

Cabinet

17:30 to 18:20

Wednesday, 13 November 2024

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

Apologies: None

In attendance: Councillor Galvin (Leader of the Green Group)
Councillor Wright (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group)

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

2. Public Questions and Petitions

There had been no public questions or petitions received.

3. Questions to Cabinet Members

There had been no questions received.

4. Minutes

The Leader announced that Councillor Hampton had been appointed to the Member Board of the Norfolk Environmental Credits Ltd Joint Venture.

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2024.

5. Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy revisions

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report. The revisions to the Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy were around working with Registered Providers (RPs) and enabling the use of affordable rents as necessary. Affordable rents would be capped at the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and no existing tenants would be affected by this. The Council sought every opportunity to build housing within the city but viability could be an issue. Affordable rents could help to support the Council's aims in building more housing.

The Leader of the Council asked the following question on Councillor Galvin's behalf:

“With the new affordable rent tenancies, the report suggests that this will allow registered providers to introduce these tenancies. What plans does the council have for introducing this specific type of tenancy itself?”

The Cabinet Member for Housing gave the following response:

“The Tenancy Policy explains the link between our affordable rent tariff and Local Housing Allowance (LHA) caps. We will not set our affordable rents at 80% of the market rent.

Norwich's affordable rents will be set at a maximum of LHA. Setting the rent levels at this tariff is equivalent to 55-60% of market rents. The Policy was developed with guidance from the Financial Inclusion Teams, and no identifiable households will be affected by this change in rent setting.”

The Cabinet Member for Housing moved, and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for A Climate Responsive Norwich seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to approve the Tenancy Strategy attached at Appendix 1a to the report and the Tenancy Policy attached as Appendix 1b to the report.

6. Revised safeguarding policy

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report. The report provided a comprehensive update to the Council's safeguarding policy. It detailed the processes for escalating concerns and made it clear that officers and councillors had a duty to raise any concerns. There was training available for staff and for councillors.

The Leader of the Council asked the following question on Councillor Galvin's behalf:

“There have been numerous occasions where councillors have tried to raise safeguarding issues about tenants in their current accommodation for a variety of issues where residents have expressed suicidal thoughts, with this leading to no proper process being followed to address these concerns. How can this be addressed through this new safeguarding policy?”

The Cabinet Member for Housing gave the following response:

“There is a separate guide re: responding when people are expressing suicidal thoughts which is accessible along with other accompanying resources via our wellbeing SharePoint site. – we will ensure this is referenced more clearly in the policy before publication.”

The Cabinet Member for Housing moved and the Cabinet Member for A Prosperous Norwich seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to agree the revised safeguarding policy and publish the revised policy on the Council's website.

7. Variations and awards of Housing Revenue Account contracts for housing maintenance, upgrades and compliance works – Key Decision

(The Leader of the Council agreed to take this item early).

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the report. The Executive Director of Housing highlighted that the report brought together a number of housing property services contracts to enable these essential works to continue. A significant procurement exercise would be undertaken in the next year.

The Leader of the Council asked the following question on Councillor Galvin's behalf:

"What proportion (as a value and as percentage) of the extra £16,113,500 to be spent on the above will provide insulation and renewable heat for the council's stock?"

The Cabinet Member for Housing gave the following response:

"Insulation

During roof replacement works loft insulation is checked, if the loft insulation does not meet the 300mm requirement then it is topped up, or alternatively if the insulation is defective then the insulation is removed and new insulation is installed to the current 300mm standard, this is hard to quantify as this is a reactive work programme and is subject to survey at the time of replacement.

Loft insulation is carried out on all whole house improvements to the standard of 300mm.

An average loft insulation cost is circa £1500 per property for full replacement.

Renewable Heat

None of these current contracts are to facilitate renewable heating installations."

The Cabinet Member for Housing moved and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for A Climate Responsive Norwich seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, subject to satisfactory performance and quality being met for the complete contract period, to:

- 1) Vary the following contracts, to be funded from existing HRA Capital budget:
 - a. Re-Roofing Programme to a single supplier, Aspect Group Services Limited, for the remaining contract period to 31 March 2025 at a value of £925,000.00
 - b. Domestic Heating Upgrades to a single supplier, Dodd Group (Easter) Ltd, for remaining contract period to 31 March 2025 at a value of £306,000.00
 - c. Kitchen Installations Programme to a single supplier, Gasway Services Limited for the remaining contract period to 31 March 2025 at a value of £270,000.00
 - d. Bathroom Installations Programme to a single supplier, Gasway Services Limited, for the remaining contract period to 31 March 2025 at a value of £275,000.00

- e. Domestic Electrical Upgrades and Re-wires to a single supplier, Gasway Services Limited, for the remaining contract period to 31 March 2025 at a value of £100,000.00
- 2) Extend the following contracts, funded from the existing HRA Capital budget
- a. Kitchen Installations Programme to a single supplier, Gasway Services Limited, for the additional contract period 01 April 2025 for up to one year to 31 March 2026 at a value of £1,515,000.00
- 3) Extend the following contracts, subject to Full Council approving the HRA Budget for 2025/26 in February 2025:
- a. Bathroom Installations Programme to a single supplier, Gasway Services Limited, for the additional contract period of 01 April 2025 for up to one year to 31 March 2026 at a value of £1,520,000.00.
 - b. Domestic Electrical Upgrades and Re-wires to a single supplier, Gasway Services Limited, for the additional contract period of 01 April 2025 for up to one year to 31 March 2026 at a value of £1,515,000.00.
 - c. Domestic Electrical Inspections and Testing (EICRs) to a single supplier, Gasway Services Limited, for the additional contract period of 01 April 2025 for up to one year to 31 March 2026 at a value of £200,000.00
- 4) Award the following new contracts, subject to Full Council approving the HRA Budget for 2025/26 in February 2025:
- a. Re-Roofing Programme to a single supplier, Aspect Group Services Limited, for an additional contract period of 01 April 2025 for up one year to 31 March 2026 at a value of £2,000,000.00
 - b. Domestic Heating Upgrades to a single supplier, Dodd Group (Eastern) Ltd, for an additional contract period of 01 April 2025 for up to one year to 31 March 2026 at a value of £3,100,000.00
 - c. Heating Systems, Servicing and Repairs to a single supplier, Gasway Services Limited, for a period of 01 April 2025 for up to one year to 31 March 2026 at a value of £1,900,000.00
 - d. Whole Home Improvements (Void properties) to a single supplier, Gasway Services Limited, for the period of 01 December 2024 to 31 March 2025 and for the additional contract period of 01 April 2025 for up to one year to 31 March 2026 at a value of £2,487,500.00.

(Councillor Jones left the meeting at this point).

8. Corporate Performance Report for Quarter 2, 2024-2025

The Leader of the Council introduced the report. The Senior Strategy Officer highlighted that the report set out the Council's performance for quarter 2 of 2024-2025 for the period 1 July to 30 September 2024. The report detailed the priorities within the community-led plan

“We are Norwich” and the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within the report were legacy KPIs that were not fully aligned with the community-led plan. This would be addressed through the business planning process. The report detailed quarterly KPIs and annual KPIs. One KPI, related to the general fund, had been removed as this was monitored through the budget monitoring report. Overall performance remained steady there were six KPIs where the Council was taking action to bring these into target.

The Cabinet Member for A Fairer Norwich commented that there had been improvements in the KPI measuring the processing of new Housing Benefit claims which had improved from an average of 20 days to process to 15 days which exceeded the target of 19.5 days in terms of performance. Processing times for claims for Council Tax Reduction Scheme were within target.

The Leader of the Council asked the following question on Councillor Galvin’s behalf:

“The corporate plan was adopted at the beginning of this year after much work and needs to align with reporting and KPIs. I am not clear why the other priorities are being monitored but A Future Proof Norwich, which is clearly an important priority, is not. By what date will Future Proof Norwich be monitored and reported on? When will the new KPIs be finalised so performance can be monitored using indicators that actually fit our corporate plan, and what are the risks involved in using outdated KPIs? (“existing KPIs have been mapped to the new priorities”, but how can we be confident that all new priorities are sufficiently captured by existing KPIs?”

The Leader of the Council gave the following response:

“Following the adoption of the new community-led plan ‘We are Norwich’ in April 2024, work is underway to transition the organisation towards outcome-based monitoring and performance reporting. This will help us to align our resources, people, and partnerships to deliver our new priorities - this is a big task, and it will take some time.

For each of our five priorities we are developing business plans with an outcomes-based approach that defines:

- the desired outcomes under each priority (what success looks like)
- the activities we need to undertake to achieve them
- the resources required (money and people)
- which partners and stakeholders we need to work with
- key performance indicators (KPI’s) and performance reports to better monitor our progress

Interim performance arrangements are in place during this transition period with existing KPIs mapped to the new priorities in ‘We are Norwich’, noting that these are legacy measures that will be reviewed through the process above, resulting in the development of more relevant and robust measures through which to evaluate our progress in delivering the ambitions set out in the community-led plan.

As we move through this iterative process over the next 18 months or so, members will see quarterly performance move towards:

- making **outcomes measurable and quantifiable** - linking outcomes with outputs
- a focus on **improving, as opposed to hitting targets** – a systematic collection of data that measures progress and achievement
- ongoing assessment of **efficiency, effectiveness and impact**, with evaluation of why outcomes are, or are not, being achieved
- **evidence of achievement and invest to save** in project and programme impact assessments
- an enhanced capacity to monitor delivery of We are Norwich through robust **governance and oversight.**”

The Leader of the Council moved, and the Cabinet Member for An Open and Modern Council seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to review the progress on the key performance indicators for quarter 2 of 2024-2025.

9. 2024-25 Quarter 2 – budget monitoring report

The Cabinet Member for An Open and Modern Council presented the report. The Council's financial environment remained challenging as there had been long term reductions in funding and economic factors such as inflation were increasing the cost of services. The Council continued to monitor these pressures. The report detailed a forecast overspend in the Council's general fund of £645,000. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme had benefitted from the relaxation of the rules around Right to Buy receipts and there was a forecast underspend of £7.167 million.

The Leader of the Council asked the following question on Councillor Galvin's behalf:

“In reference to paragraph 2.3 ‘with a Vacancy Management Panel about to be established, that will review all recruitment proposals, both as a means of ensuring value for money and as a potential mitigation against the current outturn forecasts. To this end the number of agency staff has been reduced and will continue to be kept under review.’ I was told over a year ago by senior management that they were monitoring interim spend, which is clearly at unacceptable levels, as a ‘grip indicator’. However this says that the Vacancy Management Panel is ‘about to be’ established. What will the panel do to make an effective difference? What is the timeline for the Vacancy Management Panel to be established? “To this end the number of agency staff has been reduced and will continue to be kept under review” – in what areas has agency staff been reduced? With what impact on costs? Can this be broken down by pay grade & department?”

The Cabinet Member for An Open and Modern Council gave the following response:

“The information you have requested regarding the vacancy management panel arrangements and agency staff numbers and costs will be published at a future date, and will be shared with all Councillors at that time.”

The Cabinet Member for An Open and Modern Council moved and the Cabinet Member for A Fairer Norwich seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to:

- 1) Note the forecast outturn for the both the general fund revenue account is an overspend of £654k and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is currently reflecting a forecast underspend of £7.167 million. However there continue to be potential budget pressures across all service areas which are being reviewed on an on-going basis, alongside the exploration of options to mitigate the current outturn forecast position.
- 2) Note the forecast £0.050m underspend against the general fund and the £0.832m underspend against the HRA capital programmes.
- 3) Note the carry-forward of unspent 2023/24 capital budgets for utilisation in future years as approved under delegation by the interim chief finance officer.
- 4) Note the re-profiling of capital budgets as approved under delegation by the interim chief finance officer in consultation with the cabinet member for an open and modern council, resulting in the revised capital programme set out in Appendix 1.
- 5) Approve the proposed virement within the 2024/25 HRA capital programme as set out in Appendix 2.
- 6) Recommend to Council, the removal of £0.078m of General Fund budgets and £0.087m of HRA budgets from the 2024/25 General Fund and HRA capital programmes as set out in Appendix 2.

10. Corporate Risk Register 2024-25 – Quarter 2

The Cabinet Member for An Open and Modern Council presented the report. The report detailed the Council’s Corporate Risk Register for the period to 30 September 2024. There had been no significant changes since Quarter 1 of 2024-25. The Council continued to operate in a high risk environment due to the funding position. The risk register would continue to be monitored by Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

The Leader of the Council asked the following question on Councillor Galvin’s behalf:

“cost of living pressure placing demands on the council, its partners and residents. The General Election has led to the establishment of a new Government and it is expected that the Chancellors budget, due on 30th October, will set out plans for local government financing.’ This paper comes well after the budget. Can we have an update on the impact of the budget on the risk register?”

The Cabinet Member for An Open and Modern Council gave the following response:

“The risk register report was written to report the position reflecting back on the position at the end of Quarter 2, i.e. 30th September whereas the Autumn Budget was announced in October, so it was up to date at the time of writing. The impact of the autumn budget is still unfolding, for example in terms of the Bank of England’s decisions about the base rate interest rate and how quickly this might be cut and/or as we await further details about the distribution of the additional investment in local government, that we won’t have the details of before the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement is published in December. The risk register will continue to be reviewed and updated as more information becomes apparent.”

The Cabinet Member for An Open and Modern Council moved and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for A Climate Responsive Norwich seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to note the identified risks and the direction of travel.

11. Adjustment to the 2024-29 general fund capital programme

The Cabinet Member for An Open and Modern Council presented the report. The report detailed an adjustment to the capital programme to be funded through Section 106 funding to repair paths in Bowthorpe Park that had been damaged. The repair would increase the resilience of the pathing against future flooding.

The Cabinet Member for An Open and Modern Council moved and the Cabinet Member for A Prosperous Norwich seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to recommend to Full Council, the approval of an adjustment to the 2024-29 general fund capital programme, to include an additional £0.030m of the Section 106 Funding to enable the upgrade of the riverside path, located at Bowthorpe Southern Park.

12. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of items *13 to *15 (below) on the grounds that they contained exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs within Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, of the Local Government Act 1972.

***13. Corporate Risk Register 2024-25 – Quarter 2 – Exempt Appendix (Para 3)**

The Cabinet Member for An Open and Modern Council presented the report.

The Cabinet Member for An Open and Modern Council responded to a question from Councillor Galvin on the risks that were confidential and the mitigations for each risk.

The Cabinet Member for An Open and Modern Council moved and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for A Climate Responsive Norwich seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to note the exempt appendix.

***14. Purchase and Sale of an Asset (Para 3) – Key Decision**

(An exempt minute exists for this item).

The Leader of the Council presented the report. He detailed the history of the asset and the work that had been undertaken by officers in reaching a way of moving forward with the site.

The Leader of the Council moved and the Cabinet Member for An Open and Modern Council seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to agree the recommendations as set out in the report.

***15. Participation in an Investment Partnership (Paras 3 and 5)**

(An exempt minute exists for this item).

The Leader of the Council presented the report. He highlighted that the Investment Partnership was an important vehicle to provide confidence to the Government that delivery of critical housing sites could be achieved.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin the Leader of the Council confirmed that the governance of the Investment Partnership would use the Heads of Terms as a basis that were consistent with similar arrangements elsewhere.

The Leader of the Council moved, and the Cabinet Member for An Open and Modern Council seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to agree the recommendations as set out in the report.

CHAIR

Item 6

Question	Response
<p>6.1 With the new affordable rent tenancies, the report suggests that this will allow registered providers to introduce these tenancies. What plans does the council have for introducing this specific type of tenancy itself?</p>	<p>The Tenancy Policy explains the link between our affordable rent tariff and Local Housing Allowance (LHA) caps. We will not set our affordable rents at 80% of the market rent. Norwich's affordable rents will be set at a maximum of LHA. Setting the rent levels at this tariff is equivalent to 55-60% of market rents. The Policy was developed with guidance from the Financial Inclusion Teams, and no identifiable households will be affected by this change in rent setting.</p>
<p>6.2 It is well known that 80% of the market rate is not truly affordable. Given that this is the maximum allowed, did the council consider capping this tenancy at a different level in order to provide a truly affordable option while still being able to supplement income to reinvest?</p>	<p>Norwich affordable rents will be set at a maximum of LHA. Setting the rent levels at this tariff is equivalent to 55-68% of market rents. The Policy was developed with guidance from the Financial Inclusion Teams, and no identifiable households will be affected by this change in rent setting.</p>
<p>6.3 What safeguards will be in place to ensure that this change does not result in a reduction of the level of housing at social rent in the city?</p>	<p>We have 14,020 properties, all currently set at Social Rents. We will assess some of our void properties for consideration as rent levels. The council has a churn of approximately 2.5% per year (500-600 units), and we will continue to develop mixed-tenure housing with our new development sites (approx. 200 new properties planned over the next 3 years).</p>
<p>6.4 Will the council be actively tracking the number of these tenancies being introduced and the number of additional social rent properties it is able to unlock? If not, what will be the key performance indicators for whether this policy change is working?</p>	<p>These properties have been created as a distinct group on our Housing Management system. All financial (rent / service charges/ repairs) and any additional Income/ budget streams have been set up to be monitored and scrutinised. As the policy indicates all additional income will be added to the HRA.</p>
<p>6.5 In what circumstances would the council decide to convert properties from social rent to affordable rent? I don't think this is the intention of the policy but it would be possible under the policy (with permission from Homes England) and so it would be interesting to know if this is something they may do in the future (this is the concern).</p>	<p>We will strictly adhere to the Rent Standards guidance (updated in December 2022) when assessing which properties, if any, would be converted, and as stated, this would require seeking permission from Homes England.</p>

Question	Response
6.6 Page 37 - can we stop the use of leading questions like this in consultations	This feedback will be reported back to our Comms team.
6.7 Will additional income from affordable rent tenancies be ring fenced for improving the maintenance of existing homes and providing new social rent properties? If not, how will we be able to measure whether or not this policy change is being successful?	All income from the Affordable rents will be added to the HRA and used as stipulated by legislation. Please also note 6.4, on our housing management system these properties have been given a dedicated a tenancy group.

Item 7

Question	Response
7.1 There have been numerous occasions where councillors have tried to raise safeguarding issues about tenants in their current accommodation for a variety of issues where residents have expressed suicidal thoughts, with this leading to no proper process being followed to address these concerns. How can this be addressed through this new safeguarding policy?	There is a separate guide re: responding when people are expressing suicidal thoughts which is accessible along with other accompanying resources via our wellbeing SharePoint site.– we will ensure this is referenced more clearly in the policy before publication
7.2 In the definitions, p52 point 6.7, the definition of neglect only applies when the person lacks mental capacity. There have been a number of examples where a young adult's needs have been neglected that would fall outside this definition. For example young adults left on the streets for multiple nights, because their failing mental health and language barriers prevented them from accessing the support they so desperately needed, leaving them vulnerable and at increased risk of abuse. Could the definition of neglect be broadened to cover those who have mental health conditions and language needs that might not extend as far as lacking capacity, but which prevent an adult from getting their most basic needs met.	The definition is based on the threshold required to constitute a safeguarding concern under the Care Act 2014. The Mental capacity Act 2005 is also referenced in the policy. We would expect officers to liaise with relevant professionals in these complex cases including health and social care colleagues. We also have guidance to support officers when we are worried about someone but the threshold for raising a safeguarding concern is not met. This is also referenced in the policy and accessible via our SharePoint site.
7.3 P54 6.19 Radicalisation - What counts as extreme here please? Governing authorities have failed to protect the future	The government's Prevent E-learning module is mandatory for all staff and includes a focus on radicalisation. This is a

Question	Response
<p>of children, with current policies taking us to a very dangerous +3 degrees, and some children are aware of this. Should securing a 1.5 degree future be added to our safeguarding policy and failure to do so be seen as organisational abuse?</p>	<p>complex issue and not something the council alone can resolve.</p>
<p>7.4 P60 15.1 Whistleblowing - Often employees will have had concerns for a long time before they get to the stage where they whistleblow. This means that issues often persist longer than they should. Even in organisations with excellent culture, if there is a hierarchical framework, that in itself is a barrier to reporting. Would it be a good idea for the council to have a platform where staff can anonymously report concerns when they are small sparks rather than big flames, as part of their safeguarding policy?</p>	<p>The whistleblowing policy is generic and relates to any concerns regarding organisational or individual practice. It is referenced in this policy in the specific context of safeguarding and organisational / professional abuse. New staff are introduced to the whistleblowing policy during induction and all staff receive 1:1 line management support and annual performance reviews to encourage sharing and resolution of any concerns. The mandatory safeguarding e-learning refers to organisational / professional abuse. This is also completed during induction and refreshed every 3 years</p>

Item 8

Question	Response
<p>8.1 p10 of report <i>Please note, there are currently no KPIs being monitored for the priority 'A future-proof Norwich.'</i> However, we are developing a new performance framework to ensure our KPI's align to our new corporate priorities.</p> <p>→The corporate plan was adopted at the beginning of this year after much work and needs to align with reporting and KPIs. I am not clear why the other priorities are being monitored but A Future Proof Norwich, which is clearly an important priority, is not. By what date will Future Proof Norwich be monitored and reported on? When will the new KPIs be finalised so performance can be monitored using indicators that actually fit our corporate plan, and what are the risks involved in using outdated KPIs? ("existing KPIs have been mapped to the new</p>	<p>Following the adoption of the new community-led plan 'We are Norwich' in April 2024, work is underway to transition the organisation towards outcome-based monitoring and performance reporting. This will help us to align our resources, people, and partnerships to deliver our new priorities - this is a big task, and it will take some time.</p> <p>For each of our five priorities we are developing business plans with an outcomes-based approach that defines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the desired outcomes under each priority (what success looks like) • the activities we need to undertake to achieve them • the resources required (money and people)

Question	Response
<p>priorities”, but how can we be confident that all new priorities are sufficiently captured by existing KPIs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • which partners and stakeholders we need to work with • key performance indicators (KPI’s) and performance reports to better monitor our progress <p>Interim performance arrangements are in place during this transition period with existing KPIs mapped to the new priorities in ‘We are Norwich’, noting that these are legacy measures that will be reviewed through the process above, resulting in the development of more relevant and robust measures through which to evaluate our progress in delivering the ambitions set out in the community-led plan.</p> <p>As we move through this iterative process over the next 18 months or so, members will see quarterly performance move towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – making outcomes measurable and quantifiable - linking outcomes with outputs – a focus on improving, as opposed to hitting targets – a systematic collection of data that measures progress and achievement – ongoing assessment of efficiency, effectiveness and impact, with evaluation of why outcomes are, or are not, being achieved – evidence of achievement and invest to save in project and programme impact assessments – an enhanced capacity to monitor delivery of We are Norwich through robust governance and oversight.
<p>8.2 p17 of report <i>There have been no private sector installation measures completed this quarter. Grant funding is required to support this KPI, and that funding requirement therefore</i></p>	<p>The council acknowledges the importance of private sector insulation measures and is working hard to increase this KPI. An Expression of Interest for the next Warm Homes Local</p>

Question	Response
<p><i>produces 'variable' quarterly figures. The more recent funding, the Sustainable Warmth Competition, has now ended. At this point last year, the rolling 12 -month total was 156 versus the current rolling 12 -month total of 126 installations. Please note, with the establishment of the 'Our Power' community energy group, and with an increased capacity to engage with communities around Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding, we expect figures to increase in future quarters.</i></p> <p>→ Q1 and Q2 have had zero private insulation measures completed. Insulation is vital for a healthy future. Our Power does not have funding to complete this work, to my knowledge. Is there more that can be done by Norwich city council to get these figures back on track?</p>	<p>Grant is being prepared, based on delivering measures to 1300 homes over three years, at a total cost of £19.5m, although final numbers have yet to be confirmed. We are also arranging a new simpler access pathway to ECO4 and Great British Insulation Scheme grant funding. We predict a significant increase in the rate of measures being installed.</p>
<p>8.3 p. 72: increase in amber & red ratings & decrease in green ratings – this looks concerning. Table on p. 72 mentions 5 red KPIs, point 7 on p. 72 mentions 6?</p>	<p>The table on p.72 compares quarterly KPIs only. There is also one annual KPI showing as red which is reported in quarter two each year, hence the different totals</p>
<p>8.4 p. 74: KPI “total number of private sector insulation measures completed” – what is the point of this KPI if it isn’t within the Council’s control – should we rather be monitoring number of available grants applied for or the like?</p>	<p>The current KPI is not directly comparable with that of other local authorities, as the methodology differs, to the best of our knowledge. The response is compiled from surveys circulated to residents of Norwich, and the response rate varies each quarter. As part of the new focus on outcomes-based monitoring, we will be developing more robust and relevant performance measures, taking account of best practice used by other local authorities</p>
<p>8.5 p. 85: % of residents responding as feeling safe in their local area after dark: 44%; % of residents responding as feeling safe in their local area during the day: 69% - what’s the process for developing a benchmark for these KPIs & how do these figures compare to other similar local authorities?</p>	<p>The current KPI is not directly comparable with that of other local authorities, as the methodology differs, The response is compiled from surveys circulated to residents of Norwich, and the response rate varies each quarter. As part of the new focus on outcomes-based monitoring, we will be developing more robust and relevant performance measures, taking account of best practice used by other local authorities</p>

Question	Response
<p>8.6 P.74 Council income from investment property portfolio expressed as % of target income: Performance has dropped this quarter due to one of the councils' largest tenants going into administration. Officers are working with administrators and seeking legal advice to ensure the council's position is protected. - Did the council have any indication that this tenant was at risk of going into administration?</p>	<p>The council were aware of the company having some cash flow issues post Covid. Officers were in regular dialogue with the company's managing director who had provided written reassurance on their financial position a few months prior to the company being put into administration. The council had assisted by allowing monthly rather than quarterly payments and immediately prior to going into administration the company were up to date with rental payments. Given the reassurance provided by the Managing Director only 2 months prior to going into administration the appointment of administrators was not expected. We are being proactive in our discussions with administrators to seek the best resolution for the Council and are working closely with a firm looking to acquire the business and which may result in some payment of outstanding rent.</p>

Item 9

Question	Response
<p>9.1 2.3 'with a Vacancy Management Panel about to be established, that will review all recruitment proposals, both as a means of ensuring value for money and as a potential mitigation against the current outturn forecasts. To this end the number of agency staff has been reduced and will continue to be kept under review.' I was told over a year ago by senior management that they were monitoring interim spend, which is clearly at unacceptable levels, as a 'grip indicator'. However this says that the Vacancy Management Panel is 'about to be' established. What will the panel do to make an effective difference? What is the timeline for the Vacancy Management Panel to be established? "To this end the number of agency</p>	<p>The information you have requested regarding the vacancy management panel arrangements and agency staff numbers and costs will be published at a future date, and will be shared with all Councillors at that time.</p>

Question	Response
<p>staff has been reduced and will continue to be kept under review” – in what areas has agency staff been reduced? With what impact on costs? Can this be broken down by pay grade & department?</p>	
<p>9.2 2.5 ‘The volume and value of income from car parks has increased relative to the same time in 2023/24, however it hasn’t increased at the same rate as estimated when the budget was set consequently creating a budget pressure of £724k.’</p> <p>→ Can you give some more detail on how the estimate was set for car parks which explains how it was nearly three quarters of a million pounds off the mark in real terms? How do repairs & maintenance relate to “anticipated demand”? Whose demand is this referring to?</p>	<p>Assumptions underpinning the increased budget were based upon an incorrect understanding and interpretation of the trends in parking volumes across the car park portfolio. In terms of the approach taken now, we can confirm that there is greater opportunity for the verification of assumptions and management of expectations, so there is now greater collaborative working between Finance and Environmental Services staff to match activity data to financial planning allowing for the discussion of sensitivity in the modelling of future activity levels.</p> <p>The reference to anticipated demand not being matched by reality, refers to the assumptions of car-parking demand described above, and the higher than anticipated expenditure on maintaining and repairing council owned buildings, in particular council homes within the HRA.</p>
<p>9.3 p. 91, 2.2: Could we work towards a KPI that monitors what percentage of our investments (cash balances & investments) are invested in ESG funds? Could reports include this info going forward? What is the current position in terms of % of investments placed with ESG funds?</p>	<p>The core pillars of the Council’s Treasury Management Strategy are Security, Liquidity and then Yield. Arbitrary targets for types of investments or investment classes result in an investment focus that departs from these three core pillars. Equally cash balances rise and fall depending on cashflows during the year, which makes performance monitoring against a fixed target difficult to maintain. Officers continue to identify ESG investment opportunities that meet the core pillars of the TM strategy and the minimum credit rating criteria. Going forward Officers are able to include % of investments placed with counterparties that have an ESG focus</p>

Question	Response
	in the reporting to TM Committee. As at 30 th November the Council had £105M in cash investments of which 29% was invested in funds promoting ethical investment practice and ESG criteria. A further 35% is invested with other Local Authorities and Central Government and 36 % with Banks/Financial institutions.
9.4 p. 91 p. 92, 3. “new flexibilities applied to the Right to Buy retention agreement for a two-year period” Please give a fuller explanation.	In July 2024, the Government increased the flexibilities that applied to how local authorities can use their Right to Buy receipts retained under Section 11(6) of the Local Government Act 2003. The increased flexibilities are for two financial years 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 and included an increase to the maximum contribution from Right to Buy receipts to fund replacement affordable housing from 50% to 100%. Under the existing agreement, the remaining 50% of the cost had to be funded from either revenue contributions or borrowing, but the changes will mean that expenditure on new social housing in Norwich can be fully funded from Right to Buy receipts and therefore no revenue contribution will be required during this period.

Item 10

Question	Response
10.1 ‘cost of living pressure placing demands on the council, its partners and residents. The General Election has led to the establishment of a new Government and it is expected that the Chancellors budget, due on 30th October, will set out plans for local government financing.’ → this paper comes well after the budget. Can we have an update on the impact of the budget on the risk register?	The risk register report was written to report the position reflecting back on the position at the end of Quarter 2, i.e. 30th September whereas the Autumn Budget was announced in October, so it was up to date at the time of writing. The impact of the autumn budget is still unfolding, for example in terms of the Bank of England’s decisions about the base rate interest rate and how quickly this might be cut and/or as we await further details about the distribution of the additional investment

Question	Response
	<p>in local government, that we won't have the details of before the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement is published in December. The risk register will continue to be reviewed and updated as more information becomes apparent</p>
<p>10.2 p. 105: why has target risk score for Climate Change changed? (from 12 in Q1 to 15 in Q2)</p>	<p>The Target risk score is made up of scores for likelihood and impact. The score has increased because of concerns that the <i>likelihood</i> of extreme weather-related risk is increasing, due to the average global temperature continuing to increase and recent examples of extreme rainfall events in the UK and Europe. The <i>impact</i> score of climate related risks has not increased because the nature of extreme weather events remains unchanged. It is important for us to acknowledge this in our assessment of the risk we face.</p> <p>It should be noted that the residual risk has also increased for the same reasons around likelihood rather than impact.</p>
<p>10.3 p. 105: why isn't there any data for CORP29 and CORP31 for Q1?</p>	<p>These are new risks added to the risk register during Quarter 2 therefore there isn't a prior quarter comparator.</p>
<p>10.4 The two red risks are Corporate Risk 29: Contact centre staff risk and Corporate Risk 31: Recruitment. What are the issues around contact centre staff risk? What are the issues around recruitment (presumably interims/cost & continuity?)</p>	<p>Risk 29 - We have had a number of incidents in the customer centre, following customers interactions, that have impacted both staff and security. As a direct result of this, we conducted a review of our risk assessment for the customer centre, and this indicated that the risk level should be raised</p> <p>All such incidents are closely monitored and reviewed, and a number of changes have been identified that would help mitigate the identified risks. These are in the process of being implemented, and we will continue to access and review any future incidents.</p>

Item 12

Question	Response
<p>12.1 What proportion (as a value and as percentage) of the extra £16,113,500 to be spent on the above will provide insulation and renewable heat for the council's stock?</p>	<p><u>Insulation</u> During roof replacement works loft insulation is checked, if the loft insulation does not meet the 300mm requirement then it is topped up, or alternatively if the insulation is defective then the insulation is removed and new insulation is installed to the current 300mm standard, this is hard to quantify as this is a reactive work programme and is subject to survey at the time of replacement. Loft insulation is carried out on all whole house improvements to the standard of 300mm. An average loft insulation cost is circa £1500 per property for full replacement.</p> <p><u>Renewable Heat</u> None of these current contracts are to facilitate renewable heating installations.</p>