



NORWICH
City Council

Cabinet

Date: Wednesday, 17 January 2024

Time: 17:30

Venue: Mancroft room, City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH

Committee members:

For further information please contact:

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Agenda

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- 1 Apologies**
To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Declarations of interest**
(Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting).
- 3 Public questions/petitions**
To receive questions / petitions from the public which have been submitted in accordance with the council's constitution.
- 4 Questions to cabinet members**
(A copy of the questions and replies will be available on the council's website prior to the meeting).
- 5 Minutes** 5 - 10
To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2023.
- 6 Scrutiny Committee Recommendations** 11 - 16
Purpose: To consider the recommendations made by scrutiny committee in relation to a review of the effectiveness of scrutiny committee on 23 November 2023 and on the Equality Information Report 2024 on 7 December 2023.
- 7 Equality Information Report 2024** 17 - 78
Purpose: To consider the council's statutory annual Equality Information Report 2024 which is appended to this report.
- 8 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027** 79 - 100
Purpose: To consider the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024/27.
- 9 Greater Norwich Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2024-2029 (Key Decision)** 101 - 116
Purpose: To consider the draft Greater Norwich Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2024-2029.

10 Compliance work update (Report to follow)

11 Utilities Contract (Key Decision)

117 - 126

Purpose: To consider the future commissioning of utility contracts.

12 Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2023-2024 (Report to follow)

13 Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Change 2023-24 (Report to follow)

14 Draft Treasury Management Strategy (Report to follow)

15 Exclusion of the public

Consideration of exclusion of the public.

EXEMPT ITEMS:

(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and the public.)

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of an agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972 or it being confidential for the purposes of Section 100A(2) of that Act.

In each case, members are asked to decide whether, in all circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption (and discussing the matter in private) outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

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***16 Managing Assets (Housing) (Key Decision) (Exempt -Para 3)**

- This report is not for publication because it would disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as in para 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Date of publication: **Tuesday, 09 January 2024**



Cabinet

17:35 to 18:50

13 December 2023

Present: Councillors Stonard (chair), Jones (vice-chair), Fulton-McAlister, Giles, Hampton, Kendrick and Packer.

Apologies: Councillor Kidman

Also Present: Councillor Galvin (leader of the Green group)

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

The chair announced that three new members had been appointed to cabinet, Councillors Fulton-McAlister, Kidman and Packer and emphasised that they would provide the right mix of expertise, fresh ideas and passion to tackle the challenges the city faced and to provide the best possible service to residents. He advised that cabinet portfolios would be reallocated across the eight members and there would be more information in due course.

2. Public questions/ petitions

One public question had been received from Mr Neil Hardman. Mr Hardman asked the leader of the council and cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable development the following question:

“According to the council website, the Carrow house site was bought for £2.25 million in 2021 and a further £1.4 million was to be spent on refurbishment, so that it would ‘become a centre for economic growth’.

New Carrow House was opened in September 2022 to provide 5 floors of rental space for businesses. Works on Carrow House and the conservatory were to be completed by the end of 2022. I wonder how much of the office space has been used and is currently being used and whether the works to the site have been completed for use.

If parts of the site are not currently being used, can the Council confirm whether there are plans to explore new uses and opportunities, or to open the sites for local organisations and members of the public?”

Councillor Stonard, the leader of the council and the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable development responded:

“Carrow House forms part of a larger range of sites across East Norwich. East Norwich is an ambitious project to create a sustainable new urban quarter in the city and the sites combined form the largest brownfield redevelopment site in the East of England. The Council funded the acquisition and refurbishment of Carrow House from a successful bid to the government’s towns fund in view of the strategic benefits that having a substantial land holding within East Norwich would bring to the wider East Norwich project. The long-term aim being to renovate Old Carrow House and enable redevelopment of new Carrow House and the car park associated with the property in accordance with the East Norwich Masterplan.

In the short term the council have now completed a light refurbishment of the building. We are currently working with a new charity which is formed from a local consortium of charities and social enterprises with a view to them taking over the management of the building. This would be a short-term initiative over the next 3-5 years pending redevelopment proposals coming forward. We are still working through the details of this, however if successfully delivered it would provide substantial benefit to those organisations and provide substantial social and cultural value to the city.”

In response to Mr Hardman’s supplementary question the Head of Property and Economic Development confirmed that current proposals included the whole site.

3. Questions to cabinet members

There were no questions to cabinet members from members of the council.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023 and the extraordinary meeting held on the 22 November 2023.

5. Scrutiny Committee Recommendations

Councillor Stonard invited Councillor Galvin to introduce the report as she had been chair of the task and finish group on retrofitting whose recommendations were being considered. Councillor Galvin thanked officers and members of the group who had worked hard to review the evidence with the remit to produce something of benefit to the council. She emphasised that retrofitting the council’s housing stock in order that it was fit for the future was not easy or cheap but that it was one of the most important things the council would ever do. The group had considered evidence from other local authorities and housing associations and the aim of the recommendations was to seamlessly support and fit into the corporate plan process.

Councillor Hampton, cabinet member for climate change, had attended the meeting of scrutiny committee along with Councillor Jones and thanked members of the task and finish group for their time and work and to scrutiny committee for setting the topic. She considered that it was an important and timely topic and well placed in terms of the corporate plan refresh. Domestic emissions were the greatest source of

CO2 emissions in the city and it was essential to reduce these to get to net zero. In light of the cost of living and energy crisis warmer homes and lower bills for residents were a priority. The report was a productive piece of work and she proposed that cabinet provide a response after going through the recommendations. There were a number of service cross cutting recommendations which was right but cabinet needed to consider the implications of these. She would speak with officers to ensure what was agreed could be delivered and within realistic timescales.

Councillor Jones, the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety commended the meeting of scrutiny committee on retrofitting as fascinating. She referred to the recommendation in relation to reworking the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan (BP) to deliver retrofitting at pace.

She noted that retrofitting had to be considered alongside other priorities such as delivering new social housing and building upgrades. It was essential to complete the council's housing stock condition survey before such priorities could be finalised. She agreed with Councillor Hampton and proposed that cabinet take time to consider the recommendations further.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin the Executive Director of Housing and Community Safety noted that the change in the budgeted retrofit figure from £290m to £321m in the HRA BP reflected changing interest rates and understanding of costs of works.

RESOLVED to defer consideration of the recommendations on retrofitting until the February 2024 meeting of cabinet.

6. Managing Assets (non-housing)

(The chair took this item early)

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources, presented the report. He highlighted that there was an error in the report and confirmed for accuracy recommendation (3).

In response to a question the Head of Property and Economic Development confirmed that information in relation to the sale of 74 Upper St Giles Street had been shared with Lion Homes and the board were considering their options. The Head of Legal and Procurement advised that the decision to sell the property would not preclude Lion Homes from purchasing it.

With no member indicating they wished to discuss the exempt appendix it was:

RESOLVED to:

- 1) approve the disposal of the assets outlined in this report;
- 2) approve the disposal of 215b Woodcock Road for the sum detailed in the exempt appendix; and

- 3) delegate acceptance of the most advantageous offer for 2/2a Charing Cross, 82 Upper St Giles and 74 Upper St Giles to the Executive Director of Development and City Services in consultation with the Cabinet member for resources.

7. Allocation of Better Care Fund to support new developments (key decision)

(This report is contained in the supplementary agenda pack.)

During this item, there were a number of interruptions. The chair reminded all present of the need to be respectful during Council meetings and debates, and where appropriate, in accordance with the constitution, instructed for removal of those who interrupted the meeting.

Councillor Jones, deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety introduced the report. The council had received a Better Care Fund (BCF) allocation since 2015 and this was used to support residents in a number of ways. The idea of the fund was to provide a local person centred approach and planning was coordinated with Norfolk County Council and Clinical Commissioning Groups. There were three main areas of spend; Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) which could provide adaptations to enable people to remain independently in their homes or return from hospital, housing assistance funding and funding for social care capital projects.

The report proposed the allocation of BCF for two sheltered housing schemes, the first project for older residents was at the Great Hospital and the funding would provide for the provision of assistive technology at the scheme. The second project at Webster Court had 32 units providing mental health care and support and the proposal was to provide four additional units of accommodation. The county council were also committed to capital funding the project too.

Councillor Jones highlighted that there was a lack of specialist housing provision and this provided an opportunity to increase the resource and commended the recommendations to her colleagues.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin, Councillor Jones advised covid had impacted on the spending of the funding but there were three ways to allocate the funds, social care provision being one of these.

RESOLVED to authorise the allocation of £0.5m of the councils Better Care Fund allocation to the two capital projects detailed in this report, and the funds be distributed to Norfolk County Council to enable these projects to proceed.

8. The council's provisional 2024/25 budget and medium-term financial strategy

(This report is contained in the supplementary agenda pack.)

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources, presented the report. He reported that one in five council leaders surveyed by the Local Government Association (LGA) considered it likely they would issue a S114 notice. The LGA

estimated there to be a £4billion funding gap over the next two years required to maintain local authority services at current levels. The Autumn Statement had failed to address the crisis in local government funding and local government required a settlement which provided it sufficient resource.

He advised that the figures for the local government settlement were being awaited and the figures in the report were based on best estimates. It was proposed that a public consultation on the budget be completed and considered before the budget was approved in February. The council faced additional inflationary pressures and funding was not keeping pace with demand on services. While inflation was now falling it remained at levels not seen for decades impacting negatively on the city council, residents, businesses and partners. The city council were seeing increasing costs in terms of homelessness services but he considered it would not see adequate support with adult and children's services likely to be prioritised.

He noted that consultation on the corporate plan priorities had been taking place and advised that in order to respond to that work the budget focussed on five key themes; delivery of the existing savings programme, income optimisation and automation, ensuring non-statutory fees and charges fully cover cost, review of asset management (including commercial rental income) and Corporate Items: Capital Financing and Treasury Management.

He considered the council were in a strong position to face the current budget challenges and was pleased to advise that it was currently estimated that the budget would be balanced in the next financial year without the use of drawing down reserves. A below inflation increase to council tax of £2.99% was proposed.

In terms of the Husing Revenue Account (HRA) he advised that 7.7% rent increases were proposed for the financial year 2024/25 reflecting the government's current rent standards of CPI in September 2023 plus 1%. This increase was needed to fund the council's obligation to reach Energy Performance Certificate level C by 2030 and to achieve net zero carbon emissions over the medium term. There was an ambition to build new council homes and a need to invest in existing homes too.

He emphasised that the council were in much stronger financial position than most other local authorities and considered that this was due to sound financial management. He commended the work of the council's officers and noted that the budget consultation was online until mid January.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin, the Interim Chief Finance Officer advised that £0.4m had been allocated to support proposals that would be coming forwards in the corporate plan.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin asking if he agreed that the Norwich Standard was out of date, the Interim Executive Director of Housing and Community Safety advised that the Norwich Standard was based on the 2010 Decent Homes Standard (DHS). He was aware that the government were working on DHS II and considered that when this was introduced it would be the appropriate time to revisit the Norwich Standard. Councillor Jones echoed this view noting that the government review would inform the decision.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the latest financial information and the budget strategy incorporated into the report, which enable the Council to set a balanced budget for 2024/25 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for the period to 2028/29; and
- 2) note the budget principles used for consultation and agree that budget consultation with businesses, residents and other interested stakeholders commences to inform the Council's budget setting decisions in February 2024.

**9. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and Budget 2024/25
(Key decision)**

(This report is contained in the supplementary agenda pack.)

Councillor Jones, deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety, presented the report. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) required careful management to balance the competing needs upon it, new homes building, stock upgrades, retrofitting and compliance work.

She was pleased to advise that the Social Housing Regulator had notified the council that it had discharged its voluntary undertaking, removed the council's notice and the council were no longer under regulatory supervision. The ways of working used to successfully address the compliance work would be used to address other issues such as damp and mould and the aging of the housing stock. The current stock condition survey which was underway would provide a robust evidence base to use to plan the work that was needed on the stock going forward.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin the Interim Executive Director of Housing and Community Safety advised that the HRA Business Plan was a projection forward of what was known and what was believed to be needed for the future.

RESOLVED to approve the HRA Business Plan report for 2024/25, subject to approval of the HRA Revenue Account Budget 2024/25 at Council in February 2024.

***10. Managing Assets (non-housing) – exempt appendix**

This item was noted under item 6 above.

CHAIR



Committee name: Cabinet

Committee date: 17/01/2024

Report title: Scrutiny Committee Recommendations

Portfolio: Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources

Report from: Head of legal and procurement

Wards: All wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

To consider the recommendations made by scrutiny committee in relation to a review of the effectiveness of scrutiny committee on 23 November 2023 and on the Equality Information Report 2024 on 7 December 2023.

Recommendation:

To consider whether to adopt all or some of the recommendations from the scrutiny committee.

Policy framework

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
- Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
- Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
- The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.
- Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

The scrutiny committee is an important part of the democratic process, helping hold the cabinet to account and exploring how services are performing. As such, a well performing scrutiny committee can contribute to all corporate priorities.

Report details

A review of the effectiveness of scrutiny committee

1. Members used the October meeting of the committee to hold an informal session to conduct a review of the effectiveness of scrutiny committee.
2. To start this work, officers designed a survey sent to all councillors which sought to understand members views on a range of questions posed by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS).
3. The session in October considered the following:
 - a) The CfGS design principles and understanding the different views in the room as to how to move forwards
 - b) The outcomes of the survey sent to all councillors
 - c) Establishing priority areas of focus
 - d) Agreeing how to move the work forward
4. A number of key themes emerged from the debate as follows:
 - a) Setting of the work programme
 - b) Training for the committee
 - c) Use of substitutes
 - d) Relationship with cabinet
 - e) Promoting scrutiny
 - f) Resources
5. Officers presented a report to members summarising the workshop and recommendations at the committee meeting on 23 November 2023. Members considered a number of recommendations, and committee agreed several in relation to promoting the work of the committee and improving the topics selected for consideration.
6. One proposal to highlight and where the committee are seeking the support of cabinet is the proposal to adopt a scrutiny-executive protocol. This is recognised good practice and would outline how the relationship between scrutiny and cabinet would work.
7. With cabinet's support it is intended to develop a document for approval by scrutiny and cabinet, which would incorporate a number of the other recommendations made by scrutiny committee including liaison between the chair and group leaders; the attendance of cabinet members at scrutiny and the attendance of scrutiny at cabinet.
8. Cabinet members are requested to support this recommendation.

Equality Information Report 2024

9. Members considered the Equality Information Report (EIR) at the 7 December 2023 meeting of the committee. Councillor Giles, cabinet member for communities and social inclusion attended committee and gave a presentation to members on the EIR and took questions.
10. Members commended work on the report and noted areas of success and considered areas where improvements or greater clarity could be provided and the following recommendations were agreed for cabinet to consider:

Recommendation	Rationale	Implications/ resource requirements
Include information on the performance of the Reducing Inequalities Target Areas (RITAs) against outcomes in the next EIR report;	Unclear as to how success was being measured or evaluated in relation to RITAs.	Officer time to consider and agree relevant method to record performance.
Explore the potential of reporting the volume of customer contact resolved at the first point of contact;	To monitor the effectiveness of the council's ability to resolve customer enquires at first point of contact.	Officer time to consider and implement means to record and officer time to record and collate data.
Investigate a process for evaluating the equality compliance of parks and outdoor spaces;	Concern was raised that measures to prevent the use of pedestrianised areas by motor bikes and mopeds impacted on access for disabled individuals.	It was suggested by Councillor Giles that this could possibly be included when the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy was considered. If it could be included as part of a scheduled review it would reduce the impact on resources. Officer time to review and consider.

Consultation

11. These proposals were considered and agreed by members of the scrutiny committee. There has been no specific consultation on these proposals.

Implications

Financial and resources

12. Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan 2022-26 and budget.
13. Any additional financial requirements where activities cannot be undertaken within existing resources will need to be subject to further consideration, and approval through a business case. This will need to include an appropriate funding source being identified and/ or being built into future years' budget processes.

Legal

14. The proposals largely request that cabinet consider exploring specific matters further. If these result in formal business cases, the legal implications will require due consideration at that time.

Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	<p>In relation to a review of the effectiveness of scrutiny committee members considered measures aimed at increasing access to and the diversity of voices at committee.</p> <p>As a local authority, the Council has a statutory requirement to publish an annual Equality Information Report.</p>
Health, social and economic impact	<p>There are positive impacts associated with a number of projects as detailed throughout the EIR.</p>
Crime and disorder	<p>There are positive impacts associated with a number of projects as detailed throughout the EIR.</p>
Children and adults safeguarding	<p>There are positive impacts associated with a number of projects as detailed throughout the EIR.</p>
Environmental impact	<p>There are positive impacts associated with a number of projects as detailed throughout the EIR.</p>

Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
None at this stage.		

Other options considered

15. There have been no other options considered for this report, as it is a factual report based on the outcome of committee meetings that have already taken place.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

16. This report will allow cabinet to make a decision on whether or not to take forward some or all of the recommendations.

Background papers:

[Report on the effectiveness of scrutiny committee and minutes of the meeting.](#)

[EIR, presentation and minutes of the meeting.](#)

Appendices: None

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Committee name: Cabinet

Committee date: 17/01/2024

Report title: Norwich City Council - Equality Information Report 2024

Portfolio: Councillor Giles, Cabinet member for communities and social inclusion

Report from: Interim executive director of housing and community safety

Wards: All wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

To consider the council's statutory annual Equality Information Report 2024 which is appended to this report.

Recommendation:

To approve the publication of the annual Equality Information Report for 2024.

Policy framework

The council has five corporate aims, which are:

- People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
- Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
- Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
- The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.
- Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

This report meets the **People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city** corporate aim – by recognising and tackling existing inequalities that form a barrier to individuals living the independent and safe lives they seek and deserve.

This report meets **The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish** corporate aim – by working with partners and our communities to create an environment that allows people to feel they belong, and that they are respected and heard, whilst working to maximise the opportunities they have to succeed and thrive in Norwich.

Report details

1. As a local authority, the Council has a statutory requirement to publish an annual Equality Information Report.
2. The Equality Information Report is appended to this report. This report provides an account of the council's progress against its equality objectives and presents key data about Norwich residents and city council customers and employees, especially those with protected characteristics under The Equality Act 2010.
3. Previous Equality Information Reports can be found on the Equality and Diversity section of the council's website: <http://www.norwich.gov.uk/equalityanddiversity>.
4. This report maintains last year's revised format, comprising of five sections:
 - a. Our duty
 - b. Working with our communities
 - c. Celebrations and commemorations
 - d. Changing how we do things
 - e. Information about our people, customers, and employees.
5. The format provides evidence to enable us to better allocate resources to help those communities identified as needing additional support. It will also form part of the evidence base for the forthcoming Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan that is in development.

Consultation

6. This report has been compiled in consultation with officers from across the council, the portfolio holder and key stakeholders.

Implications

Financial and resources

Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan 2022-26 and budget.

7. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources.

Legal

8. The publication of the Equality Information Report 2024 forms part of our Public Sector Equality Duty requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	No further implications have been identified, given this annual report's primary function is to highlight the council's progress towards our equality objectives. This report seeks to provide information only and does not seek to propose additional actions.
Health, social and economic impact	No further implications have been identified, given this annual report's primary function is to highlight the council's progress towards our equality objectives. This report seeks to provide information only and does not seek to propose additional actions.
Crime and disorder	No further implications have been identified, given this annual report's primary function is to highlight the council's progress towards our equality objectives. This report seeks to provide information only and does not seek to propose additional actions.
Children and adults safeguarding	No further implications have been identified, given this annual report's primary function is to highlight the council's progress towards our equality objectives. This report seeks to provide information only and does not seek to propose additional actions.
Environmental impact	No further implications have been identified, given this annual report's primary function is to highlight the council's progress towards our equality objectives. This report seeks to provide information only and does not seek to propose additional actions.

Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
<p>As specified in the Equality Act 2010 the Council must publish equality data annually.</p> <p>This includes reporting on how we are integrating equality, diversity and inclusion into our work practices and publishing our workforce employment information.</p>	<p>Failure to have 'due regard' in relation to the Equality Act 2010 could mean:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a judicial review of decision making • incurring unnecessary costs to the council • reputational damage • unconscious discrimination against a part of the city's community • developing services that do not meet the needs of our communities. 	<p>The publication of an annual Equality Information Report every January.</p> <p>The publication of specific SMART equality objectives at least every four years which are aligned to our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.</p> <p>The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy allows identification of risks around liabilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Progress will be reported to CLT and Cabinet.</p>

Other options considered

9. Not applicable as the publication of an annual Equality Information Report is statutory requirement under the Equality Act 2010.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

10. This report and the appendix should enable Cabinet to approve publication of the Equality Information Report for 2024.

Background papers: None

Appendices: Equality Information Report 2024

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Norwich City Council Equality Information Report 2024

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The council aims to make all the ways that we communicate accessible for everyone, including those with impairments to vision, hearing, mobility, thinking and understanding. As the proportion of our communications that are digital continues to increase, changes we have made to make communications more accessible have been informed by Government's [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#). WCAG is based on four design principles: perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust.

Examples of changes we have made to increase accessibility include:

- Making key documents and publications available as web pages rather than PDFs, for example Citizen and Tenants' and leaseholders' community (TLC) magazines. Content is also structured logically and can be navigated and read by a screen reader or other assistive technologies.
- Ensuring online content works well on mobile devices
- Using descriptive links so users know where a link will take them, or what the downloadable linked content is
- Providing text alternatives ('alt text') for any non-text content and the addition of subtitles to videos
- Implementing simplified and uncluttered format and design in all communications
- Ensuring sufficient colour contrast for online and printed design
- Ongoing review of information to ensure it can be easily understood with calls to action that provide a clear onward journey.

This year, in order to improve the accessibility of this report, we have chosen a consistent colour scheme that is accessible to individuals with vision impairments, such as colour blindness. This is designed in a way that avoids using clashing colours, as well as providing alternative identifiers for different data series, such as different shaped markers. The colour scheme was generated using [Venngage](#), a reliable online resource for accessible colour palettes.

Foreword from the Leader of the Council

As a city, Norwich actively benefits from its rich cultural diversity and history of inclusivity. Through its vibrant community and various key partnerships with local organisations, Norwich City Council endeavors to encourage these communities to thrive, as well as promotes equity for all those living, visiting, and working within the city.

Like every city across the country, we are confronted with the challenges posed by the existing inequalities within our society. These challenges represent the driving force for much of what we do as leaders and champions of this progressive city.

Unfortunately, amid the persistent cost-of-living crisis, we are seeing the expansion of socioeconomic inequalities within our community, which highlights the unmet need for basic necessities such as food, clothing, and affordable energy to heat our homes.

We recognise the stubborn nature of the difficult times our community are facing and remain wholly committed to the reduction of inequality in all its forms. To help us tackle inequality and promote diversity and inclusion, we maintain our strong working relationships with local service delivery partners, as we work together to support our residents, businesses and visitors to access advice and assistance.

Norwich City Council continues to work towards our 2040 City Vision, as we promote Norwich's growth towards a truly creative, liveable, fair, connected, and dynamic city. Against the backdrop of huge national issues, Norwich strives to be at the forefront of change, not following it.

This Equality Information Report will highlight the progress we have made to reduce inequality locally and our work to assist those individuals and communities who need our support the most. This report also provides some useful insights that we may draw upon to help us mitigate and address some of the challenges our residents, service users and partners are facing.

Cllr Mike Stonard
Leader

SECTION ONE: Our duty

Introduction

1. We want Norwich to be a fair, kind, accessible, and inclusive city. We work with our partners to make Norwich the best it can be for everyone, recognising that different people and communities have different needs, so it's a city where everyone:
 - a. Feels they belong
 - b. Is respected
 - c. Has a voice
 - d. Has the chance to succeed and thrive.
2. We also want to be an organisation that makes a real difference for the people of Norwich by:
 - a. Showing respect and kindness to everyone
 - b. Giving the most help to the people who need it the most.
 - c. Continuing to learn and improve
 - d. Focusing on prevention and early intervention.
3. We have been working towards this for many years. This report covers what we have been doing over the last 12 months to tackle the inequalities that exist within our city, improve life within our communities and develop effective working partnerships with residents and organisations across the city, as we work to improve equality together.

Equality refers to everyone having the same chances to do what they can. Some people may need extra help to get the same chances.

Equality is right for many reasons:

- People enjoy life more if they are treated fairly.
- The country is richer because each and every person can do what they are best at.
- It is easier for people to live side by side and get on with each other if everyone is treated fairly.

Public Sector Equality Duty

4. As a public sector body, Norwich City Council has a responsibility to ensure that the needs of all of those we work with and for are considered when developing policy, delivering services, and managing our workforce.

Equality Act or the Act - This is the Government's law to make sure all people are treated fairly. The Act became law in 2010 when Parliament agreed it was right.

5. The [Equality Act 2010](#) works to provide people with legal protection from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. The Act outlines what public bodies must do to prevent discrimination and promote equality, diversity, and inclusion. The council must demonstrate due regard to three general equality duties across its functions. These are:

- a. Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- b. Eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- c. Promoting good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Equality Duty - This is a law for public bodies telling them they must think about how they can make sure their work supports equality. For example, in their services, through their jobs, and through the money they spend.

6. The Act tells some public bodies, like the council to do certain things to help make equality happen, for example:
 - a. Think about equality when we are buying things.
 - b. Make men and women's wages easier to compare.
 - c. Use positive action if we want to make sure our workers are diverse.
 - d. Think about how we can help to stop people doing less well than other people because of their family background or where they were born.
 - e. Think about treating people from different groups fairly and equally.
 - f. Think about what we can do to make our services more helpful to poorer people.

Positive action - This lets employers and service providers think about equality when looking at who they might supply their services to or employ. It might mean providing services in a different way or giving people information or training. For employers it might mean choosing between two people who can do the job as well as each other.

Diverse or diversity - This is a mix of different kinds of people. For example, men and women, young and old people, people of different races, disabled and non-disabled people.

7. We also have a duty to review and publish Equality objectives. Our objectives over the past year, as published in June 2021 were:
 - a. Develop a new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy – This strategy is in development and is due for publication in January 2024.
 - b. Redesign council services and reshape teams around the needs of users, creating more joined up and accessible services which are in tune with the changing needs and behaviours of those we serve – see [Section four](#) of the report for progress.
 - c. Understand our communities and celebrate and respect diversity – see [Sections two](#) and [three](#) of the report for progress.
 - d. Recruit, develop and retain a diverse and representative workforce – see [Section four](#) of the report for progress.
8. Our annual [Equality Information Report](#) highlights the progress we are making against these objectives.

Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristics - This refers to different groups of people in England, Scotland and Wales who sometimes get treated unfairly.

9. The protected characteristics covered by the Public Sector Equality Duty are:
 - a. **Age** – people of different ages
 - b. **Disability** – people with a physical or mental disability
 - c. **Gender Reassignment** – transgender people who have changed their sex or are in the process of doing so.
 - d. **Marriage and Civil Partnership** – partnerships entered into by a man and a woman or a couple of the same sex.
 - e. **Pregnancy and Maternity** – women having a baby, and women just after they have had a baby.
 - f. **Race** – people who come from different places or have different ethnic origins; they may have different skin colours or hold a passport from a country outside of the UK.
 - g. **Religion or Belief** – people with differing religions or beliefs, or people without a religion or belief.
 - h. **Sex** – people of different sex (women and men).
 - i. **Sexual Orientation** – a person’s sexual attraction to other people, or lack thereof including persons of the opposite, same or either sex.
10. We must have due regard for the **Socio-economic Duty** – family background or where a person is born still affects their life. For example, a child from a rich family often does better at school than a child from a poor family, even if the poorer child is cleverer. This is sometimes called socio-economic inequality.
11. Our policies and actions seek to ensure that we do not negatively impact those who may be from low-income households, carers, people sleeping rough or any other marginalised or vulnerable group.
12. Local data relating to the characteristics can be found at [Section five](#) of this report.

Meeting the Equality Duty

13. We use various tools to meet our duties and to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion across our communities:
 - a. **Equality, diversity, and inclusion officer group** – an internal cross council working group to drive equality improvements.
 - b. **Shared ambitions with strategic partners to reduce inequality** – Through strategic partnerships such as the Norwich 2040 City Vision Partnership, we seek to drive equality improvements across the city through progressive action.
 - c. **Workforce Diversity Strategy** – this works towards us having a more representative workforce that better reflects our local demographic.

- d. **Training and development provision** - ongoing training is provided to officers including equality and diversity duties and responsibilities, equality impact analysis, trauma informed approach, and safeguarding children, young people, and adults at risk.
- e. **Community mapping** – members and officers are updated about the makeup of the Norwich community through briefings, [State of Norwich](#) reports and through links to other data sources including [Norfolk Insight](#).
- f. We have an [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) which is being reviewed and updated, and we are developing an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, due to be published in January 2024.
- g. We carry out **Equality Impact Assessments** wherever appropriate to promote access to services for all members of our communities and to eliminate discrimination and advance equality in our actions, policies, and strategies. Our work predominantly, although not exclusively, focuses on reducing inequality target areas (defined in [section five](#)) and our approach enables residents and groups to produce sustained change.

SECTION TWO: Working with our communities

14. Our community enabling team works with residents, grassroots organisations and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise partners across Norwich so that neighbourhoods can be more responsive to what is of value to the communities who live in them. This involves a number of activities including:
 - a. Making it easier for residents to get permission for developing community gardens where neighbours can come together to grow food and plants – our permissions process gives residents a single-entry point via a webform to apply for permission to take on green space in housing estates and support the management of parks.
 - b. Supporting residents with practical advice and guidance to establish new groups and grow existing organisations. This includes supporting learning opportunities and peer to peer networking through our food network, outdoor projects network and local networks we support such as the Lakenham Initiative.
 - c. The provision of small-scale grants for communities to come together for things such as street parties for royal or other celebrations - we have given out a total of 23 “Get Involved” grants consisting of 18 “Get Together” grants of up to £50 each for communities who want to come together around occasions like this. 2 “Get Started” grants of up to £300 for groups who are starting to establish, and 3 “Get Growing” grants of up to £500 for those who are taking that next step in their development.
 - d. Supporting existing organisations working with vulnerable and minority groups, this includes those working with refugees and asylum seekers as well as food provision. We’ve supported a number of these groups, including those who provide advice, guidance and therapy to those fleeing conflict, as well as a number of grassroots foodbanks across the city.

15. A real success story is that of the Tuckswood Cycle Hub. Based on a housing estate in the Lakenham ward of the city, the team have supported the development of this community-led project over the past few years. Today, operating out of two council-owned garages, the hub provides regular repairs sessions as well as the opportunity for local residents to purchase refurbished secondhand bikes at a heavily discounted price. It does so in a way which builds connection in the community, strengthening the assets of the estate.

Community conversations

16. To help guide our ongoing work, we have heard from communities with a range of backgrounds, identities and cultural affiliations through some specific conversations. Equality, diversity, and inclusion were understood to be key elements for any positively functioning environment and city like Norwich.

17. The feedback is being used to shape our forthcoming Equality, diversity and inclusion strategy, which is due to be published in January 2024 and inform our action plan that will sit under this, and which will be published later next year.

18. This approach of having theme-based community conversations was well received. As a result, the council took this approach to reach more people with our annual budget consultation – to ensure the voices of community members in Norwich are better reflected.

19. Conversations have been analysed and we have established a community conversations insights hub. The trends indicate there is a consistency across the city in that residents value community, the natural and built environment, and health and wellbeing. We have also been able to track what assets and deficits residents see in the areas and, through our work in the community, have started to support community assets to increase their capacity as well as build links to address what are seen as the deficits.

20. The insights from this work are now hosted on a website which is shared with partners. Whilst each neighbourhood is different, there are some strong consistencies. Community is consistently considered to be of greatest importance to residents with the natural environment and health & wellbeing following shortly behind. We have also been able to track the increase in concern around the cost of living in some areas.

Gypsy, Romany, and Traveller site development

21. Our housing development team has continued to work in partnership with Broadland Housing Association to help improve the Gypsy, Romany, and Traveller site in the city.

22. To allow more pitches on the site, we have leased additional land to Broadland Housing Association; the land sits next to the current site at Swanton Road. This site has now been redeveloped with 13 new pitches.

23. Planning approval has been granted for an additional 3 pitches on the new site and for existing pitches to be remodelled and refurbished to meet modern standards. Work has now commenced on these projects following the successful awarding of £0.69m DLUHC Traveller Site funding and an additional £0.315m funding from the city council. It is anticipated that the work will be complete in

Spring 2024 and once complete, that there will be a total of 31 pitches, all meeting current standards for space and amenity.

24. The new pitches and the re-modelling have been carried out in consultation with the existing community who have welcomed the proposals.
25. A recent [Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessment](#) undertaken as evidence for the [Greater Norwich Local Plan \(GNLP\)](#), has identified further pitch requirements across the Greater Norwich area. Following public consultation by the GNLP, a number of sites have been proposed for allocation to meet the identified need.

Anti-racism charter

26. In July 2022, we were proud to sign up to [Unison's Anti-Racism Charter](#). At an event organised by Norwich City Unison branch, the leader of the council, the Lord Mayor and our Chief Executive all signed this important document.
27. It is not enough to be non-racist. Signing the Charter commits the council to actively challenge racism wherever it occurs. The pledges we have made will also ensure our policies, processes, and organisational culture celebrate, and champion the diversity of our whole workforce.
28. We are currently progressing the charter's action plan, as we fully embed anti-racist practice within everything we do. The action plan highlights the actions we have taken to promote racial diversity and inclusion, recognise the impact of racism on people's wellbeing and entrench robust training, monitoring, and reporting processes that allow us to fulfil and improve our anti-racism programme of initiatives and actions.

Supporting victim-survivors of domestic abuse

29. Norwich City Council are proud to be the first organisation in the country to receive accreditation through Alpha Vest's Community Advocate Scheme. [The Community Advocate Scheme](#) is a new scheme that acknowledges and recognises businesses and organisations' continued commitment and support of the shared vision to 'break the cycle' of domestic abuse. This can be achieved through a number of different ways, with a clear focus on awareness, prevention, and early intervention.
30. In October 2023, the council was proudly awarded with a certificate verifying the recent work we have undertaken to ensure that our organisation is better equipped to support victim survivors of domestic abuse.

Supporting the Armed Forces community

31. The [Armed Forces Covenant](#) is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and the local armed forces community. It is a promise by the nation to ensure that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly.
32. As an equal opportunity employer, we acknowledge the Armed Forces Covenant to show our continued support and appreciation to those who have served, and it is our commitment to ensure they will not face a disadvantage when accessing

our services. Our work does not stop at those still serving in the armed forces, but we also assist reserve units, veterans, military families, and their dependants.

33. Last year, Norwich City Council reaccredited to maintain our Silver Award from the Ministry of Defence, for recognition for the work that we do to support the Armed Forces, and how we implement the covenant into our employment practices.
34. We have also rolled out the following e-learning training modules for our staff:
 - a. [The Armed Forces Covenant for Front Line Workers](#)
 - b. [Housing, Homelessness, and the Armed Forces Covenant](#)

Accessible Norwich

35. Our community enabling team has started working with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector to create a network of groups and organisations who are working on making the city more accessible and inclusive. This work has progressed, with a number of VCSE partners having now submitted a joint application for Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funding for a phased project to improve the accessibility of the city based on lived experience and engagement.

City of Sanctuary

36. Norwich is a part of a national movement building a culture of welcome for refugees and asylum-seekers, many of whom have lost their homes, fled persecution, and sought safety here - [Norwich City of Sanctuary provides details of this initiative.](#)
37. Norwich City Council is proud of its history of welcoming people seeking safety in Norwich. We are committed in the medium-term to becoming an accredited council of sanctuary through cross-team working to ensure our services meet the necessary criteria.
38. Since March 2022, our community support team has been working in collaboration with Norfolk County Council and the other districts to support people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.
39. In total we have helped support over 240 guests (adults and children) through the scheme since we started. Currently we are working with 50 active hosts that are hosting 83 Ukrainian guests (58 adults and 25 children). Many guests have now successfully moved on from their hosting arrangements (private rental, moved away, returned to Ukraine).
40. In Norwich we have carried out a total of 150+ inspections to ensure the accommodation being offered by hosts is suitable. Furthermore, we are now approaching 300+ welfare visits for guests/hosts – these are done at milestones within the hosting arrangement (or ad hoc as needed), including a welcome visit, 3-month, 6-month and 12-month visit. These are vital to understand any specific issues that our hosts, guests and the Ukrainian community are experiencing and provide an opportunity to advise on any move-on arrangements.
41. Currently, guests are given a three-year visa under the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme. Part of the sponsorship scheme is to offer hosting

arrangements (up to two years) and we are very thankful for all the Norwich hosts that have come forward and opened their homes (and lives) to these guests.

42. Our main focus has been to ensure the wellbeing of any people we're welcoming into the city. Last year we recruited two Ukrainian welfare officers, both originally from Ukraine, who have lived in the UK for a number of years. They carry out ongoing welfare checks along with any other visits required to ensure that people are settling in and are receiving the help and support they need.

43. We continue to support guests after they have left hosting arrangements too. The team also help resource and support two 'welcome' support sessions at the library in The Forum on Mondays and Tuesdays, along with a weekly session held at [Norfolk Polonia](#). These drop-in sessions held at the library are well attended – often by guests from all our neighbouring districts, with the team able to advise and signpost them to help answer their queries and questions.

Supporting our LGBTQ+ Community

44. This year we have unfortunately continued to see a concerning rise in transphobia in the UK with 4,732 hate crimes against transgender people being recorded in the year ending March 2023. This represents an 11% increase in transgender based hate crime on the previous year. Trans rights are human rights and affirm the legal rights of all protected groups under the 2010 Equality Act. A graph illustrating this trend can be found within the [Hate Crime & Incidents section](#) of this report.

45. The council states that: Trans women are women. Trans men are men. Non-binary people are non-binary. We believe in the dignity of all people, and their right to respect and equality of opportunity. We value the strength that comes with difference and the positive contribution diversity brings to our community. Our aspiration is for Norwich to be a safe, welcoming, and inclusive city for everyone.

46. We continue to work with [Norwich Pride](#) which, this July, celebrated its fifteenth annual parade. A group of Norwich City Council employees joined friends and family to celebrate Pride and marched across the city. As part of taking part in the march, Norwich City Council signed the [Norwich Pride Pledge](#), so committing to ensuring our organisation remains a safe, welcoming and friendly place for LGBTQIA+ customers and staff. Like last year, we publicly acknowledged the Trans Day of Remembrance on 20 November - the [Transgender Flag](#) will continue to be flown to mark this day and the International Trans Day of Visibility (March 31st). We have also updated our flag to fly at Pride in July to the [Intersex Progress Pride Flag](#).

47. We have encouraged council employees and Councillors to make small gestures that make it clear that transgender and non-binary people are welcome. This includes adding pronouns to email signatures.

48. We have a large number of online forms and, as these are renewed, we are considering a gender-neutral approach.

Helping people to live independently

49. The council's home improvement team offer [financial and practical assistance](#) to help residents to stay living independently within their own homes. Through our

team of highly trained occupational therapists, case workers, technical officers, and qualified contractors, we provide:

- a. Adaptations, such as converting bathrooms to wet rooms, building ramps to help with getting in and out of the property, and installing stairlifts to help with getting up and down stairs.
- b. Works or adaptations to help with a timely discharge from, or to prevent admission to hospital, such as the fitting of key safes and other adaptations.
- c. Small scale emergency repairs such as heating repairs, resolving small leaks and minor electrical issues.
- d. Significant repairs to rectify hazards such as excess cold, leaking roofs and damp and mould growth.
- e. Replacing old and inefficient boilers with modern equivalents, reducing heating bills by up to 15%.
- f. Income maximisation to ensure all eligible benefits are being claimed.
- g. Signposting to other council services and external organisations as appropriate.

50. The team work hard to make their budget (approximately £4m for 2023-24) go as far as possible in helping as many people as they can. We are the only local authority in Norfolk to offer financial help of at least £5,000 to all eligible applicants to help them adapt their home and continue to live in it.

51. In 2022-2023 the home improvement team awarded 474 grants totalling over £2.4m with a grant average of £5,273. This helped:

- a. 314 council tenants
- b. 120 owner occupiers
- c. 8 private renters
- d. 53 housing association tenants

52. The people helped were mainly White British (92%). The age profile of people helped was:

- a. 312 over 65-year-olds
- b. 182 Working Age Adults
- c. 1 child

53. In addition to the work our home improvement team have been doing to support residents to live independently, officers within our property development team are actively in discussion with colleagues at Norfolk County Council to understand the housing need for our residents with additional requirements. This includes our residents with physical difficulties, poor mental health, learning disabilities, older people and those fleeing domestic abuse. We are actively looking for development opportunities that would assist with meeting the housing needs for these supported housing clients.

Helping people to keep warm

54. The council's environmental strategy and community enabling team have been supporting households across Norwich through a range of schemes aiming to reduce fuel poverty, helping more people keep warm in their home, whilst also reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.

Fuel poverty is when someone cannot afford to heat or cool their home to a comfortable temperature – if they do, this will more than likely mean getting into debt.

55. 16% of households in Norwich are experiencing fuel poverty. To help our residents, we offer a range of support including:
- a. Advice on how to reduce energy use in their home
 - b. Benefits advice and emergency fuel payments
 - c. Signposting and access to energy efficiency/retrofit grant schemes
 - d. Delivery of energy efficiency improvements to low-income households.
56. We were one of the first councils in the country to run a [collective energy switching scheme](#), helping residents access cheaper energy. Since the scheme began in 2016, we've helped over 6,000 residents switch energy provider, saving households hundreds of pounds on their energy bills each year. The current state of the energy market has meant that opportunities to switch have been limited. However, the scheme will continue as and when switching provides value for money.
57. We were also one of the first councils in the country to take part in the [Solar Together](#) scheme, which allows residents to group together as a collective to buy cheaper solar panels. The 2022 scheme was highly successful, with hundreds of residents signing up. The 2023 scheme is now underway and looks to be equally successful.
58. Over the past two years we've delivered energy efficiency measures, ranging from external wall insulation to solar panels, to over 350 private and social homes across the city. These measures will significantly reduce residents' fuel bills and increase the comfort of their homes, all whilst also reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.
59. One Norwich resident who received free solar panels via the Sustainable Warmth Scheme, said: "I'm really chuffed with the solar on my roof. As winter comes and the cost of energy increases, it's reassuring knowing that I'm creating my own electricity and reducing my bills. Plus, I'm doing my bit for the planet".
60. We continue to make our council housing stock more energy efficient and, in doing so, minimising energy consumption and reducing tenants' bills. The council has committed more than £50 million by 2030 to ensure that all of our housing stock reaches EPC band C, which will involve installing measures such as external wall insulation, solar PV, and air source heat pumps.
61. With the cost-of-living crisis continuing, and energy contributing significantly to this, it is vital that we continue to provide support for residents; over the next year we will be:
- a. Supporting residents to utilise ECO and Great British Insulation Scheme funding to install energy efficiency upgrades in their homes.
 - b. Referring residents through the council's home improvement team to receive support and funding to stay in their homes, particularly residents at risk of hospitalisation and in cold homes.
 - c. Providing vulnerable residents with emergency fuel payments
 - d. Offering the [collective energy switching scheme](#)
 - e. Offering energy advice and support to residents to enable access to appropriate funding for heating repairs and to reduce fuel debts.

62. More information about the council's plans to address fuel poverty can be found in the recently adopted [Sustainable Warmth Strategy](#).

Helping people in debt

63. The council has been committed for many years to reducing financial exclusion, recognising the inequality that exists in our city. The current cost of living crisis has created multiple challenges for both our residents and the services that support them. Demand on support services far outstrips supply which further highlights the importance of the work we deliver with our partners and the ongoing needs of our residents. Support continues to be crucial for many, as people's needs continue to be impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. Increasing private sector rents, food prices and high inflation/low wages mean we are seeing more people fall into poverty.
64. There are key areas that have been underway for some years; they form the central planks within our response to helping and supporting those most affected by the [cost-of-living crisis](#):
- a. Our approach to dealing with personal debt as a result of an adopted [policy](#) that builds holistic, wraparound support for vulnerable customers in debt, whilst at the same time continuing to maintain an income for much needed services.
 - b. The [Debt Respite Scheme](#) (otherwise known as "breathing space") came into force in May 2021. The main aim of this scheme is to incentivise more people to access professional debt advice and to access it as early as possible. The scheme also provides debtors who engage with this advice, the headspace to find a debt solution by pausing creditor enforcement action, interest, and charges.
 - c. In April 2022, the council recommissioned the provision of information, advice, and advocacy services for residents via the [Financial Inclusion Consortium](#), with £174,623 awarded for 2023/24. This service is invaluable - it cannot prevent people from getting into debt, but it can help people to find a longer term, more sustainable solution to their financial challenges.
 - d. The council continues to provide funding of £3,750 per year to use the Norfolk Community Advice Network ([NCAN](#)) [referral system](#) to enable our officers to receive referrals from, and refer people to charities and other organisations for information, advice and advocacy support. This includes wider issues that can contribute to debt, such as housing, legal and immigration support. [NCAN](#) is a Norfolk-wide partnership of agencies that provides free independent advice with a 'one front door' approach to support. It provides useful insight into the volumes of people needing the help of support agencies and the types of support they require.
 - e. Many residents across Norwich may, at some point, require help from the council in terms of debt, housing, welfare benefits, financial, or other types of support. Multiple teams are involved in delivering this much needed help. Such support includes:
 - a. [Homeless prevention and housing advice](#)
 - b. [Tenancy support from housing officers](#)
 - c. [Budgeting and money advice service for tenants](#)

- d. [Access to support funds via the community enabling team](#)
 - e. [Benefits support via the revenues and benefits team](#)
 - f. Financial inclusion advice via the strategy team
 - g. Tenancy sustainment via the specialist support team
 - h. Joined up, multi-agency support through the Norwich Early Help Hub.
65. Further details on the debt advice and support services we offer can be found in the recent [Scrutiny Committee report](#).
66. Through our [Council Tax Reduction Scheme](#), we continue to offer 100 percent discount on Council Tax for eligible residents, allowing us to help approximately 10,000 people each year.

Norwich Living Wage Place

67. We recognise that the most effective pathway out of poverty is a fair and sustainable wage, which is why the council is playing a leading role to promote the [Living Wage](#) in Norwich. In September 2022, a coalition of local businesses, charities and public sector organisations launched a plan to substantially increase the number of Living Wage Employers in the city. The 'Making Norwich a Living Wage City' Action Group has been recognised by the [Living Wage Foundation](#).
68. At the time of writing this report, there were 81 Real Living Wage accredited employers in Norwich, meaning 1,175 workers have already received a pay rise that meets the Real Living Wage. The group's action plan aims to nearly double the number of employers paying the Real Living Wage to 140 by 2025.
69. In late October 2023, the Living Wage Foundation announced the new Living Wage rates and encouraged accredited employers to implement them by May 2024.

Support for people sleeping rough over winter

70. Additional shelter for anyone sleeping rough in Norwich is being provided every night throughout winter, building on the success of the city's approach in previous years. The shelter is again kindly provided by the Roman Catholic Cathedral and Norwich Central Baptist Church, who have already proved to be welcoming, flexible venues.
71. The winter night shelter is available every evening from November to March, providing additional beds for anyone in need of one. This set up means severe weather arrangements do not need to be formally triggered in response to a drop in temperature, as emergency beds are available throughout the winter months.
72. This provision goes beyond the year-round daily outreach service delivered by the [Pathways](#) team, commissioned by Norwich City Council, and the specialist organisations behind it, so will be targeted at those not accessing accommodation through these routes.
73. In addition to existing support and offers of accommodation to anyone currently [rough sleeping](#), outreach teams will be focusing on offering advice to anyone on the streets. Our proactive, collaborative strategy means we can be confident that emergency beds will be available for people throughout the winter, no matter what the temperature is.

74. Anyone needing a bed at the winter shelter will need to be referred by the [Pathways team or city council](#), who can make sure everyone in need can get the support that they need and be moved into longer-term accommodation as quickly as possible. Concerns about someone sleeping rough should be reported through to www.streetlink.org.uk.
75. The council's rough sleeping strategy seeks to break the cycle of homelessness through prevention, intervention, recovery, and systemic support. Recent examples of innovative partnership work between the organisations include the Pathways service and [Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub](#), providing holistic specialist support and accommodation for people sleeping rough. The council's updated Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2023-28 is currently out for consultation and will be published early 2024.

Social supermarkets

76. With the cost of living remaining high, Norwich residents are continuing to have an expanding offer of social supermarkets across the city. Run by individual charities, the council has supported the establishment of [social supermarkets](#) across the city through the provision of funding or buildings. There are now six social supermarkets across the city based in Lakenham (The Feed), Russell Street (ENYP), Catton Grove (the Soul Foundation), Mile Cross (Phoenix Centre), Magdalen Street (St. Giles Trust) and at Earlham Nursery School. Shoppers can access discounted food and household essentials at a range of times throughout the week, as well as enjoy a free cup of tea or coffee when they visit.
77. [Social supermarkets](#) are run by voluntary organisations, working with local food producers and suppliers to provide products at a lower cost than traditional supermarkets. These shops are aimed at anyone who is struggling to afford food, but there are no specific criteria for who can become a member.
78. The need for social supermarkets was first identified through an action plan developed by the Food Alliance and members of [The Norwich Food Network](#), community groups working together to alleviate food insecurity. This network was originally set up by the city council who continue to facilitate its vital work.
79. An empty shop unit owned by the city council was identified as the first suitable site, with local organisations invited to apply to be the lead partner. [The Feed](#) were successful and recently opened their social supermarket on Hall Road, with ENYP (Equipping, Nurturing Young People), launching shortly after.
80. Our local voluntary sector is going above and beyond to rise to challenges brought about by the national context and we will continue to find practical ways to support them. Through its food network, the city council hopes to find opportunities for more social supermarkets around Norwich.

New eco-friendly homes

81. Our commitment to social housing continues. Last year we bought the site of the former Kings Arms public house in Mile Cross to build social housing, using a compulsory purchase order, after it was left to stand derelict for years by its previous owner.
82. The homes are designed to save tenants money on heating and hot water. They have extra insulation and low carbon features, including air source heat pumps,

triple glazing, and solar panels. Each property also has an electric vehicle charging point. They have been thoughtfully designed to complement the established residential area.

83. Mark, a resident who has moved into the development's bungalow said: "It's a lovely home, it couldn't be better. We have downsized from a three-bedroom house in Norwich and no longer need to worry about the stairs."

84. Purchasing the King Arms site to benefit the community is one example of how we are being creative to address the demand for affordable housing while staying true to our environmental ambitions. As the shortage of affordable housing continues, with many families in our city struggling to find good, well-maintained properties, these new homes are needed now more than ever.

Support to reduce health inequalities

85. Against the pre-existing backdrop of deprivation and the current cost of living crisis, it is a stark reality that these challenges will continue to significantly impact the health and wellbeing of individuals across the city.

86. It is the job of the [Norwich Health and Wellbeing Partnership](#) to support those residents most in need, to affect change at the earliest point possible by co-designing with their communities and listening to what they have to say and what they want.

87. The Norwich Health and Wellbeing Partnership (NHWP) is an important place-based aspect of the Integrated Care System. It brings together colleagues from Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council, health services, local voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations, and other partners to make a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing across Norwich, driving strategy and activity to:

- a. Promote the health and wellbeing of communities across Norwich.
- b. Address the wider determinants of health of these communities.
- c. Tackle health inequalities experienced by these communities.
- d. Align, develop, and influence NHS and local government services and commissioning.

88. Using locally available data and intelligence, the partnership's role involves identifying projects which work towards solving health priorities and problems within the city council's boundary and awarding money accordingly.

89. A focus for the partnership going forward is to develop the partnership strategy within the group, to ensure the wider determinants of health are understood, and inform wider system planning, including with health colleagues.

Supporting our creative sector

90. This year, our Small Culture Grants were assessed according to the strands of the City Vision's '[Creative City](#)' theme. Grants were awarded to a number of organisations including:

- a. **The Garage** – which has a strong emphasis on engaging those from challenging circumstances with the least access to the arts, particularly young people. Rather than inclusion being siloed it is embedded throughout the

activity, from supporting people to engage in the weekly classes, to holiday provision with bursaries, to one-to-one mentoring.

- b. **The Puppet Theatre** – which hosts a range of inspiring opportunities at the theatre and on tour including puppet making, manipulation and storytelling workshops for young people, family creative learning workshops, specialist creative sessions for young people with complex needs, adult creative learning sessions, and masterclasses for emerging artists and industry professionals.
- c. **Curious Directive** – which works with young people to ensure they think that Norwich is somewhere an arts career can be forged.
- d. **Refugee Week** – Norwich Refugee Week, (part of the annual national festival) celebrates the contribution of refugees and asylum seekers to UK culture and promotes cross-cultural understanding.
- e. **Frozen Light** – which aims to create high-quality, contemporary, devised multisensory theatre specifically for adult and young adult audiences with profound and multiple learning disabilities, so that they can experience this within their community, and exercise their right to participate fully in cultural life.
- f. **The Common Lot** – which aims to make theatre that matters to people that is free, accessible and original. This is achieved through developing opportunities for cultural collaboration and participation in group based creative activity including research, imaginative response and rehearsal. Producing live theatrical events that are for, with and about the people of Norwich.
- g. **NORCA and Sistema** – is an arts participation and engagement charity based in Norwich that aims to improve lives and communities through arts and culture, with a vision to create a world where arts and culture are part of everyone's lives, and the people and communities they work with can live creative, healthy lives, and fulfil their potential, regardless of background.

SECTION THREE: Celebrations and commemorations

Celebrating Black History Month

- 91. A host of events and activities celebrating the achievements and contributions of Black people throughout history took place throughout October as part of [Norfolk Black History Month](#). Events in the city included a 'Norwich, City of Equality & Diversity Grand Portrait event' which took place in City Hall, and a range of performances at [The Halls](#) and Cinema City. There were also county wide events and online workshops.
- 92. The council supported the delivery of this year's initiative with funding from its annual culture grant scheme; its ninth year of involvement with the cause. The funding was used to support a launch event, publicity, venue hire, volunteer expenses and some workshops.

93. Norfolk Black History Month is a charitable organisation made up of a small number of volunteers and associate members who work tirelessly throughout the year to engage the community in celebration of Black history. Its aims are to promote knowledge and experience of Black people throughout history and share the positive contributions that they have made to society.
94. It is important to champion Black history all year round but Black History Month gives an opportunity for us all to celebrate and acknowledge the wide-reaching contributions of Black people throughout history. Our cultural grants scheme is intended to help achieve greater innovation and strengthen the cultural sector overall. They also support the delivery of the [Norwich 2040 City Vision - Creative City](#) objectives in the current financial year.

Honorary Freedom of the City of Norwich

95. In November 2022, the council awarded [Honorary Freedom of the City of Norwich](#) to one of its long-standing partners, [St Martins](#), following more than 50 years' service and support to people facing homelessness. After starting out in a garage shed in the Cathedral Close half a century ago, St Martins has grown into an established charity which provides not only hundreds of beds and homes to those in need, but delivers education, training, psychological and intervention, and undertakes partnership work with other city organisations.

Armed Forces Week

96. A celebration to mark the beginning of [Armed Forces](#) Week was held outside City Hall on Monday 19 June. Members of the public were invited to watch the civic procession, including standards and the special flag – which was hoisted in a flag-raising ceremony. Guests were invited by the Lord Mayor of Norwich Councillor James Wright and Sheriff, Dr Jan Sheldon, as well as standard-bearers and representatives of the armed forces, past and present.
97. Armed Forces Day is an annual opportunity to thank the Armed Forces community for their work and to learn more about life in the Armed Forces.

New Routes - Refugee Week

98. Through its cultural development funding, the council supported [New Routes](#) with [Norwich Refugee Week](#). Over the course of Refugee Week (19-25 June 2023) a programme of arts, cultural, sports and educational events, alongside media and creative campaigns, enabled people from different backgrounds to connect beyond labels, as well as encouraged understanding of why people are displaced, and the challenges they face when seeking safety. Refugee Week is a platform for people who have sought safety in the UK to share their experiences, perspectives, and creative work on their own terms. Through this we also celebrate the contributions of refugees and asylum seekers to British and local culture.
99. It is an opportunity to showcase and celebrate diverse cultures and talents, and to foreground different life experiences within the context of 'mainstream' civic participation. Events are an opportunity for asylum seekers/refugees in Norwich to feel comfortable accessing new public spaces, and to facilitate new cultural experiences, exchanging stories between newly-settled and established Norwich residents. Cross-cultural interactions have a positive effect on public attitudes and community cohesion and combat the isolation of newly arrived migrants.

Trees for peace

100. Seeds from a Ginkgo tree, which survived the 1945 atomic bombing of Japan, were given to Norwich City Council to create a lasting symbol of peace. As part of the international Mayors for Peace programme, of which the city council is a member of, seeds from hibaku-jumoku or 'survivor' trees have been gifted to cities across the world, including Norwich. The idea is for the seeds to be germinated and the trees planted in a location where people can gather to nurture them and reflect on peace.
101. In Norwich, one of the Ginkgo trees will be planted in Chapelfield Gardens – with another at Easton College where the seeds have been germinated. Norwich prides itself on being a diverse and welcoming city, where people have lived together in harmony – from the 'strangers' who arrived here in the sixteenth century, to those fleeing conflict in more recent years.
102. Working with its lead arboricultural officer, the city council asked horticulture students at Easton College to germinate the seeds. We wanted to involve the students in the project, both to give them the experience of working with these unique seeds and so they could learn the history of the trees and the Mayors for Peace programme. Depending on how they grow, it is expected the trees will be planted in Norwich and at Easton College next year.

Ukrainian cities of Lviv and Odesa granted Freedom of the City

103. In March last year, the council awarded the [Freedom of the City](#) to the cities of Lviv and Odesa. Communities throughout Norwich, and beyond, have been shocked by the recent events in Ukraine with many people in the city coming forward to express their support for the Ukrainian people.
104. One of the ways the council can stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian cities of Lviv and Odesa – which, along with Norwich, are both recognised as UNESCO Cities of Literature – is to grant them Freedom of the City.

Commemorating the Holocaust

105. On Friday 27 January 2023, the city's key civic institutions commemorated Holocaust Memorial Day at St Peter Mancroft Church. This is an annual event to remember the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, as well as the millions of people killed under Nazi persecution and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. It is also a time to honour the survivors of these atrocities and use the lessons of their experience to challenge hatred and discrimination today.

SECTION FOUR: Changing how we do things

106. As the city council, we want to lead and shape the future evolution of Norwich. As an organisation, we want to continue our journey to be a progressive, forward-looking authority. Progress has been made over the past four years. The way in which the council responded to the pandemic has shown us at our best – the way services were remodelled, and new ones set up from scratch gives us confidence that we can change at pace. Throughout, focus has, and always will be, to support those who need it most.

107. Like all councils, we are not without our challenges but, set against a backdrop of reducing funding, we are improving standards and coming up with new ways to deliver services. This will take time and a change in culture, but we are building the internal infrastructure to support delivery and have refocused our transformation programme to build on the momentum and changed mindset demonstrated during the pandemic.

Improving the diversity of our workforce

108. In March 2021, Cabinet considered a [report from the chief executive officer](#) setting out a strategy and action plan to improve the diversity of the council's workforce, specifically the ethnic diversity of the workforce.

109. The report identified that the workforce profile of the council is currently not representative of the communities we serve and there was a significant difference in relation to employees from an ethnic minority heritage.

110. While it is not uncommon for local authorities to have workforce diversity numbers which are out of step with the communities they serve, it is something that the city council is determined to address.

111. Three key themes identified in the strategy were to:

- a. Ensure our recruitment practices and processes are designed to attract a diverse candidate pool.
- b. Build an inclusive workplace and create a culture where people from all backgrounds feel included and valued.
- c. Embed effective and objective workforce and succession planning to support the retention and progression of talented employees.

112. Progress against these themes is set out in a [further report](#) which was presented to Cabinet in February 2022.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion training

113. Unconscious bias e-learning has been rolled out to all employees and has also been made available to Councillors, to help adjust discriminatory patterns of thinking and behaviours.

114. The rollout of a new programme of mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion training began in December 2021, this included:

- a. A module for all employees - Being Inclusive
- b. A module specifically aimed at managers – Inclusive Leadership
- c. Bespoke training to address specific issues has also been developed on an ad hoc basis.

Climate and biodiversity emergencies

115. The council recognises the climate and biodiversity emergencies and the disproportionality of potential impacts according to protected characteristics and socio-economic demographics. The risks associated with this will continue to be captured through the corporate risk register.

116. With regards climate action, it is the council's aim to develop mitigation and adaption strategies and plans which address inequality, for communities within the city and more widely. With regards biodiversity action, it is the council's aim

to create equitable access to nature for the benefit of all communities and groups.

Customer and Digital Strategy

117. The council is currently developing a new customer and digital strategy which is due to be published in April 2024 – this strategy will sit alongside the Corporate Plan and will build on the changes delivered by the existing Customer Experience and Digital Strategy 2021-2024.
118. The strategy will support the council’s plans, demonstrating our commitment to improving services by:
- Embracing technology
 - Investing in customer services
 - Making it easier for things to be done online, whilst providing alternatives for those unable to do so.
119. Feedback is vital in helping to shape the strategy and initial feedback has identified three key emerging themes:
- Provide services which are easy to access for all customers.
 - Develop our approach to best serve our customers expecting a digital first service.
 - Ensure our systems are reliable and secure.
120. Following the identification of these key emerging themes, the council is now seeking detailed feedback from:
- Residents
 - Voluntary and community organisations
 - Businesses
 - Councillors
 - Council colleagues
121. This feedback will be vital in shaping our strategy and identifying the key objectives within it. Once objectives are identified, key performance measures will be agreed, which will monitor the success of all strategy objectives.
122. The strategy will provide a framework for how the council can continue to work with its customers to deliver services which meet the needs of all.

SECTION FIVE: Information about our people, customers, and employees

123. Our annual [Equality Information Reports](#) include a range of charts and data to highlight the demographical breakdown of our people, customers, and employees. The reports are informed by data provided by the Office for National Statistics through the Census (national survey of the population) and other quantitative research.

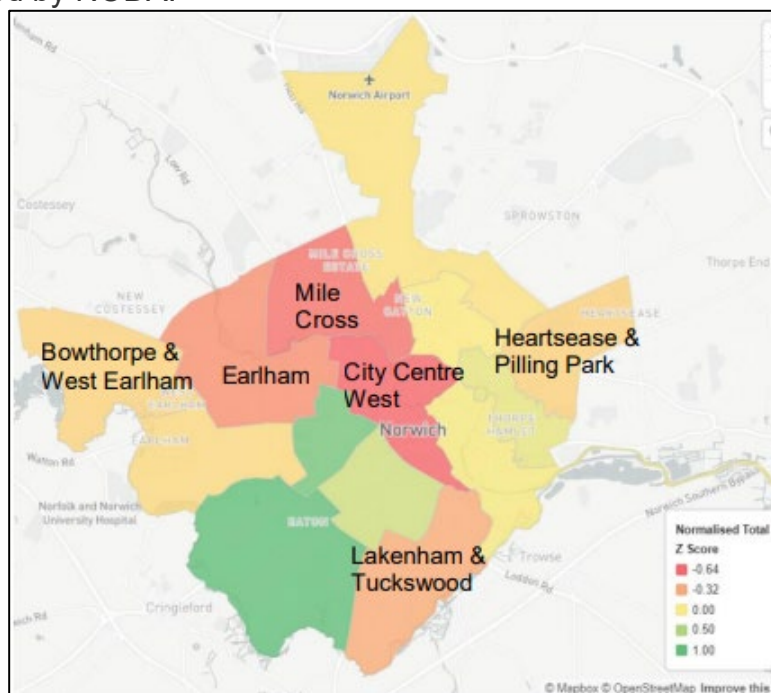
State of Norwich

124. Each year the council produces a data set which provides an overview of key statistics relating to our residents, the city (place), our economy and the overall

wellbeing of Norwich. This can be found on the council's website: [State of Norwich](#).

Reducing inequality target areas (RITAs)

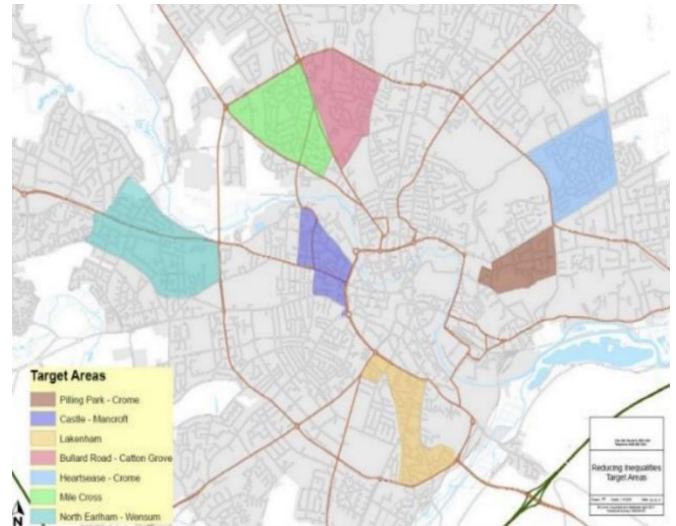
125. Norwich continues to face significant and entrenched inequality. The city's affluent areas sit alongside areas with deep-rooted social and economic issues. Some 40% of small [Lower Super Output Areas](#) (LSOAs) in Norwich are among the most deprived 20% of LSOAs in England.
126. A few years ago, the council reviewed existing data to evaluate the level of inequality across the 13 wards making up our local authority area. We initially identified seven areas across the city where levels of inequality were highest.
127. Since then, the council, in collaboration with local community groups and organisations specialising in support for marginalised people, came together to help volunteers already working in the reducing inequality target areas to tackle inequalities and issues facing the areas they are passionate about.
128. In October 2022, the Norfolk Office of Data and Analytics (NODA) reviewed the existing data to provide us with a more up to date picture of inequality across the city. The report can be found [here](#).
129. The first visual below shows a heat map of the latest Reducing inequality target areas(RITAs) analysis, by all [Middle Layer Super Outputs Areas \(MSOAs\)](#) conducted by NODA.



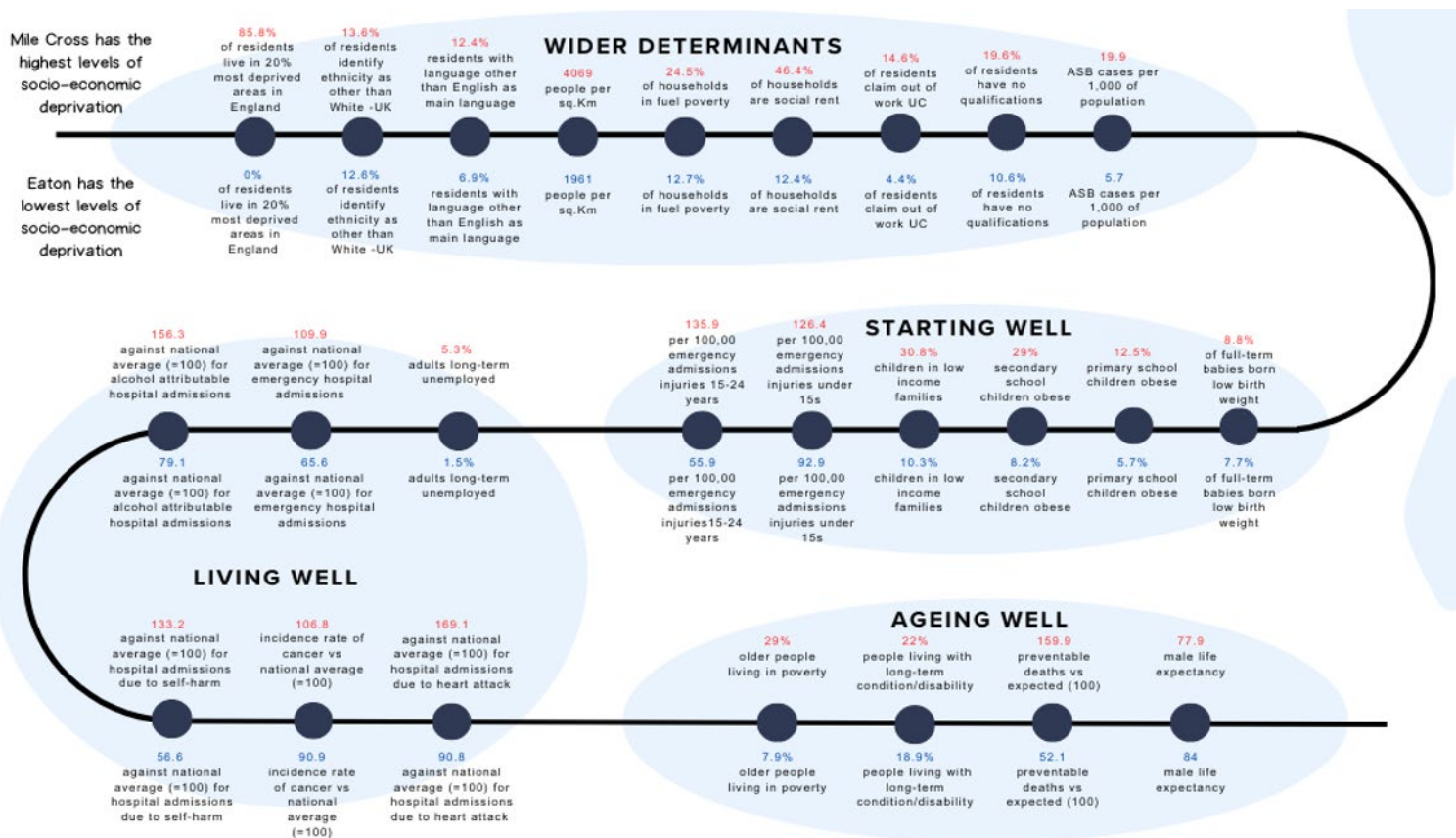
130. The visual to the right highlights the locations of the Reducing Inequality Target Areas within the city of Norwich as identified by NODA in 2015.

Target Areas:

- Pilling Park – Crome Ward
- Castle – Mancroft Ward
- Lakenham Ward
- Bullard Road – Catton Grove Ward
- Heartsease – Crome Ward
- Mile Cross Ward
- North Earham – Wensum Ward



131. The visual timeline below demonstrates how the levels of socio-economic deprivation at the ward level within Norwich impacts local residents' chances of living a healthy life. This graphic highlights the contrasting picture between our Mile Cross Ward, which has the highest levels of socioeconomic deprivation and our Eaton Ward, which has the lowest levels of socioeconomic deprivation within the Norwich local authority area.

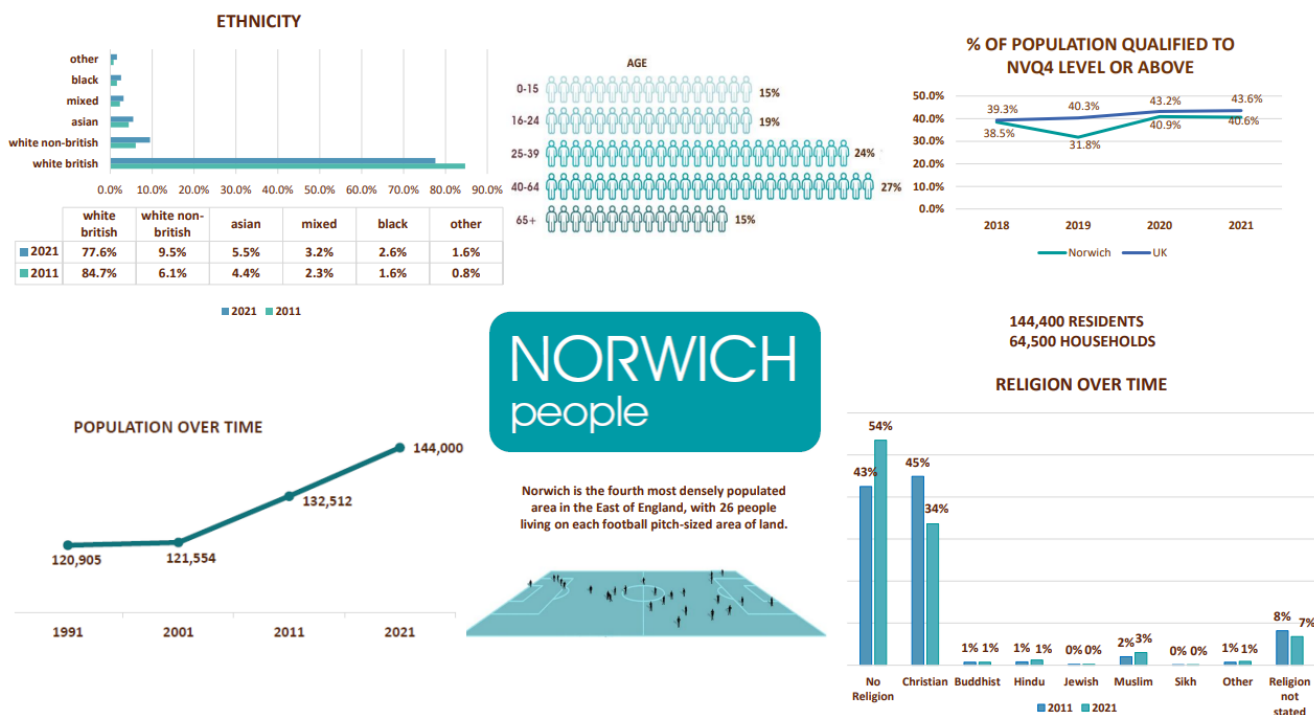


People

132. The 2021 Census places, Norwich in 150th place for total population out of 309 local authority areas in England, moving up eight places in a decade.

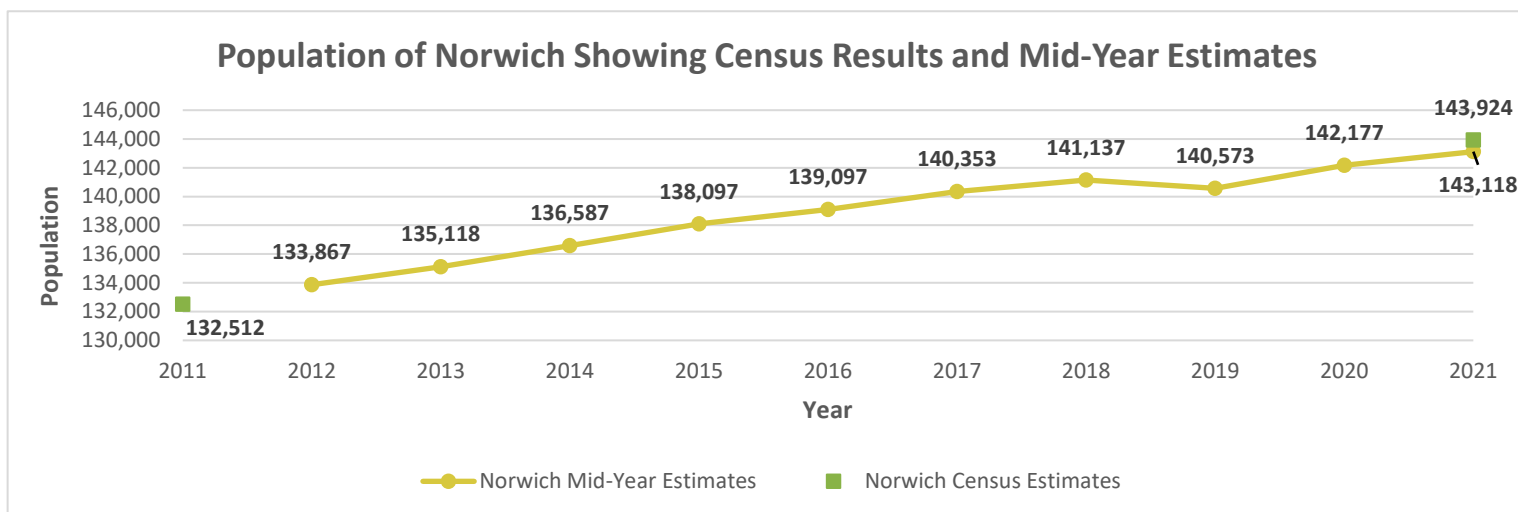
133. Norwich is one of the fastest growing cities in the UK and is growing younger, with an average age of just 34 years. According to the latest census data which

received a 97% response rate, 42.3% of residents in Norwich are aged 15-39 (11.4% above the national average). Since last year's report, the release of the latest mid-year population estimate for Norwich has been postponed and as such we have been unable to update this section with the latest estimates for population. Looking back to last year's data we can see there has been a slight increase (1.8%) in the number of people aged between 40-64 years within Norwich. The city is becoming more diverse with significant population growth over the last 10 years.



Population

134. On Census Day, 21 March 2021, the size of the usual resident population in Norwich was 143,924 people: this is an increase of 9% (11,412) since 2011, when it was 132,512 people. Norwich is now ranked 15 (out of 39 Districts in the East of England region) in terms of total population.

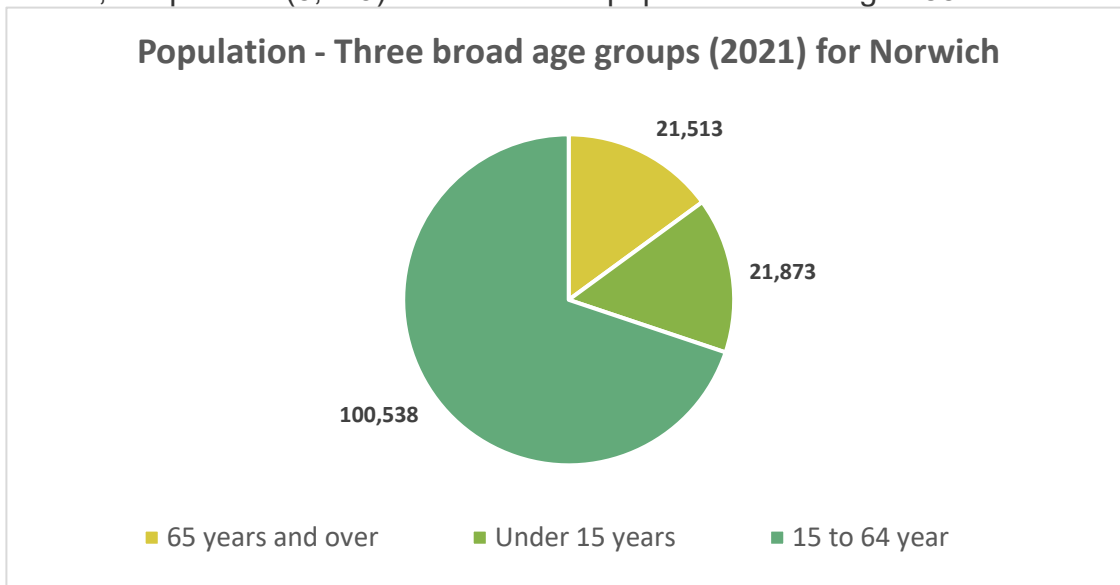


135. Norwich's population increase, at 9%, compares to an 8% increase for the East of England and a 7% increase for England.

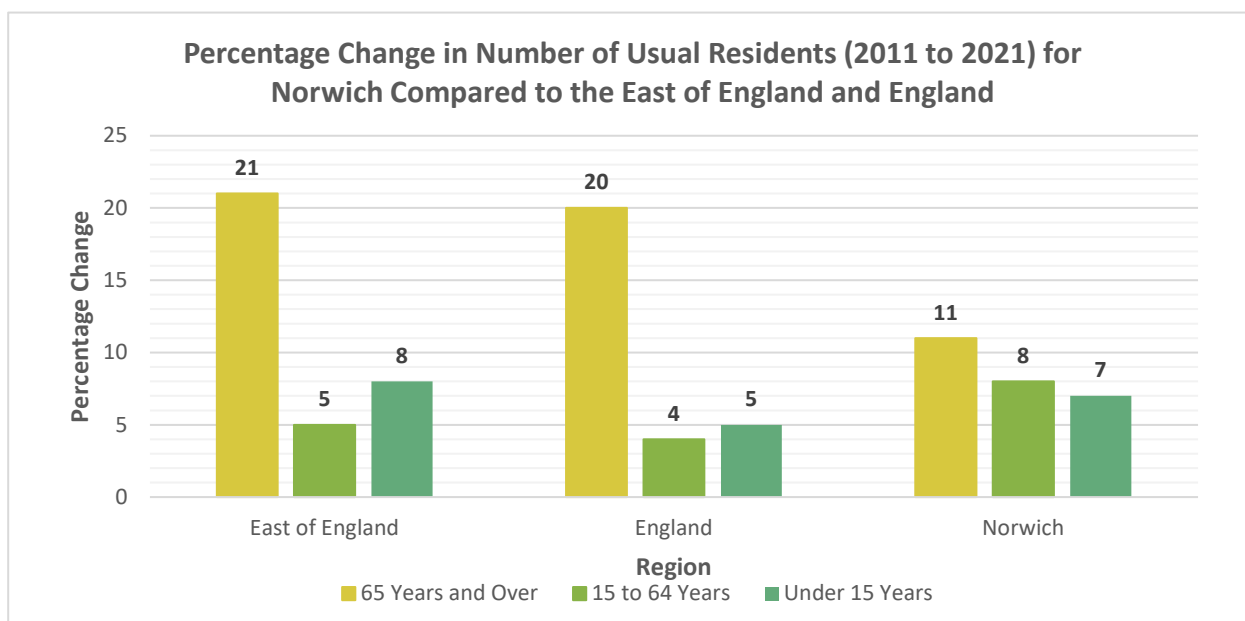
136. As of 2021, Norwich is ranked 4th out of the 45 local authority areas in the East of England for population density, with around 36.88 persons per hectare of land. The population density for the East of England is 3.31 persons per hectare and for England it is 4.34 persons per hectare. The East of England experienced the largest growth in population between the 2011 and 2021 census, when compared to all other regions within England and Wales.

Population by age

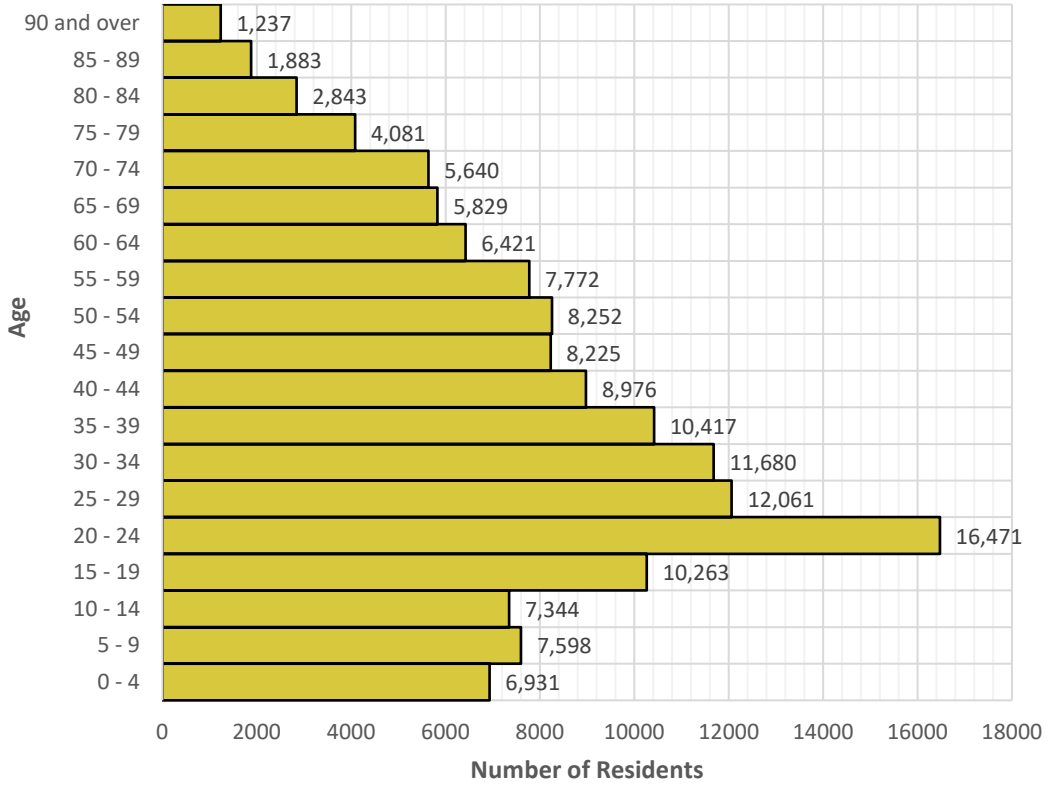
137. On Census Day, the size of the usual resident population in Norwich was 143,922 people, of which: 15.2% (21,873) were children aged under 15, 69.9% (100,538) were adults aged 15 to 64 and 14.9% (21,513) were aged 65 and over; 2.2 percent (3,119) of the resident population were aged 85 and over.



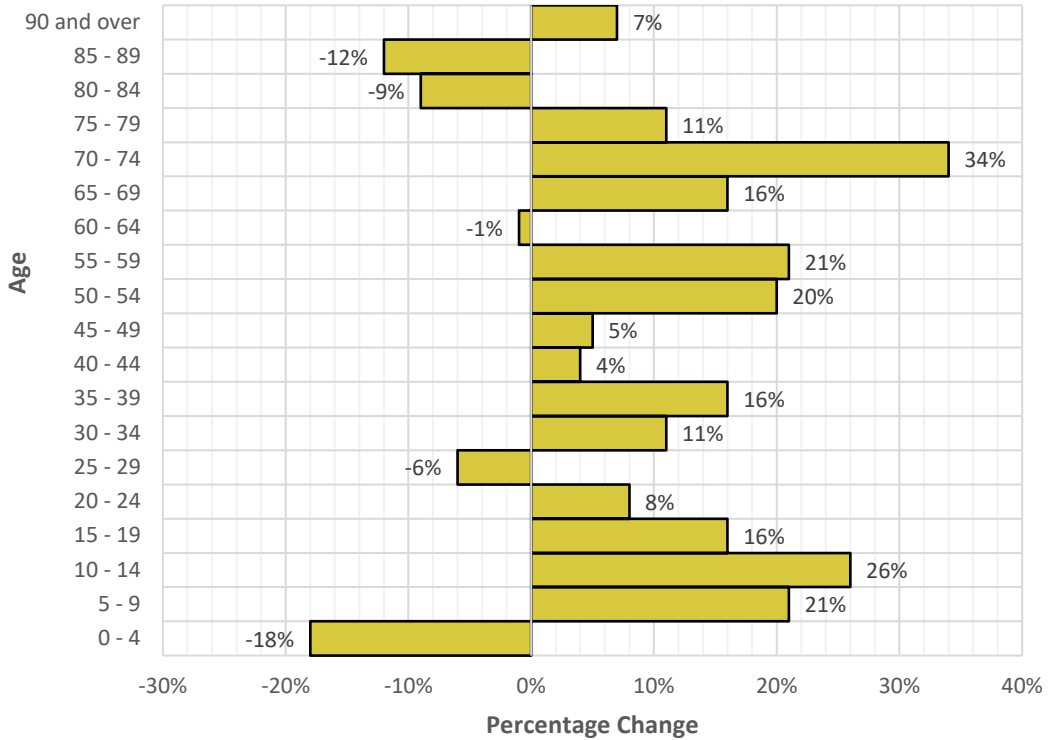
138. The largest age group in Norwich was those aged 20 - 24 (16,471 people or 11.44%). In the East of England, the largest age group was those aged 50 - 54 (6.99%) and in the England the largest age group was those aged 30 - 34 (7%).



Breakdown of Norwich Residents by 5 Year Age Gaps

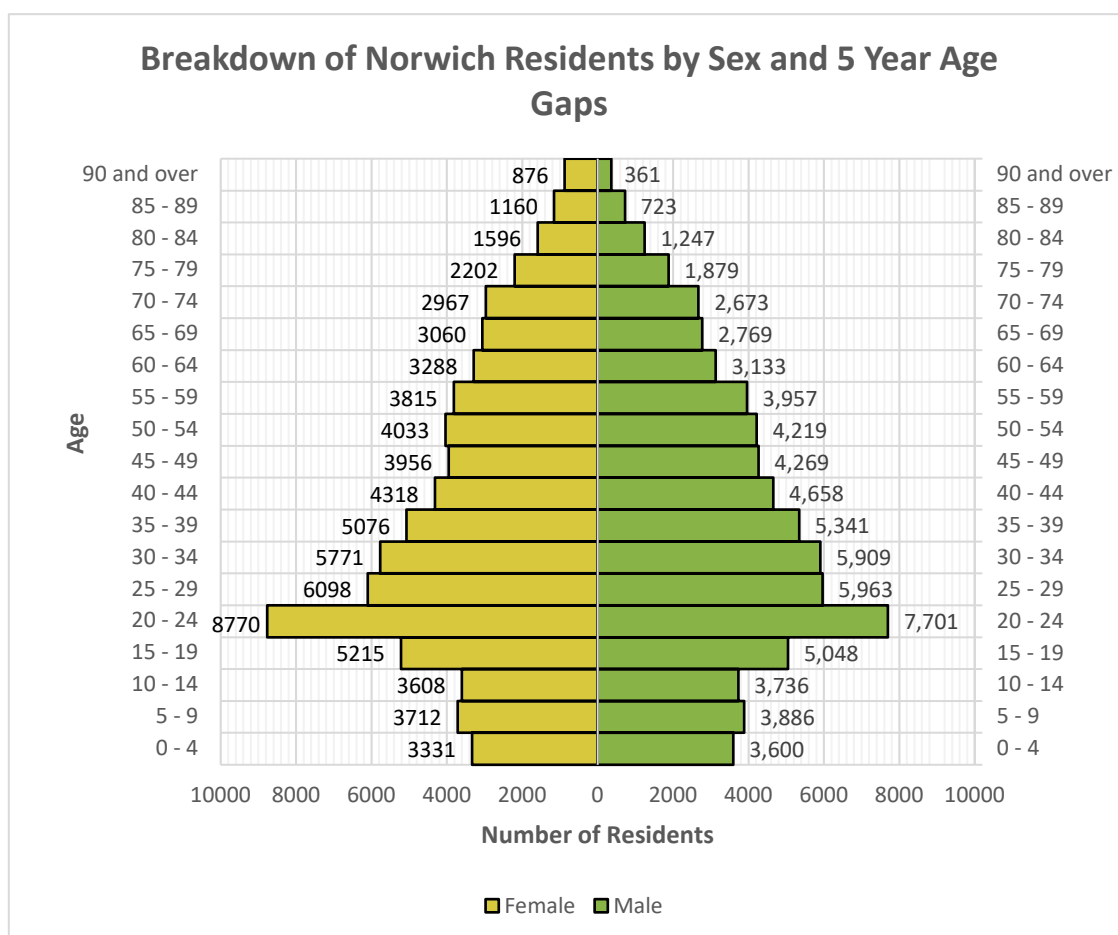


Percentage Change of Norwich Residents by Age Band between 2011 and 2021

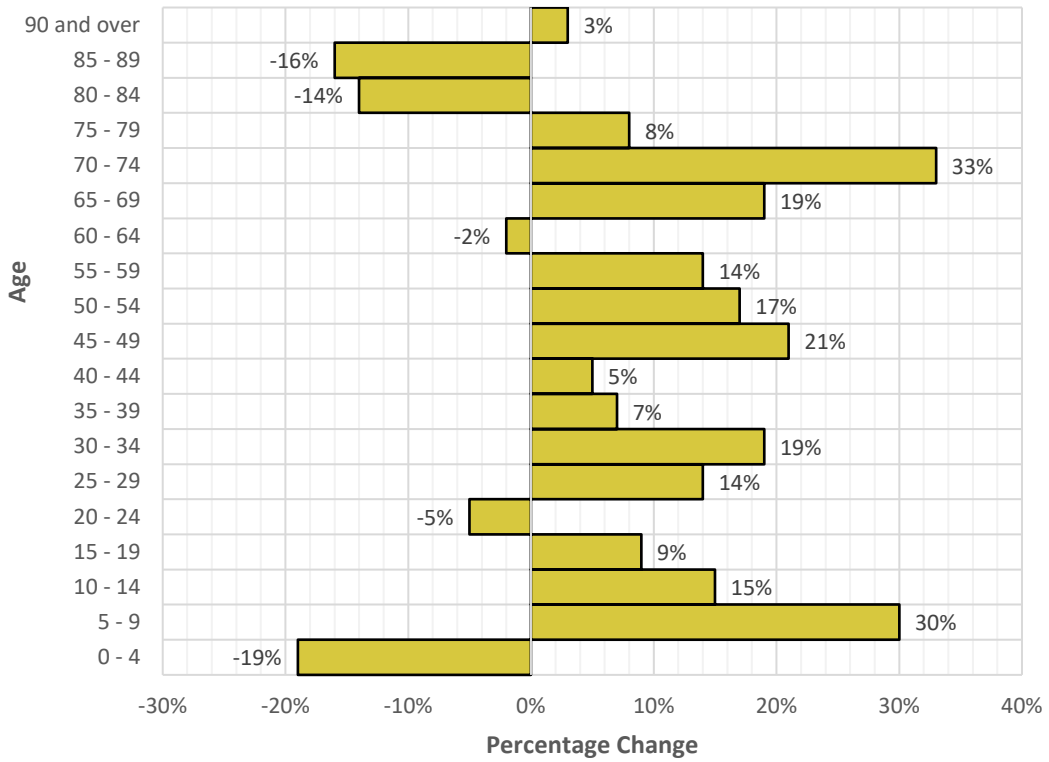


Population by sex and age

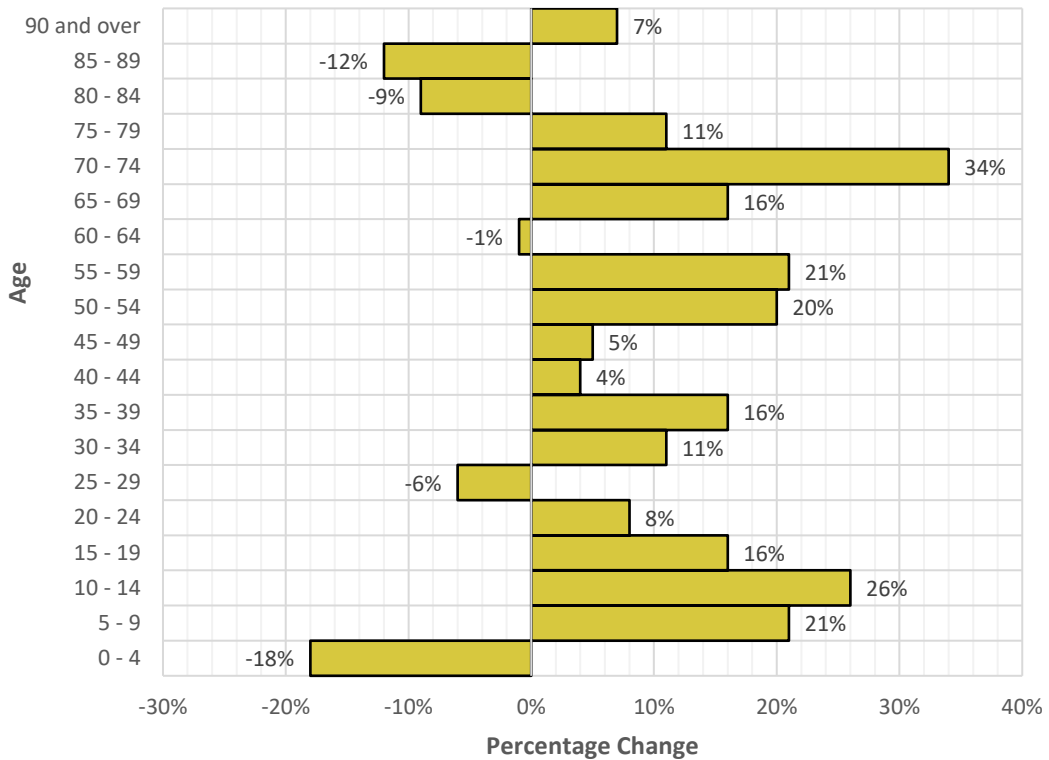
139. On Census day in March 2021, of the 143,924 people in Norwich, 72,852 were women (50.6% of the population) and 71,072 men (49.4%). In 2011, 67,245 were women (50.7% of the population) and 65,267 men (49.3%). In the East of England, 51.0% of the population were women and 49.0% were men. In England, 51.0% of the population were women and 49.0% were men.
140. The female population of Norwich has increased by 8% and the male population has increased by 9% from 2011. In the East of England the female population has increased by 9% and the male population has increased by 8% from 2011.
141. The average life expectancy for females born in Norwich is 82.8 years. This is 1.1 years lower than the Norfolk average and 0.3 years lower than the national average. The average life expectancy for males born in Norwich is 78.0 years. This is 2.0 years lower than the Norfolk average and 1.3 years lower than the national average.
142. The chart below shows the population by sex in five-year age bands for Norwich, with the female population living longer than the male population.



Percentage Change of Female, Norwich Residents by Age Band between 2011 and 2021



Percentage Change of Male, Norwich Residents by Age Band between 2011 and 2021

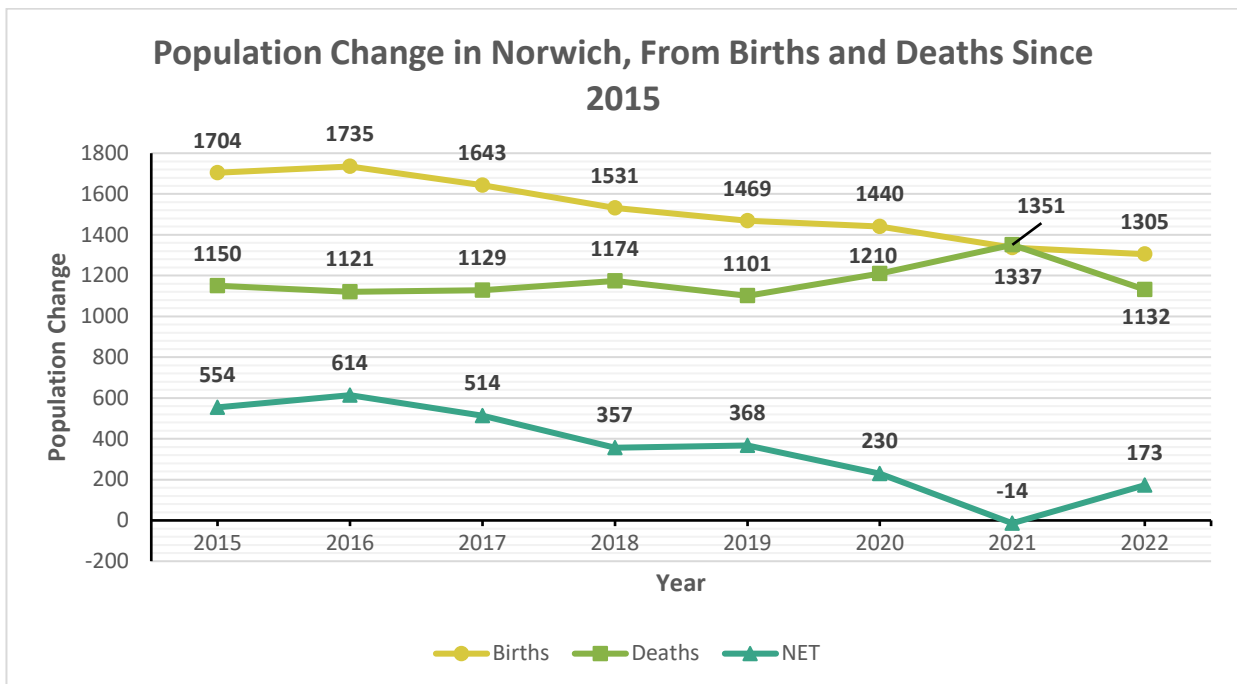


Population changes

143. The total population change in Norwich in 2021 and 2022 has not yet been released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The last available information is for the year to 2020, when there was a net change of 1,604 people. This change was comprised of:

- -218 – natural change (births-deaths)
- -106 – net internal migration (people into/out of the area from within the UK)
- 1,510 – net international migration (people immigrating/emigrating into/out of the UK)
- -18 of all other migration factors.

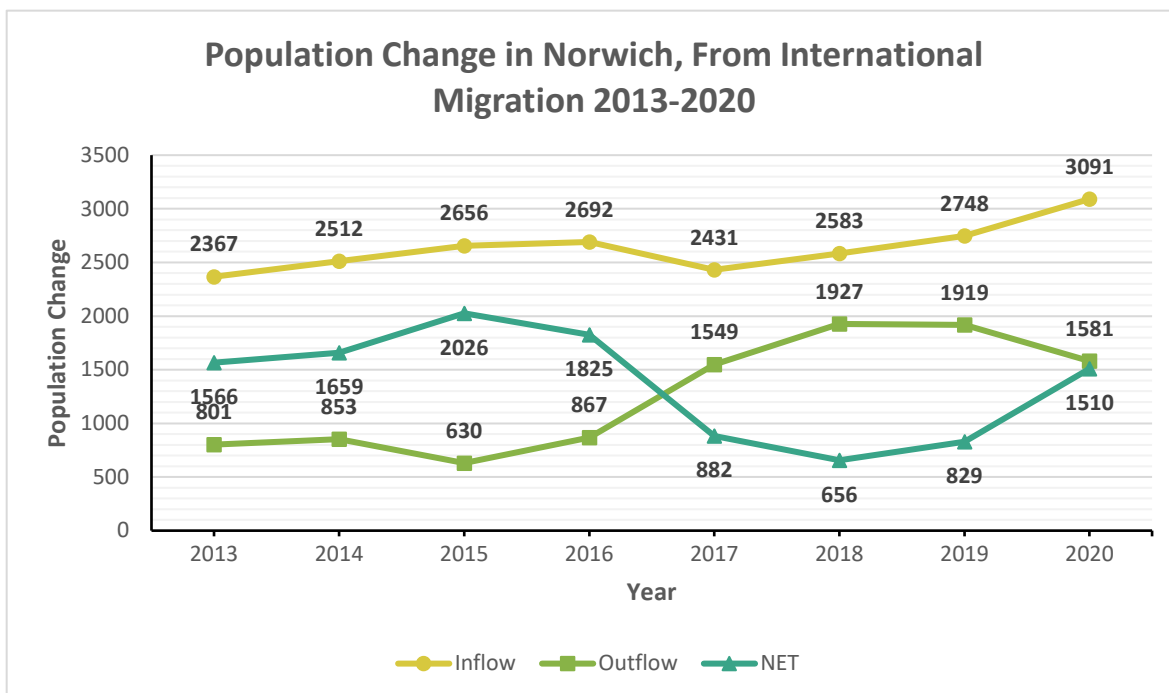
144. However, ONS has released information for both 2021 and 2020 on natural change. We see a continuing trend of declining birth rate, with the number of births falling to 1337 in 2021 and 1305 in 2022. A 7.2% decrease in 2020-21 and a 2.4% decrease in 2021-22. Deaths have held relatively steady in Norwich over the last 8 years. However, there was a slight peak in 2020 (1210) and a particular peak recorded in 2021(1351) likely due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused natural change to fall briefly into the negatives in 2021. In 2022, deaths returned to more 'normal' levels of 1132.



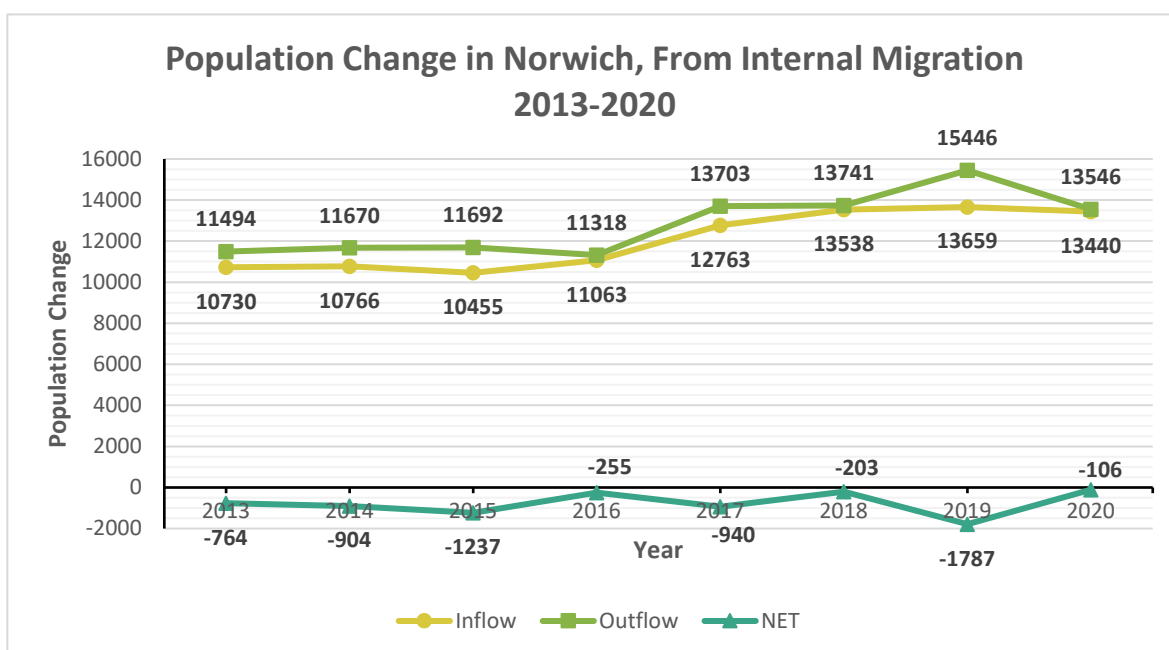
145. Population change include changes in population due to internal and international civilian migration and changes in the number of armed forces (both non-UK and UK) and their dependants resident in the UK. In calculating the international migration component of the population estimates, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) uses the United Nations recommended definition of an international long-term migrant (someone who changes their country of residence for at least 12 months). The graph on the next page does not include short-term migrants and visitors.

146. There has been no new data released for 2021 or 2022 on net International Migration. Looking at the historical data in the graph below, we have seen a general trend of increasing immigration, particularly since 2017. Likewise,

international emigration also increased drastically from 2017, likely as a result of the Brexit referendum. This level of international emigration has decreased slightly from 2019 to 2020, resulting in an increase of net International Migration with values returning to around 2016 levels.

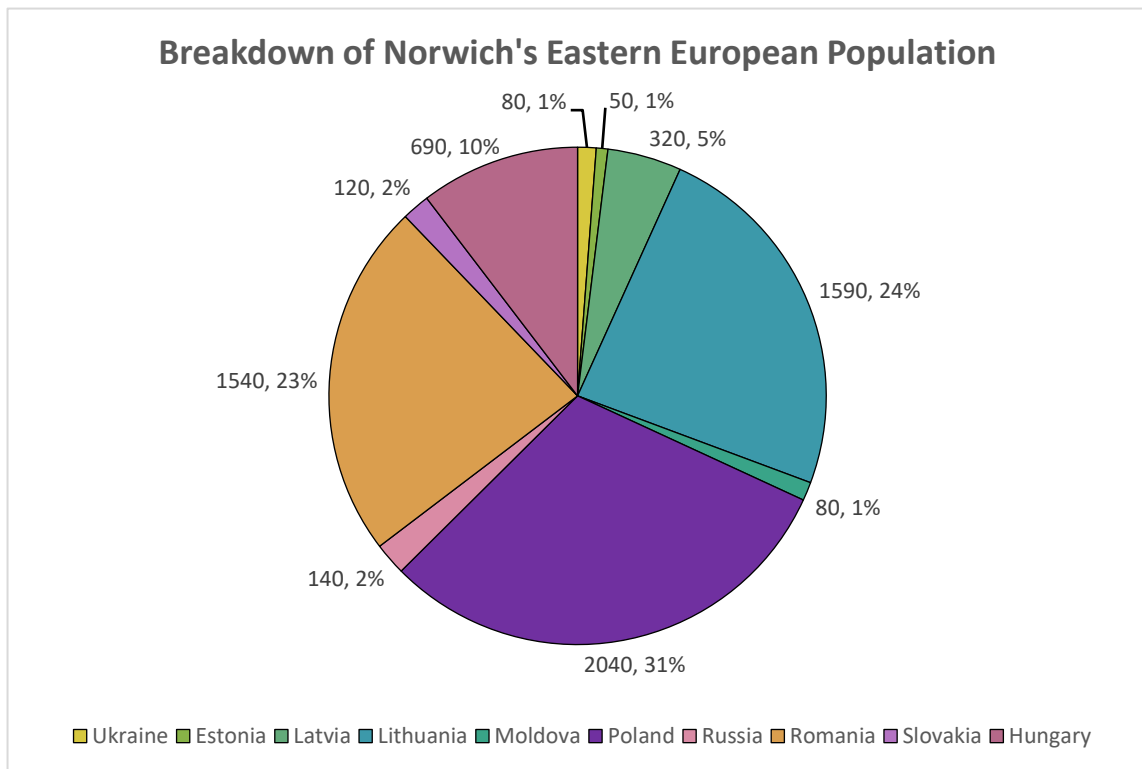


147. Like International migration, the Office for National Statistics is yet to release more recent data on Internal migration, with the latest data relating to 2020. Looking at historical trends, net internal migration has remained slightly negative generally. It is likely that in 2021 and 2022 this would only have become more negative, as large numbers of people elected to move away from cities and into the countryside, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Residents born in Ukraine, Russia, and Other Eastern European Countries

148. The preliminary Census 2021 counts of country of birth by local authority for Ukraine and neighbouring or relevant countries have been published to help local and national emergency response planning to the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine. There is no data currently available for county councils.
149. It is important to note that the data contained are the rounded counts of Census 2021 responses. They are not final census estimates and have not yet been through all the usual census processing.
150. To help contextualise the numbers, the Local Government Association has rated the figures and calculated percentages using the most recently available authority population data. The population data is from ONS's most recent mid-year estimates, rather than data from Census 2021.
151. The chart below shows the count and percentage of residents born in Ukraine, Russia and other Eastern European Countries who were resident in Norwich at the time of the Census 2021.

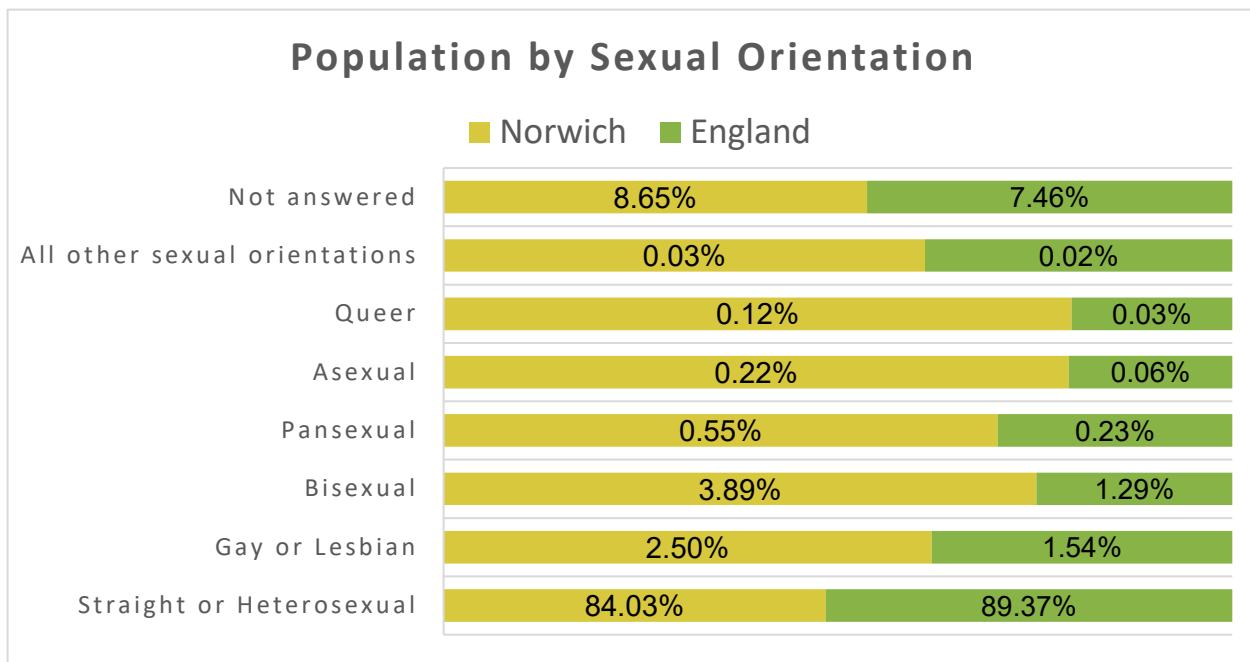


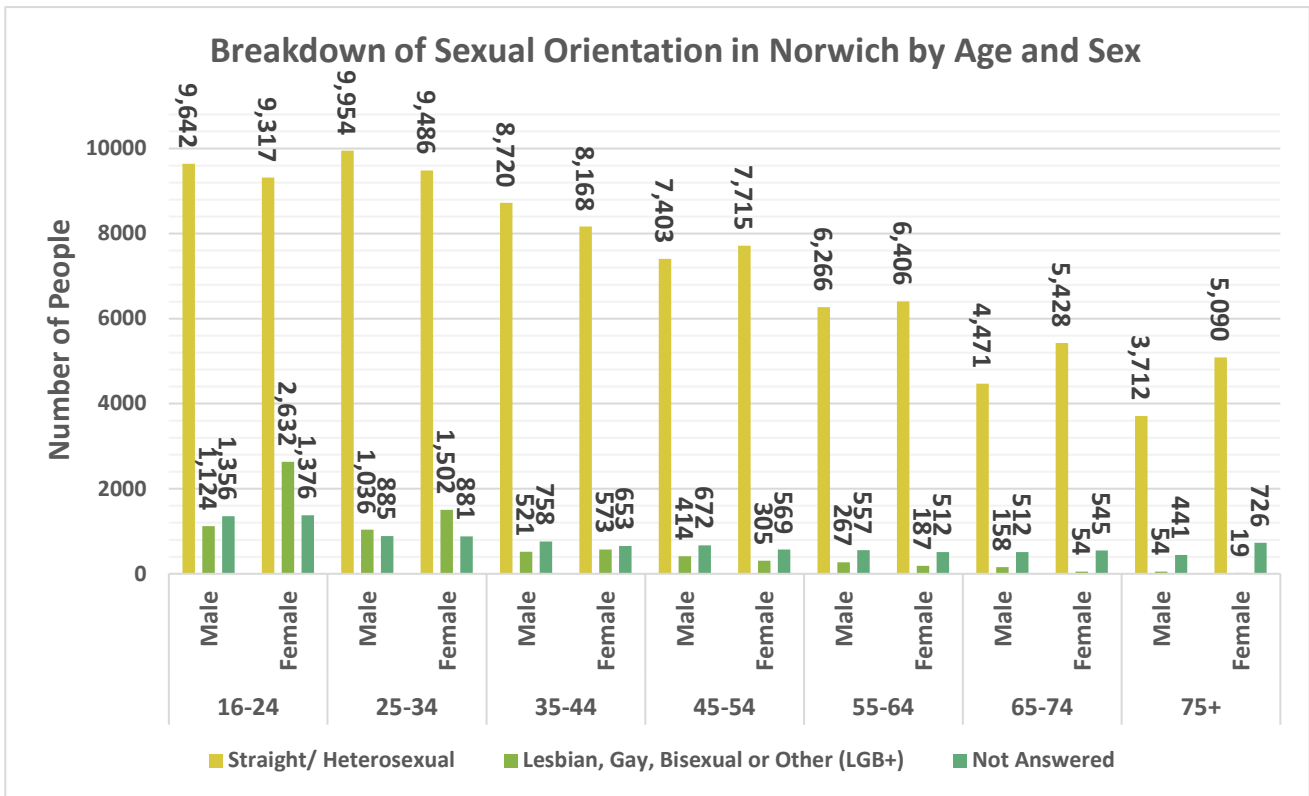
152. During March 2022, the UK Government introduced 2 new visa routes to allow persons affected by the war in Ukraine to come to the UK. These being the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme.
153. The Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme allows Ukrainian nationals and their family members to come to the UK if they have a named sponsor who can provide accommodation.

154. The number of visas issued to come to or stay and the number of arrivals in Norwich under the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme are detailed below, (data correct as of 10 October 2023):
- The total number of Visas issued to Ukrainians with sponsors in Norwich is 255 (178 per 100,000)
 - The total number of arrivals of Ukrainians with sponsors in Norwich is 224 (170 per 100,000)
 - In Norwich 88 per cent of those with sponsored visas have arrived.

Sexual orientation

155. The question on sexual orientation was new for Census 2021, providing better quality information on the LGB+ population (“lesbian or gay”, “bisexual” or “other sexual orientation”) for monitoring and supporting anti-discrimination duties under the Equality Act 2010.
156. The question was voluntary and was only asked of people aged 16 years and over. People were asked “Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?”. The different sexual orientations that people could choose from included:
- Straight or heterosexual
 - Gay or lesbian
 - Bisexual
 - Other sexual orientation
157. If they selected “Other sexual orientation”, they were asked to write in the sexual orientation with which they identified.
158. The graphs and table below show how people in Norwich answered, compared with the rest of England.





159. More detailed data on sexual orientation from the Census 2021 was published in April this year. The table below illustrates the breakdown of sexual orientation within Norwich by age and sex of those individuals who are aged 16 or over.

Category	Norwich		England	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Straight or Heterosexual	101,477	84.03%	41,114,478	89.37%
Gay or Lesbian	3,025	2.50%	709,704	1.54%
Bisexual	4,700	3.89%	591,690	1.29%
Pansexual	669	0.55%	107,852	0.23%
Asexual	267	0.22%	26,614	0.06%
Queer	143	0.12%	13,928	0.03%
All other sexual orientations	41	0.03%	9,963	0.02%
Not answered	10,443	8.65%	3,432,728	7.46%
Total	120,765		46,006,957	

Financial hardship and economic vulnerability

160. These indicators are designed to provide an indication of how households and their finances have been impacted or are likely to change in the near future. Moreover, these indicators are presented alongside data on pre-existing levels of financial vulnerability, to identify how and where the scale of financial hardship is increasing and thus where relevant support services such as hardship grants and money / debt advice are required or may need scaling up.

Measures of local deprivation

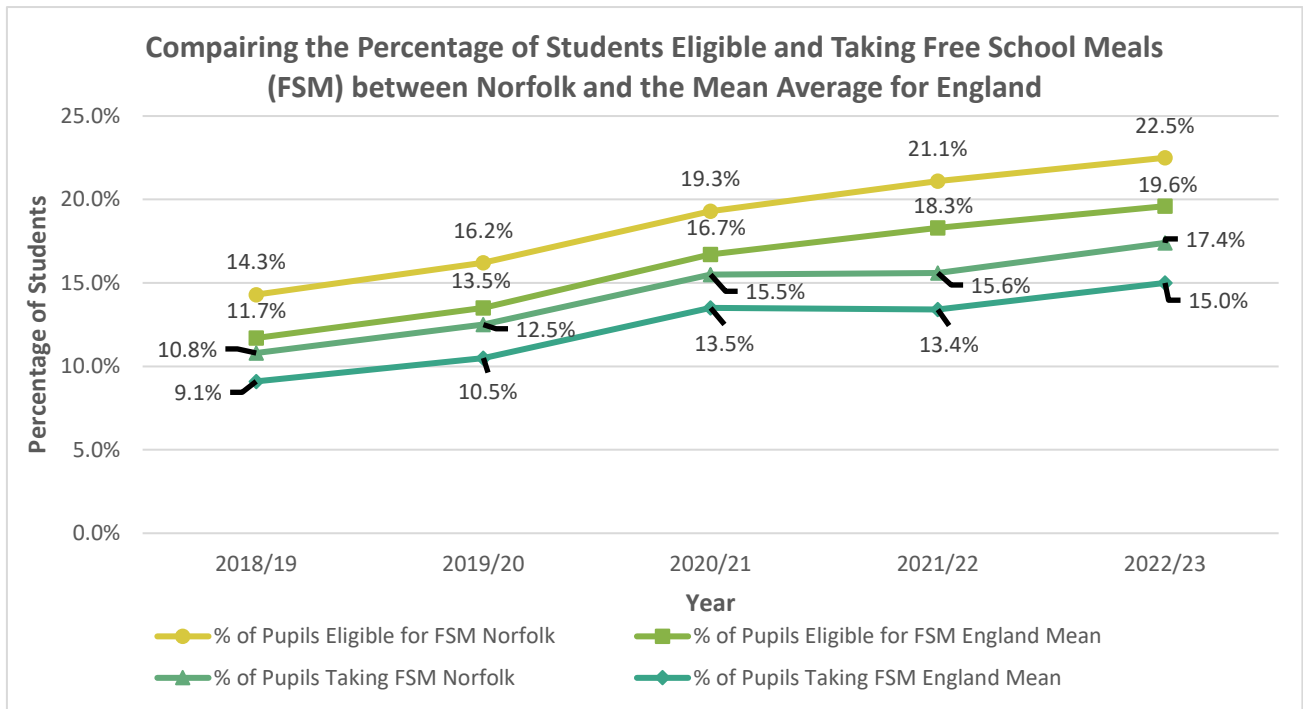
161. The Indices of Deprivation combine a range of economic, social, and housing indicators to provide a measure of relative deprivation, i.e., they measure the

position of areas against each other within different domains. This data therefore provides some useful baseline contextual information for localities in terms of existing deprivation levels, which will influence and inform the scale of impacts due to the rising cost of living. The higher the ranking, the higher the level of deprivation, i.e., 1 is measured as the most deprived area in the Indices of Deprivation. Following the restructuring of local government in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset, the total number of local authorities which make up the IMD ranking system was reduced. As a result, Norwich's position as measured by the IMD has now changed to the following:

- a. Norwich is ranked **61** out of 317 authorities for deprivation – based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) average rank. This measure is based on population weighted ranks of all neighbourhoods within an area, so an area that is more uniformly deprived will tend to rank higher on this measure.
- b. It is a weighted average of the seven IMD domains: Income Deprivation, Employment Deprivation, Health Deprivation and Disability, Education Skills and Training Deprivation, Barriers to Housing and Services, Living Environment Deprivation, and Crime.
- c. Norwich is ranked **52** out of 317 authorities for deprivation – based on the IMD average score. This measure is based on population weighted scores of all neighbourhoods within an area.
- d. 15.66% of Norwich neighbourhoods (Lower Super Output Areas) are in the 10% most deprived nationally. The domain measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income.
- e. Specifically, with regards to income deprivation, Norwich is ranked **58** out of 317 authorities – based on the IMD average rank. (County level data isn't available for this metric).

Free school meals

162. Free school meal eligibility continues to increase. For the 2022-2023 academic year, approximately 2.15 million pupils were eligible for free school meals nationally, 23.8% of all pupils. This is an increase of nearly 135,000 pupils since the beginning of the 2021-2022 academic year, when 1.9 million (22.5%) of pupils were eligible for free school meals.
163. The table below illustrates the latest available data on free school meal eligibility and take up within Norfolk compared to the mean average for England over the last 5 years.



164. The percentage of pupils with free school meals had been increasing prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The increase during the first period of the pandemic, from 17.3% in January 2020 to 20.8% in January 2021, was higher than each of these previous year-on-year increases. The most recent increase in free school meal eligibility of 1.3% in January 2023, represents a return to the year-on-year increases seen prior to the pandemic.

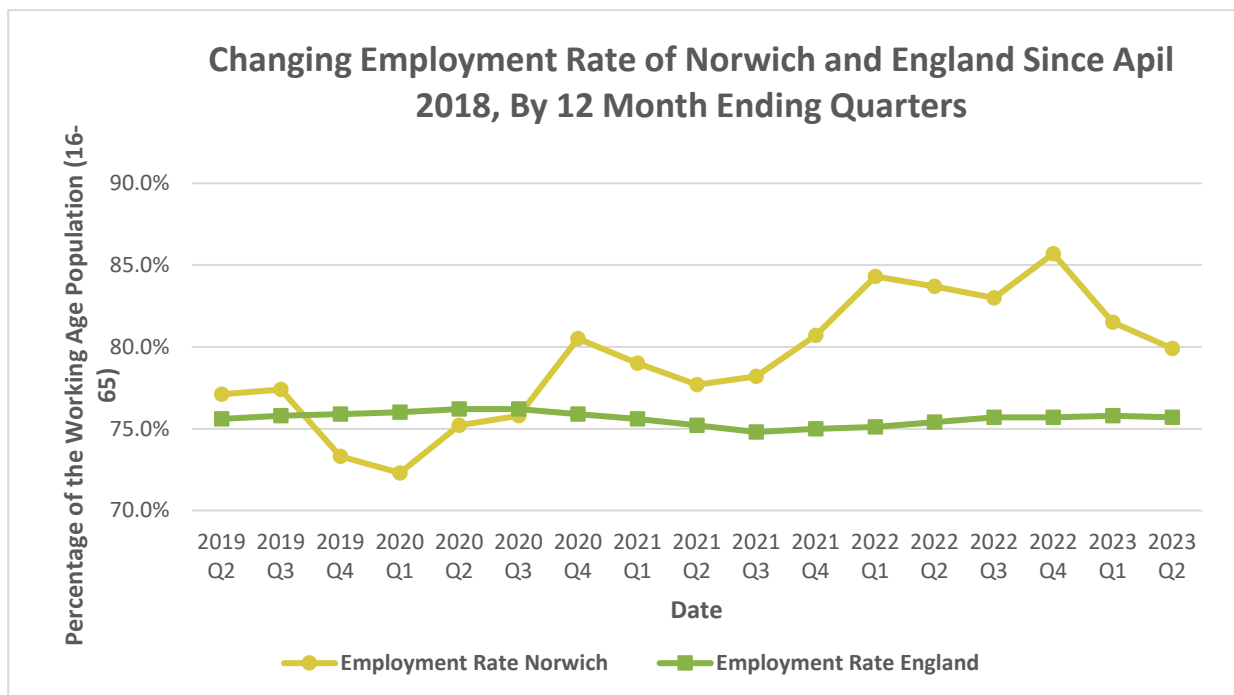
165. The table below shows the change in the percentage of students eligible for free school meals.

Year	No. of Pupils Eligible for FSM		No. of Pupils Taking FSM		% of Pupils Eligible for FSM		% of Pupils Taking FSM	
	Norfolk	England Mean	Norfolk	England Mean	Norfolk	England Mean	Norfolk	England Mean
2018/19	16,457	14,687	12,483	11,398	14.3%	11.7%	10.8%	9.1%
2019/20	18,843	17,082	14,603	13,303	16.2%	13.5%	12.5%	10.5%
2020/21	22,719	21,170	18,199	17,177	19.3%	16.7%	15.5%	13.5%
2021/22	24,950	23,429	19,465	17,227	21.1%	18.3%	15.6%	13.4%
2022/23	26,870	25,387	20,766	19,494	22.5%	19.6%	17.4%	15.0%

Overall employment rate

166. Employment measures the number of people aged 16 years and over in paid work and those who had a job that they were temporarily away from. The employment rate is the proportion of people aged between 16 and 64 years who are in employment.

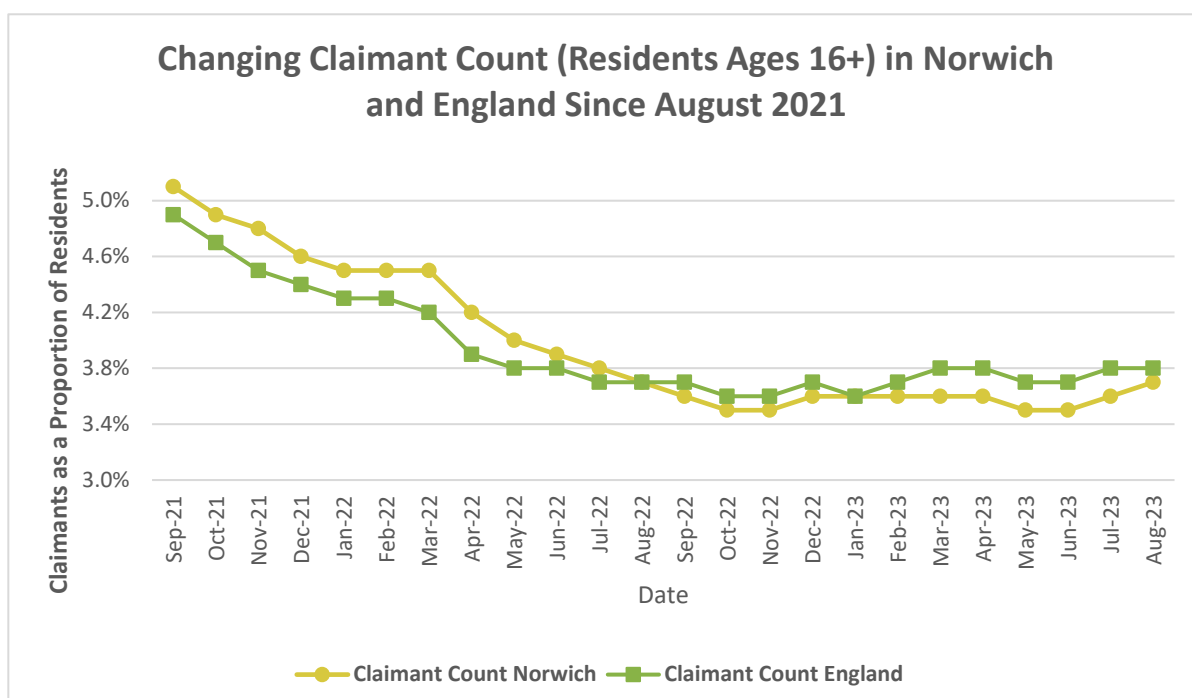
167. The chart below shows that Norwich has an employment rate of 79.9%. This has decreased from 83.7% in the previous period. This is above the All-English single tier and county councils' figure of 75.4% and above the England figure of 75.7%.



Claimant Count

168. Claimant Count is an administrative measure of the number of people claiming benefit principally for the reason of being unemployed, using individual records from the benefit system. It therefore provides a useful indication of how unemployment is changing at a local level.

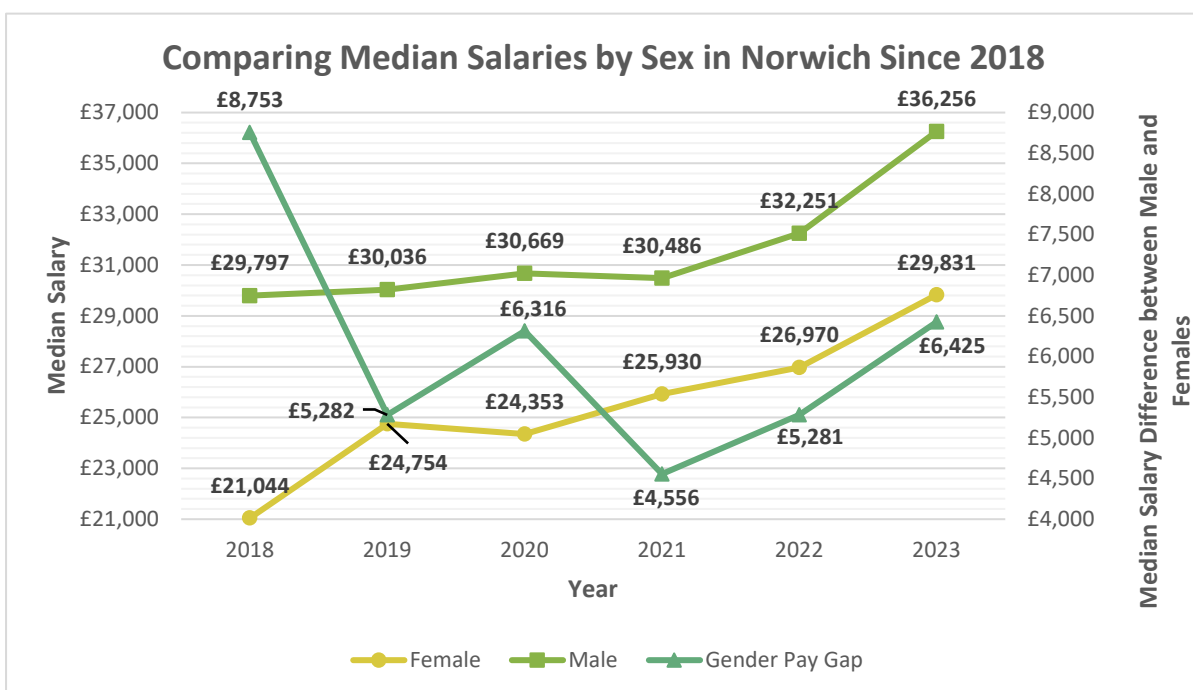
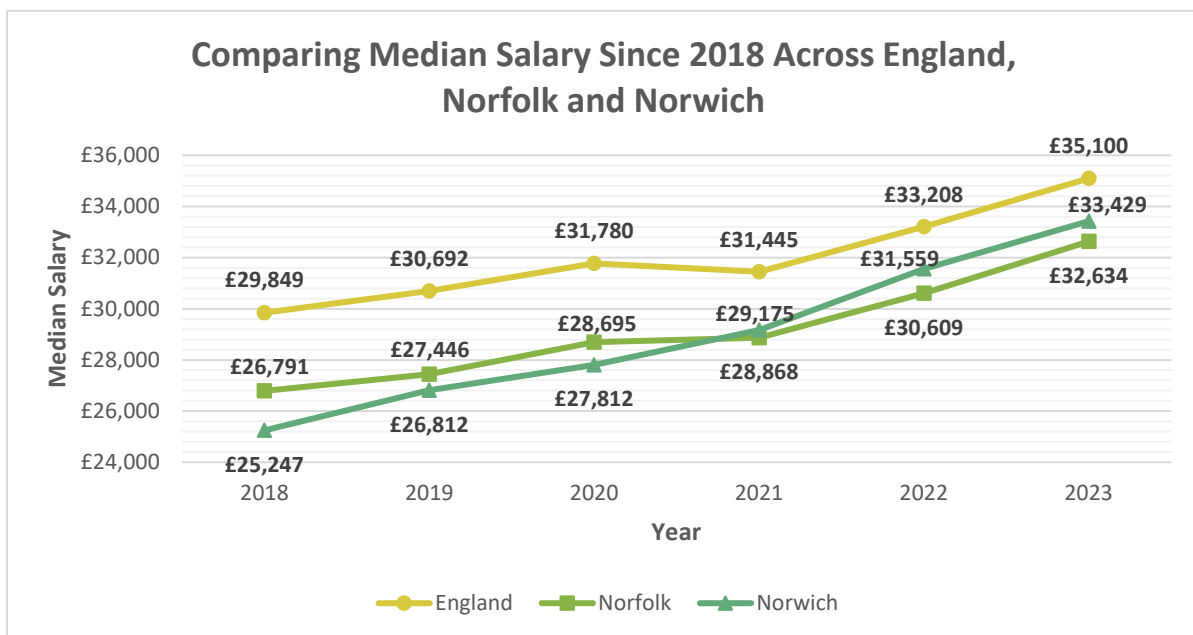
169. The chart below shows the claimant count rate in Norwich in August 2023 was 3.7%, which was the same rate as was recorded in August 2022. The All-English single tier and county councils' rate was 3.8% for the same month and 3.7% last year.



Median Gross Annual Pay of Employees (by Residence)

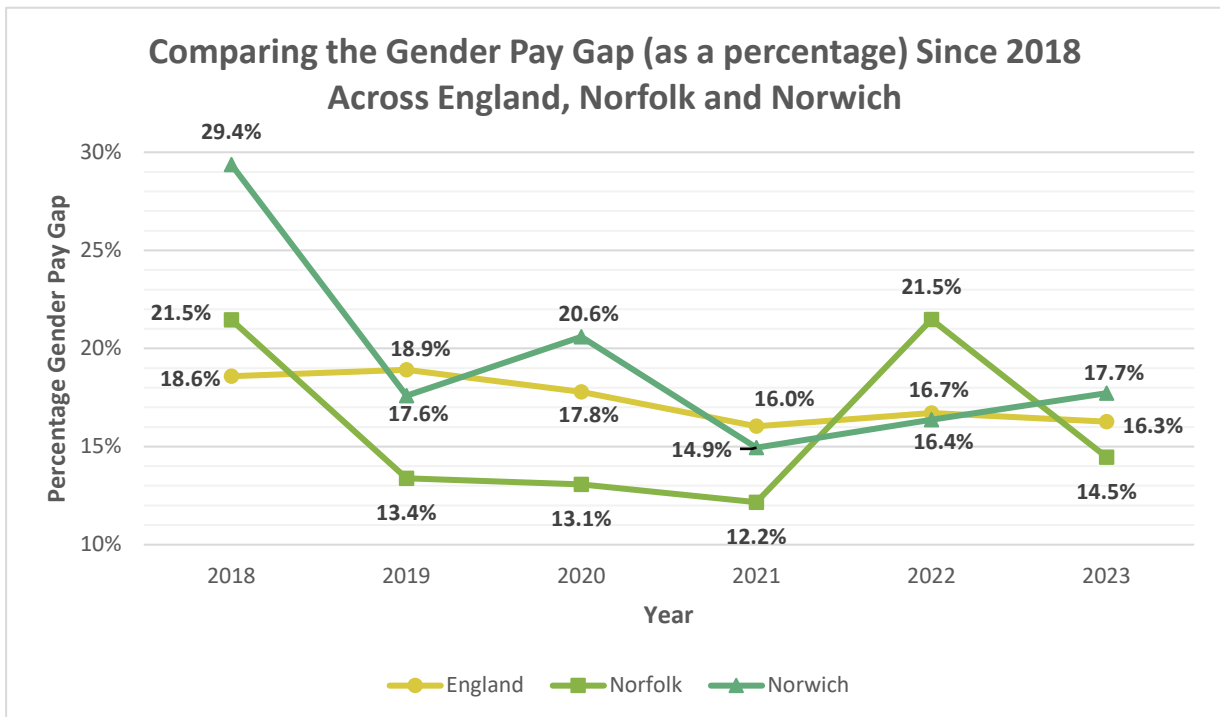
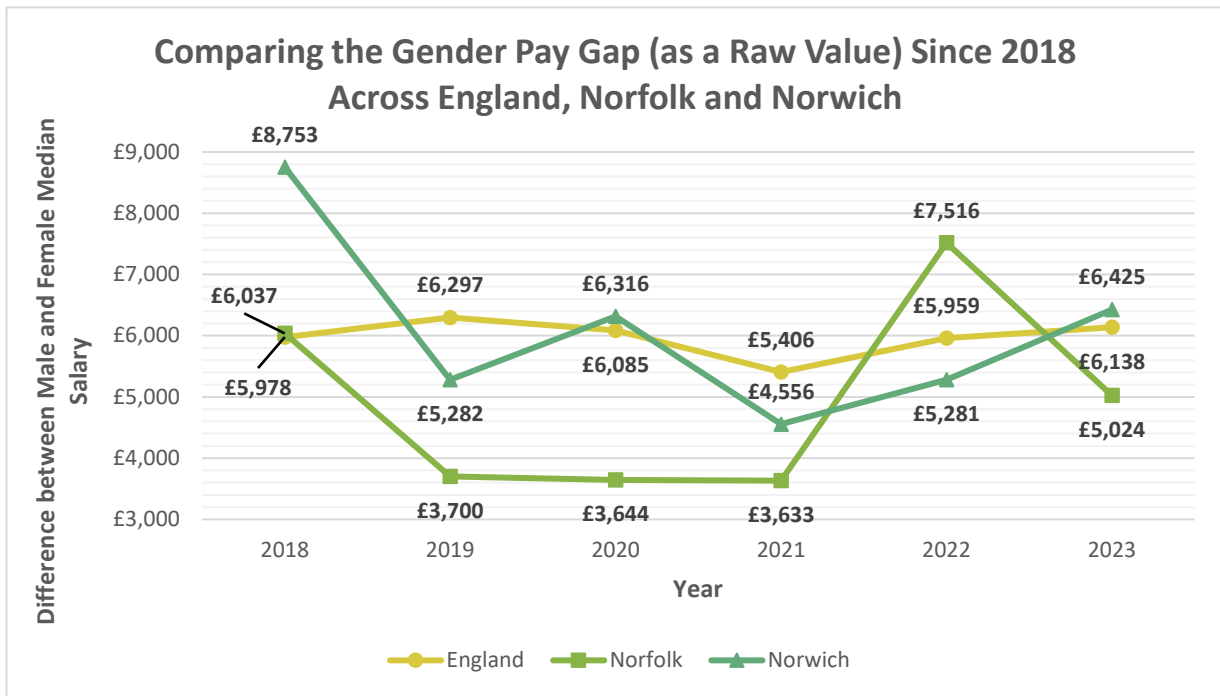
170. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) is conducted in April each year to obtain information about the levels, distribution and make-up of earnings and hours worked for employees. This data set provides information about earnings of employees who are living in an area, who are on adult rates and whose pay for the survey's pay-period was not affected by absence. This data therefore provides some useful context in terms of potential economic and financial resilience.

171. The chart below compares the median salaries in England, Norfolk and Norwich. We can see that in Norwich, the median salary was £33,429 per year, representing a 5.9% increase, which is positive, but still lower than inflation. The median yearly salary in Norwich was higher than the Norfolk median of £32,634, but lower than the median value for England of £35,100.



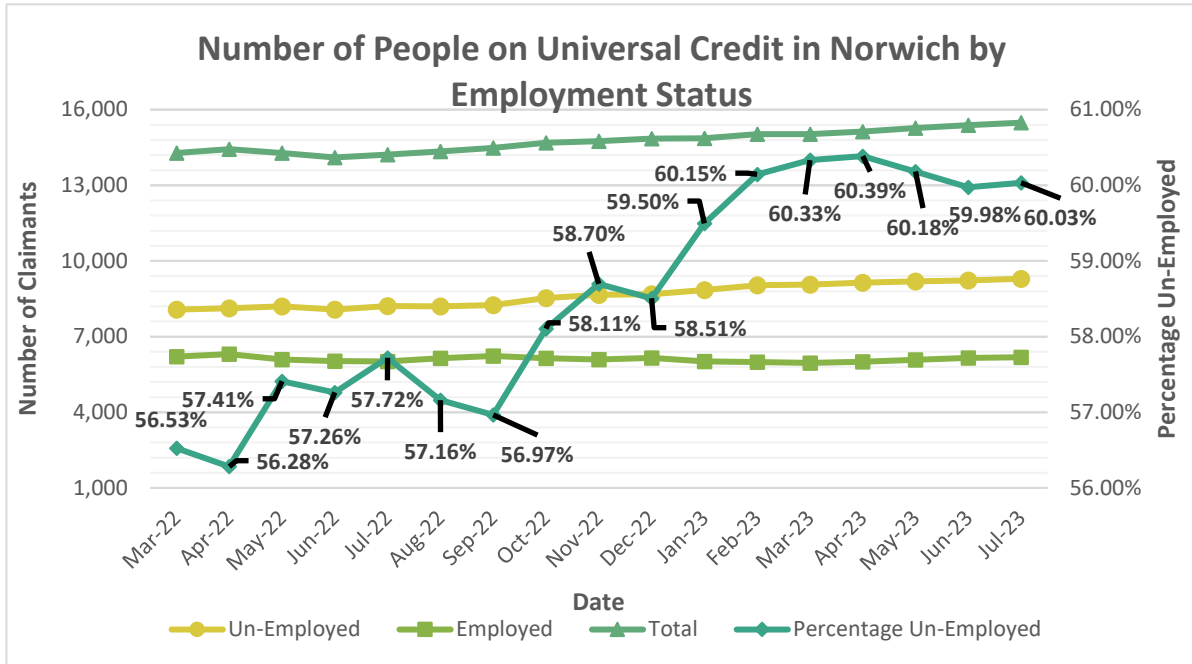
172. Below are two graphs analysing the gender pay gap, looking at the change in male and female salaries in Norwich since 2018. The graphs calculate the

gender pay gap as a raw value and percentage difference in salary, which is calculated as a percentage of the male median salary.



Universal Credit

173. This data covers the period of March 2022 – July 2023 and highlights the total number of people claiming Universal Credit, including the numbers of those in and out of employment. The number of claimants in/out of employment are released one month later than the overall total.



174. 15,483 people were claiming Universal Credit in Norwich in July 2023. For the latest month available (July 2023), 9,295 of these claimants were not in employment, whilst 6,187 were in employment. The total number of claims has increased by 8.8% compared to July 2022.

Cost of Living Vulnerability Index

175. The [Cost-of-Living Vulnerability Index](#) is the total of multiple poverty-based vulnerability and work-based vulnerability indicator rankings for each local authority. This index has been created by the Centre for Progressive Policy to measure the cost of living crisis (not available for County Councils). The index is based on six separate rankings for local authorities, which include, fuel poverty, food insecurity, child poverty, claimant count, economic inactivity, and low pay.

176. The higher the score will indicate an area's relative risk of more people being pulled into poverty, and the relative risk of those who were already struggling being pushed into destitution.

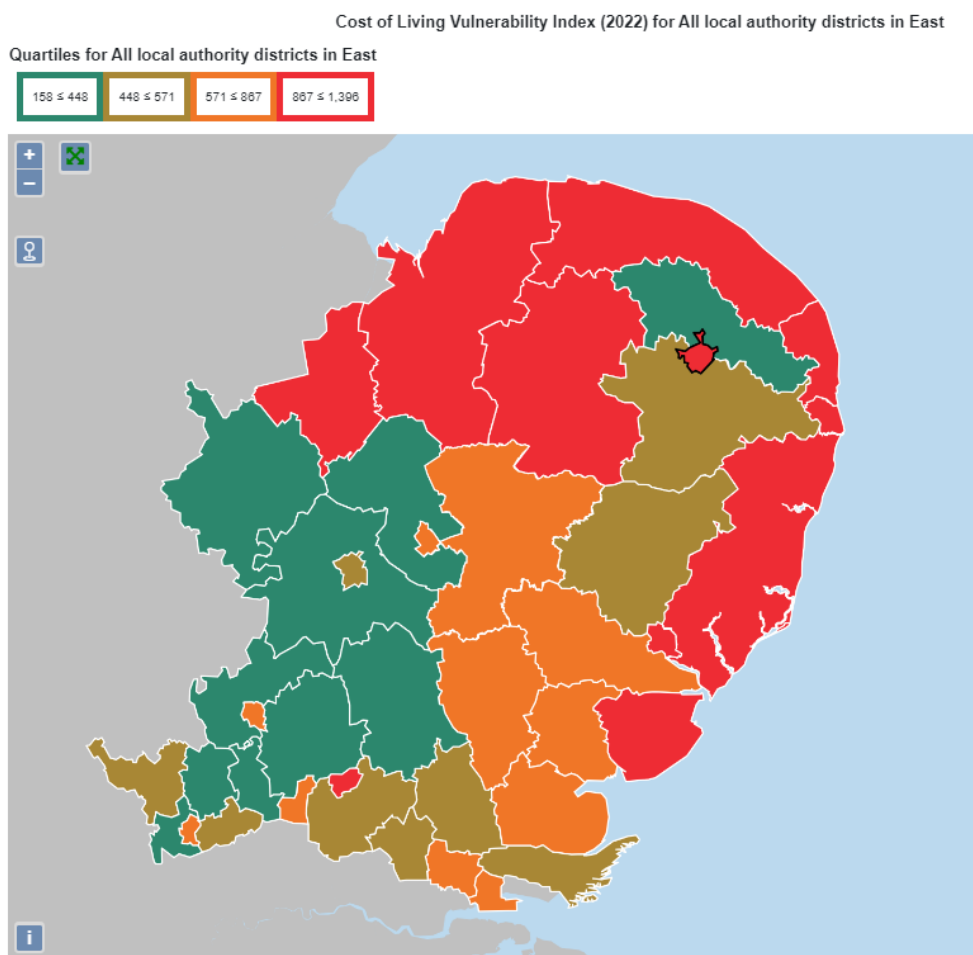
177. For Norwich, our Cost-of-Living Vulnerability Index ranking has improved over the last year with our index being 950. Out of the 307 local authorities which make up the Cost-of-Living Vulnerability Index, Norwich is currently ranked in 155th place.

178. Of the areas within All-English single tier and county councils, the three authorities with the highest index totals are:

1. Middlesbrough (1,706)
2. Sandwell (1,664)
3. Walsall (1,621)

4. The three authorities with the lowest index totals are:
5. South Cambridge (143)
6. Hart (186)
7. West Berkshire (206)

179. Below is a map illustrating the difference in the cost-of-living vulnerability index scores for all local authority districts in the East of England. The darker shades of red indicate a higher (worse) score across the metrics that comprise the index.



Source:
Centre for Progressive Policy

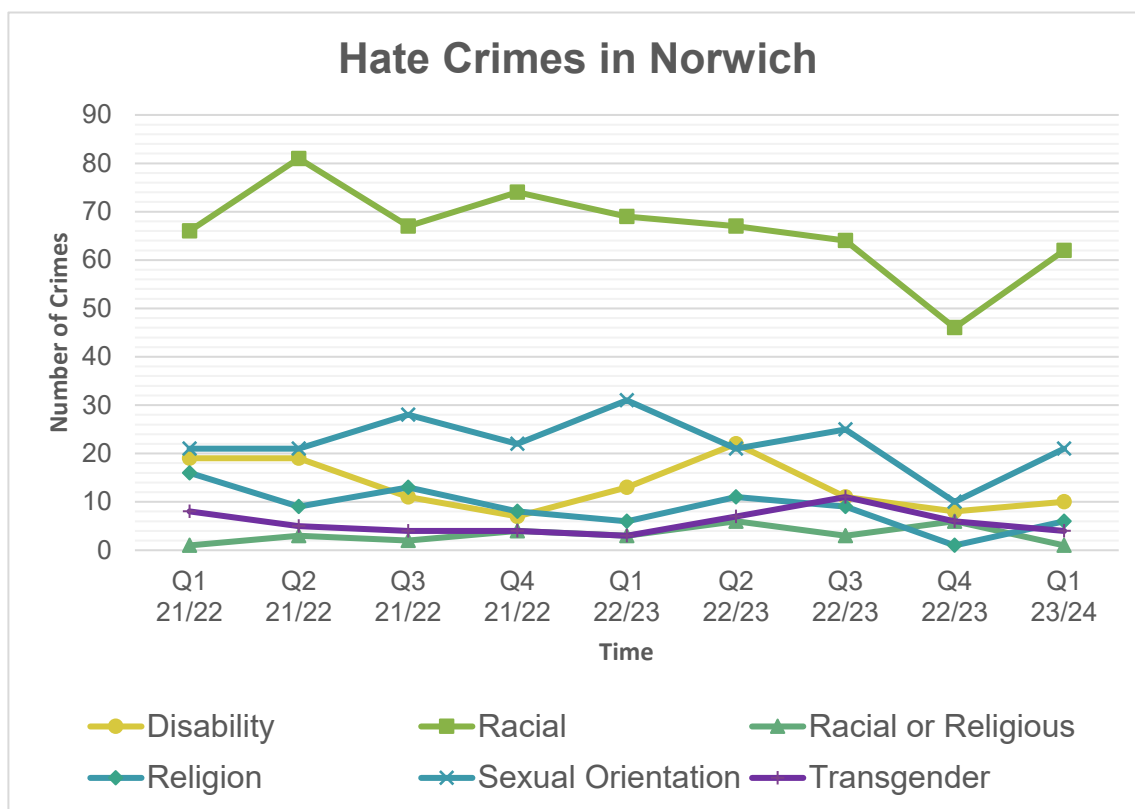
Hate crimes and incidents

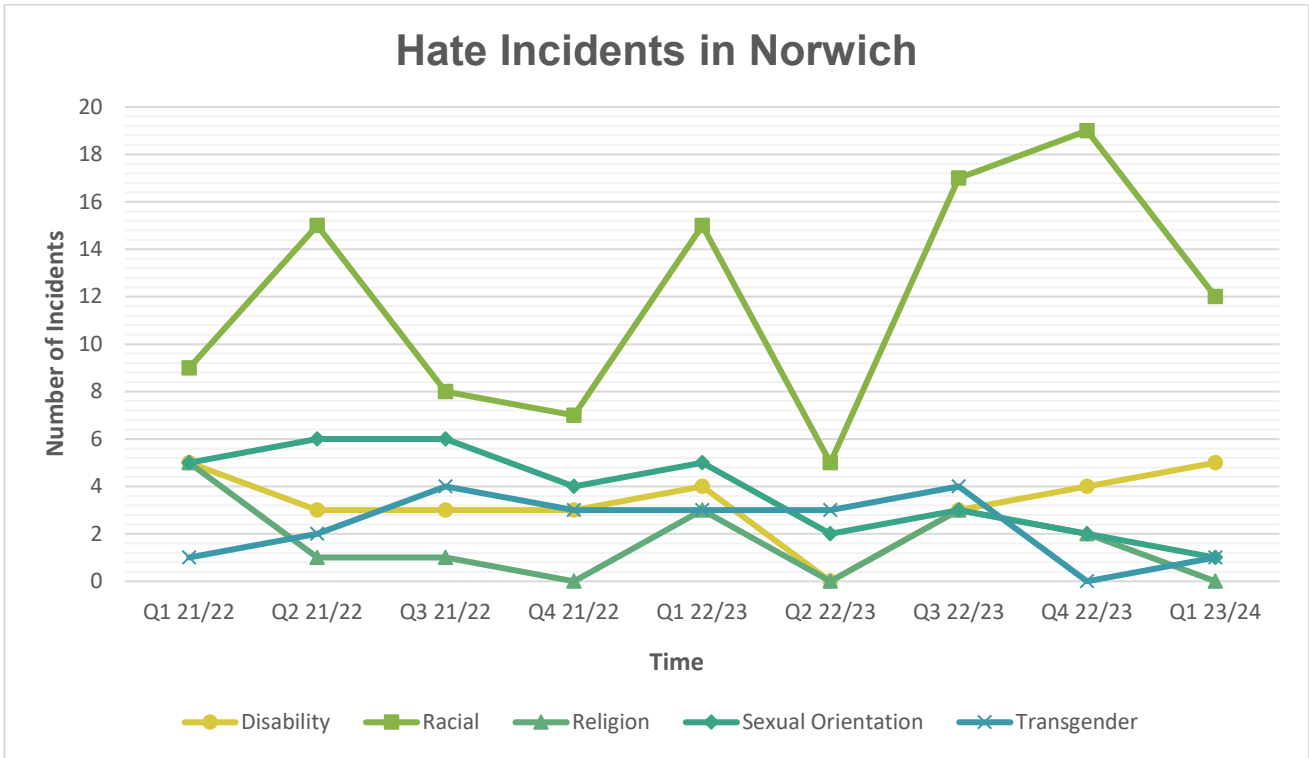
180. A hate incident is any incident which is perceived by the person, or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hatred. It may or may not be a crime. A hate crime is a crime committed against someone because of their protected characteristic. It is likely that the majority of hate crimes or incidents are not reported; therefore, higher figures do not always represent more crime, but possibly more reported crime due to more awareness or confidence in reporting.

181. Since the total number of hate crimes and incidents was reported in last year's Equality Information Report, Norwich has seen a slight decrease in this figure over the last 12 months, with 524 crimes and incidents being reported between the second quarter of the 2022-2023 and the first quarter of the 2023-2024 financial year. This represents a decrease of 79 hate crimes and incidents over the same time period.

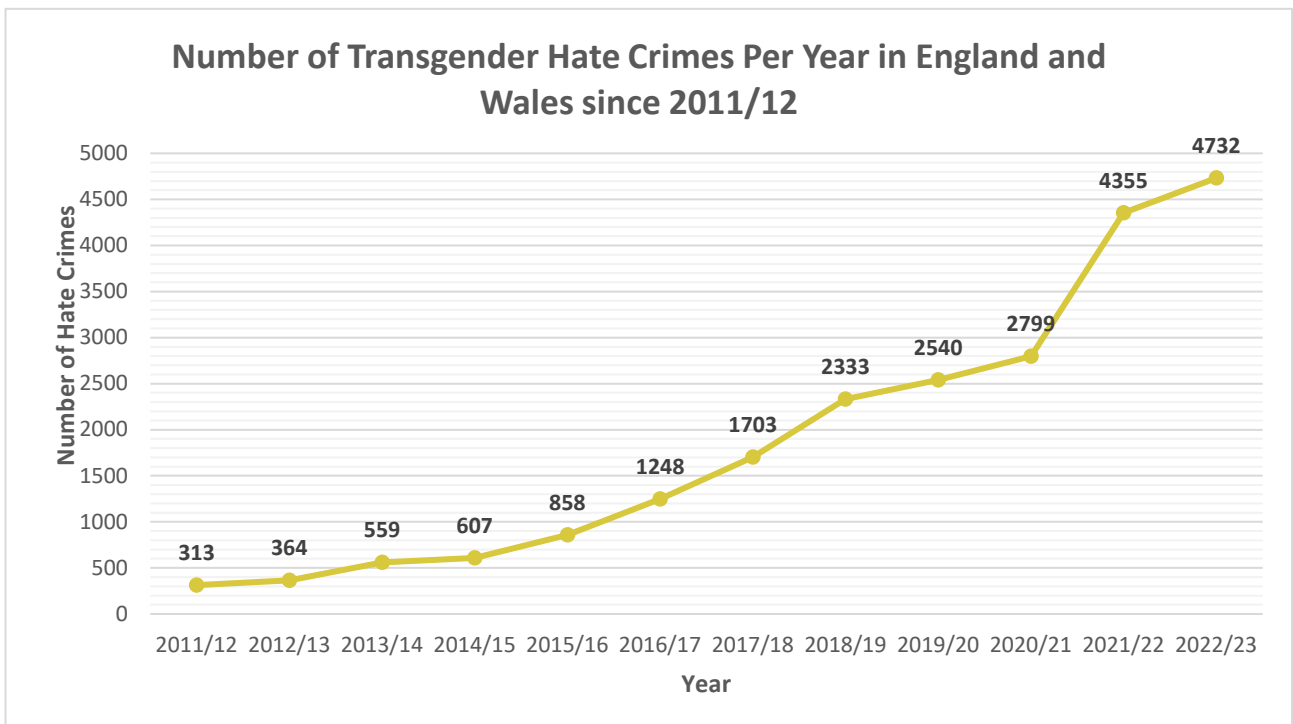
Type	2021-2022 Q2	2021-2022 Q3	2021-2022 Q4	2022-2023 Q1	2022-2023 Q2	2022-2023 Q3	2022-2023 Q4	2023-2024 Q1
Crimes	138	125	119	125	134	123	77	104
Disability	19	11	7	13	22	11	8	10
Racial	81	67	74	69	67	64	46	62
Racial or Religious	3	2	4	3	6	3	6	1
Religion	9	13	8	6	11	9	1	6
Sexual Orientation	21	28	22	31	21	25	10	21
Transgender	5	4	4	3	7	11	6	4
Incidents	27	22	17	30	10	30	27	19
Disability	3	3	3	4	0	3	4	5
Racial	15	8	7	15	5	17	19	12
Religion	1	1	0	3	0	3	2	0
Sexual Orientation	6	6	4	5	2	3	2	1
Transgender	2	4	3	3	3	4	0	1
Total	165	147	136	155	144	153	104	123

182. The charts below shows that racial crimes continue to account for largest type of those reported.





183. As mentioned [earlier in this report](#), the number of hate crimes against individuals identifying as Transgender have been increasing each year. The graph below illustrates this trend and the number of hate crimes recorded in England and Wales since 2011/12.



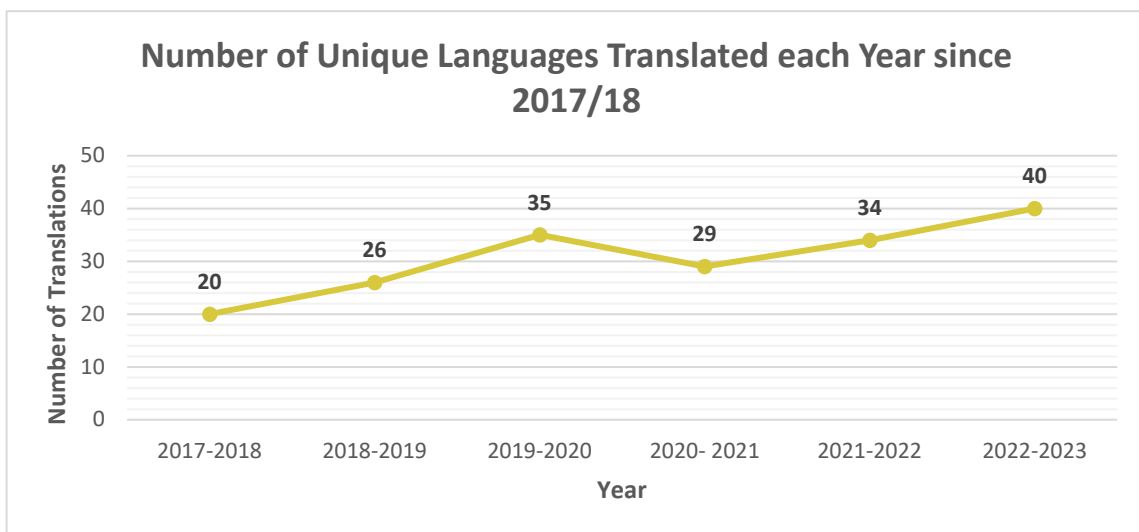
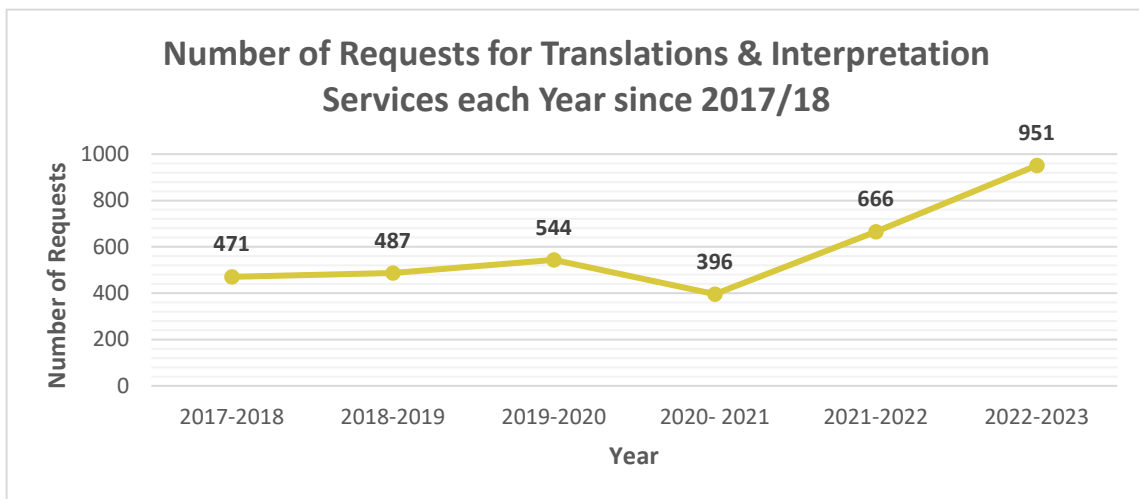
184. This data formed part of the evidence base that informs our new Safer Norwich Strategy for 2023 to 2026, which identifies specific activities we will take to help improve the safety across our communities and neighbourhoods.

Customers

Translations and interpretations

185. The council has seen a 43% increase in the number of translations and interpretations conducted for our customers this year, with the number of languages requested increasing from 34 to 40.

Top 10 languages					
2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020- 2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Arabic	Lithuanian	Arabic	Lithuanian	Arabic	Arabic
Hungarian	Hungarian	Lithuanian	Portuguese	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Lithuanian	Arabic	Polish	Arabic	Polish	Polish
Farsi	Portuguese	Portuguese	Hungarian	Bengali	Kurdish - Sorani
Polish	Vietnamese	Kurdish - Sorani	Romanian	Kurdish - Sorani	Ukrainian
Portuguese	Kurdish - Sorani	Hungarian	Polish	Italian	Portuguese
Kurdish - Sorani	Mandarin	Romanian	Spanish	Portuguese	Romanian
Latvian	Polish	Bengali	Bulgarian	Mandarin	Albanian
Bulgarian	Bengali	Amharic	Turkish	Sudanese Arabic	Tigrinya
Bengali	Russian	Russian	Mandarin	Bulgarian	Vietnamese



Complaints

186. Below are a series of tables that provide a breakdown of the total number of complaints the council received between 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 by ethnicity, age, disability status and sex.

Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
Black African	4	0.2%
Black Caribbean	1	0.0%
Black Other	2	0.1%
Indian	1	0.0%
Other	3	0.1%
Other Asian	3	0.1%
Other Mixed	5	0.2%
Pakistani	2	0.1%
Romany Gypsy	1	0.0%
White & Asian	1	0.0%
White British	458	22.6%
White European	20	1.0%
White Irish	3	0.1%
White Other	16	0.8%
Unknown/declined to answer	8	0.4%
Not recorded	1,496	73.9%
Total	2,024	

Age	Count	Percentage
19 and under	3	0.1%
20-29	125	6.2%
30-39	241	11.9%
40-49	264	13.0%
50-59	269	13.3%
60-69	177	8.7%
70-79	130	6.4%
80-89	48	2.4%
90-99	6	0.3%
Unknown/declined to answer	761	37.6%
Total	2,024	

Disability	Count	Percentage
Non-Disabled	719	35.5%
Disabled	310	15.3%
Unknown/declined to answer	995	49.2%
Total	2,024	

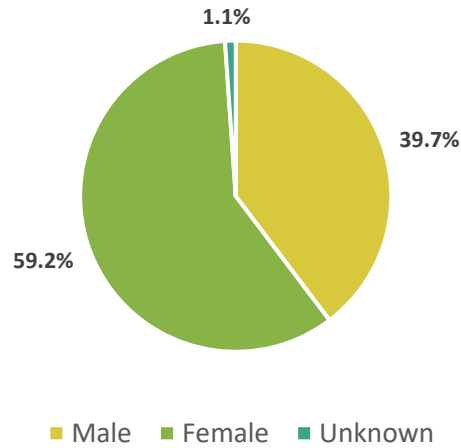
Sex	Count	Percentage
Female	844	41.7%
Male	613	30.3%
Unknown/declined to answer	567	28.0%
Total	2,024	

187. Our complaints process has been reviewed and we will be introducing more informative monitoring where we analyse the nature of the complaint from an equality perspective as opposed to just the equality profile of the complainant. This will go live from April 2024, as part of the upgrade to our contact management system.

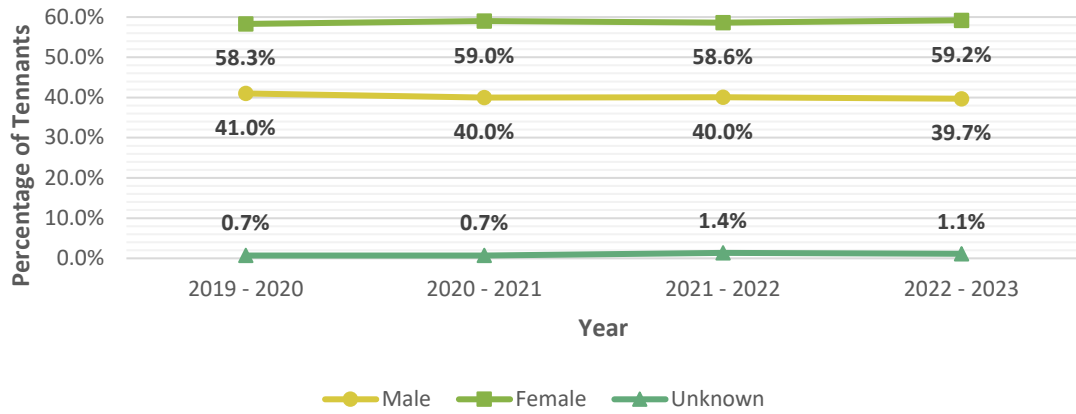
Tenant profiles

188. The tenant data in this section relates to the named Norwich City Council Tenant, and not all occupants of the household, as of 30 October 2023. The charts below show the sex, race, age, and disability levels breakdowns along with the four-year trends for each characteristic.

Breakdown of Norwich City Council Tenants by Sex

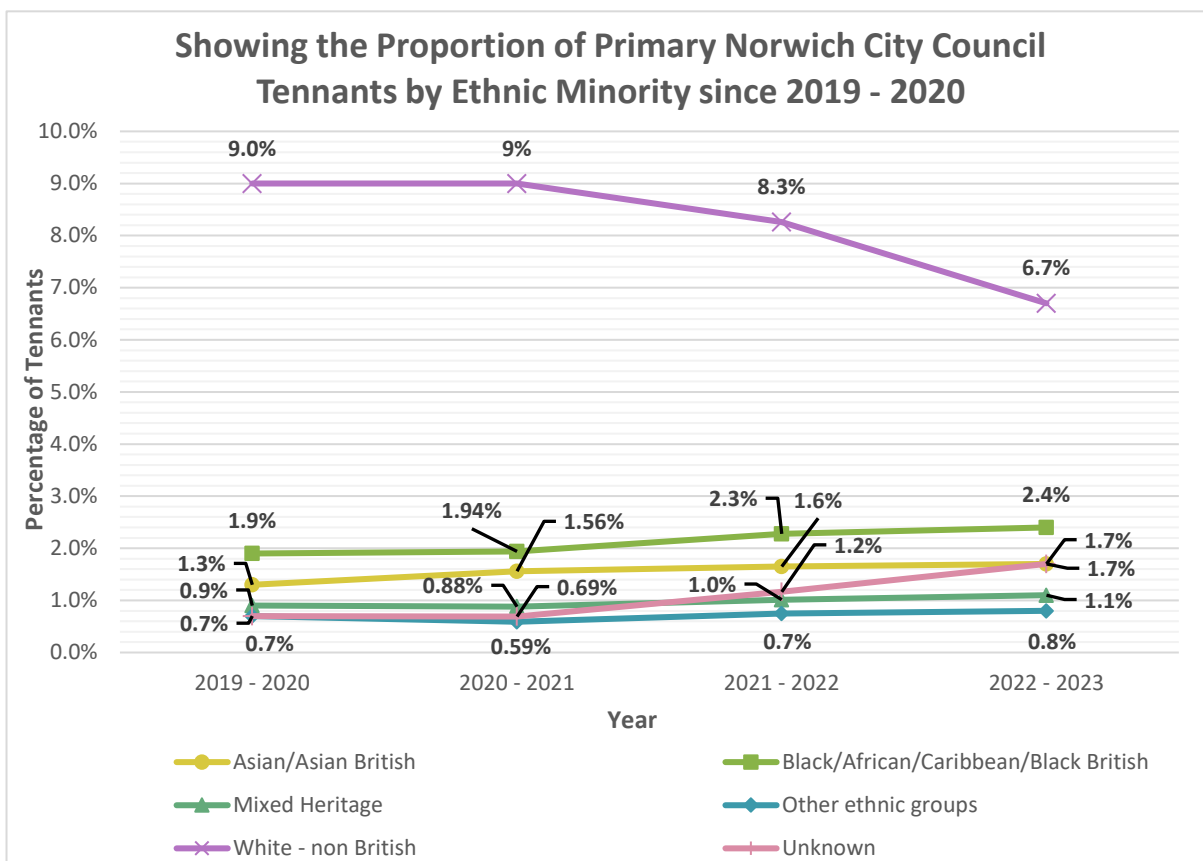
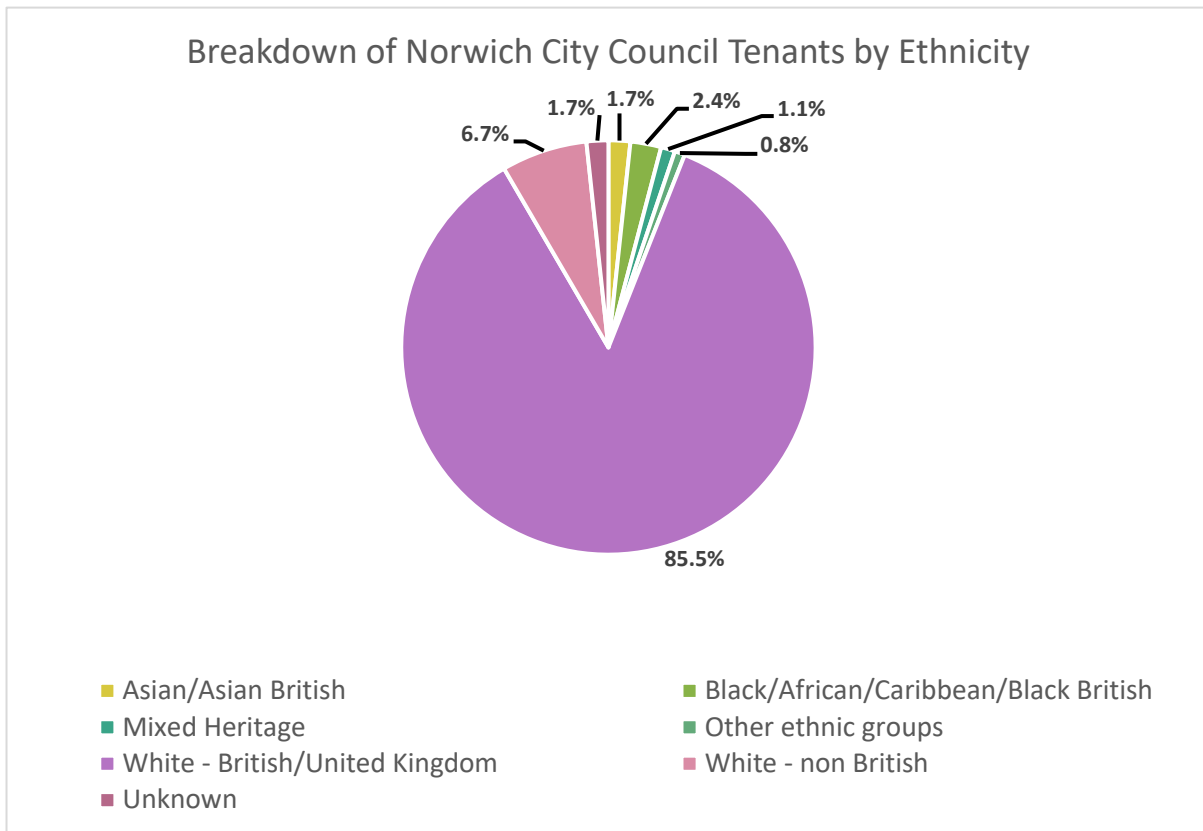


Proportions of Primary Norwich City Council Tenants by Sex since 2019 - 2020

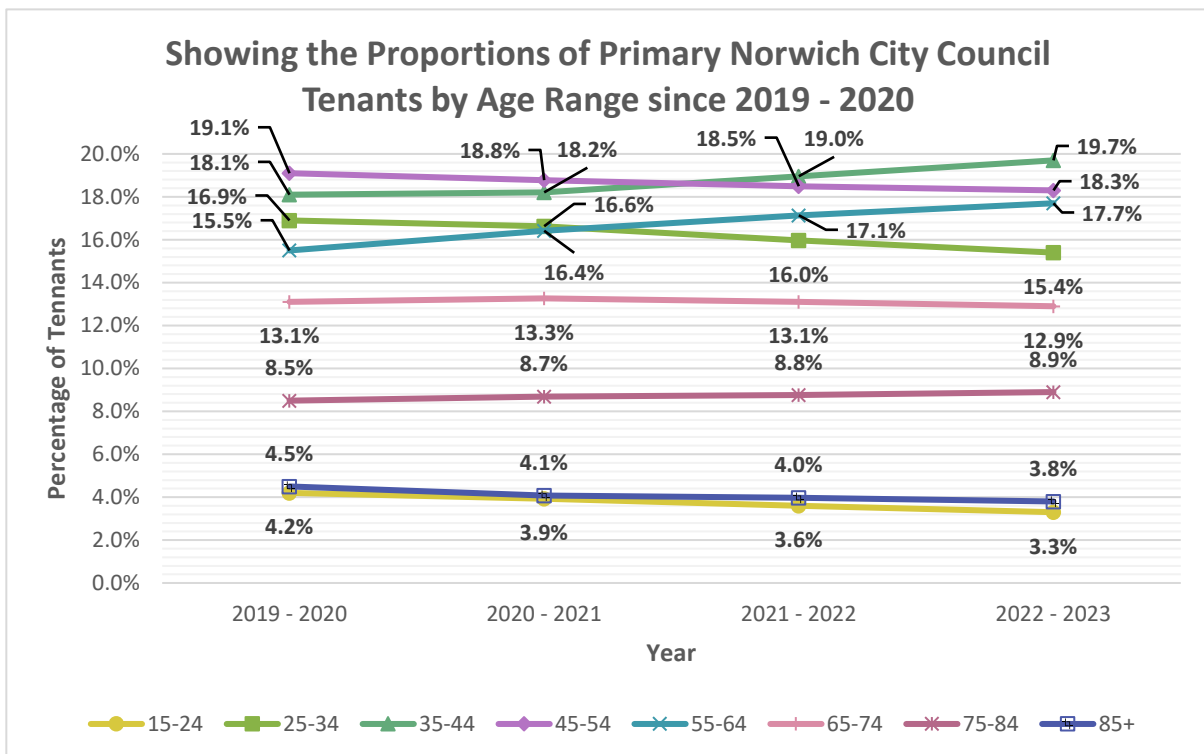
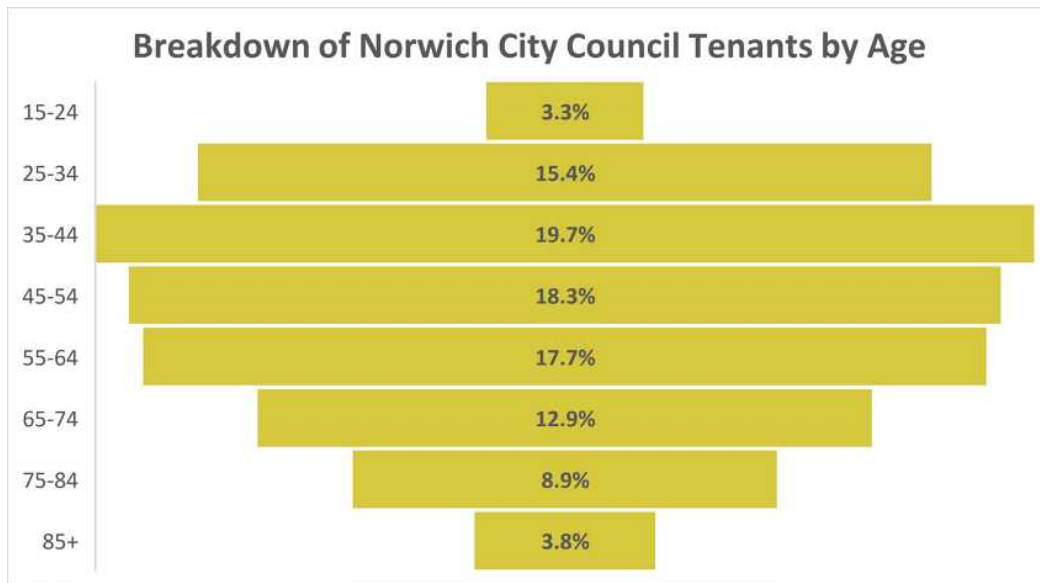


189. There has been little to no change in the distribution of our tenant's sex, with female tenants being more common than male, at around 60% compared to 40%.

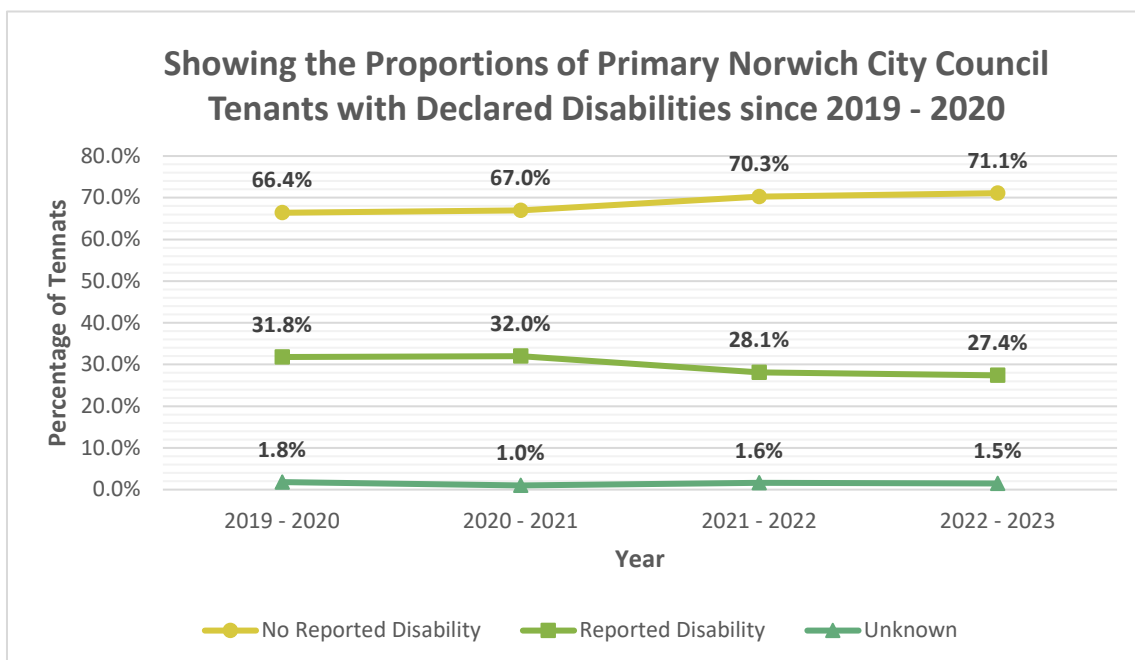
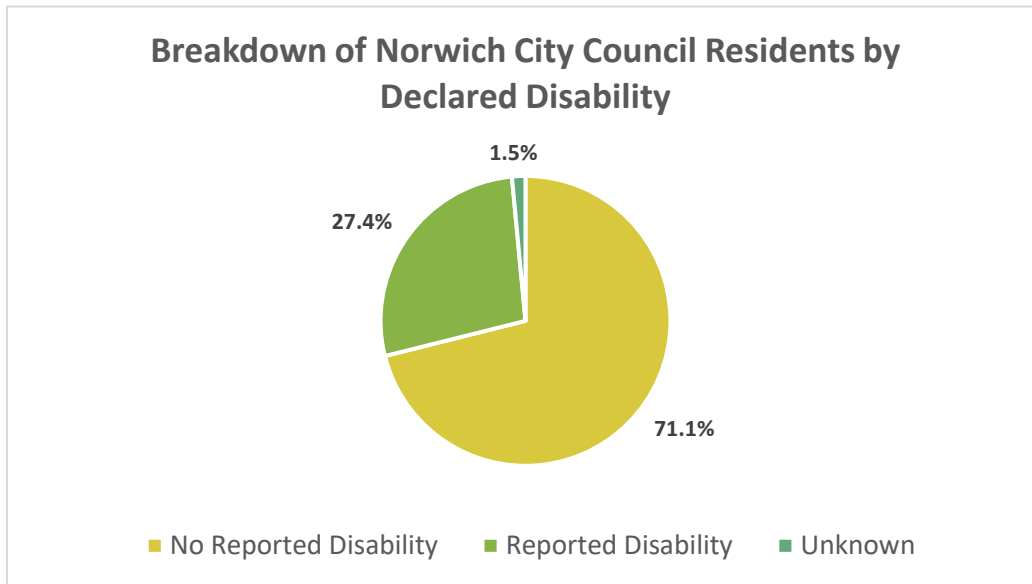
190. Shown below is the changing distribution of ethnic minorities in our council homes. The vast majority of residents are White British (85.5%), and this hasn't changed significantly over the last 4 years. We do see more significant change in the makeup of ethnic minorities however, with White – non-British residents falling since 2019-2020.



191. There have been some slight changes in the distribution of our tenant's ages. The most common age range now being 35-44, compared to 45-54 four years ago. Additionally, the number of 55-64-year-olds has steadily increased over the last four years, becoming the third largest demographic, overtaking 25-34-year-olds. This has resulted in the majority of our tenants (54.7%) being aged between 35 and 64 years of age.



192. There has been a slight decrease in the number of our tenants declaring disabilities, from 31.8% in 2019-2020 to 27.4% in 2022-2023.



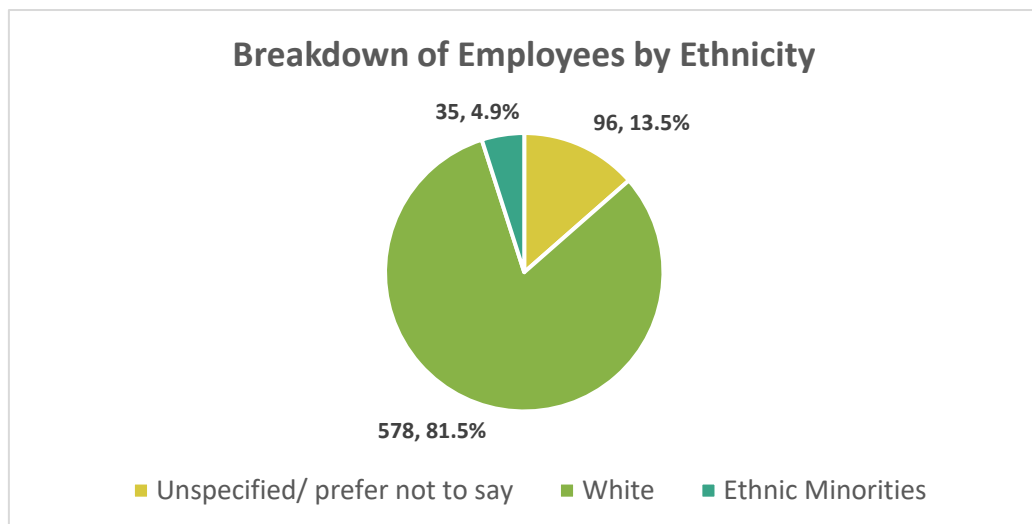
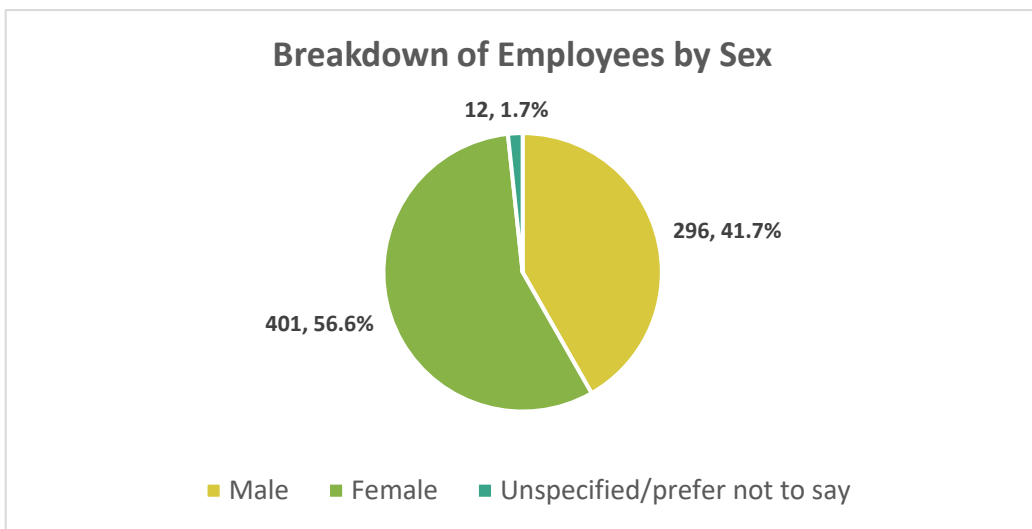
Employees

Profiles

193. The diversity figures in this report are based on a headcount of a total of 709 employees, as of 31st March 2023, and are taken from Norwich City Council's Human Resources system. Employees who are not paid directly by Norwich City Council are not included in the analysis, nor are agency workers/contractors.
194. Norwich City Council's aim is for the workforce to reflect the percentage of the local community who are economically active, from an ethnic minority, who have a disability and who match the gender imbalance.
195. The table below shows the overall declaration rates for each reported characteristic as of 31 March 2023.

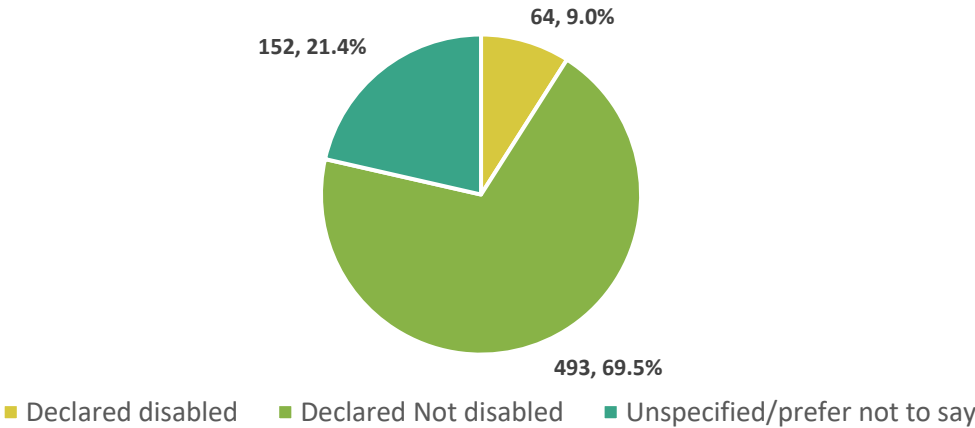
Protected Characteristic	Proportion %	Number of employees
Sex	98.3	697
Ethnicity	86.5	613
Disability	78.5	557
Sexual Orientation	40.3	286
Age	100.0	709
Religion	41.2	292

196. The data presented below shows Norwich City Council's workforce by protected characteristic as of 31 March 2023. Workforce composition by sex, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion. We have also included the breakdown of employees by working pattern. The breakdown in the graphs is show as both a numerical value and the percentage this value equates to, out of the total number of council employees.

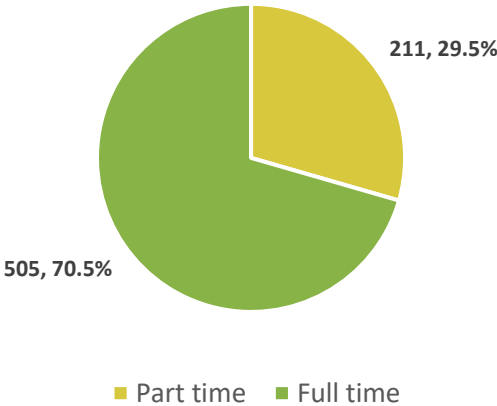


Please note that the data for race is not divided into ethnic groups as it is not appropriate to publish datasets which are based on fewer than ten employees and the lower number poses a threat to employee confidentiality.

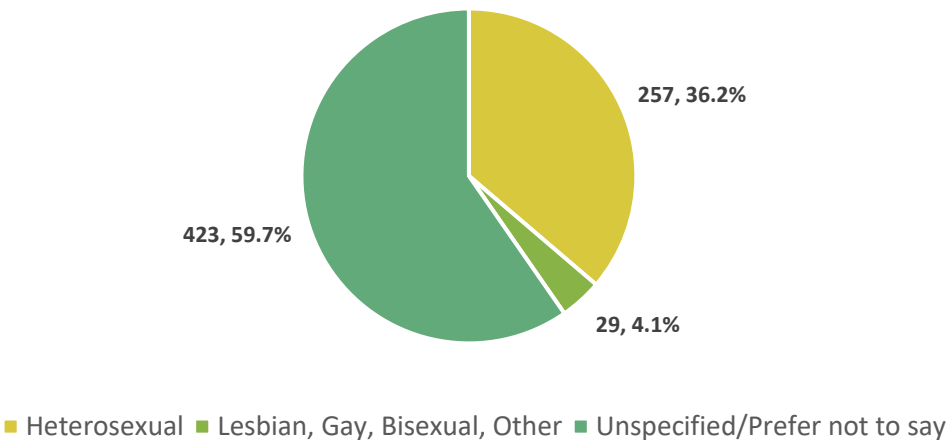
Breakdown of Employees by Disability

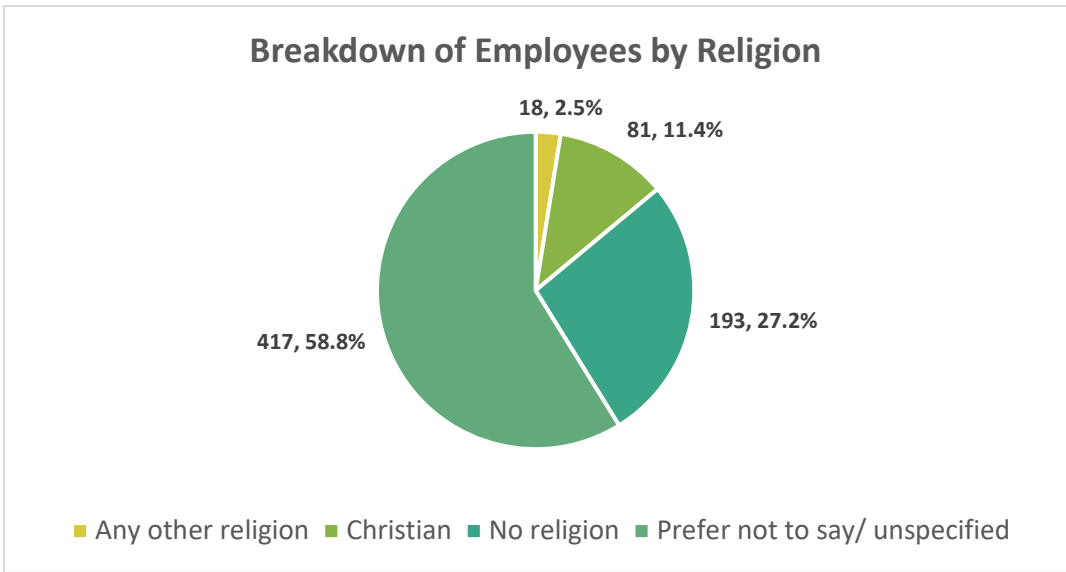
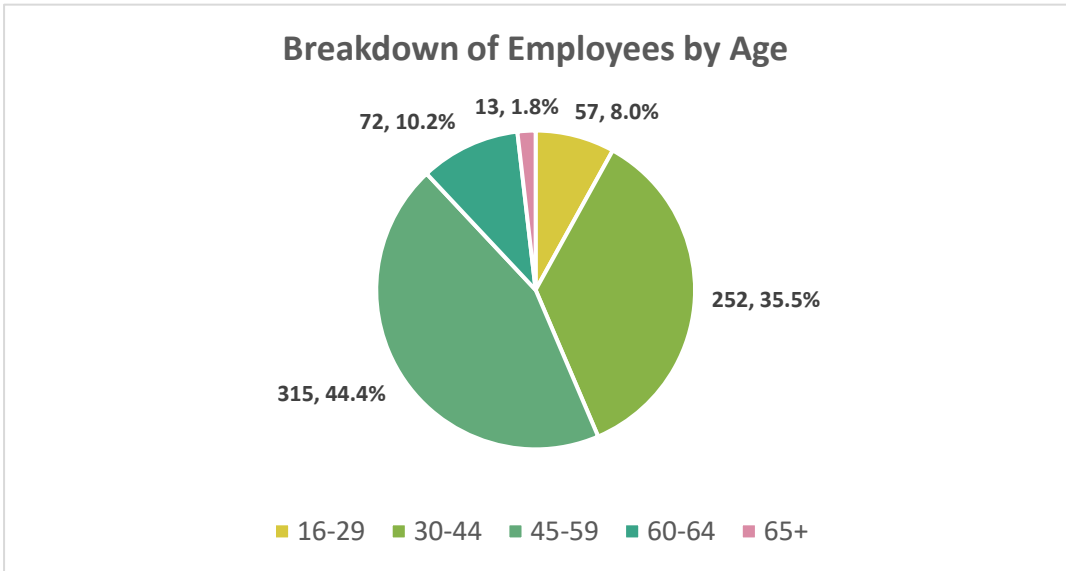


Breakdown of Employees by Working Pattern

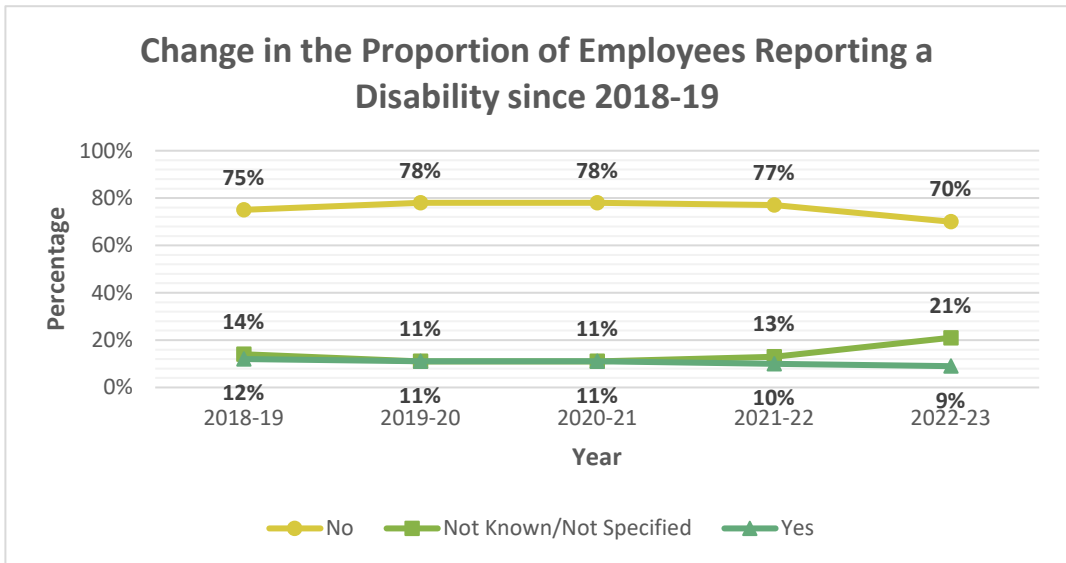


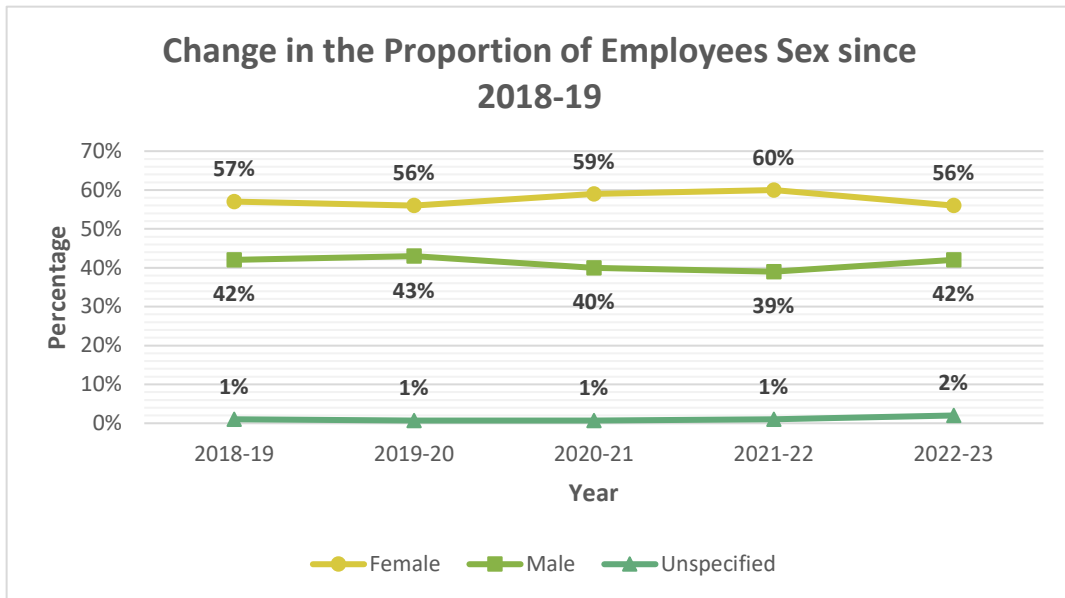
Breakdown of Employees by Sexual Orientation



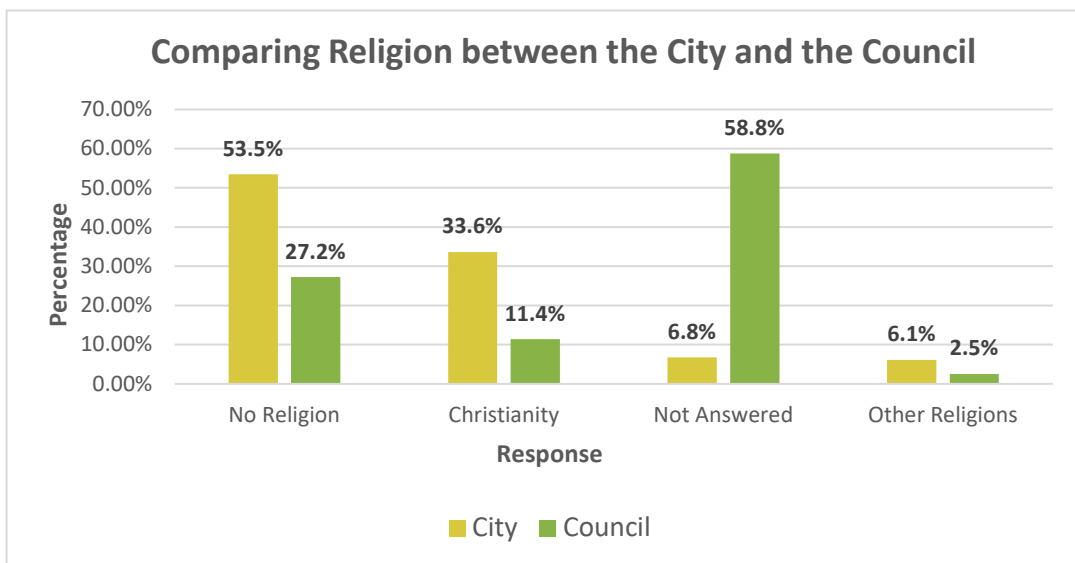
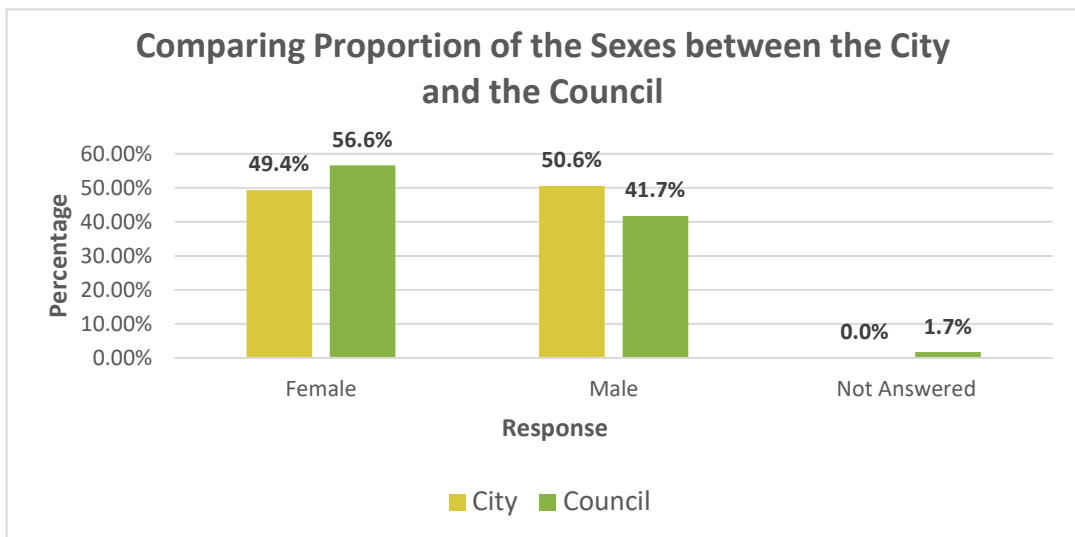


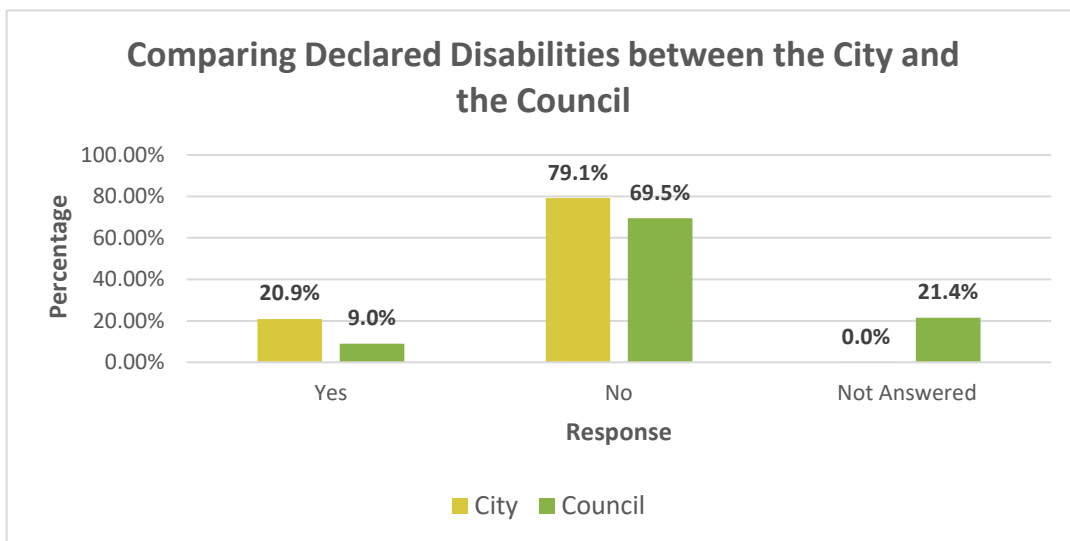
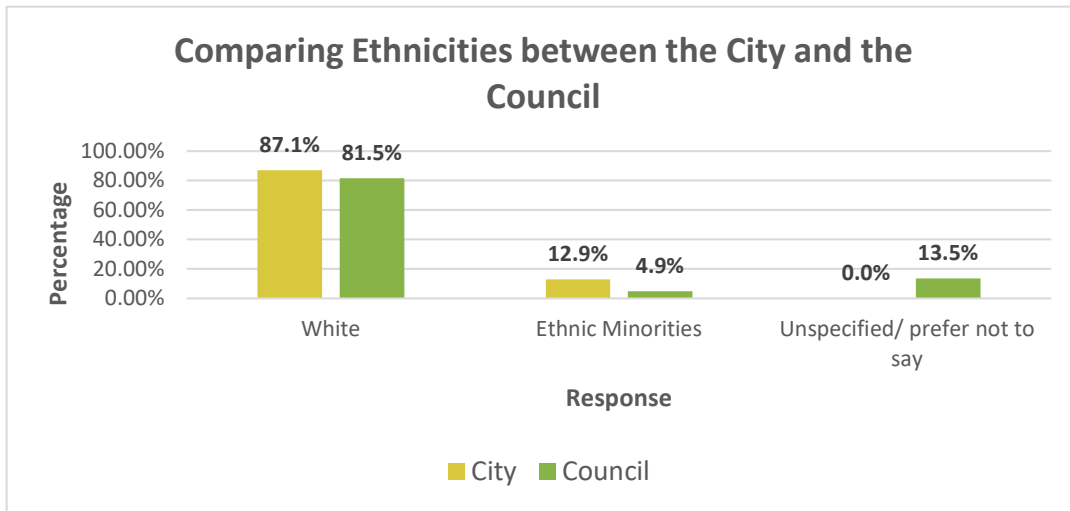
197. The graphs below demonstrate there has been very little change in the sex and disability profiles of our employees over the last five years. Latest data indicates that 9% of our workforce (who chose to answer the question) are reporting a disability.





198. We have mentioned that our goal is to reflect the economically active community in our employees. Below is a comparison, using 2021 census data, comparing our employee demographics, to those of the city by sex, religion, ethnicity and disability.





199. For disabilities, the 'Yes' response in the Census includes those reporting both severe and mild impact on day-to-day living. One assumption we could make, is that those experiencing severe impacts on their day-to-day life are unlikely to be economically active. Making this assumption, and excluding them from this analysis gives a better comparison between our employees and the economically active in our local community, shown below. In addition, a significant proportion of council employees (21.4%) have either not answered or stated 'prefer not to say' when asked if they consider themselves to have a disability. Work with employees to encourage them to disclose this information will provide a more accurate picture.
200. In general, we still have room to improve in reflecting our local economically active population in our employee profile. It is important to note that this data is taken from the Census data for population, and therefore includes citizens that are not economically active. This, combined with the much higher proportion of employees not answering/preferring to not respond makes analysing the data quite difficult. Regardless, it is still clear that we need to promote the employment of the disabled as well as religious and ethnic minorities.
201. The data for disciplinary, grievance, leavers, and promotions for the year 2022/23 is not appropriate to publish as the datasets are based on fewer than ten employees and the lower numbers pose a threat to employee confidentiality.

Recruitment

202. We have sought to continue to attract, retain and develop diverse talent through our recruitment strategies and use of social media to promote opportunities. Our recruitment practice is inclusive, ensuring job advertisements are checked for accessible language and include positive statements. All are open to reasonable adjustments to support the recruitment process.

203. The data in the table below shows the numbers of applicants at different stages of the recruitment process between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. All aspects of the recruitment process are reported in relation to each of the following characteristics: ethnicity, disability, and sex. During the period 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 there were a total of 1,354 applicants for Norwich City Council vacancies. 694 were shortlisted for interview and 310 were successful at interview.

Characteristic	Applicants	Shortlisted	Offered
Ethnicity			
Asian, Asian British, Asian Welsh	80 (5.9%)	31 (4.5%)	15 (4.8%)
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	49 (3.6%)	10 (1.4%)	3 (1%)
Mixed or multiple	47 (3.5%)	28 (4.1%)	11 (3.5%)
Unspecified or prefer not to say	37 (2.7%)	19 (2.7%)	9 (2.9%)
White	1,127 (83.2%)	604 (87%)	271 (87.4%)
Other ethnic group	14 (1%)	2 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)
Sex			
Female	731 (54%)	397 (57.2%)	196 (63.2%)
Male	608 (44.9%)	292 (42.1%)	112 (36.1%)
Unspecified or prefer not to say	15 (1.1%)	5 (0.7%)	2 (0.7%)
Disability			
Disabled	132 (9.8%)	64 (9.2%)	22 (7.1%)
Non-disabled	1,147 (84.7%)	593 (85.5%)	274 (88.4%)
Unspecified or prefer not to say	75 (5.5%)	37 (5.3%)	14 (4.5%)
Totals	1354	694	310

204. The Covid-19 pandemic forced our culture to change rapidly with an unexpected and first-time move to mass home working. A hybrid working policy was developed during this year and went live in April 2022. A hybrid working approach allows colleagues flexibility of some home working whilst attending the office according to business and personal requirements. We ensure that colleagues who require workplace adjustments are fully supported as hybrid workers and equipment is provided if appropriate.

205. In the majority of our service areas, we operate flexible working to carry out duties during a range of hours. We offer a variety of flexible working arrangements, enabling eligible employees to apply to change the way they

work. This includes the ability to apply for any position on a full or part time basis. We are also open to requests for term-time or annualised hours or compressed working hours.

Gender pay gap

206. Our latest gender pay gap was published 31 March 2023 for the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. In line with the statutory requirements, the report for Norwich City Council's Gender Pay Gap for 31 March 2023 is due to be reported by 31 March 2024. This will be made available on Norwich City Council website and Gov.uk [here](#).

Data sources

[Local statistics - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

[Census - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

[Sexual orientation, England, and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

[Norfolk Insight - Demographics and Statistics - Data Observatory](#)

[Citizens Advice cost of living data dashboard](#)

Useful links

[Community safety in Norwich](#)

[Community support | Norwich City Council](#)

[Cost of living support in Norwich](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Get Talking Norwich](#)

[Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025](#)

[LUMi - Community portal](#)

[Norwich 2040 City Vision](#)

[Norwich City Council Corporate Plan 2022-2026](#)

[Norwich Economic Strategy 2019-2024](#)

[Norwich Good Economy Commission](#)

[Norwich Food Network](#)

[Norwich Food Poverty Action Plan](#)

[Norwich Monthly Economic Barometer](#)

[Norwich Town Deal](#)

[Public Sector Equality Duty](#)



Committee name: Cabinet

Committee date: 17/01/2024

Report title: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024/27

Portfolio: Councillor Giles, Cabinet member for communities and social inclusion

Report from: Interim Executive Director of Housing and Community Safety

Wards: All wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

KEY DECISION

Purpose

To consider the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024/27.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that cabinet agree the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2024/27.

Policy framework

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
- Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
- Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
- The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.
- Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

Equality, diversity and inclusion permeates all parts of the council's remit. This report and the appended EDI Strategy therefore meet with all corporate priorities listed above. Of the five priorities, achieving the aims and priorities of the Strategy will most positively impact:

- **People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city** – by recognising and tackling existing inequalities that form a barrier to individuals living the independent and safe lives they seek and deserve.
- **The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish** – by working with partners and our communities to create an environment that allows people to feel they belong, and that they

are respected and heard, whilst working to maximise the opportunities they have to succeed and thrive in Norwich.

- **Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city** – by seeking to ensure the profile of our workforce broadly reflects the city’s population and the local labour market, whilst continuing to develop inclusive working practices that support colleagues to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to consider equality in all their work.

The EDI Strategy also works to support our partners, enabling Norwich to realise its aspirations of becoming a truly *Fair City*, as outlined within the Norwich 2040 City Vision.

Report details

Background

1. Work on an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy began in February 2022. At the same time, revision of the council's EDI Policy was also considered. These two documents, alongside a forthcoming EDI Action Plan, seek to set out the council's ambition, governance and activities with regard to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across its workforce and services, as well as Norwich more generally.
2. The Strategy provides the overall vision and sets out the council's strategic ambitions with regards EDI. These are detailed fully within the Strategy appended to this report. In headline, the Strategy's aims are:
 - a. Norwich City Council is an inclusive place to work.
 - b. Our services will be joined up, accessible and inclusive.
 - c. Norwich is a fair city where people facing inequality can share in and contribute to the city's success.
3. Under the Strategy (and informed by these ambitions) will sit an EDI Policy which will detail how the Council will embed EDI within its service provision and the behaviours it expects of councillors and all permanent and temporary employees of Norwich City Council, including any contractors, agency or visiting professionals employed to provide services on our behalf.
4. The Policy will also list a number of core measurable, specific and timebound objectives, so meeting with the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty. The 2021/22 Policy is available [here](#). The updated Policy will be published early in the new year.
5. In addition, an EDI Action Plan will be developed once the new Corporate Plan has been agreed. The Corporate Plan will inform the EDI Action Plan which will set out a phased approach to the work the council will undertake to achieve the attached Strategy's aims. It is anticipated that work on the Action Plan will begin later this year.

Consultation

6. Consultation on the EDI Strategy has been undertaken across a series of platforms and stakeholder groups. These include:
 - a. **Residents** were invited to participate in an online public consultation soliciting their views on equality, diversity and inclusion, their community and the council.
 - b. **Community groups**: were offered small grants to run workshops and provide brief reports of their views of equality, diversity and inclusion and their lived experience.
 - c. **Councillors**: were invited to share their views on equality, diversity and inclusion and the council's approach to the agenda.

- d. **Council officers:** were offered a survey, and workshops were facilitated to engage staff from across services and with a range of characteristics; this included gathering views on current experience of working in the council, council services, the actions the council is undertaking and areas for improvement.
7. Specifically, the full Strategy and an “easy read” were uploaded to Get Talking Norwich with visitors invited to contribute their thoughts by answering a series of questions. The consultation ran from Monday 14 August 2023 to Sunday 17 September 2023. A total of 63 responses were received, with 13 respondents open to further engagement in an EDI context.
8. Respondents to the survey were a mix of differing characteristics. Most characteristics were broadly in line with the Norwich population, other than age (predominantly older respondents) and gender (predominantly female respondents). Notably, a high proportion of council employees responded, implying a strong interest in EDI workforce issues.
9. The full findings of the survey (noting their specificity to particular activities) will inform the EDI Action Plan as it is developed. In summary, feedback showed:
 - a. A largely positive response to the EDI Strategy
 - b. A clear sense that the forthcoming EDI Action Plan will be critical in delivering the Strategy, and that measuring the impact of this against the Strategy’s aims will be critical to understanding its effectiveness.
 - c. Some scepticism by some respondents about the Council’s EDI agenda, with some questioning about whether it is doing enough.
 - d. A strong appetite for ongoing and meaningful engagement and dialogue with employees and residents, especially through non-digital means where possible.
 - e. A tension between views, with some considering EDI as critical to the council's service delivery and employment of staff, and others seeing EDI as a separate agenda.
10. In addition to the survey and other platforms for consultation highlighted above, The Bridge Plus+ – a community-based, user-led service tailored to the information and advice needs of ethnic minorities and migrant communities in Norwich – dedicated their regular community lunch on 28 September 2023 to the EDI Strategy consultation. Attendees came from a range of communities, backgrounds and situations, including those seeking asylum, those with refugee status or other leave to remain, volunteers, VCSE representatives and other individuals.
11. At the lunch, volunteers sat with attendees and encouraged them to provide responses to a series of simple questions and mark themselves on a Likert scale against certain statements.
12. The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Social Inclusion has been closely involved in the development of this Strategy throughout the consultation period.

Evidence and data

13. Development of the Strategy has also drawn on a range of data and analysis, including:

- a. **State of Norwich** – a visual summary of some key statistics about the people, place and economy of Norwich.
- b. **Equality Information Report** – an annual report as part of our Public Sector Equality Duty that provides key data on the characteristics of residents, council customers and workforce (the 2023 report is to be heard at your meeting today).
- c. **NODA report** – a report on spatial distribution of inequality in the city council area commissioned from the Norfolk Office of Data Analytics (NODA) to provide an evidence-base and analysis of neighbourhood-level data.

Implications

Financial and resources

14. Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan 2022-26 and budget.

15. There are no proposals in this report and the appended EDI Strategy that would reduce or increase resources, noting that it sets out our strategic ambition only. Any resource implications will be identified as the EDI Action Plan is developed over the coming months.

Legal

16. There are no legal implications for the EDI Strategy itself. It provides the strategic direction for the forthcoming EDI Policy which will contain core EDI objectives (revised annually). This, alongside the council's annual Equality Information Report (also considered at your meeting today) meet with:

- a. [The Equality Act 2010](#), which introduced the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#), and protects people from discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity for all.
- b. [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) Regulations 2011](#), which require public authorities to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish specific and measurable equality objectives.

17. The EDI Strategy therefore has a bearing on the council's Public Sector Equality Duty obligations in that it will need to enable the EDI Policy's objectives and inform the actions that are reported within the council's Equality Information Report. As such, and aligned with legislation in the Equality Act 2010, it should support the council in its need to:

- a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.

- b. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- c. Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	An Equality Impact Assessment for the Strategy has been completed and is appended to this report. In summary, the Strategy positively impacts all communities in Norwich with no one particular group disproportionately affected. It outlines the council's continued commitment to address inequality, and to promote greater levels of diversity and inclusion within the city.
Health, social and economic impact	The Strategy supports the Norwich Health and Wellbeing Partnership Strategy in that it goes beyond promoting equality for the nine protected characteristics (as cited in the Equality act 2010) to encompass socio-economic and health equality across Norwich. The forthcoming EDI Action Plan will consider measures that will complement the work of the Partnership.
Crime and disorder	The Strategy is not considered to have direct and specific crime and disorder implications.
Children and adults safeguarding	The Strategy is not considered to have direct and specific safeguarding implications, beyond the council's duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
Environmental impact	The Strategy is not considered to have direct and specific environmental implications, other than considering mitigations through the forthcoming EDI Action Plan for those experiencing disadvantage as a result of environmental measures put in place by the council or other government bodies.

Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Operational	The EDI Strategy provides the strategic direction for Norwich City Council with regard to equality, diversity and inclusion. Without it, the forthcoming EDI Policy and Action Plan could not be developed. This Policy and Plan will seek to embed equality principles across the council's workforce culture and services. Without the Strategy, no clear direction would exist, risking unfair treatment of employees and service users.	By adopting the Strategy these risks are mitigated.
Legal	The EDI Strategy has significant bearing on the council's Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) obligations in that it enables the forthcoming EDI Policy's objectives and informs the actions that are reported within its Equality Information Report. Without it (and the aforementioned documents for which it provides strategic direction), the council would risk a breach of its PSED.	
Reputational	If the council fails to follow a clear strategic direction with regard to equality, diversity and inclusion, it is likely that it would not achieve its corporate priorities (all of which have some level of bearing on equality). This would likely generate negative perceptions of the council amongst the communities it serves, its stakeholders and peers.	

Other options considered

18. No other reasonably viable options have been identified.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

19. It is recommended that cabinet agree and adopt the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2024/27.

20. By so doing, the council will provide a clear strategic direction for equality, diversity and inclusion, providing a framework for best practice and mitigating the risks highlighted above.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

- Norwich City Council: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024/27

- Equality Impact assessment for the above named Strategy.

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If you would like this agenda in an alternative format, such as a larger or smaller font, audio or Braille, or in a different language, please contact the committee officer above.

APPENDIX 1.

**Norwich City Council
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
2024-27**

PLAN ON A PAGE

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy sets out our continued commitment to tackling inequality and promoting diversity. This covers both our legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 and our wider ambition to reduce socio-economic and health inequalities in the city.

It outlines how we will work with our partners to make Norwich the best it can be for everyone, recognising that different people and communities have different needs, so it's a city where everyone:

- feels they belong
- is respected
- has a voice
- has the chance to succeed and thrive.

We want to be an organisation that makes a real difference for the people of Norwich by:

- showing respect and kindness to everyone
- giving the most help to the people who need it the most
- continuing to learn and improve
- focusing on prevention and early intervention

We have three aims which are supported by key priorities:

Aim	Priorities
Aim 1- Norwich City Council is an inclusive place to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the profile of our workforce broadly reflects the city's population and the local labour market • Continue to develop inclusive working practices and policies • Support colleagues to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to consider equality in all their work
Aim 2 - Our services will be joined up, accessible and inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve a range of communication platforms and channels to enhance accessibility, including for those facing digital exclusion • Undertake service-specific equalities reviews, so every service reflects our ambition • Ensure that our knowledge about the people and communities we serve informs our service planning, and that their voices are heard
Aim 3 - Norwich is a fair city where people facing inequality can share in and contribute to the city's success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion outcomes inform wider council policies, strategies and programmes • Focus our efforts on the places and communities in the city that face the biggest disadvantages, improving our use of data to help us do this • Develop our leadership capacity and capability around equalities • Continue working with partners to influence investment and target resource • Mitigate the disproportionate inequalities of climate change impacting specific sectors of the community

Introduction

Norwich has a long history of being a radical, innovative city. We are increasingly recognised for our strong economy, quality of life and vibrancy. The city is rich in cultural and ethnic diversity which we aim to both celebrate and promote. This is central to our Norwich 2040 vision and our work with partners to achieve this. We recognise the contributions that people from different backgrounds make, and actively seek to tackle inequalities and foster good relationships across our communities. We want the city to be a fair, kind, accessible and inclusive place for everyone. This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy sets out our continued commitment to tackling inequality and promoting diversity.

It outlines how we will:

- deliver this ambition and the high standards we expect of ourselves
- work with partners and communities to promote equality, diversity and inclusion and the progressive building of good relations between different groups
- shape services which actively address inequality and exclusion
- build an inclusive culture within our workforce and organisation

A key reason why many people in Norwich are held back is because of inequality and lack of opportunity connected to one or more of the characteristics that are protected under the Equality Act 2010. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

As well as a firm commitment to deliver our legal duty under the Act regarding these characteristics, our aspirations go further to include refugees and migrants, those who have served or continue to serve in our Armed Forces, and the socio-economic and health inequalities resulting from deprivation.

All these factors can cause disadvantage around poverty, educational attainment, access to good quality jobs, health and life expectancy.

This strategy re-states our long-held commitment to tackling inequality, with our partners, not just because it is our duty but also because doing so helps create a more successful city.

We want Norwich to be a place in which everyone's hopes and aspirations can be made real. We want to ensure people are not held back by poverty and that success is shared. This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy supports that journey.

Our Ambition

We live in an unequal society and that inequality causes vastly different outcomes for different individuals, groups and communities.

Against that backdrop, we want Norwich to be as fair, kind, accessible, and inclusive as possible. We will work with our partners to make the city the best it can be for everyone, recognising that different people and communities have

different needs, so it's a place where everyone:

- feels they belong
- is respected
- has a voice
- has the chance to succeed and thrive.

We want to be an organisation that makes a real difference for the people of Norwich by:

- showing respect and kindness to everyone
- giving the most help to the people who need it the most
- continuing to learn and improve
- focusing on prevention and early intervention.

As a public sector body, we have a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to have 'due regard' for advancing equality. This includes eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not, and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

However, this strategy goes beyond this legal duty. It reflects our strong political commitment to equalities, fairness and social justice, which has been the basis of our ambition to reduce socio-economic and health inequalities in Norwich. We have been working towards this for many years. We take action to address inequality and hold ourselves and others accountable for this and will continue to do so. This new strategy sets out the priorities that will shape the new actions we will take over the next few years in addition to all the existing work which continues day-to-day.

What we mean

Equality, diversity and inclusion means different things to different people. For us:

Equality means...	...ensuring that every person has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. It is also the belief that no one should have poorer life chances because of who they are, where they come from, or what they believe.
Diversity means...	... having a range of people with various backgrounds, circumstances, lifestyles, experience and interests, in line with the variety of people that make up society.
Inclusion means...	...the sense of belonging: feeling respected, having a voice and being valued for who you are; as well as feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best.

How we have developed the strategy

To help guide our ongoing work and the development of this strategy, we have heard from communities via representative groups and from residents across the city as well as businesses, institutions and our own employees and elected members.

We did this through community conversations, online surveys, workshops, and open calls for views, trying to enable people to tell us their thoughts in a way that worked for them. We have also drawn on analysis of a range of quantitative data sources that show the distribution and nature of inequality in the city council area. From this work, equality, diversity and inclusion are understood to be key elements for a positive and successful city like Norwich. However, listening to people is not a one-off exercise, so we plan to continue doing so as part of delivering this strategy.

Our aims

We have three strategic aims:

Aim 1 - Norwich City Council is an inclusive place to work	It is important that we have a culture that has inclusion and equality at the heart of everything we do. This is not just about the council's role as an employer: we need to be a genuinely inclusive organisation in order to achieve our other aims
Aim 2 - Our services will be joined up, accessible and inclusive	The council has duties and powers to provide a wide range of services in an inclusive way. Many of these services can play a role in creating a more level playing field for people who face inequality or exclusion.
Aim 3 - Norwich is a fair city where people facing inequality can share in and contribute to the city's success	Ensuring that all communities share in the city's success is a core part of the vision set out in our Corporate Plan. Many of the challenges we face need action by a range of partners and the council has a leading role to play in bringing together organisations across the private, public, and voluntary sectors to tackle inequalities and exclusion across Norwich.



Making it happen

We will only realise our ambition and our strategic aims through taking action. Much of this action constitutes our ‘business as usual’, routine service and business planning processes and our ongoing use of Equality Impact Assessments. However, we are also committing to some specific, additional actions that will support the realisation of our ambition.

The detail of these actions can be found in our forthcoming action plan This will cover the duration of one year with the expectation that we will build on this in subsequent years covered by the strategy, based on measuring and reviewing the effectiveness of the action plan.

This table outlines the key priorities against each of our strategic aims:

Aim	Priorities
Aim 1 - Norwich City Council is an inclusive place to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the profile of our workforce broadly reflects the city’s population and the local labour market • Continue to develop inclusive working practices and policies • Support colleagues to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to consider equality in all their work
Aim 2 - Our services will be joined up, accessible and inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve a range of communication platforms and channels to enhance accessibility, including for those facing digital exclusion • Undertake service-specific equalities reviews, so every service reflects our ambition • Ensure that intelligence about the people and communities we serve inform our service planning, and that their voices are heard
Aim 3 - Norwich is a fair city where people facing inequality can share in and contribute to the city’s success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion outcomes inform wider council policies, strategies and programmes • Focus our efforts on the places and communities in the city that face the biggest disadvantages, improving our use of data to help us do this • Develop our leadership capacity and capability around equalities • Continue working with partners to influence investment and target resource • Mitigate the disproportionate inequalities of climate change impacting specific sectors of the community

Accountability and impact

The responsibility for achieving both our legal duty on equality and realising the ambitions of this strategy lies with the whole organisation, with every officer and councillor having a role to play.

Delivery of the strategy and action plan will be overseen by the Strategy Manager. They will report to the senior leadership team on progress of actions and impact, through the annual Equality Information Report.

The Equality Information Report will also be considered by Cabinet. The report includes data on our recruitment, workforce, customers, tenants and wider demographics of the city, as well as data that shows the patterns of socio-economic and health inequalities in the city. Although there are a range of factors that contribute to changes in these data, it provides some insight into how well we are meeting our aims, for example, in the diversity of our workforce.

[ENDS]

If you would like this information in another language or format such as large print, CD or Braille please visit www.norwich.gov.uk/Intran or call 0344 980 3333.

APPENDIX 2:



High level equality impact assessment for strategic programmes



Programme title	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-27	Programme start date	This strategy will come into effect following approval by Cabinet in January 2024.
Team	Strategy	Directorate	Community Services
Senior leadership team sponsor	Helen Chamberlain	Role	Head of Strategy, Engagement & Culture
Officer completing	Joe Siggins	Role	Digital Inclusion Officer

What are the main aims or purpose of the programme?

As a public sector body, we have a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to have 'due regard' for advancing equality. This includes eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not, and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

This new strategy sets out the priorities that will shape the new actions we will take over the next few years, in addition to all the existing work which continues as part of our business-as-usual practice.

The refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy covering the period 2024-2027, outlines our 3 main aims as we seek to address the existing inequality within Norwich, in addition to promoting diversity and inclusion throughout our community.

Our 3 aims are:

1. Norwich City Council is an inclusive place to work.
2. Our services will be joined up, accessible and inclusive.
3. Norwich is a fair city where people facing inequality can share in and contribute to the city's success.

How does it fit with other services and policies, and how does it support our [corporate objectives?](#)

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy underpins all of the council's existing policies relating to the promotion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. This strategy seeks to ensure that considerations around EDI and their outcomes inform wider council policies, strategies and programmes moving forward.

This new strategy also aims to help the council work towards the delivery of its commitments as highlighted within our corporate plan to:

1. Help people *live independently and well in a diverse and safe city* - through recognising and tackling existing inequalities that form a barrier to members of our community from living the independent and safe lives they wish and deserve to.
2. Promote efforts to ensure *the city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish* – through working with partners and our communities to create an environment that allows people to feel they belong, are respected and heard, whilst working to maximise the opportunities they have to succeed and thrive within Norwich.
3. Ensure *Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city* – through efforts to make sure the profile of our workforce broadly reflects the city's population and the local labour market, whilst continuing to develop inclusive working practices that support colleagues to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to consider equality in all their work.

This strategy also works to guide the council's future activity, so that it may assist Norwich to realise its aspirations of becoming a truly *Fair City* as outlined within the Norwich 2040 City Vision.

What outcomes do we want to achieve, why and for who?

A full breakdown of the additional actions the council will be taking to promote equality, diversity and inclusion will be published in a forthcoming action plan and this Equality Impact Assessment will be updated to reflect those.

However, the strategy does outline 10 priority areas that we will focus on over the coming 4 years, all of which will contribute towards the realisation of our ambition to reduce the level of inequality across the city.

Our key priorities as mentioned within the strategy are:

- Ensure that the profile of our workforce broadly reflects the city's population and the local labour market.
- Continue to develop inclusive working practices and policies.
- Support colleagues to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to consider equality in all their work.
- Improve a range of communication platforms and channels to enhance accessibility, including for those facing digital exclusion.
- Undertake service-specific equalities reviews, so every service reflects our ambition.
- Ensure that our knowledge about the people and communities we serve informs our service planning, and that their voices are heard.
- Ensure that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion outcomes inform wider council policies, strategies and programmes.
- Focus our efforts on the places and communities in the city that face the biggest disadvantages, improving our use of data to help us do this.
- Develop our leadership capacity and capability around equalities.
- Continue working with partners to influence investment and target resource.

By having clarity within our organisation around our priorities relating to EDI, the council will be better equipped to deliver a coordinated effort to address local inequality, take further action to advance feelings of inclusion and encourage wider diversity covering all nine protected characteristics.

The responsibility for achieving both our legal duty on equality and realising the ambitions of this strategy lies with the whole organisation, with every officer and councillor having a role to play.

Delivery of the strategy and action plan will be overseen by the Strategy Manager. They will provide annual reports to the senior

leadership team and Cabinet on progress of actions and impact, through the council's Equality Information Report.

To help us develop this strategy and communicate our ambition to reduce local inequalities and promote diversity and inclusion, we consulted residents, community groups, councillors and internal council staff on the strategy.

- Residents were invited to participate in an online public consultation, asking questions about their views on equality, diversity and inclusion, their community and the council.
- Community groups were offered small grants to run workshops and provide brief reports of their views of equality, diversity and inclusion and their lived experience.
- Councillors were invited to share their views on equality, diversity and inclusion and the council's approach to the agenda.
- Council officers were offered a survey and workshops were facilitated engaging staff from across services and with a range of characteristics; this included gathering views on current experience of working in the council, council services, the actions the council is undertaking and areas for improvement.

The full Strategy and an "easy read" version were uploaded to the council's Get Talking Norwich website with visitors invited to contribute their thoughts by answering a series of questions. The consultation ran from Monday 14 August 2023 to Sunday 17 September 2023.

Will anyone be disproportionately affected by the programme (customers, employees, those with protected characteristics or groups in the wider community)?

No one particular group of people will be disproportionately affected by this strategy, including those with protected characteristics. This strategy outlines our continued commitment to addressing local inequality experienced by all groups of people. This strategy will help us improve our understanding and identification of local inequalities, as well as the opportunities we can all take to reduce such inequalities and promote greater levels of diversity and inclusion within the city.

In addition to the consultation this strategy went through, we have drawn on a range of data and analysis to inform the development of this strategy, including:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of Norwich – a visual summary of some key statistics about the people, place and economy of Norwich • Equalities Information Report – an annual report as part of our Public Sector Equality duty that provides key data on the characteristics of residents, council customers and workforce. • NODA report – a report on spatial distribution of inequality in the city council area commissioned from the Norfolk Office of Data Analytics to provide an evidence-base and analysis of neighbourhood-level data. <p>All of which help to illustrate the challenges we seek to address and are accessible by council staff and the general public.</p>		
<p>If yes, will these be adverse impacts (specify whether high, medium or low impacts)?</p> <p>N/A- No impact identified</p>		
<p>If yes, can the impacts be</p>	<p>a) justified?</p> <p>N/A- No impact identified</p>	<p>b) mitigated?</p> <p>N/A- No impact identified</p>
<p>What is the reason for the proposal or change (financial, legal etc)? <i>The Equality Act requires us to make this clear.</i></p> <p>As outlined earlier in this assessment, as a public sector body, Norwich City Council has legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have ‘due regard’ for advancing equality within our local authority boundary area. This strategy, along with other existing related policies and our corporate plan, will help ensure we continue to meet these legal obligations.</p>		

Please email assessment to: strategy@norwich.gov.uk - for the assessment to be final, the relevant people agreeing it must sign off this section

Officer completing EqIA	Joe Siggins	Date	07/11/2023
SLT sponsor	Helen Chamberlin	Date	09/11/2023
Equality lead (strategy team)	Nick Bodger	Date	07/11/2023



Committee name: Cabinet

Committee date: 17/01/2024

Report title: **Greater Norwich Draft Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2024-2029.**

Portfolio: Councillor Stonard, Leader of the council

Report from: Executive director of development and city services

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

KEY DECISION

Purpose

To consider the draft Greater Norwich Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2024-2029.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Cabinet agree:

- (i) The approval of a new programme management fee within the draft Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan, to be funded from the Infrastructure Investment Fund (pooled community infrastructure levy). This will supplement the cost of the Greater Norwich Project Team who are instrumental in driving forward the provision of infrastructure across the full Greater Norwich area. The fee for 24/25 will be in the region of £115,000 and the amount for future years will be confirmed within each subsequent version of this Plan. (More details within paragraphs 10-21 of this report).
- (ii) The signing of a deed of variation to the agreement entitled 'Partner Draw down and Borrowing Authorisations' that was originally signed by all partners on 21 October 2015. This is required to progress the establishment of the already agreed City Deal Borrowing Loans Fund. (More details within paragraphs 22-32 and Appendix A of this report).
Subject to agreement of (i) and (ii)
- (iii) The approval of the draft Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2024-29

(see appendix B) which includes the proposed 2024/25 Annual Growth Programme (AGP) and note that approval to allocate funding for the Eaton Park project (in the 2024/25 AGP) and Sloughbottom Park (in the 2023/24 AGP) is subject to the approval of the Council's capital programme in the February budget papers. (More details within paragraphs 33-40 of this report).

Policy framework

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
- Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
- Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
- The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.
- Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

This report serves the first four priorities and especially to provide the infrastructure and housing Norwich needs to be a successful city.

This report helps to meet the strategic planning policies in the Joint Core Strategy and the draft Greater Norwich Local Plan.

This report helps to meet objectives of the COVID-19 Recovery Plan that relate to:

- Business and the local economy
- Housing, regeneration and development
- Arts, culture and heritage

Report details

Background

- 1 In 2013 the Greater Norwich authorities (Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council and Norfolk County Council) together with the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, signed a City Deal with Government. The City Deal agreed a strategic infrastructure programme which would be supported by access to reduced cost borrowing, and the local authorities made a commitment to pool a significant proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income to form an Infrastructure Investment Fund (IIF).
- 2 The Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) has responsibility for managing the IIF and assembling the Annual Growth Programme from the Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan (the Plan).
- 3 The development of the Plan is informed by the updated Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan 2023, which [was published in a new digital format on the GNGB website here](#).
- 4 The GNGB agreed at its meeting on 24 March 2016 to produce an annual Joint Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan (the Plan), which is attached as Appendix B. The Plan is prepared to provide a longer term, more strategic context for infrastructure decision making as well as eliminating the need to approve individual projects at partner Cabinets more than once a year (subject to the GNGB not recommending any substantial changes to the programme).
- 5 The projects identified within the Plan are those currently considered to be a priority for delivery to assist in achieving the economic growth targets as set out in the Joint Core Strategy and the Greater Norwich City Deal. One of the key strands of the City Deal was the delivery of an infrastructure programme facilitated by a pooled funding arrangement between the authorities.
- 6 Income received from CIL is pooled within the IIF and allocated to infrastructure projects forming the Greater Norwich Growth Programme, which is administered by the GNGB.
- 7 The new projects which have been recommended to receive IIF funding during the forthcoming financial year (the first of the planned five years) are proposed to be adopted as the 2024/25 Annual Growth Programme (AGP).
- 8 The Plan provides an update of the financial status of the IIF and therefore is an important evidence base to support decision making for new allocations. It also includes information which each charging authority is legally required to report annually on CIL spend.
- 9 As the IIF has matured, the scope of how the fund supports the delivery of infrastructure within the Plan has broadened. There are now a variety of ways in which funding can be allocated to projects, some of which require pre-approval (recommendations i and ii).

The approval of a new programme management fee within the Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan.

- 10 The Greater Norwich Project Team (GNPT) have provided a dedicated partnership resource, working to deliver all workstreams as directed by the GNGB since their establishment in 2014. During this time, the team's work has become well established and respected on both a local and national scale, with central government and other local authorities seeking to learn from Greater Norwich's partnership working practices.
- 11 In more recent years, the scope of the team's work has broadened, developing beyond the management of a programme of projects which have been funded by the IIF. The team now develop and manage a programme of interdependent financial streams that need to be monitored with skill and knowledge to mitigate the financial risk to all partners, whilst ensuring all workstreams align with CIL legislation.
- 12 To date the team has been funded by annual contributions from the four partner authorities. A contribution of £40,000 was received from each partner for 23/24. This contribution will continue to be required and is adjusted each year in line with inflationary budget increases.
- 13 The Greater Norwich Infrastructure Delivery Board (IDB) reviewed the team workplan in March 2023 and agreed that the team is no longer suitably resourced to complete everything requested of it. They instructed a further review of the workplan and for options for securing additional resource to be explored. Having undertaken this work they proposed a change to the way the GNPT is funded which will enable the team to increase in size and deliver the extended scope of works.
- 14 At the meeting on 27 September 2023, the GNGB reviewed a proposal to increase the team resource from 3.2FTEs to 5.4FTEs, and for the annual contribution received from each partner to be supplemented by CIL. The additional staff resource will be utilised to bring forward the delivery of the Greater Norwich Growth Programme (IIF funded projects) and will free up the senior officer's time to progress new and emerging workstreams.
- 15 Section 59 of the CIL regulations states that CIL can be applied to the "provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure to support the development of its area".
- 16 The GNPT are instrumental in the provision of infrastructure. Together, they drive forward the delivery of the 100+ infrastructure projects that have been allocated funding from the IIF.
- 17 A summary of the team's roles include:
 - Preparing and publishing the evidence base which supports all partnership decision making to allocate funding to projects from the IIF.
 - Providing dedicated support to all projects funded by the IIF.
 - Supporting all applicants through the process of applying for IIF.

- Processing, monitoring, and reporting all IIF funding drawdowns.
 - Developing and progressing all project change requests.
 - Reporting quarterly programme updates to the IDB.
 - Managing the IIF call for projects and application appraisal process.
 - Publishing annual programme delivery updates.
- 18 It is accepted and common practice for individual projects to claim costs from the IIF to cover the project management related to the delivery. This proposal introduces a new 'programme management' fee, to cover the work that is undertaken to support the overall programme of funded projects.
- 19 For clarity, this proposal is not recommending the use of the 5% administration fee that is detailed under Section 61 of the CIL regulations and retained by the City Council from CIL that it collects from developers.
- 20 Using IIF to partly fund the team marks a change to previous partnership funding arrangements. The Greater Norwich partnership working arrangements requires all new allocations from the IIF to be agreed by the three CIL receipting authorities (Norwich City Council, Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council). The Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan provides the evidence against which new funding decisions can be agreed, so the decision to use IIF to partly fund is included within the Plan.
- 21 The GNGB are recommending that a new programme management fee be introduced to the Plan, to supplement the cost of the Greater Norwich Project Team who are instrumental in driving forward the provision of infrastructure across the Greater Norwich area. The fee for 24/25 will be £115,000 and the amount for future years will be confirmed within each subsequent version of the Plan.

Signing a deed of variation to progress the establishment of the already agreed City Deal Borrowing Loans Fund

- 22 As part of the Greater Norwich City Deal agreement signed with Government in 2013, the GNGB were afforded the opportunity to access lower-cost loan funding from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB).
- 23 The borrowing is allocated in two specific ways:
- £60 million for strategic infrastructure projects:
 - £40m for the Broadland Northway
 - £10m for the Long Stratton Bypass
 - £10m for Central Norwich Road network schemes
 - £20m to establish a local infrastructure fund

- 24 To date, only the £40m for the Broadland Northway has been drawn down. A further £10m for the Long Stratton Bypass has been agreed by all partners but is yet to be drawn down.
- 25 In 2021 the GNGB agreed in principle to repurpose the £20m borrowing capacity allocated to a local infrastructure fund, to a new City Deal Borrowing Loans (CDBL) Fund. This facility will provide the partners upfront loan funding to support the delivery of key infrastructure in the Greater Norwich area. Monies repaid will in turn establish a new cyclical fund called the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF).
- 26 Initial work to develop the CDBL Fund progressed during 2022, draft terms of reference were agreed and the GNGB was granted delegated authority from all four partner Cabinets in summer 2022 to manage the allocation of the £20m City Deal borrowing to individual projects. Further details on the operation of the fund can be found [here](#) in the City Council's Cabinet report of 6 July 2022.
- 27 Due to a lack of resource within the GNPT, work was put on hold for a while until 27 June 2023 when the GNGB committed to accelerating the development of the CDBL Fund.
- 28 Work to develop the monitoring and administrative processes of the CDBL Fund was progressed and later agreed by the GNGB on 27 September 2023, triggering the opening of the fund. At the same meeting, the first application to the CDBL Fund was reviewed and agreed, allocating £4.5m of borrowing to forward fund the developer contribution for the Long Stratton Bypass and bring forward its delivery.
- 29 In order for this £4.5m borrowing and any future agreed borrowing to be progressed, an amendment is required to be made to an existing legal agreement that was originally signed by all Greater Norwich partners in 2015. The legal agreement entitled 'Partner draw-down and borrowing authorisations' currently caps the total amount of City Deal borrowing to be drawn at £60m, because initially only the first £60m (as detailed in paragraph 23) was intended to be repaid by the IIF. All partners have already agreed for the £20m allocated to establish a local infrastructure fund to be repurposed to be used to establish the CDBL Fund and ultimately a new SIF (see paragraph 25 and 26), and in doing so agreed for the total of up to £80m borrowing drawn down from PWLB to be repaid by the IIF. Prior to the first CDBL Fund loan being drawn, the original 2015 legal agreement needs to be amended, increasing the cap on borrowing from £60m to £80m to accommodate this decision.
- 30 The deed of variation requires a minor administrative change to be made to the 2015 agreement, but any change to a legal agreement requires specific agreement from all signatories before it can be actioned.
- 31 The full Deed of Variation is provided in appendix A.
- 32 The GNGB are recommending that each partner agrees to the signing of this deed.

Draft Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2024-29

- 33 The Plan (see appendix B) was considered by the GNGB at their public meeting on 30 November 2023 and is now being recommended for approval to each partner district council. The Plan along with the confirmed Annual Growth Programme (AGP) 24/25 will then return to the GNGB at their meeting on 19 March 2024 for final confirmation of the commitment of funds.
- 34 The Plan incorporates the updated position on infrastructure delivery, includes revised CIL income forecasts and provides updates on projects accepted within previous AGPs. The plan is split into five chapters.
- 35 Chapter 1 (Context and introduction to the work of the GNGB) details how the Plan is developed and provides information around the long-term strategic planning for Greater Norwich.
- 36 Chapter 2 (The Infrastructure Investment Fund) provides an overview of what the IIF is, its eligibility criteria, and the different mechanisms the GNGB use to fund and deliver infrastructure using the IIF.
- 37 Chapter 3 (New Allocations) details the projects which are being proposed within the 2024/25 AGP which, if agreed, will receive IIF funding to support their delivery in the forthcoming financial year. The AGP includes a £333,000 contribution from the IIF to the City Council's project in Eaton Park. The improvements will include renovations to the changing rooms in the central pavilion to install four player changing rooms and two changing rooms for officials, the installation of green technologies (including solar panels, heat pump, PIR system, LED lighting), improved park signage at all entrances and ten cycle storage racks located at several locations throughout the park. This project will make the facilities compliant with Football Association regulations and accessible by all, as well as improving the energy efficiency of the building. The installation of cycle racks will help encourage active travel in and around the park.
- 38 Chapter 3 also presents the match funding and City Deal Borrowing Loans Fund allocations which have been agreed by the GNGB this year under their delegated powers.
- 39 Chapter 4 (Previous Allocations) provides a financial overview and drawdown timeframe of each project which has been allocated funding from the IIF since its establishment. This is referred to as the Full Growth Programme with all projects listed by their Growth Programme (GP) number. Legislation requires this information to be reported annually. It includes the allocation of £850,000 for the regeneration of Sloughbottom Park, which was agreed last year and acts as match funding for the City Council's successful application for Levelling Up Funding that was confirmed by the government on 30 November 2023. This project will deliver a linked set of community facilities including a new 3G football pitch, league standard changing rooms, multi-purpose pavilion and café, upgraded play park, refurbished and upgraded BMX track, storage facilities, an

upgrade to the Dolphin Path and other park infrastructure (car park and path resurfacing, lighting and signage).

- 40 Chapter 5 (Delivery Updates) provides updates for projects that have received funding in previous years and are currently underway.

Data Dashboard

- 41 A new [digital dashboard](#) has been developed, presenting the financial information contained in the Plan. It provides an interactive and more accessible platform for readers to be able to explore the financial data more easily.

Greater Norwich Annual Growth Programme (AGP)

Each year, a new group of projects receive funding from the Infrastructure Investment Fund (IIF) and are called the Annual Growth Programme. This table shows all the projects that have been received funding since the fund was established in 2014/2015. Click on the authority logos or select from the drop down menus to filter the projects by different factors. Please note that multiple factors can be selected at once.

Greater Norwich Growth Board

Growth Programme

Growth Programme Overview

Match Funding

Loans

CIL Forecast

Planned Spend

IIF Balance

Lead Authority Partner

Infrastructure Theme

All

District Location

All

AGP Year

All

Project Status

All

AGP Year	Ref	Lead Authority Partner	Project Name	Infrastructure Theme	Project Status	Project Budget	Other Funding	IIF Funding	Spend to 2022/23
2024/25	GP100	County	Plumstead Road Library	Community	Not Started	£260,391	£65,391	£195,000	£0
2024/25	GP099	Norwich	Eaton Park	Community	Not Started	£601,000	£268,000	£333,000	£0
2024/25	GP098	Broadland	Aylsham Gym & Fitness Centre	Community	Not Started	£1,309,988	£909,988	£400,000	£0
2023/24	GP097	South Norfolk	Hethel Technology Park	Transport	Not Started	£8,218,900	£3,218,900	£5,000,000	£0
2023/24	GP095	County	Hethersett to NRP Cycle Route	Transport	Ongoing	£728,015	£227,000	£501,015	£0
2023/24	GP094	South Norfolk	Venta Icenorum	Green Infrastructure	Ongoing	£155,628	£2,500	£153,128	£0
2023/24	GP093	South Norfolk	Cringleford Country Park	Green Infrastructure	Ongoing	£798,000	£330,000	£468,000	£0
2023/24	GP092	South Norfolk	Queens Hill Community Park	Green Infrastructure	Ongoing	£153,553	£20,000	£133,553	£0
2023/24	GP091	Broadland	Youngs Park Aylsham AGP	Community	Ongoing	£900,000	£650,000	£250,000	£0
2023/24	GP090	South Norfolk	Easton Village Hall	Community	Ongoing	£1,505,204	£1,000,204	£505,000	£0
2024/25	GP088b	County	Education - Wymondham High Academy	Education	Not Started	£12,500,000	£10,000,000	£2,500,000	£0

Clear Filters

Consultation

- 42 There has been no consultation on the content of the Plan itself. Project sponsors are responsible for ensuring consultation takes place on individual projects.

Implications

Financial and resources

Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan

2022-26 and budget.

43 The financial status of the IIF is explained within the Plan.

44 The establishment of the programme management fee for the GNPT, which supplements the existing annual City Council revenue funding commitment, will be funded through CIL funds that the districts pool into the IIF.

45 The Greater Norwich Growth Programme requires continuous monitoring and reporting which will be undertaken by the existing resource of the Greater Norwich Projects Team.

46 Resources for the delivery of each project within the programme are the responsibility for the individual project manager and sponsor.

Legal

47 The IIF pooling arrangements and the designation of an Accountable Body are set out in the Joint Working Agreement which was signed on 21 October 2015 and is supported by the Infrastructure Investment Fund Programme Governance which is agreed by all partners.

48 The proposed deed of variation is in relation to the existing 2015 signed agreement. Signing this deed will allow previously agreed decisions to proceed. No new risks are identified.

49 There is an anticipated change from the current scheme of CIL to the proposed Infrastructure Levy scheme. The full details of this change are not yet known but will need to be considered by the GNGB given the significant implications it could have for the operation of the IIF in the long term. Norfolk County Council will work with the GNGB to assess any risk, but this will not be a risk to the Board because Norfolk County Council is the constituent body for all borrowing.

50 The Long Stratton Bypass loan is yet to be drawn from the Public Works Loan Board by Norfolk County Council as the Accountable Body. This has already been agreed by the partners and no new risks are identified. The loan will be underwritten by a legal agreement which will need to be signed by all partners. This mirrors the agreement that has already been signed when borrowing for the Broadland Northway.

Statutory considerations	
Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	No specific issues arising from the funding of the Growth Programme. Individual project issues are the responsibility of the project manager and sponsor. In the case of the City Council, this relates to the Eaton Park project. The project addresses an inequality allowing the facilities to be used simultaneously by males and females.
Health, social and economic impact	The funding of the Growth Programme is intended to contribute to the provision of infrastructure that support the development identified in the Joint Core Strategy. Individual project issues are the responsibility of the project manager and sponsor. In the case of the City Council, this relates to the Eaton Park project. The facilities will be more accessible improving residents' ability to live a healthy lifestyle. The anticipated increased use of the pitches will provide revenue to the council.
Crime and disorder	No specific issues arise from the funding of the Growth Programme. Individual project issues are the responsibility of the project manager and sponsor. In the case of the City Council, this relates to the Eaton Park project, but no crime and disorder impacts have been identified.
Children and adults safeguarding	No specific issues arise from the funding of the Growth Programme. Individual project issues are the responsibility of the project manager and sponsor. In the case of the City Council, this relates to the Eaton Park project, but no safeguarding impacts have been identified.
Environmental impact	Project managers and sponsors will be required to meet their own environmental obligations. In the case of the City Council, this relates to the Eaton Park project. The project will reduce carbon emissions from the building with the addition of solar PV panels and a heat pump.

Risk Management		
Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Overrunning project cost and programme	Additional cost or lengthier programmes only carry a risk for the City Council in relation to those projects within the City Council's capital programme. The Council would be obliged to either curtail the scope of the projects or obtain additional funds.	The risks related to project cost and delivery remain with the project manager and sponsor and for City Council projects would be covered by existing thorough governance and programme management arrangements. New projects in the IIF are asked to sign an IIF funding offer letter to cover any additional project specific risks subject to specific conditions. Funding is also drawn in areas from the IIF.
Lack of funds within the IIF to make interest and loan repayments in the medium to long term	If the mitigating measures were insufficient the City Council would be obliged to provide a share of the funds to repay the borrowing on the Long Stratton Bypass as it is already obliged to do in relation to the Broadland Northway.	This risk is alleviated by the agreed monitoring and reporting processes that the GNGB adheres to. The Plan provides an annual financial update, any new allocations are only agreed when all existing commitments are considered. It was agreed by each partner s151 officer that a reserve equal to one annual loan repayment was required to be kept in reserves as a safeguard. A £2m cash reserve to support the repayments for the Broadland Northway was allocated in 20/21 and £345,000 was allocated in 22/23 in readiness for the repayments of the borrowing for Long Stratton Bypass. Any required increase to the reserve amount for Long Stratton Bypass will be allocated in next year's version of the Plan, when the final loan repayment amount is known.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

51 Cabinet is invited to approve the recommendations to ensure that the programme of infrastructure investments that are needed to support development in the Greater Norwich area can be provided using the funds that have been collected from developers through the CIL.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A – Deed of variation to the agreement entitled ‘Partner Draw down and Borrowing Authorisations’ that was originally signed by all partners on 21st October 2015.

[Appendix B – Draft Joint Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2024-29](#)

Contact officer:

Name: Ben Webster

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If you would like this agenda in an alternative format, such as a larger or smaller font, audio or Braille, or in a different language, please contact the committee officer above.

Appendix A

DATED

**Deed of variation of contract
between**

BROADLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

NORWICH CITY COUNCIL

SOUTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

and

NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

This deed is dated [DATE]

Parties

- (1) BROADLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL of South Norfolk Council, The Horizon Centre, Broadland Business Park, Peachman Way, Norwich, NR7 0WF (**“Broadland”**);
- (2) NORWICH CITY COUNCIL of City Hall, St Peter Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH (**“Norwich”**);
- (3) SOUTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL of South Norfolk Council, The Horizon Centre, Broadland Business Park, Peachman Way, Norwich, NR7 0WF (**“South Norfolk”**); and
- (4) NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL of County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH (**“County Council”**)
- (5) (together “the Parties” and each one “a Party”; Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk together the “District Councils”)

BACKGROUND

- (A) The Parties are party to an agreement relating to funding under the Greater Norwich Growth Board Partner Draw-down and Borrowing Authorisations dated 21 October 2015 as amended from time to time (“Agreement”).
- (B) Pursuant to the Agreement, the County Council borrows fund to assist with the delivery of the Greater Norwich Growth Programme, up to a maximum of £60m, undertaken at the equivalent of the prevailing Public Works Loan Board (“PWLB”) project rate discount as set out in the City Deal dated 12 December 2013.
- (C) The City Deal also contained provisions for an additional amount of borrowing, at the Public Works Loan Board project rate discount, of up to £20m in order to establish a local infrastructure fund intended to provide upfront funding for onsite infrastructure delivery to small and medium-sized local developers. The facility was available for four years but the rate and level of take up was lower than expected. All the agreed loans were financed directly by Norfolk County Council without the need to draw down the £20m through the City Deal.
- (D) Pursuant to a review of the LIF facility, on 17th March 2020 the Greater Norwich Growth Board (“GNGB”) made the decision to bring it to a close and instructed the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Delivery Board (“IDB”) to prepare an updated City Deal Borrowing schedule, proposing a reassignment of the £20m previously allocated to LIF. On 17 June 2021 the GNGB endorsed the ‘in principle’ draw down of £20m City Deal borrowing to create a new cyclical programme of funding to bring forward the delivery of major community infrastructure projects.
- (E) In accordance with the meetings of each of the Parties, as set out in Schedule 1, the maximum amount of borrowing permitted pursuant to this agreement shall be increased by £20m.

(F) Pursuant to each of the Party's agreement it has been determined that the costs of the £20m additional borrowing will be underwritten by the CIL-funded Infrastructure Investment Fund, and as a result an additional £20m borrowing capacity needs to be added to the Agreement. Consequently, the parties wish to amend the Agreement as set out in this deed with effect from the date of this deed (**Variation Date**).

(G) This Deed of Variation ("Deed") is supplemental to the Agreement

Agreed terms

1. Terms defined in the Agreement

In this deed, expressions defined in the Agreement and used in this deed have the meaning set out in the Agreement unless otherwise defined. The rules of interpretation set out in the Agreement apply to this deed.

2. Variation

2.1 With effect from the Variation Date, the parties agree the following amendments to the Agreement:

a)	Recitals (iii) limitation on "borrowing" amended	The words "(up to £60m)" to be deleted and replaced with the words "(up to £80m)"
b)	Clause 1.1 Definition of "Loan" amended	The words "up to £60m" to be deleted and replaced with the words "up to £80m".

2.2 Except as set out in clause 2.1, the Agreement will continue in full force and effect.

2.3 To the extent of any conflict between the terms of the Agreement and this deed, the terms of this deed will prevail.

3. Governing law

This Deed and any dispute or claim (including non-contractual disputes or claims) arising out of or in connection with it or its subject matter or formation is be governed by and will be interpreted in accordance with the law of England and Wales.

4. Jurisdiction

4.1 Each party irrevocably agrees that the courts of England and Wales will have exclusive jurisdiction to settle any dispute or claim (including non-contractual disputes or claims) arising out of or in connection with this deed or its subject matter or formation.

**ANNEX A SCHEDULE 1 Dates of meetings of each Party approving increase
in amount of borrowing permitted under the Agreement.**

Norfolk County Council	06 June 2022
Norwich City Council	06 July 2022
South Norfolk District Council	11 July 2022
Broadland District Council	19 July 2022



Committee Name: Cabinet
Committee Date: 17/01/2024
Report Title: Utilities Contracts

Portfolio: Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources and
Councillor Hampton, cabinet member for climate change

Report from: Head of Property and Economic Development

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

To consider the future commissioning of utility contracts.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 1) Agrees to enter an agreement with Crown Commercial Services to enable the Council to access their framework for utilities.
- 2) To call off from the framework referred to in 1, to procure electricity from October 2024 by entering an interim contract for the period October 2024 for 6 months to March 25; and then a fixed annual contract from April 2025.
- 3) To call off from the framework referred to in 1, to procure gas and to align both electricity and gas contracts to run for a fixed 12 month term from April 2025 to March 2026.
- 4) Agrees to continue procuring green electricity as part of the above arrangement.

Policy Framework

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
- Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
- Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
- The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.
- Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

This report meets the corporate priority to ensure Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

Report Details

1. The council has two major energy contracts. The current gas contract is with Total Gas and Power having been awarded under a call off contract from a Crown Commercial Services framework. It is a fixed one-year term which expires in March 2024 and will continue to roll annually until terminated. The electricity contract, let through the ESPO utilities framework and supplied by Total Gas and Power, is due to expire on 30 September 2024.
2. The current electricity contract was entered into for a 4-year term and has generally represented good value with the Council benefitting from the purchasing power of the framework, as well as being protected from the price fluctuations and uncertainty within the energy markets. However, as this contract is now approaching the end date, the council needs to secure a new cost-effective arrangement.
3. The supply of gas and electricity covers a range of operational assets such as City Hall and the Halls, properties in the general fund, and communal housing properties which are re-charged to residents through their rent and service charges. As a result, it is important that the council seeks to obtain best value, where it can, to protect both the public and residents' purse.
4. The current utilities market continues to be challenging, given the global impact of events such as the war in Ukraine and the recent conflict between Israel and Palestine. The price fluctuations of utilities, particularly gas and electric, has been widely reported. Whilst geopolitical risks have been the main focus, the fundamentals of supply and demand have been rather more settled. Overall demand remains below recent years and the long-range weather forecasts are suggesting that we are likely to experience milder than normal winters. The outlook for renewable energy generation also looks positive with forecasts that our weather over Q4 will be dominated by Atlantic westerlies, which suggest strong wind speeds.
5. The council has been carefully considering its options for future procurement of supplies in light of the challenging market. The main options for procurement are either purchasing utilities ourselves versus utilising a framework.
6. Historically, the council has used frameworks to call off from. These are contracts already procured by large purchasing organisations and are made available to a range of organisations and tend to obtain better rates for councils using bulk purchasing power and their management of the market. The main two framework owners are the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) and Crown Commercial Services (CCS) although there are other smaller providers who offer utilities contracts.
7. CCS are the largest buyer in the market and therefore offer the potential for the best value. They are the largest public sector aggregator in the UK and last year purchased over 23tkw/hr (23 trillion kilowatt hours) units of gas and electricity. This has been validated to benchmarking from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero which demonstrates that Crown Commercial Services energy rates available to customers were consistently lower than the general industry benchmark.

Current Gas Purchasing

8. The recommendation approved by cabinet on the 14th September 2022, was to enter into a 1 year fixed term deal by calling off from the CCS framework for gas supply from 1 April 2023 and to continue to explore options with regards the longer term purchasing position, alongside proposals regarding electricity.
9. The council committed to a (short term) 12 month contract, buying gas over a 6 month period (October 2022 to March 2023) at a range of future rates and then accessing gas over a 12 month contract period starting April 2023 at the rates already secured.
10. The current contract will roll annually, to see the Council purchase gas over a 6 month 'forward supply pricing basis' whilst the contract is in place i.e. for the relevant summer and winter seasons in advance.

Options for Future Electricity Purchasing

11. The council's current electricity contract expires on 30 September 2024. CCS have confirmed that by 15 March 2024, they would require the council to confirm whether it wishes to opt into its interim solution, which would see the council on a rate based on supply conditions for the period 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025, and then on a fixed term 12 month from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.
12. As a result, it is recommended at this stage that the council agrees to sign a joining agreement and to access the CCS framework for the procurement of electricity from 1st October 2024, purchasing electricity over a 6-month period from 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025, and then on a fixed term 12 month from April 2025 to March 2026
13. One of the benefits of entering a 1-year agreement is that this presents the platform for the council to enter discussions to effectively manage its supply based on future rate fluctuations.

Alignment of Gas and Electricity contracts

14. CCS advises that its strategies for the framework are set out based on customers appetite to risk as well as individual commitment circumstances.
15. The purchase of gas is currently based on a short-term buying strategy and is market reflective, meaning that any volatility in the market will be seen in the costs that are achieved.
16. Aligning with the proposal for the electricity strategy on the longer-term strategy means that buying is conducted over 10 months instead of 6, spreading the risk. The thought process is the longer the buying period, the less risk of year-on-year price change and exposure to volatile conditions.
17. Having both gas and electricity in the same strategy will mean not only the same levels of risk exposure, but also alignment of key notice dates, greater understanding of the strategies and ease of administration.

Purchasing Options

18. CCS offer the opportunity for the Council to award a fixed or variable contract (as detailed below in Table 1). When considering the future purchasing options it is important to understand the current energy market. Wholesale gas and electricity price volatility and shifting economic conditions are creating energy bill uncertainty. The council's attitude to energy cost management aims to achieve value for money in a manner consistent with our approach to risk management. A short-term fixed contract provides budgetary certainty, reduces risks, whilst providing the flexibility to opt out, should market conditions change.

Table 1

Option	Summary	Benefits	Risks	Comments
Fixed contract	The price is fixed before the start of the delivery period	Well established approach	No benefit seen if the wholesale market falls for the fixed period	Enables council budget setting in a straightforward and transparent manner
	Bills are issued with actual prices	Budget certainty	Resource intensive procurement activity will be required for the following year	
	A flexible contract is effectively run as a fixed price contract with all the exposure fixed prior to the start of the annual contract period	Exposure to volatility is minimised, avoids peaks and troughs		
	If there is a reversal in the market and prices begin to fall, the Council will benefit from that	Limited ongoing management requirements by the council and individual depts		
Variable contract	Purchasing of defined gas or electricity blocks undertaken in line with agreed trading strategy	Well established approach	Prices not known until final transaction made	Exposure to risk in a rising market. The trading strategy should allow for exceptional or emergency purchases to mitigate potential risk
		Can manage exposure to wholesale price volatility	Does not support substantial budget certainty given seasonal trading and price setting	

		Limited ongoing management requirements by the council and individual depts	Can be resource intensive requiring ongoing monitoring for any open ended period before contracted position is finalised	
			Unless the volume is purchased ahead of delivery, can result in the use of a reference price on bills and require resource intensive bill reconciliation	
			Difficult to manage in a volatile market	
			Some variable pricing strategies may be incorrectly perceived as market speculation	
Spot prices	Secure Energy on spot prices on an interim basis	If the wholesale market stabilises and prices fall the council could benefit	Extremely intensive process requiring active monitoring	The most volatile option and not aligned to the councils budgetary objectives.
	Seek new suppliers and partners , exploring options when market conditions are perceived to improve	Longer term; access to alternative support services may be better aligned to councils objectives	Significantly higher exposure to price volatility.	
		Longer term; Purchasing options may be possible which may allow for greater flexibility and or budgetary control	Active monitoring of market conditions and time intensive procurement process.	
Procure our own contracts	Officers would be required to seek new suppliers and explore options	We would be in control of the contract terms	We would be highly unlikely to get as good value compared to using a Procurement framework	
			We do not have the same market specialisms in house	

19. Options to enter a long term fixed contract to purchase electricity over a 22 month purchase window for delivery in April 25 would have required agreement to opt in by March 2023. Given the instability and uncertainty within the market, a sensible approach was to look to enter into an interim arrangement using the

CCS framework from September 2024 through to March 2025 and then align both the gas and electricity contracts from April 2025 to March 2026.

20. Advice procured to support the previous utilities paper in September 2022, from Cornwall Insight, a local company who operate as one of the leading energy advisors in the country, concluded that. *Lower-risk approaches allow the Council to mitigate wholesale market exposure while allowing varying degrees of budget and cost certainty. Fixing prices early on may reduce the risk of exposure to wholesale market volatility, but could result in lower price opportunities being missed. As such, there is a trade-off in terms of risk and reward associated with this, or indeed any, trading decision.*

Purchase Strategy

Table 2 included below, summarises the current and proposed arrangements for the purchase of gas and electricity through the CCS framework.

Gas	Current contract	From	To	Pricing
	Purchased Gas	1st October 2022	31st March 2023	
	Delivering Gas	1st April 2023	31st March 2024	Fixed for 12 mths
	Now Purchasing	1st October 2023	31st March 2024	
	To Be Delivered	1st April 2024	31st March 2025	Fixed for 12 mths
Electricity	Proposed contract	From	To	
	Purchase Electricity	1st April 2024	30th Sept 2024	
	Deliver Electricity	1st October 2024	31st March 2025	Fixed for 6 mths
Gas and Electric	Aligned contract	From	To	
	Purchase both	1st April 2024	31st March 2025	
	Deliver both	1st April 2025	31st March 2026	Fixed for 12 mths

Options for Green Gas and Electricity

21. We have also discussed green energy with CCS. There are no effective options for purchasing green gas through their framework at present (and limited options across the sector for green frameworks that are compliant with public procurement regulations); Green gas is both expensive and its environmental credentials are questionable, and so, it is not recommended that the council looks to source green gas.
22. The Council's *current* electricity contract (procured by calling off from the ESPO framework) is 100% renewable and will be so until it expires on 30 September 2024; it is recommended that the Council continues procuring green electricity as part of any new contract it enters. The current Environmental Strategy 2020-2025, adopted by Cabinet on 8th July 2020, commits to "[ensuring] 100% of the council's energy is sourced from a "green" tariff". Likewise, the council's 2030 net-zero commitment is a *de facto* commitment to green electricity. Whilst this is not explicit in the commitment, reaching operational net-zero by 2030 without

green electricity will be practically impossible.

23. CCS' proposed additional uplift for customers from the April 2024 start date for "UK Renewable for Business" – which is specifically "sourced from a range of renewable technologies across the UK only" – is 0.85 pence per kWh. Based on consumption rates, this would mean an additional cost of approximately £70,000 per annum. Our contract will begin in October 2024, with forecast prices available nearer the time.
24. In carbon terms, based on consumption rates and DEFRA's latest emissions conversion factors, our electricity consumption equates to approximately 1,635 tonnes CO_{2e}. This is, essentially, the amount of CO₂ that will be saved by opting for green electricity. For reference, the council's total emissions at the last measurement (2021/22 financial year) was 3,610 tonnes CO_{2e}. Not opting for green electricity would thus increase our emissions by approximately 45%. Reducing 1,635 tonnes CO_{2e} for £70k is highly cost effective, working out at a carbon cost effectiveness of £41.05/tonne CO₂.
25. The green electricity provided through the CCS framework is 100% REGO backed, meaning that it is entirely legitimate to count this as zero carbon and we can be confident that it's origin is renewable sources.
26. In the near future, it might be that the Council seeks to reserve an option to procure a small portion of its electricity through new and emerging peer-to-peer trading arrangements, notwithstanding that such arrangements are acceptable in terms of the council's due diligence and procurement processes. Such arrangements have successfully been implemented by other local authorities with significant savings in cost and improvements in flexibility around low-carbon technologies. Should the council wish to pursue this option and procure energy according to a peer-to-peer arrangement then a separate paper will be brought to cabinet to consider this matter.

Consultation

27. Recharged utility costs form part of the communal areas service charges for some residents and leaseholders and also for those in sheltered accommodation that do not have individual metered supplies. All these residents receive heating and energy by way of communal heating schemes which must be recharged at actual cost. There is no requirement for formal consultation as the contract is for a 12 month period.
28. However, given that those paying service charges have no choice to opt out of these schemes it is imperative that the council considers communicating the impact of rising utility prices on them as early as possible and in ways which gives advice and support to them managing these costs.

Implications Financial and Resources

29. The current budgets for utilities costs for 22/23 and 23/24 are set out below, for information and comparison.

2022/2023	Gas (£)	Electricity (£)	Total (£)
General Fund	77,901	532,939	610,840
HRA	783,552	492,930	1,276,482
Total	861,453	1,025,869	1,887,322
2023/2024	Gas (£)	Electricity (£)	Total (£)
General Fund	284,300	1,328,530	1,612,830
HRA	3,858,993	1,308,919	5,167,912
Total	4,143,293	2,637,449	6,780,742

30. CCS and ESPO continue to provide the council with regular budgetary projections as their buyers procure from the market for gas and electricity. The most recent estimated figures reflect an overall positive position against budget for 2023/24.

2023/2024	Budget £	Estimated Spend £	Variance £
Gas	4,143,293	2,370,600	1,772,693
Electricity	2,637,449	2,758,995	-121,546
Overall	6,780,742	5,129,595	1,651,147

31. Estimated projected spend levels, including the green tariff uplift, for 2024/2025, show a further reduction, it should however be noted that future economic and political factors may impact utility prices, so this should be reflected in any overarching budget predictions. Officers will continue to work with ESPO and CCS to review budgetary projections as we move towards the new financial year.

2024/2025	Gas (£)	Electricity (£)	Total (£)
General Fund	125,737	1,301,923	1,427,660
HRA	1,445,964	1,250,867	2,696,831
Total	1,571,701	2,552,790	4,124,491

32. The council is under a formal duty to ensure that the HRA costs are recharged to service users through their rent and service charges; this includes tenants of shared areas, both HRA tenants and leaseholders, as well as district heating scheme users. As such, the costs do not impact directly on to the council, but the wider context is the potential impact of such costs on our residents.

33. The service charges made to residents are for district heating and shared heating schemes, such as communal areas for buildings and sheltered housing schemes. It is not possible for residents to opt out of these schemes and secure their own, separate utility supplies.

Legal

34. The value of the council's gas and electricity contracts mean that the council must follow the public procurement regulations 2015 in its purchase of energy. The purchasing route (call off from frameworks) provided by Crown Commercial Services are compliant with the regulations.
35. S.151 of the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002 only requires a formal leaseholder consultation where the contract is more than 12 months; as such, no formal consultation is required for the proposals in this report. The Council will need to ensure any charges to leaseholders and HRA tenants reflect the actual cost of service provision.

Statutory Considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	The decision on the procurement route for the purchase of utilities does not itself create equality or diversity implications.
Health, Social and Economic Impact	As highlighted above, there is the potential that the increase in utility pricing may make it more challenging for residents to be able to afford service charges. The report sets out some of the support provided by the Council to the people of Norwich in tackling the cost of living crisis
Crime and Disorder	None
Children and Adults Safeguarding	None
Environmental Impact	This report does not propose to increase the use of energy; however, not procuring green electricity will significantly increase the council's emissions. This is outlined in paragraph 19 and 24 above.

Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Impact on the Council's financial position as a result of increased utility prices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased savings requirement within the MTFS Potential for increased debt in the HRA due to increase in service charges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of potential costs within MTFS Regular updates on budget estimates from CCS and ESPO Monitoring of debtors Ongoing support to debtors through non-commercial debt policy

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Impact on residents of increased service charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents suffer hardship as a result of increased utility costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing support to residents as outlined in paragraph 32 above

Other Options Considered

36. The options available to the council at this stage are set out in Table 1 and throughout this report.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

37. The council's contracts for utilities are critical to delivering services within the council, as well as providing services to residents. It is essential that the council agrees a way forward for these contracts.

38. As this report sets out, the market for utilities continues to be challenging. The same challenges the council is facing at this time are the same as being faced by households, businesses and other parts of the public sector throughout the country.

39. This report seeks to analyse the options available to the council to ensure it is best placed to try to secure the most economically advantageous option available.

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