



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, 31 January 2023

19:30

Agenda

Page nos

1 Lord Mayor's announcements

2 Declarations of interest

(Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting).

3 Public questions/petitions

To receive questions / petitions from the public which have been submitted in accordance with the council's constitution.

4 Minutes

5 - 40

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings held on 22 November 2022.

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 Appointment of Section 151 officer - report to follow

7 Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

41 - 48

Purpose - To consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel with regards to the

increase in Councillor Allowances for the 2022-23 financial year.

8 Treasury Management Mid Year Review Report 2022-23 49 - 62

Purpose - To consider the council's Treasury Management performance for the first six months of the financial year to 30 September 2022.

9 Motions 63 - 76

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



Leah Mickleborough

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COUNCIL (EXTRAORDINARY)

19:00 to 19:30

22 November 2022

Present: Councillors Maguire (Lord Mayor), Ackroyd, Bogelein, Carlo, Catt, Davis, Fulton-McAlister (E), Galvin, Giles, Grahame, Hampton, Harris, Haynes, Huntley, Kendrick, Kidman, Lubbock, Osborn, Peek, Sands (M), Sands (S), Schmierer, Stonard, Stutely, Thomas (Va), Thomas (Vi), Waters, Wright and Young

Apologies: Councillors Brociek-Coulton, Button, Champion, Driver, Everett, Fulton-McAlister (M), Jones, Oliver, Padra and Price

1. Lord Mayor's Announcements

The Lord Mayor introduced the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Honorary Freedom of the City – The People of St Martin's Housing Trust

Councillor Harris moved and Councillor Waters seconded the motion.

Councillors Schmierer and Ackroyd spoke in support of the proposal.

RESOLVED, unanimously:-

In recognition of the contribution that St Martin's Housing Trust have made through the provision of housing and homelessness services to the people of Norfolk, the City Council pursuant to section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, resolves to admit the people of St Martin's Housing Trust, the Honorary Freedom of the City of Norwich.

Mr Colin Bland, Chair of St Martin's Housing Trust, acknowledged the honour that had been bestowed on the Trust.

The Lord Mayor then presented Mr Bland with a commemorative scroll.

The meeting was closed.

LORD MAYOR

Council**19:30 to 22:30****22 November 2022**

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

Apologies: Councillors Brociek-Coulton, Button, Champion, Driver, Everett, Fulton-McAlister (M), Padda

1. Lord Mayor's Announcements

The Lord Mayor welcomed members of the public to the meeting.

The Lord Mayor announced that he had attended the Christmas Light Switch-on (17 November 2022) and that it had been a "pleasure and a joy" to see families enjoying this free event. He took the opportunity to express his gratitude to everyone involved in organising the event.

2. Declarations of interests

Councillor Bogelein declared an other interest in item 11(d) – Motion – Norfolk Climate Change Partnership.

Councillors Lubbock, Galvin, Osborn, and Grahame declared an other interest in item 11(b) – Motion – Sweetbriar Marshes as members/supporters of Norfolk Wild Life Trust.

3. Public questions/petitions

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

Question 1 – Bus Services

The first question was from Mr James Hawketts to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on Bus Services, as follows:

"Given the city council's involvement in the Transport for Norwich scheme, its interest in promoting low-carbon transport solutions to reduce car usage and hit net-zero, and its responsibility to cater for the green infrastructural demands of new developments within the Greater Norwich area, surely, it is

important to hold the county council and the commercial operators to account for their clearly missed commitments on quality service and value for money. To that end, could the cabinet member clarify if there is a level of mis-service at which the current administration would act, or at least call for action, against the operator should they continue to fail on reliability, pricing, or decarbonisation of their fleet, given diminishing public confidence in them, as: timetables appear more and more like suggestions, the night-time student rate has been abolished, and there appears to be little or no presence of electric buses in Norwich.”

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth’s responded as follows:

“Transportation is a county council responsibility although the city council seeks to work closely with the county both to maximise our influence on strategy development and to ensure effectively of the programmes.

We do not always agree with the county council, as our stance on the Transport for Norwich Strategy and associated Western Link scheme shows, and where this is the case, we do not hesitate to point this out.

However, we do believe it is in the interest of the travelling public of Norwich to co-operate with the county council on bidding for funding to deliver sustainable travel initiatives. We were active participants in formulating the successful Transforming Cities Funding bid and are now active participants in the delivery of the Transport for Norwich programme which has to date delivered sustainable transport schemes totalling £17m which have delivered reduced and more reliable journey times for buses and improved environments for people to walk and cycle.

We have also supported the county and First Buses Limited in their £6.9m zero emission bus bid which was recently approved by government, and which will result in a fleet of 15 wholly electric buses serving the city during 2023 / 24. We continue to work with the county council to identify opportunities to further increase the number of zero emission buses and note that the Bus Service Improvement Plan recently approved for Norfolk outlines a clear commitment to operating greener buses and an aspiration to decarbonise the bus fleet by introducing 100 zero emission buses in Norfolk by 2027.

With regard to improving the standard of public transport services the responsibility sits with the county council. In our response to the consultation on the Local Transport Plan we called for light touch regulation of bus services designed to ensure that core routes have an agreed frequency and capacity of service provided by vehicles that meet high environmental standards in exchange for public investment in infrastructure and the vehicle fleet. The county has recently agreed an Enhanced Partnership with local bus operators, which outlines commitments made to improve public transport in Norfolk. We hope this will result in the improvements we all want to see in combination with investment through their Bus Service Improvement Plan.

With regards low carbon transport more generally, our collaboration with County also includes developing plans to increase Electrical Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in high population density parts of the city, with plans now in place to procure a service provider to install circa 50-70 new charge points at numerous locations. We are active participants in county's innovative Zero Emissions Transport City project which is still at an early stage of development.

As far as our actions as the city council are concerned, we are currently reviewing our own fleet with a plan to reduce numbers of vehicles generally and increase the number of EV's over the medium term. We are investing £92k of CIL funds this year to install new EV charging infrastructure in our car parks and will produce an EV Charging Strategy for non-highways opportunities, next financial year. And finally, we will support NCSL, as part of their upcoming carbon reduction planning exercise, to reduce emissions generally, including transport emissions."

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Hawketts referred to response to a Freedom of Information request which stated that 20 per cent of buses were either earlier or later than the scheduled timetable; and asked the cabinet member if he considered that this was an acceptable service and was the council being held back in this matter from the county council. Councillor Stonard reiterated that the county council was accountable for bus services and that it would be more appropriate to address the question there. The city council had worked hard to support the introduction of a wide range of initiatives to reduce carbon emissions from vehicles and progress was being made.

Question 2 – Plant-based catering only at council events

The second question was from Miss Lucia Alexander to the leader of the council, regarding plant-based food, as follows:

"Our question relates to the climate crisis and loss of biodiversity at the heart of governance including the provision of food. Other councils, for example, Oxfordshire, Cambridge City, and Lewisham Borough have committed to serving only plant-based food at their events, and I'd like Norwich City Council to do the same.

We are currently in a cost-of-living crisis and whole food plant-based meals are considerably cheaper. By doing the right thing for the planet, and promoting eating for good health, the council can also save money by serving more plant-based foods. We can and must move away from meat and dairy, towards climate-friendly eating, and I believe councils can lead the way with this.

Given the climate emergency and Norwich City Council's stated aim to reduce their emissions, will Norwich City Council consider committing to serving fully plant-based fare at all future catered events as other councils have done?"

Councillor Waters, the leader of the council responded as follows

"Norwich City Council has been clear in acknowledging the urgent need to address the twin climate and biodiversity crises, having announced a climate and

environmental emergency in September 2019. Our recently adopted Biodiversity Strategy is one example of our ambitious response and includes objectives around food production: we also provide ongoing support to community groups adopting land for this purpose. A communications and engagement plan is under development to support delivery of this strategy, and will include opportunities to engage people in the actions they can take to reduce their impact on the environment.

The council recognises the various benefits of a plant-based diet, which gives me the opportunity to recognise the critical, world-leading work being undertaken at Norwich Research Park to explore how we can improve food sustainability, security and resilience on a global basis.

The city council rarely provides catering for events. Our catering choices are informed by various objectives, including support for local social enterprises such as the Feed who are working to reduce poverty in the city. At any catered event we ensure that there is a choice of menus, including vegetarian and vegan options.

I was so intrigued by your question that I rang the leader of Cambridge City Council where they have won awards for sustainability. The council are exploring options for their catered city council events (the council's Annual General Meeting). These possible options include fully plant-based or having at least one plant-based option. As part of this exploration, they noted that proper research is required including ensuring that any catering procured is properly sustainable: not, for example, just factory produced food with a higher carbon footprint than locally sourced meat or cheese."

Miss Alexander asked whether there was a timeline for the introduction of fully plant-based catering at council events. Councillor Waters replied that this was a good question but that the first step was to ensure that choices including vegetarian and vegan options were available. The council did not have a timeline for introducing fully plant-based catering at council events. Miss Alexander had raised an important issue which was reflected in the council's Environmental and Biodiversity strategies and that the council was actively engaged in this issue.

Question 3 – Compulsory Purchase Orders/Earl of Leicester Public House site

The third question was from Ms Laura McCartney-Gray to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth, regarding a compulsory purchase order, as follows:

"The community around Dereham and Bowthorpe Road have long had to put up with the impact of land banking where the former Earl of Leicester Pub once stood. Can the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth comment on the steps this Labour led city council will take to implement a Compulsory Purchase Notice to address this issue once and for all?"

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth's responded as follows:

“In 2020 the council acquired the site of another former pub (the Kings Arms on Mile Cross Road) through the Compulsory Purchase process. The site had lain derelict for a number of years, had become an eyesore and a magnet for anti-social behaviour. Following the purchase by the council the site is now occupied by five houses for social rent which have recently been completed. In 2021 the council received funding through the Towns Fund for its Revolving Fund, which has the objective of bringing forward several more derelict, vacant and unused sites to improve local environments and bring forward much needed new housing.

Work on the Revolving Fund is continuing. Offers have now been made to purchase a number of sites. Where these are rejected and the owner is not able to demonstrate how they will bring the site forward for development we will use our statutory powers to compulsorily purchase them to ensure they can be beneficially redeveloped.

The site of the former Earl of Leicester pub at 238A Dereham Road is clearly a strong candidate for use of the revolving fund. This site has been derelict for many years, has seen two planning permissions issued since 2007, neither of which has led to redevelopment.

Discussions on the site continue and it is the intention to report progress to cabinet in December and seek approval for using compulsory purchase orders on sites where this is justified.”

Ms McCartney-Gray, as a supplementary question, asked that if a Compulsory Purchase Order was made, how soon would housing be available on the site and how would the community be consulted. Councillor Stonard replied that at its December meeting, cabinet would consider compulsory purchase to enable development on two sites, one of which was the Earl of Leicester public house site. Further discussions with the site owners were ongoing but if these were not successful, then the council would have a mechanism in place to compulsory purchase the site in the new year.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2022.

5. Questions to Cabinet Members

(Full details of the questions and responses were available on the council’s website prior to the meeting. A revised version is attached to these minutes at Appendix A and includes a minute of any supplementary questions and responses.)

The Lord Mayor announced that 20 questions had been 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 Sands (M) to the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods on support for private renters.
- Question 2 Councillor Sands (S) to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on Capital and Revenue projects in local communities.
- Question 3 Councillor Thomas (Vi) to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on progress of innovative heating system, using water from the River Wensum to heat 85 homes at Barnards Yard.
- Question 4 Councillor Fulton-McAlister (E) to the leader of the council on whether he considered that the government's Autumn Statement would fulfil the needs of the Local Government Association's campaign to "Save Local Services".
- Question 5 Councillor Peek to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on council's investment in play facilities.
- Question 6 Councillor Huntley to the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods on the work being undertaken to ensure the £150 Council Tax Energy rebate payments were made, together with any other discretionary payments that the council had taken.
- Question 7 Councillor Stutely to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on benefits to the city from the Biodiversity Strategy.
- Question 8 Councillor Davis to the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion on the outcomes of the COP 27 and salient points that relate to Norwich.
- Question 9 Councillor Lubbock to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing for an explanation on the work of specialist contractors when they had not been used before in relation to the turnaround of void council properties.
- Question 10 Councillor Galvin to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on the backlog of repairs to council housing and delays of several months to provide homes to residents who were homeless and had been promised one.
- Question 11 Councillor Bogelein to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on the further delay to the planned programme for the installation of secure entry systems to council properties.
- Question 12 Councillor Carlo to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing regarding the removal of asbestos from a council flat.
- Question 13 Councillor Grahame to the leader of the council on the submission of expressions of interest by the county council on multiple sites becoming Investment Zones.

- Question 14 Councillor Young to the cabinet member for wellbeing on the development of a county council policy on parklets.
- Question 15 Councillor Schmierer to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth, regarding the redevelopment of Anglia Square, on the steps that the council would take to ensure the smooth transition for all small medium enterprises (SMEs) at Anglia Square and Magdalen Street.
- Question 16 Councillor Catt to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on tenant's applications for higher banding and feedback for unsuccessful applicants.
- Question 17 Councillor Haynes to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on changes to the housing service where specific officers are no longer allocated to specific areas.
- Question 18 Councillor Osborn to the leader of the council regarding Norwich City Services Limited (NCSL) and its carbon reduction plan.
- Question 19 Councillor Ackroyd to the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion regarding what work the council is undertaking in conjunction with various groups, ranging from churches, the voluntary sector, NHS and county council, to establish warm hubs to provide warm places and refreshments for people.

(A second question had been received from Councillor Carlo (Question 20) and included in the list of questions set out in Appendix A to these minutes. As the time taken by questions had exceeded thirty minutes, this second question was not taken at the meeting.)

Councillor Galvin moved and Councillor Bogelein seconded a motion to refer the matters raised in question no 8 (above), together with the supplementary question and the responses from the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion, to the climate and environment emergency executive panel (CEEEP).

On being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED, with 32 members voting in favour, and 6 members abstaining from voting, to refer Councillor Davis's question no 8 (above, and set out in Appendix A, attached to these minutes) together with her supplementary question and the responses from the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion, to the next available meeting of the climate and environment emergency executive panel (CEEEP).

The leader, by way of personal explanation, requested that as a matter of courtesy the proposal to refer a question to the panel should have been discussed with him or the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion before this meeting.

6. Treasury Management Review 2021/2022

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

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, to approve the treasury activity for the year to 31 March 2022.

7. Capital Programme Update

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

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, with 22 members voting in favour, and 10 members abstaining from voting, to approve:

- (1) the removal of budgets in relation to the Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) Riverside Walk Access Improvements and Community Centre Upgrades shown in Table 1, of the report, totalling £0.172m.
- (2) the removal of budgets from the general fund capital programme set out in Table 1, of the report, totalling £0.015m. (marked as ***);
- (3) the removal of budgets from the housing revenue account capital programme, set out in Table 2 of the report, totalling £3.155;
- (4) an increase to the general fund capital programme, as set out in paragraphs 6 – 9 of the report.

8. Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2021/2022

Councillor Price moved and Councillor Kidman seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, to receive the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2021/2022.

9. Interim Polling District and Polling Places Review 2022

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

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, to approve the amended polling scheme as recommended by the polling district and places working group at Appendix A (of the report).

10. Establishment of a Friendship Link

Councillor Waters moved and Councillor Sands (M) seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, to agree to the establishment of a Friendship Link between Norwich City Council and the Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, Brazil.

(The Lord Mayor announced that two hours had passed since the commencement of the meeting. In order to debate Motion 11(a), a member opposed it. Members agreed to take agenda items 11(b) to 11(d) as unopposed business. Amendments to Motions 11(b), 11(c) and 11(d) had been received and accepted by the movers of the motions.)

11. Motions

Motion 11(a) Library story time events

Councillor Stonard moved and Councillor Huntley seconded the motion.

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, to:

“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."

Motion 11(b) Sweetbriar Marshes

(Councillors Lubbock, Galvin, Osborn, and Grahame had declared an other interest in this item.)

(This item was taken as unopposed business.)

This motion had been moved by Councillor Lubbock and seconded by Councillor Galvin (and not as stated in the agenda papers.) Councillor Lubbock had indicated that she was willing to accept the amendments which had been received from Councillor Waters and circulated in advance of the meeting:

"Add the words "continue to" before the word "support" in resolution (1).

Replacing the text of resolution (2) with the following: "call on cabinet to consider how to confer appropriate thanks and recognition through consultation with those bodies, individuals and organisations which have supported 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."

Add the words "continue to" after the words "Work with NWT to" in resolution (3a)

Add the words "continue to" after the words "Work with NWT to" in resolution (3)(c)

Replace the word "Support" with the words "Continue to support" at the start of resolution (3)(d)

Add the word "appropriate" after the words "are given every" in resolution (3)(e)

Add the words "Continue to" at the start of resolution (3)(f)."

RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

"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 continue to support this exciting opportunity, and
- (2) call on cabinet to consider how to confer appropriate thanks and recognition through consultation with those bodies, individuals and organisations which have supported 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 continue 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 continue 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) Continue to 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 appropriate 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) Continue to 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."

Motion 11(c) Development Management Policies

(This item was taken as unopposed business.)

This motion had been moved by Councillor Bogelein and seconded by Councillor Young. Councillor Bogelein had indicated that she was willing to accept

the amendments which had been received from Councillor Stonard and circulated in advance of the meeting:

“Replace the text in resolution 4 before the list with the following:

“Consult with elected councillors and the public on the content of the revised DM policies plan. The consultation will promote discussion on areas where the policies need to better support the council’s corporate objectives and be fit for the future. The consultation will enable the review of DM policies to be progressed a lot more quickly following the publications to the Greater Norwich Local Plan. The consultation plan will be discussed with the Sustainable Development Panel. The consultation will address issues such as:”

Replace the text after the list in resolution 4 with the following:

“These discussions will review best practice, explore where local members and the local community want to see changes to policies and speed the review of the DM policies plan.”

RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

“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) Consult with elected councillors and the public on the content of a revised DM policies plan. The consultation will promote discussion on areas where the policies need to better support the council's corporate objectives and be fit for the future. The consultation 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. The consultation plan will be discussed with the Sustainable Development Panel. The consultation will address issues such as:

- (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 discussions will review best practice, explore where local members and the local community want to see changes to the policies and speed the review of the DM policies 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.

Motion 11(d)

(This item was taken as unopposed business.)

(Councillor Boglein had declared an other interest in this item.)

This motion had been moved by Councillor Osborn and seconded by Councillor Galvin (in the absence of Councillor Champion). Councillor Osborn had indicated that he was willing to accept the amendments which had been received from Councillor Waters and circulated in advance of the meeting:

“Inserting the words “continue to” after “need to” in resolution 1)

Inserting the words “due to repeated and sustained cuts in funding from central government” after the words “are over-stretched” in resolution 2)

Inserting the word “continued” after the word “urgent” in resolution 3)

Remove the words “Norwich and” in resolution 4)

Inserting the word “wholly” before the word “inadequate” in resolution 6)

Replacing the word “working” with the words “continuing to work” in resolution 6)

Adding the words “within the reality of ever diminishing resources” before the words “to establish” in resolution 6)

Replacing the words “Call on” with the words “Continue to work within” in resolution 7)

Inserting the words “of all tenures” after the words “housing” in resolution 7)

Inserting the words “and request effective resource from government to facilitate this” at the end of resolution 7)

Inserting the words “continue to” at the start of resolution 8)

Replacing the words “jointly fund” with the words “explore jointly funding” in resolution 8)

Replacing the word “implementation” with the word “coordination” in resolution 8)

Removing the words “Seek the backing of the NCCP to” at the start of resolution 9)

Inserting the words “share with the NCCP a copy of this motion and a copy of the letter written in response to resolution point 9).

RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

“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 continue work together.
- (2) Members of the NCCP are over-stretched, due to repeated and sustained cuts in funding from central government, and there is a need for a dedicated climate action officer for Norfolk, including Norwich.
- (3) There is an urgent continued 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 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 wholly inadequate, but this does not prevent councils from continuing to work together, within the reality of ever diminishing resources, to establish strategies, financing mechanisms and delivery models for advancing the decarbonisation of housing and transport.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

- (7) Continue to work within 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 of all tenures as the main sources of emissions, and request effective resource from government to facilitate this.
- (8) Continue to work with other districts and the county council to explore jointly funding a climate action officer for the NCCP, who would lead on the design and coordination of the county-wide climate action plan, and who would identify and prepare applications for relevant funding streams; and
- (9) 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. Share with the NCCP a copy of this motion and a copy of the letter written in response to resolution point 9).

The meeting was closed.

LORD MAYOR

Appendix A

Questions to Cabinet Members

(Questions and answers, including a summary of supplementary questions and the responses.)

Question 1

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

“Last month saw not one but two U-turns on Section 21 evictions, causing untold distress to Britain’s renters together with a failure to inform people what steps they will take to provide additional support for private renters whose rent costs have already gone up 12% on average in the last year, and face even higher rents in the coming year. These risks leave potentially thousands at risk of arrears, eviction, and homelessness. Can the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods comment on whether she has confidence that this government will finally address the concerns of private renters?”

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

“It is now more than three years since the proposal from the government to introduce legislation to protect private renters in the form of the renters reform bill. This has failed to progress into a parliamentary bill as yet, finally being published as a white paper in June 2022.

These protections are crucial to protect an ever expanding sector, with more than a million private renters entering the sector since the conservative government came into power. The ongoing delay continues to leave private renters vulnerable, with close a quarter of a million private tenants having been served notice since the government’s April 2019 announcement that they would bring these reforms forward.

This council continues to take its duty towards private renters with the up most seriousness and will continue to use the available legal powers to drive up standards. But it is only on a national level that the stability and protections that private renters require can be delivered. Although the proposed legislation leaves a number of loopholes and a funding commitment for its enforcement is lacking, this must be urgently progressed by the government.

There is currently no clear road map to progress this legislation or to deliver the very real reforms that this sector and most importantly the residents of Norwich require. I therefore have little confidence that the government will address the concerns of private renters with any urgency.”

(By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Sands (M) expressed concern about the government’s lack of commitment to help private renters at risk of eviction due to increases in rents. Councillor Jones said that she shared these concerns as

the white paper had not been progressed through Parliament. Increases in inflation had affected private landlords who had passed these increases on to private renters. There needed to be legislation to increase powers to local authorities to protect private renters from eviction. Private rented accommodation was the least energy efficient stock in the city. The council would continue to press government to introduce legislation to protect private tenants.”)

Question 2

Councillor Sue Sands to ask the deputy leader and social housing of the council the following question:

“It is sometimes commented that it is often “the little things in life which all add up” and can make a real difference to the quality of life in communities. It is for this reason that I have long supported, and voted for, the estate aesthetics budget which has made a real difference to providing sometimes small, but important, enhancements. Can the cabinet member for social housing comment on how many schemes have been completed since its inception?”

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

“312 schemes have been completed since inception. The detail is set out below.

Budget Year - 2022-2023

To date, we have completed 66 Capital and Revenue projects during this budget year (from 1 April 2022).

- We have an additional 53 Capital and Revenue projects that are still to be started, but we anticipate that all of these will be completed by the end of the budget year. We receive approximately 15 new projects every month.
- We also have another additional 42 projects being developed for the future. As a consequence, we are confident that the budget will again be spent this year.

Budget Year – 2021-2022

We completed 94 Capital and Revenue projects during the 2021-2022 budget year.

Budget Year – 2020-2021

We completed 55 Capital and Revenue projects during the 2020-2021 budget year.

Budget Year – 2019-2020

We completed 45 Capital and Revenue projects during the 2019-2020 budget year.

Budget Year – 2018-2019

We completed 32 Capital and Revenue projects during the 2018-2019 budget year.

Budget Year – 2017-2018

We completed 27 Capital and Revenue projects during the 2017-2018 budget year.”

(Councillor Sands asked for five examples of recent schemes which had made a difference for residents in those areas. Councillor Harris provided six examples of schemes: drying area resurfacing at Frere Road; new benches and planters at the communal gardens in Brooke Place; implementation of safety measures, including bollards, at Longmead; new picnic bench at Normandie Tower; electric garage door at Brazengate to address antisocial behaviour; and lines to distinguish disabled parking spaces at Whitebeam Court.)

Question 3

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

“I know that delivering practical and positive improvements to tackle the climate crisis and save residents money is crucial given the cost-of-living crisis we now face. Earlier this year work to install an innovative heating system using water from the River Wensum was begun at Barnards Yard aiming to achieve a major reduction in carbon emissions, but also provide hot water to 85 homes. Can the cabinet member for social housing comment on progress with the scheme?”

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

“The scheme is in the commissioning stage. All of the 85 homes have had new hot water and heating systems installed and are currently operating well. Residents have become familiar with a heating system that operates using larger but lower temperature radiators. The instance of resident call outs have almost ceased completely. There are mechanical works to be completed in the plant room with the programme for the completion of this work being early January and the issuing of Practical Completion and Final Handover on 31 January 2023. The final account for the scheme is anticipated to return just below budget (circa £1.825m).”

(In reply to Councillor Thomas’s supplementary question, Councillor Harris said that the scheme’s emissions would be 270 tonnes less carbon dioxide than regular heating systems, equivalent to the carbon absorption of 1300 full mature trees. There were very few schemes like this in the country. The council would consider the use of this technology on a case by case basis. Further funding from the government would be welcomed.)

Question 4

Councillor Erin Fulton-McAlister to ask the leader of the council the following question:

“Research released earlier this month by the trade union Unison (based on data from 391 UK councils) found that almost nine in 10 are predicting a

budget gap in the 2023/24 financial year - with a total shortfall of £3.2bn. In the run up to the Autumn Statement last week the Local Government Association called on the Government to 'Save Local Services' with a campaign to urgently provide financial sustainability and certainty for councils. Will the Leader comment on whether the autumn statement fulfils the needs of this campaign?"

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

"We reviewed our financial planning assumptions earlier this year as part of our preparation for setting the 2023/24 budget; the cabinet received a report in July which highlighted that the impact of inflation and the uncertainty surrounding future government resources suggested a budget gap of £6.2m in 2023/24 and close to £11m over the medium-term planning timeframe. Since that time inflation has continued to rise – with the latest figure for the consumer price index standing at 11.1%. This has put still more pressure on our finances.

On Thursday we heard the government's autumn statement where they confirmed that the country faces a budget shortfall of £55bn and where they announced around £30bn in spending cuts and £25bn in tax rises.

We still await the provisional local government finance settlement which will confirm the position for each local authority but that is unlikely to be produced much before the middle of December and we need to start to make decisions now. For this council our interpretation of the position is mixed – we heard that the total resources for public services over the remaining 2 years of the comprehensive spending review period are unchanged, but we also heard that it is the NHS, Schools and Social Care that are the government's priorities for resources. Whilst it is difficult to disagree with that it is of little comfort as we seek to set a balanced budget for Norwich.

We now know that, for councils like Norwich, the maximum that the council tax can be increased by is 3% rather than the 2% in previous years and that social housing rent increases are to be capped at 7%. These still present us with difficult choices; both are below the current inflationary pressures we are facing and in themselves are inadequate; for example, each additional 1% rise in the council tax raises around £100,000. We also know that even a 7% increase in social rents will not bring average rents back to the level that they would have been before the decision to impose for four years a 1% per annum cash reduction to social rents.

What we do know is that we still need to make reductions to balance the budget in a way that protects those residents most affected by the cost-of-living crisis. We will bring an updated position back to cabinet in December, but it is sufficient to say that we face significant challenges in the years ahead.

In answer to your specific question, the Autumn Statement, is not a solution to the chronic underfunding of local government and the vital services it provides to residents. It compounds the problem."

(Councillor Fulton-McAlister (E) asked a supplementary question about the impact of the Autumn Statement on the city council. Councillor Waters said that the government did not refer to local government in the Autumn Statement. There was a need to reshape the government's narrative and provide a well-funded local government that could support its residents to reach their potential and where democratic engagements is strengthened. He considered that this would not be possible under the current government.")

Question 5

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

"I was pleased to read that thanks to the investment of this city council, the small park at Douro Place, in West Pottergate, will be significantly improved. This will make a real difference to the community, some of which live in council accommodation, which surround the park. Can the cabinet member for community wellbeing, update council on the changes planned?"

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

"This project is part of the council's ongoing investment in play facilities in the city. We have recently awarded a contract for this work and will be investing approximately £55,000 in new play equipment and safety surfacing at the play area in Douro Place. The project is aimed at improving play facilities in the area, in particular making it accessible for children of all abilities. It is also aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour at this location, and we look forward to work starting in February 2023."

(Councillor Peek asked as his supplementary question for a further examples of park improvements schemes which had been implemented recently. Councillor Giles said that the schemes scheduled for this civic year included the upgrade of Harford Park tennis courts; play area upgrades at Wensum Park and St Georges Street; upgrades to park toilets at Heigham, Wensum, and Sloughbottom parks; Year Four of Eaton Park path replacements; and Year Three of the refurbishment of the damaged dry-stone walls at Wensum Park. As highlighted at September's council, we have submitted an £85,000 Investment Plan for a package of improvements at Wensum Park using Levelling-Up Parks funding.)

Question 6

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

"As winter deepens, the number of constituents I have spoken to regarding their acute difficulty in heating their home increases rapidly. Can the cabinet member for safe, strong, and inclusive neighbourhoods comment on the work undertaken to ensure the £150 Council Tax Energy rebate payments are made together with any discretionary payments which this Labour administration is taking?"

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

"The £150 Council Tax Energy rebate scheme was due to finish at the end of September; however a number of councils did not achieve the initial deadline. The scheme has been extended to now end on the 30 November, allowing us to still make payments for a few weeks if we need to.

The council took appropriate steps to ensure it had made the payments by the original scheme end date, directly to bank accounts wherever possible. If bank details were not already held, residents were asked to supply their details through our secure online portal using a unique code. If no response was received the payment was made to the council tax account of the household to reduce their council tax payments.

Where accounts went into credit (for example where there is no Council Tax liability due to the resident being entitled to an exemption or full discount) a new bill has been issued showing this and refunds are being issued on request once bank details are supplied.

For others with a council tax liability, their charge has been recalculated and a new bill issued.

The council has paid 60,992 residents a total of £9,148,800.00 in respect of the main scheme.

Applications for the Discretionary Council Tax Energy rebate scheme closed on 20 November, so payments will continue to be made until the scheme itself ends on 30 November. To date we have paid £214,095.00 of the total funding of £292,050.00 and have made payments direct to council tax accounts this week where we do not hold bank account details. The council is undertaking a number of social media campaigns to encourage take-up of the discretionary funding."

(In reply to Councillor Huntley's supplementary question, Councillor Jones listed the wide range of support that the council provided to support residents and address financial inclusion. This included: working in partnership with the voluntary sector: ensuring the prompt receipt of the £150 energy council tax rebate for 60,000 residents, totalling £9m; retaining the 100 per cent Council Tax Reduction Scheme; supporting the Financial Inclusion Consortium and social supermarkets; and campaigning for a Living Wage.")

Question 7

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

"I was pleased that the Biodiversity Strategy was accepted at cabinet earlier this month. It contains a range of excellent, practical, and important steps this council will take as we take our part in responding socially, economically, and environmentally to the climate emergency, thus better achieving true sustainability. Given the reviews and enhancements to the strategy can the

cabinet member for community wellbeing comment on the strategy and the benefits to our city?"

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

"The Biodiversity Strategy, and the accompanying Biodiversity Development Plan, sets out an ambitious agenda with a commitment to "create a city where biodiversity can sustainably recover and thrive, halt species decline and increase species diversity and abundance by 2030 or sooner". A key objective will be to establish a 'Nature Recovery Network', creating and connecting wild places and habitats across the city to give nature room to thrive. This will involve the council beginning to manage our own parks and open spaces in a way that enhances biodiversity, but also encouraging strategic stakeholders across the city to manage their land in a more biodiversity-conscious way.

A range of benefits will be realised through the Strategy and Development Plan, relating not just to biodiversity improvement but also to climate mitigation and adaptation, improved health and wellbeing and educational experiences for our residents, and the growth of the green economy within the city to support people to find good quality jobs. This is an important strategy and I look forward to sharing our progress on it with colleagues in the coming months."

(Councillor Stutely asked as a supplementary question for five examples of measures being undertaken by the council to boost biodiversity in natural areas. Councillor Giles listed the planting of 2,000 trees at West Earlham Woods (hornbeam, oak, sweet chestnut, beech, hazel, crab apple, plum, spindle, guelder rose, and holly), and 1000 trees in Netherwood (hazel, crab apple, plum, spindle, guelder rose, and holly); coppicing willow scrub at Marston Marshes by the Norwich Fringe Project to preserve habitats and protect river banks from erosion, and increase water levels to provide winter habitat for snipe; access gates at Mile Cross Marshes to prevent unauthorized vehicle access which had been damaging the wildlife meadow; utilizing Higher Level Stewardship funding for animal grazing on Eaton Common between April and November leading to wildflower diversity.)

Question 8

Councillor Davis to ask the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion the following question:

"The United Nations Climate Change Conference 2022, or 'COP27', concluded last week. This council has previously declared a climate emergency and recognised that local, national, and global co-operation will be key tackling this in a truly just manner. Could the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion reflect on the outcomes of this conference with the most salient points relating to Norwich?"

Councillor Hampton, the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion's response:

"The key messages set out by the António Guterres, the Secretary General of the UN was that *"our world is facing the most pivotal, precarious moment in*

generations” and that “the goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees is slipping away”.

The council recognises that the goal of limiting global average temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, as set out in the Paris Agreement of 2015, is unlikely to be met and that urgent action is required, by all parties, to prevent a climate, biodiversity and humanitarian catastrophe. A great deal of work has been achieved to date. Norwich’s territorial greenhouse gas emissions (those for the whole city) have more than halved since 2005, despite a 12% increase in population. The council’s own emissions, according to a methodology defined by central government, have reduced by over 70% in a similar period. Work is underway to understand the full scope of the council’s emissions, including Scope 3 emissions - those emissions outside of our direct control. In collaboration with our partners, we are also working to update our understanding of the city’s emissions.

As well as generating good quality data, comprehensive plans are in development, based on evidence and prioritised according to risk, to reduce emissions to net zero as quickly as possible. The Council also recognises the need for adaption and resilience strategies to manage the social, environmental and economic impacts of the changing climate.”

(Councillor Davis asked as a supplementary question said that COP27 had hosted a food and agriculture pavilion for the first time which demonstrated that food and agriculture were at its agenda and asked what significance this had for the city. Councillor Hampton said that food systems accounted for a third of global emissions yet hundreds of millions around the world were going hungry. Climate breakdown would result in widespread famine with devastating international effect. Norwich would not be exempt. Food systems were not working and there was a need for national and international integrated food policies. The council had signed the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration, a commitment to tackle climate emergency through a food systems approach. This was formally presented during COP 26 but the campaign has continued ever since. As a city, food was not one of the largest emissions, but the council could still promote and campaign on this issue and do what it could, through its communications, supporting community groups who use excess food to tackle food poverty, strengthening the Biodiversity Strategy to include food production as a positive outcome, playing a role in food resilience as demonstrated with the Covid 19 – Norwich Community Hub, providing food parcels to support residents most in need.)

Question 9

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

“The member for housing advised cabinet last month that there were around 3,400 people on the council housing waiting list while over 230 council houses were empty because the voids (time taken to do work on an empty property in preparation for a new tenant) were taking longer to turn around than has been the case in the past.

She said this was due to a backlog of repairs and specialist contractors were being used. Can she explain the work of the of specialist contractors when they were not used before?"

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

"When the repairs service transferred from the joint venture with Norse to the council's wholly-owned company – Norwich City Services Limited – in April, there was a backlog of works. In order to allow NCSL to get off to the best start, the council appointed contractors to clear the backlog rather than passing it to NCSL.

To date, 5775 reactive repairs have been cleared. At present there are 125 reactive repairs to complete and we are on target to complete these by the end of December 2022.

Unfortunately, some delays have occurred due to works that the contractors are reliant on from other contractors to enable them to be compliant with H&S requirements. However, delays can also occur due to lack of materials and wider supply chain and labour pressures. These impacts are not unique to Norwich.

In appointing the contractors, the council followed the correct clearance and procurement protocols, mobilised the contract and put an internal backlog team in place to support. This took a period of time but was necessary. Now everything is in place and the contractors are working through the backlog."

(Councillor Lubbock's supplementary question was to ask for clarification on the work to ensure H&S compliancy. Councillor Harris referred to the two streams of work to clear the back log and the "business as usual". There was a robust system in place to use third party contractors were used to survey for asbestos, where intrusive work was required.)

Question 10

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

"The backlog in repairs in council housing that the Labour administration has overseen has left at least thirteen homeless people waiting for months for the keys to a home that they were promised they could move into within weeks. Families have been living in cars or sofa surfing while council properties are sitting empty. Please can the cabinet member explain what the council will do from now on to ensure that people who have been promised homes are not kept waiting for several months?"

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

"A project team comprising of staff from Tenancy, Lettings and Property Services has been created. This team is meeting weekly with NCSL and the

Norwich City Council backlog contractors to monitor and manage and drive performance.

Those properties that are in most need and have people allocated to them have been prioritised, this does not mean that newly created empty homes are not being actioned.

Based on this priority contractors are expected to focus on allocated properties and if they are paused due to awaiting facilitation works or have capacity work can commence in unallocated properties.

Further contractor support is being engaged by both NCSL and Norwich City Council to enable accelerated delivery is delivered.”

(In reply to Councillor Galvin’s supplementary question, Councillor Harris agreed that it was unacceptable that people were waiting for council accommodation and said that as a member of the shareholder panel, Councillor Galvin was well aware of how hard the council and NCSL were working to address these issues and develop an improvement programme. When the service had come back in house, there were some properties that required a high level of investment and work. She would continue to put pressure on the service to improve.)

Question 11

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

“I understand that the planned programme of installing secure entry systems has yet again been delayed. In January 2022 I asked for reassurance from the cabinet member that the work would be progressed quickly. The measuring up of doors is now expected to only go ahead by the end of the year, which is a further delay on an already extremely delayed start to the programme. Can you please explain why the timetable has yet again slipped and explain to residents when they can expect the programme to finally start and what measures you are putting in place to ensure that this is now the last delay to one of the highest priorities for residents in some areas of the ward I represent?”

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

“We have been working hard with Eastern Procurement Limited to expedite the procurement of the programme and we are currently awaiting the return of tenders. It is anticipated that the contract will be formally awarded before Christmas. The successful contractor will then be expected to attend the blocks that are in-scope to undertake measured surveys and place orders for the doors and similar bespoke equipment. Subject to lead-in times, it is expected that works will commence on site (including any asbestos removal and other enabling works) in early 2023.”

(Councillor Bogelein’s supplementary question referred to the two year delay and asked for an indication of the timescale for implementation of the secure entry

systems. Councillor Harris confirmed that this project was progressing as quickly as it could and that delays had been due to shortages in materials and labour.)

Question 12

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

“Tests on damaged ceilings in need of replacement at a flat in Golding Place, caused by a leaking roof, have shown white asbestos. The tenant has been informed of the need to move out whilst the work to remove the asbestos and replace the ceilings in several rooms is carried out and this will cause considerable upheaval for the tenant. Could the cabinet member please tell me the number of council properties known to contain white asbestos and the estimated costs involved in replacing it, including the cost of temporary accommodation for tenants and moving expenses?”

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

“We have 14,140 properties that were built before the year 2000 and therefore could contain some asbestos as it wasn’t banned until November 1999. Survey information relating to domestic properties is limited as there is no requirement to survey (or have a management plan) for domestic properties under The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (specifically regulation 4). However, management surveys within domestic properties are carried out when a refurbishment survey is carried out, for example Kitchen and Bathroom replacements/window replacement and voids.

Whilst there is no requirement under the regulations, Property Service are recording the information as part of the survey process and this will be recorded in the Asset Management database in order to build up our knowledge of asbestos in our property portfolio.

The cost of removal of a typical 25m² textured coating (so one room in one property) is likely to be in the region of £1,000.

Health and Safety Executive guidance is not to remove asbestos containing materials that are in good condition that are not being (or going to be) disturbed. Decorative textured coatings contain very low quantities of Chrysotile (white) asbestos that is heavily bonded into a paint matrix, this means that fibres do not normally become respirable unless heavily abraded such as being sanded or sawn.”

(In reply to a supplementary question, Councillor Harris said that individual cases could not be discussed in this forum, and therefore. asked Councillor Carlo to let her know the relevant details of this case to pass on to an officer to answer.)

Question 13

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

“Norfolk County Council is believed to have submitted 'Expressions of Interest' in multiple sites becoming Investment Zones without publishing any details. We now know that Investment Zones will not be established, but it was likely that such zones would have undermined local democratic control of development, and efforts towards nature recovery. The guidelines' only reference to the environment was about removing legislation that protects it. Does the Leader agree that it is important for the city to keep control of the planning function; insist on existing, if not improved, environmental protections and nature recovery rules; and continue a commitment to the current affordable housing percentage for development, whatever new scheme the government may come up with?”

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

“Thank you for your question, Councillor Grahame. You will be aware that there are speculative observations in your question since Investment Zones have been dropped by a shuffling of the Prime-Ministerial pack. My understanding from colleagues at Norfolk County Council is that they submitted an Expression of Interest in multiple sites becoming an Investment Zone in Norfolk.

In the case of the city, we only requested that the county include a single site, the East Norwich Regeneration Area, within the Expression of Interest. This was done. In seeking the inclusion of East Norwich within the county's Investment Zone Expression of Interest we considered many factors. One of these was the environmental risks posed through the possible planning and environmental protection regimes that may apply to the areas. We took the view that there was simply insufficient information available to allow these to be assessed at this stage. In the light of this we choose to include material in the case we made to the county noting these concerns and stressing that the council would want to see, and discuss, any proposed future arrangements regarding planning controls, and implications for environmental standards before agreeing to an Investment Zone designation.

You will also be aware that following last week's autumn statement that:

“The government will refocus the Investment Zones programme. The government will use this programme to catalyse a limited number of the highest potential knowledge-intensive growth clusters, including through leveraging local research strengths.”

All goes to show what a massive waste of time by the government insisting that local authorities bid in this way for various initiatives rather than properly fund local government in the first place to deliver regeneration of their areas. With regards to the second part of your question, the answer is obviously yes. Take, for example, our ambitious Biodiversity Strategy that went through cabinet last week and our strong commitment and delivery of genuinely affordable housing at social rents.”

(In reply to Councillor Grahame's supplementary question, Councillor Waters confirmed that he would hope that the government legislation would support high

standards of energy efficiency in buildings. The council had a strong track record in providing housing that was energy efficient and had a lifespan longer than 30 years.)

Question 14

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

“I am sure you joined in celebrating the recent national first prize for Norwich when a street in Wensum ward won Best Parklet in the country. In late 2019 the former highway team at the city council had begun researching the subject of parklets in order to establish a policy on the subject. Unfortunately, that work was halted by the termination of the highway agency agreement with the county council. I understand that officers are making progress with developing a joint policy with the county on this issue so that Norwich can build on its excellence and enjoy the wider benefits of parklets that have been seen elsewhere. When can we expect to see the policy developed?”

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

“We have spoken to the county council as the responsible highways authority who have said they plan to produce a policy to address issues such as safety, and we have supplied them with research that was done previously. We do not know when the county council will undertake this work, but we have said we are willing to advise them further based on previous experience.”

(In reply to Councillor Young’s supplementary question, Councillor Giles said that the details were still being worked through and would be provided in due course.)

Question 15

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

“Anglia Square and Magdalen Street are popular because their retail and commercial offer is cheaper and easier than the city centre. Small businesses there are concerned about rent rises or being forced out due to the proposed Anglia Square redevelopment. The local community also fears that big chains will not meet their needs and that this unique part of Norwich will lose its distinctive character. These worries have been confirmed in answers to councillor enquiries saying some businesses will be "displaced by the early phases of development at a point where no alternative accommodation can be provided" and those who can relocate to the new centre will see rent increases. With the effects of covid, the cost-of-living and energy crises, plus residents demanding protection for small businesses, what will the council do to ensure a smooth transition for all Small Medium Enterprises at Anglia Square and Magdalen Street?”

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

"I agree that retail offer of Magdalen Street, Anglia Square and St Augustine's Street is unique and distinctive from the rest of the city centre and the vibrant and independent nature of area should be nurtured. My own view is that offer of the current Anglia Square detracts from the character of the wider area. The blight created by the large derelict and underused buildings doesn't assist the retail environment.

The current planning application for Anglia Square proposes demolition of the shopping and office precinct and redevelopment with a residential led mixed use development. The impact of development on existing business is an important consideration and this is still being worked on as part of the assessment of the application. Officers have been discussing with the applicant a possible package of proactive business support for affected businesses which may be deemed necessary to be required by a legal agreement in the event of committee deciding to grant planning permission being approved. Under the possible agreement, the developer would be required to provide affected businesses access to free independent business support which would assist them with business planning, possible temporary (or permanent) relocation plans, and applications for any available grant support. The support would also look at how these businesses can use the redevelopment as a growth opportunity to provide new products and services. Clearly this will be one of many matters that will need to be taken into consideration by the planning applications committee in reaching a determination on the planning application in due course and I would not want to do or say anything in this forum that could fetter their discretion to do so."

(Councillor Schmierer asked as a supplementary question what he could say to business owners and community to reassure them about the support that would be offered to them. Councillor Stonard referred to his response and said that he considered Councillor Schmierer had misread it. The developer had recognised that the impact that the development would have on businesses and had put in place a meaningful and proactive package to support them.)

Question 16

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

"The council has a responsibility to ensure that people with disabilities and medical conditions are housed appropriately. However, I am aware of a number of council tenants, including some willing to move to smaller properties, whose health is currently being made worse by their living conditions. Tenants in my ward have applied for higher banding and been refused, despite supplying evidence from doctors and other professionals. Will the cabinet member supply unsuccessful applicants with feedback, including explaining the process that the council follows when deciding which band applicants should be in?"

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

"Norwich is an area of extremely high levels of housing need and the Home Options scheme provides a fair, efficient, and transparent way of allocating the social housing available. The scheme has been identified as a best practice model which has contributed to the award of 'gold standard' status for our housing options service, one of only fourteen local authorities in the country to be given this accolade.

Where a Home Options applicant feels that their medical situation is made significantly worse by their accommodation, they complete a medical assessment form, which enables a full review of their circumstances by a panel, in accordance with policy. The role of the medical panel is to assess the degree of medical need relating to an applicant's current accommodation and whether this merits additional priority to move to a more suitable property.

Medical priority is awarded where an applicant needs urgent re-housing due to a significant and enduring medical condition or disability which is strongly evidenced as being seriously and permanently affected by their current accommodation.

Specifically in relation to the question every single applicant, whether successful or unsuccessful, are advised of the outcome of the medical panel setting out the reasons for the decision in writing and advisors them of their means of appeal.

This process is applied equally to all applicants to ensure fairness, consistency, and transparency. I am satisfied that through this consistent application of Home Options policy we are able to ensure that scarce social housing in Norwich is allocated to those in the greatest need."

(Councillor Catt, as a supplementary question, said that he knew of residents whose medical conditions had become worse and had been denied bronze banding which was detrimental to that resident. Councillor Harris confirmed that residents were informed of the outcome of any panel in writing together with the reasons for the decision. She asked Councillor Catt to provide her with more information if there was a specific case, he wished her to look at.)

Question 17

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

"It has become apparent that housing officers are no longer being allocated to specific areas. When communication from the council has already been raised as a big issue for tenants, why are the council removing named points of contact for tenants?"

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

"Tenancy team leaders have made some amendments to ensure that all tenants receive a consistent service whether in the north or south of the borough. There are two teams; North and South, and 10 officers cover these sites. There are a further two dedicated housing officers to ensure access for compliance activity in relation to gas and electrical safety.

The query highlights the risk of having named individuals assigned to activities. It is important to focus on operational resilience, with a system which allows the management team to redistribute casework to the wider team to ensure all enquiries are addressed.

The service needs to remain flexible. Housing casework relating to tenancies come into our call centre or online and is allocated directly to a housing officer, who triages the need for a direct intervention or allocates the requests made by tenants. By using this method, we have seen improvements in turnaround time to enquiries, catching up on outstanding casework, and access into homes to keep tenants safe.

We continue to monitor progress and review our effectiveness as a council to respond to the needs of our tenants. This is a challenging time for recruitment into various social housing sector and local government roles."

(By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Haynes referred to the changing model and said that some residents would have difficulty trusting a "random" housing officer. Councillor Harris said that there was greater demand across the city and it was important that housing officers were available where needed to deal with a situation. It was not useful where a resident had built up trust with an officer and when a situation arose, they were unavailable due to sickness or on leave. She invited Councillor Haynes to pass on feedback from residents which she would raise with the housing managers.)

Question 18

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

"When the insourcing of Norse was first proposed, we were repeatedly assured, in response to Green councillors' questions, that creating NCSL would allow the council more scope to decarbonise environmental and building services. Yet officers have told me that NCSL has no carbon reduction plan. Can the cabinet member please provide details of carbon reduction targets for NCSL as a company that is wholly-owned by the council?"

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

"A familiar Green Party template for this question. Greens claiming credit, unnamed officers giving their opinion etc. From the very start of the new company important environment features were built into the new depot and site. I quote a length from a question (Council, 16 March 2021) to the then

portfolio holder Councillor Kevin Maguire asking about new environmental and biodiversity improvements at the new depot:

“As you are aware we have been able to incorporate many environmental features within the design of the new depot to improve the environment locally and so it can contribute to our target in the Environmental Strategy for the council to become carbon neutral by 2030. Moreover, it is worth noting that the project itself is inherently sustainable as it is reusing a former wine warehouse building that has been vacant for some time.

Last month it was announced that the council had been awarded just over £100,511 through the government decarbonisation funding scheme to deliver energy efficient LED lighting within the depot and a solar PV system on its roof with associated battery storage measures. The LED lighting has been installed for depot opening, both within the main depot and the office accommodation, the solar PV scheme will follow in the summer.

These measures sit alongside the other measures that were built into the scheme to promote cycling to work, to future proof it by providing ducting to ease the process of adapting to using electric vehicles in future, and external lighting schemes that are specially designed to minimise disturbance to bats.

Furthermore, we are particularly proud of the on-site features designed to support biodiversity in the area. These include multiple bat and bird boxes, new pond and various measures to encourage reptiles and amphibians on the site.

A carefully designed landscape scheme, including 84 native trees, 88m of hedging and 71 climbing plants, has been developed in close consultation between Council officer's and landscape and ecological consultants. This provides new and varied habitat opportunities across the site. Significant tree and hedge planting has taken place in accordance with the agreed landscaping plan which, in time, will more than compensate for biomass lost as part of the development.

A combination of trees, hedging and climbers has been used. The climbers are designed and located to attract invertebrates which will in turn benefit the local bat populations. Native trees and woody shrubs have been planted, many as standard trees. The native hedgerow species have been chosen to increase diversity and promote good management for the benefit of wildlife in accordance with specialist ecological advice.

An area of fruit trees has been planted in the south of the site. The fruit trees have been selected to provide additional food sources. As they will not grow to be tall trees, this leaves an area of open grassland near to the proposed wildlife pond which should create considerable habitat opportunities for reptiles and amphibians.”

Also, as part of NCSL's 2022-25 business plan a company objective for the 2022-23 financial year is to develop a detailed carbon reduction strategy for NCSL and investigate carbon offsetting schemes.

Work is continuing and the company have met with city council officers in order to align the company objectives with that of the council's."

(Councillor Osborn's commented that the bulk of Councillor Water's response was to quote a previous answer which did not reflect the current situation in relation to the company and asked as a supplementary question whether there would be a 13 per cent year on year to reach net zero. Councillor Waters said that it was an aspiration of the council and the company to ensure that carbon reduction scheme met those targets, through the council's Environmental Strategy and working closely in partnership with the Tyndall Centre.)

Question 19

Councillor Ackroyd to ask the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion the following question:

"With the prospect of colder weather coming, many groups ranging from churches, the voluntary sector, the NHS, and the county council are working to set up much needed warm hubs to provide not only a warm place but company and refreshments for part or all of the day.

Whilst primarily a county council function, could the cabinet member outline what work is being undertaken by this council in conjunction with these groups?"

Councillor Hampton, the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion's response:

"We recognise the very difficult position many residents of Norwich will be in this winter.

We have provided funding to the Norfolk Community Foundation to support them to establish new warm spaces in the city or expand current provision. We are also using all opportunities to signpost community groups to this service, and to other funding opportunities as appropriate to access additional support, including via:

- the many relationships we have with groups in our communities and
- by maintaining a database of information about where people can go for support, so that any residents contacting the council can be directed to warm spaces, support, and other help as relevant to their circumstances – so they experience a "no wrong door" approach when they contact the council for help.

Wider partnership work continues through the City Vision Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Partnership, Greater Norwich Homelessness Forum, Norfolk

Community Advice Network, and Financial Inclusion Consortium to raise awareness of activities, support and advice and ensure we are working together to support our communities through this unprecedented period.”

(Councillor Ackroyd confirmed that she did not have a supplementary question.)

Please note that the following question was a second question from Councillor Carlo and was not taken because questions had exceeded thirty minutes. This is in line with paragraph 53 of Part 3 of the council’s constitution.

Question 20

Councillor Carlo to ask the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion the following question:

“Recent reports by three United Nations agencies warn of the terrifying outlook on climate change. The UN says there is no credible pathway to 1.5C in place and that “woefully inadequate” progress on cutting carbon emissions means the only way to limit the worst impacts of the climate crisis is a “rapid transformation of societies”. The UN also says that current pledges by countries for action by 2030, even if delivered in full, would mean a rise in global heating of about 2.5C, a level which would condemn the world to catastrophic climate breakdown. Norwich City Council has adopted two targets relating to climate change: carbon neutral for the council’s own operations by 2030 and net zero for Norwich by 2045: too little and too late. What additional targets for 2030 will the council adopt and implement in a strengthened programme of action as a matter of extreme urgency?”

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

“The council recognises that the goal of limiting global average temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, as set out in the Paris Agreement of 2015, is unlikely to be met and that urgent action is required, by all parties, to prevent a climate, biodiversity and humanitarian catastrophe.

The council’s emissions reduction strategies and plans are part of a national and international effort, most recently in Egypt at COP27. Infrastructure and social and economic change are needed that is far outside the control of the operation or sphere of influence of Norwich or any district council, county or Nation. But as I described earlier, we have a track record of success and are ambitious within our own emissions and those we can have an influence over. We are ensuring we have the best data, and that clear plans in place, to reduce emissions from the council and across the city, with our partners.

As part of the council’s environmental planning processes, we will always review the outputs of credible climate scientists and agencies and seek the opinion of trusted advisors and strategic partners, to update and adapt our plans as necessary.”



Committee name: Council

Committee date: 31/01/2023

Report title: Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Portfolio: Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources

Report from: Head of legal and procurement

Wards: All wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

This report sets out the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel with regards to the increase in Councillor Allowances for the 2022/23 financial year.

Recommendation:

It is recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel to:

- a) All Councillor allowances are increased by 5.6%, being the median increase in staff pay, to be backdated to 1 April 2022;
- b) Council considers the alternative recommendations assessed by the Remuneration Panel and whether it would have a preference for adoption of an alternative rate;
- c) Council recommends for officers to liaise with group leaders and the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel on whether a full review of the scheme of allowances should be undertaken prior to January 2025

It is also recommended for the Head of Legal and Procurement be delegated to appoint at least 4 permanent members of the Independent Remuneration Panel

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 priority

Report details

1. The current scheme of allowances for Norwich City Councillors was agreed in January 2021. The next full review of the allowances scheme will therefore need to take place by January 2025.
2. In their 2021 review, the Panel considered that “the current system of linking future increases to staff salary levels should continue and the index should then be applied for the maximum allowable period of four years.” This approach ensures that there is parity between councillors and staff, recognising the contribution they both make to the authority, and can also be helpful in avoiding larger uplifts to councillor allowances when the formal review is undertaken every 4 years.
3. In local government, most staff salary increases are established and agreed with the National Joint Council (NJC) – this is a group of key trade unions who agree rates in negotiation with local government representatives (a small number of Councils have opted out of this approach and reach a local settlement). In the past, the NJC have usually settled with a % figure (often 1% or 2%), and thus it is relatively straightforward to apply the same % increase given to staff salaries to Councillor allowances. However, for 2022/23, the NJC has determined a rate of £1,925 to be applied to all salary increases.
4. Applying the £1,925 uplift to the basic councillor allowance would result in councillors receiving a near 30% uplift, significantly more than the staff average increase, and would result in some special responsibility allowances more than doubling.
5. The Council is not alone in this challenge – many other Councils have adopted the approach of increasing councillor allowances in line with the NJC rate and now need to determine how to approach allowance increases for the current financial year.
6. The NJC settlement was reached in November, and for staff this was then backdated to April 2022. Councillors have continued to receive remuneration at the rates set for 2021/22.
7. The Independent Remuneration Panel have been requested to assess the most appropriate rate to apply for councillor allowances for 2022/23.

The Panel

8. Unfortunately, two members of the Norwich Independent Remuneration Panel were unable to take part in the review. However, we were grateful that two members of the Norfolk County Council Independent Remuneration Panel were able to step in to assist the current review. The County Council Remuneration Panel have recently concluded a review, which is due to be presented to the County Council, and as such have very recent experiences of such considerations.

9. The Panel therefore consisted of:

- a. Kate Money (Chair), a Trustee and former Chair of Age UK Norwich
- b. Gill Bannister, a CQC bank inspector and former Audit Commission inspector
- c. Clare Whelan OBE DL, a former London Councillor and local government advisor

10. The Panel met on 16 January to deliberate the single issue.

Considerations of the Panel

11. The Panel considered a range of options. The following two options were discounted by the panel:

12. **To not increase Councillor allowances.** The Panel recognised that Councillors are not immune from the cost of living crisis and it would be unfair for staff salaries to increase but Councillor allowances to remain static. As a result, the Panel discounted this option.

13. **To increase Councillor allowances by the rate of inflation.** The Panel reviewed relevant inflation rates; in April 2022, CPI was at 7.8%. The most recent published figure at the time of the panel meeting was 9.3%. The panel were concerned that increasing at this level would leave Councillors receiving significantly higher increases than staff, and were also mindful that it may be difficult for Councillors and the public to accept such increases.

14. The Panel then considered in detail 3 specific options. Whilst the panel are recommending option 1 below, they are mindful that Councillors may wish to adopt a different amount and therefore have set out the arguments in respect of these as follows:

Option	Merits
1. Increase Councillor allowances by the same median rate as the increase in staff allowances. The Council's HR team have confirmed that the median rate of staff salary increases is 5.6%	<p>The current allowances scheme expects that each year, Councillor and staff allowances should rise at the same rate. This is to maintain a sense of proportionality and fairness between allowances, recognising both parties make a contribution to the effective running of the Council.</p> <p>The option of using the median salary rate maintains this principle in the scheme and ensures equitable increases across all Councillor allowances. The Panel noted that several other authorities were looking at adopting the median rate for their increases this year.</p>
2. Increase the basic rate by a set amount, nominally £400	<p>The adopted NJC approach for the year is to increase staff allowances by a fixed amount, namely £1,925. Increasing basic allowances by a £400 amount would maintain the same principle adopted by NJC (the Panel confirmed this would represent a 5.8% increase in the basic allowance)</p>

	The panel considered this approach has significant merits albeit recognised it was problematic when considering the Special Responsibility Allowances, which would not rise in this approach; on balance, the panel felt option 1 was therefore more logical.
3. Increase the basic rate by 4.04%	<p>The NJC settlement of £1,925 also includes a separate increase for special allowances of 4.04%. These special allowances relate to items such as London uplifts and standby allowances and it is understood that some London authorities are looking to use the 4.04% as the Councillor increases this year.</p> <p>The 4.04% was based on what was the expected national median increase in salaries that the £1,925 represented. However, as above, £1,925 in Norwich represents a 5.6% uplift in salary.</p> <p>The panel recognised that this rate was established for specific types of allowances, and thus should not be seen as the default basis for members allowances. Given the basis for the rate is the median nationally, which does not equate to the local situation in Norwich, this option was discounted.</p>

15. In undertaking their work, the Panel noted that the last full review of the Norwich City Council allowances scheme was adopted by Council in January 2021, and therefore would not be due for review until January 2025. The panel heard that officers are already considering the timing of the next review and the potential this may be undertaken earlier in 2024, given the next general election may not be called until the latest possible date (being January 2025) and the desire to avoid undertaking the panel review at the same time as operating a general election.

16. The panel highlighted that the general economic situation may mean that it is prudent to undertake a full review of the allowances scheme at an earlier stage than originally planned. In particular, the panel expressed the view that if a similar problem arose in relation to the increases for the 2023/24 year it would be preferable to undertake a full review rather than introduce another one-off arrangement. With this in mind, the panel has requested a further recommendation be made for officers to work with the panel and group leaders to determine the date of the next full review.

Further Recommendation

17. Whilst not part of the work of the Independent Remuneration Panel, given their recommendation relating to the timing of the next full review of the scheme of allowances, it is felt prudent at this stage to ensure that the Independent Remuneration Panel is fully appointed to on a permanent basis.

18. At present, the panel has the statutory minimum of 3 members, which can present challenges if members are unable to attend. It is therefore recommended to delegate authority to the Head of Legal and Procurement to

confirm whether the current panel members wish to retain their appointment, and then make arrangements to permanently appoint to the panel so that there is at least 4 members.

19. Consultation

20. The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require that the Independent Remuneration Panel reports to Council on its recommendations regarding Councillor Allowances. The Council has a duty to take its views into account when determining the level of allowances.
21. Group leaders were asked to provide their views to the panel ahead of its meeting on behalf of their groups.

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.

22. As part of the Council's budget setting process, the 2022/23 budget for Councillor allowances was increased by 3.25% to £400,329.
23. The current forecast outturn is £431,041; this is based on the proportion of councillors able to claim special responsibility allowances being slightly higher than anticipated and because from November, recognising the pay award for staff, the Democratic Services team have forecast a 5.35% pay award to councillors.
24. As such, the proposal to increase allowances to 5.6% will have a £1,000 impact on the current forecast 2022/23 out-turn.
25. Any increases above this level will result in an approximate £4,000 impact for each additional 1%.
26. The longer-term impact will be adjusted for in the future MTFS projections

Legal

27. In preparing its scheme of allowances, the Council must comply with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. These make provision allowing authorities to consider indexation of their rate of allowances and allow for authorities to make amendments to their schemes during the year, the effect of which can be backdated to the start of the financial year.

Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	Initial assessment has indicated that due to the specific nature of the increase proposed, a formal equality impact assessment is not required

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Health, social and economic impact	None
Crime and disorder	None
Children and adults safeguarding	None
Environmental impact	None

Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
If an increase is not recommended, this may deter Councillors or people from standing	This may reduce the amount of people attracted to the role of Councillor or who could afford to fulfil the role of Councillor	Review of the overall rate of allowances paid by the Council; as above, if no increase is recommended an equality assessment may be required
Councillors do not accept the recommendations of the Panel	This may lead to Councillors adopting an alternative approach	Careful consideration by the panel, including review of evidence and taking into account the views of Councillors which is set out in this report.

Other options considered

28. The options considered by the independent remuneration panel are considered in this report. Whilst Councillors may elect to propose an alternative rate, this would require further consideration particularly in relation to its financial impact.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

29. As set out above, the current scheme of allowances provides for Councillor remuneration to rise at the same rate as staff. This cannot be applied fairly for the 2022/23 financial year, and as such it is necessary to consider an alternative approach.

Background papers: None

Appendices: None

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Committee Name: Council

Committee Date: 31/01/2023

Report Title: Treasury Management Mid-Year Review Report 2022/23

Portfolio: Councillor Kendrick, resources

Report from: Interim Head of Finance, Audit and Risk

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

This report sets out the Council's Treasury Management performance for the first six months of the financial year to 30 September 2022.

Recommendation:

To note the contents of the report and in particular the treasury management activity undertaken in the first six months of the 2022/23 financial year.

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. CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy) defines treasury management as: “The management of the local authority’s borrowing, investments and cash flows, including its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”
2. This report primarily reviews the council’s treasury management activity during the first six months of the financial year 2022/23 and reports on the prudential indicators as required by CIPFA’s Treasury Management Code of Practice.
3. The original Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) and Prudential Indicators were reported to and approved by Council on 22 February 2022 and, as the original decision-making body, subsequent monitoring reports should also be considered by Full Council.
4. In the Spring and Autumn of 2021 CIPFA completed two consultations on proposals to make changes to the Treasury Management Code and its associated guidance. Running alongside these consultations, similar consultations were also conducted on proposed changes to the Prudential Code for capital finance, governing local authority capital investment and borrowing activities.
5. In December 2021 CIPFA published the new Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (the Treasury Management Code) and Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (Prudential Code).
6. These two statutory and professional codes are important regulatory elements of the capital finance framework within which local authorities operate. Local authorities are required by regulation to 'have regard to' their provisions.
7. The new codes have been “soft launched” for the 2022/23 financial year. This means, where possible, local authorities should make their best endeavours to adhere to their provisions and not undertake any new investments which would not be consistent with the changes. The codes will be fully implemented in the 2023/24 financial year.
8. This Council has adopted the new CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Sector and operates its treasury management service in compliance with this Code. This requires that the prime objective of treasury management activity is the effective management of risk, and that borrowing activities are undertaken on a prudent, affordable and sustainable basis.

Investment Strategy

9. The TMSS for 2022/23, which includes the Annual Investment Strategy, was approved by the council on 22 February 2022. It sets out the Council’s investment priorities as being:
 - Security of capital;
 - Liquidity of capital; followed by
 - Yield

10. No policy changes have been made to the investment strategy and the Council will therefore, continue to aim to achieve the optimum return (yield) on investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.
11. The Council held £183m of investments as at 30 September 2022. Table 1 below shows the movement in investments for the first six months of the year. The main components of the increase between March and September were the receipt of £14m proceeds from the sale of Norwich Airport Industrial Estate and the balance reflects the normal receipt of government grants towards the beginning of the year where amounts have not yet been expended.
12. The Council continues to consider the broader impact of its investments and a new element of the Treasury Management code will also require consideration of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) policies in placing future investments. Currently the Council has placed two tranches of £5m in the Standard Chartered Bank Sustainable deposit fund; the deposit guarantees that investment is referenced against sustainable assets, both existing and future. The investments are referenced against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) thus funds are put to work addressing some of the world's biggest long-term threats including, but not limited to, climate change, health, financial inclusion and education.

Table 1

Investments	Actual 31-Mar-22	Movement	Actual 30-Sep-22
	£000	£000	£000
Short term investments:			
Banks	40,000	0,000	40,000
Building Societies	25,000	0,000	25,000
Local Authorities	45,000	0,000	45,000
Cash Equivalents:			
Banks	16,525	-6,525	10,000
Non- UK Banks	12,000	3,000	15,000
Building Societies	0,000	0,000	0,000
Local Authorities	0,000	0,000	0,000
Money Market Funds	24,000	1,000	25,000
UK Government	2,000	21,000	23,000
Total	164,525	18,475	183,000

13. In setting its Treasury Management budgets for 2022/23 the council set an income budget target of £220,000 for its investment activity, reflecting the continuing low rate environment that was at the time available for short term investments; so far however, it has proved possible to achieve a return on investments which has resulted in £533,739 of actual interest being achieved to the end of September 2022.
14. It is anticipated that cash balances will decrease during the second half of the year particularly reflecting the repayment in January and March of PWLB loans amounting to £51m and as further capital expenditure is incurred. A combination of early refinancing loans, taken before the recent interest rate rises and relatively higher than anticipated levels of cash balances has achieved a reduction of the overall cost and the refinancing risk associated with the PWLB loan.

15. A projection for the remainder of the year suggests that total income for the year of £2.6m may be achievable; interest earned will be apportioned between the General Fund and the HRA with an estimated £0.7m being due to the HRA.
16. The Director of Resources (S.151 officer) confirms that all investment transactions undertaken during the first six months of 2022/23 were within the approved limits as laid out in the Annual Investment Strategy.

BALANCE SHEET POSITION

External Borrowing

17. Table 2 below shows that as at 30 September the Council had external borrowing of £262.299m, of which £211.907m relates to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). In the first six months of the year the Council has not completed any borrowing. There is a repayment of £2m debt scheduled for January 2023 and £49m debt for March 2023.

Table 2 shows the current and forecast borrowing position. This position assumes that there will be no borrowing in the current year. The scheduled repayment of loans of £51m in January and March gives the revised position.

Table 2

	Actual	Actual	TMSS Forecast	Revised Estimate
Long Term Borrowing	31-Mar-22	30-Sep-22	31-Mar-23	31-Mar-23
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Public Works Loan Board	256,606	256,606	205,647	205,647
Money Market	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
3% Stock (Perpetually irredeemable)	499	499	499	499
Other financial intermediaries (Salix)	183	157	131	131
Corporate Bonds and External Mortgages	11	11	11	11
Total	262,299	262,273	211,288	211,288

Future Economic forecasts

18. For the period to September the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has increased interest rates seven times in as many meetings in 2022 and has raised rates to their highest level since the Global Financial Crisis. The UK's status as a large importer of commodities, which have jumped in price, means that households in the UK are now facing a squeeze on their real incomes.
19. In their November meeting which happened as this report was being drafted the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) increased interest rates further to 3% (from 2.25%) which was the largest single increase in Three decades; currently the forecast position suggests they will continue to rise to a peak of 5.00% around February 2023. Market expectations for what the MPC will do are volatile. If Bank Rate climbs to these levels the housing market looks very vulnerable, which is one reason why the peak in the forecast is lower than the peak of 5.50% - 5.75% priced into the financial markets at present.

Interest rate forecasts

The Council's treasury advisors, Link Group, have updated their forecast for Bank Rate. Table 3 below shows their interest rate forecasts through to September 2025. These projections are based on the end of September position to align with the date covered by this report and they may change before the Investment Committee meeting.

Table 3

Link Group Interest Rate View	08.11.22												
	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25
BANK RATE	3.50	4.25	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.00	2.75	2.50	2.50
3 month ave earnings	3.60	4.30	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.00	3.80	3.30	3.00	3.00	2.80	2.50	2.50
6 month ave earnings	4.20	4.50	4.60	4.50	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.40	3.10	3.00	2.90	2.60	2.60
12 month ave earnings	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.50	4.30	4.20	4.00	3.50	3.20	3.10	3.00	2.70	2.70
5 yr PWLB	4.30	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.10
10 yr PWLB	4.50	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.20
25 yr PWLB	4.70	4.70	4.60	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.50
50 yr PWLB	4.30	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.40	3.30	3.20	3.20

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

20. In summary, the MPC has tightened short-term interest rates with a view to trying to slow the economy sufficiently to keep the secondary effects of inflation – as measured by wage rises – under control.
21. The forecast on 8th November sets out a view that both short and long-dated interest rates will be elevated for some little while, as the Bank of England seeks to squeeze inflation out of the economy, whilst the government is providing a package of fiscal loosening to try and protect households and businesses from the worst impacts of ultra-high wholesale gas and electricity prices.
22. These forecasts will be kept under close review and the impact will feed through into in year budget monitoring position, the 2023/24 budget and MTFS.

PWLB Rates

23. As the interest forecast table for PWLB (borrowing) rates above shows, there is likely to be a steady rise over the forecast period for about a year, after which rates are expected to fall.

Debt Rescheduling

24. No debt rescheduling was undertaken during the first six months of 2022/23. It is not anticipated that the Council will undertake any rescheduling activity during the remainder of the financial year. The council retains some higher rate borrowings and if rates continue to rise there may be some opportunities for debt rescheduling if this proves cost effective. Until borrowing rates fall the Council is unlikely to consider additional loans to finance its unfinanced borrowing.

Prudential Indicators

25. This part of the report is structured to provide an update on:
 - The changes to the Council's capital expenditure plans;
 - How these plans are being financed;

- The impact of changes in the capital expenditure plans on the prudential indicators and the underlying need to borrow; and
- Compliance with the limits in place for borrowing.

Capital Expenditure & Financing

26. The 2022/23 capital programme budgets were approved as part of the budget report to full Council on 22 February 2022. In the Q1 Assurance report there were approved revisions to the capital budgets to include the 2021/22 capital carry forwards, new capital schemes approved during the year and the re-profiling of some capital budgets into future years. The current capital programme budget is shown in Table 4 along with the mid-year estimate. A detailed breakdown of capital programme schemes can also be found in the Quarter 1 2022/23 Corporate Performance Assurance report.

Table 4

	2022/23 Original Budget	2022/23 Revised Budget	2022/23 Forecast Outturn
	£000	£000	£000
General Fund capital expenditure	20,246	18,298	16,430
General Fund capital loans	6,000	1,000	1,000
HRA	41,962	42,347	38,417
Capital Expenditure	68,208	61,646	55,847
Financed by:			
Capital receipts	16,213	16,377	13,516
Capital grant and contributions	20,109	18,507	16,178
Capital & earmarked reserves	19,544	19,144	19,205
Revenue	6,342	6,618	5,949
Total Resources	62,208	60,646	54,847
Net borrowing need for the year	6,000	1,000	1,000

27. Table 4 shows how the revised capital programme will be financed and shows a significant decrease in the net borrowing need for the year compared to the figure anticipated when Council approved the Treasury Management Strategy. The reason borrowing need for the year has decreased is due to the loan requirement for the council's wholly owned subsidiary, Norwich Regeneration Limited being re-profiled into future years.

28. A further consequence of this is that the council's forecast Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) for 2022/23 shown in Table 5, is lower than initially anticipated.

The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

29. Table 5 below shows the Councils CFR, which is the underlying external need to borrow for a capital purpose.

Table 5

	2022/23 Original Estimate	2022/23 Revised Estimate
Opening General Fund CFR	£000 114,306	£000 113,003
Movement in General Fund CFR	5,769	2,065
Closing General Fund CFR	120,074	115,068
<i>Movement in CFR represented by:</i>		
Borrowing need (NRL loan requirement)	6,000	1,000
Loan repayment	(15)	(15)
Appropriations	(657)	0
Less MRP and other financing adj.	441	1,080
Movement in General Fund CFR	5,769	2,065
Opening HRA Fund CFR	207,517	208,533
Movement in HRA CFR	657	0
Closing HRA CFR	208,174	208,533
TOTAL CFR	328,248	323,601

Prudential Indicators relating to Borrowing Activity

30. **Authorised Limit** – This represents the legal limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited and needs to be set and revised by Council. It reflects the level of external borrowing which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. The limit represents the CFR (assumed fully funded by borrowing) plus a margin to accommodate any unplanned adverse cash flow movements. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003. The authorised limit has not been breached; Table 2 above indicates that the level of external borrowing at September 2022 was £262m falling to an estimated £211m by March 2023 and in comparison to the authorised limit in Table 7.

Table 7

Prudential Indicator	2022/23
	£000
Authorised Limit for external debt	358,248

31. **Operational Boundary** – This indicator is based on the probable external debt during the year; it is set deliberately lower than the authorised limit. This limit acts as an early warning indicator should borrowing be approaching the Authorised Limit. This limit may be breached on occasion under normal circumstances, but sustained or regular breaches should trigger a review of borrowing levels. The operational boundary has not been breached and current external borrowing is well below the Operational Boundary.

Table 8

Prudential Indicator	2022/23
	£000
Operational boundary for external debt	328,248

Borrowing Activity

32. The Authority has continued the prudent approach of utilising internal borrowing to fund its borrowing requirement where cash levels permit or interest rates mitigate against taking on external debt; overall the strategy is designed to reduce external borrowing costs. In the first six months of the year the Council has not borrowed.
33. Long-term fixed interest rates are still relatively low but are expected to rise over the five-year treasury management planning period. The Executive Director, Corporate & Commercial Services (S.151 Officer), under delegated powers, will take the most appropriate form of borrowing depending on the prevailing interest rates or opportunities at the time, taking into account the associated risks e.g. counterparty risk, cost of carry and impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy as well as risk of future more significant interest rate increases.
34. Opportunities for debt restructuring will be continually monitored alongside interest rate forecasts. Action will be taken when the Executive Director, Corporate & Commercial Services (S.151 officer) feels it is most advantageous.

Investment Performance

35. The objectives of the Council's investment strategy are firstly the safeguarding of the repayment of the principal and interest of its investments, and secondly ensuring adequate liquidity. The investment returns (yield) being a third objective, consummate to achieving the first two.
36. The Council held £183m of financial investments at 30 September 2022 with the investment profile being shown in Table 1 earlier in this report.

Risk Benchmarking

37. The Investment Strategy for 2022/23 includes the following benchmarks for liquidity and security. Additional benchmarking data against comparable authorities was not available at the time of writing this report and these will be provided as they become available.

Liquidity

38. The Council has no formal overdraft facility and seeks to maintain liquid short-term deposits of at least £1 million available with a week's notice.
39. The Average return on investment at 30 September 2022 was 1.89% against a 7 Day LIBID benchmark average rate of 1.19% -0.7% (minus). The Executive Director, Corporate & Commercial Services (S.151 officer) can report that liquidity arrangements were adequate during the year to date.

Security

41. The weighted average credit risk of the portfolio at the end of the period was 3.02%. The Council's maximum security risk benchmark for the portfolio at 30 September 2022 was 0.011% which equates to a potential loss of £20.1k on an investment portfolio of £183m. This credit risk indicator is lower than the anticipated maximum risk of 0.040% in the Treasury Management Strategy.
42. At 30 September 2022 100% of the investment portfolio was held in low risk specified investments.
43. The Director of Resources (S.151 officer) can report that the investment portfolio was maintained within the overall benchmark during the year to date.

Minimum Revenue Provision Policy

44. The Council is required to approve an MRP policy in advance of each year. Council approved the 2022/23 policy on 22 February 2022.

REGULATORY UPDATE

Proposed changes to IFRS 16 Leases and the likely impact for the Local Authority Accounting Code.

45. Although the standard was issued in January 2012, authorities are expected to comply from 1 April 2024. The current classification of leases into operating and finance will no longer apply with the exceptions of leases of 12 months or less and leases of low value. This change will therefore impact the Council's CFR but have no borrowing impact. A lot will depend on the evaluation of contracts and their implications. The potential impacts of the new standard will be covered in the 2023/24 Treasury Management Strategy.

Changes to the Treasury Management and Prudential Code.

46. In the Spring and Autumn of 2021 CIPFA completed two consultations on proposals to make changes to the Treasury Management Code and its associated guidance. Running alongside these consultations, similar consultations were also conducted on proposed changes to the Prudential Code for capital finance, governing local authority capital investment and borrowing activities.
47. In December 2021 CIPFA published the new Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (the Treasury Management Code) and new Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (Prudential Code).
48. The focus of the Treasury Management Code changes relate to supporting the new prudential code. The new prudential code includes a new liability benchmark indicator which 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.
49. The focus of the new Prudential Code changes are to address the risks associated with commercial investments (see paragraphs 50-54), including property acquisitions, known as debt for yield transactions. 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.

Commercial Investments

50. Norwich City Council currently has £119m of Investment Property on its balance sheet (31 March 2022) and, as it is in a net borrowing position, is directly impacted by the proposed code changes.
51. Despite CIPFA's stated position, the Code's statement that authorities 'must not borrow to invest for the primary purpose of financial return' is not intended to require the forced sale of existing commercial investments, whether commercial properties or financial investments. Selling these investments and using the proceeds to net down debt does, however, reduce treasury risks and is therefore an option which should be kept under review, especially if new long-term borrowing is being considered.
52. The Code requires that authorities which are net borrowers should review options for exiting their financial investments for commercial purposes in their annual treasury management or investment strategies. The options should include use of the sale proceeds to repay debt or reduce new borrowing requirements. They should not take new borrowing if financial investments for commercial purposes can reasonably be realised, based on a financial appraisal which takes account of financial implications and risk reduction benefits.
53. This enables authorities to weigh the risk reduction benefits of sale against the loss of income and the current sale value of the investments; the code guidance also makes it clear that where an authority has existing commercial properties, the Code's requirement that an authority must not borrow to invest for the primary purpose of financial return, is not intended to prevent authorities from appropriate capital repair, renewal or updating of existing properties.
54. The Council is currently undertaking a review of its investment portfolio to determine assets returns and the potential cost of disposal.

Other Treasury Management Code Changes

55. CIPFA has also set out several other areas which should be considered and reflected appropriately in authorities Treasury Management strategies and prudential indicators.

Maturity Indicator

56. The code revision sets out the need for a maturity indicator which is closely related to the liability benchmark; as the liability benchmark provides the methodology for producing maturity ranges appropriate to the authority's own committed borrowing profile and provides a projection of future debt outstanding around which to set the upper and lower limits for each maturity range.

Long Term Treasury Management Investments

57. The scope of this indicator has been clarified to relate explicitly to the authority's investments for treasury management purposes only. Investments taken or held for service purposes or commercial purposes should not be included in this indicator.

58. Authorities must not borrow more than or in advance of their needs purely to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. Organisations must not borrow earlier than required to meet cashflow needs unless there is a clear business case for doing so and must only do so for the current capital programme, to finance future debt maturities, or to ensure an adequate level of short-term investments to provide liquidity for the organisation.

Interest Rate Exposure Indicator

59. The Code requires each authority to set out its strategy for managing interest rate risks with such indicators as are appropriate. The indicators used should cover at least the forthcoming year and the following two years, in line with other prudential indicators. Authorities may find it helpful to use the measure required for the Financial Statements, which sets out the cost of a 1% increase in interest rates.
60. The liability benchmark chart can be used to portray interest rate risk, by splitting existing loans outstanding into its interest risk characteristics, e.g. fixed rate loans, variable rate loans, etc.

Credit risk

61. Authorities are asked to consider credit risk indicators appropriate to themselves. One simple measure which some authorities use is an overall credit score, i.e., the weighted average credit rating of the authority's treasury management investments.

Price risk

62. Authorities are asked to ensure that their reporting of investments which are materially exposed to movements in fair value includes an appropriate measure of price risk and reporting on movements in fair value. Authorities with commercial property portfolios, such as Norwich CC should establish a view of fair value at each year end. This is required in any case for the investment risk indicators and reporting under the Statutory Investment Guidance

Treasury Management Practice (TMP) changes

63. Each authority is required to adopt a number of Treasury Management Practices and the code changes have proposed changes to be made to some of these; some are minor wording changes to clarify or assist in interpretation however, there is now a requirement in TMP1 on counterparty credit risk for an authority's counterparty policy to set out the organisation's policy and practices relating to environmental, social and governance (ESG) investment considerations in relation to those counterparties.
64. The TMP requires an authority to assert that "its counterparty lists and limits reflect a prudent attitude towards organisations with whom funds may be deposited or investments made. It also recognises the need to have, and will therefore maintain, a formal counterparty policy in respect of those organisations from which it may borrow, or with whom it may enter into other financing or derivative arrangements. This will set out the organisation's policy and practices relating to environmental, social and governance (ESG) investment considerations."

Training, Knowledge and Skills

65. Revisions to TMP 10 on the training skills and knowledge now requires a knowledge and skills schedule to be maintained for all those involved in Treasury Management functions.

Consultation

66. The report is the mid-year position statement to ensure that the Cabinet and the Council are kept informed of treasury activity.
67. The report was considered by the newly formed Treasury Management Committee who noted and endorsed the report for consideration at Cabinet and Council.

Implications

Financial and Resources

68. 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. This report is for information only and there are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources.

Legal

69. The Council must have regard to the provisions of the Treasury Management code of practice when undertaking and reporting on its treasury activities. The requirement for Council to approve its Treasury Management Strategy and to receive reports, on its treasury management performance, are requirements of the Code of Practice.
70. The mid-year report must set out performance against the approved Prudential Indicators and any breaches of them.

Statutory Considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	None
Health, Social and Economic Impact	None
Crime and Disorder	None
Children and Adults Safeguarding	None
Environmental Impact	<p>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.</p> <p>Security, liquidity and yield remain the cornerstones of the Treasury Management Strategy, and it is vital that all investments continue to ensure the security of council funds as a priority and remain compatible with the risk appetite of the council and its cash flow requirements.</p>

Risk Management

71. Managing risk is a major part of treasury management activity. All the limits and indicators in place to reduce the level of risk have been adhered to so that risks are at an acceptable level as in the treasury management strategy.

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Future interest rate changes can offer both opportunity and risk. Cashflow requirements are known to avoid the need for unplanned borrowing or overdraft facilities to meet expenses as they fall due.	Future loan interest rate changes need to be assessed against the cost of borrowing and the council's ability to fund expenditure from its own cashflows (internal borrowing). Investment rates offer an opportunity to generate income in support of council priorities subject to the achievement of security and liquidity considerations.	To mitigate the risk, we will work closely with our treasury advisors to review interest rate forecasts to assess when we should borrow. Surplus cash for investing is only available on a short-term basis until required to meet on-going or capital expenditures. The existence of reserves provides some longer-term opportunities to generate investment returns but must be undertaken alongside an assessment of risk and knowledge of the council's cashflow requirements.

Other Options Considered

72. No other options have been considered. The report is to inform the treasury management committee and the council of the treasury activity for the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

73. To ensure the treasury management committee and Council are kept informed of treasury activity in line with the Financial Regulations.

Background papers: None

Appendices: None

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Motion to: Council

Item 9

31 January 2023

Subject: Equitable access to voter ID

Proposer: Councillor Wright

Seconded: Councillor Schmierer

Council **RESOLVES** to

- 1) note
 - a) that the Elections Act 2022 will make considerable unnecessary changes to the conduct and administration of elections.
 - b) that the Act will reduce the likelihood and ability of certain disadvantaged groups to vote without any gains in electoral security or in tackling many fundamental issues with our electoral law.
 - c) that implementing the Act will cost the public purse a large sum in set-up costs and increasing running costs for elections every year, for no gain to the electors of this city.
- 2) register its concern that the list of identification permitted to be used at polling stations is discriminatory towards young people, as the range of passes allowed is much smaller than for senior citizens. This is likely to deter young voters from voting and make it less likely that they will vote later in their lives.
- 3) recognise that although some identification used by young people is permissible, not all is and the following should be added to the list, including (but not exclusively): an 18+ bus pass, a Young Person's Railcard, a student ID card or NUS card or an 18+ Oyster Card.
- 4) ensure that this council continues to take all possible measures through its communications channels to achieve maximum awareness of this legislation and implications.
- 5) express its regret that the 'fatal motion' tabled in the House of Lords that would have killed off the passage of this legislation did not receive the necessary support from opposition peers.

Item 9a

- 6) ask Group Leaders to write to the Minister responsible and the city's two MPs to ask them to support this policy of a wider range of acceptable ID and to press for its speedy incorporation into the guidance for the next set of elections in May 2023.

Motion to: Council

31 January 2023

Subject: End the unfairness of forced prepayment meters and protect citizens at risk of being cut off 'by the back door'

Proposer: Councillor Galvin

Seconded: Councillor Haynes

Due to rising energy prices, many households are struggling to pay their bills.

Homes with prepayment gas or electric meters, which require people to pay for energy before they use it, are in an increasingly difficult position. In contrast to billed customers, who are given warnings before being cut off, they lose their energy supply when their money runs out (after a small emergency credit), yet standing charges carry on racking up, from 5p-80p a day, meaning customers can build up debts even when not getting any energy. Households with prepayment meters cannot have more than £10 of debt and if they are unable to pay in advance they are essentially disconnected, leaving them without power in their homes.

Norwich City Council has supported some residents on prepayment meters through its discretionary rebate scheme. The council does not hold information on how many people in its properties (or the wider city) have prepayment meters, but the council stock stands at 14,500 homes and around half of social housing tenants are likely to have prepayment meters. Government figures show at least 7642 meters in Norwich in 2019 (not including smart meters operating in prepayment mode, which will now sizeably increase this number).

Rules state that suppliers cannot force-fit a prepayment meter under warrant for people in very vulnerable situations if they don't want one, charge them for warrant costs on debts, or use warrants on people who would find the experience very traumatic. However, nearly half a million warrants allowing energy firms to forcibly install prepayment meters in people's homes have been approved by courts since July 2021 (these are often approved in batches at courts far away from the customer's home). Citizens Advice said it was continuing to advise "high numbers" of people each month who were having prepayment meters forcibly installed. About 65% of the people being moved on to one for debt reasons are disabled or have a long-term health condition, and 40% are single people with children.

Cutting off people's water supply is banned; energy is likewise essential and fair access to it must be protected.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) Ask group leaders to jointly write on behalf of the council to The Business and Energy Secretary to express its profound and urgent concern that warrants are being issued without the appropriate checks being undertaken to make sure that the rules are being followed, and to underline that nobody should be left without energy this winter as a result of them not being able to afford bills; and call for the Government to immediately implement a legal ban on prepayment meters being forcibly installed (or smart meters being turned onto pre-payment mode) without the explicit, informed consent of households.
- 2) Use all communications methods at its disposal (website, letter, tenancy agreement, tenant involvement panel, social media, Citizen magazine, local press, etc) to explain, inform and continue to underline to residents that they do not have to accept a prepayment meter; and offer assistance to those who wish to move to other forms of payment if appropriate.
- 3) Continue to provide where possible discretionary help to residents with pre-payment meters.
- 4) Make extra attempts to ascertain which city council tenants have prepayment meters, especially those who might be at extra risk of being cut off, and monitor them to offer assistance, for example through housing officer and other support.
- 5) Write to Norwich Magistrates Court to ask what processes magistrates followed prior to granting energy firms warrants of entry, how magistrates could be sure these households were not classed as vulnerable and what sanctions magistrates can take if it is found that energy firms did not complete vulnerability assessments on customers before applying for a warrant.
- 6) Ask group leaders to write to local MPs to ask them to support EDM (Early Day Motion) 690: tabled on 12 December 2022 - Involuntarily installation of prepayment meters; and
- 7) Ask group leaders to write to OFGEM asking them to carry out an urgent review of prepayment meters and their effects particularly on people on low incomes, in poor health and at risk of fuel poverty.

Motion to: Council

31 January 2023

Subject: Plant-based food

Proposer: Councillor Catt

Seconded: Councillor Osborn

It is increasingly recognised that meat and dairy production is a significant contributor to climate breakdown, with the livestock sector accounting for at least 14% of global greenhouse gas emissions, as well as being a major contributor to global deforestation. The catastrophic effects of climate breakdown mean climate and risk experts predict a world with systemic cascading risks related to food insecurity including food shortages, societal tensions, hunger and malnutrition, unrest and conflict (according to a Chatham house report from 2021), which furthermore predicts a 50% chance of synchronous crop failure in the decade of the 2040s. Producing a kilo of beef creates, on average, 12 times more CO₂ than a kilo of tofu or other soya based proteins. Meanwhile, producing a litre of dairy milk uses, on average, at least four times as much land as producing a litre of plant milk. Growing numbers of people are adopting plant-based diets, which do not include meat or dairy.

As well as a smaller carbon footprint, eating more plant-based foods also reduces the land footprint of our diets and would improve UK food security and self-sufficiency, thereby making our diets more local. As a country, we currently import much more food than we export. In 2021 we had a trade deficit for all dairy products of £1.04 billion and a trade deficit for just beef, pork and lamb of £1.7 billion. Only 55% of the world's crop calories feed people directly with 36% going to feed livestock; only a fraction of the calories in feed given to livestock make their way into the meat and milk that we consume which is a huge food waste issue on top of making our food production much more carbon intensive. While some people criticise people who follow a plant-based diet for eating imported soy, the vast majority of soy - 77% - goes to feeding livestock, which research has shown is an inefficient use of resources. East Anglia has predominantly arable farming and there are many local predominantly plant-based food businesses we could support.

Henry Dimbleby, in the Government-commissioned National Food Strategy concluded that a 30% reduction in meat consumption is necessary for future food

security. The National Food Strategy also states that obesity alone accounts for 8% of annual health spend in the UK, or £18bn. Savings to the NHS will come from healthier, plant-based diets. Sustain estimates that meat over-consumption costs the NHS directly £1.2 billion, and is responsible for 45,000 deaths annually. Over 40% of Britons are trying to reduce their meat consumption and 14% already follow a flexitarian diet, but plant-based food options are not consistently available at all events or food venues. Other countries have taken a stance; for example, in Portugal it is a legal requirement for all public catering – including local authority facilities – to provide plant-based food options, and other local authorities such as Oxfordshire County Council and Cambridge City Council have decided to promote plant-based food via serving a fully plant-based menu at Council meetings and events, where cost-effective. Locally, the University of Cambridge Catering Service reduced food-related greenhouse gas emissions by a third via replacing beef and lamb with plant-based products.

In September 2021, Norwich City Council formally adopted the Glasgow Declaration on Food and Climate which committed the council to try to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with food. Norwich City Council can build on its achievements to date and lead by example to promote and normalise consumption of plant-based food, recognising that plant-based meals are frequently nutritious and low-cost food options. This is in line with its vision for Norwich City to be net-zero carbon by 2045.

Council therefore **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) Follow the lead of other councils around the country in ensuring that food and drink provided at all meetings and events hosted by the city council, including those hosted by the Mayoralty, be plant-based, and where possible, provided by a local caterer.
- 2) After engaging with a wide variety of catering options (including consideration of social enterprises), use Norwich City Council civic events to promote and showcase environmentally friendly plant-based food and drink options, alongside displayed information about the climate and health benefits and relative cost of different protein/food sources and educating people about how to achieve a balanced plant-based diet.
- 3) When events occur on City Council open spaces, and where catering is provided, ensure that environmentally friendly plant-based options are available (i.e., minimum from at least one caterer), secured through the use of terms and conditions of hire (where reasonably possible).
- 4) Secure through a contract specification when re-tendering for suppliers that environmentally friendly, locally sourced plant-based food and drink options

Item 9c

are to be available at providers on City Council open spaces (where reasonably possible). Similarly, when possible, via future contract specification when re-tendering for suppliers for council-run cafes, kiosks or leisure centres, specify that vegetable/legume rich plant-based options are listed prominently on menus, above non plant-based options.

- 5) Continue to use council communications channels to promote sustainable (and affordable) food and drink practices throughout the city, including details of the climate and health benefits of plant-based food and drinks and educating people on the best ways to achieve a balanced plant-based diet.
- 6) Write to Norfolk County Council requesting that they assess the carbon impact of meat and dairy industries on the county and ask what steps are being taken to reduce this in line with the target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030.
- 7) Work with community groups across the city to promote the establishment of new community gardens, especially on sites that have been previously derelict or contaminated so that these sites can be quickly brought back into beneficial use to support the growth of cheap and accessible plant-based food and drinks for all our communities.
- 8) Recognise Norwich as a city with businesses leading the way in the provision of plant-based foods and drinks. Engage with Norwich BID and the Norwich Market Traders' Association to investigate the opportunities to promote the benefits of plant-based foods, educate people on the best ways to achieve a balanced plant-based diet and improve the availability of plant-based options at Norwich businesses ; and
- 9) Write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs supporting UK endorsement of the Plant Based Treaty and invite all Party Group Leaders to sign the letter.

Motion to: Council

31 January 2023

Subject: Energy For All campaign

Proposer: Councillor Hampton

Seconder: Councillor Padda

The failure of Conservative-led governments to invest in renewables, retrofit homes and regulate the energy market has caused the current energy and cost of living crises. At the same time, the climate crisis is the biggest existential threat to our society with urgent action needed. There are numerous synergies between tackling the cost of living, energy, and climate crises; these must be addressed simultaneously to achieve true social, economic, and environmental justice.

1) Council notes that:

- a) Residents in Norwich and across the country are being hit hard by the cost of living crisis, with too many falling into fuel poverty.
- b) The Government's Energy Price Guarantee is socially unjust and fails to lay the path to an energy secure future.
- c) Norwich City Council's Sustainable Warmth Strategy sets out this council's approach to supporting residents who are experiencing fuel poverty, in a just and sustainable manner. It states our aim of ultimately eradicating fuel poverty in Norwich within the timescale of the 2040 City Vision.
- d) But national, systemic change is needed to guarantee energy security and the eradication of fuel poverty in the long term.
- e) The Energy Equity Commission Bill, and Fuel Poverty Action's corresponding Energy For All campaign, calls for the energy price cap system to be replaced with a free universal basic energy allowance, alongside a national retrofitting strategy. Everyone would receive a basic free amount of energy: enough to cover essentials like heating, eating, lighting and connectivity.
- f) If enacted, this policy would largely eradicate fuel poverty in Norwich and the UK.

2) Council **RESOLVES** to:

- a) Write to Fuel Poverty Action affirming our support for the Energy Equity Commission Bill and Energy For All campaign.
- b) Ask the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, copying in Norwich's two MPs, to alert them to this motion and request that they lend their support to the Energy Equity Commission Bill.
- c) Continue to support residents experiencing fuel poverty, deliver retrofit measures, promote clean energy and work towards a net zero city by delivery of our Environmental Strategy, Sustainable Warmth Strategy and other related policies.

Motion to: Council

31 January 2023

Subject: National Housing Crisis

Proposer: Councillor Jones

Seconded: Councillor Huntley

The worst cost of living crisis since the 1950s is coinciding with a national housing crisis. The result of this will be an increasing number of our residents deprived of one of the most fundamental pillars to a healthy and happy life – a secure, stable, and affordable home.

Homeownership is in decline following a period of rising house prices that has made buying a home unaffordable for too many. This combined with a drastic depletion in social housing stock has forced an increasing number of Norwich residents into the private rented sector and at the mercy of rising rents and under-regulated tenancies. Worse still, many are left without a permanent residence at all, as levels of homelessness remain high.

Whilst this Council has welcomed the Norwich Council Housing Strategy 2020-26 it is now calling for the acceleration of its delivery to increase the provision of affordable, secure, high-quality, and energy-efficient housing across the city to tackle the root of the housing crisis locally.

However, in the face of a worsening national economic crisis, urgent action is needed to protect our residents, especially those in the most precarious living circumstances, from its severest impacts.

To support residents through the immediate and acute period of the cost-of-living crisis, this Council **RESOLVES** to call upon Government to:

- 1) Increase Local Housing Allowance rates in line with rising private market rents - making these more affordable and reducing the proportion of income spent on rent at a time when household budgets are increasingly squeezed.
- 2) Introduce rent reforms and delegate powers to local authorities to set rent caps to protect private tenants from further rental increases or exploitative charges at a time of crisis.
- 3) Legislate a no winter evictions guarantee to protect private tenants from homelessness through the most challenging period of the cost-of-living crisis.

Item 9e

- 4) Abolish the Right to Buy in favour of expanding the provision of high-quality, energy-efficient, and environmentally sustainable social housing stock providing homes for residents and their families.
- 5) Expand pathways to homeownership so that owning a home can still be a realistic aspiration for any residents.
- 6) Prioritise the passing of the Renters' Reform Bill that seeks to improve standards and regulations across the private rented sector to better protect tenants.

Motion to: Council

31 January 2023

Subject: Norwich Bus Fares

Proposer: Councillor Stonard

Seconder: Councillor Harris

This council recognises the vital importance of affordable, reliable, and high-quality public transport to the functioning of Norwich. We therefore strongly welcome the recent IPPR research on public transport, published on 6 October 2022 under the title "To support low-income households, it's time to reduce the cost of daily bus travel". While the report makes clear that reducing fares is not the only issue needed to increase bus patronage – interventions to improve speed, reliability and the experience of passengers are all required as well - reductions in the costs of public transport for passengers are essential for a fair transport system.

Council **RESOLVES** to

- 1) note that; -
 - a) Low-income households are the most likely to use buses, while research by the RAC Foundation shows that since 2013 the cost of bus travel has risen by a greater extent than all other forms of transport. It is the poorest households, without access to other forms of travel, that have borne the brunt of these increases driven by de-regulation and lack of long-term funding.
 - b) Any reduction in bus fares would therefore be of the greatest benefit to those least well off. Capping bus fares at no more than £1 per day would save the poorest 20% of households in England £0.8bn a year. Making all bus fares in England free would save the poorest 40% of households £1.5bn a year.
 - c) This Council notes that a policy of making bus fares in England entirely free would cost £2.3bn a year, with the greatest benefits going to the least well off. For comparison, the recent 'fiscal event' in September 2022 proposed £40bn worth of tax cuts, mostly to the most well off. The current proposed Government funding for new roads is £27bn, for schemes that are likely to increase pollution and make the climate and biodiversity crises worse. For the same money, bus travel could be made free for at least ten years, helping to reduce car journeys, and making progress towards a net zero transport system.

Item 9f

- 2) ask that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Transport, the Shadow Secretary State for Transport, Norwich's two MPs and to the Leader of the county council expressing this Council's support for making public transport in Norwich free of charge; and
- 3) Use its existing partnerships and relationships with the county council and bus operators, to work to promote this objective.

