

Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**



FINAL DRAFT

Annual Governance Statement 2021

For the 2020/21 financial year

1. Scope of responsibility

- 1.1 The [Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk](#) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The council also has a statutory duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of the above.
- 1.2 The council has a [Code of Corporate Governance](#) in place which sets out how the council intend to apply the principles of corporate governance, in accordance with '[Delivering Good Governance' within the Local Government CIPFA/ SOLACE Framework](#). The code is on our [website](#) at www.west-norfolk.gov.uk. The code was reviewed by Audit Committee during 2018/19. The code will be reviewed in 2024/25 or sooner if guidance requires.
- 1.3 This [Annual Governance Statement](#) explains how the council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, regulation 6(1) which requires all relevant bodies to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare a statement.

2. The purpose of the governance framework

- 2.1 The governance framework comprises the systems, policies, procedures and operations by which the authority is directed and controlled, and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate, leads its communities. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and outcomes and to consider whether those objectives have led to delivery of appropriate services and value for money.
- 2.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to:
 - identify and prioritise the principal risks to the achievement of the council's policies, agreed priorities and objectives
 - evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised
 - manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.
- 2.3 The governance framework has been in place at the council for the year ended 31 March 2021 and remains in place to date.

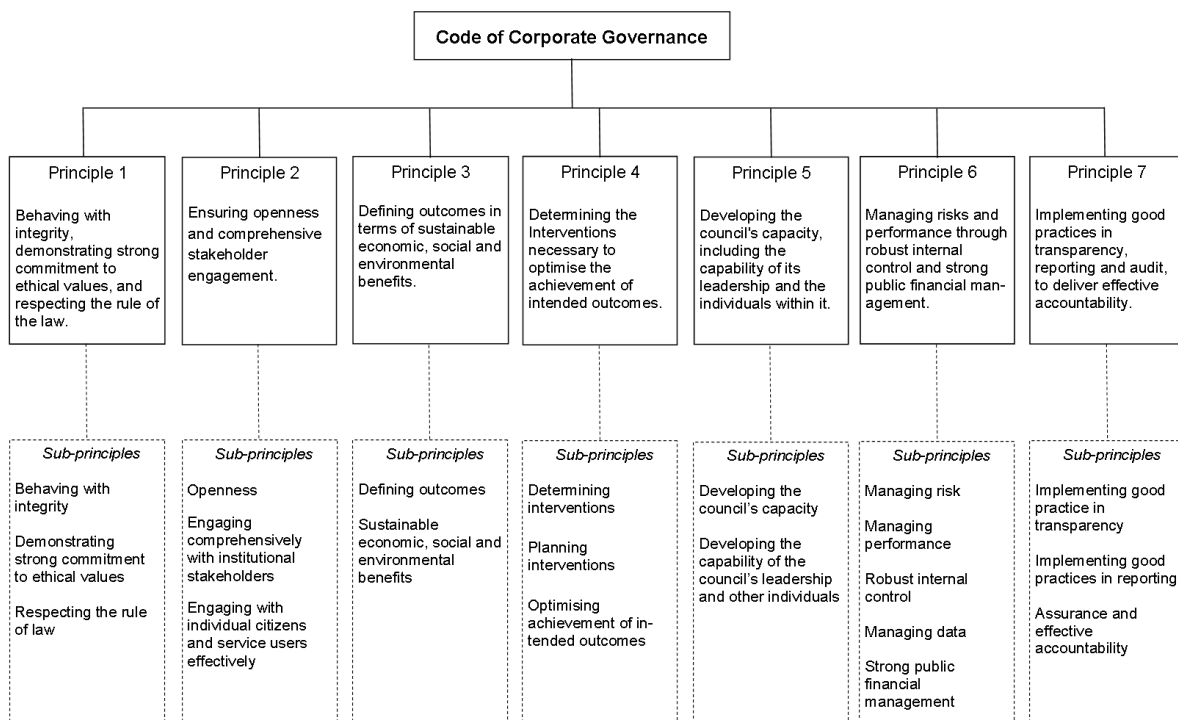
3. Key principles of our governance framework

- 3.1 The council's governance framework is made up of the many systems, policies, procedures and operations we have in place to help realise the following principles and sub-principles summarised in the following diagrams:

CIPFA¹/ SOLACE²: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016



Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Code of Corporate Governance framework



3.2 The table at Appendix C lists the types of evidence that will demonstrate how the principles of corporate governance have been upheld during the 2020/21 year.

¹ CIPFA: [The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy](#)

² SOLACE: [Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers](#)

3.3 Sections 4 to 10 summarise how we have sought to comply with the seven principles.

4 Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of the law (Principle 1).

4.1 *Behaving with integrity.*

- 4.1.1 The council has adopted a [constitution](#) which sets out how the council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure these are efficient, transparent and accountable. The Monitoring Officer has a duty to monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure its aims and principles are given full effect. The council reviews the Constitution to incorporate any necessary changes. The constitution was amended in January 2019 following minor amendments to the scheme of delegation to take account of an additional area of responsibility, and to provide the [Chief Executive](#) with a formal Deputy Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.
- 4.1.2 Roles and responsibilities of members and officers are set out clearly in the constitution. The council has adopted a number of codes and protocols that govern both member and officer activities. These are:
- [Members Code of Conduct and guidance](#)
 - Officers Code of conduct
 - [Member / officer protocol](#)
 - [Members' declarations of interest](#)
 - Register of gifts and hospitality
 - [Contract Standing Orders](#)
 - [Code of Corporate Governance](#)
- 4.1.3 Additionally, the council appoints a number of committees and panels to discharge the council's regulatory and scrutiny responsibilities. These leadership roles, and the delegated responsibilities of officers, are set out in the Constitution.
- 4.1.4 The council's Scheme of Delegation designates the Chief Executive as the council's Head of Paid Service. The Scheme of Delegation sets out the remit of elected member Portfolio Holders and the extent of delegations made to committees and officers under the principle that decisions should be made at the lowest or most local level consistent with the nature of the issues involved. The council also has [Financial Regulations](#), Contract Standing Orders relating to contracts in place and all of these procedural documents are regularly reviewed.
- 4.1.5 It is the function of the Monitoring Officer to ensure compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations. After consulting the Chief Executive and Assistant Director - Resources (S151 officer), she will report to the full council if she considers that any proposal, decision or omission would give rise to unlawfulness or maladministration. Such a report will have the effect of stopping the proposal or decision being implemented until the report has been considered.
- 4.1.6 The Monitoring Officer is provided through the council's arrangements with [Eastlaw](#) for the provision of legal services and provides advice on legal compliance. All decisions made by [Cabinet](#) and [Council](#) are on the basis of reports, including assessments of the legal and financial implications, and

consideration of the risks involved and how these will be managed. The financial and legal assessments are considered by the S151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer respectively.

- 4.1.7 The Monitoring Officer has a duty to monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure its aims and principles are given full effect. The council reviews the Constitution regularly to incorporate any necessary changes.
- 4.1.8 The Code of Corporate Governance was reviewed in 2018/19 and, in March 2019, the Audit Committee recommended it for approval by Cabinet. This updated version reflects the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (CIPFA/Solace, 2016).
- 4.1.9 The [Members' Code of Conduct](#) sets out requirements for all councillors and co-opted members. Every member and co-opted member of the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk must sign an undertaking to observe the Code.
- 4.1.10 Further measures include:
- Principles and values are covered in the induction programmes for elected members and officers and outline the standard of behaviour expected.
 - Each member of staff has an annual appraisal which considers performance and objectives, areas of development and competencies.
 - Values are reinforced via content within the regular staff briefing Internal Affairs and Members Bulletin. These are supplemented with media releases on matters such as long service awards.
 - Contract Standing Orders identify roles and responsibilities for officers and promote the highest standards of integrity, fairness, openness and transparency.
 - The members and officers code of conduct refers to a requirement to declare interests. Declarations of interest are made at each committee meeting and recorded in minutes.
 - The committee meetings are conducted in an appropriate manner with training provided for committee chairmen and vice-chairmen and other members where relevant.
- 4.1.11 The council's [Standards Committee](#) did not meet during 2020/21.
- 4.1.12 Several registers are in place covering interests and gifts/hospitality.
- 4.1.13 A [whistleblowing policy](#) is in place and provides protection for individuals raising concerns. This policy has also been provided to the public, staff, partners and contractors.
- 4.1.14 A [complaints policy](#) is in place and 23 complaints regarding behaviour/conduct were recorded in 2020/21 compared with 52 complaints in 2017/18, 46 complaints in 2018/19 and 23 complaints in 2019/20.
- 4.1.15 The council has in place key documents which communicate the standards of behaviour required of members and all council staff (officers). All relevant policies are published on the council's intranet or on the personnel system CIPHR and where required published on the council's website. These include the:

- Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Data Quality Policy & Strategy](#)
- Disciplinary / Grievance procedures
- Employee Handbook (includes employee code of conduct)
- Fraud Response Plan
- Health, Safety & Welfare General Policy
- ICT Asset Disposal Policy
- ICT Asset Management Policy
- ICT Computer Usage Policy
- ICT Corporate Email Policy
- ICT Corporate Internet Policy
- ICT Security Policy
- ICT Service Desk Policy
- Information Risk Policy
- Members Code of Conduct
- Members Code of Good Practice for Planning
- [Procurement Strategy](#)
- Protocol for Member/Officer Relations
- [Record Retention and Disposal Policy](#)
- Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
- [Risk Management Policy](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- Whistleblowing Policy

4.1.16 ICT related policies are reviewed annually but require updating after the PC rollout, once everyone is on the same platform of Windows 10 / Office 365 (mid 2021). Keeping information securely is vital for public confidence and the efficient conduct of business.

4.1.17 The [Baseline Personnel Security Standard](#) (BPSS) continues as standard practice within the Council's recruitment and appointment processes, to ensure that employees who access information held on the [Public Services Network](#) (PSN) meet a minimum baseline standard of security checks. It is a pre-appointment check which aims to ensure the council employs people who are entitled to work in the UK and who have the honesty, integrity and values needed.

4.1.18 The [Performance Management Framework](#) also describes how staff performance, including conduct, is managed. All employees have detailed job descriptions and person specifications.

4.1.19 The council also has a Harassment Procedure in place for staff, which demonstrates the belief that all employees have a right to be treated with dignity and respect, and that the council will take steps to ensure this right is protected. All policies are available to all staff and councillors via the council's intranet InSite.

4.1.20 Following the approval of a revised [Equalities Policy](#) a training programme was in development during 2019 but delayed by Covid 19.

4.1.21 In June 2019, a [non proportional task group of six members was established to review and examine alternative governance models](#) to the current "Strong Leader and Cabinet" model. External support was commissioned via East of England LGA to support the review. This review was delayed due to the Covid 19 response and anticipated Government white paper on devolution.

4.1.22 To enhance support for elected member, a dedicated email inbox was introduced in September 2020. This provides a mechanism for members to raise queries and for officers to corporately coordinate responses. The account is: Member.Enquiries@West-Norfolk.gov.uk

4.2 Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values.

- 4.2.1 An Internal Audit review of “Ethical culture” in 2018/19 received a full assurance rating demonstrating the council’s strong commitment to ethical values.
- 4.2.2 The council has a Code of Conduct for elected and co-opted members, a Code of Conduct for employees and a local [Code of Corporate Governance](#) that provides guidance for officers and members on expected standards of behaviours to ensure integrity.
- 4.2.3 Members receive training on standards arrangements, declarations of interests and the Code of Conduct as part of the authority’s discharge of its statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its members.
- 4.2.4 The Code of Conduct focuses upon the Nolan principles of conduct in public life of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. It sets an objective, non-political and high standard whose purpose is to remind members of the behaviour expected of them in public life and to set out clearly the key principles against which their conduct is measured.
- 4.2.5 The Monitoring Officer works closely with the Standards Committee and Independent Person on any complaints regarding the potential breach of the Code of Conduct by members. Complaints are handled in accordance with the authority’s arrangements for dealing with standards allegations under the [Localism Act 2011](#) and the outcome of such investigations are published on the council’s website.
- 4.2.6 There were no identified cases of corruption or misuse of power in 2020/21.
- 4.2.7 There are a range of personnel policies which foster a commitment to strong, ethical behaviour. For example, the annual appraisal process provides a means of considering values and ethical behaviour. A key aim of the process is to provide employees with a clear understanding of what is expected of them in their job and how this links to corporate and service objectives. The process drives learning and development activities across the organisation.
- 4.2.8 Other related policies include the Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure, Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy.
- 4.2.9 The terms of reference for the West Norfolk Partnership set out that the borough council provides policy and coordination support to West Norfolk Partnership via the partnership’s strategy and governance groups. Robust governance is ensured as the council’s input is subject to its internal controls and financial regulations and therefore the processes through which decisions are taken and implemented are in accordance with good practice.
- 4.2.10 The council has a number of service level agreements with external organisations to deliver services that help to improve the quality of life and provide support for communities. The recipient of the grant must comply with the council’s Equality Policy, Health and Safety Policy and Safeguarding Policy. With regards to safeguarding, the council will apply its safeguarding risk assessment in circumstances where it is considering providing funding or a grant to an organisation whose work involves children, young people or adults at risk of harm.
- 4.2.11 Officers involved in the procurement process must attend the “Introduction to Effective Procurement” training. Other mandatory courses relate to particular roles

in the procurement process including “Specification Writing and Selection of the Successful Contractor” and “Effective Contract Management”.

4.3 Respecting the rule of law.

- 4.3.1 The council’s constitution provides a comprehensive framework for the management of the authority’s business and ensures compliance with relevant laws, regulations, internal policies, codes of practice and procedures. The council is the statutory body for many laws and the range of policies and codes of practice we have in place help to ensure compliance. Policy review and development panels assist cabinet and council to ensure that compliance is considered where appropriate; report templates for those panels and for cabinet ensure all elements are given consideration at the time the report is presented. The statutory officers – Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 officer – are in post to monitor and ensure adherence.
- 4.3.2 Following the phased retirement of the previous postholder, [a new chief executive commenced on 1 September 2019](#). Lorraine Gore was previously the council’s Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Finance.
- 4.3.3 A [management restructuring and succession planning programme](#) was approved by Cabinet in June 2019 that would ultimately lead to a reduction in executive director posts from 4 to 2 and introduction of 8 Assistant Directors and 1 Assistant to the Chief Executive senior management posts.
- 4.2.4 [The council appointed a new Section 151 officer](#) who commenced on 2 March 2020. The external appointment is also the Assistant Director Resources and has responsibility for financial services, ICT, internal audit and revenues and benefits.
- 4.3.5 All initiatives undertaken, including those with financial elements, are either progressed due to being a statutory requirement or because it will contribute to a key aim of the council. All initiatives are reviewed by regular meetings of the [Management Team](#) and senior managers in order to ensure compliance and that spend is legal.
- 4.3.6 Statutory guidance is followed and tested through the [work programme](#) of [Internal Audit](#). The work programme is agreed by Management Team and reported to [Audit Committee](#). The council’s Audit Manager is shared with Fenland District Council but notice was received that the shared service could no longer continue. Following an exploration of options, Cabinet on 16 March 2021 agreed to become part of Eastern Internal Audit Services for the provision of Internal Audit Services, from 1 June 2021.
- 4.3.7 Widespread training for staff continued in 2019/20 to inform and support the council’s response to the [General Data Protection Regulation 2016](#) (GDPR). This included a compulsory e-learning module in autumn 2020.
- 4.3.8 Eastlaw and the Deputy Senior Information Risk Officer have worked with service managers to review the implications for their areas of responsibility to inform planning for any changes that may be required, helped identify data and records management issues and with completion of statutory registers including the Article 30 records of processing activities. An officer Information Governance Group was established in 2018/19 and continued in 2020/21 to support this corporate work.

- 4.3.9 A new compulsory Data Protection e-learning course was rolled out in 2020/21. The aim of this course was to provide all employees with an awareness of Data Protection and the key compliance obligations that the Council has as an organisation.
- 4.3.10 The [Record Retention and Disposal Policy](#) was reviewed in 2018/19 and approved by cabinet in March 2019 to ensure conformity with the GDPR, working practices and new UK legislation. An Information Risk Framework has also been embedded.
- 4.3.11 Job descriptions and person specifications refer to specific requirements to discharge duties regarding specific legislation.
- 4.3.12 The council is also compliant with CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (CIPFA, 2015).
- 4.3.13 The terms of reference for committees include relevant legislation and the support provided to committees helps to create the conditions whereby the council is able to fulfil its responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements.
- 4.3.14 Committee reports provide a record of advice provided by officers and are supplemented by specialist external reports where required.
- 4.3.15 Policies and procedures relating to anti-fraud and corruption are in place to ensure that these issues are identified and dealt with. Internal Audit include this within their assurance work and there have been no identified cases in 2020/21.
- 4.3.16 The following policies, strategies and governance documents were approved in 2020/21:

| Document | Approval | Date |
|---|----------|-------------------|
| Covid-19 Recovery Strategy | Cabinet | 30 June 2020 |
| Anti-Money Laundering Policy | Cabinet | 30 June 2020 |
| Community Infrastructure Levy proposed governance and spending arrangements | Cabinet | 19 August 2020 |
| Housing Delivery Test – Action Plan | Cabinet | 22 September 2020 |
| Climate Change Policy | Cabinet | 22 September 2020 |
| Statement of Licensing Policy | Cabinet | 17 November 2020 |
| Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22 | Cabinet | 5 January 2021 |
| Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework Update 2021 | Cabinet | 16 March 2021 |
| Creation of CIL Spending | Cabinet | 16 March 2021 |

- 4.3.16 The council remained 'Payment Card Industry (PCI) Compliant' in 2020/21; this is an increasingly important regulation in light of the council's move towards more digital services and the public's reduced use of cheques. Compliance is judged in two ways: via an on-site audit; and through quarterly scans on behalf of the banks to try to find any vulnerability.
- 4.3.17 Other arrangements are in place to ensure compliance with relevant policies and to ensure that expenditure is legal. One example is the ICT Development Group; a group which for the 2020/21 year consisted of the portfolio holder, a second cabinet member, the Executive Director and the ICT Manager. The group manages the ICT capital budgets, reviews all new proposed ICT developments and keeps up to date with pertinent legislation. Officers write a report to the group outlining their business case and decisions are taken on spend to ensure that it complies with the council's priorities. The group monitors project delivery and items are recorded via agendas and minutes.
- 4.3.18 There were 11 data breaches in 2020/21 (4 in 2018/19, 6 in 2019/20); all minor and therefore not reported to the [Information Commissioner's Office](#) (ICO). These were dealt with in accordance with the council's Data Protection Policy. The Information Commissioner has taken no action against the council.
- 4.3.19 Each service manager is required to submit an annual data quality sign off sheet.
- 4.3.20 An annual programme of internal audit is agreed with Management Team and approved by Audit Committee.
- 4.3.21 The list of Cabinet responsibilities was amended in November 2020 and the scheme of delegation was correspondingly revised.
- 4.3.22 Statutory guidance issued in May 2019 by MHCLG resulted in the development of a protocol to assist Panel Members of the Policy Review and Development Committees and the Cabinet by defining the relationship between the Executive and Scrutiny and the role of Cabinet Members in the Scrutiny process. The protocol was agreed by Cabinet in September 2020.
- 4.3.23 In September 2020, Cabinet agreed revised Standing Orders and Articles within the council's Constitution.
- 4.3.24 Following work undertaken by a CIL Governance and Spending Task Group and Regeneration and Development Panel, in August 2020, Cabinet agreed a scheme for allocating funds collected through the Community Infrastructure Levy and for a Spending Panel.
- 4.3.25 To reflect legislation enabling local authority meetings to be conducted remotely, Cabinet agreed amendments to Standing Orders in June 2020. This was in response to Covid-19.

5. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement (Principle 2).

5.1 Openness.

- 5.1.1 The council has an open culture demonstrated by its work on transparency, the leadership style of officers and members, the use of regular team briefings and supervision meetings, staff and member bulletins, an annual briefing on the budget and publication of information on the intranet and website.
- 5.1.2 Meetings are open to the public except where personal or confidential matters are being discussed. In addition, senior officers of the council can make decisions under delegated authority – the extent of these delegations is set out in the Constitution.
- 5.1.3 Key decisions are generally taken in an open environment and supported by concise officer reports supported by additional documents such as business cases, equality impact and risk assessments, prior scrutiny by policy review and development panels. A number of officer project boards have embraced programme and project management principles to structure decision making and project review. Examples include the Officer Major Projects Board and Leisure Project Board.
- 5.1.4 The Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Financial Accounts provide a form of annual report and these are considered in an open meeting of the [Audit Committee](#).
- 5.1.5 A wide range of information is available via the council's website. This includes a [Freedom of Information Act publication scheme](#). A wide variety of datasets are published within a "[transparency](#)" section and include data such as salaries, spending, grants, parking, assets and management information.
- 5.1.6 The "[MyAccount](#)" and "[MyRevenues](#)" online accounts enable customers to access their information and service requests via the council's website.
- 5.1.7 [Committee meetings](#) are timetabled a year ahead and have published agendas, minutes and reports which are available prior to the date of the meeting. These reports document the professional advice provided in reaching decisions.
- 5.1.8 Decision making protocols are set out in the Constitution.
- 5.1.9 A report pro-forma is used for reports to committees and to the internal Management Team.
- 5.1.10 Regular discussions between members and officers clarify the information needs of members to support decision making. The list of key decisions and committee work programmes provide further information on timescales.
- 5.1.11 The flow of information for committees is supported by a calendar of dates for submitting, publishing and distributing timely reports.

5.2 Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders.

- 5.2.1 The council works in partnership with a wide range of organisations to deliver its aims, policies and objectives. These include council owned companies, commercial partners, contractors, grant funded community groups, statutory consultees, regulators, commercial services, other public services, commercial tenants and so on.

- 5.2.2 The council has an active communications programme engaging with local media, residents and other stakeholders over a range of traditional and digital channels.
- 5.2.3 Work to develop a new internal communication strategy is ongoing.
- 5.2.4 A [Statement of Community Involvement](#) outlines how the council will involve the community on planning decisions. A stakeholder management plan is being developed for a strategic housing growth area in West Winch/North Runcton. A large number of organisations are involved in this strategic site via a new housing access road and the infrastructure development plan.
- 5.2.5 Engagement approaches are specifically designed for their purpose and audience rather than rigidly adhering to a standardised approach. A number of consultation activities engaged a wide variety of stakeholders in 2020/21 including:

| Consultation | Date | Purpose |
|---|--------------------|---|
| Invest West Norfolk Business Insight survey | June 2020 | To understand the challenges to businesses across west Norfolk, and what support they might need to respond to Covid-19. |
| Council Tax Support Scheme | Sept – Nov 2020 | To seek views upon the draft Council Tax Support Scheme for working age people. |
| Potential custom build opportunities | July 2020 | To gauge demand for a site in the west Norfolk village, Stoke Ferry. |
| Vision King's Lynn | June and Sept 2020 | To inform activities and improvements in King's Lynn town centre, including the Town Investment Plan. |
| Public Space Protection Orders | Aug 2020 | To inform three Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) which restrict alcohol consumption in areas of King's Lynn, Hunstanton and Downham Market. |
| King's Lynn Walking and Cycling Survey | Oct 2020 | To inform a plan that will make it easier for those on bike and foot to get around the area. |
| Business Impact Survey | Feb 2021 | To help the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk and other agencies focus their economic response and recovery efforts on current and emerging issues. |

- 5.2.6 The West Norfolk Wins Lottery has been running for three years with 64 local good causes and over 462 players participating every week. So far, since the first draw, £73,248 has been raised for good causes, and £30,902 for the Borough Council to utilise through its Financial Assistance Scheme, which is wholly used for local groups and organisations.
- 5.2.7 The Borough Council is a member of the Lotteries Council, the Gambling Commission and Gamble Aware. Gamble Aware funds research, prevention and treatment

services to help reduce gambling harm. Gatherwell are the administrator for West Norfolk Wins. Gatherwell has extensive experience in administering council lotteries, with over 80 councils as clients.

- 5.2.8 The Borough Council's Environment and Community Panel receives an annual update on the progress of the lottery, highlighting Council responsibilities as well as key data surrounding West Norfolk Wins.
- 5.2.9 [Norfolk Resilience Forum](#) (a group of public services, emergency services, utility companies, armed forces and key voluntary groups) has continued with its response to Covid-19 and monitoring the impact of EU transition and the Council has been an active contributor to the core groups and sub-groups.
- 5.2.10 The council participates in a range of joint working arrangements with other bodies. Some arrangements are formal, and are a way to deliver the council's duties and obligations or generate income, such as the shared audit management with Fenland District Council, strategic housing services with Breckland District Council, parking control in Great Yarmouth and the management of disabled facilities grants in Breckland and Fenland. These arrangements are subject to formal governance arrangements and include processes for reviewing the delivery of benefits, and, where performance is unsatisfactory, arrangements for termination.
- 5.2.11 The council, as a responsible authority³, is a member of [Norfolk Community Safety Partnership](#) with a district based multi-agency Operational Partnership Team and [Norfolk Community Safety Scrutiny Sub Panel](#).
- 5.2.12 District councils not only affect public health through their direct roles and functions but also through their power to influence other bodies such as county councils, the local NHS, and health and wellbeing boards. The council is a member of [Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board](#) and the related [Norfolk Health Overview Scrutiny Committee](#). At a more local level, the council coordinates a multi-agency group focused on increasing activity levels.
- 5.2.13 There are a range of county-wide collaborative partnerships that the council engages with. Examples include Norfolk Business Rates Pool, [Norfolk Arts Forum Executive](#), [Norfolk Coast Partnership Core Management Group](#), [Norfolk Joint Museums Committee](#), Norfolk Local Authority Tourism Group, [Norfolk Parking Partnership Joint Committee](#), [Norfolk Police and Crime Panel](#), [Norfolk Rail Policy Group](#), [Norfolk Records Committee](#), Norfolk Counter Fraud Hub, [Norfolk Waste Partnership](#) and the Norfolk Resilience Forum.
- 5.2.14 In regard to financial matters, the Norfolk Business Rates Pool successfully bid for a 75% business rate pilot over the financial year 2019/20. The local authority members actively contribute joint submissions to government consultations such as the fair funding settlement in order to represent the interests of the county and its constituent districts.
- 5.2.15 Considering waste management issues, the council was actively involved in a joint procurement for waste collection services with neighbouring councils in North Norfolk District Council and Breckland District Council. The Executive Director for Commercial Services was authorised to progress a joint procurement for the council's refuse and recycling contract. An internal officer group has been established to

³ Crime and Disorder Act 1998

support the transition process from the current to the new provider with the new arrangements operating from 1 April 2021.

- 5.2.16 Regarding spatial matters, the council contributed to the development of the [Norfolk Strategic Framework](#) which documents areas of agreement that the Norfolk local planning authorities had reached and which they would follow when they prepared their individual local plans. It had been prepared by an officer team drawn from all of the Norfolk authorities supported by others from organisations such as the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) (the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership had also endorsed it). The framework will help ensure that the council discharges its legal duty to co-operate with neighbouring authorities in relation to strategically important land use issues which cross administrative boundaries. The result of such co-operation is expected to be better planning outcomes.
- 5.2.17 Regeneration is a corporate priority and, given the Enterprise Zone and other regeneration interests, the council actively engages with the NALEP Steering Group.
- 5.2.18 In September 2019, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announced that 100 towns in England will benefit from the £3.6 billion Towns Fund. King's Lynn was one of the towns that will benefit from investment.
- 5.2.19 The establishment of a [Town Deal Board](#) is a requirement of the funding and is responsible for:
- developing and agree an evidence based Town Investment Plan
 - developing a clear programme of interventions
 - Coordinating resources and influencing stakeholders
- 5.2.20 There are also a number of partnerships and outside bodies at or within borough level which are independent from the council but have an impact on its service areas. In order that the council can maintain effective partnerships with a number of these organisations, representatives of the council, usually elected councillors, sit on the various committees and forums that are responsible for them. Examples include [West Norfolk and King's Lynn Girls School Trust](#), [West Norfolk Chamber of Commerce Council](#), [West Norfolk Community Transport Project](#) and [West Norfolk Tourism Forum Executive Forum](#). Oversight of these is a responsibility of the appropriate scrutiny panel.
- 5.2.21 Other partnerships are of a contractual nature, such as the delivery of leisure services via Alive Leisure Trust and a new provider, [Alive West Norfolk](#), from July 2019, procurement support to Boston Borough Council, delivery of the council's payroll processing or the Housing Strategy and Enabling Service that the council delivers for neighbouring Breckland District Council. Following Cabinet's agreement in February 2018, arrangements were embedded for the delivery of the notice processing for on and off street parking for Great Yarmouth and South Norfolk councils in addition to North Norfolk, Breckland and Broadland. These partnerships are also subject to formal governance arrangements, are reviewed regularly, deliver benefits to the council such as additional income, provide good value for money for the receiving organisation as the council maximises its own existing infrastructure, but are not delivering our own statutory obligations.

- 5.2.22 The council also continues to participate in an informal, collaborative partnership with local partners via the West Norfolk Partnership Strategy Group. The strategy group agrees priority issues which will benefit from a combined and coordinated response from partners. New terms of reference were implemented in April 2017 and have been adhered to during 2020/21.
- 5.2.23 The council has established 3 wholly owned companies which are detailed in section 12 of the Annual Governance Statement. Research has been undertaken in 2019/20 to identify approaches to enhance the governance of these companies including the concept of a shareholder committee, risk management and company director development. Following delays due to Covid 19, these will be progressed in 2021/22.
- 5.2.24 The council also had a partnership with Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services (NWES) following the award of the contract to build and operate KLIC. This partnership allowed for the loan of funds to support the development of the centre. The KLIC building came into council ownership following NWES default on the first loan repayment in 2018 which led to the council including an impairment on this asset in the financial statements. However, as income will be receivable over the lifetime of the asset, the impairment is negligible. NWES continued to manage the building until June 2020 at which time the council assumed responsibility.

5.3 *Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively.*

- 5.3.1 The Corporate Business Plan 2020-24 sets out the council's vision and provides the basis for investment, service planning and other decisions.
- 5.3.2 The plan refers to a range of intended outcomes and these are underpinned by strategies, service plans and the performance management framework and reported to overview and scrutiny panels.
- 5.3.3 The coronavirus pandemic began to impact upon the council from February 2020 and interrupted the business planning process. The council moved into a response mode for the remainder of the financial year and the corporate business plan was in stasis. As the council began to move out of response mode in summer 2020, [a Covid 19 recovery strategy](#) was developed with a focus for 12 months subject to a resurgence of the virus and emergency planning efforts.
- 5.3.4 During 2020/21 we consulted upon a range of significant issues such as town centre regeneration and these are summarised in section 5.2.5.
- 5.3.5 The findings from these exercises are being used to inform future planning and strategy development.
- 5.3.6 Impacts on equality are required for all reports and equality impact assessments are considered where required by the Equality Policy.
- 5.3.7 The council aims to ensure that it is open, honest and transparent, and to enhance inclusion by building on our understanding of customer needs and perceptions, through improved customer service and community engagement. This has informed our approach to digital transformation and thinking regarding digital exclusion and isolation evident in services such as [Care and Repair](#) and [Lily](#).
- 5.3.8 The council engages with local people and stakeholders in the following ways on a range of issues: surveys; roadshows; community events; on line feedback; interviews; public meetings / consultation; compliments / complaints procedure.

- 5.3.9 Members of the public are also able to [ask questions](#) on a topic or service within the council's control at full council meetings.
- 5.3.10 A [King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee](#) is in place, which is made up of the councillors for the un-parished area of King's Lynn and West Lynn. The committee's terms of reference state that the committee is to act as a consultative forum and to encourage community engagement. The committee meets 5-6 times a year to discuss and make recommendations on issues relating to the un-parished area of King's Lynn and West Lynn.
- 5.3.11 There is an expectation from the majority of parish councils in the borough for the relevant borough councillor(s) to attend most, if not all, of their meetings; this assists with maintaining effective communication with parish councils and therefore the communities that they serve.
- 5.3.12 The council uses a variety of corporate communication tools including a website, intranet site, a newsroom, newsletters, media releases and social media to communicate and engage with the community and staff. [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) are used effectively to update on service provision. Social media is used for specific campaigns such as Covid-19 and Census 2021, and the Town Hall has its own [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) accounts to help engage with potential customers and promote the venue. Results of all methods of communication are fed back into service delivery, ensuring accountability. The council also monitors feedback from residents and service users through compliments and complaints received.
- 5.3.13 During 2020/21, the council continued to be an active partner in the [Wash East Coastal Management Strategy Stakeholder Forum](#) and was leading plans to manage risk to Hunstanton's coastline and a [successful bid](#), in partnership with Fenland District Council, to the [Coastal Communities Fund](#). The forum includes a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations and consulted upon plans for managing a beach and addressing flood and coastal erosion risks. The council has contributed officer and financial resources to this activity.
- 5.3.15 During 2020/21 the council has complied with the requirements of the [Local Government Transparency Code 2015](#). The code makes it a legal requirement for local authorities to publish specified data by prescribed deadlines and thereafter annually. [The council publishes all specified data on its website](#), in the prescribed format, by the required deadline. This makes a direct line to the requirement to establish clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, ensuring accountability and encouraging open consultation.
- 5.3.16 [The Statement of Community Involvement](#) was approved by Council in June 2017 and continues to inform how the authority consults with the public as part of the local plan process, on planning applications, and also on neighbourhood plans.
- 5.3.17 Cabinet has a [protocol and terms of reference for four member champions](#) who act as an advocate or spokesperson for a specific area of the council's business. The main responsibility of each member champion is to encourage communication and positive action over the issue they represent. The council member champions are for disability, armed forces, heritage and coastal issues.
- 5.3.18 Fair access to services is informed by equality impact assessments on new policies and strategies and compliance with statutory guidance.

5.3.19 Our digital transformation work in 2020/21 resulted in:

- The successful launch of web chat, allowing Council Information Centre advisors to manage 'multiple' chats at the same time – 8,024 chats were completed in 2020/21 compared with 3,652 in 2019/20.
- Working closely with the Housing team to improve the digital services provided
- Fly-tipping form integration with IDOX Uniform, Open Process and Report-it, preventing repeat reports and updating multiple systems.

5.3.20 Customer feedback from contact with the Council Information Centre in 2020/21 indicated:

- 77% of customers think our digital services are excellent (66% in 2019/20)
- 99% were overall satisfied (97% in 2019/20)

6. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits (Principle 3).

6.1 Defining outcomes.

6.1.1 The Corporate Business Plan 2020-24 is used as the basis for corporate and service planning. The sets out the council's vision and provides the basis for investment, service planning and other decisions.

6.1.2 The [plan](#) outlines six priority aims, supported by 19 objectives in areas of key importance to the authority. The six priority aims within the plan are:

- Focusing on delivery
- Delivering growth in the economy and with local housing
- Protecting and enhancing the environment including tackling climate change
- Improving social mobility and inclusion
- Creating and maintaining good quality places that make a positive difference to people's lives
- Helping to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities

6.1.3 The Corporate Business Plan is aligned with the council's [Financial Plan](#) and both documents are available on our website in order to be clear and transparent to local people, service users and stakeholders. Updates are also provided for members, staff and the public and available on the council's website via committee agendas and on the intranet InSite.

6.1.4 The plan is underpinned by directorate and service plans and the performance management framework.

6.1.5 [A Covid-19 recovery strategy](#) was agreed in June 2020 setting out the immediate focus of the council's work.

6.1.6 The plan and related documents, such as the [Cultural Prospectus](#), set out intended impacts or changes for customers and other stakeholders. Progress against the plan was monitored quarterly by Management Team and reported to Corporate Performance Panel every 6 months. In response to Covid-19, a recovery strategy was developed with [an action plan](#) and a revised indicator suite reported to Corporate Performance Panel.

6.1.7 The plan is underpinned by a performance management framework that includes key performance indicators covering all of the directorates. These indicators and targets are reviewed annually. Progress trends are established and reported quarterly to the

overview and scrutiny panels and Management Team. Action plans are identified for under-performing indicators.

- 6.1.8 The council's Management Team, consisting of the Chief Executive and executive directors meet on a weekly basis to consider matters commensurate with the corporate business plan and emerging issues. It also considers internal control issues, including risk management, performance management, compliance, value for money and financial management. Management Team receive monthly reports which details movements across a range of key indicators including measures of local economic performance.
- 6.1.9 The [corporate risk register](#) is routinely updated and considers risks to the achievement of the corporate business plan. The risk reports to Management Team and Audit Committee detail actions relating to "high risks".
- 6.1.10 Budget reports are provided on the intranet for staff and members to view. All budget holders are involved in the budget setting process.

6.2 Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.

- 6.2.1 Decisions regarding capital investment consider the appropriate life spans of projects and the potential for adaptation for alternative use or that resources (such as council owned land) are used to optimise social, economic and environmental benefits. These considerations are evident in the capital programme and investment strategy and across the projects considered by the Officer Major Projects Board established in 2018/19.
- 6.2.2 Regular discussions between members and officers consider the information needs of members and senior managers to support decision making. Briefings, portfolio updates, sifting meetings and meetings between the Chief Executive and council leadership are examples of this dialogue.
- 6.2.3 Reports to committees and Management Team provide a record of decision making and related background information.
- 6.2.4 Using second homes council tax funding, the council engages with partners and schools to identify and undertake initiatives that seek to improve educational attainment and skills levels within the economy. Unfortunately, due to the closure of schools in response to Covid-19 and the ongoing impact of the pandemic on schools, this project has been significantly scaled back during 2020/21. A review of the priority needs in this area will be undertaken during 2021/22.

7. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes (Principle 4).

7.1 Determining interventions.

- 7.1.1 Portfolio holder discussions and stages within the decision making process, such as the preparation of committee reports, provide opportunities to shape objectives and robustly analyse options and associated risks.
- 7.1.2 Development of the financial plan draws together feedback from a range of sources such as service demand, local priorities, efficiency needs, new legislation and staffing to prioritise competing demands within the confines of a balanced budget.

- 7.1.3 Management Team generally meet on a weekly cycle and consider a wide range of strategic and operational issues related to the delivery of the corporate business plan.
- 7.1.4 Management Team have established programme boards to enable a greater focus on significant issues including the transition to a new delivery model for leisure services, major capital projects and its wholly owned companies.
- 7.1.5 The council's risk management framework requires that consideration of risk is embedded in all key management processes. These include aspects such as policy and decision making, service delivery planning, project and change management, contracts, budget management and partnership working.
- 7.1.6 The financial management of the council is conducted in accordance with the financial rules set out in the Constitution and Financial Regulations. The council has in place a Medium Term Financial Plan, updated annually, to support the aims of the Corporate Business Plan.
- 7.1.7 [Contract Standing Orders](#) were refreshed in January 2020 to ensure that the Council's purchasing and disposal procedures continue to reflect best practice in order to obtain best value and to guard against corruption, discrimination and breaches of public procurement regulations.
- 7.1.8 All budget lines are allocated to a named budget officer who is responsible for controlling spend against that budget, and who is also responsible for assets used in the provision of their service. Containing spending within budget is a high priority in the performance management framework for individual managers.
- 7.1.9 The council's contract management strategy emphasises that operational managers are responsible for contract management. Job descriptions for senior managers contain relevant responsibilities and appropriate training and development has been provided.
- 7.1.10 Corporate contract management support is provided by the procurement team who also actively manage a number of centralised contracts. These include: fixed wire testing; lift maintenance; boiler maintenance; air con maintenance; archive storage; external printing; drains and gutter clearing; fire alarms and emergency lighting maintenance.
- 7.1.11 The general approach is to hold regular review meetings with the contractors and invite sites/managers to provide feedback and/or attend the meetings.

7.2 *Planning interventions.*

- 7.2.1 A number of measures help to create robust planning and control cycles. These include calendars for developing and submitting plans and reports, the performance and risk management frameworks, corporate policy guidance and equality impact assessments.
- 7.2.2 Internal and external stakeholders are involved in determining how services should be planned and delivered. This is typified by internal working groups, project teams and boards, consultation on major developments and the formulation of new strategies.

- 7.2.3 Performance measures are identified within performance appraisals, service and directorate plans and strategies. Key performance indicators are identified by service managers, directors and portfolio holders and provide the basis of quarterly reports to overview and scrutiny panels.
- 7.2.4 The quarterly reports considered by the overview and scrutiny panels provide a direction of travel, an indication of variation against target and under-performing indicators have a mitigation plan. The panels can request follow up work such as briefings and written responses on matters within their remit.
- 7.2.5 The medium term financial plan is aligned with the corporate business plan. The cost reduction plan indicates how budget reductions are identified and managed. Annual budget setting guidance is issued to service managers to inform service planning. Monthly budget monitoring reports provide an indication of progress.
- 7.2.6 Project management approaches are used by project boards demonstrated by the use of project teams, project briefs, business cases and option appraisals and post project evaluation.

7.3 *Optimising achievement of intended outcomes.*

- 7.3.1 Over recent years, the council has adopted an approach of seeking efficiencies and different ways of delivering services to produce savings. The savings achieved have been the result of considerable change and transformation. In October 2016 the council published an [efficiency plan](#) in order to fix a four-year financial settlement from the government and work continues within all directorates to produce the changes required to deliver the savings identified, before 2020/21. Executive directors and all service managers are directly involved in monitoring the work being completed and savings achieved are reported in the monthly budget monitoring reports and quarterly reports to Management Team. Where savings are achieved in advance of 2020/21 these are transferred to reserves to fund investment in major capital projects which will provide future revenue income.
- 7.3.2 The council's shift towards digital services progressed well during 2020/21 with improved take up of My Account, use of online integrated forms and the online help function. The Revenues and Benefits customer portal 'MyRevenues' allows customers to self-serve via the council's website, accessing real time data about their council tax, business rates accounts and benefit claims. This has continued to be popular during 2020/2021 particularly with the impact of covid-19. Online Revenues and Benefits forms with direct integration into the back office systems are also available for customers to complete. These are key parts of the channel shift programme and provide the foundation for much of the work planned in this area over the remaining life of the Corporate Business Plan. The website is fully responsive and works well across a wide range of devices such as tablets and mobile phones. Feedback received on the change and how the change was managed was positive from both external customers and internal staff.
- 7.3.3 The total number of MyRevenues users has increased by 65% during 2020/2021 to 13,313 users. High levels of take up demonstrate the ease of use and benefit that being able to access information and complete forms at a time convenient to the customer has enabled. Many Revenues and Benefit forms integrate directly with our

back office system and further work in 2019/20 will be completed to integrate revenues and environmental health forms into the respective back office systems.

- 7.3.4 The council continues to encourage take up of digital services by providing assisted self-service facilities supported by staff at the King's Court offices.
- 7.3.5 The council's financial ledger underpinning its internal system of financial control was retendered in 2018/19 with implementation ongoing into 2019/20 and 2020/21. This is supported by a framework of regular management information, financial regulations, administrative procedures, management supervision and a system of delegation and accountability. Development and maintenance of the ledger software is undertaken by the council's financial services team. In particular, the system includes:
- Comprehensive budgeting systems;
 - Measurement of financial and other performance against targets;
 - Regular reviews of periodic and annual financial reports, which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and targets;
 - Clearly defined capital expenditure guidelines;
- 7.3.6 Financial management processes and procedures are set out in the council's financial regulations and include:
- Financial management processes and procedures
 - Financial planning including budgeting and budget monitoring
 - Risk management and control, including asset management and treasury management
 - Systems and procedures
 - External arrangements including council owned companies, service level agreements and partnerships
- 7.3.7 The council seeks to provide the maximum benefit for its communities from every taxpayer pound that is spent. This is assisted by the procurement strategy and via our regeneration role through which we take responsibility for generating economic, environmental and social growth for our local communities.
- 7.3.8 Contract Standing Orders encourage services to consider social value particularly in respect to contracts over the EU threshold. In larger contracts, the council includes social value issues such as 'use of local apprenticeships' and 'use of local sub-contractors' as award criteria. We will continue this practice and look for ways of increasing the social value obtained from our contracts.
- 7.3.9 The council engages with the voluntary, community, social enterprise (VCSE) sector usually through the route of grants, other financial support and through the West Norfolk Wins lottery. We have relatively few contracts that would be suitable for VCSE providers but we will continue to look for opportunities for this sector and encourage local organisations and groups to compete when appropriate. Currently, the council's Information and Advice Services contract is held by two VCSEs, and these contracts will remain in place until 2022, and then may be subject to a new tender process.
- 7.3.10 The procurement team use methods such as brief tender documentation, early identification of potential local suppliers, encouraging local businesses to sign up

to online alerts for local contract opportunities and provision of briefings for SMEs on the procurement process.

8. Developing the council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it (Principle 5).

8.1 *Developing the council's capacity.*

- 8.1.1 The council aims to ensure that its members and officers have the skills, knowledge and capacity they need to discharge their responsibilities and recognises the value of well trained and competent people in effective service delivery. The online corporate induction course is available for all new members and staff to familiarise themselves with protocols, procedures, values and aims of the council and is regularly reviewed.
- 8.1.2 An established member training and development programme, including an induction process and regular updates throughout the year. Specific training is also provided to members who sit on regulatory committees, and they are unable to take up a position on these committees without having first received the relevant training.
- 8.1.3 Regular reviews of activities, services and strategies are undertaken. These may be within the service, utilising Internal Audit or Policy and Personnel, incorporate lean management principles or external consultants. The Cost Reduction Plan is focused on identifying and realising efficiency savings across the organisation.
- 8.1.4 Reviews often draw upon benchmarking information and research into practice at other local authorities to inform option development.
- 8.1.5 The council recognises that it alone cannot necessarily impact on outcomes and collaborates with partners. West Norfolk Partnership typifies this with its work on promoting the reputation of the borough.
- 8.1.6 Other examples of benefits from partnership working are evident in waste management, parking enforcement, community safety, cultural and regeneration activities, strategic housing and the response to Covid-19.
- 8.1.7 All posts have a detailed job description and person specification. Training needs are identified through team meetings, 1:1s and annual appraisals and addressed via Personnel and/or individual services as appropriate. A performance related pay system provides an incentive to perform well.
- 8.1.8 There were signs of capacity challenges related to additional pressures on functions such as communications, planning, regeneration, property and legal services. These related to additional demands from the Covid-19 response and recovery activities, customer activity, increasing governance activities, staff turnover and related recruitment challenges.

8.2 *Developing the capability of the council's leadership and other individuals.*

- 8.2.1 The annual appraisal process provides an opportunity to review job descriptions and the capability of employees. The absence management procedure informs capability and capacity considerations.

- 8.2.2 Regular dialogue between the chief executive and council leadership helps to maintain a shared understanding of future direction and progress. Robust governance is informed by regular meetings between the three statutory officers. The council's senior managers and portfolio holders have been with the council for many years and that harmonious relationship has helped to build a strong foundation for broader leadership of the organisation.
- 8.2.3 The scheme of delegation is periodically reviewed and typically triggered by legal and organisational changes such as restructures.
- 8.2.4 Standing orders and financial regulations are reviewed periodically.
- 8.2.5 The respective roles and responsibilities of members and senior officers provide a check and balance.
- 8.2.6 The capabilities of members and senior officers are supported by development activities to enable the organisation to respond to the changing operating environment. This is typified by induction programmes, access to briefings and training events on new legislation and government policy, personal development plans for officers and networking opportunities.
- 8.2.7 For example, for members this may include the ability to:
- scrutinise and challenge
 - recognise when outside expert advice is required
 - promote trust
 - work in partnership
 - lead the organisation
 - act as a community leader
- 8.2.8 Other examples of activities to enhance capability include:
- Using efficient systems and technology to provide effective support e.g. roll out of Office 365 and as part of the Covid 19 response - Microsoft Teams, Zoom and YouTube.
 - Telephony via the Microsoft Teams software
 - Arrangements for succession planning.
 - Reviewing individual member performance on a regular basis taking account of their attendance and considering any training or development needs
 - Staff development plans linked to appraisals
 - Implementing appropriate human resource policies and ensuring that they are working effectively e.g. trial of absence management approach.
- 8.2.9 The Constitution sets out how the council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures to be followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. This defines, amongst other things the roles of the Council, Cabinet, how scrutiny and overview is undertaken, the Scheme of Delegation, and the roles and responsibilities of officers and members. The different elements of the Constitution are subject to periodic change either through national legislation or local decision. For example, at Council on 14th June 2018, a review of key decision levels was approved which raised the threshold to £0.5m from £0.25m.
- 8.2.10 Within the Constitution, full council sets the overall budget and policy framework of the council, while the cabinet makes decisions within this framework, and is held to

account by the overview and scrutiny arrangements. Meetings are open to the public except where exempt or confidential matters are being disclosed. In addition, senior officers of the council can make decisions under delegated authority. The council publishes a Forward Decision List which contains details of key decisions to be made by the council, its bodies and executive directors under their delegated powers.

- 8.2.11 A comprehensive programme of learning and development is provided for officers and members. Learning and development needs for staff are identified through the performance management process and in response to organisation and service level needs and these are translated into an annual training programme. Examples would include performance management training for managers, training on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 for senior officers, event management training and briefings on the council's Incident Response Plan. This programme has largely been on hold during 2020/21 due to Covid-19 but priority training has continued to be delivered.
- 8.2.12 The council has a commitment to management training and delivers a range of development activities to support managers at all levels, including specific training to support the development of service managers. Following the success of a second cohort of managers who completed a Level 7 management programme in the summer of 2018 a new Level 5 management programme commenced in May 2019. Additional development sessions are delivered to ensure senior managers are kept up to date on current issues on an ongoing basis. Plans for further management training during 2020/21 were put on hold due to the pandemic but will be recommenced once the council has progressed to an appropriate stage of its recovery plan.
- 8.2.13 Senior officers also participate in relevant sessions relating to changing technical requirements to ensure the up to date position is known and to feed in to relevant central government departments at appropriate times; examples are attendance at major projects development meetings, meetings with ministers and their civil servants on programmes and policy development and various Covid-19 meetings under the Norfolk Resilience Forum.
- 8.2.14 Member development needs are identified through use of a questionnaire following their election, and are also identified during the year as matters arise at meetings and questions of training needs arise. Particular emphasis and significant additional support has been given to ICT training for councillors during the 2020/21 year to continue to support the digital agenda and virtual meetings. Feedback forms following any training undertaken continue to be used to develop training in areas where further needs have been identified.
- 8.2.15 The policy review and development panels regularly receive updates on relevant topics as part of their agenda, particularly around any new or current initiatives, and training is run throughout the year as identified. Topics for updates or training are identified either by officers or members and help to ensure members are better informed and have input at an early stage. The Audit Committee has received specific briefings / training throughout the year.
- 8.2.16 The council values the health and wellbeing of its workforce. This is underpinned by its Health, Safety and Welfare Policy and supported by staffing changes that will bring a greater focus on health and wellbeing within the council. There is a positive

relationship with the recognised trade unions and an active staff social club. Prior to Covid-19 there have been a number of major community events ([GEAR](#) and [Fawkes in the Walks](#)) throughout the year which are assisted by staff volunteers and sponsorship.

9. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management (Principle 6).

9.1 *Managing risk.*

- 9.1.1 We recognise that everyone has a role in managing risk which is proportionate to their role. The corporate risk register is periodically reviewed with updates reported to Management Team and Audit Committee.
- 9.1.2 The risk management policy and strategy had a scheduled refresh that was informed by an Internal Audit review which rated the current arrangements as “substantial”. The updated policy and strategy were developed with Audit Committee and approved by Cabinet in March 2019. The updated approach was rolled out in 2019/20 and the Audit Committee received training on risk management on 27 July 2020.
- 9.1.3 All committee reports contain a section on risk.
- 9.1.4 Business continuity is a key risk and an Incident Response Plan was developed by the Business Continuity Corporate Officer Group to support the council’s response to incidents. This was rolled out corporately via briefings to a wide range of senior officers.
- 9.1.5 Relevant officers participated in a number of business continuity/emergency planning multi-agency events considering King’s Lynn port, cyber security and the no deal Brexit scenario.
- 9.1.6 The Covid-19 pandemic moved the council into a business continuity /emergency planning mode with gold and silver groups established and bronze plans implemented. The council formed part of the Norfolk Resilience Forum’s incident response throughout 2020/21 where the local and national focus has moved between response and recovery as the pandemic continued to impact on the country.
- 9.1.7 Following concerns arising from a late loan repayment, the council commissioned Internal Audit to review its arrangements with the recipient, NWES. A lesson learnt report was considered by Audit Committee in March 2019 and was considered at a special Council meeting in April 2019. These arrangements have continued to be a focus of Audit Committee during 2020/21.
- 9.1.8 At its meeting on 11 March 2019 the Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk’s (Council) Audit Committee set up a Cross Party Working Group (CPWG), following extensive work carried out by its Internal Audit officers, to examine all aspects of the project to create the King’s Lynn Innovation Centre (KLIC). Cabinet considered the report which set out the report of the Audit Working Group. Cabinet was presented with the report of the working group and the minutes of the Audit Committee on 10 February 2020 when it received the report.
- 9.1.9 The report made by the following recommendations:

- Notwithstanding the requirements of the Major Projects Boards, all major projects should have a designated Project Manager of sufficient seniority in the Council's hierarchy to make appropriate decisions
- In the event that a major project involves a third party in order to bring it to fruition the Chief Executive Officer or appropriate Assistant Director should oversee the project's management
- If a loan is granted or investment made under any statutory power that in ordinary circumstances would fall within the Treasury Management Procedures it should be governed by those Procedures, especially as regards to the 3 principal elements, i.e. risk/security, liquidity and return
- Any joint venture with a third party must undergo rigorous examination before being entered into to ensure as far as reasonably practicable the third party's financial viability for a period exceeding the life of the project
- If a loan is entered into with a third party that does not fulfil the Council's requirements for creditworthiness such a loan must be secured on a tangible asset wholly owned by the third party that is not otherwise secured elsewhere
- Each and every project involving a third party should be included in the Council's Risk Register following a risk assessment
- The loans to NWES should immediately be either reinstated to the half yearly reports on Treasury Management to Audit Committee or be reported on separately to Audit Committee at a shorter frequency
- All legal documents should be signed off before funds are released.

9.1.10 An [independent inquiry](#) was established by Cabinet in June 2019 to consider the partnership with Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services (NWES) and its subsidiaries and associated companies and those with common shareholders or directors, regarding the award of and administration of the KLIC project and all aspects of its (their) financial relationship with the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. The [findings](#) were considered by Special Audit Committee meeting on 10 February 2020 and Cabinet on 17 March 2020 Cabinet on 20 June 2020.

9.1.11 A [Major Projects Member Board](#) was established by Cabinet in June 2019 to provide assurance that the council's major projects programme is run in accordance with the Major Projects (Officer) Board Terms of Reference.

9.1.12 The council's internal audit team have developed a fraud risk register to monitor fraud risks across the council and review them to establish mitigations in place and improvements required in conjunction with standard internal control testing.

9.2 Managing performance.

9.2.1 The council has an effective Performance Management Framework, which is driven by the corporate business plan. Performance targets and actions are cascaded through directorate, service, team meetings and 1:1s. The Performance Management Framework was reviewed in 2016 and, following the May 2019 elections was refreshed to align with the new corporate business plan and recovery strategy.

9.2.2 The council has a performance management framework which describes how the authority measures and monitors the performance of its activities and is available on the council's website.

9.2.3 Through reviews by external auditors, external agencies, Internal Audit, and the Policy and Performance Team, the council seeks ways of ensuring the economical, effective and efficient use of resources and for securing continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised for example a senior management review was undertaken during 2019/20 with the new structure effective from January 2020.

9.3 Robust internal control.

- 9.3.1 All committees have clear terms of reference and work programmes to set out their roles and responsibilities The Audit Committee meet throughout the year to provide independent assurance to the Council and considers the reports and recommendations of internal and external audit and inspection agencies and their implications for governance, and risk management or control, and supports effective relationships between external audit and internal audit, inspection agencies and other relevant bodies, and encourages the active promotion of the value of the audit process and review the financial statements.
- 9.3.2 The committee considers the internal and external auditor's opinion and reports to members, and monitors management action in response to the issues raised by internal and external audit. These arrangements ensure that the council has processes and procedures in place to ensure that an it fulfils its overall purpose, achieves its intended outcomes for service users and operates in an economical, effective, efficient and ethical manner, as prescribed in the CIPFA/the role of the head of internal audit statement.
- 9.3.3 A data quality assessment takes place at year end supported by checks through the year.
- 9.3.4 There is an agreed programme of Internal Audit reviews through the year. With reports approved by lead managers/directors and a summary provided to Audit Committee.
- 9.3.5 The Council complies with the [Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption](#) (CIPFA, 2014). There is an Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy, Whistleblowing Policy, and Fraud Response Plan. The council investigates fraud relating to Council Tax and Business Rates payments, Council Tax Support, as well as other types of fraud identified across the authority. Responsibility for investigating housing benefit fraud transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions in 2015 and a referral system is in place between the council and the DWP if housing benefit fraud is suspected.
- 9.3.6 The Annual Governance Statement is developed corporately involving service managers across the council, the senior Management Team and Audit Committee in its drafting.
- 9.3.7 An effective internal audit service is resourced and maintained with the Internal Audit Manager shared with neighbouring Fenland District Council who contributes learning from the two authorities and professional networks.
- 9.3.8 The Audit Committee complies with best practice set out in "[Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police](#) (CIPFA, 2018)". There is a clear terms of reference which is periodically reviewed. The committee members meet at least 6 times per year. Members receive a number of training sessions throughout the

year and in 2019/20 covered internal audit, annual accounts and the capital programme. There are regular attendances from a range of senior officers including the Assistant Director - Resources (Section 151 officer and the lead officer for the committee), the Chief Executive and the Internal Audit Manager and the appointed external auditor. Other attendees include the Monitoring Officer.

- 9.3.9 During 2018/19, the council began to explore ways to enhance the oversight of its wholly owned companies initially drawing upon notable practice from the LGA, white papers published by legal/accountancy companies and research into practices at other authorities. This work continued into 2019/20 and, whilst delayed by Covid 19, will ultimately strengthen oversight of company performance and business plans together with the development of council appointed directors supported by the procurement of specialist external advice and training.
- 9.3.10 Effective arrangements are in place for the discharge of the Monitoring Officer, Head of Paid Service and Section 151 roles. There are periodic meetings of the 3 statutory officers to consider governance issues.
- 9.3.11 The council's Monitoring Officer is responsible for ensuring compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations. After consulting with the Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer will report to full council if it is considered that any proposal, decision or omission would give rise to unlawfulness or maladministration.
- 9.3.12 The Chief Executive is the council's Head of Paid Service and has overall responsibility for the management and co-ordination of the employees appointed by the council. The Chief Executive is required to report to the council as appropriate with regard to the way in which the different functions of the council are co-ordinated, the number and grades of staff required for the discharge of these functions, the way in which these people are organised and managed and the way in which they are appointed.
- 9.3.13 Following the phased retirement of the Chief Executive a new Chief Executive was appointed on 1 September 2019.
- 9.3.14 The council has a corporate complaints procedure in place, available on the council website. The council also deals with any incidents of racial complaints, or complaints relating to a disability, in a similar but separate process. The complaints received are analysed and results presented to the Corporate Performance Panel on an annual basis.

9.4 *Managing data.*

- 9.4.1 With the introduction of GDPR in 2018, the council strengthened its governance regarding data management framework and procedures. There is a designated data protection officer, a senior information risk owner (SIRO) and deputy SIRO. A range of information asset owners and administrators have also been identified.
- 9.4.2 The data protection policy was updated in 2018. Given national concerns regarding the impact of EU transition upon data sharing an audit was undertaken of ICT systems and data sharing arrangements. There were no significant issues identified although this continues to be monitored as the EU's data adequacy judgement is time limited.

- 9.4.3 Corporate training for GDPR was provided in 2019/20 and informed the corporate preparation of privacy notices, records of processing activity and the review of the authority's document retention and disposal policy.
- 9.4.4 A new Data Protection e-learning course was launched in Autumn 2020 and was compulsory for all staff to complete.

9.5 *Strong public financial management.*

- 9.5.1 Financial management supports the delivery of services and transformational change as well as securing good stewardship of the council's resources.
- 9.5.2 The CIPFA statement describes the roles and responsibilities of the chief financial officer, who is bound by both professional standards and also legislative responsibilities, with a fiduciary duty to the local taxpayer.
- 9.5.3 The council's arrangements fully comply with the principles described: the current chief financial officer was recruited in March 2020 and is the Assistant Director of Resources and reports to an Executive Director.
- 9.5.4 Budget monitoring reports are provided and published on the intranet for all staff and councillors to view. An annual budget briefing is provided by the Assistant Director Resources and open to all staff.
- 9.5.5 The development of the revenue and capital budget, medium term financial strategy and treasury management strategy all engage members and are reported to Audit Committee and Cabinet. As per 9.1.3 for managing risk, all committee reports contain a section on financial implications for consideration.
- 9.5.6 The council had a cost reduction programme which was monitored on a quarterly basis by Management Team and covers a range of service areas. The programme extends to 2021/22 however the Covid 19 response has affected the monitoring and realisation of planned savings.

10. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit, to deliver effective accountability (Principle 7).

10.1 *Implementing good practice in transparency.*

- 10.1.1 Committee meetings are open to the public except where sensitive or confidential matters are being discussed. Appropriate reports are available for the public to review on the council's website and reference the contact details of the key officers and members.
- 10.1.2 Internal Audit is an independent and objective service to the management of the council and undertakes a programme of reviews throughout the year to provide an annual opinion on the framework of governance. Significant weaknesses in the control environment are reported to senior management and the Audit Committee by the Internal Audit Manager as part of the regular reporting process. Outstanding audit recommendations are discussed at senior management meetings and Audit Committee, and issues with addressing the urgent recommendations are also discussed at Management Team. Audit recommendations are generally implemented by the agreed date but some may slip or recommendations are overtaken by unforeseen events leading to revised dates.

- 10.1.3 The council has a Code of Corporate Governance in place, which sets out how the authority intends to apply the principles of corporate governance, in accordance with CIPFA/SOLACE guidance. The code includes a chart to demonstrate the different parts of the framework and reflects the council's current processes and procedures. The code will be reviewed every three years to reflect any changes in the council's governance framework and/or any revised guidance. The three statutory officers will meet quarterly to review high risk projects and identified issues.
- 10.1.4 Progress towards achieving the aims outlined in the council's former Corporate Business Plan was monitored through the [Corporate Business Plan Monitoring Report](#) which was collated quarterly during 2019/20. Updates at the end of quarters 2 and 4 were taken to the Corporate Performance Panel for review and progress checking. As part of collating and reviewing the monitoring report, the council's senior management team consider and review the aims, actions underway and progress made. The governance arrangements in place for the year under review were appropriate for delivery of our aims. Performance monitoring of the Covid-19 recovery strategy has included a suite of monthly indicators that are reported to Corporate Performance Panel.
- 10.1.5 The website, intranet, communications function, published datasets and social media channels all contribute towards being a transparent organisation. Members of the public are able to raise questions at council meetings in addition to raising matters directly with services, senior officers and councillors. Policies are in place for responding to requests made under access to information regulations including the Data Protection Act 2018, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and via the corporate complaints system.

10.2 Implementing good practices in reporting.

10.2.1 A wide range of information is reported publicly including:

| Information | Purpose | Frequency |
|--|---|---|
| Annual financial statements | To indicate how financial resources have been used. | Annually with more frequent budget monitoring reports. |
| Appropriate approvals | To provide a record of decisions made. | As and when decisions are made. |
| Records of decisions made under delegated powers | To provide a record of decisions made. | As and when decisions are made. |
| Procurement and spending | To provide a record of expenditure and organisations in receipt of council funding. | Quarterly records of payments to suppliers over £500. Quarterly reports for Tenders, Contracts and Purchase Orders |
| Performance against | To provide a record of | Reported quarterly to |

| Information | Purpose | Frequency |
|--|--|---|
| key performance indicators | progress made by the council in the delivery of its objectives. | Corporate Performance Panel. |
| Lessons learnt reports | To provide a record of learning activities and areas for improvement. | As and when required from projects. |
| Annual governance statement which follows the best practice recommended by CIPFA/Solace. | To provide a view on how the council has complied with its Code of Corporate Governance. | Annually with drafts considered by Audit Committee and Management Team. |
| Risk management updates | To provide a record of major risks facing the council and how it is responding to them. | 6 monthly updates considered by Audit Committee and Management Team. |
| Agendas, minutes and reports | To provide a record of decisions and information used to reach those decisions. | In line with meeting schedules. |

10.2.2 Attention is given to the way in which these documents are written so that they provide the necessary information to meet transparency requirements and support scrutiny without being too onerous to produce and for readers to understand.

10.3 Assurance and effective accountability.

10.3.1 The Internal Audit process helps to drive improvement. An example of this includes the review of the council's risk management policy and strategy which was developed via Audit Committee.

10.3.2 The council complies with CIPFA's [Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit](#) and with [Public Sector Internal Audit Standards](#).

10.3.3 Effective management is based on a framework of regular management information, financial regulations, standing orders and a structure of varying levels of responsibility, including arrangements for delegating decision making. The council has all these elements in place, including those which meet '[The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014](#)', and we regularly review these to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose. The Constitution was revised during 2020/21 to reflect a new protocol for scrutiny and the executive and the use of virtual meetings. There is a protocol for recording and broadcasting of meetings. Decisions are made in open, public meetings, or via the various delegation arrangements in place and all adhere to the policy position in place – for example, planning decisions are taken with regard to the adopted Local Plan and all other relevant guidance.

10.3.4 The council works in partnership at many different levels. Continued participation is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective. Decision making in partnerships is governed by the structure outlined within the appropriate constitution. As in one

example, the [Norfolk Coast Partnership](#) (a formal partnership with Great Yarmouth Borough Council, North Norfolk District Council, DEFRA and Norfolk County Council) there is a 'Memorandum of Agreement' that outlines how decisions will be made within the partnership.

- 10.3.5 A [Memorandum of Agreement](#) for the [Wash & North Norfolk Marine Partnership](#), brings together the interests, skills and resources of 21 local authorities, environmental interest groups and national agencies to address matters of mutual interest in and around the Wash is under development.
- 10.3.6 During the 2020/21 year, the council worked in partnership with other public sector organisations in Norfolk in the '[One Public Estate](#)' programme running across the county following a successful 2016 bid for funding towards feasibility work. Formal governance for the partnership is outlined within the 'Norfolk Partnership Services & Assets Delivery Plan' document.
- 10.3.7 The council is working with Homes England and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on the Accelerated Construction programme.
- 10.3.8 The council has a [Data Quality Policy and Strategy](#) in place and available on its website. Having this in place indicates that the council understands the importance of data quality and is committed to being consistent in its management of data quality within the organisation and in partnership with others. It also means that the council ensures that the data produced adheres to the 7 principles of data quality. The policy was reviewed, and the strategy was refreshed during the 2018/19 year.
- 10.3.9 Following a review of the council's scrutiny function by the Centre for Public Scrutiny in 2015, the cross party Scrutiny Structures and Policy Development Task Group made recommendations to panels, Cabinet and Council on the Scrutiny and Policy Development Structure. The Task Group reconvened in August 2017 to review the revised operation and structures. The Task Group's proposals were considered by the policy and review panels and were approved by Cabinet in January 2018. Implementation of the changes continued into 2018/19. These changes included:
- the attendance of Audit Committee members for training becoming obligatory as it is for Planning and Licensing initial training.
 - Panels being encouraged to use the powers available to them and therefore making clear recommendations on items coming before them so they can be incorporated into reports in the progress of being prepared or taken into account at Cabinet.
 - Panels considering their own performance indicators and being encouraged to monitor the progress in line with the corporate objectives through that route.
 - when working on policy development and reviews and project programme work, Panels being encouraged to have discussions with portfolio holders.
 - the Leader nominating the panel/committee chairs for agreement at Council with the vice-chairs to be appointed by the panels/committee.
 - terms of reference being approved for chairs of scrutiny bodies.
- 10.3.10 The role referred to by CIPFA as the Head of Internal Audit has a critical role in delivering the organisation's strategic aims by championing best practice in governance, objectively assessing the adequacy of governance and

management of existing risks, commenting on responses to emerging risks and proposed developments; and giving an objective and evidence based opinion on all aspects of governance, risk management and internal control. The Internal Audit Manager has direct access to the Audit Committee. The arrangements in place for 2020/21 conformed to the requirements outlined in the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit.

- 10.3.11 During 2020/21, the shared arrangement with Fenland District Council to manage the Internal Audit team continued and is underpinned by a Section 113 agreement. These arrangements were entered into in order to provide a cost saving to the borough council, whilst at the same time continuing to provide an effective internal audit function through a different model of delivery. The arrangement enabled the shared Internal Audit Manager to provide the assurance required by management and members and issue an Audit Opinion for the Annual Governance Statement. For 2021/22, new arrangements will be established following Fenland's termination of the shared arrangement.
- 10.3.12 The council's external auditor during 2020/21 was EY.
- 10.3.13 From April 2016, the council has had a standalone Audit Committee in place providing increased opportunity for effective assurance about the adequacy of financial and operational management and reporting.
- 10.3.14 Training has been provided during 2020/21 to the members of the Audit Committee in key areas. Examples include risk management and the annual accounts.
- 10.3.15 Each year, a review is undertaken of [the effectiveness of the Audit Committee](#). For the year covered by this statement, the review was presented to the Audit Committee on 16 June 2021. The review concluded that the committee is continuing to perform effectively and the council is meeting its requirements under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
- 10.3.16 Commercialisation has introduced a new set of risks for the council. These impact upon local authority owned companies and investments.
- 10.3.17 The council has a number of wholly owned companies and appoints company directors. Work to review the governance framework in which these companies operate commenced in 2019/20 and will be supported by external specialist advice and training to be tendered in 2021.
- 10.3.18 During 2018/19, two investigations regarding the King's Lynn Innovation Centre have resulted in the identification of learning regarding due diligence processes. An Internal Audit lessons learnt review was commissioned and reported to Audit Committee in March 2019.
- 10.3.19 Following a special Council meeting in March 2019 an independent inquiry was established into the partnership with Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services (NWES) and its subsidiaries and associated companies and those with common shareholders or directors, regarding the award of and administration of the [KLIC](#) project and all aspects of its (their) financial relationship with the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.
- 10.3.20 An Audit Committee Task Group considered the future composition and operation of the Major Projects Officer Board, the Major Projects Progress overview and

other lessons learnt from the 'KLIC Lessons Learnt Review'. This work continued into 2020/21.

- 10.3.21 A follow up review of the KLIC Lessons Learnt review was completed by Internal Audit during 2020-21. The follow up review was very positive with 34 of the 35 recommendations being completed. Considerable progress has been made in how the council manages its major projects and all aspects of risk, control and governance has improved over the last two years.
- 10.3.22 A Major Projects Member Board was established in 2019/20 to provide additional oversight of the operation of the Major Projects Officer Board. The Board met on 31 July 2020 with other scheduled meetings affected by Covid-19.

11. Review of effectiveness

- 11.1 The council has a responsibility to review the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of Internal Audit and the senior managers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Internal Audit Manager's annual report, the Monitoring Officer's annual report and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates, where undertaken.
- 11.2 The process of maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control includes the following measures and actions:
- the work of senior managers within the council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of governance.
 - the Internal Audit work programme.
 - comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.
 - systems and controls within the council as outlined above.
- 11.3 In-year and year-end review processes have taken place. In year review mechanisms include:
- Cabinet and the Corporate Performance Panel are responsible for considering overall financial performance and receives reports on a regular basis. It is also responsible for key decisions and for initiating corrective action in relation to risk and internal control issues.
 - The Monitoring Officer has a duty to monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure its aims and principles are given full effect. The council reviews the Constitution regularly to incorporate any necessary changes.
 - The Standards Committee have met regularly throughout the year to consider and review issues relating to the conduct of Members.
 - The Audit Committee has oversight of the activities of the council's internal and external audit functions. Members of the Audit Committee are provided with copies of all reports produced by Internal Audit and the external auditors, and also receive regular reports on matters relating to finance, fraud investigation and risk management.

- The committee approves the annual plans for the Internal and External Auditors and receives regular progress reports throughout the year.
 - The Audit Manager submits to the committee an annual report and opinion, and the external auditors submit an annual audit letter.
 - The Audit Manager has included an audit opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's systems of internal control in the annual report and opinion on work completed during 2020/21 which was considered by Audit Committee on 16 June 2021. The report states in the Audit Manager's opinion, that:
 - Adequate assurance can be gained in respect of the overall systems of internal control operating within the council.
 - Risk management systems and corporate governance arrangements are satisfactory.
 - The Audit Manager has also completed a review of the effectiveness of the Audit Committee itself and concluded that the committee is performing effectively and the council is meeting its requirements under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
 - During 2020/21, Internal Audit has issued nine internal audit reports. There were no instances of 'limited' or 'no assurance' reports being issued.
- 11.4 The council's external auditors review the activities of the authority, approve the annual accounts and certify grant claims (where required). Conclusions and significant issues arising are detailed in various reports from the auditors. The external audits of the accounts are delayed. The audit of Statement of Accounts for 2018/19 has been completed and work will continue to bring the backlog of audits up to date. The AGS in respect of each year shall be updated alongside the financial statements in line with timetables as agreed with external auditors and published alongside the Statement of Accounts.
- 11.5 A member/officer protocol is in place and forms part of the council's constitution.
- Additionally, it is the responsibility of the statutory officers to report to council on any issues concerning the review of the effectiveness of internal control arrangements.
- 11.6 To summarise this section: a review of the council's overall governance arrangements for the 2020/21 year has been undertaken; the review highlighted no issues affecting governance or internal control during the year. Arrangements outlined in sections 4 to 10 are in place and operating as planned.

12. Areas of special interest in terms of governance

12.1 Leisure arrangements – [Alive West Norfolk](#)

- 12.1.1 The council's leisure and arts facilities had been operated and managed through an independent trust and wholly owned local authority company since 1 September 2014. A review undertaken in 2018/19 led to a decision being taken at a special Cabinet meeting on 17 October 2018 to move to a new delivery model in 2019/20. A wholly owned council company (Alive West Norfolk) has been established that is responsible for the delivery of leisure services across the borough. An officer project board supported the transition with the new model operational from 1 July 2019.

12.2 Legal arrangements

12.2.1 The council's legal service continues to be delivered via a delegated agreement on an annual, rolling basis, with [Eastlaw](#) (the in-house legal team at North Norfolk District Council). The agreement is designed to provide resilient and quality legal services to the borough council and includes provision of a Monitoring Officer; one of the council's designated statutory posts. Eastlaw provide the client role for commissioned legal services, as well as providing general advice and support for processing Freedom of Information Act 2000 requests and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016.

12.3 West Norfolk Housing Company Limited (WNHC) (Company number 10368299)

12.3.1 In August 2016, Cabinet resolved⁴ to set up a wholly owned local authority company the main purpose of which is to help meet the council's statutory housing duties, by holding property that will be purchased and / or leased from the council in order to create and provide affordable housing. The company became a registered provider of social housing in 2018. It operates on a not for profit basis. The council has appointed members and officers to serve as company directors. The company reports to Cabinet.

12.3.2 WNHC is helping to secure investment in new affordable homes in the borough to meet identified need. Broad Street is an ambitious scheme that has transformed underused office space in King's Lynn town centre into temporary accommodation for couples and families who are, or have been, threatened with being homeless opened in 2018/19. The accommodation is managed by Broadland Housing Association.

12.3.3 During 2019/20 the company acquired a number of properties via Section 106 arrangements which were subsequently leased. Additional shared ownership properties were transferred to the company portfolio.

12.4 West Norfolk Property Limited (Company number 11305604)

12.4.1 The 2017 Annual Governance Statement set out governance arrangements for this vehicle to hold new private rented sector stock in the borough. The company, limited by shares, operates primarily to generate new revenue from housing stock developed and held on sites developed by the council. The council has appointed members and officers to serve as company directors. The company reports to Cabinet. A Business Plan and Intra Group Agreement were previously agreed by Cabinet in June 2018. Following agreement of [Cabinet in January 2019](#), the company articles were amended.

12.5 West Norfolk Wins (local lottery)

12.5.1 The first lottery draw for West Norfolk Wins took place on 26 May 2018. The introduction of a local lottery requires two licences approved by the Gambling Commission. Norfolk Community Foundation provide an independent due diligence review of the approval of good causes.

12.5.2 The Borough Council is a member of the Lotteries Council, the Gambling Commission and Gamble Aware. Gamble Aware funds research, prevention and

⁴ 2 August 2016

treatment services to help reduce gambling harm. Gatherwell are the administrator for West Norfolk Wins and have extensive experience in administering council lotteries. The Gambling Commission also requires the council to undertake an annual independent security audit.

12.6 Officer Major Projects Board

12.6.1 The council has a range of projects that are identified within the approved capital programme. In addition to this, there is a multitude of other projects that are being worked on by a variety of officers. To support the management of the council's property projects, an officer board has been established. The board includes executive directors and officers involved in capital funded property projects. The monthly board meetings consider project briefs, business cases, project progress, risk and reports to Management Team.

12.6.2 Following the publication of the Internal Audit report "KLIC Lessons Learnt" in March 2019, the Officer Major Projects Board established a reporting mechanism to enable the Audit Committee to monitor major projects and identify any steps or action required. A programme of reviewing each of the current large scale projects will also be undertaken.

12.7 King's Lynn Town Deal Board

12.7.1 The council's role is to organise the Board, and make the governance and decision making structures of the [Town Deal Board public](#). The Government has set out specific requirements about who the Board must include. They are:

- all tiers of local government
- upper-tier authorities
- the MP (or MPs)
- local businesses and investors
- communities
- Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)
- Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)
- Jobcentre Plus

12.7.2 It must also include representation from some wider community bodies, such as:

- universities and further education
- hospitals
- local sports team
- cultural and creative institutions

13. Known changes in the 2020/21 year

13.1 Embedding the new risk management framework

Roll out briefings on the revised risk management framework. Align risk register with new corporate business plan and prepare 6 monthly risk updates to Management Team and Audit Committee.

13.2 Governance framework for the council's companies

Review the governance framework of the council's wholly owned companies and provide company director training for directors appointed to its companies.

- 13.3 To embed arrangements for record management and processing
Assurance work regarding GDPR.
- 13.4 Assurance work regarding the Annual Governance Statement
To implement the Internal Audit review of the council's approach to develop the annual governance statement.
- 13.5 Review of the performance management framework
Review the performance management framework to ensure it is aligned with the new corporate business plan and Covid 19 recovery strategy.
- 13.6 Embedding of the new financial ledger
To embed the new financial ledger software's operational processes.
- 13.7 Policy outlining approaches to the council's housing regulatory function
To publish an overarching policy document that brings together and updates where appropriate, a collection of existing policies and approaches formulated over time.
Delayed by Covid response and staff absences.
- 13.8 Joint waste contract implementation
To implement a joint waste collection service in collaboration with Breckland and North Norfolk district councils.
- 13.9 Preventing Fraud and Corruption
To support joint working with Department of Work and Pensions and participate in the Norfolk Counter Fraud Hub.
- 13.10 KLIC Lessons Learnt Report
To implement recommendations.
- 13.11 Member development needs
Delivery of member induction programme and identification of development needs.
- 13.12 English Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper
To consider the Government's white paper anticipated in Autumn 2020 and implications for the council's governance.
- 13.13 Review of the Norfolk Museum Service SLA
To undertake a review of the service level agreement.

14. Covid-19 response

- 14.1 The Covid-19 pandemic required the council to act swiftly to support the local community and protect the safety of its staff, councillors, customers. The first wave in late 2019/20 had minimal impact on the governance arrangements and the council

was able to take any necessary action in March 2020 using existing budgets and procedures including invoking emergency response and business continuity arrangements.

- 14.2 However, the ongoing and scale of the subsequent response to later waves and national measures in 2020/21 resulted in a rapid move to virtual meetings, increased flexible working arrangements, redeployment of staff, reductions in some services due to social distancing, related Covid 19 safe working practices and national guidance, the furloughing of staff within key service providers, additional support for the homeless and rough sleepers and little scope for policy development.
- 14.3 Alongside partners on the Norfolk Resilience Forum, every effort has been made to maintain a business as usual approach and to maintain the delivery of key services to residents. During the required lockdown period, the council was able to consider urgent matters and decisions through its urgent decision procedure rules and arrangements. Legislative changes have enabled remote meetings and the council responded quickly and effectively to this with meetings recommencing following the Government's announcement and all committees were operational. The majority of staff were required to work from home, where possible, which has proven to have worked effectively, with no significant disruption to critical services or information security breaches. Other teams, such as those in enforcement, were refocused to support the provision of Covid-19 safe activities across the borough.
- 14.3 The response also required the development of new functions involving the processing of new Government grants and rate reliefs to businesses and support services for vulnerable residents. The Financial Service team's workload, for example, has increased as a result of Covid 19, and alongside this the council has successfully:
- Administered the new government Covid discounts reducing nearly 1,200 business rates bill to nil
 - Paid 3,334 Small Business and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants totaling £38.650m
 - Paid 130 Discretionary Grant applications totaling £951k
 - Paid nearly 11,000 mandatory and discretionary Local Restrictions Support Grants and lockdown payments totaling just over £21million
 - Paid 45 Christmas Support payments totaling £45,000 to wet-led pubs to support them over the Christmas 2020 period
 - Paid 225 £500 payments to support low income residents who have had to self-isolate as they have tested positive for Covid-19, or are a close contact of someone who has tested positive,
 - Implemented government changes to housing benefit, increasing the incomes of over 1,600 residents
 - Awarded £470k in additional discretionary Council Tax Reduction payments
 - adapted more than 500 Council Tax payment arrangements to the customers' needs
- 14.4 A new, temporary cabinet portfolio holder for emergency planning was appointed in March 2020 to specifically support the council's Covid 19 response.

- 14.5 The council has continued to keep residents and other stakeholders advised of developments or assistance that is available through the website or via social media, which included collaboration with community and voluntary sector organisations to support our most vulnerable residents at this time with food, medication, befriending and general advice and support, and via the New Anglia LEP to help support businesses.
- 14.5 It is anticipated that Covid 19 will continue to have significant impacts upon the authority in 2021/22 and will require a review of corporate priorities and the Covid-19 recovery strategy, the financial plan, working practices and subject to legislation the operation of virtual meetings.
- 14.6 As referred to in 8.1.8 there were signs that the response to Covid-19 and ongoing recovery activities were creating capacity challenges and these pressures were faced by the sector as a whole.
- 14.7 To offset the additional financial pressures being faced by Local Government, the Government has provided the following support:
- Additional grant funding - funding has been provided in five tranches during 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22
 - Sales, fees and charges scheme - compensation for reductions in income in 2020/21 and the first three months of 2021/22
 - Council Tax and Business Rates Losses - to fund 75% of irrecoverable losses in council tax and business rates
 - Local Council Tax Support Grant - a new grant for 2021/22 to compensate authorities for the expected additional cost of Local Council Tax Support schemes in 2021/2
 - National Leisure Recovery Scheme - to support leisure facilities It is unclear at this stage whether this funding will be sufficient to offset all of the financial pressures and Local Government continues to lobby for further funding to be made available
- 14.8 Despite the breadth and pace of the response, Covid 19 has not led to any significant weakness in the Council underlying governance arrangements in 2020/21.
- 14.9 It is essential that the Council focuses on the likely impact that the crisis, and its aftermath, will have on income levels both now and potentially into the future. The council is aware of issues that could affect its financial position such as reduced income streams arising from commercial investments, properties and services, delays and arrears in payments for chargeable services and ongoing Covid 19 related additional costs such as PPE, sanitising materials and reduced income due to limitations on the use of buildings. The Council is working with political leaders, local MPs and council networks to continue lobbying the government to minimise the impact for the borough financially and the impact to our community.

15. EU Transition

- 15.1 Following the exit of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020, the UK and the EU entered a transition period for the negotiation of the future relationship. This transition period ended on 31 December 2020 and a trade deal was reached. The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020 but has benefited from continued membership of the single market and customs union over the last year. The end of the transition period has brought about widespread changes for British

businesses and citizens, as a new chapter in the country's relationship with its neighbours begins. The Norfolk Resilience Forum operated an EU Exit Group to concentrate on relevant preparations represented by the council's Brexit Lead Officer.

- 15.2 Whilst there has been no legal cliff edge in January 2020 as most EU rules and laws have or will be converted into UK law, there are other changes for councils including new responsibilities for regulatory services, possible changes in data governance and proposals for new UK migration rules which have a bearing on staff recruitment processes. The Cabinet Office has also taken the opportunity of EU Exit to review EU procurement law and is seeking greater local flexibilities in these processes. In line with Government guidance the council, working with the Norfolk Resilience Forum, has provided information about the EU Settlement Scheme for EU citizens living in the area.
- 15.3 Work has been undertaken at a national level to ensure a legal framework is in place to regulate businesses in respect of the supply of food and consumer goods. The council's Environmental Health Officers remain conversant with legal changes to support local business and ensure compliance. An additional burden will fall to the Environmental Health – Commercial team. For example, officers are required to issue Export Health Certificates to allow shellfish exporters to sell consignments export to the EU.
- 15.4 Public Procurement Rules Reforms are being undertaken by the Government Cabinet Office with the aim to establish a new, more simplistic, UK procurement law based on Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) as set by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The UK public sector remains and will continue to remain under any new UK procurement law, bound by the GPA.

16. Action Plans

- 16.1 In the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20, an action plan for 2020/21 was set out to deal with governance issues identified during the review for that year and is attached at Appendix A.
- 16.2 The action plan for 2021/22 is attached at Appendix B.

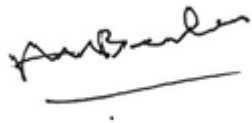
17. Assurance summary

- 17.1 From the review undertaken, the assessment and ongoing monitoring work completed⁵ and supported by the verification work undertaken by Internal Audit, we have reached the opinion that key systems are operating soundly and that there are no fundamental weaknesses.
- 17.2 No system of internal control could provide absolute assurances against material misstatement or loss; this statement is intended to provide reasonable assurance. We are satisfied that an on-going process for identifying, evaluating and managing key risks exists. These risks are reflected in the audit plan, the Corporate Risk Register and are the subject of separate reports during the course of the year.
- 17.3 We propose over the coming year to take steps to address matters identified to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that the steps outlined at Appendix B will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review

⁵ By the Audit Committee during 2019/20

of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed:

Handwritten signature of Alistair Beales in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

Cllr Alistair Beales
Leader of the Council
Date: 13.09.24

Handwritten signature of Lorraine Gore in blue ink.

Lorraine Gore
Chief Executive
Date: 13.09.24

Appendix A - Action plan for the 2020/21 year

| Item | | Action | Responsible Officer | Target Date | Update – October 2022 |
|------|--|---|---|--------------|---|
| 1 | Embedding the new risk management framework. | Roll out briefings on the revised risk management framework. 6 monthly risk updates to Management Team and Audit Committee. | Assistant to the Chief Executive | March 2021 | Delayed by Covid -19 response. Reviews now being undertaken 3 times per year. Latest review scheduled to be reported to Audit Committee in November 2022. |
| 2 | Governance framework for the council's wholly owned companies. | Review the governance framework of the council's wholly owned companies. | Chief Executive | March 2021 | Tendering exercise undertaken in summer 2021. Report received from Anthony Collins Solicitors July 2022 and under consideration by Cabinet. Review was delayed pending publication of relevant guidance by CIPFA in May 2022. |
| 3 | Assurance work regarding GDPR. | To embed arrangements for record management and processing. | Chief Executive | March 2021 | Creation and publication of the data breach incident form and a Quick Guide on handling information requests during July 2020. E-learning staff training modules on Data Protection were also rolled out on the Learning Hub during the year. |
| 4 | Assurance work regarding the Annual Governance Statement. | To support the Internal Audit review of the council's approach to developing the annual governance statement. | Assistant to the Chief Executive | March 2021 | The AGS incorporates recommendations and advice from Internal Audit and Audit Committee and the document for 2021/22 has been reduced in size. |
| 5 | Training for the council's appointed directors on the role and responsibilities of a company director. | To provide company director training for directors appointed to its companies. | Chief Executive | March 2021 | Training covered within the tender but implementation of this delayed pending the outcome of the review. |
| 6 | Update address gazetteer. | To ensure the address gazetteer is update in preparation for Census 2021. | Assistant Director – Environment & Planning | January 2021 | GeoPlace provided the ONS with address data for all LAs and we didn't receive any queries from ONS in relation to our address data as part of the Census 2021 process. |
| 7 | Review of the performance management framework. | Review the performance management framework to ensure it is aligned with the new corporate business plan. | Assistant to the Chief Executive | March 2021 | The approval of a Covid-19 recovery strategy was accompanied by a new suite of monthly performance indicators that were reported to Corporate Performance Panel on a quarterly basis. |

| Item | | Action | Responsible Officer | Target Date | Update – October 2022 |
|------|---|--|--|-------------|---|
| 8 | Implementation and embedding of the new financial ledger. | To implement and embed the operational processes of the new financial ledger software. | Assistant Director - Resources | March 2021 | The new financial system went live in April 2020 just as the initial Covid restrictions were put in place. A number of issues emerged on the system which took time and resource to resolve. Training has been focussed on specific areas and is now being more widely delivered (with a training development programme being devised and modules to support it). Other system development work is being considered as part of an improvement plan. |
| 9 | Digital exclusion strategy/policy. | Develop a digital exclusion policy/strategy. | Executive Director | March 2021 | The Covid-19 response resulted in a delay of all new policy development. |
| 10 | Develop revised media protocols. | To develop revised social media protocols. | Assistant Director – Central Services | March 2021 | The Covid-19 response resulted in a delay of all new policy development. Rescheduled to December 2023 to link with the review of practices after the forthcoming borough elections. |
| 11 | Public Services Network (PSN) compliance | Ensure PSN compliance during 2020/21 including progressing any actions identified as a result of the 2019 audit. | Assistant Director - Resources | March 2021 | The Public Services Network is currently being reviewed and we are awaiting the outcome of any revisions from the Cabinet Office. In the meantime, we will continue to undertake ICT health checks / security penetration tests. |
| 12 | Policy outlining approaches to the council's housing regulatory function. | To develop a policy that outlines the council's approach to regulation with its housing functions. | Chief Executive | March 2021 | This work was postponed, relevant procedural and guidance documentation in existence for individual service areas across the organisation. The aim was to publish an overarching policy document that brings together and updates where appropriate, a collection of existing policies and approaches formulated over time. However what is in place currently meets requirements. |
| 13 | Implementation of new waste collection service. | To implement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joint waste collection service in collaboration with Breckland and North Norfolk district councils. • A food waste treatment service. • A garden waste treatment | Assistant Director – Operations and Commercial | March 2021 | Food waste processing contract – this contract is delivering the required services fully to the expectations of the contract. Garden waste Processing Contract – this contract is fully meeting the standards of delivery required to |

| Item | | Action | Responsible Officer | Target Date | Update – October 2022 |
|------|---|--|--------------------------------|-------------|--|
| | | service. | | | <p>meet the expectations of the specification</p> <p>Waste and related services contract – this contract is higher risk classification with main functional elements being delivered. There is very limited evidence of the delivery of value added optional items which are predicated by offers from the contractor at the time of the bid. The three councils continue to pursue the full delivery of the contract benefits.</p> |
| 14 | Norfolk Fraud Hub | To support joint working with DWP and participate in the Norfolk Counter Fraud Hub. | Assistant Director - Resources | March 2021 | <p>Some FraudHub members are currently having difficulties in resourcing fraud areas. The lead sponsor, Norfolk County Council, has recently agreed to a further 2 financial years funding of the FraudHub. However, there has been no recent meeting held with the Norfolk FraudHub Steering Group. This is due to the impact from the pandemic and other workstreams continuing as a result of it. Funding has been agreed through the lead sponsor to continue with the Single Person Discount (SPD) review project for the current financial year 2022/2023.</p> <p>DWP joint working has now resumed following the Covid-19 pandemic and the redeployment of many of the DWP investigation Team. Contact has recently been received on a case for joint working purposes.</p> |
| 15 | Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance. | To respond to issues identified during the 2019 PCI audit. | Assistant Director - Resources | March 2021 | All issues identified by the 2019 audit were resolved and have been signed off by the assessor. |
| 16 | Audit Committee Task Group regarding major projects and KLIC lessons learnt | To support the Audit Committee Task Group with its work regarding the Major Projects Board and 'KLIC Lessons Learnt Review'. | Chief Executive | March 2021 | Both a Member Major Project Board (MMPB) and Officer Major Project Board (OMPB) established following the KLIC Lessons Learnt Review. |

| Item | | Action | Responsible Officer | Target Date | Update – October 2022 |
|------|---|--|--|-------------|---|
| | review | | | | |
| 17 | Equalities training programme | Development of a training programme to support the equalities policy. | Assistant Director – Central Services | March 2021 | The Covid-19 response resulted in a delay of all new policy development. Programme development and delivery rescheduled to March 2023. |
| 18 | Review the council's governance model | To review and examine alternative governance models to the current Strong Leader and Cabinet Model | Chief Executive | March 2021 | The Covid-19 response resulted in a delay of all new policy development. |
| 19 | English Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper | To consider the white paper on English Devolution and Local Recovery. | Chief Executive | March 2021 | The White Paper was revised and The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill was published on 11 May 2022. Two bids submitted for Levelling Up funding for the geographic borough; one by BCKLWN and another by Norfolk County Council. |
| 20 | Service level agreements | To review service level agreements covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alive West Norfolk • EastLaw | Assistant to the Chief Executive | March 2021 | This work was delayed, decision taken to follow the principles of the previous leisure arrangement service level agreements in the interim. |
| | | To review service level agreements covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norfolk Museum Service | Assistant Director - Regeneration, Housing and Place | March 2021 | Aspects reviewed but not the SLA in the round – needs to be completed and included in the AGS action plan for 2022/23. |

Appendix B - Action plan for the 2021/22 year

| Item | | Action | Responsible Officer | Target Date | Update – September 2022 |
|------|---|--|--|---------------|--|
| 1 | Internal Audit | Agreement with Eastern Internal Audit Services for the provision of Internal Audit Services | Assistant Director - Resources | June 2021 | Interim arrangement in place until final agreement signed in November 2021. New arrangements implemented and working well. |
| 2 | Waste contract monitoring systems | Implementation of new systems related to: Waste collection contract Garden waste contract | Waste & Recycling Manager | Mar 2022 | April 2022 updated software system for waste management became live and is working as expected. |
| 3 | Care and Repair contract monitoring systems | Implementation of new systems relating to Care and Repair contract | Assistant Director – | Mar 2022 | Process developed and includes a performance measure for each contract. New monitoring role created to support the system administration and to be recruited to in autumn 2022. |
| 4 | High Street Heritage Action Zone | High Street Heritage Action Zone, HAZ Project officer recruitment and programme management | Assistant Director – Regeneration, Housing and Place | Mar 2022 | High Street HAZ programme did not proceed as Heritage England withdrew the funding offer. The HAZ programme is in the process of being formally closed. |
| 5 | Housing Delivery Test – Action Plan | Implementation of actions falling within 2021/22 | Assistant Director - Environment & Planning | Mar 2022 | The latest HDT was formally announced in January 2022, and was passed (96%), therefore no further action was required. |
| 6 | Community Infrastructure Levy | 12 month review of Community Infrastructure Levy proposed governance and spending arrangements | Assistant Director - Environment & Planning | November 2022 | Revised governance arrangements were agreed by Cabinet on 2 August 2022 and will be implemented for future applications in 2023. |
| 7 | Public Services Network (PSN) compliance | Ensure PSN compliance during 2021/22 including progressing any actions identified as a result of the 2020 audit. | Assistant Director - Resources | March 2022 | PSN compliance across Local Authorities is being reviewed by Central Government currently. However, we still retain the major element of an ICT health check and are in the process of bringing in National Cyber Security Centre approved CHECK assessors for 2022. |
| 8 | Governance framework for the council's companies. | Review the governance framework of the council's wholly owned companies. | Chief Executive | March 2022 | Report received from Anthony Collins Solicitors July 2022 and under consideration by Cabinet. Review was delayed pending publication of relevant guidance by CIPFA in May 2022. Listed on the Forward Plan for Oct 2022. |

| Item | | Action | Responsible Officer | Target Date | Update – September 2022 |
|------|--|---|----------------------------------|-------------|--|
| 9 | Training for the council's appointed directors on the role and responsibilities of a company director. | To provide company director training for directors appointed to its companies. | Chief Executive | March 2021 | See line 8 above. Will follow from Cabinet's decisions. |
| 10 | Assurance work regarding the Annual Governance Statement. | To support the Internal Audit review of the council's approach to developing the annual governance statement. | Assistant to the Chief Executive | March 2022 | Ongoing. Amendments made to the AGS for 2021 and 2022. |
| 11 | Embedding of the new financial ledger. | To implement and embed the operational processes of the new financial ledger software. | Assistant Director - Resources | March 2022 | The new financial system went live in April 2020 just as the initial Covid restrictions were put in place. A number of issues emerged on the system which took time and resource to resolve. Training has been focussed on specific areas and is now being more widely delivered (with a training development programme being devised and modules to support it). Other system development work is being considered as part of an improvement plan. |
| 12 | Norfolk Fraud Hub | To support joint working with DWP and participate in the Norfolk Counter Fraud Hub. | Assistant Director - Resources | March 2022 | <p>Some FraudHub members are currently having difficulties in resourcing fraud areas. The lead sponsor, Norfolk County Council, has recently agreed to a further 2 financial years funding of the FraudHub. However, there has been no recent meeting held with the Norfolk FraudHub Steering Group. This is due to the impact from the pandemic and other workstreams continuing as a result of it. Funding has been agreed through the lead sponsor to continue with the Single Person Discount (SPD) review project for the current financial year 2022/2023.</p> <p>DWP joint working has now resumed following the Covid-19 pandemic and the redeployment of many of the DWP investigation Team. Contact has recently been received on a case for joint working purposes.</p> |
| 13 | English Devolution and Local Recovery | To consider the white paper on English Devolution and Local | Chief Executive | March 2022 | White Paper revised and The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill was published on 11 May 2022. Two |

| Item | | Action | Responsible Officer | Target Date | Update – September 2022 |
|------|----------------------------------|--|--|-------------|---|
| | White Paper | Recovery. | | | bids submitted for Levelling Up funding for the geographic borough; one by BCKLWN and another by Norfolk County Council. |
| 14 | Develop revised media protocols. | To develop revised social media protocols. | Assistant Director – Central Services | March 2022 | Rescheduled to December 2023 to link with the review of practices after the forthcoming borough elections. |
| 15 | Equalities training programme | Development of a training programme to support the equalities policy. | Assistant Director – Central Services | March 2022 | Programme development and delivery rescheduled to March 2023. |
| 16 | Service level agreements | To review service level agreements covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alive West Norfolk • EastLaw | Assistant to the Chief Executive | March 2021 | This work was delayed, decision taken to follow the principles of the previous leisure arrangement service level agreements in the interim. |
| | | To review service level agreements covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norfolk Museum Service | Assistant Director - Regeneration, Housing and Place | March 2021 | Aspects reviewed but not the SLA in the round – needs to be completed and included in the AGS action plan for 2022/23. |

Appendix C - Corporate Governance has been weaved through all functions of the Council including but not limited to those listed in this table.

| Policies, Strategies, Rules & Codes | Processes and Frameworks | Key documents | Functions |
|--|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy • Capital Strategy • Code of Conduct • Computer usage policy • Constitution • Data Quality Strategy • Efficiency Plan • Employment rules • Equality policy • Financial Plan • Financial procedure rules and standing orders (within Constitution) • Financial regulations • Health and Safety Policy • ICT policies • Information Governance Policies • Medium Term Financial Strategy • Member/Officer protocol • Members' allowances scheme (Constitution) • Members' code of conduct (Constitution) • Officers' code of conduct (Constitution) • Pay policy statement • Procedure rules (contracts, employment, meetings) (Constitution) • Procurement regulations • Procurement strategy • Protocol on member / officer relations (Constitution) • Prudential Code • Risk Management Strategy • Safeguarding Policy • Scheme of Delegation (within Constitution) • Statement of Community Involvement • Travelling abroad with Council devices policy • Terms of reference for task groups • Treasury Management Policy statement • Whistleblowing policy • Workforce learning and development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking • Budget consultation • Budget process • Business continuity framework • Car Park Management • Civil Parking Enforcement • Competency frameworks • Complaints process • Corporate Business Plan • Customer Care Standards • Customer feedback process • Environment policy • Environmental Statement • EQIA policies • Equality Monitoring • Extended Managers Meetings • Health and Safety policy • Induction process (member and officer) • Internal Audit Strategic Plan • Job evaluation process • Legal Services • Managing performance (people) framework (including appraisal process) • Meeting timetable • Member allowances publication • Member training • MRF Partnership Care & Repair • MT/Union meetings • Officer membership of professional bodies • Performance Management (business) framework • PRP targets • Risk management process • Scrutiny framework (Constitution) • Senior Staff Salary publication • Staff Briefing • Training for chairmen and vice-chairmen | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agendas & Minutes • Alive Trust/Management • Annual audit letters • Annual Directorate Plans • Annual Governance Statement • Assurance Statements • CCTV Operating Manual • CNC Building Control • Committee reports, agendas and minutes • Complaints reports • Consultation register • Corporate Risk Register • Council tax booklet • Council website • Delegation Agreement & SLA • Employee Handbook • Enforcement Policy • External inspection / review reports • Harassment Procedure • Internal Affairs • Intranet • JNC terms & conditions • Job descriptions/specs • Key decisions (within Constitution) • Law & governance • Local Plan • Members Bulletin • Neighbourhood Development Plans • Publication Scheme (FOI) • Quarterly Performance Reports • Record of decisions • Register of interests • Report templates • Salary scales • Senior management remuneration report • Service level agreements • Service plans • Standard timetable for circulation of agendas • Statement of Accounts • Statement of Internal Control (part of AGS) • Timetable of council meetings • Training programmes • Transparency publications • West Norfolk Partnership • Workforce development and Plans • Working Protocol | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit Committee • Community Information Points • Democratic Services • External audit (and other reviews) • Finance service • Functions and responsibilities of senior officers and councillors (within Constitution) • Head of Paid Service • Health and Safety Officer • ICT Development Group • Independent remuneration panel • Internal Audit • Local Government Ombudsman (report) • Management Team • Member Major Projects Board • Monitoring Officer • Monitoring Officer report • Officer Major Projects Board • Policy Development and Review Panels • Policy, Performance and Personnel Services • PR/Communication • S151 officer • Social media • Standards Committee • Statutory reports • Terms of reference for committees (Constitution) • Website • Weekly CEO/Leader meetings |

Appendix D – Governance is also embedded in our Joint , Contracted in and/or out Partnership Working. The list of such Partners are contained in this table.

Partnerships/joint working

- College of West Anglia via Lynnsport
- Improving Educational Attainment Steering Group
- King's Lynn Area Consultative Committee
- Kings Lynn Business Improvement District
- Lily
- New Anglia LEP
- Norfolk Arts Forum Executive
- Norfolk Business Rates Pool
- Norfolk Climate Change Partnership
- Norfolk Coast Partnership Management Group
- Norfolk Community Safety Partnership
- Norfolk Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Panel
- Norfolk Counter Fraud Hub
- Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board
- Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Norfolk IHAT strategy group (Integrated Housing Adaptations Team)
- Norfolk Joint Museums and Archaeology Committee
- Norfolk Local Authority Tourism Group
- Norfolk Parking Partnership
- Norfolk Parking Partnership Joint Committee
- Norfolk Police and Crime Panel
- Norfolk Rail Policy Group
- Norfolk Records Committee
- Norfolk Resilience Forum
- Norfolk Waste Enforcement Group
- Norfolk Waste Partnership
- Norfolk Serious and Organised Crime Group
- Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership
- North Norfolk and Breckland district councils – waste and recycling contract procurement
- Operational Partnership Team (community safety)
- Wash East Coastal Management Strategy Stakeholder Forum
- West Norfolk and King's Lynn Girls School Trust
- West Norfolk Chamber of Commerce Council
- West Norfolk Community Transport Project
- West Norfolk Partnership
- West Norfolk Tourism Forum

Wholly owned council companies

- Alive West Norfolk
- West Norfolk Housing Company Limited
- West Norfolk Property Limited

Contracted out services

- Alive West Norfolk - Leisure, culture and sports development services
- Bedford Borough Council – Payroll processing
- Eastlaw – Legal services
- Gatherwell Limited - West Norfolk Wins lottery
- Serco - Waste and recycling collection
- Lovell Partnerships Ltd - Major Housing Contract
- 17 contractors - Care and Repair aids and adaptations work
- Herefordshire Housing Ltd - Careline alarm monitoring contract (expired March 2021)
- Lifeline 24 Ltd - Careline alarm monitoring contract (1 April 2021)
- Greenworld Sales Ltd - Garden waste composting (April 2021)
- Eastern Internal Audit Services - Internal Audit Management (June 2021)

Shared services

- Internal Audit Manager – Fenland District Council (expired June 2021)

Services we provide for other councils

- On and/or off street parking services/administration in Great Yarmouth, South Norfolk, North Norfolk, Breckland and Broadland areas
- CCTV - Breckland, Norfolk County Council and Great Yarmouth
- Management of Disabled Facilities Grants – Breckland District Council (ended March 2021) and Fenland District Council
- Strategic housing – Breckland District Council
- Careline Services – North Norfolk District Council
- Procurement – Boston Borough Council

Glossary of terms

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Annual Governance Statement (AGS) | The Annual Governance Statement which describes how corporate governance arrangements have been working for a period of time indicated. It is a public report by the council on the extent to which it complies with its own local governance code, including how it has monitored the effectiveness of its governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes in the coming period. |
| Audit Committee | The Audit Committee considers the council's governance arrangements and ensures that the financial affairs of the council are properly conducted. |
| Budget | The estimate of income and expenditure for a set period of time, for the council this covers the financial year 1 April until 31 March each year and includes all the financial resources allocated to different services and projects. |
| Capital Programme | This identifies agreed capital schemes, showing the total cost of schemes and the projected phasing of those schemes over current and future financial years. |
| Code of conduct | The Code sets the standards and behaviour expected of councillors and co-opted members. |
| Code of Corporate Governance | The Code of Corporate Governance describes the arrangements in place to ensure that the council conducts its business in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. |
| Constitution | The council's constitution contains the standing orders, scheme of delegation, financial regulations and contracts procedure rules. The constitution also contains the policies for anti-fraud and corruption, anti-bribery and whistleblowing. |
| Corporate Business Plan | This document details the vision, priorities and objectives of the organisation. |
| Corporate Risk Register | This is a formal record of the major risks facing the council and the mitigating actions to reduce the risk. |
| Data Protection Act 2018 | The Data Protection Act 2018 and associated General Data Protection Regulations which came into force in May 2018. This strengthens the regulatory environment for data owners, controllers and processors and aligns legislation with other European countries. |
| Data Protection Officer | A Data Protection Officer (DPO) is a role required by GDPR. Data Protection Officers are responsible for overseeing data protection strategy and implementation to ensure compliance with GDPR requirements. |
| Extended Management Team | Comprises the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Assistant Directors and Service Managers. |
| Governance | Governance is about how local government bodies ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises the systems and processes, cultures and values, by which local government bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and where appropriate, lead their communities. |
| Head of Paid Service | The most senior officer with overall responsibility for the management and operation of the council. Also known as the Chief Executive. |
| Internal Audit | This is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve the council's operations. |
| Licensing Committee | Committee of councillors that undertake all licensing and gambling functions, powers and duties conferred on the council under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005. |
| Local Plan | A Local Plan sets out the local planning policies and identifies how land is used, determining what will be built where. Once a local plan |

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| | becomes adopted it provides the framework for development within an area. |
| Management Team | Comprises the Chief Executive and Executive Directors. |
| Medium Term Financial Strategy | The council's key financial planning document. It aims to provide the council with an assurance that the spending plans are affordable over the medium term (five years). The MTFS includes a five year budget forecast that is reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process. |
| Monitoring Officer | The officer charged with ensuring that everything that the council does is fair and lawful. |
| Performance Indicators | A measurable value that demonstrates how effectively the organisation is achieving against its key objectives |
| Planning Committee | Committee of councillors that sit as the local planning authority to determine planning applications (not delegated to officers). |
| Policy Framework | The plans and strategies, which have been adopted by the Full Council in accordance with which the Leader of the Council, Cabinet, policy development panels, committees and officers must operate. |
| Risk Management | This is an important part of both corporate governance and performance management. It allows the council to avoid problems and failures, rather than just reacting to them when they arise. It helps the council to identify where it needs to focus its efforts and resources, to exploit more opportunities and suffer fewer failures. |
| Scheme of delegation | This sets out how the Cabinet and full Council have delegated their executive and non-executive powers. |
| Section 151 Officer | The officer responsible for the administration of the financial affairs of the council (under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972). Also known as the Chief Finance Officer. |
| Statement of Accounts | The Statement of Accounts show, in financial terms, the performance of the council for the year indicated. It is a statutory publication produced in accordance with legislative requirements and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. |