

Cabinet

Agenda

Members of the Cabinet:

Cllr J Fuller (Chairman) Cllr K Mason Billig (Vice Chairman) Cllr Y Bendle Cllr M Edney Cllr L Neal Cllr A Thomas Cllr J Worley Leader, External Affairs and Policy Governance and Efficiency Better Lives Clean and Safe Environment Stronger Economy Customer Focus Finance and Resources

Date & Time:

Monday 15 March 2021 9.00 am

Place:

To be hosted remotely at: South Norfolk House, Cygnet Court, Long Stratton, Norwich, NR15 2XE

Contact:

Claire White tel (01508) 533669 Email: <u>democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk</u> Website: www.south-norfolk.gov.uk

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE:

This meeting will be live streamed for public viewing via the following link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZciRgwo84-iPyRImsTCIng

If a member of the public would like to attend to speak on an agenda item, please email your request to <u>democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk</u>, no later than 5.00pm on Thursday 11 March 2021.

Large print version can be made available

If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance.



AGENDA

- 1. To report apologies for absence;
- Any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972. Urgent business may only be taken if, "by reason of special circumstances" (which will be recorded in the minutes), the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency;
- 3. To receive Declarations of interest from Members;

(Please see guidance – page 3)

- 4. To confirm the minutes from the meeting of Cabinet held on Monday
8 February 2021(attached page 5)
- 5. Strategic Performance, Risk and Finance Report for Quarter 3 2020/21; (report attached – page 19) (Appendix 3 to follow)
- 6. Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan Submission (report attached page 59) (Please Note: as Appendix 1 has been provided by an external source, we cannot guarantee that it is fully accessible)
- 7. Proposed Change to Discretionary Rate Relief Policy (report attached page 168)
- 8. Covid-19 Hardship Fund Policy 2021/22(report attached page 172)
- 9. Affordable Home Ownership Qualification (report attached page 180)
- **10. Social Prescribing**(report attached page 184)
- **11. Response to New Homes Bonus Consultation**(report to follow)
- **12. Cabinet Core Agenda**(attached page 191)

Agenda Item: 3

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

When declaring an interest at a meeting Members are asked to indicate whether their interest in the matter is pecuniary, or if the matter relates to, or affects a pecuniary interest they have, or if it is another type of interest. Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote. If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed. If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting. Members are also requested when appropriate to make any declarations under the Code of Practice on Planning and Judicial matters.

Have you declared the interest in the register of interests as a pecuniary interest? If Yes, you will need to withdraw from the room when it is discussed.

Does the interest directly:

- 1. affect yours, or your spouse / partner's financial position?
- 2. relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner?
- 3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council
- 4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own
- 5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in

If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary.

Please refer to the guidance given on declaring pecuniary interests in the register of interest forms. If you have a pecuniary interest, you will need to inform the meeting and then withdraw from the room when it is discussed. If it has not been previously declared, you will also need to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.

Does the interest indirectly affect or relate any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above?

If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but you should not partake in general discussion or vote.

Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be an other interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.

Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting, and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.

FOR GUIDANCE REFER TO THE FLOWCHART OVERLEAF.

PLEASE REFER ANY QUERIES TO THE MONITORING OFFICER IN THE FIRST INSTANCE

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF





Agenda Item: 4

CABINET

Minutes of a remote meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk Council, held on Monday 8 February 2021 at 9.00am.

Committee Members Present:	Councillors: J Fuller (Chairman), Y Bendle, K Mason Billig, L Neal, A Thomas and J Worley
Apologies for absence:	Councillor: M Edney
Other Members in Attendance:	Councillors: B Bernard, C Brown, V Clifford-Jackson, T Laidlaw, N Legg, G Minshull and J Overton
Officers in Attendance:	The Managing Director (T Holden), the Director of People and Communities (J Sutterby), the Director of Resources (D Lorimer), the Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (E Hodds), the Assistant Director of Finance (R Fincham), the Chief of Staff (H Ralph), the Assistant Director of Planning (H Mellors), the Housing and Benefits Manager (R Dunsire), the ICT and Digital Manager (C Balmer), the Strategy and Programme Manager (S Carey), the Transformation Manager (T Sayer) and the Senior Community Planning Officer (R Squires).
Also in Attendance:	Mr J Joyce – Chairman of Poringland Parish Council

2861 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared 'other' interests in the matters detailed below:

With regard to item 5, the Poringland Neighbourhood Plan, Cllr L Neal declared an interest as a member of Poringland Parish Council, and as a former member of the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan Panel.

With regard to items 6 and 7, the Greater Norwich Growth Board: Joint Five-Year Investment Plan, and the Update to the Local Development Scheme, Cllr J Fuller declared an interest as a member of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership, and Greater Norwich Growth Boards.

With regard to item 13, the Council Tax Assistance Scheme, Cllr A Thomas declared an interest in that she had applied for a Council Tax discount due to her home being uninhabitable, due to the recent flooding.

With regard to item 9, the Covid-19 Update report, Cllr V Clifford-Jackson declared an interest as a Trustee of Voluntary Norfolk.

2862 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet meeting held on 11 January 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

2863 PORINGLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2019-2039 DECISION TO PROCEED TO REFERENDUM

Members considered the report of the Senior Community Planning Officer, which sought Cabinet approval for a minor amendment to the second examiner's recommended modified wording to Policy 2 of the proposed Poringland Neighbourhood Plan, and to proceed to a consultation on the amendment.

Mr J Joyce, Chairman of Poringland Parish Council, was invited to address the Cabinet. Mr Joyce explained that one of the key issues the Plan had tried to address was the pace and scale of development in Poringland, hence the Plan's Policy 2, to provide a detailed focus on small scale development. Unfortunately, the first examination had diminished the thrust of this policy, and it was felt that the modifications from the Examiner did not meet the aspirations of residents. Whilst the second Examiner's report was much improved, the Parish Council felt it still fell short in ensuring that the Plan would attract community support. Mr Joyce expressed his gratitude to officers who had assisting in finding a solution, that would hopefully meet approval from the local community.

The Portfolio Holder, Cllr L Neal, commended the recommendations of the report to Cabinet. She explained that the residents of Poringland were not against smaller developments but had felt overwhelmed at the pace and scale of recent development. The second examination had not quite met the needs and aspirations of the Parish Council and residents, and therefore she was supportive of the minor amendments that had been recommended by officers, which she felt would satisfy the aspirations of the Parish.

The local member for Poringland, Cllr J Overton, expressed his support for the the Parish Council, and urged Cabinet to support the recommendations of the report.

The Chairman referred to officers' proposed amendment to the alternative wording to Policy 2 and explained that he felt this to be an elegant solution, which strengthened the Policy.

In response to queries, the Senior Community Planning Officer explained that if approved, the Plan would need to go out for further consultation for a sixweek period, before Cabinet decided whether to proceed to a referendum. He advised that this probably would not be in time to allow for the referendum on 6 May, however, he would be liaising with the elections team to determine time scales.

The Chairman indicated that he would be in support of a special cabinet meeting, if this would ensure that the referendum could take place on 6 May along with the County and the Police and Crime Commissioner elections

RESOLVED

То

1. Approve a minor amendment to the second examiner's recommended modified wording to Policy 2 of the proposed Poringland Neighbourhood Plan, as set out in Appendix 2.

and

2. To proceed to a consultation on this amendment, in accordance with section 13 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The Reason for the Decision

To ensure that the Policy and the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions, whilst also meeting the aspirations of the Parish Council and residents.

Other Options Considered

- To approve the policy wording as originally modified by South Norfolk Council
- To approve the amended policy wording as recommended by the second examiner

2864 GREATER NORWICH GROWTH BOARD – JOINT FIVE-YEAR INVESTMENT PLAN

Members considered the report of the Place Shaping Manager, which sought approval of the Greater Norwich Growth Board Joint Five-Year Investment Plan 2021-26, and the allocation of CIL to four specified projects.

The Chairman introduced the report, explaining that approval was sought to support a spend of £921k over four discretionary projects. He acknowledged that none of these projects fell in the South Norfolk district, however, he reminded members that South Norfolk benefitted significantly from the growth programme, making reference to investment in education at Costessey, Cringleford and Hethersett, and further investment in leisure and upgrades to libraries.

Members also noted that funding was still earmarked to support the Long Stratton bypass, and as local member, this was welcomed by Cllr A Thomas.

RESOLVED

TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL:

1. Agrees the Greater Norwich Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2021-2026 included at Appendix A of the report.

and

2. Approves the allocation of CIL to 4 specified projects, these projects will form the 2021/22 Annual Growth Programme (AGP); the allocation of £2M to support the Education Capital Programme within Greater Norwich; and, the allocation of an additional £341,000 to projects GP46 and GP53 that were initially allocated funding within the 2018/19 AGP.

The Reason for the Decision

To support the provision of infrastructure to benefit the District

Other Options Considered

- To make further recommendations for priority projects
- To agree only some of the proposed projects

2865 UPDATE TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Members considered the report of the Place Shaping Manager, which sought approval to make amendments to the Local Development Scheme, to reflect changes to the timetable for the South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Document. The Assistant Director Planning referred members to the proposals, explaining that it was a legislative requirement for the Council to publish and update the Local Development Scheme. Referring to the Village Clusters Housing Allocations Document, she advised that this would go out for its first public consultation (Regulation 18) in May/June 2021.

The Chairman felt this to be a more realistic timetable, drawing attention to the 400 village sites that had come forward, and the need to ensure that the process was correct and thorough.

RESOLVED

TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL approves the proposed amendments to the current Local Development Scheme (LDS).

The Reason for the Decision

To ensure that the Local Development Scheme timetable reflects the changes to the timetable for the South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Document.

Other Options Considered

None

2866 DELIVERY PLAN 2021/22

Members considered the report of the Strategy and Programmes Manager, which presented members with the Council's Delivery Plan for 2021/22, for approval.

The Chairman introduced the report, stressing the importance of having a Plan in place that was flexible and adaptive to change. He reminded Cabinet that all members had been able to participate in the formation of the Plan.

The Strategy and Programmes Manager provided members with a brief overview of the report, explaining that the Plan's purpose was to set out the activities and the programmes of work the Council would be undertaking to meet the priority areas in the second year of the four year strategic Plan. She explained that the Plan took account of the Council's Covid-19 Recovery Plan and outlined ways in which the Council would respond to the challenges the pandemic had brought and how it would support residents and businesses going forward.

Members discussed the importance of flexibility and referred to a number of areas where future changes to the Plan and budget, might be required, such as environmental protection. The Chairman acknowledged that no one could have foreseen the current pandemic, or the recent flooding across the District, but also stressed the importance of anticipating change and being sufficiently prepared for the impact the pandemic would leave, for example on homelessness. The Managing Director was confident that officers were anticipating future challenges, and he also drew attention to work being carried out with Norfolk County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership, to consider the medium and long term implications of Covid-19, the results of which would feed in to the Delivery Plan.

RESOLVED

TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL approves the adoption of the one-year Delivery Plan for 2021/22.

The Reason for the Decision

To provide a document that sets out the ambitions of the Council going forward and provides an in-year overview of the different activities needed to ensure that it is delivering on those ambitions

Other Options Considered

To decide not to adopt the Plan.

2867 COVID-19 UPDATE REPORT

Members considered the report of the Internal Consultancy Lead, which provided an overview of the impact of Covid-19 on residents, communities and businesses in South Norfolk, together with the detail of the Council's ongoing response.

The Assistant Director Chief of Staff outlined the salient points of the report, providing a brief update on the position of Covid-19 cases in the District, and outlining the Council's response.

Cabinet was proud of the amount of direct financial support it had been able to provide to local businesses, via a wide range of schemes, and also those people struggling financially as a direct consequence of Covid-19.

During discussion, members congratulated staff for all the work they had done, stepping up and adapting to new ways of working, with staff being redeployed and working long hours, in what were difficult personal circumstances for some. Special mention was given to staff in Economic Development, Leisure and the Help Hub.

The Chairman felt the pandemic had shone a light on the important role of district councils in connecting with residents, communities and local

businesses, and attention was drawn to the vital role the Council played in partnership working.

Turning to compliance, the Assistant Director Regulatory explained that staff had a clear remit to advise and support, to issue warnings if required, and to only issue enforcement action as a last resort. Members noted that there had been an extremely high percentage of compliance from local businesses and residents, although officers were mindful that as the country came out of lockdown, rules would become more complex and breaches would become more common.

The Chairman thanked officers for an excellent report and suggested a further update might be appropriate in May.

RESOLVED

To note the contents of the report regarding the local impact of Covid-19 together with the activities the Council is taking to mitigate those impacts.

2868 CAPITAL STRATEGY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22 TO 2025/26

Members considered the report of the Capital Accountant, which presented Cabinet with the Capital Strategy and the proposed Capital Programme for 2021/22-2025/26.

The Assistant Director Finance presented his report, drawing attention to Appendix A, the Capital Strategy, and Appendix B, the Capital Programme. He advised members that this equated to a capital programme of £26.5m for 21/22 but stressed that some projects were provisional, and that slippage was possible. Members noted that the project relating to Poringland Phase 3, had been incorrectly highlighted in the programme as provisional; in fact the project was approved back in June 2020 and work on the project was underway.

The Chairman referred to the capital programme as both ambitious and affordable. He believed the Council's approach to the balance of risk and reward to be appropriate, with a mix of cash, property and trading assets, and he referred to the strong governance arrangements in place with Big Sky companies.

Turning to the need to borrow, he explained that even the worst-case scenario would see the Council well within its credit limit.

With regard to a new provisional project at the Bawburgh Temporary Stopping Place for Gypsies and Travellers, the Chairman stressed the need for capital improvements to the provision, and also a commitment for stronger management of the site.

In response to a query regarding performance figures for quarter 3, members were advised that these would be available for the March meeting of the Cabinet. The Assistant Director Finance explained that £14.9m of the current capital programme had been spent, and the Managing Director assured members that capital projects had progressed well over the last 12 months.

One member queried the rate of slippage in previous years, and the Chairman stressed that due to the complex nature of projects and partnership working, it was inevitable that slippage would occur, and for that very reason, the Council presented a five year plan.

RESOLVED

TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL approval of

- (a) the Capital Strategy (at Appendix A of the report)
- (b) the Capital Programme for 2021/22-2025/26 (at Appendix B of the report).

The Reason for the Decision

To ensure that the Strategy represents a prudent and affordable approach to investment in the Council's assets, to support service delivery, the District and its residents.

To ensure that the Capital Programme is affordable and complies with Council policies

Other Options Considered

None

2869 REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2021/22

Members considered the report of the Assistant Director Finance which detailed information regarding the Council's revenue budget for 2021/22, to enable Cabinet to make recommendations to Council on 24th February regarding the Council's budget and council tax for 2021/22.

The Assistant Director Finance drew members' attention to the key points of the report. He explained that the report had been written based on the provisional finance settlement announced back in December, and he was pleased to report that it had since been confirmed that there had been no changes to the main figures of the settlement, and an increase in the Rural Services Delivery Grant of £19k. Members noted that the budget would allow for a £436k addition to the general fund reserves.

Regarding Council Tax, he advised that the budget proposed a £5.00 increase to a band D property, which equated to a 3.2% increase on current figures.

Members' attention was drawn to the medium term financial position, and it was noted that although the proposed budget for 2021/22 was balanced, in future years, should government funding reduce as expected, there would be a funding gap of between £0.5 and £1m over the medium term.

Turning to his responsibilities as Section 151 Officer, the Assistant Director confirmed that in his opinion, the budget had been based on a reasonable set of assumptions with due regard to the risks and was therefore robust. He also confirmed that he considered the level of reserves to be adequate.

The Chairman referred to future turbulent levels of income, and gave mention to the New Homes Bonus, Section 106 Agreements, CIL and non-domestic rates. These unknowns were in addition to the decimated income from the Council's leisure provision. With regard to the £436k earmarked for the general reserves, he explained that this might be required to respond to the ongoing impact of Covid-19, for example homelessness.

Cllr K Mason Billig referred to section 2.30 of the report, and suggested that a future report was brought to Cabinet to address the additional resources required to help implement the actions set out in the Environment Strategy, and also in response to the recent flooding in the District. This proposal was supported by Cabinet. In response to queries regarding the report, the Chairman explained that it was required to identify the level of investment required and how it would be spent. The Managing Director added that work was underway to scope out the enforcement powers of the Council and how this could be better managed within existing resources, and how additional resources might deliver more ambitious targets.

Cllr A Thomas referred to para 20.20 of the report regarding Leisure Services, and the proposal to support the service with £2.5m over the next three years. She explained that the service had been tasked with producing a recovery plan, to work within the allocated budget, and that this would come forward for scrutiny in due course. She reminded members that the service had an important role to play in getting people fit, both mentally and physically, post Covid, and to address the general wellbeing of residents across the District.

Cllr L Neal drew attention to para 5.3 of the report, regarding proposals to adjust the current categories and associated charges relating to Planning Preapplication advice and explained that this was as a result of feedback from developers and agents. She stressed that fees were not being reduced, but had been spread out across the additional categories.

The Portfolio Holder, Cllr J Worley thanked officers for all their hard work in preparing the budget. He felt it a real achievement that despite all the pressures, a balanced budget had been possible, along with an ambitious capital programme, and he commended the report to members.

RESOLVED

1. TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

- (a) The approval of the base budget; subject to confirmation of the finalised Local Government Finance Settlement figures which may necessitate an adjustment through the General Revenue Reserve to maintain a balanced budget. Authority to make any such change to be delegated to the Assistant Director of Finance;
- (b) The use of the revenue reserves as set out in Appendix E of the report;
- (c) That the Council's demand on the Collection Fund for 2021/22 for General Expenditure shall be £8,037,280 and for Special Expenditure shall be £7,192;
- (d) That the Band D level of Council Tax be £160.00 for General Expenditure and £0.14 for Special Expenditure.
- 2. To agree changes to the proposed fees and charges, as set out in section 5 of the report.
- 3. To note
 - (a) The advice of the Section 151 Officer with regard to section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, contained in section 10 of the report.
 - (b) The future budget pressures contained in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- 4. That a future report regarding investment in flooding resilience and protecting the environment, be considered at a future meeting of the Cabinet.

The Reason for the Decision

To provide a budget which meets the Council's priorities and to set a council tax affordable to residents.

Other Options Considered

None

2870 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2021/22

Members considered the report of Corporate Accountant, which set out the Council's approach to the management of its borrowing, investments and cash flows.

The Portfolio Holder, Cllr J Worley, introduced the report, explaining that as at the end of December 2020, the Council had treasury investments of \pounds 33.5m and \pounds 24m in loans to wholly owned Council companies. Members noted that the expected return on investments for 20/21 was approximately \pounds 62k.

RESOLVED

TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:

- (a) The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22;
- (b) The Treasury Management Policy Statement 2021/22 (Appendix 1 of the report);
- (c) The Annual Investment Strategy 2021/22 (Appendix 2 of the report);
- (d) The Treasury Management Practice (TMP1) (Appendix 3 of the report);
- (e) The Treasury Management Scheme of Delegation (Appendix 4 of the report);
- (f) The Prudential Indicators (Appendix 5 of the report);
- (g) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement (Appendix 6 of the report).

The Reason for the Decision

To ensure that the Council's Investment Strategy remains prudent and complies with statutory requirements

Other Options Considered

None

2871 COUNCIL TAX ASSISTANCE SCHEME 2021/22

Members considered the report of the Housing and Benefits Manager and the Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager, which sought agreement to remove the additional discretionary payments from the Council Tax Scheme, in to a separate and stand-alone policy.

The Portfolio Holder, Cllr Y Bendle commended the report to Cabinet, explaining that in accordance with the regulations, the Council Tax scheme was reviewed on an annual basis, and although there were no proposed changes to the scheme itself, there was a need to separate out the discretionary payments. This was to ensure that the discretionary payments could be amended without being tied into the timing restrictions of Council Tax assistance regulations. Members noted that a report regarding the separate policy would be presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

The Housing and Benefits Manager added that substantial changes had been made to the Council Tax Assistance Scheme in the previous year, to ensure that it was appropriate and aligned to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The Chairman expressed his support for the recommendation, explaining that it would allow discretionary payments to be more flexible in meeting the needs of residents.

RESOLVED

TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL approves the removal of the discretionary payments from the Council Tax Assistance Scheme, into a separate stand-alone policy.

The Reason for the Decision

To allow changes to discretionary payments to occur on a more flexible basis, allowing the Council to respond quickly when needed.

Other Options Considered

That discretionary payments remain as part of the Council Tax Assistance Scheme.

2872 MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT NORFOLK AND WAVENEY HEALTH AND CARE PARTNERSHIP

Members considered the report of the Assistant Director Governance and Business Support, which sought retrospective approval for the Council to enter in to a mutual aid agreement as a voluntary reciprocal exchange of employees between partners in the area, in order to maximise an efficient response to the management of Covid-19 across Norfolk.

The Managing Director advised members that there had been a brilliant response to the call for staff to assist the NHS, with over 100 volunteers willing to support colleagues on the front line.

The Assistant Director Governance and Business Support gave special mention to the Council's leisure staff who had already started work at the

Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. She thanked all those involved and explained that feedback from the both the hospital and staff had been positive.

The Chairman paid tribute to all those who had volunteered, particularly those who had gone above and beyond and offered to work in their own time, and without payment. He anticipated that similar agreements might be required in future with other partners, such as schools, and he proposed that authority be granted to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Leader, to enter in to future Mutual Aid Agreements with public sector partners.

RESOLVED

- 1. To retrospectively agree the decision to enter into the Mutual Aid Agreement, as agreed under urgency provision between the Leader and the Managing Director.
- 2. To delegate to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the authority to enter into future suitable Mutual Aid Agreements, with public sector partners.

The Reason for the Decision

To maximise Norfolk's response to the pandemic, and to assist with the immediate need of the NHS.

Other Options Considered

None

2873 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members noted the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda.

2874 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was **RESOLVED** to exclude the public and press from the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following item of business on the grounds that it involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended)

2874 ICT INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THE ONE NETWORK

Members considered the exempt report of the ICT and Digital Manager and the Transformation Manager, which sought approval from Cabinet to award a contract to the preferred provider for the provision of new ICT Infrastructure.

The Transformation Manager outlined the salient points of the report to members. He explained the outcome of the tender evaluation process and the reason for the preferred provider.

The Portfolio Holder, Cllr A Thomas, commended the report to members, and it was

RESOLVED

To agree the recommendations, as outlined at section 8 of the report.

The Reason for the Decision

To support the strategic ambition of the two councils to consolidate and align ICT systems across the organisations.

Other Options Considered

None

(The meeting concluded at 11.06 am)

Chairman



Agenda Item: 5 Cabinet 15 March 2021

Strategic Performance, Risk and Finance Report Quarter 3 2020/21

Report Author(s):	Finance: Maddy Bussens (Senior Finance Business Partner) 01508 508713 mbussens@s-norfolk.gov.uk
	Performance & Risk : Sinead Carey (Strategy and Programmes Manager) 01508 533661 <u>scarey@s-norfolk.gov.uk</u>
Portfolio:	Governance and Efficiency Finance & Resources
Ward(s) Affected:	All

Purpose of the Report:

The purpose of the Strategic Performance, Risk and Finance Report is to provide an overview of the performance of the Council against the key outcomes set out in the Delivery Plan for 2020/21. This Quarterly Report covers Quarter 3, the period from October to December 2020.

Recommendations:

Cabinet to:

- 1. Note the revenue and capital position (variance details in Appendix 1)
- 2. Note the current position with respect to risks and agree the actions to support risk mitigation (detailed in Appendix 2).
- 3. Note the 2020/21 performance for Quarter 3 (detail in Appendix 3).

1 SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides a summarised overview of the performance of the Council and is aligned to the key outcomes set out in the Delivery Plan for 2020/21. This Quarterly Report covers Quarter 3.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council agreed in March 2020 to move forward with implementing the fouryear Strategic Plan which sets out the vision and ambitions of the Council. Alongside this, the Council developed an in-year Delivery Plan for 2020/21, which has been updated to reflect the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.2 At the heart of the Strategic Plan 2020-2024, is the vision for our place:

'Working together to create the best place for everyone, now and for future generations'

- 2.3 This vision is underpinned by the Council's strategic priorities:
 - Growing the economy
 - Supporting individuals and empowering communities
 - Protecting and improving the natural and built environment, whilst maximising quality of life
 - Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively
- 2.4 The Delivery Plan sets out the key activities to be delivered within the first year of the Strategic Plan, broken down into service delivery and major projects/programmes of work. There is clear linkage between our vision and aspirations, detailed in the Strategic Plan, our priorities and projects and the Strategic Performance, Risk and Finance Reports. To enable the activities to be monitored, the Delivery Plan provides several Delivery Measures which are reported into Cabinet in Quarter 2, Quarter 3 and Quarter 4.
- 2.5 The report summaries the Council's performance, risk and finance position for Quarter 3, with detailed overview provided in the appendices to the report as set out below:
 - Appendix 1 Finance
 - Appendix 2 Strategic Risk Register
 - Appendix 3 Delivery Measure Performance

3 CURRENT POSITION/FINDINGS

3.1 The below sections provide a summary for Quarter 3 finance, performance and risk data.

Finance Revenue Dashboard Overview

3.2 The following table provides a summary of the revenue budget position. It shows the actual spend as at end of December 2020, and the estimated outturn for the 20/21 financial year.

	Original Annual Budget £'000	Latest Annual Budget (LAB) £'000	Actual Spend to End Dec £'000	Estimated Outturn for year £'000	Variance (LAB - EO) £'000
Managing Director	1,149	1,164	849	1,132	32
Resources	6,593	6,448	4,233	6,139	309
Place	1,454	1,700	438	733	967
People & Communities	4,541	5,485	2,116	4,286	1,199
Net Cost of Services	13,737	14,797	7,636	12,290	2,507
Investment Income	-1,541	-1,541	-704	-984	-557
Interest payable	192	192	-	3	189
Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	2,445	2,445	-	2,445	-
Transfers to General Reserves	1,838	1,009	-	1,009	-
Total Amount to be Funded by Taxpayers and Government Grant	16,671	16,902	6,932	14,763	2,139

- 3.3 It is currently estimated that SNC will underspend this year by £2.139m. Some of these underspends are a one off in nature, others are a result of the government providing additional funding to support income losses, and a number of staff have been redeployed to support the COVID response and where this has happened staff costs have been reimbursed.
- 3.4 **Managing Director** is forecasting to achieve a small underspend of £32,000.
- 3.5 **Resources directorate** is forecasting an underspend of £309,000 The reasons for this underspend are primarily as follows:
 - Governance is forecasting an underspend on legal fees following a refund from NPLAW due to the change in contracts.
 - IT are forecasting some savings through telephone and data infrastructure.
 - Savings are forecasted from the corporate contingency.
 - Income received from court summons is forecasted to come in lower than budget due to courts being closed. However, this income deficit will be offset by the savings forecasted.
- 3.6 **People and Communities** directorate is forecasting an underspend of £1.199m.

The reasons for this underspend are primarily as follows:

- Leisure At the start of the year the net cost of leisure was budgeted to be £0.4m. During the year we increased the net budget to £1.3m to reflect the likely impact of the pandemic. However, as we have been able to redeploy the leisure staff, we are now expecting a net cost of £0.7m. This is £0.6m better than the amended budget, but still £0.3m worse that the original budget.
- £0.3m favourable variance within waste due to Increased income from recycling and other operational cost savings.
- There is a £0.3m favourable variance in housing mainly due to reduced periods of void generating higher income and the migration over to Universal Credit which reduces the amount of housing benefit payments made for housing costs.
- 3.7 **Place directorate** is forecasting an underspend of £0.967m. The reasons for this underspend are primarily as follows:
 - Business support £0.1m additional income due to increased land charges fees from the stamp duty exemption initiative currently in place.
 - Economic Growth £0.3m, generally due to establishment savings across the teams due to vacant positions and some advertising expenditure that was planned but not used.
 - Investment properties and Crafton House forecasting higher than budgeted income.
 - Planning £0.6m includes a one-off adjustment for historical apportionment of building control losses from partners income being received. Planning has also achieved some cost savings throughout the year.
- 3.8 A more detailed analysis of the variances is attached in Appendix 1.
- 3.9 The forecast outturn position is shown graphically below.



3.10 **Income** is forecast to be £5.5m down compared to budget. This is largely explained by a compensating reduction in Housing Benefit Grant from Government of £4.7m (see non pay variance below).

Internal Audit is forecasting a reduction in income of £0.2m for services not carried out during the initial lockdown period.

A one-off adjustment for historical apportionment of building control losses from partners income being received results in an increased forecasted income (£0.3m).

Due to continued closure of the Leisure Centres the income is now forecasted to be £0.8m lower than budget.

3.11 **Non-Pay** budgets are expected to underspend by £6.7m.

This is primarily because Housing Benefit expenditure is down by £4.7m, as more claimants migrate over to Universal Credit. This is however offset by a compensating reduction in the Housing Benefit Grant from Government.

There is also an additional £2.5m across all other directorates where expenditure is lower than budgeted in the period.

£0.7m is within the Leisure centres due to their closure.

Governance is forecasting £0.5m savings mainly within Audit and IT. Audit work was unable to commence during lockdown so these savings are offset by lower forecasted income.

Due to priority projects and New Ways of Working there is £0.9m underspend in several areas

3.12 **Pay budgets** are expected to underspend by £1.3m.

Staff being redeployed to support the Covid-19 response. These staff costs are therefore chargeable against Covid-19 budgets (rather than their substantive posts) which generates a salary saving against the substantive budgets. Further savings through vacant posts across the directorates.

Covid-19

- 3.13 In 2020/21 SNC has been award £1.852m in additional grant to cover the additional costs it has incurred responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.14 Members have allocated this funding to specific areas to cover specific pressures as follows.

	£'000	£'000
Covid-19 Emergency Funding for Local Government		
- Tranche 1 – May	-55	
- Tranche 2 – May	-1,410	
- Tranche 3 – Aug	-201	
- Tranche 4 – Nov	-186	-1,852
Allocation of Funding		
- General Expenditure (including this report)	700	
- Homelessness Expenditure (including this report)	300	
- Operation Beacon to support businesses	50	
- Business facility grants	50	
- Cost of Council tax support	256	
- Increase in DHP budget	50	
- Reduction in Council tax collection	154	
- Contribution to Norfolk Strategic Fund	150	
 Additional regulatory expenditure 	55	
- Hardship money	100	1,865
Lost Income		
- Estimated lost income	3,233	
- Offset by compensation grant	-1,778	1,455
Saving used to offset pressures		-433
Overall position (positive is worse off/ negative is better off)		1,035

- 3.15 All these budgets will be used to support the Covid-19 response in 20/21 and 21/22.
- 3.16 In additional to the general funding, the Council has also been awarded various other funding streams to support specific projects e.g. grant to businesses, provision of Covid Support Advisors, track and trace payments etc.

Finance Capital Dashboard Overview

3.17 The following table provides a summary of the capital budget position. To date SNC has spent £14.9m on capital schemes.

Scheme	Annual Budget	Budget to End Dec	Actual to	Variance to End Dec	Comment
	including slippage £'000	£'000	End Dec £'000	£'000	
Approved Schemes					
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,028	771	369	402	Spend being impacted by COVID. In Dec we received an extra allocation of £123k from NCC - this has been included in the budget for the year and the team are working on committing these funds. We have recently received confirmation that if any of the original allocation from the Better Care Fund remains unspent at year end, we can roll the funding forward into 2021- 22.
Improved Leisure Provision	518	408	394	14	All leisure centre projects are now complete for the year with only minimal final costs still to come through. Included in the total budget is £110k for a contribution to Long Stratton Pool. This will not be spent this year and is therefore likely to

					be slipped into 21- 22
Depot Projects including Vehicle Replacement	1,337	1,003	90	213	A further large vehicle was delivered in December and we are expecting two more to be delivered in February, which would take total spend on vehicles to £987k against a budget of £1.021m. The Waste Route Optimisation System project is currently on hold and the Budget of £70k remains unspent, but a paper is currently being written to decide the future of the project.
Integrated Working Model with Police	63	63	63	-	Grant now paid to the Police
IT Projects	1,420	1,065	104	961	The vast majority of this budget relates to the new infrastructure project and as the award of the contract is now not expected to be agreed until mid Q4, it is likely that the cost of this will slip into 21-22. Spend against some of the more 'business as usual' budgets has fallen behind whilst mobile working solutions have been prioritised.

					The total budget has been increased to include an additional £141k that was recently approved for the purchase of Laptops to enable home working.
Inv Property - Cringleford	3,000	3,000	3,000	-	Loan to BSD granted in May. No further expenditure expected.
BSD - Homes England Funding	5,440	5,440	5,440	-	These loans are financed by Homes England Grant funding.
BSPM Rental Home Purchases on new sites	550	-	-	-	No new homes available for purchase at present
Norwich Research Park Enterprise Zone Office	4,354	3,266	1,881	1,385	Building on track to be complete by the end of the financial year within the existing budget. An additional phase to fit out the building, which will require extra budget, is subject to approval at Cabinet.
Norwich Research Park Enterprise Zone Infrastructure	2,100	1,575	1,110	465	Project on track and is expected to come in on budget. The Rosalynd Franklind Road is now complete, and the roundabout is on track to be completed by the end of Feb. The road and roundabout are due to be officially opened in March 2021.

Tailat	040	457	100	25	Refurbishment
Toilet Refurbishments	210	157	122	35	works at both LS & Diss were completed as expected before Christmas. Some further fees are yet to paid but we expect the total cost to be in the region of £152k. The legal work for the transfer of the toilets is now being carried out and is expected to be complete by year end.
Street Lighting	103	33	32	1	Having made the payment to Loddon PC, no further payments to Parish & Town Councils are expected for the rest of the financial year. Replacement of a small number of columns may be needed this year, but the remaining budget is proposed to be slipped into 21-22 to facilitate a larger replacement programme.
Play Area Refurbishments Equipment	72	54	26	28	The play area at Abbey Rd, Wymondham is now complete and the surfacing at Dounes Way Harleston, is due to be laid early in Q4, which will complete this play area. The remaining budget was for a site where work is not yet required, so

					this will be rolled forward for future years
Car Park Improvements	63	47	-	47	Resurfacing will only be undertaken when required budget not expected to be spent in this financial year
Total Approved Schemes	20,259	16,883	13,331	3,552	
Provisional Schemes					
BSD Financing	10,000	1,560	1,560	-	£1.56m loan advanced to Big Sky Development to finance 5 year strategy.
Strategic Economic Development (Browick)	8,750	-	-	-	
Total Provisional Schemes	18,750	1,560	1,560	-	
TOTAL	39,009	18,443	14,891	3,552	

Performance Dashboard Overview

3.18 **Delivery Measure Status against targets**: The following table shows the number of Delivery Measures with the associated RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status (where applicable). More detail is outlined in Appendix 3.

	Totals
U Green Indicator	 13 Measures are on target to meet the year end success criteria Progress towards delivery of the predicted £8.6m savings through the South Norfolk/Broadland collaboration (Measure reference 1) Staff absence levels - working days lost to short term sickness (Measure reference 4)
	 Staff retention (Measure reference 5) Numbers of vulnerable residents supported by our discretionary prevention services (Measure reference 15) Number of residents supported to live independently (Measure reference 17) Delivery of housing standards enforcement (Measure reference 18)

	 % successful intervention to prevent or relieve homelessness for customers who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless (Measure reference 19) Number of working days taken to process new claims for Housing Benefit/Council Tax benefit (Measure reference 20) Number of affordable homes delivered (including help to buy) (Measure reference 21) % of planning decisions made within statutory timescales – minors/others (Measure reference 23) % of planning decisions made within statutory timescales – majors (Measure reference 23) Tonnage by household of garden waste being recycled (Measure reference 27) Number of verified missed bins for all waste per 100,000 collections (Measure reference 29)
	3 Measures are at risk of not meeting the year end success
•••	criteria
_	 % of planning decisions made within statutory timescales –
Amber	householders (Measure reference 23)
Indicator	% of household waste recycled (Measure reference 26)
	• KGs of residual waste collected per household (Measure reference
	28)
	3 Measures are not on target to meet the year end success
	criteria
	Collection rate of Council Tax (Measure reference 7)
	Collection of Business Rates (Measure reference 8
Red Indicator	 % increase in the annual footfall of customers visiting SNCs leisure facilities and activities to lead healthier and more active lives
	(Measure reference 16)
	8 Measures are currently being baselined to determine the target
	Customer satisfaction survey (%) (Measure reference 2)
•	Staff Satisfaction (Measure reference 3)
•••	 % of the organisations workforce who are apprentices and graduate entry roles (Measure reference 6)
Baseline	 % of vacant retail space in market towns (Measure reference 12)
	• External funding to support growth (Measure reference 14)
	• % of food businesses with food hygiene ratings of rated as 4
	(Good) and 5 (Very Good) (Measure reference 24)
	Number of litter picks / clean up initiatives supported (Measure
	reference 30)
	Number of confirmed incidents of fly tipping (Measure reference 31)

3.19 As part of the new Delivery Measure design, not all measures were given a specific 'target' to meet over each quarter. Where 'targets' have been provided, a Red, Amber or Green (RAG) status has been used. A RAG status signifies whether or not progress is on track. In deciding RAG ratings, data on current performance and an assessment of progress is considered:

- Green RAG rating the delivery measure is performing to the success criteria and no action is needed.
- Amber RAG rating the delivery measure is at risk of not meeting the success criteria. This could be due to a problem or challenge to the service.
- Red RAG rating the delivery measure is not currently meeting the success criteria and its anticipated it will not by the year end.

Strategic Risk Dashboard

3.20 **Strategic Risks:** The following table shows the number of Risks within each risk category. Appendix 2 outlines the risk register in more detail, including an update on actions being taken to mitigate risks.

Risk Category	Category Description	Number of risks	Change from previous quarter
Very High	Risks scored here represent a severe threat to the delivery of Council objectives and service delivery and are outside of the risk appetite of the Council.	Total number of risks - 0	No change in severity scores
High/Medium High	Risks scored here represent a significant threat to the delivery of Council objectives and service delivery and are outside the risk appetite of the Council.	Total number of risks - 8 Risk 1 - An uncertain funding landscape for the public sector makes the Council finances unsustainable Risk 4 – Failure to respond to wide scale disaster or business disruption Risk 5 – Failure to respond to future waves of Covid-19 Risk 6 – Failure to take advantage of Local Government reform/devolution Risk 7 - Failure to anticipate and respond to changes in the external political environment Risk 11 - Failure to handle and manage data adequately Risk 13 - Council is unable maintain memberships and income levels at its Leisure Centres as a consequence of Covid-19 Risk 15 - Withdrawal of Covid- 19 support funding leads to increased levels of unemployment and financial hardship for our residents.	No change in severity scores 1 new risk since last quarter – risk 15

Medium	Risks scored here represent a moderate threat to the delivery of Council objectives and service delivery and are within the risk appetite of the Council with some proportionate mitigation and regular monitoring required.	Total number of risks – 7 Risk 2 – Commercial uncertainties Risk 3 – Failure to uphold trusted reputation Risk 8 - Major contractor or supplier fails to deliver on an agreed contract or service delivery Risk 9 – Major H&S incident of which Council is responsible for Risk 10 - Council is unable to take advantage of the benefits and opportunities from collaborative working Risk 12 - Capability and capacity of the workforce is not aligned effectively to key priorities and organisational requirements Risk 14 - failure to respond to economic impact of Covid-19 and Brexit and the Covid vaccination programme fails to provide adequate coverage for the population of South Norfolk, impacting the health of our communities and pace of economic recovery Total number of risks 0	No change in severity scores 1 new risk since last quarter – risk 14
Low	Risks here represent a minor threat to the delivery of Council objectives and service delivery and are within the risk appetite of the Council.	Total number of risks - 0	No change in severity scores
Very Low	Risks scored here represent an insignificant threat to the delivery of Council objectives/service delivery and are within the risk appetite of the Council.	Total number of risks - 0	No change in severity scores

Performance Highlights and Areas for Improvement

- 3.21 The following section of the report provides an overview of the key performance highlights and areas for improvement for the Council.
- 3.22 Covid-19 has had a significant impact on our residents, communities, businesses and Council, with increased demands and changing priorities. The impact of Covid-19 is clearly demonstrated in the performance against the measures of

previous quarters, particularly in those service areas where demands have increased, or resources utilised to support the Covid-19 response.

3.23 The revised Council Delivery Plan agreed by Council in December 2020 provides a revised platform of activity. The Council will continue to monitor the impact of the pandemic on performance and recommend appropriate additional resources and activities to ensure the Council continues to deliver key services and transformation projects alongside an effective local response and recovery plan to the pandemic.

Supporting individuals and empowering communities

3.24

Numbers of vulnerable residents supported by our discretionary prevention services (Measure reference 15)

In Q3, 1,028 people were supported through our discretionary prevention services. These services include Help Hub, Community Connectors, Welfare and Debt and Advice as well as our community welfare response to Covid-19. The introduction of a second lockdown in November 2020 saw an increase in the numbers requesting assistance in relation to Covid-19. As well as directly supporting our vulnerable residents, we are rolling out enhanced contact tracing, which has enabled more local proactive contacting of positive Covid-19 cases in the district.

3.25

<u>% successful intervention to prevent or relieve homelessness for customers</u> who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless (Measure reference 19)

On average during Q1-Q3, 87% of interventions to prevent or relieve homelessness have been successful. This is above our target of 80% and in light of the ongoing challenges presented by Covid-19 on the community. Demand for homelessness services have remained high and sustained over the year and performance remains in line with that of 19/20.

3.26

<u>% increase in the annual footfall of customers visiting SNCs leisure facilities</u> and activities to lead healthier and more active lives (Measure reference 16)

The pandemic has had a major impact on the leisure service and despite being able to reopen at the start of Q2, footfall was down considerably. Another enforced closure throughout most of November and then for the final week of December (usually a busy time for health and fitness facilities) meant that footfall figures are well down on where they were in 19/20. In response to closures, in December a new online exercise platform was launched, Your Home Workout, which had 106 bookings that month. By the end of the quarter, 581 users were registered. This will build in Q4 with an enhanced lockdown programme. This is intended to be used as a retention tool to keep customers engaged throughout the lockdown and ensure continued membership once facilities can reopen.

Growing the economy

3.27

External funding to support growth (measure reference 14)

Alongside the strong start for 2020/21 for securing external funding, additional funding has been secured in Q3 of £500,000 from New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP). This funding goes towards 50% of the fit out of the Norwich Research Park (NRP) Enterprise Zone commercial building, which is being developed by the Council. If the required level of match funding is secured, this will allow the building to be fitted out in readiness for its opening in June 2021. Central Government Covid-19 related funding in excess of £44m has also been received since the beginning of the pandemic for distribution to businesses affected by national and local restrictions. This has not been included within the quarterly figures.

3.28

3 29

Collection of business rates (measure reference 8)

The collection rate has been impacted by the effects of the pandemic and currently sits at 82.18% in Q3. Retail, Hospitality and Leisure businesses which have particularly been affected by the pandemic have benefitted from a national scheme which has awarded 100% Rate Relief. This has been a major help to these sectors, but many other businesses are also struggling with the effect of the pandemic. The rates team has proactively worked with businesses to offer extended and deferred payments where appropriate. The effects of Covid-19 on businesses means that collection rates are likely to be depressed this year and potentially in 21/22. The risk of further local or national lockdowns mean that there is a risk of collection rates being further affected and increased likelihood we will not meet our year end target of 98% collected.

Protecting and improving the natural and built environment, whilst maximising quality of life

Number of affordable homes delivered (including help to buy) (Measure reference 21)

Over the last 3 years, affordable housing has contributed greatly to the total number of affordable homes. Between April 2017 and March 2020, the completions by housing associations and through Help to Buy (equity loan) comprised over 50% of total dwellings completed in South Norfolk. During Q3, 28 new homes were completed by housing associations and 47 homes through Help to Buy (equity loan) delivered.

3.30

<u>% of planning decisions made within statutory timescales – minors/others</u> <u>and % of planning decisions made within statutory timescales – majors (Measure</u> <u>reference 23)</u>

The % of decisions made within statutory timescales currently sits at 92% which is above our target of 90% for Minors and Others. For Majors, the % of decisions made within statutory timescales currently sits at 100% which is above our target of 95%. For both measures, South Norfolk Council continues to perform better than the national averages.

3.31

% of household waste recycled (Measure reference 26)

In Q2, there was a slight decrease from 45.5% to 44.2% compared to last year. This was a trend seen across Norfolk. This decrease in recycling rate is due to a corresponding increase in residual waste that has been seen during the pandemic, as more residents have been at home. Recycling rates are influenced by contamination rates, residual waste tonnages and garden waste tonnage. These are all influenced by adverse weather conditions and changes in household behaviour. To assist in mitigating this risk, officers are currently developing a number of different options aimed at directly impacting upon the behaviours of residents in their recycling and residual waste management.

Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively

3.32

Progress towards delivery of the predicted £8.6m savings through the South Norfolk/Broadland collaboration (Measure reference 1)

The Feasibility Study for the collaboration set out an indicative savings forecast of £8.6m over a five-year period. The current five-year saving forecast for the

collaboration is £8.8m. This is £0.2m better than the Feasibility Study forecast. The savings delivered in 2019/20 were £1.419m and it is currently predicted that cumulative savings of £2.086m will be achieved by the end of 2020/21.

3.33

Staff absence levels - working days lost to short term sickness (Measure reference 4)

Staff absence levels for short term sickness currently sit at 2.83 days, which is lower than target of no more than 4.5 days. In Q3, there has been a slight increase in short term sick days. Qualitative feedback from staff suggests that staff working from home locations are able to work more flexibly to complete their hours. Health challenges that would typically result in staff taking sick leave are able to be better managed from home because staff can be more flexible with the completion of their hours and do not have to factor in the journey to work. Covid-19 related absences (i.e. where employees or household members were displaying symptoms) which are recorded under specific Covid-19 codes do not impact on the absence figures but are recorded and monitored outside of this measure.

3.34

Collection rate of Council Tax (measure reference 7)

Collection rates will be lower this year than in previous years and this is due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The usual process of proactive recovery action has been adapted to take account of residents' circumstances. Whilst our collection rate has been impacted, the proactive action taken to re-engage and continue to issue notices has helped us to maintain performance above the national trend. It is likely that the collection rate will fall below our target for this year.

4 PROPOSED ACTION

4.1 Cabinet is asked to note the contents of this report and agree the recommendations.

5 OTHER OPTIONS

5.1 None applicable to this report.

6 ISSUES AND RISKS

- 6.1 **Resource Implications** the finance section of this report provided an overview of the finance resource implications for this quarter.
- 6.2 **Legal Implications** no implications.
- 6.3 **Equality Implications** no implications.
- 6.4 **Environmental Impact** no implications.
- 6.5 **Crime and Disorder** no implications.
- 6.6 **Risks** The report has outlined the Strategic Risks faced by the Council which are set out in the Strategic Risk Register in appendix 2.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 The report has provided an overview of the position of the Council for performance, risk and finance for Q3 2020/21. Despite the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, performance for the Council remains relatively stable in most areas and positive trends are now being seen.

8 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet to:

- 1. Note the revenue and capital position (variance details in Appendix 1)
- 2. Note the current position with respect to risks and agree the actions to support risk mitigation (detailed in Appendix 2).
- 3. Note the 2020/21performance for Q1 and Q2 (detail in Appendix 3).



Appendix 1 South Norfolk Council – Finance for Quarter 3 2020/21

Appendix 1 provides an overview of the variances for the budget in Quarter 3.

South Norfolk Council – Explanation of Variances

Managing Director

Directorate	Service Area	FC Variance Level	Sub Service area	CC Description	Budget	Annual Budget	Actual Spend to End Dec £000's	Estimated Outturn for year £000's	(LAB - EO)	Comments
Managing Director	Chief Of Staff	All Other			792	786	555	777	9	
	Chief Of Staff Total				792	786	555	777	9	
	Consultancy	All Other			0	0	0	0	0	
	Consultancy Total				0	0	0	0	0	
	Managing Director	All Other			357	378	294	355	23	
	Managing Director Tota	al			357	378	294	355	23	
Managing Director	Total				1,149	1,164	849	1,132	32	

Resources

Directorate	Service Area	FC Variance Level	Sub Service area	CC Description	Original Budget £000's	Latest Annual Budget £000's	Actual Spend to End Dec £000's	Estimated Outturn for year £000's	(LAB - EO)	Comments
Resources	Director - Resources	All Other			20	0 0	-0	0	(
	Director - Resources T	otal			20	0 0	-0	0	(
	Finance	Over £25k	Corporate Management	Corporate Management	1,847	7 1,799	1,080	1,654		Forecasted underspends on corporate contingency (£124k) and other sundry underspend variances.
			Finance	Finance team	455	5 427	348	455	-28	⁸ Forecasted overspend due to vacancies in the team have being covered by an agency resource which has been more expensive.
			Revenues	СТАХ	-266	5 -247	-138	-151	-96	Income is forecast to be down compared to budget due to reduced summons income with the closure of courts.
		All Other			695	5 684	631	652	32	2
	Finance Total				2,732	2 2,663	1,920	2,610	53	3
	Governance & Business Support	Over £25k	Governance	Democratic Services	402	2 402	262	360	42	Porecasted underspend of members travel & subsistence (£30k) and other sundry underspend variances.
				Governance	656	5 650	231	508	142	Forecasted underspend due to lower spend on legal fees than budget (126k). This is due to ending the NPLAW contract and receiving a refund on the contract variance. Anticipated profit share from this contract was also higher than budgeted.
			IT & Digital	IT & Digital	1,556	5 1,538	1,092	1,452	85	Forecasted underspends on telephone & data infrastructure (£55k), consultancy services (£30k) printing (15k) and equipment (10k) offset by a forecasted software overspend (24k).
		All Other			1,228	3 1,195	728	1,208	-13	3
	Governance & Busines	s Support Tot	al		3,841	L 3,784	2,313	3,528	257	7
Resources To	tal				6,593	6.448	4.233	6,138	309	3

Place

Directorate	Service Area	FC Variance Level	Sub Service area	CC Description	Original Budget £000's	Latest Annual Budget £000's	Actual Spend to End Dec £000's	Estimated Outturn for year £000's	(LAB - EO)	Comments
Place	Director of Place	Over £25k	Business Support	Business Support - Land Charges	-171	-134	4 -150	-231	98	Income is forecast to be up compared to budget due to additional income from the stamp duty exemption which finishes 31/3/21.
				Business Support - Regulatory	107	101	46	70	31	Forecasted underspend on salaries due to staff members on secondment and no back fill - will recruit for 21/22 budget.
		All Other			347	339	267	343	-3	
	Director of Place To	tal			283	307	163	181	125	
	Economic Growth	Over £25k	Economic Development	Economic Dev	519	519	9 252	399	120	Forecasted underspend from establishment and expense cost savings due to movements between Economic Dev and Growth Delivery Team.
				Tourism	51	51	2	5	46	Forecasted underspend on advertising costs due to limited tourism opportunities during lockdown.
			Growth Delivery Team	Growth Delivery Team	77	57	107	89	-31	Forecasted overspend from establishment and expense costs due to movements between Economic Dev and Growth Delivery Team.
			Housing Strategy & Enabling	Enabling	59					Forecasted underspend due to savings within the budgeted establishment.
			Property	Investment Properties	-258					Income is forecast to be up compared to budget although projected in line with prior years.
				Crafton House	-74					Income is forecast to be up compared to budget although projected in line with prior years.
		All Other			322	332	2 190	310	22	
	Economic Growth T	otal			696	721	293	426	296	
	Planning	Over £25k	CNC	Building Control	-361	-34() -257	-384	44	Income is forecast to be down compared to budget but savings on staffing establishments and staff travel costs are forecasted to underspend offsetting this deficit providing an overall saving.
				SNC Cost of Building Control	-191	-191	-495	-527	336	Income is forecast to be up compared to budget. Reimbursement of losses carried forward from 18/19 & 19/20.
			Development Management	Development Management	-285	-170) -155	-264	94	Income is forecast to be up compared to budget. Additional income from fees & charges income and the Covid income recovery scheme. There are also some establishment savings.
			Planning Policy	Planning Policy	551	543	3 289	448	95	Forecasted underspend as expenditure on GNLP/SNC Cluster Work not ye materialised. Underspends to carry over into 21/22
		All Other			196	288	3 222	303	-15	
	Planning Total				-89	130	-396	-423	553	
	Pogulatori				EC.4	542	2 379	549		
	Regulatory Regulatory Total	All Other			564 564				-7 - 7	
lace Total					1,454	1,700	438	733	967	

People & Communities

Directorate	Service Area	FC Variance Level	Sub Service area	CC Description	Original Budget £000's	Latest Annual Budget	Actual Spend to End Dec	Estimated Outturn for year £000's	(LAB - EO)	Comments
						£000's	£000's			
eople & Communities	Community Service	Over £25k	Assistant Director - Community Services	Waste LATC	125	125	39	34	91	
			Leisure	Framingham Earl	7	36	20) -4	40	Income is forecast to be down compared to budget. This is compensate by forecast underspends in pay cost savings, reduced centre running costs and instructor fees.
				Wymondham LC	-91	397	423	181	216	Income is forecast to be down compared to budget. This is compensate by forecast underspends in pay cost savings, reduced centre running costs and instructor fees.
				Diss LC	119	275	222	136	140	Income is forecast to be down compared to budget. This is compensate by forecast underspends in pay cost savings, reduced centre running costs and instructor fees.
				L.Stratton LC	203	310	218	166	145	Income is forecast to be down compared to budget. This is compensate by forecast underspends in pay cost savings, reduced centre running costs and instructor fees.
				Leisure Ctr Mgt	331	331	243	294	. 37	Forecasted underspend against the advertising budget due to closures.
			Operations	Car Parks	-83	-73	-87	-28	-44	Income is forecast to be down compared to budget due to the decision offer free parking.
				Pest Control	12	19	-41	8	27	
				Street Cleaning	398	398	248	348	50	Forecasted underspend due to savings on an establishment post and fuel costs being lower in price.
				Clinical Waste	90	90	10	0 10	80	Forecasted underspend from the home clinical waste service initiative which is now being carried out with County at a pharmacy level.
				Domestic Waste	1,183	1,183	856	5 1,143	40	Forecasted underspend due to savings on agency staff as leisure staff were deployed to cover. Fuel costs being lower in price.
				Garden Waste	-1,352	-1,352	-1,216	i -1,465	113	Income is forecast to be up compared to budget due to an increase in demand for bins during lockdown. There has also been an increase in recycling credits.
				Recycling	765	765	491	. 1,185	-419	Forecasted overspend due to a provision for additional charges to help fund the running of the MRF
				Ops Management	400	400	262	374	25	Forecasted underspend due to a project surrounding In cab technology not progressing.
				Transport Fleet	709	709	325	468	241	Forecasted underspend as training of the workshop team has enabled work to done in house rather than outsourced.
		All Other			218	360	168	3 242	118	
	Community Service T	otal			3,034	3,973	2,181	2,574	899	
	Individuals & Families	Over £25k	Benefits & Housing	Homelessness	-165	-165	-154	-199	34	Income is forecast to be up compared to budget due the occupancy level in our TA's exceeding expectations therefore reducing periods of voids.
				HB Payments	-300	-205	-1,162	-297	92	Income is forecast to be up compared to budget. Natural migration to Up reduces the amount of HB payments made for housing costs
				Benefits & Housing Team	889	817	567	777	40	Forecasted underspend due to savings within the budgeted establishment.
			Communities	Communities Team	436	421	291	. 384	37	Forecasted underspend through savings on session costs as sessions were cancelled.
				Community Connectors	-28	-44	-25	0	-44	This project is fully funded and therefore should not have any impact or the councils budget
			Housing Standards	Housing Standards Team	402	382	244	299	83	Forecasted underspend due to savings within the budgeted establishment.
		All Other			272	306	174	249	58	
	Individuals & Families	s Total			1,506	1,512	-65	1,213	300	
eople & Communities	Total				4,541	5,485	2,116	6 4,286	1,199	
copie a communities					4,341	5,405	2,110	7,200	1,195	



Appendix 2

South Norfolk Council – Strategic Risk Register Update

Appendix 2 provides a detailed overview of the Strategic Risk Register for the Council covering Quarter 3.

					Risł	c with e contro	existing ols					Cur	rent ri	sk
Objective	Ref	Risk description	Existing Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Severity score	Risk Response	Planned mitigating actions	Risk Owner	Delivery timescales	Likelihood	Impact	Severity score	Within Risk Appetite?
Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively	1	Risk - An uncertain funding landscape for the public sector makes the Council finances unsustainable. Consequence - General fund expenditure exceeds budget and income targets not achieved. The Council is unable to deliver on its longer term Strategic Plan or in year Delivery Plan.	 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) budget process and scenario planning. Budget monitoring. Investment and Income targets. Implementing Broadland/South Norfolk Collaboration. 	4	5	20	Reduce	 1a Continued development and review of MTFP to address budget gaps (particularly in light of the Covid-19 Pandemic and the ongoing impacts of this on our financial position). 1b Delivery of the savings from collaboration with Broadland District Council 1c Delivery of our Spark Transformation programme to release savings and generate income. 1d Increased Marketing Activity and Promotion of services, including reviewing options for commercialisation. 1e Effective budget monitoring and training for staff at all levels. 1f Regular monitoring of our current position and reporting to Members. 1g Lobby government for adequate funding 1h Review the services we offer 1i Look for further income generating opportunities 	Director of Resources	1a - Feb 2021 1b - March 2022 1c - Ongoing 1d - Ongoing 1e - 2021/22 1f - Quarterly 1g - Ongoing 1h - Ongoing 1i - Ongoing 1i - Ongoing	3	4	12	Νο

Comments and progress on actions

No	 1a Revised MTFP will be presented to cabinet in February 21 & this will continue to be updated during the budget process for 22/23 budgets. 1b Officers continue to work towards the savings target however due to Covid-19, some projects have been delayed which may in turn delays the release of some savings. 1c The Spark transformation programme was halted during the first wave of Covid-19 and projects have now been prioritised and are underway, some of which will secure savings. 1d Marketing of services such as garden waste have continued. 1e Monthly budget information is provided to budget holders with more training to follow in 21/22. 1f Q3 figures are being prepared with a provisional out-turn being reported in the Revenue Budget Cabinet Papers for February 21 Cabinet. 1g Officers continue to respond to government consultations and to work with the DCN to lobby with regards to New Homes Bonus and clarity on future funding. The Government have halted the introduction of the new fairer funding scheme and also the revaluation of business rates which would have impacted on funding for 21/22. A long-term decision is still awaited. 1h This is ongoing with Covid-19 impacting on the demand for services provided, such as regulatory and housing.
	1i Future funding of Big Sky Developments is being investigated, which will generate an
	income return to the Council.

Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively	2	Risk - Commercial uncertainties associated with decisions taken as part of the Councils Commercial Strategy E.g. Property Development activities through the Council owned Big Sky Development, Commercial Waste etc Consequence - Reputational damage, lack of income generation and inability to repay council loans and associated interest.	 Governance arrangements for commercial activities. Budget monitoring. Close management and monitoring of investments. Quarterly reporting against the commercial strategy. 	4	5	20	Reduce	 2a Robust oversight and governance arrangements for all commercial activities. 2b Robust budget management for commercial activities. 2c Thorough project management and business case development where required. 2d Respond to market conditions, supply and demand. 	Managing Director	2a - Ongoing 2b - Ongoing 2c- Ongoing 2d - Ongoing	3	3	9	•
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 2a-2b - The Council has set up a new Portfolio and Policy Panel to focus on Commercial Trading and Customer Focused Activities. Revised Governance arrangements for Big Sky Ventures agreed in Dec 2020 with Councillors joining the Board to provide strategic oversight. Big Sky Developments has drafted a business plan which is currently being progressed through the Big Sky decision making process prior to sharing with the Council to support the request for additional funding for the St Giles Park development. The impact of Covid-19 on the Leisure income is a separate risk below.

Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively	 Risk - The Council fails to uphold a positive and trusted reputation and fails to meet customer and stakeholder expectations. Including making an unlawful decision or failure to comply with agreed policies or legal compliance. Consequence - Reputation declines, negative impact on staff and Member morale, negative impact on trust of residents and businesses on the Councils ability to provide effective services. This may include a negative financial impact. 	 Internal and external communications. Project Management with clear milestones for delivery and communication. Freedom of Information (FOI) responses and complaints handling Provide Officer and Member training to ensure an awareness of policies 	4	4	16	Reduce	 3a Delivery of an effective internal and external Communications Strategy, with clear deliverables and milestones. 3b Development and delivery of a Customer Satisfaction Strategy and action plan. 3c Implement effective programme and project management approach and ensuring all external facing projects have clear communication messages and effective methods. 3d Strong management and response to complaints handling, including Freedom of Information requests. Build a business case for an electronic system to manage FOIs. 	Hannah Ralph - Chief of Staff	3a - Q2 3b - Q4 3c - Q2 3d - Q3	3	3	9	Yes	 3a Work has been underway to develop a new internal comms strategy to support effective communication following a survey with staff. 3b A project is currently in progress to develop a customer satisfaction strategy. The project has completed the exploratory stage, looking at current practice within teams and models of best practice from other public and private sector bodies. A strategy and customer charter is currently being developed. 3c A delivery plan is in place for the Council for 2020/21 that sets out the key programmes of work for the organisation. A project is currently being scoped to develop an embedded programme and project approach to support the delivery of key pieces of work. 3d FOI requests are responded to in line with the statutory requirement, the process is currently being reviewed to ensure that this is more efficient across the One Team. The business case for an electronic FOI system is part of the business case for a Committee System which is due to be progressed towards the end of quarter 3. A review of the complaints process has commenced, to ensure that complaints are handled in a more effective way.
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Supporting individuals and empowering communities	4	Risk - The Council is unable to respond effectively to a wide scale disaster or business disruption, such as loss of key staff, loss of accommodation to deliver services etc. Consequence - Unable to support our residents and businesses as there is the potential of significant impact on service delivery and decline in reputation.	 Councils form part of the Norfolk Resilience Forum (NRF). Business Continuity Plans in place and tested. Remote working for key staff tested and in place. Covid-19 response has demonstrated flexibility of staff, providing added resilience to organisation. County and District Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place to provide support in an emergency. Two councils provides resilience e.g. two buildings which have two work area recovery sites. 	4	5	20	Reduce	 4a Continue to ensure we have effective emergency plans and business continuity plans in place, working with key partners such as the NRF where possible. 4b Test our plans through regular practice exercises where appropriate until commencement of usual exercise program. 4c Promote and expand the reach of community emergency plans work being carried out internally and with county based community resilience group to capture & engage with new and existing volunteer groups and voluntary agencies. 4d Conduct lessons learnt activities to ensure that we continuously adapt and improve. 4e Develop an assured, resourced capacity to respond effectively out-of-hours to serious emergency incidents impacting on our communities. 	Phil Courtier - Director of Place	4a - Ongoing 4b - Ongoing 4c - Q4 4d - Ongoing	3	4	12	
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No	4a-e Prior to Covid-19, work had commenced on refresh and review of Business Continuity Plans in consultation with ADs. This process has inevitably been delayed by the additional burden of dealing with the pandemic. It remains a high priority and will be resumed as work priorities allow. Proposals to strengthen the Council's ability to respond to an emergency incident out of hours are being developed and will be presented to Cabinet in the near future
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Supporting individuals and empowering communities	5	Risk - The Council is unable to respond effectively to future waves of the Covid- 19 Pandemic. Consequence - Unable to support our residents and businesses as there is the potential of significant impact on service delivery resulting in a negative impact on our residents and businesses, decline in reputation, increase in staff absence and inability to address the Councils budget gaps in the future.	 Councils part of Norfolk Resilience Forum (NRF) Strategic and Tactical Coordination Groups established Business Continuity Plans in place and tested. Recovery Plan agreed by Cabinets and Councils and in the process of being implemented. Majority of staff enabled to work from home. HR processes refined and in place to support staff 	4	4	16	Reduce	 5a Implement the organisational Recovery Plan, based on the 3 themes of: Economy, Communities and Organisation and Governance. 5b Closely monitor and respond to the impacts of the pandemic on our economy and communities, working with key partners where possible. 5c Continue to lobby government for adequate funding to support recovery. 5d Implement phase 1 of the new ways of working project. 5e Emergency Planning team running scenario-based exercises to document good practices from Covid-19 response and how we can be more effective against a 2nd wave. 	Managing Director	5a - Quarterly 5b - Ongoing 5c - Ongoing 5d - Q3 5e - Ongoing	4	3	12	
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5a The Councils' Recovery Plan has been agreed by Cabinet. The recovery plan will be reviewed during Q4 following the 2nd wave.

5b The Council's Covid Coordination Group, alongside supporting cells, closely monitors the impact of the pandemic in order to ensure the Council effectively responds to the second wave.

No 5c Additional funding is being provided by government to support part of this response.

5d The New Ways of Working Programme is underway and has supported the remote working of staff. This includes a roll out of laptops to all staff to enable effective home working.

5e Emergency Planners sit on the Covid Coordination Group and Silver Group to provide advice and guidance on best practice.

Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively	6	Risk - The Council fails to take advantage and act quickly and proactively on the opportunities of Local Government Reform and devolution. Consequence - Failure to achieve potential for greater devolved funding and/or decision making to the region and the benefits this would bring for residents and businesses in our area.	 Regular Horizon Scanning. Active Membership of different groups such as the DCN, LGA, RSN etc Implementing Broadland/South Norfolk Collaboration. Quarterly review of performance and risks to the organisation. CMLT relationship building and liaison with key stakeholders such as central Government departments and professional bodies. 	4	5	20	Reduce	 6a Review the outcomes of the Devolution White Paper when it is released. 6b Continued regular horizon scanning and policy updates to CMLT and management team to ensure we stay abreast of changes and are able to have influence. 	Chief of Staff	6a - October 2020 (delayed to Spring 2021) 6b - Monthly	3	4	12	No
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 6a The devolution white paper has been delayed by government following the announcement of a small number of areas who were invited to make reorganisation bids. Officers will continue to monitor any future government announcements and developments. 6b Officers continue to horizon scan for any policy developments and impacts for the council.

Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively	7	Risk - The Council fail to anticipate and respond to changes in the external environment such as political changes in the national priorities from Central Government. Consequence - Lack of ability to influence external drivers for greater change and additional resources required to achieve the new priorities or changing direction of travel.	 Regular Horizon Scanning. Active Membership of different groups such as the DCN, LGA, RSN etc Implementing Broadland/South Norfolk Collaboration. Quarterly review of performance and risks to the organisation. CMLT relationship building and liaison with key stakeholders such as central Government departments and professional bodies. 	3	4	12	Reduce	• 7a Continued regular horizon scanning and policy updates to CMLT and management team to ensure we stay abreast of changes and <u>are able to</u> have influence.	Hannah Ralph - Chief of Staff	7a - Monthly	3	4	12	No
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No	7a Regular horizon scanning updates are produced to ensure that key policy changes are addressed.

Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively	8	Risk - A major contractor or supplier fails to deliver on an agreed contract or service delivery. Consequence - Material effects to our service delivery, potential large-scale financial impacts, increased resources to handle and manage customer expectations/compla ints	 Procurement processes in place to develop robust contracts. Strong communication channels between suppliers and the Council. 	3	4	12	Reduce	 8a Ensure staff are equipped with the right knowledge to ensure effective and proactive management of our contracts. 8b Ensure contract registers are up to date. 8c Work with partners to review, amend and embed the social value policy to develop a more inclusive economy including through the Councils' procurement processes. 	8a and b - Director of Resources 8c – Director of People & Communities	8a - Ongoing 8b - Ongoing 8c - ongoing 8d - Q3	2	3	6	Ye
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	8a <u>The</u> procurement team support officers with any issues that arise from existing contracts and also work with Officers on the larger or more complex procurements to
Yes	ensure future contracts are fit for purpose. 8b Contract registers have been updated and are reviewed by senior management at CMLT on a quarterly basis.
	8c Work is planned into the delivery plan to review the way we procure services to improve social value, both at the Council but as part of the wider Norfolk public sector system.

Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively	9	Risk - A major health and safety incident occurs (internal or external e.g. leisure centres/waste depot) of which the Council are responsible for. Consequence - Potential injury/harm to either staff or customers, service disruptions and potential cost implications	 Risk assessments and action plans in place where needed. Lone Working Controls in place. Health and Safety Contract with Norfolk County Council in place. Risks and mitigations are reviewed and managed through the Health and Safety Committee and CMLT. 	4	4	16	Reduce	 9a Ensure we have risk assessments and action plans in place where needed. 9b Provide organisational wide Health and Safety training where applicable. 	Director of Resources	9a - Ongoing 9b - Q2 21/22	2	4	8	Yes	
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'es	 9a Covid Risk Assessments are in place for each service and are amended in line with government policy changes. As part of this each service has reviewed their existing risk assessments. A corporate Risk Assessment template is available on Connect to ensure consistency of approach. 9b Covid-19 prevented first aid certificates which had expired being updated during the initial lockdown. As soon as lockdown was lifted this situation was remedied and all existing first aiders hold current certificates, HR are drawing up a corporate wide training plan which includes any statutory H&S training.

Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively	10	Risk - The Council is unable to take advantage of the benefits and opportunities from collaborative working with Broadland Council and other key partners through autonomous policy decision-making. Consequence - Failure to achieve efficiency savings through economies of scale and increased chance of not delivering upon key priorities set out in the organisations Strategic Plan.	 Transformation Approach and initial programme of work in place. JLMG established to have Member oversight and steering of the collaboration programme. Regular updates and briefings to CMLT and JLMG (monthly) on the collaboration. Collaboration costs and savings tracked quarterly and reported through to JLMG and in formal finance updates quarterly. 	4	4	16	Reduce	 10a Review and update the transformation programme in light of the recent Covid-19 pandemic and updated Delivery Plan and Recovery Plan. 10b Continue to deliver transformation training to all staff. 10c Continue to review opportunities for further collaborative working with key partners. 	Chief of Staff	10a - Q2 10b - Ongoing 10c - Ongoing	3	3	9	Ye
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	10a Officers have considered and reviewed the corporate SPARK transformation programme in light of the second wave and reprioritised the programme in order to support the delivery of key projects.
Yes	10b Training is taking place for the internal consultancy network on <u>a number of</u> areas including project management.
	10c The Council is working collaboratively with partners in a wide range of areas to support our businesses and communities.
Yes	programme in light of the second wave and reprioritised the programme in order to support the delivery of key projects. 10b Training is taking place for the internal consultancy network on <u>a number of</u> areas including project management. 10c The Council is working collaboratively with partners in a wide range of areas to

Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively	11	Risk - The Council fails to handle and manage data adequately. Consequence - Potential loss of data, unlawful sharing of data, reputational damage and significant financial penalties.	 Online GDPR training provided to all staff to raise awareness of how to handle and manage data correctly. Remote access controls in place including two factor authentication. Any breaches are identified internally and recorded as and when necessary. 	5	4	20	Reduce	 11a Deliver the System Architecture Review project. 11b Ensure all systems meet our data security requirements. 11c Review of how data is managed whilst working remotely 	Director of Resources	11a - Q1 21/22 11b - Ongoing 11c - Ongoing	3	4	12	No
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11a A supplier has been sourced for the systems architecture review with preliminary meetings held in December 2020, with anticipated consultants' report in Feb 2021.

11b Access to all systems on our network is through secure log in when office based, or through a two-factor authentication when remote working.

11c As above, with regards to remote working staff are continually reminded in terms of safeguarding information when working from home. In addition, any breaches are recorded and actioned, with training and lessons learnt exercises undertaken.

Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively	12	Risk - Capability and capacity of the workforce is not aligned effectively to key priorities and organisational requirements. Consequence - Poor standards of service delivery, service disruption, slow or minimal transformation and inability to meet savings targets as a result.	 Four year Strategic Plan developed and in place which sets out the ambitions for the Council over the coming years. Delivery Plan for the Council developed and in place which sets out the detailed projects and BAU for the Council in the coming year to 2021. Management/Leade rship Training and Development in progress. 	3	4	12	Reduce	 12a Review and update the Delivery Plan for 2020/21 jn light. of the recent Covid-19 Pandemic to ensure it reflects our changing priorities. 12b Scope and develop a talent management programme. 12c Build our own talent - Develop projects to consider our use and opportunities of apprenticeships, internships, career placement, graduates etc 12d Effective project and programme management processes and model in place to support delivery of priorities. 	12a and d Chief of Staff 12b and c Director of Resources	12a - September 2020 12b - March 2021 / Ongoing 12c - March 2021/ Ongoing 12d - Q3	3	3	9	Ye
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12a The Delivery Plan has been reviewed and updated for 2020/21 to account for the impacts of Covid-19. This has been agreed by Cabinet and Council. The delivery plan for 2021/22 has also been developed and will go to Cabinet and Council for review and decision.

12b There has been a gap in OD resource, which has now been temporarily seconded to. The talent management programme is one of the priority pieces of work that is currently in progress, with a launch planned for March 2021.

12c This is a priority piece of work that is currently in progress, with a launch planned for March 2021.

12d A scope is currently being developed which looks at reviewing our project and programme management approach. This will include a phased programme of work, reviewing best practice and making recommendations on best methods for the future to support our capacity to deliver.

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Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively	13	Risk – The Council is unable maintain memberships and income levels at its Leisure Centres as a consequence of Covid-19. Consequence – Membership levels decrease. Expenditure levels exceed income levels and the commercial viability of the service decreases.	 Detailed Covid-19 procedures in place Regular contact with existing members Marketing campaigns to increase membership Review of existing member offer Budget monitoring 	4	5	20	Reduce	 13a Reduced membership fee as a loyalty offer to existing members to encourage them back into Centres 13b Provide a range of incentives to encourage existing and new members to return 13c Delivery of the savings through reduced staff resources and utility costs 13d Review existing procedures and restrictions in response to changing Government guidance 13e Look for further income generating opportunities and review of membership offer 13f Review product and pricing structure 	Assistant Director Community Services	13a – Until Dec 2021 13b - Ongoing 13c - Ongoing 13d - Ongoing 13f – April 2021	3	4	12	
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Growing the Economy/ Supporting individuals and empowering communities	14	<new last<br="" since="">QUARTER> Risk - The Council is unable to respond effectively to the economic impact of Covid-19 and Brexit and the resultant impact upon local businesses and the local economy. In addition, the roll-out of the Covid-19 vaccination programme fails to provide adequate coverage for the population of South Norfolk, in particular vulnerable groups, impacting the health of our communities and limiting the pace of economic recovery. Consequence – Detrimental impact on our local economy</new>	 Administering grant funding to businesses Providing an ongoing package of business support Using all levers available to us to help our businesses retain cash in the business where appropriate. 	3	4	12	Reduce	 14a Improve the quality of business intelligence we are gaining in order to enable the Council to respond to the needs of our businesses 14b Continue to provide support to the roll-out of the vaccination programme across South Norfolk, working in collaboration with partners, to provide targeted support to vulnerable and hard to reach groups 	14a Director of Place 14b Director of People and Communities	Ongoing	2	4	8
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14a The Council has adopted a comprehensive multi-team approach to respond to the impacts of the pandemic on local businesses and the local economy. We continue to successfully deliver the administration of the various Government funded business support grant programmes, and have recently collaborated with other Norfolk Local Authorities to launch a Coronavirus business impact survey to gather intelligence on any additional support our businesses require during the latest period of lockdown restrictions and beyond.

14b The Council continues to engage and provide support to the vaccination programme to support the roll-out of this to the residents of South Norfolk. The Council is also bidding for funding to support the effective and more targeted delivery of the vaccination programme to more vulnerable groups

Yes

Growing the Economy/Sup porting individuals and empowering communities	15	Kisk - The withdrawal of Covid- 19 support funding for our local residents and businesses including business rate relief, the furlough scheme and eviction prevention scheme. Consequence – The potential closure of support schemes leading to increased levels of unemployment and financial hardship for our residents and unmanageable levels of demand upon key council service areas	 Council tax support scheme and hardship policy for those facing hardship Increased help hub resource providing support to our residents Business rates relief Working with our partners to support Kickstart and Apprenticeship schemes to support employment Proactive work with housing associations and PSLs to identify tenants in arrears and prevent evictions Ability to increase and flex temporary accommodation and housing support offers to suit profile of demand 	4	4	16	Monitor	15a Using data and insight to map and forecast the impact for our residents and ensure appropriate support services in place for residents	Director of People and Communities	Ongoing	3	4	12	
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	15a The Council is developing a recovery
	plan to ensure that it is able to respond effectively to the potential increased call for support from our residents once the wider government support schemes end.
Yes	Additional Covid-19 resource has already been allocated to key services such as housing, benefits and community hub to meet current and expected demand
	The council will also continue to work in partnership to support the delivery of the kickstart and apprenticeship programmes.



Agenda Item: 6 Cabinet 15/03/2021

LONG STRATTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SUBMISSION

Report Author(s):	Richard Squires Senior Community Planning Officer 01603 430637 richard.squires@broadland.gov.uk
Portfolio:	External Affairs and Policy; Stronger Economy
Ward(s) Affected:	Stratton; Forncett

Purpose of the Report:

Long Stratton Town Council has submitted its proposed Neighbourhood Plan, along with necessary supporting information to South Norfolk Council. The purpose of this report is to agree to take the proposed Plan through to the next stages of consultation and independent examination.

Recommendations:

It is proposed that Cabinet agree:

- 1. That the submitted Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of Part 6 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 2. That the Neighbourhood Plan can therefore proceed to consultation, in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and subsequently to an independent examination.
- 3. That the proposed South Norfolk Council response, as detailed in Appendix 2, is formally submitted as part of the Regulation 16 consultation.

SUMMARY

1.1 Long Stratton Town Council has submitted its proposed Neighbourhood Plan, along with necessary supporting information to South Norfolk Council. The purpose of this report is to agree to take the proposed Plan through to the next stages of consultation and independent examination.

BACKGROUND

- 1.2 Long Stratton Town Council, as the appropriate Qualifying Body, applied to South Norfolk Council in April 2016 to designate a Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of producing a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.3 Since that time, the local planning authority has supported the appointed Neighbourhood Plan steering group in terms of funding, professional advice and guidance from officers, and other forms of practical support. The process of producing the Plan has seen the steering group undertaking consultation with residents and other stakeholder organisations, with a view to developing and drafting Neighbourhood Plan objectives and policies with the help of an independent consultant.

CURRENT POSITION/FINDINGS

- 1.4 On submission of a Neighbourhood Plan to the local planning authority, the authority must undertake an assessment of the proposed plan against certain criteria. This is required by Part 6 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 1.5 The following sets out details of the assessment against each of the prescribed criteria (bold headings);

1.6 Is the parish/town council authorised to act?

Long Stratton Town Council applied to South Norfolk Council to designate its Neighbourhood Area in line with the boundary for the Long Stratton AAP. This encompasses a part of Tharston and Hapton. Each of the parishes have agreed to the submission of this Plan. This application was approved in April 2016. It is therefore considered that the Town Council is authorised to act in relation to this neighbourhood area.

3.4 Do the proposals and accompanying documents:(a) Comply with the rules for submission to the Council?

Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended) states that the submitted documents should include:

- A map or statement identifying the area to which the plan relates.
- A Consultation Statement, which contains details of those consulted, how they were consulted, summarises the main issues and concerns raised and how

these have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan.

- The proposed Neighbourhood Plan.
- A Basic Conditions Statement, showing how the Plan meets the basic conditions set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Act.
- An SEA screening assessment and, if required as a result of the latter, an SEA.

The Town Council has supplied all of the above documentation.

3.5 Do the proposals and accompanying documents: (b) Meet the definition of a Neighbourhood Plan?

It is considered that the Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan meets the definition of a Neighbourhood Plan as set out in Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, containing (as it does) a series of planning policies that seek to manage development within the parish.

3.6 **Do the proposals and accompanying documents:**

(c) Meet the scope of Neighbourhood Plan provisions?

The Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan clearly states that it is a development plan for Long Stratton, which runs until 2036. The Neighbourhood Plan does not make any provision regarding excluded development. Excluded development is that which is either a 'county matter' (relating to minerals), any operation relating to waste development, or development consisting wholly or partly of a national infrastructure project.

- 3.7 The Neighbourhood Plan only relates to the Long Stratton Neighbourhood Area and it does not repeat an existing planning permission. It is therefore considered that it satisfactorily meets the provisions defined in Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 3.8 Has the parish/town council undertaken the correct procedures in relation to consultation and publicity regarding the Neighbourhood Plan? Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 states that, before submitting the Neighbourhood Plan to the local planning authority, the Qualifying Body should publicise the Plan and consult the public and stakeholder bodies over a period of six weeks.
- 3.9 The pre-submission (Reg. 14) consultation undertaken by the Town Council in relation to the draft Neighbourhood Plan is summarised in the Consultation Statement. This provides details of the publicity that was undertaken at this (and prior) consultation stages and the bodies that were consulted on the draft Plan. A copy of the draft Neighbourhood Plan was received by the District Council, for comments, at this stage (which were duly made).

PROPOSED ACTION

- 1.7 It is proposed that, as Long Stratton Town Council has met each of the criteria specified above, South Norfolk Council approves the submission of the Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan and that confirmation of this is sent to the Town Council.
- 1.8 Once approved, District Council officers will arrange for the Neighbourhood Plan to be published and will invite comments from the public, stakeholder bodies and previous consultees over a minimum period of six weeks. This requirement is set out in Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- 1.9 Officers have considered the content of the submitted Neighbourhood Plan to identify whether there are any significant, outstanding issues on which South Norfolk Council may wish to make its own representations during the Reg. 16 consultation.
- 1.10 Four key issues have been identified, which were raised previously by the Council during the pre-submission Regulation 14 consultation. These relate to Policy E12 (Training Long Stratton's local workforce), Policy GI19 (Protecting existing sites of biodiversity value in the plan area), Policy R20 (Delivering a new community meeting space in Long Stratton), and Policy R21 (A new swimming pool for a larger community). Details of the proposed representations can be found in Appendix 2. The rationale for making these representations largely relates to concerns around the clarity and viability of the policy requirements, as well as (in the case of GI19) general conformity with a strategic policy within the current development plan. A small number of minor/factual amendments relating to character and design are also proposed.
- 1.11 The Reg. 16 publication period will be followed by an independent examination which will be carried out by a (yet to be appointed) accredited Neighbourhood Plan examiner, in accordance with Regulation 17.
- 1.12 Following the examination (which is normally dealt with via written representations), the examiner will produce a report recommending whether or not the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum (with or without certain modifications). South Norfolk Council will then consider this report and decide whether or not to approve the examiner's recommendations.
- 1.13 If it is decided that the Plan should proceed to a referendum, then everyone eligible to vote within the Neighbourhood Area is invited to vote on whether they wish to see the Neighbourhood Plan made. This is a simple 'yes/no' vote and a majority of those voting in favour of the Plan (50%+1) is required before it can be made by South Norfolk Council.

OTHER OPTIONS

1.14 The submitted Neighbourhood Plan can be refused if it is felt that the criteria discussed above have not been met, or if the Plan is a repeat proposal, as defined in legislation. A written statement would need to be sent to the Town Council, detailing the reasons why the proposal has not been approved. However, it is considered that the above criteria have been met and there appear to be no valid reasons for refusal.

ISSUES AND RISKS

- 1.15 **Resource Implications** There are no significant resource implications in approving the submitted Plan. There will be a small amount of officer time required to issue notice of the decision to Long Stratton Town Council.
- 1.16 The subsequent stages will demand greater officer time (preparing the plan and related documents for consultation, preparing and arranging the examination). This will be resourced from within the Place Shaping Team.
- 1.17 There are limited costs involved in undertaking the consultation, as the majority of this will be via electronic means. Printing will be kept to a minimum as the restrictions imposed by COVID mean that it will be very difficult to allow public inspection of hard copy documents.
- 1.18 Following the consultation period, there will be costs to the Council associated with the examination and referendum. The average cost of an examination is currently approximately £4,800 and the average cost of a referendum is approximately £4,500. It is worth noting that South Norfolk Council can claim £20,000 from MHCLG once the authority approves a Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to a referendum, meaning these costs can be recouped.
- 1.19 **Legal Implications** The steps outlined in this report comply with appropriate legislation within Schedule 4B of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 1.20 They also have regard to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. If successful at referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the statutory Development Plan and will therefore be one of the main considerations in the determination of applications for planning permission within the parish.
- 1.21 **Equality Implications** There are no significant equalities implications associated with the approval of the submitted Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan. A full Equality Assessment has been carried out in relation to the submitted plan.
- 1.22 **Environmental Impact** The Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening and a Habitat Regulations

Assessment (HRA) screening, as required by legislation. These initial assessments consider whether the proposed policies in the Plan will have any significant impact on identified environmental objectives or on nearby EU designated sites. No significant impacts have been identified.

- 1.23 **Crime and Disorder** There are no significant risks associated with the matters covered in this report.
- 1.24 **Risks** There are no significant risks associated with the matters covered in this report.
- 1.25 There are risks associated with the subsequent stages in the process of adopting a Neighbourhood Plan; specifically that the Plan fails the examination, and also that the Plan fails to gain support during the local referendum. It is felt that these risks are relatively low, at present, and measures will be taken where possible, by either the District Council or Long Stratton Town Council, to mitigate against their occurrence.

CONCLUSION

- 1.26 As discussed above on submission of a neighbourhood Plan to the local planning authority, the authority must undertake an assessment of the proposed plan against certain criteria. This is required by Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 1.27 As Long Stratton Town Council has met each of the assessment criteria set out above, the next step is to accept their submission and to start preparations for the Reg.16 consultation.
- 1.28 Officers are proposing a small number of representations to be submitted on behalf of South Norfolk Council, as part of this consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 It is proposed that Cabinet agree:
 - 1. That the submitted Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of Part 6 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
 - 2. That the Neighbourhood Plan can therefore proceed to consultation, in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, and subsequently to an independent examination.
 - 3. That the proposed South Norfolk Council response, as detailed in Appendix 2, is formally submitted as part of the Regulation 16 consultation.

Appendix 1: Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan – submission version Appendix 2: Proposed South Norfolk Council consultation response (Reg. 16)

Background Papers

Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan submission documents



LONG STRATTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2019 to 2036



SUBMISSION VERSION JANUARY 2021

STEERING GROUP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kevin Worsley (Chairman)	Communication and Transport
Steve Adcock	Community and Facilities
Diane Woodham	Health and Wellbeing
Ian Hetherington	Economic Growth (local economy)
Bob Mackenzie	Education and Transport
Mark Gladding	Long Stratton Representative
David Gunton	Tharston & Hapton Representative
Jenna Goodall-Browne	Tharston & Hapton Representative
Will Howman	Tharston & Hapton Representative

Supported by -

Rachel Hogger	Planning Consultant, Modicum Planning Ltd
Becky Buck	Clerk to Long Stratton Town Council
Bobby Bennett	(ex-clerk to Long Stratton Town Council)
Jessica Lawton	Neighbourhood Plan administration assistant

Special thanks to Judith Baker for her involvement in the history element

FOREWORD

Welcome to the Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan

When the Long Stratton Area Action Plan first identified that Long Stratton and parts of Tharston & Hapton had been earmarked for 1800+ homes and delivery of a bypass, Long Stratton Town Council asked the question; how can we secure the integrity of Long Stratton and Tharston & Hapton and represent the local community by ensuring any development benefits the local people in a positive manner?

The situation facing Long Stratton and Tharston & Hapton was unlike any other seen before and as such serious consideration was given to the task at hand and the Long Stratton and Tharston & Hapton Neighbourhood Plan was born.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a tool for the local community to influence the future of the local area, to improve services for existing and new residents as well as to build a community with local jobs, good transport, schools, community facilities and open space.

It was agreed the Neighbourhood Plan would mirror the Long Stratton Area Action Plan which included areas of Tharston & Hapton and therefore members of Tharston & Hapton Parish Council were invited to participate in the Neighbourhood Plan and a steering group consisting of Long Stratton Councillors, Tharston & Hapton Councillors and local residents was formed.

Since then the steering group have held a number of public consultations and liaised with key stakeholders such as the Clinical Commissioning Group and Education Authority to name a few as well as engaging with professionals in Locality (the Government body that oversees neighbourhood plans), Modicum Planning, the Neighbourhood Plan consultant and AECOM who have provided a Town Centre Plan and Design Code to support how Long Stratton grows.

Without the consultations and support of the key stakeholders and professionals, the Neighbourhood Plan would have been a pipe dream; with all the input received we have been able to identify local issues and concerns to be considered. We have been able to write policies that will determine how Long Stratton and Tharston & Hapton shapes and develops in the future and have been able to gather considerable evidence to provide a plan that is right for Long Stratton and Tharston & Hapton and Tharston & Hapton.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be used to provide guidance to Long Stratton Town Council and Tharston & Hapton Parish Council in delivering the community aspirations that have been identified. Our plan is ambitious, and our aspirations are high, but they will mean nothing if we don't make it happen. Implementing the plan in the current economic climate will at times be challenging; however, with community support and innovative ways of working the community can look forward to experiencing growth in a positive manner and will benefit from the changing landscape. The Neighbourhood Plan is a long-term strategy and a living document that will evolve with changes both locally and nationally. The Neighbourhood Plan ethos can be found throughout and reflects the aim of the steering group 'Our long-term goal is to make sure that Long Stratton and Tharston & Hapton is the best place to live, work and play anywhere in the UK.'

Finally, I would like to give thanks to all that have given their time to this process, without you this would not have been possible.

Kevín Worsley

Cllr Kevin Worsley Chairman of The Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan







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1.INTRODUCTION

- 1 This document is the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for the Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan area over the period 2019 to 2036. The purpose of the NP is to set a framework for future development within the plan area. Once made, the NP will carry the same legal weight as plans drawn up by South Norfolk Council (SNC). The planners must follow what is in the NP when making decisions about planning applications in the area subject to other material considerations¹.
- 1.1 The Town Council of Long Stratton and the Parish Council of Tharston and Hapton have listened to parishioners and have drafted this Neighbourhood Plan which covers the entirety of the parish of Long Stratton and part of the parish of Tharston and Hapton. Only the parts of Tharston that are closer to Long Stratton are included in the NP area.
- 1.2 The work on the Long Stratton NP has been led by the NP steering group which comprises eight local people, a mixture of residents and councillors from both parishes.
- 1.3 The NP area covers the same area as the Long Stratton Area Action Plan (AAP) which was adopted by SNC in May 2016. The AAP was prepared by planning officers at SNC as a way of ensuring that the housing growth taking place in Long Stratton over the plan period 2016 to 2031 will be delivered subject to the creation of a bypass. Whilst the Long Stratton community were given an opportunity to engage on the AAP it is a plan driven by SNC in consultation with key stakeholders. This NP complements the work already undertaken by the AAP but provides more detail in terms of what is expected from development. This Neighbourhood Plan is written by the communities of Long Stratton and Tharston for the communities of Long Stratton and Tharston.
- 1.4 The NP has been subject to screening for both Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). In 2019, SNC concluded that

¹ Many issues are capable of being material considerations, but in broad terms should relate to the use and development of land. As a general principle, the planning system works in the public interest and matters that affect solely private interests are not usually material considerations in planning decisions. However, each application is considered on its merits (DCLG, Jan 2015)

development resulting from the Long Stratton NP will not lead to an impact on sensitive receptors and therefore a full Appropriate Assessment is not required. In March 2020, SNC concluded that the NP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects on the environment and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Requirements of Neighbourhood Plans

- 1.5 There are certain requirements, referred to as basic conditions which all Neighbourhood Plans will be tested against at examination: The planning policies in the plan will need to:
 - be in broad conformity with the strategic policies of the South Norfolk Local Plan;
 - contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development;
 - be appropriate having regard to national policy and guidance (e.g. the National Planning Policy Framework 2019); and
 - be in accordance with environmental and human rights legislation.
- 1.6 In the preparation of this NP we have had to ensure compliance with these requirements. Compliance is demonstrated in the Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement. In addition, Chapter 4 of this plan (vision and objectives) provides an explanation as to how the plan contributes towards addressing cross-cutting priorities relating to climate change and sustainable development.
- 1.7 At the time of submission, the South Norfolk Local Plan which is applicable to the Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan comprised the following documents:
 - Adopted Joint Core Strategy March adopted 2011;
 - Development Management Policies Document adopted 2015;
 - The adopted Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (2011); and
 - Long Stratton Area Action Plan adopted 2016.

2. THE LONG STRATTON NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

- 2 The Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan area was designated by South Norfolk Council on 8 June 2016. The designated NP area is shown in Figure 2.1:
- 2.6 Long Stratton is a town in the district of South Norfolk. It is bisected by the A140 which provides direct access to Norwich in the north and Ipswich in the south.
- 2.7 The scale of Long Stratton Town itself means that it is well served in terms of facilities. In addition to a good range of local shops and services Long Stratton benefits from infant/nursery, junior and secondary schooling, a medical centre and a leisure centre. It is also the base for South Norfolk Council. The town acts as a sub-centre for neighbouring villages such as Wacton, Tharston, Morningthorpe, Tasburgh and Fritton.
- 2.8 The NP boundary does not follow administrative boundaries. Instead, it has been drawn to create an area more meaningful to local people in terms of their daily 'comings and goings.'
- 2.9 The NP area includes the entirety of Long Stratton Parish as well as southern parts of Tharston and Hapton Parish including residential and employment areas abutting Long Stratton Town.



Figure 2.1 Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan Area

A Historic Settlement

- 2.10 Long Stratton stands on a boulder clay plateau which was deposited during the Ice Age. It conceals underlying solid rock which produce its gentle undulating landscape. The A140 is a Roman Pye road between Caister St Edmunds, a large settlement and the Roman city of Colchester.
- 2.11 The Roman name for Stratton was Stratum, meaning paved road or street. The name was later changed to Estratuna meaning street by the water. There have been several Roman finds in Long Stratton. In August 1773, urns and pots were found in what is believed to be a crematorium hearth. There were also coins found at this site which is where SNC offices are. Finds were also made in 1849, 1887, 1948 and in the 60s and 70s.
- 2.12 Following the Romans, the Saxons settled in 400 1000 AD and, after this, came the Normans. Further detail on the history of Long Stratton can be found in the history report available to view on the Neighbourhood Plan website.



Population

2.13 The population in Long Stratton parish was estimated to be 4,500 in 2015.² This represents a small increase from 4,424 in 2011. However, growth was more substantial during the previous decade. The population of Long Stratton was 3,701 in 2001 which implies a growth rate of about 20 percent over the decade.³

² 'ONS Mid Year Population Estimates, 2015 (via Norfolk Insight) as documented in the Long Stratton DSE Review

³ 2001 and 2011 Census of Population. As reported in the Long Stratton DSE Review

- 2.14 In 2011, the parish of Tharston and Hapton had a population of 793⁴. This represents an increase of 32% since the 2001 Census when the parish of Tharston and Hapton had a population of 599.
- 2.15 Long Stratton can be described as a youthful town⁵. The median age is 39 compared to 45 in South Norfolk and 43 in Norfolk. It has a relatively low proportion of people aged 60+ which is counter-balanced by higher proportions of working age people, and to a lesser extent, school age children.

Household Composition

2.16 The NP area has a low proportion of both single and couple households with all inhabitants aged 65+ (21 percent). This compares to 26 percent in both South Norfolk and Norfolk. In contrast, the proportion of couple households with dependent children (23 percent) and lone parents (10 percent) are both higher than in South Norfolk and Norfolk.



FIGURE 2.3 - LONG STRATTON HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, 2011. SOURCE: CENSUS OF POPULATION (TABLE QS113EW), NOMIS AS REPORTED IN THE LONG STRATTON DSE REVIEW

Housing

- 2.17 Growth in Long Stratton dwelling stock has been slightly below population growth. In 2011, Long Stratton had 1,897⁶ dwellings and in 2001, it had 1,598⁷ dwellings representing an increase of 19%.
- 2.18 Growth in Tharston and Hapton dwelling stock has been below population growth. In 2011, Tharston and Hapton had 299 dwellings and in 2001, it had 241 dwellings representing an increase of 24%.

⁴ Census 2011, QS102EW

⁵ As noted in the Demographic and Socio-Economic Review 2017

⁶ Census 2011, KS401EW

⁷ Census 2001, UV55

- 2.19 There have been about 123 dwellings completed in the NP area between 2011/12 and 2017/18. About half of these were in Tharston parish as part of a planning permission for 120 dwellings on Chequers Road. This permission has a further 43 dwellings still to be built (as at December 2018). There has also been a significant development of 50 dwellings completed by December 2018 on a brownfield development in Swan Lane.⁸
- 2.20 These figures pale into insignificance in comparison with the allocation of a minimum of 1,800 dwellings allocated for development by the Long Stratton Area Action Plan (AAP).
- 2.21 In terms of the overall housing stock (in 2011), more than eight in ten dwellings in Long Stratton are detached (41 percent) or semi-detached (42 percent). There are very few flats, typical of a rural community, but Long Stratton does have a significant supply of terraced housing.
- 2.22 The stock of semi-detached and terraced housing is important in ensuring Long Stratton has retained a supply of smaller homes for new entrants to the housing market and those wishing to downsize. Thirty-five percent of dwellings in Long Stratton have two bedrooms or less compared with thirty percent in South Norfolk.

Affordable Housing

- 2.23 As at 2011, Long Stratton Parish had 299 affordable housing units⁹. This was made up of 251 socially rented properties and 42 shared ownership properties.
- 2.24 As illustrated in Figure 2.4, shared ownership constitutes a higher than average proportion of dwellings in Long Stratton. The proportion of social rented housing (14 percent) is higher than South Norfolk but lower than Norfolk. Long Stratton also has a significant private rented sector at a little over 10% of all dwellings.

⁸ Residential Land Availability: April 2017 – March 2018', South Norfolk Council and analysis of previous data

⁹ Source: ONS - 2011 Census (KS402EW)



FIGURE 2.4 LONG STRATTON HOUSING TENURE, 2011, SOURCE: 2011 CENSUS OF POPULATION (TABLE KS402EW). NOMIS AS REPORTED IN LONG STRATTON NP DSE REVIEW

2.25 House prices are a significant obstacle for low income families. Prices are broadly in line with South Norfolk. It is estimated¹⁰ that an income of £38,160 would be required to purchase a terraced house in Long Stratton. To put this in context, a household with two people both earning the national living wage will have an income of below £30,000.

	All	Detached	Semi- detached	Terraced	Flats/ maisonettes
Long Stratton	£200,000	£249,950	£185,000	£166,950	n/a
South Norfolk	£195,000	£250,000	£179,950	£162,000	£117,500
FIGURE 2.5- A CO/ NORFOLK	MPARISON OF HC	OUSE PRICES BETWI	EEN THE LONG ST	RATTON AREA AND	SOUTH

Note: prices are for Middle Super Output Area E02005603 which includes Long Stratton and a number of neighbouring villages

Source: House Price Statistics for Small Areas, ONS (released 24 June 2015)

- 2.26 Affordability is also likely to be an issue for low income households in the private rented sector. The Demographic and Socio Economic Review (DSE Review) undertaken for the NP area reviewed rental prices and found a 2 bedroom terraced house available at £135 per week, a 2 bed semi-detached house available at £144 per week and a 3 bed semi-detached house at £173 per week. All three are well above the local housing allowance rate (this is the rate at which housing benefit is capped for private rented properties).
- 2.27 As at September 2017, there were 27 households with a Long Stratton parish address on the South Norfolk Council Housing Register.

¹⁰ See Long Stratton DSE Review, 2017

2.28 The Housing Needs Assessment undertaken by AECOM in December 2017 to inform the Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan identified a need (arising from the plan area itself) for 132 affordable dwellings (as well as an overall need for 408 new dwellings arising from the plan area) during the period 2017 to 2026. Furthermore, the report states that private rental housing will also have a significant role to play in meeting the needs of the 50% of households in the plan area who would be unable to afford typical mortgage at 2016 prices.

Housing suitable for the elderly

- 2.29 There are currently three different types of housing specifically suitable for the elderly in Long Stratton:
 - Residential care home called the Mayfields, housing 60 residents.
 - A care home run by the county council on Flowerpot Lane.
 - A sheltered housing scheme at Depwade Court run by Saffron Housing Trust providing 35 dwellings for those aged over 60.

Community

- 2.30 There is a distinct sense of community in the NP area. There are many events in the calendar year to promote the community spirit; the firework event and village fair being just two of them. In terms of buildings or other spaces that we have for the purpose of hosting community events we have the village hall. A new community pavilion has been built by the Town Council at Manor Road following the demolition of an old condemned building. It is hoped the new pavilion will be used by some groups such as pilates, yoga and other activities. The village hall is a well-functioning building and is fully used.
- 2.31 In addition, Long Stratton has a purpose-built library which is open seven days a week.

Education & Health

- 2.32 Long Stratton is served by one infant/nursery school, one junior school and one high school. All three schools are situated on a campus style site together in the centre of the town. Post 16 further and higher education is catered for outside the area.
- 2.33 Policy LNGS1 in the Long Stratton AAP requires provision of a serviced site of at least 2.0 hectares for a new two-form entry primary school and a 60 place pre-school as part of the site allocation for 1800 new homes.
- 2.34 Norfolk County Council have indicated in meetings with the NP group that the best long-term solution to the increase in pupil numbers in the plan area will be to have two all through primary schools in Long Stratton by 2025 with a minimum of two-form entry in both primary schools and the capacity to expand to three-forms of entry in the future as needs require.
- 2.35 There are two key health facilities in the plan area. There is the Swan Lane surgery and Newton Flotman surgery provided by the Long Stratton Medical Partnership. This is located in Swan Lane and services Long Stratton and Newton Flotman. There are

11,000 patients signed up to this practice. The Care Quality Commission deemed the service to be good in 2017. There is also the Health Centre located on Flowerpot Lane known as the Norfolk Community Health and Care Surgery. It offers a range of services including district nurses and midwives, community therapists and a range of clinics.

Natural Environment

- 2.36 Long Stratton is situated in the countryside and as such has green spaces all around although the countryside is not all readily accessible to the public. Key assets include:
 - A network of public rights of way crisscrossing the countryside in most areas of the plan area but not in the north west.
 - Tyrrel's Wood located in the south and extends into neighbouring parish Pulham Market. Visitors access Tyrrel's Wood by car (other than those walking through it as part of the Boudicca Way). The site is partly privately owned and partly owned by the Woodland Trust. Two public footpaths run through the site and part of the site falls in the Boudicca Way. It is a popular destination for dog walkers and also popular amongst children and family groups for informal play activities including den building. The southern part of the site that extends into the neighbouring parish is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the remaining part is a designated county wildlife site.
 - Wood Green this site is closer to the settlement of Long Stratton also to the east and is accessed by foot as well as by car by Long Stratton residents. It is an extensive county wildlife site, a registered common, open access land and part of the Boudicca Way.
 - Further sites just outside the plan area boundary include Fritton Common SSSI to the east and Wacton Common to the south-west and Morningthorpe Green to the east.

Sports Facilities and Recreation

- 2.37 There are many sports played by the residents of Long Stratton but the facilities in the town to enable games to be played are limited. The Manor Road playing field provides a multi-games area with an artificial surface which allows all-year-round use. There are also three football pitches which are well used by Long Stratton Football Club. The games area has tennis courts marked out but these are seldom used. There is a district council run leisure centre and there is a 3G football pitch in the high school ground which is administrated by South Norfolk Council.
- 2.38 There is no swimming pool in Long Stratton. There has previously been a small 15m training pool not open to the public but provided as part of the high school campus. The pool is currently closed as it is in need of expensive maintenance work.
- 2.39 In terms of open space provision accessible to the population, as shown in the table on page19 (an extract from the Long Stratton AAP), the plan area is deficient in all types of open space. Accordingly, adopted Policy LNGS6 Protecting Existing Recreation or Amenity Land in Long Stratton in the Long Stratton AAP protects existing open space provision in the plan area and Policy LNGS7 New Recreation Provision in Long Stratton

requires developers to provide additional on-site public open space as part of the allocation for the delivery of 1,800 additional homes.

- 2.40 As part of its work on the Long Stratton AAP, South Norfolk calculated that the allocation of 1,800 new homes would need to provide up to 3 hectares of children's play space and 7.4 hectares of older children/adult open space.
- 2.41 As shown in the table, the plan area is deficient in children's play areas. The NP steering group consider they also need to be better maintained and controlled. Many are under the control of the district council, but talks are underway to move control to the town council.
- 2.42 Youth facilities are also limited in the NP area. There is an area of the Manor Road park that includes a skate park.



Open Space type	Recommended Standard (2007)	Provision in Long Stratton (2007)
Formal Open Space (formal parks, areas for community events and	0.98ha/1,000 population	0.89ha/1,000 population
areas for sports/recreation – other than formal pitches)	46% quality rating	Long Stratton Playing Fields: 74%
Formal sports (pitches, courts etc)	1.82ha/1,000 population	0.82ha/1,000 population
	60% quality rating	Long Stratton Playing Fields: 90%
Children's and Young People's play (equipped areas, skate parks etc)	1.98ha/1,000 population	1.31ha/1,000 population
	60% quality rating	Long Stratton Playing Fields: 75%
Amenity space (informal open space)	0.71ha/1,000 population	0.4ha/1,000 population
	46% quality rating	No sites rated
Natural/semi-natural green space (woodlands, commons, wildlife	5.08ha/1,000 population	1.11ha/1,000 population
areas)	46% quality rating	No sites rated
Allotments	0.11ha/1,000 population	0.10ha/1,000 population
	60% quality rating	No sites rated

Figure 2.7 - Long Stratton Open Space Provision. Extract from AAP (figures taken from South Norfolk PPG17 Open Spaces, Indoor sports and Community recreation assessment. Red text indicates a shortfall in provision and blue text indicates an over-provision).

2.43 South Norfolk's latest standards for recreational open spaces is set out in Table 3 of the Open Spaces SPD adopted in September 2018. The standards blend the previous standards (shown in the middle column of Figure 2.7) and are not easily directly comparable.

Burial Grounds

2.44 As the town grows, it is expected there will be a need for additional burial ground facilities in the plan area.

Transport

- 2.45 Long Stratton is dominated by the A140 which runs through the town bisecting the town in two. Congestion in Long Stratton occurs on a daily basis, the regular bottlenecks in the centre cause pollution for residents leading to a long running campaign for a bypass. Traffic on the A140 includes through traffic as well as industrial traffic travelling to and from Tharston Industrial Estate, access to which is achieved through Flowerpot Lane which meets the A140 in the town centre.
- 2.46 The town is served by a regular bus service between Diss and Norwich during the day. During the evening, the service is less regular.

- 2.47 In the centre of the town, there is a public car park available for shoppers and visitors but due to a two hour limit is of limited use to workers.
- 2.48 It is without doubt that the volume, nature and location of traffic in the town centre presents challenges for residents needing to travel by foot, bicycle or mobility scooters. The difficulties are further exacerbated by narrow pavement widths (as narrow as 81.2cm outside the dentist). Notwithstanding these challenges it is evident that many residents walk around the town. This includes many school children crossing the A140 on their daily journey to school¹¹.



Figure 2.8: narrow pavement width measured as 81.2cm outside the dentist on The Street (source: NP committee)

- 2.49 There are no dedicated cycle routes in Long Stratton.
- 2.50 Outside the town centre, there is an ancient network of lanes, especially to the east, which allow access to the countryside by bicycle. There are also well-established footpaths, leading off Norwich Road, Edges Lane, Star Lane and Parkers Lane to the countryside to the east. These routes follow those shown on some of the earliest maps of Norfolk such as William Faden's 1797 map.

Transport and Air Quality

2.51 There are no Air Quality Management Areas in the district of South Norfolk. However, annual mean concentrations of NO₂ along the A140 in Long Stratton are close to breaching recognised air quality standards. In fulfilment of the Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 Local Air Quality Management, the district monitors air pollution in seven locations along the A140 in the town centre including one location at the northern (bus stop) and one location at the southern (funeral directors) extent of the town. NO₂ emissions during the period 2013 to 2017 (annual mean concentrations) appear to range from 23 ug/m³ to as high as 38 ug/m³. In monitoring stations along The Street in the town centre NO₂ emissions are consistently higher and ranged between 36.1 to 37. 23 ug/m³ in 2013, 2014 and 2017.

¹¹ At a school consultation held in October 2018, 50 out of 108 secondary school children said they walked to school, 53 said they travelled by bus, 1 travelled by bike and just 14 travelled by car to school

- 2.52 Poor air quality along the A140 is a primary reason for the district's commitment towards delivering the Long Stratton bypass. If the bypass was not to be delivered, air quality improvement measures would be essential in order to achieve and maintain and adequate quality of life in Long Stratton town centre.
- 2.53 The NO₂ emissions are reported annually by South Norfolk Council in the Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) which are available to view at www.southnorfolk.gov.uk.



Employment and Economy

FIGURE 2.9 - LONG STRATTON WARD 2017

- 2.54 Economic data for the NP area is most easily analysed at the ward level which includes the parishes of Long Stratton, Wacton and Tharston & Hapton see Figure 2.9¹².
- 2.55 Long Stratton is a net exporter of labour (more people travel out to work than travel in). Nevertheless, the majority of Long Stratton employed residents work within Long Stratton, elsewhere within South Norfolk or commute to Norwich. Likewise, in-commuters to Long Stratton do not typically travel far.
- 2.56 Economic activity rates are high in Long Stratton. This is due to higher levels of employment rather than unemployment as well as higher rates among women. There is a relatively low propensity for Long Stratton ward residents to work in managerial and professional roles in comparison with South Norfolk. Stratton ward has a higher

¹² It is noted the Stratton Ward boundary was later revised in 2018. <u>http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/eastern/norfolk/south-norfolk</u>

proportion of employed residents working in 'administrative & secretarial roles', 'skilled trades', 'caring, leisure and other service occupations' and 'sales and customer services.'

2.57 In terms of employment based in the Long Stratton ward, the largest employment sector in Stratton ward is wholesale & retail which in part reflects the 'market town' shopping role that Long Stratton plays. Recent survey evidence suggests that Long Stratton is functioning well.¹³ Vacancy rates have been constantly low in recent years and well below the Norfolk average. Comparison retailers and leisure services are the predominant businesses but there has been an increase in all business types between 2013 and 2015 which possibly reflects renewed business confidence both in current trading and future activity as a result of planned housing growth.



FIGURE 2.10- EMPLOYEES IN EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR, STRATTON WARD 2015

Figure 2.10 Note: This data is workplace based. Employment is allocated to the geography where the job is based rather than where the job holder lives.

Source: Nomis (BRES) as reported in the Long Stratton 2017 DSE Review

2.58 Other significant sectors include public administration, health & social work and real estate activities. The figure above compares the employment structure of Long Stratton

¹³ 'Market Towns Report 2015', Norfolk County Council, September 2015

ward with South Norfolk and Norfolk. It highlights the disproportional importance of real estate activities, public administration and agriculture to the local economy.¹⁴

2.59 The Long Stratton AAP includes the allocation of 9.5 hectares of local employment opportunities and identifies the site west of Tharston Industrial Estate as part of this.

Town Centre

- 2.60 Long Stratton town has a wide range of retail and community facilities and acts as a service centre for surrounding villages. As noted in the AAP, the number of shops and services is already high for a settlement of this size, making it close in function to a market town.
- 2.61 There are some sites in the town centre that are located in the Long Stratton town centre boundary (as defined in the adopted AAP) that are vacant and presenting

opportunities for comprehensive development where this would enhance the commercial centre of Long Stratton. This includes the fire station/telephone exchange area on Swan Lane and properties interspersed within the town centre boundary.



- 2.62 Currently the volume and type of traffic along the A140 impacts adversely (through noise, vibrations, fumes, dust) on the quality of the public realm in the town centre. The A140 is also a barrier to pedestrian movement in and around the town centre.
- 2.63 The Long Stratton by-pass would provide an opportunity to increase the quality of the public realm in the town centre and is an excellent opportunity to enhance the setting of the Long Stratton Conservation Area and all the heritage assets in it.
- 2.64 The removal of high volumes of traffic along the A140 in itself will help but if opportunities are to be fully realised physical improvements in layout, furniture and street scene also needs to take place. The Long Stratton Masterplanning Report undertaken in January 2018 looks specifically at such measures.

¹⁴ Most agricultural related employment is excluded from BRES. The employment recorded here falls under the category 'farm animal boarding and care' which is presumably predominantly stable yards

- 3 This section of the plan:
 - Describes the priority issues shared by the community as identified in early engagement work in March 2017 and the summer of 2017.
 - Includes the SWOT analysis prepared by the NP steering group as a way of building a shared consensus or key priority concerns.
 - Summarises the existing planning policy context for the NP area. The existing planning policy context provides important background to the NP and it is essential the NP adds to that context rather than duplicate it.

Early Engagement

- 3.1 Early engagement with the community of the NP area started in March 2017. A leaflet was delivered to all residents in the NP area to raise awareness of the NP work but also to seek input from residents in terms of what they like, what they don't like and what should be done to improve the plan area. Drop-in events were also held over three days in March 2017.
- 3.2 A survey was posted online using survey monkey and residents were invited to respond in paper version or online.
- 3.3 The engagement continued throughout the summer of 2017 and further events were held.
- 3.4 Data was extracted from survey monkey twice; once in May 2017 (at which point 159 responses had been collated) and once in August 2017 (at which point a further 91 responses had been collated.)
- 3.5 The details of all consultation activity is available in the Consultation Statement accompanying this submission plan. The following table provides an overview of the main messages.



Figure 3.1- March 2017 early public engagement event (source: NP committee)

What	residents most liked
•	Proximity/ease of access to Norwich
•	Proximity/ease of access to countryside
•	Good schools
•	Good bus service
•	Good facilities incl. GPs, shops, schools
•	Strong/friendly community
•	Good transport links
What	residents least liked
•	A140 traffic (including noise, fumes, impact on residential amenity and quality of the public realm in the town centre)
•	Limited shopping facilities
•	Limited leisure facilities
•	Narrow pavements along A140 creating poor accessibility for those with mobility scooters or pushchairs children etc
•	Not enough for young people to do
•	More difficult to get a doctor's appointment
•	Impact of anticipated development on infrastructure e.g. health facilities
What	could be improved
•	Building of the A140 by-pass
•	More sports facilities including swimming pool
•	More for young people to do
•	Increase capacity of doctor's surgery
•	A large community centre
•	Better pedestrian links throughout the town
•	Provide a 6 th form in the town

- 3.6 In all the consultation results it was very clear that the vast majority of residents were very concerned about traffic on the A140 which runs through the town and supported the building of the by-pass. The building of the by-pass has however been addressed through existing planning policy and there is no need for the Long Stratton NP to include policies on this.
- 3.7 A further popular issue raised at early engagement stage was a widely shared aspiration for a swimming pool to be built in Long Stratton. As recorded in the Consultation Statement, this is an issue that continued to be raised throughout the plan preparation process.
- 3.8 The NP steering group used the early consultation results in 2017 to identify the strengths in the NP area that should be protected, weaknesses that need to be addressed, the threats to the strengths and which could exacerbate any weaknesses and any opportunities for improvement. This is shown in Figure 3.2.

Long Stratton SWOT Analysis			
Strengths	Threats		
Key strengths that came across particularly strongly in early community engagement: • Frequent bus services • Choice of shops • Close to countryside • Access to Norwich Other key strengths: • Schools • Library • Peaceful • Friendly/sense of community • Good facilities • Doctor's training centre	 Access to countryside adversely impacted upon by by-pass? E.g. pedestrian access to St Michaels Sense of community weakened with growth? There is a fear that the new housing will not be suitable for meeting existing local housing needs Fear that opportunities to improve town centre (following building of the by-pass) will not be realised 		
Weaknesses	Opportunities		
 Key weaknesses that came across particularly strongly in early community engagement: A140 traffic and need for a by-pass Other recognised weaknesses: Hempnall crossing needs improvement Noise outside some town centre uses at night time Lack of safe pedestrian crossing on A140 south of the village Overstretched doctors No evening bus services No swimming pool New or expanded community centre/village hall facilities are needed Dog fouling Parking issues at shops etc Lack of leisure facilities and outdoor sports facilities Schools need improving There is no sixth form college Need more varied housing Need affordable properties to rent 	 Building of the bypass will address key issue Others: Improved bus services when population grows? Secure new community centre/village hall as population grows Ensure that when housing comes forward it comprises type and tenure suitable for meeting existing local needs Opportunity to secure new outdoor sports facilities Town Centre improvements 		
• Need attordable properties to rent Figure 3.2: Long Stratton SWOT Analysis			

Mid-term engagement

- 3.9 In the summer and autumn of 2018, the Neighbourhood Plan steering group published a draft Neighbourhood Plan vision, emerging themes, objectives, together with a completed Long Stratton Masterplanning report and a completed draft housing needs assessment. The purpose of the consultation was to raise awareness of the ongoing work on the plan (following early consultation on key issues in 2017) as well as seeking input from the wider community and other stakeholders on the proposed direction of the plan.
- 3.10 The feedback received during the summer and autumn of 2018, confirmed the NP steering group had good coverage of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The consultation did however result in more detail being provided from the wider community with regard to future aspirations for the town centre. This is described in the paragraphs below.
- 3.10.1 Suggestions included:
 - prioritising the planting of trees and grassy areas, in particular planting local tree species that are endangered, e.g. The Black Poplar, as trees would take time to reach maturity it would be important to establish these first
 - leave some natural countryside in the town
 - to have tree lined walkways and paths that are comfortable to walk on, quiet spaces to relax in, seating, garden beds and cycle routes
 - seating outside cafes and pubs with screening from the road
 - a local vegetable garden that the community can work at

3.10.2 During consultation exercises with school pupils, suggestions from pupils included:

- another park but with a running track
- a nature reserve and public gardens with fruit trees
- replicating the old Norfolk villages where homes are situated around an area of common land, so having new commons, giving people a stake in caring for their environment
- 3.10.3 On the issue of creating pedestrianised areas, responses included a preference for the A140 between Flowerpot Lane and Swan Lane and the A140 between Hall Lane and Flowerpot Lane to create a communal area between St Mary's Church and the village hall.



3.10.4 When asked if we should have a market place, twice as many comments were in favour than against. Some of those in favour suggested it should be where the Fire

Station and Telephone exchange is now but to landscape it with grassy banks, trees and bushes and outdoor seating, possibly a bandstand and water features. Some of the comments for those against were that there was little demand as a car park would need to be requisitioned for it. Others suggested it would be fine so long as historic buildings were preserved. One suggested a historic walk in the town with guide signs.

- 3.10.5 With regard to pedestrian safety, safe crossings at the A140 and Flowerpot Lane junction and a crossing opposite the Co-op were mentioned, including zebra crossings.
- 3.10.6 In answer to the question "What features of local importance need protecting?" people suggested:
 - the village life as it is and the 'village feel' in the town needs protecting
 - historic listed buildings
 - the churches especially St Mary's and the village hall
 - one comment referred to ensuring we give historic buildings a use e.g.: "What about helping to make St Mary's Church more suitable for community and support use?" Another suggestion was that the church could be used for concerts and exhibitions
 - protect the windmill
 - protect the public toilets in the centre of the village
 - protect The Plain
 - green spaces were identified as needing protection including wildlife areas meadows and wetlands, as well as individual trees
 - the dark skies were mentioned as needing protection by taking care on the type and frequency of street lighting
- 3.10.7 One comment that came up in many places referred to the need to preserve the ancient footpaths that go from the centre of the town to the surrounding countryside and the communities that are served by them.

Existing planning policy context

- 3.11 The existing planning policy context for the NP area is described in the following paragraphs.
- 3.12 The Joint Core Strategy adopted in March 2011 covers the period up to 2026 and includes:
 - The key diagram which identifies Long Stratton as a Key Service Centre, a location for major housing growth and the Long Stratton bypass
 - Policy 10 Locations for major new or expanded communities in the Norwich Policy Area sets out specific requirements for Long Stratton and includes in this the delivery of:
 - Long Stratton bypass
 - Minimum of 1,800 dwellings identifying the full level and phasing of growth to be dependent on overcoming sewerage constraints

- Improvements to the town centre including traffic management, environmental enhancement and expanded facilities
- High school provision to be provided in, or by the expansion of the existing school
- Investment in strategic green infrastructure corridor reflecting and conserving the ancient landscape to the east of the village
- Transport improvements including bus priority at the A140/A47 junction and an enhanced route to the city centre
- Safe and direct cycle and pedestrian access to the town centre and employment locations
 - Figure 3.4 Looking south along The Street (source: NP committee)
- Additional employment opportunities

3.13 The Long Stratton Area Action Plan (AAP) was adopted in 2016 and provides a planning framework for the delivery of housing (minimum of 1,800 homes), green infrastructure and transport infrastructure as required in Policy 10 of the Joint Core Strategy. The AAP includes the following vision which forms the basis of the detailed policies and proposals.

"Long Stratton – a revitalised large village based around its historic linear street pattern and Conservation Area, growing and building on its existing broad range of jobs and services into a thriving small town. The delivery of a bypass will enable a safer and more inviting town centre with increased shops and services and an enhanced Conservation Area"

3.14 Policy LNGS1 in the AAP- Land East, South-East and North-West of Long Stratton:

- allocates 140.1 hectares of land for housing, employment, a bypass and associated infrastructure for the purpose of delivering a minimum of 1,800 new homes and 9.5 hectares of local employment opportunities. The policy specifies that 1,200 dwellings and 8 hectares of employment land are to be accommodated to the east and south-east of Long Stratton and the remaining 600 homes and 1.5 hectares of employment land are to be accommodated to the north-west of Long Stratton;
- specifies that before any housing is permitted there shall be a phasing and delivery mechanism in place that will secure the delivery of the bypass and that the bypass will be delivered prior to the occupation of the 250th new dwelling (subject to viability);

- requires delivery of other necessary road infrastructure (e.g. Hempnall crossroads) early in the development;
- regarding employment uses, the policy stipulates that uses generating significant volumes of traffic/or HGV movements to have direct access to the bypass;
- regarding education infrastructure, the policy requires at least 2 hectares for new two form entry primary school and 60 place pre-school;
- regarding open space, the policy requires links between village and countryside to east of bypass corridor to be enhanced. The policy specifies a buffer to waste water recycling centre and for this to be utilised as green infrastructure;
- regarding design, the policy seeks for development to sustain and improve the distinctive character of the Long Stratton and to be of a scale and form which respects and enhances the conservation area; the bypass and green infrastructure provision to the east of Long Stratton to respect and reflect the key features identified in the Historic Landscape Characterisation and Sensitivity Assessment; and the bypass will be designed as an integral part of the wider development in order to achieve a high quality environment. Additionally, the existing grid patterns of lanes to the east of Long Stratton is to be retained.
- 3.15 Policy LNGS2 in the AAP Land West of Tharston Industrial Estate is a site allocaiton which identifies land west of Tharston Industrial Estate suitable for accommodating employment opportunities and economic growth. The policy also requires maximisation of walking and cycling opportunities; phasing of the land in agreement with Anglian Water regarding resolution of wastewater management issues; vehicular access from Salamanca Road and direct from Stratton Motor Company site; retention or diversion of footpath and design and landscaping.
- 3.16 Policy LNGS3 in the AAP **Town Centre Policy** defines a town centre boundary for Long Stratton and allows for new town centre uses to come forward in the centre. The policy also defines a primary shopping area within which loss of A1 (shops) will be resisted if this were to lead to an over concentration of non-A1 uses. The policy has a generic requirement stating that as part of any proposal opportunities should be sought to enhance the character and appearance of the town centre, taking into account the 2013 Conservation Area Statement.
- 3.17 Policy LNGS4 in the AAP Sequential Approach and impact assessment for Provision in Long Stratton clarifies that in the event of proposals for new retail units outside the town centre boundary, a sequential assessment and impact assessment will be required. The purpose of this policy is to resist any retail developments which undermine the vitality and attractiveness of Long Stratton town centre.
- 3.18 Policy LNGS5 in the AAP General Infrastructure requirements for new developments within Long Stratton AAP Area provides general green infrastructure principles for any additional developments that come forward during the plan period. The AAP includes a green infrastructure map (Appendix 3) which, whilst not directly referred to in the policy, identifies the necessary green infrastructure requirements for new development.

- 3.19 Policy LNGS6 in the AAP **Protecting Existing Recreation or Amenity Land in Long Stratton** protects existing recreation and amenity land in Long Stratton.
- 3.20 Policy LNGS7 in the AAP **New Recreation Provision in Long Stratton** requires developers to provide new on-site public open space provision commensurate with the level of development proposed as well as green infrastructure to help create a network of safe movement around the urban environment of Long Stratton. No specific standards are referred to in the policy but paragraph 9.8 of the AAP states that 1,800 new homes are calculated to trigger a need for 3 hectares of children's play space and 7.4 hectares of older children/adult open space.
- 3.21 Policy LNGS8 in the AAP Land for a new burial ground in Long Stratton allows for new burial ground proposals subject to criteria.
- 3.22 Policy LNGS9 in the AAP **Accessibility** requires that development maximises permeability for pedestrians and cyclists by improving access to/from existing and new key services and facilities. The policy seeks layout of developments to allow for easy circulation of buses and bus prioritisation measures on the A140.

Current developer proposal

- 3.23 In January 2018, Norfolk Homes Ltd submitted a planning application on 45.2 hectares of land to the west of the A140 seeking outline planning consent for 387 dwellings and 1.5 hectares of Class B1 employment land, associated infrastructure and public open space. The application is a hybrid application which also seeks full planning consent for a western relief road (including a roundabout access at the north to the A140 and a priority junction access to Swan Lane at the south) and with phase 1 housing consisting of 213 dwellings, associated infrastructure and public open space.
- 3.24 Also in January 2018, Norfolk Land Ltd submitted a planning application on 109.7 hectares of land to the east of the A140 seeking outline planning permission for 1,275 dwellings, 8 hectares of employment land for uses within Classes B1, B2 and B8, 2 hectare primary school site, community facilities site, associated infrastructure and public open space. As with the Norfolk Homes Ltd application, this application is also a hybrid one which also seeks full permission for a bypass including roundabouts and junctions.
- 3.25 Since the submission of the planning applications, the district council and the developers have been working on site details and engaging with statutory consultees in the process of doing this. This includes the drafting of a Design Code by the developers which establishes broad principles to be followed across the site which is subject to strategic site allocation LNGS1 in the adopted AAP.
- 3.26 At the time of writing the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) is in preparation. This is being prepared by Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council. The GNLP will replace the current Joint Core Strategy for the area. The Joint Core Strategy plans for the area up to 2026 where as the GNLP will ensure needs continue to be met to 2038. The Regulation 18 GNLP does not allocate additional

development in Long Stratton beyond the current strategic site allocation set out in the Long Stratton Area Action Plan. Neither does the Regulation 18 GNLP propose to supersede the Long Stratton Area Action Plan.

Priorities for the NP

3.27 Having considered the key issues highlighted during early consultation, the existing policy context provided by the Joint Core Strategy and the Long Stratton AAP, the key areas which the Neighbourhood Plan must focus on are:

Priority 1 - Address housing choice and seek to ensure new housing is suitable for meeting existing needs as well as needs of future residents (to address the fear identified in Figure 3.2 that the new housing coming forward as part of the Area Action Plan development will not be suitable for meeting Long Stratton specific needs).

Priority 2 - Be focused on retaining those characteristics that make Long Stratton special. This includes its rural feel, heritage and biodiversity assets (to manage the threat identified in Figure 3.2 that the current sense of identity and community will weaken when new development comes forward and respond to community feedback summarised in paragraph 3.10.6).

Priority 3 - Include planning policies on employment and seek to facilitate opportunities for providing skills development training to residents (the address the threat identified in Figure 3.2 that the current sense of identity and community will weaken when new development comes forward and ensure the current local population are able to benefit from new employment growth identified in Policy LNGS2 in the Area Action Plan).

Priority 4 - Plan for successful integration of new communities with existing communities and plan for infrastructure to be provided alongside new development (to address the threat identified in Figure 3.2 that the current sense of identity and community will weaken when new development comes forward and address identified weaknesses regarding existing community infrastructure provision (overstretched doctors, no swimming pool, need for new or expanded community centre/village hall facilities, parking issues at shops, lack of leisure facilities and outdoor sports facilities)).

Priority 5 - Highlight existing shortages in community infrastructure and highlight shortages anticipated as new development comes forward (to address the threat identified in Figure 3.2 that the current sense of identity and community will weaken when new development comes forward and address identified weaknesses regarding existing community infrastructure provision (overstretched doctors, no swimming pool, need for new or expanded community centre/village hall facilities, parking issues at shops, lack of leisure facilities and outdoor sports facilities)).

Priority 6 - Look at improving accessibility to and from shops and services in the town centre (to address the weaknesses identified in Figure 3.2 regarding the A140).

Priority 7 - Provide more detail than the LSAAP in terms of a vision for the town centre once the by-pass has come forward (to address the threat identified in Figure 3.2 that opportunities to improve the town centre will not be realised).

Priority 8 - Secure economic success in Long Stratton as the settlement grows. This priority is linked to Priority 3 and 4 and reflects Long Stratton's economic role in relation

to Norwich but also in relation to its 'market town' role with respect to its surrounding rural hinterland (as described in paragraph 2.49 to 2.54).



FIGURE 3.5 - Poor pedestrian environment A140 looking south into town centre (source: NP committee)

3.28 In addition to the eight priorities expressed above, the Neighbourhood Plan must also meet the basic conditions required of it by legislation. These basic conditions are explained in the introduction to this plan. We have therefore identified two important cross-cutting priorities which emanate from these basic conditions:

Cross Cutting Priority A: - Take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change (as required by paragraph 149 of the NPPF).

Cross Cutting Priority B: - Contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development (as required by the basic conditions but also by reference to paragraph 16 of the NPPF). 4 As a response to the issues identified in Chapter 3, the following vision has been drafted for the Neighbourhood Plan.

"Long Stratton village will grow into a town but a village feel will be retained. Long Stratton will keep its close links to the surrounding countryside and the characterful feel of the enclosed historic centre will be strengthened not just as a result of reduced through-traffic but due to physical improvements which can take place once the by-pass has been built.

Our strong sense of place in the Neighbourhood Plan area will grow as the new development is designed sensitively and reflect Long Stratton and Tharston's existing characteristics. Pedestrian and cycle access between existing estates and the shops, services and areas of employment will be improved whilst the new development will be designed to encompass pedestrian and cycle access to the town centre. We will have a vibrant, mixed and balanced community. Our employment and business base will grow and diversify as the town takes on a more strategic role in the wider geographic area. New housing developments will provide a varied and wide housing choice ensuring the needs of existing communities will be met alongside those of future residents"

4.1 The Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan Group initially worked with their planning consultant, Modicum Planning, to develop a set of plan themes and objectives which could address the concerns addressed by the community whilst also being within the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan to address. These were first consulted on during the summer and autumn of 2018. Objective 8 did not initially appear as part of earlier consultation in 2018. It is identified by the NP steering group as an important component of the Long Stratton vision which seeks that 'our employment and business base will grow and diversify as the town takes on a more strategic role in the wider geographic area'.

Theme	Objective	What does this mean?
A Strong Community	1. Housing that is built should be suitable for meeting needs of existing and future NP area residents	The Housing Needs Assessment that looks specifically at needs arising from Long Stratton itself during the period up to 2026 tells us this means: 1.1 During the period 2018 to 2026, 408 of the homes to be of size and tenure to meet Long Stratton needs 1.2 Provision of at least 132 affordable homes during the period 2018 to 2026 specifically for NP area residents 1.3 Development to include sizeable proportion of private rental housing (to meet needs of the 50% of households that can't afford a typical mortgage at 2016 prices) 1.4 A high proportion of all houses to be 2-3 bedrooms 1.5 Provision of specialist housing totalling 126 units

4.2 The final and agreed themes and objectives are set out in the table 4.1 below.

Theme	Objective	What does this mean?
Design and	 2. Successful integration between new community and existing community where new community facilities are located in sustainable locations and which facilitates good cycle and pedestrian connectivity 3. A strong sense of place 	The following elements which all feature in other themes: 2.1 Excellent pedestrian permeability within neighbourhoods, between neighbourhoods and from residential areas to town centre 2.2 Good provision of shared open spaces, recreation and community facilities 2.3 Good distribution of community facilities throughout the plan area 2.4 A vibrant town centre 3.1 Retain and enhance those characteristics
Character	incorporating sustainable design	 that make Long Stratton special. Based on existing studies such as the South Norfolk Place Making Guide and the Long Stratton Conservation Character Appraisal this would include: Strengthening the character of the historic core and prioritising the conservation or enhancement of historic buildings Outside the historic core, high quality and locally distinctive neighbourhoods New perimeter of Long Stratton to provide attractive setting to the settlement Protecting ancient countryside beyond new settlement boundaries 3.2 Ensuring new development delivers high quality and sustainable design that adds to the overall quality of Long Stratton and is sympathetic to Long Stratton's character and history
Employment	4. Long Stratton's employment and business base will grow and diversify as it takes on a more strategic role in the wider regional market	 4.1 Increase employment base 4.2 Increase opportunities for small business 4.3 No or significantly reduce industrial traffic through town 4.4 Explore how opportunities for appropriate skills and training can be opened up to NP area residents
Town Centre	5. Opportunities to enhance the town centre will be realised	 5.1 The public realm in the town centre will be improved. For example, through the creation of a market place 5.2. Improved pedestrian safety across and along the A140. For example, through the measures proposed in the Long Stratton masterplanning work 5.3 Increased vegetation along the A140 5.4 Improve infrastructure for cyclists along the A140

Theme	Objective	What does this mean?
Outdoor Recreation, Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Policies	6. Improved opportunities for green infrastructure and recreation in the NP area	 6.1 Open space provision to meet needs of population/increase in quantity and quality 6.2 Outdoor recreation facilities will have been improved 6.3 Outdoor sports facilities will have been improved 6.4 Open space infrastructure will be
Indoor Community Infrastructure	7. Infrastructure necessary to support the growing community will come forward in a timely manner	distributed throughout settlement 7.1 Identify the need for a new community centre/village hall as community grows 7.2 Continue to work with health providers to understand future space requirements and where they are and support provision through the plan if applicable 7.3 Work with education providers to understand future needs. Support provision of this through the NP
Superfast Broadband	8. The most technically advanced communications infrastructure to be in place to serve Long Stratton's growing resident and business community.	8.1 For all new development coming forward as part of the Long Stratton strategic site allocation (Policy LNGS1 in the AAP), Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) to be installed. All other proposals to receive superfast broadband via Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC)

How this plan contributes towards achieving sustainable development

4.3 All Neighbourhood Plans are required by the basic conditions to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that "achieving sustainable development means the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways." It goes on to define these three objectives as economic, social and environmental.

Economic Goal: The Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan works within the strategic context established by the 2016 Area Action Plan that includes a strategic site allocation for 1,800 new homes in the plan. The plan focuses on ensuring this growth can happen successfully by prioritising the growth and diversification of Long Stratton's employment and business base as it takes on a more strategic role in the wider regional area and by prioritising the success of Long Stratton town centre, especially once the bypass has been built.

Social Goal: A key principle underpinning the Long Stratton NP is to ensure the existing Long Stratton community will also benefit from the housing that is built recognising the existing Long Stratton need for housing (as evidenced in the Long Stratton Housing Needs Assessment) and existing need for more affordable homes. This will assist with successful integration of new and existing neighbourhoods. The Long Stratton NP identifies additional community infrastructure items (e.g. a new centrally located community meeting space or hub to address a range of existing but growing demand

from community groups and services including the library) which it considers essential for the delivery of successful places. Key to the creation of successful communities is maintaining and enhancing sense of place. The policies underpinning theme Design and Character are focused on addressing this priority.

Environmental Goal: Whilst the strategic context provided by the Long Stratton Area Action Plan is one of growth, the Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan does prioritise the delivery of development which accords with sustainability principles (see Policy DC10) as provided in the Long Stratton Design Principles document. The Neighbourhood Plan has also identified existing areas within the plan area which are important for biodiversity and seeks to protect them as well as seeking to secure and enhance existing green infrastructure.

How this plan takes a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change

- 4.4 The Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan is very much focused on reducing the need to travel by private vehicles and improving pedestrian and cycle links in the town centre and securing good pedestrian and cycle connections as part of new development, with particular regard for the strategic site allocation for 1,800 new homes. With regards to the town centre the emphasis is very much on improving the safety and street scene environment (including tree planting and greening the urban environment) along and in the vicinity of The Street. Outside the town centre, the emphasis is on ensuring new community facilities are located where residents can access them through public transport, walking or cycling. The protection and enhancement of green infrastructure to benefit both people but also biodiversity is the subject of policies under theme Outdoor recreation, green infrastructure and biodiversity.
- 4.5 Chapter 6 in the Neighbourhood Plan includes a community aspiration to work with stakeholders to seek a renewable energy scheme in the plan area where the scheme does not impact adversely on landscape character and where schemes deliver community benefits such as tariffs from the energy generated.
- 4.6 In reviewing the policies set out in this Neighbourhood Plan it is very important to regard the policies against strategic planning policies set out in the South Norfolk Local Plan as well as against national planning policy (set out in the NPPF) and national guidance set out in national planning practice guidance. As required in paragraph 16 of the NPPF, the Neighbourhood Plan should serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to the plan area already.
- 4.7 The following table No.4.2 illustrates the link between the plan theme and objectives on the one hand and the priorities on the other The table also shows how the planning policies (see Chapter 5) and the community aspirations (see Chapter 6) are linked to the objectives and priorities.

Theme	Objectives	Linked Priority (paragraph 3.27)	Linked Policy (see Chapter 5)	Linked Community Aspiration (see Chapter 6)
A Strong Community	1. Housing that is built should be suitable for meeting needs of existing and future NP residents.	Priority 1 Cross Cutting Priority B (sustainable development)	Policy SC1 – Housing mix Policy SC1 – Specialist and supported housing Policy SC3 – Affordable homes meeting Long Stratton needs	Paragraph 6.2.ix
	2. Successful integration between new community and existing community	Priority 2 Priority 3 Priority 4 Priority 5 Priority 6 Priority 7 Cross Cutting Priority A (climate change) Cross Cutting Priority B (sustainable development)	Policy SC4 – Pedestrian and cycle friendly neighbourhoods Policy SC5 – Maintaining good connectivity with outlying areas Policy SC6 – Location of new community facilities	Paragraph 6.2.ii, Paragraph 6.2.x, Paragraph 6.2.iv, Paragraph 6.3 and Paragraph 6.4
Design and Character	3. A strong sense of place	Priority 1 Priority 2 Cross Cutting Priority A (climate change) Cross Cutting Priority B (sustainable development)	Policy DC7 – Landscape and settlement sharacter Policy DC8 – Creating successful neighbourhoods Policy DC9 Strengthening and enhancing Long Stratton's historic core Policy DC10 – Long Stratton design principles Also, Policy G119 – Protecting existing sites of biodiversity value in the plan area.	Paragraph 6.2.v and Paragraph 6.2.ii
Employment	4. Long Stratton's employment and business base will grow and diversify as it takes on a more strategic	Priority 3 Priority 4 Cross Cutting Priority B (sustainable development)	Policy E11 – New employment uses in Tharston Policy E12 – Training Long Stratton's local workforce	Paragraph 6.2.vi and Paragraph 6.3.i

Theme	Objectives	Linked Priority (paragraph 3.27)	Linked Policy (see Chapter 5)	Linked Community Aspiration (see Chapter 6)
	role in the wider market.			
Town Centre	5. Opportunities to enhance the town centre will be realised	Priority 6 Priority 7 Cross Cutting Priority A (climate change) Cross Cutting Priority B (sustainable development)	Policy TC13 – Re- establishing The Street as the heart of the Town Policy TC14 – Long Stratton Market Place Policy TC15 – The Fire Station and Telephone Exchange.	Paragraph 6.2.i, Paragraph 6.2.iii and Paragraph 6.2.iv
Outdoor recreation Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity	6. Improve opportunities for green infrastructure and recreation in the NP area	Priority 5 Priority 4 Priority 2 Cross Cutting Priority A (climate change) Cross Cutting Priority B (sustainable development)	Policy GI16 – Long Stratton Recreational Open Space standards Policy GI17 Delivering Green Infrastructure in Long Stratton GI18 – Green Infrastructure Management GI19- Protecting Existing sites of biodiversity value in the plan area	Paragraph 6.2.ii, Paragraph 6.2.iv, Paragraph 6.2.v and Paragraph 6.2.vii
Indoor community Infrastructure	7 Infrastructure necessary to support the growing community will come forward in a timely manner		R20-Delivering a new Community Meeting Space in Long Stratton R21 – A new swimming pool for a larger community	Paragraph 6.2.iv and Paragraph 6.2.vii
Superfast Broadband	8. The most technically advanced communication infrastructure to be in place to serve Long Stratton's growing resident and business community	Priority 8 Priority 3 Priority 4	C22 – Fibre to the Premises	Paragraph 6.2.xi

5. PLANNING POLICIES

5 This section of the plan contains the planning policies which future planning applications in the plan area will be determined against. The planning policy is shown in bold text. Supporting each policy is the policy intent and, following this, context and reasoning for the policy requirements.

A STRONG COMMUNITY – HOUSING POLICIES

5.1 The following three policies are focused on housing type in terms of tenure and size. The overall focus of the three policies is to ensure that of the 1,800 houses due to come forward as part of the Long Stratton Area Action Plan (AAP), a considerable proportion of them should be tailored to meet the needs already identified in the existing Long Stratton community. Failure to do so will result in pushing residents with a local connection out of the parish and result in fragmentation of the fabric which currently holds the community together.

Policy LSNP - SC1 Housing mix

Residential development proposals will be supported where they incorporate a mix of dwelling types and sizes that meet the needs of current and future residents (as evidenced in up to date housing needs assessments applicable to the plan area) including homes suitable for older people that can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

For major residential development proposals (10 dwellings or more), a significant proportion (circa 70 percent) should be two and three bedroom dwellings. An alternative housing mix must be justified with reference site-specific context and an up-to-date assessment of existing needs applicable to Long Stratton. Specific regard should be had to meeting the needs of entry level purchasers on low and medium incomes for example including flats and terraced housing as part of a residential scheme.

Policy intent

- 5.1.1 To ensure all residential schemes (including those coming forward as part of the AAP strategic site allocation) will assist in meeting existing identified local housing needs and to ensure that no overall dwelling type will dominate any particular neighbourhood.
- 5.1.2 Two and three-bedroom dwellings required as part of this policy will need to be of an adequate size to ensure a good quality of residential amenity for future occupiers. A two-bedroom property will need to include at least three rooms excluding the kitchen, bathroom and toilets. A three-bedroom property would need to include at least 4 rooms excluding the kitchen, bathroom and toilets. These are the definitions used in the Long Stratton Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) 2017 (see paragraph 137).

5.1.3 The technical housing standards – nationally described space standard provide a further method for measuring minimal internal space in square metres for new dwellings and, as such, provides a mechanism for assessing space standards in Long Stratton. South Norfolk Council have not yet adopted the technical housing standards but are seeking to do this through the Greater Norwich Local Plan which is at Regulation 18 Stage as at March 2020.

Context and reasoned justification

5.1.4 A review of existing housing stock in the civil parishes of Long Stratton and Tharston and Hapton helps to provide context to this policy. Compared to South Norfolk and the country as whole, Long Stratton has a large proportion of household spaces with 2 and 3 bedrooms. The parish of Tharston and Hapton on the other hand has a high proportion of household spaces with 4 and 5 bedrooms. The Long Stratton NP area includes the whole of the parish of Long Stratton and small proportion of the parish of Tharston and Hapton. The housing characteristics of the plan area can be regarded as typical of a large village or small market town rather than small South Norfolk village.



Figure 5.1: Number of bedrooms in households (Census 2011)

- 5.1.5 The Long Stratton HNA 2017 also looks at existing housing stock and looks specifically at how this has changed between 2001 and 2011 in order to identify any trends – see Table 14 on page 33. The work shows that the actual number of properties with 4 rooms (which could equate to both a 2 bedroom 2 reception room property or a 3 bedroom 1 reception room property) has actually fallen. This indicates a current squeeze on 2 or 3 bedroomed properties in the plan area.
- 5.1.6 The Long Stratton HNA 2017 concludes that there is a total housing need arising within the Neighbourhood Plan area of 408 dwellings from 2017 to 2026. Long Stratton specific needs will be higher than this over the entire plan period. The level of need arising within the plan area means it is very important that the housing being delivered

as part of the AAP to deliver on wider district needs also succeeds to address Long Stratton specific needs. Of the need arising in the plan area, the Long Stratton HNA finds that 70% of need falls within the category of two and three bedroomed homes – See Figure 5.1 (and illustration for CORE Housing Market Area (HMA) (inc. Long Stratton)).

- 5.1.7 It is recognised that the growth allocated for the Long Stratton NP area in the adopted 2016 Area Action Plan has a purpose to serve a wider district need. Figure 5.1 shows a lower need for 1 bedroom dwellings in the South Norfolk Housing Market Area than for the Core Housing Market Area but the need for two and three-bedroomed homes are similarly high at circa 70%.
- 5.1.8 As discussed under **Policy LSNP SC3 Affordable housing meeting Long Stratton needs**, smaller properties including flats and terraced housing and smaller rental properties are often the only properties that those on median incomes in the plan area can afford. It is therefore important that the overall proportion of such properties in the plan area is increased during the plan period.
- 5.1.9 The Long Stratton Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) looked at needs across the wider housing market area which is defined as the functional Housing Market Area (HMA) (includes Broadland, South Norfolk, Norwich, North Norfolk, Breckland) and compares this to need in South Norfolk district as well as with need in the Core HMA. The Core HMA is a smaller area than the functional HMA and is focused around Norwich. The Long Stratton HNA concludes that the core HMA provides a more accurate picture of needs required in Long Stratton than the South Norfolk HMA.



Figure 5.2 Sizes of housing needed in different geographies in Central Norfolk. Source: Figure 7 in the Long Stratton Housing Needs Assessment 2017.

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- 5.1.10 The provision of a mix of house sizes is also needed for the purpose of establishing successful new neighbourhoods with broad based communities. They will also have the benefit of having activity at different times of the day (for example retired people and younger families are more likely to enliven a place during the working day.) The overconcentration of many larger homes or many smaller homes should therefore be avoided.
- 5.1.11 The proportion of Long Stratton residents aged 65-84 is lower than that across South Norfolk as a whole and more in line with England as a whole. However, as is the case across the nation, the proportion of older people in the plan area is expected to increase significantly. Table 20 in the Long Stratton HNA predicts the proportion of Long Stratton residents aged 75 plus to increase from 9% of the population as at 2011 to 14% of the population by 2031. The health and lifestyles of older people will differ greatly, as will their housing needs, which can range from accessible and adaptable general needs housing to specialist housing with high levels of care and support. Specialist housing suitable for the older people is specifically addressed in Policy LSNP SC2.
- 5.1.12 Some needs of older people can be met through accessible and adaptable housing (such as bungalows) made available as private or affordable housing.
- 5.1.13 Accessible and adaptable housing will provide safe and convenient approach routes into and out of the home and outside areas, suitable circulation space and suitable bathroom and kitchens within the home. Wheelchair user dwellings include additional features to meet the needs of occupants who use wheelchairs, or allow for adaptations to meet such needs.

Policy LSNP – SC2 Specialist and Supported Housing

Specialist Housing

Development proposals providing specialist housing (class 'C3') for the older generation (including retirement housing, sheltered housing or extra care housing) and specialist or supported housing for people with disabilities are strongly encouraged.

Proposals will be supported where:

- they are close to Long Stratton Town Centre or otherwise easily accessible to shops, services and community facilities without the need to rely on private transport;
- they are integrated well with surrounding development and land uses;
- incorporate a mix of tenure to meet identified need in the area including affordable homes; and
- they achieve a high standard of residential amenity for occupiers.
Residential Institutions

A proposal for a new residential institution (class 'C2') will be supported where:

- it is located in a location easily accessible to shops, services, community facilities and public transport as appropriate to meet the needs of the intended residents, staff and visitors;
- the scheme layout and design achieves a high standard of residential amenity for occupiers.

All schemes should ensure adequate pavement widths and the appropriate location of dropped curbs so as to facilitate good access and egress to the property.

All development proposals will be expected to relate well with surrounding built environment. Gated developments will only be supported where the security is necessary to protect the intended occupiers and where it is sensitively designed to result in a welcoming and attractive street-scene environment.

Policy intent

5.1.14 To highlight the importance and opportunity for delivering:

- additional specialist housing for the older generation in Long Stratton; and
- specialist and supported housing for people with disabilities.

Context and reasoned justification

- 5.1.15 There are currently three facilities specifically catering for the older generation in Long Stratton (a nursing home, a retirement home and a sheltered housing scheme). But the Long Stratton HNA predicts further need for specialist housing catered to meet the needs of the older population during the period 2017 to 2026 of 126 units particularly given the recent growth in the 85+ population. Over the full duration of the plan period, the actual needs for specialist housing is likely to be higher than this. Also of relevance here is the function of Long Stratton as an urban hub within a large rural area between Norwich and Diss.
- 5.1.16 A need for more specialist housing for the older generation is identified at the county level as well. Norfolk County Council have undertaken an analysis of need for extra care housing in the county up to 2028. This analysis identifies an unmet demand of 2,842 units across the county including 360 in South Norfolk. Norfolk County Council define Extra care housing as housing suitable for people over the age of 55, whose current home no longer best meets their needs. On their website, Norfolk County Council assert that extra care housing should:
 - Be close to shops, bus routes and GP surgeries
 - Have provision for a restaurant offer on site
 - Have facilities such as hairdressers and fitness suites (where appropriate)
 - Developments should be mixed tenure, suitable for a range of care needs banded from low to high
 - They expect care staff to be on site 24/7 for any emergency unplanned care

- 5.1.17 The NP supports the above. The criteria in Policy LSNP SC2 has been informed by consideration of these.
- 5.1.18 Planning practice guidance asserts "the provision of appropriate housing for people with disabilities, including specialist and supported housing, is crucial in helping them to live safe and independent lives." and "Without accessible and adaptable housing, disabled people risk facing discrimination and disadvantage in housing. An ageing population will see the numbers of disabled people continuing to increase and it is important we plan early to meet their needs throughout their lifetime"

Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph 002 Reference ID: 63-002-20190626 26 June 2019

- 5.1.19 Long Stratton Town Council and Tharston and Hapton Parish Council will work with South Norfolk Council, Norfolk County Council and potential providers to seek the provision of additional specialist housing schemes which can best meet the needs of the plan area.
- 5.1.20 In addition to the identified additional need for extra care housing of 360 units needed in South Norfolk, Norfolk County Council have also identified a need for additional residential and nursing home bed spaces. The total identified additional need in South Norfolk up to 2028 is for 288 care and nursing beds.

Policy LSNP - SC3 Affordable homes meeting Long Stratton needs

The size and tenure of affordable homes being delivered as part of residential schemes should be specifically tailored to contribute towards Long Stratton specific affordable housing needs. A proportion will be prioritised for those residents with a close connection to Long Stratton.

Applicants will be expected to refer to the Long Stratton Housing Needs Assessment and any other up to date information (e.g. the strategic housing market assessment) relating to Long Stratton affordable housing needs in order to ascertain specific needs in the Long Stratton neighbourhood area.

Policy intent

- 5.1.21 To help ensure that Long Stratton residents and those with a connection to Long Stratton have affordable housing needs met. This is in order to meet the need for 132 additional affordable homes currently estimated (see Long Stratton Housing Needs Assessment, AECOM) to be needed to meet Long Stratton specific needs during 2018 to 2026.
- 5.1.22 This policy is intended to sit alongside the Local Plan policy which sets the affordable housing thresholds for all development proposals. This is currently Policy 4 in the Joint Core Strategy which includes a 30% affordable housing target for schemes of 10 to 15 dwellings and 33% on schemes comprising 16 or more units.

Context and reasoned justification

- 5.1.23 Policy 4 of the Joint Core Strategy includes a target of 30% affordable housing on schemes of 10 to 15 dwellings and 33% of affordable housing on schemes comprising 16 or more units. The policy requires tenure mix (e.g. social rent or shared ownership) to be determined on a site by site basis for schemes of up to 15 units and for the tenure mix to be split as 85% social rent and 15% intermediate tenures of schemes comprising 16 or more units. South Norfolk Council are able to apply a local connection criteria to affordable housing made available on a rental basis. The actual proportion will be determined on a case by case basis, but should be a meaningful proportion of the overall level of affordable housing planned for in the plan area (circa 600 homes during the period 2017 to 2026 if Local Plan policy requiring 33% affordable housing is met) in order to effectively address Long Stratton affordable housing needs over the plan period.
- 5.1.24 The Long Stratton Demographic and Socio-Economic review and the Long Stratton Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) both demonstrate considerable levels of affordable housing needs within the plan area. It is therefore very important that the affordable housing that is provided either as part of market housing schemes (via Policy 4 of the Joint Core Strategy) or as rural exception sites (sites delivered with the primary purpose of delivering local affordable housing) is both tailored to meet Long Stratton needs but also allocated to those with a connection to the parish of Long Stratton. For market housing schemes, it is acknowledged that some of the affordable housing proportion will be allocated on a wider district needs basis.
- 5.1.25 The Long Stratton HNA identifies (see paragraph 2) that 132 affordable dwellings will be needed in the plan area over the period 2017 to 2026. It is unlikely that these will be delivered via rural exception sites on the edge of Long Stratton since Long Stratton itself is not an identified rural area. It is therefore important that the proportion of the affordable housing being provided as part of market schemes are earmarked for those with a local connection.
- 5.1.26 In 2011 the tenure of households in Long Stratton plan area comprised 72.1% home ownership, 2.2% shared ownership, 12.6% social rent and 11.1% private rented. Between the period 2001 to 2011, the number of home ownership dwellings increased by 12.4%, the number of shared ownership dwellings increased by 32.4%, the number of social rent properties increased by 23.8% whilst the number of homes in the private rented sector increased by 175.9% (starting from a very low base with only 34 shared ownership properties in 2001 and only 83 rented properties). The Long Stratton HNA finds that the significant growth between 2001 and 2011 in the shared ownership and private rented sector in the plan area is a clear indication of the worsening affordability housing for sale. The Long Stratton DSE Review 2017 finds that house prices are a significant obstacle for low income families. As at September 2017, it estimated that entry level house prices in Long Stratton would require an income of about £38,000.

5.1.27 The Long Stratton HNA states "Even those on median incomes have very limited for-sale housing options within Long Stratton, and are more likely to be able to afford a flat outside of the village, elsewhere in South Norfolk, or a rental property". This highlights the importance of retaining or increasing the overall level of smaller homes such as flats and terraced housing in the plan area as a way of providing entry level housing for residents. The Long Stratton HNA also states "Those on lower quartile household income are restricted to social and intermediate housing, and this particularly affects those under 25 and lone parent households". The report finds that ".. in broad terms, 50% of all households in Long Stratton would not be able to afford for-sale housing without additional equity (either from existing homes or from family assistance)". This presents a problem for the Long Stratton community since only 26% of existing housing in the plan area is found to be available in other more affordable tenures (including the private rented sector).

5.1.28 A close connection to Long Stratton is defined (in priority order) as:

- Residents of the parishes of Long Stratton or Tharston and Hapton who have lived in either parish for a total of at least 3 years of the last 10 years.
- Former residents of the parishes of Long Stratton or Tharston and Hapton who have lived in either of those parishes for a total of at least 3 years of the last 10 years.
- Residents of the parishes of Long Stratton or Tharston and Hapton who have lived in those parishes or the adjacent parishes of Wacton, Morningthorpe and Tasburgh for the last 3 years or more.
- People working in the parishes of Long Stratton or Tharston and Hapton and have done so for the last year or more for at least 10 hours each week.
- Residents of the adjacent parishes of Wacton, Morningthorpe and Tasburgh who have lived in one or more of those parishes (or the parishes of Long Stratton or Tharston and Hapton) for the last 3 years or more.
- Residents of the parishes of Long Stratton or Tharston and Hapton who have lived in those parishes for less than 3 years.
- Residents of the adjacent parishes of Wacton, Morningthorpe and Tasburgh, who have lived in these parishes (or the parishes of Long Stratton or Tharston and Hapton) for less than 3 years.
- Residents of South Norfolk in accordance with the standard allocation criteria for the property type.

Any other person in accordance with the standard allocation criteria for the property type.

A STRONG COMMUNITY – SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION BETWEEN THE NEW COMMUNITY AND EXISTING COMMUNITY POLICIES

5.2 The A140 currently splits the town centre in two and has the effect of segregating east from west. The delivery of the Long Stratton by-pass which is planned for as part of the Long Stratton AAP will give the Long Stratton community the opportunity to reclaim a town centre as a focus for resident and visitor activity as opposed to a focus for commuters travelling through. Currently, most residential areas are within walkable distance to the town centre using, on the whole but not always, safe and attractive walkable routes. Indeed, consultation work with the secondary school found that a about half of the children participating walked to schools.

Policy LSNP – SC4 Pedestrian and cycle-friendly neighbourhoods

The design and layout of new residential development proposals will be expected to provide for direct, safe and attractive walking and cycling routes (including adequate street lighting and pavement condition) within the scheme and utilise opportunities to link directly with neighbouring areas. Residential proposals which result in poor pedestrian connectivity to neighbouring areas, shops, services and facilities (including schools) will not be supported.

Policy intent

5.2.1 To ensure good connectivity between new neighbourhoods and the existing Long Stratton community.

Context and reasoned justification

- 5.2.2 As new neighbourhoods are built out on the edge of the existing settlement it is very important for the purpose of facilitating successful community cohesion that new residents and existing residents are able to travel by foot or bicycle on direct routes between different neighbourhoods and from residential area to key destinations such as the town centre, schools and community centres. The location of community facilities including schools will have a bearing on how this happens but what is also key is that new neighbourhoods are designed so as to allow for direct, safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 5.2.3 The South Norfolk Place Making Guide published in 2012 finds that there is poor permeability (i.e. it is not well connected) from modern estates to centre of the town as well as across the A140 and it is essential that this does not continue as the town grows.

Policy LSNP – SC5 Maintaining good connectivity with outlying areas

Development proposals coming forward in the plan area will be expected to maintain or enhance good connectivity between Long Stratton and its outlying hamlets, including Stratton St Michael, Wacton Common, Wood Green and Tharston and Hapton. Proposals which result in the severance of walking and cycling links (including the Public Rights of Way Network) between rural communities and Long Stratton settlement will not be supported.

In locations where the proposed bypass will sever an existing route, this will be mitigated through the provision of safe, attractive and viable crossing points (e.g. attractive underpass or footbridge) that successfully links into existing routes.

Policy intent

- 5.2.4 To ensure that proposals do not result in poorer community cohesion with outlying hamlets as a result of new development.
- 5.2.5 It is recognised that the bypass will sever some existing links and the intention of this policy is not to undermine the delivery of the bypass. However, where existing links are severed it is essential new, attractive and viable links are provided so that overall connectivity between Long Stratton and outlying hamlets is maintained and enhanced.

Context and reasoned justification

5.2.6 Delivery of the Long Stratton by-pass presents the community with a valued opportunity to strengthen community cohesion but depending on how the by-pass is delivered it has the potential to isolate communities which are located on the other side of the by-pass route. One particular area which the community at large is concerned about is the impact of the by-pass on severing links with Wood Green. Wood Green is an outlying hamlet approximately 1km to the east of the A140 in Long Stratton as well as a County Wildlife Site with pond habitat. There is an ancient network of lanes (e.g. Hall Lane, Parker's Lane, Edge's Lane, Mill Lane) to the east of Long Stratton which provide attractive cycling and walking routes to outlying areas such as Wood Green. The planned route of the by-pass however will result in some of these links being severed unless appropriate crossings (via attractive underpasses or footbridges) are maintained. The AAP indicates that a vehicle junction is planned at the by-pass Hall Lane junction but this will not address the severance of existing walking and cycling routes. An appropriate approach would be for the provision of a green infrastructure route (e.g. a green bridge or underpass) providing access across the A140 to maintain connection of Long Stratton with outlying hamlets.



5.2.7 Outlying hamlets that this policy is intended to apply to include Stratton St Michael, Wacton Common, Wood Green, Tharston and Hapton and beyond e.g. Morningthorpe which is just beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Policy LSNP – SC6 Location of new community facilities

New community facilities including library facilities and sports facilities will be supported where they can easily be accessed by the communities they are intended to serve. This would normally mean the facility should be located in close proximity to the residential areas they are serving, be easily and safely accessed by foot or bicycle and, for those residents travelling from further distance, be close to a bus stop.

Policy intent

- 5.2.8 The intent of this policy is to facilitate opportunities for all residents to access community facilities and to facilitate the provision of shared meetings spaces where members of different neighbourhoods can come together. Clearly the town centre is a good location for many residents but the intent of this policy is to have a distribution of facilities (i.e. buildings and spaces) throughout the plan area as well as in more centrally located hubs.
- 5.2.9 Elsewhere in this NP, Policy LSNP R20 addresses the need for a community meeting space close to Long Stratton town centre and Policy LSNP R21 seeks the provision of a new swimming pool in the plan area to meet the needs of a growing community.

Context and reasoned justification

5.2.10 The provision of accessible community facilities is key to allowing for successful integration of the existing community of Long Stratton and the new community. The

opportunity to interact through sport, leisure and other shared interests is essential in a successful cohesive community. Community groups (e.g. local scouting groups), sports and leisure providers need sufficient provision of physical buildings and spaces in order to meet the needs of their participants. There is a current demand from local scouting groups for additional meeting space in the plan area and demand will grow as the population grows. It is important new facilities (i.e. buildings and spaces) are in appropriate locations which are accessible to residents they are intended to serve.

DESIGN AND CHARACTER POLICIES

- 5.3 The policies in section 5.3 are focused on ensuring that there will be a strong sense of place in Long Stratton as the town continues to grow.
- 5.3.1 South Norfolk has a Place Making Guide, first published in 2012. This document is a material consideration when planning applications are determined. It makes clear what South Norfolk Council expects when deciding planning applications. It also provides useful context to the three policies in this section.
- 5.3.2 The Long Stratton AAP emphasises the importance of the Place Making Guide in the supporting text although there is no direct reference to it in the actual planning policies. Policy DM1.4 in the Development Management Policies document directly refers to the Place Making Guide stating:

".... the South Norfolk Place Making Guide which identifies important aspects of local distinctiveness that new development should respond to"

- 5.3.3 Section 2.5 (page 80) of the Place Making Guide describes Long Stratton's key characteristics. This includes the following:
 - Clearly defined historic core of linear pattern with strong degree of enclosure to main street.
 - Village situated on main transport route north to south of the district.
 - Majority of buildings in the village are small scale two-storey dwellings of simple form.
 - Property boundaries with road are largely low brick walls, mature hedgerows (particularly on entering village) and some railings.
 - 14th century round towered church and cemetery dominates historic core to the south.



• Within the historic core buildings have steeply pitched roofs and relatively narrow spans. Traditional window details, brick, flint or painted render wall finishes and pantile roofs.



- Ground floor shops either side of the main street.
- Some gable ends front the main street.
- Chimneys, dormers, bargeboards to gables.
- Mature trees provide back drop to buildings.
- Some unsympathetic modern infill development has diluted character of historic core.
- Late 20th century estates of generally standard pseudo-vernacular design but with some sympathetic use of open spaces in more recent development.
- Modern estates provide village with hard perimeter.
- Poor permeability from modern estates to centre of the village and across the A140.
- Poor pedestrian access east to west across the main street.
- 5.3.4 The document identifies the following key design principles to follow in new development:
 - Ensure that new development responds to the scale, form and proportions of existing vernacular buildings in the historic areas of the town, reflecting their distinctive character.
 - Respect existing materials and finishes, although new materials could be introduced with more contemporary designs.
 - Enhance permeability into existing village centre wherever possible.
 - Ensure development does not form a hard perimeter to the edge of the village.
 - Incorporate key open spaces into the design of new residential areas to provide focal points and interest.
 - Incorporate trees to provide a natural back drop to some buildings or groups of buildings.
 - Reflect existing boundary treatments in new development.

Policy LSNP – DC7 Landscape and settlement character

To be supported, development proposals must be sympathetic to Long Stratton's local landscape character and Long Stratton's heritage, including its existing built environment and the landscape which surrounds the settlement.

This means:

- Development proposals coming forward on the edge of the existing settlement shall design in sensitive landscaping and lower densities to create an appropriate transition into the open countryside and avoid a hard perimeter to the edge of the settlement;
- To the east of Long Stratton, beyond the new settlement boundaries, key features of the ancient countryside will be protected including surviving historic greens, the lanes and the historic hedgerow boundaries;
- All development proposals in the plan area to retain or enhance existing features of landscape value (including trees, hedgerows, water features etc) within the site and work within the context of existing features of landscape value in its surroundings; and
- Beyond the Area Action Plan development boundary (see Appendix 2 of the Area Action Plan), the tranquil rural character of the outlying hamlets, including dark skies, shall be safeguarded.

Landscaping schemes of individual development proposals need to be planned as an integral part of the development from the outset and implemented at an early stage of the build-out phase. To be supported, development proposals must include agreed timings for the implementation of landscaping works. For schemes involving the development of publicly accessible spaces, developers are encouraged to provide opportunities for residents to participate in community planting schemes.

Policy intent

- 5.3.5 To ensure those landscape characteristics which help to distinguish Long Stratton as a place are retained or enhanced.
- 5.3.6 This policy is intended to complement and work alongside Policy DM 4.9 in the South Norfolk Local Plan (Development Management Policies) which requires all proposals (where appropriate) to demonstrate a high quality of landscape design. This includes the provision of new planted features (such as tree belts, hedgerows, wild flowers and specimen trees) to form part of development proposals from their outset and should provide an appropriate landscape setting for the scheme.

Context and reasoned justification

- 5.3.7 Further information on landscape and settlement character applicable to Long Stratton is provided in:
 - The South Norfolk Place Making Guide
 - South Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (Land Use Consultants June 2001); and
 - The South Norfolk Local Landscape Designations Review, Landscape Character Areas and River Valleys in the Norwich Policy Area (Chris Blandford 2012).
- 5.3.8 In 2009, Norfolk County Council published the Historic Characterisation and Sensitivity Assessment. The report was produced as evidence to inform local planning (Greater Norwich preferred option growth areas) and consists of an evidence-based analysis of historic character of four study areas including Long Stratton which the report has subdivided into 5 'sensitivity' zones. The overview of the area states that the Roman Pye Road (A140) is a significant feature, visible in the landscape, and the reason for

Long Stratton's location. In addition, the road influences the shape and arrangement of field boundaries either side of its length, and possibly the layout of the ancient road



network, particularly to its east.

5.3.9 The most sensitive of the zones are Long Stratton East which, as set out in the report, "retains a high number of features of typical 'Ancient' countryside with a significant number of surviving greens, cohesive settlements of timber framed buildings grouped around them, church/hall complexes and an extensive network of ancient track ways linking them together. In addition, the zone contains a rare grid system of lanes which dates from at least the medieval period and may well be much earlier. There is little evidence of modern housing development – a few 20th century ex- local authority houses in Morningthorpe – so that the zone has a strong 16th/17th century character. The most significant change in recent times has been loss of hedgerow boundaries, particularly adjacent to Long Stratton. Robustness is affected by the proposed Long Stratton bypass which, as proposed, will cut across the lane grid system. The setting of settlements and archaeological sites would also be affected."

5.3.10 The extent of the Long Stratton East Sensitivity Zone as described in Norfolk County Council's Historic Characterisation and Sensitivity Assessment is shown in Map 1. The second bullet point in Policy DC7 therefore applies to this area which is also beyond the new settlement boundary as per the adopted Long Stratton Area Action Plan.



5.3.11 The NP would support schemes which provide opportunities for residents to participate in community planting schemes because we consider this will assist in strengthening sense of place and community pride as the population grows.

Policy LSNP - DC8 Creating successful neighbourhoods

All residential development proposals shall contribute positively to the quality of Long Stratton as a place. For smaller schemes, descriptions as to how a development achieves this should be provided in the Design and Access statement or Planning Statement as applicable.

Major development proposals (10 dwellings or more) should be accompanied by a Building for Life 12 assessment (as updated or equivalent) that demonstrates how a scheme does this, taking into account the latest government design guidance.

Policy intent

- 5.3.12 To ensure new residential development in the plan area helps to create successful places in Long Stratton.
- 5.3.13 The National Design Guide published in October 2019 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government asserts that well-designed places have individual characteristics which work together to create its physical character. The guide identifies ten characteristics which help to nurture and sustain a sense of community. These are context, identify, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan. Applicants will be expected to refer to this when completing their Building for Life 12 assessments.

Context and reasoned justification

- 5.3.14 Applicants of smaller sites may also choose to complete a Building for Life 12 assessment. Alternatively, they can be guided by the design principles set out in Long Stratton's Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidelines as well as the design principles set out in the South Norfolk's Place Making Guide (as summarised in paragraph 5.3.4) when describing how their schemes contributes positively to Long Stratton as a place.
- 5.3.15 For schemes within the Long Stratton conservation area, applicants should also be guided by the Long Stratton Conservation Area Character Appraisal.
- 5.3.16 Policy 2 in the Joint Core Strategy states that all development will be designed to the highest possible standards, creating a strong sense of place. Amongst the more detailed requirements is that all residential development of 10 units or more will be evaluated against the Building for Life criteria published by CABE achieving at least 14 points. Since the adoption of the Core Strategy, CABE has been merged into the Design Council and Building for Life has evolved into Building for Life 12. It continues to be the industry standard for new housing development. There is still a scoring system but it now has a traffic light system where green indicates the design of a scheme has succeeded, red identifies aspects that need to be changed and amber is used where local constraints prevent a green from being achieved. Applicants can now self-assess their scheme (e.g. by their design team) and it works on the principle of the applicant identifying opportunities for improvement as the design evolves. The system works best when local planning authorities and other stakeholders are involved in this discussion.

5.3.17 The Building for life 12 scheme includes twelve criteria that new residential schemes can be assessed against. These are grouped under three headings as follows:

Integrating into the neighbourhood

- Connections
- Facilities and Services
- Public Transport
- Meeting local housing requirements

Creating a place

- Character
- Working with the site and its context
- Creating well defined streets and spaces
- Easy to find your way around

Street and home

- Streets for all
- Car parking
- Public and private spaces
- External storage and amenity space

5.3.18 Further information on Building for Life 12 can be found at www.designcouncil.org.uk

Policy LSNP - DC9 Strengthening and enhancing Long Stratton's historic core

Development proposals (including comprehensive redevelopment schemes) within Long Stratton's conservation area or within the setting of Long Stratton's conservation area should respect the scale, form and proportions of existing vernacular buildings.

- new proposals on either side of the A140 should complement the scale of those that give the historic core its distinctive character (and should not be taller or out of scale with them); and
- infill will be supported where it conserves or enhances the heritage assets and their setting.

Proposals should be informed by the findings of the Long Stratton Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan. Where applicable, opportunities to address issues at individual listed buildings and buildings of townscape significance¹⁵ will be sought.

Policy intent

To ensure development conserves the significance of existing heritage assets in the historic core and opportunities to enhance heritage assets are utilised.

¹⁵ Page 28 of the Long Stratton Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan includes a streetscape map which identifies both listed buildings and the buildings of townscape significance

Context and reasoned justification

- 5.3.19 Policy 2 in the Joint Core Strategy requires development to respect local distinctiveness including the historic environment taking account of conservation area character appraisals.
- 5.3.20 The Long Stratton conservation area was designated in 1975. In January 2013 South Norfolk Council produced the Long Stratton Conservation Area Character Appraisal. A key aim of the document is to improve the understanding of the value of the built heritage and provide property owners and potential developers within the conservation area with clearer guidance on planning matters and the types of development likely to be encouraged.
- 5.3.21 The appraisal divides the conservation area into four distinct sections:
 - From Hall Lane to Flowerpot Lane
 - From Flowerpot Lane to Jubilee House and the Old Manor House
 - The Centre: from Jubilee House/Old Manor House to Maltings House/Ling Cottage
 - From Maltings House and Ling Cottage to Hill Farm Road
- 5.3.22 The conservation area contains 54 statutorily listed buildings but the Conservation Area Character Appraisal also identifies a number of other buildings considered to be of townscape significance.
- 5.3.23 The appraisal identifies problems and opportunities in the conservation area:
 - Condition of buildings where a number of historic buildings are in need of repair
 - Vacant or discussed buildings and sites
 - Changes to the character through the adverse impact of the A140; by home improvements of inappropriate design/material and unsympathetic advertising signage in the village

5.3.24 The appraisal recommends some management proposals which include:

- Assessing the need to restrict permitted development rights through Article 4 and Article 4(2) directions
- Work with Highways to make sure works within the conservation area are undertaken using an agreed palette of materials
- A list of specific enhancements at individual properties
- 5.3.25 The Historic Characterisation and Sensitivity Assessment published by Norfolk County Council in 2009 and introduced above describes five 'sensitivity' zones in Long Stratton. One of these is Zone 2, which is the Long Stratton historic core. This zone is categorised as high-medium sensitivity. Due to the inward-looking historic core, the assessment concludes that development either side of the road will not necessarily impact on the historic core (due to it being largely out of sight) unless the new development were taller and out of scale with the historic buildings. In order to conserve the quality of the conservation area it is therefore important that Policy DC9

resists development on either side of the A140 where this would be taller or out of scale with those that give the historic core its distinctive character. The assessment states the robustness of the zone is affected by modern infill and potential future development, and the busy road which has eroded the character.







Map 2. Long Stratton Conservation Area

Policy LSNP – DC10 Long Stratton Design Principles

A design led approach should be taken for all proposals. In adopting a design-led approach, applicants should be guided by the design principles set out in the Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidelines in relation to:

- Pedestrian and cycle connectivity;
- Edge treatments between the proposed and existing settlements;
- Road dimensions and vehicle access;
- Vehicle parking solutions;
- Built form, including architectural details and material palette; and
- Sustainability.

Innovative approaches to the construction of low carbon homes which demonstrate sustainable use of resources and high energy efficiency levels will be supported (for example, construction to Passivhaus standards, homes fitted with three phase electricity to allow for the addition of renewable technology such as heat pumps and incorporation of on-site renewable technology).

Development proposals coming forward as part of Long Stratton's strategic site allocation (Policy LNGS1 of the Long Stratton Area Action Plan) shall also accord with design principles set out in an area-wide design code as agreed by South Norfolk Council in connection with planning consent for the strategic site.

Policy intent:

- 5.3.26 To help achieve the following objectives underpinning the plan:
 - Objective 2: Successful integration between new community and existing community. As part of this the achievement of excellent permeability within neighbourhoods, between neighbourhoods and from residential areas to the town centre.
 - Objective 3: Achieving a strong sense of place. As part of this retaining and enhancing those characteristics that make Long Stratton special
- 5.3.27 The National Design Guide published in October 2019 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government asserts that well-designed places have individual characteristics which work together to create its physical character. The guide identifies ten characteristics which help to nurture and sustain a sense of community. These are context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan. The intention of Policy DC10 is not to depart from the approach taken nationally but provide the Long Stratton specific context to it. The local priorities expressed throughout this Neighbourhood Plan but in particular in this chapter highlights the local priorities and concerns with regard to design. This is helpful in defining identity which is the second design characteristic identified in the National Design Guide.

- 5.3.28 To demonstrate compliance with this policy, applicants will be expected to provide an assessment of their scheme against the Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidelines. This can be provided as part of the Design and Access statement, or for smaller schemes as part of the Planning Statement. Officers will assess the scheme against the questions set out in section 3.8 of the Design Guidelines document.
- 5.3.29 All applications coming forward as part of the strategic site allocation for 1,800 homes as per Policy LNGS1 in the AAP will also be expected to be in conformity with an area-wide Design Code prepared by the developer (Norfolk Land and Norfolk Homes Ltd) to support the original hybrid applications and as agreed by South Norfolk Council as part of planning consent or subsequently updated and agreed by South Norfolk Council.

Context and reasoned justification:

- 5.3.30 The Long Stratton Design Guidelines was prepared by AECOM in May and June 2019 on the behalf of Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan Group. Prior to this, the Neighbourhood Plan Group had completed targeted consultation with the community on issues relating to design and sustainability. The feedback from this fed into the brief provided to AECOM. The design guidelines was subjected to consultation with the wider community as part of the pre-submission consultation stage. The purpose of the document is to inform the design of all future planning applications in the plan area and also to support the Design Code that has been prepared by Norfolk Homes and Norfolk Land Ltd to accompany their planning applications as submitted in 2018.
- 5.3.31 The Long Stratton Design Guidelines focuses on specific aspects of design of importance to the community. These are pedestrian and cycle links connectivity, boundary treatments between existing communities and proposed new communities, road dimensions and vehicle access, vehicle parking solutions, architectural details and material palette and sustainable design.
- 5.3.32 Consultation undertaken with the Long Stratton community in April 2019 as part of the plan preparation highlighted strong community support for sustainable design and construction measures especially where this would contribute towards lower running costs of the property.
- 5.3.33 Two hybrid planning applications were submitted in 2018 for the development of residential development in line with strategic site allocation LNGS1 (Land East, South-East and North-West of Long Stratton). As part of this, the applicants (Norfolk Land and Norfolk Homes Ltd) were required to prepare a Design Code for all elements of the scheme to comply with. The document divides the wider areas into different neighbourhood areas and provides a broad design strategy for these areas including design principles, green infrastructure and the built environment. All future housebuilders building out elements of the strategic site allocation will be expected to comply with this Design Code.

Flood risk and water management

- 5.3.34 Information on flood risk in the Long Stratton NP area can be found by referring to the latest Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (adopted 2011 with an addendum issued in 2017 as at time of writing).
- 5.3.35 The 2017 Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (addendum to the 2011 report) states that there are over 200 properties in the Long Stratton area at risk from surface water flooding in the 1% AEP event.
- 5.3.36 There is a record of internal flooding to 1 property in Glebe Close in March 2013.
- 5.3.37 The Long Stratton History Report accompanying this plan also records historical flooding events in Long Stratton 12 August 1912, January 1939, March 1947 and September 1968.
- 5.3.38 It is very important that any new development proposals in the plan area does not result in increased risk of flooding from an existing flood source and that when development does take place mitigation measures are implemented to address surface water arising within the development site.
- 5.3.39 However, it is not considered that a Long Stratton NP specific policy on flooding will add value to the existing adopted planning policies which are already in place.
- 5.3.40 Existing policies include:
 - Policy DM 4.2 (Sustainable drainage and water management) in the Development Management Policies document,
 - Policy 1 in the Core Strategy (Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets) and
 - 2019 NPPF policies.
- 5.3.41 These will apply to development proposals coming forward in the Long Stratton NP area.

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

- 5.4 The objective underpinning this policy section is to help ensure Long Stratton's employment and business base continues to grow and diversify as it takes on a more strategic role in the wider regional market.
- 5.4.1 It is expected that the attractiveness of Long Stratton as an employment base will increase during the plan period. This is because BT Openreach have agreed that all new dwellings coming forward as part of the AAP allocation will have access to superfast broadband. It is also because of the anticipated population growth and of course, Long Stratton's strategic location on the A140 between Diss and Norwich.
- 5.4.2 Local businesses in Long Stratton and Tharston were contacted to gain their views and aspirations as to how the new development (1800 homes proposed in the AAP) would affect their businesses. All the businesses were invited to attend drop in consultation sessions over two days during a weekend in June. Discussions held suggested that one of the concerns is maintaining access for deliveries to businesses on the Tharston Industrial estate. One business said that any new growth in the village will have the potential to bring new customers/clients to the area as well as new businesses for competition or for growth, either way it's good for the area. Rent and rates on the Tharston Industrial Estate are currently competitive so it is unlikely that businesses would be encouraged to move to the new premises on the plans for the proposed development without incentive.
- 5.4.3 The Flowerpot Lane/A140 junction which is used by industrial traffic from Tharston Industrial Estate is identified as a key problem for residents. This junction is considered as unsafe by many residents because there is no signal controlled crossing for pedestrians. This problem could be partly addressed if businesses which relied on HGV traffic were to re-locate away from Tharston Industrial Estate to alternative employment sites in the plan area with a more direct access on to the planned by-pass.



Policy LSNP - E11 New employment uses in Tharston

New B2 employment uses at Tharston Industrial Site and at land west of Tharston Industrial Site will be supported in line with Policy LNGS2 of the Long Stratton Area Action Plan subject to traffic impacts being assessed as not triggering additional pedestrian safety or amenity issues at the Flowerpot Lane/A140 junction or along Chequers Road.

New B8 uses will be supported where they will not lead to additional HGV movements along Flowerpot Lane as demonstrated through a transport assessment. Where proposed new B8 uses at the Tharston Industrial Site are projected to trigger additional HGV movements at the Flowerpot Lane/A140 junction, the development proposals will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that there will be no resulting adverse impacts on road safety for pedestrians and cyclists using this junction, or where applicable, these are adequately addressed through mitigation measures (e.g. installation of pedestrian controlled traffic lights).

Policy Intent:

5.4.4 To manage the volume of heavy vehicles using the A140/Flowerpot Lane junction and Chequers Road.

Context and reasoned justification:

- 5.4.5 Policy LNGS2 of the AAP (Land West of Tharston Industrial Estate) allocates an area of land amounting to 2.5 hectares for use classes B1 (office/light industrial), B2 (industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution) uses. Whilst the policy includes criteria relating to the need to maximise walking and cycling opportunities, it is the location of B8 land uses in this part of the plan area that is going to continue to undermine pedestrian safety and pedestrian amenity at the A140/Flowerpot Lane junction.
- 5.4.6 B8 employment uses will be more appropriately located closer to the A140 as part of the 9.5 hectares allocated for employment uses in Policy LNGS1 of the AAP.

Policy LSNP - E12 Training Long Stratton's local workforce

Development proposals which will facilitate the delivery of skills training or apprenticeship schemes to the local people are strongly encouraged.

Where necessary to secure a strong and sustainable local economy, development proposals which are anticipated to create a high number of job opportunities may be required, via \$106 agreement, to invest in local training or apprenticeships schemes.

Policy Intent

5.4.7 To support and encourage proposals which result the provision of training opportunities for local people. Proposals could include purpose built technical skills academies or other employment uses which result in the employer entering into agreements to employ local people or provide skills training to local people. In such case, the developer may be asked to make contributions towards such initiatives. 5.4.8 Proposals likely to generate more than 250 employees (i.e. above the UK threshold for a small or medium enterprise) will be considered as generating a high number of job opportunities.

Context and reasoned justification

- 5.4.9 In terms of education, it is important that the education in Long Stratton provides people with the skills and qualifications needed for successful and rewarding employment. Employers are attracted into an area not just on the basis of the infrastructure on offer but also on the skills and abilities of its residents. Businesses in East Anglia often struggle to find the skills needed, especially for higher scientific and technical roles, as a result many of the available high value jobs go to an imported workforce. In particular the New Anglia LEP identified the ICT/Digital and creative sector as a fast growing area of development (55% growth in New Anglia LEP compared to 20% UK). By tailoring the skills offer to meet the needs of the local economy training providers can help to achieve greater levels of private sector investment in skills and ensure that businesses have access to the high level skills necessary for innovation and growth (DfE Norfolk and Suffolk Area review August 2017).
- 5.4.10 A need is identified for robust, good quality apprenticeships, especially at advanced, higher level and degree level, as having a key role in aligning quality training with economic need and providing clear entry points and pathways into local industry. Paragraph 56 of the NPPF¹⁶ states that obligations can only be legally secured where necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; where directly related to the development and where fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development). It is acknowledged the policy can only apply to cases where these tests are met. The NP covers the period 2019 to 2036. During this time the role of Long Stratton in wider region is expected to change and evolve. It is important polices are sufficient flexible and broad for a range of planning applications which may come forward during this plan period.

¹⁶ <u>https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/4-decision-making</u>

TOWN CENTRE POLICIES

- 5.5 The objective underpinning this policy section is to help realise opportunities to enhance the town centre in particular the opportunities which present themselves once the Long Stratton by-pass has been delivered.
- 5.5.1 In January 2018, the Long Stratton Masterplanning report was produced by AECOM for the Long Stratton Parish Council for the purpose of informing the work of the Neighbourhood Plan. The overarching objective of the report was to advise on how the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group could use the planned re-routing of the A140 as a catalyst to remodel the town centre in a more people-friendly way. Key outputs of the work were:
 - An urban design analysis of the study area. This is shown in Figure 3.1.5 of the Long Stratton Masterplanning Report. The analysis identifies existing issues which contribute to creating an overall hostile environment to pedestrians and cyclists along the A140. Map 3 called Pedestrian Movement is based on Figure 3.1.5 of the Masterplanning Report.
 - A diagram showing proposed improvements. This is shown in Figure 4.1 of the Long Stratton Masterplanning Report. This presents opportunities for improving the town centre environment. Map 4 called Opportunities for Improvement is based on Figure 4.1 of the Masterplanning Report.
- 5.5.2 As part of the urban design analysis the following was identified:
 - As a result of the A140, the town centre suffers from traffic congestion, noise and high air pollution, severance and degraded setting of listed buildings and conservation area



(Figure 5.10 Looking north up The Street from The Plain, traffic congestion (source: NP committee)

• A hostile environment is created for pedestrians and cycling namely narrow footways which places pedestrians dangerously close to vehicle traffic, pedestrian pinch points where the pavements disappear to accommodate bus lay-bys, in some areas pavements which are surfaced with pebbled surfaces unsuitable for wheelchair users or people pushing a pushchair.

- There are some places where the pavement widens such as at Star Lane and Flowerpot Lane but here the spaces are found to be poorly utilised and are not inviting for pedestrians.
- Poorly designed junctions which create a hostile environment for pedestrians by impacting on pedestrian safety and accessibility
- Large areas of unattractive hard standing surfaces and poor quality public realm
- 5.5.3 The report finds that the existing design of the A140 is oriented towards moving traffic and this is heavily prioritised over enabling pedestrian and cycle access. But the report also makes the point that the building of the bypass, although expected to move traffic, will not itself address problems related to inadequate street design. Other measures are needed to make sure this happens.
- 5.5.4 Chapter 4 of the masterplanning report presents the opportunities which could complement the proposed bypass in providing a more pleasant pedestrian environment and sustain the role of the town centre as its main community hub. These are summarised below:
 - Widen the footways in the town centre by narrowing the carriageway and removing areas of pebbled surfacing that clearly has no clear function and removing bus lay-bys (instead provide bus stops aligned with the street)
 - Repaving footways with high-quality paving slabs
 - Consider the introduction of raised pedestrian crossings so they are level with the pavement and pedestrians don't need to step down into the traffic
 - Create a more pedestrian friendly environment on both The Street and Swan Lane which is the main pedestrian route to schools west of the village centre by converting the existing signalised pedestrian crossing between Swan Lane and Star Lane into a raised zebra crossing



- Introducing a 20mph zone through the town centre
- Consider upgrading the crossings at St Michael's Road into raised zebra crossings
- Consider upgrading the crossing at Flowerpot Lane into signalised crossings with pedestrian signals
- 5.5.5 The report states that traffic calming along the A140 would provide an incentive to renew currently underutilised public spaces for example the spaces created by the building set back at the junctions with Star Lane and Flowerpot Lane. Although these spaces are equipped with public benches, they feature unattractive areas of hard standing with minimal landscape that discourage stopping. The report identifies these spaces as ideal for pocket park treatment with new plants and trees to provide more greenery.
- 5.5.6 The report also recommends the designation of outdoor seating areas for cafes and restaurants as a way of anchoring these places as community gathering spaces.
- 5.5.7 In addition to the issues picked up in the Long Stratton Masterplanning report, the Neighbourhood Plan also recognises there is an issue around town centre car parking. There is a car park on Swan Lane available to town centre shoppers and visitors and this is well used and often full resulting in some visitors having to look elsewhere which can be difficult. In order to maintain and enhance the shops and facilities in the town centre it is important that town centre car parking capacity is increased. Policies TC14 and TC15 would seek the provision of additional car parking capacity as part of any proposals for a new market place or the redevelopment of the existing fire station and telephone exchange sites. In addition, the Neighbourhood Plan also seeks a provision of a new community meeting space at Star Lane (see Policy R20). This community meeting facility will include parking capacity to meet the needs of the facility which will also be suitable as an overflow parking location to serve town centre shoppers and visitors.



Map 3. Pedestrian Movement in the Town Centre



Map 4. Opportunities for Improvement

Policy LSNP – TC13– Re-establishing The Street as the heart of the town

Development proposals coming forward as part of the Long Stratton Area Action Plan proposals will be supported subject to contributions being secured (either through \$106 where applicable or through the payment of CIL) towards environmental enhancement measures in the defined town centre¹⁷ in line with adopted Policy LNG\$1 and where these will help establish The Street as the heart of the town. These measures could include:

Measures to improve pedestrian permeability throughout the town centre:

- 1. Implementation of traffic calming measures along The Street
- 2. A programme of works to widen pavement widths and removing obstacles such as railings and pebbled surfaces
- 3. Highway works at the Flowerpot Lane/A140 junction that results in improved pedestrian safety
- 4. Highway works along The Street between Swan Lane and Star Lane in order to increase pedestrian prioritisation and safety (for example through a raised zebra crossing)

Measures to help create attractive town centre public spaces:

- 1. Creation of pocket parks along The Street with plants and trees
- 2. Creation of equipped play areas in locations with high amenity valued and not adversely impacted by noise, air or vibration pollution
- 3. Greening the environment through tree and vegetation planting
- 4. Installation of additional seating in locations with high amenity value and not adversely impacted by noise, air or vibration pollution

Measures to improve access for cyclists:

- 1. Implementation of traffic calming measures along The Street
- 2. Installation of bicycle parking facilities in locations which are needed by cyclists
- 3. Creation of cycle routes either along The Street, Swan Lane and other town centre routes.

Measures which help retain or enhance community facilities:

1. Provision of improved public toilet facilities

Other development proposals coming forward within or adjacent to the defined town centre will be expected to design in environmental enhancement works, as listed above as applicable and appropriate to each scheme.

Policy intent

5.5.8 To ensure that the town centre can be 'by-pass' ready and to ensure that needed environmental enhancements are implemented in the town centre when the by-pass is built out. This will help establish Long Stratton as a thriving, busy and attractive town centre functioning as the primary community hub and destination point serving an increased population.

¹⁷ Town centre is defined in the Area Action Plan proposals map and is also shown in Map 4 in this NP

- 5.5.9 The measures included in the policy are examples of suitable environmental enhancement measures which have been identified through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. They are priorities shared by the community for improving public realm and the pedestrian environment along The Street. It is expected the delivery of these identified measures will be through a combination of developer contributions (where it meets the requirements of paragraph 56 in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) or any update to this), Town and Parish Council spending of CIL funding and through other Town and Parish Council-driven funding bids.
- 5.5.10 Long Stratton Town Council have prepared an action plan which includes aspirations and commitments for improving the town centre. These include the measures set out in Policy TC13. See Chapter 6 for more detail.
- 5.5.11 As the by-pass is being built and once it is in place, Long Stratton Town Council will continue to review the impact on the town centre and maintain a traffic management plan, in consultation with the community and stakeholders including Norfolk County Council as Local Highway Authority.
- 5.5.12 Item 3 in the second paragraph of the policy reflects an identified community desire as well as identified measure in the Long Stratton Masterplanning document for a pedestrian signalised junction to be installed at the Flowerpot/A140 junction. The most effective measure for improving pedestrian safety will be examined as part of working with Norfolk County Council as the Local Highway Authority.
- 5.5.13 Item 4 in the second paragraph of the policy reflects and identified community desire as well as an identified measure in the Long Stratton Masterplanning document for a raised crossing point to replace the existing signalised junction on the A140 between Swan Lane and Star Lane.
- Context and reasoned justification
- 5.5.14 Establishing an active town centre in Long Stratton is a key component to ensuring the strong sense of place is retained and grows as the population grows. The town centre has some strong assets such as the conservation area, historic buildings and land mark community buildings such as St Mary's Church. The delivery of the by-pass will assist in moving traffic away but without further intervention the town centre will remain a space dominated by vehicular traffic. Public realm improvements and environmental enhancements are needed to create a successful town centre and are essential as part of any plans resulting in population growth in the plan area. In turn, the establishment of a successful town centre will help to facilitate good community cohesion simply by creating successful spaces where people from different neighborhoods can come together.
- 5.5.15 This policy complements Policy LNGS1 of the AAP which requires the site to deliver environmental enhancements to the town centre.

5.5.16 Long Stratton Town Council will need to work alongside stakeholders including South Norfolk Council and Norfolk County Council as Local Highway Authority to help delivery of town centre improvement initiatives.





Policy LSNP – TC14 – Long Stratton market place

Proposals involving the creation of a new market place in the town centre will be supported subject to:

- the effective engagement with the community and other stakeholders taking place which addresses detail such as design, pedestrian and vehicle movements
- provision of parking for market stall holders and visitors being adequately addressed.

Policy intent

5.5.17 To encourage proposals to come forward for the provision of a new market place in Long Stratton.

Context and reasoned justification

5.5.18 The Long Stratton masterplanning document included a recommendation to create a new market place in Long Stratton and included illustrations of a market place on The Plain. When asked if we should have a market place, the majority of residents have been in favour. Some residents however are not in support of a new market place. One of the reasons why some residents may not be in support of a new market place is concern regarding the impact on availability of town centre parking spaces.

Policy LSNP – TC15 The Fire Station and Telephone Exchange

In the event of the Fire Station and Telephone Exchange Site – see Map 6 coming forward for redevelopment during the plan period, support will be given for a comprehensive mixed-use scheme subject to:

- retention of existing or replacement with improved toilet facilities or, alternatively, reprovision of public toilet facilities on alternative town centre site;
- adequate provision of off-street parking to meet the demand generated by the development;
- conservation or enhancement of heritage assets and their setting including the conservation area itself; and
- high quality landscaping providing visual amenity and green infrastructure to town centre visitors.

The following uses would be welcomed:

- provision of a town centre public open space and a market place;
- provision of town centre uses at ground floor level; and
- provision of additional town centre car parking capacity.

Policy intent

5.5.19 During the plan period 2018 to 2036, it is considered possible that proposals to redevelop the Fire Station and Telephone exchanges will come forward. The purpose of this policy is to articulate clearly the priorities shared by the community with regard

to the future of this site. The policy is not intended to restrict the uses that could come forward on this site.

Context and reasoned justification

- 5.5.20 This site is large and centrally located in the heart of the town. It is outside the conservation area but is within the setting of the conservation area. It is visually prominent both from the main Co-op site on The Street but also along Swan Lane which is a key walking route to and from school. Currently the site includes one of the 'large areas of unattractive hard standing surfaces' described by AECOM in the Long Stratton masterplanning report and lacks visual interest. Redevelopment of the site presents lots of opportunities for positive contributions to be made to the quality of the fabric of the heart of the town.
- 5.5.21 The existing toilet facilities in the town centre are well used and essential to meet the needs of town centre shopper and visitors. They are the only facilities currently available to the public. Existing capacity issues with regard to town centre car parking is a well established concern in the community as reflected in the NP SWOT analysis (See Figure 3.2) and as articulated by many during all stages of consultation on this plan. The sensitivity of the conservation area is well documented in the Long Stratton Conservation Area Character Appraisal. It is important any development of this town centre either conserves or enhances these heritage assets.
- 5.5.22 The site is also considered ideal for the location of market place.





OUTDOOR RECREATION, GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND BIODIVERSITY POLICIES

5.6 The planning policies in this section seek to create improved opportunities for green infrastructure and recreation in the NP area.

Policy LSNP GI16 - Long Stratton recreational open space standards

All development proposals will be required to make provision (either on-site or off-site as a commuted sum) for recreational open space commensurate with the level of development proposed in order to meet the needs generated by the development. Demonstrable regard should be had to South Norfolk Council's Open Space Supplementary Planning Document 2018, or any updates to this, when identifying appropriate requirements.

New recreational open space should, wherever appropriate, be designed to contribute to local biodiversity for example through provision of ecological corridors (trees, hedges and scrub along boundaries for a wide range of species and carbon capture, and wildflower areas subject to relaxed cutting regimes away from key sports areas for pollinators) along boundaries and informal areas.

Policy Intent

- 5.6.1 To ensure appropriate amounts of recreational open space is provided as part of new development coming forward in the plan area.
- 5.6.2 To complement:
 - adopted Policy LNGS1 Land East, South-East and North-West of Long Stratton which requires, amongst other things

'Provision of open space including children's play space and older children/adult open space sufficient to meet the needs of residents of the development'

- adopted Policy LNGS6 Protecting Existing Recreation or Amenity Land in Long Stratton -protects existing land within the plan area.
- adopted Policy LNGS7 New Recreation Provision in Long Stratton requires developers to provide new on-site public open space as part of the allocation LNGS1 in Long Stratton commensurate with the level of development proposed.
- adopted policy DM13 Outdoor play facilities and recreational space
- 5.6.3 This policy applies to all proposals coming forward in the Neighbourhood Plan area and reflects up to date guidance provided in South Norfolk Council's Open Spaces SPD 'Guidelines for Recreational Provision in Residential Developments' September 2018.
- 5.6.4 Recreational open space is an umbrella term intended to cover:
 - children's' play space (equipped play areas to serve up to 11-year-olds);
 - older children's' and adults' recreational space (multi-use games areas, trim trails, skate parks); and
• informal recreation space (natural green space, allotments and other forms of informal recreation areas.

Context and reasoned justification

- 5.6.5 As evidenced by South Norfolk in their PPG17, 'Open Spaces, Indoor Sports and Community Recreation Assessment' published in 2007, Long Stratton is deficient in all types of open space. Accordingly, the AAP requires developers to provide additional space as part of the 1,800 site allocation.
- 5.6.6 South Norfolk Council produced the Open Spaces SPD 'Guidelines for Recreational Provision in Residential Developments' in September 2018. This SPD (intended to supplement the Council's Development Management Policy DM3.15: 'Outdoor play facilities and recreational space') provides a tool to calculate the open space requirement a development will generate. The SPD should be used to inform the quantity and quality of open space provided as part of any new development. The SPD applies the following standards:

Figure 5.13: Open Space Classifications and Standards used by South Norfolk Council and applied in 2018 Open Spaces SPD

Recreational Open Space Classification	Standards (m2 per 1,000 population hectares (ha) per 1,000 population)
Children's Play space	6,000 m2 (0.6 ha)
(including a minimum activity zone of 400 m2)	
Older Children and Adult Recreation	
Space:	a) 3,000 m2 (0.3 ha)
a) Open space; and	b) 16,000 m2 (1.6 ha)
b) Playing Pitches and Courts	
Informal Recreation Space	24,000 m2 (2.4 ha)
Total	26,000 m2 (4.9ha)

- 5.6.7 The recreational open space standards apply to all residential development of 15 units or more.
- 5.6.8 The requirement for recreational open space is separate from the provision of landscaping and other amenity spaces which form an equally important element of the design of new developments, although as stated in the 2018 SPD, the dual use of land may be considered acceptable provided the land uses do not prejudice one another.
- 5.6.9 As stated in the SPD larger scale facilities, including formal sports pitches, courts and greens, swimming pools and sports halls, may also be provided on-site as part of strategic scale developments; however, they are more likely to be funded (at least partly) through the pooled Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) pot and timetabled for delivery through the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan.
- 5.6.10 Planting should be with local provenance seeds (collected locally) wherever possible. The NP would support schemes which provide opportunities for residents, community

groups and local schools to participate in community planting schemes because we consider this will assist in strengthening sense of place and community pride as the population grows.

Policy LSNP GI17 – Delivering green infrastructure in Long Stratton

Where Green Infrastructure is required as part of new development in the plan area, the nature of the provision will respond to the following plan area priorities:

- Locating and designing green infrastructure with a view to maximising accessibility and connectivity between neighbourhoods (existing and new) and outdoor recreational areas, taking into account and utilising opportunities to link up with existing public rights of way.
- Relieving visitor pressure on ecologically sensitive sites in the vicinity of the plan area including Tyrrel's Wood and Wood Green through:
 - Creation of a new extensive area of common land within walking distance and on walking routes to and from existing and proposed residential areas
 - The creation of new areas of informal open space attractive to dog walkers on walking routes to and from existing/proposed residential areas
- Maintain or improve connectivity to the countryside beyond the new bypass
- Recognise, protect and incorporate locally characteristic features including greens, hedgerows, woodlands and ponds and locally distinctive landscapes
- Retain and enhance connectivity for biodiversity through public rights of way, hedgerows, protection of water features and wildlife corridors.
- Include provision designed for the purpose of promoting health and wellbeing (including physical exercise).

Policy intent

- 5.6.11 To maximise the benefit of green infrastructure being provided as part of new development.
- 5.6.12 To complement adopted policy LNGS5 General Green Infrastructure Requirements for new development within Long Stratton AAP Area - This policy states that new development will be required to maintain, protect and enhance green infrastructure, and developers will be expected to contribute towards green infrastructure requirements. The AAP also includes a Map shown in Appendix 3 which identifies the identified and necessary green infrastructure requirements.
- 5.6.13 In this policy, green infrastructure is a term used which includes areas of open land in the plan area that have specific biodiversity benefits. It includes wildlife corridors, public rights of way, county wildlife sites, areas of woodland and trees. In many cases, the green infrastructure is publicly accessible and often overlaps with the function of providing informal recreation space (as required in Policy LSNP GI16) but sometimes the green infrastructure could have limited recreational value to people and may not be publicly accessible.

Context and reasoned justification

- 5.6.14 The protection of existing green infrastructure and the provision of additional green infrastructure when new development comes forward is also given importance in The Place Making Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) produced by South Norfolk in 2012. The document notes that modern housing estates give the settlement a hard perimeter. As noted in the AAP "New development will be the interface between the built environment and the countryside; as such the identification and implementation of green infrastructure will need to be an integral element of proposals. Integrating the locally characteristic greens, hedgerows, woodlands and ponds into the development to the east of Long Stratton and links to the river valleys from development to the north-west will be key considerations."
- 5.6.15 A priority of the Neighbourhood Plan is that green infrastructure, recreation facilities and informal green infrastructure is distributed throughout the plan area so that all neighbourhoods have access to these amenities. Community engagement work has identified a community-shared aspiration for a network of sporting facilities around the town such as a sporting trim trail.

Biodiversity benefits of open space provision

5.6.16 The protection and provision of additional informal open space provision will help to alleviate pressure on existing sites of biodiversity value in and around Long Stratton. Norfolk Wildlife Trust looked at the impacts of recreational pressures on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and county wildlife sites with public access as part of a study undertaken in 2017. The report finds that pressure on Tyrell's Wood was considerable and damaging to wildlife. The report found that 50% visitors came from Long Stratton, were all driving, were predominantly there to walk their dogs (as is the case with other visitors) and visited the wood frequently and were driving a short distance because they perceived a lack of public open space within Long Stratton. The report also found visitor pressure at Wood Green, a site found to be mostly visited by Long Stratton residents and a site accessed by foot and by car.



Policy LSNP GI18 – Green infrastructure management

Development Proposals will be expected to provide robust arrangements for the future maintenance of all new green infrastructure areas and features (including public open space, new habitat provision, surface drainage infrastructure, landscape mitigation areas, pedestrian and cycle paths and related furniture and structures).

This means:

- i. Where the developer transfers the adoption and responsibility for maintaining the open space over to Long Stratton Town Council (for spaces in the parished area of Long Stratton), over to the Tharston and Hapton Parish Council (for spaces in the parish of Tharston and Hapton) or over to another community body, there will be a requirement for future maintenance to be funded by the developer for a minimum of 10 years. In some circumstances, where the size and nature of the green infrastructure presents specific complexity to deem it necessary, this may be extended to 15 years to secure successful provision of the open space to the community it is intended to serve.
- ii. In line with South Norfolk's Open Spaces SPD adopted in September 2018, developers will be expected to follow the hierarchy of management in the Neighbourhood Plan area. For spaces in the Long Stratton parished area, the Long Stratton Town Council will have first refusal for the management of the space and for spaces in the parish of Tharston and Hapton, the Parish Council of Tharston and Hapton will have first refusal of the management of the space.
- iii. Due to the expectation set out in ii) above, the developer will be required, at an early stage, to consult Long Stratton Town Council and Tharston and Hapton Parish Council in the design and layout of proposed new open spaces.

Policy intent

5.6.17 To ensure that mechanisms are in place for the future management of any additional green infrastructure provided as part of a development proposal.

Context and reasoned justification

- 5.6.18 It is explained in The Guidelines for Recreation Provision in New Residential Developments SPD (the Open Spaces SPD), that the district will no longer take on the ownership or maintenance of new recreational open spaces or play areas. Responsibility for the management of the new public green infrastructure will therefore need to be taken on by others such as Long Stratton Town Council, Tharston and Hapton Parish Council, an appropriate community group or a designated management company. Whichever body takes on the responsibility of managing new green infrastructure resources it is essential that a funding structure and principles regarding future management are established at the outset.
- 5.6.19 Paragraph 2 in Chapter 6 of South Norfolk's 2018 Open Spaces SPD specifically states that developers expected to provide recreational open space will be expected to follow the 'hierarchy' of management which means offering as the preferred course

of action the land to the relevant parish or town council (with a ten-year maintenance sum); then if the parish or town council does not wish to take on the land, offering the land (with a ten-year maintenance sum) to any community association or similar body; or lastly the developer will either retain the land or pass it to a management company approved by the district council.

5.6.20 The new approach adopted by the District Council increases the importance of the relevant Parish or Town Council being involved, at an early stage, in the design and layout of open space being provided.

LSNP GI19 – Protecting existing sites of biodiversity value in the plan area

The sites identified on Map 7 are recognised for the value they contribute towards protecting and maintaining biodiversity in the parish.

- i. Tyrells Wood County Wildlife Site
- ii. Wood Green County Wildlife Site
- iii. Wet Meadow on Swan Lane
- iv. Area of grassland with pond and hedges behind the allotments
- v. Roadside nature reserves in the parish including Wood Lane

Any development proposals which impact upon identified biodiversity assets including the sites listed here will contribute to, rather than detract from, their biodiversity value. When assessing possible impacts, consideration will be given to wildlife connectivity to and from these sites.

Where a development proposal is likely to adversely impact a site of biodiversity value, the proposal will be refused unless the benefits of the development proposal in the location clearly outweighs the adverse impacts. Where significant impacts to biodiversity are likely to occur, permission will only be granted if impacts are adequately mitigated for or, as a last resort, compensated for. In all cases, development proposals will be expected to deliver net gains in biodiversity which means delivering measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats as part of the development proposal.

New built structures which incorporate new biodiversity features such as green roofs, walls, bat and swift bricks, and permeable boundaries between new development plots, are welcomed, and may be required as part of achieving a net gain in biodiversity as required in Policy LNGS5 of the Area Action Plan.

Policy intent

5.6.21 To complement the policy approach provided in adopted AAP Policy LNGS5.

Context and reasoned justification

5.6.22 The Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) advise that Tyrrel's Wood County Wildlife site supports priority species - great crested newt Triturus cristatus and a maternity roost of barbestelle (Norfolk Barbestelle Study Group data). In places, the woodland ground flora is good, with sanicle, bluebell and yellow archangel.

- 5.6.23 The NWT advise that Wood Green supports a mosaic of species-rich grassland types with three orchid species, plus scrub, mature trees and a number of ponds of highwater quality and which support a diverse flora. Priority species recorded here include great crested newt and foraging barbestelle bat, plus water vole Arvicola amphibious and breeding turtle dove Streptopelia turtur. Hunting barn owl and buzzard also recorded (data from NWT surveys).
- 5.6.24 The indicative Green Infrastructure Plan for Long Stratton (provided in Appendix 3 to the AAP) maps indicative green corridors to be planned in as part of the strategy for ensuring green infrastructure connectivity (for the benefit of biodiversity) is maintained or enhanced as development comes forward. Any green infrastructure corridors that are instrumental to connecting existing areas of biodiversity value should be safeguarded.
- 5.6.25 Up until May 2018 a Green Infrastructure Working Group for Long Stratton was focused on ensuring green infrastructure and biodiversity assets were properly safeguarded and planned for as part of the proposed development. The group comprised Long Stratton Parish Council, Norfolk County Council, South Norfolk Council and Norfolk Wildlife Trust. As part of the GI work undertaken by the group, the wet meadow on Swan Lane (opposite surgery) and the grassland with pond and hedges behind the allotments were identified as important contributory spaces in the wider green infrastructure network for Long Stratton.





- 5.6.26 Adopted Policy LNGS5 General Green Infrastructure Requirements for New Developments within Long Stratton AAP Area (AAP Policy) includes provisions for the protection of biodiversity. Specifically, it requires proposals a 'to enable and where appropriate provide.'
 - the 'retention of habitat features and creation of new habitats
 - functional ecological connections between priority species and habitats and designated sites in the vicinity of Long Stratton
- 5.6.27 The green infrastructure map at Appendix 3 of the AAP identifies the existing designated sites in the vicinity of Long Stratton and identifies green infrastructure requirements for new developments.
- 5.6.28 Policy LNGS5 also states that:

All new development should deliver a net biodiversity gain and any planning proposals should be accompanied by detailed ecological assessment, where appropriate. The cumulative impact of developments on biodiversity assets should be taken into account as part of the planning application process.

- 5.6.29 This Neighbourhood Plan supports the policy requirements regarding biodiversity in the adopted Policy LNGS5.
- 5.6.30 Green roofs and walls can make an important contribution to nature conservation and energy efficiency of buildings, as well as slowing down surface water run-off. Integral nest and roost boxes for declining and vulnerable species such as swifts and bats are recommended to be installed as mandatory except where unsuitable. In addition, boundaries between new development plots should also be made permeable (i.e. with suitable gaps between or underneath fences) for hedgehogs, to help ensure that they can remain a resident species in the parish, given the widespread and rapid declines the species has faced nationally in recent years.



Map 7: Sites of Importance for Biodiversity

INDOOR COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Policy LSNP R20 - Delivering a new community meeting space in Long Stratton

Development proposals for a new town hall or community meeting space will be supported subject to:

- The new facility being centrally located and accessible in terms of public transport and walking and cycling routes, and being capable of providing overflow towncentre parking capacity
- Provision of adequate off-street parking so that on street parking problems are not triggered by the development

Map 8 accompanying this plan identifies the preferred location for a new community centre in Long Stratton

Development proposals coming forward as part of the strategic site allocation set out in Policy LNGS1 of the Area Action Plan will be supported subject to land being provided for the provision of a new centrally located community centre for Long Stratton. In addition, developer contributions towards the building and delivery of the site will be sought where justified (i.e where a development proposal generates new (unmet) demand for community meeting space and town centre improvements).

Contributions towards the delivery of the community centre will continue to be sought from all other major development proposals in the plan area where justified (i.e where a development proposal generates new (unmet) demand for community meeting space and town centre improvements).

Policy intent

- 5.6.31 To facilitate the delivery of a new town hall or similar community meeting space close to the town centre as the population grows. Specifically the NP would support the delivery of this facility on land south of Star Lane which is part of a current proposal by Norfolk Homes Ltd – see Map 8.
- 5.6.32 The provision of land for a new town hall/community meeting space and construction of a new town hall/community meeting space will be sought where justified such as part of the strategic development allocated as part of the adopted Area Action Plan or as part of any other major development proposals. In this context, major development applies to residential developments of 10 dwellings or more. Developer contributions towards the delivery of the facility will be sought where this is necessary for the completion of the project and justified through the additional demand created by the development proposal. In this context, additional demand includes:
 - additional demand for community meeting space and facilities to meet the needs of future occupiers
 - additional demand for town centre based off street parking provision to meet the needs of future occupiers

- 5.6.33 The delivery of the centrally-located Long Stratton community centre is considered to be necessary in order to:
 - sustain a healthy town centre to meet the everyday needs of current and future residents;
 - minimizing the need for car based journeys in the plan area;
 - secure successful integration of a new community with an existing community; and achieve
 - successful place-making
- 5.6.34 In terms of assessing quantitative need for additional meeting space, the latest available guidance on this from South Norfolk Council is as per the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Needs and Funding Study published in December 2007. This report states in paragraph 2.32 and Table 2.3 the following standards:
 - 61 sq metres per 1,000 population of community meeting space
 - 26.5 sq metres per 1,000 population of library space

5.6.35 More recently than this the consultation on the Greater Norwich Local Plan was in March 2020 accompanied by a supporting evidence which includes the Greater Norwich Local Plan Infrastructure Needs Report. However, this report did not include information on community meeting space standards.

Map 8: Long Stratton community meeting space and car park – preferred location



Context and reasoned justification

5.6.36 The existing village hall on Ipswich Road is a popular facility and well used. However, it is also fully booked throughout the year. As the town expands when the AAP development comes forward, it will be necessary to provide an additional facility in the plan area.



- 5.6.37 Community engagement undertaken as part of this plan and as documented in the Consultation Statement demonstrates there is strong community support for a new community meeting space centrally located in Long Stratton. There is also demand for additional community space from existing community groups including brownies, guides and scouts to keep pace with the development and the potential increment in people wanting to join these organisations.
- 5.6.38 Due to current and projected growth in the plan area and in light of the existing town centre car parking capacity issues (described elsewhere in this plan), it is essential that the new facility has the capacity to provide additional car parking spaces for town centre visitors.
- 5.6.39 In addition, the Long Stratton library located on The Street is an important community facility, particularly for Long Stratton's older and younger population (who tend to use the facilities more than others). As the town expands, the NP group consider it appropriate to house Long Stratton library facilities within a larger community hub. It is considered this would provide better access to library facilities for all residents. Colocation with other community uses would also have the benefit of helping the library strengthen its offer.
- 5.6.40 The Long Stratton community aspires towards the delivery of a multi-use community centre along the lines delivered at Poringland in 2017. This is considered to work well because it is a place where people can use different services in one visit. As with the

Poringland Community Centre, Long Stratton Town Council are keen to see improved library facilities, together with a Police drop in centre and capacity for 200 car parking spaces.

- 5.6.41 The provision of such a community hub at a central location as shown on Map 8 is considered an essential part of place making that will help achieve the vision underpinning this NP and in particular objectives 2, 3, 5 and 7:
 - Objective 2: Successful integration between our new community and existing community where new community facilities are located in sustainable locations and which facilitates good cycle and pedestrian connectivity
 - Objective 3: A strong sense of place incorporating sustainable design
 - Objective 5: Opportunities to enhance the town centre will be realised
 - Objective 7: Infrastructure necessary to support the growing community will come forward in a timely manner
- 5.6.42 The hybrid planning application submitted by Norfolk Homes Ltd in January 2018 proposes a site for a new community centre on land to the east of the A140 and on the south side of Star Lane. This is supported by the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.6.43 The preferred route for delivering the Long Stratton community centre is through \$106 contributions. This is because within the Greater Norwich area, the CIL is pooled and projects then prioritised across the three-district area. In order to access the funds, Long Stratton Town Council would need to make a case as to why the community centre should be prioritised over projects. This is not considered an appropriate route given the uncertainty in delivery this would create and given the direct relationship between the planned development in Long Stratton and the need for a new community centre.
- 5.6.44 Once the Neighbourhood Plan is made, the town council will receive 25% of ClL receipts within its area to spend on projects that support the delivery of growth and, if the community centre is not delivered via \$106 agreements, the town council will have the option of prioritising the community centre for spending of this 'local' element of ClL.

Policy LSNP R21 – A new swimming pool for a larger community

The provision of a new swimming pool facility serving the community at large in an accessible location is strongly encouraged.

As the town grows, and subject to the business case, together with a delivery mechanism, for a new swimming pool facility being demonstrated by the Town and Parish Councils, contributions may be sought from developers towards the provision of this key piece of infrastructure.

Policy intent

5.6.45 It is beyond the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan to deliver a new swimming pool facility in Long Stratton. However, the strong aspiration shared across the board by the community for a new swimming pool is acknowledged. The intent of this policy is to send a strong signal to providers and developers.

Context and reasoned justification

- 5.6.46 The provision of a new swimming pool in the plan area is very popular aspiration in the community. In all the community consultation that has taken place it is clear that the vast majority of residents wish to see a swimming pool being provided in Long Stratton that would be open for the public to use. The Town Council intends to work alongside stakeholders including South Norfolk Council to explore options and feasibility for the delivery of a swimming pool.
- 5.6.47 There are existing plans in place to bring the 15m learner pool at the current school back into use and to provide public access to this facility once opened. Whilst this is strongly welcomed, this pool will not address the current demand for a swimming pool suitable for those who are established swimmers. The nearest swimming pool facility to Long Stratton is in Diss or in Wymondham (both 11 miles away). A new facility in Long Stratton would not only satisfy demand in our growing community but in the wider rural area which Long Stratton serves for other shops and services.

SUPER FAST BROADBAND

- 5.7 The objective underpinning this policy section is for the most technically advanced communications infrastructure to be in place to serve Long Stratton's growing resident and business community.
- 5.7.1 Underpinning this objective is a priority to secure economic success in Long Stratton as the settlement grows. The provision of super-fast broadband speeds is an essential part of this.
- 5.7.2 The Better Broadband for Norfolk (BBfN) Initiative is a multi-million pound partnership through Norfolk County Council, BT and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport via BDUK (Broadband Delivery UK) with additional support from the New Anglia LEP, and five of Norfolk's district councils. It is transforming Norfolk's broadband speeds by installing high-speed fibre optic networks across the county.
- 5.7.3 Long Stratton Town Council and Tharston and Hapton Parish Council support this initiative and consider it crucial that high-speed fibre optic networks are also provided as part of new development coming forward in the Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan area. They have worked with infrastructure and development partners to make sure this can happen.
- 5.7.4 In October 2017, the Long Stratton AAP developers (Norfolk Homes Ltd and Norfolk Land Ltd) reached an agreement with BT Openreach, Long Stratton Parish Council and the Member of Parliament for South Norfolk Richard Bacon that all new development (including dwellings and employment uses) in the plan area would receive Fibre to the Premises (FTTP). Fibre to the Premises is a form of fibre-optic communication delivery, in which an optical fibre is run in an optical distribution network from the central office all the way to the premises (dwelling, place of work etc).
- 5.7.5 As part of this initiative BT Openreach have committed to providing 1000 homes with high speed networks with no cost to the developer and developers have agreed that all necessary physical infrastructure (trenchwork and laying down of fibre infrastructure rather than copper infrastructure) will be provided with no cost to the buyer of the premise.
- 5.7.6 In the process of new developments being planned and built in Long Stratton, it is crucial that every partner in the development chain contribute as applicable to securing super-fast broadband to new premises in Long Stratton. What this means in practice is that the developers will be required to design in the physical infrastructure including underground trenches but it will be the responsibility of the individual house builder or builder of other types of premises (employment and community uses) to ensure the correct and most up to date technology is laid down and linked up to every new dwelling and property.

- 5.7.7 Where planning applications come forward in locations that do not fall within the scope of strategic development allowed through AAP Policy LNGS1, it is acknowledged it may not be possible to lay down the physical infrastructure required to provide Fibre to the Premises. In these cases, the developer will be expected to utilise the infrastructure provided in the plan area (through the strategic development) and deliver superfast broadband to newly created premises via Fibre to the Cabinet infrastructure.
- 5.7.8 To guarantee that superfast broadband is delivered in every new development, the requirement set out in Policy LSNP C22 may be subject to a planning condition.

LSNP - C22 Fibre to the premises

All development proposals, involving new build, shall include the necessary infrastructure to allow for the delivery of superfast broadband.

For any development proposals coming forward as part of the strategic site allocation (Policy LNGS1 in the Area Action Plan) this involves the installation of fibre infrastructure¹ (and digging of any trenches necessitated by this) to serve all planned premises as well as the installation of Fibre to the Premises technology (or the most up to date version of) to serve each planned dwelling or place of work.

For other development coming forward in locations not part of this strategic development, this means provision of infrastructure that facilitates superfast broadband through Fibre to the Cabinet technology.

¹as opposed to copper infrastructure

6. NON-PLANNING COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

6 Non-planning community aspirations are further matters to be considered alongside the planning policies set out in this plan. These community aspirations express the intentions shared by Long Stratton Town Council and Tharston and Hapton Parish Council with regard to what actions that should come forward which can not be delivered through implementation of the planning policies alone.

Expenditure of CIL monies

6.1 During the plan period, the Parish Council of Tharston and Hapton and the Town Council of Long Stratton will receive community infrastructure levy (CIL) monies generated when new development proposals are delivered. Tharston and Hapton Parish Council will receive CIL monies for schemes delivered in their parished area and Long Stratton Town Council will receive CIL monies for schemes delivered in the civil parish of Long Stratton. How these monies will be spent will be determined on an annual basis by the two councils. The spending of the monies will however reflect the priorities expressed in this plan.

Community Aspirations in Long Stratton

- 6.2 The additional community aspirations for the plan area that falls within the civil parish of Long Stratton are:
 - i. Long Stratton Town Centre improvements as set out in Policy TC13 of this plan
 - ii. Pedestrian and cycling safety improvements as set out in Policy TC13 of this plan.
 - iii. Delivery of Long Stratton Market Place as set out in Policy TC14 of this plan.
 - Delivery of a new Long Stratton Community Meeting Space as set out in Policy R20 of this plan.
 - v. Implementation of the management proposals set out in the Long Stratton Conservation Area Character Appraisal (see supporting text to Policy DC9 of this plan).
 - vi. Industry led initiatives to support training and apprenticeship schemes to benefit Long Stratton workforce.
 - vii. Further exploration into the viability of delivering a new swimming pool in Long Stratton (see Policy R21 of this plan)
 - viii. Community Aspirations set out in the Long Stratton Town Council Community Aspirations 2019 document made available as part of this plan and any subsequent updates to it (via agreement of the Long Stratton Town Council).
 - ix. We will work with stakeholders and seek a sheltered housing scheme or similar in the plan area.
 - x. We will work with stakeholders to seek improvements to cycle infrastructure to outlying areas including Tasburgh.
 - xi. We will work with stakeholders to seek a renewable energy scheme in the plan area where the schemes does not impact adversely on landscape character and where schemes deliver community benefits such as tariffs from the energy generated.

Community Aspirations in Tharston

- 6.3 The additional community aspirations for the plan area that falls within the civil parish of Tharston and Hapton are:
 - i. Industry led initiatives to support training and apprenticeship schemes to benefit Tharston workforce
 - ii. Delivery of a Tharston and Hapton community building within the Tharston part of the NP area to meet the needs of the Tharston and Hapton residents and subject to consultation with Tharston and Hapton residents.
- 6.4 Long Stratton Town Council and Tharston and Hapton Parish Council recognise the importance of working with residents and community stakeholders during the plan period as we work towards the achievement of the aspirations set out in this Chapter. We will endeavour to maintain an open approach and will welcome collaborate working with key stakeholders including shops, businesses, Long Stratton High School and our many community-based groups.

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN MONITORING

- 7 The work on the NP has been undertaken by the NP Working Group which comprises residents and parish councillors from both the parish of Long Stratton and the parish of Tharston and Hapton. Under the NP legislation there can only be one qualifying body for the purpose of consulting on the NP and submitting the NP to SNC for examination. The qualifying body is Long Stratton Town Council and this is in agreement from the Parish of Tharston and Hapton. Once the NP is adopted, however, the implementation of the NP will become the responsibility of SNC. This is because SNC have responsibility for development management (the processing of planning applications) in the NP area.
- 7.1 Long Stratton Town Council will closely monitor new development proposals that come forward in the plan area as they are determined by SNC. Where proposals come forward in the parish of Tharston and Hapton, the two Councils will coordinate their monitoring of proposals. As part of this, Long Stratton Town Council will ensure that SNC are applying the adopted NP planning policies as required by legislation. In addition, it is proposed that Long Stratton Town Council also monitors the effectiveness of the NP policies themselves. As part of this the Town Council will monitor the following:
 - i. Are SNC officers applying the NP policies as they are required by legislation?
 - ii. The extent to which NP policies are breached if at all and why?
 - iii. Are the NP policies themselves straightforward to apply to development proposals (by both SNC officers and the applicant)?
 - iv. Are planning applicants using the NP policies as intended when they prepare their development proposals?
 - v. Do the parish and town councillors find the NP policies easy to apply and understand?
 - vi. Are the councillors using the NP in their decision making and consultation responses on planning applications coming forward in the parish?
 - vii. The effectiveness of the NP policies in meeting the overall vision and objectives underpinning the NP
- 7.2 Long Stratton will monitor the above aspects of the NP in the following ways:

Table 7.1 When and how the two councils will monitor the Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan

NP monitoring indicator	When	Method
i. Check whether SNC	When planning applications	Check the officers' reports
officers are applying the NP	in the NP area are being	and whether the NP policies
policies as required by	considered and decided by	are listed as part of the
legislation	SNC	statutory development plan
ii. The extent to which NP	When planning applications	Check for departures from
policies are breached if at	in the NP area are being	the statutory development
all and why?	considered and decided by	plan. These should be listed
	SNC	in the officers' reports

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NP monitoring indicator	When	Method
iii. Are the NP policies themselves straightforward to apply to development proposals (by both SNC officers and the applicant)?	Annually. Annual council meetings.	Seek feedback from developers and SNC officers
iv. Are planning applicants using the NP policies as intended when they prepare their development proposals?	When two councils look at planning applications or are being consulted at the pre- application stage	Checking whether the planning application refers to the NP policies in their proposal and checking for compliance Do developers and applicants use the NP as a starting point in their proposals and at pre- application stage?
v. Do the councillors find the NP policies easy to apply and understand?	Annually. Annual parish council meeting	Seek feedback from councillors
vi. Are the councillors using the NP in their decision making and consultation responses on planning applications coming forward in the parish?	When the councils, for example at planning committee, consider planning applications in the parish	Are the councillors considering the statutory development plan (the adopted Local Plan and the Long Stratton NP) as a starting point when considering planning applications and preparing responses back to SNC
vii. The effectiveness of the NP policies in meeting the overall vision and objectives underpinning the NP	Annual	Reviewing on an annual basis whether planning proposals and the future shape of the village are in accordance with the NP vision and objectives

7.3 Monitoring the above will help ensure the NP is implemented (by all users) as intended and assist Long Stratton Town Council and Tharston and Hapton Parish Council in understanding the added value provided by the NP and if a review of the NP is required.

7.4 It is proposed that at each annual parish and town council meeting, a report on the Neighbourhood Plan is prepared detailing its impact on development each year in the parish and providing a report against points i to vii above.

Glossary

References used in	Description
the plan	- oodinpiioii
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government. Government department with responsibility for planning before being renamed to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government
	(MHCLG)
DSE Review 2017	Demographic and Socio-Economic Review 2017 A key evidence base document supporting this plan. A document summarising demographic information in the NP area. It was prepared as part of the NP preparation by Cambridgeshire ACRE on the behalf of the Long Stratton NP group. The document can be viewed on the NP website
Long Stratton AAP	Long Stratton Area Action Plan. This is part of the statutory development plan and was adopted by South Norfolk in May 2016. A key policy in this plan allocates 140.1 hectares land for housing employment, a by-pass and associated infrastructure.
Long Stratton Design Guidelines	This is a set of design principles prepared by AECOM in 2019 on the behalf of the Long Stratton NP group. It is a key evidence base document supporting this plan. The purpose of the document is to inform the design of all future planning applications in the plan area. The document can be viewed on the NP website
Long Stratton Housing Needs Assessment	A key evidence base document supporting this plan. An assessment of housing need in the plan area (market housing and affordable housing) undertaken by AECOM in 2017 on the behalf of the Long Stratton NP group. The document can be viewed on the NP website.
Long Stratton Masterplanning Report 2018	A report prepared by AECOM in 2018 on the behalf of the Long Stratton NP group. It is a key evidence base document supporting this plan. An overarching objective of the report was to advise how the planned re-routing of the A140 could be used as a catalyst to remodel the town centre in a more people-friendly way. The document can be viewed on the NP website
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
NP area	The area to which this Neighbourhood Plan applies.
Public realm	Area of open space hard (paved) or soft (vegetated) that members of the public enjoy either by looking at or using the space. Public realm includes pavements, parks and areas of space outside community facilities.
SNC	South Norfolk Council

Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan – Submission Version

Reg. 16 Response from South Norfolk Council

Section of document	Comments
Policy E12 - Training Long Stratton's local workforce	Following its comment during the Regulation 14 consultation stage, and despite being supportive of the policy intent, South Norfolk Council remains concerned as to how and when this policy could be applied. In particular, the Council feels that greater clarity is required, in terms of the operation of the policy, the circumstances in which it would apply, the likely level of contribution required, and how impacts on viability have been considered.
Policy GI19 – Protecting existing sites of biodiversity value in the plan area	The Council is concerned that this policy is in conflict with the adopted Long Stratton Area Action Plan, in that the Neighbourhood Plan policy expects net gains in biodiversity at the site level from development proposals, as opposed to a overall net gain (as expressed in AAP Policy LNGS5).
	In particular, Policy LNGS1 of the Area Action Plan includes the delivery of a link road between the A140 and Swan Lane. The route of the Link Road traverses the wet meadow on Swan Lane, which is identified within Policy GI19 of the Neighbourhood Plan as a 'biodiversity asset'. Under AAP policy LNGS5, 'all new developments should deliver a net biodiversity gain'. However, under GI19, there is a requirement for developments in any of these identified biodiversity assets to 'contribute to, rather than detract from their biodiversity value'. The policy also requires development proposals to ' deliver net gains in biodiversity which means delivering measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats as part of the development proposal.'
Policy R20 – Delivering a new community meeting space in Long Stratton	The Council feels it would be useful if the policy could give some further clarity on the types and scale of development from which contributions might be sought (i.e. does the obligation apply to all development or just major development, as defined within planning legislation?), the

	level of contribution that might be required in different circumstances, and any consideration that may have been given to viability. Any further information of this sort that could be provided to assist the decision maker in interpreting and applying the policy would be considered valuable.
Policy R21 – A new swimming pool for a larger community	The Council is aware of the significant amount of community support that sits behind this policy, as well as the work that has gone into providing a positively-worded statement that reflects this aspiration, but which also takes account of the need for further detailed evidence. However, there is a concern that, as the decision maker, it would be difficult for the Council to apply this policy in the determination of applications. Consequently, it may be worth considering changing this from a policy to a 'project' or 'community aspiration'.

Minor/factual amendments relating to design and character

Section of document	Comments
Policy DC8 'Creating successful neighbourhoods'; incl. supporting text	Building for Life 12 has recently been replaced by Building for a Healthy Life (<u>https://www.udg.org.uk/publications/othermanuals/building-healthy-life</u>). Where 'Building for Life 12' is referred to within the policy and within the supporting text, this should be replaced with 'Building for a Healthy Life'.
Paragraph 5.3.15	The Council would suggest adding the following, 'For schemes within the Long Stratton conservation area, or that are considered to affect its setting, applicants should also be guided by the Long Stratton Conservation Area Character Appraisal'.
Paragraphs 5.3.30 and 5.3.33	It is worth noting that Norfolk Homes are revising their design code, so the wording within these paragraphs (and possibly elsewhere within the plan) needs to reflect this, rather than specifying a date.



Agenda Item: 7 Cabinet 15 March 2021

PROPOSED CHANGE TO DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY

Report Author(s):

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Portfolio:

Finance and Resources

All

Ward(s) Affected:

Purpose of the Report:

To request that members consider a change to the Discretionary Rate Relief policy with respect to top-up relief for registered charities.

Recommendation:

That the Discretionary Rate Relief policy is altered to increase the discretionary top-up relief cap from £4,000 to £5,000 per registered charity (with the exception of those for properties listed as being outside the scope of the policy).

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Under existing legislation, registered charities receive mandatory relief of 80% on their Business Rates. With the exception of certain types of organisation, the Council's current discretionary relief policy tops up mandatory relief with up to £4,000 additional discretionary relief per charity.
- 1.2 This report provides members with the opportunity to review the current policy in order to consider increasing the cap on discretionary rate relief.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council carried out a full review of its discretionary rate relief policy in December 2019 and updated it with a number of changes.
- 2.2 Discretionary rate relief is mainly governed by legislation set centrally by Government with rules applying nationally. However over and above provisions that previously existed, Billing Authorities are also able to exercise wider powers under the Localism Act to set local policies to allow relief on a wider basis.
- 2.3 This paper considers the current cap on top-up relief for Charities as the threshold has not been reviewed for some years.

3 CURRENT POSITION/FINDINGS

3.1 The relevant section of the Council's current discretionary rate relief policy is shown below:

'Throughout this policy document (unless otherwise stated) it shall generally apply that discretionary relief will be awarded only up to a maximum sum of:

• £4,000 per registered charity or Community Amateur Sporting Club (CASC) in any financial year

Registered charities may apply for additional 'top-up' discretionary relief where 80% mandatory relief has been granted.

Applicants will need to demonstrate that the use of the premises is in furtherance of the objects of the charity, and that the property is wholly or mainly occupied by the charity.

Each application will be looked at on its own merits and it will be at the discretion of the Council whether or not to make an award of discretionary relief. Discretionary charitable top-up relief will not usually be granted:

- 1) to charity shops, or
- 2) to Academy or Independent schools
- 3) in respect of village halls or community halls that operate a bar
- 4) in respect of periods where any property is unoccupied (other than in the Enterprise Zone).
- 5) In respect of properties in an Enterprise Zone while other Discretionary Enterprise Zone Rate relief is available.'

- 3.2 Under current policy, the council tops up 80% mandatory charitable relief for 162 charities with up to £4,000 discretionary relief to the value of £101,000.
- 3.3 Given that most of the charities we top up occupy fairly small premises, the combination of mandatory and discretionary relief results in nil rates liability for 157 out of 162 assessments. Five organisations currently receive £4,000 discretionary top-up relief but still have a rates charge to pay.
- 3.4 Under the current Business Rates Retention Scheme South Norfolk Council bears 20% of the cost of any top up relief granted.
- 3.5 There are a number of charitable organisations operating on the Research Park, which do not qualify for discretionary top-up due to exceeding state aid limits and/or have chosen not to apply for further relief. Removing the cap on top up relief entirely could expose the council to significant additional expenditure.

4 PROPOSED ACTION

4.1 To raise the £4,000 top-up relief cap to £5,000 for registered charities in order to provide higher levels of top-up relief to all eligible charities which do not currently benefit from full relief. This would offer additional support to the 5 charities which do not benefit from full relief and to other larger charities in the future. The current cost of this change to SNC would be £1,000 per year.

5 OTHER OPTIONS

- 5.1 To remove the £4,000 cap completely on all registered charities (with the exception of the types of property listed in 3.1 above). The current cost to South Norfolk of this change in policy would be £23,160 per annum and the full cost to the public purse would currently be £115,804. In addition to the current cost, removing the cap on discretionary top-up relief may lead to considerable additional expenditure if in the future other charities occupy properties and become eligible for full relief.
- 5.2 Leave the policy unchanged and offer no enhancement.

6 ISSUES AND RISKS

- 6.1 **Resource Implications** None
- 6.2 Legal Implications None
- 6.3 **Risks** As described above, removing the cap on top-up relief would lead to additional cost, which could increase if more charities occupy properties. The above options offer alternatives to mitigate risk.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 That the Discretionary Rate Relief policy is altered to increase the discretionary top-up relief cap from £4,000 to £5,000 per registered charity (with the exception of those for properties listed as being outside the scope of the policy).

Background Papers

None



Covid-19 Hardship Fund Policy 2021/22

Report Author(s):

Lindsay Sayer / Richard Dunsire Housing and Benefits Manager/ Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager 01603 430632 /01508 533620 <u>lindsay.sayer@broadland.gov.uk</u> <u>rdunsire@s-norfolk.gov.uk</u>

Portfolio:

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

Purpose of the Report:

To ensure the provision of the Covid-19 Hardship Fund continues for the financial year 2021/22, to provide short term stability for residents suffering financial hardship. The purpose of the report is to detail the policy relating to the hardship fund, eligibility and level of entitlement.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet approves the adoption of the Covid-19 Hardship fund policy for the year 2021/22

SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of the report is to outline the Covid-19 Hardship fund policy, the purpose of which is to help mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the local economy by providing short-term financial support for our residents.

BACKGROUND

- 1.2 An assistance fund has been established by the Council to help residents who are experiencing severe financial hardship due to the Coronavirus pandemic
- 1.3 The demand on the Housing and Benefit service has increased significantly due to the impact of the Covid pandemic on the local economy, reflecting the increase in hardship within the district due to unemployment, welfare assessment periods, furlough and the loss of income due to the need to self-isolate.

CURRENT POSITION/FINDINGS

- 1.4 The Council has been allocated a Covid support fund from Central Government of £163295.00. This paper is proposing £25,000 of this is apportioned for this hardship fund.
- 1.5 This policy will come into effect from 1 April 2021, for the financial year 2021/22
- 1.6 The amount applicants can receive is limited and will in the main be for daily living essentials such as food and heating. This policy will only be utilised where all other support and welfare systems have been explored but the claimant remains ineligible or are in a period of transition whilst welfare support is assessed.
- 1.7 This fund is part of a wider package of support available to residents in response to the pandemic, which includes £500 Test and Trace Support payments, fuel hardship payments for those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable support, Discretionary Housing Payments, the Norfolk Assistance Scheme, and our Work4all scheme which is focussed on building up skills for employment.
- 1.8 The fund will support residents who are temporarily economically inactive by providing some short-term stability to allow them to look for work, to apply for any welfare benefits they may be entitled to or negotiate with lenders. The aim is that this short term support will enable the council to provide short term economic stability without residents having to utilise unsuitable funding mechanisms in a time of high need thus reducing evictions or future benefit applications. Payments will be restricted to short term allocation to meet household basic. This is complementary to our ongoing aim of supporting individuals and helping them back into work.

PROPOSED ACTION

- 1.9 We intend to apply the policy as contained within appendix 1. The key themes of this policy are:
- 1.10 When making an assessment for a hardship fund application, the officer will utilise the Joseph Rowntree Minimum income standard as a guidance. If the applicant's household has gross income below this standard, and they are suffering severe financial hardship, then they will generally qualify.
- 1.11 If the household has savings, capital or investments to a value greater than £3,000 they will generally not qualify for the Covid-19 Severe Hardship Fund.
- 1.12 Due to the wide reaching economic impact of Covid-19, we have had a number of applications from people who would otherwise not need our assistance but have experienced sudden hardship due to a change in their circumstances. For any application where the applicant is suffering severe financial hardship but does not meet the above criteria then the decision to award can be made at a manager's discretion.
- 1.13 An award of Covid-19 Severe Hardship Fund, if paid directly to the applicant, will usually be no higher than £500.
- 1.14 It may be determined that it is more appropriate for a payment to be made to the applicant's Council Tax account to cover future instalments. The number of instalments covered will be at the discretion of the decision-maker.

OTHER OPTIONS

1.15 The options available are to utilise the Central Government allocated money to alleviate hardship for our residents by providing interim financial support, or to not pay this money and hope that the support funds which are currently in place are sufficient.

ISSUES AND RISKS

- 1.16 **Resource Implications** This fund will be administered the Housing and Benefit Team and it is currently anticipated that no additional resources will be required as we have been administering this fund in the current financial year and have already allocated sufficient resources for this.
- 1.17 **Legal Implications** There are no legal implications
- 1.18 **Equality Implications** Although the policy is not aimed at any particular demographic, some groups of people have been adversely impacted to a greater extend by Covid-19 than others, such as women and young people. This policy will therefore have a positive effect on these groups.

- 1.19 Environmental Impact There is no environmental impact
- 1.20 Crime and Disorder This policy will have no impact upon crime and disorder
- 1.21 **Risks** Whilst we are confident this is a sufficient amount of money based on the level of demand this year, this is a limited fund, and therefore there is a risk that the money will not be sufficient. Consequently, there is a potential risk that either we may not be able to assist people that we would otherwise want to, or we request that more money is allocated to the fund.

CONCLUSION

1.22 Adopting the Covid-19 Hardship Fund for the financial year 2021/22 will ensure that we can continue to provide short term financial support to residents when they are suffering severe financial hardship. This will provide stability for the resident while either moving into new employment or putting into place longer term financial support such as Universal Credit or Council Tax Assistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.23 We recommend that Cabinet approves the adoption of the Covid-19 hardship policy for the financial year 2021/22

APPENDIX 1

COVID-19 HARDSHIP FUND POLICY 2021/22

1.0 Background

- 1.1 An assistance fund has been established by South Norfolk Council to help residents who are experiencing severe financial hardship due to the Coronavirus pandemic
- 1.2 The demand on the Housing and Benefit service has increased significantly in the past year, reflecting the increase in hardship within the district due to unemployment, furlough and the loss of income due to the need to self-isolate.
- 1.3 This fund is part of a wider package of support available to residents in response to the pandemic, which includes £500 Test and Trace Support payments, fuel hardship payments for those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable support, Discretionary Housing Payments, the Norfolk Assistance Scheme, and our Work4all scheme which is focussed on building up skills for employment.
- 1.4 The fund will support residents who are temporarily economically inactive by providing some short-term stability to allow them to look for work, or to apply for any welfare benefits they may be entitled to. The aim is that this short term support will enable them to become economically stable and reduce evictions or future benefit applications. This is complementary to our ongoing aim of supporting individuals and helping them back into work.

2.0 Purpose of this policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to specify how South Norfolk Council will administer Covid-19 Hardship Fund payments. It details the application process and indicates some of the factors that will be considered when deciding if a payment can be made.
- 2.2 This policy covers the financial year 2021/22
- 2.3 Due to the ever changing landscape of Covid support any changes to the eligibility criteria will be done in consultation with the portfolio holders.

2.4 The funding for the policy will be agreed by Council as part of the wider Covid-19 recovery plan.

3.0 Details of the Fund

- 3.1 The Covid-19 Hardship Fund is to support working age residents who are experiencing severe hardship due to the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 3.2 The amount of the fund will be £25,000 for each Council, which has been apportioned from the Covid support fund which has been allocated.
- 3.3 The amount applicants can receive is limited and will in the main be for daily living essentials such as food and heating.

4.0 Applying for a Covid-19 Hardship Fund payment

- 4.1 The application for the Covid-19 Severe Hardship Fund is to be made online. We will support residents who are unable to do this or don't have access to the internet.
- 4.2 To process the application, we will require to see proof of bank account, and details of income, we will also check residency in the district using systems already held.
- 4.3 The Council may request (reasonable) evidence in support of an application. If the information is not provided within the time given, this will be treated as a withdrawal of the application by the applicant and it will be refused as such.
- 4.5 The Council reserves the right to verify any information or evidence provided by the claimant in appropriate circumstances.

5.0 Awarding a Covid-19 Hardship Fund payment

- 5.1 When making an assessment for a hardship fund application, the officer will utilise the Joseph Rowntree Minimum income standard as a guidance. If the applicant's household has gross income below this standard, and they are suffering severe financial hardship, then they will generally qualify.
- 5.2 For any application where the applicant is suffering severe financial hardship but the household has gross income above the Joseph Rowntree Minimum income standard, then the decision to award can only be made at a manager's discretion.
- 5.3 Severe financial hardship means the inability to meet their immediate basic needs, such as heating the home or buying food.
- 5.4 The Joseph Rowntree Foundation minimum income standard for 2020 is as follows:
 - £37,400 for a family
 - £26,000 for a couple with no children
 - £19,200 for a single person

These figures are published annually and the criteria for this fund will update in line with the annual publication.

- 5.5 When considering any application, the circumstances of the whole household will be taken into account.
- 5.6 If the household has savings, capital or investments to a value greater than £3,000 they will generally not qualify for the Covid-19 Severe Hardship Fund.

6.0 Amount of an Award

- 6.1 An award of Covid-19 Severe Hardship Fund, if paid directly to the applicant, will usually be no higher than £500. This allows sufficient time for the applicant to apply and receive any other income they may be entitled to, for example welfare benefits or furlough payments.
- 6.2 An award may be made above the value of £500 but this can only be made at a manager's discretion.
- 6.2 It may be determined that it is more appropriate for a payment to be made to the applicant's Council Tax account to cover future instalments. The number of instalments covered will be at the discretion of the decision-maker.
- 6.2 On a case by case basis we may consider a further application. There will, however, be a full investigation into why other welfare systems are not sufficient and what action will be needed to avoid a further need. We will do this within our one Housing and Benefit team and in conjunction with our partners within the Early Help Hub thus allowing all aspects to be considered including but not limited to housing and money advice.
- 6.3 In all cases the amount of the award will be determined at the discretion of the Council and will be done so on the basis of the evidence supplied and the circumstances of the claim.

7.0 Method of Payment

7.1 Payment of the Covid-19 Severe Hardship fund will be made either

a) directly into the applicant's bank account.

Or

- b) to the applicant's Council Tax account to cover future instalments.
- 7.2 Bank details used for Council Tax Direct Debit payments will usually be used to ascertain the applicant's bank details. If the applicant does not give consent for this or does not pay by direct debit the Benefits Team will contact them for details and evidence.



Agenda Item: 9 Cabinet 15 March 2021

AFFORDABLE HOME OWNERSHIP - QUALIFICATION

Report Author(s): Keith Mitchell Housing Enabling Officer 01508 533756 kmitchell@s-norfolk.gov.uk

Portfolio: Better Lives

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of the Report:

In July 2019, Cabinet considered eligibility for affordable home ownership. It was resolved that ordinarily there would be no local connection priority, but a local connection priority would be potentially applied if demand for affordable home ownership properties was greater than supply. This report arises from a proposal that residents of the three Greater Norwich authority areas (Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk) should have equal priority for affordable home ownership properties in the three areas in circumstances where a local connection priority is applied.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet agrees that, unless otherwise agreed by the Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder:

- 1 For affordable home ownership (shared equity and Discounted Market Sale) provided through negotiation with developers and in circumstances where a local connection is applied, priority will be given for residents of Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk.
- 2 The reciprocal agreement with Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk will be entered into for a trial period of 2 years.
1. Summary

1.1 In July 2019, Cabinet resolved that:

"For affordable home ownership:

Ordinarily there will be no local connection priority, but authority is delegated to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health, Housing and Wellbeing to agree to a local connection priority when necessary, on the basis of supply and demand."

The effect of this was to create a default position such that anyone in housing need would have equal eligibility, irrespective of any local connection.

- 1.2 In 2019, to deliver benefits of joint working, it was proposed that residents of Broadland and South Norfolk would have equal first priority. It was not necessary for South Norfolk's Cabinet to provide a resolution to implement this because of the delegated authority.
- 1.3 When Broadland's Cabinet considered the proposal, they decided that they wanted equal priority for any affordable home ownership in Greater Norwich (Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk) for residents of the whole of Greater Norwich. This was proposed to Norwich City Council, who agreed this reciprocal arrangement in late 2020.
- 1.4 This report seeks Cabinet's agreement to implement the Greater Norwich arrangement, and Broadland's Cabinet is being asked to agree it also.

2. Background

- 2.1 In practice the two relevant tenures are:
 - Shared equity: purchase of a specified percentage of the equity, most commonly 75%, with no rent payable on the remaining equity. The purchaser has the right to buy the remaining equity, but often not before a specified period has passed.
 - Discounted Market Sale: purchase of a home at a specified percentage of its market value, usually 75%. These are sold with a restriction on the title deeds and so all future sales must be at the same percentage of open market value.

For convenience, the term 'affordable home ownership' is used in this report to mean these two tenures.

2.2 The proposal to give equal priority to residents of Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk recognises the fact that the employment and property markets of Greater Norwich extend across administrative boundaries. The proposal acknowledges the benefits of people being able to obtain an affordable home in a location which takes account of their work/life preferences.

3. Current position/findings

- 3.1 Since July 2019, none of the seven South Norfolk s106 agreements signed for 39 affordable homes include shared equity or Discounted Market Sale. Applying the 2019 Cabinet resolution, future developments granted planning permission in South Norfolk which include affordable home ownership would not include any local priority for those homes. (Note: homes for rent do have a local priority.)
- 3.2 Norwich City Council is in a position to implement equal priority for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk residents, and Broadland's Cabinet is being asked to approve it.
- 3.3 As this would be a new arrangement, the respective Councils are being asked to agree this as a 2-year trial.

4. **Proposed action**

4.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the proposal as a 2-year trial.

5. Other options

5.1 Cabinet could decide not to approve the proposal, leaving homes for affordable ownership without any local priority.

6. Issues and risks

- 6.1 **Resource Implications** the proposed arrangement can be implemented within existing resources.
- 6.2 **Legal Implications** none.
- 6.3 **Equality Implications** no negative implications, and it may improve access to suitable accommodation for all equalities groups.
- 6.4 **Environmental Impact** none.
- 6.5 **Crime and Disorder** none.
- 6.6 **Risks** none identified, but a review in 2 years can consider any unanticipated consequences.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 A sub-regional approach to eligibility for affordable home ownership is justified.
- 7.2 A 2-year trial would be a suitable basis to assess the benefits and to identify any problems.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agrees that, unless otherwise agreed by the Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder:
 - 1. For affordable home ownership (shared equity and Discounted Market Sale) provided through negotiation with developers and in circumstances where a local connection is applied, priority will be given for residents of Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk.
 - 2. The reciprocal agreement with Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk will be entered into for a trial period of 2 years.

Background papers

Agenda of Cabinet 22 July 2019.

Minutes of Cabinet, 22 July 2019.



Agenda Item: 10 Cabinet 15 March 2021

Social Prescribing

Report Author(s):

Kerrie Gallagher Senior Communities Manager 01508 533741 kgallagher@s-norfolk.gov.uk

Portfolio:

Better lives

All

Ward(s) Affected:

Purpose of the Report:

The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to sign off the agreement between the Council and South Norfolk Healthcare CIC (GP provider organisation) for running social prescribing services. The financial payment to the Council is £900,000 and therefore requires Cabinet approval.

Recommendations:

1. Cabinet to agree to delegate to the Director of People and Communities, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Better Lives, to sign off the contract for social prescribing services.

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 SP (social prescribing) services in South Norfolk are run through a collaboration between the Council and our PCN (Primary Care Network) colleagues. The aim of social prescribing is to divert patients away from clinical services, accessing more appropriate support from other agencies or within the community where possible.
- 1.2 Along with our NHS partners, the Council has taking a proactive lead in developing SP services, as part of our wider help hub approach, to support our most vulnerable residents. This support produces better outcomes for people and reduces the impact on specialist services, including Council run services.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 South Norfolk Council has a strong reputation for supporting our most vulnerable residents through our innovative help hub approach which was started in 2015. As part of this approach the Council supported the introduction of community connectors in Diss in 2016. The aim of the connectors was to have a local connection with their communities, being able to identify issues earlier and support people within their local area to connect them into services. This approach matched our ethos of helping families, one house, one street at a time.
- 2.2 This approach quickly grew to Wymondham and Costessey and since 2017 has been across the whole district, becoming an integral part of our help hub offer.
- 2.3 The community connector team were at the forefront of introducing social prescribing to Norfolk. Utilising external funding the team began working within GP surgeries before it was a priority for the NHS, showcasing the impact that could be had by accessing customers in this setting where support is often sought out for issues which are not medical in nature. The community connectors built up strong relationships with primary care partners and became part of the team putting holistic support around patients.
- 2.4 As understanding of social prescribing increased within primary care the community connectors and our help hub offer fitted into the new model being rolled out by the NHS, enabling us to reach quickly to the opportunity this collaboration brought.
- 2.5 Our community connectors and help hub approach have been instrumental in supporting South Norfolk through the Covid pandemic. Local intelligence, strong relationships with community groups, with a help hub infrastructure has formed our Covid response which enabled us to scale up quickly to support the most vulnerable. As the impact of the pandemic continues to affect our residents, the community connectors will be on hand to overcome them.
- 2.6 Previous funding arrangements for community connectors have been on an annual cycle, and for less staff connector posts, which has meant this is below the threshold for Cabinet sign off. This is the first time that we have agreed a three-year funding package which has raised the total funding limit to Cabinet level.

- 2.7 The following performance charts demonstrates the growth and effectiveness of the Community connectors and our work within social prescribing.
- 2.8 The graphs below demonstrate the increasing numbers using the service as the scheme has grown and has become a standard support route in South Norfolk. Demand fell away quickly during lockdown in April 2020 but has significantly increased as we feel the effects of 12 months of Covid on wellbeing and the economy. Most people who use the service are working age, with housing, debt, welfare and immediate poverty support high on the connector's caseload.





Fig 2 Demonstration of demand during and post covid



Fig 3 Demographics: Most people using this service are of working age and in a wide spread of age groups



Fig 4 Examples of presenting needs and Connectors onward referrals



3. CURRENT POSITION/FINDINGS

- 3.1 We have worked to sign an agreement with South Norfolk Healthcare CIC to run social prescribing over the next three years. This agreement will see us operating in 14 surgeries across South Norfolk (and three in Breckland as this fits in with Ketts Oak PCN).
- 3.2 The agreement will pay for nine community connectors between 2021 and 2024 which will enable us to continue social prescribing and a financial value per year of £300,600. Therefore, the overall incoming funding for the Council is £901,800.
- 3.3 We have been successful in drawing in funding as the PCN's can see that their funds are enhanced by the Councils own investment in supporting people who need additional help. Through creating and resourcing a help hub infrastructure,

and boots on the ground, we are seen as a partner to work alongside as opposed to a contractor.

4. PROPOSED ACTION

4.1 The proposal is to continue with our successful social prescribing model until 2024 with the agreement detailed in 3.2 and key components in appendix one. This agreement will enable us to continue our delivery of social prescribing and community connectors. This agreement builds on the last three years annual funding to a substantial funding package to the Council, which will help with our continued collaboration with health partners, and stability during our Covid response.

5. OTHER OPTIONS

5.1 The Council could end its involvement in social prescribing which would mean community connectors are no longer funded from external funding. This would also cause a gap in social prescribing services in South Norfolk when we are supporting people through Covid.

6. ISSUES AND RISKS

- 6.1 The Council has continuously delivered on its targets over the last three years and so there is minimal risk to the agreement.
- 6.2 **Resource Implications** Community Connectors are fully funded externally.
- 6.3 Legal Implications None
- 6.4 Equality Implications None
- 6.5 Environmental Impact None
- 6.6 Crime and Disorder None
- 6.7 **Risks** A reputational risk may occur if the Council choses to pull out of social prescribing at a time when Covid requires a local response to supporting vulnerability.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The connector scheme continues to a flagship programme for the Council which supports our aim to have strong local connections with our local communities to identify and support residents who need help within their local community.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 Cabinet to agree to delegate to the Director of People and Communities, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Better Lives, to sign off the contract for social prescribing services.

Appendix 1

SERVICE OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFICATIONS AIMS OF THE SERVICE	 The aims of South Norfolk Healthcare and its associated PCN(s) are to provide a service to: To assess the needs of those referred to a Social Prescribing Link Worker. To advise individuals of resources available to meet their needs. To liaise with partner services and agencies as necessary to ensure that these needs are addressed. To work, where necessary, on an enduring basis with individuals to assist them in addressing their needs 			
CORE SERVICES FUNDED UNDER THIS AGREEMENT	 Assess how far a patient's health and wellbeing needs can be met by services and other opportunities available in the community; Co-produce a simple personalised care and support plan to address the patient's health and wellbeing needs by introducing or reconnecting people to community groups and statutory services, including weight management support and signposting where appropriate and it matters to the person; Evaluate how far the actions in the care and support plan are meeting the patient's health and wellbeing needs; Provide personalised support to patients, their families and carers to take control of their health and wellbeing, live independently, improve their health outcomes and maintain a healthy lifestyle Develop trusting relationships by giving people time and focus on 'what matters to them'; Take a holistic approach, based on the patient's priorities and the wider determinants of health; Explore and support access to a personal health budget where appropriate; Have a role in educating non-clinical and clinical staff within the PCNs through verbal or written advice or guidance on what other services are available within the community and how and when patients can access them. 			
DELIVERABLES	 Patients will demonstrate a high degree of satisfaction with the service provided through social prescribing. Primary Care clinicians will notice a reduction in demand on service for non-clinical reasons. 			
REPORTING & KPIs	 90% of referred individuals will be assisted to a resolution of their difficulties. Less than 10% of cases will result in a referral to NHS or statutory Adult Social Care services. 			
BREAK CLAUSE & NOTICE PERIOD	Three months notice given by either side at anytime within the contract			

CABINET CORE AGENDA 2021

Date	Key	Title of Report	Responsible Officer	Portfolio Holder	Exempt
15 Mar		Q3 Strategic Performance/Finance and Risks	Mel Wiles/ Sinead Carey	Josh Worley	
		Council Tax Support – COVID Hardship Fund	Richard Dunsire/ Lindsay Sayer	Josh Worley	
		Community Connectors	Kerrie Gallagher	Yvonne Bendle	
	T	Programme/Project Management Approach	Sinead Carey/ David French	John Fuller	
		Eligibility for Affordable Home Ownership	K Mitchell/ K Oglieve- Chan	Yvonne Bendle	
		Response to New Homes Bonus Consultation	Rodney Fincham	Josh Worley	
	Key	Review of SNC NDR Discretionary Relief Policy	Simon Quilter	Josh Worley	
	Key	Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan	Richard Squires	Lisa Neal	
19 Apr		Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework Update 2021	Paul Harris	Lisa Neal	
		Request for temporary additional resource for Council Tax teams	Simon Quilter	Josh Worley	
		Review of Bawburgh Temporary Stopping Place for Gypsies and Travellers	Kevin Philcox/ Leigh Booth	Yvonne Bendle	
	Key	Ella May Barnes Building	Tig Armstrong/ Nina Cunningham	Lisa Neal	Exempt
	Key	Norfolk Strategic Fund	Tig Armstrong	John Fuller	Exempt
		Village Clusters Housing Allocations	Paul Harris	Lisa Neal	
		Tree Management Policy	Tig Armstrong	Lisa Neal	
		Bure Valley Railway – funding for fence works	Phil Courtier	Lisa Neal	
		Leisure Restructure	Simon Phelan	Alison Thomas	
		Breathing Space Legislations	Rodney Fincham	John Fuller	
		Lease for Car Parking at the Norwich Research Park	Nina Cunningham	Lisa Neal	
		Internal Audit Consortium	Emma Hodds	Josh Worley	
		Council AGM 17 May 2020			
1 Jun		Re-design of Care and Repair and Disabled Facilities Grant service element of Integrated Housing Adaptations Team	Leah Booth/ Kevin Philcox	Yvonne Bendle	
		Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy and Enforcement Policy	Nick Howard/ Tony Cooke	Michael Edney	

Date	Key	Title of Report	Responsible Officer	Portfolio Holder	Exempt
		Q4 Performance, Risk and Finance Report	Sinead Carey	Josh Worley	
		Review of Materials Recovery Facility Contract	Simon Phelan	Michael Edney	

Key decisions are those which result in income, expenditure or savings with a gross full year effect of $\pounds 100,000$ or 10% of the Council's net portfolio budget whichever is the greater which has not been included in the relevant portfolio budget, or are significant (e.g. in environmental, physical, social or economic) in terms of its effect on the communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral wards in the area of the local authority.