

DETAILED SERVICE DELIVERY AND IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

**COVERING THE FOLLOWING KEY SERVICE AREAS
(as listed in Annex A of the DCLG invitation to bid)**

1	Children's Services	
2	Highways, Roads and Transport	
3	Adult Social Care	
4	Housing Services	
5	Cultural Services	
6	Environmental Services	
7	Waste Management	
8	Regulatory Services (including Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Licensing)	
9	Air Quality	
10	Planning and Development	
11	Fire and Rescue	
12	Economic Development	
13	Corporate Services	
14	ICT and Business Transformation	
15	Local Tax Collection and Benefits	
16	Pensions	
17	Trading Accounts	

1 Children's Services

This section of the proposal covers all services for children, including children's social care, Early Years provision, Education at all phases, learning and other partnership arrangements for the benefit of children and young people.

1 The national picture

'Every Child Matters' and the subsequent legislation have set the direction for Children's Services. The new authority must achieve outcomes under the 5 priorities:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Economic well-being

To achieve these objectives, a holistic and partnership approach is essential, involving children and young people, their parents, school staff and governors, social care, Learning and Skills Council, the Primary Care Trust and health providers, other statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector. Social care has an important contribution to make in increasing the life chances of children in need, those at risk, support to families and in providing care to Looked After Children. It will be essential that the new authority has robust systems in place to address all safeguarding issues and to learn the lessons from national reports such as the Victoria Climbié Inquiry.

A particular emphasis should be placed on the development of high quality early years provision that offers parents and the local community accessible multi-disciplinary services in neighbourhood venues to reduce inequalities and provide high quality provision for families on lower incomes and those with disabled children, in line with the Childcare Act.

The national context recognises the central role of schools in helping to achieve the Every Child Matters priorities within a context where schools act both as self-governing organisations and, in the most successful examples, as collaborative partnerships with the Local Authority and with other schools in the geographical area.

We will shape our services in line with guidance and research which highlights the inter-relationship of services within the Local Authority and from partner organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. For example the recent Children's Services Network report 'More than the Sum – mobilising the whole Council and its Partners' with the emphasis on engaging Housing, Police, local businesses etc in the children's agenda, with mutual benefits for all organisations.

We will take account of other relevant legislation and guidance, namely:

- The Childcare Act
- The Schools' White Paper and Education and Inspection Act
- The Youth Green Paper and the response to consultation, Youth Matters
- The Bichard Bill
- The Adoption Bill
- The Respect Agenda
- The Children in Care Green Paper
- Working Together.

2 Local vision and priorities

Our vision is to achieve better outcomes for all children and to narrow the gaps between disadvantaged children and other children. We will do this by:

- Building services around the needs of the child.
- Supporting parents and carers.
- Promoting prevention and early intervention.
- Making services work more effectively together.
- Ensuring universal, specialist and targeted services are integrated.

We will develop and deliver services in partnership with other organisations to meet the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes with a focus on meeting the specific needs of Norwich children and families and raising aspirations. We will act as a 'learning organisation' disseminating best practice locally and ensuring that we learn from our mistakes. The new authority will adopt a whole Council approach, scrutinising the impact on children of decisions that lie outside the remit of traditional children's services.

Safe and consistent services will support children and young people at risk and those in need. Looked After Children (LAC) will be assisted to return to their families but where this is not possible, high quality care will be provided, usually in foster homes and within the authority wherever possible and where it is in the child's best interests. More support to families will reduce the number of children on the child protection register and in care.

An emphasis on early intervention and preventative services will be a high priority, to be taken forward through multi-disciplinary early year teams from Council and partner agencies in neighbourhood locations. We will ensure that the authority's childcare responsibilities will be central to the city's priorities, by ensuring high standards of childcare, driving forward the provision of sufficient and flexible childcare for working parents and arranging for high quality advice and support to be available for childcare providers. We will be proactive in seeking innovative ways of reaching parents who might otherwise have difficulty accessing information. Also at the centre of our policy will be the development of a City-wide network of extended schools, operating on a

cluster basis to commission services tailor-made to the needs of different areas of the City.

Support for schools will be focused on raising standards at all key stages, with a particular focus on under-achieving schools and on Key Stages 2 and 4. The reduction of absence rates, especially in the secondary sector will be a priority.

More effective commissioning between the City Council and the Primary Care Trust will reduce the number of specialist school placements at a distance from Norwich and focus resources upon building capacity to include a wider range of children in local schools.

3 Strengths and weaknesses of current delivery

Current strengths for Education provision county-wide, as set out for example in the 2006 Annual Performance Assessment of Services for Children and Young People in Norfolk, include:

- Very good support for schools particularly those in special measures.
- Good early years and Key Stage 1 provision.
- Good progress in Key Stage 3.
- Good analysis of assessment data leading to effective interventions.
- Improved outcomes for looked after children.

However, other data relating specifically to Norwich indicates concerns about:

- **Achievement at Key Stage 2**, which has been consistently below both the Norfolk and the national figures for each year over the past decade in all three subjects (English, Mathematics and Science). Norwich's figures have improved over the past decade but the gap has not reduced. Most recent data for 2006 show that Norfolk's figures have gone down slightly compared with the previous year, resulting in a national position of 107th out of 150 authorities. Whilst there is a range of achievement in Norwich primary schools, the figures for 2006 indicate that several schools in the city are amongst the lower achieving schools across the county.
- **Achievement at Key Stage 4**. The 2005 headline figure is that 45.8% of students in schools in Norwich District achieved 5+A-C grades at GCSE compared with 52.4% in Norfolk and 56.3% nationally.
- **Post 16 attainment**, which is also below the national average and there is a need for more vocational education.
- **Value added data for secondary schools**, i.e. the extent to which schools make progress with students between Key Stages 3 and 4. This indicates that all Norwich schools are below the national average for value-added.

- **Absence rates**, which are high at secondary schools, ranging in 2005 from 7.6% in one school to 14.6 in the school with the highest absence rate.
- Lack of consistent **alternative educational provision** for children not attending school.
- The number of **students 16-19 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)** was 10% last year, with 5 wards in the city amongst the weakest wards in Norfolk.
- **Low levels of attainment at GCSE by looked after children** in Norfolk (44.6% with 1 or more A* -G grades compared to 49.6% nationally and 92.6% by other children in Norfolk schools; 4.8% with 5 or more A*-C grades compared to 7.2% nationally and 51.3% by other children in Norfolk schools.)
- **Need for dissemination of good models of improved leadership and management** with effective interventions to raise standards.

Under current provision the number of Looked After Children (LAC) is 10% higher than in comparable areas. 70% of LAC are in care because of court orders. This is because of the lack of family support services, especially at an early age, the failure to develop effective partnership working and the lack of alternative services in the community.

The number of children and young people on the child protection register is also too high for the same reasons.

Although 80% of LAC are in foster homes (the average proportion), too many Norwich children are placed outside the city. Greater effort is needed to recruit foster carers within Norwich.

4 Future model: Day 1 of the unitary authority

From the outset, the new Children's Services will have approved policies and procedures that provide service continuity and minimise risk. The Local Safeguarding Board, with senior and wide-ranging multi-agency representation, will have a vision for the City that strengthens and develops preventative services through partnership work. The Safeguarding Board will ensure that all aspects of safeguarding, including the most critical child protection issues, are dealt with rigorously and collaboratively with a clear focus on children's needs being at the centre of all activities and decisions. A Children's and Young People's Partnership, which will eventually provide the basis of a Children's Trust will oversee the development and implementation of a Children and Young People's Plan.

Plans will already be in place to:

- Recruit more local foster carers and improve after care arrangements for young people leaving care.
- Learn from other authorities about best practice in children's services, building on the experience of authorities such as Knowsley, Telford and Wrekin, Gateshead, Leeds and Hartlepool and for specific groups, e.g. provision for looked after children, replicating and extending innovative approaches from authorities such as Slough.
- Develop local early year's services and partnerships with clusters of schools to provide more holistic services.
- Establish new mechanisms to hear the voices of Norwich children and young people within the democratic process such as through e-based opportunities.

A great deal of attention will be given to identifying pathways between different services and agreeing thresholds across universal, targeted and specialist services. Particular attention will be paid to securing smooth transitions between Children's and Adult services. The new Council will learn from the experience of other unitary authorities in the effective implementation of the Common Assessment Framework, Lead Professional Roles and sustained integrated working at a local level.

Schools will be central to the changed approach to Children's Services, relishing their enhanced role within the smaller network of Norwich schools rather than the much larger County system. They will quickly be able to appreciate the difference that their contributions will make and will feel that they are a key driving force for shaping provision for children and young people in the City. To provide schools with a leadership role in school improvement, soon after the setting up of the unitary authority we will establish a Schools' Improvement Board. This Board will focus particularly on primary schools but will also make relevant links with secondary schools. It will feed in to the Council's democratic structures via the Executive member with responsibility for Schools Improvement.

The schools' improvement agenda will include making links between high performing and less well performing schools, especially at primary school level to lift overall standards, building on the successful achievements of local schools such as Notre Dame. The unitary authority will establish an officer team to support school improvement, which will emphasise signposting of schools to sites of good practice and quality assuring any organisations which offer initiatives or support for schools to commission. We will encourage schools to develop specialisms and to share good practice.

The existing areas of co-operation between high schools, e.g. on the 14-19 agenda, will be taken forward by the setting up of a Learning Partnership. The Learning Partnership will involve a cross-section of agencies (the Council, further and Higher Education, the private and voluntary sectors, etc.) and will be charged with co-ordinating post-14 education, making links between businesses and schools, and tackling low aspirations in relation to education, adult education and life-long learning. It will develop innovative ways of delivering education and learning activities, disseminating and

building on good practice from each of the specialist schools, benefiting from the contribution of health and cultural provision and maximising the active participation of the planned Academy. The Partnership will work closely with the Schools Improvement Board (see above).

The extended schools agenda will be at the heart of the development of our children's services. We will be seeking to provide multi-agency, child-centred services on school sites, extending the range of activities for pupils beyond the school day and opening schools for families and the wider community. Raising achievement and aspirations will be a central focus of these initiatives and provision will be based on a clear understanding of the inter-related nature of adult and community learning, multi-agency co-operation and the role of schools. Links between schools (both primary and secondary) and local businesses will help to raise pupil aspirations and also promote opportunities for school-based volunteer schemes by local employees, with mutual benefits to schools and the business community.

The development of a locally based CAMHS service will be a high priority, using as a starting point the outcomes of the 2005 external review of this service area across Norfolk. We will place a particular emphasis on developing provision in conjunction with the PCT for services for young people with learning disabilities, appropriate services for 16/17 year olds, 24 hour cover for urgent needs and inter-agency protocols.

The outcomes of the current County review of provision for Special Educational Needs (SEN) will be taken forward working with the County Council to ensure coverage of the full range of SEN provision in order to meet individual needs. The aim will be to build on the skills of staff in Norwich Schools to meet the widest possible range of needs locally for all children.

The programme of setting up Children's Centres will be implemented as soon as possible, including the 2 centres already designated, with dissemination of outcomes and sharing of services across as wide a part of the City as proves effective. The centres will build on the experience of Sure Start and will extend the range of services from birth through to formal education, with integrated provision between Health, Social Care, Education and the Third (Voluntary) Sector. The emphasis will be on early intervention, preventative services, which also enhance the skills of parents and raise aspirations of their children's future educational attainments.

5 Future model: After 5 years of unitary status

In 5 years time a new model of service provision will be in operation. Many services will be reorganised on a local, neighbourhood cluster basis, arranged by groupings of schools, children's centres, extended schools and Centres of Excellence aligned with multi-agency teams. All schools will be part of one of the clusters, which will act as the core mechanism for delivering child-centred, integrated services for their local communities.

The authority will be taking a full “ages and stages” approach to provision (0-13 and 13-19) with lead professionals taking responsibility for the integration of a wide range of services. For example, the lead professionals for 0-13 services will be co-ordinating inputs from health visitors, special education needs co-ordinators, children’s centre staff, child care resources, speech and language therapist, CAMHS, GPs, school nurses, Housing, etc. Lead professionals for the 13-19 age range will be co-ordinating inputs from sources such as adolescent support services, drugs and alcohol services, youth offending services, careers services, Police, dieticians, FE colleges, etc. The neighbourhood teams will co-ordinate universal services but also targeted services such as family support and youth support. For both age ranges there will be strong links with the third sector.

The first priority of the schools and integrated front-line teams will be the children in their area. Employees will only work as professional teams with colleagues from their own disciplines for agreed purposes, e.g. policy development, training, quality assurance etc. For all other purposes their priority will be to the children and team in their area/neighbourhood. Sometimes this will entail co-location but where this is not feasible (e.g. for reasons of economy), staff will work as members of virtual teams.

Such a model will be developed on an incremental basis, starting from pilots, learning from successes before wider dissemination, and forming the basis of a Children’s Trust, which will bring together the commissioning, funding and provision of services for children within each neighbourhood. Strong partnerships will focus services on prevention and support in the community, with joint procurement arrangements for specialist services.

Some education and children’s social care services will continue to be provided on a City-wide basis, especially where specialist officers need to cover the whole authority area and any services where there is a safeguarding responsibility that must be provided on a consistent authority-wide basis. However, these services will be fully integrated (e.g. integration between LAC, Child Protection and Disability Services) both within the Council and across agencies. A Norwich Children’s Trust will be overseeing the implementation of the Children and Young People’s Plan and there will be a joint agency team involved in identifying needs and commissioning joint services.

In 5 years time, fewer children will be on the Child Protection Register and the number of LAC will be lower, with most of them living with local foster carers. More responsive and individually tailored services will be available for disabled children, children out of school and young people with mental health needs and their families.

The Learning Partnership will now be playing a greater role in co-ordinating post-14 education and direct delivery. It will be sponsoring an extensive range of mentoring and peer support activities to raise aspiration levels and will be managing a shared 14-19 education facility.

Ward members will play a key role in helping to drive forward changes in their part of the City, working with clusters of schools, children's centres, multi-disciplinary teams in order to respond to residents' local needs. They will use funding devolved on a neighbourhood basis to respond to identified priorities, including those voiced by children and young people in their wards. They will provide a challenge to and scrutinise City-wide services.

6 ICT systems

Norfolk County Council intends to procure the CareFirst client database during 2007. This is of proven benefit in many local authorities and will be adopted by the new unitary council. It will interface with schools and financial systems.

The new authority will work closely with schools to ensure that they have effective ICT systems to meet the needs of 21st century communication and data flow between the authority and schools, to support the raising of educational standards and to interface with the public on all administrative functions such as admissions, special educational needs and free school meals.

7 VFM, efficiency and procurement

VFM is about both delivering services cost-effectively and raising performance. The unitary authority will ensure that expenditure is focussed very clearly upon local needs rather than supporting the diverse needs of the county. There will also be an emphasis on providing a lean Local Authority in terms of services provided directly by the authority but accompanied by a strong enabling and signposting function to help schools, children and parents to choose appropriate kinds of high quality support and advice from a range of approved providers.

The focus on providing services locally will lead to a reduction in expensive placements outside the City and the investment in early intervention and, prevention will reduce the requirement for intensive services to a small number of children and families and, in turn, enable savings to be re-directed to early years and family support. This investment will be locally based in Norwich schools and will form part of a continuous cycle of enskilling the city's school staff so that they can in turn include a wide range of children with additional needs. Similarly, investment in the building of a network of local foster carers will assist with ongoing recruitment and improve the quality of provision for looked after children without further, additional funding.

8 Benefits of unitary status on current boundaries

Children's Services will be much more effective within an organisation that includes current City Council services such as Housing. Services will be commissioned and provided in response to assessed local need. Partnerships focused on the City will be better able to address under performance, tackle low aspirations and provide value for money services.

9 Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries

A larger financial base will be advantageous as well as the ability to draw on resources located within the Greater Norwich area.

For schools, particularly in the high school sector, there are existing partnerships involving schools outside the City boundaries. Headteachers are keen to maintain and build on these partnerships. Funding arrangements might be more complicated for existing 14-19 arrangements if City schools remained with different authorities.

2 Highways, Roads and Transport

1. The national picture

The key policy context is provided in The *Future of Transport* 2004 White Paper and as reflected in the *Government/LGA shared priorities* including the delivery of outcomes associated with these priorities through the Local Transport Plan. Within transport the four key outcomes are:

- Tackling congestion
- Delivering accessibility
- Safer roads
- Better air quality

The new unitary LTP should seek to maintain the momentum in delivering these priorities established in the Norfolk LTP, whilst also making better links between the priorities for more effective delivery and improved community focus.

The *Eddington report* would support transport investment in Norwich as a 'congested and growing area and ... catchment'. A key component to be fully examined would be road pricing. Eddington also implicitly stresses the role of airports¹ as a gateway to international markets and a key issue for Norwich in order to maximise benefits is improving surface access.

Buses are likely to remain the cornerstone of public transport provision in Norwich. Whilst public transport patronage in Norwich has grown, there remain major concerns particularly with relation to fare levels, reliability and frequency. The Government's proposals in *Putting Passengers First* could deliver widespread benefits allowing the easier introduction of partnership working to deliver in patronage and improved service quality. This would compliment any proposals for road user charging.

Other key drivers include:

- Barker Review of Land Use Planning;
- Sustainable Communities - Homes for All and People; Places and Prosperity;
- ODPM – citizen engagement and public services - why neighbourhoods matter;
- Schools White Paper - Higher Standards, Better Schools For All
- Making the Connections: Report on Transport and Social Exclusion;
- National Air Quality Strategy – 2000;
- Disability Discrimination Act – 1995;
- Traffic Management Act - 2004

¹ See also The Future of Air Transport White Paper

- Urban White Paper: Our Towns and Cities the Future – Delivering an Urban Renaissance;
- PPGs/PPSs;
- Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change
- DfES draft guidance on home to school travel and transport

2. Local vision and priorities

A Unitary Council for Norwich will bring together under effective representation and leadership, the 3 key service drivers for urban sustainable development and change namely: economic development, planning services and transportation. Rather than dealing with infrastructure requirements and investment needs in isolation, this will provide a platform on which to integrate with other services.

Specific priorities are as follows:

1. To improve the efficiency of the transport network – to reduce delays and help the economy
2. To maintain and improve the transport infrastructure – with particular regard to possible climate change
3. To develop a land use/transport system that provides good access to services for all residents and visitors to Norwich, particularly disadvantaged communities
4. To reduce road accident casualties and improve road safety, particularly for vulnerable road users and in disadvantaged communities
5. To improve transport and community safety and security, including reducing perceived danger
6. To enhance air quality
7. To reduce the contribution of transport to climate change
8. To encourage healthier travel choices
9. To encourage sustainable travel choices such as walking, cycling and public transport and planning land use to reduce the need to travel
10. To improve environmental conditions for communities by reducing the adverse effects of transport and enhancing the sense of place

3. Strengths and weaknesses

Norfolk CC is a high performing transport authority and its second Local Transport Plan has been judged as being excellent. A key contributor to this success is the City Council through the Highways Agency Agreement (HAA)

Strengths:

- There is a clear vision and objectives
- This is informed by analysis of problems and opportunities
- Norfolk County Council has Beacon status for its work on road safety
- Norfolk County Council has Beacon status for its work on rethinking construction
- Delivery of the first Local Transport Plan (LTP) was excellent (with reward funding in 2007/08 of +12.5%)
- The second LTP is excellent (with reward funding + 12.5%)
- The size of Norfolk CC allows economies of scale in delivering services

Weaknesses:

- There is a detachment from Norwich issues which can lead to decision making which does not reflect local wishes (e.g. not taking forward a part 'pedestrianisation' scheme [Westlegate] and relative disinterest in partnership working with local bus companies).
- Engagement with local communities and neighbourhoods could be improved (e.g. concerning bus service changes).
- Integration of land use and transport planning is hindered by the different economic, social, social and political agendas of Norfolk County Council and Norwich City Council.
- The arguments for major schemes such as the Northern Distributor Road could be better linked to economic, environmental and social issues.
- Accessibility issues in urban areas – to do with cost, information availability, etc. is not well developed.
- The potential for improving accessibility through service planning and reorganisation of non-transport sectors (including District services) is poorly realised.

4. Future model: Day 1 of unitary authority

The service is likely to be similar to that provided at present given that the Council already has a HAA with Norfolk County Council for the majority of highway and transport services. However, it is anticipated that there would be

- Immediate improvement in decision making to reflect Norwich's needs and issues at a strategic, local and neighbourhood level
- Improved service planning to better integrate transport with land use planning and other services to deliver transportation and accessibility improvements, particularly for disadvantaged communities and in respect of cross cutting issues such as health
- A more holistic approach to transport support (e.g. bus service support and concessionary travel) to ensure that a single best solution with maximum efficiencies would be achieved within budgets available

Much would not change, however, and matters not already covered by the HAA such as street lighting and traffic signal control/maintenance could continue to be delivered by the County Council albeit through partnership. Similarly, there is no reason not to work with the County Council and their strategic partnership in procuring other services (such as schemes development).

For the public there would be a single point of contact to reduce confusion and delays to action being taken.

5. Future model: After five years of unitary status

After 5 years the new unitary will have:

- Developed a full Norwich plan and strategy reflecting strategic, regional, local and neighbourhood issues and needs – but still working closely with the other councils – and in partnership with other service providers, particularly public transport.
- Integrated aspects of the service with other service areas:

Highways, roads and transport	Unitary Norwich
Planning the asset (e.g. LTP, NATS)	Planning
Developing the asset (e.g. infrastructure improvements)	Places
Using the asset (e.g. travel planning, school travel, road safety)	People ²

² Alternatively this could be at the Neighbourhood level – see Halton BC beacon scheme approach

Maintaining the asset (e.g. routine maintenance)	Neighbourhood
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- Developed an improved community focus for all aspects of the service, e.g. in relation specifically to reactive maintenance and smaller improvement schemes
- Reviewed all service provision to optimise accessibility (e.g. review location of community centres and plan accordingly, provide concessionary travel for young persons in new deal areas)
- Continue to work with Norfolk in partnership on individual aspects of service delivery where this is in the public interest and can demonstrate value for money and efficiencies (e.g. traffic signal control)
- Established efficiencies in service provision.

6. ICT systems

It is likely that a unitary Norwich would use existing County Council ICT as much of this is already being used as part of the HAA. The key software includes:

1. Accessibility modelling – better able to reflect local needs e.g. jobseekers
2. Exor - asset management
3. ArcView – GIS system to display Exor information
4. SMIS – programme management
5. AXIS – specialist GIS for accident investigation and analysis
6. ParkMap – specialist GIS for Traffic Regulation Order analysis
7. Saturn, etc. – specialist traffic modelling
8. Winter maintenance METEO weather reporting.

7. VFM, efficiency and procurement

Public transport support: Decisions affecting bus service support may have implications on concessionary travel and vice versa. Such unintended consequences could be minimised

Transport support: Integration of school travel, social services travel, community transport, taxis and making use more of walking and cycling to also address health issues plus develop strong partnership working with bus

companies (e.g. see approach adopted by Cambridge County Council Beacon scheme) and other providers (e.g. NHS trusts). Shared performance arrangements would be developed.

Public lighting: Integration of district and street lighting to lower management costs (extend scope of street lighting PFI to include former?) and save on costs of electricity due to bigger contract

Parking: Integration of off and on street parking to lower management costs and help optimise delivery of both transport goals and income generation

Procurement generally: Likely efficiencies in joining County partnership (Mott MacDonald/May Gurney and their supply chain) for delivery of services once CityCare contract elapsed. Also scope for efficiencies in procuring via NPS and NCS.

8. Benefits of unitary status on existing boundaries

Better alignment of the highways, roads and transport service with local needs. The necessarily countywide approach from Norfolk County Council tends to misunderstand and therefore disadvantage the urban agenda. Norwich would also be better able to influence e.g. the East of England Plan.

Integration of all local authority functions would enable integrated accessibility planning maximising the opportunities available from land use planning and rethinking the delivery of other services. It would be possible to develop a Norwich specific approach that recognises the important links between urban deprivation, accessibility to employment and safety.

Clearer public understanding of who to contact for service provision and therefore better customer care. The present HAA overcomes much of this but there is confusion in some areas (e.g. school transport is confused with concessionary bus fares). There would also be potential for more effective marketing learning from approaches adopted by Telford and Wrekin Beacon scheme

Efficiencies in service provision related to public transport, accessibility, lighting and parking

A clearer integration between transport infrastructure and environmental and social concerns placing greater emphasis on urban quality of life and sustainability issues. The Council already has a good track record in this area and would build on this experience.

The application of standards and practices more appropriate to the urban character of the City. County-wide practice tends to focus on the needs of a more rural population, and encourages solutions inappropriate to the urban environment.

Improved public engagement/community neighbourhood focus in transport and traffic planning, with Planning for Real for example (which Norwich City Council has pioneered) allowing detailed issues to be properly assessed to assist the development of an inclusive environment. Norwich City Council has recently submitted a bid under the Road Safety Partnership Grant, which embraces a community approach³ to sustainable road safety improvement, learning from the Knowsley Beacon scheme.

More effective delivery of integrated transport solutions to suit an urban population. The role of walking, cycling, and other alternatives such as car clubs, community transport, taxis, etc. would be recognised – as well as bus transport – to deliver access to employment, schools, shopping, health, etc.

Focussing on urban transport issues and bringing greater coherence would improve the function of the City as a major interchange, to the benefit of the County as a whole.

9. Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries

Covering a whole urban area would help avoid difficulties for the County in addressing the remaining urban area in e.g. Broadland. A Greater Norwich approach would be consistent with Eddington's suggestion to link decision making with geographical units of economic activity.

The integration of land use and transport planning (e.g. land use decisions in relation to accessibility and the provision of new road infrastructure [NDR]) would be further advanced by having control over all areas of significant growth allowing decisions to be made in the interests of Norwich as a whole and the region more generally

Improved economies of scale but working within a continuing Norfolk wide (or regional partnership towards procurement of services so as to advantage both Norwich or Norfolk

Further efficiencies in service provision (e.g. from taking on park and ride), and better integration between currently 'competing' services (for example public car parking)

Greater coherence in intra-urban transport with a single authority overseeing all modes of transport at a strategic urban level resulting in improved 'whole journey' experience, better integration between modes and enhanced potential for sustainable growth

³ Includes Community Development, NELM, Sports Development, School Travel Plans, Health Promotion, Community Wardens, Road Safety

3 Adult Social Care

1 The national picture

The White Paper '**Our health, Our care, Our say**', (January 2006) confirmed the policy direction for adult social care.

The main themes are:

- Better prevention and early intervention services so more people can receive care in their communities.
- Promotion of independence and well-being
- More choice in care and health services and stronger voice for individuals.
- Improved access to community services by reducing inequalities, especially for people with learning disabilities and care at the end of life
- More support for people with long term conditions through closer joint working between health and social care.
- Improved support for carers

The Local Government White Paper, 'Stronger and prosperous communities' published in October 2006 proposes strengthening Health and Well-Being Partnerships by introducing a duty of co-operation for Primary Care Trusts and local authorities.

2 Local vision and priorities

The new unitary council will make a major difference by making it more possible for adults and older people to choose their own care. Having an individual budget gives people more flexibility in how care is provided and which services will meet their needs.

Other differences will be:

- Stronger partnerships between the Council and the Primary Care Trust and improved joint outcome based commissioning.
- Greater integration of a range of services, breaking down traditional professional and agency boundaries.
- More joint appointments and pooled budgets.
- More involvement of users in service planning and evaluation.
- Working more with third-sector organisations.
- Reducing social exclusion and health inequalities.
- Greater range and choice of service providers and continuing to develop a mixed economy of care.
- Improving efficiency and ensuring there is a skilled workforce able to support an increasing number of people in their own home.

A unitary council will give more focus to the specific needs and opportunities within Norwich. Increased involvement of local service users and carers in

planning, delivery and evaluation will be critical to the development of modern services that are more relevant to the needs of people living in Norwich.

Partnership with other agencies, particularly the Health Service will be strengthened. Without this the outcomes required by 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say' and expected by local residents will not be achieved. Joint commissioning with the NHS, based on a joint assessment of local needs, and more integrated teams with health staff, will be the way forward. A joint post with the Primary Care Trust of a Director of Public Health will assist with this approach and the commitment to reduce health and social inequalities.

3 Strengths and weaknesses of current provision

For the past four years, Adult Social Care had been rated as one star. For 2006, Norfolk has gained two stars and been assessed as "serving most adults well and with promising capacity to improve services".

The new rating results from some notable improvements over the past year. Inspections of services for older people and people with mental health needs recognised that the vision and strategy are being implemented. The Commission of Social Care Inspection record of performance for 2005-06 also commented positively on performance management developments.

The areas identified for improvement included:

- Better understanding, increased involvement from and better access to services for people from minority groups.
- Better joint commissioning with the NHS.
- Improved services for carers.
- Up to date, consistent case files and care plans that are outcome rather than service focused.

Over recent years, expenditure on preventative services has been lower than comparator authorities. It is essential to invest sufficient and through effective strategic commissioning, support more people to remain in their own home. Specialist services for people with more substantial needs are costly but disproportionate expenditure on this group and insufficient development of community support will result in more people requiring more costly care.

The relatively high numbers of people in residential care and nursing homes highlights a lack of alternatives such as extra care housing schemes and use of assistive technology.

4 Future model: Day 1 of the unitary authority

Service continuity and ensuring all the basics are in place will be the overriding priority for the first year of the Unitary Council. However the unitary authority will also focus on providing cost effective services that are more relevant to the City.

Access to information and assessment for services will be clearly sign posted and provide a prompt response. Earlier involvement of Adults Services should ensure better transition arrangements for young people requiring continuing support.

The unitary authority will make available a wider range of services in the community and give people more control by a rapid expansion of individual budgets.

To support this approach, there will be three organisational blocks

- **Community Services:** for older people and people with physical disabilities. Some of these services will be delivered in neighbourhoods with Housing and PCT staff. The intention is to increase local integrated service delivery over the first five years of the new Council. The proportion of in-house residential care homes and in-house homecare would be reviewed, in conjunction with users and carers, with the intention of achieving a better balance of services and investing in services targeted at critical periods of peoples' lives such as at the point of being discharged from hospital. For people with physical impairment, apart from a major expansion of individual budgets, existing services will be reviewed with users, with particular reference to improving benefits advice, increasing advocacy and the possibility of developing a Centre for Independent Living. Arrangements for Safeguarding Adults living in the community will be strengthened and developed. A Unitary Council will facilitate closer working with Norwich's Housing Service and its social housing partners and open up a range of possibilities.
- **Specialist Services:** (i.e. residential services and services for people with learning difficulties and mental health needs) Residential services will be centrally managed. Services relating to learning difficulties will be provided in integrated teams with the NHS. Services for people with mental health needs will be developed with Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust with the priorities being
 - To develop a socially inclusive mental health service for people of all ages, with full integration of social and health care, and close relationships with housing and employment providers
 - To ensure people with mental health needs have access to specialist services such as Alcohol and Drugs and Forensic services

- **Strategic Commissioning:** The development of commissioning will be a very high priority. This must be based on an analysis of need - community and individual – and moving toward an integrated approach with the Primary Care Trust and Norwich Housing will be an early aim of the new Council. The work on Practice Based Commissioning, with Norwich GPs, will be built upon with the addition of the social care dimension. The local care market will be developed so a wider range of services are available for people with individual budgets to purchase the type of support they require.

5. Future model: After 5 years of unitary status

Partnership working will characterise all service delivery arrangements. Partnership with users and carers at the centre and with the NHS, other statutory agencies, existing City services, especially Housing, and the voluntary and community sector working together to meet the needs of Norwich residents.

Other features of the service will be:

- Better services for carers and improved access to assessments.
- Improved access to adult learning and other services that reduce social isolation
- More comprehensive re-enablement services.
- Employment and training initiatives supported by the Council's Economic Development Unit.
- Some integrated neighbourhood teams with NHS and Housing staff

Joint Commissioning with the PCT, and with the involvement of Norwich Housing will be further developed. Practice based commissioning with the Primary Care Trust will have been extended to include relevant social care needs. A more focused approach on Norwich residents and procuring a range of cost effective services will be demonstrating the benefits of a Unitary Authority.

Less reliance on residential care and nursing homes will be achieved by the provision of more comprehensive community based support services and an increase in extra care housing, which has already demonstrated its value.

The unitary authority will have made a major investment in developing the skills required by the workforce increasingly required to provide community care to very dependant people. This will enhance the quality of service delivery and improve staff recruitment and retention.

6 ICT systems

The County Council intends to procure the CareFirst client database during 2007. This is of proven benefit in many local authorities and should be adopted by the unitary council. It must be able to interface with Housing, other relevant City Council service and financial systems.

7 VFM, efficiency and procurement

A review of the amount and type of in house residential care and home care, and their unit costs, will result in more effective use of resources and a better continuum of care services. More practical home support should be available for people with a lower level of need. Day service and respite care will also be part of the review. Extra care housing, floating support, supported living and more assistive technology, in partnership with housing providers, is key to providing a better mix of modern services.

Some limited shared service arrangements with the County Council such as joint commissioning with the Primary Care Trust of regional specialist high cost/low volume services and perhaps some out-of-hours services will be mutually beneficial.

8 Benefits of unitary status on current boundaries

Adult social care services will be much more effective within an organisation that includes Housing. This will assist with the commissioning of services through Supporting People and the development of extra care schemes, floating support and supported housing and assistive technology. It will also facilitate joint assessments and the delivery of more integrated neighbourhood services.

9 Benefits of unitary status based on extended boundaries

A larger financial base will be advantageous as well as the ability to draw on resources within the Greater Norwich area.

4 Housing Services

1. The national picture

The Government's agenda on housing can be summed up in the following statement: *Everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home at a price they can afford, in a place in which they want to live and work.*

This National Policy therefore has 3 main themes:

- More affordable homes: to provide choice (mix) and prevent homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation.
- Improving existing homes: to provide Decent, accessible homes in both public and private sectors including affordable warmth.
- Contributing to Sustainable Communities: including maintaining independence, neighbourhood working, delivering the Government's Respect agenda and working across sub regions

This policy is prominent in the Sustainable Communities Plan from which a number of other policy documents have originated including:

- Sustainable Communities: Homes for All.
- Sustainable Communities: Settled homes, changing lives, which focuses on prevention of homelessness, reducing the use of temporary accommodation, keeping rough sleeping as close to zero as possible.
- Sustainable Communities: Homes for All a Strategy for Choice Based Lettings.

In addition to the above a number of other policy frameworks exist including:

- The Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities, which focuses on neighbourhood working, resident involvement and local agreements.
- The Respect Agenda including the Respect Standard for Housing Management.
- DCLG Decent Homes Guidance.
- The Government White Paper 'Our Health Our Care our Say' and the Green Paper 'Well-being and Choice' on the direction of social care services.

2. Local vision and priorities

Our vision is to provide Housing and Support Services that:

- Ensure that those disadvantaged in the housing market are assisted into decent, affordable homes in areas they want to live.
- Provide real choice for residents in tenure and type of home.
- Harness the private sector to help meet housing need and provide choice to customers, including bringing empty homes back into use.

- Directly provide more or better co-ordinated multi agency services to help people maintain independence in their own home.
- Prevent homelessness with tenancy sustainment and promotion of independent living at the core of our services
- Deliver services in neighbourhoods with the involvement of local residents and in full partnership with other agencies.
- Improve homes to a standard that meets aspirations and provide affordable warmth.

Desired outcomes:

- Scarce resources are targeted towards those who need them most
- Reduced homelessness
- Sustainable communities
- Good quality energy efficient homes that meet residents' aspirations

3. Strengths and weaknesses of current delivery

Strengths:

- Up to date evidence of Housing needs and aspirations following a new sub regional needs survey in 2006, new public and private sector stock surveys 2005, and a Housing Stock Option Appraisal in 2005.
- A Housing Options Service that is a Regional Champion in delivering services.
- A Housing Development Team working in partnership with partnering RSLs, using council land and financial resources, to significantly increase the number of affordable homes provided in Norwich.
- Our housing sub-regional partnership (Greater Norwich Housing Partnership) with Broadland and South Norfolk Council.
- A Private Sector Housing Service which pro-actively targets rogue landlords
- A retained landlord service in which 84% of tenants and leaseholders placed their trust in the Council to remain their Landlord. The service:
 - Manages almost one third of all homes in Norwich providing strengths in resident involvement, land opportunities and 'control' of regeneration opportunities.
 - Is leading the way in restructuring around neighbourhood working, mobile working, surgeries and virtual neighbourhood teams.
 - Can meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard by 2010
 - Provides well-maintained homes (as assessed by Savilles) that are top quartile in terms of energy efficiency.
- DCLG Respect Task Force recognition as a Respect (good practice) Area by supporting people to maintain their tenancies / homes effectively and tackling anti social behaviour.

- Neighbourhood management including surgeries and peripatetic and mobile working
- The amalgamation of Housing Landlord Services, Community Liaison, Streets and Citizens and Environmental Services under the same Directorate of 'Communities and Neighbourhoods'
- A high performing Norwich Community Alarm Service providing a range of modern 24/7 services to several agencies that help maintain independence and provide out of hour support
- Modern output based contracts to deliver repairs and maintenance services in place
- Experience of community engagement for example extensive consultation with tenants through the Housing Landlord Service on stock options appraisal, home improvement aspiration and conditions of tenancy. The Landlord Service has a long and established tenant participation structure built around a tenant compact, an active Tenant's Citywide Board, Leaseholders Forum and street representatives. Currently around 70% of tenants are covered by an established tenants and residents association, of which there are 17.

Weaknesses:

- Partnership working with some of our statutory and voluntary sector partners, this includes:
 - Harnessing the range of housing related services in the City to meet housing need.
 - Working jointly with Adult Social Services/PCT to enable elderly households to continue to live independently – the flow between homecare, shelter and Housing with Care needs to be improved.
 - Working jointly with both Children and Adult Services to improve joint assessments of vulnerable homeless 16/17 year olds, homeless households with mental health problems and vulnerable tenants.
 - Achieving full, multi agency 'buy in' to neighbourhood management direction and proposals.
 - Respect related actions / early intervention objectives are proving difficult to join up between agencies.
- Limited land availability in Norwich to meet strategic housing need objectives and achieve an appropriate mix of homes.
- The Council's Neighbourhood based staff have not yet reached their full potential to identify support needs and assist with access to wider range of support services.

4. Future model: Day 1 of the unitary authority

For Housing services there would be little direct change on day 1 although the following areas will be addressed / remodelled during the lead up to unitary status:

- Improved use of the Council's existing neighbourhood based staff in the identification and assessment of need for our own services (Families Unit, floating support etc) and County Services (Adult and Children).
- Inclusion of housing services in integrated models of care and provision for vulnerable adults and families.
- Identification of synergies between Norwich Community Alarm Service and the County Council's 24/7 services.
- Occupational therapist to be based within the Landlord Service and or Private Sector Housing Team responsible for Aids and Adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grants.
- Reframing our relationship with other authorities with which we currently work in partnership on a sub regional basis.

5. Future Model: After five years of unitary status

We will:

- Controlling of own Supporting People programme.
- Continuing to be the direct provider of housing with appropriate resources.
- Included in wider policy debates such as those relating to 'Every Child Matters'
- Working closely with Adult Social Services in the identification of supported housing projects for vulnerable groups. We will have five year's experience of commissioning projects based on robust identification of need.
- Have a wider range of neighbourhood based staff who are involved in the identification and assessment of support needs for a range of services including adult and children's services, for example Neighbourhood housing officers, wardens, floating support workers, Families Unit
- Extended use of mobile working
- Co-ordination of information sharing with adult and children's services
- Integrated policies and procedures between all services delivered at a 'neighbourhood level' (to include housing, adult and children's services)
- Improved models and packages of care between housing, adult and children's services tailored to individuals needs and aimed at tenancy sustainment and promotion of independent living. Both of these outcomes achieve VfM and an efficient use of the City's housing and social care resources.

6. ICT systems

Using a single contact management programme for all services in a Unitary authority will have great benefits for Neighbourhood Management, Housing Options and Private Sector Housing. Enhanced information about households and the services they are engaging with will allow us to provide a much better housing service to our customers.

7. VFM, efficiency and procurement

No additional Housing services would be carried out so large scale efficiency savings as a result of the Unitary bid will be more difficult than in other areas but efficiencies will be made in:

- Using more widely modern, output-based procurement methods and practices such as those recently achieved in housing repairs and maintenance.
- Service rationalisation in areas like out-of-hours services, reporting and response services.
- A wider range of neighbourhood staff involved in support needs assessment.

8. Benefits of unitary status on existing boundaries

By joining up housing with other services currently carried out by the County Council, we will be able to offer a much better service to our customers.

The County Council owns a great deal of potential development land, from redundant school sites to disused depots, within Norwich. At present a cascade operates within the County Council for use by all services to be considered before disposal and even then it will only be disposed for full market value. Once this land is owned by a new unitary authority, then the case for affordable housing development could be made with greater strength. This could also result in disposing of sites for a lower value to enable new affordable housing which would provide a huge benefit and result in a dramatic increase in the supply of new affordable housing.

9. Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries

At present Norwich acts as a magnet for single homeless people who move into the City and place a strain on resources. This is because Norwich offers greater service provision for this client group and has a larger supply of small dwellings. The outlying suburbs and towns around Norwich have a larger supply of family housing. It would be desirable to affect an outward flow of families to these areas. At present, although many families want to move, this is difficult due to the restrictions placed upon cross authority moves. Control of a larger area will allow us to meet the housing needs of families across Norwich more appropriately.

A large amount of housing growth (33,000 homes over the next fourteen years) is due to take place in Greater Norwich. The majority of this will take place in and around Norwich itself. An authority that covered the majority of this area would be well placed to take a strategic overview of the whole housing market. It could ensure that the right types and sizes of houses are built in the appropriate locations. The delivery of new affordable housing which would also benefit from this strategic overview and increased land availability.

A unitary authority on extended boundaries would also promote consistency in of service delivery and economies of scale in shared services, for example:

- Families Intervention Work
- Tackling Anti Social Behaviour
- Care and Repair

5 Cultural Services

1. National picture

ODPM's Sustainable Community Strategy, *People, Places and Prosperity* emphasises the importance of culture as a driver for and contributor to regeneration of communities. In July 2006 The DCMS signed a joint agreement with the DCLG, Arts Council England, CABE, English Heritage, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council which sets out a vision for culture within strong communities:

- Identity – self-knowledge and a shared sense of purpose
- Agency – the ability to act.
- A country where all communities have the capacity to be culturally vibrant and reflect their distinctive identities.
- Diverse and tolerant place.
- Every community, including the most disadvantaged should have access to cultural activities, opportunities for learning and self-expression.
- Places should be attractive safe with a well designed built environment that respects and enhances local character.

Nationally the Regional Cultural Consortia have taken the themes People, Places and Prosperity when formulating strategies. The liveability agenda and this emphasis 'sense of place' and local identity has been a major influence on arts policy nationally, regionally and locally.

Legislation arising from the new heritage protection regime has altered the relationship between English Heritage and local authorities.

Norwich is recognised nationally as an important cultural centre and is part of the DCMS cultural cities network of Cities who bid for European Capital of Culture 2008. Only 2 of the 12 Cities in this network are district councils.

2. Local vision and priorities

We will work in partnership to make Norwich a Creative City putting culture and creativity at the heart of everything we do. We will inspire, raise aspirations and educate. We will create opportunities for everybody to reach their full potential and use culture to increase prosperity. We will make explicit links between cultural activity and the achievement of wider local objectives such as in promoting health and well being, in encouraging safer and stronger communities and in promoting sustainable communities. We will use culture to generate community energy and enthusiasm and make people feel proud of living in Norwich.

The City Councils unique position as the founder member of the Cities of Culture network means we are able to draw on best practice from the UK Cities who bid to be European Capital of Culture. This group includes Cities

like Newcastle, Liverpool, Birmingham and Brighton who all put huge emphasis excellent cultural services as a driver for change. As a unitary council we can at last use this network to compare like with like city against city.

Our priorities will be to:

- Increase access to cultural activity particularly for hard to reach groups. We will aim to double the number of Norwich residents visiting the City's museums, libraries and cultural events by 2012.
- Continue to work with Children's and Adult Services to promote creativity as a means realising potential and to help create a well-rounded workforce for the future.
- Build on the City's position as a nationally and internationally recognised centre for culture. We will become a place of choice for visitors to the 2012 Olympics and a European Capital of Culture in 2025.
- Open cultural services to external challenge to aid the improvement process and improve service integration.
- Improving the marketing of cultural services both to users and non-users.

3. Strengths and weaknesses of current delivery

Strengths

- The County Council has a 4 Star Service and is nationally recognised for its work in museums and libraries services.
- The partnerships that the county has developed in all areas of the service are impressive.
- Satisfaction with library services has increased from 65% in 2004 to 71% in 2005.
- Satisfaction with museums services has increased from 64% in 2004 to 71% in 2005

Weaknesses

- A lack of recognition that Norwich is the cultural capital of the East of England and of the County.
- Priority often given to rural areas despite the critical mass for culture being in Norwich.
- The Norfolk LAA and Norfolk cultural strategies subsume and dilute the Norwich offer and aspirations.

Under a unitary authority we will focus on sense of place and inspiring local communities and drive forward our ambitions for the City. We will be able to focus on urban cultural needs while the County Council legitimately focussed on rural cultural needs. Our LSP will drive forward the cultural agenda.

4. Future model: Day 1 of the unitary authority

The County Council already have an excellent Cultural Services department; we would maintain the current levels of performance. From the outset cultural services will be integrated and focussed on the needs of Norwich people. We will improve both strategic planning to help overcome fragmentation and also operational effectiveness. Cultural services will have unified management and a single member portfolio holder to promote a cross-cutting approach to culture. Members will play a key role in raising the profile of cultural services.

An early action will be to commission a culture peer review (e.g. from the IDeA) to provide benchmark for improvement. We will draw on various tools to extend user assessment as a means for improvement (e.g. the Museums Accreditation Scheme) and network with Beacon authorities to raise standards.

The main improvement we will make early on will be in access to these services for Norwich people. For example a Citizen Card, which enables Norwich people and schools to access, services like museums either free of charge or at a reduced cost.

We will also build on the benefit of having Youth Services, community services and cultural services in one organisation, which will mean that we can capitalise on the synergies.

Working closely with children's and adult learning services we will use culture to shape and improve our local communities. For example, we will use of community centres to introduce people to library and museums services, and encourage schools to obtain Artsmarks awards.

We will continue the current work of the library services in the areas of early years development and continue the partnerships with Surestart schemes across the city, encouraging very young children and their parents to become library users.

We will continue to emphasise the importance of literature development as a way of engaging hard to reach groups. Currently this work is based at the Millennium Library. We would increase and extend the influence of this work working in partnership with the nationally acclaimed New Writing Partnership, which promotes Norwich as a centre for literary excellence.

- The Records Office will continue to be provided by the County Council
- The Archaeology Unit would continue to be run provided by the County Council.

5. After five years

The clear leadership that a Greater Norwich unitary council will provide will begin to reap rewards:

A comprehensive Cultural strategy for Norwich will be in place. This will have been used to pull together a cohesive offer for the City to include all aspects of the cultural mix.

The number of residents accessing cultural activity will have increased.

Cultural tourism will be a key plank of our strategy, including (through the web) virtual visitors. This groundwork for this has already been done in partnership with the UEA who have developed, on our behalf, virtual tours of the city for use on our website. The number of people physically visiting our city to take part in the cultural offer will also have increased.

The City will have a reputation for culture, which matches that of Newcastle and Liverpool nationally and Barcelona internationally.

There will be increased neighbourhood delivery of the cultural offer through a virtual neighbourhood model.

We foresee that the voluntary sector will be a key player in the delivery of high quality cultural services.

The City will have been a major cultural player in the run up to the 2012 games, and will have developed a programme of complimentary events in collaboration with the DCMS.

6. ICT Systems

With exception of libraries and museums, which have specialist systems, back of house IT services will be easily integrated.

We will use ICT to improve access to services such as a Dial a Read Service to enable people who cannot visit libraries to choose books, hi-tech support for mobile libraries, etc.

7. VFM, efficiency and procurement

There will be opportunities to increase the number of people from outside Norwich who use and visit cultural services. There will be opportunities to close some libraries and to make better use of facilities at neighbourhood level. School libraries will be upgraded to improve the stock available to schools. We will achieve economies on staffing levels and pay. For example we will have fewer managers and more frontline staff.

8. Benefits of unitary status on existing boundaries

- One voice for culture in Norwich and on the national stage
- More integrated systems and services.
- Flagship services, which we will be able to promote in a more focussed way.
- The ability to concentrate on raising aspirations in some of our most disadvantaged communities.
- We will have an easier story to tell – people will understand who does what.
- We will have more status nationally and regionally to attract more funding.

9. Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries

- We would be more able to make efficiency savings
- The people in Greater Norwich who currently use our services without having any say in what they are will be able to influence our decisions on culture.
- We would be a major player in the cultural world because of the increased size of the City.
- It would mean that we would be responsible for delivering the cultural product to all those who use it (e.g. 70% of the Theatre Royals audience from Greater Norwich)
- 1 Council would make decisions relating to culture in the City rather than four.
- Flagship services, which we will be able to promote in a more focussed way.

6 Environmental Services

1. The national picture

The national picture is summarised in the Government's "Cleaner, Safer, Greener" agenda for delivering street scene and other services. As such it encompasses a wide range of national priorities, including environmental protection and the "Respect" agenda covering issues of community safety. New legislation in the form of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 gives the Local Authority significantly more powers to develop and enforce the "Cleaner, Safer, Greener" agenda.

Nationally the new emphasis on delivering more local services and the importance of the Neighbourhood ties in strongly with the Council's priorities.

2. Local vision and priorities

The improved management of the street scene environment is one of the Council's key local priorities and resources have been re-directed into this area.

The Council has commenced an innovative project aimed at integrating street cleaning, grounds and building maintenance, refuse collection and the control of anti-social behaviour. The area selected for the pilot project has already been identified by the local Partnership Task and Coordination Group as the most appropriate area for such inter-agency collaboration. This pilot will enable the Council, partner organisations and a range of stakeholders to analyse the benefits of a joined-up approach to services that are currently delivered independently, and will enable the contract specification for 2010 (when the current contract expires) to reflect all the lessons learned.

The Community and Neighbourhoods Directorate includes a Service Plan priority to reduce fly-tipping to 50% of its 2006 levels by 2010. This will be achieved through improving information and education on waste disposal opportunities, increasing staff resources to tackle reported incidents, deployment of mobile CCTV in known hot-spots and a rigorous pursuit of offenders.

3. Strengths and weaknesses

Current strengths include the Council's political commitment to the environmental agenda resulting in a transfer of resources to this service area, including high-calibre staff.

The 2005 Audit Commission report on the street scene services noted that:
:

"The overall quality of the street scene is good and the Council has invested in improving it successfully" and went on to say that "the

streets are cleaned well and work with partners to deal with ‘hot-spot’ areas is delivering results”.

The current contract ends in 2010 providing an opportunity for the Council to implement a significantly radical approach to the street scene, based on a neighbourhood approach, which involves a wide range of agencies delivering services to the area and moving away from the traditional and functional delivery of services.

The Council is setting up the street scene pilot project to address the weakness of the current fractured approach to various street scene management issues.

The historic problem of poor contract monitoring and poor contractor performance will be resolved by a new and dedicated contract management team. This team will ensure that the terms and conditions of existing contracts are being met and that the high performance standards demanded are being achieved and maintained. This team will also be gathering evidence and information to ensure that the new contracts (to replace those that expire in 2010) are more challenging and provide an improved service and better value for money.

A recent Audit Commission report identified a lack of key strategies for service improvement as a significant weakness of the Council. This is being addressed in part by the Environmental Services review, which is improving and expanding the structure of the teams which deliver these services, and by the pilot street scene project which will provide a more ‘joined-up’ delivery of services to local communities. The Council’s Integrated Waste Management Strategy will also address this concern in the key areas of waste management and recycling.

The Audit Commission also noted that “Enforcement is underdeveloped in environmental management services” and this weakness is being addressed by the new dedicated Environmental Protection team within the new Environmental Services section as well as by the establishment of a dedicated project team to implement the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act.

4. Future model: Day 1 of the unitary authority

There will be a new post of Head of Citizen Services and this section will be delivering a service that provides:

- A more rigorous performance management system for the existing contracts.
- A new street scene management process based on the results of the pilot scheme and an analysis of best practice in other areas.
- The new contract will have been drafted and these changes will inform and shape the way the service continues to develop and improve.
- There will be increased opportunities for a wide range of stakeholders to influence and contribute to developing the service

- These services are currently provided by the City Council and on day 1 of a unitary authority there will be a continuity of service provision.

5. Future model: After 5 years of unitary status

In 5 years time a new model of service provision will be in operation;

- Residents will clearly see the benefits from improvements in contract and performance monitoring.
- The joined-up approach to service provision will have provided enduring improvements to the street scene environment.
- Residents will have provided inputs into neighbourhood improvement initiatives and will be enjoying the benefits of a cleaner, safer, greener environment
- New and more robust contracts will be in place offering efficiency savings and a more effective client/contractor partnership.

Contract management will be more straightforward as failings in the delivery of other services (due to different schedules and programmes) will not provide a 'cover' or excuse for a poor overall result. All services will be provided within a combined operation and the achievement of the required standards will be obvious and easier to maintain.

An analysis of best practice in other local authorities has suggested a number of new initiatives to improve the street scene environment. These will have been tried and tested and initiatives that raise standards will have been adopted. These might include the chewing-gum scheme used in Brighton where people are encouraged to stick their used gum on posters of celebrities which can be rolled-up and disposed of on a regular basis. Manchester has also adopted a scheme to stop street cleaning in certain areas to highlight how much rubbish is being discarded and in part to 'shame' people into being more considerate about how they dispose of waste and a similar scheme in Norwich may lead to changes in our City Centre cleaning regimes.

6. ICT systems

The Council will continue to use existing systems and there will be no disruption in service. We will also improve the scope and quality of our information through the development of a fully integrated GIS to provide all services:

- This will make it easier to provide detailed and quality information to customers without having to refer enquiries to a number of different service providers.
- It will reduce the amount of time taken to respond to enquiries on street scene and grounds maintenance issues.
- It will make it significantly easier to examine and eradicate anomalies and failures in service provision.
- It will be easier to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate service improvements.
- It will provide a full range of information to managers.

7. VFM, efficiency and procurement

These are existing City Council services which will not attract value for money or efficiency savings simply as a result of achieving unitary status. However, savings will arise from changes to the operation of the street cleaning and neighbourhood management functions. The use of multi-skilled operatives within a particular area will provide an immediate and obvious improvement to the local Street Scene Environment, rather than piecemeal improvements over a period of months. This more immediate and more significant improvement will promote greater pride and responsibility amongst residents who will help to maintain these standards within their own communities. Performance monitoring will be more straightforward as failings in the delivery of other services (due to different schedules and programmes) will not provide a 'cover' or excuse for a poor overall view. All services will be provided within a combined operation and the achievement of the required standards will be obvious and easier to maintain.

The fully integrated GIS will improve information delivery times and reduce the amount of staff time required to answer enquiries.

Information and communication improvements as part of the street scene changes will alert residents to the requirement to move parked cars from streets in order to allow a new combined street cleaning and gulley-emptying operation. This will result in noticeably cleaner streets and regularly emptied gullies – there will be a saving on current insurance costs arising from flooding damage caused by the existing poor maintenance and cleaning of gullies (as they are often missed due to the presence of parked vehicles.)

8 Benefits of unitary status on current boundaries.

In our current capacity we act as agents to the County Council for a number of street and highway maintenance issues. Where our boundaries meet we have had historic problems with failure to effectively communicate on issues, usually when the County Council has assumed (because we are their agent) that we are aware of their changes in cleaning, maintenance or inspection routines.

Such changes can lead to different standards and frequency of services from one side of the boundary to the other. Norwich as a unitary authority would have to be consulted on such changes as part of a formal process and such inconsistencies could be avoided.

9. Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries.

A larger financial base will be advantageous in allowing us to draw on resources within the greater Norwich area. Street scene services would be standardised so that all residents of the greater Norwich area would receive the benefits of the new initiatives.

7 Waste management

1. The national picture

The UK is bound by the EC Landfill Directive (99/31/EC) which sets mandatory targets for the reduction of biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill to:

- 75% of that produced in 1995 by 2010,
- 50% of that produced in 1995 by 2013,
- 35% of that produced in 1995 by 2020.

To meet these requirements the Government has established national targets (currently under review) for the recovery of municipal waste and recycling /composting of household waste:

- To recycle or compost at least 25% of household waste by 2005
- To recycle or compost at least 30% of household waste by 2010
- To recycle or compost at least 33% of household waste by 2015

The Council is a member of the Norfolk Waste Partnership (NWP) and is a subscriber to both the joint municipal waste strategy for Norfolk (JMWS) and a joint Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) signed with the Government in 2004. The key targets in the JMWS are to recycle and compost 36% of municipal waste by 2005/06 and 40% by 2011. The LPSA target is to reduce total household waste arisings, as defined by the current Local Government (Best Value) Performance Indicator 84 (BVPI 84) to 2002/03 levels by 2006/07, thus achieving zero growth over this period. The BVPI 84 for 2002/03 is 524 kg per head of population.

LATS is the system by which the requirements of the Landfill Directive have been passed on to all Waste Disposal Authorities (WDA) in the UK (in the case of Norfolk this is the County Council). Each WDA has been allocated a set amount of biodegradable waste that it is permitted to send to landfill in any year. These targets are statutory and failure to meet them is likely to incur financial penalties of up to £150 per tonne. Significant financial penalties are possible if Norfolk authorities do nothing to change the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill. The County Council has developed a LATS strategy to 2009/10 and a procurement project is underway for new residual treatment facilities that are required to address the shortfall in LATS allowances that is predicted to occur after 2009/10.

2. Vision and priorities

A Unitary Council for Norwich will bring together under effective representation and leadership, the 3 key service drivers for urban sustainable development and change namely:- economic development, planning services and transportation. Rather than dealing with infrastructure requirements and investment needs in isolation, this will provide a platform on which to integrate

with other services. Waste is one of the services which needs to be tied into planning, so an holistic approach can be developed for the growth of the city and the waste arising.

Norwich City Council is the waste collection authority for the Norwich City area and has been set Statutory Performance Standards for recycling and composting household waste to achieve a rate of 12% by 2003/04 and 18% by 2005/06. The Council has improved its recycling performance, but at the current 15.8%, it has not been able to achieve the standards set. As a consequence the Council has now been set a further Statutory Performance Standard to recycle or compost 20% of the household waste it collects by March 2008.

The Council's current waste management performance means it is contributing significantly to the LPSA target (with local household waste arisings in 2005/06 of 402.89 kg per head). It is not however making as great a contribution as it wishes to the Partnership's joint recycling and composting targets or the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) allowances for Norfolk.

The Council is determined to improve and is developing an integrated waste strategy by March 2007 with implementation in the following 3 years. This will enable the Council to :

- Meet and exceed its recycling statutory performance standard and other recycling and waste minimisation commitments.
- Be far better informed about its waste management activities and have a far clearer picture of future waste management priorities.
- Increase recycling performance and provide residents with a considerably more efficient and effective recycling service.
- Enthuse residents and instil a better understanding of the importance of waste minimisation and recycling.
- Involve local communities in assisting the Council to achieve its waste management objectives and statutory performance standards.
- Enable the Council to become a major contributor to the Norfolk Waste Partnership and the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Norfolk.

The City Council's Executive has also committed the service to deliver the following:

- 20% recycling rate by March 2008
- 32% recycling rate by 2010
- be in the top 10 recycling authorities by March 2012

3. Strengths and weaknesses of current delivery

Strengths:

- **Commitment.** Members and Senior Management have identified the existing weaknesses and have instigated measures to address and resolve these issues. There is a firm practical, strategic and financial commitment to 'champion' recycling as part of the cleaner, safer, greener agenda. We know that a step-change in policy is necessary in order to achieve all our targets.
- **Staff.** We have the breadth of knowledge and experience required to enable us to implement challenging and essential changes.
- **Current Landfill Contribution.** The city currently contributes significantly to the LPSA targets and has one of the lowest per capita tonnage going to landfill at just 402.89 kg per head compared to the Norfolk LPSA target of 524 kg per head.

Weaknesses:

- **The worst recycling rate in Norfolk.** This is due to the lack of an overarching Waste Management Strategy resulting in a dysfunctional refuse and recycling service. Without an effective strategy we have been unable to address a range of practical waste management issues that are not present to the same intensity anywhere else in Norfolk.
- **Communications.** Our record is poor due to an historic failure to recognise the strategic importance of an integrated communications strategy and the lack of significant and sustainable funding.

4. Future model: day 1 of the unitary authority

The current vision for the Waste Strategy (as a disposal authority) will not require change, business as usual to deliver the action plan. What will be required is a renewed partnership arrangement within the Norfolk Waste Partnership. It is proposed to build this on a similar basis as RECAP. Peterborough City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and 5 district councils have attained Beacon Status for the work on waste reduction and innovation in collective community engagement. This model will work for a Unitary Norwich and the Norfolk Waste Partnership.

There should be no discernable difference to residents except where improvements due to the new Waste Management Strategy have been implemented.

We will work within the Norfolk Waste Partnership and tie into their disposal contracts rather than create our own.

We will offer a much more proactive role within the NWP and provide clear input to disposal decisions (rather than as a consultee).

We will bring best practise and learning from city partners (eg Peterborough) into improvement to the Norfolk Waste Partnership

We will use the City Based economic business and retail forums to deliver locally based waste minimisation initiatives, whilst continuing to work within the Norfolk Waste Partnership.

We will give better integrated support to the work of the Schools Waste Action groups, by using the framework of locally based neighbourhood wardens to continue this work from schools to the community.

5. After five years of unitary status

Implementation of the Waste Strategy will be complete and will have been reviewed. Any necessary improvements will have been made or will be ongoing. Any changes in Government policy will have been accommodated. We will be in the top 10 of the recycling League table and a beacon for other LA's

We will have secured new refuse and recycling contracts (as our existing contracts expire in 2010) and these will reflect the full range of changes instigated in our new Waste Management Strategy.

In order to avoid LATS penalties after 2010 we will continue to work within the partnership (and through our own strategic commitments) in order to divert bio-degradable waste from landfill – this could result in new collection and disposal/recycling systems being in place within 5 years.

6. ICT systems

As a disposal authority we will need to forecast waste arisings and cost benefit assessment for future treatment options. Much of this work is already being carried out by the Norfolk Waste Partnership, and it is envisaged that the unitary Norwich will buy into this service

7. VFM, efficiency, procurement

The most significant area for efficiency is provided by the opportunity to negotiate our own contracts on disposal of waste and sale of recyclates. We will also be entitled to develop our own waste disposal facilities allowing the opportunity for provision of more (and more accessible) facilities, which will help reduce flytipping as well as providing a more integrated waste management service.

8. Benefits of unitary status on existing boundaries

In terms of waste collection, none by becoming Unitary as we are the sole deliverer of the waste collection service. The County Council would continue with the strategic function of disposal and the interpretation of national waste campaigns, which we will tie into.

The most significant area for efficiency is provided by the opportunity to negotiate our own contracts on disposal of waste and sale of recyclates.

We would also be entitled to develop our own waste disposal facilities allowing the opportunity for provision of more (and more accessible) facilities, which would help reduce fly-tipping as well as providing a more integrated waste management service.

We will have a clearer input to the control of the waste hierarchy and will be able to implement fully the doctrine of: re-use, recycle, compost, energy recovery, and disposal.

9. Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries

There will be the opportunity to standardise and improve services for all residents and to eliminate the different and confusing messages on waste disposal and recycling and provide a uniform service City-wide.

Standardisation would be via a step up to the highest achievable level of service provision.

As well as the environmental benefits, recyclates provide a significant income stream which can be re-invested to provide further enhancements of the service. The greater the area of 'capture' for the recyclate material the larger the potential income will be and the more impact this income can make when re-invested into an integrated and complete waste management service.

8 Regulatory Services

1. The national picture

The Better Regulation Executive is currently working across Government to reduce and remove unnecessary regulation for the public, private and voluntary sectors. Government departments, agencies and regulators have released simplification plans which will simplify regulations by deregulation, consolidation, rationalisation and reducing administrative burden, which will impact on implementation of local authority Regulatory Services.

To encourage implementation on a risk-based approach at local level the Government will:

1. Establish Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) by the end of 2007. Its Board will be made up of business and regulator representatives. The LBRO's key role is to reduce burden on business without compromising regulatory outcomes.
2. LBRO will be placed on a statutory basis and will issue guidance to local authorities.
3. Establish the principle of Home and Lead authorities will be put on a statutory footing for multi-site businesses and thereby tackle inconsistencies in different local authority enforcement strategies.
4. Ensure local authority Regulatory Services are included in Hampton Code of Practice.

The Roger's Review of Local Authority Regulatory Services will review some 60 policy areas including environment, fair trading, licensing, health & safety and food safety to determine five high risk national priorities which will help councils to provide improved enforcement activity in key areas and to review their practices in areas considered to be of lower priority.

This review will build on the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act which received Royal Assent in November 2006 and which enables the Hampton Review principles to be established in UK law through the Regulator's Compliance Code. All regulators will then have regard to the following principles:

1. Use comprehensive risk assessment to concentrate resources on key areas;
2. Regulators accountable for efficiency and effectiveness of their activities;
3. No inspection without a reason;
4. Businesses not required to provide unnecessary information;
5. Quick identification of non-compliant businesses;
6. Regulators provide authoritative accessible advice easily and cheaply and;
7. Regulators to allow economic progress of businesses unless clear case for enforcement protection/intervention.

In November 2006, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published its "Review of Planning Enforcement" in which it recommends the following:

1. Introduction of government indicators to give enforcement a higher priority;
2. Allocation of a proportion of the Planning Delivery Grant on enforcement;
3. The fines from successful prosecutions should go to the local planning authority;
4. The profile of planning enforcement should be raised by:
 - Better PR and publicity
 - Establishment of good practice guidance and;
 - Local enforcement officer fora to disseminate good practice.

2. Local vision and priorities

Our local vision embraces and builds on the proposal contained in the Government's White Paper entitled "*Strong and Prosperous Communities*" to:

"Provide a holistic approach to the enforcement of regulatory services by providing effective public protection tailored to the needs of the community and the area as well as applying sensible risk management strategies which support legitimate businesses but ensure effective action against serious and serial wrong doers"

Our priorities will be:

- The transfer and integration of the Trading Standards function from the County into the existing Regulatory Services of Pollution, Licensing, Health & Safety, Food Safety and Emergency Planning, and the internal integration of Development Control enforcement. The City Council's modernised structure for Regulatory Services will enable the Trading Standards function to be seamlessly absorbed and developed within the existing services.
- Development of cross-service inspection and enforcement programmes to concentrate on the high-risk key areas and remove the burden of unnecessary inspection on compliant premises.
- Provision of simpler and clearer advice and guidance to the public and businesses.
- The allocation of resources to implement preventative work and education as enforcement would identify key problem areas.
- To achieve economies of scale by sending one enforcement officer instead of three.

- To implement standard forms, processes and procedures for all enforcement and thereby improve efficiency.

3. Strengths and weaknesses of current delivery

Strengths:

- Already centralised enforcement functions (joined up services).
- Co-ordinated enforcement plans.
- Co-ordinated enforcement activities.
- Reduced duplication between legislative requirements.
- Production of clear information to the public.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of clarity for the public.
- Duplication of effort.
- Concentration on enforcement and not on education.
- Trading Standards enforcement undertaken in isolation to other regulatory enforcement undertaken by the City Council (not joined up).

4. Future model: Day 1 of the unitary authority

We will provide an integrated Regulatory Services for Trading Standards, Pollution, Licensing, Health & Safety, Food Safety, Emergency Planning and Development Control, by building on our current good enforcement practice and implementing the Government's current legislative and best practice provisions detailed above to achieve:

- A holistic approach to Regulatory Service enforcement;
- Reduction of bureaucracy;
- A multi-skilled inspection service to reduce the number of inspections and the legislative burden on businesses;
- Clarity of information to the public and businesses about the Councils new enforcement role and how the enforcement policies will be applied

We will further develop our following existing good practice:

- Common cross-council computerised processes for enforcement work which enables Regulatory Services to link directly to Legal Services.
- Common enforcement policies, which ensure transparency to our actions and decisions.
- Introduction of national initiatives such as "*Safer Food Award*" which scores the food safety standards of restaurants and uniquely makes all inspection reports available to the public on our website.

- This type of initiative will be rolled out across the other Regulatory Service, particularly Trading Standards and Health & Safety.
- The Residents' Services Team providing a "one stop shop" for our visiting customers and our website for our interactive ones.
- The County and Regional Officer groups for the Regulatory Service functions.

5. Future model: After five years of unitary status

- The Service will be a unified enforcement regime providing a holistic approach to the enforcement of Regulatory Services in Norwich, tailored to the needs of the business and residential community.
- The enforcement officers will be multi-skilled enforcing a wide range of legislative requirements, in the main delivering "light touch" interventions determined by comprehensive risk based inspection programmes.
- The Regulatory Services will be delivered seamlessly from one point of public or business contact.
- The Government's current initiatives and recommendations will be being implemented and well as the development of local initiatives and performance indicators to ensure the need of the citizens of Norwich City are being delivered.
- We will be looking to develop and disseminate our best practice to other authorities together with an application for Beacon Status for our Regulatory Services should the opportunity arise.

6. ICT systems

Uniform ICT systems will be used across all regulatory services functions. Enforcement Officers will have remote access and will be able to issue statutory notices etc. at first point of contact.

7. VFM, efficiency and procurement

Efficiencies will be achieved by the reduction of officers having to make visits. One officer will undertake Licensing, Noise and Weights and Measures visits instead of two or three officers. The public will only have to make one telephone call to the regulatory Services Team.

8. Benefits of unitary status on existing boundaries

- Greater clarity for services users.
- Greater job satisfaction for staff.
- Greater emphasis on inspection.
- Reduction in red tape.
- One stop shop.
- Improved career prospects and wider job satisfaction for staff.
- Greater emphasis on prevention/education.

9. Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries

As above but with greater economies of scale

9 Air quality

1. The national picture

The UK Government published its policy framework for air quality management in 1995, establishing national strategies and policies on air quality, which culminated in the Environment Act 1995. Air quality standards and objectives were identified and enacted through the Air Quality Regulations in 1997, 2000 and 2002.

The air quality objectives set out in the Air Quality Regulations provide the statutory basis for the system of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM).

The Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to undertake air quality reviews in their respective areas. In areas where air quality objectives are not met, Local Authorities are required to declare Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) and implement action plans to improve air quality.

2. Local vision and priorities

Our Vision will be to maintain and improve on the existing high standards of air quality throughout the City by proactive involvement in schemes for its economic and physical development to ensure air quality issues are considered and improvements made where practicable.

Our priorities will be to:

- To implement the Air Quality Action Plan in relation to the three Air Quality Management Areas declared.
- To continue monitoring air quality across the city to enable action plans to be developed and reviewed to address potential pollution "hot spots".

We will ensure that the transport policies of a new unitary council are geared towards improving air quality. There will be a comprehensive network of cycle routes and pedestrian safety schemes to promote cycling and walking. There will also be an integrated bus strategy to enhance public transport use, plus more pedestrianisation of the City centre

3. Strengths and weaknesses of current delivery

Strengths:

- Since the 1970s the Council has a good track record of monitoring and implementing action plans to improve the quality of the air in the City.
- Norwich has two automatic air quality monitoring sites funded by DEFRA, the Norwich Centre is part of their Automated Urban and Rural Network (AURN) and maintained by us, and the Norwich Forum Roadside site owned by the City Council and affiliated to the AURN.

- All data is fully audited by AEA Technology and our capture data is in excess of 90%.

Weaknesses:

- Recent policy guidance changes to the implementation of the air quality management regime (LAQM.PGA(05)) now allows councils to address transport pollution through the local transport plan (LTP) without the need for a separate AQ Action Plan. The transfer of responsibility to the County Council has led to difficulties in maintaining and achieving City priorities.
- The County Council does not see Air Quality as a high priority in the LTP. This has been emphasised in their recent review of the LTP, where lower targets for Air Quality have been introduced to enable other traffic performance indicators to be achieved.

4. Future model: Day 1 of the unitary authority

The Council will continue with its detailed air quality monitoring programme and established pollution control work and; with the responsibility for the Local Traffic Plan (LTP) being transferred to the City Council we will now be able to give a higher priority to achieving local targets and legislative requirements thereby building on our:

- Established reputation for developing action plans for pollution control and implementing Government air quality initiatives and legislation dating back from the 1960's and;
- Experience of running national air quality monitoring stations on behalf of NTL and DEFRA

5. Future model: After five years of unitary status

As in 4 above, but within the first 2 years of unitary status we will have the necessary "in house" traffic modelling skills which will be more cost effective than working with the County, and allow us to use "what if" scenario models to develop traffic schemes to achieve the maximum improvements to air quality.

Additionally, within five years we will have maximised our external working relationship to ensure our:

- Data capture is of the highest quality and continues to be accredited to the national database and;
- Annual Progress Reports and Updated Screening Assessments for DEFRA are identifying and addressing the developing national and local air quality pollution issues.

6. ICT systems

No changes envisaged

7. VFM, efficiency and procurement

The Review and Development of the Air Quality within the City and the production of the four Review and Assessment Reports and then subsequently the development of the Air Quality Action Plan has meant joint working between Norwich City, the County Council and our external air quality consultant.

Although this working arrangement achieved our aims, this type of working was inevitably onerous on officer time and resources, with a duplication of officers to liaise with the consultants, and the attending meetings to ensure both parties achieved operational and policy requirements. In addition, the County Council carried out the traffic modelling which involved a further two of their officers.

In a Unitary Authority, this process will be streamlined, with the resources being reduced by up to 50%, the development time being reduced and improved efficiency and administration in working with the consultants.

8. Benefits of unitary status on existing boundaries

- Clearer public understanding of who to contact for service provision and therefore better customer care.
- Potential to be much more focussed on neighbourhood and community issues.

9. Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries

As 8, but with the opportunity to remove the anomalies in complying with the regime and apply uniform targets and priorities where the current boundary splits urban areas.

10 Planning and Development

1. The national picture

The principle driver for the Planning Service remains the Modernisation of Planning and the Sustainability and Communities agendas. This will focus the Service on delivering increased efficiencies, sustainable economic growth, open and transparent decision making and close engagement with local communities and stakeholders.

The emphasis and importance of delivering sustainable economic growth is reinforced by the Cities (Pilot) Growth Area status, the challenging RSS targets for the creation of 36,000 jobs within the City and two adjacent districts (South Norfolk and Broadland) within the Plan period to 2021, for the completion of 33000 new homes within the Norwich Policy Area, and the need for a coherent and competitive core strategy to deliver this.

Looking forward, of equal significance for the planning service are the conclusions and recommendations of the recently published Barker Review of Land Use Planning. Many of whose recommendations are likely to be embraced in the forthcoming Planning White Paper due to be published in Spring 2007, and most notably include:

- Welcomed proposals to streamline processes for delivery of Development Plan Documents which for Norwich will be important in order to speed up delivery of the core strategy ,subsequent reviews, and associated documents necessary to implement the significant levels of growth in the most sustainable manner
- The revised and simplified procedures to deal with major infrastructure projects, which in relation to Norwich could include waste handling and major road infrastructure depending on the definition of what will constitute major development which with the provision of clearer national policies and streamlined decision making, possibly through the suggested Independent Planning Commission , will assist the delivery of the infrastructure necessary to meet the sustainable growth targets
- the emphasis of Planning Services to focus on the more significant forms of development, by increasing permitted or authorised development;
- to give greater weight to economic development consideration in planning policy and decisions which in relation to the new unitary authority will build on the already close integration of these functions with transportation ,within the Council's Development Directorate;

- encouragement for greater partnership working which reinforces the approach which the Council is currently progressing for the preparation of a joint core strategy, with the adjacent districts, and for new partnerships we will need to deliver as a Unitary Authority relating to the additional responsibilities and the need to ensure efficiency of services.
- A further important influence for the Service will be the need to address the issues which contribute to and result from climate change, as highlighted in the Stern Report .

2. Local vision and priorities

The key elements of the local vision and priorities for the service are

1. ,For a more direct link and input to government and to regional policy development and to encourage, stakeholders (both in the public and private sector) and communities to be involved in emerging strategic planning policy issues
2. To achieve greater community and stakeholder engagement with the planning processes and accountability at a local level. - including strategic policy. In particular this will focus on increasing the involvement and interaction with hard to reach groups. This will build on the current initiatives being run in partnership with the RTPI Planning Aid Team.
3. The completion of a joint core strategy with the adjacent districts for the Greater Norwich Policy Area, which will address the very significant growth targets, set out in the RSS.
4. A focus on key planning issues, dealing with issues and developments where planning can bring significant benefits whilst at the same time protecting the natural and historic environment and to streamline the application process.
5. For greater liaison with developers, agents etc involved in the delivery of major schemes through regular Developer Forums to improve understanding and ways in which both parties can work together to improve the efficiency and certainty of delivery
6. Implement further improvements to the 'development team' approach to provide comprehensive advice and to coordinate the delivery of council services particularly in relation to major development proposals
7. In the interest of efficiencies to develop partnership working, joint procurement and resource sharing
8. Develop greater integration of all Council services in the planning process

9. Implement measures to address climate change

10. To improve the skills base of all staff

3. Strengths and weaknesses of current delivery

The following are the most crucial elements, which need to be taken into account in relation to future partnership arrangements, and delivery of services by the new authority:

Strengths

- Minerals and Waste Planning Policy
 - Currently delivered by the County Council and regarded by Audit Commission as a strength, and having charter mark for specific elements (complaints of community engagement)
- Specific expertise in current partnership arrangements
 - Archaeological advice (compliance with BVPI 205)
 - Environmental Issues and Biodiversity
- Transportation
 - Currently well run service but with some deficiencies – notably community engagement
- Regeneration
 - To build on the City Council's successful record for the delivery of major redevelopment on brownfield sites in City Centre and other parts of the administrative area

Weaknesses

- Lack of direct input from the City into Regional Policy Development
 - Current input is primarily based on a County wide view, and does not take adequate account of the role of Norwich as economic driver to sub region and the potential for increasing this role
- Lack of coordination of County controlled services and district functions
 - Adverse affect on delivery of sustainable communities and on integrated services– particularly for deprived communities
- Lack of local accountability for strategic policies and
 - Disengagement by individuals and local communities in political

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>project delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility for local planning policies for current built up area and principle areas for growth shared by 3 authorities, and current LSP and Community Strategy is for current administration area only | <p>processes and delivery of planning and other objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflicting aspirations which fail to deliver a integrated strategy |
|---|---|

4. Future model: Day 1 of the unitary authority

As a unitary authority we will put in place the strategic framework necessary to deliver the new planning functions. This will not necessarily mean setting up separate new structures within the authority, which would duplicate work already done by other agencies, (especially where these are being performed well).

In this respect we will seek partnership arrangements with the County Council for the delivery of the Minerals and Waste Development Scheme, and continue with the current agreements with the County Council for the delivery of archaeological advice, and specialist environmental advice particularly on biodiversity.

We will however put in place structures and partnership arrangements to provide a more direct and informed input to regional spatial policy development to ensure that the full potential of the City to deliver sustainable growth is recognised and resourced and in so doing maintain the very special qualities that Norwich and the policy area has in terms of its urban fabric and natural environment.

The new authority will continue progress the delivery of the Planning Core Strategy for the Greater Norwich Policy Area, in partnership with the two adjacent districts, which is essential to ensure coordination and consistency of policy.

A Unitary Council for Norwich will bring together under effective representation and leadership, the 3 key service drivers for urban sustainable development and change namely: economic development, planning services and transportation. Rather than dealing with infrastructure requirements and investment needs in isolation, this will provide a platform on which to integrate with other services

Structures will also be put in place to ensure close integration of the planning service and other services referred to above, with other services within the Council, particularly with the new functions, Children's Services, Social Services and waste management so that their spatial requirements are

integrated with others and encompassed in policies and land allocations and fully taken into account in the appraisal of major development schemes.

5. Future model: After five years of unitary status

After five years if unitary status we will:

- Have established partnership working with the County Council for the delivery of the Minerals and Waste Development Scheme, integrated with the Council's waste strategy, and for some specialist service, notably archaeological advice;
- Have completed the initial core strategy and be embarking on the review, providing an integrated policy framework to deliver the sustainable growth agenda;
- Put in place as part of the wider partnership arrangements involving transportation, mechanisms and agreements to enable the greater use of external consultants, to meet specialist staff skills, or staff required on short duration or to cover key vacancies
- Have an established demographics unit to inform policy formulation, decision making and to measure outputs, and which is focussed on the very special needs of the city.
- Have developed and implemented a more comprehensive 'development team' approach to advise developers and coordinate delivery of all council services in relation to major development proposals In particular through the use of 'Planning Delivery Agreements' or other similar models to provide developers and agencies with greater surety over the timetable for key decision making and implementation programme for major development proposals;
- Implemented schemes to simplify application making, delivery where feasible of Local Development Orders to reduce the need for permission in instances where there would be negligible demonstrable harm.

6. ICT systems

In relation to development control the two adjacent districts, South Norfolk and Broadland use MVM as their legacy systems, whereas the City Council uses the CAPs Uniform system. The Broads Authority, have also recently installed the Uniform system, and are preparing to take on the development control function for the Broads Area which has previously been exercised by the district councils. The Broads Authority are in the process of migrating historic data records, and clearly with the establishment of the unitary authority on the extended boundary a similar migration would be necessary, and we can learn from the Broads Authority experience.

In terms of the policy function a common LDF monitoring system (is being appraised which will be administered by the County Council, and used by the majority of Norfolk Districts.

In relation to systems to manage planning policy and development and consultation, Broadland Council has recently implemented 'Limehouse' software.

In the interests of efficient and cost saving it will be advantageous for the delivery of the unified core strategy (and related documents) for the three authorities to adopt common systems.

As an over arching principle the new authority will work with all partners to seek to secure compatible systems, and minimise costs through joint procurement and wherever possible system sharing.

7. VFM, efficiencies and procurement

The key elements will be:

- More efficient consultation and coordination within the authority across all services,, and with outside bodies – reducing the danger of consultation fatigue and disengagement
- Joint procurement of studies and IT systems
- More integrated and comprehensive 'development team' approach to streamline and ensure coordinated delivery of council services in major development schemes.
- Savings in costs of specialist skills and to cover key vacancies by being part of a larger partnership with external consultants

8. Benefits of unitary status o existing boundaries

Key benefits will be:

1. Direct input to the development of regional planning policy and greater community involvement
2. More direct accountability over priorities and delivery of planning policy and actions
3. Greater integration of the services, which are needed to deliver sustainable communities
4. Civic pride and satisfaction with public authority provision

9. Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries

The additional benefits from the extended boundary are:

1. The establishment of a comprehensive LSP and Community Strategy for the whole of the built up area – to inform the development of future core strategies and related documents and service priorities
2. To ensure the coordinated delivery of services particularly in the new growth areas contiguous with the City
3. Unified requirements for planning submissions across the whole of the built up area.

11 Fire and Rescue services

1. The national picture

In 2004 the Government published a new national framework for the Fire and Rescue Service, *The Fire and Rescue National Framework*, which set out the Government's approach to modernizing the fire service to ensure it is fit for purpose for meeting community needs. It:

- Forms part of the Government's reform of the Fire and Rescue Service.
- Switches emphasis to pro-active prevention of fires rather than dealing with them – six themes.
- Make the production of a Fire Safety Plan a legal duty
- Recognises that the Fire and Rescue Service does more than fight fires (e.g. road traffic accidents, other emergencies, terrorism, major urban disasters, etc.).

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2005 requires Fire Authorities to draw up a Safety Plan, an integrated risk management plan, with four themes:

- Identifying risks
- Evaluating past performance
- Identify Service improvements
- Identify policies and standards

The Fire Safety Order (Regulatory Reform Order) Repeals and amends approximately 70 primary and secondary pieces of legislation and introduces a risk based approach to fire safety at work and encompasses majority of premises excluding single private dwellings and specialist premises (e.g. nuclear plants).

2. Local vision and priorities

The unitary authority will not run its own fire and rescue service but would work in partnership with the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service to build on its current successes. We will endorse the current priorities of the FRS, which are to:

1. Reduce all fires and emergency incidents.
2. Reduce arson.
3. Reduce deaths from fires.
4. Raise community awareness of fire risks.
5. Respond to fires more efficiently.
6. Improve sickness absence.
7. Implement new legislation.
8. Move from Bethel Street station

However, as members of a joint Fire and Rescue Authority we will work with the FRS to develop services so they meet the specific needs of Norwich (e.g.

endorsing initiatives such as the new urban search and rescue team) and to ensure that the service is focussed on the issues relating to deprived urban communities.

3. Strengths and weaknesses of current delivery

The 2005 CPA inspection report for Norfolk Fire and Rescue Authority judged that it was a “good” FRS. It noted that the FRS had:

- Responded well to modernisation agenda.
- Been structured and resourced appropriately to address the key risks faced by the Community
- Effective management
- Enhanced its capacity by making links within the County Council and through partnership working.
- Performed well and sustained improvement despite issues of rurality.

However it also noted the following weaknesses:

- Performance management was not consistently supported by robust monitoring arrangements.
- ICT systems inhibit delivery
- Not all HR policies were up-to-date hindering progress in tackling high absence rate.

4. Future model: Day 1 of the unitary authority

The Fire Service will remain largely as it is at the moment. However, there would be a change in governance arrangements with the setting up of a Joint Fire Authority, the Norwich and Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service. We will appoint senior members to the Joint Fire Authority who are well equipped to provide strategic leadership on fire issues.

During the early days of unitary status we will invest in member training and development to enhance the effectiveness of the members sitting on the Joint Fire Authority. We will be ensuring that they receive regular performance information.

The new service will invest in more preventative activities in partnership with other Council services such as Housing and Neighbourhood Wardens. Services will be targeted towards deprived communities, rather than the blanket approach that currently exists. For example we will be piloting targeted “hot spots” initiatives such as Home Risk Assessments (similar to the Target Fire initiative in Greater Manchester) and community advocates to work with the most vulnerable of the City’s residents (as in Merseyside).

Learning from the work undertaken by Merseyside FRS, there will be more focussed work with vulnerable young people in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Wardens’ Service.

In setting up the Joint Fire Authority we will learn from the experience of Essex Joint Fire Authority where a smooth transition was achieved.

5. Future model: After five years of unitary status

After five years of unitary status we will have used our influence as members of the joint fire authority to ensure a far greater integration of fire services with other relevant services, particularly at neighbourhood level to reduce arson, particularly vehicle arson.

There will be improved engagement with local people generally but particularly with young people at risk of offending through strong links with schools, and Children's Services teams and Neighbourhood Wardens.

Using our influence we will also have accelerated the pace of change in relation to issues such as working practices, improving performance management and meeting diversity targets.

We will have negotiated the setting up of a joint member/officer Management Board similar to that operating in Merseyside to promote dialogue and partnership working between members of the fire authority and senior officers.

Fire and rescue services will form an important component of both our Place and Neighbourhood Hub and our strategy for achieving social cohesion drawing on the work of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

6. ICT systems

We will ensure that all relevant software is upgraded to improve fire safety enforcement and risk management. There will be a dedicated task and control centre.

7. VFM, efficiency and procurement

Working with Council tenants and with Registered Social Landlords will result in a reduction in accidental fires.

During the early years of the unitary authority procurement systems will be reviewed to identify opportunities for greater efficiencies. We envisage that over time a greater proportion of fire and rescue services will be delivered through shared services partnerships, or on a regional basis to improve efficiency and achieve economies of scale.

8. Benefits of unitary status on existing boundaries

Unitary status will allow greater service integration, improved engagement with local communities and an improved focus on urban issues.

9. Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries

There will be an even greater ability to focus on urban issues.

12 Economic Development

1. The national picture

The State of the English Cities Report (ODPM), and work by various bodies including The Work Foundation, demonstrate the opportunities for UK Cities to make a step change in economic performance. They also refer to the need for changes in governance and models of delivery to help cities to become more effective deliverers of economic development. The majority of UK citizens live and work in cities. The crucial role that cities play in leading the UK's response to the challenges of globalisation is set out in *Devolving Decision Making 3: The Importance of Cities to Regional Growth* (HM Treasury, ODPM and DTI March 2006). Competitive advantage increasingly lies in knowledge-intensive and service-focused sectors of the economy. The physical proximity provided by cities is of particular importance in facilitating knowledge transfer and innovation and providing specialised labour markets.

In this context, the role of medium-sized cities such as Norwich in contributing to national economic performance is increasingly recognised. As a founder member of Regional Cities East (RCE), Norwich has worked with Government, in particular DCLG, to develop critical thinking in this area. We have found that making common cause with other urban local authorities in the Eastern Region is enabling us to punch our weight in ways previously unavailable when operating through a County-led framework for economic development. Unitary Status for Norwich will enhance the deliverability of initiatives flowing from RCE and the Sustainable Growth Agenda.

2 Local vision and priorities

The Norwich Local Economic Partnership vision for greater Norwich is:

“Norwich will be recognised as a premier UK City with a thriving, diverse and sustainable economy, providing all its citizens with opportunities and a great quality of life.”

Norwich is the largest employment centre in the Eastern Region, has a buoyant and diverse economy with strong growth potential in knowledge-based businesses and as a regional service centre. Sustainable growth is the key priority (Greater Norwich is scheduled to have the highest percentage rate of growth in the Eastern Region, outside of the three Government Growth Areas and has already been awarded Growth Point funding.) The priority is to achieve 33,000 houses and 36,000 additional jobs by 2021. This will require a step change in economic performance.

The key priorities for Norwich are:

- Achieving sustainable economic growth, particularly in high-value knowledge economy jobs offering good quality employment/career opportunities, attracting and retaining investment in a shifting global

environment, tackling low rates of entrepreneurship and poor rates of business growth among small and medium enterprises by doubling the number of home grown / locally owned businesses and developing the physical and virtual infrastructure in which businesses can innovate and flourish.

- Ensuring that economic growth and success brings benefits for all our citizens. Tackling deprivation, in particular working at a neighbourhood level to tackle low aspirations and rates of entrepreneurship and raising the skills and educational attainment levels of the indigenous population.

In December the Government recognised that the Norwich economy required additional investment and support, by granting it Local Enterprise Growth Initiative Funding (LEGI). This will address under performance in business start-up, growth of small and medium sized enterprises, inward investment and economic exclusion in deprived communities.

A Unitary Council for Norwich will bring together under effective representation and leadership, the 3 key service drivers for urban sustainable development and change namely:- economic development, planning services and transportation. Rather than dealing with infrastructure requirements and investment needs in isolation, this will provide a platform on which to integrate with other services.

This new Council will make supporting the local economy core to all it does, for example using its buying power to support the local economy, building on County Council best practice in procurement and developing its role as an employer to promote good employment practice.

3. Strengths and weaknesses of current delivery

Strengths:

- Shaping Norfolk's Future is the East of England Development Agency's (EEDA) Norfolk wide Sub Regional Economic Partnership (SREP). Several key sector groups are primarily built around Norwich businesses and provide a good platform on which to build more intensive business support activity.
- There are examples of effective partnership working between the County Council and the District councils to collectively deliver some economic development initiatives.

Weaknesses:

- County Council Economic Development activity is largely through Shaping Norfolk's Future, which it manages and staffs on behalf of the SREP Board. Businesses and economic stakeholders report a lack of clarity / distinction between County Council Economic Development and Shaping Norfolk's Future functions and activities.

- EEDA funding, through Shaping Norfolk's Future, is determined by a County-led agenda that underplays the economic role of Greater Norwich, urban issues and the investment needed for growth. For example key sectors for Norfolk do not include construction, which is crucial to the greater Norwich growth agenda and retail, even though Norwich is a top 5 UK retail centre.
- Norfolk seeks to take an "even-handed" approach to spreading resources across the county.
- Policy development on county level data does not meet Norwich's needs. For example on deprivation, countywide data flattens out the severity of need in Norwich. Norfolk policies focus on attracting and retaining young people and graduates in an ageing County. Whereas in Norwich the population includes 17% 16 to 24 year olds compared with 10.5% in Norfolk (and 11.7% in UK) and Norwich has the second highest graduate retention rate in the country. The policy challenge for the city is to create sufficient graduate level jobs.
- Marketing is focussed on a County brand, which is not effective for economic development purposes. The approach includes marketing Norfolk as a "cheap alternative", directly countering the Norwich brand image of a high quality knowledge economy city.
- Inward investment activity bears little fruit. and is filtered through county level websites/ officers creating an unnecessary tier of bureaucracy.

4 Future model: Day 1 of the unitary authority

- Businesses and private sector investors more effectively engaged in the sustainable growth agenda: Norwich has driven the establishment and development of The Greater Norwich Development Partnership. This provides the basis to investigate forming a Local Delivery Vehicle such as a City Development Company.
- City Growth Strategy supporting knowledge economy and high growth potential businesses, through targeted business support work with key sectors and businesses. New models of support for business start – up and growth of homegrown businesses, building on best practice such as Bowthorpe Biz Fizz, rolled out across Norwich.
- Public sector investment in education and skills prioritised for scrutiny and action clearly focussed on the predicted needs of the growing Norwich economy.
- More effective delivery of services to communities. Community Economic Development activity, which is already delivering on the Neighbourhood Renewal / Local Enterprise Growth Initiative / Raising aspirations and skills agendas, will be enhanced by integration with Children's Services priorities, in particular, the Extended Schools, Schools Improvement Board and Learning Partnership initiatives. Bringing best practice gained from City Council managed regeneration initiatives in engaging young people and adults living in deprived communities into mainstream education.

- Building on Local Enterprise Growth Initiative programme activity to provide enhanced business engagement in schools, including expanding mentoring provision, enterprise and world of work opportunities.
- Business Simplification Programme assisted by the integration of business access to local authority services including land, property, planning, transport, licensing / regulatory, environmental services, waste, economic development, trading standards etc. through a Norwich Single Business account. Local Enterprise Growth Initiative currently developing One-Stop Shop / Business Services into which access to local authority services will be integrated.
- Building on the best practice developed by the City Council/ private sector partnership production of Norwich marketing materials: Norwich marketed as a strong international City and Regional Service Centre in its own right. Investment activity dealt with directly by the City in an enhanced “total process” from marketing and initial enquiries through to securing investment and ongoing business aftercare.
- Businesses more fully engaged in the “place shaping” of the city, building on Norwich City Council best practice including engaging businesses in a twice-yearly face to face dialogue with The Administration about the state of the city.

5 Future model: After 5 years of unitary status

As above plus:

- Entrepreneurial approach to developing Norwich with full engagement of businesses, developers and investors as well as Government and its agencies, potentially through a Local Delivery Vehicle, such as a City Development Company.
- Clarity and strengthening of economic leadership role. Economic vision focussed on the urban agenda, with clarity regarding Norwich’s economic interface with other parts of Norfolk and the Eastern Region.
- Business Simplification Programme achieved “seamless services” under a single Norwich brand available to all business / potential businesses.
- Norwich’s economic development needs clearly addressed in other relevant local and regional strategies, for example transport aligned with development sites to enable people in deprived areas to access jobs.
- Number of players in Economic Development roles reduced and initiatives streamlined.
- Greater Norwich integrated development plan to ensure investment is focussed where there is potential for greatest impact and providing the infrastructure to ensure sustainability.
- Step change in educational performance and employment participation rates amongst the indigenous population in the local economy.
- Improved quality in investment propositions generated within the City by public and private sector.

- Increased capacity to bid for major projects.

6 ICT systems

- Local authority Single Business Account enabling greater efficiency for delivery of local authority services to businesses and simplification of transactions for local businesses.
- Business simplification through single point of contact – One Stop Shop including single website and telephony.
- Business simplification to be sought through networked client management systems with Business Link and other providers such as Research and Business Services, Innovation Relay Centre, Enterprise Agencies, etc.
- Significant enhancement to range of business services available through web based information and e - transactions.

7 VFM, efficiency and procurement

- Reduced bureaucracy by one tier resulting in savings on accommodation, IT systems, staffing etc.
- Officer / member time focussed on delivery rather than “turf wars” to secure resources and debates to achieve consensus / shared priorities.
- See section 6 above for efficiencies.

8 Benefits of unitary status on current boundaries

- Businesses and residents empowered to shape their City through a single set of consultation and engagement processes. Able to “place shape” focusing on an urban agenda.
- Improved service delivery as the result of becoming a single service provider. For example strategically by joining up Transportation with Economic Development, Planning and Property Services to provide better services to businesses, communities and investors. Improvements to neighbourhoods and communities will be enhanced by joining up services, such as Education, Connexions and Youth and Community, and Adult Education with Community Economic Development.
- Norwich / urban focused investment activity with clear priorities covering all services, simplifies Government / Agencies investment decision-making and provides seamless service to private sector investors.
- Greater influence over the education and skills agenda to address pressing needs and deficits.
- Neighbourhood Hubs support holistic approach, policy integration and improved delivery of all services contributing to community economic development.
- Businesses only deal with one local authority, which assists the Business Simplification Agenda. (This has benefits at a service

delivery level and at a strategic business engagement level where there is currently duplication of activity).

- Stronger relationship with Market Towns as result of removal of urban v rural competition for prioritisation and resources. Opportunity for a constructive dialogue about the interface. For example labour force connectivity; over half the Norwich workforce commutes in from rural districts.
- Stronger relationship with Regional Development Agency. Assume either direct funding for a Norwich Sub Regional Economic Partnership or a Norwich and Norfolk SREP with equal responsibility for prioritisation and distribution of RDA and other agency resources (e.g. appropriate branding and profile raising for the City using RDA / SREP funds differently).

9 Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries

As above plus:

- Closer alignment between the “functional economic area” and economic governance/ decision-making arrangements.
- Economic growth agenda simplified as one local authority deals with issues such as transport, schools, etc. across the functional economic area.
- Efficient use of resources as businesses, public and private sector investors etc. only deal with one council for the functional urban area.
- Time / resources saved in sustaining 3 district partnership working
- Better decision making as pressure to reconcile 3 LA priorities removed

13 Corporate Services

1. The national picture

The Government has set all public services a number of key challenges and the reports by Sir Peter Gershon⁴, the Cabinet Office⁵, and Sir David Varney⁶ are particularly relevant. In summary the key challenges facing local authorities are:

- Service Transformation, in particular through the use of ICT, and new models of service delivery.
- Building the capacity of an authority to face future challenges.
- Increasing the efficiency of an authority.
- Making best use of the resources available.

Transformational Government – Enabled by Technology, sets out the Government's strategy of how technology can be used to transform the business of government. The report also recognises that:

'The efficiency of the corporate services and infrastructure of government organisations, thus freeing up resources for the front line. It also recognises that corporate services and infrastructure have very much been the Cinderella areas, and that corporate services such as Human Resources and Finance are significantly behind the private sector in both effectiveness and efficiency.'

The report also sets out the three key transformations we need to make in local government:

- Services must be designed around the citizen or business.
- We must move to a shared services culture.
- Must move to professionalism in terms of the planning, delivery, management, skills and governance of IT enabled change.

Therefore the challenge for corporate services is to:

- be effective in the way they support the organisation; enhance the capacity of the Council through effective planning of resources
- be efficient in the use of resource
- be flexible to meet the changing needs of the organisation
- have robust governance arrangements.

⁴ Releasing Resources to the front line, HM Treasury, July 2004

⁵ Transformational Government – Enabled by Technology, Cabinet Office, November 2006

⁶ Service Transformation: A better service for citizens and businesses, a better deal for the taxpayer, HM Treasury, December 2006

The Government sees Shared Services as the answer to this, and an IPF report on Shared Services⁷ sets out the strategic choice the Council needs to make regarding shared services which are:

- Joint working
- Principal partner-lead
- Third party

2. Local vision and priorities

Corporate Services will be delivered centrally and the role of the services will be to plan and develop the Council's resources so it can deliver its vision and objectives and face future challenges.

It will do this by:

1. Being customer focussed and effectively communicating with all stakeholders
2. Making the most effective and efficient use of the resources the Council has, people, finance, information and knowledge.
3. Developing the people in the Council through a systematic approach to workforce development
4. Creating an environment of learning from each other and others
5. Providing advice, guidance and information to employees and Councillors to enable them to be effective
6. Protecting the interests of the Council by setting a clear governance framework and having systems to monitor and enforce this
7. Being exemplars of the Council's vision and values and incorporating these into policies, processes and procedures.
8. Providing a consistent and coherent approach to service delivery across the Directorate and the Council.
9. Delivering responsive services to customers efficiently and effectively
10. Delivering value for money

A key feature of providing these services moving forward will be determining the level and nature of expertise that are held in the Council and the level that is brought in as required, or procured from a partner or shared service provision. We will explore a range of models to establish what is fit for

⁷ Shared Services: the opportunities and issues for public sector organisations

purpose. Currently we work with Steria to provide IT Services (and as part of the Norwich Connect programme, BPR expertise), and iTrain to provide high skill and knowledge regarding the design and delivery of Finance systems and information.

The effective use of ICT is key to developing the role of Corporate Services, and in particular, developing robust corporate information systems that can be used by both the Corporate Service professionals, such as Finance and HR will enable managers to 'self serve'. This means that we will no longer need people to be suppliers of information, but will have accessible systems with accurate, up to date information that is available when needed.

Strong and effective and good governance will be maintained throughout the Council through the corporate centre by having clear policies, procedures, processes and systems, and to have visibility of the use of these through a corporate workflow system, to ensure that these are used properly. The corporate workflow system will also enable the Council to measure the achievement of core standards.

Having Corporate Services established as a central service will also give flexibility within and across the teams, and give the capacity to provide appropriate levels of staff, skill and expertise to services.

3. Strengths and weaknesses of current delivery

Currently, in the County Council, corporate services have a small core with the responsibility for delivery resting with managers. The majority of the departments have their own resource to deal with ICT, Finance, Human Resource Management, Procurement and Efficiency. Examples of this are:

- The Efficiency Programme - has a core team of 5 Project managers and a Head of Efficiency. This team is overseeing a 3-year programme to deliver £30 million efficiency savings, and there appear to be no 'middle ground' between and the managers delivering the efficiency savings.
- The ICT team - a core team of 4 Project Managers is bought in as and when required.
- Finance - has a small central tem providing the Treasury function with most of the finance work being carried out in the departments.

The strengths of this model are that the corporate costs will appear to be low, and that managers have a high degree of autonomy and flexibility within their own service area.

The weaknesses of this model are that there appears to be a very weak connection between the central and the dispersed teams. The result of this is uneven investment and standards throughout, for example ICT hardware is of a varying standard and there is no central or standard support. In Human

Resources there may be one H.R. Manager providing the whole range of services to a department, trying to cover too broad a range for one individual. Staffing levels are determined by managers who have cash-limited staffing budgets to spend at their own discretion, and there are no Staff Establishments, and it is difficult to maintain common standards across the Council, and there is little or no scope to manage peaks and troughs of work across different services

In Norwich City Council, corporate services are centralised, and currently concentrated work is underway to get the systems needed up-to-date and fit for purpose, and in the governance arrangements, in good shape. Boards of officers are in place to develop a strategic approach to resource planning and investment, e.g. the Resources Board, and the ICT Strategy Board.

Human Resource Management is organised on a functional basis:

- Recruitment
- An HR Advice Line for Managers
- Well Being
- Change Management

This means we can build up high levels of expertise in these fields and provide a higher level of support to managers, for example in Recruitment we have also developed an in-house expertise in assessment, which is saving the Council significant sums of money but still providing an excellent service.

4. Future model: Day 1 of the unitary authority

During the lead up period the Council will establish which systems will be used in which services and map the current use of systems and service delivery. The key task is then to bring together the resources, particularly people and information from both Councils together and to establish a programme to rationalise the teams and systems, and build a single service for each area.

The good practice that has been built up so far in Norwich City Council in HR will be used to build the HR Team. Establishing a functionally based service, and drawing heavily on the use of recruitment and assessment as part of the transfer of all of the staff into the new Council.

We will continue to draw on the knowledge and expertise of a strategic partner to bring together the financial systems and information from both councils and to build on the best practice models that Norwich City Council is currently developing with iTrain. This will include the development of the Procurement systems and processes.

5. Future model: After five years of unitary status

Corporate Services will be delivered centrally, providing clear and sound governance arrangements, supporting the Council with robust ICT systems that are available to all managers, setting standards across all services, giving visibility of information across the Council, and having clear and usable policies and procedures for managers to self serve from.

The main developments will be the rationalisation of ICT Systems to have a single system for each service, and rationalising policies and procedures across all areas.

New models of service delivery will have been developed which will result in shared service models or engaging with strategic partners to enable the council access the skill and knowledge it needs to continue to develop and plan resources.

6. ICT systems

The Finance, Payroll, HR and Procurement systems at Norfolk County Council are Oracle.

In Norwich City Council Finance and Procurement are Oracle, HR is Intellect, and Payroll is outsourced.

This means that the Council would use Oracle Financial Systems, and bring together the information from both Councils. In terms of HR information the Council will make a strategic choice in the lead up period about which HR system it should use, and then establish a design and implementation programme to enable information from both councils to be collated and input into the new system.

7. VFM, efficiency and procurement

There are potential future efficiencies by providing services through a shared service model for areas such as in HR, Internal Audit.

There are potential efficiencies in procurement by setting up a single system in the Council and establishing a central register of suppliers and robust processes for managers to purchase goods and services.

There are potential efficiency savings to be gained by bringing together teams from the current City and County Councils. These savings are most likely to be at middle manager/team leader level, by providing the service on a functional basis and increasing the size of teams, rather than increasing the number of teams.

8. Benefits of unitary status on existing boundaries

Corporate Services has a role in ensuring that the resources of the Council are applied to the Council's priorities and that there are systems and processes that support the Council to plan and manage its resources. The benefits of this being for a unitary council are that we will be planning resources across the full range of services, meeting a single set of priorities. This means that there is greater flexibility to plan both finance and human resources across all service areas, and build greater flexibility into the Council.

9. Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries

In a council on extended boundaries the Council will be serving a larger population and geographical area and therefore requiring a larger resource centrally. However this will not require more teams at the centre and the service can be increased by adding to existing teams and, therefore only incurring a marginal increase in costs.

14 ICT and Business transformation

1. The national picture

Until recently, significant investment through the Local Government Online programme (LGOL) has enabled local authorities to implement technologies that support delivery of streamlined and efficient services to its citizens. The Implementing Electronic Government programmes have significantly improved how local government interacts with its citizens. In November 2005, the Cabinet Office eGovernment Unit released a key strategic whitepaper that detailed the next steps in developing modern public services to citizens. The paper identified three key areas of focus for local authorities in the coming years. These are:

- **Effective engagement with citizens and communities (Customer focused agenda)**
Understanding our communities, giving people the power to influence service delivery and making authorities more accountable.
- **Reshaping Service Delivery (Adopting new models for service delivery)**
Increasing the choice of how services are received, joining up service provision and achieving efficiencies and effectiveness through new service delivery models.
- **Making it happen (Professionalism Agenda)**
Adopting the right resource model, aligning delivery to strategy, adopting an appropriate governance model, managing resources effectively and managing the overall change.

National policy around the role of ICT in local government is clear. It is one of developing transformational capacity within local authorities, creating the ability to fundamentally reform the way they operate, creating enhanced opportunities for savings and efficiencies in the way they work and gaining synergies of operation across organisational boundaries whilst providing organisational resilience to ensure continuity of service delivery. However, above all, national policy provides an opportunity for local government to promote the health and wellbeing of its citizens, adopt safer communities, support vulnerable people, promote families, promote economic development and regeneration whilst being sensitive to global issues.

2. Local vision and priorities

In order to achieve our strategic priorities, technology must support us in the fulfilment of our place shaping, neighbourhood and citizen agendas. We will only be able to deliver our strategy on behalf of our citizens by having one structure that delivers transformational ICT capacity to our organisation and an effective and efficient ICT operational service.

As such we will need to capitalise on the latest ICT service delivery models. Based on our already successful 'Norwich Connect' service we will extend this

style of working and will implement an 'industrialised' ICT model that will centralise our core ICT service. We will achieve this by rationalisation and centralisation of the data centres; we will consolidate the ICT infrastructure in terms of desktop, server and data to ensure we have a cost effective and modern ICT service. In addition, we will implement systems management and monitoring to identify service issues before the user becomes aware and will provide a centralised ICT help desk to record, track and solve customer related ICT issues effectively.

We will also implement common line of business application across the organisation, removing multiple applications in favour of one best of breed application. This will help us to transform customer facing service into single holistic services as appropriate. In doing so, there will be an opportunity to achieve efficiency savings in aligned service areas. The organisation will benefit from a single point of electronic data storage that will offer resilience and will provide high levels of disaster recovery and business continuity.

Our ICT service will be provided by a single partner that will work in partnership with us to operate its service provision from a local base, thus offering additional benefits of job creation, localised 'up skilling' of citizens and supporting us in the economic growth of the area.

3. Strengths and weaknesses of current delivery

The ICT service in the City Council is provided as a managed service by our Partner Steria. Some Norwich City staff were transferred under TUPE to Steria at the outset of the fifteen year Contract in 2002. This partnership has delivered over two million pounds worth of year on year savings. The County Council differs in service model as it has an in-house ICT provision with key contracts let out to organisations such as British Telecom for infrastructure services and other providers for support of various applications.

Both authorities use key applications to support the ICT service. Whilst similar in function, they are not from the same supplier and therefore there are issues around duplication of resource. There are also support contracts for multiple applications, differing implementations of technologies and differing support requirements. From the end user perspective this will provide little transparency and will offer a 'confused' approach that will not support the transformational agendas well. Issues will arise from difficulties in implementing across the organisations some of the core transformational projects such as mobilised and location independent working, information sharing and knowledge management and integration for joined up service delivery.

The County Council has progressed well on server virtualisation and consolidation that offers opportunity to adopt an industrialised and potentially off site delivery of services to the Authority. This is in line with many ICT service delivery models currently in use by a number of authorities.

Both authorities have an ICT help desk service, provided by Steria for the City Council and provided in house by the County Council. Again, service alignment will be difficult if running two help desk services and support telephone numbers. In general this misalignment of technologies and service delivery models across the organisations will provide much opportunity for efficiencies and improved service.

4. Future model: Day 1 of the unitary authority

We will seek to appoint a Strategic Partner for ICT for the unitary organisation that from day one will start to join the separate ICT services. There will be a strategic approach to service transformation that will direct the partner in the changes necessary. We will still have staff working locally and some would be transferred under the rules of TUPE. We would also initially have separate organisational structures and separate systems.

We plan to transform the ICT organisations initially, through the re-focus around a new role of Chief Information Officer operating at a management team level. This will enable us to embed transformational skills within our organisation, raise capacity, and structure the ICT operation to provide a holistic approach. The ICT service will initially start with two separate services that will over time transition into a single service.

The implementation of a single management structure underneath the Chief Information Officer will be possible from Day One. The CIO will have responsibility for the two fundamental areas of delivery of ICT operations and transformation. The ICT operations structure will achieve efficiencies by reductions of staffing across the County and City ICT services.

The ICT help desk will initially become one service, to ensure overall co-ordination and there will be a single support contact number for internal customers to the service.

5. Future model: After 5 years of unitary status

After transition of the ICT service we will have a single managed service partner delivering a single outsourced ICT provision to the Authority. This will look much like the current city councils 'Norwich Connect' service, but will also have the advantage of additional elements that will further improve efficiency and effectiveness of the ICT service.

Multiple providers of services will be eliminated; multiple contracts for service provision will be changed at contract break points or when economically justified into a single sourced service through the strategic partner. There will be one ICT support telephone number for the organisations, one finance system, one HR system and one line of business application for appropriate line of business services. Our servers will be consolidated into a smaller number that will be housed in a single datacentre that will be managed for resilience, supported through out of hours 24x7, and will be a service that is supported via fail over in disaster and failure situations. Servers and systems

will be remotely monitored for performance and fail conditions so that service continuity is maximised. Our desktops and laptops will also be consolidated to support location independent working across the Authority as a whole. Data will be stored in network storage so that a thin client approach to the desktop will be achieved, thus reducing the need for a high cost 'to desk' support service.

Our network will be a high bandwidth service, enabling the use of high bandwidth data services such as document and records management and even provision of video. Telephony will be supported in this way through IP connected telephones internally to reduce costs. We will also consider converged technologies such as personal digital assistants (PDA's) and tablet PC's to support in community working. Security will be through active directory services and through secure VPN services for remote and mobile users.

6. ICT (see above)

7. VFM, efficiency and procurement

To achieve value for money, we will have to review how ICT services are procured. We will initially have a number of service providers across the authorities. These will need to be rationalised and a single supplier sought. This will require a procurement of an ICT partner that will help us to align all these elements into a single service.

We have seen, through similar single source ICT partnerships across the country, savings of around 10 – 20 % on the overall contract value to provide the same ICT service levels. There will be a reduced management headcount through a single organisation structure for ICT operations that will be achievable from day one. There will be reduced support costs for applications support through single source realised over a period as contracts require renewal. There will be reduced 'to desk' support costs through thin client, a reduced maintenance on hardware through use of less hardware and there will be a reduced software costs by standardisation of software on the desktop and servers – all realised over a period of two years. There will be reduced resource needed to support backups, a reduced telephony cost through use of IP phone on internal calls realised over the first year.

8. Benefits of unitary status on existing boundaries

A single source for ICT operational services will provide us with much benefit, including improved service out of hours through remote management and monitoring, improved resilience of the service, improved communications and reporting structures, centralised and standardised methods of call logging and monitoring, improved service failure detection by remote management. Staff will have a much more responsive, efficient and effective ICT service that will allow them to focus on their day to day role.

Above all however, such an alignment of ICT services will allow us to implement a service that will save money and will also enable us to be in a strong position to begin transformation of the authorities' services more easily. For example, by rationalisation of applications such as HR and Finance, revenues and benefits, children and young people we will be able to save on duplication but more importantly provide the transformational impetus to begin to reorganise these services effectively.

Additionally through having an efficient and effective ICT foundation in place with a high bandwidth network, a thin client desktop, consolidated servers, a single point for data storage etc, we will have the opportunity for more innovative transformational projects. Projects such as location independent working to mobilise our staff into the community and to reduce the office space needs we currently have, workflow to manage our transactions and manage organisational performance in delivering services to citizens, document and records management to electronically store information and to make it readily accessible to front line staff as well as freeing up office space from all the paper we currently have to store.

9. Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries

By considering extending the boundary to that of Greater Norwich, the opportunity for additional efficiencies and service improvements become possible. The overall ICT operational service savings would be increased due to the economies of scale the additional organisational elements provide. In addition, all the benefits and improvements identified above would also be extended.

15 Local Tax Collection and Benefits

1. The national picture

The key drivers for change in these services are to make them more accessible to the public by offering a range of routes to access these services, increased efficiency particularly through the use of ICT, and automation of the delivery of service as far as possible,

The efficiency of these services is being increased by reducing bureaucracy, for example the introduction of the Customer Management System whereby the Department of Work and Pensions collect the information needed to assess entitlement to Housing and Council Tax Benefit at the same time they collect the information needed to assess entitlement to Income Support and Job Seekers Allowance which reduces duplication of effort across the services.

This is also an area where the use of shared services to reduce costs is being tested out, and we have a local example of this, the Anglia Revenues Partnership.

2. Local vision and priorities

To deliver these services in the most efficient and effective way possible, and, in particular:

- To automate as far as possible the delivery of service through the use of ICT,
- To provide a range of routes to access these services, in particular to develop the use of the web
- To use new tools available eg web based benefits assessment tools,
- To reduce overheads of ICT and specialist staff by sharing services with other Councils/strategic partners

3. Strengths and weaknesses of current delivery

Norwich City Council currently provides all of these services, and will continue to do so in a unitary council.

The Norwich City Council Benefits Service is a high performing service, in the top quartile.

4. Future model: Day 1 of the unitary authority

The services will continue as established in Norwich City Council. As the Council is already exploring alternative service models this could either be a service delivered in house, or may be a shared service model. As we have a much higher percentage of Benefits claimants in Norwich than elsewhere in

the county we are in a strong position to offer specialist services e.g. Benefit Fraud Investigation, to other authorities.

5. Future model: after 5 years of unitary status

The service is likely to continue in a similar format as before, and continue to assess the benefits of the two broad options of in house delivery and shared services.

6. ICT

Norwich City Council use SX3, and we see no need for change

7. VFM, efficiency and procurement

Largely through Shared Services, as additional work and processing can be covered by a marginal increase in costs.

8. Benefits of unitary status on existing boundaries

None, as the services are already delivered by Norwich City Council

9. Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries

Additional work can be covered by the marginal increase in cost of appointing additional processing staff under the same management arrangements.

16 Pensions

1. The national picture

Pension Funds are under increasing pressure from both the impact of longer life expectancy and historical under investment.

Pensions Administration is complex and requires a high degree of specialist skill and knowledge

2. Local vision and priorities

Norwich City Council is currently part of the Norfolk Pension Fund and will continue this arrangement for a Unitary Council. The Norfolk Pension Scheme is 90% funded overall, the Norwich City Council part of the fund is 80% funded

3. Strengths and weaknesses of current delivery

The Norfolk Pension Fund is in relatively good shape.

4. Future model: Day 1 of the unitary authority

We will continue to use the Norfolk Pension Scheme.

5. Future model: After 5 years of unitary status

As above.

6. ICT

Not relevant.

7. VFM, efficiency and procurement

Not relevant.

8. Benefits of unitary status on existing boundaries

Not relevant.

9. Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries

Not relevant.

17 Trading Accounts

1. The national picture

Local Government has been required through Compulsory Competitive Tendering legislation and then through a duty of Best Value to ensure that all services give citizens value for money. As a result of this many councils have either outsourced some areas of service delivery, or have set up new structures for delivering services.

This practice is now embedded into the way local authorities work, and would seem to be set to continue, not least because many of the contracts local authorities have usually last for at least 5 years, and often longer.

2. Local vision and priorities

A Unitary Council for Norwich will seek to deliver value for money across all services, and would use the best available routes to do this.

3. Strengths and weaknesses of current delivery

Norfolk County Council has three trading accounts:

- NPS (Norfolk Property Services)
- NCS (Norfolk County Services)
- Norfolk Environmental Waste Services Ltd (NEWS)

All three companies have a good track record for service delivery.

Norwich City Council has worked with NPS on a number of projects and has: successfully transferred the Architects Team for Norwich City Council to NPS; and used NPS to advise the Council on the retendering of the Councils Housing Upgrades and Maintenance Programmes. NPS has a strong base in Norfolk and is developing a national customer base.

Norfolk County Services provides a range of services in Norfolk and Suffolk.

4. Future model: Day 1 of the unitary authority

As the current arrangement with these Trading Accounts is working well we will continue to provide services by using these Trading Accounts.

5. Future model: After 5 years of unitary status

During the first 5 years of a new Unitary Council we will review each service to assess value for money and performance, and then decide on the how the service should be delivered and by whom.

6. ICT systems

Not relevant at this stage.

7. VFM, efficiency and procurement

There are contractual arrangements underpinning the delivery of service by these Trading Accounts, and these contracts will novate to a new unitary council. Future procurement of the services will be based on value for money and performance.

8. Benefits of unitary status on existing boundaries

Not relevant

9. Benefits of unitary status on extended boundaries

Not relevant