NORWICH
City Council

Council

Members of the council are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the council to be held in the council chamber, City Hall, Norwich, on

Tuesday, 22 November 2022

19:30

Agenda

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1	**Lord Mayor's announcements**	
2	**Public questions/petitions** To receive questions / petitions from the public which have been submitted in accordance with the council's constitution.	
3	**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)	
4	**Minutes** To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2022.	**5 - 50**
5	**Questions to cabinet members** (A copy of the questions and replies will be available on the council's website prior to the meeting)	
6	**Treasury Management Full Year Review 2021-22** **Purpose** - To approve the treasury activity for the year to 31 March 2022.	**51 - 66**
7	**Capital Programme update**	**67 - 74**

Purpose - To approve changes in the council's capital programme.

8	**Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2021-2022**	**75 - 88**

Purpose - To present the annual report of the Audit Committee to Council.

9	**Interim polling district and polling places review 2022**	**89 - 94**

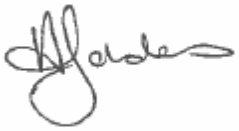
Purpose - To approve proposals for the interim polling places and polling district review 2022.

10	**Establishment of a Friendship Link**	**95 - 100**

Purpose - To consider the establishment of a Friendship Link between Norwich City Council and the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, Brazil.

11	**Motions**	**101 - 108**

To consider motions which have been received in accordance with the council's constitution.



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Date of publication**: Monday, 14 November 2022**

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NORWICH City Council

Item 4

MINUTES

Council

19:30 to 22:35 **29 September 2022**

Present:	Councillor Maguire (Lord Mayor), Ackroyd, Bogelein, Brociek-Coulton, Button, Carlo, Catt, Champion, Davis, Driver, Galvin, Giles, Grahame, Hampton, Harris, Haynes, Huntley, Kendrick, Kidman, Lubbock, Oliver, Osborn, Padda, Peek, Sands (M), Sands (S), Stonard, Stutely, Thomas (Va), Thomas (Vi), Waters, Wright and Young.
Apologies:	Councillors Everett, Fulton-McAlister (E), Fulton-McAlister (M), Price and Schmierer

1. Lord Mayor's Announcements

The Lord Mayor thanked members of the council for their support in moving the meeting of council due to the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

He invited Councillor Waters to say a few words in memory of Brenda Ferris, a former councillor, Lord Mayor and Sheriff of Norwich, who had sadly passed away.

A minute's silence was held.

2. Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Public questions/petitions

The Lord Mayor announced that three public questions had been received.

The first public question was from Mr John Griffiths who was unable to attend the meeting and would receive a written response.

The second question was from Mr John Marais on behalf of Norwich Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament the following question.

Mr Marais asked the leader of the council the following question:

> "At Lakenheath, the United States Air Force has recently positioned B61 nuclear missiles and F35 fighter jets to deliver them. Norwich, 42 miles away,

> is now a potential target for nuclear attack should America become embroiled in a nuclear exchange. There has been no democratic discussion in Parliament, or local councils, about this. These weapons at Lakenheath threaten the lives of Norwich citizens, who are already uncomfortably aware of the extremely loud F35 training flights thundering over our city. I implore the council to discuss these concerns and raise them urgently with central government.
> Having recently sponsored the planting in Norwich parks of tree seeds from Hiroshima, as a memorial gesture of peace, the council clearly understands there is a relevance of the nuclear weapons issue to Norwich. Can the council please take action to address the nuclear threat facing Norwich?"

Councillor Water, the leader of the council gave the following response:

> "Practically it is about shaping public sentiment.
> At the height of the Cold War, during the 1980s, we were one of a number of councils that declared themselves nuclear free zones.
> Recently, the planting of tree seeds from Hiroshima at a number of locations in Norwich is a statement about remembering the awful power and effects of nuclear weapons.
> Earlier this year we gave the Freedom of the City to our sister UNESCO Cities of Literature, in Ukraine – Lviv and Odessa. Ukraine decommissioned its nuclear arsenal after independence in 1991. The Freedoms were awarded for defending democratic values against an authoritarian regime that had illegally invaded a peaceful sovereign country and which threatens to use 'tactical nuclear weapons'.
> The city council has a consistent record, locally, and in the case of Ukraine, internationally, of highlighting the threat that nuclear conflict poses and how it must be avoided at all costs."

Mr Marais asked, by way of a supplementary question, if Councillors understood that if missiles at Lakenheath were used as a first strike weapon that Norwich would be unwillingly implicated in a criminal act of mass murder. In response Councillor Waters agreed it would be a criminal act, he referred to the end of the cold war and the peace dividend that came from that with the decommissioning of nuclear weapons and stabilisation of the threat of nuclear war.

The third question was from Mr Jack Parkins.

Mr Parkins asked the leader of the council the following question:

> "I would like to give thanks to those councillors who have supported the striking RMT members in their ongoing dispute with the Government over significant attacks upon the terms, conditions and safety measures of staff operating on the network.
> Can the Leader comment on the need for a properly funded, democratically controlled public transport system as a key driver for economic growth and wellbeing to this city and the need also for a wider agenda that supports strengthening employment rights, fair pay and good terms and conditions for Norwich workers?"

Councillor Waters, the leader of the council gave the following response:

> "On behalf of the Labour administration, I strongly endorse the views expressed in your question. The privatisation model has failed. It's financial structures built around franchising have been ripped up as passenger revenue has disappeared. The most recent proposal: 'Great British Railways' has not moved off the page. Infrastructure projects are shelved or cut; timetabled train services are cut. No room in the Conservative's "mini – budget" of massive tax giveaways to the already wealthy and protecting the super-profits of energy companies to invest in the railways: except a statement about reducing the rights of workers to take industrial action to protect their standard of living and working conditions.
> The railways are a public service and key infrastructure for building a strong economy. Labour, nationally, is committed to renationalisation.
> A productive economy is built on strong employment rights and decent pay. We have a motion at tonight's council on that theme"

Mr Parkins had no supplementary question.

4. Minutes

Councillor Waters moved and Councillor Bogelein seconded and it was:-

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2022.

5. Questions to Cabinet Members

The Lord Mayor said that thirty two questions were received from members of the council to cabinet members for which notice had been given in accordance with the provisions of the council's constitution.

The questions are summarised as follows:

Question 1: Councillor Kidman to the leader of the council on assistance for the cost of living crisis.

Question 2: Councillor Thomas (Va) to the leader of the council on support for local government inflation.

Question 3: Councillor Huntley to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on Compulsory Purchase Orders for social housing.

Question 4: Councillor Sands (M) to the leader of the council on social supermarkets.

Question 5: Councillor Driver to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on public tennis provision.

Question 6: Councillor Padda to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on the Biodiversity Strategy.

Question 7: Councillor Thomas (Vi) to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on Green Flag awards.

Question 8: Councillor Davis to the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods on private sector housing.

Question 9: Councillor Peek to the leader of the council on the living wage campaign.

Question 10: Councillor Brociek-Coulton to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on the River Wensum Strategy.

Question 11: Councillor Grahame to the cabinet member for resources on funding for biodiversity actions.

Question 12: Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on biodiversity net gain targets.

Question 13: Councillor Haynes to the leader of the council on NCSL performance.

Question 14: Councillor Osborn to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on retrofitting funding within the HRA.

Question 15: Councillor Catt to the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods on the land contamination at Morley Street.

Question 16: Councillor Price to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on water butts for residents.

Question 17: Councillor Bogelein to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on basketball court for Ely Street.

Question 18: Councillor Schmierer to the cabinet member for environmental services on the bin service review.

Question 19: Councillor Galvin to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on pre-payment metres.

Question 20: Councillor Champion to the cabinet member for community wellbeing of the council on trials to phase out glyphosate.

Question 21: Councillor Young to the cabinet member for environmental services on charges for bin replacements.

Question 22: Councillor Lubbock to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth services on council input into the transport infrastructure grant.

Question 23: Councillor Ackroyd to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth services on Anglian Water and Nutrient Neutrality.

(Second questions were received from councillors Bogelein, Osborn, Catt, Grahame, Galvin, Haynes, Champion and Schmierer and these are detailed at appendix A to these minutes. As the time taken by questions had exceeded thirty minutes, these second questions were not taken at the meeting)

(Norwich City Council constitution, Part 3, paragraph 35).

(Details of the questions and responses were available on the council's website prior to the meeting and attached to these minutes at Appendix A, together with a minute of any supplementary questions and responses.)

6. Constitutional amendments

Councillor Haynes moved and Councillor Kendrick seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, to:

1) Adopt the new Councillor Code of Conduct, as attached at Appendix A;
2) Agree the consequential amendments to the Constitution as set out in paragraph 9 of the report and Appendix B;
3) Agree to establish a Treasury Management Committee and agree the terms of reference as set out in Appendix C; and
4) To amend paragraph 38 of the Committee Procedure Rules to remove the words "Answers shall not exceed 150 words"

7. Annual Report of the Audit Committee.

The chair of the audit committee had given his apologies for the meeting so the annual report of the audit committee would be taken at the November meeting of council.

8. Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee

The Lord Mayor advised that there was an error on page 87 of the agenda papers, paragraph 28c should refer to the Tenant Involvement Panel and not the Tenant Improvement Panel.

Councillor Wright moved and Councillor Brociek-Coulton seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

Following debate, it was **RESOLVED** , unanimously, to receive the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee 2021-22.

(Councillor Button left the meeting at this point).

9. Motions

(Notice of the following motions 9(a) to 9(f), as set out on the agenda, had been received in accordance with the council's constitution).

9(a) Motion: Supporting the Transgender Community

The following amendment from Councillor Stonard was received.

> Insert the following "**and include this in the city council's annual Equality Information Report 2023**" at the end of resolution 6) after the words "**under the 2010 Equality Act**"
>
> Insert the following "**and as part of the forthcoming Equality Diversity and Inclusion strategy around ensuring Norwich City Council is an inclusive place to work.**" At the end of resolution 7)
>
> Inserting the words "**as part of the draft Equality, diversity and inclusion plan which is under development by the city council**" at the end of resolution 10).
>
> Inserting the words "**as part of the draft Equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan which the city council is currently developing**" at the end of resolution 16).

Councillor Catt had accepted the amendment and as no other member objected, it became part of the substantive motion.

Councillor Catt proposed and Councillor Haynes seconded the motion as amended.

The Lord Mayor said that notice had been received of a further amendment to the motion from Councillor Stonard which had been circulated:

> Replacing the words "**to**" in resolution 8) with the words "**working with Norwich Pride, to consider**" after "**Cabinet agrees**" and replacing the word "**acknowledge**" with "**acknowledging**" after "**publicly**".
>
> Inserting the words "**continue to**" before the word "**consider**" in resolution 12).
>
> Inserting the words "**continue to**" before the word "**work**" in resolution 13).

Councillor Catt indicated that he was not willing to accept the amendment and it was debated in the usual way.

With 23 voting in favour, 9 against and no abstentions, the amendment was passed and became part of the substantive motion.

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

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

The Council notes:

1) the concerning rise in transphobia in the UK, from individuals, politicians and the media, as well as the increasing severity of the threats faced by the trans community;
2) that transgender and non-binary people may require specific support to access services without facing discrimination. All council services must be equipped to welcome and provide appropriate service and good customer care to suit transgender and non-binary people;
3) that there are transgender and non-binary people in Norwich of all ages, and that the need for better understanding and acceptance of what it means to be transgender or non-binary is an intergenerational issue;
4) the vital work done by groups in Norwich to support local trans and non-binary people, as well as the wider LGBTQIA+ community. These groups include Oasis Norfolk, Norfolk LGBT+ Project and Norwich Pride;
5) that despite many positive initiatives there is always more to do to ensure we are a genuinely supportive, inclusive and welcoming city. The council will seek to better support transgender and non-binary people to live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives;that transgender and non-binary people may face intersecting struggles due to factors like their race, religion, socioeconomic background, gender or sexuality.

This Council therefore resolves to:

6) state publicly that trans rights are human rights and affirm the legal rights of all protected groups under the 2010 Equality Act, and include this in the city council's annual Equality Information Report 2023;
7) work with LGBTQIA+ groups and people to strongly encourage training for councillors and council staff to raise awareness of the difficulties transgender and non-binary people face and of the support councillors could offer to this community. This could be included in the council's existing equalities and inclusion training and as part of the forthcoming Equality Diversity and Inclusion strategy around ensuring Norwich City Council is an inclusive place to work;
8) request that the Cabinet agrees, working with Norwich Pride, to consider acknowledging International Trans Day of Visibility (March 31st), in addition to Trans Day of Remembrance (November 20th) and fly the transgender flag on those days;
9) to fly the Progress Flag at Pride

10) request a review of all forms and documents created by the council with a view to ensuring they are trans and non-binary inclusive where possible as part of the draft Equality, diversity and inclusion plan which is under development by the city council;
11) encourage council staff and councillors to make small gestures that make it clear transgender and non-binary people are welcome. This could include adding pronouns to email signatures;
12) Continue to consider the particular needs of transgender and non-binary people who are at high risk of facing homelessness when implementing the council's existing strategies on homelessness and rough sleeping;
13) Continue to work with partner organisations to ensure transgender and non-binary people are not discriminated against whilst accessing homelessness services;
14) ask NHOSC to consider the barriers which transgender and non-binary people face when accessing medical care and to find ways of reducing them;
15) review with a view to improving signposting to support services for transgender and non-binary people within council communications, including a dedicated page on the council's website;
16) provide a gender-neutral option such as Mx on all council forms as part of the draft Equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan which the city council is currently developing.

9(b) Motion: Biodiversity and SUDs supplementary planning documents

Councillor Carlo moved and Councillor Osborn seconded the motion

The following amendment from Council Stonard was received.

> Inserting the words "**and the importance of the city council's Biodiversity Strategy in helping to address the issues raised in the motion**" at the end of resolution 2).
>
> Inserting the words "**continue to**" after the words "**ask cabinet to**" in resolution 3).
>
> Replacing the word "**prepare**" with the words "**consider preparing**" in resolution 4).
>
> Replacing the word "**prepare**" with the words "**consider preparing**" in resolution 5).

Councillor Carlo indicated that she was not willing to accept the amendment and it was debated in the usual way.

With 20 members voting in favour and 12 against, the amendment was passed.

.Following debate it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

Nature continues to decline across the UK. The loss of habitat and decline of species is largely due to intensive agriculture, other changes in land management, and

urbanisation. Climate change is adding to pressures on nature. In Norwich we can help nature recover by ensuring that any future development is more sympathetic to nature and by preventing nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphate from entering the River Wensum.

Council resolves to:

1) note the decline in nature in Norwich, Norfolk and the UK;

2) note the importance of nutrient neutrality and the negative impact of large quantities of chemicals entering rivers, particularly in protected areas and the importance of the city council's Biodiversity Strategy in helping to address the issues raised in the motion;

3) ask cabinet to continue to give high priority to reversing the decline in nature by enhancing green spaces of different types, linked together by ecological networks;

4) ask cabinet to consider preparing a supplementary planning document on biodiversity and green infrastructure; and

5) ask cabinet to consider preparing a supplementary planning document on sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

(As two hours had passed since the start of the meeting, the Lord Mayor asked if any of the remaining business could be taken as unopposed. Councillor Waters opposed item 9(c) Motion on the cost of living crisis and the Norwich Economy as he wanted debate on this item and this motion was therefore debated after the two hour mark)

9(c) Motion: Cost of living crisis and the Norwich Economy

Councillor Waters proposed and Councillor Jones seconded the motion.

Following debate it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

"Over a decade of austerity, stagnant wages, rising insecure work and the recent pandemic have bought into sharp focus the imbalance of power Norwich workers experience as a critical inhibitor to improving their economic and social wellbeing. Since 2010 in-work poverty, low pay, and financial insecurity have become rampant. Incomes have stagnated and many workers have experienced real terms pay decline. In-work poverty has hit new highs, with one in six working households in poverty. Wages have suffered a decade of stagnation – the worst in over a century. Norwich workers now face an enhanced cost-of-living crisis.

Council **RESOLVES** to

1) Note.

    a) Restrictive anti-trade union laws, most recently the Trade Union Act 2016, have made it harder for unions to organise and stand up for their

members. These restrictions mean workers are denied their fair share of the wealth they create, whilst a lack of collective representation has led to a race to the bottom. The right of unions to operate effectively in the workplace, in each sector of the economy, is vital for achieving fairness, dignity and democracy at work for all.

b) A radical 'New Deal for Working People' is needed to improve the lives of workers by strengthening individual and collective rights - repealing anti-trade union laws, including the Trade Union Act, and introducing new rights to help unions bargain, recruit, organise and win a better deal for their members. Critical to this will be strengthening rights at work for all workers, from day one on the job, ending fire and rehire, making work more family-friendly, and make it easier to balance work with home, community and family life, banning zero-hours contracts and ensuring everyone has the right to regular hours they can rely on, strengthening trade union rights, raising pay and conditions, bringing in Fair Pay Agreements to drive up pay and conditions for all workers, using sectoral collective bargaining.

c) The cost-of-living crisis is structurally linked to poverty pay, the erosion of an effective social security system and the removal of public services designed to safeguard British people.

2) Ask cabinet to; -

a) Implement within the financial inclusion strategy immediate plans to best protect Norwich people through the cost-of-living emergency, using all appropriate resources of the City Council, those of partners and continue to deliver upon the motion passed in June 2022 to tackle to the cost-of-living crisis.
b) Support and enhance measures to help the local economy with new housing, quality apprenticeships and jobs. Tackle low pay and insecure work by making Norwich a 'Real Living Wage' city and deliver a 'Fine City Employers Charter' to reward those who treat their workers with respect. Use the Good Economy Commission and relationships with partners to further enhance our economic development strategy to best support a local economy whereupon sustainable and inclusive economic growth is shared fairly with those that produce wealth.
c) Call on government to support local government and statutory agencies in the fight to tackle the cost-of-living crisis with appropriate resources and powers. "

(Councillor Hunter opposed item 9(d) Motion: Library Story time events as he wanted debate on this item but as the three hour mark had been reached by this point this motion was deferred to the next meeting of Council)

9(d) Motion: Library Story time events

(This item was deferred to the next meeting of council as the three hours has passed since the start of the meeting).

(The following items were taken as unopposed business)

9(e) Motion: Defending the right to seek safety from war and persecution

Council **RESOLVES** to

1) note that:

   a) Norwich City Council is proud of our history of welcoming people seeking safety in Norwich;

   b) there are significant problems with the UK asylum system that affect people in Norwich, including a record backlog of cases awaiting a decision, a de facto ban on working, and enforced poverty and homelessness;

   c) the Nationality and Borders Act does not address these issues, and has instead created a two-tier system, punishing people seeking safety based on the journeys they make;

   d) under these laws, people seeking safety will be criminalised and threatened with removal to Rwanda;

   e) people will be warehoused in large accommodation centres, segregated from communities and denied support;

   f) many recognised refugees will receive a temporary and precarious status;

   g) over 400 charities and faith groups have signed a national pledge to 'Fight the 'Anti-Refugee Laws', as well as MPs from all opposition parties.

2) believe that:
   a) everyone's claim for asylum should be treated equally and fairly;

   b) these are fundamentally 'anti-refugee' laws that undermine internationally recognised rights for people fleeing war and persecution to seek safety;

   c) these measures will create ever-longer delays in the asylum process, lead to greater poverty and homelessness in Norwich and will undermine people's ability to rebuild their lives;

   d) people seeking safety should be housed as our neighbours and as a part of our communities;

   e) the UK needs an asylum system that empowers people seeking safety to rebuild their lives and enables communities to welcome them;

3) agree to:

a) defend the right to seek safety from war and persecution in the UK and sign the national 'Fight the Anti-Refugee Laws' pledge;

b) call on the UK Government to withdraw the UK-Rwanda agreement, repeal the Nationality and Borders Act, and work with Local Authorities and communities to build a refugee protection system that treats all people with dignity and compassion;

c) work with local organisations and people with lived experience of the asylum system to identify ways to mitigate the effects of these measures in Norwich;

d) Join the network of cities and towns which promote the inclusion and welfare of people who are fleeing violence and persecution and become a recognised Council of Sanctuary.

9(f) Motion: Ban conversion therapy

Council **RESOLVES** to:

1) recognise and oppose the harm caused to our LGBT+ community in the past through the denial of rights and equal treatment and further recognises that discrimination does still occur today.

2) recognises and oppose the ongoing harm the practice of so-called conversion therapy brings to LGBT+ people.

3) call on the Government to follow through on the promises made for several years to outlaw the practise of so-called conversion therapy.

4) also calls on the Government to ensure that any ban on conversion therapy is fully trans-inclusive, protecting all LGBT+ people from this cruel practice.

5) calls on the relevant Government department + Minister to introduce an effective ban on conversion therapy within England, supported by a programme of work to help tackle these practices in all their forms. Furthermore, this Council will highlight and promote the continued support, counselling and advocacy our local groups provide to members of the LGBT+ Community.

6) recognise the excellent work done by local people and organisations to support the LGBT+ community here in Norwich, particularly Norwich Pride and extends its thanks and support to them.

The meeting was closed.

LORD MAYOR

NORWICH City Council

Council
29 September 2022
Questions to cabinet members

Question 1

Councillor Kidman to ask the leader of the council the following question:

"Representing a ward which contains some of the highest poverty rates in the city I know that the future for many of my constituents will be exceptionally difficult. A financial time bomb will explode for families next month not just in Crome but across this entire country as a second round of fuel price rises in six months send shockwaves through every household and pushes millions over the edge. 35 million people in 13m households – an unprecedented 49.6% of the population of the United Kingdom – are under threat of fuel poverty in October. This council has a proud record of fighting for social, economic, and environmental justice for our citizens. In the face of the coming hurricane can the Leader comment on what steps this council can do to assist its citizens through these darkest of times?"

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

"With the cost of living spiralling, we know this is a time of great concern for many people and we are doing everything we can to provide support to residents.

It is vitally important to raise awareness of the help that is available, whether it is council tax reduction, energy saving improvements, or help making sure that you are receiving the financial support that you are entitled to. The council's new cost of living hub on our website signposts this information, outlining what we, and our partners, can do to help. For those that need tailored support our budget advisors have been working hard to provide that help.

We also continue to work alongside our partners and voluntary organisations that are supporting communities. One of the ways we support them is providing free accommodation and funding for services. The recently opened social supermarkets on Hall Road and Russel Street are examples of this, and underline the role the council plays in addressing food poverty.

But it must be said that the emergency response to the cost of living crisis is a sticking plaster, made necessary by years of stagnating wages and cuts to public services leaving communities vulnerable. We need a long-term solution

creating well paid jobs in our city, properly funding essential services and ensuring we never find ourselves in a situation like this again."

(As a supplementary question Councillor Kidman asked if the leader of the council had any advice for the Secretary of State for the Department of Works and Pensions, Chloe Smith MP. Councillor Waters, leader of the council said he would be watching very carefully to see whether she was helping people through a cost of living crisis or making their situation worse.)

Question 2

Councillor Vaughan Thomas to ask the leader of the council the following question:

> "Given the spiralling rise of inflation, leading to an additional £6.2m cost to this council, can the Leader comment on whether government has given any indication that they intend to support local authorities in the coming months ahead?"

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

> "Council finances are being significantly impacted by the high level of inflation we are seeing, particularly across energy and fuel prices. The high inflationary pressures impact on the current financial year and future years, resulting in an increase in the forecast budget gap to £6.2m for 2023/24. Central Government has recently unveiled measures to help the Public Sector with rising energy costs for example, which will use a cost cap mechanism that will be automatically applied to energy bills from 1 October. The impact for the city council will be determined when the full details of the proposed support are published, however the current proposals only extend to 31 March 2023 and therefore will not address the forecast gap for next financial year.
>
> Whilst the reversal of the increases to NI will reduce the council's costs, the indication is that the additional resources the government claimed to have included in the 2022/23 settlement will also be removed and so this is expected at best to have a neutral impact on the council's resources overall.
>
> We are also aware that the expected Spending Review 2022 has also been deferred and so there is some question over whether a 2 year settlement promised by Michael Gove when he was the Secretary of State at DLUCH will now actually be announced or, as seems more likely, a further 1 year position will be provided.
>
> There have been no other announcements that would lead us to believe there is to be further government support to local government and, in fact, given the turmoil in markets and the cost to government debt more pressure on government finances seems likely."

(Councillor Vaughan Thomas, asked by way of a supplementary question, if the leader would write to the Chancellor to implore him to prioritise the support people needed to meet the cost and impact of inflation. In response the leader said he would and that the government was using a disaster it had created to justify further cuts to public expenditure.)

Question 3

Councillor Huntley to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing the following question:

> "I regularly pass the former Kings Arms Pub site on Mile Cross Road and am pleased to see this much needed new council housing being built on the site of a former derelict and abandoned pub. The use of compulsory purchase orders, despite their difficulties, have led to a much better alternative for this community. Can the cabinet member for social housing update council on progress to now complete these properties but also confirm her determination to continue to use, where appropriate CPOs to lever in new council housing in the city?"

Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing's response:

> "I have been delighted to see the development of the former Kings Arms pub site progressing so well, following the council's acquisition using a compulsory purchase order. It is well over 20 years since the pub was in use and throughout the intervening period it has significantly blighted this part of Mile Cross.
>
> Following our Compulsory Purchase Order, work commenced in September 2021 and whilst the contractor has experienced some minor delays with the supply of materials and labour, construction on the five properties is nearing completion.
>
> The contractor has now given formal notice that completion is due at the end of October, and I look forward to welcoming the new tenants in the near future.
>
> These much-needed new family homes will form part of the council's housing stock and are being built to enhanced energy efficiency standards to keep bills as low as possible.
>
> As members will be aware I am determined to continue to use all powers available to us, in order to bring forward stalled development sites for homes of all tenure, and this is why we included the £5m Revolving Fund as part of our Towns Deal.
>
> We have been making contact with owners of such sites and offering to work with them, offering to acquire their sites through negotiation but also ensuring they are aware of our ultimate powers of CPO should they continue to not bring forward their site for delivery. CPO is not a swift process, but we do have the resources and determination to pursue these sites to a successful conclusion"

(In response to Councillor Huntley's supplementary question, Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing detailed how the construction of Three Score phase 3 worked to mitigate its environmental impact.)

Question 4

Councillor Mike Sands to ask the leader of the council the following question:

> "I have long disliked the manner in which the advent of foodbanks have seemingly become an accepted 'norm' as a means to administer some form of alternative social security, in the absence of proper statutory support for people experiencing poverty. I therefore welcome the development of Social Supermarkets in the city, which came from a recommendation out of our 2017 Norwich Food Poverty Network strategy. Two new supermarkets have now been opened – one in Lakenham and the other in Mancroft. Can the Leader comment on whether he hopes more of these can be delivered across every part of this city in the coming months and years?"

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

> "It's a fantastic testament to the strength and dedication of the voluntary and community sector in Norwich that they have identified a need and delivered the solution, with support from the council, to provide these much needed new options for those struggling in the face of this cost of living crisis. Council officers are working closely with voluntary groups, members of the Norwich Food Network and Norfolk Community Foundations' Nourishing Norfolk funding team to support emerging new social supermarkets and identify areas where there is a need and additional support is required to help local groups develop more of them. There are already plans in place for further social supermarkets in Earlham and another in Mancroft with work ongoing to create more opportunities where they are most needed."

(As a supplementary question Councillor Mike Sands asked if the leader of the council would prioritise the extension of social supermarkets throughout Norwich. The leader said social supermarkets were an important initiative and after austerity could evolve into community assets serving to provide social engagement and advice too.)

Question 5

Councillor Driver to ask the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:

> "I was pleased to finally see the new tennis courts at Heigham Park opened and a wide range of users enjoying the new facility, including those who would have previously been excluded through reasons of disability. Now that this modern, new investment in our city is complete can the cabinet member for community wellbeing comment on future plans to continue to invest and improve in public tennis provision across Norwich?"

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for community wellbeing's response:

> "We were all pleased to see the latest addition to our highly successful Norwich Parks Tennis programme open in the summer. This will build on the success of other Norwich Parks tennis schemes by providing high quality, accessible, affordable sports facilities that will be available for 52 weeks of the year for our residents.
>
> However, we have no intention of resting on our laurels and the council is continuing to work with the Lawn Tennis Association to expand Norwich Parks Tennis to further sites. The ultimate aim is to future proof all the tennis courts in our care and provide high quality facilities city wide. This Labour-led city council will always prioritise affordable sports facilities, and the health and wellbeing benefits that they bring."

(In response to Councillor Driver's supplementary question, the cabinet member detailed the roll out for tennis court upgrades planned for the next two years.)

Question 6

Councillor Padda to ask the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:

> "The publication of our new biodiversity strategy has attracted significant positive attention, including praise from the leading environmentalist Chris Packham. Can the cabinet member for community wellbeing comment on whether he supports this endorsement and the ongoing work to improve biodiversity in our green spaces across the city?"

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for community wellbeing's response:

> "The feedback received during the public consultation exercise in August has been very positive indeed. I strongly endorse Mr Packham's comment which demonstrates the innovative nature of the Strategy and its potential therefore, to become a model of excellence for local government across the UK. I look forward to bringing the strategy to Cabinet in November."

(As a supplementary question Councillor Padda asked if the cabinet member could provide examples where the council had increased biodiversity in green spaces. Councillor Giles responded by detailing the measures taken at Netherwood in Lakenham working with the Norwich Fringe Project, and local volunteers.)

Question 7

Councillor Vivien Thomas to ask the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:

> "I was pleased to see Mousehold Heath, Eaton Park and Waterloo Park all secure the much-coveted Green Flag award status in late July. It is a real testament to the hard work of staff and volunteers who invest and protect in these treasured Norwich assets. Can the cabinet member for community wellbeing comment on these prestigious awards and ongoing investment in our parks and open spaces across Norwich?"

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for community wellbeing's response:

> "The re-awarding of the coveted Green Flag for three of our important open spaces was indeed testament to all the efforts of the many staff, volunteers and park users who look after them. We will continue to deliver the action plans which sit within the management plan for each park. These ensure continued investment and development to maintain our high standards.
>
> This year's capital programme has already seen improvements to our park football pitches completed and work ongoing to refurbish our dry stone walls around the perimeter of Wensum Park. This winter will see Year Four of works to replace the footpaths in Eaton Park. This year is also seeing toilet upgrades at Sloughbottom Park, Wensum Park, and Heigham Park; and upgrades to the large play area at Wensum Park and the Douro Place play area."

(In response to Councillor Vivien Thomas' supplementary question the cabinet member confirmed that the recent award of £85,000 the council had received from the Levelling Up parks fund would mainly be spent making improvements to Wensum Park.)

Question 8

Councillor Davis to ask the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods the following question:

"Representing a ward which contains an ever-growing number of private renters I regularly support constituents who experience problems with their absentee landlords. Poor housing conditions, utterly exorbitant rent and no security of tenure leads to constant fear for many tenants. It damages communities. I read recently how the City Council had assisted two brother who were evicted from their home of three years so the landlord could put rent up by 54pc. To be clear Lord Mayor, their rent went from £795 per month to £1,225. Can the cabinet member for safe, strong, and inclusive neighbourhoods' comment on the ongoing work to develop and strengthen our private sector housing team and ensure, like we did at St Faith's Lane, that we are best able to always protect private renters against the vagaries of landlordism while we have to wait for this for government to finally strengthen the law?"

Councillor Jones, cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods' response:

"I agree that the practices that we see in Norwich's private rented sector are a cause for considerable concern. Following the publication of the government's white paper "A fairer private rented sector" earlier in the summer it remains to be seen whether and how the proposed reforms will be implemented. Certainly, additional powers are much needed to enable us to stop rouge landlords and poor standards in the sector.

Whilst we await this detail, we are taking forward a restructure proposed in the Planning and Regulatory service which will see additional resource brought in to the Private Sector Housing enforcement team. The new structure will be in place before the end of the calendar year and thereafter a recruitment drive will commence to fill new posts. We hope the expanded team will be fully resourced by spring next year. The assessment of this team and their capacity will be constantly reviewed in the context of an awareness of the significant proportion of the City's housing which is in the private rented sector. My expectation is that over time we will be able to use fines that we can levy on the City's rogue landlords to expand the team further in future years. We do undertake enforcement, such as at St Faith's Lane, with two significant investigations currently underway. The safety of our residents is at the heart of the work this team does."

(In response to Councillor Davis' supplementary question the cabinet member said she would encourage any resident facing eviction to contact the council's housing options team.)

Question 9

Councillor Peek to ask the leader of the council the following question:

"Representing a ward in which the very real problem of poverty pay remains a systemic issue, I was pleased to see that the 'Making Norwich a Living Wage City' Action Group was recently recognised by the Living Wage Foundation. Their plan will see employers encouraged to pay the real Living Wage and become Living Wage Employers, ensuring all employees are paid what they need to live, rather than just survive. Knowing the work that the Leader and other councillors have invested in this important endeavour, can he comment on the significance of this development and the opportunities which it could bring to the city?"

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

"Unacceptable numbers of people in Norwich are working in jobs that simply do not pay a wage that meets the basic cost of living. Paying everyone a Living Wage, calculated at a rate based on what people need to live, is the single most effective way of helping people out of in-work poverty.

Just last week it was announced that the new Living Wage rate for the coming year has increased by a record 10% to £10.90 an hour, reflecting the spiralling rise in cost of living over recent months, and underlining how vital decent pay is to people struggling.

We as a council are proud to have been accredited Living Wage employers for a number of years, paying all colleagues at least a Living Wage, alongside 50 other organisations in Norwich.

As part of the Norwich Living Wage City Action Group, we have come together with some of the city's major employers to produce an action plan to drive up the number of Living Wage Accredited businesses. Our aim is to triple the number paying the Living Wage over the next three years and we have already started working with several businesses to assist their progress towards accreditation. If we meet our ambitious targets, it would represent a pay rise for thousands of people."

(In response to Councillor Peek's supplementary question the leader of the council said that good wages and strong Trade Union membership were key to getting households out of poverty and the current cost of living crisis.)

Question 10

Councillor Brociek-Coulton to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:

"The vast majority of the population is outraged by the amount of sewage being pumped into rivers and seas around the UK, including here in Norwich and Norfolk. Pollution in our local rivers can come from several sources. Ironically, one of them is Anglian Water which also extracts water from these same rivers to provide a water supply for domestic and commercial use. Anglian Water repeatedly discharges treated, and untreated sewage into rivers, and this is not by accident. In 2020, the company pumped raw sewage into rivers in our region 17,428 times, for 170,547 hours. Given the significant work of this council in developing the River Wensum strategy and its importance to the city environment, can the cabinet member comment on his concerns at this issue and promise to raise it with Anglia Water at a senior level?

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth's response:

"The River Wensum Strategy (RWS) is the result of significant partnership working which has seen huge improvements in access to and enjoyment of the River Wensum. Improving the water quality and biodiversity offer of the River Wensum are both very important issues and these are set out as policies in the Strategy. Although the responsibility for sewage spills lies with Anglian Water (AW) which is not a member of the Partnership, the Environment Agency (EA) is a member and has a responsibility to monitor water quality and has a regulatory role regarding unconsented sewage spills to our rivers. The council has contacted the EA to raise this issue and the partnership will be discussing this further at RWS partnership meetings. In addition to this, the partners are involved in supporting wider initiatives for improving water quality, such as addressing nutrient neutrality and work being undertaken by Water Resources East."

(In response to Councillor Brociek-Coulton's supplementary question Councillor Stonard said he was pleased that the public ownership of utilities was back on the political agenda.)

Question 11

Councillor Grahame to ask the cabinet member for resources the following question:

"The biodiversity strategy has two principal outcomes:

- The development of a Nature Recovery Network (NRN) for Norwich which will be created by inviting coordinated action from residents, the business community, voluntary groups and charities who own wildlife sites, to work together towards the common goal of sustained nature recovery.
- Aligning council operations with the strategy to contribute to the NRN by improving biodiversity in parks, open spaces and the green spaces in and around our buildings.

The council's aspiration to improve the biodiversity in and around our buildings could include many things, such as a Supplementary Planning document that restricts the removal of trees, requires hedges on boundaries, roof space to be utilised for green roofing (or solar) as default. It might involve grant seeking to support initiatives to site hedges, green roofs, hedgehog bridges, pocket parks and green corridors. How will whatever the strategy includes actually be funded?"

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources' response:

"Our Biodiversity Strategy is an ambitious response to the biodiversity emergency and has been welcomed by many through the recent consultation process. As set out in the Strategy, an internal Biodiversity Working Group, has been convened comprising 14 officers drawn widely from across all directorates of the council. A key workstream of the working group is to coordinate budget management activities, including the strategic management of existing budgets and to seek external funding as appropriate. As always, all decisions around funding will be taken in line with the council's normal corporate planning processes following the completion of individual business cases relating to each project."

(Councillor Grahame confirmed she had no supplementary question.)

Question 12

Councillor Carlo to ask the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:

> "The Environment Act 2021 paves the way for Biodiversity Gain to be a condition of planning permission. Defra's follow up consultation refers to achieving 'at least' 10% Biodiversity Net Gain' (BNG). Norwich City Council is proposing a minimum BNG of just 10% for new development. It claims in its draft Biodiversity Strategy that 10% is an 'ambitious' target. Other local authorities have adopted a target of 20% BNG (for example, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridge City Council, Lichfield District Council, Swindon Borough Council and Guildford Borough Council). Will Norwich City Council adopt the genuinely ambitious target of 20% BNG?"

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for community wellbeing's response:

> "The Greater Norwich Local Plan sets the policy framework that planning applications will be assessed against, and it requires a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on site for all new developments. A change to this requirement would require a change to the policy. This will be enacted via a Supplementary Planning Document. We are currently procuring an evidence base study on the biodiversity baseline for species, flora and fauna in the city which will inform how we improve biodiversity in our green and other spaces in the city moving forward. The 10% requirement could be reviewed in later years but as a first measure it is important to be able to successfully deliver on our legislative requirements."

(In response to Councillor Carlo's supplementary question asking if the cabinet member would commit to a 20% target for biodiversity net gain. Councillor Giles said that the Biodiversity Strategy would go the Climate and Environment Emergency Executive Panel in November 2022 and this would provide an opportunity to discuss the strategy further.)

Question 13

Councillor Haynes to ask the leader of the council the following question:

"Over several months Green councillors have had numerous complaints about:

- housing repairs being delayed or incomplete
- surveys being scheduled but no one turning up
- lack of updates about outstanding repair, some going on for months
- poor quality of environmental services including emptying bins and street-cleaning

A severe bottleneck in housing repairs seems to be disrupting other services including customer service. Meanwhile, basics like reporting against the Norwich Standard is not happening due to issues with technology. The promised lift-and-shift from Norse to NCSL has not happened, leading to a decline in service quality. And residents have flagged that they have seen low morale among NCSL workers. All this seems to point to problems in the oversight of the council's wholly-owned company, NCSL, which lies with a company board which includes Labour councillors. What is the council doing to improve NCSL performance in both housing repairs and environmental services?"

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

"We made no secret of the fact, that the services we transferred to NCSL would need significant improvement, we acknowledged - that full improvement could take up to three years.

We work with NCSL closely to understand and monitor performance through contract management meetings attended by officers, and through shareholder panel meetings attended by senior officers and Members. We are using social housing repairs data in the first year of the contract to benchmark and provide a meaningful comparison of performance to drive positive improvements in services for repairs and maintenance and set Key performance indicators going forward.

Through the shareholder panel meetings, we have agreed with the company that an improvement plan will be developed. This will be monitored by the company board of course as part of their own governance arrangements and closely monitored by the city council through the shareholder panel, of which Councillor Galvin is a member."

(In response to Councillor Haynes' supplementary question Councillor Waters said work to improve service delivery started before the service was transferred to the council's wholly owned company.)

Question 14

Councillor Osborn to ask the deputy leader and the cabinet member for social housing the following question:

"Some district and unitary councils are finding ways to fund the retrofitting of tens of thousands of social homes (eg: Lewes, Leeds). That compares to the dozens, or at most couple of hundred, being retrofitted by Norwich City Council. Over the last two years Green Party councillors have repeatedly proposed motions and called for the HRA to be updated to address the potential to reduce fuel bills, support local jobs, and cut energy use.

What has been done to update the HRA to contribute essential long-term funding (other than one-off central grants) to improving the energy efficiency of council housing stock and introducing forms of sustainable energy and heating since the last budget, where such measures were noticeably absent?"

Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing's response:

"A planned review of the HRA business plan is nearing completion and will be presented to Members in November for consideration and approval. The business plan will outline proposals for investment in our homes, including improved energy efficiency measures, sustainability, and retrofitting.

A new strategic Asset Management Plan is also being developed once completed it will form part of the overall longer term housing improvements strategy, which will include improved energy efficiency measures, sustainability, and retrofitting.

We have of course already undertaken several measures to improve the energy efficiency of our homes through our capital improvement programmes. Through a recently commissioned survey we have recorded a SAP score of 74.37% across our council homes, which makes us one of the better performing authorities in England.

The business plan and strategic asset management plan will help us quantify the level of investment required, so that we can seek to develop our delivery and funding approach."

(In response to Councillor Osborn's supplementary question asking how the required investment for retrofitting of council houses would be made, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing said a change in government would achieve this.)

Question 15

Councillor Catt to ask the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods the following question:

> "The council recently passed a new strategy on contaminated land. I was very glad to see this strategy considered and I reviewed it quite closely. The overarching goal is that the council will work to bring contaminated land back into beneficial use and where possible, will work directly with groups to remediate these plots. There was no mention of the council leaving sites without remediation and what factors would be considered to determine this. However, I have been told repeatedly that Morley Street will not be remediated. Can you explain this gap in the contamination strategy and explain why this apparent decision to not de-contaminate the land at Morley Street has been made, despite no reference in the strategy of sites that the council will not bring back into beneficial use?"

Councillor Jones, the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods' response:

> "The Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy sets out how the Council will determine which land is contaminated, specific sites are not identified in the strategy. If the land is within private ownership, it is not the responsibility of the Council to remediate any contamination. Where contamination poses a significant risk to health we can intervene under statutory powers and where it is in the public interest to do so, the council works with landowners in the first instance to secure remediation through agreement, only as a last resort would the council take enforcement action. Remediation can be incredibly costly and so a case by case decision must be made in such circumstances. Normally, land decontamination is secured when planning permission is granted for redevelopment with conditions applied to permissions. It is hard to respond to the specifics of this case as the land is not identified clearly."

(In response to Councillor Catt's supplementary question, asking why the land had not been remediated the cabinet member said she was happy to explore why and speak outside of the meeting to the Councillor.)

Question 16

Councillor Price to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:

> "The first objective behind the Local Plan is to minimise contributions to climate change and address its impact. The weather we have seen this summer has been unprecedented with heatwaves, fires and droughts. These weather events will become even more common and even more extreme. Droughts are dangerous in two ways - they are a risk to our water supply but also greatly increase the chance of flooding. In line with objective 1 of the local plan, would the council consider reintroducing a scheme to provide standard and slow-release water butts to residents across the city as happened with the successful CATCH project in conjunction with Norfolk County Council and Broadland District Council as part of a sustainable urban drainage system?"

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth response:

> "The local plan does indeed seek to minimise contributions to climate change and address its impact. Whilst the provision of standard or slow-release water butts to residents across the city would be a laudable project there is no funding in place to secure this. Norfolk County Council may be better placed to promote any such scheme linked to their role as Lead Local Flood Authority"

(As Councillor Price had sent his apologies there was no supplementary question.)

Question 17

Councillor Bogelein to ask the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:

> "The cabinet member for community wellbeing recently stated that the council 'will always prioritise affordable sports facilities and the health and benefits that they bring.' However, the basketball court on Ely Street, a court that used to provide a free sports facility to one of the most deprived areas in the city centre, has been closed off for years. The latest response from his predecessor was that a consultation had been undertaken about the future of the court. It has not been possible for me to find out since what the council's plans are for this facility. Could you please explain when this court will be re-opening, something I get asked by residents (especially those with children) on a regular basis?"

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for community wellbeing's response:

> "We are pleased that following recent discussions, our Community Enabling and Housing officers are making progress with a local community group who have shown interest in making use of the site. This will benefit local residents and bring the site back into use. Other options have been explored for the site and found unsuitable, so this presents an opportunity to use the site differently in line with what is wanted by residents in the area. The detail and terms need to be agreed and we will be happy to update on progress as the specific arrangements are put into place"

(In response to Councillor Bogelein's supplementary question, Councillor Giles said that discussions were in an advanced stage with a community group to make positive use of the site.)

Question 18

Councillor Schmierer to ask the cabinet member for environmental services the following question:

> "Many residents and visitors to the city have complained about the state of the litter bins in the city centre, including: bins overflowing, bins missing their tops and not being replaced (e.g.: Fishergate, the Moorings), and the lack of recycling bins (especially in the north city centre e.g.: Colegate). Green councillors have previously been assured that the bins service is being reviewed. Can the cabinet member say what concrete steps are being taken to address these issues?"

Councillor Oliver, the cabinet member for environmental services' response:

> "A review of litter bins within the city centre and further afield is currently taking place. Nine dual (litter and recycling) bins have been delivered and will be installed shortly to replace some of the old cast iron bins within the city centre. It is proposed a further 25 dual bins will replace the remaining cast iron bins in the coming months. Due to ongoing issues with vandalism (mainly bin lids being thrown into the Wensum and bins being set on fire at Mousehold Heath it is proposed that the cast iron bins will replace litter bins both on riverwalk and Mousehold Heath within the next few months also. We will continue to review areas of need and current bin capacities across the city."

(As Councillor Schmierer had sent his apologies there was no supplementary question).

Question 19

Councillor Galvin to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing the following question:

> "Many tenants may choose a pre-payment meter or may be required to have a pre-payment meter by their supplier. These could well end up being a sure fire way of being cut off as the fuel crisis bites this winter. And standing charges rack up even when no energy is used. I understand that the council counts on self-referral for support and advice, but could I be assured that it will be pro-active in identifying these cases which may be numerous, by asking who has a meter at present, and giving specific information to meter users through its social media, tenant and citizen magazine and other channels throughout winter?"

Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing's response:

> "All communications to our residents during the autumn and winter will include information about support available, and how to contact us for advice. We will share this information through our existing channels and forums, and via our teams of contractors and staff who regularly visit tenants. As already mentioned by the Leader - the council's new cost of living hub on our website signposts this information, outlining what we, and our partners can do to help. For those that need tailored support our budget advisors have been working hard to provide that help.
>
> We are also asking our contractors and officers to inform housing staff immediately if they attend a home where there is no gas or electricity or where a tenant requires specific advice, this is the case whether the tenant has a pre-payment meter in place or not. We will then directly contact our tenants in those circumstances to help.
>
> A cross council group of officers are working together to deliver our cost of living response. This group will monitor and collect information to understand early trends and data and design our response accordingly."

(By way of supplementary question Councillor Galvin asked whether the council had spoken to National Energy Action on how SMART pre-payment meters could benefit tenants. In response the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing said she would speak to officers about this item.)

Question 20

Councillor Champion to ask the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:

> "Glyphosate is a weedkiller which is highly harmful to biodiversity, watercourses and human health and for which safer alternative methods of weed control exist. Unfortunately, this council does still use it, particularly on some hard surface drying areas. It is looking at alternatives but was not able to progress trials this year due to hot weather. As every year is likely to be hot from now on, can you confirm that trials leading to a firm decision will take place next year?"

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for community wellbeing's response:

> "It was unfortunate that for a number of reasons, including the extreme weather over the summer, it was not possible to proceed with the pesticide reduction project as originally planned.
>
> We have the resources in place and a detailed project brief in place that will allow the trials to commence once sufficient weed growth has occurred in 2023. I am very keen for this to commence as it will give us valuable information about how we can best manage our land in the changing climate but will have to adapt our plans in the light of weather conditions next year."

(In response to Councillor Champion's supplementary question, Councillor Giles said progress was being made on eliminating the use of pesticides.)

Question 21

Councillor Young to ask the cabinet member for environmental services the following question:

> "I understand that the council's policy is to charge £40 per bin for any replacement or swap. Residents have asked why they should pay £80 for a pair of 120l bins to replace a pair of 240l bins when smaller bins contain less waste and take up less space, both of which are beneficial to the city. Could the reasons for these charges please be explained?"

Councillor Oliver, the cabinet member for environmental services' response:

> "Charges for new and replacement bins were agreed back in 2016. The £40 fee is a delivery and administration charge which is still be required even if residents are 'downsizing' their bins. I recognise this may seem contrary to our efforts to minimise waste production, but it is needed to cover costs in changing existing bins. We continue to look at waste strategy issues and will be considering further ways of minimising waste production in due course so will re-examine our charges as part of this exercise."

(In response to Councillor Young's supplementary question Councillor Oliver said that residents who found it difficult to move bins could contact the Council's waste collection agent Biffa who could assist. She agreed that ideally there would be a move to allowing people to have smaller bins to encourage less waste.)

Question 22

Councillor Lubbock to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:

> "The county council have received £50m in Government Funding to improve bus services. Their plans to spend this sum throughout Norfolk include infrastructure changes with more bus lanes, better junctions and transport hubs, reducing costs of fares for young people and better through ticketing.
>
> What input will the city council have into these improvement plans and the spending of £50m?"

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth's response:

> "We were disappointed not to be involved in shaping the Bus Service Improvement Plan or the selection of schemes due to County Council's concerns about meeting the demanding timetable for submission set by the government. The county know we are keen to help them shape the schemes in Norwich through commenting on briefs and designs for new infrastructure. We have also said that we would like them to consider extending a flat fares scheme to Norwich if the trial in Yarmouth is successful, especially if this would make bus travel more affordable for struggling households in Norwich. Although Norfolk did well in the competition for bus funding with other transport authorities, £50m for the whole county will not be enough to persuade people out of their cars and onto buses, especially given the enormous sums planned for road building in the area that will have the opposite effect."

(In response to Councillor Lubbock's supplementary question Councillor Stonard agreed that bus operators should be held to account.)

Question 23

Councillor Ackroyd to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:

> "Water companies, Anglian Water included, have failed to deal with untreated sewage being released into our rivers, lakes, and seas.
>
> In 2021 untreated sewage was released on more than 370,000 occasions in England alone.
>
> For Norwich this means the river Wensum, a protected and very rare chalk stream, is being badly polluted so much so that Natural England has put a stop to any further development which includes increasing overnight accommodation in the catchment area of the river.
>
> Norwich and neighbouring authorities are working up a plan to mitigate the effects of pollution in the River Wensum in order to lift this 'stop' on development.
>
> Will this Council write to the Environment Agency and ask them to pursue Anglian Water, without further delay, to the fullest legal level and thereafter inform Anglian Water that because of the seriousness of the situation you have taken this action?"

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth's response:

> "The pollution of our waterways is indeed a very serious issue. The issue of the alleged breach of permit levels by Anglian Water is for the Environment Agency to enforce in their statutory role. We are not apprised of the full facts of the situation and therefore it is not considered appropriate for us to intervene in the way that is suggested. This does not directly impact on the solutions that we are working hard to identify to ensure that new development does not add to the problems created by significant historic under investment in our water infrastructure."

(In response to Councillor Ackroyd's supplementary question Councillor Stonard advised that the council was looking at outputs from new developments and how the sewage works managed nutrients which were produced.)

Please note that the following questions are second questions from members and will only be taken if the time taken by questions has not exceeded thirty minutes. This is in line with paragraph 53 of Part 3 of the council's constitution.

Question 24

Councillor Bogelein to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing the following question:

"We are all looking forward to the secure door entry system being rolled out across the city, so residents no longer have to live with anti-social behaviour and drug use in the communal areas of block of flats. However, there are several communal staircases where the council has indicated that a door entry system is not appropriate, such as Canterbury Place and Langley Walk. These communal staircases are already highly frequented by drug users, and this is likely going to increase when other areas receive secure door entry systems. A few months ago, the council committed to exploring alternative solutions for these staircases (e.g. partial premises closure orders). I have been unable to find out what solutions are actually being proposed. Could you therefore please explain what solution the council is seeking to ensure people living near these communal staircases are no longer disturbed by anti-social behaviour and drug use?"

Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing's response:

"Our discussions with police were that Partial Closure Orders would not be very effective on their own and are only a short-term measure. In recognition of the physical problems around installing door entry systems to certain blocks and the issues highlighted in developments like Canterbury Place and Barnards Yard this led to us submitting a bid to the Home Office, Safer Streets Fund. I can confirm we were successful and this funding will enable us to purchase CCTV systems for both developments; these will be installed in early 2023/24. We are not currently aware of any reported issues in the communal areas of Langley Walk but would encourage residents to report any incidents through the normal channels.

Substance misuse is a multi-faceted issue and something that cannot be solved in isolation, and we rely on working with partners to reduce harm to users and the knock-on effect it has on residents. In the forthcoming Norwich Community Safety strategy (that will be launched early next year) we will set out how we aim to work with partners to help reduce the harm caused by this issue."

Question 25

Councillor Osborn to ask the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods the following question:

> "I have had numerous cases where private tenants have sought support from the city council due to them being at risk of eviction, but where they have not been left waiting for someone from the housing team to contact them due to staff shortages. I was told that tenants would be prioritised when they are at imminent risk of eviction, which may mean that they wouldn't get support before a court date.
> Given that evictions are expected to rise as more people struggle to afford rent, can the cabinet member tell me what actions are being taken to ensure the housing team has the capacity needed to support private tenants at risk of eviction at the earliest opportunity?"

Councillor Jones, the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods' response:

> "We believe that the most effective way to deal with homelessness is to prevent it from happening and place great emphasis on this approach through the provision of specialist housing advice and assistance to all those facing homelessness or in housing difficulty in the city. Our approach is successful, with our Housing Options team being one of fourteen in the country to receive nationally recognised 'gold standard' accreditation for the quality of its homelessness and prevention services
>
> Over the past year, our pro-active approach has directly prevented more than 650 households from experiencing homelessness and assisted many hundreds more in resolving their own housing issues. We continue to develop our service and continue to enhance our provision, with specialist advisers in post and more specialist accommodation being brought onstream.
>
> The prevention of homelessness; provision of accessible, high quality, personalised advice and assistance and a broad range of housing options for those in housing need will remain priorities for this council. Equally, our commitment to supporting those in the private rented sector, now and in the future, is set out fully in our charter for private sector tenants."

Question 26

Councillor Catt to ask leader of the council the following question:

"I understand that since the move of NCSL to NCC, the ability to report on quality standards (such as the Norwich standard) and the ability to produce SAP scores for properties have been lost. With energy efficiency being crucial to help residents through the cost of living crisis and fighting climate change and the quality of social housing properties being a big issue for tenants. Could I have an explanation for a plan not being in place to ensure that the ability to carry out these essential functions was retained, and an explanation of what plans are in place to ensure they are returned?

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

"The ability to report on progress against the Norwich Standard has not been lost. This information was previously held in a system called "codeman". In transferring services back to the Council, the data has been downloaded from one system into file formats that can be interrogated, ready to be uploaded to NEC.

Officers are currently involved in designing the structure of NEC to enable the data to be held and utilised there. At the same time work is being undertaken to validate and ensure the integrity of the transferred data.

Throughout the period of transition, we are able to report on all aspects of the council's housing stock, including SAP ratings and compliance with the Norwich Standard."

Question 27

Councillor Grahame to ask the leader of the council the following question:

"I have had countless cases where residents are fed up and angry with the council due to a lack of communication, often having to wait months for any form of communication whether that be in answer to an online form request, contacting their housing officer or estate management. Meanwhile their issues escalate and from speaking to many of my residents, a reputation of the council being unresponsive is now widespread. What is being done to ensure that the council fulfils its basic responsibilities by responding to residents in a prompt manner?"

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

"The council has corporate service standards for dealing with enquiries and these are managed across the difference service areas. Our customer complaints are closely monitored with key performance indicators, and this is reported into the quarterly assurance report.

It is disappointing to hear that some enquiries are taking longer to answer, and it would be useful to have details of these specifically so they can be checked, and any issues addressed with relevant managers."

Question 28

Councillor Carlo to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:

> "In April 2020, I requested street signs for Primrose Place, off Rose Valley, on Unthank Road and have done so on several occasions since. Primrose Place has grown in number from four to eleven homes in the last few years. The cul-de-sac has never had a street name plate and residents report the difficulty that some visitors have in finding their street. City council officers acknowledge that new street signs for Primrose Place are a high priority but eighteen months on from asking, none have been installed. When can Primrose Place residents expect to see their street signposted?"

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth's response:

> "A die press street sign for Primrose Place was installed around three weeks ago."

Question 29

Councillor Galvin to ask the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:

"The new Heigham Park tennis courts, which cost around a quarter of a million pounds, were surfaced in the wrong colour early this year but nonetheless the council installed nets and lines on them in March for promotion which did not happen. It then resurfaced, re-lined and re-netted them – all before a single ball was served. What was the cost of this extra work?"

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for community wellbeing's response:

"The cost to reline the courts prior to full resurface added £900 to the total capital cost for the works on Heigham and Lakenham tennis courts. This launch could have gone ahead with community participation, but for the criminal damage caused to them by someone throwing jars of gloss paint over them.

Norwich Parks tennis have confirmed that Heigham Park tennis courts are already outperforming Eaton Park in bookings. It is looking to be their most successful site to date, which is great news. This Labour-led City Council will always prioritise affordable sports facilities, and the health and wellbeing benefits that they bring."

Question 30

Councillor Haynes to ask the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:

"Defibrillators save lives and are designed to be used by any member of the public but time is absolutely crucial with minutes making the difference between life and death. While we have seen the recent closure of numerous establishments across the city centre where defibrillators could previously be found, and others, such as at The King Centre and The Maids Head have been out of use, the defibrillator at City Hall sits behind a locked door inaccessible to members of the public, council officers and councillors. Particularly as knowledge of defibrillator sites is generally low, will the cabinet member work with me to make sure this defibrillator is accessible to all and collate a public list of available defibrillators in the city?"

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for community wellbeing's response:

"Thank you for your question and I agree it is vital to make sure that defibrillators can be readily accessed. To assist with this, we have been working with the conservation team, to agree a suitable external location for siting the defibrillator. An application has now been submitted for listed building consent, in an accessible location, adjacent to the main entrance to City Hall. Once the application has been validated, site and press notices will be issued and there is a statutory consultation period for public comment. For a Grade II* Listed Building such as City Hall, Historic England will also be invited to comment. Determination is expected to take 6-8 weeks.

Should the application be approved, we will seek to install the defibrillator promptly. Following this the location of the defibrillator, and its availability to the public, will be registered on the British Heart Foundation website. Their website identifies the locations of the current defibrillator sites within Norwich.

Defib finder – find the defibrillators nearest you."

Question 31

Councillor Champion to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing the following question:

"I have encountered issues of repairs and poor maintenance that tenants are suffering from across Sewell with little help from their housing officers. Moreover, numerous issues have arisen with housing officers leaving the council and this causing delays to tenants who have to start the process all over again and waiting even longer for the repairs the council are responsible for. What is the council doing to ensure that there is regular and constructive communication between housing officers and tenants and that there is a process to ensure cases are not dropped or delayed when switching over officers?"

Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing's response:

"The majority of repairs will be raised either directly by tenants using the online portal, or via the customer contact centre. These orders will be processed by property services and appointments will be arranged with tenants. Property services or NCSL keep tenants up to date with progress, time scales and any issues or delays. If there is any issue to follow up or a complaint, they are followed up by a dedicated repairs support team to monitor and track repairs.

Our housing officers are not involved in day-to-day repairs enquiries and usually only involved where there are non-access issues, in which case the housing officer will attempt to engage with the tenant and support services to ensure the repair or H&S check is carried out."

Question 32

Councillor Schmierer to ask the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:

"Council officers recently planned to remove a healthy rowan tree from Barnards Yard. This removal of a healthy tree would have been in contravention of the council's own policy. Could the cabinet member explain to me how the removal of this tree nearly occurred, and would have if a councillor hadn't stepped in?"

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for community wellbeing's response:

"The removal of a rowan tree at Barnards Yard is proposed as part of the wider scheme to remodel car-parking arrangements. Removal of the tree allows for a substantially improved overall approach to the design and landscaping of the scheme.

In policy terms, where the loss of trees is accepted in these circumstances, developers (the council in this case) will be required to provide at least equivalent replacement in terms of biomass. This should be provided on-site unless the developer can show exceptional circumstances which would justify replacement provision elsewhere. The council proposes to replace the rowan tree with 5 silver birches on site"

NORWICH City Council

Item 6

Committee Name: Council

Committee Date: 22/11/2022

Report Title: Treasury Management Review 2021-22

Portfolio: Councillor Kendrick, resources

Report from: Executive director of corporate and commercial services

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

This report sets out the Treasury Management performance for the year to 31 March 2022.

Recommendation:

To approve the treasury activity for the year to 31 March 2022.

Policy Framework

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

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

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

This report meets the Treasury management strategy policy adopted by the Council.

Report Details

Background

1. The Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual review of its treasury management activities and the final prudential and treasury indicators for each financial year. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

2. This report details the results of the council's treasury management activities for the financial year 2021/22. It compares this activity to the Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) for 2021/22, approved by full council on 22 February 2021. It will also detail any issues that have arisen in treasury management during this period.

Introduction

3. Treasury management relates to the policies, strategies and processes associated with managing the cash and debt of the council through appropriate borrowing and lending activity. It includes the effective control of the risks associated with the lending and borrowing activity and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with the risks.

4. For the 2021/22 financial year the reporting requirements were:

    - an annual Treasury Management Strategy in advance of the year (Council 22 February 2021).
    - a mid-year Treasury Management Review report (Council 8 December 2021).
    - an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy (this report).

5. The regulatory environment places responsibility on members to review and scrutinise treasury management policy and activities. This report is therefore important in that respect, as it provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the council's policies which have previously been approved by members. This report summarises the following:

    - Capital activity during the year (paragraphs 6 - 10)
    - The impact of this activity on the Council's underlying indebtedness (the Capital Financing Requirement) (paragraphs 11 - 17)
    - The 2021/22 performance against the approved prudential and treasury indicators (paragraphs 18- 24)
    - The overall treasury position identifying how the Council has borrowed in relation to this indebtedness, and the impact on its investment balances (paragraphs 25-30)

- The council's borrowing strategy and detailed debt activity (paragraphs 31-40)
- The council's investment strategy and detailed investment activity (paragraphs 41-51)

The Council's Capital Expenditure and Financing 2021-22

6. The 2021-22 capital programme budgets were approved as part of the budget papers approved by full council on 22 February 2021. Subsequent to this there were approved revisions to the 2021-22 capital budgets to include the 2020-21 capital carry forwards and new capital schemes approved during the year. The revised capital programme budget is shown in **Table 1** along with the mid-year position reported to cabinet in December 2021.

7. Actual capital spending was under budget for the year by £33.430m. The actual level of resources needed to finance the expenditure was also less than that originally estimated. Capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. **Table 1** shows the estimates and then the actual capital expenditure for 2021/22 and how this was financed in the year:

Table 1: Capital Programme Financing

	2021/22 Original Budget	2021/22 Final Budget	2021/22 Mid-Year Estimate	2021/22 Actual Outturn	Variance from Final Budget
Capital Expenditure	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
General Fund capital expenditure	20.802	21.045	18.380	10.827	(10.218)
General Fund capital loans	0	0	0	0	0
HRA capital expenditure	48.839	45.962	37.209	22.758	(23.204)
Total Expenditure	**69.641**	**67.007**	**55.589**	**33.585**	**(33.422)**
Financed by					
Capital receipts	21.947	21.694	9.092	4.110	(17.584)
Capital grants/contributions	19.621	17.023	15.254	9.529	(7.494)
Capital & earmarked reserves	15.464	18.280	23.072	18.280	0
Revenue	11.934	7.169	7.330	1.106	(6.063)
Total Financing	**68.967**	**64.166**	**54.747**	**33.585**	**(31.141)**
Borrowing need for the year	**0.674**	**2.841**	**0.841**	**0.560**	**(2.281)**

8. Norwich Regeneration Ltd (NRL) is a private limited company wholly owned by Norwich City Council. In order to finance its housing development, NRL borrows money at commercial interest rates from the Council. During 2021-22 NRL repaid loans of £6.500m, with no new loans being made. Therefore, as at 31 March 2022 the company had a loan outstanding with the council of £6.150m (2020/21 £12.650m). These transactions were in line with the lending facility approved by council. The impact of the loan movements on the capital financing requirement is shown in Table 2.

9. Norwich City Services Ltd (NCSL) is a private limited company wholly owned by Norwich City Council. To finance the set-up of the company including capital

works on its depot building, the council has provided NCSL with both loan and equity financing. A 20-year capital loan of £1.140m was advanced to the company as well as a working capital loan of £0.500m. Equity investment was made into the company of £0.370m. During 2021/22 the Council loaned a further £0.180m to NCSL resulting in total loans outstanding with the Council of £1.820m (2020/21: £1.640m). No additional equity was purchased in NCSL by the Council (2020/21: £0.370m purchased).

The impact of these capital loan movements on the capital financing requirement is shown in Table 2.

10. Capital expenditure may either be:

- Financed immediately through the application of capital or revenue resources (e.g. capital receipts, capital grants, revenue contributions etc.), which does not impact on the Council's borrowing need; or
- Financed by either external or internal borrowing, if there is insufficient financing available, or a decision is taken not to immediately apply resources.

Council's overall borrowing need

11. The council's underlying need to borrow for capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR increases as the council incurs capital spending and then if it does not apply resources immediately to finance the capital spend, (i.e. capital receipts, capital grants, capital reserves or revenue), a borrowing need arises. The 2021/22 CFR year-end balance is the cumulative total of the 2021/22 unfinanced capital expenditure i.e. £0.560m and prior years' unfinanced capital.

12. Treasury management includes addressing the funding requirements for this borrowing need; it also includes maintaining a position to ensure sufficient cash is available to meet the capital expenditure as they occur. This may be sourced through borrowing from external bodies, e.g. the Government through the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) or the money markets, or utilising temporary cash resources within the Council (known as internal borrowing).

13. The council's (non-HRA) underlying borrowing need (CFR) is not allowed to rise indefinitely. Statutory controls are in place to ensure that capital assets are broadly charged to revenue over the life of the asset. This requirement is met by making an annual revenue charge, called the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), to reduce the CFR. This is effectively a repayment of the non-HRA borrowing need (there is no statutory requirement to reduce the HRA CFR).

14. The total CFR can also be reduced by either:

- the application of additional capital financing resources (such as unapplied capital receipts)
- charging more than the statutory MRP each year through a Voluntary Revenue Provision (VRP).

15. This differs from the treasury management arrangements which ensure that cash is available to meet capital commitments. External borrowing can be taken or repaid at any time, but this does not change the CFR.

16. The Council's CFR for the year is shown below and is a key prudential indicator. It includes leasing schemes on the balance sheet, which increase the Council's borrowing need. No borrowing is actually required against these schemes as a borrowing facility is included in the contract.

Table 2: Capital Financing Requirement

	2021/22 Original Estimate	2021/22 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Outturn (unaudited)
	£000	**£000**	**£000**
Opening General Fund CFR	**120,100**	**122,330**	**121,183**
Prior years adjustment			
Movement in General Fund CFR	1,200	(9,133)	(7,163)
Closing General Fund CFR	**121,300**	**113,197**	**114,020**
Movement in CFR represented by:			
Borrowing need (capital programme)	674	841	560
Loan repayment	(55)	(8,555)	(6,500)
Less MRP and other financing adj.	581	(1,419)	(1,223)
Movement in General Fund CFR	**1,200**	**(9,133)**	**(7,163)**
Opening HRA Fund CFR	**207,518**	**207,517**	**207,517**
Movement in HRA CFR	0	0	(1)
Closing HRA CFR	**207,518**	**207,517**	**207,516**
TOTAL CFR	**328,818**	**320,714**	**321,536**

17. Borrowing activity is constrained by prudential indicators for borrowing and the CFR, and by the authorised limit.

The prudential and treasury indicators

18. **Gross borrowing and the CFR** - to ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term and only for a capital purpose, the council should ensure that its gross external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year (2020/21) plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current (2021/22) and next two financial years. This essentially means that the Council is not borrowing to support revenue expenditure. This indicator allows the Council some flexibility to borrow in advance of its immediate capital needs. The table below highlights the Council's gross borrowing position against the CFR. The Council has complied with this indicator.

Table 3: Gross Borrowing

	2021/22 Original Estimate	2021/22 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Actual
	£m	£m	£m
Gross borrowing	219.853	232.300	262.301
CFR	328.818	320.714	321.536
Over Borrowed/(Under Borrowed)	**(108.965)**	**(88.414)**	**(59.235)**

19. **The authorised limit** - the authorised limit is the "affordable borrowing limit" required by s3 of the Local Government Act 2003. The Council does not have the power to borrow above this level. The Table 4 below demonstrates that during 2021/22 the Council has maintained gross borrowing within its authorised limit.

20. **The operational boundary** – the operational boundary is the expected borrowing position of the Council during the year. Periods where the actual position is either below or over the boundary is acceptable subject to the authorised limit not being breached.

Table 4: Authorised Limit & Operational Boundary

	2021/22 Original Estimate	2021/22 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Actual
	£m	£m	£m
Authorised Limit for external debt			
Borrowing	358.138	358.138	358.138
Other long-term liabilities	0.680	0.680	0.680
Total Agreed Authorised Limit	**358.818**	**358.818**	**358.818**
Operational boundary for external debt			
Borrowing	328.138	328.138	328.138
Other long-term liabilities	0.680	0.680	0.680
Total Agreed Operational Boundary	**328.818**	**328.818**	**328.818**
External debt (including other long-term liabilities e.g. finance leases)			**315.518**

21. **Liability Benchmark**

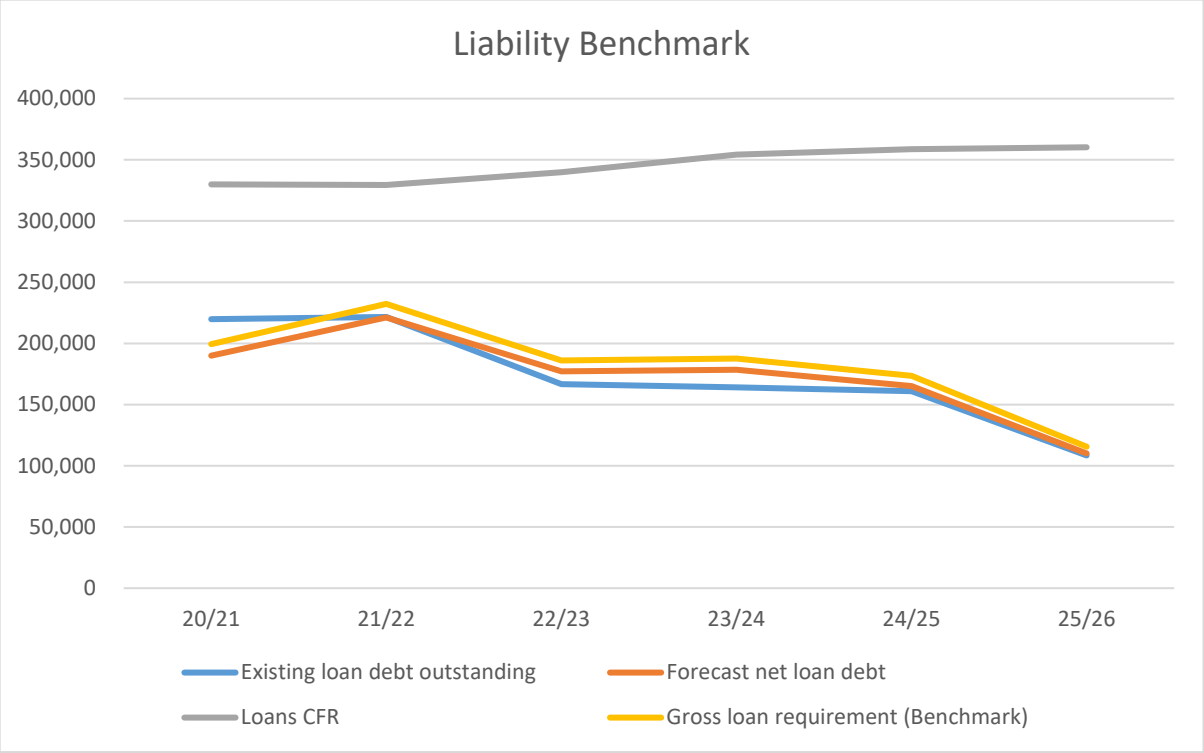
Following the release of the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Guidance Notes, CIPFA have introduced the liability benchmark as a new Prudential Indicator. The guidance states that "the liability benchmark is a projection of the amount of loan debt outstanding that the authority needs each year into the future to fund its existing debt liabilities, planned prudential borrowing and other cash flows." The City Council will need to include this new treasury management indicator from 1st April 2023.

The revised Treasury Management code will require an authority to implement a new debt liability benchmark treasury indicator - to support the financing risk management of the capital financing requirement and is to be shown in chart

form for a minimum of ten years, with material differences between the liability benchmark and actual loans to be explained;

Link Asset Services have prepared a Liability Benchmark template based on the example workings provided within the Treasury Management in the Public Services Guidance Notes. The template will enable the City Council to populate it with our own data and produce the Liability Benchmark chart and tables to be included in formal reporting required from 2023/24.

22. As part of preparations to implement the new required prudential indicators, the City Council has prepared a draft graph presented below.



The liability benchmark is presented as a chart of four balances which are:

■ Existing loan debt outstanding: the authority's existing loans which are still outstanding in future years;

■ Loans CFR: calculated in accordance with the loans CFR definition in the Prudential Code, and projected into the future based on approved prudential borrowing and planned MRP taking account of approved prudential borrowing;

■ Net loans requirement: the authority's gross loan debt, less treasury management investments, at the last financial year end, projected into the future based on its approved prudential borrowing, planned MRP and any other forecast major cash flows and;

■ Liability benchmark (or Gross Loans Requirement) = Net loans requirement + short term liquidity allowance.

Any years where actual loans are less than the benchmark indicate a future borrowing requirement; any years where actual loans outstanding exceed the benchmark represent an overborrowed position which will result in excess cash requiring investment.

The graph above is in line with the Approved MTFS which also includes the Treasury Managements Strategy.

Actual financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream

23. The authority is required to report on the ratio represented by its net financing costs to its net revenue stream. For the general fund net revenue is represented by the amount that is funded by government grants and council tax payers, while for the HRA it is the rental income paid by tenants. This is intended to be a measure of affordability, indicating how much of the authority's revenue is taken up in financing its debt.

24. Table 5 shows that the general fund outturn is lower than the estimate due to lower than budgeted borrowing costs combined with a higher net revenue due to additional covid-19 related grant income. The HRA affordability ratio is higher than estimated due to the inclusion of £5M of capital costs which have been written back to revenue where the essential adaptations and enhancements to properties carried out did not add value to the asset. Last year's outturn was at a similar level 44.0% (2020-21).

Table 5: Affordability Ratio

	2021/22	2021/22
Affordability of financing costs	**Estimate**	**Actual**
General fund - financing costs as a percentage of net revenue	11.59%	8.66%
HRA - financing costs as a percentage of rental income	39.93%	48.44%

Treasury Position as at 31 March 2022

25. The Council's debt and investment position is managed by the in-house treasury management team. All activities are undertaken primarily to ensure security for investments, to ensure that there is adequate liquidity for revenue and capital activities, and to manage risks within all treasury management activities. Procedures and controls to achieve these objectives are well established both through member reporting detailed in the summary, and through officer activity.

26. During 2021/22 the council's treasury management function operated a target to maintain daily closing current account bank balances between £0 and £200,000. The target was set to ensure a minimal cash liquidity balance and maximise returns on available cash balances. The target measure was for cash balances not to be outside the £0 and £200,000 threshold for more than twelve days in the year. The target was met for the year however, due to a banking system failure, for one day cash balances held overnight in the account exceeded £200,000. From 1st April 2022 the Council has implemented a pooling arrangement for all its bank accounts with Barclays. Interest is now earned on all remaining balances without the need to move these to an interest bearing account.

27. The council's actual borrowing position at 31 March 2022 and activity during 2021/22 is detailed in the table below. Borrowing has remained within the authorised limit of £358.818m throughout the year.

Table 6: Borrowing activity 2021/22 (excluding finance leases)

	PWLB loans £m	Market loans £m	Total £m	Average interest rate %
Opening balance (1 April 2021)	214.107	5.000	219.107	
New borrowing taken	45.000	-	45.000	
Borrowing matured/repaid	(2.500)	-	(2.500)	
Closing balance (31 March 2022)	**256.607**	**5.000**	**261.607**	**3.3**
Authorised limit for external debt			358.818	

28. The maturity structure of the debt portfolio was as follows:

Table 7: Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing

	%	31-Mar-22 £m
Under 12 months	19.48	50.96
Between 12 months and 2 years	1.53	4.00
Between 2 years and 5 years	24.15	63.20
Between 5 years and 10 years	23.42	61.26
Over 10 years	31.42	82.19
Perpetually irredeemable stock		0.50
Total borrowing		**262.11**

29. Table 8 shows the movement in investments in the year. The movement is a combination of several factors including: an increase in the Council's internal borrowing (see table 3); repayment of loan agreements; an increase in short term creditors and a reduction in long term debtors. These can be seen on the face of the council's Balance Sheet, shown in the draft Statement of Accounts.

Table 8: Investment Movements

	31 March 2021 £m	Net movement £m	31 March 2022 £m
Short term			
Banks	15.000	25.000	40.000
Building Societies	0.000	25.000	25.000
Local Authorities	15.000	30.000	45.000
Cash Equivalents			
Banks	23.750	(7.225)	16.525
Non-UK Banks	0.000	12.000	12.000
Building Societies	0.000	0.000	0.000
Local Authorities	0.000	0.000	0.000
Money Market Funds	21.070	2.930	24.000
UK Government	0.000	2.000	2.000
Total Internally Managed Funds	**74.820**	**89.705**	**164.525**

30. The maturity structure of the investment portfolio was as follows:

Table 9: Maturity Structure

	31 March 2021 £m	31 March 2022 £m
Under 1 year	74.820	164.525
Over 1 year	0.000	0.000
	74.820	**164.525**

Borrowing Strategy for 2021/22

31. The council maintained an under-borrowed position in 2021/22. This means that the capital borrowing need (the CFR) has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the council's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This strategy is prudent as during the year investment returns were low and counterparty risk is relatively high.

32. Table 10 below shows the interest rate forecast to June 2025. These forecasts have been provided by the Council's treasury advisor, Link Asset Services and show gradual rises in medium and longer-term fixed borrowing rates over the next two financial years. Variable, or short-term rates, are expected to be the cheaper form of borrowing over the period.

Table 10: Interest Rate View

Link Group Interest Rate View	09.08.22												
	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25
BANK RATE	2.25	2.50	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.50	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.00
3 month ave earnings	2.50	2.80	3.00	2.90	2.80	2.50	2.40	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.20	2.20	2.20
6 month ave earnings	2.90	3.10	3.10	3.00	2.90	2.80	2.70	2.60	2.50	2.50	2.40	2.30	2.30
12 month ave earnings	3.20	3.30	3.20	3.10	3.00	2.90	2.80	2.70	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40
5 yr PWLB	2.80	3.00	3.10	3.10	3.00	3.00	2.90	2.90	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.70	2.70
10 yr PWLB	3.00	3.20	3.30	3.30	3.20	3.10	3.10	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.90	2.90	2.80
25 yr PWLB	3.40	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.40	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.10
50 yr PWLB	3.10	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.20	3.10	3.10	3.00	3.00	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.80

Source: Link Treasury 2022 (PWLB rates include adjustments for Certainty rate discounts)

33. Given the under-borrowed position of the council (Table 3) it was reported mid-year that it would be likely the Council would need to undertake fixed rate long-term borrowing within the short to medium term. On 22/07/21 the council took out a £5m fixed rate 50-year loan with PWLB at an interest rate of 1.64% and a further £10m fixed rate 50-year loan was taken on 05/11/2021 at 1.7%.

34. As interest rates fell again, on 7/12/21 three fixed rate loans for £10m each were taken out with interest rates of 1.38%, 1.4% and 1.41% for 49 years, 47 years and 46 years respectively. This borrowing was in line with the Treasury Strategy and the interest costs are within the 2021/22 revenue budget provision. Given that interest rates have risen significantly subsequently as a response to inflationary pressures this approach has been successful in managing the council's long term debt position at low cost. Any further decisions to borrow will be reported to Cabinet at the next available opportunity.

PWLB rates

35. PWLB rates are based on, and are determined by, gilt (UK Government bonds) yields through HM Treasury determining a specified margin to add to gilt yields.

As the interest forecast table for PWLB rates above shows, there is likely to be a steady rise over the forecast period, with some degree of uplift due to rising treasury yields in the US.

36. The Council has previously relied on the PWLB as its main source of funding; however, the council will consider alternative sources of borrowing as appropriate and in line with the treasury management strategy. We will continue to liaise closely with our treasury advisors, monitor the borrowing market and update Members as this area evolves.

37. The Municipal Bond Agency are now offering loans to local authorities. This Authority may make use of this emerging source of borrowing as and when appropriate. This is within the existing approved Treasury Management Strategy.

Forward borrowing considerations to mitigate expected future interest rate increases

38. The Council may also look to arrange forward borrowing facilities should the future borrowing risk rise, although the recent increase in rate may mitigate against this in the short term. The policy on forward borrowing has been complied with in 2021-22.

Debt Rescheduling

39. No debt rescheduling was undertaken during 2021-22 as low interest rates during that year would have increase the costs of any redemption premia costs. As interest rates rise in 2022 the use of such an approach will be kept under review.

Borrowing Outturn for 2021-22

40. During 2021-22 the Council repaid £2.5m PWLB debt and borrowed £45m from the PWLB taking advantage of a drop in interest rates. The council paid £8.230m in interest costs on external loans, this compares to a budget of £8.640m. The reduction against budget was due to the continued use of internal borrowing rather than external borrowing as a result of holding sufficient cash balances.

Investment Strategy for 2021-22

41. The TMS for 2021-22, which includes the Annual Investment Strategy, was approved by the council on 22 February 2021. It sets out the council's investment priorities as being Security of capital, Liquidity; and Yield.

42. No policy changes have been made to the investment strategy, the council will continue to aim to achieve the optimum return (yield) on investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.

43. This report does not cover the council's investment strategy in regard to non-financial investments. These investments which include the purchasing of commercial property and lending to third parties were covered under the Non-Financial (Commercial) Investment Strategy published in February 2021 as part of the Budget papers.

44. As part of the new Prudential and Treasury Management codes councils are now required to review assets held for investment purposes against ongoing

borrowing requirements. The code requires councils to consider disposal of investments to finance borrowing where the sale of an investment is financially viable. The Council is currently undertaking a review of its investment portfolio to determine assets returns and the potential cost of disposal.

45. The Treasury Management Strategy is published on the council's website. Following a review of the document and the counterparty credit rating criteria an amendment has been made to the wording to remove potential ambiguity.

46. Link Asset Services have prepared the counterparty list based on their understanding of the original wording to mean that if a building society meets a minimum credit rating applicable to a bank, then the bank maximum duration and counter limit apply – not the building society maximum duration and counterparty limit.

47. The minor wording change has been agreed with Link Asset Services the Council's Treasury advisors and approved by the Executive Director of Finance in accordance with the delegated powers under the council's constitution. The original and revised table is shown at Appendix 1.

Investment Outturn for 2021-22

48. The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy, and the council had no liquidity difficulties.

Reserves

49. The council's cash balances comprise revenue and capital reserves and day to day cash flow monies.

Within the reserve figures below the main reduction year on year was against Earmarked Reserves and was mainly due to the application of Government grants during 2021-22 to compensate the council for loss of income in respect of business rate income due to reliefs given to business in response to the COVID19 Global Pandemic.

There was an increase in the HRA reserve due to the HRA surplus in 2021-22 and the usable capital receipts reserve due to the sale of assets. The council's reserves are shown in the draft 2021-22 statement of accounts and comprise the balances summarised in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Balance Sheet Reserves

	31-Mar-21	31-Mar-22*
	£m	£m
General Reserves	9.890	10.336
HRA	43,370	51.373
Earmarked Reserves	36.992	30.697
Useable Capital receipts	55.726	64.353
Capital grants Unapplied	4.274	4.249
Major Repairs Reserve	10.020	7.281
Total	**160,272**	**168,289**

* Unaudited figures

50. The council's year-end balance of cash and short-term investments was £164.525m. These internally managed funds earned an average rate of return of 0.4%.

51. The council is part of a benchmarking group (facilitated by our treasury management advisors, Link Asset Services) across Norfolk, Suffolk & Cambridgeshire. The table below shows the performance of the council's investments when compared with this benchmark group, and also when compared with the non-metropolitan districts and all authorities that use Link's benchmarking group facility.

Table 12: Link benchmarking - position at 31 March 2022

	Norwich	Benchmark Group 7 (12)	Non met districts (87)	All authorities (224)
WARoR[1]	0.40%	0.45%	0.45%	0.44%
WA Risk[2]	3.33	3.84	2.95	2.95
WAM[3]	70	46	76	74
WATT[4]	136	98	139	142

Source: Link Treasury March 2022

[1] **WARoR** Weighted Average Rate of Return This is the average annualised rate of return weighted by the principal amount in each rate.

[2] **WA Risk** Weighted Average Credit Risk Number Each institution is assigned a colour corresponding to a suggested duration using Link Asset Services' Suggested Credit Methodology.

[3] **WAM** Weighted Average Time to Maturity This is the average time, in days, till the portfolio matures, weighted by principal amount.

[4] **WATT** Weighted Average Total Time This is the average time, in days, that deposits are lent out for, weighted by principal amount.

52. The council's average investments return (0.40%) is comparable with that for the benchmark group (0.45%), the 87 non-met authorities (0.45%) and the population of 224 local authorities (0.44%). The WATT and the average investment return in 2021/22 is slightly higher than the benchmarking group and comparable to the other authorities whilst still allowjng the authority to keep council funds readily available to pay government grants and make capital programme payments as they fell due.

Consultation

53. The report is the outturn position statement to ensure that council are kept informed of treasury activity. No additional consultation has been undertaken.

Implications

Financial and Resources

54. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources however it does report on the performance of the council in managing its

borrowing and investment resources which have significant financial implications for the council.

Legal

55. The council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual review of its treasury management activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2021/22. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

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	Sustainable investment products are an area of growth in the market. These options will be considered where the investments are in line with approved Treasury Management Strategy. Security, liquidity and yield remain the cornerstones of the council's Treasury Management Strategy, and it is vital that all investments ensure the security of council funds as a priority and remain compatible with the risk appetite of the council and its cash flow requirements.

Risk Management

Risk	**Consequence**	**Controls Required**
Future interest rate changes can offer both opportunity and risk.	Future interest rate changes need to be assessed against the cost of borrowing.	To mitigate the risk, we will continue to work closely with the council's advisors to review interest rate forecasts to assess when we would look to borrow.

Other Options Considered

56. No other options to be considered. The report is to inform council of the treasury activity for the year to 31 March 2022.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

57. To ensure that council are kept informed of treasury activity.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Extract wording from Treasury Management Strategy

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Appendix 1 Treasury Management Strategy

Original wording

Counterparty/Financial instrument	Minimum Credit Criteria or Equivalent	Specified Investments		Non-specified Investments	
		Maximum duration	Counterparty Limit (£m)	Maximum duration	Counterparty Limit (£m)
Term Deposits with UK Building Societies	ratings for banks outlined below / Asset worth at least £2.5bn or both	12 months	£5m	n/a	n/a
Banks (Term deposits, CD, Call & Notice accounts)	AAA	12 months	£20m	2 years	£10m
Banks (Term deposits, CD, Call & Notice accounts)	AA+	12 months	£17m	12 months	£5m
	AA				
Banks (Term deposits, CD, Call & Notice accounts)	AA-	12 months	£10m	n/a	n/a
	A+				
	A				
Banks (Term deposits, CD, Call & Notice accounts)	A-	6 months	£5m	n/a	n/a

Amended wording

Counterparty/Financial instrument	Minimum Credit Criteria or Equivalent	Specified Investments		Non-specified Investments	
		Maximum duration	Counterparty Limit (£m)	Maximum duration	Counterparty Limit (£m)
Term Deposits with UK Building Societies	Assets worth at least £2.5bn but do not meet the minimum Bank/Building Society credit Criteria	12 months	£5m	n/a	n/a
Banks/UK Building Societies (Term deposits, CD, Call & Notice accounts)	AAA	12 months	£20m	2 years	£10m
Banks/UK Building Societies (Term deposits, CD, Call & Notice accounts)	AA+	12 months	£17m	12 months	£5m
	AA				
Banks/UK Building Societies (Term deposits, CD, Call & Notice accounts)	AA-	12 months	£10m	n/a	n/a
	A+				
	A				
Banks/UK Building Societies (Term deposits, CD, Call & Notice accounts)	A-	6 months	£5m	n/a	n/a

NORWICH City Council

Item 7

Committee Name: Council

Committee Date: 22/11/2022

Report Title: Capital Programme update

Portfolio: Councillor Kendrick, resources

Report from: Executive director of corporate and commercial services

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

This report seeks approval to changes in the Council's capital programme.

Recommendation:

1) To approve the removal budgets in relation to the Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) Riverside Walk Access Improvements and Community Centre Upgrades shown in Table 1 totalling £0.172m.

Subject to cabinet agreement on 16 November, to the Q2 Assurance report

2) To approve the removal of budgets from the general fund capital programme set out in Table 1 totalling £0.015m. (marked as *** in Table 1)
3) To approve the removal of budgets from the housing revenue account capital programme set out in Table 2 totalling £3.155m.

Subject to cabinet agreement on 16 November, to the contract award report for works at St, Andrews car park

4) To approve an increase to the general fund capital programme, as set out in paragraphs 6 – 9.

Policy Framework

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

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

The capital programme supports all these corporate priorities.

Report Details

Background

1. The council set its capital programme for the period 2022 – 2027 in February this year. Any change to the capital programme must be approved by full council unless it is a new scheme or an increase to an existing scheme which is fully matched by external resources; in which case cabinet can approve the change.

2. Maintaining an accurate profile of capital expenditure supports the budget management process and assists in understanding the treasury management implications of programme delivery.

Report details

3. The council's regular budget management processes consider the extent to which capital schemes are progressing and where there are variances against the approved capital budget. As the council's capital programme spans several financial years it is common for expenditure to need to move between years and for there to be a variance between the initial and final scheme cost.

4. In the quarter 1 assurance report (considered by cabinet on 19 October) and the quarter 2 assurance report (being considered by cabinet on 16 November) recommendations were made for council to consider and agree changes to both the general fund and housing revenue account capital programmes.

5. The relevant schemes and amounts together with a brief explanation for the changes are set out in tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1 – General Fund projects – removal

Scheme ref.	Scheme title	Comments	Budget £000
AA1184	Community Centre Upgrades	The budget for 2022/23 was approved to facilitate any upgrades required to community centres, following minimum energy efficiency standard surveys. However, no upgrade work has been identified and the budget is not now required.	60
AD5202	Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) Riverside Walk Access Improvements	Access improvements to Riverside Walk have been delayed and will not now take place in this financial year. As its not known when the project will proceed, it has been agreed with the GNGB that the project and budget should be removed from our programme and any future application will be fast-tracked through the GNGB process.	112
AB1197	Cadge Road Community Centre Lighting Upgrade ***	Scheme no longer required.	7
FL5201	Bunkers Hill Entrance (S106 project) ***	Project complete – residual budget no longer required.	8

*** subject to approval at cabinet on 16 November.

Table 2 – Housing Revenue Account (HRA) projects – removal

[All the following schemes are subject to approval at cabinet on 16 November.]

Scheme ref.	Scheme title	Comments	Budget £000
5120	Whole house improvements	Scheme is not achievable within financial year and budget can therefore be reduced. Existing approved budget for 2023/24 is sufficient for planned works.	2,261
BB0000	Community Centre Assets – HRA impact	Following surveys, no work required in this financial yr.	25
AA5100	Demolition & Site Maintenance	Budget re-profiled to reflect anticipated expenditure with remaining budget to be removed.	160
AB5100	New Build Opportunities	Budget re-profiled to reflect anticipated expenditure with no further opportunities anticipated.	500
AA5215	New Housing – 165 Springbank	Work completed; remaining budget not required.	21
AM0000	Capital Grants to Housing Associations	Budget re-profiled to reflect anticipated expenditure; no further opportunities to provide grants in this financial year have been identified.	188

6. The cabinet is scheduled to consider a tender award report at its meeting to be held on 16 November relating to edge protection works at St. Andrews car park. Based on the most economically advantageous tender proposed for acceptance at that meeting, the cost of this scheme has increased from the original estimated sum included in the capital programme for 2022/23 by £0.998m.

7. The current construction of the car park does not meet modern safety standards and the council has consulted with partners, including the emergency services and industry experts over the last 12 months to identify the most appropriate method of improving the design of the car park to meet these standards. There is a need to complete these urgent works over an 8 week period stipulated in the tender documents, starting in early 2023.

8. Increases to the council's capital programme, except where they are fully matched by external funding, can only be made by full council. The increase in

budget can be financed through unapplied capital receipts already held by the council.

9. To facilitate the prompt delivery of these urgent works the council is being asked to approve the increase in budget, financed by unapplied capital receipts, subject to the tender report being agreed by cabinet at their meeting on 16 November.

Consultation

10. The service has consulted with emergency services, Norfolk County Council, NUA and the Crown Prosecution Service on its proposals to enhance the edge protection at St Andrews car park

Implications

Financial and Resources

11. The removal of scheme budgets from both the general fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) frees up resources previously earmarked for those schemes to be used to finance other capital programme expenditure.

12. There are sufficient unapplied capital receipts to finance the additional project costs of £0.998m, for the St. Andrews car park scheme.

Legal

13. In relation to the proposed reduction in resources set out in Tables 1 and 2, only the council has the power to vary the level of capital programme budgets, unless it relates to a scheme where external funding which fully matches any increase is available in which case the cabinet can approve the change to the programme.

14. In relation to the increase in budget for the St. Andrews car park scheme the council has a duty in terms of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and the Occupiers Liability Acts of 1957 and 1984, to ensure that its properties are safe for our employees and for users of our car parks. The proposals considered by cabinet on 16 November and the consequent request in this report for an amendment to the council's 2022/23 capital programme, will ensure that the council is fulfilling these duties.

Statutory Considerations

Consideration:	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	n/a – but see also cabinet report (Contract award report – St. Andrews CP)
Health, Social and Economic Impact	n/a – but see also cabinet report (Contract award report – St. Andrews CP)
Crime and Disorder	n/a – but see also cabinet report (Contract award report – St. Andrews CP)
Children and Adults Safeguarding	n/a – but see also cabinet report (Contract award report – St. Andrews CP)
Environmental Impact	n/a – but see also cabinet report (Contract award report – St. Andrews CP)

Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Financial	Capital resources are not effectively used.	Budget management identifies variances and informs appropriate management actions.
Reputational and other risks	See contract award report (St. Andrews car park)	See contract award report (St. Andrews car park)

Other Options Considered

15. No other options have been considered for the removal of capital project resources set out in Tables 1 and 2.

16. The cabinet will consider the options considered for the St. Andrews car park scheme at its meeting on 16 November. Subject to their agreement to the tender report the only other options considered are the source of financing to be used in support of the increased cost. The Chief Financial Officer has considered the financing options available and concluded that unapplied capital receipts best meets the scheme requirements.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

17. Where capital resources are no longer required it is appropriate to propose a reduction to the budget and the capital programme to facilitate effective budget management and support the best use of the council's capital resources.

18. Only the Council can approve the proposed increase in resources to support delivery of the St. Andrews car park scheme. That recommendation is subject to cabinet initially approving the tender award report for those works.

Background papers:

Contract award capital works at St. Andrews car park (Cabinet 16 November meeting)

Appendices: None

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NORWICH City Council

Item 8

Committee Name: Council
Committee Date: 22/11/2022
Report Title: Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2021-2022

Committee chair **Councillor Price**

Report from: Executive director of corporate and commercial services

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

This report presents the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2021-2022, appended to this report at Appendix A, to council.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that council receives the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2021-2022.

Policy Framework

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

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

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

Report Details

1. On 11 March 2014, the audit committee resolved to approve new procedures for the audit committee in line with Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance. The CIPFA guidance says that:

   "The purpose of an audit committee is to provide to those charged with governance independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and annual governance processes."

2. The guidance goes on to set out that the core functions of the audit committee are to:

   a) Be satisfied that the authority's assurance statements, including the Annual Governance Statement, properly reflect the risk environment and any actions required to improve it, and demonstrate how governance supports the achievements of the authority's objectives.
   b) In relation to the authority's internal audit functions:

      i) oversee its independence, objectivity, performance and professionalism;

      ii) support the effectiveness of the internal audit process;

      iii) promote the effective use of internal audit within the assurance framework.

   c) Consider the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements and the control environment. Review the risk profile of the organisation and assurances that action is being taken on risk-related issues, including partnerships with other organisations.

   d) Monitor the effectiveness of the control environment, including arrangements for ensuring value for money and for managing the authority's exposure to the risks of fraud and corruption.

   e) Consider the reports and recommendations of external audit and inspection agencies and their implications for governance, risk management or control

3. The council delegates authority to the audit committee to undertake a range of functions on its behalf, including approval of the Annual Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement. It is therefore important the council ensures that the audit committee is discharging its role effectively.

4. The attached annual report of the audit committee 2021-2022 was considered by members of the audit committee at their meeting on 12 July 2022. The

report has been amended slightly to reflect that the member training scheduled for 11 July has been postponed to 3 October.

5. The report sets out the work of the audit committee over the last financial year, providing assurance to council on the work undertaken by the committee.

6. The report concludes that the committee has been effective in undertaking the functions set out in its terms of reference, in accordance with the council's procedure rules and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Consultation

7. This report has been written in consultation with the chair and vice chair of the committee and based on discussions recorded in the minutes of meetings of the committee. At its meeting on 12 July 2022, the committee approved the report and recommends it to council.

Implications

Financial and Resources

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

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

Legal

9. The role of the audit committee is an important part of the ouncil's arrangements to ensure proper administration of its financial affairs under s.151 of the Local Government Act 1972. The annual report of the committee is considered to be good practice as identified by the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy and is reflected in the council's constitution.

Statutory Considerations

Consideration:	**Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:**
Equality and Diversity	No implications arising from this report
Health, Social and Economic Impact	No implications arising from this report
Crime and Disorder	No implications arising from this report
Children and Adults Safeguarding	No implications arising from this report

Environmental Impact	No implications arising from this report

Risk Management

Risk	**Consequence**	**Controls Required**
Include operational, financial, compliance, security, legal, political or reputational risks to the council	None	None

Other Options Considered

10. This report is for information and consolidates information set out in minutes to the audit committee held on

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

11. To provide an annual report to council.

Background papers:

12. Minutes and reports to the audit committee meetings held from April 2021 to May 2022.

Appendices:

A Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2021-2022

B Extract from the Council's Constitution – Audit committee terms of reference

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APPENDIX A

Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2021-22

Introduction

This is the annual report of the audit committee and advises the council of the work of the audit committee for the period of the civic year 2021-22.

Councillor Ben Price
Chair, audit committee

Councillor Keith Driver
Vice-chair, audit committee

Background

1. This report covers the work of the audit committee for the financial and civic year 2021-22. The production of an annual report by the committee is considered good practice.

2. The council established an audit committee in 2007. The terms of reference were considered and revised as part of the Constitution Review 2021. The committee exercises its powers, within the policy framework of the council and the corporate plan, as specified in the terms of reference.

3. The members of the audit committee in 2021-22 were:-

   Councillor Ben Price (chair)
   Councillor Keith Driver (vice chair)
   Councillor Adam Giles
   Councillor Ash Haynes
   Councillor Martin Peek
   Councillor Mike Sands
   Councillor Ian Stutely
   Councillor James Wright

4. Councillor Paul Kendrick, cabinet member for resources, attended all meetings of the committee.

5. The key officers who support the audit committee during this period were:

   Annabel Scholes, executive director of corporate and commercial services (S151 officer) (chief finance officer)
   Hannah Simpson, head of finance, audit and risk
   Neville Murton, interim head of finance, audit and risk
   Faye Haywood, internal audit manager
   Leah Mickleborough, head of legal and procurement

6. The engagement team of the external auditors (Ernst & Young LLP) is led by Mark Hodgson, the external audit manager for the council. The external auditors have an open invitation to attend meetings of the audit committee to present their reports and answer members' questions. The external auditors attended meetings in July 2021 and May 2022.

7. The committee monitors the fees paid by the council to the external auditors to ensure value for money.

8. The committee met five times during the civic year 2021-22 as follows:

   - 13 July 2021
   - 21 September 2021
   - 18 January 2022
   - 8 March 2022
   - 17 May 2022 (extraordinary meeting)

9. The information contained in this report is drawn from the minutes and reports considered at committee meetings held during the year. Agendas, reports and minutes for the meetings are available on the council's website:

https://cmis.norwich.gov.uk/live/Meetingscalendar.aspx

10. The committee last received training from an external facilitator in October 2020. Members will have an opportunity to attend an introductory training session for members of the audit committee on 3 October 2022 (rescheduled from 11 July 2022.)

11. This report sets out the committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and effectiveness of the committee in meeting its purpose, under the following headings:

    (a) Corporate governance
    (b) Internal and external audit
    (c) Statement of accounts
    (d) Referral powers and accountability arrangements

Corporate governance

12. The committee welcomes the changes that the corporate leadership team has made to strengthen governance arrangements within the council and in relation to its wholly owned companies.

13. The committee is advised by the chief finance officer, internal and external audit. In line with CIPFA/SOLACE good practice, the council's constitution adopted in March 2021, has provision for the council to appoint up to two independent non-voting co-opted members to the audit committee whose "skill, knowledge, qualification and experience relevant to the role of the committee" to assist members. The council is currently in the process of appointing an independent person to the committee.

Corporate risk management policy, strategy and register

14. The council's constitution adopted in March 2021, formalises the committee's request to receive a report on the council's risk management policy, strategy and register twice a year. This provides the committee assurance about the risk appetite of the council and an opportunity to ask questions on the application of scores to risks.

15. The committee considered changes to the Risk Management and Strategy at its September meeting, prior to its approval at cabinet in October 2021. The committee welcomed the opportunity to review the policy and strategy and appreciated the shift in the culture of the council that it represented, with risk management being considered at individual and service levels and risks being addressed before serious problems occurred. The relaunch of this strategy ensured that risk management is embedded throughout the organisation. Members commended the officers for the clarity of the document and the inclusion of the assessment of risk and scoring matrix.

16. The committee considered the risk register at its meetings in September 2021, where it was noted that the overall level of risk had not changed, and in March 2022. Following discussion at the September meeting, the committee asked for further consideration of the impact of Brexit, where the concern is that the

impact has not been fully realised, climate change as a separate risk on the risk register and inclusion of risks relating to the end of the furlough scheme and cuts in universal credit under the appropriate risk. Some members of the committee were disappointed that climate change remains an overarching rather than a separate risk on the register. The committee also expressed an interest for further information on the ASB team recruitment and training and looks forward to the risk level being reduced as actions are implemented in the coming year.

Anti-Fraud and Corruption policy and strategy - Application

17. An important function of the committee is to ensure the adequacy of the council's anti-fraud and corruption policy and strategy and the effectiveness of their application.

18. The committee receives an Annual report on Audit Risk and Fraud each year. The annual report for 2020-21 was considered at the July meeting. Members are updated on Anti-Fraud and Corruption measures as part of the quarterly internal audit reports. Significant issues are flagged up to the committee with every quarterly internal audit report. The committee monitors and questions progress on addressing the recommendations.

19. Work of internal audit including counter fraud activity was reported to every meeting throughout the year. Each time this included a schedule of significant issues with response and implementation dates for any required action. In addition, the committee receives the report on risk management and the risk register twice a year. This allows committee members to challenge the risk appetite of the authority for example, areas where fraud could potentially be a high risk.

20. During the pandemic, the council administered business support grants on behalf of the government. There is a national picture of these grants being open to fraud due to the timescales and lack of government guidance at the time to get grants out to support businesses. An internal audit of the revenues and benefits service has been conducted and the audit recommendations agreed. The council has a duty to ensure that checks are in place and £40,000 has been written off. Members appreciate the work of the team in supporting local businesses and ensuring that businesses had access to grants available. However, it has requested information on how the authority performed when benchmarked against other authorities and the outcome of the National Fraud Initiative in relation to the administration of business support grants.

21. Internal audit reviewed the council's whistleblowing policy and minor amendments relating to change of personnel were agreed by the committee at its meeting on 21 September 2021. The committee received assurance that the policy was fit for purpose.

Annual Governance Statement 2020-21

22. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the council to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). It summarises the extent to which the council complies with its Code of Corporate Governance and details, as appropriate, any significant actions needed to improve the governance arrangements in the year ahead.

23. In addition, as part of the Annual Governance Statement process key officers within the council are asked for a specific assurance as to the extent to which key policies and procedures have been complied within their area for 2020/21.

24. At its meeting on 13 July 2021, the audit committee agreed that the draft Annual Governance Statement was consistent with the committee's own perspective on internal control within the council, plus the governance issues and actions. Members welcomed the inclusion of the action plan which showed the council's performance and direction of travel and noted that it would continue to be updated during the year. The committee also noted that it was a front facing document that showed the council's direction of travel.

25. Since the original AGS was considered by the committee two further issues have arisen: the decision to self-refer to the Regulator of Social Housing, and the subsequent publication of a Regulatory Notice; and the identification and inclusion of statutory equalities objectives. Both these issues have now been added to the AGS. The committee voted unanimously to confirm that the Annual Governance Statement was consistent with the committee's own perspective on internal control within the council, plus governance issues and actions. It was prudent to amend the AGS and gratitude to the committee for raising concerns about contract management and the corporate leadership team for identifying the issue and taking the appropriate action was recorded. The AGS is a public document that shows the council's governance and risk management structure to be robust.

Internal and external audit

Internal audit

26. The council receives an annual audit opinion from the chief internal auditor on an annual basis which is timed to inform the Annual Governance Statement. The committee received the interim audit manager's annual audit opinion as reasonable in July 2021 and noted that this opinion was caveated by the ongoing work on risk management by the corporate leadership team across the council. Members noted that the council had identified a need to strengthen competencies and make improvements in the way in which contracts are managed effectively to drive out efficiencies and service improvements. This will continue to be an area of audit focus given recent limited assurance opinions for the management of a couple of large contracts. This reflects the committee's concerns about contract management and policies and procedures.

27. The council has entered a contract with South Norfolk District Council and a consortium for the provision of internal audit services. A report to the committee in July 2021 sets out the arrangements for the short term and long term provision of internal audit services for the council.

28. The committee receives regular reports from internal audit and monitors the internal audit plan. The council has moved to a risk-based approach assessed against the council's risk management register and prioritised areas identified as a risk. The internal audit manager assured members that the internal audit coverage would be sufficient to provide an audit opinion. Members have an opportunity to monitor the progress against the work programme. Due to the new arrangements the internal audit plan for 2021-22 started later in the year and therefore greater prioritisation was required this year. Reasons for deferring audit work were considered at the January 2022 meeting. There is some concern from members that there has been an overall reduction in the number of audit "days". Members have been assured that future internal audit work plans will provide justification or reasons for audit work to be delivered or prioritised and will cover a 3 year rolling programme.

29. As well as receiving quarterly updates, the committee also receives updates which track internal audit recommendations that are either medium or high priority and have gone past the due date. This provides the committee with an opportunity to monitor the progress against actions or seek an explanation where implementation of recommendations has been delayed or why actions have not been agreed by management.

External Audit

30. External auditors attend meetings of the committee when presenting reports and participate in meetings to answer members' questions and provide assurance where appropriate.

31. Members have an opportunity to comment on the external audit plan. The committee agreed the external audit plan for the accounts for 2021-22 at its July meeting. An addendum to the plan relating to VFM risk assessment was received at the March 2022 meeting.

32. Before the pandemic external audit was facing challenges around timetabling audits, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic. The accounts for 2019-20 had finally been signed off on 21 January 2021.

33. Members have expressed their frustration on the further delay this year which meant that the accounts for 2020-21 were eventually signed off in May 2022 due to pressures on external audit. This situation does not appear to be resolved with a late audit planned for late 2022. This impacts on the council's resources so late in the financial cycle, particularly in relation to budget preparation and year end close down. This is a national problem for external auditors and was raised under the Redmond Review.

34. The committee made recommendations to council on the process for the appointment of external auditors for the five-year period 2023-28. Members noted that there were benefits from being part of a national scheme for the procurement, including economies of scale that would provide the best deal for the council.

Statement of accounts

35. The committee considers the draft financial statements before publication and submission to external audit. There is no requirement for the committee to approve the unaudited accounts but this gives an opportunity for members to understand the process.

36. The committee considered the draft Statement of Accounts (SoA) 2020-21 at its meeting on 13 July 2021. It is a credit to Hannah Simpson, head of finance, audit and risk, and the finance team that they worked tirelessly to produce the accounts to meet the statutory timeframe for the publication of the accounts in what had been a challenging year.

37. It was originally expected that the external audit of the accounts would be signed off at the committee's meeting in January 2022. The audited accounts were finally published on 17 May 2022.

38. The committee had an opportunity to attend an informal presentation on the audited accounts prior to the committee meeting in May 2022. This was a useful session for members and helps with their understanding, particularly given the delay in the completion of the external audit.

Referral Powers and Accountability Arrangements

39. The committee's discussions and recommendations relating to the effectiveness of the governance, risk management and internal control frameworks, financial reporting arrangements and internal and external audit, are recorded in the minutes of the meetings. Where appropriate the committee's recommendations on any of these matters are referred to cabinet or the chief finance officer, as set out in the terms of reference. Meetings are attended by the key officers and other members of the corporate leadership team and senior managers, internal and external audit, who contribute to the discussions and are accountable for ensuring that the committee's recommendations are given due consideration. The cabinet member for resources also attends all meetings of the audit committee.

40. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) document on "audit committee's practical guidance for local authorities and police" sets out the guidance on the function and the operation of audit committees. It is therefore good practice to complete a regular self-assessment exercise against the checklist, to be satisfied that the committee is performing effectively. In addition, the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards also call for the committee to assess their remit and effectiveness, in relation to Purpose, Authority and Responsibility. The audit committee undertook its first self-assessment exercise, facilitated by the internal audit manager and as a result, actions have been identified to ensure full compliance with best practice. These actions were approved at the meeting in January 2022. It is intended that the committee will carry out the self-assessment exercise on an annual basis and monitor progress against actions as part of its work programme planning.

41. The committee has been effective in undertaking the functions set out in the terms of reference in accordance with the council's procedure rules and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Audit Committee

Membership of the Audit Committee shall comprise 8 members appointed by the Council (excluding Cabinet members). Additionally, up to two independent non-voting co-opted members may be appointed on the basis of their skill, knowledge, qualification and experience relevant to the role of the committee.

The chair of the committee is elected by the council and the vice-chair is appointed by the committee.

Within the policies laid down by the council and within the Corporate Plan to exercise the following powers of the council:

Corporate governance

1. Review the effectiveness of internal control across the council and the adequacy of actions taken to address any weaknesses or control failures.
2. Consider the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's arrangements for the identification and management of the organisation's business risks; including the risk management policy, strategy and risk register.
3. Receive and consider regular reports at least twice a year on the risk environment, corporate risk register and associated management actions.
4. Review and ensure the adequacy of the council's anti-fraud and corruption policy and strategy and the effectiveness of their application.
5. Review and ensure that adequate arrangements are established and operating to deal with situations of suspected or actual fraud and corruption.
6. Review, consider and agree the Annual Governance Statement, including the adequacy of the corporate governance framework and improvement action plan contained within it.
7. Receive periodic updates on improvement actions taken.

Internal and external audit

8. Approve the internal audit charter.
9. Approve and monitor delivery of the internal audit strategy.
10. Consider, endorse and monitor delivery of the internal audit annual work programme, including any significant in-year changes to the programme or resource requirements.
11. Ensure adequate resourcing of the internal audit function, approving any significant additional consulting services requested from internal audit not already included in the internal audit annual work programme.
12. Receive and consider the annual internal audit report and opinion on behalf of the council.
13. Oversee the annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit, to include the performance of the internal audit function, compliance with standards and delivery of improvement actions.
14. Contribute to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place every five years.
15. Commission work from internal and external audit and consider the resulting reports.

16. Comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and ensure it gives value for money.
17. Ensure that there are effective relationships between external and internal audit, inspection agencies and other relevant bodies, and that the value of the audit process is actively promoted.
18. Seek assurance that action has been taken to implement the recommendations arising from the findings of significant audit and inspection work.

Statement of accounts

19. Discuss the annual audit plan for the audit of the financial statements with external audit.
20. Consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports and the report to those charged with governance.
21. Review and approve the annual statement of accounts, including subsequent amendments on behalf of the council.

Referral powers

22. Make recommendations for due consideration on all matters described above. Recommendations relating to all paragraphs except 9-10 and 12-21 shall be made to the Cabinet and Chief Finance Officer. Recommendations relating to paragraphs 9-10 and 12-21 shall be made to the Chief Finance Officer.

Accountability arrangements

23. Report to those charged with governance on the committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks, financial reporting arrangements and internal and external audit functions.
24. Report to full council on the committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and effectiveness of the committee in meeting its purpose.

NORWICH City Council

Item 9

Committee name: Council

Committee date: 22/11/2022

Report title: Interim polling district and polling places review 2022

Portfolio:	Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources
Report from:	Democratic and elections manager
Wards:	Mancroft, Mile Cross, Thorpe Hamlet, Town Close and Wensum

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

To approve proposals for the interim polling places and polling district review 2022.

Recommendation:

To approve the amended polling scheme as recommended by the polling district and places working group at appendix A.

Policy framework

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

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

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

Report details

1. This interim polling district and polling places review focussed on changes to the polling scheme where venues were no longer available or suitable. This review did not look at the whole local authority area or boundaries.

2. A polling district and polling places review working group made up of elected members met at the end of the consultation period to help formulate a polling district and polling places scheme. The working party was politically balanced and consists of four Labour councillors, two Green Party councillors and one Liberal Democrat councillor.

3. The review concentrated on venues in the following polling districts - MA4/MA4A, MA5, MX3, TH3, TO5 and WE2/WE2A.

4. The Acting Returning Officer (ARO) set out his proposals at appendix A to this report.

5. The timetable for the review was initially published as:

   a) Notice of Review – 25 July 2022 (publication of suggested changes by ARO).

   b) Review consultation period – 25 July 2022 – 5 September 2022

   c) A meeting of a members polling district and polling places review group on 9 September 2022 to view suggested ARO changes/consultation responses and then make recommendations to September council.

   d) Working Group Report for approval by full council on 27 September 2022

6. The timetable was amended due to the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II. Revised dates were as follows:

   a) A meeting of a members polling district and polling places review group on 4 November 2022 to view suggested ARO changes/consultation responses and then make recommendations to November council.

   b) Working Group Report for approval by full council on 22 November 2022

7. The members polling district and polling places working party met by MS Teams on 4 November 2022 to propose recommendations to council.

8. Members were asked to propose 6 recommendations (one for each polling district) based on the proposed polling scheme, and those recommendations are listed in appendix A.

9. The working group were also tasked with considering any other proposals

or consultation responses. This could include responses from residents, organisations, political parties, elected representatives and other key stakeholders. There was one response from the Norwich, Norfolk and City Council Labour Party which was considered by the working group. When making decisions, members have to make sure they take into account any consultation feedback.

10. As Acting Returning Officer, the Chief Executive has a statutory duty to ensure free and fair elections. In discharging these duties, the Acting Returning Officer will take account of the recommendations made by the polling district and polling places review working party as set out in a report to council but will retain the right to make changes if deemed appropriate for reasons of practicality and/or other circumstances which may influence the location and use of polling stations within Norwich. As far as possible, the Acting Returning Officer will seek to consult with the working party on any such changes.

11. This will allow and polling station changes to be in place in time for the election on 4 May 2023. As there are no boundary changes there is no requirement to re-publish the electoral register.

Consultation

12. A public consultation has taken place and the responses to that consultation were submitted to the members working group and are available on the council's website.

13. Responses were received from the Norwich City Council Labour group, the Norfolk County Council Labour group, the Norwich Labour group and the MP for Norwich South.

Implications

Financial and resources

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

14. Any decisions to increase expenditure will be met through existing budgets or recharged to the appropriate body.

Legal

15. There are no legal implications to this report.

Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	The Electoral Commission are currently consulting on the accessibility guidance that will come into effect for elections for May 2023 and onwards. As such, all polling stations will have to be formally assessed to determine their compliance with the revised guidance. This will be conducted following publication of the guidance and should any specific equality or diversity considerations emerge, further consideration will be given to either improving compliance at the polling station or if a different polling station is required.
Health, social and economic impact	No direct implications.
Crime and disorder	No direct implications.
Children and adults safeguarding	No direct implications.
Environmental impact	No direct implications.

Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Not securing suitable venues	Voter turnout could be affected.	Suitable venues will be sought.

Other options considered

16. All options considered are outlined within this report. Members of the working group are invited to comment and make recommendations to council.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

17. Some venues are no longer available or have been deemed unsuitable. The ARO has proposed alternative or new venues where required.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

ARO proposals and working group recommendations – Appendix A

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Polling District	Ward	Existing Polling Station	Proposed Polling Station	Comments
MA4/MA4A	Mancroft	Castle Quarter, Timberhill	Julian Centre, Rouen Road	New polling station – change due to location
MA5	Mancroft	Alive Church. Colegate	St Augustines Church Hall, St Augustines Street	New polling station – change due to old station being unavailable
MX3	Mile Cross	Temporary Polling Station, Sloughbottom Park	The Community Room, Larners Way	New polling station – change due to permanent location within district
TH3	Thorpe Hamlet	Norwich Hotel, Thorpe Road	Canary Social Club, Thorpe Road	New polling station – change due to old station being unavailable
TO5	Town Close	St Albans Church Hall	St Albans Church Hall	Continued use of existing polling station while officers continue to investigate suitable alternatives
WE2/WE2A	Wensum	Harry's Soul Station, Adelaide Street	The Alive House, Nelson Street	New polling station – change due to old station being unavailable

NORWICH City Council

Item 10

Committee name: Council

Committee date: 22/11/2022

Report title: Establishment of a Friendship Link

Portfolio: Councillor Alan Waters, Leader of the Council

Report from: Councillor Alan Waters

Wards: All wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

To consider the establishment of a Friendship Link between Norwich City Council and the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, Brazil

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Council agree to the establishment of a Friendship Link between Norwich City Council and the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, Brazil

Policy framework

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

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

This report addresses the following priority or action in the Corporate Plan: 'Norwich as a Connected City'

Report details

1. The proposed Friendship link between the Norwich City Council and the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, has its origins in academic work being undertaken at the UEA with this indigenous community from the region of Brazil. The salience of the issues around the future of the Amazon and the vital work undertaken by the indigenous communities across Brazil who inhabit and defend the

forest, is of global concern and an important topic as part of the work of COP 26 and 27.

2. This is a timely issue. The hostility of the outgoing Bolsonaro Government, over the past four years, to legally protected forests and the rights of Brazil's 900,000 people to inhabit and defend the forest have seen an undercutting of environmental protections that have resulted in massive swathes of deforestation and legally protected forests being permanently destroyed by mineral prospecting, mining, logging and ranching. Murdering with impunity rainforest defenders is a sinister dimension.

3. This has been the experience of the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau. The award winning film," The Territory", is partially shot by the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau people and filmed over the course of several years. The film offers an authentic portrait of an Indigenous community's daily life and struggles. All city councillors have been sent a link to the film, to watch before we discuss the proposal to set up a friendship link at the November meeting of Council.

4. The introduction to the film, sets out starkly the challenges faced by the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau since they were first contacted by the Brazilian government in 1981. "Their territory has become an island of green rainforest surrounded by denuded farms and ranches — the results of four decades of unchecked deforestation. The community has faced environmentally destructive and often violent incursions into their sovereign territory by non-natives seeking to exploit the land. Illegal logging and land clearing incursions have become more frequent and more brazen over the years".

5. "Inside Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau territory, there are fewer than 200 people, including elders and children, to defend nearly 7,000 square miles of rainforest. On the edges of the protected lands, a network of farmers organizes to stake their claims through official channels, while individual land-grabbers begin clear-cutting swaths of rainforest for themselves. With the community's survival at stake, Bitaté Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau and Neidinha Bandeira — a young Indigenous leader and his female mentor — must find new ways to protect the rainforest from encroaching invaders. But rather than rely on others to tell their story, the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau take control of the narrative and create their own news media team to bring the world the truth".

6. Hopefully a Friendship link would give visibility and a higher profile to the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau and their fight to protect their territory and the precious rainforest. There is cause for optimism with the election of President elect Lula. But that is no guarantee in the near future that illegal incursions will not continue. If Council agrees to establish a Friendship link, one of the first tasks will be to write to the Brazilian government, including the Brazilian Embassy in the U.K, and the regional tiers of government to inform them of the connection between Norwich and the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau.

7. There have been Zoom meetings with Bitaté Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau and Neidinha Bandeira to begin to explore the benefits and possible areas of collaboration. Initial ideas include:
   - Support programmes relating to tackling deforestation.
   - Working with a number of village schools to promote the learning English. Seen as a priority.

- More broadly, the ambition would be exploring linkages and connections to share practical strategies for tackling climate change. Norwich 2040 Vision partnership and the work of the Norwich Climate Change Commission could make productive connections in Brazil, through the Friendship link, guided by Ari Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau colleagues. It is important to stress that this is a Friendship link of equals. A reciprocal relationship of mutual understanding & learning.

8. Discussions with the Norwich Dedza Partnership (Malawi) has provided very helpful ideas about how the Friendship link could potentially develop.

   "The Norwich-Dedza Partnership has been established to enable organisations and individuals in and around Norwich to assist in the development of the District of Dedza in Malawi. Norwich has many resources in its education institutions, schools, local government, health agencies, voluntary sector, commercial companies and individuals. If these are applied in a combined effort over a period of years in collaboration with the people of Dedza, it could make a considerable difference to their lives.People and organisations in Norwich also benefit from such a partnership. It provides an opportunity to learn about a different culture, to understand development and environmental issues and to work together in inter-disciplinary teams"

9. A recently completed project was helping female students at a secondary school in Dedza by providing dormitories for girls from rural areas to replace very run down off-site facilities. Through crowd funding and support from individuals and UK based trusts this project was successfully completed in 2022. For further information: http://www.norwich-dedza.org/partnership.html

10. If the recommendation to set up the link is agreed, a steering group of volunteers will be established to begin the work of developing the Friendship link. It is expected that the Norwich -Ari-Uru-Wau-Wau Friendship link will attend and report on progress to the City Council's Twinning Committee.

Implications

Financial and resources

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

11. Each twinning partner receives a small allocation of budget each year to support them with costs of administering their association, or the offer of meeting rooms at Council premises (in kind support). Once established, the Council will confirm which form of support the friendship link would appreciate. If the group would prefer a small budgetary allocation that can be achieved from the existing twinning budget without compromising on the support provided to existing twinning partners.

Legal

12. There are no specific duties or requirements for authorities to establish

twinning or friendship links. However, the general power of competence provided by the Localism Act 2011 provides authority with the ability to do so if they wish.

Statutory considerations

Consideration	**Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:**
Equality and diversity	There are no specific implications arising from this report
Health, social and economic impact	Not applicable
Crime and disorder	Not applicable
Children and adults safeguarding	Not applicable
Environmental impact	The ambition of the link would be exploring linkages and connections to share practical strategies for tackling climate change. Norwich 2040 Vision partnership and the work of the Norwich Climate Change Commission could make productive connections in Brazil, through the Friendship link, guided by Ari Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau colleagues.

Risk management

Risk	**Consequence**	**Controls required**
Failure to establish the link could lead to loss of focus for those developing the link and reputational damage to the authority	The friendship link is not established and relations with the group do not develop	Establishment of the link, to be monitored through the work of the Twinning Committee

Other options considered

1. No other options have been considered.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

2. A Friendship Link between Norwich and the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau would give visibility to their fight to protect their territory. The Norwich 2040 Vision partnership and the work of the Norwich Climate Change Commission could make productive connections in Brazil, through the Friendship link, guided by Ari Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau colleagues.

Background papers: None

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Item 11 (a)

Item 11

Motion to: Council

22 November 2022

Subject: Library story time events

Proposer: Councillor Stonard

Seconder: Councillor Huntley

Norwich's Millennium Library at the Forum recently hosted a 'Storytime with Auntie Titania' event for children. This positive, inclusive, and educational event was warmly supported by many residents of Norwich, as children enjoyed being read to in the public space of a library.

Reading aloud to children has proven benefits around improving literary skills, while doing so in a group further benefits social interaction and developmental skills, especially important in children who have lost out on much of this developmental interaction through the experience of government-mandated pandemic restrictions. The story time events teach children a positive message of a supportive, inclusive, diverse, and tolerant community for all.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

1) affirm support for the continuation of such story time events as a way of promoting positive, inclusive, and non-discriminatory attitudes within the city

2) re-affirm the Norwich 2040 vision of celebrating our diverse neighbourhoods and communities; and

3) ask the leaders of all groups to write to the relevant Norfolk County Council member expressing the city council's wish for further such events to be held in the city.

Item 11(b)

Motion to: Council

22 November 2022

Subject: Sweetbriar Marshes

Proposer: Councillor Galvin

Seconder: Councillor Lubbock

Norfolk Wildlife Trust is to create a brand-new nature reserve in the heart of Norwich, a centrepiece for their vision for a Wilder Norwich for All, giving Norwich residents the opportunity to access nature in the heart of their city.
Sweet Briar Marshes cover 90 acres along the River Wensum close to the city centre: a rare wild wetland, fenland and woodland habitat, including areas of SSSI and County Wildlife site status.

The project has led to NWT recently achieving its fastest ever appeal - with support from Aviva, charitable trusts and local campaigners and communities - for £600,000, to purchase the land, which shows how highly people value nature. Congratulations to all concerned for this incredible effort.

We call on the city council to:

1) acknowledge and support this exciting opportunity, and

2) call a special meeting to consider bestowing the Freedom of the City on the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Norfolk Rivers Trust and Broads Authority in recognition of their work to support the River Wensum and its associated marshes, and to celebrate this new nature reserve and its links to the river, demonstrating the city's commitment to natural networks and corridors.

3) ask cabinet to:

    a) Work with NWT to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the site, and encourage and enable communities, including schools, to understand and appreciate its value as habitats for wildlife and experience peaceful enjoyment of nature.

    b) Ensure that the River Wensum Strategy Partnership continues to work to protect the river - with a particular new focus on its relationship with the marsh as an intrinsic part of its rich ecology.

    c) Work with NWT to review Norwich City Council's land ownership around the site with a view to providing wildlife protection and enhancement, access and appropriate boundaries to the site including maintenance etc.

d) Support and develop future funding bids for the Marshes, for example through the Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS), CIL and other financial or 'in kind' contributions such as NCSL getting involved with volunteering.

e) Ensure Norwich citizens are given every chance to be part of caring for the area, including supporting council-owned properties and estate e.g. community centres and parks which border the site to play an active role in its management and restoration.

f) Consider how the marshes fit into the natural networks and corridors across the city, and facilitate the linkages through the Norwich city council biodiversity strategy also the planning process which provides the opportunity to fill in gaps in the natural networks that connects up with Sweet Briar marshes.

Item 11(c)

Motion to: Council

22 November 2022

Subject: Development Management Policies

Proposer: Councillor Bogelein

Seconder: Councillor Young

The Norwich Development Management Policies Local Plan forms an important part of the local planning process which is used to guide and justify planning decisions and also to reject inappropriate planning applications. The Development Management Policies Local Plan was adopted in December 2014. In planning meetings over the last few years, there have been statements by members of the planning committee stating that there is a need to urgently update the DM policies so that they are fit for purpose in the Norwich of the 2020s.

The DM policies provide a crucial lever for the council to ensure the quality and sustainability of the built environment in Norwich. The DM policies should also provide communities with a democratic means of influencing planning for Norwich.

Council notes that:

1) currently it is expected that the next review of the DM policies will commence in 2024 following adoption of the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

2) a review of DM policies needs to take account of any changes to the National Planning Framework and policies in the adopted Greater Norwich Local Plan.

3) it is desirable for the DM policies to be reviewed as soon as national policies and the adoption of the Greater Norwich Local Plan allow so that they reflect new evidence, science and challenges.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

4) Schedule a series of engagement events with elected councillors and the public to discuss areas where DM policies need to better support the council's corporate objectives and be fit for the future, for example:

a) Air quality
b) Climate adaptation
c) Energy efficiency
d) Biodiversity Net Gain
e) Public health protections
f) Water resilience and sustainable drainage
g) Quality of amenity
h) Active travel

i) Heritage
j) Gardens
k) Good design

These engagement events will clarify where reviews are necessary and explore where local members and the local community want to see changes to the policies. The events will enable the review of DM policies to be progressed a lot more quickly following the publication of modifications to the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

5) ask group leaders to write to the government echoing the concerns of the Town and Country Planning Association by seeking to preserve the primacy of the local plan.

Item 11(d)

Motion to: Council

22 November 2022

Subject: Norfolk Climate Change Partnership

Proposer: Councillor Osborn

Seconder: Councillor Champion

Norwich City Council has set itself a target of reaching net zero carbon emissions across the whole city by 2045. This will only be possible with action from all partners and will require rapid decarbonisation of sectors that contribute the most to emissions in Norwich and Norfolk, namely transport and the built environment.

Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP) is a partnership of the environmental officers of all the district councils in Norfolk and the county council. The NCCP's officer members report to the portfolio holders' group of cabinet members with responsibility for climate change at the respective councils.

The NCCP has thus far commissioned a study on the use of hydrogen in refuse collection vehicles, and a study on the opportunities for community energy in Norfolk. The NCCP does not currently have a forward work programme or agreed priorities.

This month, scientists have warned that current policies would lead to a global temperature rise of 2.8C in the next 80 years. And the UN Secretary General António Guterres has warned that humanity must "co-operate or perish", saying that under current policies, "we are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator."

Council notes that:

1) In order to reduce carbon emissions effectively in Norwich and other parts of Norfolk, district and county councils need to work together.

2) Members of the NCCP are over-stretched and there is a need for a dedicated climate action officer for Norfolk, including Norwich.

3) There is an urgent need for the NCCP to prioritise the decarbonisation of transport and energy use in buildings to achieve net zero across the county, including in Norwich, as these are the two largest sources of emissions across Norfolk.

4) Virtually all housing and transport in Norwich and Norfolk will need to be brought to zero carbon emissions by 2050 in order to meet net zero targets, as there are other sectors where total decarbonisation is not feasible (*e.g.* some industry) and therefore the offsetting that is relied on to deliver net zero must be dedicated to offsetting those sectors, not housing or transport.

5) Decarbonising housing through insulation and installation of renewable energy brings many other benefits including reduced fuel poverty, greater energy security, more green and decent jobs, and better health outcomes.

6) Support from the Government for decarbonisation is inadequate, but this does not prevent councils from working together to establish strategies, financing mechanisms and delivery models for advancing the decarbonisation of housing and transport.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

7) Call on the NCCP to establish an evidence-based county-wide climate action plan, covering Norwich and other districts, with buy-in from senior officers and cabinet members with a focus on decarbonising transport and housing as the main sources of emissions.

8) Work with other districts and the county council to jointly fund a climate action officer for the NCCP, who would lead on the design and implementation of the county-wide climate action plan, and who would identify and prepare applications for relevant funding streams; and

9) Seek the backing of the NCCP to write to the new Prime Minister, BEIS Secretary, DLUHC Secretary, and DEFRA Secretary calling for a national programme of insulation and renewable energy installation, to be delivered in partnership with local authorities.