



Council

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

Thursday, 29 September 2022

19:30

Agenda

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1 Lord Mayor's announcements	
2 Declarations of interest	
(Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting).	
3 Public questions/petitions	
To receive questions / petitions from the public which have been submitted in accordance with the council's constitution.	
4 Minutes	5 - 42
To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting on 21 June 2022.	
5 Questions to cabinet members	
(A copy of the questions and replies will be available on the council's website prior to the meeting).	
6 Constitutional amendments	43 - 62
Purpose - To consider a number of constitutional changes, including a new Councillor Code of Conduct, to create Treasury Management Committee and a change to responses to public questions.	

- 7 Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2021-2022 63 - 76**
- Purpose** - To present the Annual Report of the Audit Committee to Council.
- 8 Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee 2021-2022 77 - 96**
- Purpose** - To receive the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee 2021-22.
- 9 Motions 97 - 106**
- To consider motions which have been received in accordance with the council's constitution.



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Council

19:30 to 22:11

21 June 2022

Present: Councillor Maguire (Lord Mayor), Ackroyd, Bogelein, Brociek-Coulton, Carlo, Champion, Driver, Fulton-McAlister (E), Fulton-McAlister (M), Giles, Grahame, Harris, Haynes, Huntley, Kendrick, Kidman, Lubbock, Oliver, Osborn, Peek, Sands (M), Sands (S), Schmierer, Stonard and Waters

Apologies: Councillors Button, Catt, Davis, Everett, Galvin, Hampton, Padda, Price, Stutely, Thomas (Va), Thomas (Vi), Wright and Young

1. Lord Mayor's Announcements

The Lord Mayor said that he and the Sheriff had attended the City Service which had processed from City Hall to Norwich Cathedral showing the city's history. He thanked all of the groups that had taken part in the service. The Lord Mayor had also attended a service at the Norwich synagogue.

2. Declarations of interests

Councillor Bogelein declared a pecuniary interest in item 7(a), Motion on the cost of living crisis, and would leave the meeting for the debate and vote on this item.

3. Public questions/petitions

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

The first public question was from Ms Laura Landamore.

Ms Landamore asked the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing the following question:

"Residents have been told by the City Council to remove chairs, plants or other items from the balcony outside their front door. I've spoken to postal workers, a fire and safety officer and a police officer, and no-one saw what was on my balcony as a health and safety or access issue. Those that own their property, like me, understand that ownership stops at the front door, but we believe it's fair, reasonable and justified for the well-being of citizens, to have certain items important to us, and our well-being, on the balconies. People with mental health and anxiety find items on their balcony a comfort

and joy to them when they sit outside. Seeing as other authorities see no health, safety or access issues, don't you think it's fair, reasonable and justified of you as a City Council to allow us certain items for our well-being on the balcony?"

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing gave the following response:

"The safe management of communal areas falls under The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The order has been designed to keep residents in buildings of multiple occupancy safe. Under the order, local authorities have a duty to keep communal areas free of hazard or hindrance.

A safe limit by of what can go in communal areas was agreed with the Norfolk Fire Service and Rescue – this is one plant pot, one door mat, and one small ornament in low rise communal areas.

The presence of additional items in the communal area can present a hazard, especially in the event of an emergency, and when access is required by the emergency services.

It is also essential that we keep communal areas free of hazard to residents and visitors who may be visually impaired, or those that use a wheelchair or walking aid."

In response to Ms Landamore's supplementary question Councillor Harris said that she sympathised with flat owners and leaseholders, but balconies were not private spaces. The council had carefully considered the decision to allow each flat balcony a potted plant, one ornament and one doormat. This was similar across other local authority areas. The cabinet member encouraged residents to use local community green spaces or one of the parks across Norwich.

The second question was from Mr Liam Calvert.

Mr Calvert asked the cabinet member for resources the following question:

"When I venture outside of Norwich to places like Old Catton, Sprowston, Costessy and Thorpe St Andrew I'm always amazed by the sense of community and the quality of local facilities such as recreation grounds and halls available to all. When I ask local people they tell me it's because they have a parish council that allows them to respond to local needs and take decisions at a local level.

The vast majority of people in Norfolk are represented and well served by parish councils. Will this council commit to supporting Norwich residents in areas where there is a desire for the creation of parish councils by using its powers granted by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007?"

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources gave the following response:

“I would point that many of the local parks and services provided in Norwich are as good if not better than those in the suburbs of our city. Furthermore, many parks have been awarded prestigious Green Flags for being excellent parks. As a Mousehold Heath Conservator, I can state that the city council provides support that a parish council could not match. The council works in close cooperation with local people to manage community centres in many neighbourhoods.

Any proposal for a parish council must be bottom up, rather than top-down. 23 years ago, the council formed elected neighbour forums and the scheme eventually failed, so we should learn the lessons of the past. Developing another tier of local government at a time when this council has been cut over 40% since 2010 will simply detract from the overwhelming practical priority of delivering and extending social, environmental, and economic justice.”

Mr Calvert asked, by way of supplementary question, what was different about Norwich that meant that parish councils were not appropriate. In response Councillor Kendrick said there was a difference in the demographic between suburbs and city, that meant there would be less people standing for election to a parish council. He said that the demand for parish councils would need to come from the population of Norwich.

The third question was from Mr Joshua Worley, on behalf of the Norwich Market Traders' Association.

Mr Worley asked the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:

“The cost-of-living crisis has led people across the country to tighten their belts and think more carefully about their spending, coupled with the recovery from COVID and unprecedented threats from rival markets in the City Centre, now is a difficult time to be a small business on Norwich's historic Market. Traders need more support than ever, yet this Council has decided instead to raise our rents by 8.3%, costing some businesses on the Market hundreds more pounds a month. Additionally, Traders were given no warning about this rent increase, meaning businesses which might struggle to keep up with the rent increase had no time to consider their next steps. This has been a devastating blow to the Traders who keep alive our historic Market, integral to the fabric of our Fine City, so would this Council consider reversing the decision to increase rent by 8.3%?”

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for community wellbeing gave the following response:

“The council appreciates the financial challenges faced by traders on the market. We have supported Market traders during Covid with rent discounts. There was no RPI increase in rents 2016 – 2021. Footfall remains strong and there is strong demand from traders to take on units.

Traders were notified in March of this year that the rents were being reviewed for 2022/23 in line with RPI. This year's increase is being applied to the 11 months from May 2022 to March 2023, service charges are being held level.

We will continue to work with traders in the future to make the Market as attractive as possible for businesses and visitors. The Council is under significant financial pressure and needs to maintain and improve the services it provides to the most vulnerable in our community. I am afraid these pressures simply do not allow us to reverse the rent increase."

As a supplementary question Mr Worley asked whether the rent for commercial properties in the council's portfolio had also increased. In response, Councillor Giles said he did not have that information, but he would find out and inform Mr Worley. The council had granted market traders rent discounts during covid and there had been no RPI rent increase in the last five years. The rent increase had also been included in the budget that had been passed by the council in February 2022.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings held on 15 March 2022 and the annual meeting held on 24 May 2022.

5. Questions to Cabinet Members

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

The questions are summarised as follows:

- Question 1:** Councillor Lubbock to the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion on call centre waiting times.
- Question 2:** Councillor Ackroyd to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on St Stephen's Street scheme
- Question 3:** Councillor Mike Sands to the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods on Ukrainian refugees.
- Question 4:** Councillor Kidman to the cabinet member for resources on Voter ID
- Question 5:** Councillor Erin Fulton-McAlister to the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods on St Peter's House
- Question 6:** Councillor Brociek-Coulton to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on cashless car parks
- Question 7:** Councillor Driver to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on "Net Zero Waste" market.

- Question 8:** Councillor Peek to the cabinet member for environmental services on Kett's Hill.
- Question 9:** Councillor Huntley to the leader of the council on the social inclusion strategy
- Question 10:** Councillor Sue Sands to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on Threescore Phase 3.
- Question 11:** Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on LetNCC
- Question 12:** Councillor Galvin to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on properties on pre-payment metres
- Question 13:** Councillor Grahame to the cabinet member for environmental services on the removal of sharps
- Question 14:** Councillor Champion to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on planning enforcement.
- Question 15:** Councillor Haynes to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on the planting of edible plants.
- Question 16:** Councillor Price to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on the promotion of Play Streets.
- Question 17:** Councillor Osborn to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on the reduction of car parking spaces
- Question 18:** Councillor Catt to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on Anglia Square.
- Question 19:** Councillor Bogelein to the cabinet member for resources on the social value score for procurement.
- Question 20:** Councillor Schmierer to the leader of the council on bringing unused retail or office units into use
- Question 21:** Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on urban green space.

(A second question had been received from Councillor Osborn to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on the installation of security doors. As the time taken by questions had exceeded thirty minutes, the question was not taken at the meeting. (Norwich City Council constitution, Part 3, paragraph 35) A second question had also been received from Councillor Galvin to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on the painting of Heigham Park courts. As thirty minutes had elapsed since the start of questions to cabinet members this question was not taken at the meeting. (Norwich City Council constitution, Part 3, paragraph 35) A third

question had been received from Councillor Osborn to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on No Mow May policy. As the time taken by questions had exceeded thirty minutes, the question was not taken at the meeting. (Norwich City Council constitution, Part 3, paragraph 35)).

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

6. Appointments to outside bodies 2022-23

(An updated appendix to this report had been circulated and was made available on the council's website).

Councillor Waters moved and Councillor Harris seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, with 18 members voting in favour, one member voting against and six members abstaining from voting, to:

- 1) Make appointments to non-executive outside bodies for 2022/23 as set out in appendix A to this report
- 2) Delegate to the executive director of corporate and commercial services, in consultation with the leaders of the political groups, to make any changes to the appointments arising during the year.

7. Motions

(Notice of the following motions 7(a) to 7(c), as set out on the agenda, had been received in accordance with the council's constitution).

7(a) Motion: The cost-of-living crisis in Norwich

(Councillor Bogelein left the meeting for the debate and vote on this item having declared an interest).

The following amendment Councillor Osborn was received.

Replacing the word "**low**" with the word "**unequal**" in resolution 1a)

Removing the word "**the**" before "**economic inequalities**" in resolution 1b)

Inserting the words "**although many children in poverty do not qualify for free school meals**" after the words "**is increasing**" in resolution 1c)

Replace the word "**Secretary's**" with the word "**Secretaries**" in resolution 2a)

Inserting the word “**Council**” before “**believes**” in resolution 2a)

Inserting the words “**such as a Universal Basic Income**” after the words “**when they need it**” in resolution 2a).

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

Councillor Huntley proposed and Councillor Waters seconded the motion as amended.

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

“Norwich households are bracing themselves for the biggest drop in living standards in thirty years with a cost-of-living crisis including steep price increases in everyday and essential food items, tax hikes, low growth, falling real wages, and a failure to tackle the energy crisis. Failure of Coalition and Conservative-led governments have left Britain uniquely exposed to a global gas crisis and systemic failure to create an inclusive, sustainable economic model will leave Norwich residents further disadvantaged in the months ahead.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

1) Note that:

- a) The decade of low growth under Conservative-led governments and believes that this is holding back our local and national economy, weakening it and making it unable to deal with shocks.
- b) That the pandemic has further highlighted the significant health, wellbeing, and economic inequalities in our city and that the increase in the cost of living will impact on most residents in Norwich. Those on the lowest incomes will be hardest hit as incomes are squeezed by inflation, the £1,040 per year reduction to universal credit, the rise in National Insurance contributions for low and middle income workers, increases in council tax, the freezing of the personal income tax allowance from April, the increasing cost of household energy bills, the highest petrol prices since 2013, increased rail fares, the fastest rise in private rental prices since 2008, successive above inflation increases in childcare costs, and rising prices resulting from the supply chain disruption caused by worker and supply shortages.
- c) Eligibility for Free School Meal Vouchers in Norwich is increasing, although many children in poverty do not qualify for free school meals, indicating that poverty in the city is increasing, and council hardship funds are coming under ever increasing pressure. The National Food Strategy was a wasted opportunity to tackle this issue, but the plan lacks a clear vision and strategy on how to improve the crisis and that opportunities to set out legal ways to enforce the strategy have been missed and need to be enshrined in law.

2) to ask

- a) the Leader to write to the relevant Secretaries of State to request government support measures that would immediately cut VAT on domestic energy bills to ease the burden on households during winter – (giving a potential saving of up to £400 for many Norwich residents) – which would be paid for by a one-off windfall tax on booming oil and gas profits; Council believes that we need long-term change to keep energy bills low in the future and that a radical Green New Deal to insulate homes, improve energy efficiency and develop a long-term energy strategy to secure network resilience is vital. This must be combined with an immediate uplift in Universal Credit and its future replacement with a new compassionate social security system that is designed to support everyone when they need it, such as a Universal Basic Income, together with a Real Living Wage for all regardless of age. In particular, government should immediately increase the local housing allowance, cap rents in the private rented sector, abolish the Bedroom Tax, increase Working Tax Credits, remove differential pay rates for young people on the Government's National Minimum Wage and improve employment rights for those on zero hour contracts to better tackle the assault on living standards.
- b) Cabinet to ensure the City Council social inclusion agenda continues to respond most effectively to rising living costs, the corporate plan helps to deliver an inclusive economy to better protect Norwich's health and well-being, while making the strongest case for government to provide the additional resource so urgently required. “

(Councillor Bogelein was readmitted to the meeting).

7(b) Motion: Private Renters Deserve the Right to a Secure, Decent, and Affordable Home

The following amendment from Council Osborn was received.

Inserting the words “**and resource**” after the word “**powers**” in resolution 2d)

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

Councillor Jones proposed and Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister seconded the motion as amended.

Following debate it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

“Over 22% of Norwich people live in the private rented sector and this is increasing due to the unaffordability of homeownership and inaccessibility and lack of affordable social housing. There is little incentive for high housing standards due to the significant imbalance between high demand from potential tenants and low property availability.

Private renters face high rents, poor quality housing and insecurity, as well as the threat of eviction hanging over their heads. Action by government is vital to address this chronic emergency facing so many citizens in our city.

This council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) Note that many households in our city are facing the stark choices of food, heat, or rent as the Conservative government has increased taxes, and wages have failed to keep up with the rapid price rises. Rents in Britain are rising at their fastest rate on record and often far exceeds the local housing allowance. Private landlords can evict private tenants without giving them a reason by simply issuing a two-month notice after their fixed term tenancy ends under Section 21 no-fault evictions, with renters powerless to fight against this.

- 2) Call on government to:
 - a) Finally introduce the renters’ reforms they promised and end Section 21 no-fault evictions, protecting tenants from unfair and unnecessary evictions
 - b) Introduce new legislation to create secure, permanent tenancies in line with Scotland
 - c) Provide local councils the power to introduce rent controls to protect private tenants from unpredictable and extortionate rent increases
 - d) Give councils the powers and resource to introduce district wide licensing schemes setting out minimum standards of landlord accreditation to deter

- rogue landlords and drive-up standards in private renting without need for approval by the Secretary of State; and
- e) Provide adequate funding for local authorities to increase staffing levels in environmental health, trading standards, tenancy relations and other roles, which are needed to provide effective regulation and enforcement in the private rented sector.”

(Councillors Erin Fulton-McAlister, Matthew Fulton-McAlister and Haynes left the meeting at this point).

(As two hours had passed since the start of the meeting, the Lord Mayor asked if any of the remaining business could be taken as unopposed. The below motion was taken as opposed business).

7(c) Motion: Fairer representation

Councillor Osborn proposed and Councillor Bogelein seconded the motion.

Government proposals to make voter photo ID mandatory could prevent 2.1 million people from voting despite voter fraud being negligible. This would disproportionately disenfranchise people from minority ethnic backgrounds: (e.g.: 47% of Black people in England don't have a driving licence, compared to 24% of white people) and social-renters. Requirements for voters to have photographic identification could come into effect as soon as 2023, leaving people in Norwich disenfranchised.

People in Norwich are already denied fair representation through the First Past the Post (FPTP) electoral system. The all-out elections in 2019 demonstrated that Norwich is the third most unrepresentative council in England, as Greens needed more than twice the number of votes than Labour councillors to win a seat and Liberal Democrats needed even more.

Norwich South's Labour MP Clive Lewis recently spoke at the launch event of the campaign group Councils for PR, urging all councils to back the campaign.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) ask group leaders to write to the Minister of State at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to ask for the government not to bring into effect the requirement for Voter ID in the Elections Act, noting the disproportionate impact it is likely to have on people with protected characteristics.
- 2) ask cabinet to work with the Electoral Registration Officer to establish a plan of public engagement to ensure that electors are not excluded from voting due to lack of voter ID, including by considering how existing points of contact with residents such as housing officers can be effectively used.
- 3) ask cabinet to work with the Electoral Registration Officer to engage with partners to work towards ensuring that electors are not excluded from voting due to lack of voter ID.

- 4) ask cabinet to produce a report considering how the council could support organisations campaigning for a fairer voting system and greater representation in democracy, such as Make Votes Matter, Councils for PR, the Sortition Foundation and others.
- 5) officially register support for Councils for PR and send a representative to a Councils for PR campaign meeting.
- 6) ask group leaders to write to the Government, to the Leader of the Opposition, and Norwich's MPs stating that this council supports a system of Proportional Representation for local and national Government elections and to suggest Norwich as a possible pilot area for PR in local government.

The meeting was closed.

LORD MAYOR



**Council
21 June 2022
Questions to cabinet members**

Question 1

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

“During the last few weeks of April residents were contacting me as they were frustrated by not being able to get through to the City Council using the phone.

On calling the contact centre the message was ‘we are experiencing a high level of calls, please call back later or you can access services online’.

On enquiring what the problem was I was told it was a combination of high level of demand, backlog of housing repairs, staff training and staff shortages.

I would now like, a fuller explanation to understand the extent of the problem up to the present time, with details of how many days/hours the phonelines were unresponsive and how many calls have been lost.”

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

“Since April, the volume of calls has continued to be high because of increased contact about the £150 energy rebate, and increased repair enquiries. Current data based on calls answered show a 44% increase compared to last year. In addition, March and April are generally always busy times of the year due to Council Tax and business rates bills going out.

Since April, there have been two occasions when the telephony system has not worked due to a technical issue, but this only resulted in 65 minutes of downtime. Apart from those occasions our phones have not been unresponsive. However, at times customers have received the message to call back later when the queue limit has been reached. It is not possible to provide details of customers who have not managed to get through/lost but I can confirm that in April we answered 16,657 calls and in May it was 23,567.

To address the increased demand, we are recruiting to fill vacancies and have employed additional temporary staff to help with energy rebate calls, starting week commencing 13 June.”

(As a supplementary question Councillor Lubbock asked whether any research had been undertaken about how many customers and tenants do not have access to the

internet. As Councillor Hampton had sent her apologies a written response would be provided.)

Question 2

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

“During regular discussions with local residents in Eaton, a frequent question that comes up is about the work currently being carried out in St Stephen’s. Residents are concerned about disruption to bus journeys, difficulty accessing shops and facilities in St Stephen’s, the length of time needed to complete the works and, not least, the huge sum of money involved.

Does the cabinet member feel that the ends justify the means given the significant amount of time and money being spent?”

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

“This Transforming Cities Fund scheme will improve bus services, particularly from areas to the south like Eaton. The sawtooth kerbs will reduce delays and help people with restricted mobility who struggle to board buses that cannot park against the kerb. It will complement projects recently completed on Thorpe Road, Cromer Road and Aylsham Road and save passengers considerable time, promoting sustainable transport and improving air quality. There will also be more places to sit and an improved environment in St Stephen’s Street. This should in turn promote further investment in Norwich City Centre which is already seeing considerable levels of investment being made in its retail sector.

The construction project is being managed by the county council. I know they are working hard to minimise disruption. However, they have kept all bus services running and shops open, which necessarily lengthens the build. I echo the thanks given by Councillor Wilby, my counterpart at the county, to the public for their patience.

I am confident that the disruption will indeed be worth it in the longer term. The city cannot afford to stand still at the current time and needs to promote further investment in the city and more sustainable patterns of transport.”

(Councillor Ackroyd, asked by way of supplementary question, whether the cabinet member was confident that St Stephen’s Street would be safe for pedestrians and cyclists with buses reversing out of the bays. Councillor Stonard said that the city centre did not have the space to accommodate another large bus station that it needed, but that the planned layout of St Stephen’s Street would alleviate the queuing of buses. He added that the evidence from other places that had implemented a similar layout suggested there were no health and safety issues.)

Question 3

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

“I have warmly welcomed Ukrainian refugees into my ward, though remain appalled at the lack of support from central government in promptly processing visas and allowing easier safe routes to this country. Many residents have volunteered to host a refugee and I am aware that checks on properties and the suitability of hosts must be carried out. Can the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods’ comment on the work of this council to deliver the Homes for Ukraine scheme in practice?”

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

“Norwich City Council continues to work hard to ensure we can safely welcome Ukrainian refugees to our city, despite the difficulties created by central government processes.

The data from central government has been challenging in its quality, but by using the Norfolk Vulnerability Hub which was developed during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have been able to process information in a timely manner.

Before the guest’s arrival, Norfolk County Council undertakes a DBS check on the host and members of the household, and we at Norwich city council undertake property checks on the host location before arrival, and welfare checks on the guest, which we aim to complete within 48 hours of their arrival. We have been able to undertake these checks in a timely manner and have employed three new officers two of whom are Ukrainian speakers, to assist with this.

This is a well-established process and there are weekly partnership meetings to ensure we continue to deliver successfully. Where there are issues with the suitability of the property or the host, we work in partnership to resolve these issues. There is also a robust process in place for any breakdowns of placements which ensures that guests are relocated quickly and with consideration for any arrangements such as school placements or work.

I am pleased to say that we have processed 71 host properties and have 149 expected guests with 81 having arrived already.”

(In response to Councillor Mike Sands’ supplementary question, Councillor Jones said that the city had a proud history of helping refugees, but the Government needed to provide the right support for Local Government and those members of the public who were hosting refugees.)

Question 4

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

“Many residents in my ward expressed their thanks for the smooth running and effective management of the recent City Council elections. I am pleased that this council continues, uniquely now in Norfolk, to elect by thirds, which gives our citizens a yearly opportunity to cast their vote. This will however be the last election before Voter ID is implemented with all the concerns and significant risks this entails. Can the cabinet member for resources firstly thank those officers involved in the recent elections and comment on how we can best ensure that the hindrances of Voter ID are ameliorated?”

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources’ response:

“The council’s Electoral Registration Officer is awaiting further information around implementation and funding of all aspects of the Elections Act, including the parts related to implementation of Voter ID. This has not yet been provided by Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities however the council will be working with the Electoral Registration Officer, all members and other stakeholders, partners and the public once further details have been announced, in order to mitigate the effects of the Government regrettable legislation on Voter ID.

I would be delighted to pass on my thanks to staff for the excellent work they undertook in the running of the recent election.”

(As a supplementary question Councillor Kidman asked whether the cabinet member would impress upon the MP for Norwich North and the Government the dangers of the implementation of Voter ID and that the city council would work as hard as possible on ensuring that no elector is disenfranchised. In response Councillor Kendrick said that the council continued to oppose the legislation and the council would work with the Electoral Registration Officer and other partners to ensure that as few people as possible are disenfranchised. He added that the council was waiting for further detail on the implementation of Voter ID and the funding that would be made available.)

Question 5

Councillor Erin Fulton-McAlister to ask the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods the following question:

“I am proud to represent a ward which contains many private renters but am concerned over how many of these homes contain significant hazards. Earlier in April all of the people living in the 53 apartments in St Peter's House were forced to move out at around 10pm after the building was deemed unsafe. Can the cabinet member for Safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods' comment on the work this City Council to protect these people and pursue the landlord?”

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

“Five years after the Grenfell tragedy the case of St Peter's House was deeply shocking, with a large property in central Norwich being occupied without any power, working fire protection or alarm systems and many serious breaches of building and housing regulations. This necessitated rapid action from many Council officers to address a clearly dangerous situation and provide considerable support to those displaced.

It is disappointing that two months following the action we took to keep residents safe that the developer of the block has not taken the action necessary for us to lift the Emergency Prohibition Order and get leaseholders and tenants back into their flats.

The council's private sector housing team are continuing to work proactively with the developer and other agencies including UK Power Networks, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service and CNC Building Control to ensure the safety of the building for the residents of St Peter's House.

Meanwhile officers are still carrying out investigations into this matter and therefore it would be prejudicial to the investigation and any potential enforcement action to comment further at this time. I would be happy to provide an update at a future council meeting once the investigation has been concluded.”

(By way of supplementary question Councillor Erin Fulton-McAlister asked whether there were any similarities between the situation at St Peter's House and St Faith's Lane and the reasons these were so dangerous. In response Councillor Jones said that investigation was ongoing with regard to St Peter's House. However it was already clear that it showed a worrying trend of inadequate fire protection and alarm systems within buildings. She added that one of the biggest concerns was the lack of concern for private sector tenants by landlords, and this would continue to be raised to the Government as a concern. The development of former office accommodation into properties for habitation was a concern for this council.)

Question 6

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

“I was pleased to see that the City Council car parks now have a cashless option together with the opportunity to pay with coins. Can the cabinet member inclusive and sustainable growth comment on the benefits to the council through offering this additional option to users?”

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

“The arrival of cashless payments in our car parks is long overdue and I am delighted that we have now achieved it. In a time where the demand for physical cash has declined, it is important that other payment options are available to our customers. This gives our customers increased flexibility on how they chose to pay and makes our car parks much more attractive to use. Paying is made much simpler for customers and will generate additional income to support council initiatives, at the same time as reducing our running costs.”

(In response to Councillor Brociek-Coulton’s supplementary question Councillor Stonard said that an increase in income from the cashless car parks would be likely. This was partially driven by the fact that the council had a number of contracts related to the collection of cash from car parks that would be reduced and therefore would help the financial position of the council. He highlighted that the income generated would be used on council services such as the council tax reduction scheme.)

Question 7

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

“Like most people in the city, I am proud of our historic and important Norwich Market and try to support it whenever possible. In recent years it has continued to grow, prosper, and provide a range of products and services which are appreciated. I was particularly pleased that it has recently become the first ‘Net zero waste’ market in the country and how this will help the environment. Can the cabinet member for community wellbeing discuss how this implemented and the benefits delivered environmentally?”

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

“The council has been working in partnership with Market Traders and the BID to reduce the environmental impact of the Market by minimising the waste that is produced there.

This work has identified that the vast majority of the materials and by-products found on the Market can be re-used or recycled. These include packaging (predominantly cardboard, paper, plastic and pallets), cooking oil, coffee grinds and other types of food waste. The project has also looked at minimising the use of single use plastics such as cutlery and coffee cups.

New waste and recycling storage and collection methods are aimed at improving the quality of material that is sent for recycling and minimising the amount of processing required to produce new items from this material.

We are confident that they will deliver that this work will provide significant financial and environmental benefits for the Market.”

(Councillor Driver confirmed that he had no supplementary question.)

Question 8

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

“Homelessness and rough sleeping have risen rapidly in recent years as access to social security, housing and support has been steadily diminished. It is likely to increase further as the cost-of-living crisis grows and we risk entering yet another recession. I was therefore pleased to see that work to build seven one-bed homes on Kett’s Hill for people who have experienced rough sleeping is well underway and should be completed later this year. Can the cabinet member for environmental services comment on progress and the importance of our city providing such specialist accommodation?”

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

“This work forms part of our Norwich tackling rough sleeping strategy to provide people with homes and support to help rebuild their lives. The funding for these homes comes from a successful bid with Broadland Housing Association to the Government’s Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme in 2021-22.

We have worked successfully with Broadland Housing Association to secure capital and revenue funding for a similar project at Lakenfields, which saw six one-bed modular flats delivered and ten homes purchased on the open market at the end of last year.

Our ambition is to build and secure more homes like these to help break the cycle of homeless for people who have faced multiple disadvantages during their lives. We have therefore, submitted a further bid this year for additional rough sleeper accommodation funding for a seven one-bed house development with Broadland Housing Association and an eleven one-bed flat development with Flagship Housing Association.”

(As a supplementary question Councillor Peek asked whether the council would continue to support partners to ensure accommodation is built. Councillor Oliver said that she had visited the Kett’s Hill site had been impressed by the work that was being undertaken to build this accommodation. She said that she was looking forward to this being completed as it included plans for a small communal garden.)

Question 9

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

“A recent article in the Evening News earlier this month highlighted that foodbank use in the NR3 area had rocketed in recent months and that the Phoenix Hub in Mile Cross, which is one of our city’s poorest, is supporting ever more families across the community. Given the lack of action by central government to respond to the cost-of-living crisis can the Leader explain again how the social inclusion strategy of this City Council can provide a measure of assistance during these difficult times?”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“The city council recognises the pressure that the cost of living crisis is placing on people in Norwich, particularly those on lower incomes. We have a well-established approach to supporting financial inclusion, including our Council Tax Reduction Scheme, funding charities to advise on financial issues and help people facing homelessness, supporting the city’s new social supermarkets and helping with energy costs. Longer-term, we are making Norwich a Living Wage City, so people earn a good wage.

However, the cost of living crisis requires an additional urgent response. We are exploring what more we can do to, ensuring everyone is able to claim the benefits, discounts and support they are entitled to and helping charities meet the increased levels of demand. We are also getting every penny that we can from central government, to pass to people in need.

Many of the issues underlying this crisis can only be tackled nationally. However, this council is committed to making Norwich a Fair City and we will continue to do everything in our power to help those struggling the most.”

(By way of a supplementary question Councillor Huntley asked whether there was an explanation for the increased levels of poverty. In response Councillor Waters said that current cost of living crisis was not only due to the pandemic and the war in Ukraine but was also driven by over 10 years of austerity. He added that the cuts to benefits also impacted residents who were in work.)

Question 10

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

“I am proud to represent Bowthorpe Ward which has seen some amazing new Passivhaus council housing and other properties built in recent years thanks to the investment of this council. Approval for Threescore Phase 3 has recently been given which will ensure the majority of the 76 properties will be used as council owned social housing, with some to be sold on the open market. They will be built using a fabric first approach to provide eco-efficient homes. Can the cabinet member for social housing comment on how work will soon proceed and when these new homes should be completed?”

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

“Following approval by cabinet in January contracts for the construction of Three Score Phase 3 have now been let and the groundworks started in April.

Over the summer you should be able to witness the frames for the first of the new council homes being erected on site. I am very much looking forward to handing over the keys to these new homes to council tenants in March 2023.

My understanding is that our wholly owned housebuilder Norwich Regeneration Limited will commence marketing of the 24 excellent quality new homes for private sale in autumn this year. The entire development should be complete by September 2024.”

(In response Councillor Sue Sands’ supplementary question Councillor Harris said the delivery team were aiming to strategically move towards being recognised as an intelligent, responsible and sustainable developer during the year. This would involve identifying best in class practices and therefore they have worked closely with contractors to register with the Considerate Constructors Scheme. The scheme was designed to raise standards in the construction industry through a number of ways. The delivery team were working hard with the contractors to ensure that the Three Score Build would aim to be recognised as the highest level status under this scheme.)

Question 11

Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing the following question:

“I have long supported the excellent LetNCC scheme which successfully works with landlords to provide affordable accommodation for people who may not be eligible for social housing. A few years ago, the 1000th tenancy achieved through the scheme was celebrated. Can the cabinet member comment on this with regards to the national Afghan Locally Employed Staff Relocation scheme?”

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

“The funding from Norfolk County Council for Private Sector Leasing (PSL) to participate in the Syrian Refugee Program (SRP) commenced in November 2016 with the first families arriving in February 2017.

Since then, under the original SRP scheme, we have met our commitment to accommodate 150 people.

Since the scheme was widened to become the UK Resettlement scheme (UKRS) we have accommodated a further 25 people. We are now recruiting for an additional Private Sector Leasing Officer, funded by Norfolk County Council, so we can meet our commitment to accommodate 90 refugees per year for the next 3 years at least, with an equal 45/45 split across the schemes.

In addition, we have accommodated 52 people since the emergency situation in Afghanistan in August 2021. Most recent figures show that 36 of these are civilians (under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme).

Moving forward we have been asked to offer 5 properties of at least 2 bedrooms by July 2022 for the next cohort of families seeking refuge under UKRS. Once we have secured these, we will then look to bank the next properties for October/November.

We are trying to secure new properties to the scheme to do this, so we do not impact the waiting list of people being assessed by Housing Options as in housing need.

Total number of refugees accommodated via PSL since 2017 is 227.”

(As a supplementary question Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister asked whether the cabinet member to explain the detail of the benefits of LetNCC. In response Councillor Harris said that the scheme was a private sector leasing scheme, the benefits of which were on the council’s website. She said that a variety of properties were needed for this scheme, so she encouraged anyone to have a look at the website and use the contact details provided. There was also a case study available on the website from a landlord where they discuss the benefits they had experienced using the scheme.)

Question 12

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

“I am concerned that the council does not hold any information on how many of its homes have prepayment gas or electric meters, which require people to pay for electricity before they use it. In contrast to billed customers, who are given warnings before being cut off, those with meters lose their energy supply when their money runs out (after a small emergency credit). Even worse, they still have to pay standing charges which carry on racking up, from 5p-80p a day. This means customers can build up debts even when not getting any energy. What is the council doing to find out who is in this position to assist them in the current energy price crisis, which is set to get worse?”

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

“Our tenants make their own arrangements for energy supplier. In some circumstances tenants may choose a pre-payment meter or may be required to have a pre-payment meter by their supplier. As household circumstances may change, we do not hold this information.

If a tenant is experiencing financial difficulty then they can self-refer to our money and budgeting advice service via our website or speak with our staff who can refer on their behalf: [Housing, budgeting and money advice](#).

We also have an affordable warmth officer who can assist residents with their energy bills, and those who may be experiencing fuel poverty, through emergency interventions and longer term support, including support to reduce long term fuel debt. We also provide advice on the most appropriate tariffs for residents.”

(As Councillor Galvin had sent her apologies there was no supplementary question.)

Question 13

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

“Residents whose gardens are endangered by the contaminated sharps of others have to choose between removing the danger themselves, leaving it there or paying for someone else to remove it. I understand that NCSL are looking into quoting for a future service. I would like to know when this will happen, the likely price-range and who should bear the cost. Would we consider providing sharps boxes, gloves and training to residents where there’s a recurrent problem?”

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

“Norwich City Services Limited respond to reports of discarded needles in open spaces, and where they carry out garden and void clearances on behalf of Housing Services.

NCSL would provide this service for a fee, where requested by owner occupiers or tenants in privately rented property, and that the fee would depend on the number and location of the sharps. There are no plans to provide a universal service at this time.

With regards to the provision of sharps boxes, gloves and training to residents, the Council would not consider providing these and would recommend that residents contact NCSL to have discarded sharps removed.”

(In response to Councillor Grahame’s question Councillor Oliver said that if there was a specific issue that Councillor Grahame should contact her to understand the situation. She said that if private gardens were being trespassed into and needles being left there, then these instances should be reported to the police.)

Question 14

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

“I am aware that planning conditions are not always met by developers after being agreed at a planning committee meeting. This includes hedgehog gaps in fences. What are planning officers doing to ensure that such conditions are met?”

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

“Our approach to conditions is the same regardless of the issue that they cover. If a detail is secured by a condition, it is considered necessary to make the development acceptable. If we become aware that a condition has not been complied with then we will first of all seek to resolve the situation by talking to the developer. In the rare event that we are not able to find a solution by negotiation, then we can serve a formal breach of condition notice that would require compliance with the condition. Ultimately, we would need to pursue any failure to comply with a notice through the courts”

(By way of a supplementary question Councillor Champion asked that given the historic delays of enforcement action whether the council would commit to an increase in capacity to deal with the backlog of enforcement actions. Councillor Stonard said that there was not a need to increase capacity for this.)

Question 15

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

“Urban fruit trees could be considered as nature’s food banks, and a sensible use of urban green spaces of any size and designation, given the current economic climate, obesity epidemic and supply chain troubles. Can we agree in principle to seek opportunities for edible planting and to use opportunities as they arise, for example, by planting edible varieties of, say, cherry trees, rather than inedible ones, and to actively seek such opportunities?”

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

“The creation of orchards for production of fruit through community-lead projects could have many benefits for local communities. We would be keen to hear from tenants and residents’ associations with such proposals.

Residents are also encouraged to grow fruit and vegetables in private gardens and/or our allotments which can be rented at an affordable rate.

Increasing the growth of fruit and vegetables would support the development of a Nature Recovery Network for Norwich, as outlined in our ambitious draft Biodiversity Strategy, through enhancing nature corridors.

There are challenges for the City Council in growing fruit trees itself on public land, due to their significant maintenance requirements, in the context of the significant financial pressures on the General Fund revenue budget”

(Councillor Haynes asked, as a supplementary question, what the response was to residents who had spoken to the council about growing fruit trees on public land. In response, Councillor Giles asked Councillor Haynes to send correspondence on to him so that he could look into this.)

Question 16

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

“The local Norwich Play Streets group is working hard to promote the idea of play streets for their social and health value. Although the highways function is the responsibility of the county council, I know the city council has supported the concept in the past, including by lending play street equipment. Key to success is publicity. Please let me know what specific promotion through council communications channels is planned, including social media and publications, signposting interested residents, covering play streets and their positive aspects, and working with the Car Free Norwich group?”

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

“As Councillor Price will be aware, with the recent transfer of responsibilities for Highways functions back to Norfolk County Council, responsibility for the Play Streets scheme now sits at County Hall. We at the City Council have been very supportive of the initiative; for example by offering road closure kits to residents and community groups through the excellent relations we have. We are very happy to continue to support the scheme and share promotional and communication material about it in line with County Council communication plans.”

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

Question 17

Councillor Osborn to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth's the following question:

“The city council’s response to the Local Transport Plan consultation in December 2020 stated that the council’s vision would aim to: Raise long-stay parking charges in public car parks, designed to incentivise use of park & ride; maintain overall revenue levels by offsetting fewer car park users with the higher amount paid by each; facilitate redevelopment of redundant car parking space and intensify the turnover of the spaces that remain. The Corporate Plan approved in February 2022 committed to a Review of potential development sites, including surface car parks, to improve their management and develop a pipeline of potential housing development sites. Could we please have an update on work done to reduce the amount of car parking space in the city?”

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

“The development strategy team is actively progressing work to identify a housing pipeline to provide sites suitable for direct development or through our housebuilder NRL. This should be concluded later in the year and will have been informed by high level feasibility of sites including some surface car parks”

(In response to Councillor Osborn’s supplementary question Councillor Stonard said that the council was looking to identify surface car parks which are redundant to seek how these could be better utilised, for example for housing.)

Question 18

Councillor Catt to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth's the following question:

“Given the housing and cost of living crises we are seeing in Norwich, will the Anglia Square development be subject to the Community Infrastructure Levy and subject to providing the quota of affordable housing as stipulated by Joint Core Strategy policy 4 for housing delivery in the affordable housing Supplementary Planning Document?”

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

“The council always seeks to maximise the amount of affordable housing provided on any redevelopment site that triggers the requirement for it. Anglia Square is no exception. However, our planning policies have always allowed for the viability of a development to be taken into account when calculating how many affordable units a site should provide. A viability appraisal of the scheme submitted for Anglia Square is being prepared and will need to be taken into account in determining the planning application in due course.

As far as CIL is concerned, the council has adopted a policy on exceptional circumstances relief for sites that would deliver wider regeneration benefits. It will be down to the applicant to make an application for such relief should they consider it necessary. Such an application can only be made if planning permission for the development is granted”

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

Question 19

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

“The council is aiming to review its procurement social value guidance this year. Central government procurement policies require a minimum of 10% scoring on social value in the assessment of contract bids, based on consistent criteria. The benefits of an explicit score have been clearly argued, as it:

- gives a much clearer signal to contractors that social value related improvements must be considered for any contract, leading to longer-term changes in contractors’ approaches to social value
- enables the inclusion of explicit social value KPIs and therefore a much higher leverage in contract management of social value contributions
- gives the public and councillors a clear signal and confidence that contracts adequately consider social value.

Local government should follow the lead of Government and adopt this more stringent social value consideration. Will the cabinet member advocate for an explicit social value score for Norwich City Council Procurement?”

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources’ response:

“Our procurement strategy makes clear our commitment to investing in social value within our contract and commissioning work whilst balancing the need to ensure we secure good value for money for the people of Norwich. There are excellent examples in the work we do to secure social value in our commissioning. By way of example, the recent tennis court operator contract, which received a great deal of attention at the scrutiny committee, included a 25% weighting for how the contractor will engage with the community and reduce inequality. However, it’s not just the work we directly undertake, but the influence we can have on others; we work with providers of framework contracts, such as our partner Eastern Procurement Limited, to encourage them to promote social value in the setting up of framework contracts and in this regard recently secured the creation of eight apprenticeships in the building materials contract we procured on behalf of Norwich City Services Limited. You may recall that as a Cabinet, when we reviewed our strategy, we specifically considered whether to have a target and elected not to, recognising that it’s fundamentally about how we build social value into what we buy and the guidance we provide to staff.

Whilst you advocate that the government is taking the lead, unfortunately historically central government have placed barriers in the way of local authorities for securing better social value outcomes, most notably the local government act 1988 which bans us from taking non-commercial considerations into account when procuring, except to the extent that it is necessary to secure compliance with the social value act. We can all hope that the forthcoming procurement act removes some of these barriers.”

((By way of supplementary question Councillor Bogelein asked whether the council would commit to using the Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 06/20 and PPN 06/21 as part of the procurement strategy review. Councillor Kendrick said that the council had recently reviewed the procurement strategy. As the question was of a technical nature, he said that he would need to seek advice from officers before replying in detail.)

Question 20

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

“The city centre has recently seen a string of closures of shops, with the national decline in high streets hitting Norwich as we emerge from the pandemic. Other councils, such as Camden, have introduced policies and initiatives to revive high streets. There are also schemes where councils have partnered with businesses to open “meanwhile spaces” for start-up businesses which see premises leased out rent free or for peppercorn rents to promote small businesses, innovation and entrepreneurship. This anticipates the potential legislation that will give councils powers to force landlords to let out empty retail units. Will this council introduce a policy for bringing vacant retail or office units in the city centre into use, potentially as meanwhile spaces for temporary use by start-ups, artists, charities or other less established businesses?”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“The council’s policies aim to maintain a prosperous and vibrant city centre. Whilst there are empty units in the city centre, the monitoring work that we’ve carried out reveals that Norwich continues to hold its own in relation to other centres as can be seen by the number of people coming into the centre. We continue to work with property owners and other partners such as the BID to promote the centre and we have seen places like Castle Quarter responding to changing patterns of town centre use by moving towards a more leisure-based offer. We see similar patterns on a smaller scale in other locations, such as Magdalen Street, which has continued to thrive despite a very challenging few years.

If the proposed Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill does indeed contains useful powers to allow the councils to take control of buildings for the benefit of their communities, transforming boarded up shops or derelict buildings into thriving businesses, shared community spaces or housing we will of course consider their use very carefully.”

(As a supplementary question Councillor Schmierer asked whether the council would commit to making sure that the retail offer is as dynamic as possible especially with regard to council owned property and offering these to small businesses. In response Councillor Waters said that the council was working closely with partners such as the Norwich Business Improvement District and the Towns Deal Board to draw people into the city. He said that the independent and small businesses of Norwich had grown in recent years.)

Question 21

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

“Over the last thirty years, Norwich’s urban footprint has expanded dramatically, engulfing a large amount of countryside and parts of the city’s patchwork of green spaces. Examples include: the loss of parts of school playing fields for all-weather sports pitches and gardens to house extensions and parking. The drive to development is taking a terrible toll with a loss of space for nature, more light pollution and more hard surfaces that increase the risk of flooding and make the city a hotter place. A reduction in greenspace and greenery also impacts on people’s physical and mental health. Natural England’s call for ‘nutrient neutrality’ in planning new overnight accommodation is just one manifestation of the failure to protect our natural environment. Will the portfolio holder explain what the Council will do to increase urban green space and greenery in heavily built-up areas such as the city centre and Norwich more generally?”

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

“The local plan contains policies to protect open space, promote sustainable drainage and protection and provision of trees within development. The council also undertakes regular monitoring of the loss of designated open space. Planning applications are assessed against these policies and continue to seek enhancements to the natural environment as appropriate. The council has long been involved in efforts to protect and enhance the environment such as through past green infrastructure and tree planting strategies.

Various workstreams are ongoing aiming to improve the quantity and quality of the city’s natural environment. These include the production of a new Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy, implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain ahead of the requirement of the Environment Act (to include a citywide biodiversity baseline study), natural environment policies within the GNLP, and projects facilitated through the River Wensum Strategy.

Prior to notification from Natural England that nutrient neutrality affects our area, the city council has had water efficiency policies which are the most demanding the Government has allowed to be set and aim to reduce the impact of housing development on protected sites by reducing flows through Whitlingham Water Recycling Centre.”

(In response to Councillor Carlo’s supplementary question Councillor Giles said that information on the changes in land use, and the way this had changed, would feed into the biodiversity action plan that would follow from the biodiversity strategy.

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

Question 22

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

“Over the last three years, I have repeatedly been promised a priority plan for installing security doors, but also told that we could not tell any residents about it. Despite this, residents in blocks such as Ebenezer Place and Leopard Court received letters from the council telling them that they were prioritised for security doors. Furthermore, under the current contract, I have personally seen elderly and disabled residents who are unable to open the doors because they are too heavy. These doors cost around £16,000 each, costing the HRA account millions and leaseholders as much as £4,000, when cheaper systems were available. It is now June 2022, and we still have not seen a confirmed plan for prioritisation and the details of the programme specification are still unclear. Please can the Cabinet Member provide an answer for residents who want to know what is happening with their doors?”

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

“Procurement of the door entry is progressing with a start date of December 2022 targeted. This start date is later than was originally anticipated and as the procurement process has taken longer than expected.

We are looking at the possibility of accelerating the programme through Q4 to enable us to meet the overall original programme targets.

Consultation on the type of door and configuration is planned for from September onwards to ensure that the doors fitted are “fit for purpose” and meet the requirements of the residents living within the receiving properties.

Once a contractor has been successfully appointed a detailed programme of works will be agreed and shared with residents and affected Councillors.”

Question 23

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

“Heigham Park tennis courts, although still closed, were furnished with nets and white line markings several months ago, on a surface that was apparently not finished as it was black rather than green. After multiple enquiries, officers informed me that the surface is due to be recoloured green (as per the planning permission). Can you explain why nets and lines went up before the finished surface was down?”

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

“The redevelopment work at Heigham Park will further extend the highly successful Norwich Parks Tennis Scheme by providing high quality, accessible, affordable sports facilities that will be available 52 weeks of the year. The project is nearing completion, and the lining and nets that were provided in March were in the anticipation that the courts could be used before the final surface coating was applied. Unfortunately, some minor planning conditions had not been fulfilled at the time, which prevented use of the courts. These have now been addressed, and we are looking forward to the courts opening in July.

As set out in the draft Greater Norwich Playing Pitches Strategy, Norwich has been identified by the Lawn Tennis Association as having the highest number of people in the country wanting to play tennis, and these excellent new facilities will seek to meet this demand.

This Labour-led city council will always prioritise affordable sports facilities, and the health and wellbeing benefits that they bring”

Question 24

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

“I was delighted to learn that the council has agreed to implement a No Mow May policy. However, there have been numerous instances where grass and plants were mowed during May, including off St Leonards Road and at Bull Close. Please can the Cabinet Member explain what steps will be taken to ensure that the policy is maintained and implemented?”

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

“No formal policy had been agreed by the Council to support “No Mow May”, although grass cutting has been reduced during May and June due to the lack of rainfall in the city. We are looking to ensure that the NCSL grass cutting programme is aligned with aligned with our emerging Biodiversity Strategy.”



Committee Name: Council
Committee Date: 29/09/2022
Report Title: Constitutional Amendments

Portfolio: Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources

Report from: Head of legal and procurement

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

This report seeks to propose a number of constitutional changes, including a new Councillor Code of Conduct, to create a Treasury Management Committee and a change to responses to public questions

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Council resolves to:

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

Policy Framework

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

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

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

Report Details

1. This report seeks the support of Council towards a number of constitutional amendments, as follows:

Councillor Code of Conduct

2. Last year, the Standards Committee reviewed whether to make amendments to our Councillor Code of Conduct, and in particular whether to move towards the Local Government Association (LGA) model code of conduct for Councils.
3. At the time, the Standards Committee recommended to make some changes to the Code of Conduct to align with good practice; however considered that prior to making a final decision, they wished to consider:
 - a. The government's response to a review undertaken by the Committee for Standards in Public Life on local government standards
 - b. Feedback from community groups about the Code of Conduct and Councillor standards
4. The Committee for Standards in Public Life had called for a wide range of changes to the national regime for monitoring councillor standards, including re-introduction of the ability of authorities to suspend councillors. The government responded earlier this year to suggest whilst many of the proposals in the Committee's report had merit, they would not be making changes to the regime at this stage.
5. Feedback was sought using the Council's network of community groups. One response was received and was reported to the Standards Committee.
6. In July, the Standards Committee met to consider whether to continue with the Code of Conduct (as amended in July 2021) or to adopt the LGA model. In conclusion, the committee elected to recommend moving to the LGA model, attached at Appendix A, for the following reasons:
 - a. It is a national framework adopted by many authorities following considerable work by the LGA to develop the model code
 - b. As Norfolk County Council have adopted this model, it will mean that residents of Norwich can then expect that all elected local councillors are expected to operate to the same Code of Conduct
 - c. This will also assist Councillors on both authorities who will follow the same rules
 - d. The LGA model code of conduct is longer than the existing City Council Code, but this is as the model code includes more explanatory information which will help Councillors understand the expectations placed on them.
7. In practice, expectations placed on Councillors do not significantly change under the new Code; Councillors will still be expected to operate to the same high standards of conduct when delivering their role as a councillor and declare potential conflicts and interests. Nonetheless, if Council resolves to adopt the

new Code, the Monitoring Officer will be providing training to Councillors to ensure they are fully briefed on the requirements placed upon them.

Consequential Changes to the Constitution

8. The current Norwich City Council Code of Conduct contains limited information in regards procedures for declaring interests and gifts and hospitality. Instead, there are separate sections in the constitution that cover what Councillors should do.
9. If the LGA Model Code of Conduct is adopted, changes will need to be made to the Constitution to ensure that there is alignment with the new Code of Conduct. These have been considered by the Constitution Working Party, who have recommended Council the following:
 - a. As the model Code of Conduct has more detail relating to declaring interests, to amend the declaring interests section of the Committee procedure rules to align to the new Code of Conduct, as set out in Appendix B
 - b. As the model Code of Conduct has more detail relating to declaration of gifts and hospitality than the present Code, to remove the section in the constitution relating to Councillors declaring gifts and hospitality and to instead have this as guidance for the Monitoring Officer to provide for Councillors

Treasury Management Committee

10. There has been growing attention nationally as to how local authorities manage their investments and the potential that authorities may be willing to take on more risky investments in order to secure a greater financial return. In 2021, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) undertook a consultation on strengthening treasury management arrangements in public sector organisations. This consultation recognised the increasing complexity of treasury management and included a recommendation that all public sector bodies should have a separate treasury management committee (albeit this was ultimately not formally adopted).
11. Each year, Norwich City Council prepares a Treasury Management Strategy and monitors delivery against this, in line with CIPFA and statutory guidance. Following the Audit Committee's self-assessment, it was suggested that the introduction of a Treasury Management Committee may be helpful to support the development of Treasury Management strategy, and to examine in greater depth how the Council is performing against its strategy.
12. Proposals have been developed in consultation with both the Audit Committee and the Constitution Working Party, with the recommendation that Council support the establishment of a Treasury Management Committee and agree the terms of reference as attached at Appendix C.

Public Questions

13. The Constitution Working Party have also considered procedures relating to Public Questions. At present, there is a word limit for Councillors providing responses to Public Questions at Committee meetings of 150 words; the Constitution Working Party have recommended the words "Answers shall not exceed 150 words" be removed to align with responses to Councillor Questions and ensure that thorough responses can be provided to members of the public.

Consultation

14. Each section of the report above outlines the respective nature of consultation undertaken.

Implications

Financial and Resources

15. The proposals relating to Treasury Management will result in a small increase in the number of Committees each year. It is anticipated that the Committee would meet on 3 occasions per year and this increase in demand can be accommodated from within existing resources

Legal

16. The Localism Act requires the Council to adopt a Code of Conduct for Councillors. The other aspects of this report are not specific statutory requirements, albeit it is good practice for the Council to keep its constitution under review to ensure that it remains effective in supporting delivery of Council services.

Statutory Considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	None
Health, Social and Economic Impact	None
Crime and Disorder	None
Children and Adults Safeguarding	None
Environmental Impact	None

Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Failure to ensure there are appropriate arrangements in place to manage Councillor Conduct	Councillors do not understand expectations placed on them or poor standards of conduct on the part of Councillors	Ensuring that Council continues to monitor the effectiveness of its code of conduct (through the standards committee) and provision of training on the Code of Conduct

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Failure to ensure there are appropriate arrangements to monitor compliance with treasury management strategy and policy	The Council makes inappropriate / unnecessarily risky investments	As well as a range of treasury management practices, creation of a treasury management committee will reinforce the governance and oversight of activity in this area.

Other Options Considered

17. The alternative would be to not adopt the proposals in this report, or to adopt the proposals in a modified form. Given these proposals have been developed based on recommendations from a member working party and a committee, alternatives have not been considered appropriate at this stage.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

18. These decisions support the Council in demonstrating its commitment to high standards of governance and probity in its activities.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A: Proposed Code of Conduct

Appendix B: Proposed consequential amendments to the Constitution

Appendix C: Proposed Terms of Reference for the Treasury Management Committee

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Appendix A: Proposed Norwich City Council Code of Conduct

Introduction

The Local Government Association (LGA) developed this Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. It is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments.

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct.

The LGA, and accordingly Norwich City Council will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation. The LGA, and Norwich City Council can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “councillor” means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A “co-opted member” is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who:

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint subcommittee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

General principles of councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed

specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

The Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct.

Standards of councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

General Conduct

1. Respect

As a councillor:

1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.

1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's protocol.

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a councillor:

2.1 I do not bully any person.

2.2 I do not harass any person.

2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

3. Impartiality of officers of the council

As a councillor:

3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

4. Confidentiality and access to information

As a councillor:

4.1 I do not disclose information:

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone**
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
 - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**
 - ii. I am required by law to do so;**
 - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
 - iv. the disclosure is:**
 - 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**
 - 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
 - 3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

5. Disrepute

As a councillor:

5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in you or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is

considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute. You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

6. Use of position

As a councillor:

6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7. Use of local authority resources and facilities

As a councillor:

7.1 I do not misuse council resources.

7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others:

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

8. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a Councillor:

8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.

8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.

8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.

8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local

authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

9. Interests

As a councillor:

9.1 I register and disclose my interests.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority.

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained. You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in **Table 1**, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix B sets out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

10. Gifts and hospitality

As a councillor:

10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.

10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 within 28 days of its receipt.

10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

Appendices

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"**Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"**Partner**" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote

on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
- b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Prescribed description</i>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992(3).

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Prescribed description</i>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority—</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and

provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

You must register as an Other Registerable Interest:

- 1) any unpaid directorships
- 2) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- 3) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The LGA has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on [Local Government Ethical Standards](#). If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

Best practice 1: Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

Best practice 2: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

Best practice 3: Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

Best practice 4: An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

Best practice 5: Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

Best practice 6: Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

Best practice 7: Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

Best practice 8: An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

Best practice 9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

Best practice 10: A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

Best practice 11: Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

Best practice 12: Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training,

corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

Best practice 13: A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

Best practice 14: Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

Best practice 15: Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

The LGA, and Norwich City Council, has committed to reviewing the Code on an annual basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

Proposed changes to the procedure rules

The current procedure rules, paragraph 127-133, cover how members should declare interests in meetings.

Paragraphs 127, 128, 133 and part of paragraph 129 are already covered within the LGA's Model Code of Conduct and inclusion in this part of the constitution could cause confusion if the LGA Model Code of Conduct is adopted.

As a result, it is proposed to change this section so that it now reads:

1. Members are required to follow the procedures as set out in the Council's Code of Conduct for declaring interests in meetings.
2. In addition, if a member considers that they are predetermined, or their participation in the matter could give rise to actual or apparent bias, they should not take part in discussion or voting in respect of the matter and should withdraw from the meeting when the item is considered, unless they have been given a dispensation. A dispensation may only be given by the Monitoring Officer in such situations to allow a member to speak as a member of the public or as a ward member in respect of an item.
3. If the Lord Mayor is of the reasonable opinion that this procedure rule may be being breached, in that the provisions of the Code of Conduct or the procedure rule above are not being followed, they may request that the member leave the meeting room.
4. Should a member who is not allowed to participate in an item, either by virtue of the provisions of the Code of Conduct or this procedure rule, stay in the meeting and vote, the Lord Mayor will refuse to count the 'vote' of the member concerned, as it will have been cast improperly and should not be considered to be a vote at all.

Appendix C

Proposed Terms of Reference, Treasury Management Committee

The Council appoints the Treasury Management Committee to support the in-depth consideration of a range of matters related to the governance of the Council's financial investments, including:

- Reviewing the treasury management strategy and any associated policies and recommending their consideration by Cabinet for onward approval by Council
- Reviewing the mid-year and annual reports on treasury management activity prior to their consideration by Council
- Monitoring how the Council complies with recognised good practice in relation to its treasury management practice including those issued by government or CIPFA

The Committee may also consider other matters relevant to Treasury Management on the advice of the Council's officers or treasury management advisors.

It is expected a minimum of 3 meetings should be held each year. It is expected that whilst Committee meetings may be held in public, due to the commercially sensitive nature of advice provided by the Council's treasury management advisors, a range of items may need to be considered without the press and public present.

The Treasury Management Committee shall consist of a maximum of 5 members, to include:

- a) The Chair of the Audit Committee
- b) The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
- c) The Leader of the Council, who shall chair the meetings (in their absence, meetings shall be chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Resources)
- d) The Portfolio Holder for Resources
- e) A further member to be nominated by the relevant group leader in order to achieve the correct political balance within the Committee.

The quorum for the meeting shall be 3, which must include either the Chair of the Audit or Scrutiny Committee, and either the Leader or Portfolio Holder for Resources.



Committee Name: Council

Committee Date: 29/09/2022

Report Title: Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2021-2022

Committee chair Councillor Price

Report from: Executive director of corporate and commercial services

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

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

Recommendation:

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

Policy Framework

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

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

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

Report Details

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

“The purpose of an audit committee is to provide to those charged with governance independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and annual governance processes.”
2. The guidance goes on to set out that the core functions of the audit committee are to:
 - a) Be satisfied that the authority’s assurance statements, including the Annual Governance Statement, properly reflect the risk environment and any actions required to improve it, and demonstrate how governance supports the achievements of the authority’s objectives.
 - b) In relation to the authority’s internal audit functions:
 - i) oversee its independence, objectivity, performance and professionalism;
 - ii) support the effectiveness of the internal audit process;
 - iii) promote the effective use of internal audit within the assurance framework.
 - c) Consider the effectiveness of the authority’s risk management arrangements and the control environment. Review the risk profile of the organisation and assurances that action is being taken on risk-related issues, including partnerships with other organisations.
 - d) Monitor the effectiveness of the control environment, including arrangements for ensuring value for money and for managing the authority’s exposure to the risks of fraud and corruption.
 - e) Consider the reports and recommendations of external audit and inspection agencies and their implications for governance, risk management or control
3. The council delegates authority to the audit committee to undertake a range of functions on its behalf, including approval of the Annual Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement. It is therefore important the council ensures that the audit committee is discharging its role effectively.
4. The attached annual report of the audit committee 2021-2022 was considered by members of the audit committee at their meeting on 12 July 2022. The

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

5. The report sets out the work of the audit committee over the last financial year, providing assurance to council on the work undertaken by the committee.
6. The report concludes that the committee has been effective in undertaking the functions set out in its terms of reference, in accordance with the council's procedure rules and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Consultation

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

Implications

Financial and Resources

Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan and Budget. [Do not remove]

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

Legal

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

Statutory Considerations

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

Environmental Impact	No implications arising from this report
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Risk Management

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

Other Options Considered

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

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

11. To provide an annual report to council.

Background papers:

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

Appendices:

A Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2021-2022

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

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Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2021-22

Introduction

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

Councillor Ben Price
Chair, audit committee

Councillor Keith Driver
Vice-chair, audit committee

Background

1. This report covers the work of the audit committee for the financial and civic year 2021-22. The production of an annual report by the committee is considered good practice.
2. The council established an audit committee in 2007. The terms of reference were considered and revised as part of the Constitution Review 2021. The committee exercises its powers, within the policy framework of the council and the corporate plan, as specified in the terms of reference.
3. The members of the audit committee in 2021-22 were:-

Councillor Ben Price (chair)
Councillor Keith Driver (vice chair)
Councillor Adam Giles
Councillor Ash Haynes
Councillor Martin Peek
Councillor Mike Sands
Councillor Ian Stutely
Councillor James Wright
4. Councillor Paul Kendrick, cabinet member for resources, attended all meetings of the committee.
5. The key officers who support the audit committee during this period were:

Annabel Scholes, executive director of corporate and commercial services (S151 officer) (chief finance officer)
Hannah Simpson, head of finance, audit and risk
Neville Murton, interim head of finance, audit and risk
Faye Haywood, internal audit manager
Leah Mickleborough, head of legal and procurement
6. The engagement team of the external auditors (Ernst & Young LLP) is led by Mark Hodgson, the external audit manager for the council. The external auditors have an open invitation to attend meetings of the audit committee to present their reports and answer members' questions. The external auditors attended meetings in July 2021 and May 2022.
7. The committee monitors the fees paid by the council to the external auditors to ensure value for money.
8. The committee met five times during the civic year 2021-22 as follows:
 - 13 July 2021
 - 21 September 2021
 - 18 January 2022
 - 8 March 2022
 - 17 May 2022 (extraordinary meeting)
9. The information contained in this report is drawn from the minutes and reports considered at committee meetings held during the year. Agendas, reports and minutes for the meetings are available on the council's website:

10. The committee last received training from an external facilitator in October 2020. Members will have an opportunity to attend an introductory training session for members of the audit committee on 3 October 2022 (rescheduled from 11 July 2022.)
11. This report sets out the committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and effectiveness of the committee in meeting its purpose, under the following headings:
 - (a) Corporate governance
 - (b) Internal and external audit
 - (c) Statement of accounts
 - (d) Referral powers and accountability arrangements

Corporate governance

12. The committee welcomes the changes that the corporate leadership team has made to strengthen governance arrangements within the council and in relation to its wholly owned companies.
13. The committee is advised by the chief finance officer, internal and external audit. In line with CIPFA/SOLACE good practice, the council's constitution adopted in March 2021, has provision for the council to appoint up to two independent non-voting co-opted members to the audit committee whose "skill, knowledge, qualification and experience relevant to the role of the committee" to assist members. The council is currently in the process of appointing an independent person to the committee.

Corporate risk management policy, strategy and register

14. The council's constitution adopted in March 2021, formalises the committee's request to receive a report on the council's risk management policy, strategy and register twice a year. This provides the committee assurance about the risk appetite of the council and an opportunity to ask questions on the application of scores to risks.
15. The committee considered changes to the Risk Management and Strategy at its September meeting, prior to its approval at cabinet in October 2021. The committee welcomed the opportunity to review the policy and strategy and appreciated the shift in the culture of the council that it represented, with risk management being considered at individual and service levels and risks being addressed before serious problems occurred. The relaunch of this strategy ensured that risk management is embedded throughout the organisation. Members commended the officers for the clarity of the document and the inclusion of the assessment of risk and scoring matrix.
16. The committee considered the risk register at its meetings in September 2021, where it was noted that the overall level of risk had not changed, and in March 2022. Following discussion at the September meeting, the committee asked for further consideration of the impact of Brexit, where the concern is that the

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

Anti-Fraud and Corruption policy and strategy - Application

17. An important function of the committee is to ensure the adequacy of the council's anti-fraud and corruption policy and strategy and the effectiveness of their application.
18. The committee receives an Annual report on Audit Risk and Fraud each year. The annual report for 2020-21 was considered at the July meeting. Members are updated on Anti-Fraud and Corruption measures as part of the quarterly internal audit reports. Significant issues are flagged up to the committee with every quarterly internal audit report. The committee monitors and questions progress on addressing the recommendations.
19. Work of internal audit including counter fraud activity was reported to every meeting throughout the year. Each time this included a schedule of significant issues with response and implementation dates for any required action. In addition, the committee receives the report on risk management and the risk register twice a year. This allows committee members to challenge the risk appetite of the authority for example, areas where fraud could potentially be a high risk.
20. During the pandemic, the council administered business support grants on behalf of the government. There is a national picture of these grants being open to fraud due to the timescales and lack of government guidance at the time to get grants out to support businesses. An internal audit of the revenues and benefits service has been conducted and the audit recommendations agreed. The council has a duty to ensure that checks are in place and £40,000 has been written off. Members appreciate the work of the team in supporting local businesses and ensuring that businesses had access to grants available. However, it has requested information on how the authority performed when benchmarked against other authorities and the outcome of the National Fraud Initiative in relation to the administration of business support grants.
21. Internal audit reviewed the council's whistleblowing policy and minor amendments relating to change of personnel were agreed by the committee at its meeting on 21 September 2021. The committee received assurance that the policy was fit for purpose.

Annual Governance Statement 2020-21

22. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the council to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). It summarises the extent to which the council complies with its Code of Corporate Governance and details, as appropriate, any significant actions needed to improve the governance arrangements in the year ahead.
23. In addition, as part of the Annual Governance Statement process key officers within the council are asked for a specific assurance as to the extent to which key policies and procedures have been complied within their area for 2020/21.
24. At its meeting on 13 July 2021, the audit committee agreed that the draft Annual Governance Statement was consistent with the committee's own perspective on internal control within the council, plus the governance issues and actions. Members welcomed the inclusion of the action plan which showed the council's performance and direction of travel and noted that it would continue to be updated during the year. The committee also noted that it was a front facing document that showed the council's direction of travel.
25. Since the original AGS was considered by the committee two further issues have arisen: the decision to self-refer to the Regulator of Social Housing, and the subsequent publication of a Regulatory Notice; and the identification and inclusion of statutory equalities objectives. Both these issues have now been added to the AGS. The committee voted unanimously to confirm that the Annual Governance Statement was consistent with the committee's own perspective on internal control within the council, plus governance issues and actions. It was prudent to amend the AGS and gratitude to the committee for raising concerns about contract management and the corporate leadership team for identifying the issue and taking the appropriate action was recorded. The AGS is a public document that shows the council's governance and risk management structure to be robust.

Internal and external audit

Internal audit

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

28. The committee receives regular reports from internal audit and monitors the internal audit plan. The council has moved to a risk-based approach assessed against the council's risk management register and prioritised areas identified as a risk. The internal audit manager assured members that the internal audit coverage would be sufficient to provide an audit opinion. Members have an opportunity to monitor the progress against the work programme. Due to the new arrangements the internal audit plan for 2021-22 started later in the year and therefore greater prioritisation was required this year. Reasons for deferring audit work were considered at the January 2022 meeting. There is some concern from members that there has been an overall reduction in the number of audit "days". Members have been assured that future internal audit work plans will provide justification or reasons for audit work to be delivered or prioritised and will cover a 3 year rolling programme.
29. As well as receiving quarterly updates, the committee also receives updates which track internal audit recommendations that are either medium or high priority and have gone past the due date. This provides the committee with an opportunity to monitor the progress against actions or seek an explanation where implementation of recommendations has been delayed or why actions have not been agreed by management.

External Audit

30. External auditors attend meetings of the committee when presenting reports and participate in meetings to answer members' questions and provide assurance where appropriate.
31. Members have an opportunity to comment on the external audit plan. The committee agreed the external audit plan for the accounts for 2021-22 at its July meeting. An addendum to the plan relating to VFM risk assessment was received at the March 2022 meeting.
32. Before the pandemic external audit was facing challenges around timetabling audits, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic. The accounts for 2019-20 had finally been signed off on 21 January 2021.
33. Members have expressed their frustration on the further delay this year which meant that the accounts for 2020-21 were eventually signed off in May 2022 due to pressures on external audit. This situation does not appear to be resolved with a late audit planned for late 2022. This impacts on the council's resources so late in the financial cycle, particularly in relation to budget preparation and year end close down. This is a national problem for external auditors and was raised under the Redmond Review.
34. The committee made recommendations to council on the process for the appointment of external auditors for the five-year period 2023-28. Members noted that there were benefits from being part of a national scheme for the procurement, including economies of scale that would provide the best deal for the council.

Statement of accounts

35. The committee considers the draft financial statements before publication and submission to external audit. There is no requirement for the committee to approve the unaudited accounts but this gives an opportunity for members to understand the process.
36. The committee considered the draft Statement of Accounts (SoA) 2020-21 at its meeting on 13 July 2021. It is a credit to Hannah Simpson, head of finance, audit and risk, and the finance team that they worked tirelessly to produce the accounts to meet the statutory timeframe for the publication of the accounts in what had been a challenging year.
37. It was originally expected that the external audit of the accounts would be signed off at the committee's meeting in January 2022. The audited accounts were finally published on 17 May 2022.
38. The committee had an opportunity to attend an informal presentation on the audited accounts prior to the committee meeting in May 2022. This was a useful session for members and helps with their understanding, particularly given the delay in the completion of the external audit.

Referral Powers and Accountability Arrangements

39. The committee's discussions and recommendations relating to the effectiveness of the governance, risk management and internal control frameworks, financial reporting arrangements and internal and external audit, are recorded in the minutes of the meetings. Where appropriate the committee's recommendations on any of these matters are referred to cabinet or the chief finance officer, as set out in the terms of reference. Meetings are attended by the key officers and other members of the corporate leadership team and senior managers, internal and external audit, who contribute to the discussions and are accountable for ensuring that the committee's recommendations are given due consideration. The cabinet member for resources also attends all meetings of the audit committee.
40. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) document on "audit committee's practical guidance for local authorities and police" sets out the guidance on the function and the operation of audit committees. It is therefore good practice to complete a regular self-assessment exercise against the checklist, to be satisfied that the committee is performing effectively. In addition, the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards also call for the committee to assess their remit and effectiveness, in relation to Purpose, Authority and Responsibility. The audit committee undertook its first self-assessment exercise, facilitated by the internal audit manager and as a result, actions have been identified to ensure full compliance with best practice. These actions were approved at the meeting in January 2022. It is intended that the committee will carry out the self-assessment exercise on an annual basis and monitor progress against actions as part of its work programme planning.
41. The committee has been effective in undertaking the functions set out in the terms of reference in accordance with the council's procedure rules and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Audit Committee

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

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

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

Corporate governance

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

Internal and external audit

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

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

Statement of accounts

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

Referral powers

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

Accountability arrangements

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



Committee Name: Council

Committee Date: 29/09/2022

Report Title: Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee 2021-22

Committee Chair: Councillor Wright

Report from: Head of legal and procurement

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

For council to receive the annual scrutiny report 2021-22.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that council receives the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee 2021-22.

Policy Framework

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

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

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

Report Details

1. The council's constitution states that the scrutiny committee will report annually to council on its work.
2. The attached annual report (appendix A) reports on the work and progress that has been made by the scrutiny committee for the 2021-22 civic year and council is asked to receive and note the report.

Consultation

3. This report has been written based on discussion minuted at meetings of the scrutiny committee.

Implications

Financial and Resources

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

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

Legal

5. The council has a duty to publish an annual report for scrutiny.

Statutory Considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	Neutral impact
Health, Social and Economic Impact	Neutral impact
Crime and Disorder	Neutral impact
Children and Adults Safeguarding	Neutral impact
Environmental Impact	Neutral impact

Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
None	None	None

Other Options Considered

6. This report is for information and consolidates information from meetings of the scrutiny committee.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

7. To provide an annual report to council.

Background papers: None

Appendices: Appendix A: Annual report of the scrutiny committee 2021-22

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Norwich City Council

Scrutiny committee annual report

Chairs Foreword:

I would like to begin by thanking all those who have been involved with the scrutiny process during the last civic year, particularly those officers and members who have subsequently left the council. Their collective effort has been hugely valuable to our work.

Despite changes to the legislation following Covid-19 that required council meetings to take place only in person, the committee members continued to make use of the technology we had become accustomed to during the pandemic to enable us to hear from those witnesses unable to attend in person.

The broadcast of meetings via YouTube also continues and gives members of the public an opportunity to watch our proceedings at a time / place that suits them.

Much of the work undertaken by the committee this year continued to be framed in the context of COVID-19, with the committee providing scrutiny for the **review of the environmental strategy following COVID-19**, a report into **the emerging new social agenda following COVID-19**, and **a sustainable, inclusive economy following COVID-19**.

One meeting that was able to take a hybrid approach was the scrutiny into **air pollution from woodburning**. The committee was able to take in-person evidence from Emeritus Professor Claire Reeves from the UEA, and from the council's public protection team at the July meeting but reconvene in September to hear online from the Stoves Industry Association and the member of the public who had introduced us to the topic. It is the opinion of the chair that this significantly aided us when arriving at recommendations.

Throughout the year, the committee has also looked at various standing items that feed into the transformation and budget setting process, with members making recommendations to cabinet that help shape and strengthen the work of the council.

Following each meeting, recommendations from the committee were considered by the cabinet, and broadly accepted.

Groups of councillors also serve on select committees outside of the main scrutiny meeting, and one was convened to look at **fly-tipping and communal bins**, an issue that was introduced to us by members of the public from the West Pottergate area. Whilst it is disappointing that this work could not be concluded

during the 2021-22 civic year, the chair looks forward to positive outcomes in the next civic year.

Whilst most of our meetings are scheduled, we do from time to time consider call-ins of cabinet decisions, and convene extraordinary meetings as necessary. As detailed in this document, one such extraordinary meeting was to consider the council's self-referral to the Regulator for Social Housing following investigation into compliance. Following lengthy scrutiny, a series of recommendations were made and adopted by the cabinet.

I commend this annual review and hope that members feel able to adopt it.

Councillor James Wright (Chair)

Background

1. This report covers the work of the scrutiny committee for the civic year 2021-22. The production of an annual report is to fulfil the statutory obligation to publish such a report.
2. The members who were initially members of the scrutiny committee are:
 - Councillor Wright (chair)
 - Councillor Fulton McAllister (vice chair)
 - Councillor Carlo
 - Councillor Everett
 - Councillor Galvin
 - Councillor Giles
 - Councillor Hampton
 - Councillor Manning
 - Councillor Oliver
 - Councillor Osborn
 - Councillor Stutely
 - Councillor Thomas (Va)
 - Councillor Thomas (Vi)
3. In September 2021 Councillors Oliver and Hampton were appointed to the cabinet so Councillors Driver and Huntley replaced them on the committee. The committee membership for the remainder of the civic year was:
 - Councillor Wright (chair)
 - Councillor Fulton-McAlister (M) (vice chair)
 - Councillor Carlo
 - Councillor Driver
 - Councillor Everett
 - Councillor Galvin
 - Councillor Giles
 - Councillor Huntley
 - Councillor Manning
 - Councillor Osborn
 - Councillor Stutely
 - Councillor Thomas (Va)
 - Councillor Thomas (Vi)
4. Membership of the scrutiny committee is politically balanced and made up of councillors of each political party of the council. In line with the constitution any substitutions to the committee were non-executive members of the council. Members of the cabinet were invited to attend committee meetings when the topic of the meeting was within their portfolio.
5. The committee met monthly on Thursdays from 4.30pm (excluding April and August). The majority of the meetings during the civic year 2021-22 took place in person, but a few meetings were held remotely. In addition to the regularly scheduled meetings there were three extraordinary meetings. The committee also held one call in meeting.

What is scrutiny?

6. The Local Government Act 2000 introduced a structure within Local Government for decision-making and accountability and created a separation between the cabinet role and the non-executive member role.
7. Moving forward, subsequent acts of parliament have come in to extend the remit of scrutiny along with its statutory responsibilities. For example, local government scrutiny committees can now look at the work of partner organisations as well. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities to scrutinise other partners and agencies. This, along with other legislation relating to scrutiny powers has now been consolidated in the Localism Act 2011.
8. The cabinet proposes and implements policies, and the non-executive members review policies and scrutinise decisions or pre scrutinise proposed decisions of the cabinet.
9. The committee sets its own work programme via suggestions from councillors, the cabinet and council, or from other issues of public interest. Any scrutiny topic that is undertaken needs to add value, and in considering suggestions for scrutiny the committee will ascertain the reasons why the matter would benefit from scrutiny, and what outcomes might be generated from inclusion to the work programme or other scrutiny activity.
10. The scrutiny committee assists non-executive and cabinet members in accordance with the Act by:
 - a) Acting as a critical friend by challenging performance and helping improve services
 - b) Ensuring policies are working as intended and, where there are gaps help develop policy
 - c) Bringing a wide perspective, from the city's residents and stakeholders and examining broader issues affecting local communities
 - d) Acting as a consultative body
11. In carrying out its role, the scrutiny committee can request written information and ask questions of those who make decisions. The committee is also enabled to comment and make recommendations to decision makers. These decision makers include cabinet, partners and other statutory organisations. Successful scrutiny is collaboration between the scrutiny committee, the cabinet, residents, partners and the officers of the council.

Key themes for the civic year 2021-22

12. The committee looked at a broad range of issues during the civic year 2021-22. These were a mixture of recurring items along with items the committee had set as its work programme for the year.
13. As the civic year 2021-22 took part during the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, the pandemic and the effects this had had on the residents of Norwich factored into a number of topics discussed through the year. The overarching themes of the topics discussed during the year were:
 - a) Social agenda and economic recovery following COVID-19
 - b) Health and safety of residents of Norwich
 - c) Environmental concerns
 - d) Recurring items
14. This report will discuss each of these areas in turn.

The social agenda and economic recovery following COVID-19

The emerging new social agenda following COVID-19

15. At the 18 November 2021 meeting the committee looked at the topic “The emerging new social agenda following COVID-19”. The reports and minutes of the meeting can be found [here](#).
16. The scope for this item included on the TOPIC form was: “Government austerity measures since 2010, but also previous structural poverty which pre-dated this, will be likely advanced with the cessation of furlough and other temporary measures which will cease in September. While the so called ‘levelling up’ agenda focusses largely upon infrastructure and relaxation of statutory controls around planning, there is little evidence of any interest from government to enhance social inclusion agenda. Coupled to economic change within the city through automation and the emerging new economy, the service-based economy in Norwich could be exposed still further. The city council prides itself, rightly, on its social inclusion agenda which has been in existence for decades. A review of this, to better appreciate the impact of the above-mentioned changes and ensure it is fit for purpose, appears now particularly opportune.”
17. The report presented to committee on 18 November 2021 focussed on:
 - a) the activities that had taken place through the 2019-22 period of the corporate plan,
 - b) whether the council’s approach supported its ability to respond to COVID-19 and,
 - c) identifying key learning that should be embedded in the council’s approach going forward.

18. The leader of the council attended the meeting as the cabinet member for social inclusion was unable to attend. He and officers answered questions from the committee in particular around the Living Wage, Reducing Inequalities Target Areas and social supermarkets.
19. During the meeting members made the below recommendations to cabinet, which were discussed at the cabinet meeting of 12 January 2022.
 - a) ask cabinet to:
 - i. ask cabinet to commission a background report on inequality in Norwich with benchmarking from other cities and long term trends to inform an evidence based framework which would set and link to existing Key Performance Indicators (not to be to the detriment of on the ground work)
 - ii. consider whether it is legally viable to begin establishing a matrix in accordance with procurement strategy which also includes trade union recognition, lack of use of zero hours contract and broadly comparable gender pay gap with the council
 - iii. ensure that appropriate resources are available to ensure that the good work on social inclusion projects continues
 - iv. resource staffing to seek new venues and funding for social supermarkets across the city and to increase provision and extend existing projects.
 - v. Engage with communities to ensure participatory budgeting processes.
 - vi. ensure digital inclusion work continues and is extended where possible.
20. Cabinet at its meeting on 12 January 2022 discussed the above recommendations. During the meeting cabinet heard from officers that a number of the recommendations would have resource and budget implications and that there would need to be an appraisal of these following the budget setting process. Cabinet agreed the recommendations in principle but recognised that there was a need to be further consideration of the resources required before agreeing and implementing these.
21. The committee then made resolutions that would feed into the work programme setting for the civic year 2022-23. These were as follows:
 - a) ask for the topic of ward breakdown of project delivery to be considered by the scrutiny committee in the new civic year
 - b) To receive an update on work being done to improve communications with tenants.

- c) To note that the scrutiny committee recognises the link between inequality and education and would like to consider this as a piece of future scrutiny work, to include how the council works with partners on this issue.

A sustainable inclusive economy following COVID-19

- 22. The scrutiny committee meeting in March 2022 looked at the “A sustainable inclusive Norwich economy following COVID-19”. The agenda and the minutes of the meeting can be found [here](#).
- 23. The scope from the TOPIC form was as follows: “The pending recession emanating from the consequences of Covid-19 will be felt by all but particularly those with the least resources and already hard hit from 10 years of austerity. As government announces measures to potentially stimulate the economy, reviewing and refining our economic strategy to better meet both challenges and opportunities would be opportune. This is particularly important given the council success at achieving the Town Deal but also the wider potential impact of the ‘levelling up’ agenda from central government.” During the February 2022 meeting members agreed that the meeting should focus on the work of the Norwich Good Economy Commission (NGEC) and the effects of the cost of living increases on Norwich citizens, including reference to the council tax reduction scheme.
- 24. During the March 2022 meeting Catherine Waddams, the chair of the NGEC was in attendance to give a presentation. Members asked a range of questions on the work of the NGEC and the learnings that could be applied in future by the council, its partners and other organisations in Norwich. The committee in particular were interested in the ways that the pandemic had shifted ways of working and spending and the work that had taken place to understand skills within communities.
- 25. As the final report from the NGEC had not yet been published at the time of the meeting, the committee decided that they would consider the final report at a later date to feed into the council’s response to the report. Members also thanked Catherine Waddams and the NGEC for their work.

Health and safety of residents of Norwich

Pre-scrutiny health, safety and compliance of council homes

- 26. On 12 November 2021 the committee considered an urgent report that was being presented to cabinet that evening. This was an extraordinary meeting. The topic was around the council’s recent self-referral to the Regulator for Social Housing following investigation into compliance. This investigation had shown that the council was not meeting its obligations to ensure that fire safety, electrical safety, water hygiene and asbestos checks had been undertaken. The report and minutes of the meeting can be found [here](#).

27. Members asked questions on the extent of the problem, and what was being done to address the issues. The chair of the audit committee had been invited to the meeting and he gave his opinion on the issues of contract management. The chair of the audit committee said that there had been a positive direction of travel with the new Corporate Leadership Team looking at governance. Members also asked questions how the council would ensure that the checks are conducted if residents refused entry to officers.
28. The scrutiny committee made the following recommendations:
- a) For the chair of the scrutiny committee and the Executive Director to determine a mechanism to inform the scrutiny committee of progress with regards the matters referred to in the exempt paper;
 - b) That a report comes to scrutiny committee in early summer on the progress in delivering services referred to in the report following the transfer to NCS Ltd;
 - c) That the Housing Compliance Board regularly updates the Tenant Improvement Panel on its progress in securing compliance with required housing standards
 - d) That cabinet considers how compliance and safety risks are reflected in the council's risk register; and
 - e) The provision of training to councillors on contract management, compliance and performance management is reviewed
29. Immediately following the scrutiny committee meeting cabinet also considered the issue. The cabinet discussed that the work of the scrutiny committee had been helpful with regard to looking at how the issues detailed in the report could be addressed. The leader of the council said that it was not currently appropriate for the committee to look at the historic issues, as the resources and focus needed to be on ensuring that the council worked towards compliance. The cabinet agreed all recommendations made by the scrutiny committee.

Air pollution from woodburning

30. The committee looked at woodburning and air pollution over two meetings on 15 July 2021 and 9 September 2021. The topic had been suggested by a member of the public to the committee. The meeting on the 15 July 2021 had an officer from the public protection team attend to give a presentation. The committee also heard from the Emeritus Professor Claire Reeves from the University of East Anglia who spoke to committee about the sources and movement of air pollution. Written evidence had also been circulated to members from the campaign group Mums for Lungs. The report and minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2021 can be found [here](#). The report and minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2021 can be found [here](#).
31. During the meeting the committee discussed how to discourage residents and business from using wood burners in their premises. As

the member of the public who had suggested had been unable to attend the committee decided to defer making recommendations until the meeting in September to allow the member of the public to attend. The committee also wanted a member of the Stoves Industry Association to attend.

32. At the 9 September 2021 meeting the committee heard from the Stoves Industry Association and the member of the public who had introduced the topic.
33. Members discussed the need for comprehensive education to businesses and residents in order for them to choose not to use solid fuel and to use methods other than bonfires to dispose of garden waste. The committee also felt that help should be given to employees working in premises that had wood burners that produced air pollution.
34. The committee made the following recommendations to cabinet:
 - a) Prepare a communications strategy on air pollution for residents
 - b) Submit the committee's findings to the Chair of the all -party parliamentary group on Air Quality
 - c) Work with the Clinical Commissioning Group on health education regarding respiratory problems
 - d) Investigate the level of solid fuel burning in City Council owned properties
 - e) Review enforcement against burning of wet leaves on bonfires on Council properties
 - f) Write to Norwich MPs about resources available to support employees working in licensed premises
 - g) Discourage the use of bonfires across the whole of the city and encourage people to use their brown bins and composting
35. At the cabinet meeting on 17 November, the recommendations were discussed. The cabinet said that the recommendations helped to inform the wider air quality targets of the city. Cabinet agreed to implement those recommendations that would take the least resource and time, and other actions would form part of the wider air quality work the council was doing. The cabinet agreed all recommendations made to cabinet. Due to the timing of the meetings, an article had already been published in the Winter 2021 edition of Citizen magazine.
36. As part of recommendation a) the council had not only published an article in the Winter 2021 edition of Citizen but also published an article in the Spring 2022 issue of the council's Tenants and Leaseholders magazine including guidance on the use of solid fuel burners in council properties. As part of recommendation e) the council encouraged its partners' communications teams to help spread the messaging that the council was using with regard to air pollution. In respect of

recommendation g) the council published an advert in the Spring 2022 edition of Citizen magazine to promote the council's brown bin service along with supportive and positive educational messaging to discourage the use of bonfires, raise awareness of the effects on neighbours and encourage the use of brown bins rather than the burning of green waste. The council also promoted these on the council's social media pages to raise awareness of this issue.

Environmental concerns

Review of the environmental strategy following COVID-19

37. At the 21 October 2022 meeting the committee looked at the topic of the "Review of the environmental strategy following COVID-19". The reports and minutes of the meeting can be found [here](#).
38. The scope from the TOPIC form was "The impact of Covid-19, set within last year's context of the climate strike and extinction rebellion, has generated renewed interest and opportunity to consider the environment. The strategy document, linking to the recovery plan and the work of Climate and Environment Emergency Executive Panel will provide an important blueprint for how the council responds to protecting, enhancing and improving the environment in the future".
39. During the meeting the committee discussed that the direction that the council was taking on environmental matters was welcomed. The committee did, however, discuss their concerns with regard to the Norwich Climate Commission, the economic strategy and partnership working. The committee also asked questions around retrofitting housing within the city.
40. The committee made the following recommendations:
 - a) ask for the standing items of the Scrutiny committee to include updates from the Norwich Climate Change Commission;
 - b) invite UK100 to attend a meeting of this committee to update on what work we are going to do with them.
 - c) hold a member briefing on the environmental impact of any investments to form part of the investment matrix that is used
 - d) request that the review of the Economic strategy include businesses plans for net zero carbon emissions.
 - e) review commercial investment strategy to see how it can support environmental strategy
 - f) recommend that when the BEIS per capita figures are reported in council reports that it is stated that the BEIS data set is not comprehensive.

- g) ask cabinet to actively look at partnering with academia to get the tools needed to ensure we can work out what we can and can't influence.

41. Cabinet discussed the recommendations at its meeting on 8 December 2021. Cabinet agreed that the first two recommendations were for the scrutiny committee to consider when setting its work programme. With regard to the recommendation on a members' briefing session on the environmental impacts of investments the leader of the council said that the most significant investment that the council had was in the Norfolk Pension Fund and he would request a note to be circulated to all members. The recommendation on reviewing the economic strategy was being addressed by the 2040 City Vision work. With regard to the recommendation on partnering with academia the leader of the council said that working with the newly established Norwich Climate Commission would address these issues, as it would be in close partnership with academia. Cabinet agreed to consider the other recommendations made.

Fly tipping, communal bins and bins left on pavements

- 42. At its meeting on the 24 June 2021 the scrutiny committee considered the topic of "fly tipping, communal bins and bins left on pavements". This had been agreed at the 27 May 2021 meeting of the scrutiny committee to combine the topics into one report for the meeting. The report and minutes of the meeting can be found [here](#).
- 43. During the meeting members discussed how the issue of fly-tipping could be resolved, the lessons learnt since implementation of communal bins and the data that was available on the cost of dealing with fly-tipping. As members felt that they did not have enough evidence and data to understand where this was happening that they could make recommendations at this date.
- 44. The committee agreed to convene a task and finish group on fly-tipping and communal bins. The makeup of the group was three Labour members, one Green Party member and one Liberal Democrat member. The work of the task and finish group was delayed and therefore the results of the group's work would be published in the 2022-23 civic year.

Call-in

- 45. Members of the scrutiny committee decided to call in the cabinet decision, made on 9 February 2022, to:
 - a) enter into a concessionary contract for the provision of tennis centre operations in Norwich; and
 - b) delegate the award of the contract to the most economically advantageous supplier to the Executive director of development and city services, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Health and Wellbeing

46. The reasons given for call in were to examine contract management, equalities and customer service and specific deliverables to ensure that the contract would help to deliver against the aims in the corporate plan.
47. The report and the minutes of the meeting can be found [here](#).
48. Members asked questions of the relevant officers and of the leader of the council. Questions were submitted in advance of the meeting and officers had provided written answers, at the meeting members asked for clarifications on some of the provided answers. In particular members were interested in the cost of membership for low income households, how issues within the contract would be managed if services were not supplied in a satisfactory manner and the usage of the courts by residents from different backgrounds.
49. Following discussion, the committee agreed to endorse the cabinet decision and therefore the decision would be implemented as agreed at cabinet on 9 February 2022.

Recurring items

50. There are number of items that are recurring and standing items for the committee. Each year the committee look at the annual budget, the corporate plan, the equality report and the business plans of the wholly owned companies of the council, Norwich Regeneration Limited (NRL) and Norwich City Services Limited (NCSL). At each meeting the committee considers its work programme and hears updates from the representatives appointed to the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (NHOSC) and the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub Panel (NCCSPSSP).

Budget

51. The scrutiny committee pre-scrutinise the budget every year in early February before the budget papers are presented to cabinet. The meeting for the 2021-22 civic year was held on 3 February 2022. The report and minutes of the meeting can be found [here](#).
52. During the meeting members asked questions on each section of the report: local government finance, the general fund, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan and budget, the capital and commercial investment strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy. Overall members were particularly interested in the effect of the savings that would need to be made on the services provided by the council. Members also asked questions around the income generation activities of the council, such as car parking charges and commercial investment. With regard to commercial investment members asked around investing into renewable energy.
53. Members made the following recommendations to cabinet:
 - a) Ensure there is political commitment to investing in renewable or green energy projects.

- b) Where financially and legally viable, fit the lowest carbon emitting heating systems in council properties.
 - c) Ensure there is budget available to carry out any recommendations of the fly tipping and communal bins task and finish group.
54. At the cabinet meeting on 9 February 2022 the recommendations were discussed and cabinet made an amendment to the first recommendation so that it read “ensure there is continued political commitment to investing in renewable or green energy projects”. With that amendment cabinet agreed all the recommendations and these were fed into the budget document that was discussed and agreed at council on 22 February 2022.

Corporate Plan

55. The scrutiny committee looks at the council’s Corporate Plan and any refreshes made throughout the corporate plan’s life cycle. For the 2021-22 civic year the committee looked at the Corporate Plan 2022-26. The report and minutes of the meeting can be found [here](#).
56. During the meeting members asked questions around the strategic direction of the council against the backdrop of financial concerns and environmental concerns. Members also discussed the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) contained within the technical appendix.
57. The committee made the following recommendations to cabinet:
- a) amend the wording of Aim One to ‘listen to communities and use their views in decision making’
 - b) amend the wording of Aim Two to – ‘Work with partners to increase sustainable transport and improve air quality’.
 - c) Indicate those KPIs that are ‘roll overs’ of existing targets due to upcoming reviews for clarity.
 - d) Include previous KPIs in performance documents to understand if the council is achieving its targets.
 - e) Include a KPI linked to the Councillor enquiry service.
58. At its meeting on 9 February 2022 cabinet considered the scrutiny recommendations and the corporate plan. The recommendations were discussed and agreed recommendations a), b) and c) above. These were then incorporated into the corporate plan which was agreed by full council on 22 February 2022.

Equality report

59. At its meeting on 16 December 2021 the scrutiny committee considered the Equality Information Report 2022. This document is a statutory

document that the council must publish by 31 January each year. The report and minutes of the meeting can be found [here](#).

60. During the meeting members welcomed the new format of the document and discussed the movement of trends over the previous year and the possible reasons for this movement. Officers answered questions on the council's workforce and how to improve the diversity of the council's staff. The committee also expressed that it was keen to work closely with partners to understand how to remove barriers for the residents of Norwich.
61. Members made the following recommendations:
- a) Acknowledge the work that has gone into the production of the dashboard, and welcome its future wider rollout,
 - b) Work with the housing partnerships officer to identify topics for scrutiny work around outreach to those who needed to access health and other services, such as legal services and education services.
 - c) Note the work being undertaken around the complaints process and ask for an update on improvements to data collection around protected characteristics.
62. Cabinet considered the recommendations made at its meeting on 12 January 2022 while considering the Equality Information Report. During the discussion cabinet agreed the recommendations.

Business plans

63. Each year the scrutiny committee considers the business plans of the council's wholly owned companies; NCSL and NRL. The business plans were considered at separate meetings.
64. The business plans for each company were considered in private by members as these are exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The recommendations made were noted by cabinet.
65. The committee at its meeting on 10 January 2022 also considered the Threescore Development that was being delivered in part by NRL. The report and minutes of the meeting can be found [here](#). During the meeting members discussed the rising cost of building materials, whole lifecycle carbon assessments and risk management.
66. The committee made the following recommendation to cabinet: "investigate whether it is feasible to include detailed carbon lifecycle assessments in the design of future building phases." At its meeting on 12 January 2022 cabinet noted the recommendation.

Work programme setting

67. The scrutiny committee work programme is key for the committee as it outlines the topics that the committee will discuss throughout the civic year. Usually, the committee will consider the work programme for the year at the first meeting of the civic year and any amendments are made as part of the standing work programme item on each agenda.
68. For the civic year 2021-22 the committee held two dedicated work programme setting meetings, this was done in part as the council held a by-election in June 2021 due to a countermanded poll for the Sewell ward. The two work programme setting meetings were held on 27 May 2021 and 16 September 2021. The reports and minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2021 found [here](#). The reports and minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2021 can be found [here](#).
69. Members are asked to circulate TOPIC forms in advance of the meeting. The TOPIC forms ask members to identify the scope of the item by looking at the following:
- a) **Time:** Is this the right time to review the issue?
 - b) **Objective:** What would be the objective of scrutiny? How do you feel scrutiny could make a difference
 - c) **Performance:** Can performance be improved by scrutiny input?
 - d) **Public Interest:** What would be the public interest in placing this topic onto the work programme?
 - e) **Contribution:** How would a scrutiny review contribute to achieving our corporate aims?
70. Throughout the civic year members updated the work programme, either by changing the substantive item discussed or by refining the scope of the item.

Updates from joint scrutiny committees

71. Norwich City Council has a representative, and named substitute, on two scrutiny committees that are held by Norfolk County Council. These are Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (NHOSC) and the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub Panel (NCCSPSSP).
72. The role of NHOSC is to look at the work of the clinical commissioning groups and National Health Service (NHS) trusts and the local area team of NHS England. It acts as a 'critical friend' by suggesting ways that health related services might be improved. It also looks at the way the health service interacts with social care services, the voluntary sector, independent providers and other county council services to jointly provide better health services to meet the diverse needs of Norfolk residents and improve their well-being. NHOSC meets every other month and the reports and minutes of each meeting are available [here](#).

73. Reports from NHOSC were presented at the next possible meeting of the scrutiny committee, these were either oral reports or a written report was circulated to members and then questions were asked of the representative.
74. The representative for the 2021-22 civic year was Councillor Oliver but following her appointment to the cabinet, Councillor Stutely was named the representative, with Councillor Giles as substitute member.
75. The role of the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub Panel is to:
- a) Scrutinise the actions, decisions and priorities of the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Crime and Disorder Partnership in respect of crime and disorder on behalf of the (County) community services overview and scrutiny panel
 - b) Scrutinise the priorities as set out in the annual countywide community safety partnership plan
 - c) Make any reports or recommendations to the countywide community safety partnership.
76. While the scrutiny sub panel has the duty of scrutinising the work of the Norfolk countywide community safety partnership the police and crime panel scrutinises the work of the police and crime commissioner. There is a protocol regarding the relationship of these two panels to encourage and exchange information and to co-operate towards the delivery of their respective responsibilities. The community safety partnership meets on a half yearly basis. The reports and minutes of NCCSPSSP can be found [here](#).
77. The representative for the council was Councillor Stutely, and Councillor Giles was appointed as the named substitute following Councillor Oliver's appointment to cabinet.

Training

78. The committee took part in a training session held remotely on 1 July 2021 by Dave McKenna. During the training session the following topics were discussed:
- a) How can we work more effectively 'cross party'?
 - b) How can we have a more productive relationship with cabinet?
 - c) How can we better involve the public in our scrutiny work?
79. The feedback was well received by those that attended the session.

Public involvement and getting in touch with scrutiny

80. Meetings of the scrutiny committee are usually as informal as possible and as well as scrutiny members, are attended by cabinet portfolio

members, officers, partners and anyone else who can assist with the work and provide evidence for reviews.

81. Members of the public are also welcomed to attend the scrutiny committee meetings and can participate at the discretion of the committee's chair. If you do wish to participate regarding an agenda item at a scrutiny meeting, you are requested to contact democratic services who will liaise with the chair of the committee. To contact democratic services please use democraticservices@norwich.gov.uk.
82. Members of the public can suggest a topic for scrutiny by submitting an on-line form available on the council's website. Please encourage your constituents to suggest topics in this way.

Motion to: Council

Item 9

29 September 2022

Subject: Supporting the Transgender Community

Proposer: Councillor Catt

Seconder: Councillor Haynes

This Council states that:

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

The Council notes:

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

This Council therefore resolves to:

- 6) state publicly that trans rights are human rights and affirm the legal rights of all protected groups under the 2010 equality act;
- 7) work with LGBTQIA+ groups and people to strongly encourage training for councillors and council staff to raise awareness of the difficulties transgender and non-binary people face and of the support councillors could offer to this community. This could be included in the council's existing equalities and inclusion training;

Item 9(a)

- 8) request that the Cabinet agrees to publicly acknowledge International Trans Day of Visibility (March 31st), in addition to Trans Day of Remembrance (November 20th) and fly the transgender flag on those days;
- 9) to fly the Progress Flag at Pride
- 10) request a review of all forms and documents created by the council with a view to ensuring they are trans and non-binary inclusive where possible;
- 11) encourage council staff and councillors to make small gestures that make it clear transgender and non-binary people are welcome. This could include adding pronouns to email signatures;
- 12) consider the particular needs of transgender and non-binary people who are at high risk of facing homelessness when implementing the council's existing strategies on homelessness and rough sleeping;
- 13) work with partner organisations to ensure transgender and non-binary people are not discriminated against whilst accessing homelessness services;
- 14) ask NHOSC to consider the barriers which transgender and non-binary people face when accessing medical care and to find ways of reducing them;
- 15) review with a view to improving signposting to support services for transgender and non-binary people within council communications, including a dedicated page on the council's website;
- 16) provide a gender-neutral option such as Mx on all council forms.

Motion to: Council

29 September 2022

Subject: Biodiversity and SUDS supplementary planning documents

Proposer: Councillor Carlo

Seconder: Councillor Osborn

Nature continues to decline across the UK. The loss of habitat and decline of species is largely due to intensive agriculture, other changes in land management, and urbanisation. Climate change is adding to pressures on nature. In Norwich we can help nature recover by ensuring that any future development is more sympathetic to nature and by preventing nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphate from entering the River Wensum.

Council resolves to:

- 1) note the decline in nature in Norwich, Norfolk and the UK;
- 2) note the importance of nutrient neutrality and the negative impact of large quantities of chemicals entering rivers, particularly in protected areas;
- 3) ask cabinet to give high priority to reversing the decline in nature by enhancing green spaces of different types, linked together by ecological networks;
- 4) ask cabinet to prepare a supplementary planning document on biodiversity and green infrastructure; and
- 5) ask cabinet to prepare a supplementary planning document on sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

Motion to: Council

29 September 2022

Subject: Cost of living crisis and the Norwich economy

Proposer: Councillor Waters

Seconder: Councillor Jones

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

Council RESOLVES to

- 1) Note.
 - a) Restrictive anti-trade union laws, most recently the Trade Union Act 2016, have made it harder for unions to organise and stand up for their members. These restrictions mean workers are denied their fair share of the wealth they create, whilst a lack of collective representation has led to a race to the bottom. The right of unions to operate effectively in the workplace, in each sector of the economy, is vital for achieving fairness, dignity and democracy at work for all.
 - b) A radical ‘New Deal for Working People’ is needed to improve the lives of workers by strengthening individual and collective rights - repealing anti-trade union laws, including the Trade Union Act, and introducing new rights to help unions bargain, recruit, organise and win a better deal for their members. Critical to this will be strengthening rights at work for all workers, from day one on the job, ending fire and rehire, making work more family-friendly, and make it easier to balance work with home, community and family life, banning zero-hours contracts and ensuring everyone has the right to regular hours they can rely on, strengthening trade union rights, raising pay and conditions, bringing in Fair Pay Agreements to drive up pay and conditions for all workers, using sectoral collective bargaining.

Item 9(c)

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

2) Ask cabinet to; -

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

Motion to: Council

29 September 2022

Subject: Library story time events

Proposer: Councillor Huntley

Seconder: Councillor Stonard

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

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

Council resolves to:

- 1) Affirm support for the continuation of such story time events as a way of promoting positive, inclusive, and non-discriminatory attitudes within the city
- 2) Re-affirm the Norwich 2040 vision of celebrating our diverse neighbourhoods and communities
- 3) Ask the leaders of all Groups to write to the relevant Norfolk County Council member expressing the city council's wish for further such events to be held in the city.

Motion to: Council

29 September 2022

Subject: Defending the right to seek safety from war and persecution

Proposer: Councillor Wright

Seconded: Councillor Ackroyd

Council **RESOLVES** to

1) note that:

- a) Norwich City Council is proud of our history of welcoming people seeking safety in Norwich;
- b) there are significant problems with the UK asylum system that affect people in Norwich, including a record backlog of cases awaiting a decision, a de facto ban on working, and enforced poverty and homelessness;
- c) the Nationality and Borders Act does not address these issues, and has instead created a two-tier system, punishing people seeking safety based on the journeys they make;
- d) under these laws, people seeking safety will be criminalised and threatened with removal to Rwanda;
- e) people will be warehoused in large accommodation centres, segregated from communities and denied support;
- f) many recognised refugees will receive a temporary and precarious status;
- g) over 400 charities and faith groups have signed a national pledge to 'Fight the 'Anti-Refugee Laws', as well as MPs from all opposition parties.

2) believe that:

- a) everyone's claim for asylum should be treated equally and fairly;
- b) these are fundamentally 'anti-refugee' laws that undermine internationally recognised rights for people fleeing war and persecution to seek safety;
- c) these measures will create ever-longer delays in the asylum process, lead to greater poverty and homelessness in Norwich and will undermine people's ability to rebuild their lives;

Item 9(e)

- d) people seeking safety should be housed as our neighbours and as a part of our communities;
 - e) the UK needs an asylum system that empowers people seeking safety to rebuild their lives and enables communities to welcome them;
- 3) agree to:
- a) defend the right to seek safety from war and persecution in the UK and sign the national 'Fight the Anti-Refugee Laws' pledge;
 - b) call on the UK Government to withdraw the UK-Rwanda agreement, repeal the Nationality and Borders Act, and work with Local Authorities and communities to build a refugee protection system that treats all people with dignity and compassion;
 - c) work with local organisations and people with lived experience of the asylum system to identify ways to mitigate the effects of these measures in Norwich;
 - d) Join the network of cities and towns which promote the inclusion and welfare of people who are fleeing violence and persecution and become a recognised Council of Sanctuary.

Motion to: Council

29 September 2022

Subject: Ban conversion therapy

Proposer: Councillor Wright

Seconder: Councillor Lubbock

Council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) recognise and oppose the harm caused to our LGBT+ community in the past through the denial of rights and equal treatment and further recognises that discrimination does still occur today.
- 2) recognises and oppose the ongoing harm the practice of so-called conversion therapy brings to LGBT+ people.
- 3) call on the Government to follow through on the promises made for several years to outlaw the practise of so-called conversion therapy.
- 4) also calls on the Government to ensure that any ban on conversion therapy is fully trans-inclusive, protecting all LGBT+ people from this cruel practice.
- 5) calls on the relevant Government department + Minister to introduce an effective ban on conversion therapy within England, supported by a programme of work to help tackle these practices in all their forms. Furthermore, this Council will highlight and promote the continued support, counselling and advocacy our local groups provide to members of the LGBT+ Community.
- 6) recognise the excellent work done by local people and organisations to support the LGBT+ community here in Norwich, particularly Norwich Pride and extends its thanks and support to them.

