

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



Environment and Community Panel

Agenda

Tuesday, 4th July, 2017
at 6.00 pm

in the

**Education Room
Town Hall
Saturday Market Place
King's Lynn**



King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 1EX
Telephone: 01553 616200
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Monday, 26 June 2017

Dear Member

Environment and Community Panel

You are invited to attend a meeting of the above-mentioned Panel which will be held on **Tuesday, 4th July, 2017 at 6.00 pm** in the **Education Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn** to discuss the business shown below.

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Minutes (Pages 6 - 12)

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

3. Declarations of interest

Please indicate if there are any interests which should be declared. A declaration of an interest should indicate the nature of the interest (if not already declared on the Register of Interests) and the agenda item to which it relates. If a disclosable pecuniary interest is declared, the Member should withdraw from the room whilst the matter is discussed.

Those declarations apply to all Members present, whether the Member is part of the meeting, attending to speak as a local Member on an item or simply observing the meeting from the public seating area.

4. Urgent Business

To consider any business which, by reason of special circumstances, the Chairman proposed to accept as urgent under Section 100(b)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972.

5. Members Present Pursuant to Standing Order 34

Members wishing to speak pursuant to Standing Order 34 should inform the Chairman of their intention to do so and on what items they wish to be heard before the meeting commences. Any Member attending the meeting under Standing Order 34 will only be permitted to speak on those items which have been previously notified to the Chairman.

6. Chairman's Correspondence

If any.

7. Report of the Informal Working Group - Operation of the West Norfolk Disability Forum (Pages 13 - 15)

8. Initial Draft Tree Strategy (Pages 16 - 49)

Members are requested to read the Draft Tree Strategy in advance of the meeting and the Arboricultural Officer will be present at the meeting to take questions.

Members of the Regeneration and Development Panel are invited to attend the meeting for this item of business.

9. Presentation on the Housing Register and how to bid for Properties (Verbal Report)

10. Homelessness Review (Pages 50 - 68)

11. Work Programme (Pages 69 - 70)

12. Date of the next meeting

To note that the next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel is scheduled to take place on **Tuesday 5th September** at **6.00pm** in the Education Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

To:

Environment and Community Panel: Miss L Bambridge (Vice-Chairman), A Bubb, Mrs S Collop, Mrs S Fraser, G Hipperson, J Moriarty, C Sampson (Chairman), T Smith, Mrs J Westrop, D Whitby, Mrs M Wilkinson and T Wing-Pentelow

Portfolio Holders:

Councillor R Blunt – Portfolio Holder for Development

Councillor A Lawrence – Portfolio Holder for Community
Councillor Mrs E Nockolds – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Health

Officers:

Richard Fisher – Arboricultural Officer
Sheila Farley – Housing Services Operations Manager

By Invitation:

Members of the Regeneration and Development Panel for Agenda Item 8

Members of the Informal Working Group – West Norfolk Disability Forum for Agenda Item 7

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL**

Minutes from the Meeting of the Environment and Community Panel held on Wednesday, 24th May, 2017 at 6.00 pm in the Education Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillor C Sampson (Chairman)
Councillors Miss L Bambridge, R Bird (substitute for J Moriarty), A Bubb,
Mrs S Collop, T Smith, Mrs J Westrop, D Whitby and Mrs M Wilkinson

Portfolio Holders

Councillor I Devereux - Portfolio Holder for Environment
Councillor B Long - Leader of the Council
Councillor Mrs K Mellish – Portfolio Holder for Human Resources,
Facilities and Shared Services

Officers:

Emma Boore – Careline Community Service Manager
Barry Brandford – Waste and Recycling Manager
Honor Howell – Assistant Director
Karen Robson – Lily Co-ordinator

By Invitation:

Tommy Goode – Director of Business Development – Alive Leisure
Nina McKenna – Director of Culture and Communication – Alive Leisure
Simon McKenna – Chief Executive – Alive Leisure

EC1: APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR 2017-2018

RESOLVED: Councillor Colin Sampson was appointed Chairman of the Panel for the Municipal Year.

EC2: APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR 2017-2018

RESOLVED: Councillor Lesley Bambridge was appointed Vice Chairman of the Panel for the Municipal Year.

EC3: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hipperson, Moriarty and Nockolds.

EC4: MINUTES

RESOLVED: The Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EC5: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Vice Chairman, Councillor Bambridge declared an interest in EC11: Lily Update as she was a Trustee of West Norfolk Carers, which was linked with Lily.

EC6: **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

EC7: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor Pope – all agenda items.

EC8: **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

EC9: **SUSTAINABILITY TRANSFORMATION PLAN**

The Chairman reminded the Panel that this item had been withdrawn from the Agenda during the Parliamentary Election Purdah period. Representatives from the CCG would be invited to a future meeting of the Panel.

EC10: **ALIVE LEISURE UPDATE**

Simon McKenna – Chief Executive, Nina McKenna – Director of Culture and Communication and Tommy Goode – Director of Business Development from Alive Leisure were present at the meeting and provided the Panel with a presentation, as attached.

The Panel were reminded that as part of the Service Level Agreement, Alive Leisure were required to provide updates to the Environment and Community Panel. Simon McKenna provided information on key performance indicators, as included in the presentation and explained that they were still in draft at the moment as budgets had not yet been finalised. He felt that Alive Leisure was in a healthy position and had met a lot of its targets.

The Panel was informed that last year was the 25th Anniversary of the opening of Lynnsport. An event was held to mark the occasion and a DVD of the opening was shown.

Simon McKenna explained to the Panel that the new road had been completed and he felt that it was well used and, along with the increase in car parking, had made a positive difference to people using Lynnsport. He also explained that as part of the works there were four new floodlit tennis courts and the additional facilities had benefitted the centre.

The Skate Park was due to reopen shortly and had been rebranded. Simon McKenna reminded those present that previously the Skate Park had issues with condensation and had to close periodically. A grant had been awarded to improve the environment within the skate park by installing a new roof and insulation. Work to the inside included creation of a first floor which could be used as café and spectator space. There was also room to hold workshops and classes.

Nina McKenna provided an overview of activities at the Corn Exchange. She explained that recently the Corn Exchange had held its first week long play, the Mousetrap, which had proved popular. There had also been lots of sold out performances. The Pantomime had also been the most financially beneficial Pantomime at the Corn Exchange so far with over 20,000 tickets sold. Relaxed Autism friendly and signed performances were also held and had proved popular. The 2017 Pantomime would be Jack and the Beanstalk and sales were currently tracking ahead of Cinderella.

Alive Leisure were working with partners on Arts Development and were offering outreach work. Alive Leisure was currently in the process of establishing a two year development plan.

The Panel was provided with information on School Summer Holiday activities which were subsidised. This meant that the majority of activities could be offered for £1. Alive Leisure also held two open days during the year, which were well attended.

Tommy Goode provided an overview of the fitness campaign which was currently running. He explained that staff and customers had been used in the adverts and he felt that it had been well received. Alive Leisure also now offered Personal Training.

The Panel was informed that Alive Leisure was in the process of introducing a new computer management system which would allow users to book online. It would also improve the background functions and enable reports and analysis to be run.

Tommy Goode reminded those present that the Tennis Courts had opened in June 2016 and various activities had been offered to promote the facility.

The Panel was informed that work was ongoing to improve fitness income. A review of fitness would be presented to the Alive Leisure Board for consideration before being discussed with Alive

Management. Tommy Goode also provided the Panel with an overview of Sports Development including GEAR and Adaptive Sports Days.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from Alive Leisure for their presentation and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

In response to a question from Councillor Bubb, Nina McKenna explained that the Corn Exchange Cafe opened from 10am to 3pm. It was not financially viable to extend these opening hours and the busy period was from 11.30am to 2pm. She also explained that work was ongoing to promote the disabled swimming sessions.

In response to a further question from Councillor Bubb, Simon McKenna explained that customers had been interested in the work ongoing around Lynnsport and positive feedback had been received on the increase in Car Parking and the new Road.

Councillor Mrs Collop raised concerns that some aerobic classes had been cancelled because of exams at the College and she felt that people who paid monthly for classes should receive some sort of compensation. Tommy Goode explained that the users had met with the Fitness Manager to express their concerns and alternative options would be looked at for the future.

Councillor Bird referred to the facilities available in Hunstanton and Simon McKenna explained that some of the facilities were not in Alive Leisure's control. He explained that the future of the Oasis was being looked at and would be discussed with Alive Leisure and Alive Management.

RESOLVED: The update was noted.

EC11: **LILY UPDATE**

The Careline Community Service Manager and Lily Co-ordinator were present at the meeting. An update report on the progress of the Ask Lily project had been included in the Agenda.

The Chairman thanked officers for their report and invited questions and comments from the Panel as summarised below.

In response to a question from the Vice Chairman, Councillor Bambridge, it was explained that the additional entries on the directory had focussed on social activity. Work was ongoing to ensure that the entries in the directory were up to date and contact details were being checked. Ask LILY also included a 'what's on' calendar which included community events.

Councillor Bird commended the work of the team and thanked them for the work they carried out in Hunstanton with the Dementia Group. Other Members of the Panel commented that they often had constituents mention LILY and how it acted as a lifeline for many.

Councillor Mrs Westrop asked for clarification on LILY and the Social Prescription Pilot and it was explained that meetings with the CCG and Community Action Norfolk would be held to look at potential options. The Panel was also informed that funding, after the next financial year, was unconfirmed, but work was ongoing to investigate funding sources.

RESOLVED: (i) The Panel thanked all those involved in the Ask LILY Project.

(ii) The update was noted.

EC12: **FOOD WASTE BIN LINERS**

The Waste and Recycling Manager presented a report which provided information on proposed changes in the way in which residents could present food waste for collection due to technical changes in the processing of collected food waste.

He explained that the previous composting facility would be closing and in the future food waste would be sent to an anaerobic digester, which had a de-packaging plant. This meant that food waste could be presented in a bag or container. This meant that the caddy liners would no longer be required.

The Waste and Recycling Manager asked for the Panel's comments on the proposed changes which would contribute towards the Cabinet Members Delegated Decision report. He asked if the Panel supported promotion of the arrangements to members of the Public.

The Chairman thanked the Waste and Recycling Manager for his report and invited questions and comments from the Panel, as summarised below.

The Vice Chairman, Councillor Bambridge asked if the waste collectors encountered any health issues when dealing with food waste. The Waste and Recycling Manager explained that scientific tests and studies had been carried out and there was little to no risk to public health for the user or collector. He explained that the outside food caddies had lid locks which should be used and it was important not to let children or pets have access to the bins.

Councillor Smith felt that it would be a positive move if users no longer had to purchase specific bags for the food waste bin and he asked if additional bins were available, should residents not have one. The

Waste and Recycling Manager explained that additional bins would be made available.

Councillor Whitby asked what would happen to the plastic bags which would be collected with food waste. The Waste and Recycling Manager explained that they were recovered and recycled into oil. He explained that for 6000 tonnes of food waste approximately 59 tonnes of plastic would be required.

The Panel, discussed, and agreed that food waste should not be accepted if it was left loose in the food caddy and it should be wrapped. Options for wrapping the food waste could include plastic bags, left over packaging or newspaper.

The Panel discussed the proposed changes to arrangements and all agreed that it would be good to provide users with more options for recycling food waste and not having to purchase specific caddy liners.

RESOLVED: (i) The Panel supported the change of arrangements.
(ii) The Panel agreed that loose food in the bin should not be accepted.
(iii) The Panel supported promotion of the new arrangements as appropriate.

EC13: **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Chairman invited the Panel to nominate representatives to participate in the outside bodies and partnerships which fell within the Panel's remit. The nominations would be presented to Full Council on 15th June 2017 for approval.

The Panel was informed that Cabinet, at its meeting on 23rd May 2017, had delegated nomination of a representative to King's Lynn Football Club Board to the Panel.

RESOLVED: That the following nominations be presented to the Full Council meeting on 15th June 2017:

1. College/Council Liaison Board – Councillor Smith
2. Area Museums Committee – Councillors Smith, Wright and Bubb
3. NCC Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub Panel – Councillor Westrop and vacancy (substitute)
4. Norfolk Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Fraser and Smith (substitute)
5. West Norfolk Community Transport Project - Councillor Fraser

6. West Norfolk Disability Forum – Councillors Bubb, Fraser, A Tyler, Squire and Horsbrugh.

7. King's Lynn Town Football Club Board – Councillor Westrop.

EC14: **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members of the Panel were reminded that an eform was available on the Intranet which could be completed and submitted if Members had items which they would like to be considered for addition to the Work Programme.

In response to a question, the Chairman, Councillor Sampson agreed to liaise with the new Harbourmaster and ABP regarding a potential update on the port.

Councillor Westrop requested that the Budget be added to the Work Programme

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

EC15: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel would be held on **Tuesday 4th July 2017 at 6.00pm** In the Education Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 7.46 pm

POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Environment and Community Panel
DATE:	4 th July 2017
TITLE:	Report of the Informal Working Group – Operation of the West Norfolk Disability Forum
TYPE OF REPORT:	Informal Working Group report to Panel
PORTFOLIO(S):	Community – Councillor Adrian Lawrence
REPORT AUTHOR:	Rebecca Parker, 01553 616632
OPEN	

REPORT**PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:**

This report provides detail of the work of the Informal Working Group which was set up by the Environment and Community Panel on 15th March 2017 to look at the future operation of the West Norfolk Disability Forum.

Minutes from the Informal Working Group are available to view on the Council's Intranet.

KEY ISSUES:

Feedback from Councillors who sit on the West Norfolk Disability Forum included concerns that the Forum was not productive in its current format. Problems with the Forum were identified by the Informal Working Group as follows:

- Size of the Forum
- Membership of Forum and attendance at meetings
- Managing expectations of external attendees

Concerns were also expressed that the Forum had become a 'talking shop', and no longer delivered its objectives, as set out in its Constitution. Members felt that information was now available in other formats such as public consultation exercises, information in the media and online and queries and concerns could be answered quicker if individuals contacted the relevant organisation direct.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

The Informal Working Group considered the following options:

1. Disband the Forum in its current form and look at other ways of operating to make the Forum more effective.
2. Do nothing.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Informal Working Group recommend the following to the Environment and Community Panel:

1. Disband the West Norfolk Disability Forum
2. Invite Cabinet to give consideration to appointing a Disability/Equalities Champion and further suggest that this role be given the status of a new Portfolio Holder position. This would ensure that it is seen that due and serious consideration has been given to making the changes.

3. That the Environment and Community Panel have the opportunity to look at the Borough Council's Equalities Policy which is due for review and give consideration to establishing an Informal Working Group to input into the review if necessary.
4. That the Environment and Community Panel receive and update on the Equalities Policy on an annual basis.
5. That ways to promote Equality on the Corporate Agenda be investigated.
6. That a page be created on the website to promote the Equality and Disability Champion. An e-form could be created so that members of the public could report issues direct to the Equalities Champion.
7. An e-learning package on disability awareness be made available to staff and Members.
8. The Disabilities Champion to hold open Forums, as required (a minimum of twice a year), which will be open to all.
9. The Disabilities Champion to report to the Environment and Community Panel on an annual basis.
10. That the Opportunity Awards and other events hosted by the Forum be incorporated into other events already organised by the Borough Council.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Informal Working Group feel that their recommendations would provide a route for members of the public to report issues immediately to the Disability Champion, without having to wait for a meeting of the West Norfolk Disability Forum.

The open Forums will provide the opportunity for members of the public to report any issues of concern to the Disability Champion. Through annual reporting to the Environment and Community Panel, the public and members will receive an update on issues raised and dealt with to report on issues raised and dealt with.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Introduction

1.1 On 15th March 2017, the Environment and Community Panel received feedback reports from Council appointed representatives on Outside Bodies. Representatives on the West Norfolk Disability Forum felt that the Forum, in its current format, was not productive and had moved away from its aims and objectives as set out in its Constitution.

1.2 The Environment and Community Panel established an Informal Working Group to review the operation of the West Norfolk Disability Forum. The Informal Working Group met three times and comprised of Councillors Bubb, Fraser and Westrop.

2. Proposal

2.1 The Informal Working Group agreed that the West Norfolk Disability Forum, in its current format, should be disbanded. The Forum looked at alternative ways that the Forum could operate and all agreed that it was important for members of the public to continue to have a route to report issues.

3. Issues for the Panel to Consider

3.1 The Informal Working Group feel that their recommendations provide a better opportunity for members of the public to raise issues. The creation of a Disability Champion and a dedicated web page and e-form provide the opportunity to report issues at any time instead of having to wait for a Forum meeting every three months.

3.2 The Panel may like to consider ways to engage members of the public who do not have access to the internet. If a Disability Champion is created, this could be promoted through Parish Magazines and Ward Members.

3.3 Open Forums would also provide the opportunity for members of the public to attend to meet the Disabilities Champion and raise any issues of concern.

3.4 In 2016/2017 three meetings of the West Norfolk Disability Forum had been held. Details of attendance at the meetings are below and agendas and minutes of the meetings are available on the Borough Council's website:

Date of Meeting	Number of external attendees	Number of Councillor attendees	Number of Officer attendees
20th July 2016	12	5	3
25 th January 2016	11	5	2
18 th April 2017	6	2	3

Agendas for the meeting are sent to 45 external recipients via email and 30 hard copies are posted out to external organisations/individuals.

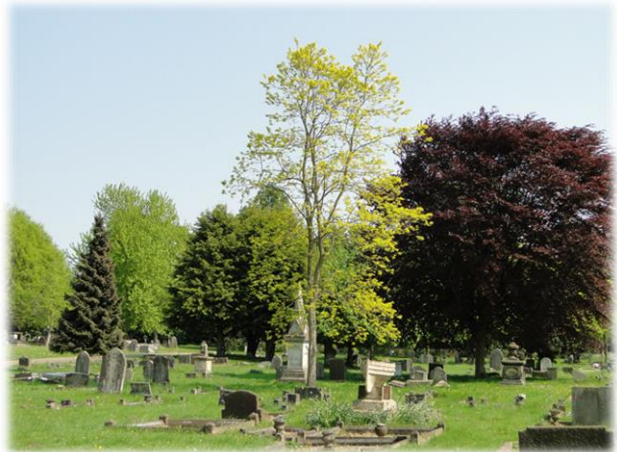
4. Background Papers

Minutes from the West Norfolk Disability Forum
Minutes from the Informal Working Group
West Norfolk Disability Forum Constitution

The Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Tree and Woodland Strategy



**A ten year programme
for sustaining the
Borough's urban forest**



**Period: 1st April 2017 to
31st March 2027**

Draft Tree and Woodland Strategy for Consultation Complied by:

Richard Fisher - Arboricultural Officer, Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Andrew Coombes - Principal Arboricultural Consultant, A.T. Coombes Associates Ltd

Kit Hardy - Arboricultural Consultant, A.T. Coombes Associates Ltd

5th June 2017

DRAFT

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Plan showing the boundaries of the of the Borough and of Urban King’s Lynn

Appendix 2 – The Tree Risk Management Plan

Appendix 3 – List of Tree Species Found on Council Sites

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This strategy sets out how the Council will manage their tree stocks in a sustainable way. An important aspect of plan will be to, as far as is practicable, make the trees and woodlands more resilient in the face of threats from introduced pests and diseases and the impact of climate change. The period of the strategy is ten years from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2027.
- 1.2 A key aim will be to increase tree canopy cover in the Borough by both planting new trees and ensuring proper development of newly established trees to maximise the benefits they can provide. A key target area will be urban King's Lynn. However, tree, planting will be encouraged throughout the whole of the Council's area.
- 1.3 The strategy seeks to strike a balance between maximising benefits provided by trees and recognising that trees can cause significant problems for home owners when in close proximity to dwellings and gardens. Where possible, long term solutions will be applied to reduce the level of conflict between trees and residents.
- 1.4 The landscape impact of historic trees in the centre of the town including the Walks will be carefully preserved. However, an important element of this preservation effort will be gradual regeneration of the tree cover on these areas. The preservation and improvement of wildlife habitats and the conservation value of the Borough's trees and woodlands is at the heart of the strategy.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk extends to 1,429 km². The population at the 2011 census was 147,451.
- 2.2 The Borough includes the town of King's Lynn, which is the major urban centre, and the smaller towns of Downham Market, Dersingham and Hunstanton. It is situated close to the coast and Wash in north west Norfolk where the Fens meet the sandy soils of north west Norfolk. This junction of landscapes provides a rich and diverse range of contrasting and distinctive landscapes including fenlands, and fertile arable land.
- 2.3 There has been continuous settlement since in King's Lynn the early medieval period. The town grew to become an important medieval town, port and regional trading centre. The densely populated medieval town had little space for trees. However, the town flourished and in the 18th century many town houses were built during this period which also saw the establishment of the Walks as a pleasure ground with tree lined thoroughfares. The Walks still forms the green heart of the town with over 800, mainly mature, trees, in the care of the Council.
- 2.4 The 19th century saw increasing industrialisation and population growth. It became necessary to create a new cemetery and in 1851 Hardwick cemetery was opened which is an early example of a Victorian burial ground. The trees planted since its opening form an important element of the urban forest in the town.
- 2.5 In 1962 King's Lynn became an overspill town for London and population increased significantly with new housing constructed. New estates were built at the Woottons and Gaywood in the

1960's. The new tree planting associated with these developments are still owned and managed by the Council.

2.6 Figure 1 shows the historic growth of King's Lynn which, to an extent, influences tree cover within the town.

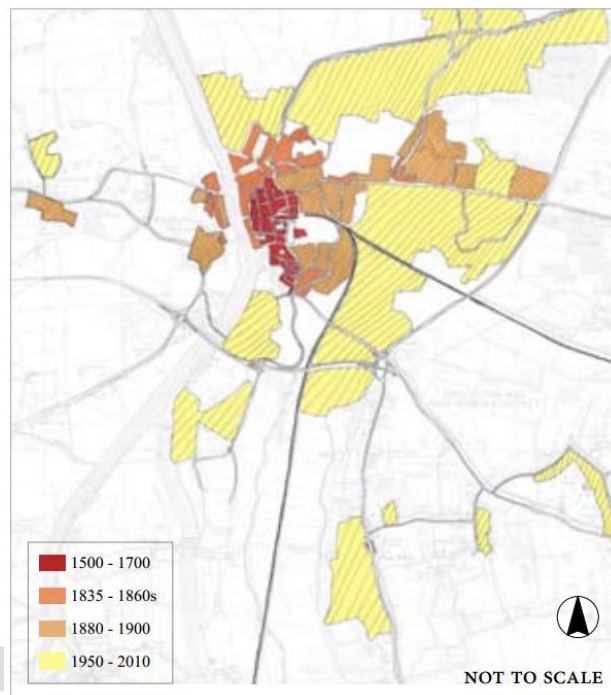


Fig 1: The growth of King's Lynn over time around its medieval core (Bolgar et al 2010)

2.7 The Council tree stocks in rural west Norfolk are relatively small and mainly situated in the larger settlements such as Downham Market and Hunstanton.

2.8 The total of Council owned green space in the Borough is 138 ha of which 9.7 ha are woodland. King's Lynn has 75.3 ha of which 6 ha are woodland.

3. Aims of the Strategy

3.1 The strategy sets out how the benefits provided by trees and woodland will be maintained and enhanced. The primary aims are summarised as follows:

- To maintain and enhance the tree population of the Borough.
- To increase the tree canopy cover across the Borough with particular reference to urban areas with low canopy cover.
- To protect and consolidate the historic trees and woodlands within King's Lynn.
- To maintain and maximise the ecosystem services provided by the Council's trees.
- To ensure, as far as possible, that the Council's tree stocks are resilient in the light of threats from introduced tree pests and diseases and climate change.
- To promote biodiversity and conserve tree and woodland eco-systems.

- To conserve and protect ancient woodland and ancient trees with significant ecological value
- To fulfil the Council's duty of care in respect of its tree stocks. The systems of health and safety checks on trees that have been developed will be maintained. The aim will be to keep risks presented by trees as low as it is reasonably practical to do so.

3.2 This document highlights the importance of the tree resource under the stewardship of the Council and sets a standard for its management, which ensures its long term conservation and development for the benefit of the people of the Borough and future generations.

3.3 The Council will respond to the concerns and actions of residents. The removal of Council owned trees shall be resisted and, when it is necessary to do so, replacement planting will be carried out.

4. Current Management Systems

4.1 Management of the Council's tree stocks is carried out by directly employed staff under the direction of a part time arboricultural officer. The direct labour team carry out general maintenance and all tree planting works. The arboricultural officer carries out tree survey works aided by contractors. All tree work is completed by contractors. All contractors are appointed by competitive tender.

4.2 A Tree Risk Management Plan was produced in 2015 setting out the staff responsibilities and procedures to be followed to fulfil the Council's duty of care. The plan has been fully implemented. A copy forms Appendix 2.

4.3 This strategy has been prepared with due consideration to current international, regional and corporate policies, and to provide a structure for compliance with the Council's legal responsibilities. The strategy will also contribute to the delivery of the broad range of the Council's aims, objectives and priorities on the environment, communities, health, and land use planning. The strategy also takes account of the latest Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement issued by DEFRA in January 2013 and the UK Forestry Standard.

5. The Resource (an Analysis of the Council's Tree Stocks)

5.1 In certain circumstances some species of tree can live to 200 to 300 years and beyond. However, in dynamic urban conditions with poor soils and growing conditions life expectancy can be considerably shorter, in some cases as low as 20 to 30 years. Figure 2 shows the age structure of trees which have been included in council health and safety surveys.

5.2 It can be seen from Figure 2 that the majority of the Council's urban trees are in the mature and over mature category. Mature trees, are defined as trees in the final third of their expected safe, useful life expectancy and have reached the point where they will need increasing amounts of management. Over mature trees are becoming senescent and generally in decline. While over mature trees are likely to be more valuable for wildlife conservation and habitats and in many cases need to be retained, they require careful management in terms of public safety.

5.3 It should be noted that are a very small number of veteran / ancient trees are present in the Borough. The veteran and ancient trees and woodlands that do exist are therefore of particular historic and conservation value.

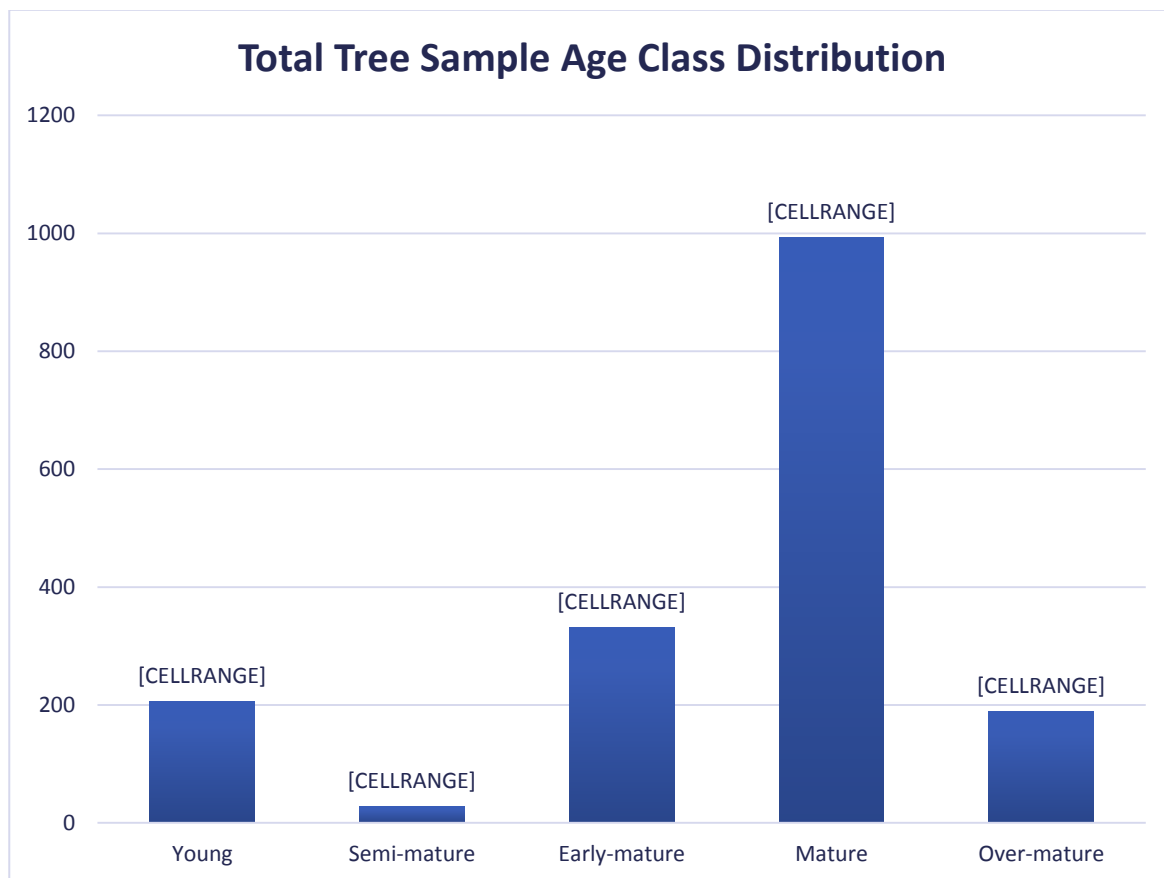


Fig 2: Bar chart showing the age distribution of the trees surveyed within urban King’s Lynn.

5.4 In summary, the demographics of the Borough tree stocks are that in the historic Walks and Victorian cemeteries the trees consist predominantly mature and in some cases over-mature, while the late 1960’s residential estates they are mainly early-mature.

5.5 There has been no detailed survey of canopy cover within urban King’s Lynn. However, given the distribution of trees and the stratified nature of the tree stocks it is likely that the canopy cover will vary significantly over the area. To gain an impression of the canopy cover a desk study was completed sampling 0.5 kilometre squares across the urban part of King’s Lynn the results are presented in Table 1 overleaf.

5.6 It can be seen that while the average of these samples is 18.3% canopy cover, there is considerable variation within the urban area. This is around the 18% national average quoted in “Trees in Towns II” a countrywide survey of Local Authority trees. However, the Walks is not typical of the bulk of the urban area and if this figure is discounted the average canopy cover works out at 13.8 %. A table viewed on the Urban Tree Cover website shows a tree canopy of 12.8% for King’s Lynn which tends to corroborate the desk study. It seems likely, therefore, that tree cover in the urban area is less than the national average.

5.7 As protection against pests and diseases and the possible impact of climate change it is important to have a wide range of tree species and plant families making up the urban forest. There is no

single database of the trees on Council owned land. However, data collected as part of the tree health and safety surveys has been used to produce the pie chart that forms Figure 3 overleaf.

Table 1 – summary of the estimated Percentage Canopy Cover (PCC), hard surface cover and grassed open space within King’s Lynn.

Sampled Areas Across King’s Lynn;	Percentage Canopy Cover (PCC) (%)	Hard Surfaces, Building/ Housing (%)	Grass Open Space or Gardens (%)
Section of Hardwick Industrial Estate 1950-2010	3	91	6
Town centre dating 1500-1700	4	96	0
Housing 1835-1860	11	84	5
Housing 1880-1900	24	53	23
20th century / overspill town designation 1950-2010	26	44	30
Gaywood housing Estate 1950-2010	15	73	12
The Walks including football ground and housing	45	19	36
Total Percent Coverage	18.3	65.7	16.0

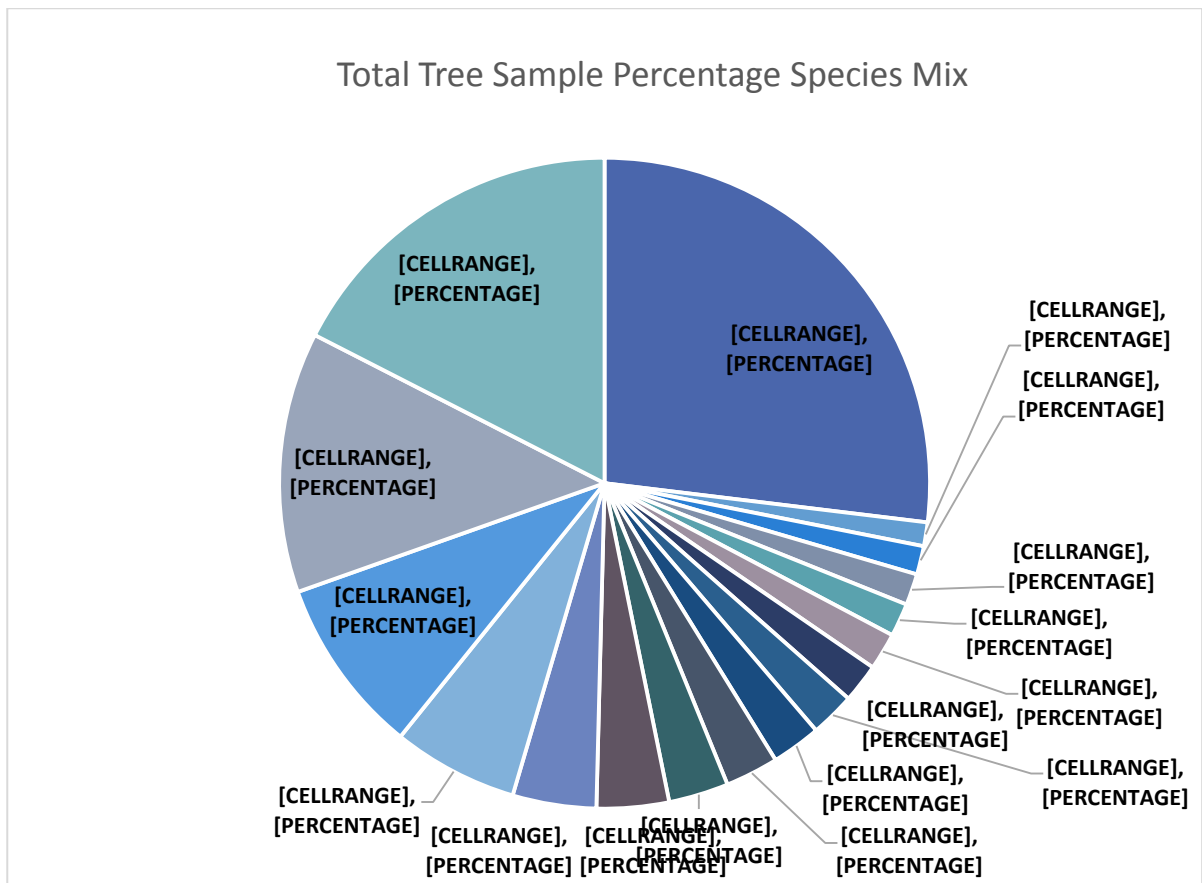


Fig 3: Species percentages from Tree health and safety survey data ('Other' includes species making up less than 1% of the total).

- 5.8 It can be seen that pedunculate oak is the most common species in the urban area and that oak and four other, species common lime, sycamore, horse chestnut and Turkey oak make up over 50% of the total number.
- 5.9 Ash makes up only 2% of the urban tree stock which reduces the vulnerability to the impact of ash dieback in respect of Council owned trees.
- 5.10 Appendix 3 provides a list of the species recorded during health and safety surveys of the Borough's trees. This includes 108 species and cultivated varieties from 45 different genera.

6. Benefits provided by the Borough's Trees

- 6.1 Trees are the largest and oldest living organisms in our environment. Trees and woodlands are important features of the landscape. Collectively they form one of its finest and most important features. However, they are not simply embellishments, but provide a range of important ecosystem services and contribute towards the sustainable future of the Borough. The following examples illustrate the importance of some of the ecosystem services provided. These services will become increasingly important with the onset of Climate Change bringing high summer temperatures, increased storm events and associated flooding. Examples of some of the benefits are as follows:

Trees Help Prevent Flooding

Trees planted in catchment areas can reduce flooding of rivers. Large parts of King's Lynn are within the flood plain of the river Great Ouse and subject to both fluvial and tidal floods. Figure 4 shows flooding around the Customs House in King's Lynn. It is unlikely that either existing or newly planted trees in the Borough will have any impact on river and tidal flooding. However, trees can have a significant impact on flooding caused by surface water runoff.



Fig 4: The river Great Ouse in flood after storm surge 2014



Fig. 5: Flooding due to surface water, Station Road Heacham

- 6.2 Many built up areas within the Borough are susceptible to flooding due to surface water runoff. Additional tree planting particularly in conjunction with Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDS) and the use of structural soils has the potential to intercept and slow down runoff and reduce the severity of this type of flood. Figure 5 shows flooding due to surface water.

Trees Store Carbon

- 6.3 The Council's reported Carbon emissions from all Council owned buildings, vehicles and equipment in 2014/2015 was reported as 6183 tonnes of carbon. The Council has a target of reducing emission of 5% annually. It is likely that the Council's trees sequester a significant percentage of its own annual emissions. These sequestration levels could be more firmly established in the light of a more detailed audit of tree stocks. There is scope to improve sequestration levels by planting larger woodland blocks on the urban fringe or planting short rotation coppice for biofuel. A modest extension of the planting of trees could significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the Council's operations.

Trees Promote Human Health and Wellbeing

- 6.4 Access to green space is intrinsically linked to good health. In the UK it has been estimated only one third of the population does the recommended level of exercise. Ill health due to obesity is estimated cost of £1 billion per year. The accessibility of woods and green space has been shown to encourage exercise and also have positive impacts on mental health. Being involved woodland projects contributes to human wellbeing and self-worth as shown in figure 7.



Fig.6 Family exercise on a King's Lynn woodland track



Fig. 7 Young people working on a Conservation Project

Trees Reduce Air Pollution from Traffic

6.5 Air pollution from vehicles and industrial processes produces minute particles known as particulate matter (PM) as well as gasses such as ozone, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide. These present a risk to health and it has been estimated around 30,000 deaths in the UK are attributable to air pollution. Trees trap particulates on the leaves and take in gasses through the pores. Figure 8 shows the traffic on Hardwick Road (this area would benefit from increased tree cover).



Fig.8 Trees trap harmful particulates from vehicle emissions on their leaves.



Fig. 9:Trees providing screening and noise reduction on the A47

6.6 Trees reduce traffic noise levels. A 30m width of woodland, can reduce noise to the human ear by approximately 50%. Figure 9 shows woodland belts edging the A47 to the south of the urban area screening and reducing the impact of this busy trunk route.

Trees Cool the Urban Environment

6.7 The urban heat island effect can prevent cooling and have a negative impact on human health. Trees provide, cooling and shading of buildings and streets as shown in Figure 10 Shading from trees can reduce energy needed for cooling buildings. Trees reduce urban temperatures particularly in heat waves.



Fig. 10: Shade cast by trees in Tennyson Road



Fig.11 High urban temperatures can be damaging to health

- 6.1 The examples of ecosystem services listed above undoubtedly have a considerable monetary value and systems are available that attempt to quantify these. However, the range and scope of the benefits provided by trees almost defy quantifying and are intrinsic to the quality of life for the Borough's residents.

7. Problems Caused by the Council's Trees

7.1 Tree Proximity Issues

It must be recognised that trees can be responsible for ecosystem disservices. For example they cause problems for residents where they are growing close to private property and gardens. The Council will deal promptly with all enquiries and consider concerns of residents about problems caused by Council trees. However, in order to preserve the Borough's tree stocks for the benefit of all, the Council's response will be limited. The Council's policy on common enquiries are detailed below:

Tree debris includes leaves, fruit, sap and bird droppings.

- The council will not prune or fell a council owned tree to remove or reduce debris fall.
- The council will not remove fallen debris from private property.
- The loss of leaves from trees in the autumn is part of the natural cycle and can't be avoided by pruning.
- The maintenance of gutters is the responsibility of the landowner and we are not obliged to remove leaves that may have fallen from council owned trees- where gutters are regularly blocked by fallen leaves, gutter guards may be fitted to provide a low maintenance solution.
- For roads, streets or the highway, extra teams are working in the autumn to clear fallen leaves.
- In parks and green spaces, paths or areas of hard standing are regularly cleared of fallen leaves - but leaves on grass / shrub beds are generally left until the majority of leaves have fallen before they are removed (unless leaving them would damage the grass, in which case the accumulated leaves will be removed sooner)

Light

- The Council will not prune or fell a council owned tree to improve natural light in a property. In law there is no general right to light - any right to light would need to be established via a specific grant (rare) or by prescription. This can only occur where the right has been enjoyed uninterrupted for a minimum of 20 years.
- Following this, a legal right to light can only be enjoyed in relation to a specific opening (such as a window) in a building.
- There is no right to light in connection with open land, such as a garden.
- Further, if the above conditions are met, then an owner of the building is 'entitled to such access of light as will leave his premises adequately lit for all purposes for which they may reasonably expect to be used'.
- If natural light is being blocked by the growth of a hedge then action may be taken to reduce the problem under the High Hedges Act, Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act, 2003.

Trees that are too big or tall

- The Local Authority will not fell a council owned tree because it is considered to be 'too big' or 'too tall'.
- A tree is not dangerous just because it may be considered too big for its surroundings. Other problems would need to be shown such as those described in our dangerous tree policy (Appendix 2).

Tree and TV reception

- The Council will not prune or fell a Council owned tree to prevent interference with TV, satellite, broadband internet-installation, or reception.
- A satellite or TV provider will be able to suggest an alternative solution to the problem, for example relocating the aerial/dish or means to boost the signal.

7.2 Damage to Property Caused by Tree Roots

7.3 A range of soil types are found within the Borough including free draining calcareous soils in the north as well as soils formed from peat and alluvium and isolated outcrops of Jurassic or calcareous clay these soils are potentially subject to volume change when moisture is drawn out of shrinkable clay soils by vegetation, particularly trees. The clay shrinks which can lead, in some circumstances, to property damage. Most volume change is seasonal and as soils rehydrate in the winter months, and levels are restored. Modern buildings are designed to cope with some seasonal movement. Since 1976 the National House Building Council (NHBC) Chapter 4.2 recommendations for foundation depth when building near trees has reduced the incidence of damage.

7.4 When soils no longer rehydrate a permanent water deficit is formed. If large trees are removed, after they have created a permanent water deficit, water uptake stops and the soils can rehydrate lifting any building that has been built on the dehydrated ground. This type of property damage known as heave is rare and mainly found on very plastic clay soils such as London clay. Local soil types are not normally associated with heave and the damage it can cause.

7.5 In the NHBC guidance tree species are classed depending on their water demand. It is often high water demand species such as poplar and willow that are linked with subsidence damage to

properties. However in some circumstances tree species listed in the NHBC guidance as moderate or low water demand can be implicated in structural damage to buildings.

- 7.6 Any cases of property damage resulting from encroachment of the roots of Council owned trees on to private land will be investigated by the Council on a case by case basis. It is not reasonable to remove all trees that could conceivably damage property when no damage has occurred, this would involve a huge loss of amenity and ecosystem services. However, the potential of Council owned trees for root encroachment will be considered in the management of the existing trees and when new trees are being planted. Where, in the past, trees and woodlands have been planted with unsuitable species in unsuitable positions in relation to buildings there will be a policy of restructuring and management to enable trees and buildings to co-exist.
- 7.7 Trees in close proximity to light structures such as free standing walls, patios and paved areas can cause damage by direct pressure from the stems and roots as they grow and expand. Stem and root expansion can cause cracks in free standing walls, and surface roots can lift pavements and other hard surfaces. The Council will seek to minimise the impact of roots of council owned trees particularly where these present a risk to the public safety. BS 5837:2012 gives guidance on the clearance needed to avoid direct damage and trees need to be very close, normally under 1 m from a structure, for this class of damage to occur.
- 7.8 Tree roots can proliferate in drains, which offer ideal rooting conditions, sometimes blocking them. However, tree roots have little capacity to enter well maintained and intact drainage systems. In the case of drainage problems linked to tree roots a drainage expert is the best source of advice.

8. Threats and Challenges

- 8.1 In the last 20 years there has been a steady rise in the number of introduced tree pests and diseases some of which have the potential to cause significant loss of tree cover and the benefits they provide. The reasons for this include increasing levels of world trade particularly in plant material, world travel and changes in the climate making it suitable for pests from warmer environments to establish in the UK.
- 8.2 To illustrate the destructive potential of tree diseases the virulent strain of Dutch elm disease, which was imported into the country in the late 1960's on elm logs, killed around 23 million trees changing landscapes and reducing tree cover over large areas of the UK countryside.
- 8.3 Among the recent introduction or occurrences of pests and diseases the following two examples pose a particular threat to the Borough's trees and landscape:

Ash Dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)

- 8.4 This fungal disease has caused extensive tree losses in continental Europe, for example killing over 90% of the ash population in Sweden. It was first found in the UK in 2012 and has rapidly spread from east to west across the country.
- 8.5 The level of infection is currently low but expected to rise significantly in the next few years. The symptoms are initially browning and dead leaves and diamond shaped stem lesions as illustrated in Figure 12. This is followed by a fairly rapid dieback in the crown on larger trees. Typically, an

infected tree will have tufts of re-growth that eventually succumb to the disease as illustrated in Figure 13. The progress of the disease can be quite rapid with large trees killed in a single growing season in some cases



Fig. 12: Dead leaves and diamond shape stem lesions are symptomatic of the disease



Fig. 13: Typical crown dieback with tufts of regrowth.

- 8.6 There is, currently, no proven cure or treatment that can be applied. However, there has been extensive research to try to isolate resistant individuals and indeed, in areas of high infection, some trees appear to remain free from infection.
- 8.7 It is not clear how the disease will progress in the Borough so, at this stage, ash on Council owned land will not be pre-emptively removed. The exposure to the disease in urban King's Lynn is relatively low due to the species making up an estimated 2% of the tree stock. However, the impact on the landscape of rural west Norfolk is likely to be more severe.
- 8.8 Ash will be excluded from new tree planting schemes and alternative species planted. However, in woodland conditions, natural re-generation of ash should, as far as possible, be retained as it may contain resistant individuals.
- 8.9 The condition of Council owned ash will be monitored as part of the normal health and safety inspections policy and promptly dealt with if they present a significant risk to the public. This does not mean that all infected or dead trees will be removed. The Council's policy on ash dieback will be reviewed on an annual basis. The Council's approach to dealing with the disease will follow the Tree Council's framework guidance on dealing with tree deaths and decline due to the disease.
- 8.10 Simple biosecurity measures such as cleaning boots, shoes and tyres after visiting woodlands or open spaces with ash trees present will be adopted. The fungus over winters in fallen leaves therefore, in some situations, clearing the leaves in autumn will help reduce to source of spring infection.

Oak Processionary Moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*)

- 8.11 The caterpillars of this moth feed on oak trees and defoliate the tree by eating the foliage. However, perhaps a more serious problem is the effect of the caterpillars urticating hairs, which detach from their bodies, causing serious allergic reactions and respiratory difficulties in humans and animals.

8.12 This pest was introduced on imported trees into the London area in 2005. It was hoped to contain or eradicate the species by volume spraying foliage with insecticide and destroying the communal silken nests which have an accumulation of toxic hairs. Unfortunately, this policy has not been successful and the pest is spreading outside the London area. The current most northerly sighting is at Watford, some 113 miles south of King's Lynn.

8.13 The hairy caterpillars are shown on Figure 14. Perhaps their most distinguishing feature is that they cluster near food and follow each other in a nose to tail line when moving to and from feeding areas. They make silken nests on the stems and branches of oak trees as shown in Figure 15.



Fig. 14 A cluster of caterpillars on an oak leaf clearly showing their urticating hairs



Fig. 15 A communal nest on an oak tree full of toxic hairs

- 8.14 High populations of this insect will lead to repeated defoliation of oak trees which could seriously weaken them. However, trees are generally resistant to browsing insect damage and their lost leaves will generally grow back even after complete defoliation. This pest is more of a public health problem than a tree issue.
- 8.15 Oak trees form an estimated 17 % of the urban tree stock and they are widely distributed around the Borough.
- 8.16 Given the public health risk the Council will take prompt action to try to eradicate populations of this insect as they are discovered on their land and offer help to private landowners to deal with the problem. The Council will also periodically review its policy on controlling this insect.
- 8.17 Members of the public that notice either the caterpillars or their nests on oak trees in the Borough should report the sighting to the Council immediately. **AVOID CONTACT WITH THE INSECTS AND DO NOT TOUCH OR DISTURB THE NESTS WHICH WOULD RELEASE CLOUDS OF TOXIC HAIRS.** Be aware of the potential health risk and teach children to avoid both the caterpillars and their nests. Pets should be restrained to prevent them coming into contact with the nests.
- 8.18 Both the Oak Processionary Moth and Ash Dieback present a serious threat and, if they become established, are likely to require a large amount of staff time and expenditure to deal with.

Other Pests and Diseases

- 8.19 Other recently introduced diseases that have the potential to impact on the tree cover in the Borough are detailed in Table 4 below

Table 2 – Recently Introduced tree pests and Diseases their likely impact

Species	Vulnerable Tree Species	Symptoms	Implications for the Borough's trees	Status
Sweet Chestnut Blight <i>(Cryphonectria parasitica)</i>	Sweet chestnut	Death and dieback	Sweet Chestnut forms only a small proportion of the Council's tree stocks. However this disease has the potential to kill most of the Sweet Chestnut in the wider landscape.	Recently introduced into UK
Ramorum Disease <i>(Phytophthora ramorum)</i>	A fungus-like disease affecting a wide spectrum of species including oak, sweet chestnut, and beech. Currently a serious pathogen of larch.	Dieback and death	The wide range of potential hosts. Formally known as 'Sudden Oak Death'. Urban and rural trees within the Borough are susceptible	Introduced but now well established

Species	Vulnerable Tree Species	Symptoms	Implications for the Borough's trees	Status
Acute Oak Decline	Not a specific pathogen but a syndrome. However the main cause is thought to be bacterial.	Symptoms include black exudate from stem followed by rapid dieback of oak	Has the potential to cause serious damage to the most common species in the Borough	Endemic
Bacterial Bleeding Canker of Horse Chestnut <i>(Pseudomonas syringae pv aesculi)</i>	Horse chestnut	Bacterial disease causing black exudate from the bark of stems and branches and extensive patches of dead bark leading to branch failure and dieback.	There has been a rapid spread of this condition in the last 5 years. However, it appears to have become less virulent in the last two years	Endemic
Horse chestnut Leaf Miner <i>(Cameraria ohridella)</i>	Horse chestnut	Larval stage of this micro-moth feed in the leaf tissue causing an early browning of foliage in mid-summer.	Attack by this pest is disfiguring in summer and may, over time, weaken the tree but is not considered a serious problem requiring action.	Introduced
Dutch elm Disease <i>(Ophiostoma novo-ulmi)</i>	Elm	This fungal wilt disease causes rapid die back and death of elms. This virulent strain introduced in the 1970's has killed around 23 million elms.	The disease is still active killing elm species that initially showed resistance to the disease and also regrowth from elm suckers arising from the roots of infected trees removed in the past.	Introduced
Massaria Disease of London Plane <i>(Splanchnone ma platani)</i>	London plane	A Fungal pathogen mainly found on the upper side of branches causing branch failure	Only a small number of Council trees are at risk but they are prominent positions such as The Walks. If this pathogen is found in the Borough it will necessitate regular climbed inspections	Introduced

8.20 In addition to the species listed in table two there are a number of very serious pests and diseases not yet found in the UK but are affecting trees in Europe. Three examples are:

- Plane wilt (*Ceratocystis platani*) a fungal wilt disease of plane similar in effect to Dutch Elm Disease causing die back and death of plane trees,
- OQDS or Olive quick decline syndrome (*Xylella fastidiosa*) this bacterial disease has a very wide host range and while currently devastating olive groves in southern Europe is it capable of transfer to many other shrub and tree species.
- Asian longhorn Beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*). The larval stage of this large beetle is a woodborer that bores through the wood rapidly killing a wide range of tree species including the five most common species found in the Borough. A small breeding population has been found in the UK but eradicated.

8.21 Council staff will maintain a high level of training and awareness of tree pests and diseases and take prompt action to, as far as is practicable, alleviate the impact when they are discovered.

Climate Change

8.22 The likely effects of climate change, caused by anthropogenic carbon emissions which are enhancing the greenhouse effect of the upper atmosphere, are widely predicted to be as follows;

- Increased summer temperatures and possible drought conditions; summer temperatures are expected to rise by 4.2° 2080.
- Possible more frequent storm events; heavy rain days with rainfall > 25 mm will be between 2 and 3.5 times more frequent by 2080.
- Higher wind speeds.
- Greater potential for flooding
- Higher levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.
- Increased numbers of tree pathogens and insect pests.

8.23 Measures to both mitigate and adapt to these predicted effects of climate change will be incorporated into the strategy wherever possible.

8.24 The magnitude and rate of predicted climate change means that trees and woodlands could be significantly affected. Adaptation is therefore an important issue and should be addressed at the earliest opportunity. This is particularly important, because of the long time-frame associated with any management decisions made in tree and woodland management. The difficulty for the Council is ensuring that decisions made now, particularly over planting choices, are appropriate to both the current and future climate.

8.25 Initially, the impact of climate change is likely to be most serious and apparent in southern England. Young and newly established trees, together with street trees and trees in hedgerows are likely to be the first affected. Mortality will increase and species suitability will change, therefore it is important to consider the planting stock in adapting to climate change. Recent research into drought resistance of urban trees and the search for new and lesser known species with drought resistance will be considered when making decisions on species choice.

- 8.26 It is well documented that trees offer significant benefits of removing CO₂ from the atmosphere through photosynthesis. This CO₂ is bound and stored as carbon within the tree. This carbon will remain locked in the timber until it is released by combustion or slow decay. Carbon is also held within the tree's foliage, roots and branches. Research has also shown that woodland soils sequester a large amount of carbon, and plant matter is the single most important source of carbon.
- 8.27 The potential for increased summer droughts and storm events will be considered in the context of trees and woodland adjoining residential areas. Where appropriate, high water demanding species and species prone to gale damage will be removed and replaced with more suitable species.
- 8.28 Natural regeneration of native species will be encouraged so that the natural genetic variation will provide a buffer against climatic variation.
- 8.29 Species known to be sensitive to drought conditions such as beech, silver birch and yew will form no more than 10% any new council planting. As better information on drought resistance species becomes available this will be made an important consideration in species selection.

9. General Policies and Priorities for Managing the Councils Trees

Legal Considerations (meeting the Council's Duty of Care)

- 9.1.1 The risk presented by trees is low. For example the Health and Safety Executive estimate the risk of death caused by a failing tree or branch is 1 in 10,000,000 which is much lower than the risks accepted by people on a day to day basis such as using the roads where the risk of death is 1 in 16,800. These low risks must also be balanced with the benefits trees provide.
- 9.1.2 The Council has a duty of care to employees and members of the public in respect of safety of the trees in its ownership. This does not mean that the Council must maintain all its trees in a safe condition. Trees are dynamic organisms, subject to the forces of nature, which can fail without showing warning symptoms and can never be classed as entirely safe. However, the Council will try to keep risks presented by trees as low as is reasonably practicable.
- 9.1.3 The most recent guidance in the Tree Health and Safety Group's "Common Sense Guide to the Management of Tree Safety" published by the Forestry Commission in 2011 sets how out a Local Authority should approach tree safety. This involves zoning areas based on the usage of the ground around the trees, working out a level of tree inspection needed, employing trained and competent staff to complete various levels of survey and recording and storing all findings on a database.
- 9.1.4 The Council has produced a Tree Risk Management Plan which forms Appendix 2 it includes all the measures recommended in current guidance. The plan has now been fully implemented with all Council trees checked on a regular cycle.

TP1 The Council will maintain its trees and woodlands in accordance with its obligations to observe duty of care and the safety of both people and property.

Priorities: TP 1.1: The regime of periodic tree inspections and data recording as set out in the Tree Risk Management Plan will be continued.

TP 1.2: Council staff will maintain a high level of training and continued professional development to ensure that tree management decisions are well founded and in line with current industry practice.

TP 1.3: The Tree and Safety Policy will be periodically reviewed.

TP 1.4: The Council's tree stock will be digitally mapped and the data entered into a data base to facilitate long term management and efficient working.

Stakeholder Involvement

- 9.1.5 It is very important that stakeholders and residents within the Borough understand the principles set out in this strategy particularly that cyclical renewal and management of trees is necessary to ensure their long term sustainability. The strategy will be widely distributed and available on line on the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk web site. It is hoped residents will be assured that the Borough trees are being sensitively and professionally managed to achieve long term sustainability. The Council would like residents to feel a sense of involvement and communal ownership and take pride in the Borough's trees, woods and greenspaces.
- 9.1.6 Before adopting the new strategy the Council will consult with a range of local organisations who will be invited to comment. These will include;
- The Local Conservation Bodies
 - Town and Parish Councils
 - Other interested groups
- 9.1.7 The Council will seek to support community based projects regarding trees, in particular to encourage schools and youth groups to become involved in the Borough's trees and woodland.
- 9.1.8 Trees and woodlands offer a variety of outdoor opportunities for recreation and learning. The priority will be to provide high quality access near to where people live and work. To ensure trees and woodlands remain valued by the community, appropriate information will be made freely available. An example of this in action is the 'Walks Tree Trail' available on line
- 9.1.9 Partnership working promotes community involvement and so links to existing partners will be strengthened and new ones established by providing advice and support to communities with plans to plant and maintain their own trees. An example of this type of partnership is the 'Street trees for Lynn project' established by the Borough Council in conjunction with the Civic Society and Groundwork Art Gallery. Partnerships can help support applications for funding from organisations such as The Woodland Trust.

- 9.1.10 The planning process is a source of possible funding for new trees through Section 106 Agreements and allocation of a proportion of CIL payments. The Council will, where practicable, work with a range of commercial partners to provide trees woodland and green space across the Borough.
- 9.1.11 All queries on tree matters will be promptly responded to and residents views given due consideration. When making management decisions, it may not always be possible to comply with resident's wishes in respect of neighbouring trees.
- 9.1.12 The Council are committed to ensuring that, when undertaking tree work, local residents are kept informed. Notice of significant works will be published on the Council Website and, where

TP 2: The Council will encourage a better understanding of tree and woodland management and in so doing promote community involvement.

Priorities:

TP 2.1: The Council will seek to disseminate information on its tree and woodland activities as widely as possible.

TP 2.2: The aim will be to support and maximise community involvement in the Borough trees and woodlands

appropriate, notices will be posted on or near the site.

Natural Environment

- 9.1.13 The council owns 138 ha of woodland and green space which will be managed as a multi-functional resource, delivering a wide range of environmental benefits. Trees and woodlands are a very important part of this and play a vital role
- 9.1.14 Woodlands, especially old trees and ancient woodlands, are amongst our richest habitats. The highest levels of biodiversity are often found in woodlands that are actively and sensitively managed. Their diversity is even greater when they form part of a mixed landscape in close proximity to other features such as ponds, grasslands and even residential gardens. Hedgerows linking woodlands act as wildlife corridors and so greatly promote the extent and range of wildlife. In order to protect this ecological asset an evaluation will be given to the sensitivity of the species and habitats identified to ensure public access remains appropriate, without harming the biodiversity interest.
- 9.1.15 The challenge in the future will be to maintain and enhance diversity. Planning and management needs to be aimed at providing a natural environment which is resilient to climate change. Climate change will impact on the range of native wild plants and animals and hence the character of our woods.
- 9.1.16 The presence of invasive non-native species such as Japanese Knotweed on Council land will be will be addressed

TP 3: The Council will ensure that its trees and woodlands are managed with due regard to the wildlife and conservation benefits that they provide

Priorities:

TP 3.1: The Council will work within all BAP and HAP targets and other national advice and guidelines on habitat conservation when undertaking tree management.

TP 3.2: Works, as far as is practicable, will be timed to limit disturbance to wild life particularly nesting birds and bats. If urgent work is necessary in sensitive periods this will only be undertaken in the light of the Councils ecological protocols and advice.

10. Policies and Priorities for the Management of Council Owned Trees

10.1 The Council's tree stocks can be divided into three main categories as follows:

- Trees in Parks and Open Spaces: These are frequently the trees of greatest local significance and provide maximum visual amenity for both residents and visitors.
- Trees in cemeteries, including Mintlyn Crematorium grounds. These areas have a high proportion of mature trees and are important in the landscape. They provide recreation opportunities and space for quiet contemplation.
- Trees in Residential Areas: which are planted in pavements or road verges. These help to filter traffic pollution, provide shade for car parking and improve the overall appearance of the street scene. Trees in residential areas are mainly trees growing around 1960's housing estates built when the town was expanding to accommodate London overspill.
- Village Trees in rural west Norfolk: the Council has 22 ha of green space. The small towns and villages have a unique character to which the trees make a significant contribution.
- New and Replacement Planting: The policies and priorities in respect of new and replacement planting are a key element of this strategy and decisions made now will have a bearing on the future resilience and sustainability of the tree cover in the Borough.

Each category of tree cover is assessed below and the specific policies and priorities that relate to them are detailed.

Trees in Parks and Open Spaces

10.2 The mature trees in the Borough's parks and green space will be conserved and carefully maintained by the Council taking full consideration of their historical and landscape importance. Management will ensure that the benefits they provide are sustainable in the long term by means of replacement and enrichment planting as required.

10.3 Over mature trees will be preserved and managed to reduce the risk to the public. Where possible alternative solutions such as rerouting paths and moving benches will be considered before deciding to fell a tree in a potentially dangerous condition.

10.4 Where open spaces contain areas of short grass. These areas provide potential for extending tree woodland planting. Research within The Woodland Trust's "Trees or Turf" report aims to

demonstrate that management of woodlands could be markedly cheaper than maintaining some types of grassland. By creating small woodlands on such amenity grassland opportunities for wildlife can be promoted in addition to landscape enhancement

Policy TP4: To conserve and maintain tree cover within the Borough's parks and open spaces

Priorities:

TP4.1: To replace all trees lost due to the incidence of pests and diseases, gale damage or health and safety considerations on a one for one basis.

TP 4.2: To carry out new tree planting in anticipation of the need to replace older tree stocks in the future. Working in a phased way rather than causing large amounts of disturbance and change to the landscape of the park in one operation.

TP 4.3: To increase diversity by planting species that do not feature in the existing list of species (Appendix 3).

TP.4.4: To ensure that management work takes into consideration the sensitivities of the residents who use and care about the parks. In particular ensure that the reasons for particular operations are explained to the public before commencement.

TP 4.5: To maximise arboricultural interest by planting a proportion of rare specimen trees from temperate areas of the world.

Trees in Cemeteries and Mintlyn Crematorium

- 10.5 The trees within the cemeteries include mature and overmature specimens. These areas need new planting to be carried out to ensure that tree cover is sustained into the future
- 10.6 Tree planting must respect the historic, monuments and maintain the character of the area. For example, conifers were a feature of Victorian Cemeteries therefore a proportion of any new

The Policy TP5 The Council will manage trees within the cemeteries and crematorium grounds in a way that respects the setting and ensures that tree cover is sustainable.

TP5.1 Carry out new planting in the Victorian Cemeteries to ensure continuity of tree cover in particular using species that will ultimately be of similar stature to the existing tree cover. The Aim is to plant 1% of the existing cover by number each year and replace any failures on a one for one basis.

TP5.2 Selectively thin the woods, surrounding Mintlyn crematorium to allow proper development of the better trees and enrichment and under planting for added amenity.

TP5.3 New planting in Mintlyn to be specially selected to provide a range of seasonal interest and colour

planting should include appropriate conifers such as yew, cypress and cedar.

- 10.7 Mintlyn crematorium is set in mature woodland. The prime of management aim will be to enhance the visual amenity of the site.

Trees in Residential Areas

- 10.7.1 Council owned trees in residential areas provide considerable local amenity but other than carrying out health and safety work have historically receive little management.
- 10.7.2 A large proportion of public sector housing in the Borough was built by the in the 1960's tree and shrub planting areas include individual trees and tree groups. These enhance the environment and are very important to the quality of life for the residents. However, as the trees mature, design faults such as planting trees too close to buildings and each other and selecting inappropriate

Policy TP6 – To maintain and increase tree cover in residential areas in particular increasing the species and age diversity of the trees

Priorities

TP 6.1: To carry out a scoping survey of council trees in residential areas identifying potential sites for new planting tree planting and areas where existing trees need management or rationalisation.

TP 6.2: To plant new trees in appropriate sites,

TP 6.3 To address problems caused by unsuitable species planted too close to buildings and in inappropriate situations by tree removal and replacement planting as necessary.

species for a given situation become evident.

Woodlands

- 10.8 The total woodland holding is 9 ha
- 10.8.1 The council will manage its woodlands on a continuous cover basis not clear felling but maintaining the woods in the landscape and regenerating them by enrichment planting and natural regeneration.
- 10.8.2 Where necessary thinning will be carried out to allow proper development and provide light to reach the woodland floor.

Policy TP 7: The Council will aim to achieve sustainable management of its woodlands and to preserve and improve wildlife habitats.

Priorities:

TP 7.1: Prepare a Woodland Management Plan for all Council owned woodlands outlining work required in the next 20 years period.

TP. 7.2: The woodland management proposals will take full account of the wildlife habitats and be based on a separate ecological evaluation of the woodlands,

TP 7.3: As far as is consistent with TP 6.2 seek to improve public access and the potential for recreational use of the areas.

TP 7.4: The Council will monitor the impact of impact of ash dieback on its woodlands and take all necessary measures to maintain the integrity and conservation value of the areas.

Village and Rural Trees

- 10.8.3 Many of the trees in the villages and rural areas are privately owned. The Council has responsibly for a relatively small number of trees in these areas. However, it is recognised that they make a significant contribution the local landscape
- 10.8.4 Distinctive village scenes can be maintained by the use of native species which will be prioritised within locations where appropriate i.e. rural verges. In certain village locations the use of non-native stock may be considered where site restrictions or the surrounding landscape dictates. For the foreseeable future planting of ash will be avoided.
- 10.8.5 Many trees have been planted by village communities. Where possible, the Council will help facilitate such activity by offering suitable planting locations on Council owned land.
- 10.8.6 The Council will fulfil its duty of care in respect of Council owned trees in villages which will be surveyed in line with the Tree Risk Management Plan.

Policy TP8: The Council will preserve and effectively manage village and rural trees in its ownership.

Priorities:

TP8.1: To ensure that .all Council owned trees in small towns and villages receive periodic inspection in line with the Tree Risk Management Plan.

TP 8.2: To replace all trees which are removed in these areas and attempt to expand tree cover if appropriate. Planting of low maintenance bare rooted whips with appropriate guards will be favoured over larger planting stock.

TP.8.3: To re-plant using suitable native tree species except where this would not be in keeping with the local landscape character.

New and Replacement Planting

- 10.8.7 A key aim of this strategy is to increase the numbers of trees within the Borough by both new and replacement planting. The target is to increase canopy cover overall to at least the notational average of 18%. Opportunities to improve wildlife habitats and connectivity between woods and tree groups will also be a major consideration in setting out new planting areas.
- 10.8.8 Trees as living organisms have a finite life expectancy. Whilst relatively long-lived, the stress of the urban environment significantly shortens their life span. Hence the need for regeneration and renewal is paramount.
- 10.8.9 The expansion of tree cover will be on a planned basis. To build in resilience to pests and diseases, planting stock will be selected from a wide range of genera and species. The guiding principle for new planting will be using no more than 10% of the same species, no more than 20% of the same genus and no more than 30% from the same plant family. However, this principle must be balanced with other factors such as site conditions and design criteria. There is a limited range of native tree species (approximately 35 species excluding micro species drawn from 21 genera and 11 plant families) therefore where ecological considerations dictate that native species are used it will be more difficult to achieve the desired variation.
- 10.8.10 While the aim is to produce a more even spread of trees across the Borough, not all benefits can be provided in one location and the benefits that are most important to the locality will be the focus for both new and replacement planting.
- 10.8.11 Council trees that are removed for any reason will be replaced on a one for one basis. However, replacements may be allocated elsewhere in the area.
- 10.8.12 Many of the problems encountered during the daily management of the Borough's trees can be directly attributed to the inappropriate choice of species at the time of planting. Greatest long term economic savings in tree management can be achieved by ensuring a tree is suitable for its proposed planting area and that this policy is followed every time a new or replacement tree is selected and planted.
- 10.8.13 Deciding which tree species to plant will take account of a range of factors beyond purely ornamental or conservation values. Trees must be selected in the light of the need for resilience to changes caused by climate change in particular drought resistance. Some diseases such as Ash dieback and Dutch elm disease will be a major limiting factor for the use of certain species or genera.
- 10.8.14 Planting is only the first stage in the process of planted trees achieving independence in the landscape. Well drafted planting specifications will ensure healthy trees are established, failures minimised, and defects, which could affect the mature condition of the tree, removed at the time which is most cost effective.
- 10.8.15 A tree requires space in which to grow, if it is to thrive and provide its many positive benefits. To achieve this any proposed site should provide adequate space for both the tree and, most importantly, its root system to develop in the long-term. Species selection must be with consideration to the tree's likely ultimate size.

10.8.16 The constraints of the urban environment can make the enlargement of woodland and other habitats impractical. With fore-planning and management of open spaces and gardens that border these sites, effective buffers and extensions can be created.

10.8.17 In the urban parts of King's Lynn insufficient planting space is a serious constraint and in order to increase the tree cover. In these areas the focus will be on locating preparing suitable sites to ensure roots have sufficient space to allow proper development of the tree. Small numbers of well planted feature trees will be used in these areas.

10.8.18 In areas where publicly owned sites are not available planting on adjacent privately owned sites will be encouraged. The Council will offer guidance and advice where proposed planting would have a direct benefit to the local environment.

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Policy TP9: The Council will encourage an increase in tree cover by new and replacement planting, placing great emphasis on use of appropriate tree species.

Priorities:

TP 9.1: To develop a planting plan identifying specific potential tree planting sites throughout the Borough, including consultation with other council departments and stakeholders

TP 9.2: Allocate a percentage of the total tree budget to fund the replacement of trees in inappropriate situations

TP 9.3: As and when the prospect arises, to work with other organisations to secure additional funding streams for the establishment and management of tree stocks.

TP 9.4: To pay careful attention to the site conditions in particular providing sufficient space for root development.

TP 9.5: To ensure that all planting stock used, of whatever type, is healthy and has a well formed root structure. Imported plants must have spent at least one growing season in the UK and be free from pests and diseases.

TP 9.6: To ensure all newly planted trees achieve independence in the landscape by virtue of a sustained programme of maintenance.

TP 9.7: Where possible reduce the tree maintenance commitment by the use of smaller planting stock that will establish quickly and require less attention.

TP 9.8 In urban Kings Lynn the emphasis will be on planting small numbers of high quality Heavy Standard trees planted in carefully prepared sites. The target will be six trees per year over the strategy period.

11. Summary of the Key Elements of the Strategy

- 11.1.1 This strategy highlights the immense value of the Borough's urban forest to the wellbeing of its residents and the substantial contribution it makes to the Borough's sustainable future.
- 11.1.2 Considerable progress has been made to put systems in place to manage the Borough's trees and woodlands, particularly the steps that have been taken to fulfil the Council's duty of care in respect of health and safety. The new strategy builds on these achievements.
- 11.1.3 The focus for the ten year period of this new strategy is consolidation of the Council's trees stocks in particular making provision for the long term renewal in the light of the ageing nature of the tree stocks
- 11.1.4 The tree stock must be carefully managed to provide a degree of resilience to both imported pests and diseases and the climate change.
- 11.1.5 The expansion of the urban forest will be a priority to ensure that the ecosystem services can be maintained to meet the needs of a growing population. However, this will be carefully planned and

targeted. The aim to increase canopy cover towards the national average will be over a period of at least ten years.

11.1.6 Development in the Borough presents both challenges and opportunities for its tree cover. The Council will seek to ensure suitable trees are retained on development sites and commensurate and appropriate provision is made for new tree planting and green space.

11.1.7 It is hoped that both stakeholders and residents of the Borough will appreciate that the urban forest requires careful management to thrive and provide the considerable benefits of which it is capable. The Council's policies and priorities contained in this strategy represent a commitment to sustainable management of the Borough's trees for both the existing and future generations.

12. Review and Performance Indicators

12.1 The period of the strategy is ten years after which it will be revised. At the five year point the progress will reviewed to ensure that sufficient progress is being made towards the key policies and that any changes of circumstances are accommodated.

12.2 The key performance indicators will be achieving the targets for new tree planting and increasing the canopy cover in Kings Lynn.

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14. Glossary of Terms

Ancient Trees – Trees significantly older, and often larger in girth, than the general tree population providing a rich variety of habitats for wildlife.

Ancient Woodlands – Woodland thought to have been in existence since at least 1600 and designated on the Natural England register of ancient woodlands.

Canopy Cover – The area of ground occupied (covered) by the overall branch spread of trees normally expressed as a percentage of the total land area;

Ecosystem disservices – Trees can cause problems in urban conditions particularly when growing in close association with roads, railways and buildings. Trees can also have negative effects on the urban atmosphere for example roadside trees trapping polluting gasses under the canopy. However, most researchers see the net effect of trees on the atmosphere as positive.

Ecosystem Services – Services provided by trees and vegetation that contribute to the quality of the environment such as their capacity to sequester carbon from the atmosphere, reduce surface water runoff and reduce air pollution.

Heat Island Effect – Urban areas are warmer than the surrounding countryside by virtue of the concentrated activities their population particularly energy use. Hard surfaces store thermal energy and release it slowly keeping up night time temperatures. In heat waves urban conditions can lead to even higher temperatures.

High Water Demand Trees – Trees that take up large amounts of water from the soil in comparison to other species with a lesser capacity to extract water.

Mature trees – Trees in the second third of their life cycle and still growing strongly.

Natural Regeneration – Young self-sown trees derived from naturally distributed seed produced by nearby trees.

Newly planted trees – Trees that require regular maintenance and have yet to become established in the landscape.

Over mature trees – Trees in the final third of their life expectancy and beginning to decline with very slow growth rates or signs of natural retrenchment (bare dead branches in the upper crown with a healthy but reduced crown at a lower level)

Pollarding – A traditional management technique often used in deer parks and wood pasture which involves cutting off the tree at a height of around 3 to 4 m on a cyclical basis to provide firewood and small poles; the regrowth is then safe from browsing livestock and deer. In an urban situation pollarding is often used to control the crown spread of trees and reduce the water demand. Cyclically reducing trees to a low framework of branches is a form of pollarding. Some species are particularly tolerant of this treatment such as lime, London plane and willow.

Semi Mature Trees – Trees in the first third of their life cycle and growing strongly.

SUDS – Acronym for Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes which allow for natural drainage of water runoff from roofs and hard surfaces into the ground, rather than directing runoff into the sewerage and main drainage systems.

Structured Soils – Specially formed soils that can be compacted but still allow root growth and water percolation. Normal structural soils have a high percentage of sand and gravels.

Tree Stocks – The total of Council owned trees.

Urban Forest – All trees and woody vegetation which grow within a town or city collectively form the urban forest regardless of ownership.

Veteran Trees – Traditionally, trees with the same characteristics as given for ancient trees. However, more recently, the term has been expanded to include trees of any age that have features that support wildlife such as splits, cracks, holes and dead wood.

Wet Woodlands – Woodland growing on soils subject to seasonal waterlogging often in river valleys and adjacent to watercourses. Common species in wet woodlands include alder, willow, aspen and birch.

Whips – Transplanted and bare rooted nursery stock 60 cm to 1.2 m.

Young Trees – Recently established trees that have achieved independence in the landscape.

POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Environment and Community Panel		
DATE:	4 July 2017		
TITLE:	Homelessness Review		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Review and Update		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Cllr Adrian Lawrence		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Sheila Farley		
OPEN/EXEMPT	OPEN	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	Not at this stage. The subject of homelessness and a new Strategy may be brought forward in next 12 months

REPORT SUMMARY/COVER PAGE

PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:
<p>The Homelessness Strategy 2015 – 2019 identified that there should be an annual review. This report reviews the significant issues and changes since April 2016 as well as looking at challenges ahead</p>
KEY ISSUES:
<p>Review and update of previously agreed Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan.</p>
OPTIONS CONSIDERED:
N/A.
RECOMMENDATIONS:
N/A
REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:
N/A

REPORT DETAIL

1. Introduction

The Homelessness Strategy 2015 – 2019 identified that there should be an annual review.

This report reviews the significant issues and changes since April 2016 as well as looking at challenges ahead and is supported by 3 appendices

1. A review of current issues related to homelessness in BCKLWN, future threats and potential solutions
2. A review of homelessness trends
3. A review of the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

This report reviews the situation as at June 2017. Situations can develop and change over time and Officers will continue to monitor changes and trends

2. Review

Developments and trends

There was a significant rise in homelessness applications and decisions in 2013-14 This pressure has continued as well as the complexity of issues amongst those people presenting as homeless. Positive work has been undertaken in relation to partnership working, commissioning new services and changes in our approach.

Nonetheless, significant challenges remain and new ones are imminent. These are detailed in the report and Appendix 1.

Rough sleeping

There has been a unprecedented rise in the number of people rough sleeping – from 5 to 42 reported to DCLG in November 2016.

This is especially difficult for the Council as there is not a specialist service for rough sleepers in the area. Instances of rough sleeping are considered on a case by case basis, having regard to individual needs. Solutions using existing services and emergency beds are utilised whenever possible. However, rough sleepers may not wish to engage with the council or other services nor take up offers of emergency accommodation.

Progress is being made in exploring the possibility of a joint funded outreach service.

Temporary accommodation

The high demand and lack of available settled accommodation led to an increase in the use of temporary accommodation including doubling the use of bed and breakfast (including outside the Borough) between August and November 2016 .

This situation has now improved but could re-occur if we have a duty to accommodate a household and all other avenues have been exhausted.

Future challenges

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The most significant impact in the future year will be the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which is expected to be implemented in April 2018. There will be significant changes and expansion of our duties including

- Duty towards homeless households and those threatened with homelessness changing from 28 days to 56 day,
- Duty to provide meaningful advice and information, Personal Housing Action Plan for all, prevent and relieve homelessness
- Council to be open to more challenges from clients about advice provided and decisions made
- Duty of public bodies to refer a (potentially) homeless person to a local housing authority (e.g. BCKLWN)

Welfare reform

The welfare reform agenda will continue to impact on households. The most significant will be the roll out of Universal Credit in the area. The transition to Universal Credit has not been smooth in some areas. The Council is working with DWP to benefit from those experiences and use feedback to frame our local implementation.

Housing related support and supported accommodation

There are ongoing and significant reductions in the former Supporting People funding (NCC) and services are being de-commissioned. This Council is assessing local priorities and reviewing services in order to develop proposals and funding with partners to re-commission or develop new services.

Temporary accommodation

There will be an ongoing need for temporary accommodation. The Council is developing 7 further units of temporary accommodation and a further 14 flexible units. The cost of temporary accommodation to the Council may also increase due to potential changes with the implementation of Universal Credit.

3. Issues for the Panel to Consider

For information, awareness and comment as detailed in the report

4. Corporate Priorities

The Homelessness Review does not bring forward any specific proposals. The Homelessness Service is business critical to the Council

5. Financial Implications

None specifically arising from this review

6. Any other Implications/Risks

None specifically arising from this review

7. Equal Opportunity Considerations

None specifically arising from this review

8. Consultation

The original Homelessness Strategy was subject to wide consultation. This report brings forward a review of progress, current and future issues.

9. Conclusion

Whilst much has been done to develop the Council's approach and response to homelessness, there are significant and unprecedented challenges ahead with change and extension of our homelessness responsibility, some of the most fundamental changes to welfare benefit and housing subsidy systems and continuing pressure on housing.

As a consequence, it is likely that a fundamental review or new Homelessness Strategy will need to be developed within the next 12 months – dependant on issues such as the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This would include an Action Plan identifying tasks and targets from 2018/19.

10. Background Papers

Report to ECP 6 July 2016

Environment and Community Panel 4 July 2017

HOMELESSNESS REVIEW Appendix 1

Positive issues and changes – what has worked well

Provision of accommodation

- Good working relationship around accessing Emergency Direct Action Beds with Merchants Terrace (Genesis Housing).
- Development of training houses that accommodate and support vulnerable single homeless people. These are a partnership between The Purfleet Trust, Freebridge Community Housing and the Borough Council. There is also a shared house provided and managed by Broadland Housing.
- Preparatory work and planning for provision of temporary and rented accommodation via the Council, Local Housing Company and partners

Our approach

- Use of Homelessness Prevention Fund to prevent homelessness by e.g. assisting with rent deposits / rent in advance, reducing rent arrears, travel to an area of safety or reconnection to an area where accommodation is available.
- IAA (Insecure Accommodation Award) to help people access housing through the housing register before they lose their home and become homeless.
- Introduction of new software system to i) support advice, self help ii) direct officer time to preventing homelessness and assessment of cases, iii) case management iv) reducing information input and double entry v) monitoring temporary accommodation vi) enhanced reporting tools including automatic production of P1E Government statistical return
- Revising working arrangements to prioritise responses and focus officer time on advice by developing early, more detailed information from clients, phone interviews
- Managing expectations - Providing earlier, clearer reality about demand for social housing
- Interventions and discussions with those that wish to exclude household members e.g. sons and daughters
- Targeted visits to vulnerable people and to prevent exclusions
- Improved monitoring of temporary accommodation – software system, hostels meetings

Working in partnership

- Tenancy sustainment work - Preventing eviction from housing association properties through partnership working with Stonham Homestay (tenancy support service), Freebridge Community Housing and the Borough Council.

- Continued and developing emphasis on multi-agency working
- Commissioning of housing, debt and generalist advice services
- Work with domestic abuse agencies such as Leeway Domestic Abuse Service including a drop in service with the Borough Council Offices and a telephone service covering West Norfolk.
- Joint work with Police and Immigration Service to respond to rough sleeping and any associated criminal activity to people with no recourse to public funds
- Working in partnership with the Purfleet Trust which delivers training, washing, meals via their Pathways Centre and a commissioned intensive support service.
- Early intervention and planned discharge from Fermoy
- Work with Norfolk County Council Children's Services relating to young people and care leavers e.g. Jointly commissioned Housing Officer Post (Norfolk housing authorities and Norfolk County Council) to reduce the number of young people in care and to develop / facilitate appropriate housing pathways, Care Leavers Transition Panel a partnership to facilitate appropriate housing pathways.
- Multi Agency Risk Assessment Panels – working in partnership to plan for high risk people suffering domestic abuse – daily meetings
- Early Help Hub - A partnership led by Children's Services making sure that vulnerable families receive that the right support is available as soon as someone needs it – weekly meetings
- 180 scheme – A partnership led by the Police to manage priority and prolific offenders – fortnightly meetings

What hasn't worked so well

- Local housing allowance used for housing benefit increasingly below the actual cost of private renting which has been increasing – causing affordability issues and difficulty for people accessing or retaining private rented homes.
- Former tenant debt including rent arrears, court costs, damage exclude many households accessing the private rented sector (primarily) but also social housing.
- Increasing income limits for private rented homes mean even working families have issues in accessing them.
- Lettings agent fees and set up costs very high – up to £1850 for a 3 bedroomed house to be paid before a key can be turned in the door.
- Pressure of increasing rents and set up costs restricts the ability of homeless people in accessing the private rented sector.
- Issues in relation to clients with mental health issues i) changing provision/ no specialist residential accommodation ii) securing suitable accommodation including on a temporary basis for those with mental health issues

- Unprecedented increase in rough sleeping, an increase from 5 to 42 reported to DCLG in the last financial year.
- Reductions in new social housing for rent due to funding changes – capital grants and rent control in housing associations
- Increasing demand on housing options/homelessness service including larger families
- Increased use of temporary accommodation including bed and breakfast accommodation outside the West Norfolk area although reduced by year end
- Landlords personal circumstances change leading to loss of tenancy
- Short term impact of Hillington Square redevelopment as properties not available for rent – although long term investment is beneficial
- Stretched staffing resources – Homechoice and Options – especially in times of change and peaks in demand
- Unrealistic expectations of clients in relation to availability of social housing offer

Who are the excluded people with limited access to housing and associated services?

- Vulnerable groups including those with complex needs, undiagnosed mental health, domestic abuse as well as those recognised mental health needs.
- Single people under 35 with restricted housing benefit.
- Young/single individuals and those with intense support needs.
- People with high rent arrears, debts with previous landlords and general debt.
- People who are ineligible for housing assistance
- Those who are unaware of their entitlements..
- People with substance misuse issues.
- Offenders including sex offenders.

What are the barriers to finding and retaining accommodation?

- Demand for rented accommodation exceeds supply – with increasing issues in securing larger accommodation
- Lack of affordable accommodation, increasingly with housing benefit restrictions or those on a low income.
- Landlords not willing to accept tenants on benefits – this could increase with introduction of Universal Credit
- Need for housing solutions (accommodation and support) in the transition from temporary or supported accommodation to a settled home.
- High up front costs in accessing private rented homes - obtaining deposits, rent in advance, agent's fees.
- Household income and debts.

- Lifestyle – chaotic, drug use, domestic abuse, not having the skills to maintain property such as paying bills, managing money.
- Taking personal responsibility - including understanding ramifications of not adhering to tenancy rules and agreements.
- Gaps in provision of floating support e.g. no specialist young person service.

Future threats:

- Implementation of Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and changes to our duties – anticipated April 2018
- Reduction in funding opportunities for charitable/supporting/advice organisations.
- Reductions in Supporting People (Norfolk County Council) commissioned services and public sector financial constraints.
- Reduction in new rented social housing development
- Local housing allowance rates frozen until 2020 but private rents increasing.
- Housing Association allocation policy reviews for under 35 year olds who may have their housing benefit level reduced.
- Changes to supported accommodation for homeless households.
- Potential impact of Universal Credit e.g. processing delays, direct payments to claimants, budgeting, arrears, private landlords choosing not to let to let to those in receipt
- Pressure on staffing resources to help all those that require assistance if demand continues to rise and as our statutory duties expand.
- New duties on private landlords being introduced – could impact on ability to let property and lead to reduction in availability of private rented homes
- Increased costs of temporary accommodation as potentially no reclaim of costs when Universal Credit implemented

Potential Opportunities and Solutions:

Increasing supply of accommodation

- Development of more shared houses with housing associations including potential HCA funding
- Direct or indirect action to increase new suitable housing supply – including affordable such as starter homes, custom build, private rented accommodation.
- Expand the temporary accommodation offer including directly provided accommodation (7 purpose built and a further 14 flexible units) with future consideration of residential caravans and analysis potential of new accommodation models
- Review of Long Term Empty Homes Strategy including consideration of funding a scheme to bring low cost long term empty homes into use to meet housing needs where acquisition and/or remediation costs are not prohibitive

- Work with housing and housing support providers on new models of delivery.
- Investigate the business case for provision of private sector leasing schemes and/or social lettings agency – improve access and quality of accommodation and improve option of private rented sector discharge of duty

Our approach and working in partnership

- Further development of housing advice and options online – including promotion of lower cost home ownership.
- Managing expectations through communications strategy – publicity, website and through day to day discussions and correspondence
- Continue with a multi-agency approach to share information and work in partnership.
- Work within the Council and with partners to monitor the impact and promote initiatives to mitigate welfare benefit changes where possible especially Universal Credit
- More engagement with private rented sector and consideration of financial incentives or guarantees
- Review Social Housing Allocations Policy and processes in light of Homelessness Reduction Bill
- Greater involvement in Court Action User Group
- Developing a new jointly commissioned and funded Tenancy Sustainment Protocol to replace de-commissioned SP (NCC) service that reflects local priorities
- Identifying and developing an outreach service for rough sleepers in conjunction with NCC, CCG including consideration of a treatment room

Implementation of Government agenda

- Potential abolition of lettings agents costs to tenants
- Flexible Homelessness Support Grant replacing Temporary Accommodation Management Fee to be administered by council (separate report will be circulated to members in due course)
- Personal Housing Plans through homelessness reduction bill, duty to co-operate
- New Burdens Funding

Environment and Community Panel - 4 July 2017
Appendix 3 – Review of Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2015-2019

Priority 1 - Early intervention to prevent homelessness whenever possible

Action	Key tasks	Timescale	Responsibility/lead	Resources	Progress
Improve communications and awareness with public and partners – increasing awareness of realistic housing options	Undertake a review of information and communication including website and on line Housing Options	2014-15	Housing Services Operations Manager	Review to be undertaken within existing resources. On line housing options subject to costs and budget availability	Information and communications reviewed . Housing Options online developed but full implementation dependant on wider issues including impacts of Homelessness Reduction Act
	Hold 2 Housing Options Forums per year	Twice a year	Housing Options Manager	Within existing resources	Undertaken via alternative thematic forums/visits to offices

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Review best practice and seek continuous improvements	Undertake a review of ways in which services are delivered Consider developing the GOLD standard	2015-16 Ongoing	Housing Services Operations Manager	Within existing resources	Ongoing including as part of the Homeconnections Project. Changes took place in 2016/17 and will continue. Details in main report and Appendix 1
Maximise role of Homechoice scheme	Keep under review the use of Insecure Accommodation Awards Ensure the needs of (potentially) homeless people are taken into account in review of Social Housing Allocations Policy	Ongoing and as Policy is reviewed	Senior Allocations Officer	Within existing resources	Ongoing – to be further reviewed in next year due to Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
Minimise households becoming homeless at the end of Flexible (fixed term) tenancies	Develop protocols with Registered Providers in final year of Flexible (fixed term) tenancies Implement as appropriate Review Tenancy Strategy	2017/18	Housing Strategy Officer	Within existing resources	Discussions took place with key partners in June 2017 and impacts on the risk of homelessness appear to be minimal
Implementation of a multi agency	Early Help Hub is about making sure that the right	Ongoing	Housing Options Manager with	Within existing resources	Ongoing

Early Help Hub lead by Children's Services.	support is available as soon as someone needs it and reducing the need for intrusive crisis level interventions.		Norfolk County Council + partners	Any new service subject to review and budgetary provision	
Review debt and income advice for public including potential for joint commissioning, pooled funding and service re-design	Establish a baseline assessment of debt and income services in West Norfolk Scope options and map outcomes, governance and monitoring framework Review opportunities for increasing awareness in schools Commission relevant services – potentially jointly with others Monitor	2015/16	Policy & Partnership, Rev's & Bens, Housing Options Manager & Finance Team	Assessment within existing resources Changes subject to budgetary provision	Completed New services commissioned in July 2016 Ongoing monitoring will review implementation and any issues arising
Prepare for implementation of Universal Credit in West Norfolk	Co-ordinate awareness and activity through Welfare Reform Group Undertake information and awareness campaigns for public and partners	Ongoing – quarterly meetings 2015-16	Council Information Centre Manager with internal and external partners	Within existing resources	Revenues and Benefits Manager lead Ongoing Detailed plan for implementation of Universal Credit will be developed

					by 1 January 2018
Review Debt Policies with Registered Providers	Undertake a review of existing debt policies and procedures Identify impacts on homeseekers including homeless people and Registered Providers	2015-16	Senior Allocations Officer/Housing Options Manager with Registered Providers	Within existing resources	Ongoing
Review existing and introduce new tenancy sustainment protocols with partner organisations	Work with Registered Providers and support workers to review especially in relation to any changes in service or funding Involve Norfolk County Council in tenancy sustainment work at an early stage Revise in relation to impact from Universal Credit	Ongoing Ongoing 2016/17 2017/18	Housing Options Manager	Within existing resources	Under review – see main report and Appendix 1 Under review, see main report and Appendix 1

Underlying principles in day to day work

- Develop early intervention initiatives and maximise homelessness preventions through Home Options approach
- Implement discharge of duty through Private Rented Sector Offers where possible
- Consideration of Private Sector Leasing opportunities (added 2016 review)

Corporate targets – annual targets monitored quarterly

- Number of homelessness acceptances – seek to minimise
- Number of households in temporary accommodation – seek to minimise

Priority 2 - Working to ensure an appropriate supply of good quality affordable accommodation in both private and public sectors

Action	Key tasks	Timescale	Responsibility/lead	Resources	Progress
Review funding mechanisms to bring forward development – including cross-subsidy, co-investment and private investment	Continue to investigate innovative mechanisms and bring forward proposals	2015/16	Housing Strategy Officer	Review within existing resources	Actively considering new investment such as housing for rent or sale as part of Council Efficiency Plan
Explore opportunities to invest in housing using existing commuted sums and land holdings	Review following the creation of a Local Authority Housing Company	2015/16	Housing Strategy Officer	Review within existing resources	LHC inception September 2016. HCA registration nearing completion
Make best use of homes in the social sector including increasing supply of family and other homes to help prevent and	Encourage the development of under-occupation initiatives with Registered Providers Report and monitor at Homechoice Partnership meetings Review potential for de-	2015/16 Twice a year 2015/16	Senior Housing Allocations Officer Housing Strategy	Within existing resources	Ongoing

tackle homelessness	designation having regard to housing demand and turnover Review the potential for a social housing tenancy fraud initiative	2015/16	Officer Housing Service Operations Manager/Legal Service Manager with Registered Providers		Audit team lead. Detail on council website. Ongoing work once potential fraud identified. Detail and reporting mechanism on website
Deliver the empty homes scheme with Freebridge Community Housing to bring homes back into use	Achieve target of 40 homes	By 31 March 2015	Housing Development Officer	Within existing staffing resources but scheme utilising HCA and FCH funding	Achieved
Review the outcomes and opportunities arising from the Shared Housing Schemes	Set up a project group Agree outcomes and objectives Develop evidence base Produce a report and agreed actions for the future as appropriate	2016/17	Housing Services Operations Manager, Housing Strategy Officer, Housing Options Manager with partners	Project Group and assessment within existing resources Any new plans subject to resource availability	Work has been done with FCH and Purfleet Trust. This will be kept under review
Work with Freebridge Community Housing (FCH) to	Review demand and turnover for housing – by type, area and other factors	2015/16	Housing Strategy Officer (with FCH)	Within existing resources	Ongoing Enhanced information provided to FCH

review demand for housing and make best use of existing stock					regularly from Spring 2017 following implementation of new software
Secure sufficient, appropriate temporary accommodation to meet the immediate needs of homeless households	Regularly review use of temporary accommodation and move on Review models of temporary accommodation and funding e.g. temporary accommodation subsidy	Ongoing Formal review and reporting quarterly	Housing Options Manager	Review within existing resources Future development dependant on resource availability	Ongoing Reviewed and reported on monthly basis Work continues on funding streams including impact of changes or cessation of temporary accommodation subsidy – see Mainreport/Appendix 1

Underlying principles in day to day work

- Respond to any funding opportunities that come forward to develop accommodation or services and support appropriate bids – as occur
- Continue to use planning powers and housing enabling role to bring forward new affordable housing
- Work in partnership to bring forward unviable sites – all –
- Utilising new infrastructure funding streams from the HCA to help increase the supply of new housing – added 2016 Review

Corporate targets – annual targets monitored quarterly

- Number of new social housing units – seek to maximise

Priority 3 – Working together to support households with more complex needs

Action	Key tasks	Timescale	Responsibility/lead	Resources	Progress
Ensure housing pathways and protocols are agreed and reviewed with partners for key client groups	Review 16/17 year old homelessness protocol	2015/16	Housing Options Manager – with Norfolk County Council	Within existing resources	Completed
	Review intentionally homeless families protocol	2016/17	Housing Options Manager		Completed
Seek to ensure that homelessness is recognised as a priority for action with Health and Social Care partners – amended 2016 Review	Review hospital discharge protocol				Further work will be needed in light of Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
	Develop a rolling programme to review including mental health services				
Seek to ensure that homelessness is recognised as a priority for action with Health and Social Care partners – amended 2016 Review	Ensure representatives are regularly briefed	Ongoing	Housing Services Operations Manager	Within existing resources	Briefing undertaken Ongoing work channelled through JSNA
	Support the development of Joint Strategic Needs Assessment	Ongoing	Housing Strategy Officer		
	Review the need to develop a robust Evidence Base for health and homelessness	2015/16	Housing Strategy Officer		
Improved data	Develop through	Ongoing	Housing Options	Within existing	Norfolk wide and

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sharing across organisations including mental health review possibility of county wide data sharing agreement	Partnership bodies and as part of review of protocols		Manager with partners	resources	local agreements in place
Work in partnership to develop suitable housing and support for those with complex needs	Ensure representation on Supporting People Groups Review need for new specialist housing	Ongoing	Housing Services Manager Housing Strategy Officer	Within existing resources Any new development subject to available funding	Ongoing – see main report and Appendix 1
Review the impact of No Second Night Out	Review and produce a report	2016	Housing Options Manager	Within existing resources	Reports produced and to be kept under review

Underlying principles in day to day work

- Continue to work with organisations who assist with helping rough sleepers to reconnect, re-engage and leave the streets
- Respond to any funding opportunities that come forward to develop accommodation or services and support appropriate bids
- Support partnership working whenever possible and in a manner which maximises dialogue and joint work but minimises unproductive time

National data

- Undertake annual rough sleeper assessment

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2017/2018

DATE OF MEETING	TITLE	TYPE OF REPORT	LEAD OFFICER	OBJECTIVES AND DESIRED OUTCOMES
24th May 2017, 4.00pm - Tour of the Crematorium prior to the Environment and Community Panel Meeting				
24 th May 2017	Sustainability Transformation Plan – AGENDA ITEM WITHDRAWN BECAUSE OF THE PURDAH	Update	Chris Humphris and Dr Mack from the CCG	To be engaged in the STP consultation process.
24 th May 2017	Alive Leisure Update	Update	Alive Leisure	
24 th May 2017	Lily	Update	John Greenhalgh, Emma Boore, Karen Robson	
24 th May 2017	Food Waste Bin Liners	Consultation	Barry Brandford	
24 th May 2017	Appointments to Outside Bodies	Consultation	Rebecca Parker	To nominate representatives to serve on Scrutiny Outside Bodies for 2017/2018.
4 th July 2017	Homelessness Review	Review	Sheila Farley	
4 th July 2017	Demonstration on the Housing Register and how to bid for properties.	Information	Sheila Farley	As requested by a Member of the Panel.
4 th July 2017	Report from the Informal Working Group – West Norfolk Disability Forum	Policy	Informal Working Group	Report from the Informal Working Group on the future operation of the West Norfolk Disability Forum.
4 th July 2017	Tree Strategy	Policy	Chris	

		Development	Bamfield	
5 th September 2017	West Norfolk Strategy Group	Information	Becky Box	Information on the West Norfolk Strategy Group as requested by the Panel
5 th September 2017	Non Drainage Board Drainage Works	Initial Discussion	Requested by Councillor Hipperson	
5 th September 2017	Advice Services	Update	Lorraine Gore and Sarah Dennis	Last update received in January 2017 and the Panel agreed to receive six monthly updates.
10 th October 2017	Prevent	Information	John Greenhalgh	As requested at the Panel meeting in March
10 th October 2017	Community Car Scheme		John Greenhalgh	
14 th November 2017	Alive Leisure Update	Update	Alive Leisure	
4 th January 2018	Budget			
13 th February 2018				
27 th March 2018				