



Cabinet

17.30 – 18:50

9 February 2022

Present Councillors Waters (chair), Harris (vice chair), Hampton, Jones, Kendrick, Oliver, Packer and Stonard.

Apologies Councillor Davis

Also present Councillors Galvin and Councillor Wright

1. Declarations of interest

Councillors Harris, Kendrick, Oliver and Waters declared that they had been granted a dispensation as a council tenant, to take part in the discussion and vote on item 6, the council's 2022-23 budget and medium term financial strategy.

Councillor Harris declared a conflict of interest in items 10 and 13, Repairs and building maintenance service provided by Norwich Norse Building Ltd as a director and would withdraw from the meeting for the discussion and vote on those items. She also declared an other interest in items 9 and 12, as a director of Norwich Norse Building Ltd and a member of the Norwich City Services Ltd shareholder panel.

Councillor Kendrick declared an other interest as a director of NPS and a member of the Norwich City Services Ltd shareholder panel.

Councillor Oliver declared an other interest in items 9 and 12 as a non- executive director of Norwich City Services Ltd.

Councillor Waters declared an other interest in items 9 and 12 as a member of the Norwich City Services Ltd shareholder panel.

Councillor Galvin declared an other interest as a member of the Norwich City Services Ltd shareholder panel.

2. Public Questions/Petitions

Charlotte Chamberlain asked the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion the following question:

“With headlines suggesting energy bills could increase by as much as 50% when the price cap is raised in April, a lot of Norwich residents, including me, are worried about the impact on our finances. I’m part of a local group called Green New Deal Norwich which is looking at how we as a city can retrofit our homes to stop them leaking heat and transition away from reliance on gas. This needs to

happen across the country, but there is a serious shortage of investment, skills and awareness. Will the council commit funds to addressing this challenge in its upcoming Budget?"

Councillor Hampton, cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion replied:

"We are aware of the challenge that rising energy bills represent for many. We continue to do all we can to improve housing and help residents access appropriate support and advice.

We have been awarded £3.1 million from central government to retrofit approximately 200 private-sector homes in the city with insulation and solar systems. Overall this will save residents £250,000 a year. We also utilise other external sources of funding including ECO, which helps private sector households access funding for loft and cavity wall insulation. Over 1,500 homes have benefited from this scheme.

We have invested £129m into our housing over the past six years. We have committed £18.5m to maintaining and improving the condition of existing housing.

All of this is an important part of our wider work supporting residents who face financial challenges. For example, our Council Tax Reduction Scheme offers those in most need a 100% reduction."

By way of a supplementary question Ms Chamberlain said that she welcomed that the council was addressing the retrofit challenge, but it would only be a fraction of what was needed. She asked whether the council would consider following the example of other councils, such as Manchester City Council, which had set up a task force specifically for retro fitting to help to meet the enormous challenge.

Councillor Hampton replied that the council was always happy to look at models from other councils, but the work was still largely reliant on government funding. The funding opportunities tended to be relatively small in scale and what was needed were long term, sustainable solutions, with central government playing its part.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of meeting held on 12 January 2022.

4. Corporate Plan 2022-2026

Councillor Waters, leader of the council presented the report. He reminded members that items 4 and 5 would be subject to debate at the full council meeting on 22 February and had already been considered by the scrutiny committee.

Councillor Beth Jones proposed the following amendment to the priority to 'Take action against domestic abuse, hate crime and anti-social behaviour and regulate activity so our communities are places where residents feel safe.'

Replace:

Review and update the Norwich Private Renters Charter to provide clarity on the standards that private landlords and agents must meet when providing private rented accommodation (with a delivery date of December 2024)

With:

Review and accelerate delivery of the Norwich Private Renters Charter (which provides clarity on the standards that private landlords and agents must meet when providing private rented accommodation) in line with improvement plan for regulatory services. (with a delivery date of ongoing from June 2022) and Review and update the Charter itself (with a delivery date of Charter updated by December 2024).

Councillor Waters continued to present the item. He commended the report which was clearly set out and well designed and had been strongly informed by the work of the Norwich 2040 Vision partnership.

It was a high level document and therefore did not contain all of the work being undertaken by the council. There were a series of technical appendices which set out the ambition of the council using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and timeframes for delivery of those. The Corporate Plan had to be flexible to take account of any changes happening throughout the year and the document would be amended as needed.

There had been some helpful input from the scrutiny committee and Councillor Waters invited the chair of scrutiny, to speak on the recommendations on page 18 of the agenda pack.

Councillor Wright, chair of the scrutiny committee, highlighted each of the recommendations at page 18 and also thanked Councillor Jones for her additional amendment which was an issue that he had also raised.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin, the leader of the council said that any amendments to the budget and policy framework would need to be taken to budget council on 22 February 2022.

RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the following recommendations of the scrutiny committee:
 - a) Aim one – amend wording to ‘listen to communities and use their views in decision making
 - b) Aim two – amend wording to – ‘Work with partners to increase sustainable transport and improve air quality’.
 - c) Those KPIs that are ‘roll overs’ of existing targets due to upcoming reviews could be indicated as such for clarity.
2. Approve the recommendation to amend the action around the Private Renters Charter in aim 1 of the technical appendix to read:
 - a) Review and accelerate delivery of the Norwich Private Renters Charter (which provides clarity on the standards that private landlords and agents

must meet when providing private rented accommodation) in line with improvement plan for regulatory services. (with a delivery date of ongoing from June 2022)

- b) and Review and update the Charter itself (with a delivery date of Charter updated by December 2024).
- 3. Subject to the above amendments to recommend the Corporate Plan 2022-26 to Council for approval.
- 4. Agree to move reporting of progress against the Covid-19 Recovery Plan to an annual occurrence alongside the Corporate Plan annual progress report (as detailed on page 9 of the draft Corporate Plan under 'Annual review').

5. The council's 2022-23 budget and medium term financial strategy

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources, presented the report. Setting a balanced budget would continue to be a challenge for the council over the next few years on the back of a decade of austerity and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The short-term nature of the government settlement made it very difficult for medium term financial planning.

The budget proposed a range of savings alongside additional income and £2.1m to be taken from council reserves. An increase of 1.99% for council tax was recommended although the 100% council tax reduction would be retained for those on the lowest incomes.

The budget was one of investment which allowed for no cuts to services.

The leader of the council invited Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing, to speak to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) elements of the report.

She said that the HRA was in a relatively stable position but there would be pressures in the future with competing priorities. The council wanted to continue to build good quality new homes and maintain and improve its existing stock. A housing delivery team was in place to drive forward a pipeline of new housing sites.

The issues surrounding health and safety compliance in council owned homes had been acknowledged and the council was working hard to rectify these. From the 1 April 2022, building repairs and maintenance services would be transferred to the council's wholly owned company, Norwich City Services Ltd, and the property services would be brought back to the council.

The HRA was forecast to make a £0.246m surplus and it was proposed to spend this, alongside £6.096m of reserves to fund capital investments in new social housing.

A 4.1% rent increase was proposed after careful consideration and discussion with the tenant involvement panel. There would continue to be help for those on low incomes.

Members thanked officers for their hard work on the report.

The leader of the council invited the chair of the scrutiny committee to present the recommendations of the scrutiny committee on the council's 2022-23 budget.

Councillor Wright, chair of the scrutiny committee highlighted the three recommendations:

- 1) Ensure there is political commitment to investing in renewable or green energy projects.
- 2) Where financially and legally viable, fit the lowest carbon emitting heating systems in council properties.
- 3) Ensure there is budget available to carry out any recommendations of the fly tipping and communal bins task and finish group.

The leader of the council indicated that he would like to take the recommendations forward with a change to recommendation one so that it read:

- 1) Ensure there is continued political commitment to investing in renewable or green energy projects.

RESOLVED to:

- a) Note the 2022/23 budget proposals and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- b) Note the budget consultation process that was followed and consider, as part of finalising the 2022/23 budget proposals for Council, the feedback as outlined in Section 2, Appendix 2 (I).
- c) Note the Section 7 report of the chief financial officer on the robustness of the budget estimates, the adequacy of reserves, and the key financial risks to the council.
- d) Note that the Council Tax resolution for 2022/23, prepared in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, will be calculated, and presented to Council for approval once Norfolk County Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk have agreed the precepts for the next financial year.
- e) Agree the amended recommendations of the scrutiny committee:
 - i. Ensure there is continued political commitment to investing in renewable or green energy projects.
 - ii. Where financially and legally viable, fit the lowest carbon emitting heating systems in council properties.

- iii. Ensure there is budget available to carry out any recommendations of the fly tipping and communal bins task and finish group

Recommend to Council to approve:

General Fund

- i. The council's net revenue budget requirement as £17.713m for the financial year 2022/23 including the budget allocations to services shown in Section 2, Appendix 2 (C) and the savings and growth proposals set out in Section 2, appendices 2 (F) and 2 (G).
- ii. An increase to Norwich City Council's element of the council tax of 1.99%, meaning that the Band D council tax will be set at £280.21 (Section 2, paragraph 2.26) with the impact of the increase for all bands shown in Section 2, Appendix 2 (E).
- iii. The prudent minimum level of reserves for the council as £5.100m (Section 2, paragraph 2.53).
- iv. Setting aside the council's distribution of £0.675m from the Norfolk business Rates Pool into a new earmarked reserve to support future spend in line with the economic development objectives of the fund (Section 2, paragraph 2.6).
- v. Setting aside any 2021/22 underspend more than £0.426m into the business change earmarked reserve (Section 2, paragraph 2.5).
- vi. Delegation to the chief finance officer (S.151 Officer), in consultation with the portfolio holder for resources and the portfolio holder for social inclusion, the award of any new business rates reliefs announced by government using discretionary relief powers. The full cost of granting this relief will be compensated through a section 31 grant from Government.
- vii. Delegation to the chief financial officer in consultation with the portfolio holder for resources inclusion of any minor changes consequent on the publication of the final local government settlement or subsequent additional grant allocations.

Housing Revenue Account

- viii. The proposed Housing Revenue Account gross expenditure budget of £70.364m and gross income budgets of £70.610m for 2022/23 (Section 3, paragraph 3.24).
- ix. The use of the estimated surplus of £0.246m along with a further £6.096m of HRA general reserves to make a revenue budget contribution of £6.342m towards funding the 2022/23 HRA capital programme (Section 3, paragraph 3.24).
- x. A 4.1% increase in dwelling rents for 2022/23, in accordance with the Secretary of State issued Direction on the Rent Standard 2019. This enables authorities to increase rent annually by up to CPI (Consumer Price Index) as

at the preceding September plus 1%. This will result in an average weekly rent increase of £3.30 for Norwich tenants (Section 3, paragraphs 3.30 to 3.35).

- xi. That garage rents increase by 3.1%, based on CPI in September 2021 (Section 3, paragraph 3.36).
- xii. That the setting of tenants' service charges is delegated to the executive director of community services in consultation with the portfolio holder for Social Housing after engagement with tenant representatives (Section 3, paragraph 3.37)
- xiii. The prudent minimum level of Housing Revenue Account reserves as £5.848m (Section 3, paragraph 3.56 and Table 3.4).
- xiv. The creation of an earmarked reserve to fund the costs associated with HRA service transformation linked to a programme of review and improvement detailed in Section 3, paragraphs 3.3 to 3.18. This reserve will be used to fund costs linked to the programme which are not delivering specific savings, for example project management and benchmarking with the release of funds being approved in accordance with paragraph 26 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

Capital and Commercial Strategy

- xv. The proposed general fund capital programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 (2022/23: £29.347m; 5 years: £45.766m) and its method of funding as set out in Section 4, table 4.2, table 4.4 and Appendix 4 (B).
- xvi. Delegating to Cabinet, approval to include in the capital programme additional capital schemes funded wholly by grant where it meets the Council's aims (Cover report, paragraph 27).
- xvii. The proposed HRA capital programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 (2022/23: £38.860m; 5 years: £171.579m) and its method of funding as set out in Section 4, table 4.2, table 4.5 and Appendix 4 (B).
- xviii. The capital strategy, as required by CIPFA's Prudential Code.

Treasury Management Strategy

- xix. The borrowing strategy 2022/23 through to 2026/27 (Section 5, paragraphs 5.27 to 5.29).
- xx. The capital and treasury prudential indicators and limits for 2022/23 through to 2026/27 contained within Section 5, paragraphs 5.18 to 5.25 and table 5.3, including the Authorised Borrowing Limit for the council.
- xxi. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy statement described in paragraphs 5.37 to 5.41 and contained in Appendix 5 (Section 5)
- xxii. The (financial) Investment Strategy 2022/23 including changes to counterparty limits (Section 5, paragraphs 5.42 to 5.88).

Summary of key financial indicators

xxiii. The indicators for 2022/23 through to 2025/26 contained in section 6.

6. Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022-2023

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources, presented the report. Norwich City Council was one of only a few local authorities in the country that was continuing with 100% council tax reduction scheme which would help those on the lowest wages.

Councillor Galvin asked what the practicalities were of the government announcement of £150 rebate on council tax. The executive director of corporate and commercial services replied that officers were working through the guidance and would develop an approach.

RESOLVED to:

1. Recommend that council, when reviewing the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2022/23, retains a maximum 100 per cent entitlement for working age CTRS recipients.
2. Recommend that council make the following changes to the council tax reduction scheme (CTRS) for 2022/23 by continuing with the 2021/22 scheme with the following annual modifications:
 - a) To increase the working age applicable amounts for allowances and premiums by the September 2021 Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate of 3.1 per cent;
 - b) To increase the level of income brackets used to decide non-dependent deductions and level of non-dependent deductions by the September 2021 Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate of 3.1 per cent;
 - c) To increase the level of income brackets used to decide entitlement to second adult reduction by the September 2021 Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate of 3.1 per cent;
 - d) To retain the maximum household capital limit of £16,000;
 - e) To add the option to recalculate entitlement when the council investigate fraud where the DWP have not revised DWP passported benefit entitlement.

7. The award of a concessionary contract for the delivery of tennis centre operations in Norwich

Councillor Packer, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, presented the report. He said that the paper clearly identified the process followed and ensured that all procurement regulations had been met.

Councillor Wright asked members would be given the details once the delegated decision had been taken. The monitoring officer confirmed that a decision notice would be issued as part of the process.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin on baselines being specified within the tender, the parks and open spaces manager said that the baselines would be taken from the current contract and new targets set with the provider.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) enter into a concessionary contract for the provision of tennis centre operations in Norwich; and
- 2) delegate the award of the contract to the most economically advantageous supplier to the Executive director of development and city services, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Health and Wellbeing

8. Norwich City Services Ltd Business Plan 2022-2025

(Councillor Oliver left the meeting for this item)

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources presented the report. From 1 April 2022, the company would cover both environmental services and building maintenance services. The Business Plan showed that objectives of the company which aligned with the council's corporate priorities.

He highlighted a typing error on page 232 of the agenda, under service performance risks – NCS should read NCSL.

RESOLVED to exclude the public for consideration of item *11 under paragraph 3 of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Following discussion, the public were readmitted to the meeting.

The chair of scrutiny outlined the following recommendations, put forward by the scrutiny committee:

- 1) To include biodiversity as one of NCSLs main objectives.
- 2) On the risk register - Company 9 risk – severe weather event – this should be expanded to take account of changes to work practices and schedules as a result of climate change by listing the effects of this.
- 3) To ask the board to benchmark the environmental standards of NCSL against other companies in the field.

Councillors Waters, leader of the council responded to each in turn.

Regarding biodiversity, this was one of the company's main objectives and a Biodiversity Strategy would be published by the council in June 2022. The work of the company tracked the council's Corporate Plan and priorities so this was already embedded in the company strategy.

The risk register was framed, in part, by the corporate risk register which was considered by cabinet on an annual basis. Risk elements could be adjusted as new factors came into play as the risk register was not a static document.

With regards to undertaking benchmarking work, the priority of the company was to achieve the objectives of the shareholder which included researching best practice. It was therefore felt that although the recommendations were valuable the work was already in hand.

Councillor Galvin commented that there appeared to be several vacancies at NCSL and asked for more detail around the terms and conditions of the staff. The managing director of NCSL replied that some vacancies were related to more challenging to recruit to roles, such as the climbing arborist. There had not been a benchmarking exercise undertaken regarding salaries but information from other local authorities was used. Going forward, the company was looking to undertake a job evaluation scheme.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) Endorse the NCLS business for 2022-25 on behalf of Norwich City Council as the shareholder;
- 2) Endorse the two new shareholder's objectives for NCSL as detailed below:
 - a) the company to return a 4% or 5% net profit by year 4 of each of the main council contracts which equates to a potential revenue stream of approximately £0.300m in 2024/25 and a further £0.500m in 2025/26 which will be incorporated into the 2023/24 MTFS refresh and NCSL business plan during 2023-26 if approved.
 - b) NCSL to develop a financial strategy options paper for the Shareholder (Quarter 3 2022/23) which will consider how the company can become financially independent and not rely on the Council to provide investment through the Council's capital programme for replacement of existing equipment required to deliver contracted services.
- 3) Note the recommendations of the scrutiny committee

(Councillor Oliver was readmitted to the meeting)

9. Repairs and maintenance service provided by Norwich Norse Building Ltd

(This report is contained in the supplementary agenda. Councillor Harris left the meeting for this item).

Councillor Waters, leader of the council, presented the report. The report related to a significant backlog of work which had been identified, alongside a strategy for undertaking the work.

There was an estimated timeframe of 9 months for the work to be completed and additional capacity would be required for that time period. The procurement criteria were outlined at paragraph 9 of the report.

RESOLVED to exclude the public for consideration of item *12 under paragraph 3 of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

(Following discussion, the public were readmitted to the meeting).

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin on why resources were not brought in sooner, the leader of the council said that the issues had been fully explored, including by the council's scrutiny committee and had been thoroughly discussed already.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to the executive director for community services in consultation with the Leader of the Council to enter appropriate contract/s to address the backlog of repairs outstanding. The value of contracts not to exceed £3.8m in total and procurement methodology to follow Norwich City Council's contract procedures and Public Regulations 2015.

(Councillor Harris was readmitted to the meeting).

10. Exclusion of the public

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of items *11 to *13 (below) on the grounds contained in the relevant paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

***11 Norwich City Services Ltd Business Plan 2022-2025 – exempt appendix (para 3)**

Following discussion it was: -

RESOLVED to consider and note the exempt appendix

***12 Repairs and maintenance service provided by Norwich Norse Building Ltd - exempt appendix (para 3)**

Following discussion, it was: -

RESOLVED to consider the exempt appendix

***13 Exempt Minutes (Para 3)**

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the exempt minutes of meeting held on 12 January 2022.

CHAIR



Extraordinary Cabinet

16.30 – 17:55

23 February 2022

Present: Councillors Waters (chair), Harris (vice chair), Hampton, Jones, Kendrick, Oliver and Packer

Also present: Councillor Galvin

Apologies: Councillors Davis and Stonard

1. Declarations of interest

Councillors Harris declared an other interest in item 2 (below) Q3 Corporate Assurance Report, as a director of the Norwich Preservation Trust, with regard to 16 Elm Hill, and the exempt appendix to this report, as a director of Norwich Norse Building Limited.

Councillor Jones declared an other interest in item 2 (below) Q3 Corporate Assurance Report, as a director of the Norwich Preservation Trust, with regard to 16 Elm Hill.

2. Q3 Corporate Assurance Report

(Councillors Harris and Jones had declared an interest in this item.)

Councillor Waters, leader of the council, (chair) introduced the appended report which provided an insight into the work of the authority and the key performance indicators of each of the three directorates and was a useful reference document to other councillors and members of the public.

During his presentation, the chair drew members' attention to the executive summary and that there had been a reduction in the number of indicators showing as red in this quarter. Members were also advised of the ongoing work in the council to identify risks associated with climate change. There was concern that forecast risks for the 2080s, particularly flooding and rising temperatures would have a disproportionate effect on people who were already disadvantaged.

The chair referred to Annex 2 and said that the unbudgeted grants received in 2021-22 had helped the council tackle the effects of Covid-19. The most recent of these grants was the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant to support businesses affected by the variant, and he acknowledged that the government did not produce guidance

for implementation quickly but hoped that this funding would be fully utilised. The executive director of corporate and commercial services said that the finance team had received the guidance from government and were currently working through the details to ensure the greatest outreach and uptake of this grant.

The chair said that both he and the chief executive had attended regular meetings with the Norfolk Leaders and Public Health throughout the pandemic. It was crucial that the Director of Public Health continued to have access to data and that there was a framework in place to share local information with authorities should it be required from a further outbreak of Covid emergence of a new variant.

Referring to the risk register, the chair said that the Environment Act 2021 could require councils to provide a free collection service of garden waste. This was estimated to be at a cost to the council of around £2 million and would destabilise its budgets. The government was also proposing in its Elections Bill to require voters to produce photo identification. This would be an impediment to voters and something that the council should be aware of and include in the risk register.

The chair then referred to the appendices listing the key performance areas of the three directorates.

The chief executive commented that elections were a large annual corporate event and that risks were managed by mitigation. The requirement for voters to provide photo identification was a new risk. As Returning Officer, the chief executive said that he had engaged with the government to ask for further advice and guidance as it would not be without risk. He considered that the requirement was deemed unnecessary as the levels of prosecution for voter fraud were low. The chair and the cabinet member for resources expressed their concern about the introduction of voter identification which would discriminate against the most disadvantaged in society.

Councillor Galvin welcomed the inclusion of climate change on the risk register and that consideration of it should be built into every decision that the council made. She asked how actions would be captured and cross referenced throughout the council. The head of strategy, engagement and culture confirmed that this was a piece of work that the environmental strategy manager would be taking forward in the next few months to review actions across the authority and identify and address any gaps.

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for corporate resources presented the financial element of the report, as set out in paragraph 1.2 *Finance*. The General Fund underspend was £0.426m due to a number of pressures identified in services (as set out in the appendices to the report) and was being offset by reduced corporate financing costs (additional income from the government's sales, fees and charges scheme and reduction in the forecast contribution to the capital programme) and additional income, from multi-storey car parks and investment properties, which had not dropped as significantly as anticipated but were not yet back to pre-Covid levels. He also drew members' attention to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), page 11 of the report (page 15 of the agenda pages) which contained an explanation for the HRA forecast underspend, and the Capital Programme, page 13 of the report (page 17 of the agenda papers) and the explanations for the forecast underspends of £7,634k General Fund and £14,493k HRA.

(Members had no questions on the exempt appendix (item *11 on the agenda papers).)

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note progress on the key performance indicators for this quarter and the corporate risk register;
- (2) note the financial forecast for 2021/22 general fund, HRA and capital programme;
- (3) note the consequential balances of the general fund and HRA reserves;
- (4) amend the risk register to include the requirement for voters to produce photo identification under Risk 16, Elections;
- (5) approve an increase to the general fund capital programme of £0.004m in 2021/22 and £0.066m in 2022/23 to support the completion of the St Stephens Towers public realm project, wholly funded from Section 106 contributions;
- (6) approve the retrospective appropriation of 16 Elm Hill for non-housing use and transfer of the property from the HRA to the general fund.

3. An Update on Health, Safety and Compliance in Council Homes and Buildings

(This was a late report circulated with the supplementary agenda for this meeting.)

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing, presented the report to update members on the progress in relation to the health, safety and compliance management in council homes and buildings. It was important to note that although the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) had found that the council had breached the home standard, it had not considered it necessary to take enforcement action because it had confidence in the council's plans to improve services and return to full compliance. She thanked officers for the work that they had been doing.

The interim housing operations director said that this was the first of the quarterly reports in relation to compliance matters discussed last November. She confirmed the following progress had been made: Gas safety and lifts have remained fully compliant; fire risk assessments of all high-risk residential buildings have been completed, with some remedial work outstanding; good progress was being made on electrical testing and additional contractors were procured to increase capacity to accelerate the programme from March; additional contractors have been procured to carry out water hygiene testing commencing in February; and, additional contractors procured to inspect for asbestos and carry out remedial works if required. There was a clear priority to clarify data and provide information to provide assurance. This was currently managed by NPSN but would transfer to the new housing IT system. Fire risk assessments of low rise blocks were currently being reinspected. There had been three meetings with RSH who were confident that the council could implement

its compliance improvement plan. Officers were committed to consulting and sharing information about the process with tenants and leaseholders.

Councillor Galvin said that it was extremely important that information was shared with tenants and leaseholders. In reply to a question from Councillor Galvin, the chair said that efforts should be concentrated on achieving full compliance in accordance with the agreed timetable and the priority was to complete the work as speedily as possible. There had been exhaustive discussions at cabinet, council and scrutiny committee, as part of a transparent process, and there was an understanding of what needed to be done through the scoping work.

RESOLVED to note the content of the report.

4. Greater Norwich Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2022/23 – Key decision

Councillor Waters, leader of the council (chair) introduced and presented the report. The City Deal was agreed in 2013 and underpinned the agreement of Broadland District Council, South Norfolk Council and the city council to pool community infrastructure levy (CIL) income. Schemes were evaluated using sustainable methodology to balance social, economic and environmental elements. The Greater Norwich Growth Board administered the scheme. Infrastructure projects also included schools and the county council was also a partner, together with New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership. Further information was available on the [Norwich Growth Board website](#) which contained a plotted map of the infrastructure projects carried out over the last 15 years. The board agreed projects collectively, subject to confirmation from the cabinets of each council. Members were advised that if the cabinet stepped back from an element of the plan, it would not go ahead. Norwich had benefited from the infrastructure projects. He drew members' attention to the list of projects set out in paragraph 12, the section on Long Stratton Bypass and the section on Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Commitments and Spending. The investment programme was very good news to the city. The pooled CIL arrangement was a ground-breaking model.

Councillor Galvin referred to an earlier five year infrastructure plan that was used to finance the Northern Distributor Road which was contributing 6.1 per cent carbon emissions, and asked why public funding was still being used to fund roads instead of the developers. In reply to her question, the executive director of development and city services explained how the Long Stratton Bypass would be financed by government funding and a loan from the pooled CIL. The sale of housing from the development facilitated the funding to payback the CIL contribution under a separate legal agreement. The CIL funding was then circulated to bring forward another infrastructure scheme.

The chair said that he understood Councillor Galvin's concerns about air quality and said that that the Northern Distributor Road had improved air quality in the north of the city. In terms of policy on road use, central government would need to promote the conversion of vehicles to electricity and improve public transport, which should ameliorate the concerns about meeting carbon reduction targets.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) approve the draft [Greater Norwich Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2022-27](#) ("the Plan");
- (2) approve the proposed 2022/23 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocations in the Annual Growth Programme (see paragraphs 12 to 16 of this report)
- (3) enter into a draft loan agreement for the draw-down of £6.733m through the Greater Norwich City Deal, to support the delivery of Long Stratton Bypass (see appendix E within the Plan), with authority for the Executive Director of Corporate and Commercial Services, in consultation with the portfolio holder for resources, to agree the terms of the agreement on behalf of the Council;
- (4) agree (subject to recommendation iii above) for the Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) to be granted delegated authority to sign the final loan agreement together with their s151 officers, under the direction of Norfolk County Council as the Accountable Body (see paragraphs 20 to 25 of this report).
- (5) approve an adjustment to the 2022/23 general fund capital programme, in accordance with the delegation to Cabinet to approve capital schemes funded wholly by grant where it meets the Council's aims approved by Council on 22 February 2022, to include:
 - (a) £275,000 of neighbourhood community infrastructure levy funding and associated expenditure;
 - (b) £17,000 of additional CIL funding and associated expenditure for the UEA – Eaton riverside walk green infrastructure project that was approved by the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Delivery Board on 17 September 2021.

5. Town Deal Fund Programme Update

(Andrew Dernie, chair of Town Deal Board Norwich and head of IT Finance Operations, Aviva, attended the meeting for this item.)

The chair welcomed Andrew Dernie, chair of the Town Deal Board Norwich, and Sarah Collins, the Town Deal project manager, to the meeting and asked that it be put on record his appreciation for their contribution. All councillors had been given an opportunity to attend a briefing on the proposed revolving fund to unlock development. The Town Deal Norwich was proving to be one of the most successful in the country and highly regarded by government agencies in progressing this important investment in the city.

Andrew Dernie addressed the committee and reflected on the formation of the Norwich Town Deal, which had benefited from the partnership arrangements under the 2040 Vision and that the council's priorities were reflected in the five themes of the Town Deal. The Town Deal was able to move quickly and energise bringing a cross section of people together. It was the first Town Deal to submit business cases for regeneration, receive funding and complete a project. He also complimented the Town Deal project manager and her colleagues in city development services for their efficiency and support.

The executive director of development and city services explained the proposed use of a revolving fund, to bring forward sites for development by transferring ownership, had been difficult to formulate but was now considered as innovative funding and the model replicated. The King's Arms public house was the first site in the city to be developed under this funding model. Owners of sites were less likely to hold onto sites without development if they knew that the site could be compulsory purchased and developed. There was a risk that the fund would be diminished but the value to the community of providing houses and developing vacant sites was a key priority of the fund.

The Town Fund project manager said that the revolving fund was a good example of the Towns Fund helping the city. The key factor in business cases was to ensure that sites that blighted the community and were subject to antisocial behaviour were moved on for development. They would do everything that they could to ensure that funding was repaid but the benefit to the community was what was important.

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing, said that she had visited the King's Arms site and it was exciting to see five new homes. The whole community would benefit from this scheme and she thanked the officers concerned. The development also demonstrated to owners of vacant sites that action would be taken.

(Members had no questions on the exempt appendix (item *12 on the agenda papers).)

RESOLVED to

- (1) note the current position regarding the Towns Fund programme and governance arrangements in place for the programme;
- (2) delegate authority to the Executive Director of Development and City Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council, portfolio holder for resources, portfolio holder for sustainable and inclusive growth and the S151 officer, to negotiate and purchase sites using the revolving fund.

6. Improving the Diversity of the Council's Workforce Update

Councillor Waters, leader of the council, presented the report and said that improving the diversity of the council's workforce was one of the council's priorities and that it was proposed that further reporting against the workforce diversity action plan could be picked up in the annual progress report against the council's Corporate Plan and the annual refresh of the council's Equality Information Report.

The chief executive officer said that the cabinet had agreed an outline strategy and action plan to improve the diversity of the council's workforce last year because it lagged behind the community that it served and was not as representative as an organisation as it should be. He acknowledged that it would take time for results to show but he was determined that progress would be made. The council would be a richer organisation that brought together different perspectives and ideas. He referred to the actions that had been taken which included: increased reporting of protected characteristics; provision of unconscious bias training by e-learning for

officers and colleagues; a new equality, diversity and inclusion training programme on being inclusive for officers and managers; reviewing recruitment procedures with training for recruiting managers in April, improvement at short-list and offer stages, and looking at wording used in job descriptions and specifications, using software to check for unconscious bias and looking at alternative media to publicise jobs. There had been some progress as data showed that the ethnic diversity of the workforce had increased to 4.16 per cent in December 2021, compared to 3.1 per cent in December 2020.

Councillor Galvin suggested that socio-economic background data should be measured in the workforce data and that it intersected with other protected characteristics. The chief executive officer said the annual equality assessment had access to socio-economic data and it was possible to take Councillor Galvin's suggestion and consider how it could be incorporated. The chair said that the socio-economic background diversity of the workforce of the council had increased as joint ventures had been brought back into house.

RESOLVED to

- (1) note the progress made against the action plan to improve the workforce diversity profile;
- (2) agree the further reporting against the workforce diversity action plan is picked up in the annual progress report against the council's new Corporate Plan and in the annual refresh of the council's Equality Information report.

7. The Award of a Contract for Loft and Cavity Wall Insulation to Council Owned Homes – Key decision

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing, presented the report. This was a big investment in council owned homes to improve energy efficiency, reduce the carbon footprint and utility bills. She fully supported the report and the procurement approach that was being proposed.

The building surveying section leader (NPS Norwich) said that the successful contractor had been the incumbent contractor for several years and worked to a good standard.

RESOLVED to approve the award for loft and cavity wall insulation work to 1st Choice Insulations Ltd, from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2027 at an estimated value of £2,500.00 excluding VAT, over, five years (£500,00 per annum). The final award value will be within the existing allocated budget.

8. The Award of a Contract for Sustainable Warmth Grant Delivery – Key Decision

Councillor Hampton, cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion, presented the report. The council had been awarded £3.1 million to provide insulation measures to 200 private sector homes in areas of low income and inefficient heating and was a socially just scheme. The scheme was expected to save 200,000 kg of CO2 per year and £250,000 in bill savings per year. Long term

government funding was needed to provide whole house retrofitting across the private sector, particularly as households faced the challenge of climate change and the rising cost of living, and also, the retention and training of contractors to implement the improvements. She thanked the affordable warmth officer for securing this funding. The council had approved the Capital Programme 2022-23 at budget council on 22 February 2022.

The affordable warmth officer confirmed that there was a realistic timescale for delivery of this scheme of 200 homes. In reply to a question from Councillor Galvin, she said that she did not know if there were plans in place to repeat this particular scheme but considered that the grant received was similar to that received by other councils.

RESOLVED to award a contract for the Sustainable Warmth Grant – retrofit insulation measures to E:on via the Fusion21 framework (The contract value will be up to a maximum of £3.1 million).

9. Renewal of Microsoft Enterprise Licences – Key decision

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources presented the report. It was important that the licences were renewed for a further 3 years, particularly as all officers used Word and Excel.

The head of customers, IT and digital added that the licences were required for other software systems used in the council, telephony use through MS Teams and Sharepoint.

RESOLVED to enter a contract with Phoenix Software Limited for the renewal of the Microsoft licence agreement valued at £1.164 million based on current requirements as detailed in paragraph 12 (of the report).

CHAIR