

2. GENERAL FUND 2024/25 BUDGET AND MTF5

Forecast 2023/24 Outturn

- 2.1 The latest estimated outturn position on the General Fund, shows a forecast underspend of around £3.5m.
- 2.2 Most of the underspend has been generated within corporate finance. This is due to similar reasons as in 2022/23, where an increase in the level of interest generated by the council's day to day cash investments continues due to higher interest rates and relatively high cash balances. In addition, a review of the council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy has also delivered savings in the year.
- 2.3 In the December 2023 update to the medium-term financial strategy, it was assumed that any underspend achieved within 2023/24 will be utilised to support the implementation of the council's change programme as it responds to the priorities of the Corporate Plan. This remains largely unchanged although some resources have been into the capital financing reserve to support capital investment in corporate plan priorities and the budget risk reserve.

Proposed 2024/25 Revenue Budget

Savings, growth and investment

- 2.4 Permanent savings/additional income of £3.7m have been identified in 2024/25. Updates to the MTF5 assumptions, such as a slower growth in the Housing Benefit Subsidy gap, means that the proposed budget shows a balanced position for 2024/25, with no requirement to draw down on general reserves. However, in the later years of the plan there is a cumulative gap indicated; no work has been done to mitigate this gap as the financial planning assumptions for those years' are being made in the absence of the next spending review information and so are highly speculative. The further uncertainties surrounding the outcome of a general election also serve to complicate those projections still further.
- 2.5 Included within the savings figure are amounts relating to updated assumptions on the council's cash investments (£0.4m additional in 2024/25 followed by a reduction of £1.2m in 2025/26). The Council also has two (HRA) £50m loans maturing in 2026 and 2028 but is operating on the expectation that they can be refinanced at similar rates, recognising that the economic outlook is forecasting falling interest rates in the medium term.
- 2.6 The focus for 2024/25 has been on the following themes, which are based around the council's journey to be a modern, efficient council:
- Delivery of the existing savings programme
 - Income optimisation and automation
 - Fees and charges
 - Asset management (include commercial rental income)
 - Corporate items: capital financing
- 2.7 Delivery of existing savings clearly underpins the viability of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. whilst the other four themes relate to the overall

efficiency and effectiveness of the authority to deliver against in the corporate priorities.

- 2.8 Outcomes will be driven by the Corporate Plan and the results of the Corporate Plan consultation will help drive the allocation of resources across the authority. By linking the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to the Corporate Plan, assurance can be provided that the resources required to deliver the planned outcomes and benefits will be in place and that, as the Corporate Plan evolves, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy can be flexed to respond to any changes in priorities and/or the timing of outcomes.
- 2.9 The council undertook a public consultation in relation to the proposed budget and on the proposal for a council tax rise. An analysis of the results can be seen at Appendix 2 (E). The consultation found that most respondents supported the proposed council tax rise and the retention of the 100% council tax reduction scheme. There was also broad support for the approach taken to closing the estimated 2024/25 budget gap using the 5 thematic approach, rather than individual saving proposals from across the council.
- 2.10 The proposed 2024/25 budget currently includes provision for £1.4m of permanent budget growth (i.e. increases to the budget not arising from inflationary factors). The permanent growth has broadly been targeted towards additional resources to support economic growth and regeneration, environmental actions and to allow for capacity to address the Corporate Plan consultation outcomes. The additional resources are also intended to address statutory Health and Safety actions and known pressures in relation to elections and to support the provision of an in-house payroll service. Further details relating to these proposals can be seen at Appendix 2 (F) below.

Inflation

- 2.11 The increasing inflation levels have placed additional pressures on the council's finances. There are £3.8m of contractual and energy inflationary pressures included within the lifetime of the MTFP as well as £4.4m payroll pressures and £1.0m Housing Benefit pressures, this is on top of £4.9m of inflationary costs which have already been incorporated into the 2023/24 budget across pay, gas, electric and other contract costs.
- 2.12 The council's pay structure is primarily based on national negotiating body pay spines and nationally negotiated settlements. The process has only recently been concluded for the 2023/24 financial year at a level greater than the budgeted figure. An estimate of payroll inflation has been included within the provisional budget for 2024/25. Given that pay costs form a significant proportion of the council's budget and the uncertainty over future pay awards, this is a key budget risk (see paragraph 2.28).
- 2.13 Many of the council's contracts have inflationary increases incorporated within them and therefore the significant increases in CPI and RPI measures has created a clear pressure on the budget position. Inflationary increases have been applied across the council's main contracts, although there remains a risk that further cost pressures emerge as contracts come up for re-tender. The provisional local government finance settlement seeks

to ensure that there is an increase in funding for all local authorities, not least by the means of the Funding Guarantee, but this has been set at a 3% increase relative to the 'Core Spending Power' (CSP) whereas many costs directly impacting local government, for example insurance premiums or postage have been increasing at significantly higher rates in recent times.

Council Tax & Business Rates

- 2.14 Any increase in the level of council tax is limited by referendum principles, which for a district council have been set at a maximum of up to 3% for 2024/25. This referendum level was confirmed in the finance policy statement for 2024/25 which was published on 5th December 2023.
- 2.15 A 2.99% increase to the Band D rate is proposed in the 2024/25 budget figures (£0.483m additional income including changes to the taxbase). The proposed 2024/25 Band D rate is therefore £297.22 compared to the current year rate of £288.59 – an increase of £8.63.
- 2.16 This is for the Norwich City Council share of total council tax only and does not include the amounts required from preceptors - Norfolk County Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk. Appendix 2 (D) shows the proposed increases (for Norwich City Council only) by each Council Tax band.
- 2.17 The figures shown will be reduced, for qualifying council taxpayers, by the council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTR). Currently the total cost of the CTR scheme is £14.69m, of which the Norwich share is around £1.94m.
- 2.18 The current estimate of the Council Tax base is 38,773 which combined with the Band D rate gives an expected income of £11.524m in 2024/25.
- 2.19 The forecasts for retained Business Rates income for 2024/25 assumes income in line with the council's baseline funding level as set by government but uprated for the September CPI level of 6.62%. This is consistent with the updated modelling of the impact of changes made to the Business Rates system in the provisional local government finance settlement.
- 2.20 The Council is in a pool that shares the benefits of growth across Norfolk. The Medium-Term Financial Plan currently assumes that there will be no further changes to the business rate retention scheme for future years, due to long-term uncertainty regarding the government's plans for business rates. Overall, the council is better off from being in a pool than not. Collectively, Norfolk collects less resource from its business rate taxbase than its needs assessment suggests and therefore, retains the levy element.

Council Tax Premiums

- 2.21 As a billing authority, the council must adopt policies for the application of discretionary Council Tax premiums.
- 2.22 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 received Royal Assent in October 2023, which established discretionary Council Tax premium options on empty properties and second homes. The Act reduces the minimum period for the implementation of a Council Tax premium for empty premises from two years to one year with effect from 1st April 2024 and allows Councils to introduce a Council Tax premium of up to 100% in respect of second homes.

- 2.23 Billing authorities that wish to adopt a second homes premium are required to make a Council resolution confirming their requirements at least 12 months prior to the financial year in which the changes will come into effect.
- 2.24 This report recommends an in-principle decision from Members to agree proposals in accordance with the Council Tax premium proposals set out within the Act.
- 2.25 Initial, high-level analysis shows that the application of a 100% premium on second homes within Norwich could generate around £1.37m in additional Council Tax revenue, with circa £0.18m retained by Norwich City Council.

Grants

- 2.26 The publication of the provisional Local Government Settlement introduced some significant changes to the way in which grants were allocated nationally. The Services Grant was introduced in 2022/23 to provide funding to all tiers of local government in recognition of the vital services delivered at every level of local government. Originally it was a one-off grant but it has subsequently been extended into 2023/24 and now 2024/25. In 2023/24 Norwich City Council received £0.24 million from this funding source, but in 2024/25 this has been reduced to just £0.04 million as resources were diverted to support upper tier authority pressures. This loss has been offset to a degree by an increase in the Funding Guarantee, which equates to £0.14 million. There is no indication how the resources provided through the funding guarantee might be removed in future settlements.
- 2.27 This reflects the national decision to divert a significant proportion of the Services Grant towards social care and emphasises the current uncertainty in local government finance and the consequent challenges when trying to plan for the medium-term.

| Grants | Provisional Settlement £000 |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Revenue Support Grant | 523 |
| New Homes Bonus | 58 |
| Services Grant | 38 |
| Funding Guarantee Grant | 782 |
| Total | 1,401 |

Budget Risks

- 2.28 At this stage, the combination of uncertainty over the wider economic conditions means the level of risk associated with the provisional budget remains relatively high. Some of the key risks are outlined below which will continue to be closely monitored. The council holds a budget risk reserve (current balance £1.8m) to provide resilience against emerging pressures and delays in the delivery of savings and other unforeseen events. Given these uncertainties it is proposed to increase the level of the budget risk reserve from the anticipated 2023/24 revenue underspend.
 - **Savings delivery & cost of change.** The budget includes £3.745m of savings and income proposals for delivery in 2024/25. This is a significant undertaking and will require close monitoring of delivery.

- **Inflation.** The volatility in inflation continues to pose a risk, which will need to be kept under review, however current forecasts from the Bank of England and the Office for Budget Responsibility indicate that the peak may now have passed. Recent experience of impacts upon inflation driven by international events suggests that there may be a risk of some further volatility in the short-term.
- **Housing Benefit.** In recent years the council has seen reducing level of Housing Benefit subsidy recovery against its housing benefit expenditure, attributable to continuing growth in rent levels against fixed subsidy caps. The projection is this will continue to worsen over the life of the MTFs. Whilst every council is seeing increased natural migration to Universal Credit, Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) rules mean cases that attract 100% subsidy return are lost to councils, whilst DWP's strategy is to continue to leave temporary, exempt and supported accommodation cases with councils and it is these cases that are subject to punitive subsidy rules. The pressure in relation to exempt accommodation is approximately £1.0m and is projected to grow further over the life of the MTFs. Along with increased demand and rental market pressures, councils are therefore seeing increased subsidy loss.
- **Service Pressures.** The economic situation is continuing to put significant financial pressures on local businesses and residents, particularly the most vulnerable. It may also impact on all council income streams including fees and charges and the levels of council tax and business rates collected.

Chart 2.1: 2024/25 Provisional General Fund Gross Expenditure Budget

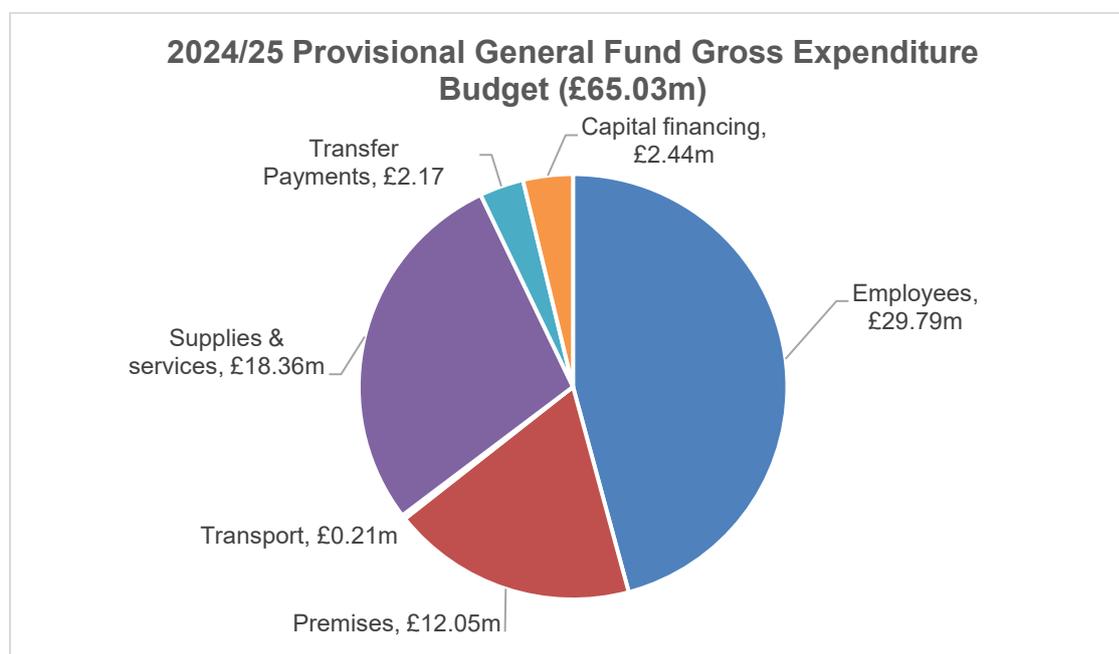
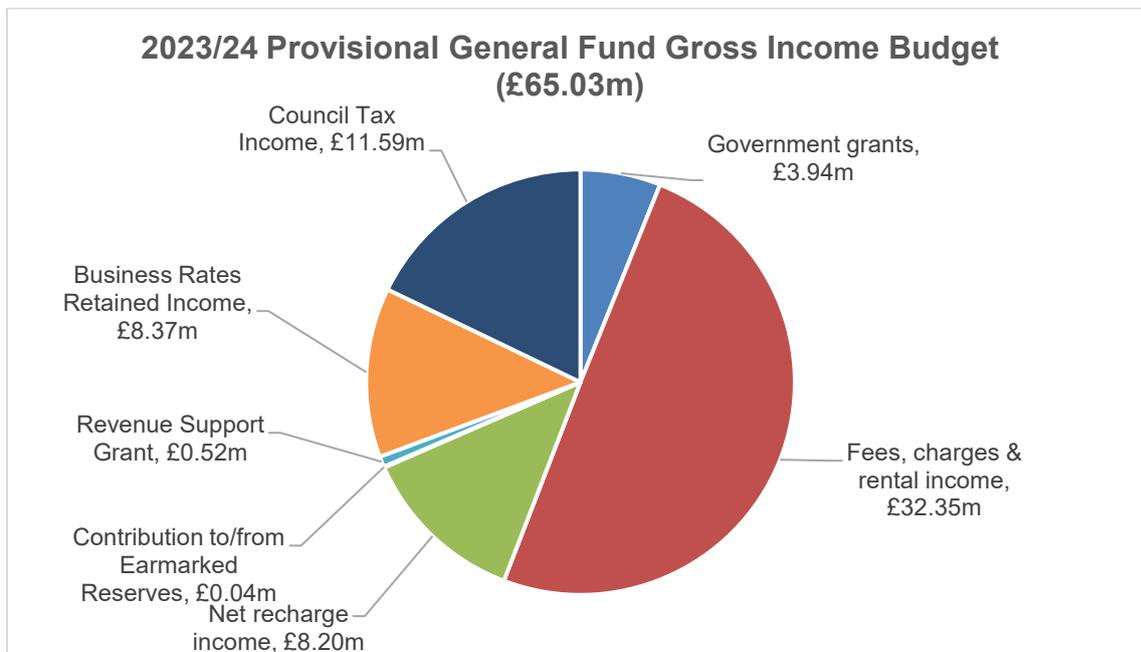


Chart 2.2: Provisional General Fund Gross Income Budget



Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

- 2.29 The MTFS is a forecast of the estimated cost of delivering current services over the next five years, compared to the anticipated funding streams to support council services. This results in a projected budget gap from which the future savings requirements are estimated.
- 2.30 The July 2023 MTFS update identified a savings requirement of £8.194m over the four-year period to 2028/29 (Table 2.1). The updated MTFS is showing a savings requirement over the same period of £8.819 million, of which £8.106 million has been identified and incorporated into the budget proposals. This leaves a forecast overall deficit over the whole MTFS period of £0.713 million (Table 2.2).

Table 2.1: July 2023 Medium Term Financial Position – Figures are in £000s

| Medium Term Financial Strategy | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 | 2028/29 |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| Revised Base Budget Requirement | 22,683 | 21,823 | 22,761 | 22,254 | 22,894 |
| less available resources (grants, Council Tax, Business Rates etc.) | 19,802 | 20,308 | 20,829 | 21,365 | 21,918 |
| Budget Gap/(Surplus) | 2,881 | 1,515 | 1,932 | 889 | 976 |
| less Savings Identified | 2,200 | 1,748 | 1,298 | 42 | 0 |
| plus savings yet to be identified to balance 2024/25 | - | 681 | - | - | - |
| Remaining Budget Gap/(Surplus) | 681 | -233 | 634 | 847 | 976 |

- 2.31 Since, July 2023, the Council has updated its projections for the changes attributable to inflation, pay, council tax, business rates and interest rate projections. The savings have also been reviewed for deliverability and been re-profiled where appropriate. Table 2.2 reflects the detailed implication of those changes. Table 2.2 is prior to existing savings being incorporated into the net gap.

Table 2.2: Updated Medium Term Financial Position – Figures are in £000s

| Medium Term Financial Strategy | 2024/25 £000 | 2025/26 £000 | 2026/27 £000 | 2027/28 £000 | 2028/29 £000 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Base Budget Requirement b/fwd | 19,041 | 20,487 | 20,827 | 21,330 | 21,944 |
| Net Budget Movements (inflation, growth etc.) | 5,191 | 1,745 | 2,147 | 1,617 | 1,620 |
| Revised Base Budget Requirement | 24,232 | 22,233 | 22,973 | 22,947 | 23,564 |
| less available resources (grants, Council Tax, Business Rates etc.) | 20,487 | 20,827 | 21,330 | 21,944 | 22,542 |
| Budget Gap/(Surplus) | 3,745 | 1,406 | 1,643 | 1,004 | 1,021 |
| less Savings Identified | 3,745 | 714 | 2,295 | 797 | 555 |
| plus savings yet to be identified from previous year | 0 | 0 | 691 | 40 | 247 |
| Remaining Budget Gap/(Surplus) | 0 | 691 | 40 | 247 | 713 |

2.32 The council has identified a range of potential future savings of £8.106m against the revised cumulative target of £8.819m (residual savings £0.713m). These are provisional options and are still subject to a full budget validation process. All options will continue to be refined as part of finalising budget papers for February 2024 and future corporate business planning processes.

Table 2.3: Savings Plan to deliver on Gap – Figures are in £000s

| Savings identified: Revised Dec 2023 Cabinet report | 2024/25 £000 | 2025/26 £000 | 2026/27 £000 | 2027/28 £000 | 2028/29 £000 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Savings Re-profiled | 1,921 | 2,250 | 2,391 | 310 | 0 |
| HRA savings element | -161 | -80 | -32 | 0 | 0 |
| Fees and Charges Add'l | 823 | -450 | -154 | 153 | 155 |
| MRP & Treasury Add'l | 962 | -1,206 | -110 | -66 | 0 |
| Income Maximisation & Automation | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 |
| Asset Management & Commercial Rents | 0 | 0 | 0 | 200 | 200 |
| Total estimated savings | 3,745 | 714 | 2,295 | 797 | 555 |
| less: Savings Gap | 3745 | 1406 | 1643 | 1004 | 1021 |
| Residual Gap | 0 | -692 | -40 | -247 | -713 |
| Cumulative Savings | 3745 | 4460 | 6754 | 7551 | 8106 |

2.33 It should be noted that, as the options are still subject to a full validation process it is likely that the savings figures may evolve and change as this work is completed. There is also a high degree of risk associated with the MTFs projections especially around government funding from next year (2025/26) onwards in light of the fiscal challenges outlined in the Autumn Statement. It is therefore important the council has plans that can flex to the financial position as a clearer view emerges.

MTFS Risks & Uncertainties

2.34 There are number of significant financial risks and uncertainties over the period of the medium-term financial strategy. These include:

- Future funding levels given the clear message in the Autumn Statement about the need to increase public sector productivity and the fiscal drag that is likely to impact upon unprotected public sector spending.
- Uncertainty over future inflationary levels and impacts on council expenditure.
- Quantum of the savings to be delivered and the associated costs to enable the required changes.
- Capital requirements arising from the ongoing strategic review of the council's asset portfolio.
- That a General Election will be held at some point during 2024/25.

General Fund Reserves Position

General Fund Unallocated Reserve

- 2.35 The prudent minimum level for the general fund reserve was set at £5.400m by full Council in February 2023 as part of the budget approval. This will be reviewed as part of the main budget report in February 2024 but is not expected to move significantly. The General Fund unallocated reserve, subject to delivering on savings is expected to remain at £8.248m over the life of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, which remains above the prudent minimum level.

General Fund Earmarked Reserves

- 2.36 Taking account of the council's expected surplus in 2023/24, the overall general fund reserves (including earmarked reserves) are expected to increase to £27.164m. However, much of these resources are earmarked for specific purposes. It is only through tight fiscal management that the council can deliver services and reinvest in the city.
- 2.37 On the basis that provisional options have been identified to significantly close the budgetary shortfall in the years 2024/25 to 2028/29 no further drawn downs from general reserves are currently forecast to be required, although given the uncertainty over funding levels further work will be required to address this and any remaining funding shortfalls once financial planning totals become available.

Earmarked Reserves

- 2.38 The General Fund holds several earmarked reserves which are held for specific purposes. The balances held in earmarked reserves are regularly reviewed to assess whether the funds are held at an appropriate level, in particular at the financial year end, as part of the preparation of the statements of accounts the balances reflected within the Balance Sheet will be reconciled including to the final General Fund outturn position. The key reserves and their current balances are summarised in Table 2.4.

Invest to Save Reserve: To support the delivery of savings and efficiencies through the Future Shape Norwich Programme over the next 2-3 years.

Budget Risk Reserve: To manage the financial risks associated the delivery of the budget savings identified.

Business Change Reserve: To fund costs linked to the council's change programme which are not delivering specific savings, for example project management, benchmarking and potential redundancies. It will also support training and development of our workforce to ensure we have the skills required to deliver the ambitions of the Council.

Commercial Property Reserve: Established to reduce the risks associated with holding commercial property by providing funding for any future void and rent-free periods as well as repairs and upgrades to the investment portfolio.

Insurance Reserve: This is to cover the excesses carried in respect of claims under various insurance policies and is subject to annual review.

Lion Homes Reserve: Originally established to smooth any fluctuations in net income received by the Council from lending to Lion Homes. The reserve level was increased to mitigate against any potential future

Minimum Revenue Provision charges required to cover for estimated non-recovery of the loan balance.

Collection Fund Equalisation Reserve: Unutilised balance of S31 grant monies received in prior years from Central Government to fund Business Rates reliefs.

This will be used to manage the volatility in Collection Fund movements due to timing issues of Section 31 Grants and weakening of the business rate base over the early period of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Revenue Grants Unapplied: Holds grants and contributions received which have yet to be applied to meet expenditure. The use of the balance is restricted and can only be used to fund the specific service area awarded the grant income.

General Fund Repairs Reserve: To provide future funding for required maintenance on general fund properties.

Business Rates Pool Reserve: This reserve is to support future spend in line with the economic development objectives of the fund.

Capital Financing Reserve: A reserve to hold the resources necessary to manage any additional voluntary revenue provision requirements or to fund future capital expenditure.

Table 2.4: General Fund Earmarked Reserve Balances – 31st March 2023

| General Fund Earmarked Reserves | Balance as at 31 March 2023 £000 | Estimated Balance as at 31 March 2024 £000 |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Invest to Save | 1,660 | 1,660 |
| Budget Risk | 1,800 | 2,500 |
| Business Change | 4,178 | 4,121 |
| Commercial Property | 2,041 | 2,041 |
| Insurance Reserve | 311 | 311 |
| Lion Homes | 1,700 | 1,700 |
| S31 Grant | 629 | 1,229 |
| Revenue Grants Unapplied | 3,860 | 3,860 |
| General Funds Repairs | 530 | 530 |
| Business Rates Pool | 110 | 110 |
| Capital Financing | 0 | 700 |
| Other Minor Reserves | 154 | 154 |
| Total | 16,972 | 18,916 |

Appendix 2 (A): Movements from the approved 2023/24 base budget

| | £000 |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2023/24 Budget Resources | (19,041) |
| Budget movements: | |
| Increase in business rates income | (895) |
| Increase in council tax income | (519) |

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Movement in revenue support grant | (32) |
| 2024/25 Budget Resources | (20,487) |
| 2023/24 Budget Requirement | 19,041 |
| Budget movements | |
| Reversal of one-off items in the 2022/23 budget | (18) |
| MTFS movements | 390 |
| Inflation | 2,681 |
| Reduction in grant income | 73 |
| Other movements and recharges | 679 |
| Permanent Savings & Additional Income | (3,745) |
| Permanent growth | 1,386 |
| Revised 2023/24 Budget Requirement | 20,487 |

Appendix 2 (B): 2024/25 provisional budget by subjective group

| Subjective group | Budget 2023/24 £000 | Budget 2024/25 £000 | Movement £000 |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Employees | 28,865 | 29,790 | (1,359) |
| Premises | 11,744 | 12,053 | 1,255 |
| Transport | 209 | 209 | (40) |
| Supplies & services | 18,598 | 19,226 | 819 |
| Transfer Payments | 41,639 | 40,430 | 147 |
| Capital financing | 4,016 | 2,442 | (361) |
| Gross expenditure | 105,071 | 104,150 | 461 |
| Government grants | (44,037) | (42,181) | 808 |
| Fees, charges & rental income | (32,558) | (33,237) | (4,875) |
| Net recharge income | (8,606) | (8,201) | 1,445 |
| Gross income | (85,201) | (83,619) | (2,622) |
| Contribution from General Reserves | 0 | 0 | 2,100 |
| Contribution to/from Earmarked Reserves | (829) | (44) | 1,389 |
| Total Budgetary Requirement | 19,041 | 20,487 | 1,328 |

Appendix 2 (C): 2024/25 provisional General Fund budget by service

| | Gross Expenditure £000 | Gross Income £000 | Net Expenditure £000 |
|------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Chief Executive | 267 | 0 | 267 |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|--|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Corporate Financing | 4,410 | (5,784) | (1,374) |
| | | | |
| Corp & Commercial Services Management | 476 | 0 | 476 |
| Finance, Audit & Risk | 1,931 | (1,146) | 785 |
| HR & Organisational Development | 1,207 | (514) | 693 |
| Legal & Procurement | 3,153 | (1,378) | 1,775 |
| Revenues & Benefits | 43,417 | (39,733) | 3,684 |
| Total Corporate & Commercial Services | 50,184 | (42,771) | 7,413 |
| | | | |
| Community Services Management | 407 | 0 | 407 |
| Customers, IT & Digital | 7,796 | (3,041) | 4,755 |
| Strategy, Engagement & Culture | 3,623 | (1,462) | 2,161 |
| Housing & Community Safety | 6,845 | (5,615) | 1,230 |
| Total Community Services | 18,671 | (10,118) | 8,553 |
| | | | |
| Development & City Services Management | 556 | 0 | 556 |
| Environment Services | 17,994 | (14,820) | 3,174 |
| Planning & Regulatory Services | 4,439 | (2,257) | 2,182 |
| Property & Economic Development | 7,628 | (7,868) | (240) |
| Total Development & City Services | 30,617 | (24,945) | 5,672 |
| | | | |
| Total General Fund | 104,149 | (83,618) | 20,531 |
| | | | |
| Contribution from General Reserves | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Contribution from Earmarked reserves | 0 | (44) | (44) |
| Contribution to Earmarked reserves | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Budget Requirement | 104,149 | (83,662) | 20,487 |
| | | | |
| Revenue Support Grant | | (523) | (523) |
| Business Rates Retained Income | | (8,374) | (8,374) |
| Council Tax Income | | (11,590) | (11,590) |
| Budget Resources | | (20,487) | (20,487) |

Appendix 2 (D): Calculation of Retained Business Rates Income & Council Tax

A. Business Rates Retained Income

| | £000 |
|--|----------------|
| Total Business Rates Income | (26,119) |
| Tariff | 25,501 |
| Retained surplus S31 Grant & Multiplier Cap Adjustment | (7,860) |
| Levy to the Pool | 104 |
| Total Business Rates Income 2023/24 | (8,374) |

B. Council Tax Calculation 2024/25

| | £ |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Budgetary requirement | 20,487 |
| - Revenue Support Grant | (523) |
| - Business Rates Distribution | (8374) |
| = Council tax requirement | 11,590 |
| - Surplus on collection fund 2022/23 | (65) |
| =Total Council tax income | 11,525 |
| Band D Equivalent properties | 38,773 |
| Council tax (Band D) | 297.22 |

C. Proposed Norwich City Council tax increases 2023/24 to 2024/25, Bands A to H

| Band | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 2023/24 | £192.39 | £224.46 | £256.52 | £288.59 | £352.72 | £416.85 | £480.98 | £577.18 |
| Increase | £5.76 | £6.71 | £7.68 | £8.63 | £10.55 | £12.47 | £14.39 | £17.26 |
| 2024/25 | £198.15 | £231.17 | £264.20 | £297.22 | £363.27 | £429.32 | £495.37 | £594.44 |

Appendix 2 (E): Consultation responses on the proposed budget for 2024/25

Consultation and engagement approach

The consultation, which ran from 21 December 2023 to 15 January 2024, was hosted on the council's consultation and engagement website 'Get Talking Norwich' (GTN).

To help inform people's views, key documents were made available on Get Talking Norwich: the council's provisional budget and medium-terms financial strategy 2024-25; Norwich 2040 City Vision; Corporate Plan progress report 2023.

The response rate was 281 completed surveys. This compares with an average response rate of 1,140 over the past 6 years.

This year's engagement focused on five main areas:

1. Continuing to deliver the savings that were agreed in the 2023-24 budget and medium-term financial strategy.
2. Collecting all money that is owed to the council in the most efficient way possible.
3. Ensuring we charge the right amount of money for our services, so it covers the cost of providing them and includes inflationary increases.
4. Managing the properties that we own to the best effect including maximising income generation.
5. Use the money we have in the bank in a way that helps us generate more money.

Direct engagement was encouraged from colleagues, elected members, residents, partners/key stakeholders, and wider service users.

The budget consultation was promoted widely throughout the 26 days it was live via a number of channels and methods. These included publishing a news article on the council's website, social media posts, issuing a news release to the local media, text message bundles and internal colleague-wide promotion.

Part 2: detailed analysis

Key findings

Feedback from the consultation indicates broad support for the council's intended approach to managing its budget and meeting its forecasted budget gap of £3.7 million for 2024-25.

The majority of respondents supported the council's proposal to increase the city council's share of council tax by up to 2.99% per cent to safeguard council services (53% somewhat or strongly support this proposal, compared to 39% who strongly or somewhat oppose the increase).

There was strong support (59%) for the council providing up to 100 per cent council tax relief to those on low incomes, despite only 11% of respondents receiving this support at present. 35% of respondents somewhat or strongly oppose retaining this scheme.

The majority of respondents (52%) somewhat or strongly support the council raising fees and charges to safeguard service provision, while 36% somewhat or strongly oppose this proposal.

The top-rated council services in order of preference were as follows: parks and open spaces, waste and recycling and housing services.

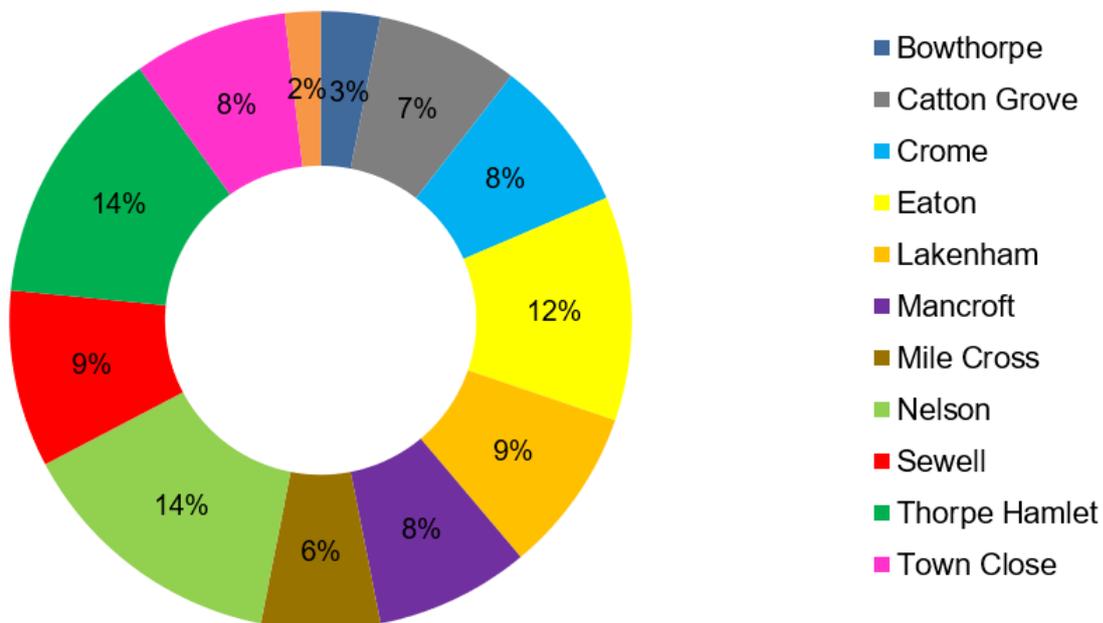
Respondents' profile

The following section of the report outlines demographic data about the respondents who completed the budget consultation survey via Get Talking Norwich. All percentages throughout the respondent's profile section, quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis section are rounded to the nearest whole number, e.g. 8.6% is presented as 9% and 19.3% is presented as 19%. This may result in some percentages not totalling 100 for some questions.

The majority of those who completed the online survey responded as an individual (94%), compared with 6% who responded as an employee of Norwich City Council.

While responses from the VCSE sector were low, it is worth noting the extensive corporate plan consultation and engagement activities that took place across November and December 2023, which were well attended by key city stakeholders and partners across the public, private and voluntary sector.

Q11. What is your full postcode?



Q12. What age group are you in?

The majority of respondents (58%) were aged 45 and over, and over a third were aged 25-44.

| Age group | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Under 14 | 0 | 0% |
| 14-16 | 0 | 0% |
| 17-24 | 8 | 3% |
| 25-44 | 94 | 34% |
| 45-64 | 106 | 38% |
| 65 and over | 56 | 20% |
| Prefer not to say | 13 | 5% |
| Total responses | 277 | |

Q13. Do you consider yourself as having a long-term health condition and/or disability?

26% of respondents identified as having a disability, while 69% did not. 6% of respondents did not disclose this information.

| Category | Number | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------|------------|
| Yes | 72 | 26% |
| No | 190 | 69% |
| Prefer not to say | 15 | 6% |
| Total responses | 277 | |

Q14. Which, if any of these activities describe what you are doing at present? Only tick 'looking after home or family' if this is your main activity and none of the other options apply.



| Category | Number |
|--|--------|
| Full-time working (30+ hours per week) | 152 |
| Part-time working (<30 hours per week) | 40 |
| Volunteering (any hours) | 34 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Full-time education (including government training programmes) | 2 |
| Wholly retired from work | 50 |
| Looking after home or family | 18 |
| Unable to work due to long-term sickness or disability | 13 |
| Unemployed and seeking work | 7 |
| Other (self-employed) | 1 |

Q15. If you work full or part-time, do you currently have more than one job to make up your income?

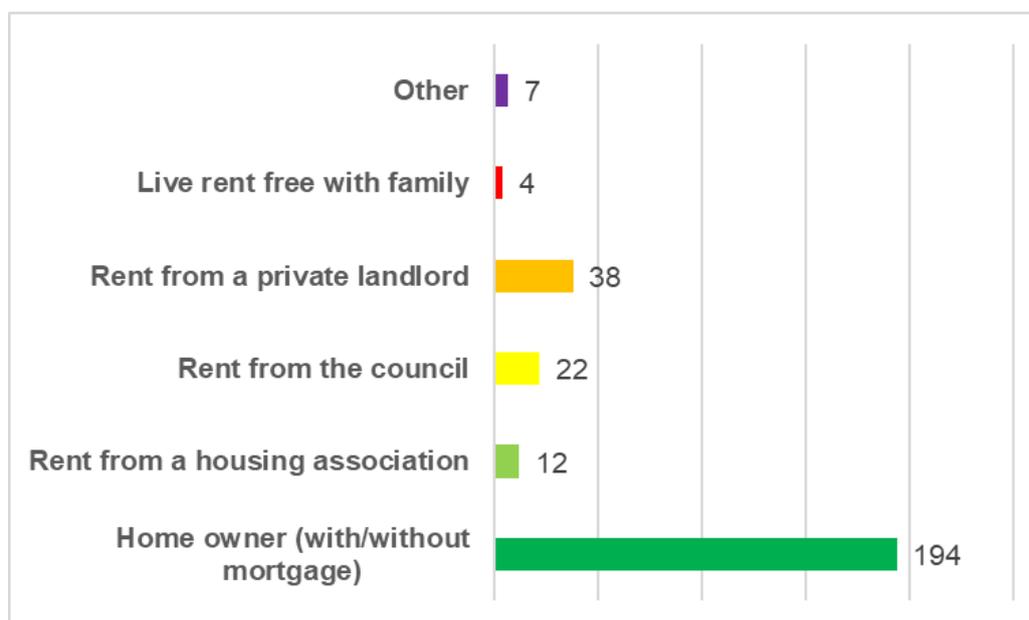
87% of respondents work more than one job to make up their income, compared with 14% who only work one job.

Q16. Do you receive help from the council to pay your council tax (the council tax reduction scheme?)

87% of respondents receive support from the council via the council tax reduction scheme, while 11% do not. 2% of respondents were unsure if they receive this support at present.

| Category | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------|--------|------------|
| Yes | 30 | 11% |
| No | 238 | 87% |
| I'm unsure | 6 | 2% |
| Total responses | 274 | |

Q17. Which of these statements, if any, describe your housing situation?



| Category | Number |
|---|--------|
| Own own home (with or without mortgage) | 194 |
| Rent from a housing association | 12 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Rent from the council | 22 |
| Rent from a private landlord | 38 |
| Live rent free with family | 4 |
| Other, including: - Shared ownership (own 50% of property and rent the remaining 50% from housing association) - Living with family (paying rent) | 7 |
| Total responses | 277 |

Q18. What is your ethnicity?

The majority of respondents (88%) identified as White, 8% preferred not to disclose this information and 1% identified their as Mixed or multiple ethnic groups. 2% of respondents identified their ethnicity as Other, 1% of respondents identified as Asian or Asian British and 0% of respondents identified as Black, African, Caribbean or Black British.

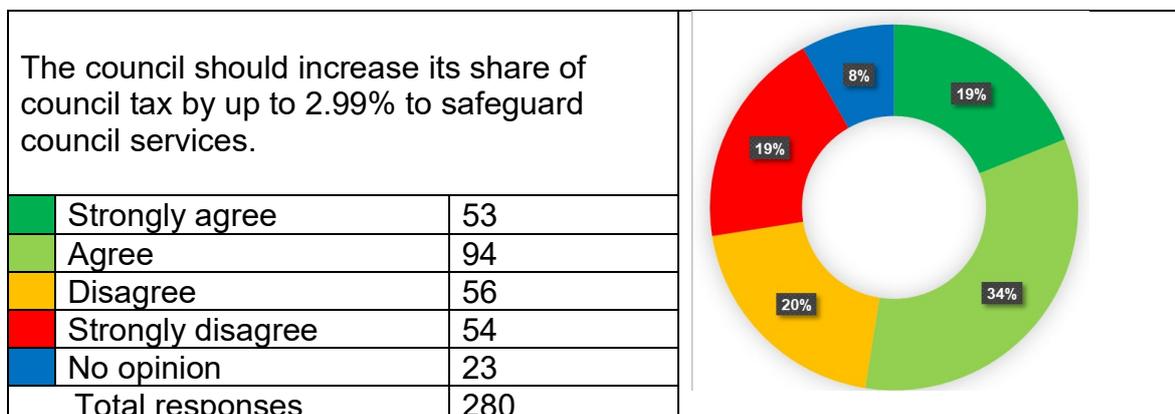
| Category | Number |
|--|--------|
| White | 243 |
| Mixed or multiple ethnic groups | 3 |
| Asian or Asian British | 4 |
| Black, African, Caribbean or Black British | 0 |
| Prefer not to say | 22 |
| Other | 5 |
| Total responses | 277 |

Quantitative survey results

The following section of the report breaks down the quantitative survey responses by question. A short paragraph supplements the graphs and tables provided to highlight notable trends.

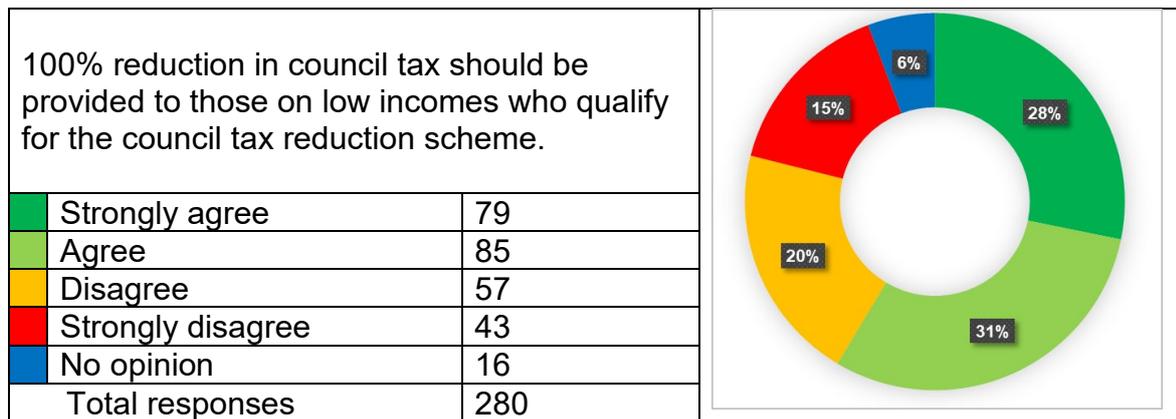
Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the council increasing its share of council tax by up to 2.99% to safeguard council services?

The majority of respondents (53%) somewhat or strongly support the council increasing council tax by up to 2.99%, while 39% somewhat or strongly oppose this increase. 8% of respondents have no opinion on this proposal.



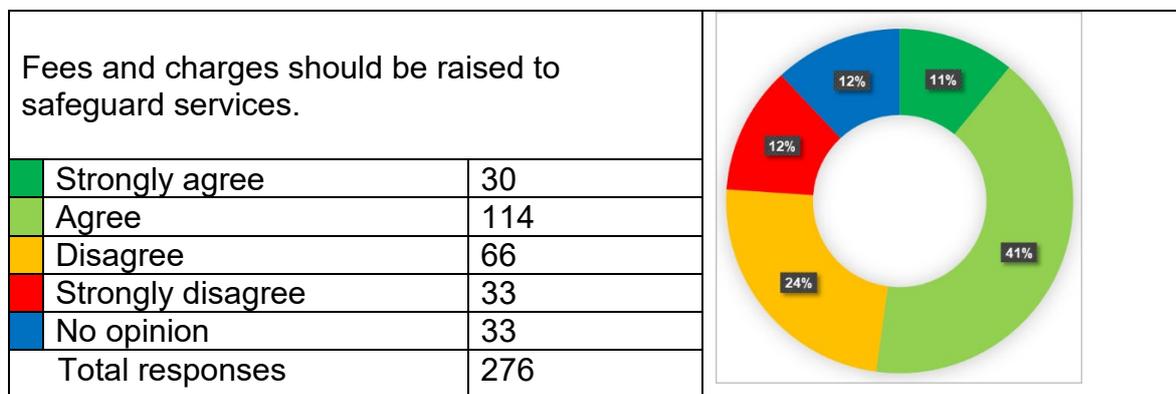
Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with providing up to 100% reduction in council tax to those on low incomes who qualify for the council tax reduction scheme?

The majority of respondents (59%) somewhat or strongly support the council continuing to provide up to 100% reduction in council tax to those on low incomes who qualify for the scheme, compared with 35% of respondents who somewhat or strongly oppose this.



Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with us raising fees and charges to safeguard services?

52% of respondents somewhat or strongly support the council raising fees and charges to safeguard service provision, while 36% somewhat or strongly oppose this. 12% of respondents have no opinion on this proposal.

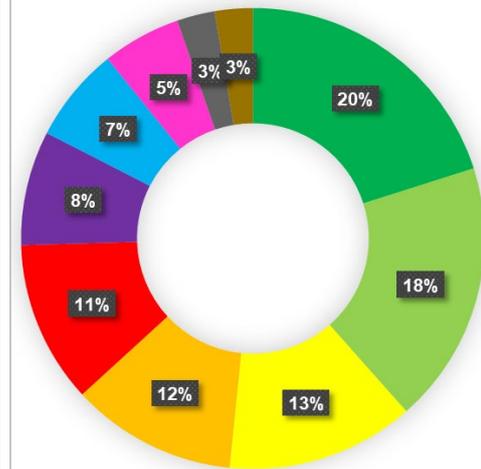


Q4. If we increased fees and charges it would help fund valued services. Please tell us below which services you value most. Please select up to five.

The top three most valued council services are parks and open spaces, waste and recycling and housing services.

The services which are most valued by respondents are:

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Parks and open spaces | 214 |
| Waste and recycling | 197 |
| Housing services | 138 |
| Leisure facilities | 123 |
| Events and culture | 118 |
| Benefit support | 85 |
| Local planning | 70 |
| Car parking | 58 |
| Election services | 28 |
| Other | 28 |
| Total responses | 281 |

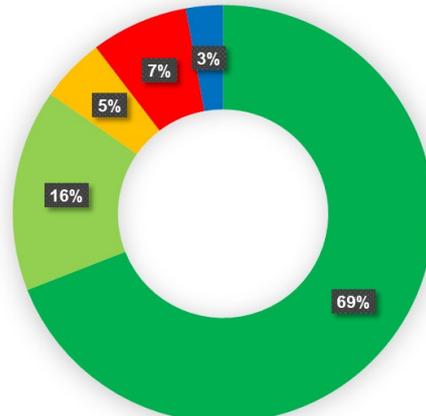


Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that where a second home has been empty and unfurnished for over one year, we should charge a 100% council tax premium?

A significant majority (85%) of respondents somewhat or strongly support the proposal to charge a 100% council tax premium on second homes that have been empty and unfurnished for over one year, compared with only 12% who somewhat or strongly oppose this. 3% of respondents have no opinion on this proposal.

Where a second home has been empty and unfurnished for over one year, we should charge a 100% council tax premium.

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 194 |
| Agree | 44 |
| Disagree | 14 |
| Strongly disagree | 21 |
| No opinion | 8 |
| Total responses | 281 |

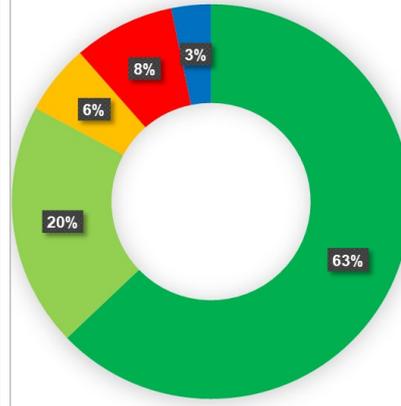


Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the council should charge a 100% council tax premium for second homes and other properties that are unfurnished but unoccupied?

83% of respondents somewhat or strongly support a 100% council tax premium being charged on second homes and other properties that are unfurnished but unoccupied, while 14% somewhat or strongly oppose this. 3% of respondents have no opinion on this proposal.

The council should charge a 100% council tax premium for second homes and other properties that are furnished but unoccupied.

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 176 |
| Agree | 56 |
| Disagree | 16 |
| Strongly disagree | 23 |
| No opinion | 9 |
| Total responses | 280 |

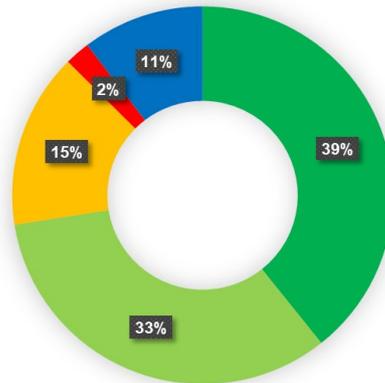


Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the council should manage its property portfolio in a way that maximises income, to ensure the council can continue to deliver services that residents value most.

72% of respondents somewhat or strongly support the council managing its property portfolio to maximise income and allow services to continue being delivered, compared with 17% of respondents who somewhat or strongly oppose this. 11% of respondents had no opinion on this proposal.

The council should manage its property portfolio in a way that maximises income, to ensure the council can continue to deliver services that residents value most.

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 110 |
| Agree | 93 |
| Disagree | 42 |
| Strongly disagree | 6 |
| No opinion | 29 |
| Total responses | 280 |

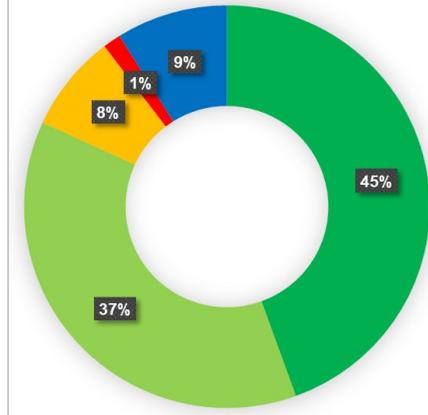


Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the council should try to protect frontline services by doing all it can to reduce its running costs and embrace new technologies to help save money.

A strong majority of respondents (82%) somewhat or strongly support the council embracing new technologies to reduce running costs and protect frontline services, while 9% of respondents oppose this. 9% of respondents have no opinion on this proposal.

The council should try to protect frontline services by doing all it can to reduce its running costs and embrace new technologies to help save money.

| | |
|--|-----|
| ■ Strongly agree | 125 |
| ■ Agree | 105 |
| ■ Disagree | 22 |
| ■ Strongly disagree | 4 |
| ■ No opinion | 25 |
| Total responses | 281 |



Qualitative survey results

Q8. Is there anything else you think we should do to increase income, save money or improve value for money?

Question 8 provided an open-ended text box for respondents to provide additional detail in response to the above question. 161 resident responses have been coded into the below key themes using content analysis as a research tool, with the most common theme appearing first:

41 (25%) responses mentioned reducing the council spend on staffing. This included reducing management layers, reducing council salaries and the number of council employees, and limiting the use of agency staff and interim consultants as a means of delivering savings.

32 (20%) responses mentioned reducing the operational costs of running Norwich City Council by harnessing new technologies, implementing more efficient and joined up ways of working and adopting flexible working practices such as home working and hot desking.

18 responses (11%) mentioned housing provision including private sector housing regulation and improving council housing services. This included building more council homes, reducing void/repair turnaround times and enforcing fines on rogue landlords in the private rented sector.

13 responses (8%) mentioned changes to council tax rates as a means of generating income. This included support for council tax premiums on second homes, council tax increases being made in line with inflation and some opposition to 100% council tax relief being offered to some residents while others experience year-on-year increases in their council tax.

10 responses (6%) mentioned contract management of procured services to ensure value for money for the taxpayer and tendering for external contracts as a means of generating income.

Eight responses (5%) mentioned fees and charges as a means of generating income. This included increasing fees and charges such as car parking or general comments in support of making increases to fees and charges in line with inflation or to ensure cost recovery at a minimum. One response suggested increases to fees and charges should be applied to some discretionary services which would allow residents to choose whether they deem the service necessary rather than proposing council tax increases which affect all by default.

Seven responses (4%) provided comments in relation to the prioritisation of statutory services versus discretionary services. The majority of comments suggested consideration should be given to whether non-statutory services should continue where statutory services are not being fulfilled, with one comment suggesting that non-statutory services should only continue where they recover delivery cost at a minimum. One comment highlighted that investment in culture and leisure services could make the city more desirable, create new jobs and encourage highly skilled graduates to continue to live in the city after their studies.

Seven responses (4%) mentioned enforcing fines as a way to maximise income generation. This included enforcing parking fines and Fixed Penalty Notices for offences including littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling.

Six responses (4%) mentioned employment support schemes and stricter monitoring of benefit fraud as a means of saving money. This included encouraging those who are unemployed but fit to work back into employment.

Six responses (4%) mentioned the management of council-owned assets. This included comments in relation to reducing empty office space at City Hall, which could be rented out to other organisations and ensuring all council properties and empty garages are in a rentable condition as a means of maximising income generation. One comment opposed the sale of council-owned assets.

Six responses (4%) mentioned reducing spend on physical infrastructure projects, with one comment indicating that such projects should take a lower priority during a cost of living crisis.

Five responses (3%) mentioned more proactive approaches to debt recovery as a means of generating income. This included more robust recovery of overdue council tax, council rent and business rates.

Five responses (3%) mentioned investing in the council's climate change and sustainability agenda. This included comments in relation to investing in green spaces and renewable energy solutions for council-owned property which could create green jobs and reduce the council's operating costs in the long-term.

Four responses (2%) mentioned waste and recycling services, with two comments indicating better value for money would be delivered by keeping the city's streets clean, while two comments suggested waste charges for the collection of large household items should be reduced to prevent cases of fly-tipping, which may incur higher costs to the council to remove.

Three responses (2%) mentioned seeking central government funds and grants to increase council income and deliver better value for money to the taxpayer.



Growth Proposal information: Climate Change

Which Corporate Plan Aims, Future Shape Norwich Outcomes and the High Value Themes does this seek to address?

| Future Shape Norwich outcomes | | Corporate plan aims | | High value themes | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ensure that the Council is financially sustainable | <input type="checkbox"/> | People living independently and well in a diverse and safe city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Redesign services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| People focused, quality services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Reform contracts | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Motivated, high performing colleagues | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drive value from our assets | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Enabling, influencing, leading | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish | <input type="checkbox"/> | Maximise commercial opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Culture, people and engagement | | Norwich city council is in good shape to serve the city | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Drive growth and regeneration | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Compliance – is this a statutory requirement? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|

Section one: Climate Change

1| Background information and overview

Climate change is recognised as a key factor impacting upon the lives of residents, both directly and indirectly, therefore the city council needs to be providing a lead in planning, developing and implementing approaches to support improvements that will reduce the impact of climate change. This will provide a dedicated resource and capacity to ensure that this is reflected within the services, improvements and outcomes that the council delivers, in particular this will have direct bearing upon the delivery of the following initiatives,

- Carbon Reduction including the Carbon Management Programme and achieving net carbon zero
- Green House Gas emission monitoring
- Coordination of the delivery of the Biodiversity Strategy
- Implementation and delivery of the Citywide Climate Strategy
- Development of the Local Area Energy Plan
- Implementation of Heat Network Zones

2| We will know we have succeeded when:

The council's net zero strategy will be an outcome that underpins the delivery of the Corporate Plan and consequently will be incorporated into future performance tracking.

3| Resources - £160k Full Year Effect

Additional capacity would potentially be sourced on an interim basis in 2024/25, during which a transition to an on-going approach would be undertaken. It is envisaged that the resources could be in place for April 2024, thus this reflects a Full Year Effect (FYE)

What are the consequences if this growth is not supported?

Without these resources there won't be the capacity and skills necessary to support the delivery of significant change and improvement that has a positive impact upon Climate Change.

Growth Proposal information: Corporate Plan Implementation

Which Corporate Plan Aims, Future Shape Norwich Outcomes and the High Value Themes does this seek to address?

| Future Shape Norwich outcomes | | Corporate plan aims | | High value themes | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ensure that the Council is financially sustainable | <input type="checkbox"/> | People living independently and well in a diverse and safe city | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Redesign services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| People focused, quality services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Reform contracts | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Motivated, high performing colleagues | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drive value from our assets | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Enabling, influencing, leading | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Maximise commercial opportunities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Culture, people and engagement | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Norwich city council is in good shape to serve the city | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Drive growth and regeneration | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Compliance – is this a statutory requirement?

Section one: Corporate Plan Implementation

1| Background information and overview

The updated Corporate Plan will be the driver for significant change and improvement to support Norwich City Council on its modernising journey, which will also be at the heart of the implementation of the medium-term financial strategy, ensuring that the budget and service outcomes are two sides of the same coin. Simultaneously driving increased efficiency, effectiveness and economy, leading to improved value for money and service delivery, whether via business process redesign, the applied use of technology or fundamental change in service delivery model(s). The resourcing will be utilised across the council, providing flexible and adaptable support alongside business as usual delivery.

2| We will know we have succeeded when:

The implementation of the Corporate Plan and associated improvement and change programmes are tracked and monitored on a regular basis to demonstrate specific outcomes and the delivery of benefits, as well as more traditional output measures such as delivery on time and budget. Further work will be undertaken to map resources/budgets to outcomes in order to add greater transparency and value.

3| Resources - £200k Full Year Effect

Additional capacity would be sourced on an interim basis in 2024/25, during which a transition to a on-going approach would be undertaken. It is envisaged that the resources could be in place for April 2024, thus this reflects a Full Year Effect (FYE)

What are the consequences if this growth is not supported?

Without these resources there won't be the capacity to deliver the Corporate Plan and the associated best practice required to support the savings required to balance the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Growth Proposal information: East Norwich

Which Corporate Plan Aims, Future Shape Norwich Outcomes and the High Value Themes does this seek to address?

| Future Shape Norwich outcomes | | Corporate plan aims | | High value themes | |
|--|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ensure that the Council is financially sustainable | <input type="checkbox"/> | People living independently and well in a diverse and safe city | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Redesign services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People focused, quality services | <input type="checkbox"/> | Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Reform contracts | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Motivated, high performing colleagues | <input type="checkbox"/> | Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Drive value from our assets | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Enabling, influencing, leading | <input type="checkbox"/> | The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Maximise commercial opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Culture, people and engagement | | Norwich city council is in good shape to serve the city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drive growth and regeneration | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Compliance – is this a statutory requirement? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|

Section one: East Norwich

1| Background information and overview

The regeneration of East Norwich represents a once in a generation opportunity. It is the biggest regeneration site in the East of England and one of the biggest edge of city sites in UK. East Norwich will deliver comprehensive regeneration and reimagining of part of the city. It offers a unique opportunity to provide new homes and places to work in Norwich whilst also improving the quality of life, health and well-being for existing residents and future generations. It will restitch communities back into the city and create a seamless transition from the Broads to the city centre. The East Norwich area is of strategic importance to the future growth and success of the city and wider region. The central role these sites will play together in providing homes and jobs. This will provide additional capacity to support the delivery and progression of the programme.

2| We will know we have succeeded when:

Appropriate skills and knowledge will make key contributions to the delivery of the programme which is tracked via the Future Shape Norwich programme.

3| Resources - £270k Full Year Effect

Additional capacity would potentially be sourced on an interim basis in 2024/25, during which a transition to an on-going approach would be undertaken. It is envisaged that the resources could be in place for April 2024, thus this reflects a Full Year Effect (FYE)

What are the consequences if this growth is not supported?

Without these resources there won't be the capacity and skills necessary to support the East Norwich plan.

Growth Proposal information: Elections

Which Corporate Plan Aims, Future Shape Norwich Outcomes and the High Value Themes does this seek to address?

| Future Shape Norwich outcomes | | Corporate plan aims | | High value themes | |
|--|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ensure that the Council is financially sustainable | <input type="checkbox"/> | People living independently and well in a diverse and safe city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Redesign services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People focused, quality services | <input type="checkbox"/> | Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Reform contracts | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Motivated, high performing colleagues | <input type="checkbox"/> | Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drive value from our assets | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Enabling, influencing, leading | <input type="checkbox"/> | The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish | <input type="checkbox"/> | Maximise commercial opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Culture, people and engagement | | Norwich city council is in good shape to serve the city | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Drive growth and regeneration | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Compliance – is this a statutory requirement? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|-------------------------------------|

Section one: Elections

1| Background information and overview

Over time the roles and responsibilities associated with effectively managing the election process have increased above the level of current resourcing. This includes the increased demand for postal votes but also reflects the costs of maintaining the infrastructure and preparations for undertaking elections efficiently and securely.

2| We will know we have succeeded when:

It is known that there will be a General Election in 2024/25 in addition to any other scheduled local elections, all of which form fundamental elements of the democratic and constitutional process. Undertaking the administration of these elections without significant issue will demonstrate the success of the resourcing of this key service.

3| Resources - £50k Full Year Effect

The growth item reflects the experience of recent elections.

What are the consequences if this growth is not supported?

Without these resources there would be increased risk of overspending in recognition that the elections form a fundamental part of the statutory role of the council. Appropriate budgets support effective governance and financial control through the roles and responsibilities of budget managers.

Growth Proposal information: Finance

Which Corporate Plan Aims, Future Shape Norwich Outcomes and the High Value Themes does this seek to address?

| Future Shape Norwich outcomes | | Corporate plan aims | | High value themes | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ensure that the Council is financially sustainable | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | People living independently and well in a diverse and safe city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Redesign services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| People focused, quality services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reform contracts | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Motivated, high performing colleagues | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drive value from our assets | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Enabling, influencing, leading | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish | <input type="checkbox"/> | Maximise commercial opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Culture, people and engagement | | Norwich city council is in good shape to serve the city | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Drive growth and regeneration | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Compliance – is this a statutory requirement? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|

Section one: Finance

1| Background information and overview

Norwich needs to ensure that it is able to maximise the level of resource available to support service delivery, whether this be in terms of debt recovery, in maximising the value derived from existing buildings, land and assets or by ensuring that an appropriate balance between risk and return on investments made in Treasury Management. To achieve these outcomes the capacity and skill base within the Finance function need to be increased, this will support business change and efficiency but also increase the resilience of the Finance function to address the uncertain future of local government funding.

2| We will know we have succeeded when:

Maintaining good performance in the returns made on debt recovery and management, the contribution of assets to enhance income, economic growth or enhanced use of existing assets alongside the maintenance of high performing returns in Treasury management relative to comparator local authorities.

3| Resources - £130k Full Year Effect

Additional capacity would be sourced on an interim basis in 2024/25, during which a transition to a on-going approach would be undertaken. It is envisaged that the resources could be in place for April 2024, thus this reflects a Full Year Effect (FYE)

What are the consequences if this growth is not supported?

Without these resources there won't be the capacity and skills necessary to support the delivery of existing programmes of work to maximise the level of resources available to support the delivery of services to Norwich residents and to balance the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Growth Proposal information: Health & Safety

Which Corporate Plan Aims, Future Shape Norwich Outcomes and the High Value Themes does this seek to address?

| Future Shape Norwich outcomes | | Corporate plan aims | | High value themes | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ensure that the Council is financially sustainable | <input type="checkbox"/> | People living independently and well in a diverse and safe city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Redesign services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| People focused, quality services | <input type="checkbox"/> | Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Reform contracts | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Motivated, high performing colleagues | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drive value from our assets | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Enabling, influencing, leading | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish | <input type="checkbox"/> | Maximise commercial opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Culture, people and engagement | | Norwich city council is in good shape to serve the city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drive growth and regeneration | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Compliance – is this a statutory requirement? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|-------------------------------------|

Section one: Health & Safety

1| Background information and overview

Following a comprehensive review of existing services and resources this proposal will enhance the service delivered across the council, to both the public and staff. Supporting the delivery of more proactive and strategic planning and implementation of H&S developments and improvements, ensuring both best practice and statutory requirements are addressed in an appropriate manner.

2| We will know we have succeeded when:

Resources are in place, initially on an interim basis but ultimately via permanent recruitment, which in turn will support the implementation and embedding of improved health and safety outcomes.

3| Resources - £60k Full Year Effect

Additional capacity would be sourced on an interim basis in 2024/25, during which a transition to a on-going approach would be undertaken. It is envisaged that the resources could be in place for April 2024, thus this reflects a Full Year Effect (FYE)

What are the consequences if this growth is not supported?

Without these resources there won't be the capacity to deliver the statutory and best practice required to appropriately manage risk going forwards.

Growth Proposal information: Insurance

Which Corporate Plan Aims, Future Shape Norwich Outcomes and the High Value Themes does this seek to address?

| Future Shape Norwich outcomes | | Corporate plan aims | | High value themes | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ensure that the Council is financially sustainable | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | People living independently and well in a diverse and safe city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Redesign services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People focused, quality services | <input type="checkbox"/> | Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reform contracts | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Motivated, high performing colleagues | <input type="checkbox"/> | Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drive value from our assets | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Enabling, influencing, leading | <input type="checkbox"/> | The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish | <input type="checkbox"/> | Maximise commercial opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Culture, people and engagement | | Norwich city council is in good shape to serve the city | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Drive growth and regeneration | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Compliance – is this a statutory requirement? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|

Section one: Insurance

1| Background information and overview

Insurance via third parties forms an important part of the council's risk management approach, mitigating significant financial risks arising from a range of possible circumstances, ranging from cover for physical assets through to liability cover. The policies put in place are procured via a competitive process, a procurement process is currently underway and it is anticipated that the cost of premiums may increase above the headline rates of inflation. This reflects the work undertaken in preparation for the procurement exercise, reflecting upon market trends since the last procurement exercise was undertaken.

2| We will know we have succeeded when:

Appropriate insurance policies form a key part of the management of risk within the council.

3| Resources - £126k Full Year Effect

The procurement exercise is currently underway and therefore the outcome is as yet unknown, however this represents an estimate of the potential additional costs arising based upon an initial assessment of responses to the tender.

What are the consequences if this growth is not supported?

Without appropriate insurance policies in place the risk profile of the council would increase significantly, requiring the council to divert additional funds from elsewhere within the budget to effectively self-insure. Whilst the council does have an insurance reserve to effectively self-insure for minor risks, it would not be cost effective or value for money for the council to self-insure against all risks, recognising the expertise required to assess the risks and that there is a competitive market in existence.

Growth Proposal information: Payroll In-sourcing

Which Corporate Plan Aims, Future Shape Norwich Outcomes and the High Value Themes does this seek to address?

| Future Shape Norwich outcomes | | Corporate plan aims | | High value themes | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ensure that the Council is financially sustainable | <input type="checkbox"/> | People living independently and well in a diverse and safe city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Redesign services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People focused, quality services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reform contracts | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Motivated, high performing colleagues | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drive value from our assets | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Enabling, influencing, leading | <input type="checkbox"/> | The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish | <input type="checkbox"/> | Maximise commercial opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Culture, people and engagement | | Norwich city council is in good shape to serve the city | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Drive growth and regeneration | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Compliance – is this a statutory requirement? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|-------------------------------------|

Section one: Payroll In-Sourcing

1| Background information and overview

In conjunction with the implementation of a replacement Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, a decision was previously made to in-source the payroll service. This will provide additional resilience and control over a business critical service and support the timely and efficient reporting of a “single version of the truth”. The service delivers statutory requirements both for the council and its employees. The payroll service is a business critical element of the “single version of the truth” that contributes to the effective management and internal controls relating to Human Resources and Finance.

2| We will know we have succeeded when:

An effective service will feed relevant data and information into the support services underpinning the effective management of the council, as well as supporting the delivery of information and reporting to external partners, such as HMRC and the Pension Fund.

3| Resources - £120k Full Year Effect

Additional capacity would potentially be sourced on an interim basis in 2024/25, during which a transition to an on-going approach would be undertaken. It is envisaged that the resources could be in place for April 2024, thus this reflects a Full Year Effect (FYE)

What are the consequences if this growth is not supported?

Without these resources there won't be the capacity and skills necessary to support the delivery of a resilient and fit for purpose payroll service.

Growth Proposal information: Postage

Which Corporate Plan Aims, Future Shape Norwich Outcomes and the High Value Themes does this seek to address?

| Future Shape Norwich outcomes | | Corporate plan aims | | High value themes | |
|--|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ensure that the Council is financially sustainable | <input type="checkbox"/> | People living independently and well in a diverse and safe city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Redesign services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People focused, quality services | <input type="checkbox"/> | Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reform contracts | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Motivated, high performing colleagues | <input type="checkbox"/> | Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drive value from our assets | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Enabling, influencing, leading | <input type="checkbox"/> | The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish | <input type="checkbox"/> | Maximise commercial opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Culture, people and engagement | | Norwich city council is in good shape to serve the city | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Drive growth and regeneration | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Compliance – is this a statutory requirement? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|

Section one: Postage

1| Background information and overview

Post Office price increases since April 2022 have increased three times in the last two years by significantly more than the headline inflation rates. Whilst efficiencies have been achieved to absorb some of this impact, the budget has fallen behind the impact these increases and needs to be accurately reflected within the budget.

2| We will know we have succeeded when:

Postage continues to form an important part of communication between the council, residents, tenants and partners, which underpins the effective working of the council and the delivery of its services.

3| Resources - £120k Full Year Effect

This would restore the budget to a balanced position relative to historic demand and pricing.

What are the consequences if this growth is not supported?

Part of the system of effective financial management and control is to set budgets at a realistic level that supports managerial responsibility and accountability .