REPORT TO COUNCIL

Open/~~Exempt~~				
Lead Member Councillor Simon Ring, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Business Email: cllr.Simon.Ring@West-Norfolk.gov.uk				
Lead Officer: Emma Hodds E-mail: Emma.Hodds@West-Norfolk.go.uk		Other Officers consulted: Executive Leadership Team and Honor Howell		
Financial Implications NO	Policy/Personnel Implications NO	Statutory Implications NO	Equality Impact Assessment req'd NO	Risk Management Implications NO

Date of Meeting: 24th September 2026

Notice of Motion 02/26 - Review of Consultant Expenditure Relating to Lynnsport Proposal

RECOMMENDED: Full Council:

1. Notes the findings of the Corporate Performance Panel in response to Notice of Motion 02/26.
2. Notes that the Panel found evidence that procurement, governance and financial oversight processes were applied during the development of the Lynnsport proposal.
3. Supports the continued incorporation of lessons learned from the project, particularly in relation to stakeholder engagement and ongoing affordability review during major capital projects.
4. Agrees that the requirements of Notice of Motion 02/26 have now been fulfilled

1 Corporate Performance Panel consideration of Notice of Motion 02/26

The Corporate Performance Panel considered Notice of Motion 02/26 at its meeting on 20 July 2026. The motion asked the Panel to review the decision-making and governance processes relating to the use of external consultants in the development of the Lynnsport and St James Pool proposal, to consider whether appropriate affordability checks and financial controls had been applied at an early stage, and to report its findings and any recommendations back to Full Council.

The Corporate Performance Panel considered a detailed officer report at its meeting on 20 July 2026.

The Panel received information regarding:

- The procurement and appointment of external consultants.
- The governance arrangements for the project.
- The development of the business case and design proposals.
- Financial oversight arrangements.

- The affordability assessment undertaken during project development.
- Lessons learned from the process.

Officers advised that consultants were appointed through a compliant procurement process using an established framework and a mini-competition process. Evaluation included consideration of team composition, relevant expertise and quality criteria, with procurement undertaken in accordance with the Council's procedures and statutory requirements.

The Panel was advised that feasibility work commenced following consideration of a range of options for future leisure provision, including redevelopment of Lynnsport, future swimming provision and wider leisure estate considerations.

Officers reported that expenditure to progress the Lynnsport project to RIBA Stage 3 was approximately £1.4 million, including consultant fees for RIBA Stages 2 and 3 of approximately £168,000. The project was subsequently reviewed in light of affordability considerations and borrowing implications identified through the Council's financial assessment process.

The Panel examined the governance and decision-making arrangements that supported the project, the procurement of external consultants, and the financial oversight processes that were applied throughout the development of the scheme. The Panel also considered whether appropriate affordability assessments had been undertaken and reviewed lessons that could be applied to future major capital projects. Members are encouraged to read the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel that considered the Notice of Motion on the 20th July 2026.

Governance and Decision-Making

The Panel found that the project progressed through the Council's established governance arrangements, with key decisions being considered through the appropriate decision-making processes and reported to Members at relevant stages. Cabinet and Council approvals were obtained where required.

Procurement of Consultants

The Panel noted that external consultants were procured through a compliant framework process and that there was evidence of formal evaluation and procurement controls being applied.

Financial Oversight and Affordability

The Panel recognised that affordability assessments formed part of the project development process and that a review by the Section 151 Officer resulted in concerns regarding affordability and borrowing constraints being identified prior to a final commitment to deliver the project. These concerns ultimately led to the project being paused and reconsidered.

Lessons Learned

The Panel noted comments made during scrutiny regarding the timing of stakeholder engagement and considered officer acknowledgement that earlier engagement with stakeholders may provide benefits in future major projects. The Panel welcomed the commitment to apply lessons learned to future schemes.

2 Conclusions

The Corporate Performance Panel concluded that:

1. The Corporate Performance Panel reviewed the decision making and governance process relating to the use of external consultants in the development of the Lynnsport and St James Pool proposal

2. The Corporate Performance Panel considered whether appropriate affordability check and financial controls had been applied at an early stage.

As the Corporate Performance Panel has concluded, Full Council are asked to:

1. Note the findings of the Corporate Performance Panel in response to Notice of Motion 02/26.
2. Note that the Panel found evidence that procurement, governance and financial oversight processes were applied during the development of the Lynnsport proposal.
3. Support the continued incorporation of lessons learned from the project, particularly in relation to stakeholder engagement and ongoing affordability review during major capital projects.
4. Agree that the requirements of Notice of Motion 02/26 have now been fulfilled