

## Cabinet

**Date:** Wednesday, 17 July 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

### Page nos

#### 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

7 - 18

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2024.

#### 6 Progress on Motion 12(c), approved at council on 30 January 2024

19 - 32

**Purpose** - Motion 12(c) was approved at council 30 January 2024. The motion stated: "It costs more to be poor: tackling the poverty premium in Norwich". This report refers specifically to resolution 8c within the motion to "take reasonable endeavours to bring forward a Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy feasibility study, as part of the planned EDI Action workstream... to June cabinet".

#### 7 Norwich City Council Control of Alcohol Public Space Protection Order - Key Decision

33 - 40

**Purpose** - This report seeks cabinet approval to implement a Control of Alcohol Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for a period of three years, extending the boundaries to cover the full Norwich City Council district.

#### 8 Corporate Performance Report for 2023-24

41 - 68

**Purpose** - To report progress against the delivery of the corporate plan priorities and key performance indicators for 2023-2024.

<b>9</b>	<b>2023-24 Provisional Outturn</b>	<b>69 - 88</b>
	<b>Purpose</b> - This report sets out the council's provisional outturn position for the 2023/24 financial year. The report covers the council's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) resources and includes information in relation to both its revenue and capital position.	
<b>10</b>	<b>2023-24 Quarter 4 - Risk Register</b>	<b>89 - 92</b>
	<b>Purpose</b> - This report provides an update to the council's corporate risk register based on the position for quarter four (March 2024).	
<b>11</b>	<b>Gender Pay Gap Report 2023</b>	<b>93 - 104</b>
	<b>Purpose</b> - To provide the findings of the Council's gender pay gap report as at the snapshot date of 31 March 2023.	
<b>12</b>	<b>Norwich City Council Productivity Plan</b>	<b>105 - 116</b>
	<b>Purpose</b> - This report informs members about the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) letter requesting the submission of a productivity plan and to present our draft response. It highlights the council's current initiatives and outlines what the council has achieved so far, as well as the future plans for the council set out in the new corporate plan.	
<b>13</b>	<b>Scrutiny Committee Recommendations to Cabinet</b>	<b>117 - 122</b>
	<b>Purpose</b> - This report presents the recommendations agreed by the Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 21 March 2024, in relation to the draft Parks and Green Spaces Strategy for Norwich and Love Norwich, to Cabinet for consideration.	
<b>14</b>	<b>Complaints Performance and Service Improvement</b>	<b>123 - 174</b>
	<b>Purpose</b> - To report the council's first set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures, which is a new regulatory requirement for social housing providers under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act, and the new Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and to provide a formal response to the report, which is a statutory requirement under the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.	
<b>15</b>	<b>Norwich Unity Hub, Carrow House - Key Decision - (Report to follow)</b>	
<b>16</b>	<b>Potential acquisition of land - Anglia Square - Key Decision (Report to follow)</b>	
<b>17</b>	<b>Exclusion of the public</b>	

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.

**Page nos**

**\*18 2023-24 Quarter 4 - Risk Register - exempt appendix**

- 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.

**\*19 Norwich Unity Hub, Carrow House - (Exempt appendix) - (Report to follow)**

This report will not be 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 paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

**\*20 Potential acquisition of land - Key Decision - (Report to follow)**

This report will not be 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 paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

**\*21 Disposal of Assets (Housing) (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 July 2024**





**Cabinet**

**16:30 to 17:55**

**6 March 2024**

**Present:** Councillors Stonard (Chair), Jones (Vice-Chair), Giles, Hampton, Kendrick and Packer

**Apologies:** Councillors Fulton-McAlister and Kidman

**Also Present:** Councillor Galvin (Leader of the Green Group)

**1. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. Public questions/ petitions**

One public question had been received, in writing, from Mr James Hawketts. The Chair advised that a response would be published in the minutes of the meeting.

Mr Hawketts asked:

“In November the city council unanimously agreed a motion from the Lib Dem Group calling for a UEA Night Bus. In that motion, the Council resolved to ask the Leader to write to the Cabinet Member for Transport at the County Council asking that the county’s prohibitively low funding offer to UEA and FirstBus be reconsidered, and for the Leader and Transport Cabinet Member here to work with various partners to seek funding arrangements towards a night bus for the long term.

May I ask the Leader/Cabinet Member to confirm that such efforts have taken place, including for example sending of the described letter and/or any meetings with relevant parties about the night bus, and detail their nature or any progress made?”

Councillor Hampton, the cabinet member for climate change’s response:

“The city council is keen to see a night bus to UEA reinstated. The Leader of the Council has written to the County Council’s Cabinet Member, Councillor Graham Plant. We are currently awaiting a response and once we have received a response, we will seek a meeting with the County Council and First Bus if necessary.”

### 3. Questions to Cabinet Members

No questions had been received.

### 4. Minutes

**RESOLVED** to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2024.

### 5. Scrutiny Committee Recommendations

Councillor Stonard referred to the report circulated prior to committee and introduced the item, available [here](#). Members discussed the proposed recommendations, in relation to the request to better capture demographic data, Councillor Jones the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety noted that this conflicted with a previous recommendation from scrutiny committee, which criticised the need for respondents to register and provide their demographic data on the Get Talking Norwich platform. She considered that the ultimate priority was that people engaged with the consultation process, she was happy to explore other methods to capture demographic data but engagement in the consultation process was first and foremost the most important thing.

In relation to the recommendation to add a section to the Corporate Plan committing to creating more posts that worked with the community and more posts which would see people face to face, Councillor Stonard, the Leader of the Council, commented that he was concerned to commit to more posts when the budget had just been agreed. Councillor Jones, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety considered that the recommendation was too vague. It was the Council's role to work with people, which it did, staffing arrangements could be changed if there was an identified need which had been evidenced.

In relation to the recommendation to share the minutes of Future Shape Norwich (FSN) Board meetings, Councillor Stonard, the Leader of the Council, advised this was an officer led group to action the decisions which members had made. He noted that a recommendation from scrutiny committee to provide an all-member briefing on FSN was agreed at the last meeting of the Cabinet. He did not consider that members needed the minutes of FSN, but felt it was important that officers were allowed to explore delivery options and speak freely and there was a process for member decision making that was adhered too.

**RESOLVED** to:

- 1) involve scrutiny committee in the development of the business planning process for the Corporate Plan and the associated corporate performance framework;
- 2) explore ways to involve more young people in the Corporate Plan consultation;
- 3) ensure that the Corporate Plan commits to continue to provide provision of access to services for those individuals who do not have digital knowledge or



access;

- 4) consider exploring ways to better capture demographic data where appropriate without deterring people from responding; and
- 5) add a section to the Corporate Plan that the council will continue to provide face to face contact to those that most need it.

## **6. The Corporate Plan 2024-2029**

Councillor Stonard, Leader of the Council, was proud to present the new draft Corporate Plan 2024-2029, which had been developed for and with the people of Norwich, underpinned by a consultation including more than 900 citywide conversations. The content of the plan 'We are Norwich' was developed from the priorities and challenges raised during the engagement process with residents, councillors, the council's workforce, partners, businesses, charities, and voluntary, creative and cultural organisations.

He highlighted that some of the areas of work raised as priorities, sat outside the council's direct control and committed to using the council's convening, influencing and advocacy powers to advance them. The approach the plan proposed was one of working together to identify local needs, aspirations and ambitions, co-designing solutions with local communities and partners, and focussing on outcomes rather than outputs. As such, it enabled and empowered communities and council colleagues to dynamically respond to changing needs throughout the city.

It represented a different way of working, with greater community participation and the flexibility to adapt to the changing world. It was the beginning of a journey as culture and processes were aligned with new ways of thinking. As delivery of the plan progressed there would be further consultation and engagement, and the greater involvement of communities in decisions and actions.

He referred to the extensive consultation process which had been undertaken and sought a rich picture of how a broad selection of different kinds of people from different contexts felt about specific issues. He considered that it was important that respondents were not required to submit demographic data. The advice of the independent engagement consultants was that it would be a barrier to participation and limit what people might tell us. So, to prioritise higher response rates and more meaningful insights the sharing of demographic information was optional for participants.

He noted that concerns had been raised in relation to the engagement of children and young people in the consultation process and confirmed that their input and views would be sought as part of the business planning process. A new performance framework would be developed to assess the impact of and align the council's resources and activities to meet the outcomes of the plan. He considered that the plan would deliver the best for the people of Norwich, a fair and thriving city full of ambition.

Councillor Jones, deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety was proud to be part of a new leadership team bringing forward a plan which tackled the root causes of health inequalities. She referred to the increasing

challenges facing people and the ability of local authorities to impact on health, wellbeing and happiness. She was proud that these themes had come through so clearly in the plan which expressed the ambition to work more effectively in partnership to achieve outcomes.

Councillor Galvin was pleased that people had been asked what they wanted to see in the plan, were consulted early and that many councillor comments had been included. She noted that people wanted to see very similar things to the previous corporate plan and questioned if this suggested that the objectives of the previous plan had not been delivered. She asked if there would be a commitment to ongoing consultation of a representative sample of residents to measure their perception on the objectives being achieved.

Councillor Stonard, leader of the council noted that the objectives were not short term and that if they were still alive it did not mean progress had not been made against them but rather that improvements would come over time. In relation to the consultation process he considered it was as representative as it could be and that the right level of data was captured. It had been noted that there was a tension between recording demographic data and maximising responses received.

The Head of Strategy, Engagement and Culture advised that there was work underway to consider how the organisation were engaging with people and how this might be improved. Councillor Jones, deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety commented that the reasons the themes identified were consistent was because they would always be important. She referred to work in relation to rough sleeping in the city, the rates for which were bucking the national trend but whilst it still existed it would be an important issue.

**RESOLVED to:**

- 1) agree 'We are Norwich', the draft corporate plan 2024-29; and
- 2) recommend the plan to Council for consideration at its meeting to be held on Tuesday 12 March 2024.

**7. Adoption of the Greater Norwich Local Plan**

Councillor Stonard, Leader of the Council, introduced the item and advised that this was the final step in a long seven-and-a-half-year process, which was coming to fruition thanks to the hard work of the Council's officers and other Councils in the partnership. It had been a hugely complicated process, and he expressed his thanks to all partners and colleagues involved. This was a great example of partnership working and it was in the common interest of the partners to plan for a rapidly growing city.

There were considerable benefits to adopting a local plan, it gave the best chance of delivering development that met the needs of communities, maximised the prospect of securing affordable housing, de-risked the development of allocated sites, increased the likelihood of securing external support and reduced the chance of speculative development harmful to economic development or environmental assets.

The Inspector's report on the plan was highly positive, there were a number of modifications to be included in the adoption of the plan which reflected the passage of time since the plan was submitted in 2021. The main modifications most related to Norwich were, the policies for East Norwich which had been updated in light of more recent evidence, that a contingency site was no longer needed as there were sufficient sites in the plan to meet housing need and a number of smaller sites had been removed where landowners had changed their views on development at Ber Street, Lower Clarence Road and Ipswich Road. He commented that there was still a desire to see the contingency site at Costessey developed in the long term as it was a well located and sustainable site.

Other main modifications provided wider benefits, changes to policy 3 would address nutrient neutrality issues, the reframing of the approach to new settlements would assist consideration of their potential role compared with other growth options in future plans and Gypsy and Traveller sites would be allocated. Overall, the main modifications strengthened the plan. The significant benefits of adopting the plan included help to meet housing and jobs needs, addressing climate change and providing infrastructure, including green and blue infrastructure.

The Executive Director of Development and City Services referred to amendments to the plan which had been circulated to members and were available to view on the website [here](#). These were minor amendments which were needed to ensure the plan was legally watertight. The Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager reiterated what a long process it had been to get to this stage and emphasised the numerous benefits to adopting a plan for the area.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin, Councillor Stonard the leader of the council commented that the airport was an important part of the local economy providing many jobs from those in hospitality to those in complex engineering. The Executive Director of Development and City Services advised that the plan sought to set the vision for encouraging a post carbon economy and set the metrics to measure this. The plan looked at the housing and industrial needs for the city going forward and land was allocated for development in and around the airport. It would be unsound to bring forward proposals for a plan which did not include the airport and seek to maximise its economic potential.

**RESOLVED** to recommend that Council:

- 1) notes the inspectors' report ([in annex 1](#)) and the required main modifications in appendices 1 to 5 (available from [this link](#));
- 2) adopts the modified GNLP (documents J2.1 to J2.11 inclusive available from [this link](#)); and
- 3) delegate authority to the Executive Director, Development and City Services to publish the Adoption Statement and accompanying documents, making the GNLP part of the Adopted Local Plan for Norwich.

## **8. Customer and Digital Strategy 2024-2029**

Councillor Packer, Cabinet Member for Customers and Digital, presented the report. He referred to the City Council's vision as set out in the previous Corporate Plan item

to become a fair and thriving city, full of ambition. He emphasised that delivering on key priorities, being an open and modern council and doing the basics well in an efficient, timely and well-informed way was key to achieving this. The strategy outlined how the vision would be supported through the development of customer and digital services.

Residents increasingly wanted to access services digitally and at a time which suited them, by providing straightforward, initiative services, 24/7 customers would use digital services by default. Traditional contacts options such as face to face and via telephone would continue for those that found accessing digital services challenging. The resources saved by increasing the provision of services online would be focussed on those that most needed them.

He noted that extensive consultation and engagement had taken place with customers to shape the strategy and an action plan would be developed to deliver the key actions and objectives. Feedback on the strategy would continue to be gathered as it was implemented to ensure that digital services were accessible and easy to use.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin the Head of Customers, IT and Digital advised that work was starting to look at a new design for the website which would prompt customers to download a shortcut to online services which would provide a similar experience to using an app.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Customer and Digital Strategy 2024-29.

## **9. Pay Policy Statement 2024/25**

Councillor Kendrick, the Cabinet Member for Resources, presented the report and advised that it was a legal requirement to produce, publish and approve a pay policy statement each year, which covered the pay of all officers.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin, the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development advised that the Council tried to align the pay of interim staff to the pay structure. However, this was not always possible and pay rates were dictated by other factors such as market conditions. She noted that the use of interims was reducing and that they tended to be used for project type work or whilst restructures were ongoing. The number of interims and agency staff on roll was reported to the Executive Leadership Team to monitor and this could be adapted and provided to members.

**RESOLVED** to:

- 1) agree the contents of the pay policy statement for 2024/25; and
- 2) recommend the Council's pay policy statement for 2024/25 to full Council for approval.

## **10. Funding Approval for Three Carbon Reduction Projects**

Councillor Hampton, the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, was pleased to present the report, which included three items providing an opportunity to tackle

climate change. Identifying relevant external funding to deliver such projects was a priority for the Council. The decisions in relation to these projects were required to be made now as this was the last meeting of the Cabinet before the pre-election period commenced.

The first item involved an application the Council had made to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, (SHDF) a decision on which was expected imminently. If successful, authority was requested to accept funding of the grant, agree match funding and sign a memorandum of understanding. The total project fund would be £5.2m, which was required to be spent over a 24-month period. The project aimed to improve the energy efficiency of the least efficient council homes and would make a real difference to the lives of residents.

The second related to a successful grant, which had been received to install solar panels at Riverside Leisure Centre, which also required a proportion of funding from the Council and would result in £25,000 net savings being added to the Medium-Term Financial Programme. The last asked for funding for feasibility work in relation to Heat Networks and was aimed at ensuring the Council was best placed to apply for any available grant funding.

Councillor Hampton thanked officers for their hard work and commended the recommendations for approval.

Councillor Giles, Cabinet Member for Communities and Social Inclusion thanked Councillor Hampton and the Environmental Strategy Team for their work, he emphasised that the installation of solar panels at Riverside leisure centre would not only reduce carbon emissions but contribute to the centre's financial viability.

Councillor Galvin asked Councillor Hampton if she was confident that the housing team had enough capacity in place to deliver the work which was required. Councillor Hampton confirmed that resources had been put in place within the housing and environmental strategy teams to drive work forward. Councillor Jones, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety, commented that there was no area which could not do with greater resource but that these works were identified as a priority.

**RESOLVED to:**

- 1) Recommend that Council delegates authority to the council's Chief Finance (s151) Officer in consultation with the portfolio holder for resources to:
  - a) Sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Department of Net Zero and Energy Security (DESNZ) to agree terms and conditions for Social Housing Decarbonisation funding up to a value of £3m;
  - b) Increase the HRA Capital Programme by an amount equivalent to any DESNZ grant funding agreed plus the match funding element from the council, currently anticipated to be £2.7m.
  - c) Increase the General Fund Capital Programme by £0.895m for the solar panel project on Riverside Leisure Centre and formally sign any related

grant documentation for £0.520m. Note that the funding requirement from the council of £0.375m can be funded from borrowing.

- d) Apply and sign a grant application for heat networks feasibility and business case.
- 2) Delegate authority in consultation with the portfolio holder for climate change:
- e) to the Executive Director of Housing and Community Safety in combination with the Section 151 Officer to sign subsequent delivery contracts for the energy efficiency works on its social housing stock;
  - f) to the Executive Director of Housing and Community Safety to sign subsequent delivery contracts for the solar panel project at Riverside Leisure; and
  - g) to the Chief Finance Officer to sign subsequent procurement contracts for the energy network items detailed within the report.

#### **11. Write-off of irrecoverable debt over £50,000**

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources presented the report. He advised the decision to write off a debt was one that was carefully considered. However, once a company became insolvent it was not possible to recover the debt. This did not preclude the council from chasing the debt in future if the means to do so arose.

**RESOLVED** to approve write offs totalling £513,479.02 of non-recoverable NNDR debt which is 100% covered within the NNDR bad debt provision.

#### **12. Contract award for the main contractor for the development at Argyle Street (key decision)**

Councillor Jones, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety presented the report. The contract was to build 14 new units of social housing which were highly energy efficient. Five local suppliers were invited to bid and a robust procurement process that considered quality, cost and social value applied. By the tender deadline only one bid had been submitted. This bid had been through the robust tender process and additional engagement with the company was conducted. The company had a strong track record of working well with local authorities and the bid was independently reviewed by Oxbury chartered surveyors.

Councillor Jones was confident in the scrutiny of the company, which had been conducted and considered this provided a good opportunity to build a working relationship with a new local company. The development had been part funded via right to buy receipts, brown field government funding and S106 monies from the development at Wherry Road.

**RESOLVED** to agree to:

- 1) award the contract for construction of the 14 homes to Marfleet and Blyth Ltd; and

- 2) utilise £729,166 S106 affordable housing commuted sum towards this development.

### **13. Response to Scrutiny Committee Recommendations on Retrofitting**

Councillor Hampton, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, introduced the item and advised that a verbal update was provided at the last meeting of the Cabinet and, as requested, a written response was now presented with an opportunity for questions to be asked.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin, Councillor Jones, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety advised that the stock condition survey would be completed within the next month or two. Once the condition of the stock was understood, decisions on how best to incorporate retrofitting works could be made. She emphasised that she agreed with the recommendations from scrutiny in principle but could not agree to them exactly because flexibility was required to take account of other factors.

Councillor Hampton, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, confirmed that Cabinet was keen to engage on retrofitting with scrutiny committee going forward if that was the will of the committee.

#### **RESOLVED to:**

- 1) include retrofitting as a priority in the Corporate Plan 2024-2029;
- 2) continue to ensure a state of readiness across council teams to enable funding applications to be submitted efficiently for all available funding opportunities;
- 3) ask officers to ensure that training on retrofitting appropriate to staff roles is offered;
- 4) arrange training for councillors on signposting to existing schemes and support;
- 5) ask officers to include a Retrofit Communications Plan and Engagement Strategy to share learning, best practice, and opportunities, and to ensure that local residents are well informed and engaged as part of the Citywide Climate Action Strategy;
- 6) continue to seek to play a leading role in terms of retrofitting within the council's estate within the context of the resources and funding available;
- 7) explore launching a municipal loan scheme to fund retrofitting measures;
- 8) explore if extra sources of funding for retrofitting of community spaces can be obtained;
- 9) ask officers to explore working with private sector investors to utilise potential external funding opportunities, i.e. in large scale heat networks; and

- 10) continue to work with planning officers to use the National Planning Policy Framework to develop local supplementary planning documents to promote and enable retrofit.

#### **14. Assets (Non-Housing) Five Year Plan**

Councillor Kendrick, the Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report and said he supported the philosophy behind the plan and noted that the successful management of assets was fundamental to the financial security of the Council.

The Head of Property and Economic Development advised that the list of assets for which authority to dispose of was being sought was in the exempt appendix to the report.

Councillor Galvin referred to the Asset and Development Board referenced in the report as the board tasked with the disposal of assets. She asked who sat on the board and how members could have oversight of its work. The Head of Property and Economic Development advised this was an officer led board which was chaired by the Interim Executive Director of Major Projects with input from finance. The cabinet portfolio holder was provided with regular briefings on the work of the board and there were six monthly updates on the asset plan which would come to cabinet.

With no members indicating that they wished to discuss the exempt appendix accompanying the report, it was: -

#### **RESOLVED to:**

- 1) Endorse the revised asset management action plan appended to this report.
- 2) Endorse the governance arrangements for management of the non-housing property portfolio.
- 3) Delegate the disposal of the assets listed within the exempt appendix to the Executive Director of Development and City Services, in consultation with the S151 Officer and Cabinet Member for Resources;
- 4) Agree to the use of the Commercial Property Reserve to fund condition surveys and rent reviews, which related to assets listed within the exempt appendix; and
- 5) Note that there would be a report to Cabinet in 12 months' time to report on progress and consider additional disposals in later years of the plan.

#### **15. Development Site Pipeline (key decision)**

The Chair advised that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

#### **16. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of items \*17 and \*18 (below) on the grounds that they contained exempt information, as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 to Schedule 12A, as amended, of the Local Government Act 1972.



**\*17. Assets (Non-Housing) Five Year Plan - (Exempt appendix) (Para 3)**

This item was noted under item 14 above.

**\*18. Development Site Pipeline - (Exempt appendix) (Para 3)**

The Chair advised that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

CHAIR





**Committee name:** Cabinet

**Committee date:** 17/07/2024

**Report title:** Progress on Motion 12(c), approved at council on 30 January 2024

**Portfolio:** Councillor Giles, cabinet member for a fairer Norwich

**Report from:** Executive Director of Communities and Housing

**Wards:** All Wards

**OPEN PUBLIC ITEM**

**FOR DECISION**

### **Purpose**

Motion 12(c) was approved at council on 30 January 2024. The motion stated: “It costs more to be poor: tackling the poverty premium in Norwich”. This report refers specifically to resolution 8c within the motion to “take reasonable endeavours to bring forward a Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy feasibility study, as part of the planned EDI Action Plan workstream... to June cabinet”.

The purpose of this report is to update cabinet on:

- (i) progress made to date towards the development of an Affordable Financial Services Strategy feasibility study as stated in motion 12c.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that cabinet:

- (i) **note** the work undertaken so far towards the preparation of a feasibility study for the development of a Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy; and
- (ii) **agree** that this feasibility study be progressed in parallel with the business planning elements of the council’s community-led plan *We are Norwich*, particularly the *Fairer Norwich* priority, with the study being considered by cabinet at a future date when the business plan has been fully developed.

### **Policy framework**

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- An Open and Modern Council

- A Prosperous Norwich
- A Fairer Norwich
- A Climate Responsive Norwich
- A Future-Proof Norwich

This report responds to the ambitions as outlined under the *A Fairer Norwich* priority, specifically the outcomes “people have better health outcomes and longer life expectancy” and “tackle the root causes of disadvantage”.

### **Report details:**

#### **Motion 12(c), Council Meeting, 30 January 2024:**

1. At council on 30 January 2024, amendments to motion 12(c) proposed by Cllr Galvin and seconded by Cllr Haynes – “It costs more to be poor: tackling the poverty premium in Norwich” – were passed. The motion is attached at appendix 1.
2. Within this motion, resolution 8c tasked the council’s strategy team to “take reasonable endeavours to bring forward a Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy feasibility study, as part of the planned EDI Action Plan workstream... to June cabinet”. This included the specific workstreams as set out below:
  - a. Present the evidence as collected based on Resolution 8(a) (see appendix 1).
  - b. Identify the relevant partnership prospects, including through the Norwich 2040 City Vision Partnership, highlighting challenges and opportunities.
  - c. Scope a top-level proposition in relation to the feasibility of a Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy.
  - d. Identify the resources that would be needed to deliver a potential Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy.
  - e. Set out a practically viable timescale for commencing work on a potential Norwich Affordable Financial Services strategy in alignment with the EDI Action Plan.

### **The feasibility study:**

3. Work is underway to deliver against the tasks identified in the motion, albeit a final feasibility study is not yet ready for publication. Progress to date broadly breaks down into the following areas:

### **Gathering evidence of need:**

- a. Local approaches to the provision of affordable credit should be evidence-based and built on a robust and detailed understanding of the needs of the local community. This is vital to maximising the effectiveness and value of local delivery, ensuring its scale meets local needs and that it can be targeted to those who need it the most.

- b. Building a holistic evidence base that includes modelling of the potential scale and cost of existing high-cost credit use will enable the council to make informed decisions about investment in local affordable finance provision.
- c. Work on developing this evidence base is advanced, with a clearer picture now emerging of the scale of the problem in Norwich, as well as nationally. This includes analysis of the latest poverty reports from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Plend, the Fabian Society and Fair by Design, and consideration of available datasets across access to support services, access to formal debt solutions, credit scores, and relevant data from Norfolk Community Advice Network (NCAN), the Financial Inclusion Consortium (FIC), the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and Norfolk Insight, as well as indices of deprivation (e.g. by examining Norwich's Reducing Inequalities Target Areas (RITAs) data).
- d. In addition to the above, officers are also seeking data around financial vulnerability markers, use of foodbanks and housing accounts in arrears as well as assessing the scale and impact for those on low incomes and benefits.
- e. The complexity of issues around this work are documented in [research by the University of Bristol](#) which finds that the average low-income household incurs about four different types of poverty premium, with around three-quarters (73%) incurring three or more premiums, over half (55%) incurring four or more, and more than a third (38%) incurring five or more. This highlights the challenge that is faced in reducing the poverty premium that low-income households pay, as it requires action across multiple domains and by multiple stakeholders.

#### **4. Mapping existing provision (locally as well as nationally):**

- a. Dialogue with local credit unions (Wherry Dragon and Norfolk First) has been initiated to understand the existing offer within Norwich and to begin identifying the scale of demand and any emerging opportunities and challenges. These conversations are ongoing and have yet to take place with Norwich Credit Union and with local banks. When complete, a fuller and more robust picture of what is available in Norwich, how applicants are assessed, and the level of loan rejection rates will become apparent.
- b. The prevalence of illegal money lenders and the use of buy-now-pay-later schemes are also being assessed, liaising with Norfolk County council about the former, and the Financial Inclusion Consortium and local Citizens Advice teams to gauge the scale of use of the latter. This is complemented by planned analysis of Financial Conduct Authority data with a view to drilling down to a local level if this is feasible.
- c. Conversations with the council's own housing team are also ongoing to assess data on contents insurance uptake for social housing tenants and opportunities for the council to promote this as a means of reducing poverty premiums, noting that current use is low. Officers will also consider the opportunities provided by social tariffs (e.g. for energy or

water use) and discuss the potential of automated referrals and better promotion of these benefits with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for those on Universal Credit.

- d. Going forwards, working with the Financial Inclusion Consortium, they will also investigate if there are local community finance providers operating in or near Norwich (such as community development financial institutions (CDFIs) like [Burnley Savings and Loans](#) (BSAL), an independent lending company that returns profits to charities, including local food banks and community centres).

## **5. The work of other local authorities and public sector bodies in affordable financial services:**

- a. There is a clear need to understand how others are operating in this field and to learn from their experiences and expertise. The Local Government Association (LGA) has been working with a group of seven councils on a [Reshaping Financial Support programme](#) looking at how to design and implement early intervention financial support and services that can prevent low income households developing further financial issues.
- b. Officers are seeking to identify the relevant officers within local authorities in other areas that have led on this work to gain clarity around what is in scope and their organisations' ability to navigate wider, contextual forces playing out on a national scale; to consider the benefits of a commissioning model against whether councils are best placed to offer affordable finance, assessing value; and to consider reputational disbenefit, examining the reputational risks for a council if – for example – it is seen to promote vulnerable individuals' use of credit union loans which can draw people further into debt.

## **6. Strategy costings and timelines:**

- a. The feasibility study will set out the costs of developing a Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy, noting the potential scope of the work and its complexity.
- b. The EDI Action Plan is scheduled for completion in December 2024. The strategy – if commissioned – would be a major strand of work within this plan.

## **Consultation:**

7. Details of the consultation underway to deliver the feasibility study are given above. It should be noted that not all consultees have yet been identified. In headline, consultees include but are not limited to:
  - a. Relevant research and data providers, including in-house teams as well as external local, regional and national bodies.
  - b. Relevant financial services providers, including banks, insurers and credit unions.
  - c. Other public bodies operating in the field of affordable financial services.

- d. Relevant voluntary and community sector organisations, including the council's own groups, boards and consortiums (e.g. the Financial Inclusion Consortium).
- e. Potential partners – local, regional and national.

### **Next steps**

- 8. The council will continue to undertake the work needed to develop an Affordable Financial Services Strategy feasibility study. Since the motion, council has agreed a community-led plan – *We are Norwich* – which includes a *Fairer Norwich* priority. It is recommended that progress towards the feasibility study is considered as part of the business planning process to deliver the community-led plan, as well as the development of the forthcoming EDI action plan which was agreed as part of the council's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in January 2024.

### **Implications**

#### **Financial and resources**

- 9. 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 2024-29 and its annual budget.
- 10. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources. Costed proposals for the development of a Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy will be contained within the feasibility study when it is submitted to cabinet. The cost of the feasibility study itself is being met from current resources in the Strategy team.

#### **Legal**

- 11. No legal implications have been identified in the writing of this status report. Any identified implications for the development of a Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy will be presented in the feasibility study when it is submitted to cabinet later in the year.

## Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	<p>Tackling socioeconomic disadvantage is a key priority area within the council's newly adopted EDI Strategy 2024/27 and within the new community-led corporate plan – <i>We are Norwich</i> (under its <i>A Fairer Norwich</i> priority).</p> <p>Any solutions proposed within the feasibility study and – if commissioned – the Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy – would support socioeconomically disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>An EqIA would be undertaken to gauge the potential impacts of such a strategy and be a requirement of any commission.</p>
Health, social and economic impact	<p>A Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy would support better health, social and economic outcomes for Norwich communities. This aligns with the EDI Strategy cited above in that it supports its aim to focus on prevention and early intervention to reduce inequalities, as well as with the <i>A Fairer Norwich</i> Priority within the community-led plan, <i>We are Norwich</i>.</p>
Crime and disorder	<p>The scope and uptake of illegal money lenders will be considered within the feasibility study and further explored in the strategy if this is commissioned, seeking to provide households with appropriate alternatives to such financing.</p>
Children and adults safeguarding	<p>As per the EDI Strategy and community-led plan, both cited above, a Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy (if commissioned) would seek to protect those vulnerable to the poverty premium, building resilience for households and better supporting families facing financial hardship.</p>
Environmental impact	<p>No environmental impacts have been identified in the development of this report.</p>



## Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Operational	Whilst there has been progress, there remains challenges which have meant that a full feasibility study is not available for June/July cabinet. See item 15 below.	The strategy team will continue to undertake the work needed to develop an Affordable Financial Services Strategy feasibility study. Since the motion, council has agreed a community-led plan – <i>We are Norwich</i> – which includes a <i>Fairer Norwich</i> priority. It is recommended that progress towards the feasibility study is considered as part of the business planning process to deliver the community-led plan, as well as the development of the forthcoming EDI action plan which was agreed in the council's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
Legal	No legal risks have been identified as part of this report excepting those seeking support from illegal money lenders.	A Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy would address this issue by offering alternative and affordable means of finance.
Reputational	If it is seen to promote vulnerable individuals' use of credit, the council may suffer reputational disbenefit.	Consultation with other public bodies operating within this field will be undertaken as part of the feasibility study, and any mitigations identified will be carried through to the Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy, if commissioned.

## Other options considered

12. No other reasonably viable options have been identified.

## Reasons for the decision/recommendation

13. This report asks cabinet to agree that the feasibility study progressed in parallel with the business planning elements of the council's community-led plan *We are Norwich*, particularly the *Fairer Norwich* priority, with the study being considered by cabinet at a future date when the business plan has been fully developed.

14. Whilst there has been progress, there remains challenges which have meant that a full feasibility study is not available for the June cabinet as stated in the motion. These include:

- a. The requirement to move this report to July cabinet, following the cancellation of the June sitting.

- b. The significant scope of research needed to inform a robust and locally-focussed study.
- c. The paucity of data in a local context and the significant delay this has caused in identifying relevant sources and understanding the breadth of the issues faced.
- d. The identification of key organisations and the personnel within them who may be best-placed to help interrogate options.

**Background papers:** None

**Appendices:**

- Appendix 1: Motion 12(c) “It costs more to be poor: tackling the poverty premium in Norwich” (amended 30 January 2024).

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**Motion to:** Council

30 January 2024

**Subject:** It costs more to be poor: tackling the poverty premium in Norwich

**Proposer:** Councillor Galvin

**Seconded:** Councillor Haynes

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An amendment has been received from **Councillor Giles**.

**Councillor Giles** is amending the motion as follows:-

Inserting the words “**presented through future Equality Information Reports**” after the words “**in Norwich**” in resolution 7)

Inserting the following resolution before resolution c) so that it becomes resolution c):

**“c) Take reasonable endeavours to bring forward a Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy feasibility study, as part of the planned EDI Action Plan workstream, on the below to June Cabinet:**

- (i) Presenting the evidence as collected based on Resolution 8A above**
- (ii) Identifying the relevant partnership prospects, including through the Norwich 2040 City Vision Partnership, highlighting challenges and opportunities**
- (iii) Scoping a top-level proposition in relation to the feasibility of a Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy**
- (iv) Identifying the resources that would be needed to deliver a potential Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy**
- (v) Setting out a practically viable timescale for commencing work on a potential Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy in alignment with the EDI Action Plan”**

Inserting the following after the new resolution c), to become resolution d): “**d) A potential Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy produced on a practically viable timescale may include:**”

Replacing resolutions c), d), e), f), g) and 9) with the following:

**“(i) A Project Mandate for investment in local credit unions, possibly including its ‘in house’ Wherry Dragon credit union. This could possibly be via subordinated debt or deferred shares, and would necessarily involve identification of how affordable finance products could be best used to support cost-effective council service delivery, by engaging with local providers to discuss potential product development opportunities. For example, this may include developing a business case in partnership with credit unions and Norwich 2040 City Vision partners to provide financial support through investment to develop targeted products in line with the council’s corporate plan objectives and the objectives of the Norwich 2040 City Vision (examples may include extending managed credit to those struggling via tailored, manageable loans, or targeted loans at reduced interest rates for home improvements that increase energy efficiency**

**(ii) Aligned with a plan of engagement with, and support of, affordable lenders, a plan to encourage and facilitate their adoption of the Affordable Credit Code of Practice as necessary.**

**(iii) Examination of using the criteria highlighted within the Affordable Credit Code of Practice to inform future commissioning/ contracting processes for affordable finance provision, to ensure the quality and effectiveness of local services.**

**(iv) Consideration of how access to affordable finance provision, including the council’s insurance offer to tenants, is robustly integrated with wider support services, including those of the council and local voluntary and community sector partners. This may include the development of an effective outreach campaign to support access to and uptake of affordable finance provision, drawing on behavioural insights to increase the effectiveness of the campaign. This could e.g. include embedding reference to local affordable finance provision and the ‘stop the loan sharks’ team within relevant council tax communication processes**

**(v) Development of, together with partners, a robust evaluation framework with clear metrics and success criteria to regularly assess the impact of this strategic work on access to affordable finance.**

**(vi) Consideration of how the aims of the Strategy align with the treasury management strategy, balanced with consideration of security, liquidity and yield.”**

Removing resolution 10)

So that the revised motion becomes:-

The cost-of-living crisis and 15 years of stagnant incomes mean that many Norwich residents are going into 2024 worse off. The benefits of decreasing inflation and tax cuts will not be felt by the 20-30 percent of people with the lowest incomes who will

see their incomes fall rather than rise, and special payments by the government will end in April.

The impact of the crisis on Norwich residents is well documented. Around 55,500 people in Norwich live in areas that are among the 20% most deprived in England.

High unemployment and poverty have been part of life in some wards in our city for generations but the cost-of-living crisis has sharpened the effects. Children's health is compromised. Recently we have seen evidence of children in Norwich suffering from rickets, and evidence from a head teacher of having to carry malnourished children to the doctor, two year olds trying to eat sand because they are hungry, and increasing absence due to ill health from poverty.

Norfolk is one of the worst-affected areas for malnutrition, with the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB) recording a malnutrition rate of 6.7%, the highest of any ICB in the country, according to a report from Future Health research centre.

The 'poverty premium' - the name for the syndrome where people living in poverty end up paying more for goods and services - worsens with increasing poverty. It harms the physical and psychological health, welfare and quality of life of residents. This penalty for living in poverty exacerbates the difficulties of managing a low income. The premium exists in many dimensions, but areas where its impact is worst include: not paying by the cheapest billing method; geographical premiums for e.g. car insurance; paying to access money; and having to use higher-cost credit.

All these elements add to keeping people in poverty, both in and out of work, and are impacting increasingly. Figures from the anti-poverty campaign Fair by Design show that in Norwich south a third of households have experienced one or more poverty premiums and the average cost of these premiums to households in poverty is £466. In Norwich north 26% of households were paying a premium of some kind, the total cost of the poverty premium is £4,681,591 and average cost to households in poverty is £ 454. This is money that could be in people's pockets, and in the local economy.

Debt is a particularly bad problem and increasing at an alarming rate. Figures from the latest Norfolk Community Law Service Impact Report (2022/23) show clients with £3 million of debt, up from £1.9 million in 2021/22, with a 52% increase in the value of debt written off/renegeotiated from 2021/22, and average debt of clients up 113% from previous year. Increase in average debt for clients went from £4,429 in 2019-20 to £15,550 in 2022-23.

Council notes:

- 1) In 2018 the UN's special rapporteur on extreme poverty described in detail the gross misery that the UK's Conservative government has inflicted on the population through the "punitive, mean spirited, and often callous" policies of austerity. Today this situation is worse, and a second UN rapporteur recently described the government's approach as a human rights law violation.

## Motion 12(c) – Accepted Amendment

- 2) Today in the UK an inexcusable one million children live in destitution, four million children face food insecurity, and 4.2 million children live in poverty, and this council states, and deplores the fact that it is this Conservative government's cuts in public services, wages, and benefits that have put them there.
- 3) Local councils like Norwich can support tackling the poverty premium within service functions relating to housing, economic development, community and wider support functions. Norwich city council continues to work to improve sustainable warmth for its citizens and on ongoing financial inclusion initiatives.
- 4) Given its leadership role within local communities, Norwich city council is well placed to ensure that the right partnerships are in place to facilitate a coordinated approach.
- 5) Norwich city council has an insurance provider available for tenants (11) and a long history of establishing and working with credit unions and advice organisations to support its communities' access to credit and advice. Currently under 9 percent of tenants use the scheme for insurance and the trend has been downwards for the past five years. The credit unions are also seeing a fall in users. An increase in the use of both of these services will assist in protecting residents from paying the poverty premium.
- 6) Given the financial pressure on councils, investing in credit union capital can allow credit unions to expand their operations while retaining the investment as an asset on the council's budget sheet, which may present a more attractive funding proposition than a grant.

### Council **RESOLVES** to:

- 7) Ask cabinet to make an immediate written commitment to monitor and address poverty premium impacts and levels in Norwich, presented through future Equality Information Reports, similar to the council's Fuel Poverty Commitment
- 8) Take action on this commitment, by asking cabinet to consider developing and working within a strategic framework to:
  - a) inform improving access to affordable financial services. This will require building a holistic local evidence base that includes estimations of the scale and cost of the issue. Effective ways of improving access to affordable financial services should further be informed by considering the success of national and international projects to address the issue (e.g. the No Interest Loan Scheme Pilot).

## Motion 12(c) – Accepted Amendment

- b) Draw on people's lived experiences to inform strategies to reduce the poverty premium in Norwich.
- c) Take reasonable endeavours to bring forward a Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy feasibility study, as part of the planned EDI Action Plan workstream, on the below to June Cabinet:
  - (i) Presenting the evidence as collected based on Resolution 8a) above
  - (ii) Identifying the relevant partnership prospects, including through the Norwich 2040 City Vision Partnership, highlighting challenges and opportunities
  - (iii) Scoping a top-level proposition in relation to the feasibility of a Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy
  - (iv) Identifying the resources that would be needed to deliver a potential Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy
  - (v) Setting out a practically viable timescale for commencing work on a potential Norwich Affordable Financial Services strategy in alignment with the EDI Action Plan
- d) A potential Norwich Affordable Financial Services Strategy produced on a practically viable timescale may include:
  - (i) A Project Mandate for investment in local credit unions, possibly including its 'in house' Wherry Dragon credit union. This could possibly be via subordinated debt or deferred shares, and would necessarily involve identification of how affordable finance products could be best used to support cost-effective council service delivery, by engaging with local providers to discuss potential product development opportunities. For example, this may include developing a business case in partnership with credit unions and Norwich 2040 City Vision partners to provide financial support through investment to develop targeted products in line with the council's corporate plan objectives and the objectives of the Norwich 2040 City Vision (examples may include extending managed credit to those struggling via tailored, manageable loans, or targeted loans at reduced interest rates for home improvements that increase energy efficiency).
  - (ii) Aligned with a plan of engagement with, and support of, affordable lenders, a plan to encourage and facilitate their adoption of the Affordable Credit Code of Practice as necessary.
  - (iii) Examination of using the criteria highlighted within the Affordable Credit Code of Practice to inform future commissioning/ contracting processes for affordable finance provision, to ensure the quality and effectiveness of local services

## **Motion 12(c) – Accepted Amendment**

- (iv) Consideration of how access to affordable finance provision, including the council's insurance offer to tenants, is robustly integrated with wider support services, including those of the council and local voluntary and community sector partners. This (REMOVE should) may include the development of an effective outreach campaign to support access to and uptake of affordable finance provision, drawing on behavioural insights to increase the effectiveness of the campaign. This could e.g. include embedding reference to local affordable finance provision and the 'stop the loan sharks' team within relevant council tax communication processes.
- (v) Development of, together with partners, a robust evaluation framework with clear metrics and success criteria to regularly assess the impact of this strategic work on access to affordable finance.
- (vi) Consideration how the aims of the Strategy align with the treasury management strategy, balanced with consideration of security, liquidity and yield.





**Committee name:** Cabinet

**Committee date:** 17/07/2024

**Report title:** Norwich City Council Control of Alcohol Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)

**Portfolio:** Councillor Jones, cabinet member for housing

**Report from:** Executive director of housing and communities

**Wards:** All Wards

**OPEN PUBLIC ITEM**

**KEY DECISION**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to implement a Control of Alcohol Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for a period of three years, extending the boundaries to cover the full Norwich City district.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that:

The Control of Alcohol Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) is made for the period of three years to May 2027.

The boundary for the PSPO be extended to cover the whole Norwich City district.

### **Policy framework**

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- A prosperous Norwich.
- A fairer Norwich.
- A climate responsive Norwich.
- A future-proof Norwich.
- An open and modern council.

This report meets the open and modern council corporate priority

This report addresses the 'We have diverse and vibrant neighbourhoods where our streets are clean and safe. Growing numbers of people enjoy creative and culture events. We have safe and welcoming public spaces that celebrate diversity and we're proud of throughout all our neighbourhoods' action in the Corporate Plan.

This report helps to meet the Anti-social Behaviour adopted policy and the Safer Norwich Strategy 2023-26 of the Council.

### **Public Space Protection Order legislative framework.**

1. The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014<sup>1</sup> provides local authorities with powers to make Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) to address and curtail activities having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the community or any likely activity that would have such an effect.
2. A PSPO effectively prohibits specified things from being done or requires certain things to be done in an area covered by it, whilst ensuring that law-abiding members of the public can use and enjoy that area.
3. A PSPO may be made if the council is satisfied on reasonable grounds that three conditions are met: (i) Activities carried on in a public place within the City boundary either have had, or it is likely that they will have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality; (ii) It is likely that the detrimental effect will be persistent, and such as to make the activities unreasonable; (iii) The effect, or likely effect, is such as to justify the restrictions imposed by the proposed PSPO.
4. The restrictions and requirements set by the council may: (i) Be blanket or targeted restrictions against certain behaviours by certain groups at certain times; (ii) Restrict access to public spaces (including certain types of highway) where that route is being used to commit anti-social behaviour; (iii) Be enforced by a police officer, police community support officer and council officers.
5. The only prohibitions or requirements that may be imposed are ones that are reasonable to impose in order: (i) To prevent the detrimental effect referred to in 3(i) above; (ii) To reduce the detrimental effect or to reduce the risk of its continuance, occurrence or recurrence.
6. A breach of a PSPO is a criminal offence. Enforcement officers can issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for up to £100. A breach may then be prosecuted on failure to pay the FPN with a possible fine up to Level 3 (£1000)
7. A PSPO can be made for a period of up to three years and can be renewed any number of times. A PSPO can also be reviewed and amended or withdrawn during the period of the order.

### **The need and justification for the PSPO**

8. The preceding Control of Alcohol PSPO was implemented in May 2021 for a period of three years.

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<sup>1</sup> [Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/122)

9. This PSPO was limited to areas of the city where street drinking had previously been observed and this was described in the PSPO.

10. Information from Police Constables and ASB hot spot mapping indicates that street drinking and alcohol related crime and ASB is still prevalent and no longer limited to the previously described areas.

## **Consultation**

11. The creation or extension of a PSPO cannot take place until the necessary consultation, publicity and notification has taken place in accordance with section 72 of the 2014 Act and Home Office statutory guidance.<sup>2</sup> This means consulting with the police, Police and Crime Commissioner, community representatives and the owners or occupiers of land within the restricted area (to the extent that it is reasonably practicable); publishing the text of the proposed PSPO; and notifying Norfolk County Council.

12. Statutory guidance highlights that, as the effect of PSPOs is to restrict the behaviour of everybody using the public place, the close or direct involvement of elected members will help to ensure openness and accountability.

13. In addition, when considering making a PSPO, the council must consider any equality issues pursuant to its duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In line with this, an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed.

## **Consultation process and outcome**

14. Norwich City Council undertook the recommended public consultation using the Get Talking (GTN) Norwich digital platform. The consultation ran from 8 February 2024 to 23 June 2024. The consultation was publicised on the Norwich City Council website, by press release (which subsequently saw an article in the Eastern Daily Press, Evening News, and BBC website) and via social media. Norwich City Council members were alerted to the consultation via e-Councillor bulletin. In addition, partner members of the Safer Norwich Board were informed of the consultation at the meeting dated 19 March 2024.

15. The consultation consisted of multiple questions to comment on the issue of alcohol related ASB in Norwich and whether the respondent supports the implementation and extension of the boundary of the PSPO. Some basic accompanying information regarding the aims of the PSPO was provided together with some Frequently Asked Questions.

16. Respondents were also invited to mark on an interactive map any locations they have experienced alcohol related ASB and offer alternative suggestions for management of alcohol related ASB in Norwich. These locations and suggestions will be used to inform future work by the Community Safety team.

17. The consultation received 117 responses to the main survey questions and 77 responses to identifying problem locations on the map. It was not mandatory to complete all questions on the consultation so the number of responses to specific questions may vary.

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<sup>2</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1146322/2023\\_Update\\_ASB\\_Statutory\\_Guidance\\_-\\_FINAL\\_1\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1146322/2023_Update_ASB_Statutory_Guidance_-_FINAL_1_.pdf)

18. 101 (91.8%) respondents supported the PSPO allowing authorised officers to remove alcohol from people engaging in ASB, with 7 (6.4%) opposing and 2 (1.8%) not sure

19. 100 (90.9%) people supported the extension of the boundary of the PSPO to be citywide, with 5 (4.5%) opposing and 5 (4.5%) not sure.

20. For purposes of clarity, a supplementary question was asked for those viewing the full wording of the proposed order “Do you support or oppose the implementation of the PSPO for control of alcohol?” There were only 6 respondents to this question, however all 6 (100%) answered “Strongly Support”.

21. As can be seen a significant majority of respondents support the proposed PSPO.

22. Key concerns raised about the extension of the boundary were:

- “All this order would do is cost money and put pressure on police and cause conflict”
- “You are overstepping the mark of control”
- “Giving too much power to police to enforce against behaviours based on their opinions. ASB is too broad and vague a definition”

23. 55 comments were offered with diverse perspectives and additional suggestions. These are summarised as:

- Enforcement and increased police presence: a recurring theme is the need for stricter enforcement of existing regulations and a more visible police presence, particularly on foot patrols and during nighttime hours.
- Consistent enforcement of signs, potentially with CCTV or increased police patrols
- Confiscation of alcohol from individuals engaging in ASB
- Potential temporary bans from specific areas for repeat offenders
- Targeted interventions: Comments suggest a multi-pronged approach, including designated alcohol-free zones and support services for those struggling with addiction.
- Increased support services to address addiction issues
- Designation of specific areas as alcohol free zones
- Collaboration with individuals in recovery to help those causing problems access support
- Balancing approaches: There’s a call for a balanced approach that tackles the root causes of ASB while also ensuring responsible enjoyment of public spaces.
- Comments highlight the need for clear communication regarding enforcement procedures and designated alcohol-free zones
- Concerns exist about potential overreach by police and the importance of only targeting those causing ASB

24. The Chief Constable of Norfolk and the Police and Crime Commissioner were consulted with both confirming their support for the proposed PSPO.

25. Norfolk County Council were informed of the proposed PSPO.

26. Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service and Norfolk Neighbourhood Watch were also consulted. Both were in support of the proposal.

### **Enforcement and management**

27. As per the agreement reached with Norfolk Police breaches of the PSPO will primarily be witnessed and evidenced by the police.

28. In summary, the escalation and enforcement model is;

- Engage and educate – potential for confiscation of alcohol and warning letter.
- Further breach – evidence and statements to Norwich City Council.
- Norwich City Council – Community Safety team to decide upon serving a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) and any subsequent prosecution.

29. Once made, the Order will be publicised on the Council website, in the local press and by social media. Signage will be placed at appropriate locations.

### **Implications**

#### **Financial and resources**

30. The financial cost of managing the PSPO and any enforcement action including prosecution for breaches will be covered from the existing Safer Neighbourhood Initiative budget.

31. The staff resource required to manage the PSPO implementation and enforcement will be met within existing Community Safety team resources.

### **Legal**

32. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities to consider the crime and disorder implications of all their activities and functions and do all that they reasonably can to reduce these problems. The proposed PSPO contributes to that requirement.

33. NPLaw have advised on consultation, the principles and content of the proposed PSPO and subsequent management of the PSPO once made.

## Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	There is the possibility the PSPO may impact more substantially on people with mental health difficulties and/or alcohol and substance abuse issues (as evidenced in the street drinking community). This may impact on our Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. An Equality Impact Assessment has been conducted
Health, social and economic impact	Limited - but positive in respect of an increase in resident's being able to enjoy public spaces
Crime and disorder	<p>The Proposed PSPO supports the Norfolk County Community Safety Partnership - Safer Norfolk Plan 2021-24 priority of reducing anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>The proposed PSPO also supports the Reducing Neighbourhood Crime and ASB priority in the Safer Norwich Strategy 2023-26.</p>
Children and adults safeguarding	No direct impact on safeguarding in terms of policies or duties
Environmental impact	No specific environmental impact can be attributed to the PSPO

## Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Failure to implement effective enforcement of the PSPO	Loss of reputation	<p>Oversight for delivery will lie with the Portfolio Holder and Executive Director.</p> <p>The Council's senior leadership team and elected members will be regularly appraised of progress.</p>
Ineffective relationship management with Police	Ineffective management of PSPO	<p>Regular reporting from police on use and impact of powers derived from the PSPO</p> <p>Regular stakeholder meetings</p>

## **Other options considered**

34. We have considered extending the preceding PSPO on a like for like basis or allowing the PSPO to lapse and not be replaced.

## **Reasons for the decision/recommendation**

35. Data from Norfolk Police and officer testimony indicates that alcohol related crime and ASB is still prevalent in Norwich and that the preceding PSPO was an effective method of dealing with this.

36. Displacement of street drinking has been evident over the past 3 years

37. The consultation has demonstrated overwhelming support for the implementation of a citywide control of alcohol PSPO.

**Background papers: None**

**Appendices:**

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**Committee name:** Cabinet

**Committee date:** 17/07/2024

**Report title:** Corporate Performance Report for 2023/24

**Portfolio:** Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for an open and modern council

**Report from:** Executive director of housing and communities

**Wards:** All wards

**OPEN PUBLIC ITEM**

**Purpose**

To report progress against the delivery of the corporate plan priorities and key performance indicators for 2023-2024.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that cabinet review progress on the key performance indicators for 2023-2024.

**Policy framework**

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- An open and modern council.
- A prosperous Norwich.
- A fairer Norwich.
- A climate responsive Norwich.
- A future-proof Norwich.

This report meets the 'An open and modern council' priority.

## Report details

### Background

1. For the reporting period 2023-2024, information across corporate performance, finance, and risk elements are presented quarterly to Cabinet as three individual reports. This report relates to the performance against the previous Corporate Plan 2022-2026, which had the following five aims:
  - a) People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
  - b) Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
  - c) Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
  - d) The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.
  - e) Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.
2. The corporate performance framework that sits alongside the corporate plan helps us to measure progress against these aims. This is done through key performance indicators (KPIs) which are a set of measures that monitor delivery of services and activities which contribute to us achieving the five aims.
3. Performance reporting for indicators in this report is based around a traffic light system, as set out in [Appendix A](#).

### Introduction

4. This report sets out progress for year two of the Corporate Plan 2022-2026 and covers the period 01 April 2023 – 31 March 2024. During 2023-2024 the Council developed and approved a new community-led plan *We are Norwich*. From April 2024 performance will be reporting against this new plan. However, in order to provide consistency, this report measures progress against the former corporate plan. Performance reports for 2024-2025 will measure progress against the new community-led plan.
5. The report appendices provide the following information:
  - [Appendix B](#) provides details on achievements, success, and challenges in quarter four, and provides links to previous success and challenges presented to Cabinet in 2023-2024.
  - [Appendix C](#) provides a detailed list of how each KPI is calculated, how frequently it is reported and what the target and intervention levels are.
  - [Appendix D](#) provides a detailed list of all KPIs for this and the previous four reporting periods, showing the status and direction of progress.
  - [Appendix E](#) provides a summary of the performance measures presented as a count of the KPIs by status as well as a total, for each corporate aim, for each quarter to date for 2023-2024.

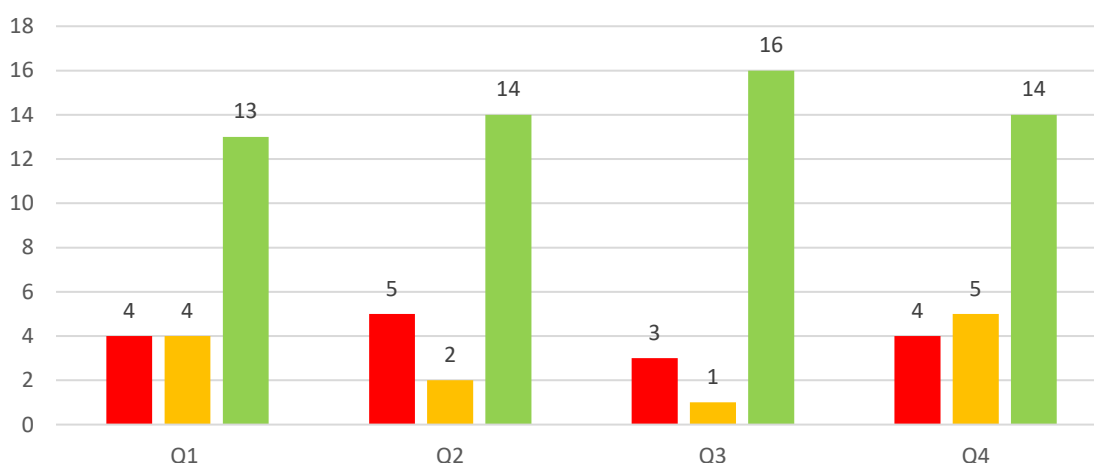
## Overview of Performance Measures 2023-2024

6. Overall performance for in 2023-24 has remained steady compared with 2022-2023, as shown in the table below. There were 23 KPIs that were reported quarterly, and six KPIs that were reported annually (two in quarter two and four in quarter four). A breakdown of the 29 indicators is shown below:

KPIs against Targets		Totals 2022-23	Totals 2023-24
	Performance is on or above target	13 (54%)	14 (58%)
	Early warning that performance is not on target and action may be required.	4 (17%)	5 (21%)
	Performance has reached a level where we will intervene and agree what action is required to bring it back on target.	7 (29%)	5 (21%)
<b>RAG totals</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>
	Data is being monitored	1	4
	Data is not currently recorded	2	1

7. There are five KPIs that have reached a level where we will intervene, and action is required to bring them back on target. An explanation of the performance in these areas can be found in the report in the section titled [‘Performance Measures Summary 2023-2024’](#).
8. The chart below compares performance with the previous quarters reported this year, and performance remains steady with positive movement across the majority of indicators.

**Count of KPI status by quarter 2023-2024**



*Please note, there was a coding error in quarter 3 for KPI 05 - % of council housing rent collected (excluding arrears brought forward) which should show as amber and not green, as reflected in the chart above.*

9. In comparison to last year, there are notable improvements in the following KPIs:
- *% of complaints responded to within 10 days*, is 15 percentage points higher than the same quarter last year.
  - From 2022 to 2023 the number of private sector homes made safe has increased by 59 properties.
  - There were 126 affordable homes built, purchased, or enabled this year, which exceeds the target by 76 homes.

## Performance Measures Summary 2023-2024

10. The information below provides a summary of the Council's performance in 2023-2024 against the five aims in the previous Corporate Plan, and commentary has been provided on the performance over the year.

### Organisation wide KPIs

11. All KPIs are service specific except for two KPIs which are organisation wide measures.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
% of FOI requests responded to within statutory timescales	91.40	98.50	97.20	97.00	95.40

12. As shown in the table above, performance has remained green for KPI 25: *% of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests responded to within 20 working days*. This is four percentage points higher than the same quarter last year despite a 39% increase in the number of requests. Over the last 12 months there has been a noticeable and sustained improvement in response times.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
% of corporate complaints responded to within stated timescales	58.74	68.00	58.00	58.00	74.00

13. Performance has significantly improved for KPI 26: *% of complaints responded to within 10 days*. This is 15 percentage points higher than the same quarter last year. A task and finish group has helped to drive performance, achieving the highest performance so far this year. Performance since April 2024 has continued to improve and will be reported in due course.

## People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.

14. There are six quarterly KPIs reported for this aim.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
% of households owed a homelessness prevention duty (in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act) where the duty was ended due to suitable accommodation being secured for them	88.00	89.00	81.00	69.00	71.00
Number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation	46.00	59.00	57.00	60.00	75.00

15. Demand for homelessness assistance has never been greater, creating significant pressures. We continue to intensively manage use of temporary accommodation which remains low in comparison to other local authorities in the area.

16. The recruitment of specialist advisers for refugee and ex-offender clients has aided work to optimise all available accommodation options.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
% of people responding as feeling safe in local area survey	52.00	59.00			
% of residents responding as feeling safe in their local area after dark			41.00	47.00	42.00
% of residents responding as feeling safe in their local area during the day			69.00	67.00	68.00

17. Two new KPIs have been created in quarter two to replace the previous KPI which did not differentiate between the time of day. The new KPIs are being monitored to enable us to set a target in due course, and therefore are showing as a white RAG status. Feelings of safety during the day have remained consistent in 2023-2024, but feeling safe after dark has decreased. This remains broadly in line with the preceding two quarters. Work is continuing with the Evening and Nighttime Economy Partnership Group and the Safer Norwich Partnership to identify and deal with issues of concern.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Average number of days taken to process new Housing Benefit claims from point of receipt to notification of entitlement	18.00	18.00	16.00	18.00	17.00

18. Performing well and remaining green are processing speeds for the assessment of new Housing Benefit claims, and quarter four resulted in the highest number of claims processed for the year (351 compared to 318 in quarter one).

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Number (of total) (%) of food premises rated 0,1 or 2 (non-broadly compliant), moving to a compliant rating of 3, 4 or 5 against the Food Hygiene Rating System following intervention by food safety officers	93.00	95.00	92.00	92.00	86.00

19. Whilst there has been a decrease in food premises inspections (the KPI still remains within target. The reason for this is due to an increased focus on higher risk food premises, which taken longer to complete, hence fewer inspections being completed.

## Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city

20. There are two quarterly KPIs and one annual KPI reported for this aim.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
% household waste sent for reuse, recycling, composting (reporting on previous quarter)	37.00	38.30	38.50	40.00	36.00

21. The percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, composting measure shows that performance has dropped, but performance remains consistent with previous quarters. This time of year, sees a natural drop in the recycling rates because of the slowdown in the amounts of garden waste due to the change in weather. In 2024, there will be discussions about the Waste Strategy which includes the targets to increase the recycling rates.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Total number of private sector insulation measures completed	34.00	60.00	62.00	83.00	43.00

22. Throughout the year performance has remained in target or above target largely due to the Sustainable Warmth Competition. However, there has been a significant drop in installations since quarter three, due to the scheme ending. It is also worth noting that many of the central government retrofit schemes no longer require the involvement of local authorities - such as the Great British Insulation Scheme - and thus there are likely hundreds more private sector installations occurring across the city that we are unable to monitor.

23. The KPI focuses on private sector installations only, and it is important to note that there has been significant work in relation to council-owned stock. We have recently been awarded £2.5 million through wave 2.2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. This funding, matched by the Council (£2.7 million), will be used to install solar panels, loft insulation and external wall insulation free of charge in up to 260 social housing properties. A more ambitious project is currently being developed for Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund wave 3, bidding for which is expected to start in December 2024.

24. Percentage reduction of CO2 emissions from Local Authority Operations. This indicator is an annual KPI, and progress was reported as blue in quarter two 2023 because the data is not currently being recorded. A significant piece of work is currently underway to update the council's current NI185 reporting protocol. This is a comprehensive piece of work which will align the council's reporting methods with the internationally recognised Greenhouse Gas Protocol.

## Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city

25. There are five quarterly KPIs, and three annual KPIs for this aim.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
% of council homes with a valid gas safety certificate	99.99	100.00	100.00	99.99	100.00



26. The percentage of council homes with a valid gas safety certificate has returned to 100%, and there has been good consistency across this measure.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
% of council housing rent collected (excluding arrears brought forward)	98.77	96.71	96.66	99.10	99.17

27. Performance remains under target for the percentage of council housing rent collected in 2023-2024, but performance has improved when compared to quarter four of 2022-2023.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
% of planning decisions upheld after appeal (where council has won)	88.00	100.00	77.00	72.00	65.00



28. There is a slight decrease in performance for the percentage of decisions upheld after appeal. This is because the Council receives a relatively small number of appeals but has lost four cases in recent months. The cases lost were for very different forms of development and there is no identifiable pattern that would indicate that the quality of decision making has dipped or that any significant change in approach is necessary. As a result, this has had a disproportionate impact upon performance, and management will continue to monitor cases accordingly.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
% of planning applications determined within statutory time limits	88.00	93.00	93.00	91.00	87.00



29. The percentage of planning applications determined within statutory limits has slightly dropped below the target of 90% for various reasons; resourcing and recruitment issues, which is a pattern across all Local Planning Authorities in Norfolk. There have also been a number of applications that have had to be refused beyond the time period without extensions due to applicants being unwilling to allow extra time because of frustration with delays caused by nutrient neutrality.

30. Our ability to secure extensions for those applications affected by nutrient neutrality is going to become more difficult as uncertainties continue over finding a solution. Managers will continue to monitor timescales for a decision and encourage a firmer approach to securing extensions or issuing refusals, where necessary. This is particularly important as there are indications from central government that the ability to use extensions is likely to be curtailed in the future.



Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Average re-let time of council homes in calendar days (excluding major works)	101.00	69.00	55.00	58.00	79.00

31. The average re-let time of council homes remains under target and is being monitored carefully to prevent further increase. This remains a key priority for the Council, and it is notable that comparing to Q4 2022-2023 there has been a significant improvement from 101 days to 79 days.

32. In the sector, performance is comparable with similar sized authorities who are also experiencing similar challenges with their voids relating to cost and availability of materials, staff, alongside the standard and volume of work required to each void.

Indicator	Q4 2021	Q4 2022	Q4 2023
Number of private rented sector homes made safe	5.00	26.00	85.00

33. Over the last three years there has been a significant improvement in the number of private rented sector homes made safe. It is notable that from 2022 to 2023 the number of private sector homes made safe has increased by 59 properties. This figure includes the lifting of prohibition orders served on 53 flats in multi occupied buildings. Also, 32 additional enforcement notices were issued and complied with during the 12-month period for data collection.

34. The service is currently part of our digitalisation transformation which will see significant investment in data capture and measurement software processes. The current powers available to local authorities means there are limitations in the impact we can make, and cases can take several months if not years to progress.

Indicator	Q4 2020	Q4 2021	Q4 2022	Q4 2023
Number of affordable homes built, purchased or enabled by the council	21.00	23.00	39.00	126.00

35. There were 126 affordable homes built, purchased, or enabled this year, which exceeds the target by 76 homes. This shows the Council's commitment to affordable home delivery. The 126 homes mainly relate to affordable homes delivery at Three Score, Northumberland Street and Bluebell Road.

Indicator	Q2 2021	Q2 2022	Q2 2023
Number of new homes (both council and private) completed	166.00	316.00	221.00

36. There was a noticeable reduction in housing completions in quarter two, following two particularly successful years (2018-2019 and 2019-2020) where a significant amount of office to residential conversions were completed.



37. Challenges in the housing market are not unique to Norwich, and factors such as but limited to, uncertainty around planning reforms, increased build costs, and a tight labour market, are all impacting on the number of new residential planning permissions being issued and the number of new homes being delivered.
38. The 2022-2023 delivery figures are not that dissimilar from delivery figures preceding 2018-2019 which varied between approximately 210 to 450 homes per annum.

**An inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.**

39. This quarter there are two annual KPIs, including a new KPI to measure the area of unused council land brought to productive use. The new KPI is being monitored to enable us to set a target in due course, and therefore is showing as a white RAG status.

Indicator	Q4 2021	Q4 2022	Q4 2023
Area of underused council land brought into productive use (m2)	0.00	0.00	1,100.00

40. The new KPI will aim to measure the area of sites allocated in the current local plan that are owned by the city council and are brought into productive use. One application on a city council owned allocated site was approved in the 2023-2024 period, to provide nine homes at 10-14 Ber Street. The site allocation policy for this site envisaged redevelopment for 10 homes. Development has not begun on this site as there are a number of pre-commencement conditions that are required to be discharged. In addition, this development is yet to draw down nutrient neutrality credits from the council's retrofitting scheme.

Indicator	Q4 2021	Q4 2022	Q4 2023
Value of external funding leveraged to support council development and place-shaping priorities (£)	16,999,750.00	6,550,985.00	463,086.00

41. The value of external funding leveraged to support council development and place-shaping priorities for this quarter is £463,086. The total amount comprises of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund revenue funding of £335,025, and capital funding of £50,061, plus Levelling Up Fund Round three capacity funding of £78,000.

## Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city

42. There are eight quarterly KPIs reported for this aim, one of which is new for this year and is being monitored to set an appropriate target in due course (marked as white).

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
% of customer contact that takes place through digital channels	42.98	46.36	43.59	37.36	36.12

43. Norwich City Council provides on-street civil parking enforcement in the city on behalf of Norfolk County Council; however, the back-office services have been transferred to a different provider. This service was predominantly carried out online with most residents requesting parking permits online. As a result, this has had a significant impact on the channel shift percentage as the service had the highest volume of online contact.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
% of customer's responding as satisfied with customer contact team service	84.75	67.46	73.95	79.80	80.80

44. There is a significant increase in customer satisfaction and since quarter one it has increased by 13 percentage points. This reflects the efforts made by the customer contact team to redesign processes and the service to reduce the average wait time.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Council income from investment property portfolio expressed as % of target income	97.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	98.00

45. The percentage of council income from investment property portfolio, has remained on or above target for 2023-2024. Our Asset and Development Board has been formed to monitor and review progress on council income from our investment property portfolio, and in particular debt.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Council Tax Collection – the amount of in year council tax plus arrears from old years collected (target set according to budget requirement)	100.26	102.93	101.60	100.21	100.26

46. Council Tax and Business Rates collection remains above target but have continued to remain a struggle due to the cost-of-living crisis and the aftermath of the pandemic. The focus for council tax collection in the next financial year is to increase income and reduce the prior year's debt.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Business Rates Collection – the amount of in year business rates plus arrears from old years collected (target set according to budget requirement)	101.83	105.48	101.11	100.20	100.94

47. Business Rates collection remained stable and on track and the reliefs provided by the Government have alleviated some of the difficulties.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Council on track to remain within General Fund budget (£)	-1,796,000.00	-2,070,000.00	-3,260,000.00	-3,500,000.00	-3,959,000.00

48. The Council continue to remain on target when it comes to remaining within the General Fund Budget.

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Customer facing IT services availability expressed as a % of time (24/7 excluding scheduled downtime)		99.93	99.82	99.18	99.97
IT System availability expressed as a percent of time available during core hours	99.95	96.60	99.94	99.77	99.92

49. Overall performance is consistent and largely remains above target for IT system availability during core hours. Any issues identified have been promptly rectified by the support team, with minimal business impact.

## Success and Challenges

50. [Appendix B](#) provides additional information on notable achievements and challenges for quarter four, including:

- We are Norwich - a community-led plan 2024-2029** was approved by Full Council in March 2024 and has been formally adopted by Norwich City Council.
- Funding** has been secured from the Government's Swimming Pool Support Fund, and additional funding has been secured for the redevelopment of the Halls (which has now commenced).
- Successful implementation of the Landlords Portal** which improves communications with landlords as they can review information regarding payment schedules and letters immediately.

51. Please note, [Appendix B](#) provides links to previous success and challenges presented to Cabinet during 2023-2024

## Future reports

52. The new Community-led Plan 2024-2029 '*We are Norwich*' launched in April this year, and we are now developing a new business planning process and performance framework that will enable us to realise the *We Are Norwich* plan and monitor its progress.

53. The new agile Business Planning Process will be translated into an annual Corporate Business Plan, which will:
- a) set out the most important actions the council needs to take, both in its role as primary service supplier as well as collaboratively with others, to start delivering *We Are Norwich*
  - b) include milestones and measures to ensure it is working towards the outcomes set out in *We Are Norwich*
  - c) be aligned with our budget setting process, to ensure we have the resources to deliver *We Are Norwich*
  - d) be developed and tested with partners and stakeholders to ensure the measures are correct, and the outcomes are felt by intended beneficiaries
  - e) be aligned to delivery of our Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
54. The new Corporate Performance Framework will specify a range of performance measures, baselines, and targets, allowing us to evaluate and monitor how well we are working towards delivery of the successes (outcomes) set out in *We are Norwich*.

## Consultation

55. No public consultation was required in creating this report.

## Implications

### Financial and resources

56. 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 2024-2029, budget, and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
57. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources.

## Legal

58. In considering its financial and non-financial performance, the Cabinet is supporting the Council to fulfil its duties under s.151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to ensure there are arrangements in place for the proper administration of its financial affairs, and under s.3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	This report does not have direct implications for equality and diversity; it reports on progress made in delivering agreed services and programmes, the equality implications of which will have been considered as part of service planning or other decision-making processes.

<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:</b>
Health, Social and Economic Impact	This report does not have direct health, social or economic implications; it provides an update on progress made in delivering agreed services and programmes, the implications of which will have been considered elsewhere.
Crime and Disorder	This report does not have direct implications for crime and disorder; it provides an update on progress made in delivering agreed services and programmes, the implications of which will have been considered elsewhere.
Children and Adults Safeguarding	This report does not have direct safeguarding implications; it provides an update on progress made in delivering agreed services and programmes, the implications of which will have been considered elsewhere.
Environmental Impact	This report does not have direct environmental implications; it provides an update on progress made in delivering agreed services and programmes, the implications of which will have been considered elsewhere.

## **Risk management**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Controls required</b>
Specific risk management activities and detailed consideration of the corporate risk register are reported separately through the quarterly Risk Management Report.	Failure to manage risks appropriately could have financial reputational or other consequences	Risk owners are required to implement controls to mitigate risks and update these regularly.

## **Other options considered**

59. There are no alternative options to consider.

## **Reasons for the decision/recommendation**

60. It is recommended that cabinet review progress on the key performance indicators for this quarter.

## Appendices:

- **Appendix A Performance indicators** provides a summary of how to read the report, in particular the KPIs.
- **Appendix B Achievements and challenges** provides details on notable achievements and challenges from quarter four, aligning them to the relevant corporate aim, portfolio, and corporate risk, where appropriate.
- **Appendix C Table of KPIs** provides a detailed list of which directorate holds the reporting responsibility for each KPI, how it is calculated, how frequently it is reported and what the target and intervention levels are.
- **Appendix D Performance summary by KPI** provides a detailed list of all KPIs for this and previous reporting periods, showing the status and direction of progress.
- **Appendix E** provides a summary of the performance measures presented as a count of the KPIs by status as well as a total, for each corporate aim, for each quarter to date for 2023-2024.

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## Appendix A Performance indicators

61. Performance reporting for indicators in this report is based around a traffic light system, as set out below.

### KPIs by status

<b>Red</b>	Performance has reached a level where we will intervene & agree what action is required to bring it back on target.
<b>Amber</b>	Early warning that performance is not on target and action may be required.
<b>Green</b>	Performance is on or above target
<b>White</b>	Data is being monitored
<b>Blue</b>	Data is not currently recorded

### KPIs by direction of progress

	Performance has dropped compared with the last quarter/year.
	Performance has stayed the same compared with the last quarter/year.
	Performance has improved compared with the last quarter/year.

## Appendix B: Achievements and challenges

### Achievements in quarter four

- **We are Norwich - a community-led plan 2024-2029**

In March 2024, We Are Norwich – A community-led plan for 2024-2029 was approved and adopted by Norwich City Council. 'We are Norwich' sets out the vision for the council over the next five years and provides the framework for how it will prioritise what it does and how it best uses its resources. A key objective in producing a new corporate plan was to put the people of Norwich front and centre of its development. This saw a programme of citywide resident and stakeholder engagement across Norwich from October through to December 2023.

- **Swimming Pool Support Fund**

The Leisure and Cultural Services and Environmental Strategy teams collaborated to successfully bid for £520,000 from the government's Swimming Pool Support Fund which aims to improve the energy efficiency of public facilities with pools in the medium to long term. The project will fund the installation of Solar PV panels on the roof of Riverside Leisure Centre, on a canopy over the car park, and a new building management system. The project will help the council achieve its environmental targets and reduce the financial liability of the centers' energy costs to the council.

- **Redevelopment of The Halls**

The Leisure and cultural services team have secured an additional £530,000 of funding to support the redevelopment of the Halls, which has now commenced. This will help achieve our objectives for a building that is fit-for-purpose, accessible and sustainable.

- **Landlord Portal**

The Revenues and Benefits team is always looking at ways to improve the service it offers. Over the past year a number of projects have come to fruition, including the Landlord Portal. The Landlord Portal allows landlords to access the portal to see their payment schedules and letters. This allows landlords to take the information immediately and action it rather than waiting for paper schedules through the post. This is currently being rolled out to all landlords following a successful trial. There are some further benefits to landlords which will come on board during the year. This should also support a reduction of calls from landlords into the Contact Centre.

- **Benefit Decision Notices**

The Benefits Service have been working on a project to improve communications to benefit claimants. New benefits decision notices were sent to claimants from January 2024. The new notices have improved the layout of the letters, and has a summary letter up front, giving the important information clearly, with the detail following, including appeal rights. It is hoped that by giving the important information in a summary letter, claimants will not need to query their entitlement, reducing avoidable contact.



### Achievements in quarter four (continued)

- **Discretionary Housing Payment**

The amount of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funding the Council received for the financial year 23/24 was the same figure as the previous year, which was exhausted by September 2022. The Benefits Team worked closely with Housing Services and the Senior Financial Inclusion Officer to ensure funding was spent in full but spread fairly to those claiming. The team has worked to identify other areas where support can improve the financial well-being of tenants, and the funding for 23/24 was spent in full by mid- March. Due to the success of working this way the team will continue to use this approach for 24/25.

- **Greater Norwich Local Plan**

In March 2024, the City Council formally adopted the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) which provides a framework for development in the city over the next 14 years. This is a significant piece of work, undertaken across boundaries with our neighbouring authorities in Broadland and South Norfolk Councils and working in partnership with Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority. It is only the second cross boundary plan to be adopted in the country in recent years. The GNLP aims to unlock up to 45,050 new homes and includes targets to create 33,000 new jobs and provide 360 additional hectares of employment land by 2038 across the Greater Norwich area. As well as being the key document for setting planning policy and allocating sites for development and regeneration, the GNLP will ensure that housing and jobs needs will be met sustainably. This includes supporting the growth of the post carbon economy, making sure we provide the right infrastructure, helping to tackle climate change, and protecting the many environmental assets in our area. The GNLP is now part of the statutory development plan for Norwich. Read Norwich's Adoption Statement on the [GNLP website](#). There is a six-week legal period when challenges on the process can be made, this lapsed on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 with no challenges lodged.

### Challenges in quarter four

- **Housing Benefit Caseload**

Additional work has been required by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to add indicators to the whole of our Housing Benefit (HB) caseload to say if it is supported accommodation or not. The subsidy payments received for temporary and supported accommodation do not fully fund the overall spend. This has been raised with Central Government as the costs to Councils are increasing rapidly in this area. It is hoped that by identifying the accommodation, the government can look at ways to support the increasing costs.

### Achievements, Successes, and challenges in 2023-202

- [Corporate Performance Report for Quarter One, 2023/24](#)(page 12)
- [Corporate Performance Report for Quarter Two, 2023/24](#) (page 13)
- [Corporate Performance Report for Quarter Three, 2023/24](#) (page 13)

## Appendix C: Table of KPIs

KPI	Indicator description	Methodology	Target	Intervention	Frequency	Corporate Aim
KPI 01	Average number of days taken to process new Housing Benefit Claims from point of receipt to notification of entitlement	Data generated from Northgate system	19.5 days from 2023/24 (previously 21 days)	21.6 days from 2023/24 (previously 23.1 days)	Quarterly	People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
KPI 02	Council Tax collection – the amount of in year council tax plus arrears from previous years collected (target set according to budget requirement).	The annual target is the Council Tax requirement set in the budget. The annual target is profiled across the year based on what we would expect to have collected by the end of each month. Each quarter, variance to the quarterly target is reported. Data is generated from the Northgate System	100%	99%	Quarterly	Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.
KPI 03	Business Rates collection – the amount of in year business rates plus arrears from previous years collected (target set according to budget requirement)	The annual target is the National Non-Domestic Rate forecast rating income. The annual target is profiled across the year based on what we would expect to have collected by the end of each month. Each quarter, variance to the quarterly target is reported. Data is generated from the Northgate System	100%	99%	Quarterly	Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.
KPI 04	Council on track to remain within General Fund budget (£)	Forecasts from all budget managers input into Collaborative Planning tool	£0.00	£500,000	Quarterly	Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

KPI	Indicator description	Methodology	Target	Intervention	Frequency	Corporate Aim
KPI 05	% of council housing rent collected (excluding arrears brought forward)	(A / B) *100. Where A = the actual rent and service charges collected year-to-date on current & former General Needs (GN) & Housing for Older People (HfOP) (excluding garages) and where B = the actual rent and service charges due year-to-date for all tenanted GN & HfOP properties (excluding garages). Worked example - By the end of September £470,000 of rent and service charges had been received by the organisation from current & former tenants. The year-to-date actual rent and service charges due is £500,000. Rent collected as a percentage of rent owed = (£470,000 / £500,000) *100 = 94.0%	99.8%	98.8%	Quarterly	Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
KPI 06	Average re-let time of council homes in calendar days (excluding major works)	Calculated by dividing the total number of days standard re-let properties were vacant in the period, by the number of standard re-lets in the period	21 days	25 days	Quarterly	Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
KPI 07	% of council homes with a valid gas safety certificate	The denominator is the number of rented dwellings in ownership that have a connected gas supply. Calculation = Number of council homes with a valid gas safety certificate / Number of council homes requiring a gas safety certificate * 100	100%	99.8%	Quarterly	Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.

KPI	Indicator description	Methodology	Target	Intervention	Frequency	Corporate Aim
KPI 08	Number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation	This measure of temporary accommodation is a snapshot at the end of the period. It is not a cumulative total of all households living in temporary accommodation across the period. Any households living in temporary accommodation in another local authority district are included where this has been provided by Norwich City Council	62	68	Quarterly	People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
KPI 09	% of households owed a homelessness prevention duty (in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act) where the duty was ended due to suitable accommodation being secured for them	<p>This KPI measures the proportion of households owed a prevention duty whose duty ended due to suitable accommodation being secured for at least six months. This can involve assisting them to stay in their current accommodation or helping them to find a new place to live.</p> <p>Calculation = <math>(N / D) * 100</math></p> <p>N = Number of households secured accommodation for at least six months (where a prevention duty ended in the period)</p> <p>D = Number of households whose prevention duty ended in the period</p>	66	60	Quarterly	People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
KPI 10	% of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, composting (reporting on previous quarter)	Using DEFRA methodology from <a href="#">WasteDataFlow</a>	40%	36%	Quarterly	Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.

KPI	Indicator description	Methodology	Target	Intervention	Frequency	Corporate Aim
KPI 11	% of people responding as feeling safe in a local area survey	% of people responding as feeling safe to a local area survey issued by text – <b>REPLACED BY KPIs 11a &amp; 11b from Q2 2023/24</b>	60%	54%	Quarterly	People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
KPI 11a	% of residents responding as feeling safe in their local area during the day	% of people responding as feeling safe during the day to a local area survey issued by text	New KPI for Q2 2023/24		Quarterly	People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
KPI 11b	% of residents responding as feeling safe in their local area after dark	% of people responding as feeling safe after dark to a local area survey issued by text	New KPI for Q2 2023/24		Quarterly	People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
KPI 12	Number (of total) (%) of food premises rated 0,1 or 2 (not broadly compliant), moving to a compliant rating of 3, 4 or 5 against the Food Rating Hygiene System following intervention by food safety officers	Calculation run in Environmental Health systems	80	72	Quarterly	People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
KPI 13	Number of private rented sector homes made safe	Report run in Uniform	100	90	Annually (Q4)	Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
KPI 14	% of planning decisions upheld after appeal (where the council has won)	Trailing Twelve Month Data calculated after the end of each quarter based on planning appeal decisions	66%	59.4%	Quarterly	Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.

KPI	Indicator description	Methodology	Target	Intervention	Frequency	Corporate Aim
KPI 15	% of planning applications determined within statutory time limits	% of planning applications of development types Q1-Q21 (these being central government definitions) determined within statutory time periods or within an agreed extension of time	90%	51%	Quarterly	Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
KPI 16	Council income from investment property portfolio expressed as a % of target income	Rental income collected (including agreed deferrals) as a % of budgeted income	95%	85.5%	Quarterly	Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.
KPI 17	Area of underused council land brought into productive use (m2)	Measure the m2 of any sites allocated in the Site Allocations plan that are within council ownership and are brought into the use specified in the allocation policy within that monitoring year (excludes designated open space)	0%	0%	Annually (Q4)	The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish
KPI 18	Number of affordable homes built, purchased, or enabled by the council	Collection of information from Registered Providers and in-house development	50	45	Annually (Q4)	Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
KPI 19	Number of new homes (council & private) completed (built)	Sum of dwellings completed in financial year. the number of dwellings counted for this indicator refers only to standard dwellings that are counted against the Joint core strategy (JCS) target. Student and communal institutional accommodation are not counted against the JCS but are reported in the monitoring report for the Development Management Policies Local Plan	477	429	Annually (Q2)	Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.

KPI	Indicator description	Methodology	Target	Intervention	Frequency	Corporate Aim
KPI 20	Value of external funding leveraged to support council development and place shaping priorities (£).	Sum of £ leveraged	£250,000	£225,000	Annually (Q4)	The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish
KPI 21	% reduction of CO2 emissions from Local Authority operations	The Council's carbon reduction metric relates to the % of carbon dioxide emitted, in tonnes, compared to the previous year. Carbon emissions included in the scope of measurement and reporting include Scope 1, 2 and a subset of Scope 3 emissions (as defined by the International Greenhouse Gas protocol and according to the National Indicator 185). These include heating and fleet fuel for operational buildings* and vehicles, electricity for operational buildings and vehicles, business travel and contractor's emissions for significant contracts including waste and other city services. * Operational buildings include City Hall, Riverside Leisure Centre, The Halls, car parks and sheltered housing schemes.	3%	2.7%	Annual (Q2)	Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
KPI 22	Total number of private sector insulation measures completes	Sum of measures	50	45	Quarterly	Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
KPI 23	% of customers responding as satisfied with customer contact team service	% responding as satisfied with service via a text survey	76%	70%	Quarterly	Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

KPI	Indicator description	Methodology	Target	Intervention	Frequency	Corporate Aim
KPI 24	% of customer contact that takes place through digital channels	Measuring the volume of customers accessing online for all services and it is measured against contact that comes in through the Customer Contact Centre.	53% from 2022/23 (previously 45%)	45% from 2022/23 (previously 40%)	Quarterly	Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.
KPI 25	% of FOI requests responded to within statutory timescales (organisation wide KPI)	% of FOI requests answered within 20 working days	90%	81%	Quarterly	Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.
KPI 26	% of corporate complaints responded to within stated timescales (organisation wide KPI)	% of complaints answered within 10 days	70%	62%	Quarterly	Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.
KPI 27	IT system availability expressed as a percent of time available during core hours	System availability data captured from various applications	99%	90%	Quarterly	Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.
KPI 28	Customer facing IT services availability (24/7 excluding scheduled downtime)	System availability data captured from various applications	New KPI for 2023/24	New KPI for 2023/24	Quarterly	Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

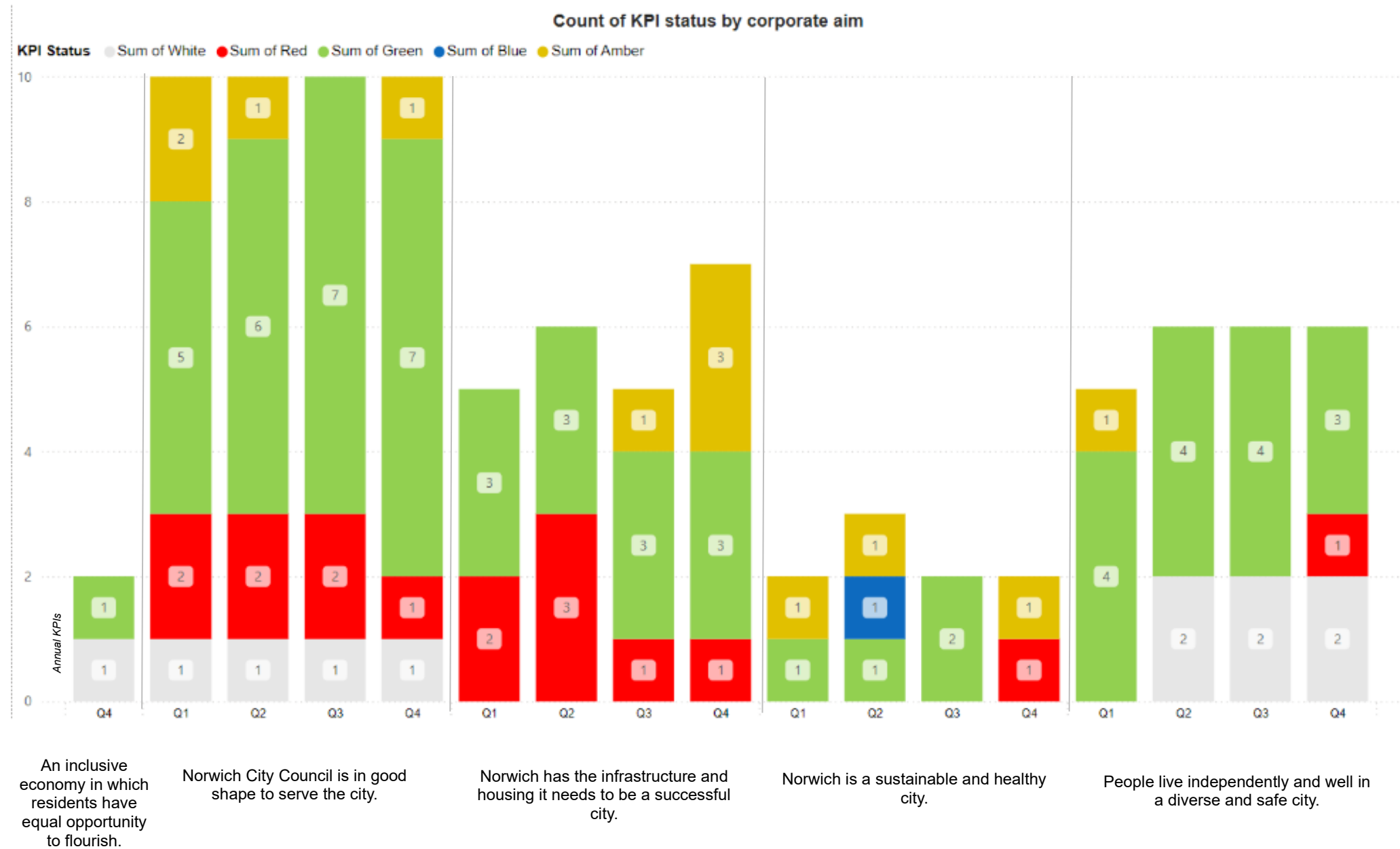


## Appendix D: Performance summary by KPI

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
% household waste sent for reuse, recycling, composting (reporting on previous quarter)	37.00	38.30	38.50	40.00	36.00
% of corporate complaints responded to within stated timescales	58.74	68.00	58.00	58.00	74.00
% of council homes with a valid gas safety certificate	99.99	100.00	100.00	99.99	100.00
% of council housing rent collected (excluding arrears brought forward)	98.77	96.71	96.66	99.10	99.17
% of customer contact that takes place through digital channels	42.98	46.36	43.59	37.36	36.12
% of customer's responding as satisfied with customer contact team service	84.75	67.46	73.95	79.80	80.80
% of FOI requests responded to within statutory timescales	91.40	98.50	97.20	97.00	95.40
% of households owed a homelessness prevention duty (in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act) where the duty was ended due to suitable accommodation being secured for them	88.00	89.00	81.00	69.00	71.00
% of people responding as feeling safe in local area survey	52.00	59.00			
% of planning applications determined within statutory time limits	88.00	93.00	93.00	91.00	87.00
% of planning decisions upheld after appeal (where council has won)	88.00	100.00	77.00	72.00	65.00
% of residents responding as feeling safe in their local area after dark			41.00	47.00	42.00
% of residents responding as feeling safe in their local area during the day			69.00	67.00	68.00
Area of underused council land brought into productive use (m2)	0.00				1,100.00
Average number of days taken to process new Housing Benefit claims from point of receipt to notification of entitlement	18.00	18.00	16.00	18.00	17.00
Average re-let time of council homes in calendar days (excluding major works)	101.00	69.00	55.00	58.00	79.00
Business Rates Collection – the amount of in year business rates plus arrears from old years collected (target set according to budget requirement)	101.83	105.48	101.11	100.20	100.94
Council income from investment property portfolio expressed as % of target income	97.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	98.00
Council on track to remain within General Fund budget (£)	-1,796,000.00	-2,070,000.00	-3,260,000.00	-3,500,000.00	-3,959,000.00

Indicator	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Council Tax Collection – the amount of in year council tax plus arrears from old years collected (target set according to budget requirement)	100.26	102.93	101.60	100.21	100.26
Customer facing IT services availability expressed as a % of time (24/7 excluding scheduled downtime)		99.93	99.82	99.18	99.97
IT System availability expressed as a percent of time available during core hours	99.95	96.60	99.94	99.77	99.92
Number (of total) (%) of food premises rated 0,1 or 2 (non-broadly compliant), moving to a compliant rating of 3, 4 or 5 against the Food Hygiene Rating System following intervention by food safety officers	93.00	95.00	92.00	92.00	86.00
Number of affordable homes built, purchased or enabled by the council	39.00				126.00
Number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation	46.00	59.00	57.00	60.00	75.00
Number of new homes (both council and private) completed			221.00		
Number of private rented sector homes made safe	26.00				85.00
Total number of private sector insulation measures completed	34.00	60.00	62.00	83.00	43.00
Value of external funding leveraged to support council development and place-shaping priorities (£)	6,550,985.00				463,086.00

**Appendix E** a summary of the performance measures presented as a count of the KPIs by status as well as a total, for each corporate aim, for each quarter to date for 2023-2024.







**Committee name:** Cabinet

**Committee date:** 17/07/2024

**Report title:** 2023/24 Provisional Outturn

**Portfolio:** Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for an open and modern council

**Report from:** Interim Chief Finance Officer S151 Officer

**Wards:** All wards

**OPEN PUBLIC ITEM**

### **Purpose**

This report sets out the council's provisional outturn position for the 2023/24 financial year. The report covers the council's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) resources and includes information in relation to both its revenue and capital position.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the cabinet:

- 1) Notes the provisional **£4.22m underspend** on the General Fund revenue account and the **£0.32m underspend** on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA);
- 2) Notes the provisional **£7.16m underspend** against the General Fund and the **£8.09m underspend** against the HRA capital programmes;
- 3) Notes the consequential General Fund and HRA balances;
- 4) Notes the transfers to earmarked reserves;
- 5) Delegates to the chief finance officer, in consultation with the cabinet member for an open and modern council, the approval of carry-forwards of unspent 2023/24 capital budgets into the 2024/25 capital programme;
- 6) Approves adjustments to the 2024/25 General Fund capital programme to enable external funding to be utilised for projects.

### **Policy framework**

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- An open and modern council.
- A prosperous Norwich.
- A fairer Norwich.
- A climate responsive Norwich.
- A future-proof Norwich

This report meets the 'An open and modern council' priority.

## 1. General Fund Revenue

Table 1 below sets out the estimated outturn position for general fund services which identifies a £4.22m underspend.

The forecast underspend is largely driven by one-off factors (higher interest rates, additional grants, contract rebates and no requirement to refund reserves relating to a 2022/23 item). While the Bank of England has indicated that interest rates will remain higher for longer, and the council will take account of it in its Medium-Term Financial Planning, the benefit of higher investment income on Council cash balances cannot be relied upon to support long term spending.

**Table 1 – Outturn position**

Directorate	Budget £'000s	Outturn £'000s	Variance £'000s
Chief Executive	267	314	47
Corporate Financing	(25,471)	(31,792)	(6,321)
Corporate and Commercial Services	7,308	7,524	216
Community Services	10,374	11,228	854
Development & City Services	7,522	8,507	985
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(4,219)</b>	<b>(4,219)</b>

### Key variances

The provisional 2022/23 outturn report to Cabinet on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023, identified that the council was able to make up for a lower level of Section 31 Grants in 2022/23 without recourse to reserves. The use of reserves, and their replenishment formed part of the approved 2023/24 budget and so the 2023/24 budget for this item now represents an underspend in the current year (£2.094m).

A review of the council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy and a decision to apply general fund capital receipts to reduce the Capital Financing Requirement has reduced the Minimum Revenue Provision requirement for the current year and in the medium term. For 2023/24, revenue costs have been reduced by £1.95m.

Interest rates continued to remain high for the duration of the financial year, and as a result, the net impact following the redistribution of the HRA share, is additional income of £1.458m to the general fund.

## 2. General Fund revenue position

### 2.1. Chief Executive and Corporate Financing

Table 2a sets out below that within the Chief Executive's area, there is an overspend of £0.047m.

**Table 2a – Chief Executive forecast**

Directorate	Budget £'000s	Outturn £'000s	Variance £'000s
Chief Executive	267	314	47

## 2.2. Corporate Financing

Table 2b sets out that within Corporate Financing, there is a provisional underspend of £6.321m. Table 2c summarises the key issues for this area.

**Table 2b – Corporate Financing provisional outturn**

Directorate	Budget £'000s	Outturn £'000s	Variance £'000s
Corporate Financing	(25,471)	(31,792)	(6,321)

**Table 2c – Corporate Financing – key issues**

Summary issues	Detailed	£'000
Transfer to/from reserves	Budget provision was made for net transfers to/from reserves including an expected drawdown in 2022/23. The improved 2022/23 outturn position meant this transfer was not required. This change in circumstances has been offset, to a degree, by additional calls on reserves, resulting in a net reduced call on reserves of £2.094m.	(2,094)
Minimum Revenue Provision changes	The council commissioned Link Asset services (the Council's treasury management advisors), to review the Council's approach to MRP. The proposed changes have been considered by the Treasury Management Committee and cabinet, and includes the reclaim of voluntary revenue payments. As a result of these changes a saving has been achieved.	(1,950)
Net impact of interest received and redistribution to HRA	Improved performance as interest rates have remained higher than originally forecast, leading to higher investment interest returns.	(1,458)
Funding Guarantee allocations grant 2023/24	The Funding Guarantee grant was included in the final settlement from Central Government for 2023/24. The grant was not included in the original 2023/24 budget due to uncertainty over the amount due.	(568)
Un-utilised provision	A provision made in 2022/23 for staff related costs which was greater than the funding ultimately required in 2023/24 and therefore created a one-off windfall benefit in 2023/24.	(260)
Other minor variances		9
<b>Total</b>		<b>(6,321)</b>

## 2.3. Corporate and Commercial Services

Table 3a below sets out that within Corporate and Commercial Services, there is a provisional overspend of £0.216m. Table 3b summarises the key issues for this area.



**Table 3a – Corporate and Commercial provisional outturn**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Budget £'000s</b>	<b>Outturn £'000s</b>	<b>Variance £'000s</b>
Corporate & Commercial Services	476	816	340
Finance, Audit & Risk	866	944	78
HR & Organisational Development	866	920	54
Legal & Procurement	1,822	1,851	29
Revenues & Benefits	3,278	2,993	(285)
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,308</b>	<b>7,524</b>	<b>216</b>

**Table 3b – Corporate and Commercial Services – key issues**

<b>Summary issues</b>	<b>Detailed</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Revenues & benefits	The variance is mainly due to higher than expected New Burdens grant funding received in year, alongside staffing vacancies due to the inability to recruit to temporary posts pending a service review.	(285)
Corporate & commercial services - Senior vacancies being covered by interim staff	A recruitment campaign for a number of vacant senior posts in the directorate commenced last year. Due to challenges in the recruitment market, appointment to key roles has taken longer than planned - these include the ED Resources, S151 officer and the Head of Finance, Audit and Risk posts.	160
Corporate & commercial services - Enabling services review	Stretch targets associated with the implementation of both the ERP and Civica MDM systems have not been achieved this year, as implementation dates have been extended.	180
Finance - Vacancies being covered by interim staff	Backfilling resources for the new finance system implementation, and senior finance posts have increased costs.	78
Legal & Procurement - Increase in election running costs/Nplaw surplus not previously recognised	The costs for running elections and electoral registration functions has risen over recent years as the costs involved in hiring venues and increased postal costs in particular have risen. This has been offset by a rebate received from NPLaw relating to a previous years charges.	29
HR & Organisational Development	The additional costs for the recruitment campaigns associated with a number of senior vacancies and a higher cost of the apprenticeship levy were pressures in the service that were offset by a salary underspend.	54
<b>Total</b>		<b>216</b>

## Community Services provisional outturn

Table 4a below sets out that within Community Services Directorate, there is a provisional overspend of £0.854m. Table 4b summarises the key issues.

**Table 4a – Community Services**

Service	Budget £'000s	Outturn £'000s	Variance £'000s
Community Services	407	663	256
Customers, IT & Digital	5,220	5,532	312
Strategy, Engagement & Culture	3,471	3,876	405
Housing & Community Safety	1,276	1,157	(119)
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,374</b>	<b>11,228</b>	<b>854</b>

**Table 4b – Community Services – key issues**

Summary issues	Detailed	£'000
Customers, IT & Digital	Variance mainly due to contractual spend for the new A365 customer contact system, local area network (LAN) hardware support and Actian settlement. Translation usage and costs for the authority were higher than anticipated. Backfill resources related to new finance system implementation have also increased costs.	312
Neighbourhood Housing	Neighbourhood CIL expenditure covered in full elsewhere within the General Fund by drawing down funding from earmarked reserves.	303
Community services - Senior vacancies being covered by interim staff	A recruitment campaign for a number of vacant senior posts in the directorate commenced last year. Due to challenges in the recruitment market, appointment to key roles has taken longer than planned - these include the ED Housing & Community Safety and ED Resources posts.	256
Other minor variances		(17)
<b>Total</b>		<b>854</b>

## 2.4. Development & City Services

Table 5a below sets out that within Development and City Services Directorate, there is a provisional overspend of £0.820m. Table 5b summarises the key issues for this area.

**Table 5a – Development and City Services provisional outturn**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Budget £'000s</b>	<b>Outturn £'000s</b>	<b>Variance £'000s</b>
Environment Services	4,180	4,542	362
Planning & Regulatory Services	2,432	2,618	186
Property & Economic Development	354	688	334
Development & City Services	556	659	103
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,522</b>	<b>8,507</b>	<b>985</b>

**Table 5b – Development and City Services – key issues**

<b>Summary issues</b>	<b>Detailed</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Property Services	Additional income from staff recharges largely offset by overspend against Investment Properties (below).	(909)
Investment property	Additional costs from council owned properties remaining void throughout the year (£0.236m); additional staff recharge costs (£0.737m) offset by increased income to Property Services team (above).	973
Integrated Waste Management	Higher contract rebate from waste recycling contracts offset by increased variable gate fees.	(181)
Parking	Increased income against budget (£355K), reduced by £135K overspend on running costs.	(220)
Planning Policy	Underspend generated from vacancies.	(131)
Open Spaces	Increased operational costs (£0.485m) arising from the need to utilise agency staff and from increased property repair costs, which were partially offset by increased income (£0.205m).	280
Towns Fund & East Norwich	Additional costs, provisionally funded from reserves, were actually funded from existing General Fund resources.	279
Bus shelters	Unanticipated costs linked to the partnership arrangements for bus shelter maintenance.	190
Environmental Services	Increased costs in line with contractual terms and conditions.	180
Street Cleaning	Increased costs arising from the Cleaner Streets project. Additional costs identified once the scope of work required became clear	166
Licensing	Increased employee costs (£0.034m) and reduced taxi licensing income (£0.086m).	120
City Development	Additional interim senior staff supporting project delivery.	103
Other minor variances		135
<b>Total</b>		<b>985</b>

### 3. Housing Revenue Account Revenue (HRA)

Table 6a, below sets out below that overall, the HRA has a provisional underspend of £0.324m for the year. Table 6b sets out the key variances against the budget.

An increase in the cost of general repairs due to the impact of inflation on the cost of labour and materials has generated an overspend, and in addition the level of work required to reinstate void properties to a lettable standard has increased, including additional asbestos related works and electrical inspections.

There has also been an increase in the cost of carrying out asbestos surveys to non-dwelling properties, costs arising from disrepair claims and interim staff covering vacant senior roles, whilst rental income from properties has increased due to the unoccupied rate being lower than expected.

Significant underspends have arisen due the cost of gas and oil for district heating being much lower than originally budgeted. This is primarily due to the 2023/24 budgets being set shortly prior to the council's gas purchase contract ending just as energy prices peaked. When the contract was renewed, the council was able to secure more favourable prices than initially anticipated.

Additionally, provisions totalling £1.277m were made in 2022/23 to cover repair and staff related costs anticipated to arise in 2023/24. Ultimately, £0.364m of the provision was utilised to offset costs with the remaining £0.913m being returned in the year.

**Table 6a – Summary forecast position**

<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>	<b>Budget (£000)</b>	<b>Outturn (£000)</b>	<b>Variance (£000)</b>
General Management	15,715	18,416	2,701
Special Services	9,290	6,630	(2,659)
Repairs & Maintenance	16,119	16,226	107
Rents, Rates, & Other Property Costs	6,030	6,730	700
Provision for Bad Debts	430	(128)	(558)
Depreciation & Impairment	22,160	23,732	1,572
Adjustments & Financing items	5,706	4,464	(1,241)
Garage & Other Property Rents	(2,320)	(2,369)	(49)
Dwelling Rents	(62,571)	(63,070)	(498)
Service Charges - General	(8,243)	(8,494)	(251)
Interest Received	(2,104)	(2,309)	(205)
Miscellaneous Income	(82)	(24)	58
Amenities shared by whole community	(130)	(130)	0
<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(324)</b>	<b>(324)</b>

**Table 6b – HRA – key issues**

<b>Key variances:</b>		
<b>Budget pressures – overspends/loss of income</b>		
Repairs & maintenance	107	Increased costs for general repairs due to higher contract costs, increased electrical inspections plus additional void costs arising from increased level of work and asbestos associated costs. With backlog contract extended further into year.
General Management - Salary Costs	(1,347)	Net underspend from salary savings from vacant posts offsetting restructure costs. Saving offset by additional agency costs (below).
General Management – Subscriptions	85	Unbudgeted mandatory payment to the Housing Ombudsman.
General Management – Insurance	170	Insurance costs higher than budgeted due to economic conditions within the insurance sector.
General Management – Legal	268	Increased legal costs due to the larger number of cases.
General Management – Head of Housing	277	Additional professional advice and fees in relation to HRA assets.
General Management - Compensation to tenants	586	Decants and associated costs arising from disrepair issues.
General Management	1,249	Unrealised internal recharge income, no longer applicable due to transfer of service to HRA.
General Management - Agency Costs	1,649	Increased agency costs, largely offset by savings on salary costs (above).
Special Services – District Heating Gas	(2,090)	Gas budgets set as council's gas supply contract expired and gas prices peaked. Subsequent contract secured lower prices than budgeted.
Special Services – District Heating Oil	(108)	Lower fuel prices than anticipated when budget set.
Special Services – TV Aerial Maintenance	(111)	Income from TV aerial receipts offset against expenditure reducing the overall cost
Service Charges - Leaseholders	(170)	Recharge of higher level of costs to leaseholders in the year.
Service Charges - General	(140)	Additional income from insurance service charges offset by an increase in insurance costs.
Interest Received	(205)	Increased income from investments due to higher rate of interest and reduction in capital expenditure.
Dwelling Rents	(498)	Increased rental income due to lower void rate than budgeted.
Garage & Other Property Rents	(49)	Increased rental income due to lower void rate than budgeted.

Provision for Bad Debts	(588)	Lower bad debt charges arising from a better than anticipated arrears position, due to the positive work of the income team.
Rents, Rates, & Other Property Costs - Water Services	(442)	Cost of water charges lower than budgeted for year.
Rents, Rates, & Other Property Costs - General Insurance	268	Increased market pressures within the insurance sector, partly offset by service charge income.
Rents, Rates, & Other Property Costs - General HRA Premises	721	Increased cost of asbestos surveys.
Other minor variances across the HRA	44	
<b>Total</b>	<b>(324)</b>	

#### 4. General Fund Reserve

The prudent minimum level of General Fund reserve has been assessed as £5.400m. The impact of the provisional outturn on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 balance brought forward is shown in Table 7 and shows the General Fund balance is expected to continue to exceed the prudent minimum balance and is consistent with the trajectory set out in the 2024/25 budget and MTFS.

**Table 7 – General Fund balance**

Item	Balance £000
Balance as at 1 April 2023	(8,249)
Budgeted utilisation of balances in 2023/24	0
Provisional outturn as at 31 March 2024	(4,219)
Transfer to earmarked reserves	4,219
<b>Forecast balance as at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>(8,249)</b>

#### 5. Housing Revenue Account Reserve

The prudent minimum level of the HRA reserve has been assessed as £5.848m. The impact of the provisional outturn on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 balance brought forward is shown in Table 8 and shows the Housing Revenue Account balance continues to exceed the prudent minimum balance.

**Table 8 – HRA balance**

Item	Balance £000
Balance as at 1 April 2023	(45,249)
Budgeted utilisation of balances in 2023/24	1,210
Provisional outturn as at 31 March 2024	(324)
<b>Provisional balance as at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>(44,363)</b>

#### 6. General Fund Earmarked Reserves

Table 9 sets out the changes to the General Fund earmarked reserves. Key movements include:

- The **Lion Homes reserve** has increased by £1.3m following the reversal of the voluntary revenue provision as a result of Council approving a change to the MRP calculation in accordance with professional advice.

- The **Commercial property reserve** has been reduced by £0.325m to fund additional costs associated with minimum energy efficiency standard works to council owned properties.
- **Invest-to-save reserve** £0.150m of the drawdown to fund revenue expenditure in 2023/24 has been transferred back to the reserve for use in 2024/25 due to delays to the Master Data Management (MDM) and Civica projects.
- £0.370m of **unapplied revenue grants** have been set aside for future use in line with the terms of the grants. £0.356m of existing grants have been utilised in-year.
- £1.255m has been utilised from the **Business change reserve** for approved 2023/24 projects.
- The Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy was previously held as a capital reserve, but due to the nature of expenditure it supported, was transferred to a revenue reserve during the year. £0.304m has been utilised in-year for eligible projects.

Full council on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 agreed that the provisional general fund underspend be transferred to the **Budget risk reserve**. Since that time a number of initiatives have been identified in 2024/25 that, due to their one-off nature, would be suitable to finance from the one-off 2023/24 underspend. These have been set out below for Cabinet to consider and they would, if agreed, be transferred in support of 2024/25 expenditure; in total these options would require £1.5m and would therefore reduce the transfer to the budget risk reserve to £2.719m.

- (i) Anglia Square – following the withdrawal of Weston Homes from the redevelopment of this site, the council has been engaging with several partners and agencies to explore the options for the site and following its marketing by the owners. The costs of external advice and support for this project in 2024/25 is estimated at £0.3m and more detail is included in the relevant report on this same agenda.
- (ii) City Hall – following the unsuccessful bid for levelling up funding in 2023, the project to re-imagine uses for City Hall was removed from the capital programme. Since that time work has continued to explore what options might still be possible without that external funding. A strategic business case is being brought forward and as a part of that, some options for accelerating survey work and other immediate works which would be complementary to future proposed uses, including enhanced Audio Visual equipment for the council chamber, have been identified. To proceed with these in advance of a new capital scheme being brought back into the capital programme would assist in understanding the likely costs and options available. A sum of £0.250m has been proposed and initially this could be financed from the 2023/24 underspend; if a capital scheme came forward and was implemented it is anticipated that this would subsequently be capitalised as part of that scheme.
- (iii) Livestock Market – work has been continuing with exploring options for relocating the livestock market and more detail is included elsewhere on this same agenda. One-off resources are required to support the bringing forward of the private bill and to undertake the required consultation as well as taking forward preliminary survey work on suitable sites. An estimated £0.2m has been requested to support this

work including the production of a business case which would support the case for investment on a relocated site including associated commercial activities.

- (iv) Some unexpected costs have been identified in relation to the renovation project at the Halls. Additional insurances and security measures were insisted on by the council's insurers that had not been envisaged in the original cost proposal through the Towns Fund. For the works to proceed without undue delay agreement was reached to finance from the council's contingency provision but it is now proposed that an element of the 2023/24 underspend be used to support those costs and allow the contingency to remain intact to cover other unforeseen items later in the year. The estimated additional costs incurred are £0.4m
- (v) Business Planning – following the adoption of the new 'community plan – We are Norwich' work to develop the Business plan on an outcomes basis is being taken forward. External support has been commissioned to assist with the outcomes elements of this work in addition to dedicated programme support to continue engagement across the council including with members and with partners to bring a focus on the key strategic driver of the council's activities. An estimated £0.25m is proposed from the 2023/24 underspend to support this work into the 2025/26 budget setting process so that resources are strongly aligned to the council's priority areas across the MTFS planning period.
- (vi) Some specialist review work has been commissioned to develop the economic growth strategy and carry out a review of Lion Homes to ensure that those key activities continue to support the council's priorities. An estimated sum of £0.1m has been proposed for both of these pieces of work.

**Table 9 – General Fund Earmarked Reserves**

<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Balance 01/04/2023 £000</b>	<b>Transfers in £000</b>	<b>Transfers out £000</b>	<b>Balance 31/03/2024 £000</b>
Insurance Reserves	311	0	0	311
Other Reserves	41	11	(17)	35
Rev Grants Unexpended Res	3,860	370	(356)	3,875
S31 Earmarked reserve	629	0	0	629
Commercial Property	2,041	0	(325)	1,716
Lion Homes reserve	1,700	1,300	0	3,000
Elections Earmarked	113	0	0	113
Repairs Reserve	529	0	0	529
GF Invest to Save Reserve	1,660	150	0	1,810
Budget Risk Reserve	1,800	4,219	0	6,019
Business Change Reserve	4,178	0	(1,255)	2,923
Business Rates Pool	110	0	0	110
Neighbourhood CIL Reserve	0	917	(304)	614
<b>General Fund Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>16,972</b>	<b>6,967</b>	<b>(2,257)</b>	<b>21,684</b>



## 7. Housing Revenue Account Earmarked Reserves

Table 10 sets out the provisional changes in the housing revenue account earmarked reserves. Key movements include:

- The **HRA Invest-to-save reserve** has been reduced by £0.223m to fund the approved change projects. The majority of the spend is the HRA contribution to the cost associated with supporting various strategic projects.
- The **HRA Compliance reserve** was fully utilised to support revenue compliance expenditure incurred during the financial year.

**Table 10 – HRA Earmarked Reserves**

Reserve	Balance 01/04/2023 £000	Transfers in £000	Transfers out £000	Balance 31/03/2024 £000
HRA Invest to Save Reserve	703	0	(223)	480
Tenancy & Estate Management System	7	0	0	7
HRA Transformation Reserve	1,000	0	0	1,000
HRA Insurance Reserve	202	0	0	202
HRA Compliance Reserve	713	0	(713)	0
<b>HRA Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>2,625</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(936)</b>	<b>1,689</b>

## 8. General Fund Capital provisional outturn

Table 11a sets out below that overall, the General Fund capital programme is provisionally underspent by £7.157m for the year. Table 11b sets out the major variations against the revised capital budget.

**Table 11a – General Fund capital outturn**

Directorate		Budget £'000s	Outturn £'000s	Variance £'000s
Community Services		6,402	4,964	(1,438)
Corporate & Commercial Services		499	732	233
Development & City Services		15,384	9,432	(5,952)
<b>Total</b>		<b>22,285</b>	<b>15,128</b>	<b>(7,157)</b>

**Table 11b – General Fund capital programme – key issues**

Summary issues	Detailed	£'000
<b>CPO Revolving Fund (Towns' Fund)</b>	Expenditure is reliant upon suitable properties arising and only one property acquired during the year.	(1,650)
<b>BEIS Sustainable Warmth Grant</b>	In line with other authorities, scheme criteria was found to be too difficult to fulfil and owner/occupier householders refused to accept level of intervention required by scheme.	(1,126)
<b>Lion Homes Loan Facility</b>	Loan facility not required in financial year.	(1,000)
<b>CIL Contribution to Strategic Pool;</b>	Lower level of funds raised through CIL income from developers due to	(974)

	Nutrient Neutrality issue delaying development activity.	
<b>Play Park Equipment Refurbishment</b>	Works extended into 2024/25; budget to be requested to be carried forward.	(361)
<b>Regulatory Services Digitisation</b>	Project delayed due to procurement due diligence. Balance requested to be carried forward into next financial year.	(268)
<b>Hay Hill Public Realm</b>	Project completion delayed along with final payment to 2024/25.	(267)
<b>Digital Hub (Towns' Fund)</b>	Slower start than anticipated; Works and expenditure re-profiled into 2024/25.	(234)
<b>The Halls</b>	Repair work is underway although progress slightly slower than anticipated. Works will primarily be completed in 2024/25.	(178)
<b>Park Toilets Refurbishment</b>	Tenders received but work not taking place until 2024/25, therefore budget to be requested to be carried forward.	(177)
<b>GNGB Marriot's Way/ Hellesdon Station Green</b>	Project behind schedule partly due to rescoping the project and awaiting change request from funder that has now been agreed.	(177)
<b>Riverside Leisure Centre Plant/Equipment</b>	Replacement of building management system and air handling units postponed to coincide with additional projects and funding.	(167)
<b>Strategic Property Remediation</b>	Fund supports urgent works required following project to improve condition data on assets following approval of business cases. A number of business cases were approved in quarter 4 to be delivered in 2024/25.	(147)
<b>Disabled Facilities Grant</b>	Budget significantly increased during the year to enable additional grants/upgrades to be delivered; underspend to be requested to be carried forward into 2024/25.	(122)
<b>NCSL Equipment Purchase</b>	Two electric pedestrian sweepers and required charging infrastructure plus two mini RCVs acquired in 2023/24; remaining budget to be requested to be carried forward to support new sweeper fleet in 2024/25.	(112)
<b>Wider Area Network Refresh</b>	Project ongoing; budget to be requested to be carried forward into 2024/25.	(100)

<b>ERP System</b>	Pressure from extension of internal project team resource and widening of scope to implement e-invoicing module.	233
Other variances		(331)
<b>Total</b>		<b>(7,157)</b>

## 9. Housing Revenue Account Capital provisional outturn

Table 12a sets out below that overall the HRA capital programme is provisionally underspent by £8.085m for the year. Table 12b sets out the major variations against the capital budget.

**Table 12a – HRA – capital forecast position**

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Budget £'000s</b>	<b>Outturn £'000s</b>	<b>Variance £'000s</b>
Community Services	20,478	14,196	(6,282)
Development & City Services	13,067	11,264	(1,803)
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,545</b>	<b>25,460</b>	<b>(8,085)</b>

**Table 12b – HRA capital programme – key issues**

<b>Summary issues</b>	<b>Detailed</b>	<b>£'000</b>
HRA Upgrades – Compliance Upgrades	Both the compliance and existing doors/windows budgets were identified for the replacement of all of the known fire doors across the stock, including 454 doors within the Council's Higher Risk Residential Buildings. Due to the legal process and procurement of an installation contractor, significant spend was delayed apart from the reactive ad-hoc replacement of 'emergency' doors which posed an immediate risk to residents. The remainder of the doors (and spend on the associated budgets) has slipped and will commence in 2024/25 following completion of a procurement process.	(2,116)
HRA Upgrades – Doors	Contractual issues have delayed installations into 2024/25.	(1,215)
HRA Upgrades – Solar Thermal/Photovoltaic	Revised strategy with installations to commence in 2024/25.	(664)
HRA Upgrades – Door Access Controls	Programme delayed into 2024/25 due to resourcing issues.	(655)
HRA Upgrades – Electrical	Programme delayed due to loss of one of the contractors.	(635)
HRA Upgrades – Communal Boilers/Heating	Underspend due to a delay in mobilizing the contract with Gasway to undertake the upgrade works to district heating and ventilation systems at Mile Cross. This is largely because of the	(382)

	availability of materials (specialist replacement fans) which were ordered in P6, but only delivered in P11. The planned works have now commenced.	
HRA Upgrades – Domestic Boilers/Heating	Systems upgraded as required but fewer system failures in year than anticipated.	(225)
HRA Upgrades - Windows	Fewer installations in year as contract to be reviewed to maximise value for money.	(221)
HRA Upgrades – Programme Management Fees	Reduced recharge of staff costs reflected by lower level of expenditure and staff vacancies.	(203)
HRA Upgrades – Estate Aesthetics	Less work in year as contract to be reviewed to maximise value for money.	(186)
HRA Upgrades – Structural	Less work in year as contract to be reviewed to maximise value for money.	(101)
HRA Upgrades – Whole Home Improvements	Increase in volume of homes completed plus additional void properties upgraded.	281
HRA Upgrades – Disabled Adaptations	High volume of works completed in year; overspend offset by underspend against revenue budget for minor works.	382
Capital Grants to Registered Housing Providers	Registered provider's projects delayed into 2024/25; budget to be requested to be carried forward.	(1,478)
Argyle Street development	Scheme significantly delayed due to Nutrient Neutrality issues; carry-forward into 2024/25 to be requested.	(1,225)
Three Score Housing Acquisition	Underspend due to being able to recover stamp duty land tax on social housing acquisition.	(461)
Mile Cross Depot site	Delay to submission of planning application; carry-forward into 2024/25 to be requested.	(104)
Three Score Phase 3 development	Following re-profile of expenditure earlier in financial year, scheme has progressed faster than anticipated. 2024/25 budget to be reduced to accommodate advanced expenditure in 2023/24.	1,480
Other variances		(357)
<b>Total</b>		<b>(8,085)</b>

## 10. Proposed adjustments to 2024/25 General Fund capital programme

### Arts Council England Grant

The 2024/25 and 2025/26 general fund capital programmes currently include £2.091m and £0.498m respectively for the programme of upgrade and refurbishment works taking place at The Halls.

Following a successful bid to Arts Council England, a grant of £0.497m has been awarded to enable additional works to take place.

On 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024, Council approved to delegate to Cabinet, the approval to include in the capital programme, additional capital schemes funded wholly by grant where it meets the Council's aims. Approval is therefore sought to increase the 2024/25 general fund capital programme by £0.497m to £2.588m to reflect this grant.

### **Disabled Facilities Grant**

On 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024, Council approved the inclusion of a budget of £1.420m for the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants. The budget is fully funded from the council's allocation from the Better Care Fund from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) via Norfolk County Council.

DLUHC have now confirmed that the council's allocation for 2024/25 is £1.411m, therefore approval is sought to reduce the 2024/25 general fund capital programme by £0.009m to £1.411m to reflect the grant allocation.

## **11. Virements**

The following adjustments to projects funded by the Town's Deal within the 2023/24 general fund capital programme were approved by the chief finance officer in consultation with the executive director of development and city services in accordance with the delegation approved by Council on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023.

All budgets are funded from existing reserves.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Current Budget £'000</b>	<b>Budget Virement £'000</b>	<b>Budget Changes £'000</b>	<b>Revised Budget £'000</b>
AA1019	Hay Hill Public Realm TF	2,046	490	447	2,983
AA2015	New Carrow House	18	35	0	53
AB1391	TF- Digital hub	263	97	0	360
AZ0000	St Giles Public Realm TF	653	(653)	0	0
BI0000	TF - Programme management	14	31	0	45
<b>Total</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>447</b>	

## **12. Consultation**

There has been no specific consultation on this report.

## **13. Implications**

### **13.1. 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 2024-29 and budget.

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

## 13.2. Legal

In considering its financial and non-financial performance, the Cabinet is supporting the Council fulfil its duties under s.151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to ensure there are arrangements in place for the proper administration of its financial affairs, and under s.3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

### Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	This report does not have direct implications for equality and diversity; it reports on the financial progress made in delivering agreed services and programmes, the equality implications of which will have been considered as part of service planning or other decision-making processes.
Health, Social and Economic Impact	This report does not have direct health, social or economic implications; it provides an update on the financial progress made in delivering agreed services and programmes, the implications of which will have been considered elsewhere.
Crime and Disorder	This report does not have direct implications for crime and disorder; it provides an update on the financial progress made in delivering agreed services and programmes, the implications of which will have been considered elsewhere.
Children and Adults Safeguarding	This report does not have direct safeguarding implications; it provides an update on the financial progress made in delivering agreed services and programmes, the implications of which will have been considered elsewhere.
Environmental Impact	This report does not have direct environmental implications; it provides an update on the financial progress made in delivering agreed services and programmes, the implications of which will have been considered elsewhere.

## 14. Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
The council does not understand or manage its resources appropriately.  Budget overspend.	A potential overspending position or failure to deliver the outcomes intended from the resources allocated.  Unexpected need to draw on reserves	Management actions where an overspend is indicated.  Where underspends are apparent decisions on resource re-allocation or transfers to reserves as appropriate.

## 16. Other options considered

As the report is primarily for information no other options have been considered.

## 17. Reasons for the decision/recommendation

It is important for the Cabinet to understand the council's financial performance and to highlight corrective actions where significant variances are apparent.

**Background papers:** None

**Appendices:** None

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**Committee name:** Cabinet

**Committee date:** 17/07/2024

**Report title:** 2023/24 Quarter 4 – Risk Register

**Portfolio:** Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for an open and modern council

**Report from:** Interim Chief Finance Officer

**Wards:** All wards

**OPEN PUBLIC ITEM**

### **Purpose**

This report provides an update to the council's corporate risk register based on the position for quarter four (March 2024)

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the cabinet notes the identified risks and the direction of travel.

### **Policy framework**

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- A prosperous Norwich.
- A fairer Norwich.
- A climate responsive Norwich.
- A future-proof Norwich.
- An open and modern council. This report meets the “An open and modern council” corporate priority.

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

## **Introduction and background**

1. Heads of Service and other risk owners were asked to update their directorate and corporate registers to reflect the position at the end of quarter four (March 2024). Directorate level risks are reviewed by the relevant management team and are escalated to the Corporate Risk Register, for consideration by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) where the residual risk exposure supports that action.
2. The Corporate Risk Register is shown at Appendix A with a report included on the exempt agenda. The position at the end of quarter 3 (up to 31 December) was reported to Cabinet in February. There have not been significant changes in the Council's risk profile at the end of this quarter.
3. The environment in which the council operates remains relatively high risk as the financial environment is challenging both in terms of the economic and the funding position. The council approved its main budget and council tax setting reports at Full Council in February. Financial planning for the 2025/26 budget process has already begun.
4. Inflation has fallen from double digit levels but still remains significantly above the government's long term target rate placing demands on the council, its partners and residents. The General Election has led to the establishment of a new Government but their plans for local government financing are yet to be published therefore planning continues currently on the basis of the assumptions linked to the most recent Local Government Finance Settlement and the Autumn Statement.
5. The relevant service leads have identified that progress is being made with corporate risks 3 and 6 and they are confident that there will be movement on the risk scoring in the next quarter. The council continues to keep a watching brief on all key risk areas. In that same vein, the Council is also in the process of updating its risk management policy to ensure that risks are properly managed and that there is adequate guidance.

## **Consultation**

6. There has been no specific consultation on these proposals.

## **Implications**

### **Financial and resources**

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

## **Legal**

9. Identification and consideration of its corporate risks is an important governance function of the cabinet to ensure that appropriate action is being taken to ensure the Council takes lawful decisions and mitigates exposure to risk. The audit committee also exercises similar oversight and collectively this is designed to ensure that the council understands and is in a position to respond to risks as they arise.

## Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	N/A
Health, Social and Economic Impact	N/A
Crime and Disorder	N/A
Children and Adults Safeguarding	N/A
Environmental Impact	N/A

## Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
The council is exposed to risks which need to be identified recorded and managed appropriately	Not managing risks appropriately exposes the council to a range of potential negative outcomes ranging from financial loss to impacts on its reputation.	The risk register provides a focus to consider risk management and in particular mitigations.  Other broader mitigations such as insurances also support the council's management of risk.

## Other options considered

10. As the report is primarily for information no other options have been considered.

## Reasons for the decision/recommendation

11. It is important for the Cabinet to understand the risks that the council is exposed to and the mitigations in place to minimise those risks to acceptable levels.

**Background papers:** None


## Appendices:

Appendix A Summary Risk Register

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## Appendix A

	Q3 2023/24		Q4 2023/24			
Risk (inc reference)	Residual risk score	Target risk score	Residual risk score	Target risk score	Current direction	Last Review Date
CORP01 Council Funding Medium - Long Term	12	8	12	8	Static	12-Apr-24
CORP03 Health & safety in the workplace	12	8	12	8	Static	16-Apr-24
CORP06 Failure to respond to a critical, business continuity or emergency planning event	12	6	12	6	Static	16-Apr-24
CORP07 Cyber security	15	15	15	15	Static	4-Apr-24
CORP09 Failure to fulfil statutory or legislative responsibilities - safeguarding	15	12	15	12	Static	4-Jun-24
CORP12 Contract management - governance	6	4	6	4	Static	22-May-24
CORP17 Failure to deliver acceptable levels of performance in regulatory services	12	8	12	8	Static	16-Apr-24
CORP18 Failure to address Natural England advice on Nutrient Neutrality (NN)	15	10	15	10	Static	16-Apr-24
CORP20 Cost of living (COL) crisis has a negative impact on the city and the council	16	12	16	12	Static	10-Apr-24
CORP21 Climate Change risk to Council and its residents	16	12	16	12	Static	14-May-24
CORP23 Impact of economic downturn on key council suppliers	12	8	12	8	Static	22-May-24
CORP24 Temporary and Supported Accommodation - Reducing the Housing Benefit Subsidy gap	15	12	15	12	Static	4-Jun-24
CORP27 Failure to deliver acceptable levels of performance in the management of HMO licenses	12	8	20	12	Worsening	31-May-24
CORP28 Failure to get acceptable cover for rebuild cost of the Halls, at acceptable cost, during the period of construction and refurbishment.	0	0	10	5	Improving	21-May-24



**Committee Name: Cabinet**

**Committee Date: 17/07/2024**

**Report Title: Gender Pay Gap Report 2023**

**Portfolio: Councillor Kendrick, Cabinet member for an open and modern council**

**Report from: Head of HR and organisational development**

**Wards: All Wards**

## **OPEN PUBLIC ITEM**

### **Purpose**

To provide the findings of the Council's gender pay gap report as at the snapshot date of 31 March 2023.

### **Recommendation:**

That Cabinet notes:

- a) The results outlined in Appendix 1 Gender Pay Gap Report 2023.
- b) The intention to report on ethnicity and disability pay gap in addition to gender pay gap from the snapshot date of 31 March 2024.
- c) Reporting on the government and Council websites was completed in March 2024 to meet the statutory deadline.

### **Policy Framework**

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- An open and modern council
- A prosperous Norwich
- A fairer Norwich
- A climate responsive Norwich
- A future proof Norwich.

This report meets the Norwich City Council is an open and modern council corporate priority.

## Report Details

1. The Government published the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 which implemented the mandatory gender pay gap reporting requirement for public sector employers with 250 or more employees. Public sector bodies are required to publish details of their gender pay gap no later than 30 March each year using pay data as at 31 March the previous year.
2. Two statistical measures of 'average pay' have been used for our gender pay gap as identified in the Governments Statutory Guidance: Gender pay gap reporting: guidance for employers.
3. A **mean** average involves adding up all the numbers and dividing the result by how many numbers were in the list.
4. A **median** average involves listing all the numbers in numerical order. If there is an odd number of results, the median average is the middle number. If there is an even number of results, the median will be the mean of the two central numbers.
5. The mean average can be influenced by very low or very high pay, compared with the rest of the sample which can distort the position on gender pay.
6. The median average is less influenced by low or high earners and is usually a better measure of a mid-point and a more representative figure than mean pay.
7. The calculations required are defined within the regulations, as follows:
  - The mean gender pay gap
  - The median gender pay gap
  - The mean bonus gender pay gap
  - The median bonus gender pay gap
  - The proportion of men and women receiving a bonus payment
  - The proportion of men and women in each pay quartile
8. The findings from our gender pay gap report are published on the Government's Gender Pay Gap Reporting portal [www.gov.uk/genderpaygap](http://www.gov.uk/genderpaygap) and on the Gender Pay section on our website.

The results were published in March 2024 to meet the statutory deadline.

## Gender Pay Gap Results

9. The gender pay gap analysis indicates no median gender pay gap for the hourly rate of pay and bonus pay during this reporting period, which is consistent with previous years.
10. The full results from the gender pay gap analysis and the supporting narrative can be found in Appendix 1 – Gender Pay Gap Report 2023.

## **Action plan and future developments**

11. In the previous 12 months we have:

- continued to deliver a series of equality, diversity and inclusion related training for employees, managers and recruitment panels;
- re-introduced anonymised information on candidates in recruitment to avoid unconscious bias in the shortlisting process;
- celebrated International Women's Day (IWD). This included events and displays at City Hall;
- held menopause events and provided resources to support women in the workplace.

Over the next 12 months, we aim to:

- undertake further analysis of equality data to address any potential barriers for applicants and areas of gender under-representation within services and at different grades/levels;
- undertake further analysis of equality data to understand any potential barriers to progression;
- commence ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting from 2024;
- continue to monitor leavers by protected characteristics and grade, including reasons for leaving and learning and acting on any feedback received. We will look at measures to increase the number of leavers completing exit questionnaires;
- the Council's EDI strategy sets out a proposal to establish ERG's or employee networks for employees who share particular characteristics and/or interests. This work is at an early stage but will ensure a clear, psychologically safe channel for employees from a diverse range of backgrounds to be able to share their lived experiences, which will ultimately inform council policy.
- continue to provide EDI training through either specific programmes or through our in-house training delivery;
- work towards improving the reporting rate of protected characteristics to ensure our data is as comprehensive as possible and explaining to employees how we use the data to identify where there are potential inequalities so that we can take action to address.

## **Consultation**

9. The extended leadership team have been consulted. There are no direct employee implications requiring consultation as a result of this report, however, the results of the gender pay gap analysis will be reported to the Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee (JCNC).

## Implications

### Financial and Resources

10. There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. As future strategies to address any pay gaps are developed any emerging costs will be assessed and reported as required.

### Legal

11. There are no legal implications for the Council arising from this report. The report ensures the Council can be compliant with its reporting obligations in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

### Statutory Considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	See actions identified in report.  Gender Pay Gap Reporting is a tool to identify and take action to mitigate the risks associated with gender pay differentials.
Health, social and economic impact	n/a
Crime and disorder	n/a
Children and adults safeguarding	n/a
Environmental impact	n/a

### Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Failure to report gender pay gap by statutory deadline	Potential for enforcement action against the council if non-compliant	Measures to ensure gender pay gap is reported by the statutory deadline
Gender pay gap not calculated correctly	Incorrect reporting and potential for enforcement action	Statutory guidance on gender pay gap reporting provides a standard framework to be applied to calculate gender pay gaps which reduces the risk of inconsistencies in this area.



## Other Options Considered

12. There are no alternative approaches that we can consider. The requirements for gender pay gap reporting are defined in legislation and data needs to be collected and published in accordance with those requirements.

## Reason for the Decision and Recommendation

**Background papers:** None

**Appendices:** **Appendix 1 Gender Pay Gap Report 2023**

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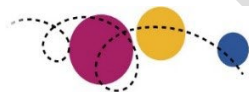


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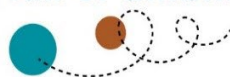
# Norwich City Council

## Gender Pay Gap Report 2023

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**A fair and thriving city, full of ambition**



## INTRODUCTION

Our ambition is for our workforce to reflect the city and communities that we serve.

We believe that a workplace where all colleagues feel included helps us to deliver better outcomes to our residents, customers and communities and contributes to the aspiration for Norwich to be a truly fair city as outlined in the Norwich 2040 City Vision.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024/27 will support our aim to be an employer that values and welcomes the different experiences, ideas and skills of all of our colleagues and ensures equality, diversity and inclusion are central to our culture.

A fundamental part of developing inclusive working practices and policies, and a workplace where all our employees can succeed, is analysing our workforce data to better understand any barriers that we need to challenge. This includes analysing, tracking and publishing our pay gap data.

We maintain our belief in pay fairness and transparency. The gender pay gap will fluctuate as the data is dependent on a number of contributing factors, but we remain committed to addressing any imbalance.

### Gender Pay Gap

It is a statutory requirement (for all organisations with 250 or more employees) to report annually on their gender pay gap data, and specifically the following;

- mean and median gender pay gap
- proportion of men and women in each pay quartile
- mean and median gender pay gap in bonus payments
- proportion of men and women who receive bonus payments

For most public sector employers the snapshot date for calculating the gender pay gap is 31 March each year. Data must be published by 30th March in the year after the snapshot date.

### Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap

It is not a statutory requirement to report on ethnicity or disability pay gap data, but we have taken the decision to voluntarily publish this information from 2024. We believe this supports our commitment to our workforce and communities to achieving our aims to improve workplace equality and be a diverse and inclusive employer.

As a signatory to UNISON's Anti – Racism Charter the reporting of our ethnicity pay gap fulfils our charter commitment to undertake ethnicity pay gap recording and publish the results.

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In calculating our ethnicity and disability pay gaps we will use the same principles and methodology that are applied to calculating our gender pay gap.

DRAFT

## WHAT IS A PAY GAP

The pay gap measures the difference between the average earnings between employees within an organisation.

The **gender pay gap** shows the difference between the average (mean and median) earnings of women and men. This is expressed as a percentage of men's earnings.

Pay gap data is different to equal pay. Equal pay deals with the pay differences between people who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value, while pay gap data looks at the overall averages in pay differences between different groups of employees, regardless of the type of the work they undertake.

### The pay data

The information in this report is based on our workforce data on 31 March 2023.

### Understanding the data

The gender pay gap is the difference between women's pay and men's pay as a percentage of men's pay. If there is a positive figure, it means that men are earning more by that amount. If there is a negative figure, it means that men are earning less by that amount.

The mean and median have been used to calculate average pay.

The mean is calculated by adding up all of the hourly rates of pay and dividing the result by the number of people included in the calculation. This calculation generally gives a good indication of the pay gap but can be distorted by extremes in pay.

The median is calculated by ranking the hourly rates of pay in order and taking the middle point. This gives a good indication of average pay in the middle of an organisation and is not distorted by very large or small hourly rates.

## GENDER PAY GAP

### Mean and Median Pay Gap

The number of employees in post on the snapshot date of 31st March 2023 was 668.

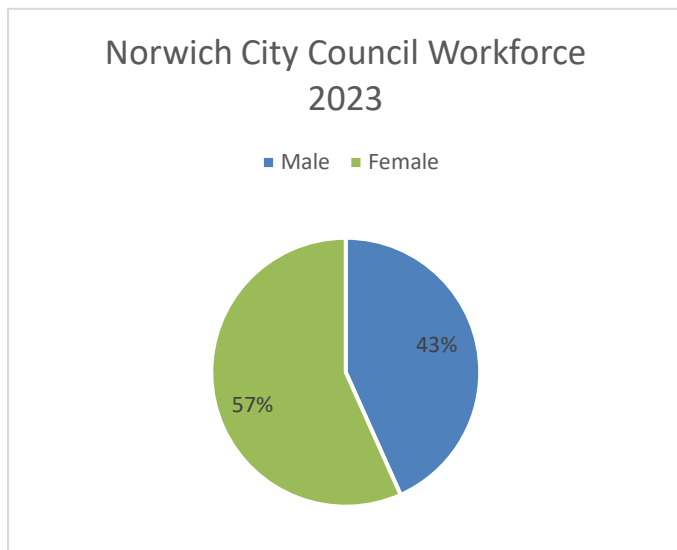
The gender pay gap shows the difference between the average (mean and median) earnings of men and women, as a percentage of men's earnings

The average (mean) hourly rate of pay of women is £17.21, and the median point is £16.11. The average (mean) rate of pay of men is £18.11, and the median point is £16.11.

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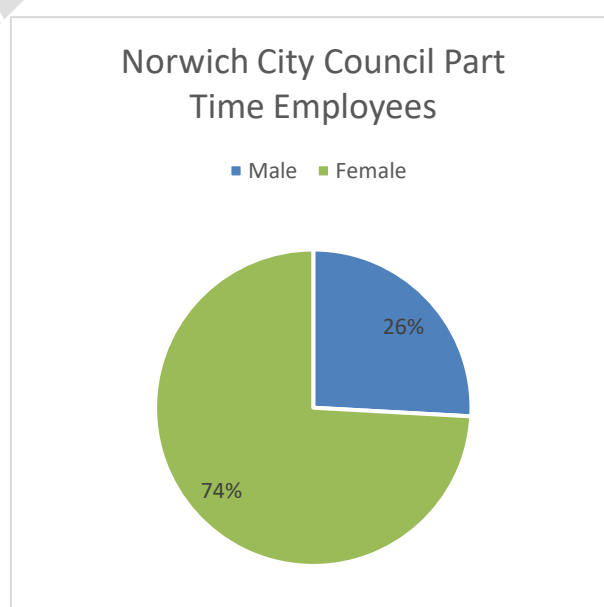
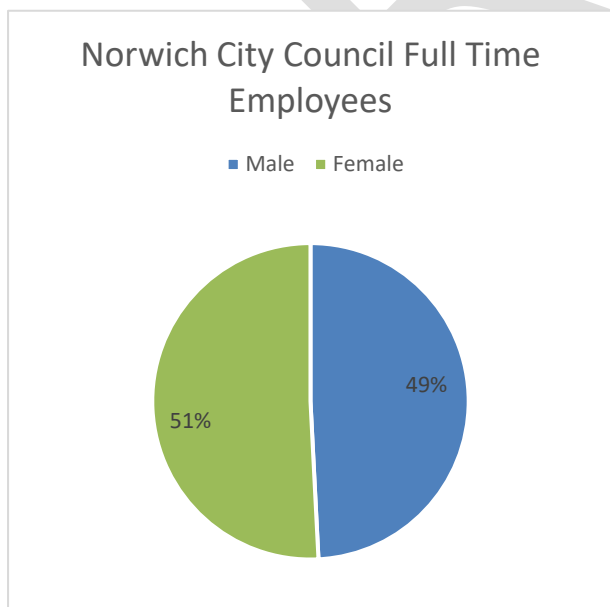
	WOMEN	MEN	PAY GAP
Average(mean) hourly rate	£17.21	£18.11	5%
Average (median) hourly rate	£16.11	£16.11	0%

We do not have a median gender pay gap. We have a mean gender pay gap of 5%. This means when comparing mean (average) hourly pay, men's mean hourly pay is 5% higher than women's or for every £1 that men earn, women earn 95p.



When split by gender overall our workforce is 56.7% female and 43.3% male.

There is a significant difference between the gender profile of our workforce who work full-time and part-time. Women make up 74.1% of part-time employees and 50.8% of full-time employees.



## Gender Pay Gap Trends

YEAR	Median Pay Gap	Mean Pay Gap
2017	0%	4.2%
2018	-3.4%	3%
2019	0%	3.4%
2020	0%	5.2%
2021	0%	4.9%
2022	0%	2.2%
2023	0%	5%

The median gender pay gap has been consistent over a number of years. The mean gender pay gap has been more variable. The increase in the mean gender pay gap between 2022 and 2023 was due to the TUPE transfer of services into the council where those transferring were predominantly men in higher paid and women in lower paid roles.

## Pay Quartiles

Pay Quartiles are where the workforce is broken down into four quartiles based on pay – the top 25% of earners make up the Upper Pay Quartile, and the lowest 25% of earners make up the Lower Pay Quartile.

Quartile	Men %	Women %
Upper quartile	45.51	54.49
Upper middle quartile	42.51	57.49
Lower middle quartile	43.11	56.89
Lower quartile	38.32	61.68

Women make up a greater proportion of the workforce in all quartiles and in particular the lowest paid positions (lower pay quartile).

## Bonus Payments

Non-consolidated bonus payments are payments that are made in addition to the basic salary that an employee receives that specifically relate only to profit sharing, commission, productivity or performance. Norwich City Council does not pay these types of bonus payments.

## What are we doing to close the gap?

Norwich City Council is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity in its employment practices, policies and procedures.

Actions we will take:

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- a) undertake further analysis of equality data to address any potential barriers for applicants and areas of gender under-representation within services; at different grades/levels; and between part time and full-time employees;
- b) undertake further analysis of equality data to understand any potential barriers to progression;
- c) continue to monitor leavers by protected characteristics and grade, including reasons for leaving and learning and acting on any feedback received. We will also look at measures to increase the number of leavers completing exit questionnaires;
- d) commence ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting from 2024;
- e) the Council's EDI strategy sets out a proposal to establish ERG's or employee networks for employees who share particular characteristics and/or interests. This work is at an early stage but will ensure a clear, psychologically safe channel for employees from a diverse range of backgrounds to be able to share their lived experiences, which will ultimately inform council policy.
- f) continue to provide EDI training through either specific programmes or through our in-house training delivery;
- g) work towards improving the reporting rate of protected characteristics to ensure our data is as comprehensive as possible and explaining to employees how we use the data to identify where there are potential inequalities so that we can take action to address.





**Committee name:** Cabinet

**Committee date:** 17/07/2024

**Report title:** Norwich City Council Productivity Plan

**Portfolio:** Councillor Stonard, Leader of the council

**Report from:** Interim chief finance officer (S151)

**Wards:** All wards

**OPEN PUBLIC ITEM**

**Purpose**

This report informs members about the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) letter requesting the submission of a productivity plan and to present our draft response. It highlights our current initiatives and outlines what we have achieved so far, as well as the future plans for the council set out in the new corporate plan.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that cabinet review our response to the productivity plan request, assess whether it effectively represents the council and provide their endorsement.

**Policy framework**

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- A prosperous Norwich.
- A fairer Norwich.
- A climate responsive Norwich.
- A future-proof Norwich.
- An open and modern council.

This report meets the open and modern council corporate priority:

- The productivity plan will be made available to the public on the Norwich City Council's website to allow members of the public to access and view it. This ensures transparency and also highlights our modern approach, presenting the strategies outlined in our community-led plan.

## **Report details**

### **Background**

1. As a requirement to providing additional resources at the 2024 final Local Government Finance Settlement, councils were mandated to produce productivity plans.
2. On 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) sent a letter detailing the broad requirements of councils' productivity plans. These plans are intended to evaluate successes, identify gaps, and outline opportunities within councils nationwide.
3. The letter outlined four key themes/questions to consider:
  - a. How you have transformed the way you design and deliver services to make better use of resources.
  - b. How you plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resources.
  - c. Your plans to reduce wasteful spend within your organisation and systems.
  - d. The barriers preventing progress that the government can help to reduce or remove.
4. In drafting a response, all relevant service areas were contacted to provide information based on their specific areas of expertise related to the respective questions. The response focused primarily on our community-led plan, highlighting the aims and priorities that emerged from it.
5. The DLUHC has requested that the productivity plan must have member oversight and endorsement before submission.
6. The productivity plan is to be submitted to the DLUHC by 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024, and will be published on the Norwich City Council website for residents to access.

### **Consultation**

7. Consultation with the relevant service areas within Norwich City Council informed the responses for the productivity plan. This comprised of a series of scheduled meetings with the various departments which include, but are not limited to Strategy, Transformation, Customer, IT & Digital, and Finance.
8. Following these consultations, the insights gathered were compiled into a structured document for the productivity plan, ensuring that key questions and considerations from each department were integrated.

### **Implications**

#### **Financial and resources**

9. 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 2024-29 and budget.

10. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources. Although, future revenue and capital investments will be necessary to achieve the aims of the community-led plan. Funding for specific projects will be approved separately for inclusion in the council's budget. Decisions will be based on business case evaluations and a detailed review of system and resource needs. This report does not suggest changes to current resources.

## Legal

11. There are no legal implications associated with the development of the productivity plan, except for the requirement mandated by central government. Whilst not legally binding, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has requested its submission by 19th July 2024.

## Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	No specific equality and diversity impacts are considered to arise from the productivity plan.
Health, social and economic impact	No specific health, social and economic impact are considered to arise from the productivity plan.
Crime and disorder	Neutral impact.
Children and adults safeguarding	Neutral impact.
Environmental impact	Neutral impact.

## Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
The Council does not endorse the productivity plan at Cabinet. There is a risk associated with the tight timeline, as Cabinet sign-off is scheduled within 48 hours of the submission deadline; a request for the decision to be called in would put the publication and submission at risk.	Failing to meet the submission deadline to the DLUHC by 19th July 2024.	Ensuring that all necessary documentation and materials are prepared in advance of the Cabinet meeting to facilitate informed decision making.  A productivity plan is recommended to Cabinet and approved before the submission date to the DLUHC.

## Other options considered

12. There are no other reasonably viable options have been identified.

## **Reasons for the decision/recommendation**

13. This report and its appendices are proposed to Cabinet for approval and endorsement, aligning with the mandated requirements specified by the DLUHC in their correspondence to Norwich City Council.

**Background papers:** None

## **Appendices:**

Appendices A: Letter from the DLUHC

Appendices B: Productivity Plan

## **Contact officer:**

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## Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

**Simon Hoare MP**  
Minister for Local Government  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

16

April 2024

*Dear Chief Executive*

### **Productivity in Local Government**

As you know, the Government is reviewing productivity across all public services and local government is, of course, part of that exercise. The recent [Local Government Finance Settlement](#) announced that councils would be asked to produce productivity plans. This letter formally begins that process.

May I first thank you for your very helpful engagement with my officials. Your views and thoughts have been valuable in shaping this approach to make it as useful as possible for all of us.

Local government has already done a huge amount in recent years to improve productivity and efficiency. However, lockdown and post-lockdown has proved challenging, and you are looking for new ways to go further. These new plans will help us understand what is already working well across the whole country, what the common themes are, whether there are any gaps and what more we need to do to unlock future opportunities. We will share these important lessons across the sector.

Productivity is not one-dimensional, and I would encourage you to consider the various facets that encompass the drive for greater productivity. When developing your plans, please think broadly and include reference to not only how you run your organisation, but also how you run the public services you provide and how you provide place leadership. It is with this wide view that we can ensure we are providing value for money for residents.

I am not looking to impose excessive burdens. I am not issuing you with a formal template or a detailed list of criteria to meet. I expect your plans to be three to four pages in length, and to set out what you have done in recent years, alongside your current plans, to transform your organisation and services. I do not want to specify a list of metrics you must report, but I do want to understand how you will monitor and assess your plans to assure yourselves and your residents that they will be delivered.

The plans should consider the below themes and where appropriate, should reference the work your council undertakes alongside other public services, such as the NHS and police.

#### **1. How you have transformed the way you design and deliver services to make better use of resources.**

Questions to consider:

- how has the organisation changed in recent years to become more productive? You may wish to consider what you have done around staffing, structures, operating models etc;
- how do you measure productivity in your organisation?
- what changes have you made to improve services, and what effects have those had?
- what are your current plans for transformation over the next two years and how will you measure the effects of those changes?

- looking ahead, which service has greatest potential for savings if further productivity gains can be found? What do you estimate these savings to be?
- what role could capital spending play in transforming existing services or unlocking new opportunities? If you have already used capital spending to boost growth or improve services, we would be interested in learning more;
- what preventative approaches you have undertaken and can the value of these be quantified?
- are there wider locally-led reforms that could help deliver high quality public services and improve the sustainability and resilience of your authority?

## **2. How you plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resources.**

Questions to consider:

- what are your existing plans to improve the quality of the data you collect; how do you use it and how do you make it available to residents?
- are there particular barriers from legacy systems?
- how often do you share data with other organisations, and do you find this useful?
- Are there opportunities to use new technology to improve workflows and systems, such as predictive analytics and AI?

## **3. Your plans to reduce wasteful spend within your organisation and systems.**

I know we will share the aim to reduce waste wherever we can and, while you have all made huge strides in recent years, no organisation is ever 100% efficient. You should set out your plans to reduce wasteful or "gold-plated" spend.

Questions to consider:

- how do you approach identifying and reducing waste in the organisation? How do you monitor progress?
- where have you followed invest to save and what was the result?
- how much time and money do you spend on staff EDI training (internal and external), networks, and other programmes? How many EDI Champions do you have as an organisation? How do you log and report the time and money spent on EDI related activity? How do you assess the effectiveness of that training?
- what percentage of total staff budget is spent on a) agency and b) consultants? How do you assess value for money on agency & consultancy spend and what are your plans to reduce use / costs? How many of those consultants or agency staff have been in place for over a year?
- what governance structures do you use to ensure accountability of spend?
- do you share office functions with other councils and if so, how useful do you find this?
- if you share external training costs with neighbouring councils, how do you factor out duplications of service between your council and your upper-tier council (if you have one)?



- if you have one, what is your assessment and experience of working with an elected mayor, combined authority, or devolution deal?
- what proportion of your paybill is spent on trade union facility time?

#### 4. The barriers preventing progress that the Government can help to reduce or remove.

There will be barriers preventing you from going as far or as fast as you would like to. I would like your plans to set those out, so that we can understand how government, or the market, can help you overcome these barriers to go even further.

Questions to consider:

- what are the barriers preventing you from improving productivity further within your organisation?
- what are the barriers preventing you from improving services further?
- are these barriers consistent across multiple services?
- what would you need to remove those barriers? What do you need from government, the market or elsewhere?

Your plans must be returned by 19 July 2024, by email to [productivityplans@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:productivityplans@levellingup.gov.uk).


You must ensure that there is member oversight and endorsement of the plan before it is submitted, and the plan must also be uploaded to your website so that residents can see it. You should consider how you will update the plans and report on progress on a regular basis. The plans should also contain relevant metrics and key performance indicators to allow you and your residents to monitor progress.

Once received, we will review the plans to identify common themes and issues across the sector. We are keen to highlight best practice that others can learn from.

Individual plans will not be rated or scored, and we will not produce any kind of league tables. We are interested in understanding what is happening across the sector.

We are setting up a panel to consider the themes and evidence that comes from the plans. I will chair the panel and bring together experts from the sector and beyond, including Oflog and the LGA. They will consider the issues emerging from the plans, the implications for future national policy design, the role of government in supporting further change and the role of the sector in going further. The panel will advise national government and local government, and I believe this collaborative approach will ensure the most effective outcomes.

I look forward to updates on your publication and progress.



**SIMON HOARE MP**  
Minister for Local Government

## **Norwich City Council (NCC) - Productivity Plan 2024/25**

The council has considered the letter dated 16th April from Simon Hoare MP; we have set out below the council's productivity plan which has been considered and agreed by the council's cabinet at its meeting held on 17 July 2024. As required, we will now publish this on our website.

### **1. How you have transformed the way you design and deliver services to make better use of resources.**

Following a change in political and organisational leadership in 2023 there has been a renewed focus on understanding and responding to the priorities and needs of communities across the city. Following extensive consultation with residents, businesses, and key partners, a new community led plan ['We are Norwich' for 2024-2029](#) has been introduced, which sets the direction of travel through setting high level priorities and ambition.

To ensure that the ambition set out in 'We are Norwich' is delivered, we have developed a new business planning process which will embed an outcome-based methodology, service development plans and bespoke work programmes, aligning all resources to effectively transform and improve delivery of all services, deliver the city's priorities, and deliver a balanced Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

We are developing a new performance framework alongside business planning; this framework will allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of our actions rather than solely tracking outputs. Our approach will establish specific key performance indicators, clear measures of success and milestones aligned with our priorities. By using data and insight, we will ensure that our services remain oriented towards people and are driven by evidence. Performance evaluation and regular feedback mechanisms are in place to monitor progress and inform necessary adjustments. Additionally, the City Vision<sup>1</sup> plays a pivotal role in maximising assets and benefits across the city and ensuring our alignment with the priorities of partners as a means of effectively addressing community needs.

We are dedicated to collaborating with communities and partners to inform change. For example, we have bolstered engagement with residents through enhanced communication channels such as Get Norwich Talking and other feedback mechanisms, resulting in user-friendly and targeted services. Our commitment to iteratively consulting the city we serve has enhanced our ability to listen to and act upon its priorities and ambitions. Using digital services has enhanced accessibility and cost-effectiveness while maintaining face-to-face contact for those requiring it with a digital first, not digital only, approach. These approaches have not only raised the standard of our services but have also contributed to greater financial stability for the council, empowering us to reinvest in further innovations and enhancements for Norwich.

Our recent peer review has validated our ability to respond to our communities needs in a way which maintains the financial resilience of the council.

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<sup>1</sup>

Published in November 2018, the Norwich 2040 City Vision outlines the council's strategy to collaborate with partners on five themes: a creative, connected, fair, liveable, and dynamic city. Key achievements include the Norwich Climate Commission (net-zero by 2045), the Norwich Good Economy Commission (tackling COVID-19 economic inequalities), the £25 million Norwich Town Deal (regeneration projects), the Norwich Creative City Compact (arts and culture growth), and the Norwich Cities of Stories campaign (visitor brand).



## **2. How you plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resources.**

The council's [‘Customer and Digital Strategy’](#) for 2024-2029 supports the new community-led corporate plan which identifies that to be an open and modern council, service provision needs to be efficient, data-driven, and evidence-based.

We will achieve this by supporting the delivery of the priorities through objective, secure and reliable solutions that:

- Improve the quality of customer data, including contact details through the development of our master data management (MDM) solution.
- Use data to support customers and inform strategic outcome-based planning.

We have delivered phase one of the MDM project – this is the first step in ensuring the organisation has a unique record for all customers and properties. The next phase of this project will focus on utilising the existing data we store to identify and address needs.

A key part of the strategy is to standardise our approach to our systems to ensure effective functionality and governance is in place. Historically, systems have not been fully exploited and the new strategy will provide a framework which will ensure that systems are utilised as efficiently as possible.

Our information and data strategy outlines how the organisation will collaborate with other organisations to process data from multiple sources, including internal service areas, external partners, customers, and third-party sources. This shared data can encompass various types, such as structured data, unstructured data, real-time data streams, and historical data archives. Such activities are undertaken in a secure, lawful, and proportionate manner ensuring we adhere to the UK's data protection requirements whilst delivering data-driven outcomes for the city.

Further strategic objectives include utilising new technologies to improve workflow and systems. Some examples of the actions we will take include the following:

- Migrate shared folders to Microsoft 365.
- Develop the use of Microsoft apps and streamline processes to support collaborative, agile working for the workforce and its partners.
- Deploy automation where appropriate, for example exploring the use of AI and virtual assistant technology internally and on the website.

## **3. Your plans to reduce wasteful spend within your organisation and systems.**

Our approach to identifying and reducing waste incorporates a focus on strategic planning; to ensure that we deliver efficient services, rigorous governance, and continuous improvement. Our transformation plans build on the foundations laid by the Future Shape Norwich (FSN) programme, which was initiated in early 2022 to support the delivery of balanced medium term financial plans in the face of escalating demand and reduced government funding. By prioritising digital projects and service improvement, we have streamlined operations and reduced the time required to complete tasks.

The FSN programme has supported the implementation of a new asset management system, improving our understanding and performance of the assets we hold and informing ‘retain, improve and dispose’ decisions in support of effective resource

allocation. Our focus on similar IT projects, such as the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, exemplifies our commitment to 'doing the basics well on the services we provide' across all services.

Our monitoring process is moving to a performance framework with defined measures of success and milestones by transitioning towards an outcomes-based model that aligns with our strategic priorities. Regular performance reviews and feedback is integral to our monitoring process, allowing us to track progress and make necessary adjustments. The FSN programme includes a system of closure reports at the end of strategic projects, providing detail of outcomes achieved and lessons learned.

One of the Future Shape Norwich projects reviewed the Norwich City Services Limited (NCSL) contract, specifically focusing on grounds maintenance and street cleaning, to identify actions for improvement and savings. FSN was initiated in 2021 due to a projected £11.8m budget gap for the council over the period 2022-2026 and this project was initiated due to concerns about NCSL's outdated operating model, the project commenced with a high-level external review. This review benchmarked NCSL's performance, identified significant savings opportunities, and proposed clarifications of roles and responsibilities. The project has achieved £268k in savings for 2023/24 and planned an additional £1.013m in savings over 2024-2027. New governance arrangements and a finalised asset management database were established, and ongoing work is set to implement a new operating model and detailed targets within NCSL's Business Plan by June 2024. Improvements in productivity and efficiency in streets and grounds maintenance have already led to better service delivery and fewer complaints.

Collaborative partnerships in Norwich have significantly improved the community by using resources effectively and achieving better outcomes. The Financial Inclusion Consortium (FIC) has helped 1088 residents manage debt, renegotiating or reducing £1,007,142 in debts and generating £4,822,014 in benefits. The Real Living Wage Action Group increased accredited employers from 64 to 80 in 2023, with a goal of 110 by 2024. The Norwich 2040 City Vision uses partnerships to drive major regeneration projects like the £25 million Norwich Town Deal. The Norwich Health and Wellbeing Partnership (NHWP) improves health by addressing inequalities and coordinating services. Collaborations with Orwell Housing Association ensure affordable housing, reducing vacancy times and refusal rates.

#### **4. The barriers preventing progress that the government can help to reduce or remove.**

Over the past 14 years, local government funding has reduced significantly. This, combined with continuing demand pressures constrains our ability to plan and innovate further as capacity is focused on managing daily operational pressures. The recruitment and retention of the exceptional talent required to deliver essential and critical services to our residents is hampered by the uncertainty of operating in an environment where no long-term financial planning by the government exists and legislation often takes place without appreciation of the reality in which councils operate. The government must undertake to fund local government properly and give certainty over funding streams on medium term (3 – 5 years) rolling basis.

Additional, buoyant funding streams linked to the services that councils provide is essential to our long-term financial sustainability. Reform of the existing funding streams is also needed with less reliance on constrained grant and bidding

mechanisms; a rebased council taxbase need not result in significant additional pressure on low-income household finances but the number of bands could be increased to remove the inequalities that exist between those in the lowest bands and the highest.

It is inequitable that those in the highest banding pay only double the average level of council tax yet there is wide disparity on property values. Artificially imposed caps on council tax increases have suppressed growth to levels significantly below compound inflation at a time when key social care and housing services including homelessness have experienced extraordinary demand and inflationary pressures above headline inflation rates. Without other compensatory sources of income, it is unsurprising that financial risk taking and consequent failure in the sector is now prevalent.

Business rates is not strongly aligned to the provision of council services and there has been a failure by the government to incentivise growth activity in this area with the promise of fully retained business rates never being achieved universally. Full devolution of a number of funding streams into a single universal funding grant source without expensive bidding processes is an essential ingredient for all councils to provide the first-class services that we have demonstrably delivered against.

Another major barrier is the systemic challenges posed by national government policies and funding mechanisms. The intermittent nature of funding and the competitive bidding processes create significant obstacles to long-term planning and increases costs unnecessarily. The tight turnaround times for funding applications leave little room for strategic development, especially with partners, forcing us to react rather than proactively plan. This not only hinders our productivity but also affects the ambition of the services we could otherwise provide. To remove these barriers, we require substantial changes from all key stakeholders. From the government, we require more consistent and predictable funding streams that allow for long-term planning and development. We need you to reduce the bureaucratic hurdles and streamline regulations which could facilitate faster project approvals and implementation.

For instance, the new waste regulations have significantly impacted Norwich City Council due to underfunding. DEFRA's allocated funding of £0 is insufficient to implement weekly food waste collections for all households. Norwich currently offers extensive recycling services but needs additional resources to extend food waste collections to 7,446 flatted properties. The estimated cost is at least £0.300 million, covering a new Refuse Collection Vehicle and extra bins, but the lack of funding prevents these expansions. It is illogical to believe that a service can be expanded further with no additional resource and the council cannot commit to providing new services until adequate funding is secured.

The sector has consistently asked for the removal of the constraints associated with retained right to buy receipts; although we recognise some limited changes have been made, there remains market failure in the provision of social housing that could be addressed if the artificial constraints on this funding stream were removed.

We would also ask for a review of the Housing Benefit subsidy arrangements whereby this council is penalised for its innovative approaches to address homelessness. We would ask that the Housing Benefit regulations be amended to update the Temporary Accommodation subsidy cap to use the current year LHA rates rather than the 2011 ones, and the Housing Benefit regulations be amended to

update the Supported Exempt Accommodation subsidy caps to return 100% subsidy for all non-profit, charitable and voluntary sector social landlords, rather than just registered providers. The inconsistent policy messages between DWP and DLUHC create inefficiencies and frustrate delivery.

By not doing so the cost to this council is currently c£2.36m per annum in lost subsidy, and this is predicted to rise to c£3.04m by the end of this financial year.

In addition, the onerous requirements on the production of information such as the numerous statutory requirements to place notices in newspapers or issue written copies of routine notices, excessive amounts of information that is required in annual accounts or has to be published under the transparency code and the need for statutory overrides such as the requirement to value assets for accounts every year are all examples where a more thoughtful approach to providing relevant information could be taken to reduce the administrative burdens that are faced by all councils.

A concerted effort from the government, is essential to overcome these barriers. By addressing the financial, regulatory, and systemic constraints, we can significantly improve our productivity and the quality of services we provide, leading to a thriving and more resilient community.

[insert e-signature]

Cllr. Mike Stonard (Leader -Norwich City Council)



**Committee name:** Cabinet

**Committee date:** 17/07/2024

**Report title:**           **Scrutiny Committee Recommendations to Cabinet**

**Portfolio:**           Councillor Kendrick, Cabinet member for an open and modern council

**Report from:**       Interim Head of Legal and Procurement

**Wards:**               All

**OPEN PUBLIC ITEM**

**Purpose**

This report presents the recommendations agreed by the Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 21 March 2024, in relation to the draft Parks and Green Spaces Strategy for Norwich and Love Norwich, to Cabinet for consideration.

**Recommendation:**

That Cabinet considers whether to adopt all or some of the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee in relation to the draft Parks and Green Spaces Strategy for Norwich and Love Norwich.

**Policy framework**

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- A prosperous Norwich.
- A fairer Norwich.
- A climate responsive Norwich.
- A future-proof Norwich.
- An open and modern council.

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.

## Scrutiny Committee – 21 March 2024

1. The Scrutiny Committee met on 21 March 2024. The agenda papers and the presentation on the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy are available on [the council's website](#).

### A Parks and Green Spaces Strategy for Norwich -An Update

2. Councillor Giles, Cabinet member for Communities and Social Inclusion, delivered a presentation on the development of the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy for Norwich and together with the Fringe Project Manager answered members' questions. The questions and responses are summarised in the minutes of the meeting.
3. Members' main concerns were that the provision of parks and green spaces met the needs of residents and was inclusive. Members sought assurance that the strategy would align with the council's other strategies, to reflect the demographic of the city, in terms of background, gender, race, ability etc. and the council's commitment to mitigate climate change.
4. The committee was interested in the methodology used for the audits and noted that a specific Inclusivity Audit had been commissioned and was due to report back in August, which would inform expenditure on the capital programme for play area provision.
5. The committee has requested another opportunity to review the strategy before it is approved by Cabinet. It is intended to invite representatives of Inclusive Norwich, and/or other consultees as required, to the Scrutiny Committee where the strategy is considered to obtain their views.
6. The committee resolved to ask that Cabinet considers the following recommendations:
  - (1) Acknowledging the role of parks and open spaces in the mitigation of carbon emissions, lowering temperatures and flood prevention, to recommend that a metric is added to measure the cooling effect of parks and open spaces.
  - (2) That consideration of the ratio of pavements to green spaces within parks and open spaces is made and prioritisation is given to address areas where the ratio is high.
  - (3) As mitigation for climate change, explore the use of rain gardens, flood areas and fire breaks.
  - (4) Ensure that Inclusive Norwich, SEND Friendly Norwich and DRAGONS, are included as consultees, and invited to comment on the draft strategy at an early stage and as part of the wider consultation.
  - (5) That prior to approval at Cabinet, the strategy is reported back to the Scrutiny Committee and to note that the committee would like to invite representatives of Inclusive Norwich, and/or other consultees as required, to that meeting.

- (6) That the strategy identifies the small open spaces used for amenity within housing estates.
- (7) Ensure that the wider population of the city is engaged in the consultation, beyond current users.
- (8) Subject to the agreement of the appropriate Friends' groups, explore the expansion of the Parks of Sanctuary to all parks.
- (9) That the council works with Norfolk County Council to reduce barriers to residents wishing to place trees in planters on the highway.
- (10) Investigate the cost of providing Changing Places toilets in the council's main parks.
- (11) As part of the consultation, allow some eco-literacy to ensure rewilding can be considered as an option and not just discarded.
- (12) That the strategy reflects the populations of each ward, any fluctuations in population, and the ratio of green space to population on a ward-by-ward basis, to assist with the identification of potential new green spaces.
- (13) That commercial sponsorship should be investigated to provide funding for specific features, such as the repair of the fountain at Eaton Park.
- (14) That consideration be given to the potential to grow food as part of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

### **Love Norwich Review**

- 7. Councillor Hampton, Cabinet member for Climate Change, introduced the report which provided an update and included the Cabinet's responses to the committee's recommendations following its review of Love Norwich (Scrutiny Committee, 14 July 2022). The Clean Streets Delivery Manager also attended the meeting and together with Councillors Giles and Hampton, answered members' questions. Members were advised that any Love Norwich funding remaining at the end of the financial year would be carried over. The questions and responses are summarised in the minutes of the meeting.
- 8. Members commented on the trial waste amnesty days and the use of CCTV cameras to combat fly tipping. The consensus was that it was beneficial to involve ward councillors in the location of cameras. Walkabouts with officers and ward councillors were useful to identify fly tipping hotspots. Members considered that the waste amnesty days required more notice, should not be based on a single day, and that ward councillors should also be consulted on the arrangements. The committee considered that that housing and other council officers should be responsible for reporting fly tipping if they come across it, rather than rely on residents to report it.

9. The committee resolved to ask that Cabinet considers the following recommendations:

- (1) That ward councillors are consulted in future on the locations of CCTV cameras used to combat fly tipping in their wards.
- (2) Ask that ward councillors are permitted to access LAMS, subject to appropriate training on the system.
- (3) Consult with residents on the provision of the new tamper proof bins to avoid bins being left open, which are both smelly and attract vermin, and work with communities to ensure that bins are tested and used properly to avoid the costly removal of bins that are not used correctly and need replacing.
- (4) That officers explore ways to combat litter by working with local businesses to provide litter picking in areas where litter is generated by that business.
- (5) That officers explore best practice for waste management and recycling in the UK and abroad.
- (6) Investigate whether an annual “spring clean” waste amnesty would be widely used by residents if advertised in advance.
- (7) Provide the Scrutiny Committee with evidence of how the target locations for the trials to reduce fly tipping were selected.
- (8) Provide the Scrutiny Committee with a breakdown of how the £100,000 Love Norwich Scheme funding had been spent.
- (9) Provide information on how well the council has performed against its targets.
- (10) Ensure that in future consultations, or information about a service, that the council communicates with residents by text rather than relying on QR codes or emails.
- (11) Liaise with the Community Pay Back Scheme to arrange clean ups in areas that require it regularly but are more difficult to reach.

## **Consultation**

10. 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

11. 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.
12. 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

13. 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	Members recommendations seek to ensure all relevant communities are represented.
Health, social and economic impact	No specific implications arising from this report.
Crime and disorder	No specific implications arising from this report.
Children and adults safeguarding	No specific implications arising from this report.
Environmental impact	No specific implications arising from this report.

### Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
None at this stage.		

### Other options considered

14. 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

15. This report will allow cabinet to make a decision on whether or not to take forward all or some of the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations in relation to the draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and Love Norwich.

## Background papers:

None

**Appendices:** None

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**Committee name:** Cabinet

**Committee date:** 17/07/2024

**Report title:** Complaints Performance and Service Improvement

**Portfolio:** Report Councillor Jones, cabinet member for housing

**Report from:** Executive director of housing and communities

**Wards:** All wards

**OPEN PUBLIC ITEM**

**KEY DECISION**

**Purpose**

To report the council's first set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures, which is a new regulatory requirement for social housing providers under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act.

To report the new Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and to seek Cabinet's formal response to this report, which is a statutory requirement under the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- i) note the results of the first set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (Appendix A)
- ii) note the Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report (Appendix B)
- iii) respond to the Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report.

**Policy framework**

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- A prosperous Norwich.
- A fairer Norwich.
- A climate responsive Norwich.
- A future-proof Norwich.
- An open and modern council.

This report responds to the ambitions as outlined under the “open and modern council” priority, specifically the outcomes “a council delivering excellence” and “a data and insight driven and people focused council”.

## **Background**

1. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act gained Royal Assent in July 2023 and the requirements within the Act commenced from April 2024. The purpose of the Act is to ensure that all social housing residents across the country are safe, listened to, live in good quality homes and have access to redress when things go wrong. The Act gives the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) strengthened powers and a revised regulatory framework to make sure all social housing providers comply with the requirements.
2. One of the new requirements is for all social housing providers to collect and publish a set of 22 standardised Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM). All social housing providers are required to publish their first set of TSM and to have submitted their results to the RSH by 30 June 2024.
3. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act is also aligned with the enhanced powers for the Housing Ombudsman and a new statutory complaint handling code, which commenced April 2024. One of the new requirements of the code is for all social housing providers to have published a Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report by 30 June 2024.
4. Additionally, this report is required to be scrutinised by the social housing provider's 'Governing body' and a response published alongside the report by 30 June 2024. The RSH will be monitoring social housing providers compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's new complaint handling code, as part of their revised regulatory role.

## **Publication of the first set of TSMs**

5. The RSH designed 22 standardised TSMs to support effective scrutiny by tenants so they can hold their landlord to account, and also for the regulator to review as part of their strengthened monitoring role. Twelve of the TSM are collected from a perception survey where tenants are asked about their satisfaction on a number of issues. The other 10 are performance measures that are collected by the social housing provider from their own records.
6. All social housing providers were required to collect this information during the financial year 2023-2024 and a technical specification sets out exactly how the measures should be collected and how the survey should be carried out. Some of the data could not be collected until after the financial year end and has been subject to a verification process, so there has been a tight timeframe to collate and publish the results by 30 June 2024.
7. The full set of results were submitted to the RSH by the 30 June 2024 deadline (Appendix A). The results were also published on our website by the 30 June 2024 deadline ([www.norwich.gov.uk/TSM](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/TSM)). Publication means that the council is fully compliant with this new regulatory requirement.
8. As this is the first year these measures have been defined and collected, there is no baseline to compare previous performance. The RSH is expected to publish the results from all housing providers in due course. In the meantime

we have shared our results with Housemark, a benchmarking organisation, and are expecting to see the first set of comparable data around mid-July.

## **Publication and scrutiny of a new Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report**

9. The Housing Ombudsman's new statutory complaint handling code was published in February 2024, and came into effect on 1 April 2024. The code set out a new requirement to publish a Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report by 30 June 2024, which was specified to include six separate items, including a 33-page self-assessment against the code and a qualitative and quantitative analysis of complaints performance for 2023-2024.
10. The report was submitted to the Housing Ombudsman by the 30 June 2024 deadline (Appendix B). The report was also published on our website by the 30 June 2024 deadline ([www.norwich.gov.uk/SelfAssessment](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/SelfAssessment) and [www.norwich.gov.uk/CPSIR](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/CPSIR)). Publication means the council is compliant with this requirement of the new complaint handling code.
11. Of the 72 criteria in the self-assessment, the council has met 63 (88% compliance) of these, with nine not met. Two of these criteria will become compliant as soon as Cabinet have responded to this report.
12. The complaint handling code also states that the report is required to be scrutinised by the housing provider's 'Governing body' and a response published by the same deadline of 30 June 2024. The purpose of the Governing body's response is to provide assurance that the self-assessment is a true reflection of the landlord's complaint handling.
13. The Housing Ombudsman did not clearly set out their requirements for the report until 22 May 2024 and at the same time confirmed that for councils the 'Governing body' would be their Cabinet. Several other Local Authorities raised questions with the Housing Ombudsman around the short timeframe and difficulties with busy Cabinet agendas.
14. On 5 June 2024, after the general election had been called, the Housing Ombudsman acknowledged that the election timing may cause issues with this requirement. The Housing Ombudsman still expects housing providers to report they are not compliant with the requirement to publish the Governing Body response by 30 June 2024, but have said they are likely to agree the delay is reasonable.
15. As soon as Cabinet has responded to the report, it will be resubmitted to the Housing Ombudsman and our compliance will increase to 90%.

## **Consultation**

16. No consultation is required.

## **Implications**

## **Financial and resources**

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

## Legal

18. The legal implications are:

- It is a regulatory requirement for social housing providers to collect and publish TSM. The RSH has a range of enforcement powers it can use to hold landlords to account, ranging from performance improvement plans to issuing limitless fines. The higher the level of risk, the greater the level of scrutiny and the stronger the actions are likely to be.
- It is a statutory requirement for social housing providers to comply with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. Failure to comply could result in the Housing Ombudsman issuing a complaint handling failure order.

## Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	No implications
Health, social and economic impact	No implications
Crime and disorder	No implications
Children and adults safeguarding	No implications
Environmental impact	No implications

## Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Risk of non-compliance if we are not able to comply with the requirement to publish our Cabinet response to the Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report by 30 June 2024.	The Housing Ombudsman has the power to issue a complaint handling failure order.	The Housing Ombudsman has acknowledged that the election timing may cause issues with this requirement and have said they are likely to agree the delay is reasonable.  The delay will be minimal as Cabinet are meeting on 17 July to provide a response.

## Other options considered

19. There are no other options.

## Reasons for the decision/recommendation

20. In order to comply with the new regulatory requirements for social housing providers and to comply with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code, it is recommended that Cabinet:

- i) note the results of the first set of TSM (Appendix A)
- ii) note the Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report (Appendix B)
- iii) respond to the Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report.

**Background papers:** None.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – TSM results

Appendix B – Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report

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# Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

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New [Tenant Satisfaction Measures](#) were introduced by the Government on 1 April 2023 which are designed to help to monitor how well landlords are doing at providing quality homes and services, and to understand how they can make improvements.

There are 22 tenant satisfaction measures, which includes 12 tenant perception measures and 10 management information measures.

## How data was collected for 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

As part of the new measures, we have been collecting data on how we are doing at completing repairs, keeping homes safe, and engaging with our customers.

Twelve of the results are from a tenant perception survey and are coded TP for tenant perception. To get this information we commissioned Viewpoint, an independent market research organisation, to carry out the survey on our behalf.

During 2023-24 they contacted 250 tenants every three months until they had achieved the required sample size of 1,000 tenants to ensure the responses were representative of our wider tenant population. With this sample size we can be 95% confident that the results are accurate to within +/-3%, which is considered statistically robust for this type of survey.

The survey was mostly carried out by telephone, with a small proportion carried out by email as we did not have a telephone number for some of the tenants selected at random.

Viewpoint managed to achieve a [representative sample](#) based on the gender, age, disability and ethnicity of our wider tenant population, as well as property types and geographical area, and so no weighting was applied to any of the results.



We've grouped both the results from the tenant survey and those from our management systems into common themes which we hope makes it easier to read.

We would like to thank everyone who took part in this survey. We really appreciate you taking the time to share your views and give us your feedback.

## How did we do?

### Overall satisfaction with the service

**64.2%**

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the overall service (TP)

### Keeping properties in good repair

**66.4%**

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the overall repairs service (TP)

**58.6%**

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the time taken to complete the most recent repair (TP)

**64.1%**

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied we provide a home that is well maintained (TP)

**0.3%**

Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard

**96.7%**

Emergency repairs completed within the target timescale

**87.1%**

Non-emergency repairs completed within the target timescale

## Maintaining building safety

**75.7%**

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied we provide a home that is safe (TP)

**100%**

Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out

**100%**

Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out

**99.2%**

Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos safety checks have been carried out

**100%**

Proportion of homes for which all required water safety checks have been carried out

**100%**

Proportion of homes for which all required lift safety checks have been carried out

## Respectful and helpful engagement

**53.9%**

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied we listen to your views and act upon them (TP)

**67.5%**

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied we keep you informed about things that matter to you (TP)

**76.6%**

Proportion of respondents who report that they agree that tenants are treated fairly and with respect (TP)

## Effective handling of complaints

**21%**

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with our approach to handling anti-social behaviour (TP)

**83.8**

Number of stage 1 complaints per 1,000 properties

**13.5**

Number of stage 2 complaints per 1,000 properties

**44.8%**

Proportion of stage 1 complaints responded to in target

**64.9%**

Proportion of stage 2 complaints responded to in target

## Responsible neighbourhood management

**47.4%**

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied we keep communal areas clean and well maintained (TP)

**56%**

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied we make a positive contribution to your neighbourhood (TP)

**55.9%**

Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with our approach to handling anti-social behaviour (TP)

**80.5**

Number of anti-social behaviour cases (including hate) opened per 1,000 properties

**0.6**

Number of anti-social behaviour cases (hate only) opened per 1,000 properties



# **Housing complaints performance and service improvement report 2023-24**

## Section 1: Introduction

Norwich City Council welcomes feedback from residents.

Handling complaints effectively allows us to address issues, learn from them and prevent future occurrences.

The Housing Ombudsman is responsible for investigating complaints about social housing providers.

In April 2024, the Housing Ombudsman introduced a new complaint handling code to ensure complaints are addressed fairly, effectively and promptly.

This report includes our self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code, as well as providing information on the complaints we received during 2023-24, some examples of service improvements we have made as a result of learning from complaints and an overview of our Housing Ombudsman cases.

## Section 2: Annual self-assessment

We have completed a self-assessment (June 2024) against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

This ensures we align our policies and practices to provide a prompt and effective complaints service.

[Our full self-assessment is published online.](#)

The areas where we need to improve are:

- We do not routinely keep residents informed about their complaint if we are unable to fully respond within the timescale.
- We do not currently have a process to prioritise complaints by the complexity of the complaint or by the residents' personal circumstances.
- We do not acknowledge 100% of our complaints within 5 working days of receipt.
- We do not respond to 100% of our stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of receipt.
- We do not currently have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties.

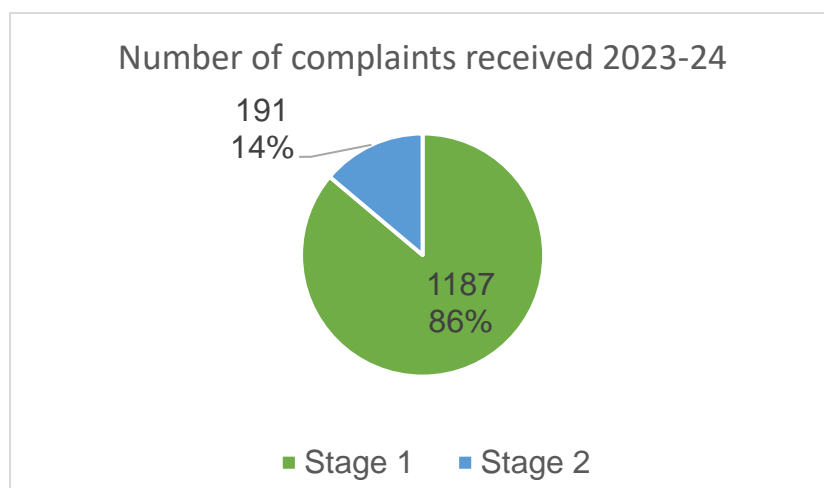
## Section 3: Performance

### Overall

We received 1,378 complaints about council housing between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024.

1,187 complaints were responded to at stage 1 of our complaints process.

191 were escalated to stage 2.



The Housing Ombudsman and the Regulator of Social Housing both regard effective complaint handling and listening to tenants as important.

There has been high media coverage of some failings in the social housing sector and the Housing Ombudsman has run publicity campaigns such as 'make it right' to raise the profile of making a complaint.

We embrace a positive complaints culture as this is key to enhancing and improving our services.

During 2023-24 we have not kept a record of any complaints we refused to accept in line with the exclusions in our published complaint policy. From April 2024 we will be keeping a record of these complaints.

### Stage 1 complaints

Of the 1,187 stage 1 complaints received, 532 (45%) were responded to within the Housing Ombudsman timeframe of 10 working days.

This does not meet the Housing Ombudsman requirement to respond to all stage 1 complaints within 10 working days. As part of monitoring our performance against the response time, processes were reviewed during quarter 4, which resulted in quarter 4 performance improving to 63% responded to within 10 working days. We are committed to improving this performance during 2024-25.

Responsive repair issues represented the largest proportion of stage 1 complaints (45%)

Stage 1 complaint category	Percentage
Responsive repairs	45%
Tenancy and neighbourhood issues	12%
Contractors	10%
Planned maintenance and upgrades	9%
Antisocial behaviour	4%
Rent and service charges	4%
Lettings	3%
Building safety	2%
Garages	2%
Leasehold and right to buy	2%
Other	7%

The most common theme was:

Stage 1 complaint theme	Percentage
Standard of service provided	43%
Failing to provide an agreed service	25%
Service requested but not provided	20%
Employee or contractor attitude or conduct	3%
Other	9%

781 (66%) of stage 1 complaints were upheld.

## Stage 2 complaints

Of the 191 stage 2 complaints received, 124 (65%) were responded to within the Housing Ombudsman timeframe of 20 working days.

This does not meet the Housing Ombudsman requirement to respond to all stage 2 complaints within 20 working days.

Responsive repair issues represented the largest proportion of stage 2 complaints (53%).

Stage 2 complaint category	Percentage
Responsive repairs	53%
Contractors	6%
Planned maintenance and upgrades	6%
Antisocial behaviour	5%
Tenancy and neighbourhood issues	4%
Lettings	3%
Rent and service charges	3%
Building safety	2%
Garages	2%
Leasehold and right to buy	2%



Stage 2 complaint category	Percentage
Other	14%

The most common theme was:

Stage 1 complaint theme	Percentage
Standard of service provided	35%
Failing to provide an agreed service	28%
Service requested but not provided	19%
Employee or contractor attitude or conduct	2%
Other	16%

97 (51%) of stage 2 complaints were upheld.

### **Tenant Satisfaction Measures**

During 2023-24 we commissioned a market research organisation, called Viewpoint, to carry out an independent satisfaction survey of our tenants.

One of the questions asked respondents “how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Norwich City Council's housing service complaint handling?”. Of the 224 respondents who answered this question, 21% were satisfied.

This falls short of our own aspiration and tells us we are not meeting the standard you expect from us.

The early results of this standardised survey from other large housing providers reflect that this figure is low across the housing sector, but this does not make it acceptable, and we recognise the need for improvement.

## Section 4: Learning and service improvement

Managers in the housing service meet on a quarterly basis to review the quality of complaint handling, to ensure timely responses are being provided and to share learning from cases.

Stage 2 cases are sampled by an independent officer to check for consistency and fairness.

Improving the learning and insights from complaints is a priority for the housing service.

During 2024-25 we will be implementing a new IT system to help us handle complaints more effectively and capture themes, outcomes and learning more easily.

Here are some examples of the learning points for us from complaints received during 2023-24:

You said our rent arrears team did not take known personal circumstances into account when pursuing a debt after a tenancy has ended. We have changed our recovery procedure to ensure we balance the debt recovery with any personal circumstances and particularly in cases of domestic abuse.

You said our standard letters were not always easy to understand. We have started to review all our standard letter and email templates. We are engaging with local voluntary and community organisations on the content and will be setting up a customer feedback panel to ensure you are involved in the review process.

You said waste and recycling bins were not always present when you move into one of our homes. We now ensure we have requested these ahead of your tenancy starting.

You said the different rates we charge for garages were confusing. We have now made the charges for garages much simpler and no longer base charges on the demand in the area.

You said our antisocial behaviour officers did not reply to contact about noise nuisance. We have improved our working practices and will ensure communication is dealt with during periods when an officer involved in a case is absent.

You said our antisocial behaviour officers did not always show ID and official communication was not always on headed paper. We have reminded all officers to always show ID and use headed paper to reassure residents that our letters are genuine.

You said the lift at a tower block was frequently breaking down. Our contractor has made adjustments following advice from the drive supplier and a senior officer is liaising with our contractor over future improvements.

You said our out of hours service did not take your health issues into account when prioritising an urgent repair. Our contractor sincerely apologised for this and has reminded call handlers to take into account customer's personal circumstances.

You said sometimes your interactions with our repairs operatives fall short of your expectations. We meet regularly with our repairs contractors to monitor performance and remind them to adhere to the standards and codes of conduct expected of them.

## Section 5: Housing Ombudsman findings

If a tenant is not satisfied with our response after a stage 2 final response has been issued, they have the right to approach the Housing Ombudsman and request an impartial review.

The Housing Ombudsman published two determinations against Norwich City Council housing service during 2023-24.

### [Case 1 \(click to view full published report\)](#)

For our handling of a report of damp and mould in a property, a finding of 'severe maladministration' was found by the Ombudsman. The finding related specifically to our failure to show we took appropriate and timely action to resolve the reported damp and mould, and this resulted in significant and unreasonable distress and inconvenience to the resident. There was also a finding of 'maladministration' in respect of how we handled the complaint, with the Ombudsman determining we had been dismissive, lacked empathy and had not sought to learn from the residents' experience.

A sincere apology was given to the resident along with financial recompense. We have since independently reviewed this case, alongside reviewing our record keeping and information we publish in relation to our repairs timeframes.

### [Case 2 \(click to view full published report\)](#)

For our handling of a report of antisocial behaviour, a finding of 'service failure' was found by the Ombudsman. The finding related specifically to our failure to respond within the timeframes in our Antisocial behaviour policy.

Compensation was given to the resident for the distress and inconvenience caused and our process for responding to reports of antisocial behaviour has been amended.

## Annual report

The Housing Ombudsman publishes an annual report on any Landlord with more than 5 findings against them in a year.

The Housing Ombudsman publishes these reports in September each year.

We received a report for the year 2022-23:

[Housing Ombudsman report on Norwich City Council \(click to view full published report\)](#)

## Section 6: 2024-25 action plan

In order to improve our complaint handling, the following actions have been identified and will be implemented:

Action to be taken	By whom	By when
Introduce a procedure to keep residents informed about their complaint if we are unable to fully respond within the timescale.	Executive director of communities and housing	31 March 2025
Make changes to our IT system so we can prioritise complaints by the complexity of the complaint or by the residents' personal circumstances.	Executive director of communities and housing	31 March 2025
Improve our performance to acknowledge 100% of our complaints within 5 working days of receipt.	Executive director of communities and housing	31 March 2025
Improve our performance to respond to 100% of our stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of receipt.	Executive director of communities and housing	31 March 2025
Improve our performance to respond to 100% of our stage 1 complaints within 20 working days of receipt.	Executive director of communities and housing	31 March 2025
Introduce a standard objective in relation to the expectations for complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties.	Executive director of communities and housing	31 March 2025

## Complaint handling code self-assessment – June 2024

### Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’</i>	Yes	Complaints policy, section 2, para 1 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	We have adopted this definition in our approved complaints policy, apart from we refer to ‘organisation’ rather than ‘landlord’ as our policy covers all complaints made to us as a local authority.
1.3	A resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord’s complaints policy.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 2, para 2 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>  Complaints policy, section 5, para 2 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	Our residents do not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such.  We process complaints received from third parties in line with our complaints policy.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 4, para 1, bullet point 2 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>  Webpage <a href="#">What is a complaint</a>	We recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint and set this out in our policy.  Our website describes what is not considered a complaint and provides links to make service requests.
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	Webpage <a href="#">What is a complaint</a>	Our website sets out some examples of what would be considered as a complaint, which includes not carrying out a service to an agreed standard or not responding to a service request within a stated timescale.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Yes	N/A	<p>We are aware of this requirement.</p> <p>When we seek feedback on our services, we provide details of how to make a complaint.</p>

## Section 2: Exclusions

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	<p>Complaints policy, section 4, para 2</p> <p><a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a></p>	We provide a detailed explanation if we do not accept a complaint, and the right to take our decision to the appropriate Ombudsman.



Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.2	<p>A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.</li> <li>• Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.</li> <li>• Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.</li> </ul>	Yes	Complaints policy, section 4 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	Our complaints policy sets out the exclusions, including where the complaint is made more than 12 months since the issue arose, and if the issue is subject to existing rights of appeal or legal remedy.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 4 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	We accept complaints if they have been made within 12 months of the issue occurring, unless excluded on other grounds.  If a complaint has been made outside of the 12 month period, discretion is applied where there are good reasons.
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 4, para 2 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	We provide a detailed explanation if we do not accept a complaint, and the right to take our decision to the appropriate Ombudsman.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 4 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	We do not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints.

### Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 6 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>  Complaints policy, section 7 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>  Equality policy <a href="#">Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</a>	We provide different channels to make a complaint.  We take into account communication preferences and make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010.  We have an approved equality, diversity and inclusion policy.
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	Webpage <a href="#">How to make a complaint</a>	Our website sets out the various ways to make a complaint.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	Yes	N/A	We are aware of this requirement.
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	Our complaints policy is in a clear and accessible format, and is published on our website.  The policy details the two-stage complaint process, what will happen at each stage and the timeframes for responding.
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 1, para 5, bullet point 1 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>  TLC magazine <a href="#">TLC magazine - Spring 2024</a>	Our policy sets out how it will be publicised.  Information about the Ombudsman was publicised in TLC magazine in Spring 2024.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.	Yes	Webpage <a href="#">Complaining on behalf of others</a>	Our website sets out how someone can act on behalf of others in relation to a complaint.
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 10 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	Our policy includes links to the Ombudsman services websites.  We provide information on how to contact the relevant Ombudsman as part of our stage 2 response.

## Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 8, <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	<p>Managers are responsible for handling stage 1 complaints.</p> <p>Heads of service are responsible for managing stage 2 complaints.</p> <p>We have a designated customer experience lead who has responsibility for day-to-day monitoring of compliance with the complaints policy.</p> <p>This role is responsible for monitoring performance indicators and management information and reporting performance to key stakeholders.</p> <p>This role is responsible for liaison with both Ombudsman services.</p>

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes	N/A	<p>Managers are responsible for handling stage 1 complaints.</p> <p>Heads of service are responsible for managing stage 2 complaints.</p> <p>These officers have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints.</p> <p>These officers have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.</p>

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively	Yes	N/A	<p>Managers are responsible for handling stage 1 complaints.</p> <p>Heads of service are responsible for managing stage 2 complaints.</p> <p>We procure training on effective complaint handling from experienced Ombudsman staff.</p> <p>A quarterly meeting for housing and property services managers is held to review complaint handling and lessons learned.</p>



## Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	Complaints policy <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	We have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints.
5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	We have a two-stage process and do not have extra named stages.
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	We have a two-stage process and do not have extra named stages.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	Complaints handled by our repairs and maintenance contractor form part of our two-stage process.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	N/A	Complaints handled by our repairs and maintenance contractor are in line with the Code.  The same training is provided to any third parties that handle our complaints.
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as "the complaint definition". If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	Complaints are acknowledged within 5 days of receipt.  The acknowledgement sets out our understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	N/A	If we are not responsible for any aspects of the complaint, this is made clear in the acknowledgement.
5.8	<p>At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;</li> <li>b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position;</li> <li>c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and</li> <li>d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.</li> </ul>	Yes	N/A	<p>Our complaint handlers are trained to deal with complaints in this way.</p> <p>The course is delivered by experienced Ombudsman staff and covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining and analysing complaints</li> <li>• Planning investigations</li> <li>• Making the best use of sources of information</li> <li>• Evaluating information and making sound decisions</li> <li>• Communicating decisions effectively</li> <li>• Resolving and learning from complaints.</li> </ul>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.	No	N/A	We do not routinely keep residents informed about their complaint if we are unable to fully respond within the timescale. This is on our action plan to improve during 2024-25.
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 7 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>  Equality policy <a href="#">Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</a>	We take into account communication preferences and make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010.  We have an approved equality, diversity and inclusion policy.  We keep a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9.2, para 4 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>  Complaints policy, section 4 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	If we decline to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure, we advise in writing the reasons and confirm the right to approach the relevant Ombudsman about this decision.  Our reasons for declining to escalate a complaint are set out in the exclusions part of our policy.
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.	Yes	N/A	A full record is kept of the complaint, all correspondence, relevant supporting documentation and the outcome.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 11 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	Our policy sets out that complaints can be remedied at any stage of the complaint process.
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 5, para 4 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>  Persistent complaints policy <a href="#">Persistent complaints, enquiries and unreasonable behaviour policy</a>	Our complaints policy refers to how we will manage unacceptable behaviour and unreasonable persistent complaints.  We have an approved policy for unreasonably persistent complainants which sets out the reasons for putting any restrictions in place and the review process.
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	Persistent complaints policy, section 3.3 <a href="#">Persistent complaints, enquiries and unreasonable behaviour policy</a>	Our persistent complaints policy sets out proportionate restrictions and how individual factors are considered when deciding an appropriate course of action.

## Section 6: Complaints Stages

### Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	No	N/A	We do not currently have a process to prioritise complaints by the complexity of the complaint or by the residents personal circumstances. This is on our action plan to improve during 2024-25.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <b>within five working days of the complaint being received.</b>	No	N/A	We do not acknowledge 100% of our complaints within 5 working days of receipt. This is on our action plan to improve during 2024-25.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <b>within 10 working days</b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	No	N/A	We do not respond to 100% of our stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of receipt. This is on our action plan to improve during 2024-25.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	If an extension is needed to respond to a stage 1 complaint, an explanation will be provided and the extension will be for no more than 10 working days.
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	N/A	If an extension is needed to respond to a stage 1 complaint, the contact details of the relevant Ombudsman will be provided.
6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	N/A	We respond to the complaint when the answer is known. If there are outstanding actions required to address the issue, these will be actioned promptly and appropriate updates given.



Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	Our complaint handlers address all points in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, and reference policy, law and good practice where relevant.
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	Additional complaints raised during a stage 1 investigation will be incorporated if they are related and the response has not been issued.  A new complaint will be logged if the stage 1 response has been issued, new issues are unrelated or if investigating the new issues would unreasonably delay the response.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the complaint stage;</li> <li>b. the complaint definition;</li> <li>c. the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>d. the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</li> </ul>	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9.1, para 3 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	Our complaint handlers are trained to provide a full response that meets the expectations of the Code and is clear and uses plain language.

## Stage 2

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	We have a two-stage process with stage 2 being our final response.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	No	N/A	We do not acknowledge 100% of our complaints within 5 working days of receipt. This is on our action plan to improve during 2024-25.
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9.2, para 3 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	We do not require an explanation for escalating a complaint to stage 2.  We will set out our understanding of the issues as part of the acknowledgement.
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9.2, para 3 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	We appoint a different complaint handler to the person who considered the complaint at stage 1.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <b>within 20 working days</b> of the complaint being acknowledged.	No	N/A	We do not respond to 100% of our stage 2 complaints within 20 working days of receipt. This is on our action plan to improve during 2024-25.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	If an extension is needed to respond to a stage 2 complaint, an explanation will be provided and the extension will be for no more than 20 working days.
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	N/A	If an extension is needed to respond to a stage 2 complaint, the contact details of the relevant Ombudsman will be provided.
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	N/A	We respond to the complaint when the answer is known. If there are outstanding actions required to address the issue, these will be actioned promptly and appropriate updates given.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	Our complaint handlers address all points in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, and reference policy, law and good practice where relevant.
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the complaint stage;</li> <li>• the complaint definition;</li> <li>• the decision on the complaint;</li> <li>• the reasons for any decisions made;</li> <li>• the details of any remedy offered to put things right;</li> <li>• details of any outstanding actions; and</li> <li>• details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.</li> </ul>	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9.2, para 3 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	Our complaint handlers are trained to provide a full response that meets the expectations of the Code and is clear and uses plain language.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 9.2 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	We have a two-stage process with stage 2 being our final response.  Heads of service are responsible for managing stage 2 complaints.

## Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apologising</li> <li>• Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;</li> <li>• Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;</li> <li>• Taking action if there has been delay;</li> <li>• Reconsidering or changing a decision;</li> <li>• Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;</li> <li>• Providing a financial remedy; Changing policies, procedures or practices.</li> </ul>	Yes	Complaints policy, section 11 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	<p>Our complaints policy sets out we will acknowledge when something has gone wrong and will take action to put things right.</p> <p>The Council does not, by default, offer compensation. We are responsible for public resources and any such decisions have to be carefully considered; compensation would usually only be provided where a complainant had suffered a genuine loss as a result of the Council's action and in most situations our focus is on offering a remedy to the situation.</p>
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 11, para 2 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	Where a remedy is offered, this remedy will be achievable, will be fair, and will reflect the extent of any service failures and the level of detriment caused to the complainant as a result.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 11, para 2 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	Where a remedy is offered, this will clearly set out what will happen and by when, and will be followed through to completion.
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	N/A	We take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.



## Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.</li> <li>a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;</li> <li>any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;</li> <li>the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;</li> <li>any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.</li> </ul>	Yes	<a href="#">Link to CPSI report</a>	We have produced a complaints performance and service improvement report for 2023-24.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	No	N/A	Due to the general election being called, we are not able to present the annual report to our Cabinet by the due date of 30 June. The report will be presented at the next Cabinet meeting in July 2024 and their response will be published at that time.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	N/A	We are aware of this requirement.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	N/A	We are aware of this requirement.
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	Yes	N/A	We are aware of this requirement.

## Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	N/A	We review every complaint to consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of learning from the complaint.
9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	Complaints policy, section 1 <a href="#">Corporate complaints policy</a>	We take all complaints seriously and every complaint is seen as an opportunity for us to put things right, improve our services, and to provide vital intelligence on our performance, culture, and reputation.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Yes	<a href="#">Link to CPSI report</a>	We have produced a complaints performance and service improvement report for 2023-24, which includes learning and improvement from complaints.
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes	N/A	Our Executive director of communities and housing is accountable for our complaint handling.
9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').	Yes	N/A	Our Portfolio holder for housing is our Member Responsible for Complaints.

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes	N/A	Our Portfolio holder for housing is our Member Responsible for Complaints and will ensure our Cabinet members receive regular information on complaints.
9.7	<p>As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regular updates on the volume, categories, and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;</li> <li>• regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;</li> <li>• regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings;</li> <li>• annual complaints performance and service improvement report.</li> </ul>	No	N/A	<p>Our Portfolio holder for housing is our Member Responsible for Complaints and will ensure our Cabinet members receive regular information on complaints.</p> <p>Due to the general election being called, we are not able to present the annual report to our Cabinet by the due date of 30 June. The report will be presented at the next Cabinet meeting in July 2024 and their response will be published at that time.</p>

<b>Code provision</b>	<b>Code requirement</b>	<b>Comply: Yes / No</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Commentary / explanation</b>
9.8	<p>Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</li> <li>• take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</li> <li>• act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.</li> </ul>	No	N/A	We do not currently have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling but will implement this during 2024-25.