

Scrutiny committee

Extraordinary Meeting

Date: **Thursday, 29 February 2024**
Time: **16:30**
Venue: **Mancroft room City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH**

There will be a pre meeting for members of the committee at 16:00.

Committee members:

Councillors:

Ackroyd (Chair)
Thomas (Va) (Vice chair)
Carrington
Champion
Davis
Driver
Fox
Galvin
Osborn
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Prinsley
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Agenda

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|----|---|-----------|
| 1 | Apologies | |
| | To receive apologies for absence. | |
| 2 | Declarations of interest | |
| | (Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting). | |
| 3 | Corporate Plan 2024-2029 (1 hour) | 5 - 82 |
| | Purpose: To consider the draft Corporate Plan 2024-2029 and make any relevant recommendations to cabinet on 6 March 2024. | |
| 4 | Funding Approval for Three Carbon Reduction Projects (15 mins) | 83 - 88 |
| | Purpose: To consider the report and make any relevant recommendations to cabinet on 6 March 2024. | |
| 5 | Assets (Non-Housing) Five Year Plan (15 mins) | 89 - 100 |
| | Purpose: To consider the report and make any relevant recommendations to cabinet on 6 March 2024. | |
| 6 | Development Site Pipeline (15mins) | 101 - 110 |
| | Purpose: To consider the report and make any relevant recommendations to cabinet on 6 March 2024. | |
| 7 | Items for the meeting on 21 March 2024 | |
| | To receive a verbal update in relation to items scheduled for the meeting to be held on 21 March 2024. | |
| 8 | Exclusion of the public | |
| | Consideration of exclusion of the public. | |
| *9 | Assets (Non Housing) Five Year Plan - (Exempt appendix) | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">This report is not for publication because it would disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that | |

information) as in para 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

***10**

Development Site Pipeline - (Exempt appendix) (Para 3)

- This report is not for publication because it would disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as in para 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Date of publication: **Wednesday, 21 February 2024**



Committee name: Scrutiny

Committee date: 29/02/2024

Report title: Corporate Plan 2024-2029

Portfolio: Councillor Stonard, Leader of the Council

Report from: Interim Executive Director of Housing and Community Safety

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

To consider the new draft Corporate Plan 2024-29

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee consider the draft Corporate Plan 2024-29 and provide their recommendations to Cabinet for consideration at the meeting on 6 March 2024.

Policy framework

The council has five current 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 incorporates the ambition of all of the above under a new set of priorities that have emerged following a full and extensive period of consultation with both internal and external stakeholders: They are:

- A Prosperous Norwich
- A Fairer Norwich
- A Climate Responsive Norwich
- A Future-Proof Norwich
- An Open and Modern Council

Report details

Introduction

1. This report invites your committee to consider the council's draft corporate plan and to make recommendations to cabinet for consideration at their meeting on 6 March 2024. The plan – "We are Norwich" – is attached at appendix 1; a working draft of priorities is shown at appendix 2; data and evidence about Norwich to inform the plan's context is at appendix 3; an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is at appendix 4; an Engagement Report summarising the consultation process and the feedback received is at appendix 5; and the independent consultant's summary of findings from our engagement with residents and stakeholders is at appendix 6.
2. To assist with the development of the plan and to bring independence to the consultation process, we worked with strategy experts Inner Circle Consulting (ICC) and public engagement specialists Collaborate CIC to carry out the considerable independent public and stakeholder consultation that underpins the plan.
3. A number of key objectives have guided the development of the plan. These include the ambition to create a plan that:
 - Responds to the ambitions and feedback of the people of Norwich.
 - Is accessible to the people of Norwich.
 - Provides a clear vision and priorities understood by residents, partners and our workforce.
 - Enables the council to adapt to changing circumstances, while remaining focused on the outcomes it needs to achieve.
4. Supporting the above, an intensive programme of consultation took place across Norwich during November and December 2023 (this is detailed in items 17 to 40). Over 900 individuals and organisations were engaged as part of this process, including Norwich residents and tenants' groups, councillors and officers, voluntary sector and community organisations, and local businesses and business networks.
5. A specific focus of the consultation was to hear from those priority groups identified in the council's new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, for example, by focusing street engagement interviews in the Mile Cross and Earlham areas and holding roundtable sessions and one-to-one interviews with voluntary and community organisations representing relevant groups.
6. The draft corporate plan's contents are wholly developed from the priorities and challenges raised during the engagement process.
7. The extent of this consultation and its predominance in informing the plan's content was purposeful and driven by an ambition for the people of Norwich to engage with the plan and to shape the future; to inspire collegiate and collaborative working as the plan is realised (with stakeholders and local communities); and to deliver a plan that the council's workforce understands and through which they feel empowered and enabled.

8. As such, the plan focusses on the outcomes the council and Norwich communities want to achieve. Outputs – which describe how the council will achieve those outcomes – will be considered under the business planning process. Business planning components of the plan will sit in a separate document. The process is outlined in items 14 to 16.
9. This approach has enabled a plan that can be better understood by those we work with and for, as well as those who work for us.

The draft plan

10. In their consideration of the new draft plan as it appears at appendix 1, members are asked to note that:
 - This version of the plan may be subject to change following the recommendations of your scrutiny committee today and any further feedback received during its onward committee journey.
 - Some pages of the plan will feature photographs of people from across the city and council, with the aim of helping the people of Norwich “see and feel” the city represented in the plan.
 - The version presented in appendix 1 is not designed – the layout and formatting are simply to aid understanding. The final plan will be a fully designed document.
 - Accessible formats of the plan including an easy-read version will be developed following agreement of the plan. The plan will also be made available in other languages when requested (using the protocols currently deployed to do this).
11. As indicated above, the strength of this new plan is the significant engagement of Norwich communities in its development. This has included some priorities being highlighted that may not be a direct responsibility of the council.
12. Rather than focus only on areas where the council is the primary service supplier, the plan proposes that it should use its strong advocacy, influencing, convening and enabling powers to help deliver all of the outcomes the people of Norwich want to see.
13. This will require a fully collaborative approach, identifying mutual benefit and interest to foster buy-in and investment, as well as deploying council assets and powers to engage relevant delivery agents. We will work through and with our many partners to achieve this, including the voluntary and community sector, businesses and across the wider public sector system.

Business planning

14. As above, the draft corporate plan (appendix 1) is outcome focussed and does not include detail on specific actions. A business plan will be developed, and it is within this, that these will be detailed and worked through.
15. The business plan and an accompanying performance framework will bring clarity to service areas to enable work and resource planning and will support our aim to manage budgets against corporate priorities; they will also allow

sufficient flexibility for the council to influence and/or adjust plans throughout a period - if required by external change or circumstances.

16. The business plan and performance framework will also represent an important step in our desire to develop the way in which the council works, ensuring service areas are working together more effectively to deliver for the city, and that we are listening to the people of Norwich, responding dynamically to what they are telling us.

Consultation overview

17. A key objective in producing a new corporate plan was to put the people of Norwich front and centre of its development. This saw an intensive programme of citywide resident and stakeholder engagement across Norwich from October through December 2023.

18. The consultation was designed to provide the council with meaningful insights into the priorities and needs of all people across the city – this includes all groups cited in the council's new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, considered by your committee in December 2023.

19. Consultation activities included:

- Stakeholder interviews.
- Workshops.
- Panel discussions.
- Focus groups.
- Street outreach.
- Online surveys.
- Data gathered from previous consultations.
- Other extant and relevant data sources.

20. Data about the demography of respondents to the consultation was invited voluntarily and then anonymised. This enabled meaningful discussion. As a result, any data gathered cannot be linked to comments and so cannot be used to weight the ideas of any particular audience or group.

21. Rather, through the business planning process and the development of the performance framework (that will follow), data the council holds on Norwich communities will be deployed to ensure targeted and specific action in priority areas and amongst priority community groups. Examples of this may include the data held on Reducing Inequalities Target Areas (RITAs) with performance being measured on the council's progress in tackling the issues faced in these locations, and consultation with voluntary and community organisations who are closely working with vulnerable communities.

Consultation detail

22. In-depth conversations comprised 26 structured interviews representing business, civil society, and the public, creative and cultural sectors. In addition, there were three focus groups with people from voluntary and community sector organisations (VCSE), as well as creative and cultural organisations; while insights gathered from the council's Community Connectors and Conversation Officers were also considered.
23. Within this, VCSE organisations represented the experiences and needs of disabled people, women experiencing domestic violence, refugees, people experiencing housing vulnerability, young people, older people, people using food banks, and some faith groups.
24. All participants were invited to be candid, on the basis that contributions would be anonymised and any quotes non-attributable. To facilitate this, no demographic data was captured during this phase of the consultation.
25. Our street engagement comprised interviews with 138 people from across the city, with groups and individuals interviewed outdoors and indoors, in cafes, community spaces, and at bus stops, libraries, shops and school gates.
26. Some demographic information was recorded for the on-street engagement, but it was not possible to gain comparable demographics across the piece, noting that submission of such information was voluntary.
27. However, engagement can be generally described as with more women than men, and more older people (40+) than younger people. This included some sixth-formers, university students, parents of young children and pensioners as well as many working age adults.
28. Many of those consulted on-street had some sort of physical or mental health condition, but fewer people had an identified disability; some were experiencing insecure housing or were previously homeless.
29. Most interviewees were of White British ethnicity, but people of Polish or other Eastern European backgrounds, and those from African and Asian diaspora origins including migrants and Black British people, were also interviewed.
30. In the main, people lived or worked in Norwich, with some commuting in from surrounding districts or counties. As per above, given the limited demographic data, we have not broken-down views by identity or position.
31. The public survey included three surveys on Get Talking Norwich: one aimed at council staff, a public survey, and an accompanying map-based survey.
32. Norwich City Council staff engagement included three focus groups with staff representing different teams and levels of seniority/tenure; three 'playback sessions' with senior managers; and an all-colleague survey, hosted on Get Talking Norwich and promoted throughout November.
33. All participants were invited to be candid, on the basis that all contributions would be anonymised and any quotes non-attributable.
34. Insights from previous Community Conversations were also gathered. This included data that has been collated from conversations by Community

Connectors and Community Conversation Officers since 2022. The conversations came from six areas:

- Heathgate / Mousehold / Cowgate
- Lakenham
- Mancroft
- Mile Cross
- North Earlham
- West Pottergate / Russell St.

35. Consultation with council tenants included a 90-minute focus group with council tenant representatives, all of whom are involved in tenants' associations. In addition, council tenants and people who live in private rented accommodation were consulted during the street engagement activity described above.

36. As per above, participants were invited to be candid, on the basis that all contributions would be anonymised and any quotes non-attributable.

37. Member and partner consultation comprised four workshops with elected members and one with partners and cabinet. Those unable to attend in person were invited to submit responses by email. The workshops comprised individual group sessions for:

- Cabinet
- Labour group
- Opposition groups (Green and Liberal Democrats)
- City vision partners and cabinet (joint)
- The Climate and Environment Emergency Executive Panel

Young people

38. As the city's future workers, parents and leaders, it was important to consider the views of young people in shaping the plan.

39. The consultation process revealed a growing consultation fatigue developing amongst young people (as well as other consultees). Voluntary and community partners who work with young people recommended that the priorities expressed by young people during the consultation period for the City Vision 2040 were incorporated into the development of the plan.

40. How we continue to ensure the views of young people in our city are heard and responded to will be addressed as the business planning process and performance framework are developed. Within these processes lies the opportunity to engage and excite the input of all user groups, ensuring the council is feeding back to people and actively linking the actions to the responses received from consultation.

Data

41. The plan details an ambition for the council to be data-driven under its Open and Modern Council priority. Outcomes from this work are listed as delivering:

- Improved cost-effectiveness, driving better targeted services
 - Enhanced customer relationships.
 - People focused, data and insight driven, effective decision-making
 - A learning, continuously improving, well-run council
42. Anticipating this ambition, the independent engagement consultants also considered the following information and incorporated it into feedback, so helping to shape the plan.
- Norwich 2040 City Vision
 - Corporate Plan 2022-26
 - Other council policies, plans and strategies
 - Equality Information Reports from 2016-2023; the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and the public consultation for this strategy
 - The final report of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge 2023 and the council's response to LGA recommendations
 - Data derived from the Get Talking Norwich engagement platform
 - Budget consultation 2023/24 analysis – full report
 - Norwich 2011 to 2021 census overview
 - Findings from City Vision 2017-18 engagement exercise
 - Data from the City Vision Youth Conference in May 2018 and the City Vision Youth Survey undertaken in the same year.
 - The final report of the Norwich Good Economy Commission
 - Norwich Reducing Inequality Target Areas – analysis of indicators October 2022 (a Norfolk Office of Data and analytics (NODA) report)
43. Further and frequentative consultation exercises and iterative data sources (such as complaints data) will be used in the ongoing development of the plan and the business planning process to inform decision-making.

Implications

Financial and resources

44. 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, noting this new draft corporate plan will replace the previous plan if it is adopted by cabinet and council.
45. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources. The new draft corporate plan sets the strategic direction for the council for the period April 2024 to March 2029 and lists a series of outcomes that the council seeks to achieve during this period.
46. Resource allocation and budget setting in support of these outcomes will be considered as part of the business planning process that follows adoption of the plan. As detailed above, this includes the development of a performance

framework against which progress on delivering the outcomes will be assessed and thus a vehicle through which budgets may be iteratively reviewed.

Legal

47. No legal implications have been identified in the development of the draft corporate plan other than ensuring that data protection requirements have been met across the consultation exercise that informs the development of the plan.

| Consideration | Details of any implications and proposed measures to address: |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Equality and diversity | An Equality Impact Assessment for the draft corporate plan has been completed and is appended to this report. In summary, the plan positively impacts all communities in Norwich with no one particular group disproportionately affected. Not least, the consultation undertaken to inform the plan and the resultant priority “A Fairer Norwich”, as well as commitments within the plan to target areas and communities where need is greatest, will help to advance equality outcomes in Norwich. |
| Health, social and economic impact | The plan supports the Norwich Health and Wellbeing Partnership Strategy under the “A Fairer Norwich” priority. This includes a commitment to work with our partners to close health inequities. |
| Crime and disorder | Similarly (to the above) crime and disorder are considered within the draft plan under the “A Fairer Norwich” priority. |
| Children and adults safeguarding | While not specifically cited in the draft corporate plan, all relevant actions will align with the council’s published Safeguarding Policy statement. |
| Environmental impact | Environmental impact is considered throughout the draft plan. This includes a specific and dedicated priority (“A Climate Responsive Norwich”) and significant consideration of environmental themes under other priorities, most pertinently under the “A Future-Proof Norwich” priority. |

Risk management

| Risk | Consequence | Controls required |
|--------------|---|---|
| Operational | <p>The draft corporate plan has been developed through consultation with the people of Norwich. As such, it lists the challenges and opportunities that the communities the council seeks to serve view as their priorities.</p> <p>Without the plan, no clear and up-to-date set of priorities would exist for the council, or, rather, services would be required to work to the priorities featured in the current plan (2022-26).</p> <p>This would result in the council providing services that may not be relevant or fit for purpose and which would likely ignore the priorities that communities have identified.</p> | By adopting the draft corporate plan these risks are mitigated. |
| Legal | No legal risks have been identified. | |
| Reputational | If the council fails to adopt the priorities that the people of Norwich have identified (and which appear within the new draft plan), it is likely that negative perceptions of the council may be generated amongst the communities it serves, its partners and its staff (all of whom have contributed to the plan). | |

Other options considered

48. No other reasonably viable options have been identified.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

49. This report and the appendices should enable the scrutiny committee to determine any recommendations it would wish to make to cabinet in regard to the new draft corporate plan.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: We are Norwich (draft corporate plan 2024-29)
- Appendix 2: Working draft of priority tables

- Appendix 3: Norwich in context – data and evidence
- Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment (for the above plan)
- Appendix 5: Engagement Report
- Appendix 6: Independent Consultant's Summary Feedback Report

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We Are Norwich

A community-led plan for 2024-29

Contents

- 1) Message from the leader of the council
- 2) What we did
- 3) What we heard
- 4) Our vision and shared priorities
- 5) Message from the chief executive
- 6) More about our shared priorities
- 7) How we will work
- 8) A very big thank you

Message from the leader of the council, Mike Stonard

When talking about what the next five years hold for Norwich, we asked people what they love about this place. Consistently, there were shared feelings that resonate deeply with me, especially the profound feeling of home. Norwich offers all the advantages of city living while nurturing a genuine and unique sense of belonging. It's where my roots are, and where I've chosen to call home.

I hope everyone shares this bond with Norwich, however I am acutely aware many among us live markedly different lives. Too many residents are grappling with making ends meet, managing their health and feeling connected within our community, and are sometimes therefore missing out on what Norwich has on offer. It is within our collective ability to transform Norwich into the best possible place for everyone.

Our five-year plan has been designed with you, reflecting your hopes, your ideas, and your joint commitment to making Norwich a great place. By committing to your priorities, we are agreeing on a singular path forward towards a future Norwich where everyone belongs, and everyone benefits.

We hope you will join with us in this effort. Together we can make Norwich a place that everyone can thrive in.

What we did

This plan has been developed by engaging with the people of Norwich through street conversations, public and employee surveys, in-depth interviews and focus groups.

Over 900 individuals and organisations were consulted across the city including Norwich residents and tenants' groups, community organisations, voluntary sector, local businesses and Norwich city councillors and officers.

By listening and learning from the feedback received through the consultation and by working in partnership, we have a very real opportunity to build a plan that unlocks the city's true potential and delivers against the priorities we share.

What we heard

We have a collective pride and passion for our city, but we recognise there are significant challenges that need to be addressed now, and in the future.

Norwich's welcoming and quirky spirit, independent shops, cultural and creative scene, open natural spaces, and compact size are all things we value and want to preserve. But we must work to improve the city's transport offer, the quality and quantity of local housing across all types and to suit all household incomes.

Issues arising from the cost of living faced by residents, businesses and partners and concerns about the look and feel of neighbourhoods outside the city's centre were also identified as areas to focus on.

Your feedback also told us that solutions need to be in place so that we can respond to our residents and wider service users when they're in touch with us.

At the heart of this is the need for the council to work with the people of Norwich to create solutions together, and for the council to use its influence, enabling and convening powers to deliver change in areas that sit outside of its specific and direct responsibilities.

We recognise that we are one organisation within the city, where everyone has a role to play. This plan helps us have a shared vision and goals and sets out what we will do and our ambitions for Norwich in the future.

Our vision

Norwich: a fair and thriving city, full of ambition

Shared priorities

To ensure we are clear about how we spend our time, effort, and money, we have developed five priorities, that we believe are the areas we should focus on to achieve our vision.

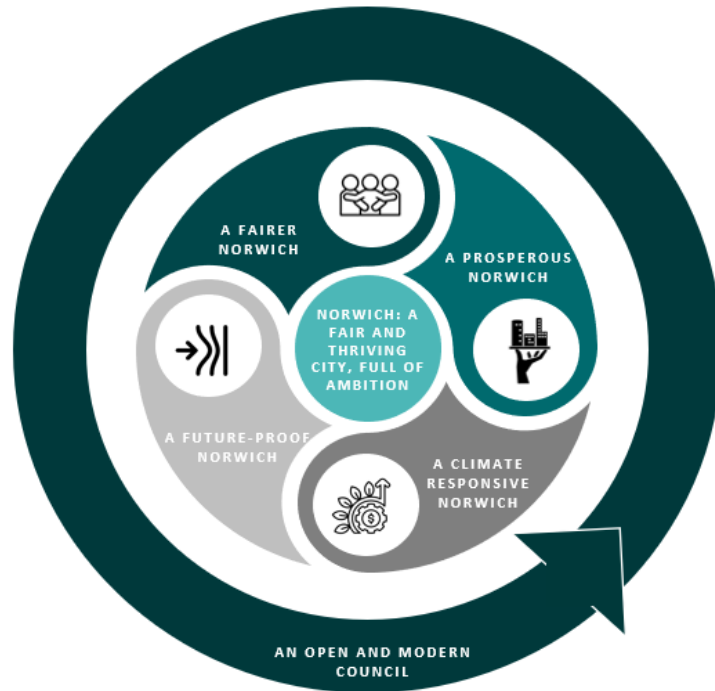
Our priorities are chosen based on what you told us during the consultation but also consider existing local, regional, and national plans and strategies. We are Norwich is our most broad strategic document, so the priorities are top-level.

We are Norwich contains ambitions that may be within our direct delivery and ability to change, and in some areas, we will use our ability to lead, influence and work in partnership with others in order to try and drive the right outcomes for our city. Our priorities will inform the more detailed development of a council Business Plan, which will describe what actions we will undertake to achieve our priorities.

We will measure our progress and success so that you can see how we are doing. This will be delivered through a new performance framework which will include clear measures of success as well as milestones against priorities.

We have identified five priorities:

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



The creation of this five-year plan signalled a totally new way of working for the city council. For the first time, we went out to the whole city to ask them what was important to them and what our priorities should be.

Hundreds of conversations have helped to mould the plan. This allowed us to take all the incredible feedback and distil it into something that I hope speaks to everyone who reads it.

Our all-embracing approach to pulling this plan together is something I'm very proud of and is what we need to do more of at the city council.

I want us to inspire our residents to talk with us and have open conversations about the role of the council so we can clearly hear, and respond to, all of the voices across our communities.

Being an **open and modern council** is central to unlocking all that we want for our amazing city: a **prosperous Norwich**, a **fairer Norwich**, a **climate-responsive Norwich**, a **future-proof Norwich**.

It is only by becoming an open and modern organisation that we will be able to adapt to the changing needs of our residents, communities and businesses.

I really hope our new plan captures the essence of shared aspirations for Norwich.

A prosperous Norwich

Why this is one of our priorities

We want to put jobs, opportunity and growth at the forefront of our work. With business, we will enable a thriving, successful economy that is creative, innovative, inclusive and sustainable. We will make Norwich a great place to live, work, learn, and visit, where everyone shares in its success.

We will maintain our status as a Living Wage city, growing the number of businesses and jobs paying the real living wage. We will work with partners to diversify our economy to deliver good jobs for all, seeking to raise household incomes. We want to ensure everyone can gain the right skills for a changing economy and we will protect commercial spaces to support diverse sectors, entrepreneurialism, and job creation.

We want to make the city centre more accessible, connected to more of our residents and make it a place that meets the needs and aspirations of the whole city.

What you told us and how it links to this priority

Many of you love the city centre, its vibrancy and culture scene, but not everyone can easily access it.

There is also concern about how the city will change in the future, affecting the ways we live, and there is a desire to make sure that local neighbourhood centres are improved.

There is also concern that reaching Norwich from elsewhere is difficult, which might affect tourism and business investment. You are concerned that Norwich is a low wage economy, making it harder for everyone in Norwich to have a good job and affecting our ability to keep good workers here. There are other barriers to work too, like social and health factors, which may limit people's chances to access good jobs. Net zero and the link to Norwich as an innovative city is viewed as a definite opportunity for our economy.

What we are aiming for:

- Norwich is a great place to live, work, learn and visit

This is what success might look like.....

The city has grown and developed in sustainable ways and is renowned as a culture and creative leader maximising its tourism offer. Opportunities for regeneration and development are grasped and they provide equitable opportunities to housing and jobs. The city's young people have a better and more equal chance of educational success.

- Business in Norwich thrives in an inclusive, resilient economy

This is what success might look like...

We have a modern, inclusive, successful economy, which supports local and independent business to thrive and grow, graduate entrepreneurs and business start-ups are encouraged. Our economy is more diverse, and our businesses and communities enjoy the benefits of great partnership working which supports people to develop skills they need, and we see skills better matched to work opportunities.

- Everyone has access and opportunity to great jobs

This is what success might look like...

There is a wider range of job opportunities and a broader range of thriving industries. Collaborative working across the city has encouraged a higher skilled and more diverse workforce, supported by more apprenticeship opportunities at the council and its trading companies. People feel they have the support they need when navigating the job market or accessing work.

- Better incomes for people in Norwich

This is what success might look like...

Incomes have risen and people have better standards of living. The Real Living Wage has become the norm not the exception, more people receive the benefits to which they are entitled and there is a greater number of high-quality unionised jobs. The economy is more inclusive and there is support for people into work, particularly in our most disadvantaged communities. We are moving towards a greener economy, and Norwich has become a city which sees increased spending and economic growth in green sectors.

A fairer Norwich

Why this is one of our priorities

We want to prioritise health and wellbeing for all. Be a place where we can live in vibrant, diverse, safe neighbourhoods where everyone feels connected and valued and part of a caring community - in the city and in our local neighbourhoods.

We aim to deliver growth and regeneration for our less wealthy areas, building more homes, especially more affordable homes for those people and families who need them. We will act to ensure homes are good quality, fit for the future, warm and in good repair. We will start regenerating our council homes, improving estates and reducing energy costs.

We will work to support and empower people and families, so they are more able to face economic, social, and environmental challenges. This includes reducing inequality and tackling poverty by enabling growth and jobs in more neighbourhoods, raising life and healthy life expectancy, improving education levels and health outcomes. We want to make sure nobody is left behind.

What you told us and how it links to this priority

You told us that there is significant and long-term poverty and that it's getting harder to escape poverty. The cost-of-living crisis has made this worse and many people are having to make impossible decisions between basic needs, such as eating or being warm.

You felt that our council housing is an asset but that we need to keep up with maintenance and enhance how our estates feel, and that improvements to the private rented sector are important too. There is concern around the availability of housing overall and increased homelessness. You said that support from Norwich's community and voluntary organisations is valued but is unable to reach everyone. You recognised that the Council and partners focusing on targeting work to our most deprived areas was a good approach and should continue.

What we are aiming for:

- [People have better health outcomes and longer life expectancy](#)

[This is what success might look like...](#)

Levels of poverty and inequality fall across the city and there is a reduced gap in life expectancy between communities with longer life expectancy for all. Services and partnership networks are better targeted and there is increased access to services that are based on need.

- Our city and local neighbourhoods are safe, diverse and vibrant

This is what success might look like...

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

- Good quality homes for all

This is what success might look like...

There are more affordable homes, and we encourage that new homes - across all tenures - are built to low or zero carbon standards. Our tenants benefit from high quality repairs and maintenance services, and we have a deliverable retrofitting programme. Homes across the city are warm and in good repair – supporting better health and specific needs. Partnership working, tackling underlying causes, continues to reduce and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.

- Tackle the root causes of disadvantage

This is what success might look like...

People and organisations are working in a joined-up way across the city and in our local neighbourhoods, tackling long standing challenges and inequalities which lead to poverty and disadvantage. More people are digitally included, and people can access advice and support to deal with debt. There is more equality of opportunity.

A climate responsive Norwich

Why this is one of our priorities

We must continue to tackle the climate emergency by reducing our own carbon emissions to become a net zero council by 2030 and working collectively with city partners for a net-zero Norwich by 2045. This may take longer across our council homes, but we will make a start.

We will work to ensure all decisions made by the council consider and mitigate the impact on the climate and the biodiversity crisis. We will protect and enhance our outstanding parks, green and blue spaces and our natural environment, so they are vibrant and accessible to everyone, and places where wildlife thrives.

We will work with our partners, including the County Council, to work towards a city where transport is cleaner and better connected, linking communities to communities and people to opportunity. We will work together to help make Norwich an exemplar city for digital connectivity and inclusivity.

What you told us and how it links to this priority

You really like Norwich being a compact and walkable city with its rivers and natural areas seen as a huge asset. You also told us about a number of challenges including issues with the city's transport system, old and poorly insulated council homes in need of modernisation and how we need to get people to make the necessary changes to make the city and the county climate efficient.

Linked to these challenges were possible opportunities – because the city council owns a large number of council homes it is seen as well placed to catalyse improvement programmes, benefiting from economies of scale. Norwich Climate Commission was seen as being in a good place to begin conversations about the low carbon roadmap it has set out.

What we are aiming for:

- [A net-zero council by 2030](#)

[This is what success might look like...](#)

Our council services have a reduced carbon footprint, and environmentally conscious suppliers are supported by increased council investment and spending. Our businesses drive a low emission agenda, our recycle rates are increased across the city and our air quality is improved. These help us to achieve our net zero target.

- [Aiming for net-zero for Norwich by 2045](#)

[This is what success might look like...](#)

Norwich is known for being a leader in the green economy and enjoys being a low-carbon city with a growing green economy. We see an increase in the use of public transport and active travel, and we take pride in our partnership work to lower emissions across the city. A lower proportion of household income is being spent on energy.

- [Vibrant parks and open spaces for all](#)

[This is what success might look like...](#)

Our parks and green spaces have increased usage across all communities, with improved recreation, sport and leisure opportunities, evidenced by a higher take up in sport and physical activity, contributing to better mental and physical wellbeing. The biodiversity value of our open spaces is increased and supports thriving wildlife.

- Growing our capacity to adapt to climate change

This is what success might look like...

We take advantage of world class research based in Norwich to help us to adapt to climate change. There is increased awareness and understanding of climate change across all our communities, so that people can change behaviours and continue to thrive despite the challenges posed by climate change. We encourage and work to pursue ecological recovery, greater diversity and abundance across insects, plant life, animals and many other species which live in our city.

A future-proof Norwich

Why this is one of our priorities

We want to put Norwich at the forefront of the journey to zero carbon, harnessing the city's innovative nature, bringing forward the jobs of the future and leading on the just transition to a green economy.

We will face the increasing challenges of heat, rising tides and flooding, along with other future shocks, by collaborating to deliver a Norwich 'City Resilience Plan', that will future proof us for decades to come.

We want to bring the city's partners and communities together to shape a city approach to a sustainable future, jointly meeting our challenges and co-designing our future aspirations and plans.

What you told us and how it links to this priority

You feel there is a real opportunity for a comprehensive zero carbon development programme – something that could provide opportunities for young people to develop future-facing employment skills. Poor educational attainment was highlighted as a challenge, along with a lack of opportunities and low salaries.

You noted that the council has a strong foundation working with the voluntary and community sector, needing to build on this to reduce barriers and ensure this foundation translates into strongly empowered communities.

The city vision partnership was also seen as having an established platform which can be used to continue conversations with partners who can collectively work towards shared goals for the benefit of all.

What we are aiming for:

- Empowered communities

This is what success might look like...

Our communities are active and strong, they are empowered to act locally to achieve the best local solutions. We partner and work with the public sector, business, voluntary and community organisations to support communities and help lead change.

- A city read for change

This is what success might look like...

Our streets are vibrant and busy and have the right facilities for our communities. We ensure that new homes are built in sustainable locations close to jobs and amenities and the city's long-term future is secure based on planned investment projects, which take advantage of funding opportunities when they arise.

- Being equipped for new ways of working

This is what success might look like...

We enjoy digital equality and embrace being data-driven to help make joined up decisions. We encourage economic development in our city, have a talent pool matched to need and have better connected communities and businesses.

- Being prepared for future challenges

This is what success might look like...

With partners we lead the development of a citywide resilience plan which prepares our city into the future. Our communities are all more resilient and are better prepared to navigate threats and change – strengthening the city's reputation for being a safe place to live and do business.

An open and modern council

Why this is one of our priorities

Becoming a modern council – one that is responsive to what matters to our city and an enabler for progress, inclusion and sustainability will be based on developing a rich and ongoing conversation between the council and residents. This conversation will flow into and underpin all our priorities – a city council where you shape our services. We will use data to design and deliver services that are high quality, value for money, accessible and are responsive to the needs of our residents.

To be this kind of council we will need to create the right structures, invest in our people, provide fulfilling careers, and equip them with the skills, tools and workplace they need to provide truly 21st century services for Norwich. We will consider equality in all that we do so we can grow the diversity of our workforce, to better reflect the city.

Above all: we will work with, and for, Norwich.

What you told us and how it links to this priority

Some of the challenges you highlighted looked at how we engage with our residents and service users, noting areas that need to improve such as our complaint handling and the general quality of how we respond – especially so with tenants. But using the data and insight we hold was seen as a positive way for us to use that information to better engage with our residents and understand their needs.

What we are aiming for:

- A collaborative council

This is how it could look...

Our council is regarded as open and transparent. We have high levels of involvement across our voluntary and community sectors, and we share our skills and knowledge across private and public sectors to achieve common goals. We have taken a partnership approach to city leadership, building a coordinated approach and deliberate response to city challenges. We have played a critical role in developing a strong sense of community in local neighbourhoods and city-wide.

- A council delivering excellence

This is what success might look like...

Listening to feedback has helped us to create user-friendly services which are linked up and targeted - because we are open to finding different solutions and we have encouraged people to influence change in the way we deliver services. Delivering excellence has contributed to the council being financially stable.

- A council invested in its people

This is what success might look like...

The council has a skilled and talented workforce that can tackle the complex challenges the city faces. People enjoy working for the city council because it offers good career opportunities and our workforce reflects the diversity of the city, this helps retain and develop the talented people needed to achieve the aspirations set out in this plan for the city and its residents.

- A data and insight driven and people focused council

This is what success might look like...

More people access our digital services, we see improved cost-effectiveness which leads to better targeted services and improved relationships with service users. We make good decisions because we use data and insight to support us and we are people focused and are always keen to learn and improve. This helps to give us the tools we need to have a well-run council.

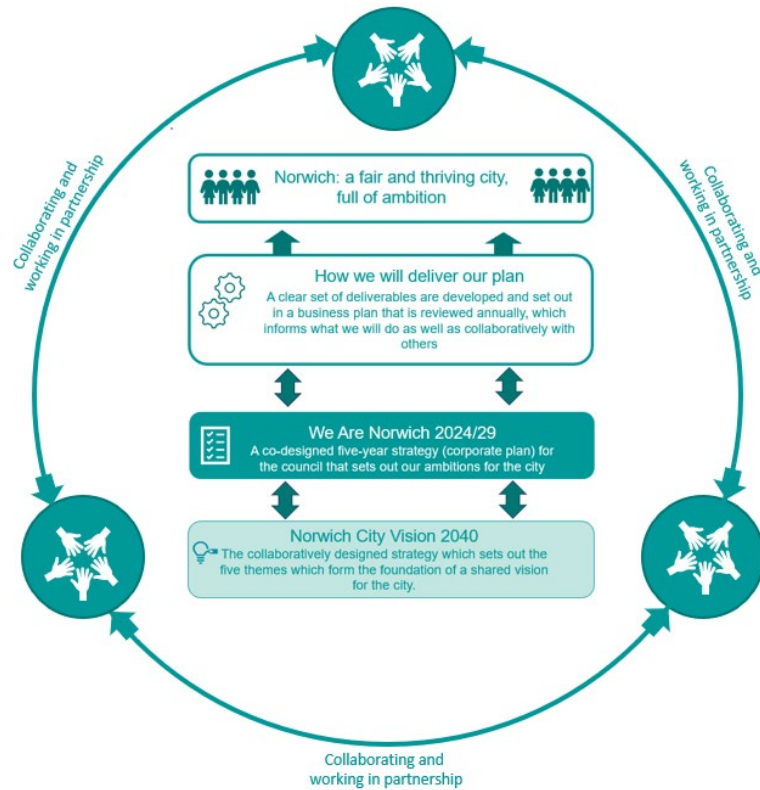
How we will work

We have a few guiding principles that inform everything we do. They underpin all our priorities and are central to the way we must work to get the best outcomes for our city.

- **Be unashamedly ambitious for Norwich**
- **Do the basics well on the services we provide**
- **Listen to the city**
- **Work in partnership**
- **Focus on the climate in all that we do**
- **Put equality and inclusion front and centre of all our thinking**
- **Use evidence to inform the services we provide**

Working together

This plan is focussed on making the city better for the people of Norwich. It sets out how the council plans to work collaboratively with its partners and the communities it serves – delivering the ideas, addressing challenges and creating opportunities the people of Norwich have said they want to see.



Finally...a very big thank you!

The best way to respect your contributions to this plan, and to express our thanks, is to engage with our partners and the local community and deliver it.

Thank you for your support. We look forward to working with you.

Working draft

Our priorities in more detail

A prosperous Norwich

| What we are aiming for | OUR FOCUS | | | |
|------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| | Norwich is a great place to live, work, learn and visit | Business in Norwich thrives in an inclusive, resilient economy | Everyone has access and opportunity to great jobs | Better incomes for people in Norwich |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the way we manage our assets for the benefit of the city centre and local neighbourhoods. Enabling the growth and development of the whole city in an inclusive, sustainable, healthy and resilient way. Securing social value from growth and development, benefitting communities. Celebrating and promoting our excellent culture, creativity and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a new Economic Strategy for a modern, sustainable city which exploits the unique attributes and opportunities available to the city and local neighbourhoods. Working with partners to support local and independent businesses to thrive and grow. Continuing to build relationships and learning, including as part of Fast Growth Cities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with our partners to strengthen the local supply chain, supporting local suppliers and jobs. Using our knowledge and data, supporting institutions to develop and provide training for new jobs in emerging industries. Making the case for improvements to our public transport network to local and national governments Working with partners and business so that our workforces reflect the diversity of the city and that people face fewer barriers to employment, especially those from more deprived backgrounds. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining Living Wage City status and supporting more businesses to become Real Living Wage employers, encouraging raising pay by addressing the low pay economy in the city. Continue to promote and further develop our Fine City Employers' Charter with businesses across the city. Working with partners towards a more inclusive economy which supports better pathways into work for disadvantaged communities. |

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| <p>heritage offer locally, nationally, and internationally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harnessing our creative sector for inward investment and tourism.• Using regeneration as an opportunity for disadvantaged areas and people – particularly focusing on East Norwich and Anglia Square.• Future-proofing the city and local neighbourhoods through sound spatial planning.• Seeking to secure increased funding to support the city's aims.• Working with our County Council partners to shape and maintain the city's transport infrastructure. | <p>Group and apply learning to the economic development of the city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximising opportunities from Devolution Deals and other investment funding opportunities to improve city and local neighbourhood economies.• Promoting Norwich's business and research strengths. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working with unions and other partners to attract high quality unionised jobs to the city, supporting and diversifying growth sectors to create and retain good, well-paid jobs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning for how the economy will change in the future and supporting people to access good, sustainable jobs.• Working hard to help people receive all the income benefits to which they are entitled. |
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What might success look like

- The city has grown and developed in an inclusive and sustainable way.
- Norwich is renowned as a leader for its culture and creativity.
- Tourism opportunities in the city are maximised through partnership working.
- Regeneration and development provide equitable opportunities to housing and jobs for people across the city.
- Through partnership working educational outcomes for young people growing up in the

- Our successful, inclusive economy is creative, innovative, and diverse.
- Greater retention of graduate entrepreneurs, supporting and incubating business start-ups.
- More diversity in our local economy, and an increase in the number of successful sectors,
- Closer collaboration between businesses and communities, which supports investment and develops skills.

- A wider range of job opportunities, including in our local neighbourhood centres
- in a diverse range of thriving industries.
- A higher-skilled and more diverse workforce achieved through collaborative working.
- People feel supported when navigating the job market or accessing work.
- Increase in the number of apprenticeships in Norwich City Council and our trading companies, as well as in wider Norwich where we have leverage through procurement/contracts.

- Incomes rise to deliver better living standards and longer life expectancy.
- Norwich is a 'Living Wage City' where the Living Wage is the norm, not the exception.
- There are lower levels of unclaimed benefits.
- A just transition to a greener economy replaces lost sectors.
- Norwich is a leader for growth in the emerging green economy
- Improved pay economy resulting in increased spending and economic growth.

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| city are more equal. | | | |
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Working draft

A fairer Norwich

| What we are aiming for | People have better health outcomes and longer life expectancy | Our city and local neighbourhoods are safe, diverse and vibrant. | Good quality homes for all | Tackle the root causes of disadvantage |
|------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| OUR FOCUS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the County Council to increase opportunities for walking and cycling, making our streets safe and pleasant places for play and informal exercise Increasing access to and inclusiveness of leisure opportunities, growing participation in sport and physical activity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building communities where everyone feels valued and connected, with good local amenities and strong cultural and social networks. Working with VCSE and wider partners to empower communities to play a greater role in managing social, cultural and community assets. Encouraging our cultural sector to connect with more people, reaching a wider and more diverse audience. Celebrating diversity and driving inclusivity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regenerating and decarbonising the council's own housing stock over time and ensuring the best use of available land in the city, to meet the city's housing aims. Building and increasing the supply of good quality social and affordable homes. Enabling and encouraging the building of innovative, low or zero carbon homes, promoting schemes and leveraging funding for private homeowners to retrofit homes, and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tackling the root causes of poverty, actively reducing social and economic disadvantage. Working with partners to grow digital inclusivity. Reducing food poverty, including the use of land for inclusive and sustainable food growing. Countering energy poverty by increasing access to utilities and |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using our own services, our influence and working with our partners to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tackle the root causes of health inequalities. - close the divide on structural inequalities breaking cycles of disadvantage, poverty, and trauma. • Listen and be responsive to our communities and our partners. • Improve opportunities for more people to actively participate in their community and in the life of the city. | <p>that helps make Norwich a city in which everyone feels safe and welcome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the city a safer place, by working with our community safety partners. • Looking after our own housing neighbourhoods well, improving estate safety through better design and making homes more affordable to live in. • | <p>exploring innovative financing and modern methods of construction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with landlords and our partners to significantly improve housing conditions and regulatory standards across the private rental sector. • Continuing to successfully work in partnership to reduce and prevent rough sleeping and homelessness, tackling the underlying causes. • Helping prevent homelessness by, taking ethical approaches to debt collection, and responding to the diverse needs of different people. • Lobbying, influencing, and seeking innovative solutions with partners, to prevent an increase in harmful nutrient | <p>increasing the availability of affordable renewable energy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to prioritise our Financial Inclusion Consortium, with our voluntary and community sector partners. • Harness the economic leverage of local anchor organisations to tackle long standing systematic challenges and structural inequalities within the city centre and local neighbourhoods. |
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| | | <p>levels around vulnerable watercourses (inc. Nutrient Neutrality).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where people have high or complex needs, taking a 'Housing First' approach (giving people who have experienced homelessness and chronic health and social care needs a stable home from which to rebuild their lives). | |
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What success might look like

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced inequality divides with poverty levels falling across the city. A reduced gap in life expectancy between communities, with a longer life expectancy for all. Services and partnership networks are better targeted. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean, safe streets, as part of vibrant and diverse neighbourhoods. Larger and more diverse audiences participating in creativity and cultural events. Safe and welcoming public spaces across Norwich that celebrate of diversity. People feeling safer in the city and local neighbourhoods. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved quality of homes across all tenures. A deliverable programme of retrofitting. High quality, responsive repairs, and maintenance for our tenants. Increased levels of affordable housing. to | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced levels of poverty, with thriving communities. Access to a wider range of jobs by working with partners to achieve this. Skills are better matched to opportunity through |
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- Increased access to needs-based services.

ensure access to quality homes.

- Our Local Plan housebuilding targets met or exceeded to improve provision and supply of homes.
- Warm homes in good repair to better support good health, including for those with specific needs.
- Greater job opportunities in construction and maintenance.

collaborative working with our education partners.

- Through partnership working support for children to get the best start in life.
- More equality of opportunity across the city.

A climate responsive Norwich

| What are we aiming for | OUR FOCUS | | | |
|------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| | A net zero Council by 2030 | As a city, aiming for net zero Norwich by 2045 | Vibrant parks and green spaces for all | Growing our capacity to adapt to climate change |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing funding to deliver reduced emissions from our council fleet and other assets. • Changing the way we work to reduce emissions. • Procuring locally where viable and from low-carbon suppliers. • Becoming a cleaner city and delivering against increasing targets to reduce waste and fly tipping. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using our planning powers to ensure new-builds are low carbon and energy-efficient. • Working with partners to encourage active travel across Norwich, by delivering infrastructure and supporting with education and information. • Enabling sustainable food for Norwich, with local food growing. Working to encourage and enable green jobs and training in emerging industries. • Improving public transport by working with partners and local providers to meet local needs and grow users. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making our parks, and our green and blue spaces, fit for everyone to enjoy. • Improving physical recreation, sport, and leisure opportunities within our parks. • Growing the biodiversity of our open spaces, especially verges and riverbanks, and enabling a thriving wildlife. • Increasing space for nature, actively exploring long term alternatives to pesticides, protecting eco-systems, and helping to make waterways cleaner. • Embracing initiatives that support the | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Norwich's world-class research to predict likely climate impacts. • Enabling nature to recover and thrive across the city. • Working with partners to take direct action to increase the number of birds and wildlife, especially in species where numbers have reduced. • Bringing our communities with us by increasing awareness and changing behaviours to support the changing climate. • Working across the system to employ nature-based solutions |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing the levels of household recycling.• Gathering, maintaining and reporting data on our emissions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encouraging increased electric vehicle charging points across the city.• Supporting the city to transform its relationship with waste, through repair, reuse and sharing of goods. | <p>recovery of our wildlife and eco-systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing ease of access to and through our parks and green spaces. | <p>to ensure ecological recovery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Driving delivery of the Ecology Strategy and the council's own action plan.• Supporting the development of a new resilience plan as described in the next priority table to prepare the city for the future.• Increasing tree planting within the city to combat overheating.• Increasing the use of sustainable urban drainage to reduce flood risks. |
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| What success might look like | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduced carbon footprint across council services. • Environmentally conscious suppliers are supported by increased council investment and spending. • More local businesses adopting low-emission practices to secure contracts. • Increased recycling rates across the city. • The net zero targets set for the council and Norwich are achieved. • Working across the city with partners to improve air quality across the city with no special measures needed for the city centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norwich is renowned as a leader in the green economy and as a low-carbon city. • The city sees growth of its green economy. • A partnership approach is successful in lowering emissions across the city and improving air quality. • Increased use of public transport and active travel. • Lower proportion of household incomes spent on energy. • Employment opportunities are available in low-carbon jobs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved mental and physical well-being through access to open spaces. • Greater participation in sport and physical activity • Higher footfall in our parks and green spaces, by all communities. • Increased biodiversity within our parks and green/blue spaces. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change in Norwich is well-understood and supported in all communities. • Improved species diversity and abundance. • Communities continuing to thrive in the changing climate. • Infrastructure adapting to changing climate needs. • An increase in the tree canopy cover. |
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A future-proof Norwich

| What we are aiming for | OUR FOCUS | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| | Empowered communities | A city ready for change | Being equipped for new ways of working | Being prepared for future challenges |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing support for community anchors and empowering community organisations. • Engaging better with communities in decisions that affect them, co-designing local solutions. • Partnering, enabling and listening to public sector, voluntary and charitable organisations. • Investing in prevention by anticipating future challenges and hardships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering an efficient and effective planning function that is responsive to change. • Utilising our planning system to better shape a city of the future. • Being more responsive to the needs of the city, with citizen groups playing a leading role. • Supporting the local economy, with small and medium enterprises. • Identifying infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with our partners to deliver a well-connected city. • Collaborating with our partners to enable the upskilling of workers to match opportunities in the emerging economy. • Using our influence and lobbying powers for improved connectivity to and from Norwich, championing its position as a regional hub. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with partners to deliver a resilience plan for the city which will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mitigate the impacts of increased rainfall; - Map and mitigate the potential impacts of heat stress; - Prepare for floods, droughts, and extreme weather events; - Minimise our contribution to future shocks and mitigate against them; - Set out investment in infrastructure and |

What success might look like

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| | projects that align to local and national funding opportunities. | | systems that help us adapt to the effects of climate change; - Prepare a multi-agency response for emergency planning. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More local management of city assets, for and by the community. • Active, strong community organisations, leading change. • Communities are empowered to act locally and long-term. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streetscapes are more vibrant and busier, with fewer empty retail units. • More homes in repurposed properties. • Homes built in sustainable locations, close to jobs and amenities. • A robust pipeline of investment projects to support Norwich's long-term future. • Norwich consistently wins funding bids | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased digital equality. • More effective, data-driven and joined up decision making. • New economic development opportunities. • A stronger talent pool that is matched to need. • A better-connected Norwich for communities and businesses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience increases in every community. • Potential impacts from natural or man-made threats are understood and mitigated. • Norwich successfully navigates both expected and unexpected changes. • Norwich is recognised as a safe place to live and do business. |

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| | when opportunities arise | | |
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Working

An open and modern council

| What we are aiming for | A collaborative council | A council delivering excellence | A council invested in its people | A data and insight driven; people focused council |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| OUR FOCUS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging civic participation by reaching out to the whole city. Taking a partnership-focused approach to city leadership, collaborating to achieve common goals. Growing involvement of partners in all sectors, building a co-ordinated approach and deliberate response to city challenges. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering easier access to services and providing a consistently good customer service. Ensuring all our services are accessible and value for money. Co-designing services, making them responsive to the needs of the communities we serve. Managing our spending responsibly and seeking best value options, taking safe but proportionate approaches to risk in performance, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making sure we have an inclusive, high-performing, and motivated workforce that is diverse and representative of the city we serve. Showing leadership on equality, diversity and inclusion across the council and city. Upskilling our employees, creating pathways for bright and fulfilling careers. Becoming a recognised employer of choice. Maximising the wellbeing of our workforce – physical, emotional and financial. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using data and the experience of our residents to better understand what the people of Norwich need to thrive. Increasing the take up of online services, improving cost effectiveness and enabling a better focus on those who most need our services. Providing easy to access digital services. Using innovation to deliver modern ways of working. Ensuring our decisions are evidenced-based, and |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building regional, national, and international influence to campaign for the city and attract investment.• Recognising the importance of the voluntary and community sectors and be a willing and supportive partner. | <p>project and contract management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Targeting services to prioritise those most in need.• Ensuring effective transparent decision making, scrutiny and governance.• Ensuring we have the right amount and right quality of workspaces and that they are carbon neutral and climate resilient by 2030.• As shareholder, working with our trading companies to improve quality of services to the city, ensuring value for money.• Reviewing the purpose of our Housing Delivery Company to ensure it is focussed and delivers for the city. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting employees to consider equality in all their work.• Providing modern and collaborative working spaces.• Maintaining our status as a Living Wage employer.• Making it easier to get things done by adopting more consistent and well-communicated procedures and processes, with corporate services that work in partnership across the council to enable and support delivery. | <p>data and insight driven.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reducing our carbon footprint by increasing digital communications.• Finding ways to work smarter for Norwich. |
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What success might look like

- Active involvement across all sectors, with collaborative contributions to the city's challenges and outcomes.
- Greater involvement of local communities and the voluntary and community sectors in our work.
- The council is open and transparent.
- Skills and knowledge are shared with the private and public sectors, and our universities and emergency services to support common goals.
- A greater sense of community is fostered in local neighbourhoods and city-wide, with strong anchor organisations.

- Service delivery is coordinated and targeted.
- A responsive council, open to the co-design of solutions.
- People can influence change that matters to them.
- User-friendly, quality services.
- Improved feedback about council services.
- A financially stable council.

- The council recruits and retains employees with the training and skills needed to tackle complex challenges.
- Clear and meaningful council career paths.
- Council employees that better represent the people they serve.
- Employees motivated and enabled in their roles to achieve this plan and the 2040 City Vision.

- More people accessing digital services.
- Improved cost-effectiveness, driving better targeted services.
- Enhanced customer relationships.
- People-focused, data and insight driven, effective decision-making.
- A learning, continuously improving, well-run council.

Norwich in context: data and evidence

| Information | Source |
|--|---|
| Norwich has the second-highest proportion of people outside London with a Trans or Non-binary gender identity. | Office for National Statistics – Census 2021 |
| 93.4% of residents in Norwich were classified as using various forms of IT in their everyday lives. This is 1.3% higher than the Norfolk average and 0.6% lower than the national average. | Digital Propensity Index for Census 2021 at local authority, region and country level, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk) |
| Over the 5 years spanning 2017 to 2022, the population in Norwich grew by 1.7%, now estimated to be a total of 144,525 people. | Office for National Statistics - Population Estimates for England and Wales: mid-2022 |
| <p>The largest ethnic group within Norwich is 'White', making up 87.1% of the population. This is followed by Asian, Asian British or Welsh (5.5%), Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups (3.1%), Black, Black British or Welsh, Caribbean or African (2.5%) and Other (1.8%).</p> <p>Those identifying as Eastern European represent 4.6% (6,650 people) of the Norwich population. The largest country of origin for people originating from Eastern Europe within the city is Poland (31% of those identifying as Eastern European), followed by Lithuania (24%) and Romania (23%).</p> | Norfolk Insight - Population Area Report – Norwich, except Eastern European population total derived from Residents born in Ukraine, Russia and Other Eastern European Countries LG Inform (local.gov.uk) – 2021 Census |

| Information | Source |
|---|--|
| Over the past five years, the council has had to find £13.1m to tackle the ongoing shortfall in its budget. This year, it needs to meet a £3.7m deficit in the funding it receives to continue delivering services. | Budget consultation 2024-25 Get Talking Norwich |
| Norwich ranks 294 out of 324 for worst social mobility* *The social mobility index comprises a variety of different metrics such as childhood conditions and parent/guardian educational attainment. | Social mobility index 2017, v1.1 (live.com) |
| Job density* has fallen to 0.9 in Norwich. This is the lowest it has ever been. * A job density of 1 means there is one job for every resident aged 16-64. | Norwich City Council's Economic Development Team |
| Workers in Norwich earned 12% less than the UK average in July 2023, equating to £82.30 a month less than when the cost-of-living crisis began. | Norwich City Council's Economic Development Team |
| Use of retail and recreation spaces in Norwich decreased by 32.9% from January 2020 to May 2021. | data-urban-centres-2021 - Key Cities (May 2021 relative to January 2020) |
| Since December 2022, the overall employment rate in the city has fallen by 3.8% | Economy and employment – map explorer – Norfolk Insight |
| From December 2020 to December 2022, the overall proportion of the Norwich population classed as economically active fell by 4.4%. | Economy and employment – map explorer – Norfolk Insight |

High level equality impact assessment for strategic programmes

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|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Programme title | Corporate Plan 2024-2029 | Programme start date | 21/02/2024 |
| Team | Strategy | Directorate | Community Services |
| Senior leadership team sponsor | Helen Chamberlin | Role | Head of Strategy, Engagement & Culture |
| Officer completing | Joe Siggins | Role | Digital Inclusion Officer |

What are the main aims or purpose of the programme?

In 2023, Norwich City Council's political and corporate leadership took the decision to review our existing corporate plan which was set to cover the period of 2022-2026. This was decided in light of the council's recent changes in leadership and the persistence of external challenges facing the city, such as those resulting from the cost-of-living crisis. In addition, it was agreed that the new plan should seek to ensure the council's priorities remain closely aligned with the priorities of the city's residents, businesses, support organisations and visitors. This has been achieved through an extensive programme of consultation, the feedback of which informs the new plan.

How does it fit with other services and policies, and how does it support our [corporate objectives](#)?

The refresh of the council's corporate planning document outlines the council's vision for the city, this being: 'Norwich: a fair and thriving city, full of ambition'. In addition to the overarching vision, which seeks to guide work the council undertakes and which, in turn, impacts the lives of many (if not all) of those who live, work and visit Norwich, the new draft corporate plan sets out how the council plans to work collaboratively with the communities it serves, delivering the ideas, addressing the challenges and creating the opportunities the people of Norwich have said they want to see. The plan highlights five priorities which were developed following comprehensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders affected by the work of Norwich City Council as the local authority.

The new corporate objectives (as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2024-2029) are:

- A Prosperous Norwich

- A Fairer Norwich
- A Climate Responsive Norwich
- A Future-Proof Norwich
- An Open and Modern Council

As stated previously, a key objective in producing a new plan was to put the people of Norwich front and centre of its development. To achieve this objective, the council engaged expert consultation and engagement specialists to deliver an intensive programme of citywide resident and stakeholder engagement during November 2023.

The consultation was designed to provide the council with meaningful strategic insights into the priorities and needs of the communities it serves, with a specific focus on those priority groups identified in the council's new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, for example, by focusing street engagement interviews in the Mile Cross and Earlam areas and holding roundtable sessions and one-to-one interviews with voluntary and community organisations representing relevant groups.

Activities included:

- Stakeholder interviews
- Workshops
- Panel discussion
- Focus groups
- Street outreach
- Online surveys

Further to a newly-established confidence that the council's priorities, used to guide our work over the coming 5 years, are in alignment with those of the people of Norwich, the plan also emphasises how such a clear 5-year plan helps the council and its partners move towards their collective vision for Norwich, as conveyed through the work of the [Norwich 2040 City Vision](#) partnership. The 2040 City Vision acknowledges the whole-city effort required if mutual aspirations are to be achieved.

What outcomes do we want to achieve, why and for who?

The scope of the council's new plan for 2024-29 is wide ranging and will certainly impact the people of Norwich in a plethora of ways and will include actions that work to address local inequality in all forms.

This new plan is developed with and for Norwich people. The council wants them to engage with it and to own it as much as it does; it wants to inspire collaborative working through the plan (with our stakeholders and local communities); and it wants its own workforce to understand and feel empowered and enabled through it.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>As such, the council has focussed on the outcomes it (and all Norwich) wants to achieve. The outputs that will describe how the council will achieve those outcomes will be considered under the delivery planning components of the plan and sit in a separate document.</p> <p>This approach enables the council to be more agile, and flex its approach to manage changing circumstances, whilst remaining focused on its end goals, achieving better outcomes for Norwich. It also enables the council to deliver a plan that will be better understood by the majority of those it works with and for, as well as those who work for the council itself.</p> | | |
| <p>Will anyone be disproportionately affected by the programme (customers, employees, those with protected characteristics or groups in the wider community)?</p> <p>Norwich City Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2029 will guide the work of the council over the next 5 years, as it seeks to realise a city in which all people, regardless of their characteristics (protected by the Equality Act 2010 or otherwise) may thrive.</p> <p>The delivery planning process, which will begin following the publication of the new plan, will initially focus on delivering the internal infrastructure needed to deliver the plan over its five-year period. This will see a set of activities, outputs and performance measures being collated and agreed in April 2024, and these in turn will inform the council's resource allocation for the 2024/25 financial year in the first instance.</p> <p>As this set of activities and outputs is yet to be finalised, it is not possible at the time of writing the first iteration of this Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to state which (if any) group of people, be them customers, employees or anyone else, may be disproportionately affected by the actions the council will take to deliver its new plan over its five-year tenure.</p> <p>As part of the equalities monitoring process, an EqIA will be carried out for the first set of outputs the council will seek to deliver in order to satisfy the vision and objectives outlined within the plan. Further EqIAs will be developed iteratively, as outputs and resource allocation are agreed.</p> | | |
| <p>If yes, will these be adverse impacts (specify whether high, medium or low impacts)?</p> <p>N/A</p> | | |
| <p>If yes, can the impacts be</p> | <p>a) justified?</p> <p>N/A</p> | <p>b) mitigated?</p> <p>N/A</p> |

What is the reason for the proposal or change (financial, legal etc)? *The Equality Act requires us to make this clear.*

The development of Norwich City Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2029 represents a timely opportunity to listen to and respond to the changing needs of the city, and to understand what matters to colleagues, residents and businesses across the city.

The new plan has been developed to ensure that Norwich City Council remains well informed and focused on delivering the services and outcomes the city of Norwich wants and needs over the next 5 years.

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|------------|
| Officer completing EqlA | Joe Siggins | Date | 08/01/2024 |
| SLT sponsor | Helen Chamberlin | Date | 09/01/2024 |
| Equality lead (strategy team) | Nick Bodger | Date | 08/01/2024 |

Engagement Insights Report and Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

Corporate Plan 2024-2029

ES1 Subject to Cabinet endorsement on the 06 March 2024, Full Council will consider the council's Corporate Plan 2024-2029 on 12 March 2024. The Corporate Plan describes the vision for Norwich City Council, the services it delivers, and what it wants to achieve. The plan sets out the main priorities for the coming five years, and it informs everything the council does and how it plans.

Corporate Plan engagement

ES2 An intensive programme of citywide resident and stakeholder engagement ran throughout November and December 2023. The work was conducted by Collaborate CIC with support from colleagues at Inner Circle Consulting on behalf of Norwich City Council.

ES3 This programme of activity was undertaken to support the development of the new Corporate Plan for the period of 2024- 2029. It sought views from the public, businesses, and organisations about the city and how the council might help to realise ambitions and mitigate challenges. By listening and learning from the feedback received and by working in partnership, the

Corporate Plan will help to unlock the city's true potential and deliver against the priorities we share.

- ES4 Over 900 people and organisations contributed their views through engagement activities, and evidence including:
- a. Stakeholder interviews
 - b. Workshops
 - c. Panel discussions
 - d. Focus groups
 - e. Street outreach
 - f. Online surveys
 - g. Data gathered from previous community conversations and consultations
 - h. Other extant and relevant data sources.
- ES5 Questions asked included:
- a. What do you like most about Norwich?
 - b. What do you see as the main challenges facing the city and the people who live and work here?
 - c. What do you see as the areas of greatest opportunity for Norwich?
 - d. What changes would you most like to see in the city?
 - e. How should Norwich City Council work alongside partners to make these changes?
 - f. What are the three most important things you'd like Norwich City Council to focus on in the coming years?
- ES6 Paper copies of the survey and alternative accessible formats were available on request. There was an Easy Read version of the survey on Get Talking Norwich. The engagement activities were widely publicised through media, social media and communications with the public, including partner organisations, businesses and other stakeholders.

Scope of this report

- ES7 This report describes the methodology and presents the findings of the engagement programme which have shaped the new Corporate Plan for 2024-2029.

How the report will be used

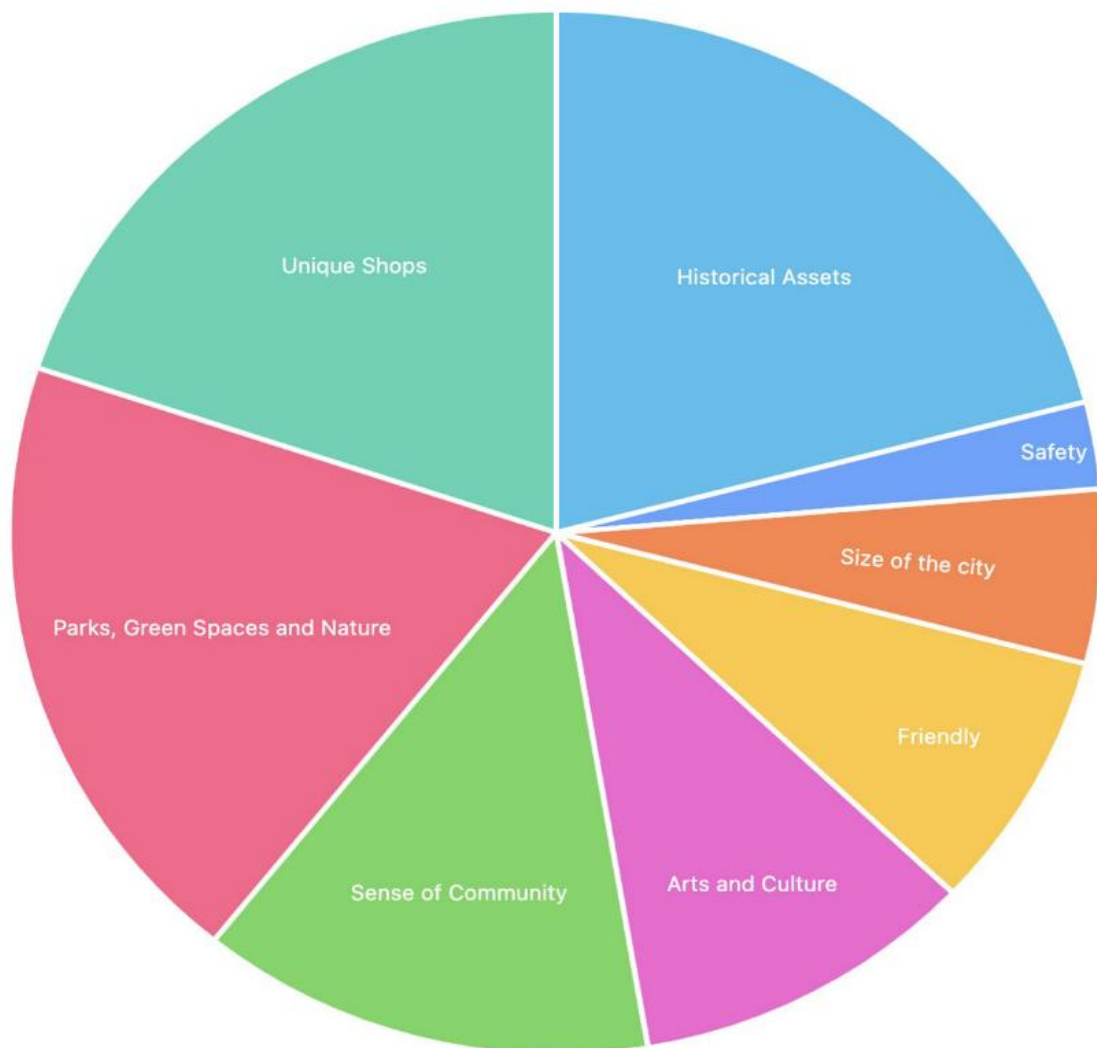
- ES8 This report, which sets out the engagement findings, has been considered as final proposals are developed by officers to put to Cabinet to recommend to Full Council on 12 March 2024. Decisions will be published through normal procedures for Full Council and Cabinet at www.norwich.gov.uk/democracy

Key Findings

- ES9 26 structured interviews were held with people from business, civil society, and the public, creative and cultural sectors, as well as three focus groups for

the voluntary and community sector, creative and cultural organisations and for Community Connectors and Conversation Officers.

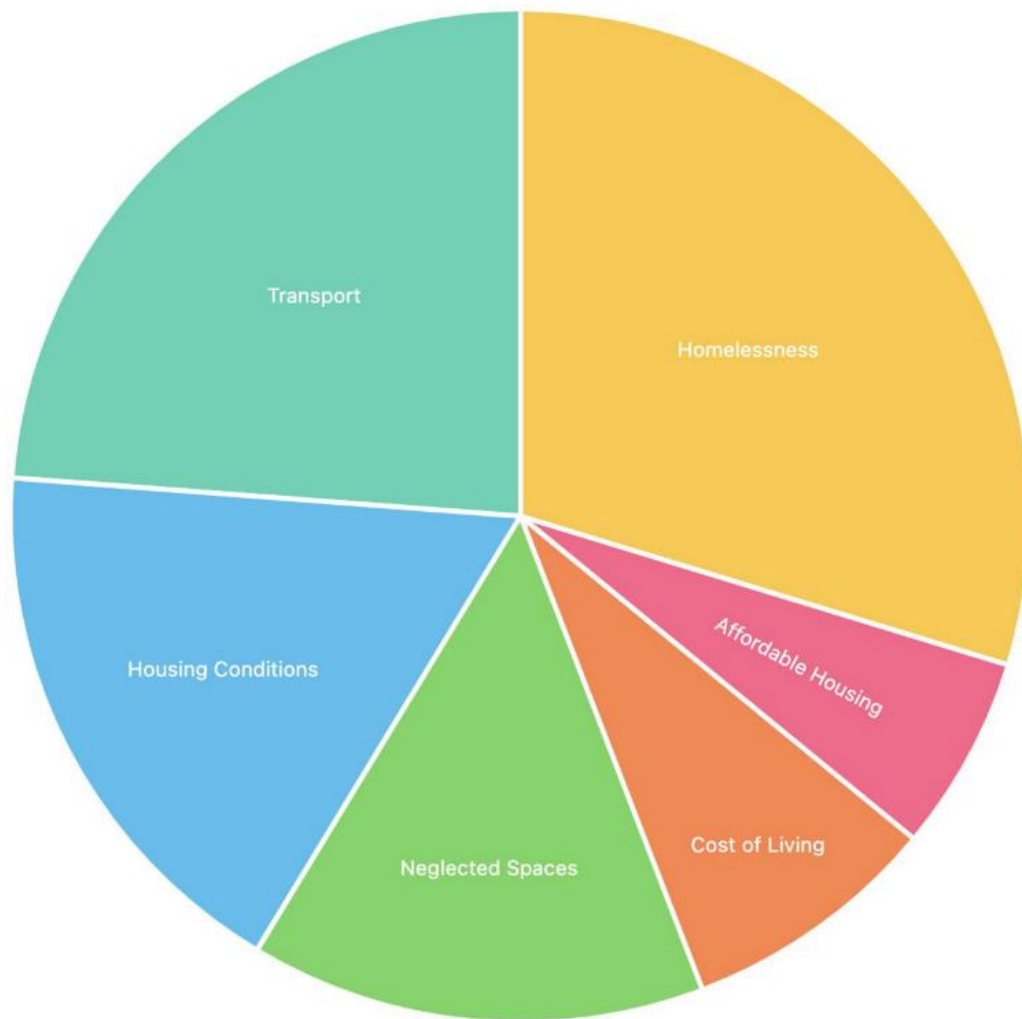
- ES10 Voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations represented the experiences and needs of disabled people, women experiencing domestic violence, refugees, people experiencing housing and financial vulnerability, young people, older people, people using food banks, and some faith groups.
- ES11 138 people engaged in face to face on the street conversations in the city centre, around Anglia Square, in Mile Cross, Earlham, and Lakenham between 15 and 23 November 2023. In the main people lived or worked in Norwich, with some commuting in from surrounding districts or counties. Characteristics of interviewees can be found from point 13 of the main report.
- ES12 Three surveys were released on Get Talking Norwich from the 1 November to 30 November. There were 690 responses to the public surveys, and the [‘Tell us about Your Norwich’ map-based survey](#).
- ES13 The chart below shows what people from the public survey said they like most about the city:



ES14 Feedback from across the engagement activities on what people like about Norwich includes:

- a. It's a good place to live and raise a family, with plenty of activities and access to the coast and green spaces.
- b. It's a good place to work, with higher wages than in surrounding areas. Lifestyle helps attract and retain talent.
- c. Universities provide the city with research and data, attract new people, and help build a youthful, skilled workforce.
- d. It's welcoming, friendly, neighbourly, and inclusive and generally feels like a safe place to be. Quirkiness and individuality give it a distinctive personality.
- e. It's compact, walkable, and beautiful with unique shopping options, historic buildings and institutions and a thriving arts and culture scene.
- f. Housing is more affordable in Norwich than London and other cities. Social housing and the role the council plays as a landlord is valued.
- g. Community and faith organisations offer spaces and support for the most vulnerable and create volunteering opportunities.
- h. It's a collaborative place, where people are good at getting things done together; the size of city helps people build relationships across sectors.

ES15 The chart below shows what people from the public survey think are the main challenges facing the city:



ES16 Feedback from across the engagement activities on areas where people want to see action include:

- a. inequalities
- b. jobs and the economy
- c. safety, inclusion, and accessibility
- d. the built environment and redevelopment
- e. housing
- f. more collaboration with communities
- g. more collaboration across the city and county

Report

Introduction

1. Subject to Cabinet endorsement on 06 March 2024, Full Council will consider the council's final recommended Corporate Plan 2024-2029 on 12 March 2024. The Corporate Plan describes the vision for Norwich City Council, the services it delivers, and what it wants to achieve. The plan sets out the main priorities for the coming five years, and it informs everything the council does and how it plans for the future.
2. An intensive programme of citywide resident and stakeholder engagement ran throughout November and December 2023. The work was conducted by Collaborate CIC with support from colleagues at Inner Circle Consulting on behalf of Norwich City Council.
3. This programme of activity was undertaken to support the development of the new Corporate Plan for the period of 2024- 2029. It sought views from the public, businesses, and organisations about the city and how the council might help to realise ambitions and mitigate challenges. By listening and learning from the feedback received and by working in partnership, the Corporate Plan will help to unlock the city's true potential and deliver against the priorities we share.
4. This report describes the methodology and the feedback received which has been synthesised with previous engagement outputs and used to shape the new Corporate Plan 2024-2029.
5. The findings have been grouped by theme and take account of what was said during the engagement activities, and other outputs as described at point 35 of this report. Appendix 6 provides a summary of the findings provided by the independent research company.

Methodology

6. The engagement programme took a relational, qualitative approach rather than a statistical, quantitative one. The people interviewed and who took part in the engagement activities were recruited based on being broadly representative of the key audiences: community groups and third sector organisations, businesses, public sector, and local government organisations. Open engagement methods, including online surveys and street-based outreach were used to gain the views of residents, and other users of the city.
7. Engagement activities included:
 - a. Stakeholder interviews
 - b. Workshops
 - c. Panel discussions
 - d. Focus groups
 - e. Street outreach
 - f. Online surveys

8. All the conversations started from an appreciative perspective, inviting participants to connect with what they value about Norwich in order to foster positive relationships and invite people to build on potential. As with all engagement activities, the researchers were reliant on people's availability, ability, and appetite to get involved.
9. The researchers encountered some 'consultation fatigue', in which people who had taken part in previous activities were keen for insights previously gathered to be used. The researchers reviewed and assimilated data from the City Vision consultations, conferences and workshops, the latest budget consultation (2024-2025), partner-led stakeholder workshops and from the community conversations programme supported by the council's Community Enabling Team and Shoebox Enterprises CIC.
10. The engagement was structured, in that pre-determined questions were asked, but exploring and capturing emergent ideas and feedback was also welcomed. Questions asked included:
 - a. What do you like most about Norwich?
 - b. What do you see as the main challenges facing the city and the people who live and work here?
 - c. What do you see as the areas of greatest opportunity for Norwich?
 - d. What changes would you most like to see in the city?
 - e. How should Norwich City Council work alongside partners to make these changes?
 - f. What are the three most important things you'd like Norwich City Council to focus on in the coming years?
11. Direct engagement was encouraged from colleagues, elected members, residents, partners, key stakeholders, and wider service users. The online survey was promoted widely throughout the time 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, internal colleague-wide promotion, and external partner-wide promotion.

Who we heard from

12. Over 900 people and organisations contributed their views through the engagement activities.
13. **In-depth conversations** comprised 26 structured interviews representing business, civil society, and the public, creative and cultural sectors. In addition, Collaborate CIC undertook three focus groups with people from voluntary and community sector organisations (VCSE), as well as creative and cultural organisations, and considered insights gathered from the council's Community Connectors and Conversation Officers.

14. VCSE organisations represented the experiences and needs of disabled people, women experiencing domestic violence, refugees, people experiencing housing and financial vulnerability, young people, older people, people using food banks, and some faith groups.
15. All participants were invited to be candid, on the basis that contributions would be anonymised and any quotes non-attributable. To facilitate this, no demographic data was captured.
16. Our **street engagement** comprised interviews with 138 people from across the city, with groups and individuals interviewed outdoors and indoors, in cafes, community spaces, and at bus stops, libraries, shops and school gates.
17. Some demographic information was recorded for the on-street engagement, but it was not possible to gain accurate demographics across the piece, noting that submission of such information was voluntary.
18. However, engagement can be generally described as with more women than men, and more older people (40+) than younger people. This included some sixth-formers, university students, parents of young children and pensioners as well as many working age adults.
19. Many of those consulted on-street had some sort of physical or mental health condition, but fewer people had an identified disability; some were experiencing insecure housing or were previously homeless.
20. Most interviewees were of White British ethnicity, but people of Polish or other Eastern European backgrounds, and those from African and Asian diaspora origins including migrants and Black British people, were also interviewed.
21. In the main, people lived or worked in Norwich, with some commuting in from surrounding districts or counties. As per above, given the limited demographic data, we have not broken-down views by identity or position.
22. There were 690 responses across three **online surveys** on [Get Talking Norwich](#): one aimed at council staff, a public survey, and an accompanying [map-based survey](#) where people were invited to add a pin to the map to show us:
 - a. *What you are doing and what you value.*
 - b. *What do you love about Norwich.*
 - c. *What ideas do you have that can make Norwich even better.*
23. **Norwich City Council staff engagement** included three focus groups with staff representing different teams and levels of seniority/tenure; three 'playback sessions' with senior managers; and an all-colleague survey, hosted on Get Talking Norwich and promoted throughout November.
24. All participants were invited to be candid, on the basis that all contributions would be anonymised and any quotes non-attributable.

25. **Insights from previous Community Conversations** were also gathered. This included data that has been collated from conversations by Community Connectors and Community Conversation Officers since 2022. The conversations came from six areas:
- Heathgate / Mousehold / Cowgate
 - Lakenham
 - Mancroft
 - Mile Cross
 - North Earlham
 - West Pottergate / Russell St.
26. Consultation with **council tenants** included a 90-minute focus group with four council tenants, all of whom are involved in tenants' associations. In addition, council tenants and some people who live in private rented accommodation were consulted during the street engagement activity described above.
27. As per above, participants were invited to be candid, on the basis that all contributions would be anonymised and any quotes non-attributable. To facilitate this, demographic information was not requested.
28. **Member and partner consultation** comprised four workshops with elected members and one with partners and cabinet. Those unable to attend in person were invited to submit responses by email. The workshops comprised individual group sessions for:
- Cabinet
 - Labour group
 - Opposition group (Greens and Liberal Democrats)
 - City vision partners and cabinet (joint)
 - The Climate and Environment Emergency Executive Panel
29. As the city's future workers, parents, and leaders, it was important to consider the views of **young people** in shaping the plan. However, consultation with a representative of Norwich's main charity supporting young people (Mancroft Advice Project, MAP) revealed that the council would need to engage with a wide number of young people in order that feedback was representative and meaningful.
30. Instead, MAP advised that young people will not have changed their priorities since the work undertaken to inform the City Vision. Thus, in response, that consultation was used as a basis for engagement, ensuring that views were captured in the plan's development.
31. It is worth noting that the consultation process revealed a strengthening consultation fatigue developing amongst young people as well as amongst other consultees. It is hoped that this may be addressed as the delivery

planning process and performance framework are developed. Within these processes lies the opportunity to engage and excite the input of all user groups by feeding back to people and actively linking the council's actions to the responses received from consultation.

32. A representative of MAP was consulted as part of the individual stakeholder interviews described above, and the priorities expressed by young people during the consultation period for the City Vision 2040 have been incorporated into the development of the plan as advised.
33. Data about the demography of respondents to the engagement activities was invited voluntarily and then anonymised. This enabled franker and more meaningful discussion. As a result, any data gathered cannot be linked to comments and so cannot be used to weight the ideas of any particular audience or group.

Additional Data

34. In synthesising their final findings, the research consultants also considered the following information and incorporated it into feedback, so helping to provide as informed a view as possible:
- Norwich 2040 City Vision
 - Corporate Plan 2022-26
 - Other council policies, plans and strategies
 - Equality Information Reports from 2016-2023; the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and the public consultation for this strategy
 - The final report of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge 2023 and the council's response to LGA recommendations
 - Data derived from the Get Talking Norwich engagement platform
 - Budget consultation 2023/24 analysis – full report
 - Norwich 2011 to 2021 census overview
 - Norwich headlines March 2023 – internal briefing paper
 - Norwich headlines August 2023 – internal briefing paper
 - Findings from City Vision 2017-18 engagement exercise
 - Data from the City Vision Youth Conference in May 2018 and the City Vision Youth Survey undertaken in the same year.
 - The final report of the Norwich Good Economy Commission
 - Norwich Reducing Inequality Target Areas – analysis of indicators October 2022 (a Norfolk Office of Data and analytics (NODA) report)

Findings

35. This section of the report provides a synthesised version of the findings from across all the engagement activities, and other engagement outputs, as set

out above. At the end of this section of the report, a table shows how what people have said has influenced and informed the content of the new plan by mapping the feedback against the priorities and aims of the new plan.

36. A summary of the findings provided by the independent researchers is appended to this report.

Environment

37. The findings show that there is clearly a need to protect the city and its environment. References to the environment are woven throughout the findings, as they cut across many of the themes identified, and therefore are not grouped in one specific section. However, the council acknowledges the importance of driving change in this area, which is reflected by the priority **A climate responsive Norwich** in the new plan. Continuing to tackle the climate emergency is vital, with the aim of becoming a net zero council by 2030 and working collectively with city partners for a net-zero Norwich by 2045.
38. Decisions made by the council will consider and mitigate the impact on the climate and biodiversity. There is a firm commitment to protect and enhance the city's outstanding parks, green and blue spaces, and our natural environment, so they are vibrant and accessible to everyone, and places where wildlife thrives.
39. The focus will be to work with our partners, including the County Council, towards a better-connected Norwich, linking communities to communities and people to opportunity. The ambition is to work together to help make Norwich an exemplar city for digital connectivity and inclusivity.

What people value about Norwich

40. Overall, people described Norwich as a good place to live and work, with many having returned to raise families. The physicality of the place is important - it's compact and walkable, nothing feels too far away. But it's also easy to access the countryside and the coast.
41. Culturally, it's perceived as welcoming and inclusive and generally it feels like a safe place to be. People are proud of Norwich's quiriness and individuality - it feels like a place with a personality that's very distinct from Norfolk as a whole.
42. Physically, the built environment has been praised – Norwich is seen as a beautiful place, with world-class heritage that people love but are also pleased by the way new buildings have been added to the mix. It's a place with plenty of green space and parks which are particularly appreciated by those with families.
43. Norwich offers lots of things to do - from a vibrant blend of independent shops and big brand stores to live music, theatre, comedy, and a great food offer.

Economically, these factors contribute to the ability of businesses to offer a lifestyle that helps attract and retain staff. For some bigger businesses the proximity to London is also a bonus as they can attract talent from further afield. The universities are seen to benefit the city, attracting students, and helping build a youthful, skilled workforce for the growing science and technology cluster.

44. Some partners describe Norwich as a collaborative place, good at getting things done together. The size of the city is again a factor, helping people build relationships across sectors. A common sense of pride also unifies people, making them want to get involved in improving things.
45. People described Norwich as a progressive place, with a high level of engagement across sectors and an appetite to work together to make the city a good place for everybody. The Stirling Prize was highlighted as an example of the level of achievement and recognition of which the city is capable.
46. Norwich City Council was praised for caring about the work it does and the people it serves. It is appreciated that the representative flags are flown at City Hall and that efforts are being made to connect with communities through the community connectors. The Living Wage campaign and Good Economy Commission are also seen as positives. It's appreciated that Norwich has managed to keep a significant stock of social housing.
47. Business partners spoke of collaborating well with the council in the past. The development of the [Norwich 2040 City Vision](#) is seen as a good example of working together across sectors and engaging widely. Building relationships in this way created a platform to produce the Town Deal, and the Business Improvement District has widespread approval.
48. Some local health partners report a very well-established close working relationship with the council having worked together on health inequalities over many years. The Interact Project is seen as a good example of effective operational integration between health, the council and VCSE partners, providing a good foundation on which to build for the future.

What people see as the challenges for Norwich

Inequalities

49. Whilst many people view Norwich as a good place to live and raise a family, with plenty of activities and access to the coast and green spaces, they also feel that there is a significant wealth gap in the city. Many people are well off and able to enjoy all that the city has to offer, but in some communities, there is entrenched poverty, with some families stuck in a generational cycle of poor educational attainment and low income, insecure work, or unemployment.
50. People said that it is not difficult for well-off people to avoid seeing the poverty, and so it's easy to ignore and for nothing to be done about it. Although it was

acknowledged that recovering from COVID and coping with the cost-of-living crisis are national challenges, there is data to show that some populations in Norwich are disproportionately affected and in need of more and better help.

51. There are increasing numbers of people in deep poverty and reliant on food banks and benefits, who feel unseen and unsupported by the authorities. Many people are living with high levels of debt, including a disproportionate number of people living with disabilities and long-term health conditions. There are long waiting lists for mental health support and in some areas, it is impossible to get dental treatment, with some people resorting to DIY fillings.
52. There is a call for the council to support people's mental health across all age groups, but particularly for young people, with a lack of confidence and mental health challenges seen to affect their employability and life chances.
53. Multiple interviewees mentioned a 'lack of aspiration' among young people, but others challenged this framing. Instead, they believe some people are less confident about how to navigate systems to find and take up opportunities, so they and their families need more help to find the right pathway.
54. People would like the council to:
 - a. Address social deprivation holistically and collaboratively, with partners and across services.
 - b. Help people increase benefits income and reduce debt through advice and guidance.
 - c. Focus on Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITA) and build on the good work already done, to reduce health inequalities and improve levels of social mobility.
 - d. Build on the award-winning social prescribing model.
 - e. Develop a much more sophisticated collective data sharing and analysis capability to guide decision-making.

Inclusion and accessibility

55. Whilst many people feel that Norwich is welcoming, friendly, neighbourly, and inclusive and generally feels like a safe place to be, some sections of the population have a different experience. Disabled people find Norwich difficult to navigate, describing many access problems on buses, and expensive parking. Disabled people find it harder to get jobs in Norwich and there is a lack of adapted housing.
56. There is a sense that Norwich is not keeping up with its changing diversity, with some black people feeling less welcome and included, experiencing racism in schools, and feeling unsafe on public transport.
57. In the outer estates, people are concerned about rising violence, anti-social behaviour, drug use and dark streets at night. People spoke of incidents of hate crime against disabled, gay, and homeless people in Norwich.

58. Poor transport options add to the inaccessibility to the city centre, with the disabled in particular needing to rely on cars to access Norwich but feeling that this isn't recognised or well supported.
59. The historic city centre doesn't lend itself well to the needs of those with disabilities, but it is believed that accommodations could be made if there was greater awareness and appetite among decision-makers, and a more active and equitable relationship between access groups and planners. People reported a general lack of disability infrastructure around the city; a lack of disabled parking; ramps into buildings; and safe crossings. Of particular concern are road layouts that put disabled people in a shared space with vehicles, and Beryl e-scooters left in places where they become hazards.
60. Digital exclusion is a significant concern, with a sense that the council is trying to cut costs by pushing its services online, without recognising that for some people (and with some issues) this will never be a viable option. A choice of online, telephone and face-to face contact is preferred. Having a dedicated inclusion team is seen as important to ensure there is clarity over responsibilities, consistent contact points and in-house expertise.
61. People would like the council to:
- a. Consider the needs of disabled people better in housing, transport, job support and access to the built environment.
 - b. Celebrate increased ethnic and racial diversity, along with LGBTQIA+ identity.
 - c. Take stronger action on race hate crime and race discrimination.

Jobs and the economy

62. Whilst many people view Norwich as a good place to work, with higher wages than in surrounding areas, it is reported to be an expensive place to live with increasing housing costs but low rates of pay. People are concerned that the economy doesn't work for everybody in the city and that employment opportunities are limited. They feel that the gig economy is increasing the number of low paid, insecure jobs, while the Living Wage Campaign has 'stalled'. There is a desire for low wage employment to be safer and more secure; for high wage employment to be more accessible for women and other underrepresented groups, and for more employment opportunities that help retain graduates.
63. People recognised the importance of the independent business sector in Norwich and want to see them supported to thrive. They want to see empty shops used for business startups, people helped to start businesses, and the city promoted to visitors and made accessible so that these businesses can do well.
64. Some people had experience of the difficulties facing businesses in recruiting skilled staff for available vacancies and want to see appropriate organisations do more to train people to fill these vacancies.

65. In general, people want a more joined up approach to helping young people develop the right skills for the high skilled, well-paid jobs of the future. This includes improvements to the careers advice offered and better links between skills development and training to opportunities in low carbon construction, hospitality, caring and retail.
66. People believe that building skills in sustainable development and low carbon construction will also support the drive to tackle the city's carbon footprint. There is a strong desire to grow a fair, low-carbon, 'good' economy in line with the image of Norwich as an independent and progressive city - but putting this into practice needs a clear strategy.
67. Norwich is seen as geographically isolated, "out on a limb", making it harder to attract investment. Some business partners believe better transport infrastructure is needed to attract big business, particularly better road and rail links to London and the Midlands. Others highlighted the lack of a high quality, high-capacity venue for conferences and concerts, and 5-star accommodation that would draw more people into the city for longer, higher value visits.
68. It was raised that there is the opportunity to recognise the value of Norwich's vibrant social enterprise sector and to promote values-aligned employment.
69. People from across the city spoke of the need to recognise, celebrate, and publicise the many strengths that Norwich has. There is frustration about being a "hidden gem" and a desire to create an ambitious, aspirational "story of Norwich" to attract inward investment and businesses to relocate, to recruit and retain new employees and make a case to central government for funding.
70. People would like the council to:
- a. Focus on developing a truly inclusive economy, including pathways to growth for all the areas within the city/local area.
 - b. Create a brand story to attract visitors and businesses with its unique blend of history, progressive action, and world class cultural offer.
 - c. To use convening power to build connections within the business community, particularly between start-ups and potential investment opportunities.
 - d. Work to attract more high-tech and science sector businesses to the city.
 - e. Prioritise connectivity and accessibility to enable commuting, leisure, tourism, and access to services. The city needs much better public transport, cycle routes and more Park and Ride.
 - f. Advocate for better rail and road connections to London and the Midlands.
 - g. Grow the creative and cultural offer, strengthening collaboration between the council and the arts and cultural sector to develop a more strategic approach.

Built environment and redevelopment

71. While many people view Norwich as compact, walkable, and beautiful with unique shopping options, historic buildings and institutions and a thriving arts and culture scene, how the city is redeveloped is a major concern, although in different ways.
72. Many reported the city centre as in decline, with shops closing, litter and more people sleeping rough; clashes between pedestrians, e-bikes and scooters and badly thought-out street furniture. Many believe empty retail space should be repurposed to address the lack of housing or for community use.
73. There's a desire for a range of new housing to be built, not just luxury homes. And there's much pride in the Stirling Prize-winning Goldsmith Street development, which many see as an approach to be followed further. There's a fear of low quality, "identikit" estates, and of high density, overly tall developments. And equally there are fears that gentrification will price people out of their neighbourhoods and remove highly valued community shops and resources.
74. Many expressed the need for more community spaces.
75. Universally, public transport comes in for heavy criticism. Buses are reported to be old, unreliable, dirty, slow, and expensive with limited operating hours, making them impossible to rely on to get to work and limiting people's access to activities on Sundays or in the evening. The unreliability of public transport is seen to be increasing car use and creating traffic congestion, leading to long delays.
76. Drivers complain about feeling pushed out of the city by parking costs and roadworks, but with no viable alternatives, especially for commuting and for leisure visits in the evening. Cycling is seen by some as a possible alternative but for many it is thought too dangerous. Responses to new cycling infrastructure are largely positive but some layouts are incoherent and disjointed, adding to feelings of lack of safety.
77. There is a real demand for improvements in public transport and sustainable transport options, including the need for another Park and Ride on the east side of Norwich. We heard this from everyone: shoppers, commuters, pensioners, disabled people (who rely on buses). People also recognise that Norwich is a walkable city and feel that more can be done to promote walking and make it easier to navigate the city.
78. We heard that people want to see Norwich's assets protected - its heritage, parks, rivers, and green spaces, whilst also being imaginative about future development and bringing new modern buildings and architecture into the mix. People want the Anglia Square redevelopment to go ahead quickly too [since the engagement took place, the developers, [Western Homes, have cancelled their plans to redevelop Anglia Square](#)].

79. There is concern that Norwich's environment is under threat, with mentions of river pollution, fly tipping, litter, and traffic pollution.

80. People would like the council to:

- a. Support active transport choices by making cycling infrastructure more coherent and safer, and improving conditions for pedestrians.
- b. Explore transport innovations - including using disused railways to support light rail/guided buses.

Housing

81. While it is understood by many people that housing is more affordable in Norwich than London and other cities, housing in particular illustrates what some called the "chasm between the haves and have-nots". The lack of suitable, affordable housing was mentioned many times. Along with limited temporary accommodation, which means some residents are sent out of the area while they wait for a homeless decision, and some families are temporarily housed alongside those with significant substance misuse problems.

82. The city centre is seen as distinct from the estates on the outskirts, with the majority of investment being in the centre and the estates suffering from an impoverished, neglected public realm - particular examples include a lack of play-space, rundown stairwells, fly tipping and overgrown verges, hedges, and communal land. The people who live on these estates feel cut off from the city centre, along with all the attractions and opportunities it has to offer. This is due in part to barriers such as public transport.

83. For many the private rented sector is problematic, with intense competition for properties, high rents and often poor-quality accommodation offered by landlords who neglect their responsibilities. Some people questioned the impact of student accommodation on housing supply for residents and of transient tenants on community cohesion.

84. Having retained a large stock of social housing is seen as a positive about the city. However, council tenants relayed a number of significant issues, particularly around allocations, empty properties, and maintenance. Core to all the issues is a sense that communication and contact with the council is too difficult. It was noted that there is a drive to digitalise contacts, but this is a significant barrier to those who are unable to get online.

85. Maintenance issues are felt to be very poorly handled, with long waits, poor quality work and lack of consideration for tenants' feelings of safety. There are seen to be many unallocated properties sitting empty for significant periods of time, which is resented, particularly by those who experienced long waiting lists for homes.

86. People would like the council to:

- a. Ensure all housing within the city is safe, liveable and energy efficient, improving living conditions and cost of living through retrofit, better maintenance, and licensing of private landlords.
- b. Build on flagship sustainable housing to link housing stock improvement, decarbonisation, and developing future skills, to drive market demand for commercial retrofitting.

More collaboration with communities

87. While many people recognise that community and faith organisations offer spaces and support for the most vulnerable and create volunteering opportunities, funding is an ongoing problem, with many struggling with rising costs for renting and running the spaces they need and difficulty recruiting volunteers. This is compounded by rising demand as these organisations are supporting increasing numbers of people, many with multiple and complex needs, including mental health issues and homelessness.
88. The sector wants better and more consistent, strategic engagement with the council and are keen to step up as partners, provided there is realism about what they can do and good commissioning processes which encourage cooperation. VCSE organisations hold large amounts of data that could help build a more rounded picture of residents' needs and want the ability to share this in support of collective decision-making.
89. Residents recognise the council is stretched and are willing to step up and do their bit. They want the council to facilitate this through grants, encouragement, access to council buildings and permission for people to solve problems and take care of their local area. The council's Community Conversations programme is seen as a good starting point to develop stronger relationships with communities and understand the opportunity for greater levels of neighbourhood working.
90. People would like the council to:
- a. Empower local communities to unlock support at the hyper-local level.
 - b. Build and develop greater community cohesion through asset-based community development.
 - c. Overcome consultation fatigue by building better long-term relationships with communities, actively seeking to better understand their needs; involving residents in decision-making processes and developing co-production approaches to service design.

More collaboration across the city and the county

91. Many people shared the view that Norwich is a collaborative place, where people are good at getting things done together. The size of the city helps people build relationships across sectors. However, despite positive experiences of collaboration in the past, some in the business community feel that the council has in recent years felt like it has turned more inward-looking.

92. The Norwich 2040 City Vision Partnership provides an established collaborative platform on which to build and shows a strong appetite among partners to work together for the benefit of all, with an opportunity for greater and more equitable involvement of the VCSE.
93. There is recognition of the challenges of having a two-tier local government system, but people see a need for much stronger alignment and collaboration with neighbouring and overlapping local authorities. Many people referred to the relationship between the city and county councils as “problematic”. For some this was seen most clearly in disjointed services, e.g. people in need of both housing and social care support can “fall through the gaps” between the two councils’ services. It is recognised that the two councils are led by different political parties, but people expressed a strong desire for this not to get in the way of working more closely together.
94. In particular there is a clear ask of the city council and county council to work to solve problems together that aren’t always within its direct power, for example, transport, education, public realm, and social care. People feel that the county council has gaps in its knowledge of Norwich and working more closely with the city council could help bridge those.
95. People suggested the city council could be working more in partnership with organisations supporting communities in the city.
96. Norwich has a very strong arts and culture offer, which is appreciated by residents, attracts visitors, and is also recognised nationally and internationally. The sector would like to see the city take a more strategic approach to support and develop the creative and cultural sectors, with a new cultural strategy aligned to the corporate plan.
97. People would like the council to:
- a. Reinvigorate the Norwich 2040 City Vision and support the partnership to make stronger collective commitments to action.
 - b. Build on the history of effective collaborative working to reconnect with business and VCSE sectors as key partners.
 - c. Use convening power to help organisations to align and do more together, supporting connection and collaboration across the whole place.
 - d. Further develop operational integration between council, health, and VCSE partners.
 - e. Grow the creative and cultural offer, strengthening collaboration between the council and the arts and cultural sector to develop a more strategic approach.
98. It is clear from the findings that there is much to protect and enhance to ensure our city remains exceptional as well as meeting the challenges head on and planning for the future.

Resident and stakeholder insights report

Executive Summary

Prepared for Norwich City Council by Collaborate CIC

January 2023

Page 71 of 110

What

- Summary of collated insights from the public, gathered through an intensive programme of citywide resident and stakeholder engagement Nov-Dec 2023.
- Conducted by Collaborate CIC with support from colleagues at Inner Circle Consulting on behalf of Norwich City Council.

Why

- Undertaken to inform the new Corporate Plan 2024- 2029.
- Designed to provide strategic insights into what people across the city want and what they expect from the city council.
- Used to shape the council's vision, performance framework, delivery plan and operations - to put 'residents and customers at the heart of everything it does'.

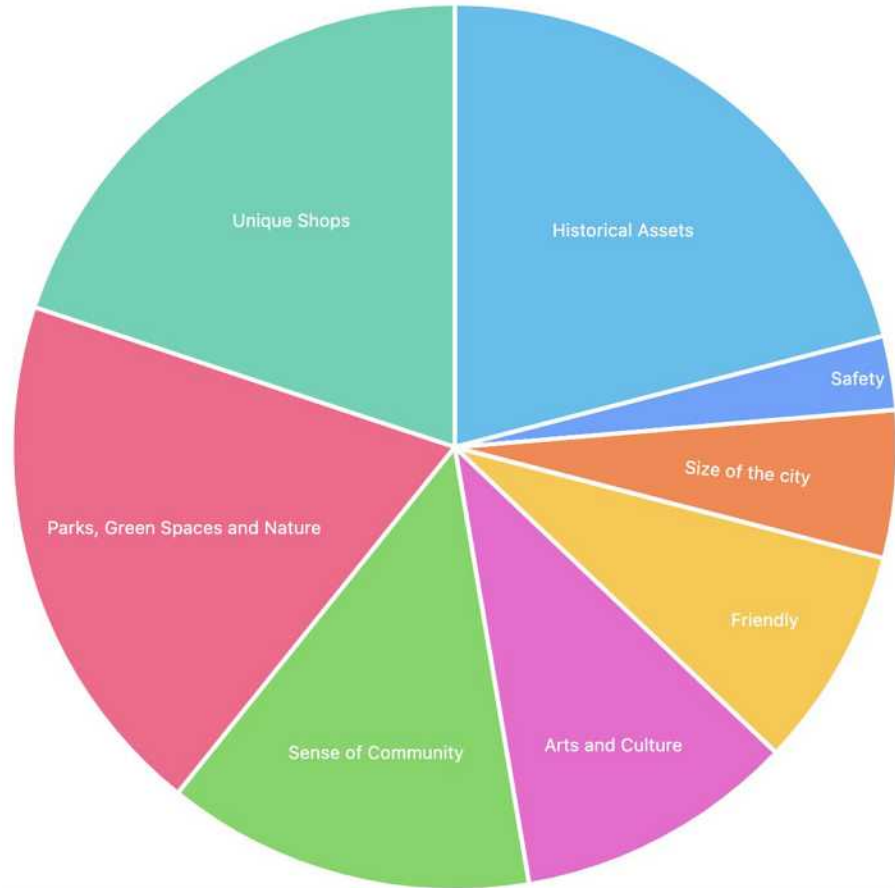
How

900+ people and organisations contributed their views through engagement activities including:

- Stakeholder interviews
- Workshops
- Panel discussion
- Focus groups
- Street outreach
- Online surveys
- Data from previous consultations, reports etc

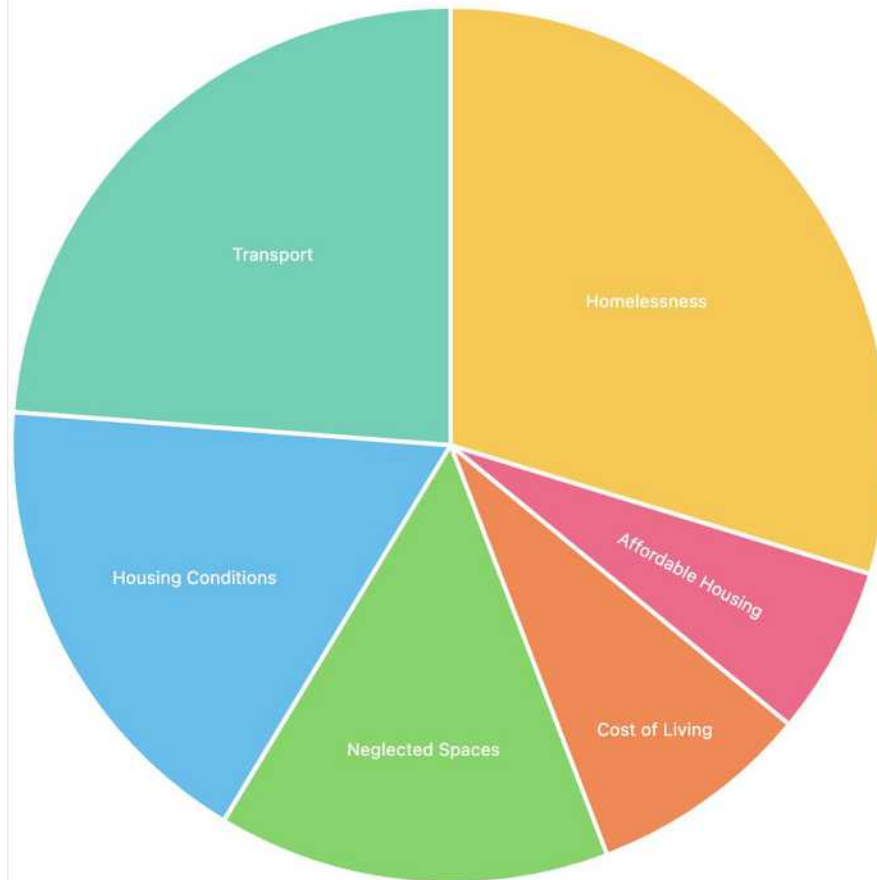
What do you like most about our city?

Responses from the public survey



What do you think the main challenges facing the city are?

Responses from the public survey



Norwich is a good place to live and raise a family, with plenty of activities and access to the coast and green spaces.

People want **action on inequalities**

- City has a mix of prosperity and entrenched poverty, with some families stuck in a generational cycle of poor education and low income, insecure work or unemployment. High housing costs and low rates of pay make it an expensive place to live; increasing numbers of people in deep poverty rely on food banks and benefits, feel unseen and unsupported; disproportionate impact of COVID and cost of living crisis on some.
- High levels of debt, disproportionately affecting those with disabilities and long-term health conditions; long waiting lists for mental health support - calls for council support for mental health for young people to reduce impact on employability and life chances; disadvantaged young people struggle to access opportunities, stigmatised as 'lacking aspiration'.
- Need holistic, collaborative approach to address social deprivation - maximise benefits income and reduce debt through advice and guidance; focus on Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs) and social mobility; build on social prescribing model etc.

Norwich is a good place to work, with higher wages than in surrounding areas. Lifestyle helps attract and retain talent. Universities provide the city with research and data, attract new people and help build a youthful, skilled workforce

People want **action on jobs and the economy**

- Concern that gig economy is increasing low paid, insecure jobs while the Living Wage Campaign has stalled; calls to make low wage employment safer and more secure, high wage employment accessible for women and other underrepresented groups.
- People want a more joined up approach to helping young people develop the right skills for the high skilled, well paid jobs of the future; and to creating employment opportunities that help retain graduates.
- Norwich seen as geographically isolated, making it hard to attract investment. Needs better transport infrastructure to attract big business. Potential for a high quality, high capacity venue for conferences and concerts, and 5 star accommodation to attract longer, higher value visits.
- Focus on attracting investment, supporting businesses, creating employment opportunities; create an ambitious, aspirational “story of Norwich” as a destination for tourism and innovation to attract investment, new businesses and talent, and funding.

Norwich is welcoming, friendly, neighbourly and inclusive and generally feels like a safe place to be. Quirkiness and individuality give it a distinctive personality.

People want **action on safety, inclusion and accessibility**

- Although for many Norwich is a safe and welcoming city, some people sense the city is not keeping up with increasing diversity, with some Black people feeling less welcome and included, experiencing racism in schools and feeling unsafe on public transport. Concerns about rising violence, anti-social behaviour, drug use and dark streets at night. We heard of incidents of hate crime against disabled, gay and homeless people in Norwich.
- Lack of accessibility infrastructure - disabled parking, ramps into buildings, safe crossings. Concern over drive for online services - for some people (and some issues) not a viable option. Prefer choice of online, telephone and face-to face contact. A dedicated inclusion team needed to ensure clarity over responsibilities, consistent contacts and in-house expertise.
- Celebrate increased ethnic and racial diversity along with LGBTQ identity; take stronger action on race hate crime and race discrimination. Better consideration of disabled people in housing, transport, job support and access to the built environment.

Norwich is compact,
walkable and
beautiful with
unique shopping
options, historic
buildings and
institutions and a
thriving arts and
culture scene.

People want **action on the built environment & redevelopment**

- City centre seen as in decline, with shops closing, litter, more rough sleepers and a fear of crime; clashes between pedestrians, e-bikes and scooters and badly thought out street furniture. Many want empty retail space to be repurposed to address the lack of housing and/or for community spaces. Concern about threats to the natural environment from pollution, flytipping, and traffic.
- Concerns about potential redevelopment plans. People want a range of new housing, not just luxury homes, but fear low quality, “identikit” estates, and also high density, overly tall developments. Also fear of gentrification pricing people out and replacing valued community shops/resources.
- Multiple, strong calls for improved transport: unreliable, expensive buses, congestion, road works, safe cycle infrastructure, walkability.
- Calls to protect heritage, parks, rivers and green spaces and to prioritise cultural leadership, equitable funding opportunities, and strategic connections with arts and cultural institutions.

Housing is more affordable in Norwich than London and other cities. Social housing and the role the council plays as a landlord is valued.

People want **action on housing**

- General lack of suitable, affordable housing and temporary accommodation. Large social housing stock viewed positively but significant concerns around allocations, empty properties and maintenance - difficulty in contacting the council; some estates suffer neglected public space e.g. lack of play-space, rundown stairwells, fly tipping and overgrown verges, hedges and communal land.
- Residents outside the centre feel cut off from attractions and opportunities on offer; poor public transport is a barrier to access.
- Private rented sector intensely competitive, high rents and often poor quality accommodation offered by neglectful landlords; disabled people at disproportionate risk of homelessness; lack of adapted housing; concerns over impact of student accommodation on housing supply, and of transient tenants on community cohesion.
- Ensure all housing within the city is safe, liveable and energy efficient, improving living conditions and cost of living through retrofit, better maintenance and licensing of private landlords.

Community and faith organisations offer spaces and support for the most vulnerable and create volunteering opportunities.

People want more collaboration with communities

- Large and thriving third sector but many struggling to find volunteers and enough resources to keep the doors open, alongside rising demand from people with multiple and complex needs, including mental health issues and homelessness; want consistent, strategic engagement with the council and ability to share data and insights to support decision-making.
- People recognise the council is stretched and are willing to step up and do their bit. They want the council to facilitate this through grants, encouragement, access to council buildings and permission for people to solve problems and take care of their local area; empower local communities, unlock support at the hyper-local level; build and develop greater community cohesion through asset based community development.
- Overcome consultation fatigue by building long term relationships with communities, actively seeking to better understand their needs, involving residents in decision-making processes, and developing co-production approach to service design.

Norwich is collaborative place, where people are good at getting things done together; the size of city helps people build relationships across sectors.

People want more collaboration across the city & county

- Despite past positive collaboration some in the business community feel that with changes in senior leadership, the Council has become more inward-looking, engagement has been more piecemeal and some goodwill has been lost. City Vision 2040 Partnership provides an established platform for collaboration on which to build, and shows a strong appetite among partners to work together for the benefit of all, with an opportunity for greater and more equitable involvement of the VCSE.
- Opportunities: further develop operational integration between Council, health, and VCSE partners; grow the creative and cultural offer, strengthening collaboration between the Council and the arts and cultural sector to develop a more strategic approach.
- Strong request for improved collaboration between City Council and County Council, especially on issues beyond direct control.
- Council should use convening power to support connection and collaboration across the whole place.

Thank you

Collaborate is an innovative social consultancy building the thinking, culture and practice of collaboration to help us meet the challenges of the twenty-first century together. For more information about this report please contact jenni@collaboratecic.com.



Committee name: Cabinet

Committee date: 06/03/2024

Report title: Funding Approval for Three Carbon Reduction Projects

Portfolio: Councillor Hampton, Cabinet member for climate change

Report from: Interim executive director of major projects

Wards: All wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

KEY DECISION

Purpose

This report advises the council on actions undertaken to deliver on the climate agenda. It keeps members appraised on the recently submitted bid to improve the energy efficiency of the Council's social housing stock. Also due to recent news of a successful solar panel bid and the identification of opportunities to obtain grant funding for an energy heat network business case, we are seeking delegated authority to progress with the development of the business case during the pre-election period.

Recommendation:

To recommend that Council delegates authority to the council's Chief Finance (s151) Officer in consultation with the portfolio holder for Resources to:

- a) Sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Department of Net Zero and Energy Security (DESNZ) to agree terms and conditions for Social Housing Decarbonisation funding up to a value of £3m;
- b) Increase the HRA Capital Programme by an amount equivalent to any DESNZ grant funding agreed plus the match funding element from the council, currently anticipated to be £2.7m;
- c) Increase the General Fund Capital Programme by £0.895m for the solar panel project on Riverside Leisure Centre and formally sign any related grant documentation for £0.520m. Note that the funding requirement from the council of £0.375m can be funded from borrowing; and
- d) Apply and sign a grant application for heat networks feasibility and business case.

To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Housing and Community Safety and the Chief Finance (s151) Officer in consultation with the portfolio holder for Climate Change to:

- e) sign subsequent delivery contracts for the energy efficiency works on the council's social housing stock;

To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Housing and Community Safety in consultation with the portfolio holder for Climate Change to:

- f) sign subsequent delivery contracts for the solar panel project at Riverside Leisure; and

To delegate authority to the Chief Finance (s151) Officer in consultation with the portfolio holder for Climate Change to:

- g) to sign subsequent procurement contracts for the energy network items detailed within the report.

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 is a sustainable and healthy city corporate priority.

Background

1. The Council has declared a climate emergency and has a clear carbon reduction commitment for its own activities and across the city. The council will also be developing detailed service plans behind the Corporate Plan policy strands that link to net zero over the coming months.
2. In the meantime, the council has been identifying opportunities where it is clear there will be a financial return at least covering cost or where the direction of travel on achieving net zero is already clear.
3. The three opportunities in this paper fit the overall corporate goal of targeting carbon reduction measures on its own activities.

Social Housing Stock Energy Efficiency Measures

4. Following the success of the council's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 1 project and as part of the council's ongoing and ambitious programme to improve the energy efficiency of its own social housing stock, a bid for £2.5m of funding was submitted to the SHDF Wave 2.2 funding round at the end of January 2024. This includes proposed match funding of £2.7m from the HRA capital programme. The total project value is therefore provisionally £5.2m which is planned to be spent over a 24-month period.
5. To enable flexibility and given the possibility that the funder may offer a sum greater than the funding bid for, the request for delegated authority has been limited to £3m.
6. The bid will deliver 672 energy efficiency measures on 261 dwellings including external wall insulation, improved ventilation, solar PV and loft insulation. The improvements are focused on the council's least energy efficient properties constructed using the 'Wimpey no-fines' post war method of building, which results in high heat loss through walls.
7. The scheme supports residents by improving comfort, making homes healthier to live in and reducing energy bills, whilst at the same time reducing greenhouse gas emissions from our social housing stock.
8. The Council will not find out whether it has been successful in winning the funding until March 2024 therefore, due to the timing of the pre-election period, to accept the funds and progress the improvements in accordance with the proposed timetable officers have sought delegated authority to accept the funds and incorporate into the capital programme.

Solar Panels on Riverside Leisure Centre

9. Officers have been proactively targeting grants that would meet its aspirations of reducing the carbon emissions attached to its own energy usage. A successful bid has been made to add solar panels at Riverside Leisure Centre.
10. It is anticipated that adding solar panels will reduce 33% in electricity usage and save 82kg CO₂ per annum.

11. The carbon emissions associated with the production and installation of solar PV systems, known as embodied carbon, are typically offset within 2 years of operation. Solar panels have a life span of 25-30 years or more and produce clean energy throughout their operational life. The emissions saved from using solar energy over this period outweighs the emissions produced during manufacturing and installation making them carbon negative.
12. The Council anticipates £53k of savings on operational (utility) costs before the capital financing costs of the scheme.
13. The full cost of the project is £895k for which the Council was successful in achieving £520k of grant, as the grant was not allowed to cover the cost of the canopy upon which the solar panels are situated. Additional council resources of £0.375m are therefore required to allow this proposal to proceed.

Heat Networks

14. It has long been identified that heat networks are a potential low carbon source of energy for Norwich. There are three specific opportunities in Norwich which will likely use large scale heat air pumps, although there are other options in the future such as waste heat from industrial processes.
15. It is important that the Council understands the financial opportunities so that it chooses the best delivery model, which maximises the benefit for the city, its residents and its taxpayers. During this process, there is the potential for the council to invest in the new infrastructure but that will be subject to future rigorous business cases.
16. There is a funding round that is anticipated to take place in June. Due to the timing of the elections (and pre-election period), to access these opportunities, the council is being asked to delegate authority to key officers to pursue these opportunities. The resultant business case will be brought back to Cabinet for future decisions.

Consultation

17. The social housing decarbonisation fund bid has been collaboratively developed across teams with relevant officers and members. Tenants of properties chosen for improvement will be consulted with as part of the project's delivery arrangements.
18. Heat networks will require extensive consultation with key stakeholders, including the county council, local residents and businesses. This would take place post award as part of the feasibility and business planning exercise.
19. Cabinet members will be consulted on the best route forward for Heat Network funding routes once more information is obtained and the business case completed.

Implications

Financial and resources

20. £2.7m of HRA resources would need to be earmarked for providing the match funding for this programme of expenditure. However, most of these energy efficiency measures are assumed to be pursued within the 30-year HRA Business Plan which includes assumptions around government funding and HRA resources to achieve EPC (C) and net zero for its housing stock. Earmarking those resources against this project is achievable within the overall business plan assumptions.
21. The solar panel bid would have a net cost to the authority of £375k but will deliver estimated savings of £53k per year, it has a payback period of 7 years. Net of capital financing costs, it will deliver approximately £25k per year of additional savings on an on-going basis. This can be added to the MTFP, reducing the size of the savings gap.
22. The funding bid for a Heat Networks business case and options appraisals is intended to cover 75% cost of an external party undertaking the work. The council will be undertaking a procurement exercise to establish the most cost-effective option to pursue. At present, early indications are that the maximum cost to the council would be £200k and that would represent bidding for not just the feasibility analysis but a full business case. At this point those resources have not been identified and this must happen before the work is commissioned.

Legal

23. Council has authority to delegate the approval of key decisions to the s151 officer and other Directors to ensure that the projects can be progressed during the pre-election period. Given the timeline of these projects it is not advisable to delay.

Statutory considerations

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Equality and diversity | These projects could assist in the equitable access to heat in the long run, affordable access to sports facilities |
| Health, social and economic impact | The Social Housing Decarbonisation Grant will improve living conditions and health outcomes and reduce energy costs for tenants. |
| Crime and disorder | N/A |
| Children and adults safeguarding | N/A |
| Environmental impact | As set out above. |

Risk management

| Risk | Consequence | Controls required |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Not targeting corporate plan outcomes and achieving net zero in line with the council deadlines.</p> <p>The council needs to manage the contracts carefully as they represent significant resources.</p> | <p>Negatively affecting the reputation of the council.</p> <p>The council has less resources to use for other activities and outcomes.</p> | <p>The risk assessment should consider:</p> <p>the most efficient way to deliver council outcomes.</p> <p>The council has adequate procurement and financial control mechanisms over its capital programme.</p> <p>The council should examine and pursue the most efficient grant arrangement for the heat networks.</p> |

Other options considered

24. The Council has considered letting commercial partners take the lead and meet all costs but this creates a risk of sub optimal outcomes for the city and residents and that the council gives away large commercial opportunities for no benefit.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

25. The recommendation is to delegate the decisions to the relevant officers (in consultation with the relevant portfolio holders) due to the upcoming pre-election period interfering and/or delaying the projects and grant funding opportunities.

Background papers: None

Appendices: None

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If you would like this agenda in an alternative format, such as a larger or smaller font, audio or Braille, or in a different language, please contact the committee officer above.



Committee Name: Cabinet

Committee Date: 06/03/2024

Report title: Assets (Non-Housing) Five Year Plan

Portfolio: Councillor Kendrick, Cabinet member for resources

Report from: Interim Executive Director of Major Projects

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

KEY DECISION

Purpose

To consider the Investment Portfolio Strategy & Implementation plan and endorse the revised asset management action plan appended to this report.

Recommendation:

To:

- (1) Endorse the revised asset management action plan appended to this report;
- (2) Endorse the governance arrangements for management of the non-housing property portfolio;
- (3) Delegate the disposal of the assets listed within the exempt appendix to the Executive Director of Development & City Services in consultation with the S151 officer and cabinet member for resources;
- (4) Agree to the use of the Commercial Property Reserve to fund condition surveys & rent reviews relating to assets listed within the exempt appendix; and
- (5) To note that there will be a report to cabinet in 12 months time to report on progress and consider additional disposals in later years of the plan.

Policy Framework

The Council has five corporate aims, 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 aim of Norwich City Council being in a good shape to serve the city. The proactive management of the Council's investment portfolio is essential to ensure that it delivers a viable and sustainable return to the council in order to help deliver front line services.

Report Details

Background

1. The council's [Strategic Asset Management Framework](#) (SAMF) was adopted in March 2022. This sets out the asset management policy, strategy and action plan for managing the non-housing property portfolio. Substantial progress has been made over the past two years in taking a more proactive approach to the management of the council's property assets.
2. Key achievements since the adoption of the SAMF have been:
 - a. services have been insourced with staff transferring in from NPSN with successful continuing service provision;
 - b. there has been a full restructure of the team managing the non-housing portfolio, leading to a more robust service structure to manage the portfolio;
 - c. the Norwich Airport Industrial Estate has been sold for £35.75m;
 - d. a full audit of compliance information and responsibilities ensuring there is a clear record and audit of compliance activities and actions across the portfolio reporting through to the compliance board;
 - e. income targets for investment properties have exceeded targets;
 - f. more proactive management of commercial property debt in line with performance standards;
 - g. improved condition and valuation data on a large number of high priority assets leading to asset reviews and decisions to dispose of a number of assets;
 - h. sale of 163 Cambridge Science Park for £12.17m;
 - i. implementation of a new IT system to hold non-housing estate management data.
3. Significant progress has been made to start to build an accurate view of our asset portfolio, however there remains a need to improve data and have an updated action plan particularly around the income earning portfolio. A business case was approved by the Future Shape Norwich (FSN) Board in summer 2023 with the aim to achieve an ongoing cycle of data gathering, decisions and action so that the portfolio is effectively challenged, proactively managed and data on our assets is kept accurate and up to date. The objectives of this piece of work were to develop a 5-year plan to inform the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), put resources in place to enable the 5 year plan to be taken forward as part of business as usual, put governance arrangements in place to allow decision making and reporting of progress against the plan.
4. In order to take this forward Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) were appointed to undertake a strategic review of the council's income earning assets and to assist in developing an implementation plan covering the next 5 years to inform and align with the MTFP. This review excludes the HRA shops. JLL's work forms the basis of a new action plan to inform estate management over the next five years.

Summary of JLL Findings

5. The property investment portfolio is characterised by its capital distribution. It can be regarded as having a large head and a long tail caused through an imbalance of capital deployed. The weighting of the portfolio is such that 80% of the capital is held in 23% (17) assets (large head), with 45% (32) assets accounting for just 5.9% (long tail) of the invested capital. The revenue generated from the portfolio is broadly aligned to the capital distribution.
6. This imbalance leads to inefficiency and poor investment performance. Management time and cost is disproportionately spent on the smaller and predominantly weaker assets. This further accentuates poor relative portfolio performance through lower capital and rental growth, the long tail forming a drag on investment returns. Smaller assets also provide a low relative contribution to overall portfolio performance.
7. The current property investment portfolio comprises 72 assets (using the smallest denominator). These assets have a book value of £87m producing an annual income of c£5.6m. The portfolio has around 170 tenants.
8. The portfolio holds a high level of liabilities for both repairs, maintenance, and future sustainability requirements. This is accentuated by a large holding of listed historical buildings accounting for 36% of the portfolio by asset number. Total repairing liabilities from the existing portfolio are estimated to be more than £35m.
9. JLL have identified a need for a more effective deployment of capital to support longer term revenue generation and growth. This can be achieved by streamlining the investment portfolio through an orderly disposal of under-performing property assets, focussed on reducing the long tail.
10. JLL have suggested that capital receipts could be used as a source of funding for future investment in either existing assets or new modern environmentally sustainable property investments, subject to them generating an appropriate return and being in line with the capital financing regulations. However, the councils general approach would be to reduce its debt or generate treasury returns with agreed property investments funded in accordance with the councils commercial strategy.
11. Through a systematic and orderly disposal and re-investment programme the council can reduce its exposure to capital liabilities through a combination of selling properties with inherent liabilities and investing in either existing buildings held as long-term holdings or modern/new investments.
12. For the residual portfolio, strategic capital investment will add longer term value and support future economic re-generation within the city. To implement this, individual asset reviews and business plans with appropriate planned maintenance programmes should be developed with a five-year time horizon to align with the Council's MTFP and over-arching objectives. Those plans will be informed by accurate condition data and environmental improvement plans.
13. JLL have identified assets which form the basis of a five-year implementation

plan for disposal and raising capital receipts. These are detailed within the exempt appendix. The program will achieve the objectives of reducing inherent repair liabilities and drive the efficient and effective deployment of capital to enhance returns and portfolio performance. By systematically reducing the weaker and under-performing assets the portfolio will be positioned to generate longer term sustainable revenue and capital growth.

Strategic Asset Management Action Plan

14. In line with the advice from JLL a revised SAMF action plan has been drafted to guide asset disposals as well as the proactive management of the remaining portfolio. This is organised into four sections as follows:
 - a. Data – commissioning of improved data on retained assets including condition surveys and energy efficiency improvement plans along with reinstatement valuations. This will allow for more detailed asset review and investment plans to be prepared for retained assets.
 - b. Repairs & Maintenance – improved condition data on assets will bring to light immediate repair requirements, these will need to be scheduled in and actioned on receipt of condition reports.
 - c. Asset Management – the action plan lists a number of actions to ensure the proactive management of assets. This includes the detailed evaluation of assets identified for disposal in this report as well as a list of assets for more detailed asset review. Further detail is within the exempt appendix.
 - d. Systems – a new asset management system has been launched in January 2024. There are a number of stages of development of this system, the detail and timescales for this are being pulled together in a new business case to guide this work.
15. The action plan sets out timescales for action and links to asset schedules which are contained in the exempt appendix.
16. The delivery of the action plan will also lead to capital investment plans for existing retained assets. It is proposed to obtain a full suite of condition data and environmental improvement plans (where these are lacking) in year 1. Such data will inform more detailed asset reviews on retained assets in order to inform capital investment plans to improve the condition and environmental performance of retained assets. This will be essential to reduce responsive repair costs going forward and will ensure the sustainability of income from assets in the medium to long term.

Governance

17. In order to monitor delivery, it is proposed to set up an Asset & Development Board. This board will:
 - a. Monitor implementation of the Asset Management Strategy & Action Plan;
 - b. Consider asset reviews
 - c. Consider asset disposal's
 - d. Monitor asset performance
 - e. Consider lease events >£500k value over 5 years
 - f. Monitor the progress of the development pipeline sites (see associated cabinet report relating to the development site pipeline)

18. In relation to any new capital expenditure on existing assets. The Asset & Development Board will make recommendations to the Capital Board who will consider inclusion within the wider capital programme to ensure affordability, borrowing capacity and rate of return. If approved by capital board the usual governance arrangements in relation to cabinet and full council will remain.
19. The board will monitor progress and undertake updates to the plan as necessary with bi-annual updates as part of financial monitoring reports to cabinet.
20. Further detail on the role of this board in relation to disposals is outlined below.

Asset Disposals

21. In order to manage the disposal of assets it is proposed to delegate the disposal of assets listed in the exempt appendix to the Executive Director of Development & City Services in consultation with the S151 officer and the cabinet member for resources. At this stage it is proposed to delegate authority for disposal of 8 assets in year 1 of the five year plan. This is in addition to 5 assets where disposals are being progressed in year 1 and for which a resolution to dispose has already been given by cabinet. Assets in the latter stages of the JLL plan will be subject to a more detailed review and subsequent report/s to cabinet seeking authority to dispose. These have been built into the asset review lists in the exempt appendix. A report on progress and to consider any additional disposals will be brought to cabinet on 12 months time.
22. Assets which once competitively marketed fail to achieve bids in line with the estimates in the exempt appendix, unless de-minimis, will be subject to further review. The figures for estimated capital value in the exempt appendix are estimates based on income yield and not formal red book valuations which take account of asset condition. Therefore, in such circumstances an external red book valuation would be sought to gain a more accurate valuation. If bids are below 90% of a red book valuation any decision to continue to dispose of the asset will be subject to a further report to cabinet.
23. Assets for which delegated authority to dispose is granted will be subject to a further review ahead of disposal with a report to the Asset & Development Board to allow a final decision. That report will consider any implications for existing tenants, the most appropriate method of disposal, which could include auction, and how best value considerations will be achieved.

Financial and Resource issues

24. Asset management decisions must be made within the context of the council's priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan and the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
25. Assets identified for disposal have the potential to raise £3.34m in capital receipts and reduce a minimum of £1.8m in capital liabilities, which would have increased borrowing requirements but at the cost of £204k rental income.

26. JLL recommend recycling of capital receipts into property. However, as a matter of course, the Council will automatically apply investment property capital receipts against debt, reducing capital financing charges in the short term (minimum revenue provision and interest payable) before making a decision on whether to re-invest.
27. At current interest rates, this could generate more than £170k in treasury returns based on 5% plus interest rates, although our treasury management advisors forecast lower interest rates going forward.
28. Whether the Council reinvests into existing properties will be made on a case-by-case basis. However, it is expected the remaining assets would have many investment options capable of realising an enhanced investment return. In the meanwhile, the council would still have that cash to generate treasury returns, protecting the revenue budget overall.
29. Upcoming rent reviews should increase rents by £660k, as detailed in the exempt appendix. The new board will monitor revenue performance.
30. External consultancy costs will be managed within the property services budget but if this does not prove to be possible the commercial property reserve is available to cover any shortfall.
31. Asset disposals will be managed in house by existing resource. Agents will typically be used for marketing and this cost along with any legal fees will be set against the capital receipt, subject to a limit of 4% in line with guidance.
32. A more detailed summary at individual asset level is provided in the exempt appendix.

Legal issues

33. By virtue of section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 the city council has the necessary statutory powers to dispose of its land. This section also states that on a disposal, the council are under a statutory obligation to obtain the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained for the land.
34. Best consideration will typically be achieved via a competitive marketing process. In cases where there is a proposed sale to a 'special purchaser' due to the ability to realise a marriage value, these will be subject to a red book valuation to ensure that there is an uplift above market value.
35. Achieving best consideration will also ensure that the council is not caught by the subsidy control regime.
36. Section 122(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 states that local authorities have a general power of appropriation for land or property which is no longer needed for the purpose its held: *'a principal council may appropriate for any purpose for which the council are authorised by this or any other enactment to acquire land by agreement any land which belongs to the council and is no longer required for the purpose for which it is held immediately before the*

appropriation' but subject to the rights of other persons in or over the land.

37. This general power is subject to the provisions of section 19(2) of the Housing Act 1985. This states that if property is being used for housing accommodation, the consent of the Secretary of State is required if the property is to be disposed of or otherwise taken out of the Housing Revenue Account. This section only applies to properties used partly or wholly for housing, including yards, gardens and outhouses.
38. This section only applies to properties used partly or wholly for housing, including yards, gardens and outhouses so land or property used solely as garages would not therefore be caught by this requirement. Accordingly, Secretary of State consent would not be required here and section 122(1) (as above) would allow the Council to dispose of the land.
39. None of the sites identified for disposal include any form of open space land and therefore section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act is not considered to apply.

Statutory Considerations

| Consideration | Details of any implications and proposed measures to address: |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Equality and Diversity | Sale of the assets will result in the transfer of the freehold interest, but this is not anticipated to have any material equality and diversity implications. |
| Health, Social and Economic Impact | There are no direct consequences flowing from these proposals. |
| Crime and Disorder | There are no direct consequences flowing from these proposals. Albeit some of the properties in question are vacant and therefore can be targets for crime and disorder. The decision to dispose should assist in bringing the assets back into use. |
| Children and Adults Safeguarding | Not applicable |
| Environmental Impact | Gaining better condition and environmental performance data on assets will allow for assets reviews and capital investment plans to be produced which will allow for enhance environmental performance of retained assets. |

Risk Management

| Risk | Consequence | Controls Required |
|---|---|---|
| Inability to dispose of the asset for the capital values identified. | Reduced capital receipts. | This will be monitored by the board and the action plan will be updated. A further asset review will be undertaken for assets which fail to sell on the open market. |
| Deterioration of market interest for this property type | We are unable to generate interest for this building and worsen our position. | This will be monitored by the asset & development board. There will need to be flexibility over the exact timing of disposals to guard against this and the board will also consider the best method of disposal to realise a sale and maximise a return. |
| Substantial liabilities are identified in retained assets via new condition data. | Increase capital costs of maintaining the asset v. revenue loss of disposal. | Retained assets will be subject to a detailed asset review to consider best outcomes and this will include consideration of the implications cumulatively across the portfolio. |

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

40. The recommendations within this report are aimed at ensuring the continued proactive management of our property assets. This builds on the substantial achievements made over the past 2 years and as set out in this report. Setting out a clear policy for assets, understanding why we own them and how they contribute to corporate objectives, having a framework for challenging assets and an action plan for service transformation is the best way of maximising the use of our property assets. The investment portfolio plays a key role in helping to fund front line services and our proactive management of the portfolio will ensure that this is sustainable into the future.

Background papers:

Appendices:

Revised SAMF Action Plan
Exempt Appendix

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| Norwich City Council Strategic Asset Management Framework Action Plan - Updated March 2024 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|---------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|-----------------|---|
| Ref. | Specific Key Actions | Comment | Baseline Data | Measurable Governance | Measurement of Success | Responsible Department | Attainable Financial / Resources | Relevant Key Drivers | Priority H/M/L | Impact H/M/L | Time-Based Delivery Timescale |
| Data | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ai | Commission condition surveys / EPC improvement reports | Gain for all assets envisaged to be retained as part of the 5 year plan. | Detailed asset schedule | Asset & Development Commissioning Board | Condition data for all assets to be retained | Property Operations Team | External consultant - £125k Budget Requirement | Understand liabilities - financial resilience | H | M | Q3 24/25 |
| Aii | Insurance Reinstatement Valuations | 5 year plan of reinstatement valuations - agreed as part of recent insurance tender | Reinstatement valuation program | Asset & Development Commissioning Board | Valuations received as per program | Property Operations Team | External consultant - circa £70k pa | Mitigate risk of underinsured premises | M | M | As per five year program |
| Repairs & Maintenance | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bi | Undertake priority repairs / capital works | Works needed for H&S reasons / preventative maintenance identified in Condition Data | Informed by Ai | Health & Safety Board | Works complete | Property Operations Team | Potential for increased repairs and maintenance costs across portfolio - proposed use of commercial property reserve for any overspend where required. | Legal compliance / H&S / preventative Maintenance | H | H | Q4 24/25 |
| Asset Management | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ci | Undertake emerging rent reviews | Undertake rent reviews | Detailed asset schedule | Asset & Development Commissioning Board | Completion of rent reviews in line with schedule | Strategic Asset Management Team | External agency support will be used where it is likely to realise a greater uplift - budget estimate £67k | Financial resilience - income generation | M | M | Detailed asset schedule |
| Cii | Detailed evaluation of disposal assets for Board decision | Undertake a detailed review of disposal assets in year for decision of Board | Detailed asset schedule | Asset & Development Commissioning Board | Asset disposal decisions in line with schedule / successful disposal | Strategic Asset Management Team | Internal by Strategic Asset Management Team | Financial resilience - capital receipts | M | M | Detailed asset schedule |
| Ciii | Asset reviews for retention assets | Undertake detailed review of assets identified for retention in the five year plan | Informed by Ai | Asset & Development Commissioning Board | Completed review and outcome in line with schedule | Strategic Asset Management Team | Internal by Strategic Asset Management Team | Financial sustainability - proactive asset management | M | M | Detailed asset schedule |
| Civ | Develop capital investment strategy for retention assets | Capital strategy for asset disposal and capital expenditure on assets 2022-2023 | Based on outcomes of Ai & Ciii | Capital Working Group / Capital Board | Capital strategy adopted by Cabinet | Property Operations Team | Property Team working with Finance | Financial resilience - Capital Strategy | M | M | Q4 24/25 |
| Cv | Base budget review including consideration of sinking funds for remaining portfolio | Based on understanding of condition liability data and capital strategy | Data from Ai & Ciii | Asset & Development Commissioning Board | Funds established | Strategic Asset Management Team | Property Team working with Finance | Financial resilience | M | M | Q4 24/25 |
| Systems | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Di | System Development & Process and Procedure Updates | Development of CIPFA Asset Manager system implemented in Jan 24 - to implement capital accounting and repairs and maintenance modules with associated procedures. | Current State Processes which have been mapped | Major Projects Directorate Board | Implementation in line with business case | Strategic Asset Management Team | Resource considered as part of business case | Financial resilience | M | M | As per business case to be signed off by Q1 24/25 |



Committee name: Cabinet

Committee date: 06/03/2024

Report title: Development Site Pipeline

Portfolio: Councillor Kendrick, Cabinet member for resources

Report from: Interim Executive Director of Major Projects

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

KEY DECISION

Purpose

To consider the development site pipeline.

Recommendation:

To:

- 1) Note the progress on the development site pipeline work;
- 2) Delegate the disposal of the assets listed within the exempt appendix to the executive director of development and city services, in consultation with the Section 151 officer and cabinet member for resources; and

To recommend to council:

- 3) The adjustment to the 2024/25 capital programme, to fund further design, feasibility and infrastructure works to the sites detailed in the exempt appendix to this report.

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 has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city' corporate priority.

This report addresses 'Review potential development sites to improve their management and develop a pipeline of potential housing development sites' priority in the Corporate Plan

This report helps to meet the strategic asset management framework and the council housing strategy, adopted policy of the Council.

Report details

Background

1. The Corporate Plan 2022-2026 identified a key action to review potential council-owned development sites, including surface car parks, to improve their management, to develop a pipeline of potential housing development opportunities, and unlock revenue opportunities.
2. This action is underpinned by the strategic asset management framework of the council, which seeks to make the most of its own land holdings and financial capability to maximise rates of housing delivery through exemplary homes that meet the needs of the people of Norwich and develop a pipeline of development sites that can be delivered over the medium to long-term.
3. On 14 December 2022 cabinet endorsed Phase 1 of development site pipeline work, carried out by Bidwells, and approved further detailed feasibility work to be undertaken. Phase 1 included a market commentary on potential uses, a review of existing information on the sites, an initial assessment of the optimum use of the site and an initial valuation of the land.
4. Significant work has now been undertaken as part of phase 2 by Bidwells in partnership with Ingleton Wood architects and has included:
 - a. Detailed feasibility work on the potential of the site.
 - b. Design work to consider type, massing and scale of development that can be achieved on the site.
 - c. Full Red Book Valuations of sites.
 - d. Prioritisation of sites to be taken forward either for development or disposal.

Summary of Bidwells' report

5. Phase 2 work has identified the priority sites. The information is commercially sensitive, so at this time the sites will remain confidential, but each site will be subject to further consideration under the delegated authority sought in this report to determine the future use or disposal.
6. Based upon the advice, some sites would be more suited to disposal to the wider market, and this could generate significant capital receipts to the council.
7. Of the 15 original pipeline sites the feasibility work has identified 4 as priority sites for disposal, 1 for wider land assembly before consideration of disposal and 2 sites for further feasibility / business case development for the council to deliver for commercial development.
8. The remaining 8 sites require further investigation and feasibility work to be undertaken before determining the preferred decision for the future.
9. The advice received from Bidwells shows a potential for delivery of between 830 and 1200 new homes across the priority sites along with approx. 70,000 sq ft of light industrial development for letting that would support economic growth as well as revenue returns.

10. Two further sites which were not in the original pipeline are also included in the exempt appendix following recent work. One we are seeking additional budget for further design and feasibility studies and one we are seeking delegated authority to dispose, subject to full business case and achieving best consideration.

Asset Disposals

11. As outlined in the Assets Five Year Plan report earlier on this agenda, to manage the disposal of assets an Asset & Development Board has been established to oversee proposals for the development pipeline.
12. The decision to dispose of land, detailed in the exempt appendix will be delegated to the executive director of development and city services, in consultation with the Section 151 officer and cabinet member for resources. The exception to this will be a site detailed in the exempt appendix which following a marketing exercise will be subject to further consideration by cabinet due to the scale of potential capital receipt.
13. Assets for which delegated authority to dispose is granted will be subject to a further review ahead of disposal with a report to the Asset & Development Board to allow a final decision. That report will also consider the most appropriate method of disposal and marketing strategy, which could include Lion Homes, and how best value considerations will be achieved.
14. Assets recommended for disposal in this report have the potential to raise c£5.54m in capital receipts and will be taken forward in the 2024/25 financial year.
15. Assets which, once competitively marketed, have bids that fail to achieve at least 90% of a red book valuation will be subject to further consideration by the Asset & Development Board for revised marketing or a further report to cabinet for a decision to proceed.
16. As detailed in the Managing Assets report, there is a need for a more effective deployment of capital to support longer term revenue generation and growth. This can be supported through an orderly disposal of property assets including those detailed in this report. Consideration would be given to not affecting land values by disposing of all the assets at one time.
17. However, generally, the Council will apply property capital receipts against debt. All future investment decisions are made on the basis as to whether the council would borrow for them. This is in line with CIPFA's best practice for holding and investing in investment properties.
18. Asset disposals will be managed in house by existing resource. Agents will typically be used for marketing, and this cost along with any legal fees will be set against the capital receipt, subject to a limit of 4% in line with guidance.

Investing in new development

19. The financing of assets and decisions to invest are separate decisions, particularly within the local government framework, where there are statutory charges (Minimum Revenue Provision) against the underlying need to borrow.

20. All decisions to invest in development of new commercial assets will be compared against investment hurdle rates, which would be slightly above 5% in today's current environment. The council will assess options for more detailed metrics, but the return required would be expected to cover repayment of principal and interest.
21. Following more detailed work some sites may be suitable for development through a range of delivery methods including those led by the council. Any development by the council will be subject to detailed business case and further cabinet and council approval for the budget, should this be the preferred option for a particular site.
22. Based upon the initial advice some sites would be more suited to disposal to the wider market, and this could generate significant capital receipts to the council. Some properties are generating an income and there should also be an underpinning strategy to understand the extent to which that revenue stream could be replaced to avoid undermining the council's revenue budget. There are also likely to be a range of capital and revenue costs associated with individual properties.
23. Assets recommended for light industrial development have the potential to generate £0.7m per annum in revenue.
24. Development of new assets for commercial purposes would generate additional business rates and any growth in residential development would also increase the council tax base for the council.
25. When sites are brought forward it is therefore important the total financial impact is understood and taken into account as part of the decision-making processes.

Consultation

26. The relevant portfolio holders have been briefed on the phase 2 work.
27. At this time no public consultation has been carried out but individual sites will become subject to consultation through the planning process should they be taken forward for development.

Implications

Financial and resources

28. The cost of the phase 2 feasibility work is funded from the approved site feasibility budget. £0.585m in additional funding is being sought as an adjustment to the approved capital programme for 2024/25 to carry out further work on sites detailed in the exempt appendix to this report.
29. To the extent that the work is feasibility, it cannot be capitalised. However, if during the process those became actual delivery plans, they could. Therefore, the request is for the funding and as to whether it is capital or revenue will be determined at a later date.

30. Depending on the disposals undertaken, capital receipts of £5.54m could be generated, if the disposal estimates were based on the lowest estimates. At current investment rates of 5%+, this could generate over £0.277m investment income over the course of a year although future returns are likely to reduce as interest rates and investment yields fall. It is worth noting that even if the cash was reinvested into investment property improvements, that impact is unlikely to be immediate and there would be a short boost to revenues.
31. Disposals would also have two other consequences: that of reducing capital liabilities and associated revenue costs and the revenue income streams attached to these council owned assets. However, those details will be considered in full as part of the proposed feasibility studies.

Legal

32. There are no legal implications arising from this work to date.
33. Following further detailed feasibility work, by virtue of section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, the city council has the necessary statutory powers to dispose of its land. This section also states that on a disposal, the council are under a statutory obligation to obtain the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained for the land.
34. Best consideration will typically be achieved via a competitive marketing process. In cases where there is a proposed sale to a 'special purchaser' due to the ability to realise a marriage value, these will be subject to a red book valuation to ensure that there is an uplift above market value.
35. Achieving best consideration will also ensure that the council is not caught by the subsidy control regime.
36. If any part of the site consists of open space land, section 123(2A) of this Act states that the council must follow certain statutory requirements to advertise the disposal of the said areas of open space land.
37. Open space is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground. If it's not held for such purposes, it can be disposed of without the need to advertise the sale. This will be considered ahead of any disposal of such land.
38. Section 122(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 states that local authorities have a general power of appropriation for land or property which is no longer needed for the purpose its held: '*a principal council may appropriate for any purpose for which the council are authorised by this or any other enactment to acquire land by agreement any land which belongs to the council and is no longer required for the purpose for which it is held immediately before the appropriation*' but subject to the rights of other persons in or over the land.
39. This general power is subject to the provisions of section 19(2) of the Housing Act 1985. This states that if property is being used for housing accommodation, the consent of the Secretary of State is required if the property is to be disposed of or otherwise taken out of the Housing Revenue Account. This section applies to properties used partly or wholly for housing, including yards,

gardens and outhouses, but garages are excluded from this.

Statutory considerations

| Consideration | Details of any implications and proposed measures to address: |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Equality and diversity | Sale of the assets will result in the transfer of the freehold interest, but this is not anticipated to have any material equality and diversity implications. |
| Health, social and economic impact | There are no direct consequences flowing from these proposals. Subject to full business case approval there would be potential economic growth from new development of light industrial or residential development. |
| Crime and disorder | There are no direct consequences flowing from these proposals. Albeit some of the properties in question are vacant and therefore can be targets for crime and disorder. The decision to dispose should assist in bringing the assets back into productive use. |
| Children and adults safeguarding | Not applicable |
| Environmental impact | Not Applicable |

Risk management

| Risk | Consequence | Controls required |
|--|--|---|
| Inability to dispose of the asset for the capital values identified. | Reduced capital receipts. | This will be monitored by the board and the action plan will be updated. A further asset review will be undertaken for assets which fail to sell on the open market. |
| Deterioration of market interest for development land | We are unable to generate interest for the land | This will be monitored by the asset & development commissioning board. There will need to be flexibility over the exact timing of disposals to guard against this and the board will also consider the best method of disposal to realise a sale and maximise a return. |
| Deterioration of market for proposed light industrial development. | We do not generate the anticipated revenue income. | This will be monitored by the asset & development commissioning board. Decision gateways will be implemented at each RIBA stage to monitor the market. If risk is realized post completion asset can be considered for disposal to recover the capital outlay. |

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

40. The recommendations within this report are aimed at ensuring the continued proactive management of our land and property assets. This builds on the substantial achievements made over the past 2 years and as set out in this report. Setting out a clear policy for assets, understanding why we own them and how they contribute to corporate objectives, including the development of new homes and the creation of jobs will enable us to maximise the use of our assets. The capital receipts and generation of revenue streams will play a key role in helping to fund front line services and our proactive management of the portfolio will ensure that this is sustainable into the future.

Background papers: Bidwells Report (exempt)

Appendices:

Exempt Appendix

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