

Scrutiny committee

Date: **Thursday, 18 December 2025**
Time: **16:30**
Venue: **Mancroft room City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH**

Committee members:

Councillors:

Wright (Chair)
Galvin (Vice-Chair)
Champion
Fulton-McAlister
Hoechner
Kendrick
Lawes
Sands (M)
Sands (S)
Smith
Stutley
Oliver

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Agenda

		Page nos
1	Apologies To receive apologies for absence	
2	Declarations of interest (Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting)	
3	Minutes To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2025.	5 - 16
4	Call in of IT Infrastructure Refresh Decision Taken at the meeting of the Cabinet on the 3 December 2025 Purpose: To consider the call in request for the IT Infrastructure Refresh decision that was taken at the Cabinet Meeting on 3 December 2025.	17 - 30
5	Exclusion of the public Consideration of exclusion of the public.	
*6	Pre-Scrutiny of Anglia Square Business Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This report is not for publication because it would disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as in para 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. 	
7	Equality Information Report 2026 Purpose - The report presents the council's draft Equality Information Report 2026 and provides updates on the delivery of the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2024-27. Its submission to Scrutiny Committee is to enable Councillors to make any recommendations or comments to Cabinet ahead of their meeting on 14 January.	31 - 128
8	Update on HR Processes Actions and Recommendations - To Follow	

Purpose - To receive an update on the actions and recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 18 September 2025.

9	Work Programme	129 - 140
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To approve the Work Programme 2025-26.

EXEMPT ITEMS:

(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and the public.)

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of an agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972 or it being confidential for the purposes of Section 100A(2) of that Act.

In each case, members are asked to decide whether, in all circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption (and discussing the matter in private) outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

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Date of publication: **Wednesday, 10 December 2025**



Scrutiny Committee

16:30 to 18:45

Thursday, 27 November 2025

Present: Councillors Galvin (Vice-Chair acting as Chair), Champion, Fulton-McAlister, Hoechner, Lawes, Sands (M), Smith, Stutely, Oliver, Ackroyd (substitute for Wright)

Apologies: Councillors Wright, Kendrick, and Sands (S)

Also Present: Cllr Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing

Davina Howes, Executive Director of Communities and Housing

Jan Robinson, Head of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Karen Smith, Community Safety Manager

Oliver Furbur, Environment Services Manager (Commissioning)

Craig Miller, Superintendent

Liam Bannon, Community Safety Manager (Office of the Police Crime Commissioner for Norfolk)

Edward Brown, Temporary Superintendent

28. Declarations of Interest

28.1 There were no declarations of interest.

29. Minutes

29.1 **RESOLVED** that the public and exempt minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2025 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

30. Safer Norwich Board, Community Safety Partnership and Community Safety Activity



- 30.1 The Cabinet Member for Housing, who was also the Chair of the Safer Norwich Board, introduced the report. She was pleased to report on the positive partnership and collaborative working between different key partners.
- 30.2 The Vice-Chair was pleased to see the report and noted that the Scrutiny Committee would receive an annual report going forward, as per the Committee's terms of reference.
- 30.3 A Member noted that the Neighbourhood Police team had been present in his ward throughout the summer and had supported residents. He was pleased with their work.
- 30.4 Discussion ensued on road safety. A Member had received expressions of concern from residents about the enforcement of the 20 mile per hour speed limit in areas across the City. The Community Safety Manager (Office of the Police Crime Commissioner for Norfolk) explained that road safety was a priority, and it was a function of the Road Safety Strategic Partnership. He highlighted a project across the county which was supported by district authorities. The focus was on car meets and the anti-social use of cars. A public space protection order had been developed across authorities in Norfolk, and a tiered response was established to exhibiting behaviours that were outside the scope of the protection order. He identified this as an example of a collaborative approach. In addition to road safety, work was developing within policing teams related to the safe use of electric scooters, also known as e-scooters.
- 30.5 A Member asked if the Council was able to influence general speeding, as well as anti-social speeding. The Community Safety Manager explained that work was being done as part of the public safety protection order in particular areas, such as the Mousehold area. This included exploring road calming measures, in conjunction with Norfolk County Council. She added that the Council was liaising with business parks where there had been issues and had developed a set of warning letters.
- 30.6 The Temporary Superintendent noted that many communities had significant concerns about speeding and Community Speed Watch was a volunteer scheme that had been effective in enforcing speed limits. Warning and advisory letters were issued to people who broke the speed limit. In response to a question on parking, the Temporary Superintendent explained that the police's responsibility was where an obstruction caused danger to other users. He commented that the police dealt with many calls for service and due to stretched resources, nuisance reports were lower on their priority list. However, he encouraged residents to take photos where anti-social parking had taken place and they would be followed up with.
- 30.7 The Vice-Chair advised the Committee that anti-social parking was on the Committee's work programme for the 2025/26 civic year.



- 30.8 A Member proposed that the local community would benefit from greater awareness of Community Speed Watch. Members agreed to ask officers to promote Community Speed Watch more and explore all avenues for this.
- 30.9 A Member noted that the police did not enforce the 20 mile per hour speed limit and asked what the likelihood of changing that was. The Temporary Superintendent responded that he would need consider that in more detail. He explained that the equipment used by Safety Camera Partnerships was not calibrated to a level to enforce the 20 mile per hour speed limit. However, the statistics were collated by the Safety Camera Partnership and if there were significant outliers, Safety Camera Partnership staff would be deployed to do enforcement in the area. He added that if a significant problem was identified at any location, a conversation would take place with County Highways to establish preventative measures.
- 30.10 (Councillor Fulton-McAlister joined the meeting)
- 30.11 Members agreed to request more information on the possibility of enforcing the 20mph speed limit.
- 30.12 Discussion ensued on anti-social behaviour in the City centre. A Member noted that there was emphasis on tackling anti-social youth gatherings in the centre but was disappointed to see that only £5,000 was granted to the Targeted Youth Support Service in Summer 2025. The Community Safety Manager clarified that the £5,000 referred to in the report was not the total amount, but it was the amount that the Council granted from the Safer Neighbourhood Initiative. She added that the work reached approximately 15,000 children.
- 30.13 The Community Safety Manager detailed the ongoing work to address anti-social youth behaviour and youth safety. She explained that support services had received funding from ASB Hotspot funding from the police to engage young people and keep them safe. Signs of criminal and sexual exploitation had been found amongst young people in the Hay Hill and Haymarket area and targeted youth support services were there to engage with them and involve them in different activities. The Community Safety Manager added there was CCTV in the area, but the Council was looking to see if there were any blackspots, and the Community Safety team was working with the Council's Licensing team to prevent alcohol and substance misuse in the area.
- 30.14 In response to a Member's question, the Community Safety Manager explained that the police had sent an email to parents of pupils in schools around Norwich, advising them to talk to their children about staying safe.
- 30.15 Discussion ensued on youth provision. A Member stated the engagement activities were not able to address the crux of the issue, which was the reduction in youth centres. The Temporary Superintendent responded that progress had been made in reducing youth violence since March 2025 when Norwich began to see an increase in the number of incidents. He



acknowledged that many young people were seeking ways to entertain themselves and emphasised that the police worked in partnership with targeted youth services. Members agreed to commend the work that had been done to reduce youth violence, but recognised that there was a need for greater youth provision.

- 30.16 In response to a Member's question, the Community Safety Manager explained that the Council was successful in securing Getting Safer Streets funding in 2024 and was able to recruit a Community Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Response Officer. Shared Prosperity funding had been secured to extend the role into the current year, and a report would evaluate the successes of the post and future funding options to extend the contract. Members were pleased to hear the update. Members agreed to ask Cabinet to explore funding options for Community Wardens.
- 30.17 A Member noted that Prevent and Community Cohesion were listed as strategic priorities in the report and asked for clarity on how officers were working to increase safety and existing lines of communication with relevant organisations in relation to hate crimes. The Community Safety Manager explained that a hate crime conference was held in October and the way to report hate crimes had been increasingly promoted. She explained that the Council worked directly with the Brook Hotel and had provided them with information on how to report hate crimes. The Council had started working with Belong, a cohesion network. Belong had hosted 3 workshops for Councillors. The Community Safety Manager added that officers wanted to facilitate honest conversations across the spectrum of feelings in Norwich and to build on the City of Sanctuary work. In response to a request from Members, the Community Safety Manager agreed to circulate the report from the hate crime conference once it was finalised.
- 30.18 The Temporary Superintendent commented that 2025 had been a busy period, particularly with activity at the Brook Hotel. He noted that whilst it had been challenging and resource intensive, he felt the response from the police had been right. The Temporary Superintendent told Members that there had not been a significant increase in reports of hate crimes and that they were typically under-reported.
- 30.19 Discussion ensued on retail crime, which Members felt was an issue in the City centre. A Member asked for an update on how the police dealt with retail crime. The Temporary Superintendent responded that officers in the City centre dealt well with incidents. Norwich had one of the highest detection rates, however, there was more to be done. A Member asked if the police required more CCTV in the City centre. The Temporary Superintendent said that more CCTV in the area would be welcomed. He added that increasing capable guardianship was a priority, meaning that that community wardens, shop security and others were able to help deter criminality. The Community Safety Manager (Office of the Police Crime Commissioner for Norfolk) commented that the Home Office had launched a 'Winter of Action' to tackle shoplifting and anti-social behaviour and Norwich City centre was taking part.



- 30.20 The Cabinet Member for Housing explained that as Chair of the Safer Norwich Board, different models of CCTV had regularly been discussed and there were a number of suggestions that had emerged by looking at examples from different authorities. Members agreed to recommend that officers explored further CCTV options where possible.
- 30.21 In response to a Member's question about the concept of designing out crime, the Community Safety Manager told Members that as part of Safer Streets Funding, visual audit training had been provided by officers who specialised in designing out crime. She assured the Committee that that was at the forefront of officers' minds when looking at developments.
- 30.22 Noting that the Committee would receive an annual report on the matter going forward, Members agreed to recommend that the next report contained detailed statistics and analysis on the types of crimes and anti-social behaviour occurring across the City, and potentially maps to visualise this.
- 30.23 Discussion ensued on tenancy engagement. The Cabinet Member for Housing explained that officers were exploring the introduction of more specialist groups to look at different areas, including repairs. She hoped this would drive more engagement. Members agreed to endorse proposals to create new tenant engagement groups to target community safety.
- 30.24 The Vice-Chair thanked officers for the report and external guests for their time. The Committee agreed to thank the Community Policing Team for their work throughout the year.
- 30.25 The Community Safety Manager invited the Scrutiny Committee to spend time with the Community Safety team. She agreed to circulate the invitation outside the meeting.
- 30.26 **RESOLVED** to note the following actions:
- 1) To ask officers to explore all avenues, including the Housing Hub, to promote Community Speed Watch across the City.
 - 2) To request more information on the possibility of enforcing the 20mph speed limit in Norwich.
 - 3) To request that the Community Safety Manager circulates the report arising from the Hate Crime conference once completed.
 - 4) To request that the next annual report on Community Safety includes detailed statistics and analysis on the types of crimes and anti-social behaviour occurring across the City and potentially maps to visualise this.
 - 5) To ask that the Community Safety Manager circulates an invite for the Scrutiny Committee to spend time with the Community Safety team.
- 30.27 **RESOLVED** to note the following recommendations and comments:



- 1) To commend the work that had been done to reduce youth violence, but recognised the need for greater youth provision.
- 2) To ask Cabinet to explore funding options for Community Wardens.
- 3) To ask officers to explore options for further CCTV in Norwich where possible.
- 4) To endorse proposals to create new tenant engagement groups to target community safety.
- 5) To thank the Community Policing Team for their work throughout the year.

31. Draft Good Neighbourhood Management Policy

- 31.1 The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the report. She emphasised that the Council was committed to helping people enjoy their homes and live harmoniously and the policy intended to support that. Members were pleased to note that the policy would be regularly updated.
- 31.2 A Member noted that the policy focused on how not to be a bad neighbour, and asked whether it would be further developed to include how to be a good neighbour. The Cabinet Member for Housing responded that the policy was intended to help people have guidance and examples that they would be able to relate to.
- 31.3 A Member asked whether more children and young people would be involved in the formulation of the policy, noting that the youngest age category in the report was 18-24 years old. The Cabinet Member for Housing explained that the policy stemmed from the Council's role as a landlord and tenancies were agreed with people aged 18 or above. She emphasised that the responsibility for a tenancy sat with adults and that why was the policy was framed as such. Members of the Committee agreed to recommend that officers explored the possibility of seeking more children and young people's views in the formulation of the policy.
- 31.4 Discussion ensued on the audience of the policy. The Vice-Chair noted that the policy spoke directly to tenants and asked whether a separate document with a more positive outlook would be created and whether it would include learning and reflections from community cohesion work. The Community Safety Manager explained that an additional version would be created in early 2026 that would be tenant-facing and more positive. Members agreed that they would like to see the additional version as an information bulletin at a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.
- 31.5 Members discussed the survey that was included in the report. A Member noted that nearly half (44.9%) of participants considered themselves to have a long-term condition or disability and of those conditions, the largest category was mental health conditions. The Cabinet Member for Housing explained that that was reflective of the demographics of the Council's tenants and



many had complex needs. She added that the data highlighted the need for partnership working.

- 31.6 Discussion ensued on ball games and play areas. The policy encouraged the use of outdoor communal spaces by residents and visitors, however, a Member commented that several areas had signs banning ball games which made children feel unwelcome. The Committee agreed to recommend that all areas with no ball games signs be reviewed and where appropriate, the signs be removed. The Cabinet Member for Housing agreed to look into it and agreed with Members that the removal of signs linked into the Council's Play Strategy. Members also agreed that some signage which intended to instruct people not to fly tip, looked like it was encouraging fly tipping. The Environment Services Manager (Commissioning) asked Members to inform officers of the locations of such signs in order for them to be removed and replaced.
- 31.7 A Member noted that only 21.4% of survey respondents felt confident about knowing where to go for help with neighbourhood issues. She asked if clearer pathways for raising concerns would be included in the further version of the policy, as well as Council responsibilities, caretaker responsibilities, reporting mechanisms and mediation schemes. The Community Safety Manager explained that officers planned to explore routes to make the pathways clear and accessible in the New Year. A Member queried whether capturing information from tenants about issues was dependent on the Council's IT interface and noted that many residents had complained about the IT forms. The Community Safety Manager advised that the Council was developing a new website which aimed to address accessibility issues and create clearer pathways. The Community Safety Manager emphasised that people who were less digitally able would still be able to use the Council's customer contact centre.
- 31.8 (Councillor Fulton-McAlister left the meeting).
- 31.9 In response to a question about bonfires, the Community Safety Manager agreed to add a link in the policy to the Council's Environmental Health Policy which contained information about the health and safety hazards of burning rubbish.
- 31.10 Discussion ensued on the redesign of the Council's website. The Environment Services Manager (Commissioning) explained that the environment and waste pages were among the first to be re-examined for the website redesign. The Community Safety Manager said that online forms were under review. The Vice-Chair proposed that the Scrutiny Committee looked at the new website and online customer journey as part of their Work Programme.
- 31.11 (Councillor Lawes left the meeting).
- 31.12 A Member commented that the Scrutiny Committee had previously commissioned a task and finish group on the issue of fly tipping. They had recommended that the Council considered creating an app for the purpose of



reporting fly tipping. The Executive Director of Communities and Housing explained that officers typically avoided the use of apps for reporting issues because they recognised that many people had lots of apps on their mobile phones. She explained that the best solution would be for it to form part of the website. Members requested for officers to clarify whether or not forms to report issues, such as fly tipping, had been examined as part of the website redesign. Ultimately, Members wanted to assurance that reporting was as quick and accessible as possible.

- 31.13 Discussion ensued about the number of responses to the survey, which was 70. Members asked if officers were disappointed by the amount of responses and whether they had considered other forms of engagement. The Community Safety Manager said that whilst the number was disappointing, it was broadly in line with other surveys run by the Council. She explained that the Council had promoted the survey when talking to residents. The Executive Director of Communities and Housing added that the Council sought feedback regularly through constant communication and the Housing Hub gave people an opportunity to engage. She emphasised that the policy would evolve as more feedback was obtained. Members reflected that 70 responses out of a total of 219 webpage visits was positive overall.
- 31.14 In response to a Member's question, the Executive Director of Communities and Housing explained that all Council policies had review dates. However, she encouraged Members to reach out to officers if they had suggestions for updates arising from resident's concerns or issues. In light of this, Members agreed to ask officers to circulate the policy to all Councillors and to incorporate text in the policy which emphasised that it was a living document that would be updated.
- 31.15 A Member suggested that the policy also needed to be advertised in Citizen magazine and suggested that a tear-out page with reporting procedures and pathways would be beneficial for residents. The Executive Director of Communities and Housing agreed to look into all avenues for communication. Members agreed to ask officers to be creative, look at different media communication beyond digital and put some resource behind the communications plan for the policy.
- 31.16 **RESOLVED** to recommend:
- 1) That officers explored the possibility of seeking more children and young people's views in the formulation of the policy.
 - 2) That officers bring an information bulletin to the Scrutiny Committee which provided an update on the additional tenant-facing version of the policy which would be created in the new year.
 - 3) That all 'no ball games' signs be reviewed by officers and where appropriate are removed.
 - 4) That the Scrutiny Committee added the new website and online customer journey to their Work Programme.



- 5) To ask officers to be creative, look at different media beyond digital and put some resource behind the communications plan for the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy.

31.17 **RESOLVED** to note the following actions:

- 1) For Members to inform officers of the location of misleading fly tipping signs in order for them to be removed and replaced.
- 2) Officers to add a link into the draft policy to the Council's Environmental Health Policy.
- 3) Officers to clarify whether or not forms to report issues had been examined as part of the website redesign.
- 4) Officers to circulate the Good Neighbourhood Management policy to all Councillors and add text into the policy which emphasised that it was a living document that would be updated.

32. Verbal Update from Norfolk Health Overview Select Committee

- 32.1 Councillor Galvin, the Council's representative on the Norfolk Health Overview Select Committee (NHOSC) was pleased to be able to give a verbal update and informed Members that she would ensure that a written update was circulated to the Committee outside of the meeting.
- 32.2 The last meeting of NHOSC included a discussion about the Vulnerable Adults Service (VAS) specification changes, histopathology delays, speech and language therapy, the wellness on wheels bus and the potential for Anglia Square health provision.
- 32.3 Councillor Galvin had written to the Board and wanted to update the Committee on their response. Councillor Galvin asked for sight of the written evidence provided by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to legal advisors on which they based the decision that there would be no change to the service. She explained that the service would be relet in April and there would be an opportunity to collect data. NHOSC asked Healthwatch to support with that stage. Councillor Galvin informed Members that the Board had replied. She added that the notable changes that had happened were that the duration of support for was unspecified and had now been changed to 6 weeks or as appropriate and the patient registration had changed. There had also been the removal of mandatory transfer to Norwich Health Centre. This had raised concerns about the continuity of care and patient trust.
- 32.4 Councillor Galvin felt that there were key gaps and unanswered points. She stated that there had been no evidence for improved outcomes and value for money for the new specification, no data or measurable indicators had been provided, and an independent evaluation of the current service had not been completed. She added that NHOSC had not seen how the new specification



aligned with Inclusion Health standards. There had been no transparency on the legal advice or the reasons for limited disclosure of that and there had no resource and implementation details had been provided.

32.5 Consequently, Councillor Galvin proposed that the Scrutiny Committee wrote to NHOSC to ask for the gaps and unanswered points detailed above to be explored by the ICB and an answer returned to the Scrutiny Committee. Members agreed to recommend this.

32.6 **RESOLVED** to write to NHOSC, asking for the ICB to respond to Scrutiny Committee's concerns about:

- A lack of evidence for improved outcomes and value for money.
- A lack of data and measurable indicators.
- A lack of independent evaluation of the current service.
- Whether or not the new specification aligned with Inclusion Health standards.
- A lack of transparency on the legal advice received.
- A lack of provided resource and implementation details.

33. Deliberative Democracy Terms of Reference

33.1 The Chair of the Deliberative Democracy task and finish group introduced the revised terms of reference to the Committee. The task and finish group had agreed to ask the Scrutiny Committee to agree to an increase in their membership and to extend the option to join the group to all Councillors.

33.2 The revised terms of reference before the Committee proposed to increase the membership from a maximum of 5 to a maximum of 7 members. However, the Chair of the task and finish group had received 5 expressions of interest from Councillors and therefore sought the Committee's approval to increase the membership to a maximum of 9 Members.

33.3 **RESOLVED** to agree to increase the membership of the Deliberative Democracy task and finish group from a maximum of 5 Members to a maximum of 9 Members. The new Members were agreed as follows:

- Councillor Harper.
- Councillor Sands (M).
- Councillor Fox.
- Councillor Stutely.
- Councillor Oliver.

34. Work Programme



- 34.1 The Committee agreed that they would to pre-scrutinise the Anglia Square Business Plan at their next meeting on 18 December 2025. Offices agreed to add the item to their Work Programme.
- 34.2 A Member raised concerns about the amount of items on the agenda for the Committee's meeting on 18 December 2025 and the Committee agreed to defer the Housing Development at Mile Cross Depot Site item until their meeting on 15 January 2026. The Executive Director of Communities and Housing assured the Committee that she would circulate an update on Mile Cross via email in the interim. She offered to answer any questions from Members via email in advance of the meeting.
- 34.3 A Member noted that in a previous civic year, a Scrutiny Topic Form had been submitted on the topic of ethical and sustainable management of cash balances and investments. The topic went to the Audit Committee and then Treasury Management Committee. In response to a request to receive an update on the conclusion of this work, the Head of Legal and Governance agreed that the Scrutiny Committee could receive an information bulletin on the topic. Members agreed to add this to the Work Programme.
- 34.4 A Member raised that the new financial strategy was scheduled to go to the Cabinet meeting on 3 December 2025. A Member noted that the report mentioned quarterly reporting and the potential involvement of the Scrutiny Committee. The Head of Legal and Governance agreed to provide clarity to the Committee on how they would be involved.
- 34.5 In response to a Member's question about Lion Homes, the Head of Legal and Governance explained that officers were waiting to receive a report which would be brought to the Committee. Interim updates throughout the Members Voluntary Liquidation process would be provided.
- 34.6 **RESOLVED** to:
- 1) Agree the Work Programme.
 - 2) Add the Anglia Square Business Plan item to the Committee's next meeting on 18 December 2025.
 - 3) Defer the Housing Development at Mile Cross Depot Site item until the 15 January 2026 meeting of the Committee.
 - 4) Request an information bulletin on ethical and sustainable management of cash balances and investments which had been reviewed by the Audit Committee and the Treasury Management Committee.
 - 5) Request clarity on how the Scrutiny Committee might be involved in having oversight of the quarterly financial and performance reports.

CHAIR

Norwich City Council - Scrutiny Protocol for Call in

Item	Guidance Description
1.	Chair to seek a proposer and a seconder for agreement of the attached Call-in protocol. Members to vote on the proposed protocol.
2.	<p>Chair to introduce the Call-in and the Committee to agree the scope of the Call-in based on the points made in the Call-in Notice:</p> <p>Members may only discuss the principles of decision making as set out in the constitution with regard to the specific points below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The report to cabinet is vague. It speaks about equipment being older but doesn't go into specific detail about what equipment is being replaced for £550k of expenditure. A more thorough report could include what the council's processing requirements are and how much data storage we need. 2. The report is not clear about why delegating to the Executive Director of Resources necessary and why full approval cannot come back to Cabinet. 3. The "doing nothing is not a viable option" statement does not detail what steps have been taken to consider longer term use of existing equipment, and the cost of buying additional support. 4. The report states a 'neutral' effect on safeguarding adults and children - if doing nothing is not an option then how can it not be a positive effect? i.e. if cybersecurity is compromised or if the system fails in part so activities cannot take place then that can lead to safeguarding risks. 5. The report states that 'the most sensible approach is to refresh the IT hardware now, providing a stable, supported platform for the foreseeable future' but does not set out why a cloud migration has not been considered, or why a Hardware as a Service (HaaS) model is also not being considered.

	6. The report talks about a framework procurement for the £550k spend, but provides no further details as to what framework is being considered.
3.	Once the scope has been agreed the Signatories will address the committee for the reasons that they have called this in.
4.1	The Chair will then ask the Cabinet Member and relevant officers to present the reason (s) why the decision was taken by Cabinet.
4.2	The Chair will invite Committee Members to ask questions of officers and of the Cabinet Member.
4.3	<p>The Committee will then be asked to debate the issue and take one of the following courses of action: -</p> <p>(1) Refer the matter back to the Cabinet for reconsideration, together with the observations of the Scrutiny Committee. Cabinet will then take a final decision and that decision cannot be called in.</p> <p>(2) Refer the Matter to Full Council who can object to the decision which has been made. If they do object then the decision will be referred back to the Cabinet together with the Council's views on the decision. If Council does not object to the decision then the decision will be implemented following the close of the meeting.</p> <p>(3) That the decision be upheld and implemented immediately. In each case setting out in writing the nature of its concern.</p>
4.4	A vote will be taken and reasons will be given for the Scrutiny Committee's decision. Any reason will be reported to the next stage if the decision is not implemented at the meeting.
4.5	Any motion must be proposed and seconded and only one motion can be debated at a time. When the debate has finished the motion will be put to the vote.
4.6	Individual Councillors can ask for their own vote to be recorded and this will be noted by the Clerk or if a recorded vote is requested as detailed in the constitution.
	<p>Principles of Decision Making:</p> <p>All decisions in the council will be made in accordance with the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) take into account all relevant considerations and ignore those which are irrelevant b) compliance with finance, contract and all other procedure rules c) due consultation and proper advice is taken at the earliest opportunity and alternative options considered before decisions are reached d) impartiality and an absence of bias or pre-determination e) any interests are properly declared f) decisions are properly recorded and published g) decisions are proportionate to the desired outcome h) respect for human rights and equality impacts

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) a presumption in favour of transparency and openness j) clarity of aims and desired outcomes k) due consideration of all available options l) reasons are given for decisions
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Norwich City Council – Call in Notice

10 December 2025

The following decision taken at the Cabinet Meeting on the 3 December 2025 has been called in to the Scrutiny Committee following the receipt of a Call in request. This will be considered at the Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on the 18 December 2025.

To consider delegating the contract award for IT Infrastructure Refresh

It was RESOLVED:

That Cabinet Approved the commencement of a procurement exercise for new IT hardware through a compliant procurement services framework within approved budgets.

And

That Cabinet delegated authority to the Executive Director for Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Equalities and Social Justice, to award the contract to the selected supplier.

Purpose:

The purpose is to delegate the authority to award a contract for IT Infrastructure Refresh for the period of 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031 to the Executive Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Justice.

Reason for Decision:

Delegating authority to the Executive Director of Resources, will enable the council to complete the procurement and implementation of essential IT infrastructure through a compliant framework, within agreed financial limits.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

There are no viable alternatives. Inaction is not advisable. A full cloud migration, while potentially an option, would not be right at this stage as it could compromise both programme delivery and operational stability

The reasons for the Call in were as follows:

1. The report to cabinet is vague. It speaks about equipment being older but doesn't go into specific detail about what equipment is being replaced for £550k of expenditure. A more thorough report could include what the council's processing requirements are and how much data storage we need.
2. The report is not clear about why delegating to the Executive Director of Resources necessary and why full approval cannot come back to Cabinet.
3. The "doing nothing is not a viable option" statement does not detail what steps have been taken to consider longer term use of existing equipment, and the cost of buying additional support.
4. The report states a 'neutral' effect on safeguarding adults and children - if doing nothing is not an option then how can it not be a positive effect? i.e. if cybersecurity is compromised or if the system fails in part so activities cannot take place then that can lead to safeguarding risks.
5. The report states that 'the most sensible approach is to refresh the IT hardware now, providing a stable, supported platform for the foreseeable future' but does not set out why a cloud migration has not been considered, or why a Hardware as a Service (HaaS) model is also not being considered.
6. The report talks about a framework procurement for the £550k spend, but provides no further details as to what framework is being considered.

The following Councillors supported the Call in of the Item:

- Cllr James Wright (Chair of Scrutiny Committee)
- Cllr Lucy Galvin (Vice Chair of Scrutiny Committee)
- Cllr Hannah Hoechner
- Cllr Ian Stutely

Date of Publication: 10 December 2025



Committee name: Cabinet

Committee date: 03/12/2025

Report title: To consider delegating the contract award for IT Infrastructure Refresh

Portfolio: Councillor Padda, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Justice

Report from: Head of customers, IT and digital

Wards: All wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

KEY DECISION

Purpose

The purpose is to delegate the authority to award a contract for IT Infrastructure Refresh for the period of 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031 to the Executive Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Justice.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Cabinet approve the commencement of a procurement exercise for new IT hardware through a compliant Procurement Services Framework, within approved budgets. Furthermore, Cabinet is asked to approve entering into a contract and to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Equalities and Social Justice, to award the contract to the selected supplier.

Policy framework

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- An open and modern Council.
- A prosperous Norwich.
- A fairer Norwich.
- A climate responsive Norwich.
- A future-proof Norwich.

This report meets the **A future-proof Norwich** corporate priority

Report details

1. The council's core IT hardware (servers, storage, and backup systems) was installed in 2020 and will be six years old by 2026/27. By this stage, equipment typically becomes unreliable, harder to support, and more costly to maintain.
2. Our IT infrastructure—servers, storage, backups—is the foundation of all digital services, much like the plumbing and wiring in a building: mostly invisible but essential for everything to function. Over time, these systems age, becoming less reliable, slower, and harder to repair. After about five to six years, the risks of breakdowns, security vulnerabilities, and higher maintenance costs increase sharply.
3. This infrastructure underpins critical council systems including Planning & Regulatory Services, Mapping (GIS), Document and File Management, User Authentication, Remote Access Services, and Security Services. While some services such as HR, Finance, and Email have successfully migrated to the cloud, full migration within the next two years is impractical due to resource constraints and system complexity.
4. Doing nothing is not a viable option. While the current infrastructure remains operational, key hardware components will fall out of support next year. This will increase maintenance challenges and the risk of downtime, data loss, and service disruption—posing a serious threat to the continuity of frontline services.
5. The most sensible approach is to refresh the IT hardware now, providing a stable, supported platform for the foreseeable future. This ensures continued reliability during the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and prevents rushed, high-risk decisions later.
6. Procurement options considered, open tender – Duplicates effort; not recommended. Framework – Compliant, cost-effective, includes configuration, migration, and support. Recommended.
7. Next steps are to commence a procurement exercise via compliant framework. Cabinet to approve entering a contract and delegate award to Executive Director of Resources.

Implications

Financial and resources

8. Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its community-led plan "We are Norwich" and budget.
9. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources.
10. The outline business case was discussed with the Director of Finance (s151 Officer) and the capital programme budgets were approved by full Council in February 2025, subject to business case submission to capital board.

11. The capital board confirmed this decision on 23 September 2025 following the submission of the business case.
12. This is a business-as-usual activity and will be managed by the IT Infrastructure team. Work will generally not be visible to the wider organisation, but periodic updates will be delivered to Resources Board.
13. The cost of the solution, based upon current requirements, is estimated to be in the region of £550k.

Legal

14. The proposal does not affect any statutory duties or human rights matters. Procurement will be carried out in accordance with the relevant regulations and internal procedures.

Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	the IT estate refresh aligns with the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024–2027. The proposal supports inclusive access to digital services.
Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs)	Neutral
Health, social and economic impact	Improved IT infrastructure will support access to online services, supporting residents' wellbeing and economic participation.
Crime and disorder	Having a refreshed IT environment contributes to the council's wider strategy to reduce cyber-related risks and support safer digital environments.
Children and adults safeguarding	Neutral.
Environmental impact	The refresh will reduce energy consumption through modern, energy-efficient hardware and promote sustainability by enabling remote work, reducing travel, and supporting digital workflows that minimise paper use.

Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Ageing infrastructure increases the likelihood of system failures, unplanned downtime, and degraded performance. This disrupts day-to-day operations, impacts service delivery, and reduces staff productivity.	Increased loss of services Reduced user satisfaction and trust in IT services Inability to support modern workloads or digital transformation Reputational impact	Replace legacy hardware with modern, resilient infrastructure to ensure reliable performance, reduce failure rates, and support current and future business needs.
Unsupported or obsolete hardware introduces significant security vulnerabilities and may fall short of compliance requirements. This exposes the council to cyber threats and regulatory penalties.	Higher risk of data breaches and ransomware attacks Non-compliance with frameworks Loss of vendor support for critical patches and updates	Invest in secure, supportable hardware that aligns with current security standards, enables timely patching, and reduces the council's threat surface

Other options considered

15. There are no viable alternatives. Inaction is not advisable. A full cloud migration, while potentially an option, would not be right at this stage as it could compromise both programme delivery and operational stability.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

16. Delegating authority to the Executive Director of Resources, will enable the council to complete the procurement and implementation of essential IT infrastructure through a compliant framework, within agreed financial limits.

Background papers:

None

Appendices: None

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Norwich City Council – Cabinet Meeting 03.12.2025**Extract from the Draft Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting on the 3 December 2025 for Call in of the IT Infrastructure Refresh.****80.IT Infrastructure Refresh**

80.1 The Leader of the Council presented the report. The report would enable timely procurement decisions aligned with operational needs and strategic priorities. The Capital funding for the refresh, estimated at £550,000 had been approved as part of the Budget agreed by Full Council in February 2025. The infrastructure in question; servers, storage and backup systems, had been installed in 2020 and would be six years old by 2026-2027. At this age hardware became increasingly unreliable and costly to maintain, making it vulnerable to security risk. The procurement would take place through a compliant framework, which was preferred over an open tender for efficiency and support coverage. Delegating authority would ensure procurement could be executed swiftly and responsibly avoiding delays that could compromise service delivery during Local Government Reorganisation.

80.2 Councillor Galvin asked the following question:

“The report says ‘There are no viable alternatives. Inaction is not advisable. A full cloud migration, while potentially an option, would not be right at this stage as it could compromise both programme delivery and operational stability.’ However, Norfolk county council is currently using a cloud system which allows for easier upscaling and protects them from the upfront payments of hardware lifecycles. With local government reorganisation on the way and in house servers no longer the norm, this council should prepare for the possibility of a cloud migration being brought by the new authority before this hardware will lifecycle out. Can you confirm that this possibility is being considered in the procurement process?”

80.3 The Leader of the Council gave the following response:

“The council already uses cloud services for HR, Finance, Email, some Web services and is migrating shared folders. However, some critical systems cannot be moved easily due to supplier constraints and integration complexity. A full cloud migration at this point would introduce significant risk to programme delivery and operational stability, especially during Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

Norfolk County Council's environment is also not fully cloud and at this stage, we do not know what applications or solutions the new organisation(s) will

select to deliver services. Moving everything to a cloud platform now could result in a second migration later to align with the new authority's chosen solution, creating unnecessary cost and disruption.

Furthermore, the selection and procurement of new systems by the reorganised authority / authorities may not be completed by vesting day, which means our current infrastructure would continue to age and could compromise operational stability if not refreshed now. Therefore, the procurement process focuses on refreshing core infrastructure to maintain resilience while continuing selective cloud adoption where feasible.

A full migration remains a longer-term consideration but is not part of this immediate cycle.”

80.4 The Leader of the Council moved, and the Cabinet Member for Culture and Wellbeing seconded the recommendations for the reasons set out in the report.

80.5 **RESOLVED**, unanimously, to:

- 1) Approve the commencement of a procurement exercise for new IT hardware for new IT hardware through a compliant Procurement Services Framework within approved budgets.
- 2) Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Equalities and Social Justice, to award the contract to the selected supplier.



Committee name: Scrutiny

Committee date: 18/12/2025

Report title: Norwich City Council - Equality Information Report 2026

Portfolio: Councillor Padda, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Justice

Report from: Executive director of communities and housing

Wards: All wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

This report presents the council's draft Equality Information Report 2026 (appendix 1), which sets out key equality data and progress against our statutory Public Sector Equality Duty.

In addition, the report provides an update on delivery of the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan 2024–2027 (appendix 2), summarising progress against each stated action and therefore highlighting how these activities support the achievement of the council's three equality objectives.

Its submission to Scrutiny Committee today is to enable councillors to make any recommendations or comments to Cabinet ahead of their meeting on 14 January to which it will be submitted for further comment and a decision regarding its publication.

To ensure compliance with its Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council must publish a new Equality Information Report by 31 January each year.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:

- Review the content of this year's annual Equality Information Report and the appended EDI Action Plan 2025–26 progress update, making any comments or recommendations they wish Cabinet to consider in their deliberations.

Policy framework

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- An open and modern Council.
- A prosperous Norwich.

- A fairer Norwich.
- A climate responsive Norwich.
- A future-proof Norwich.

This report supports the *A Fairer Norwich* corporate priority by identifying and assessing any inequalities that prohibit the people of Norwich from living the independent and safe lives they seek and deserve. In so doing, it enables the council to act where it may be necessary or appropriate to do so, and to maximise the opportunities people have to succeed and thrive.

The report also meets the *A Future-Proof Norwich* corporate priority by supporting work with partners and communities to create an environment that allows people to feel they belong and that they are respected and heard.

It also underpins the *Open & Modern Council priority* in that it demonstrates that the council is “invested in its people” and is “data and insight driven and people focussed”. Furthermore, the report underpins a number of the plan’s guiding principles, primarily that it seeks to “put equality and inclusion front and centre of all its thinking” and “uses evidence to inform the services it provides”.

The report also seeks to demonstrate progress against the council’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024/27.

Report details

1. As a local authority, the council has a statutory requirement to publish an annual Equality Information Report. The report will be considered by Cabinet in January 2026.
2. This year’s report continues to align with the council’s equality objectives as set out in its [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-27](#) and highlights headline actions taken to meet them.
3. The Report therefore comprises three sections:
 - a. Our Duty
 - b. Reaffirmation of our Equality Objectives with progress in meeting them reported within the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan progress report, appearing at appendix 2.
 - c. Information about our People, Customers and Employees.
4. The format provides evidence to enable the council to better allocate resources to help communities identified as needing additional support.
5. Previous Equality Information Reports can be found on the Equality and Diversity section of the council’s website at <http://www.norwich.gov.uk/equalityanddiversity>.
6. As highlighted above, appended to this year’s Equality Information Report (2026) is a document providing a progress update for each of the actions contained within the council’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2024-2027 (appendix 2).

7. Future iterations of this report will continue to track progress against this, noting the actions reported correspond to, and support, our equality objectives, and so enable transparent monitoring of our efforts to achieve them, as well as our work against the outcomes described in the *A Fairer Norwich* priority within the council's Community-Led Plan.
8. As of October 2025, the EDI Action Plan contains 70 actions representing activity across multiple service areas. When approved by Cabinet in January 2025, each action appearing in the Plan was assigned one of four delivery timescales: Iterative (ongoing), Short-term (by February 2026), Medium-term (2026–27), and Long-term (beyond 2027). Currently, the majority of actions are active, while those scheduled for later delivery remain inactive in line with their agreed timescales.
9. The Action Plan is subject to an iterative, internal review process, which includes revisiting timescales, adding actions or assessing whether existing actions require adjustment in light of the development of new legislation, emerging local and national issues, Local Government Reorganisation and its implications, or other. It should be noted that actions not yet started will have detailed reporting deferred to future Equality Information Reports (from 2027 onwards) to ensure effective use of council resources.

Consultation

10. This report has been compiled in consultation with officers from across the council, the Portfolio Holder for *A Fairer Norwich* and key stakeholders.

Implications

Financial and resources

11. Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its community-led plan "We are Norwich" and budget.
12. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources.

Legal

13. The publication of the Equality Information Report 2026 forms part of the council's Public Sector Equality Duty requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	No further implications have been identified, given this annual report's primary function is to highlight the council's progress towards its equality objectives. This report seeks to provide information only and does not seek to propose additional actions.
Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs)	<p>The council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and the community-led plan <i>We Are Norwich</i> commit us to targeting resources where they will have the greatest impact.</p> <p>Within appendix 2 (EDI Action Plan 2025–26 Progress Update) reference is made to several actions specifically designed to address disadvantage in RITA areas, ensuring that interventions are evidence-based and prioritise communities experiencing the greatest need. Appendix 2 seeks to provide progress updates on these actions for information only and does not seek to propose additional actions for decision or approval.</p>
Health, social and economic impact	<p>No further implications have been identified, given this annual report's primary function is to highlight the council's progress towards its equality objectives. It seeks to provide information only and does not seek to propose additional actions.</p> <p>Within appendix 2 (EDI Action Plan 2025–26 Progress Update) reference is made to several actions which directly address health inequalities, socio-economic disadvantage, and wellbeing. These actions contribute to improved health outcomes and greater social equity across Norwich.</p>
Crime and disorder	No further implications have been identified, given this annual report's primary function is to highlight the council's progress towards its equality objectives and does not seek to propose additional actions.
Children and adults safeguarding	No further implications have been identified, given this annual report's primary function is to highlight the council's progress towards its equality objectives and does not seek to propose additional actions.

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Environmental impact	<p>No further implications have been identified, given this annual report's primary function is to highlight the council's progress towards its equality objectives and does not seek to propose additional actions.</p> <p>Within appendix 2 (EDI Action Plan 2025–26 Progress Update) reference is made to several actions which intersect with environmental objectives. Such actions highlight ongoing efforts to ensure that environmental improvements benefit all communities equitably.</p>

Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
<p>As specified in the Equality Act 2010, the council must publish equality data annually.</p> <p>This includes reporting on how it is integrating equality, diversity and inclusion into its work practices and publishing its workforce employment information.</p>	<p>Failure to have 'due regard' in relation to the Equality Act 2010 could mean:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A judicial review of decision making • The council incurring unnecessary costs • Reputational damage • Unconscious discrimination against a part of the city's community • Developing services that do not meet the needs of our communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The publication of an annual Equality Information Report every January enables identification of risks around liabilities under the council's Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010. • The publication of SMART equality objectives at least every four years; these are aligned with and included in the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
<p>Delays or failure to deliver actions within the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan in line with agreed timescales and standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced progress towards the council's equality objectives. • Reputational risk and potential criticism from stakeholders and the public. • Missed opportunities to address inequality and improve outcomes for residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing monitoring and iterative review of the EDI Action Plan to ensure timescales remain realistic and actions reflect organisational priorities. • Regular reporting to senior leadership and scrutiny committees. • Development of robust evidence frameworks for actions lacking measurable indicators.
<p>Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) may impact the council's ability to deliver some actions within the EDI Action Plan, resulting in deferral or discontinuation where actions are no longer an effective use of resources under the new governance arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced progress against published equality objectives and commitments. • Potential gaps in service delivery or delays in implementing equality improvements. • Reputational risk if stakeholders perceive a lack of continuity or prioritisation of equality outcomes. • Additional resource pressures due to the need to realign actions with new structures and priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an iterative review of the EDI Action Plan to reassess timescales and relevance of actions in light of LGR. • Prioritise actions that deliver statutory compliance and high-impact outcomes. • Maintain clear communication with stakeholders about changes to delivery plans and rationale for deferrals. • Continue monitoring and reporting on active actions to demonstrate progress where feasible.

Other options considered

14. Not applicable as the publication of an annual Equality Information Report is a statutory requirement under the Equality Act 2010.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

15. This report and its appendix are submitted to the Scrutiny Committee today to enable councillors to make recommendations or comments to Cabinet ahead of their meeting on 14 January to which it will be submitted for a decision regarding its publication.

Background papers: [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Action Plan 2024-27](#)

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Draft Equality Information Report 2026

Appendix 2: EDI Action Plan 2025–26 Progress Update

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Equality Information Report 2026^{Item 7}

Foreword from the Leader of the Council:

Norwich is a city defined by its people; a community enriched by diversity, creativity, and resilience. This diversity is not just something we celebrate; it is what makes Norwich stronger and more vibrant.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion remain at the heart of our vision for the city. Guided by *We are Norwich*, our [Community-Led Plan](#), we are committed to ensuring that fairness and opportunity shape every decision we make and every service we deliver.



Over the past year, we have continued to work towards creating a city where everyone can thrive. From improving access to affordable housing and supporting health and wellbeing, to building safer, more connected neighbourhoods, our focus has been on tackling the issues that matter most to our residents.

We know the challenges facing our communities are real and complex – from the cost-of-living crisis to persistent inequalities. That is why we are working closely with partners across the city to provide practical support and long-term solutions. Together, we are determined to make Norwich a place where no one is left behind.

This report sets out our equality objectives, shares progress against our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, and provides insight into the diversity of the people we serve. It reflects both the progress we have made and the work still to come.

Cllr Mike Stonard
Leader of the Council



Accessibility: for further information about alternative formats and support accessing this report, please follow this [link](#).

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SECTION ONE: Our Duty

Introduction

1. Building a fairer Norwich is central to our mission. We want a city where everyone feels a sense of belonging, where diversity is valued, and where no one is excluded. Achieving this means understanding the different needs of our communities and removing the barriers that limit opportunity.
2. Our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion underpins everything we do. It influences how we design and deliver services, how we listen and respond to residents and other local community groupings, and how we work with partners to address the root causes of inequality. By prioritising fairness, prevention, and early support, we aim to create a city where everyone has the chance to thrive.
3. This Equality Information Report sets out our equality objectives, provides an overview of the diversity within our communities, and tracks progress through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. The Appended to this year’s Equality Information Report is a progress report
4. It highlights the achievements we have made so far as we continue working towards a fairer Norwich.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024/27

5. These ambitions and the outcomes we seek to achieve by working with the people of Norwich are summarised in our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Strategy 2024/27](#) which was published in July 2024.
6. This strategy sets out three core aims within the EDI context, which form our equality objectives. These objectives are the outcomes we will report against this year and in the future. The next section of this report outlines these aims in detail, along with key highlights of what we have delivered over the past year to achieve them.

Definitions and scope

7. As a public sector organisation, we are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; promoting equality of opportunity; and fostering positive relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not. These duties are set out

in [section 149\(1\) of the Equality Act 2010 under the Public Sector Equality Duty](#).

8. This means we work to address discrimination, harassment, and victimisation linked to the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act. They are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins); religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.
9. In addition to meeting the requirements of the Equality Duty and addressing the nine protected characteristics, our ambitions extend further. We also focus on supporting migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers; individuals who have served or continue to serve in the Armed Forces; people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage; and those facing health-related inequalities.
10. Details of these characteristics, along with our definitions of equality, diversity, inclusion, and discrimination, are set out in our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2024–27](#), which also covers Reasonable Adjustment. The policy explains the legal framework, our approach to Reasonable Adjustment, and the standards of behaviour expected from councillors and employees. It also outlines our responsibilities as an employer and service provider, and how we deliver services in line with these principles.

Meeting our Equality Duty

11. We use various tools to meet the duties described above and to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion across our communities:
 - a. **Shared ambitions with strategic partners to reduce inequality:** We share a common ambition with our partners to create a fairer, more inclusive city. By working collaboratively with community organisations, local businesses, the voluntary sector, and other public services, we can pool our strengths and resources to address inequality. This involves taking joint action on priority issues, exchanging ideas and expertise, and developing solutions that deliver meaningful and lasting benefits for everyone who lives, works and learns in Norwich and those who visit the city.
 - b. **Inclusive Workforce Plan:** Through the Inclusive Workforce Plan the council seeks to embed fairness and transparency across employment practices. It focuses on improving workforce diversity, addressing underrepresentation through SMART objectives, and

publishing ethnicity pay gap data. The plan also promotes anti-racism and strengthens data confidence, while supporting staff wellbeing through initiatives like mental health first aid training and free flu vaccinations. Together, these actions help create an inclusive, equitable, and healthy workforce.

- c. **Training and development provision:** We provide ongoing training for officers covering key areas such as equality and diversity duties and responsibilities, equality impact analysis, trauma-informed practice, and safeguarding for children, young people, and adults at risk.
- d. **Community demographic and asset mapping:** The council ensures that councillors and officers have access to up-to-date information about the makeup of Norwich's communities through regular briefings, [State of Norwich](#) reports, and links to key data sources such as [Norfolk Insight](#) and the council's [Community Conversations, Data and Insights Hub](#). These tools support evidence-based decision-making and help ensure policies and services are informed by a clear understanding of local demographics and community assets.
- e. **Equality planning, policy and strategy:** Over the past two years, we have embedded our new [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2024–27, which incorporates our Reasonable Adjustment Policy](#) and the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024–27](#). The strategy is underpinned by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2024–27 (approved in January 2025). Delivery of the Action Plan remains a priority, with actions being implemented across the organisation. This plan continues to guide our work, ensuring equality and inclusion remain central to everything we do.
- f. **Socio-Economic Duty (SED)**
The council formally adopted the Socio-Economic Duty in January 2025, reinforcing our commitment to addressing inequalities linked to poverty and financial hardship. To embed this duty into our work, we have strengthened our Equality Impact Assessment process to ensure that all decisions consider how policies and services can help reduce inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage. This approach ensures that tackling socio-economic inequality is a core part of our decision-making and service planning, supporting fairer outcomes for our communities.

- g. **Equality Impact Assessments:** The council has strengthened its EqlA process this year to make it clearer, easier to use, and more consistently applied. EqlAs are carried out to eliminate discrimination and promote fair access when the council develops actions, policies, and strategies. Recent improvements include updated templates, guidance and training, better access to resources, and the introduction of EDI Champions across the organisation to provide local support. These changes ensure equality considerations are embedded in decision-making and service planning.
- h. **Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs):**
Through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and the community-led plan *We Are Norwich*, we have committed to targeting resources where they can have the greatest impact. Using data from the Indices of Multiple Deprivation alongside local insight, we have identified neighbourhoods within the 10% most deprived nationally as our Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs). These areas are a key focus for our efforts to reduce inequality across the city, guiding strategic decision-making and informing where council and partner resources and investments are best directed. This targeted approach ensures that our work is evidence-based and prioritises communities experiencing the greatest disadvantage.

Data

12. The final section of this report presents a range of charts and data illustrating the demographic profile of Norwich's residents, our customers, and our workforce. These insights are drawn from sources such as the [Office for National Statistics](#), [Norfolk Insight](#), [LG Inform](#), and other national and local research.
13. Each year, we publish datasets that provide an overview of key statistics about our residents, the city, its economy, and overall wellbeing. These can be accessed on our website under [State of Norwich](#) and complement the data presented in this report.
14. This report presents factual data relating to equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation. It does not seek to interpret or speculate on the reasons behind any changes or trends observed. The purpose is to provide a transparent and objective overview to support informed decision-making and further analysis where appropriate.

15. As with last year's Equality Information Report, we have adopted a consistent colour scheme for charts to improve accessibility for people with visual impairments, such as colour blindness. The design avoids clashing colours and includes alternative identifiers, such as varied marker shapes, for different data series. The colour scheme was created using [Venngage](#), a trusted resource for accessible colour palettes.

Targeting our resources

16. The council is committed to directing resources where they will have the greatest impact. Our Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs, see item 10h) framework identifies neighbourhoods in Norwich experiencing the highest levels of disadvantage, using the latest data and local insight. This approach ensures that support is focused on the communities most in need, in line with our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#) and the [We Are Norwich plan](#).
17. We have refined the RITA framework to make it more accurate and meaningful. This enabled us to identify smaller pockets of deprivation that were previously overlooked. We have also worked with officers and partners to adjust boundaries using local knowledge and community insight.
18. Embedding RITAs across council services and with partners remains a key priority. This means ensuring that RITAs are considered when developing policies, strategies, and making decisions, and that progress is monitored through outcome-based accountability.

SECTION TWO: Meeting our Equality Objectives

Our objectives

19. Our equality objectives are listed within our [EDI Strategy 2024/27](#), described as 'aims'. They are:

Aim 1: Norwich City Council is an inclusive place to work.

Aim 2: Our services will be joined up, accessible and inclusive.

Aim 3: Norwich is a fair city where people facing inequality can share in and contribute to the city's success.

20. A breakdown of these objectives, the priorities underpinning them, and progress made is provided in the appendices to this report. Over the past year, the council has made substantial progress, with key highlights including: the formation of a dedicated Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish

Group focused on accessibility; the recruitment of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Champions across service areas; and the award of over £3.7 million in home adaptation grants to more than 780 residents; empowering them to live more safely, healthily, and independently.

Aim 1: Norwich City Council is an inclusive place to work.

21. This objective focuses primarily on the council as an employer and aligns with our commitment to being an Open and Modern Council, as set out in our [Community-Led Plan](#). Our priorities under this objective are:

- Ensure that the profile of our workforce broadly reflects the city's population and the local labour market.
- Continue to develop inclusive working practices and policies.
- Support colleagues to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence to consider equality in all their work.

Aim 2: Our services will be joined up, accessible and inclusive.

22. This objective focuses on how we design and deliver services to benefit everyone. Like the previous objective, it aligns with our Community-Led Plan, reflecting our commitment to delivering excellence (as part of our priority to be an *Open and Modern Council*) and tackling the root causes of disadvantage (as part of the *A Fairer Norwich* priority). Our priorities under this objective include:

- Improve a range of communication platforms and channels to enhance accessibility, including for those facing digital exclusion.
- Undertake service-specific equalities reviews, so every service reflects our ambition.
- Ensure that our knowledge about the people and communities we serve informs our service planning, and that their voices are heard.

Aim 3: Norwich is a fair city where people facing inequality can share in and contribute to the city's success.

23. This objective is about ensuring we are equipped to provide an equal and fair chance for everyone we and our partners serve, directing resources and influencing investment where the need is greatest. It aligns with all priorities in our Community-Led Plan. Our priorities under this objective include:

- Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion outcomes inform wider council policies, strategies and programmes.
- Focus our efforts on the places and communities in the city that face the biggest disadvantages, improving our use of data to help us do this.
- Develop our leadership capacity and capability around equalities.
- Continue working with partners to influence investment and target resource.
- Mitigate the disproportionate inequalities of climate change impacting specific sectors of the community.

Responding to motions and local initiatives

24. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan brings together a range of commitments agreed by the council, including motions adopted before the launch of the EDI Strategy in January 2024, as well as more recent pledges. The plan turns these commitments into practical actions, ensuring the council's approach reflects priorities set through democratic decision-making. The council is also reviewing new and emerging issues, such as those linked to the recent Supreme Court ruling on the legal definition of sex and motions addressing hate-related issues in the city. Appropriate responses are being developed, and where relevant, these may lead to additional actions being incorporated into the EDI Action Plan over the coming year.

SECTION THREE: Information about our People, Customers, and Employees

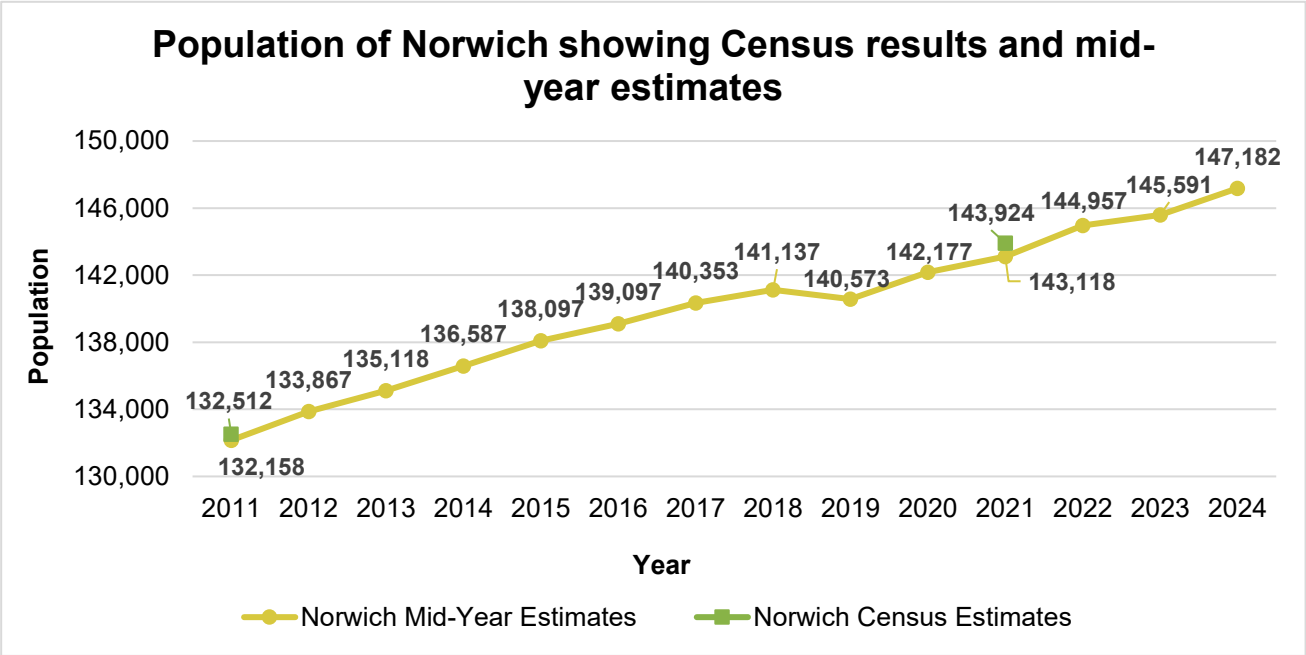
25. Our annual [Equality Information Reports](#) include a range of data and visual summaries that show the demographic makeup of our communities, customers, and workforce. This information is drawn from reliable sources such as the [Office for National Statistics](#), [Norfolk Insight](#), [LG Inform](#), and other national and local research.

State of Norwich

26. Each year, the council publishes a dataset that provides an overview of key statistics about Norwich, covering its residents, the city itself, the local economy, and overall wellbeing. This information is available on our website under [State of Norwich](#).

POPULATION

27. On Census Day (21 March 2021), Norwich had a usual resident population of 143,924 - an increase of 9% (11,412 people) since 2011, when the population was 132,512. This places Norwich 15th out of 39 districts in the East of England by population size. The latest mid-year estimate for 2024 shows the population has grown further to 147,182.

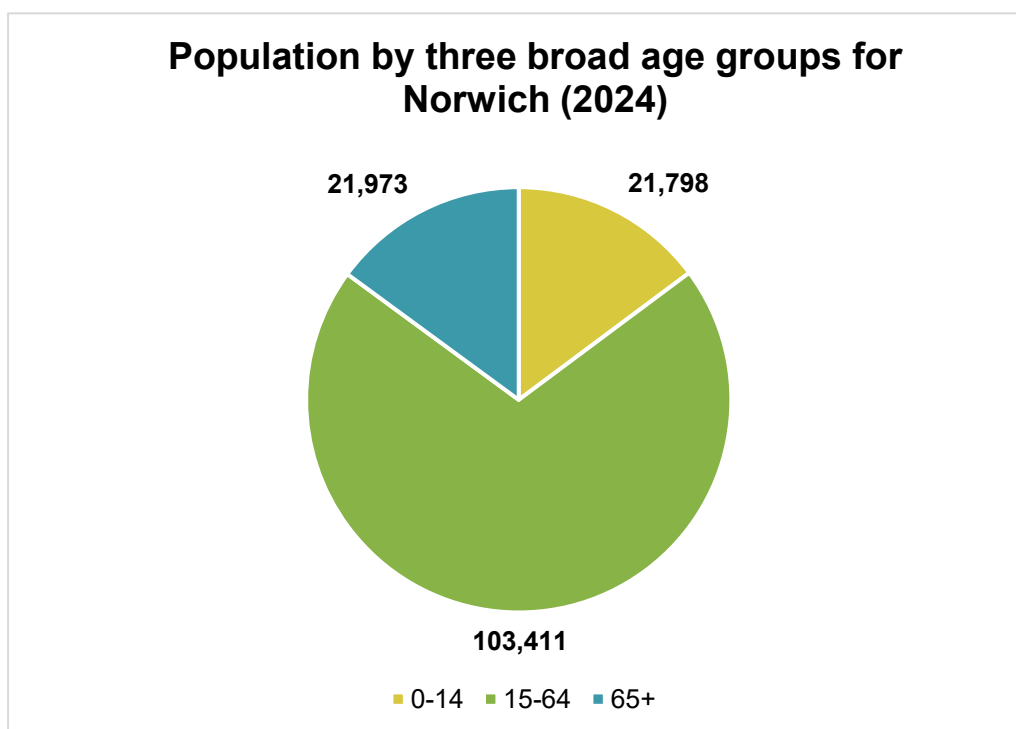


28. Norwich’s population growth of 9% is slightly higher than the regional average of 8% for the East of England and the national average of 7% for England overall.

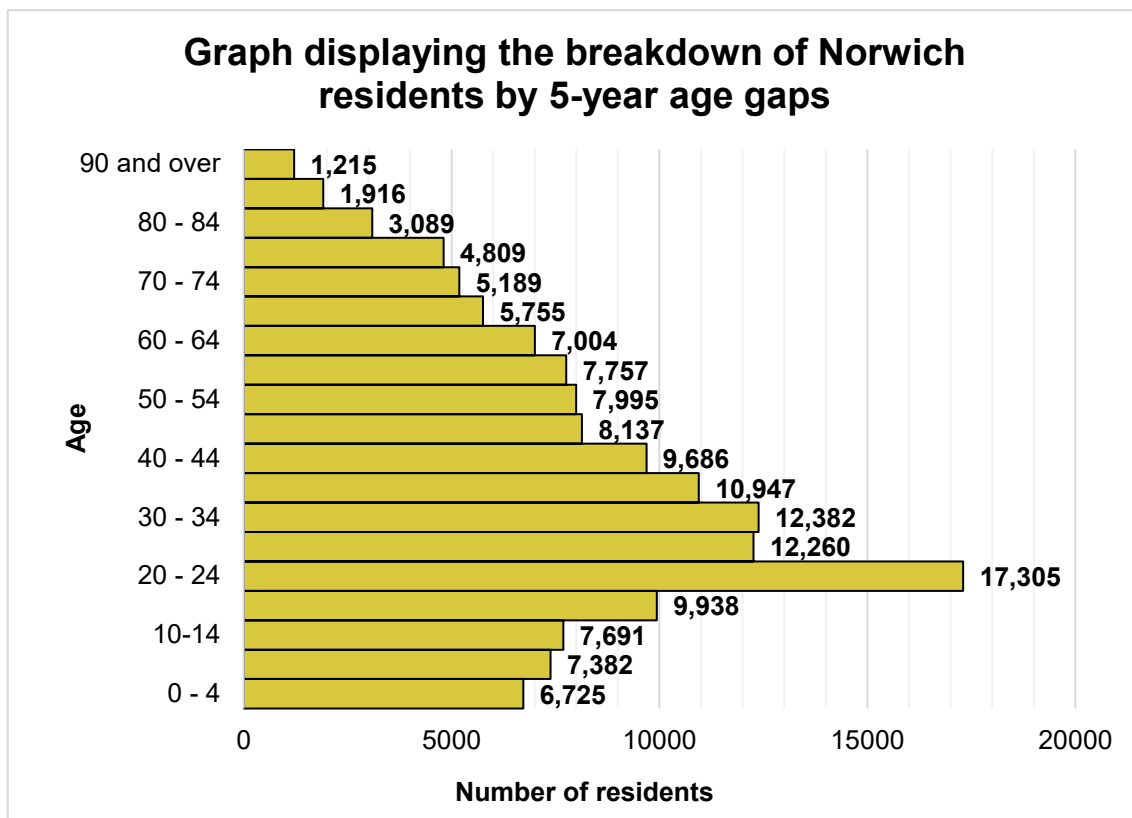
29. As of 2021, Norwich ranked 4th out of 45 local authority areas in the East of England for population density, with 36.9 people per hectare. In comparison, the regional average is 3.31 people per hectare, and the national average for England is 4.34. The East of England also recorded the highest population growth of any region in England and Wales between the 2011 and 2021 censuses.

Population by age

30. According to the 2024 mid-year population estimate, Norwich had 147,182 residents. Of these, 14.8% (21,798) were children under 15, 70.3% (103,411) were adults aged 15 to 64, and 14.9% (21,973) were aged 65 and over. Within this, 2.1% (3,131 people) were aged 85 or older.



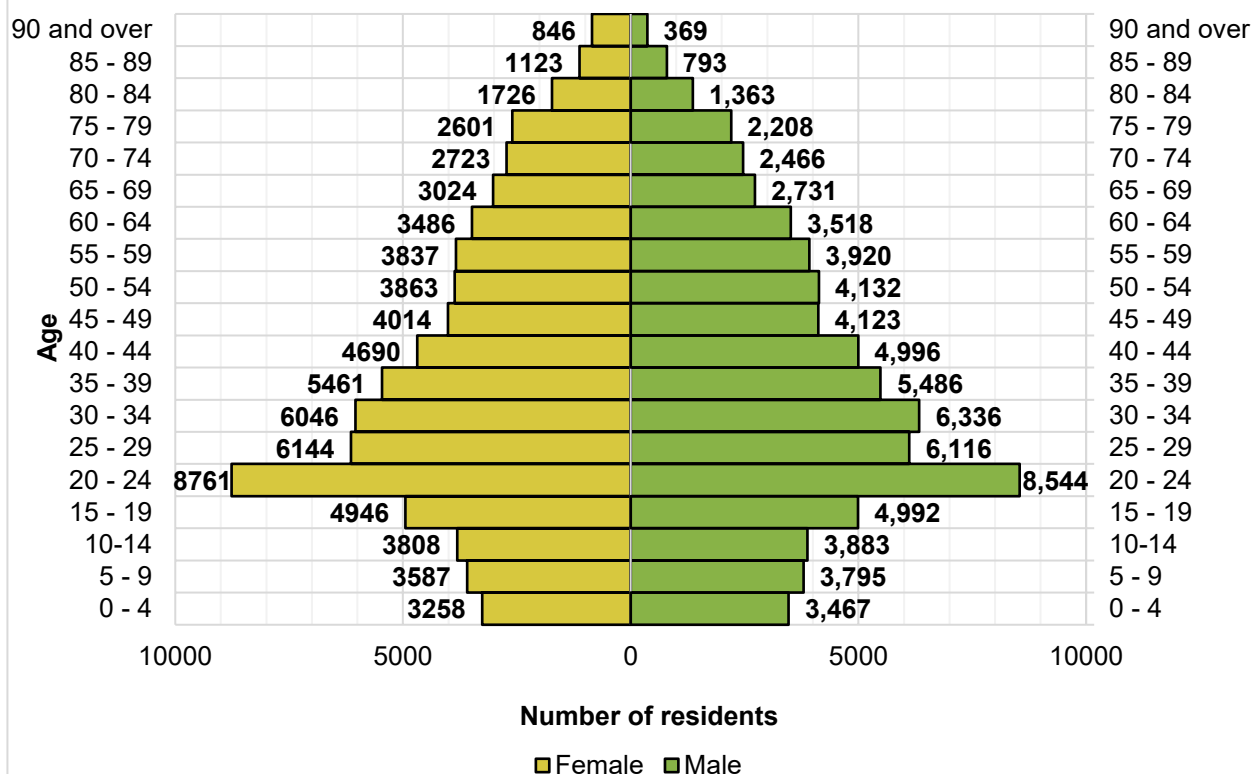
31. According to the 2024 mid-year population estimates, the largest age group in Norwich is 20–24-year-olds, with 17,305 people (11.75% of the population). *Graph appears next page.*



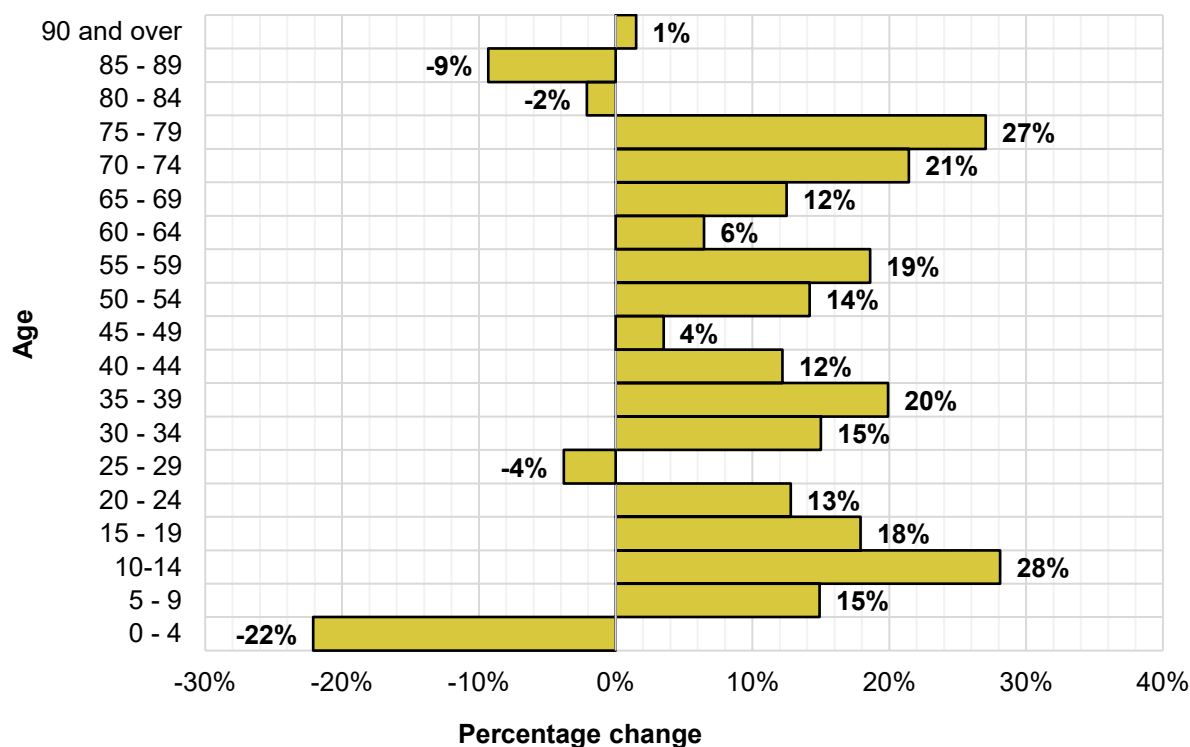
Population by sex and age

32. As of the 2024 mid-year estimate, Norwich's population was 147,182, made up of 73,944 women (50.2%) and 73,238 men (49.8%). In comparison, the 2011 Census recorded 67,245 women (50.7%) and 65,267 men (49.3%).
33. Since 2011, the female population has grown by 9.5%, while the male population has increased by 11.5%.
34. Life expectancy in Norwich is 78.1 years for men; slightly below the England average of 79.3 years and 82.7 years for women, compared to the national average of 83.2 years.
35. The gap in life expectancy between Norwich wards is significant: 8.8 years for men and 8.1 years for women, comparing the highest and lowest areas.
36. The chart on the next page shows Norwich's population by sex across five-year age bands. It highlights that women tend to live longer than men, resulting in a higher proportion of females in the older age groups.

Breakdown of Norwich residents by sex and 5-year age gaps



Percentage change of Norwich residents by age band, between mid-2011 and mid-2024



A population pyramid showing the percentage change for various age groups. The vertical axis lists age groups from '90 and over' at the top to '0 - 4' at the bottom. The horizontal axis shows the percentage change, ranging from -30% to 40% in 10% increments. Bars extending to the left represent negative percentage changes, while bars extending to the right represent positive percentage changes. Each bar is labeled with its corresponding percentage value.

Age	Percentage change
90 and over	-3%
85 - 89	-19%
80 - 84	-8%
75 - 79	25%
70 - 74	21%
65 - 69	15%
60 - 64	3%
55 - 59	13%
50 - 54	11%
45 - 49	5%
40 - 44	16%
35 - 39	25%
30 - 34	16%
25 - 29	-4%
20 - 24	10%
15 - 19	15%
10 - 14	31%
5 - 9	14%
0 - 4	-23%

A population pyramid chart showing the percentage change in population by age group and sex. The vertical axis represents age groups from 0-4 to 90 and over. The horizontal axis represents the percentage change, ranging from -30% to 40%. The chart is divided into two main sections: males (left) and females (right). The bars are colored blue for males and red for females. The percentage change is labeled at the end of each bar.

Age	Male (%)	Female (%)
90 and over	-	13%
80 - 84	-	6%
70 - 74	-	5%
60 - 64	-	30%
50 - 54	-	22%
40 - 44	-	10%
30 - 34	-	10%
20 - 24	-	24%
10 - 14	-	17%
0 - 4	2%	9%
90 and over	-3%	-
80 - 84	-	15%
70 - 74	-	14%
60 - 64	-	16%
50 - 54	-	21%
40 - 44	-	25%
30 - 34	-	16%
20 - 24	-21%	-

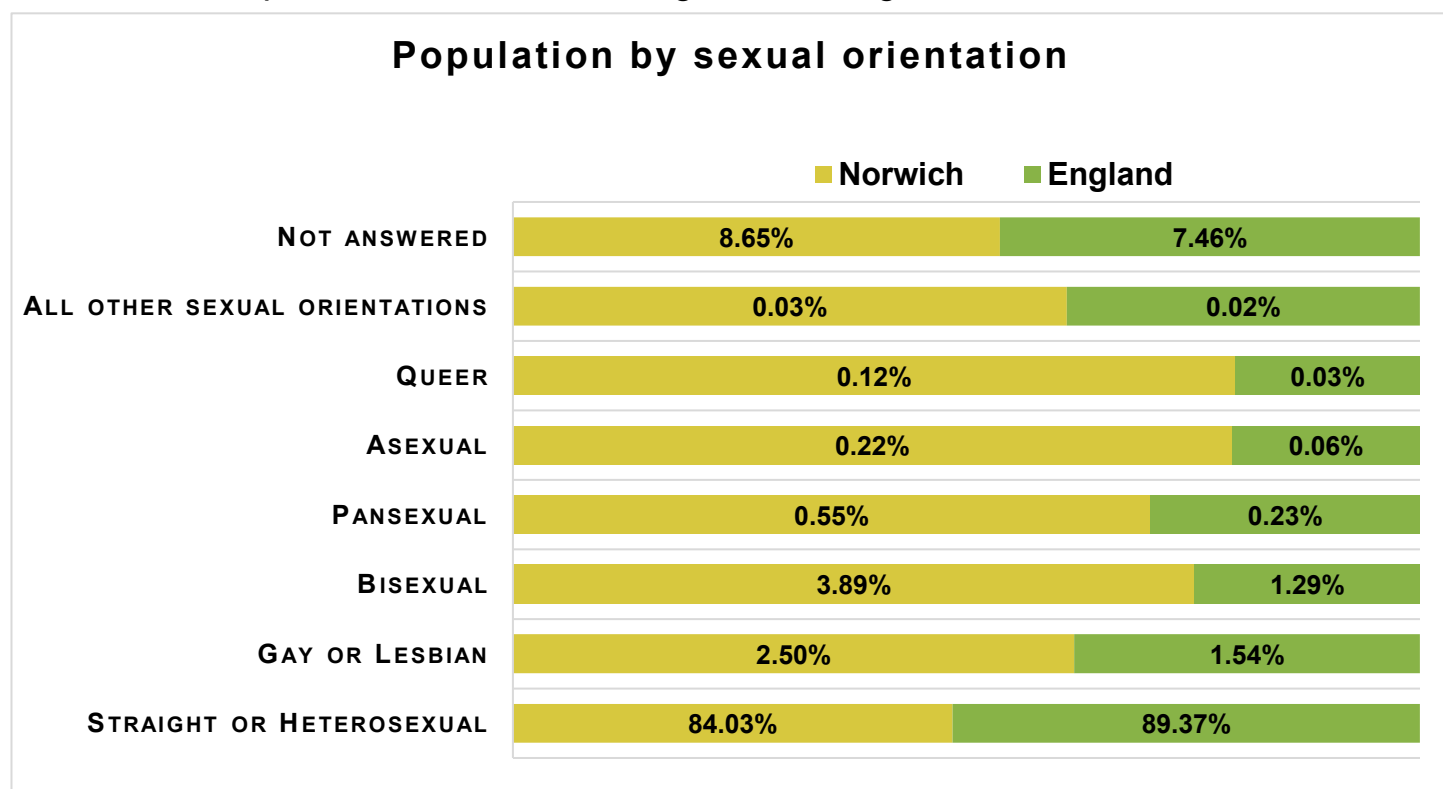
Sexual orientation

37. Because detailed data on sexual orientation at district level is collected infrequently, the most recent information available comes from the 2021 Census. This was the first census to include a question on sexual orientation, providing more accurate data on the LGB+ population (those identifying as lesbian or gay, bisexual, or another sexual orientation). This information supports monitoring and compliance with anti-discrimination duties under the Equality Act 2010.

38. The question was voluntary and asked only of people aged 16 and over: “Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?” The response options were:

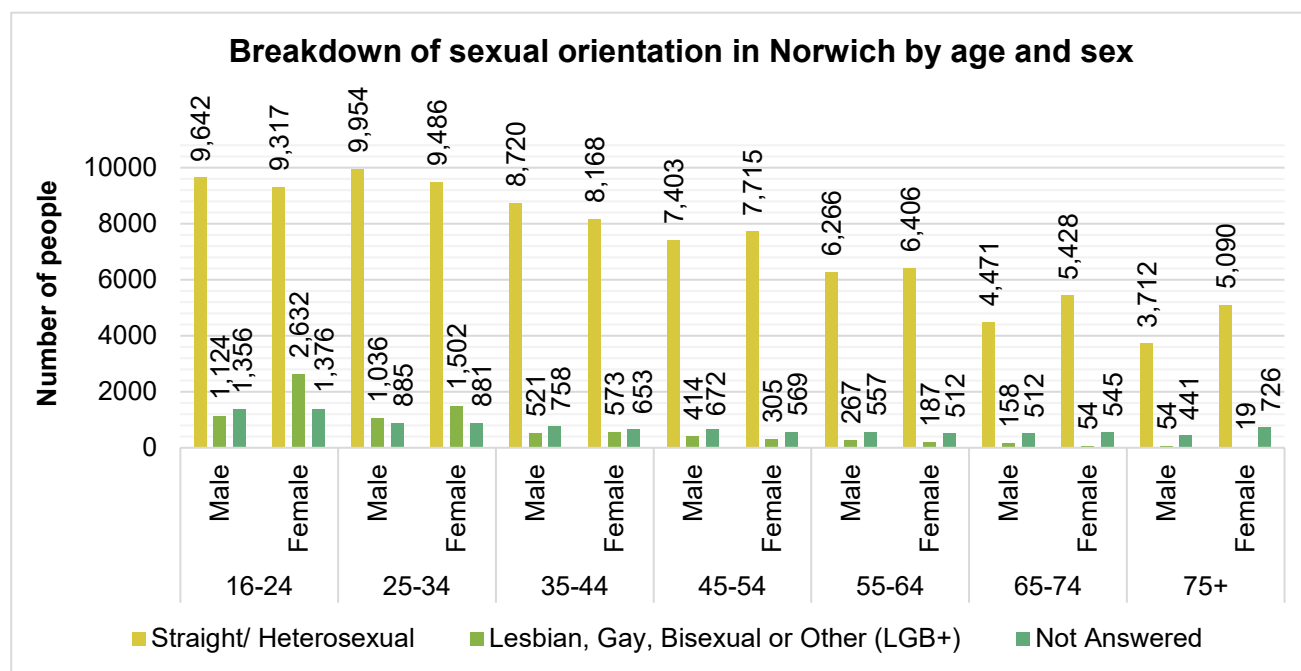
- Straight or heterosexual
- Gay or lesbian
- Bisexual
- Other sexual orientation

39. The charts and tables on this and the following page show how people in Norwich responded to the Census question about their sexual orientation in comparison with the overall figures for England.



Sexual orientation	Norwich		England	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Straight or Heterosexual	101,477	84.03%	41,114,478	89.37%
Gay or Lesbian	3,025	2.50%	709,704	1.54%
Bisexual	4,700	3.89%	591,690	1.29%
Pansexual	669	0.55%	107,852	0.23%
Asexual	267	0.22%	26,614	0.06%
Queer	143	0.12%	13,928	0.03%
All other sexual orientations	41	0.03%	9,963	0.02%
Not answered	10,443	8.65%	3,432,728	7.46%
Total	120,765		46,006,957	

40. The table below shows the breakdown of sexual orientation in Norwich by age and sex for individuals aged 16 and over (Census 2021).



Homes for Ukraine (H4U)

41. Since March 2022, we have continued to work with Norfolk County Council and neighbouring districts to support people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. The Homes for Ukraine (H4U) scheme provides wrap-around support for guests living in Norwich, with wellbeing remaining a key priority.
42. To date, the council has supported over 320 guests, including more than 80 children, helping many to move from hosted arrangements into private rental or social housing, or to return to Ukraine. We also continue to assist hosts, over 190 of whom have generously opened their homes; some for more than three years.
43. In 2025, the team began supporting guests with applications for the Ukrainian Permission Extension Scheme (UPES), which allows them to remain in the UK for an additional 19 months.
44. We remain incredibly grateful to the hosts and community members whose generosity and commitment have made this scheme a success, helping Ukrainian guests feel safe and supported during such uncertain times.

Child Poverty

45. In Norwich, about 31.6% of children live in households below the poverty line after housing costs are taken into account. This means nearly one in three children in the city are growing up in poverty, which is above the Norfolk average (25.4%) and slightly higher than the national (England) average (27.8%).
46. This measure looks at income after housing costs, as rent and housing expenses significantly affect what families have left for essentials. The figures were produced by the Centre for Research in Social Policy for the End Child Poverty Coalition, using government low-income data adjusted with local rent and household survey information to provide a more accurate picture of living standards.

Free school meals

47. Free school meal eligibility continues to rise nationally. For the 2024-2025 academic year, around 2.2 million pupils were eligible across England, representing 25.7% of all pupils.

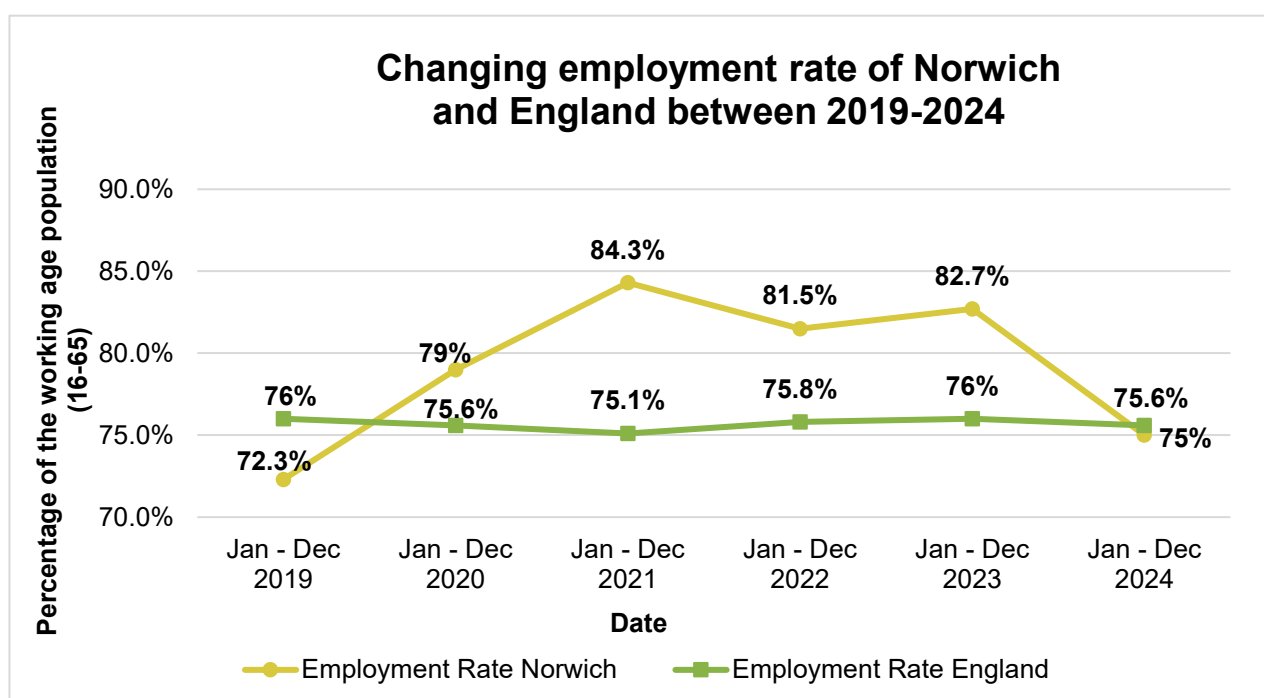
48. In Norfolk, eligibility has remained broadly stable, with a slight decrease of 0.1% over the past year. This means 27,712 pupils are currently eligible, and of these, 21,815 (78.7%) are receiving free school meals.

49. The table below shows changes in both the number and percentage of pupils eligible for and receiving free school meals in Norfolk, compared with the average for all county local authorities in England.

Year	No. of pupils eligible for FSM		No. of pupils taking FSM		% of pupils eligible for FSM		% of pupils taking FSM	
	Norfolk	England Mean	Norfolk	England Mean	Norfolk	England Mean	Norfolk	England Mean
2018/19	16,457	14,687	12,483	11,398	14.3%	11.7%	10.8%	9.1%
2019/20	18,843	17,082	14,603	13,303	16.2%	13.5%	12.5%	10.5%
2020/21	22,719	21,170	18,199	17,177	19.3%	16.7%	15.5%	13.5%
2021/22	24,950	23,429	19,465	17,227	21.1%	18.3%	15.6%	13.4%
2022/23	26,870	25,387	20,766	19,494	22.5%	19.6%	17.4%	15.0%
2023/24	27,740	26,595	21,371	20,456	23.3%	20.5%	17.9%	15.7%
2024/25	27,712	27,488	21,815	21,296	23.5%	21.2%	18.5%	16.4%

Overall employment rate

50. Employment measures the number of people aged 16 and over who are in paid work, including those temporarily away from their job. The employment rate refers to the proportion of people aged 16 to 64 who are employed.

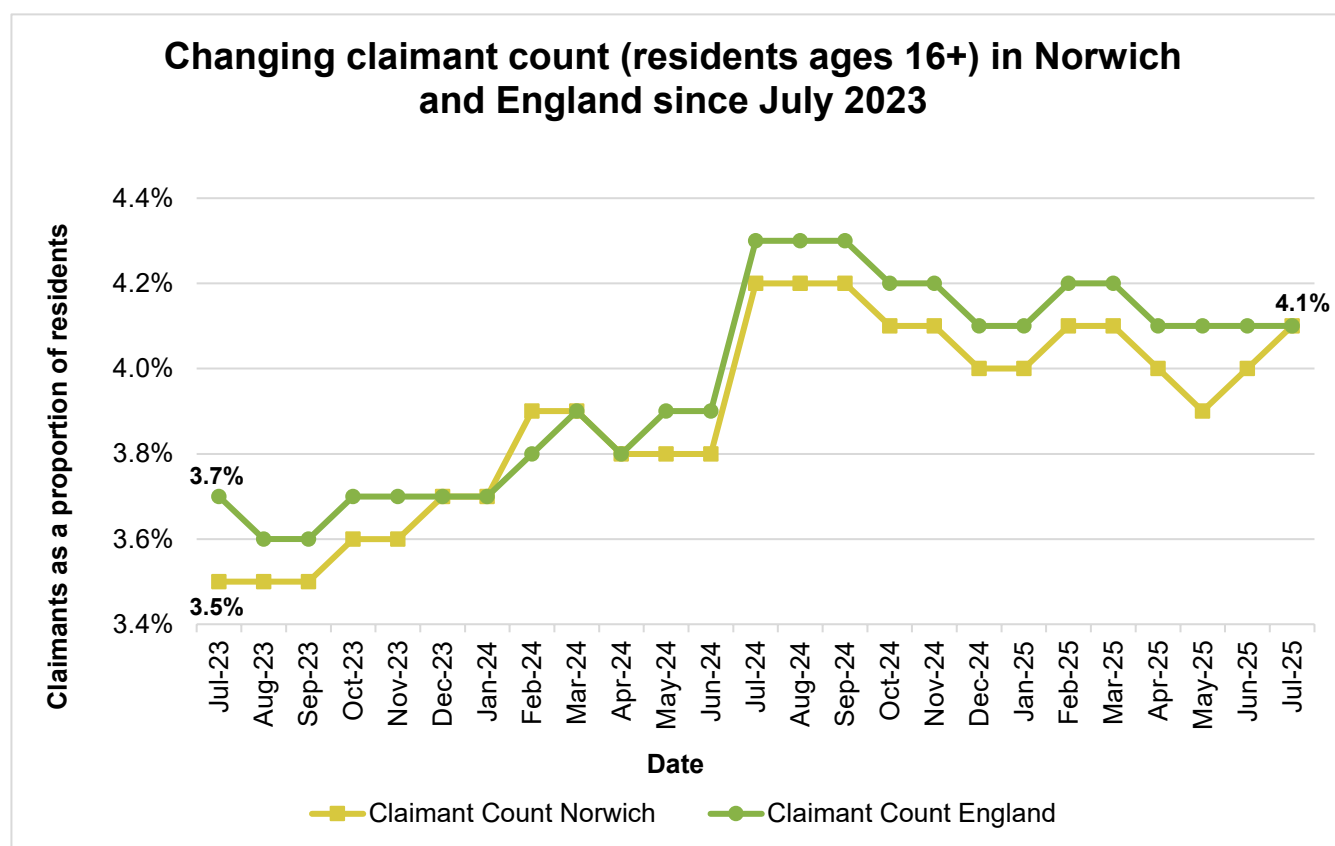


51. At the end of 2024, Norwich's employment rate was 75%, down from 82.7% in the previous period. Despite this decrease, it remains close to the England average of 75.6%.

Claimant Count

52. The claimant count measures the number of people claiming benefits primarily because they are unemployed, based on individual records from the benefits system. It provides a useful indicator of how unemployment is changing at a local level.

53. In July 2025, Norwich's claimant count rate was 4.1%, slightly higher than in July 2023. This matches the rate for all English single-tier and county councils in the same month, which was also 4.1%, compared to 3.7% earlier in 2025.

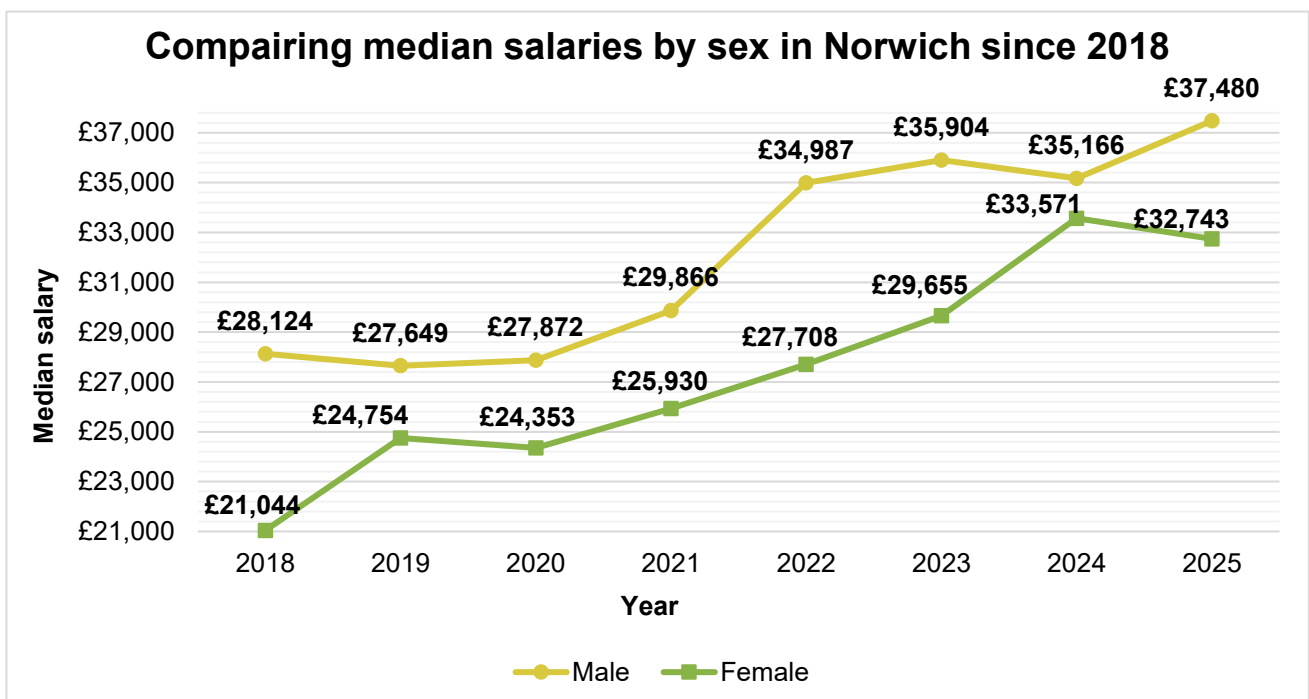
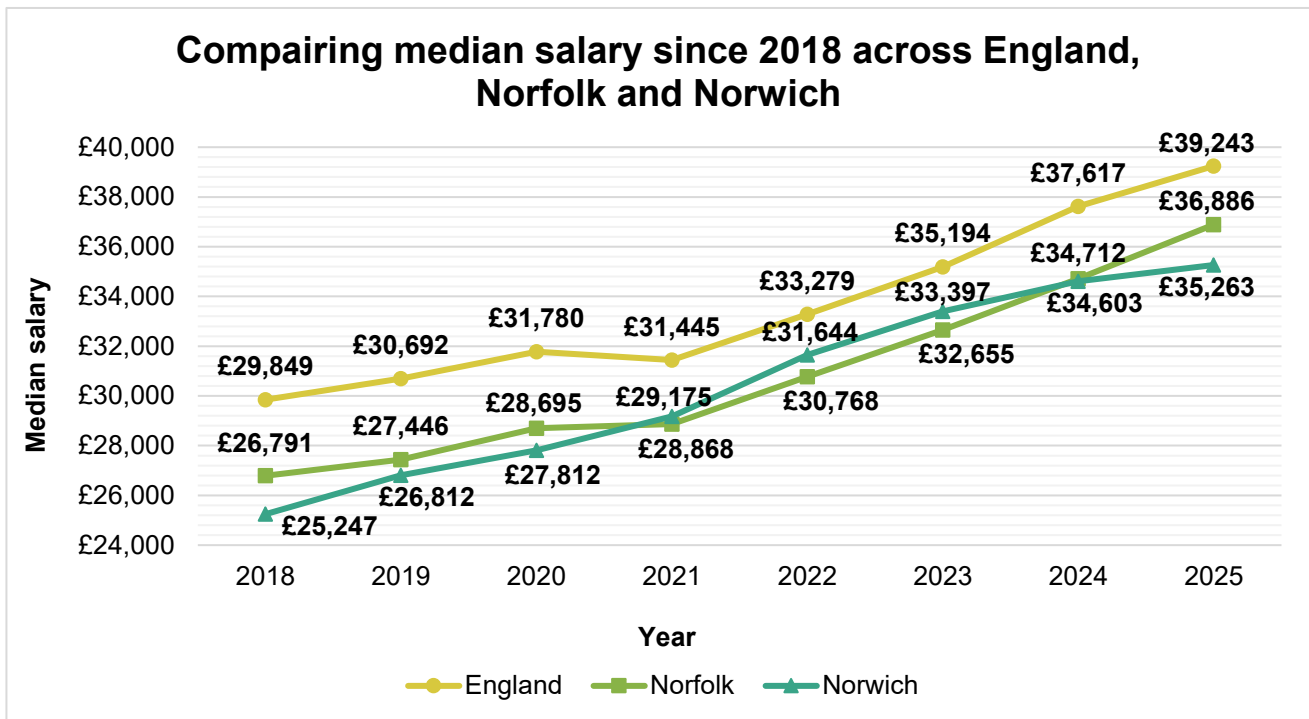


Median Gross Annual Pay of Norwich Employees (by Residence)

54. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), carried out each April, provides detailed information on pay levels, distribution, and working hours for employees. The dataset focuses on employees living in an area who are on adult rates and whose pay during the survey period was not

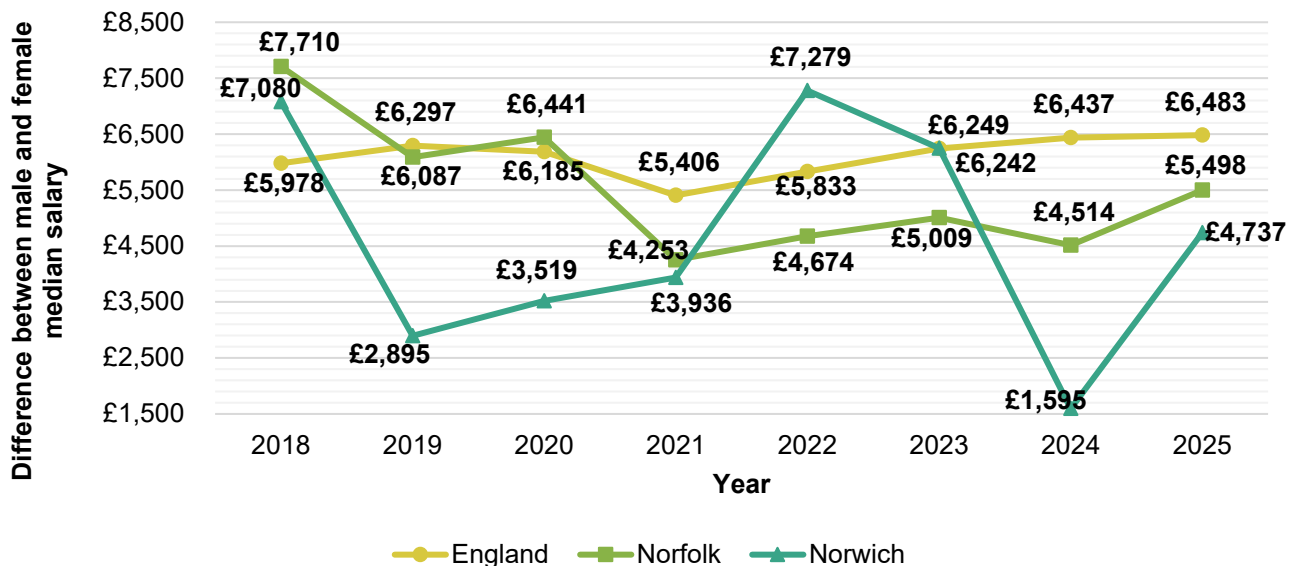
affected by absence. This makes it a useful indicator of local earnings and potential economic resilience.

55. The chart below compares median salaries for England, Norfolk, and Norwich. In 2025, the median salary in Norwich was £35,263 per year - a 1.9% increase on the previous year. This figure is slightly below the Norfolk median of £36,886 and lower than the England median of £39,243.

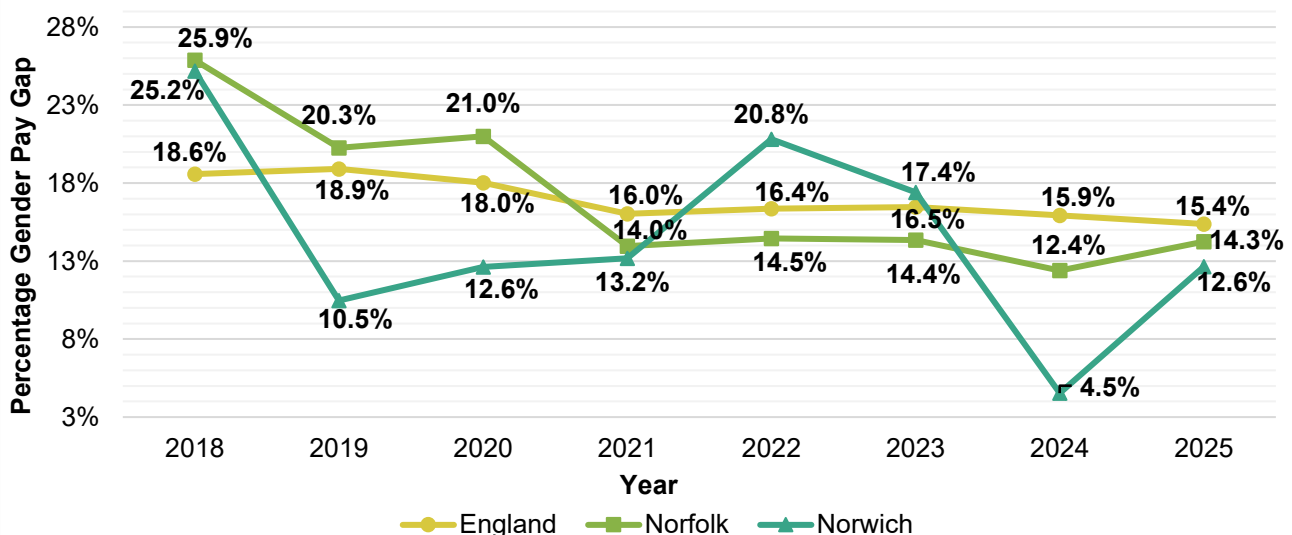


56. Below are two graphs analysing the gender pay gap in Norwich, showing changes in male and female salaries since 2018. The gender pay gap is presented both as a raw value and as a percentage difference, calculated as a proportion of the male median salary.

Comparing the gender pay gap (as a raw value) since 2018 across England, Norfolk and Norwich

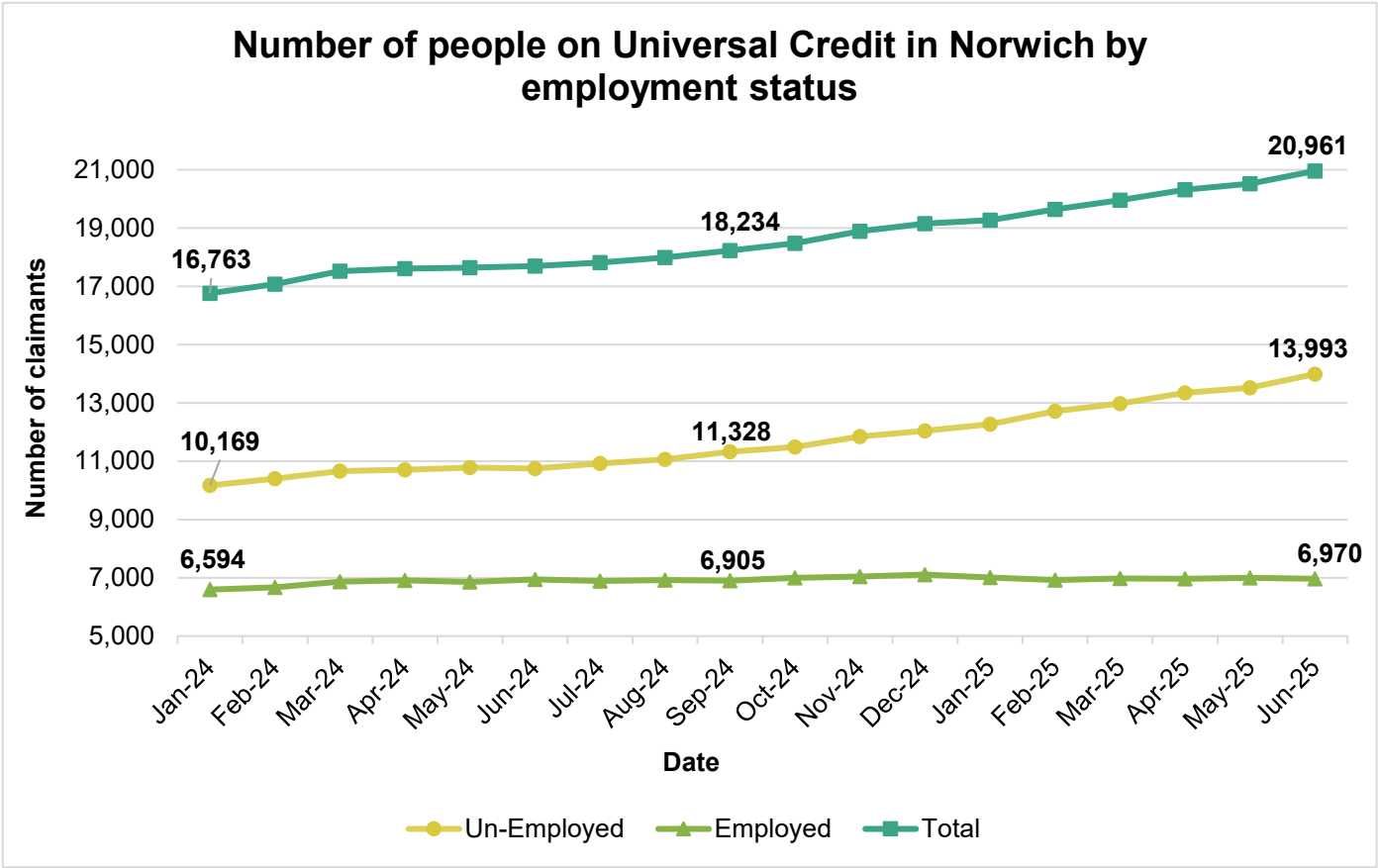


Comparing the Gender Pay Gap (as a percentage) Since 2018 Across England, Norfolk and Norwich



Universal Credit

57. This data covers the period from January 2024 to June 2025 and shows the total number of people in Norwich claiming Universal Credit, including those in and out of employment. Figures for claimants by employment status are published one month later than the overall total.
58. In June 2025, 20,961 people in Norwich were claiming Universal Credit. Of these, 13,993 were not in employment, while 6,970 were in work. Overall, the number of claims has risen by 16.9% compared to June 2024.

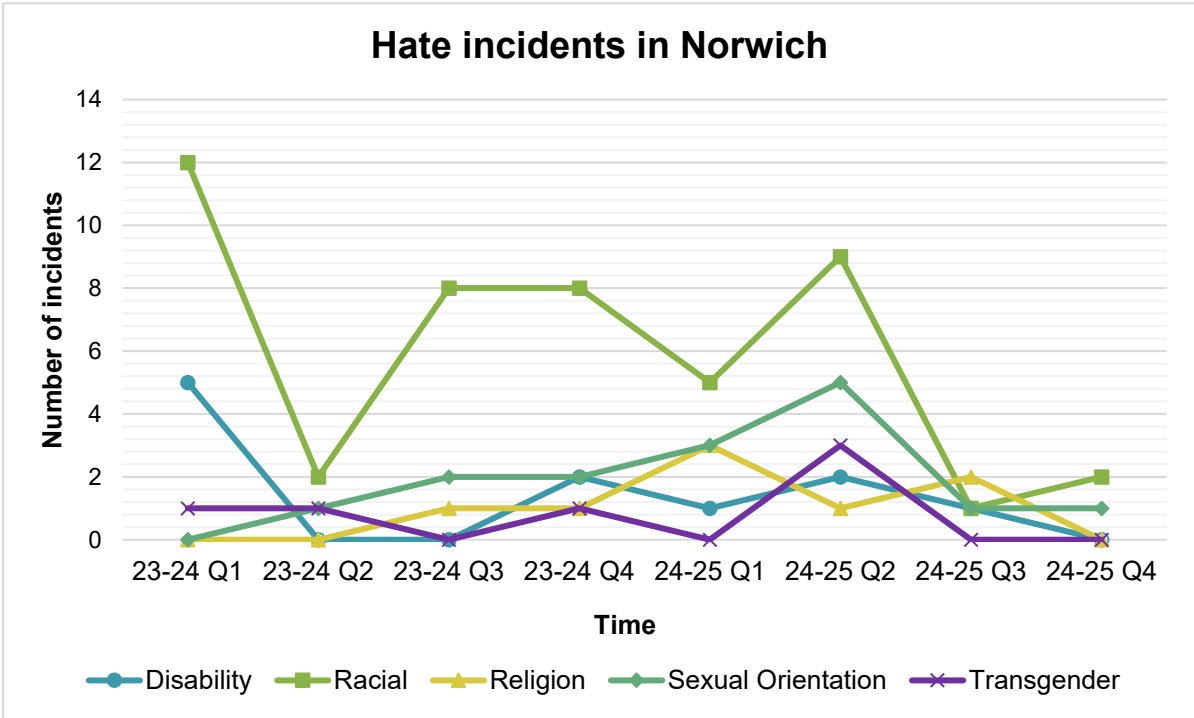
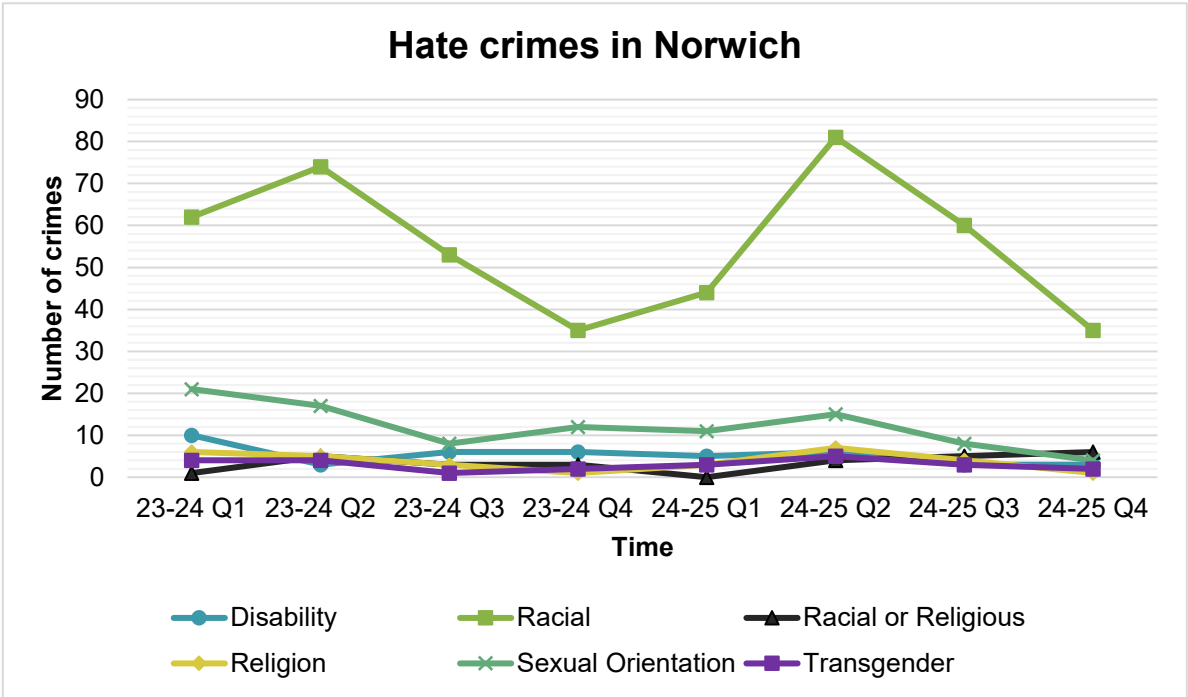


Hate crimes and incidents

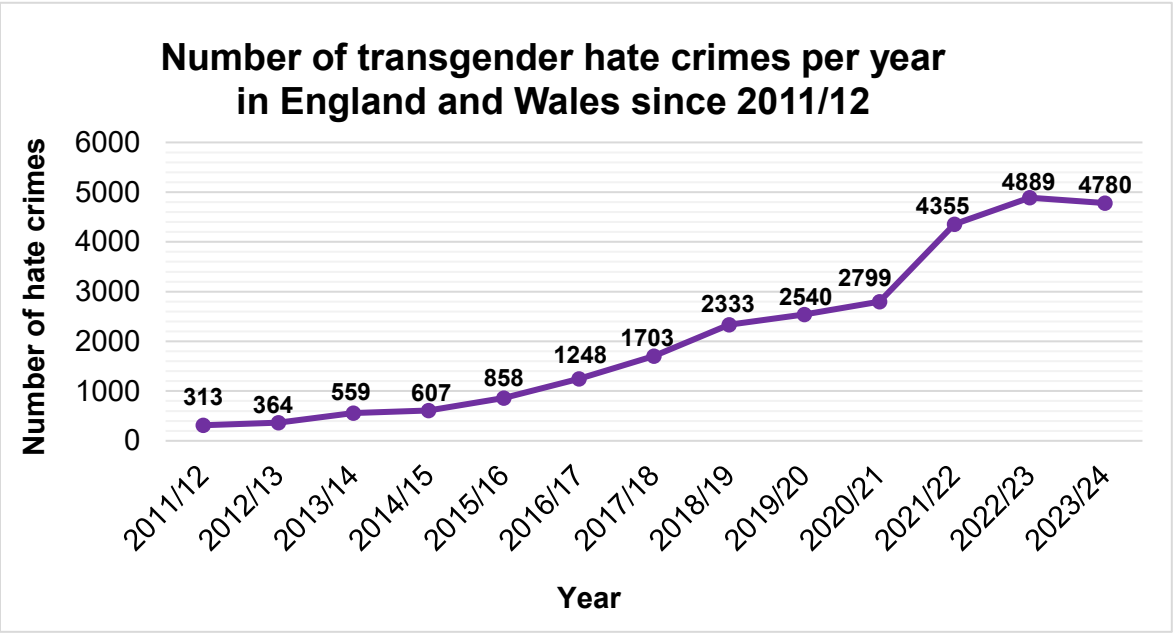
59. A hate incident is any incident perceived by the victim or by anyone else as being motivated by prejudice or hatred. It may or may not constitute a crime.
60. Hate crimes, by contrast, are criminal offences committed against someone because of a protected characteristic. It is widely recognised that many hate crimes and incidents go unreported, so higher figures do not necessarily indicate more crime; they may reflect greater awareness or confidence in reporting.
61. Since the last Equality Information Report, Norwich has seen a slight decrease in reported hate crimes and incidents. Between the first and fourth quarters of the 2024-2025 financial year, 358 cases were reported - 34 fewer than the previous period, representing an 8.7% reduction.
62. A detailed breakdown of reported hate crimes and incidents for Norwich, covering the period from Q1 2023/24 to Q4 2024/25, is provided in the table on the following page.

Type	2023 2024 Q1	2023 2024 Q2	2023 2024 Q3	2023 2024 Q4	2024 2025 Q1	2024 2025 Q2	2024 2025 Q3	2024 2025 Q4
Crimes	104	108	74	59	66	118	83	51
Disability	10	3	6	6	5	6	3	3
Racial	62	74	53	35	44	81	60	35
Racial or Religious	1	5	3	3	0	4	5	6
Religion	6	5	3	1	3	7	4	1
Sexual Orientation	21	17	8	12	11	15	8	4
Transgender	4	4	1	2	3	5	3	2
Incidents	18	4	11	14	12	20	5	3
Disability	5	0	0	2	1	2	1	0
Racial	12	2	8	8	5	9	1	2
Religion	0	0	1	1	3	1	2	0
Sexual Orientation	0	1	2	2	3	5	1	1
Transgender	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	0
Total	122	112	85	73	78	138	88	54

63. The charts below show that racial crimes remain the most frequently reported type of hate crime and incident.



64. The number of hate crimes targeting individuals who identify as transgender has risen significantly over the past decade. Nationally, these offences remain far higher than they were 10 years ago.
65. The chart below illustrates this trend, showing the number of transgender-related hate crimes recorded in England and Wales since 2011/12. Figures for 2023/24 are accurate as of 31 March 2024.



66. This data contributed to the evidence base underpinning the development of our Safer Norwich Strategy 2023-2026. The strategy outlines targeted actions aimed at enhancing safety within our communities and neighbourhoods.

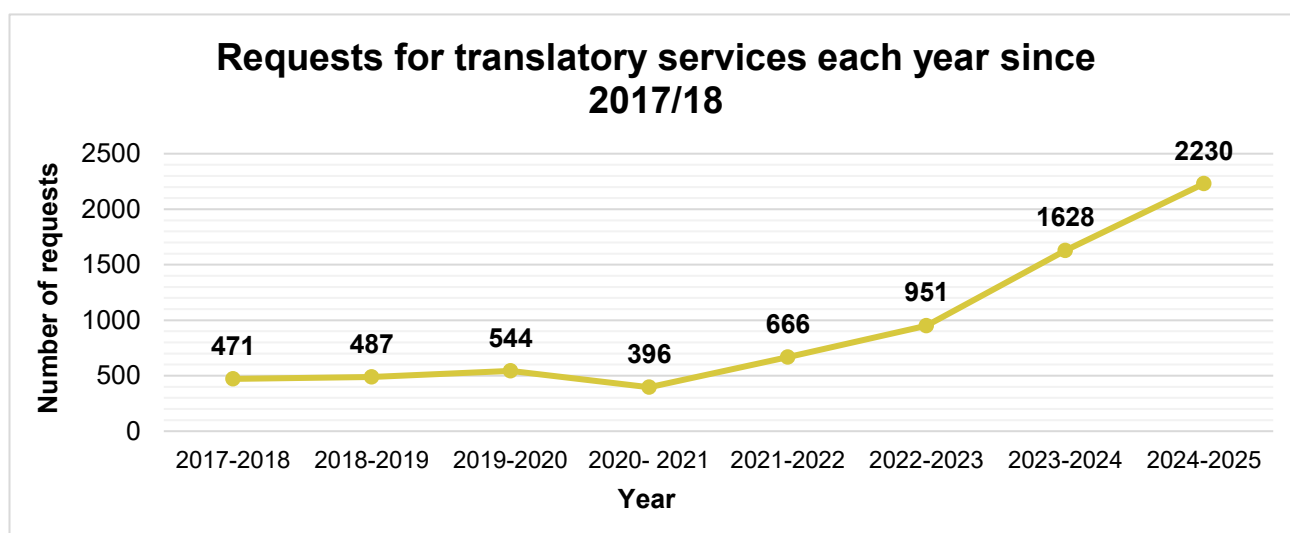
CUSTOMERS

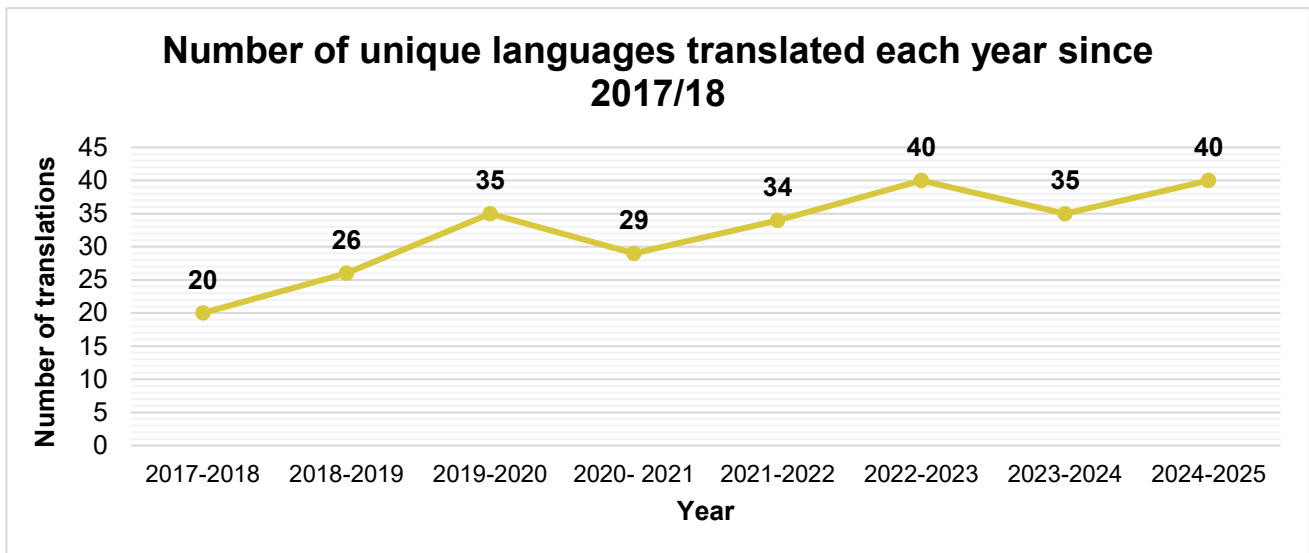
Translations and interpretations

67. This year, the council recorded a 37% rise in the use of translation and interpretation services by customers. Additionally, the range of languages requested expanded from 35 to 40.

68. The table below presents the ten most frequently requested languages over the past six years.

2019 2020	2020 2021	2021 2022	2022 2023	2023 2024	2024 2025
Arabic	Lithuanian	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic
Lithuanian	Portuguese	Lithuanian	Lithuanian	Kurdish - Sorani	Kurdish - Sorani
Polish	Arabic	Polish	Polish	Lithuanian	Pashto
Portuguese	Hungarian	Bengali	Kurdish - Sorani	Ukrainian	Tigrinya
Kurdish - Sorani	Romanian	Kurdish - Sorani	Ukrainian	Pashto	Lithuanian
Hungarian	Polish	Italian	Portuguese	Polish	Dari
Romanian	Spanish	Portuguese	Romanian	Dari	Romanian
Bengali	Bulgarian	Mandarin	Albanian	Tigrinya	Ukrainian
Amharic	Turkish	Sudanese Arabic	Tigrinya	Portuguese	Farsi
Russian	Mandarin	Bulgarian	Vietnamese	Farsi	Sudanese arabic





Go4Less

69. Our [Go4Less card](#) offers eligible residents free access to discounts of up to 50% on sport, leisure, and cultural activities at council-run venues, alongside other associated benefits.
70. To help improve health outcomes and support longer life expectancy across our communities, we have simplified the application process. Residents can now apply either online or by contacting us directly. We have also expanded collection points to include City Hall, Riverside Leisure Centre, and the Norman Centre and now offer to send the card by post, driving take up and supporting accessibility.
71. In addition to individual applications, referrals are made on behalf of eligible individuals including asylum seekers and refugees through New Routes Integration and Norwich International Youth Project. This year, we have welcomed new referral partners including St Martins Housing and YMCA.
72. The table below presents the total number of Go4Less cardholders from 2023 to 2025:

Year	Number of Go4Less card users
2023	649
2024	828
2025	925

73. The following table presents the evidence submitted by users:

Evidence provided	Number of cards issued
Bus Pass	329
Universal Credit	182
Post-16 Student	11
Child/ Young Person	80
Partner referral	22
Total	624

74. The table above continues to highlight strong engagement from key groups, including residents over 60 (bus pass holders), individuals from low-income households (Universal Credit recipients), and young people.

75. Card usage at the Norman Centre during 2025 is shown below:

Activity	Number of attendances
Gym (pay as you go only)	887
Bowls	1235
Nifty 50's multi sports	121
Badminton	36 (courts)
Short tennis/Pickleball	7 (courts)
Table tennis	81 (tables)

76. The chart below displays Go4Less card usage at Riverside Leisure Centre during 2025. As of September, a total of 161 unique individuals had used the scheme at this location, collectively accessing leisure activities 2,423 times.

Activity	Number of attendances 2025
Swimming	1434
Family swimming	203
Group workout	305
Gym	254

Complaints

77. The following tables provide a breakdown of complaints received by the Council between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, categorised by race, age, disability status, and sex.

Age	Count	Percentage
20-29	226	6.5%
30-39	654	13.2%
40-49	691	13.8%
50-59	674	13.6%
60-69	529	8.9%
70-79	261	7.1%
80-89	134	2.9%
90-99	24	0.5%
100 and over	5	
Unknown/declined to answer	892	33.4%
Total	4,087	

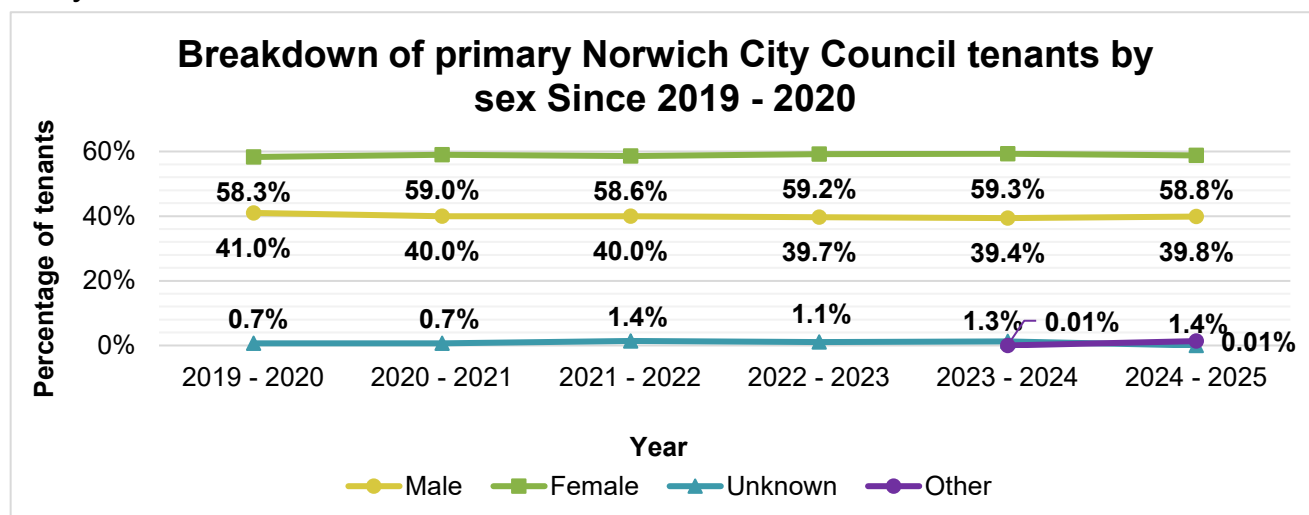
Disability	Count	Percentage
Non-Disabled	1849	45.2%
Disabled	920	22.5%
Unknown/declined to answer	1318	32.2%
Total	4,087	

Race	Count	Percentage
Black African	17	0.4%
Black Caribbean	3	0.1%
Black Other	3	0.1%
Other	9	0.2%
Other Asian	33	0.8%
Other Mixed	13	0.3%
Romany Gypsy	0	0.0%
White & Asian	2	0.05%
White British	940	23%
White European	37	0.9%
White Irish	2	0.05%
White Other	33	0.8%
Unknown/declined to answer	23	0.6%
Not recorded	2972	72.7%
Total	4,087	

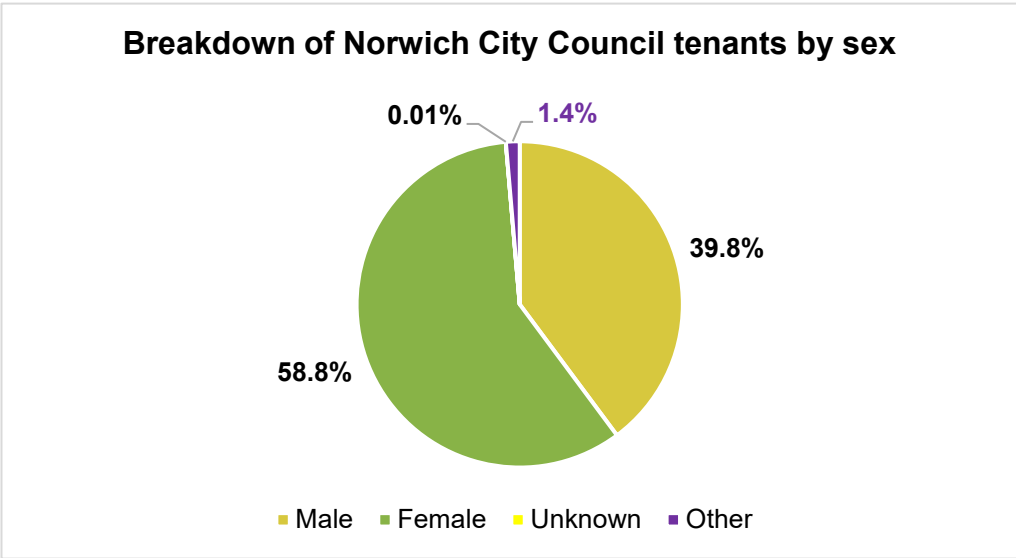
Sex	Count	Percentage
Female	2113	51.7%
Male	1318	32.2%
Unknown/declined to answer	656	16.1%
Total	4,087	

Tenant profiles

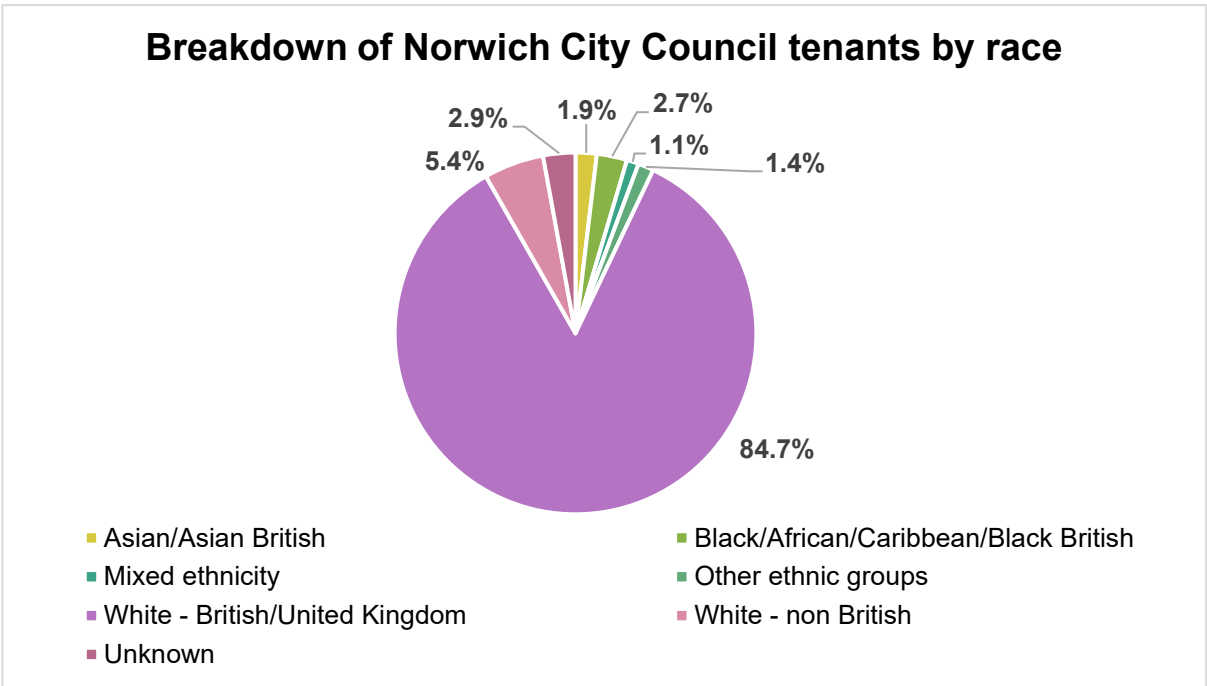
78. Tenant data in this section refers specifically to the named lead and joint tenants of Norwich City Council properties, rather than all household members, as of 31 March 2025. The charts below illustrate the breakdown by sex, race, age, and disability declaration, alongside five-year trends for each characteristic.

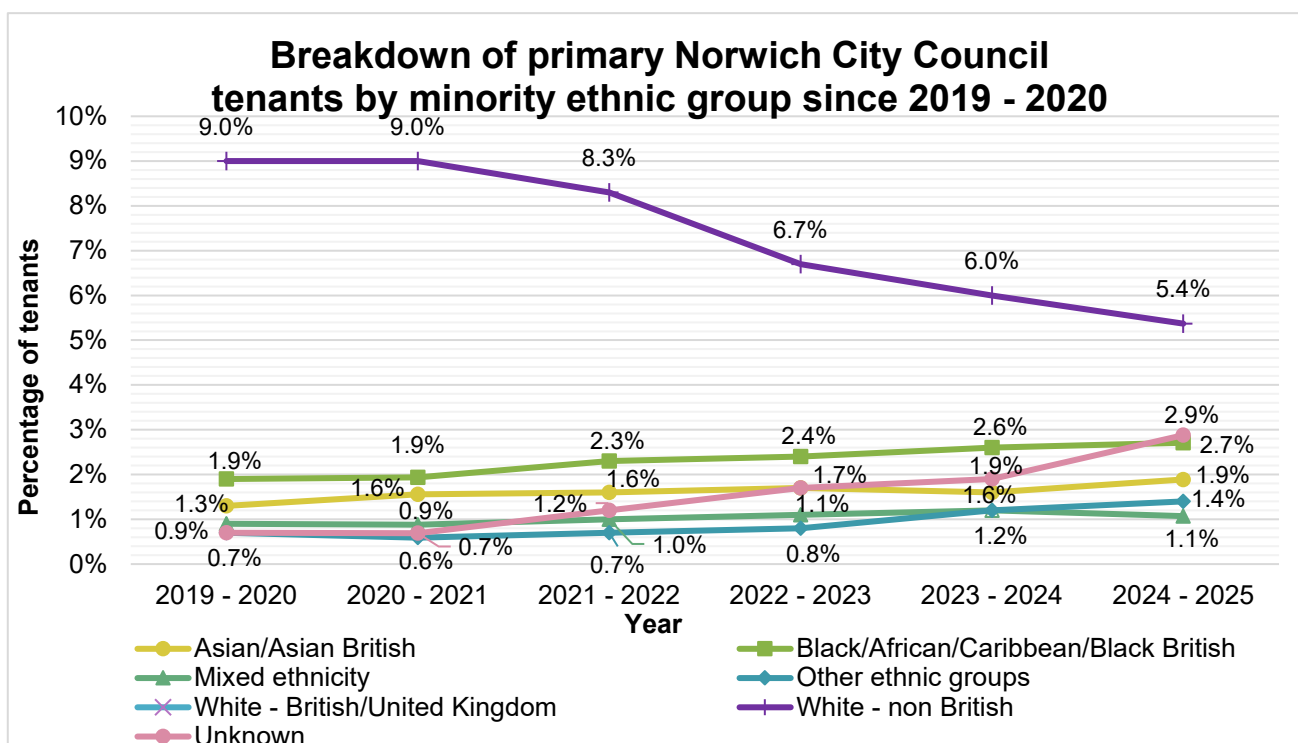


79. There has been minimal change in the gender distribution of our tenants, with women consistently representing a larger proportion, approximately 60%, compared to men at around 40%.

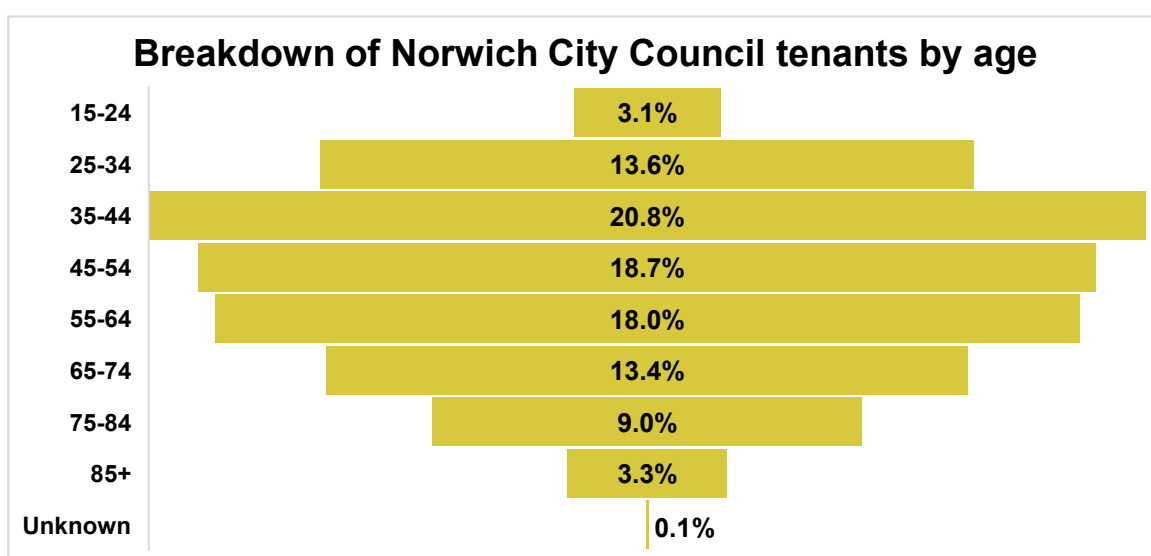


80. The chart below illustrates changes in the ethnic composition of residents in council-owned homes. White British individuals continue to make up the majority at 84.7%, a figure that has remained largely consistent over the past five years. However, there have been more noticeable shifts among minority ethnic groups. The proportion of White residents who are not British has declined since 2020–2021, while most other ‘non-white’ ethnic categories have seen modest increases. One exception is residents of mixed ethnicity, whose representation has slightly decreased over the past year to 1.1%.

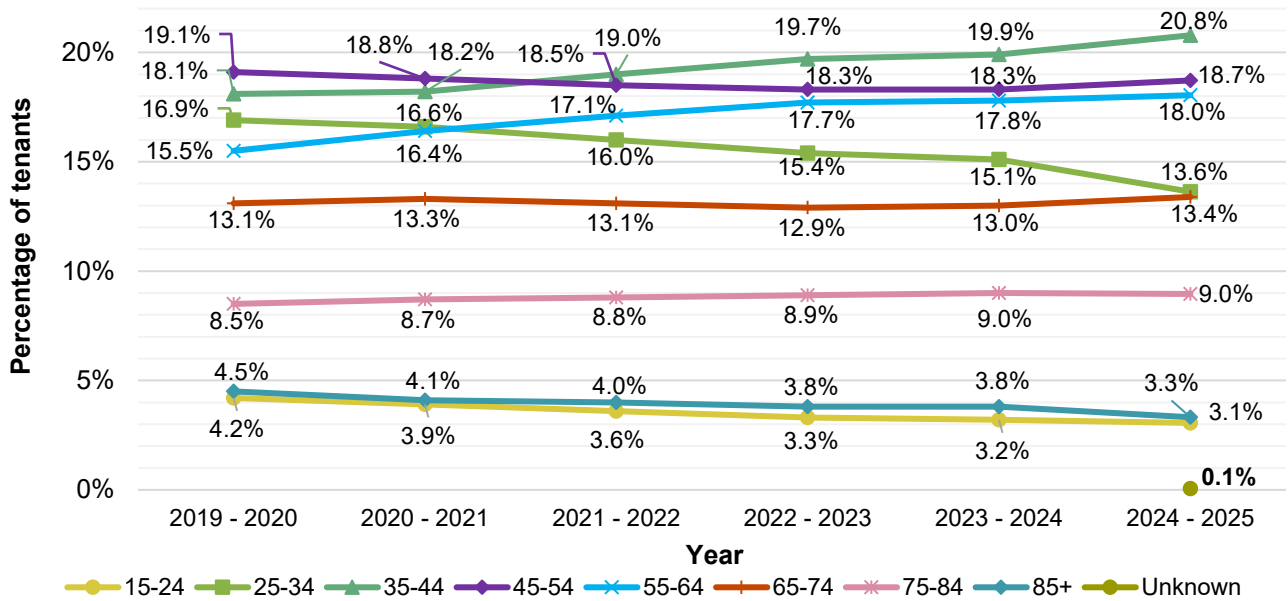




81. Age distribution among tenants has remained largely consistent over the past year, with the 35-44 age group continuing to be the most represented. However, there has been a steady rise in the number of tenants aged 55-64 over the past five years, making this group the third largest and surpassing those aged 25-34. As a result, 43.8% of tenants are now aged 55 or older.

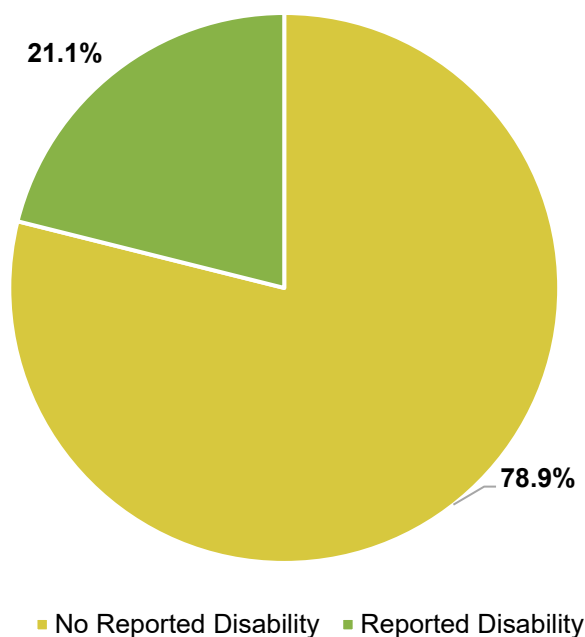


Breakdown of primary Norwich City Council tenants by age range since 2019 - 2020

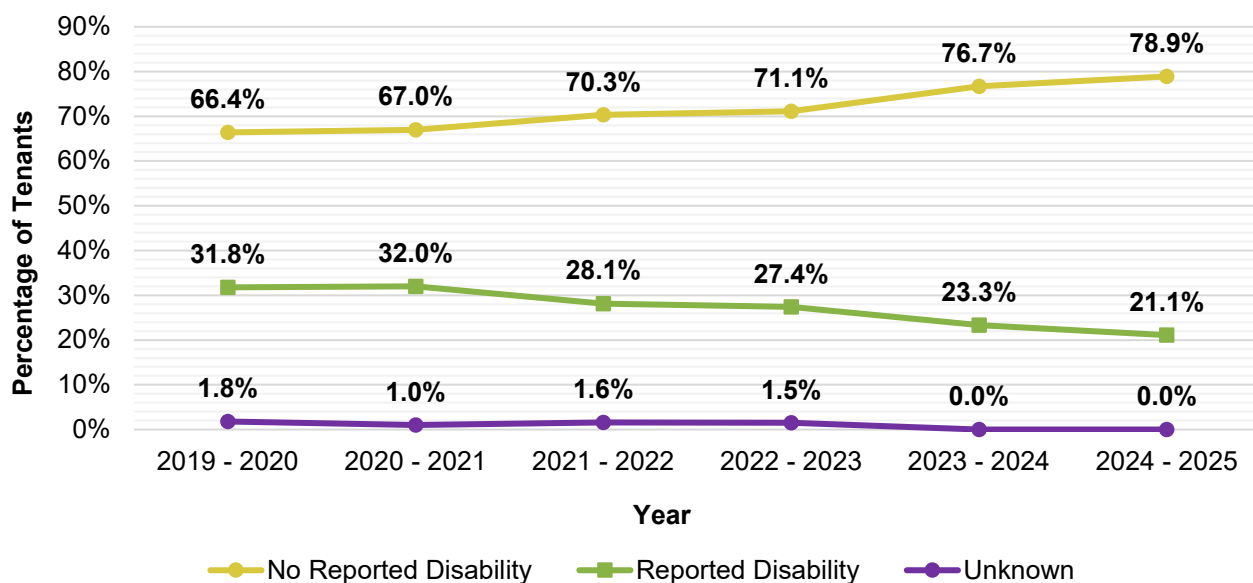


82. The proportion of tenants reporting a disability has steadily declined, falling from 31.8% in 2019-2020 to 21.1% in 2024-2025.

Breakdown of Norwich City Council tenants by declared disability



Breakdown of primary Norwich City Council tenants with declared disabilities since 2019 - 2020



EMPLOYEES

Profiles

83. The diversity data presented in this report is based on a headcount of 763 employees as of 9 September 2025, sourced from the council's Human Resources system. The analysis excludes agency staff, contractors, and individuals not directly employed by Norwich City Council.

84. The table below outlines the overall declaration rates for each reported characteristic as of 9 September 2025.

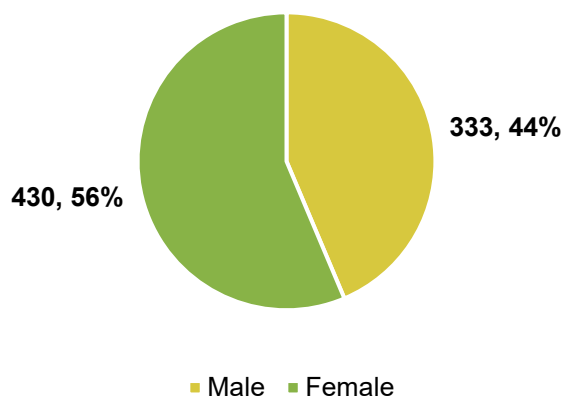
Protected Characteristic	Proportion (%)	Number of employees
Sex	100%	763
Race	69.3%	529
Disability	63.2%	482
Sexual Orientation	35%	267
Age	100%	763
Religion or belief	36.7%	280

85. The data presented below shows the council's workforce by protected characteristic as of 9 September 2025. Workforce composition by sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion.

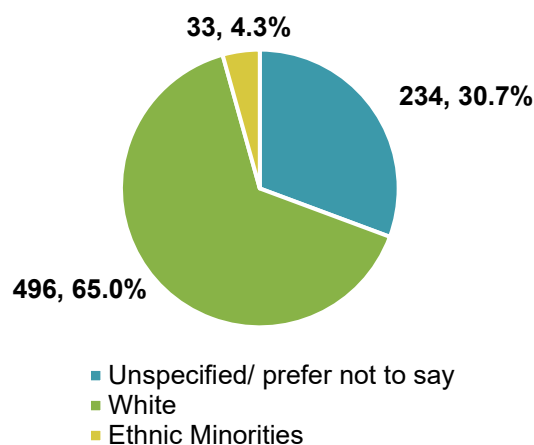
86. Also included is a breakdown of employees by working pattern. Norwich City Council supports a range of flexible working options, allowing eligible staff to request changes to how they work. Unless otherwise specified, all advertised roles are open to both full-time and part-time applicants.

87. Each graph presents both the number of employees and the corresponding percentage of the total workforce for each characteristic.

Breakdown of employees by sex

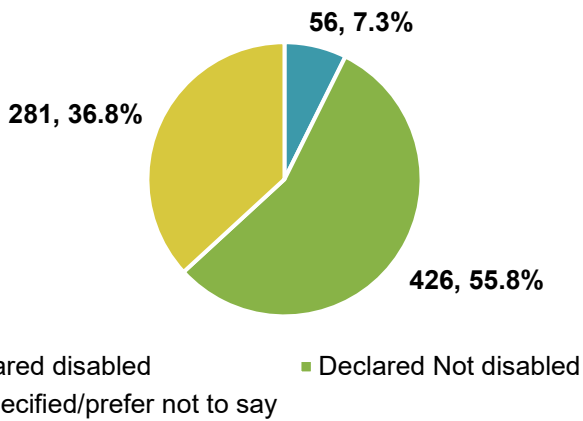


Breakdown of employees by race

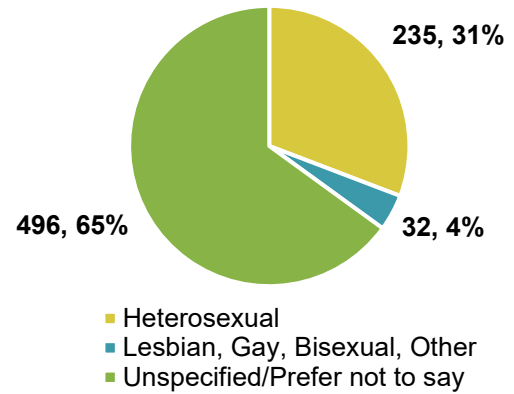


Please note: data on employee race and religion or belief is not broken down into specific minority ethnic groups or individual religions. This is because publishing datasets based on fewer than ten employees may pose a risk to employee confidentiality.

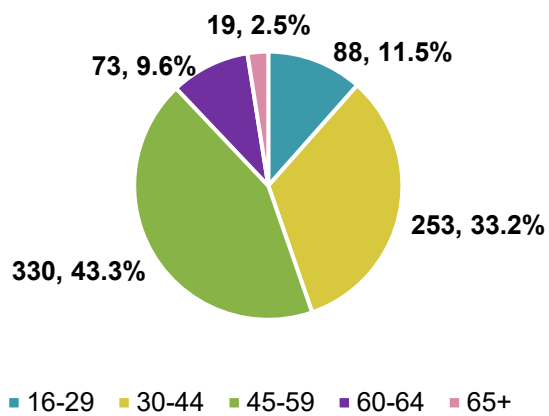
Breakdown of employees by disability



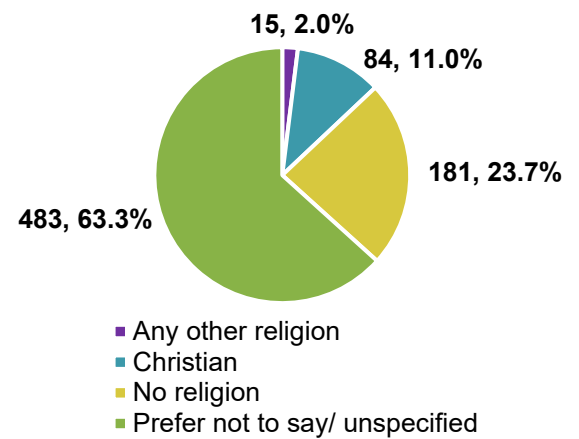
Breakdown of employees by sexual orientation



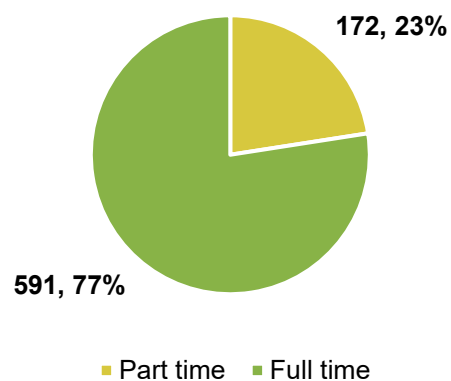
Breakdown of employees by age



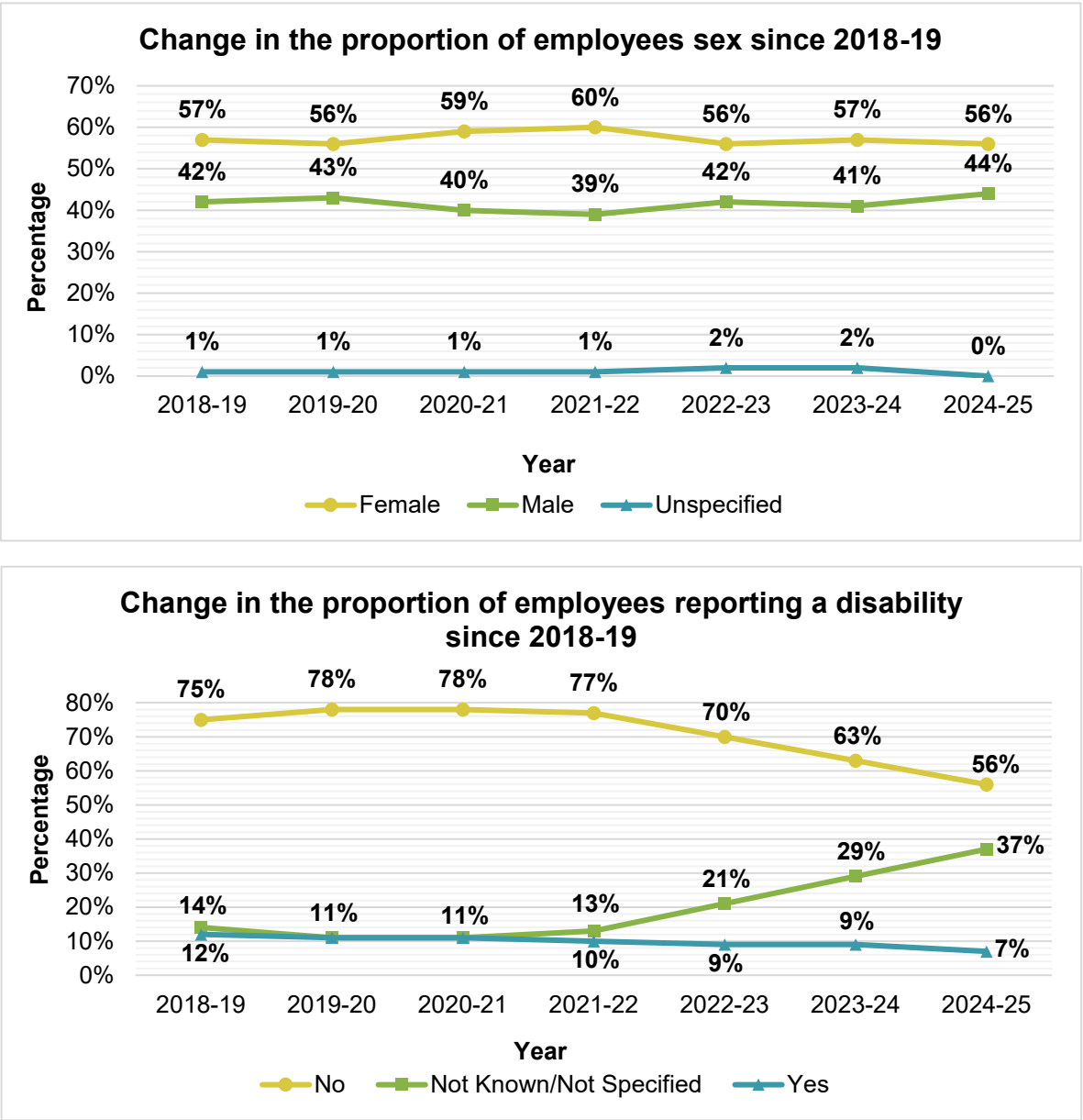
Breakdown of employees by religion or belief



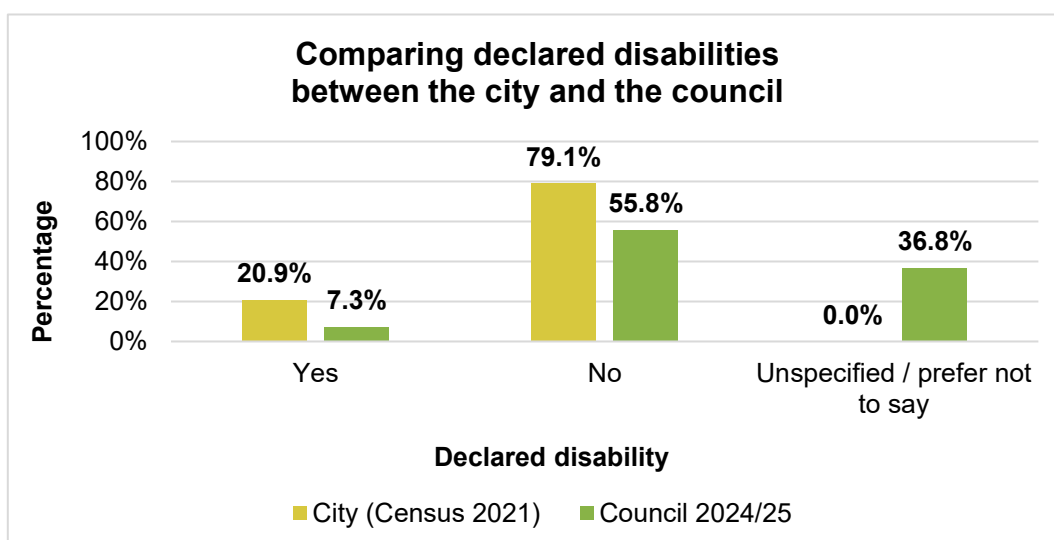
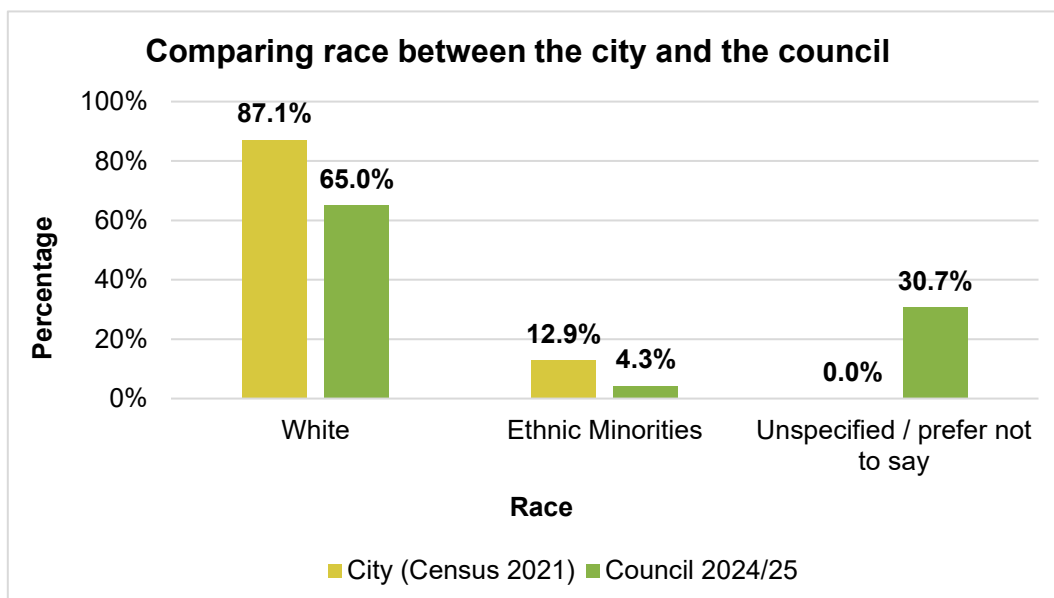
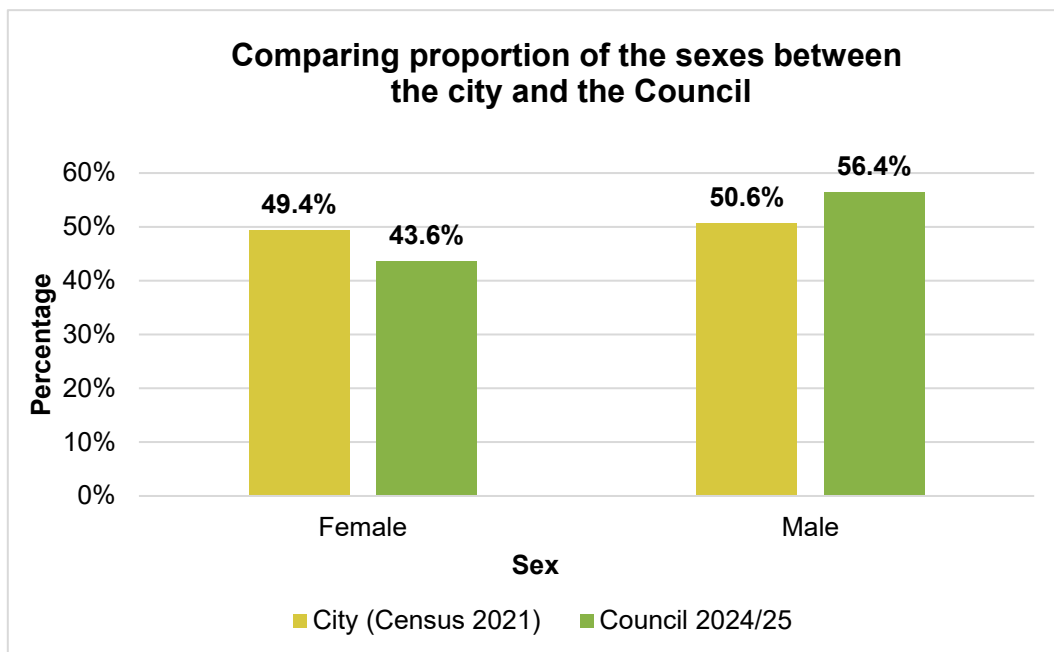
Breakdown of employees by working pattern

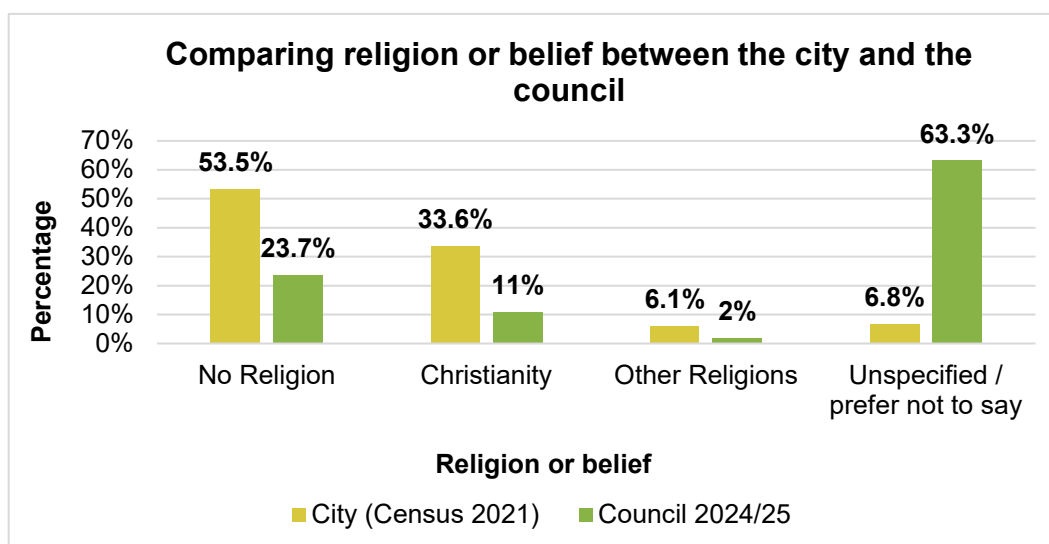


88. The graphs below show that the sex profile of our workforce has remained largely unchanged over the past six years. However, this year shows an increase in the number of employees without a disability; this change can be attributed to an increase in the number of employees declaring whether they have a disability or not. Latest data indicates that 7% of our workforce (who chose to answer the question) are reporting a disability.



89. As previously noted, the council aims for its workforce to reflect the city’s economically active population. The comparisons below, based on 2021 Census data, show how employee demographics align with those of the wider community across sex, race, disability, and religion or belief.





90. In the Census, a ‘yes’ response to the disability question includes individuals reporting both mild and severe impacts on daily life. For the purposes of this analysis, we have assumed that those experiencing severe limitations are less likely to be economically active. Excluding this group provides a more accurate comparison between our workforce and the economically active population in the local community. It is also worth noting that 36.8% of council employees either chose not to respond or selected ‘prefer not to say’ when asked about disability status. Continued engagement with staff to encourage disclosure will help improve the accuracy of future reporting.

91. Overall, the council still has progress to make in ensuring its workforce reflects the city’s economically active population. While Census data includes individuals who are not economically active, and a significant portion of employees have not disclosed certain characteristics, the available data still highlights the need to improve representation of disabled individuals, religious groups, and minority ethnic communities within our workforce.

92. Due to the small number of cases (fewer than ten), the data for disciplinary actions, grievances, leavers, and promotions for the year 2024/25 has not been published to protect employee confidentiality.

Recruitment

93. The council continues to focus on attracting, retaining, and developing a diverse workforce through inclusive recruitment strategies and the use of social media to promote opportunities. Job adverts are reviewed to ensure accessible language and include positive inclusion statements. Reasonable adjustments are available to support candidates throughout the recruitment process.

94. The table below presents data on applicants at each stage of the recruitment process between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. The analysis covers race, disability, and sex.
95. During this period, Norwich City Council received 633 applications for advertised roles, with 46 candidates successfully appointed following interview.

Characteristic	Applicants	Offered
Race		
Asian, Asian British, Asian Welsh	138 (21.8%)	4 (8.7%)
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	92 (14.5%)	6 (13%)
Mixed or multiple	15 (2.4%)	1 (2.2%)
Unspecified or prefer not to say	73 (11.5%)	1 (2.2%)
White	299 (47.2%)	34 (73.9%)
Other ethnic group	16 (2.5%)	0 (0%)
Sex		
Female	288 (45.5%)	29 (63%)
Male	294 (46.5%)	17 (37%)
Unspecified or prefer not to say	51 (8.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Disability		
Disabled	86 (13.6%)	6 (13%)
Non-disabled	459 (72.5%)	38 (82.6%)
Unspecified or prefer not to say	88 (13.9%)	2 (4.4%)
Totals	633	46

96. The Covid-19 pandemic prompted a rapid cultural shift within the council, leading to the widespread adoption of home working for the first time. In response, a hybrid working policy was introduced in April 2022, offering staff the flexibility to work from home while attending the office based on business needs and personal circumstances. The council remains committed to supporting colleagues who require workplace adjustments, including the provision of appropriate equipment.
97. Most council service areas operate flexible working arrangements, allowing duties to be carried out across a range of hours. Employees can request changes to their working patterns, including applying for roles on either a full-time or part-time basis. The council also considers requests for term-time working, annualised hours, and compressed hours.

Gender pay gap

98. The most recent Gender Pay Gap report was published on 31 March 2025, covering the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. In accordance with statutory requirements, Norwich City Council's next Gender Pay Gap report, reflecting data as of 31 March 2025 is scheduled for publication by 31 March 2026. Once available, it will be published on both the Norwich City Council website and Gov.uk [here](#).

Useful links

[Community safety in Norwich](#)

[Community support | Norwich City Council](#)

[Cost of living support in Norwich](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Get Talking Norwich](#)

[Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025](#)

[LUMi - Community portal](#)

[Norwich 2040 City Vision](#)

[Norwich 2040 Inclusive Economy Vision](#)

[Norwich City Council's Community-Led Plan 2024-2029 - 'We are Norwich'](#)

[Norwich Economic Strategy 2019-2024](#)

[Norwich Good Economy Commission](#)

[Norwich Food Network](#)

[Norwich Food Poverty Action Plan](#)

[Norwich Town Deal](#)

[Public Sector Equality Duty](#)

Further Information and Accessibility

If you would like any further information about the contents of this report, please call us on 0344 980 3333 or email us at strategy@norwich.gov.uk

If you need this report in a different format like large print, accessible PDF, audio recording or Braille, please follow our advice on our accessibility page: www.norwich.gov.uk/accessibility or call us on 0344 980 3333.

Should you require this report in an alternative language, please follow our advice on our interpretation and translation page: <https://www.norwich.gov.uk/intran> or call us on 0344 980 3333.

The council aims to make all the ways that we communicate accessible for everyone, including those with impairments to vision, hearing, mobility, thinking and understanding. As the proportion of our communications that are digital continues to increase, changes we have made to make communications more accessible have been informed by Government's [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#). WCAG is based on four design principles, these being: perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust.

Examples of changes we have made to increase accessibility include:

- Making key documents and publications available as web pages rather than PDFs, for example the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Community (TLC) magazine. Content is also structured logically and can be navigated and read by a screen reader or other assistive technologies.
- Ensuring online content works well on mobile devices.
- Using descriptive links so users know where a link will take them, or what the downloadable linked content is.
- Providing text alternatives ('alt text') for any non-text content and the addition of subtitles to videos.
- Implementing simplified and uncluttered formats and design in all communications.
- Ensuring sufficient colour contrast for online and printed design.
- Ongoing review of information to ensure it can be easily understood with calls to action that provide a clear onward journey.

As per our 2025 Equality Information Report, in order to improve accessibility, we have chosen a consistent colour scheme that is accessible to individuals with vision impairments, such as colour blindness. This is designed in a way that avoids using clashing colours, as well as providing alternative identifiers for different data series, such as different shaped markers. The colour scheme was generated using [Venngage](#), a reliable online resource for accessible colour palettes.

EDI Action Plan 2025-2026 Progress Report

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
EDI Aim 1: Norwich City Council is an inclusive place to work.				
EDI Aim Priority: Ensure that the profile of our workforce broadly reflects the city's population and the local labour market.				
1.1.1	Continue to deliver the actions under our Inclusive Workforce Plan to ensure that we are supporting a healthy and diverse workforce.	<p>Promote organisational awareness of the inclusive workforce plan, sharing it with all employees.</p> <p>Continue to provide appropriate recruitment training to hiring managers and team leaders to ensure we adhere to best practice within our recruitment processes.</p> <p>Review the workforce diversity profile of each directorate and work in partnership with directorates to develop SMART objectives, seeking to address areas of under</p>	Medium-term (2026-27)	<p>We remain committed to building an inclusive, equitable, and healthy workplace. We continue to implement its Inclusive Workforce Plan, with a strong focus on improving diversity, wellbeing, and inclusive practices across all directorates.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to review workforce diversity profiles and develop SMART objectives to address underrepresentation. Ethnicity pay gap reporting was completed and published in April 2025, and efforts are underway to improve data transparency, particularly around non-disclosure rates. A communication plan and changes to onboarding will be developed to encourage confidence in data sharing among new starters.</p> <p>Norwich City Council maintains a strong and ongoing commitment to being anti-racist and to UNISON's Anti-Racism Charter, working to ensure fairness, equity, and inclusion across all areas of employment. This includes actively identifying and addressing racial disparities, promoting</p>

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
		<p>representation.</p> <p>Continue to work with the Norwich City Council UNISON branch to promote the diversity of our workforce and further develop inclusive working practices.</p> <p>Maintain our ongoing commitment to UNISON's Anti-Racism Charter.</p>		<p>transparency, and fostering a workplace culture where discrimination is not tolerated.</p> <p>To support employee wellbeing, 16 new mental health first aiders will be trained in November 2025. A new occupational health provider, Medigold, is now in place, offering managers enhanced support and providing all staff access to the <i>Thrive</i> wellbeing app. Additionally, 100 free flu jabs were offered to staff this autumn which marked the first time in three years this initiative has been delivered.</p>
EDI Aim Priority: Continue to develop inclusive working practices and policies.				
1.2.1	Continue to work with the Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (NIDAS) to develop a range of robust policies and procedures to assist our employees working to support victim-survivors of domestic abuse. This includes support for our employees	<p>Promote organisational awareness of our new internal domestic abuse policy and resources to aid our employees to identify domestic abuse and provide access to appropriate support for victim-survivors of domestic abuse.</p>	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	We continue to work with the Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (NIDAS) to strengthen support for victim-survivors of domestic abuse and our employees. Over the past year, we have published domestic abuse policies for residents and staff on our website, added resources to our wellbeing SharePoint, and displayed NIDAS information across City Hall. NIDAS staff also spend time with council teams, including the Home

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
	who may experience domestic abuse themselves.			<p>Improvement and Specialist Support Teams, to provide direct advice.</p> <p>Training remains a priority, with sessions available through the Learning Room to help staff identify domestic abuse and respond appropriately. In 2024/25, we received 403 domestic abuse contacts and provided assistance in 77% of cases. These efforts demonstrate our commitment to raising awareness and ensuring timely, effective support for those affected.</p>
1.2.2	Ensure our flexible and hybrid working policies are aligned with the work/life balance and lifestyle needs of our workforce.	In consultation with the Norwich City Council UNISON Branch, review the content of HR policies impacting the work/life balance of employees and make appropriate changes to ensure they support the varying needs of staff.	Iterative (ongoing)	We are currently undertaking a full review of its HR policies, including those relating to hybrid working and flexible leave. This work is being carried out in consultation with the Norwich City Council UNISON Branch to ensure policies reflect the diverse needs of staff and support a healthy work/life balance.
1.2.3	Explore our workforce's interest in the establishment of new employee networks.	Gauge demand for additional employee networks through internal communication campaigns.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	Council employees maintain a 'Pride' network for colleagues identifying as LGBTQIA+ and allies, offering a safe and inclusive space to connect, share experiences, and support one another. This group was a critical and essential tool in informing the development of our EDI Policy.

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
		<p>Support employees to establish and manage employee networks.</p> <p>Ensure opportunities for the employee networks to be heard by our Senior Leadership Team and other relevant groups as appropriate.</p>		<p>Staff have shown interest in setting up more employee networks including a young employees forum. A communications plan, including a video from senior leaders, is ready to promote this. It will go to the Executive Leadership Team for approval, and further talks will decide which networks employees want to create.</p>
1.2.4	Maintain our Armed Forces Covenant Silver Award and support for veterans and ex-members of the armed forces.	Through the provision of online training, ensure employee awareness of the benefits realised through our participation in the Armed Forces Covenant Recognition Scheme.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We remain committed to supporting the armed forces community and upholding the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant. We also continue to offer support through guaranteed interviews for reservists who meet the essential job criteria, and special leave provisions outlined in HR policies.</p> <p>Awareness-raising continues through two dedicated e-learning modules for staff and managers, and a reservist information page hosted on our intranet.</p> <p>We recognise the importance of embedding support for the armed forces community in recruitment, policy, and practice, and will explore opportunities to improve visibility, strengthen links</p>

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
				<p>with cadet organisations, and ensure policies reflect this commitment.</p> <p>War pension income for both Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit claimants is 100% disregarded. (Central Government disregard the first £10 per week and the remainder is disregarded under a local disregard).</p>
1.2.5	Make reasonable adjustments for employees with physical, sensory, mental and/or learning disabilities/difficulties.	<p>Where appropriate, incorporate reasonable adjustments in all relevant HR policies and workplace practices.</p> <p>Endeavour to anticipate adjustments needed for other groups falling within the scope of our EDI policy.</p>	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We continue to strengthen our approach to reasonable adjustments in the workplace. A dedicated webpage has been drafted and will be published once the new council website is launched, improving visibility and guidance for staff. Accessibility considerations are also being factored into future planning for City Hall.</p> <p>Plans are being considered to pursue <i>Disability Confident Leader</i> status, reinforcing our commitment to inclusive employment.</p>
1.2.6	Explore the feasibility of an employee volunteering initiative which benefits the city and provides learning and development opportunities for employees.	Explore the feasibility of implementing an employer-supported volunteering initiative.	Medium-term (2026-27)	<p>We continue to offer volunteering opportunities internally, though these are not widely promoted. To improve visibility, a new recruitment webpage is being developed with a dedicated section for work experience and volunteering, helping employees to more easily access opportunities that benefit communities and support personal development.</p>

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
1.2.7	Strengthen our commitment to age friendly recruitment and support employees of all ages to flourish in a multigenerational workforce.	Sign up to the Age-Friendly Employer Pledge.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	<p>We are proud to have registered its interest in the Age Friendly Employer Pledge, reaffirming our commitment to fostering a workplace where people of all ages feel valued, supported, and empowered to thrive.</p> <p>We have already begun taking meaningful steps toward this goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce data analysis is ongoing to better understand age representation across our organisation as shown in metrics. • Job adverts have been reviewed and refined to ensure they are accessible, inclusive, and welcoming to applicants of all ages. • Flexible working arrangements are already in place, supporting work-life balance across all life stages. • Our recent introduction of the <i>Thrive</i> wellbeing app continues to offer holistic support for mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing. <p>As part of this journey, we are also updating our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) policies to explicitly reflect an age-positive approach. We remain fully committed to completing our final submission by February 2026 and are excited to</p>

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
				embed age inclusivity more deeply into our organisational culture.
1.2.8	Continue to provide volunteering opportunities for Norwich residents within designated service areas.	Promote volunteering opportunities for residents at cultural activities and events.	Medium-term (2026-27)	We continue to offer volunteering opportunities across a range of service areas. While these opportunities are currently under-promoted, a new recruitment webpage is being developed with a dedicated section for work experience and volunteering, making it easier for residents to find and engage with available roles.
EDI Aim Priority: Support colleagues to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to consider equality in all their work.				
1.3.1	Demonstrate our political and corporate commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.	<p>Appoint an EDI champion within our Senior Leadership Team.</p> <p>Recruit equality, diversity and inclusion champions across service areas.</p>	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	<p>We have recruited nine Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Champions from across different service areas. Training for these roles is underway, equipping them to support colleagues and promote inclusive approaches within their teams.</p> <p>In addition, we have now appointed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Champion within our Senior Leadership Team, reinforcing our corporate commitment to embedding EDI in everything we do. This role will help drive forward inclusive practices and ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are being undertaken across council services.</p>

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
1.3.2	Continue to develop our internal Equalities Information SharePoint site to enable colleagues to understand and consider equalities across everything they do.	Upload additional informative content and guidance to help employees build upon the basic equality's knowledge gained through their corporate induction and mandatory training.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We have updated the Equalities Information SharePoint site with new Equality Impact Assessment templates (EqIAs) and corresponding guidance to help officers effectively consider the impact of their work on equality. A new network of EDI Champions has also been recruited and will play a key role in promoting equality across services.</p> <p>In July, the Strategy Team delivered an all-staff briefing on Equality Impact Assessments, followed by tailored training sessions for service areas on request.</p>
1.3.3	Support our employees to consider equality outcomes in their work through strengthening and fully embedding our Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) process across all service areas.	Provision of EqIA training for all relevant staff.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	<p>We have taken steps to embed Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) more firmly into our decision-making processes. Updated EqIA templates and detailed guidance are now available on our Equality Information SharePoint site, giving staff practical tools to assess the impact of their work on equality.</p> <p>To strengthen compliance, our committee report template has been revised so that any decision regarding a relevant project or workstream is informed by an EqIA. Alongside this, we have delivered an all-staff briefing and provided tailored training sessions for services that requested additional support.</p>

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
				A new network of EDI Champions is also in place to promote good practice across the organisation.
1.3.4	Review and refresh the equality, diversity and inclusion training provided to our employees.	Explore, develop and implement modular e-learning courses for relevant employees.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	<p>We continue to provide a wide range of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training to staff and councillors. Current provision includes mandatory e-learning on the Equality Act 2010, unconscious bias, inclusive leadership, and mental health awareness, alongside specialist workshops and development sessions delivered by external trainers.</p> <p>Staff also have access to wellbeing resources via our intranet and targeted training covering key themes including inclusive leadership, equality legislation, unconscious bias, mental health and wellbeing, domestic abuse awareness, and support for vulnerable groups. We have also delivered training aligned with the Armed Forces Covenant and continues to support wellbeing through initiatives like Mental Health First Aider training and the Wellbeing Champion programme.</p> <p>Further consideration is being given to how this training offer can be strengthened, including the development of modular e-learning courses to ensure relevance, accessibility, and alignment with best practice.</p>

EDI Aim 2: Our services will be joined up, accessible and inclusive.

EDI Aim Priority: Improve a range of communication platforms and channels to enhance accessibility, including for those facing digital exclusion.

2.1.1	Deliver the Customer and Digital Strategy 2024-29 Action Plan.	<p>Provide services which are easy to access for all customers.</p> <p>Continue to provide traditional contact options for those that face challenges with accessing digital services.</p> <p>Develop our approach to best serve our customers expecting a digital service by default.</p> <p>Ensure IT and digital solutions are reliable and secure.</p>	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>Progress is being measured against the customer and digital strategy 2024-2029 action plan on a quarterly basis. Results are shared with the Executive Director for Resources on a quarterly basis and with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) when requested.</p> <p>To date, 30% of actions which relate to the 'easy to access' objective are complete, 78% of actions which relate to the 'digital by default' objective are complete, 32% of actions which relate to the 'safe and secure solutions' objective are complete.</p> <p>Progress quarter on quarter is showing a steady increase in objectives achieved - with a high level of confidence that all objectives will be met by 2029 (strategy end date).</p>
2.1.2	Incorporate consideration of the council's EDI strategy within our communications strategy.	<p>Follow equality guidance on use of language.</p> <p>Always aim to represent a range of diversity through our</p>	Medium-term (2026-27)	We are developing a new strategic communications plan that will be aligned with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. This approach will help ensure our communications use inclusive language, represent diverse voices and

		<p>visual and written content, internally and externally.</p> <p>Use comms channels to amplify lesser heard voices.</p>		<p>perspectives, and amplify voices that are less often heard.</p>
2.1.3	<p>Signpost residents and customers to local digital support offers to mitigate digital exclusion.</p>	<p>Maintain an up-to-date list on our website of local services, activities and guidance aimed at supporting residents to access digital skills training, IT equipment and digital volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Signpost residents to digital support through traditional (non-digital) means of communication.</p>	<p>Iterative (ongoing)</p>	<p>To mitigate digital exclusion, we continue to signpost residents to local digital support offers through both digital and non-digital means.</p> <p>As part of our website redesign project, we have updated the local digital support directory and Digital Inclusion (DI) pages to ensure residents can easily access information on digital skills training, IT equipment, and volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>We are actively supporting Norfolk County Council's bid to the Government's Digital Innovation Fund, which aims to expand the successful Tech Skills for Life programme, targeting low-income households, older residents (60+), jobseekers, and deprived areas of Norwich.</p> <p>In collaboration with the Age Friendly Transport Group, we are exploring alternative communication methods to reach digitally excluded individuals.</p> <p>While non-digital engagement remains resource-intensive, we continue to seek partnership opportunities to broaden our reach. Notably, during the consultation on local government reorganisation, we delivered a comprehensive engagement strategy including in-person</p>

				roadshows across all 13 wards, VCSE workshops, drop-in and 1:1 sessions, and a Youth Advisory Board meeting. This approach ensured inclusive participation and highlighted the importance of clear, transparent communication throughout the reorganisation process.
2.1.4	Improve the accessibility of our planning, licensing and regulatory processes through the standardisation and digitisation of planning, licensing and regulatory forms.	Review and digitise our suite of planning, licensing and regulatory forms to improve their accessibility.	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>We are making it easier for residents and businesses to engage with our planning, licensing and regulatory services by digitising key processes. This year, we launched online forms for taxi and private hire licensing, allowing drivers to apply quickly and securely. Additional improvements include online DBS checks and DVLA licence verification, significantly reducing processing times.</p> <p>From December 2025, we will introduce tamper-proof vehicle plates and holographic badges to enhance public safety and prevent fraud. These changes align with new driver standards and conditions being rolled out.</p> <p>We are also expanding digital access to other services including premises licences and gambling applications, which will be available online before the end of 2025.</p>
EDI Aim Priority: Undertake service specific equalities reviews, so every service reflects our ambition.				
2.2.1	Provide a range of affordable community, educational and recreational opportunities within our	Develop and offer a wide range of accessible recreational activities for	Iterative (ongoing)	Funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is supporting new projects at the Norman Centre to make leisure activities more inclusive. These include <i>Nifty 50s</i> , offering health walks, tailored

	<p>leisure centres, ensuring these remain fully accessible and inclusive to all who wish to use them.</p>	<p>disadvantaged groups, including those living with physical, sensory or mental disabilities, refugees and asylum seekers and those experiencing social isolation.</p> <p>Work with local disability, access and inclusion advocates and partners as part of a rolling programme of accessibility audits, to ensure all council-owned and operated leisure facilities meet the requirements of all customers and that they conform to current accessibility standards.</p>		<p>exercise classes, and wellbeing advice for older residents; a pilot programme of activities for people with learning difficulties; and a 12-week weight management course.</p> <p>All aim to improve physical health, mental wellbeing, and social connections for those who may otherwise face barriers to participation.</p>
2.2.2	<p>Promote the health and wellbeing of our residents by encouraging greater uptake of our Go4Less sport, leisure and culture discount card by eligible residents.</p>	<p>Review the Go4Less scheme and integrate the scheme's online enrolment process, so that eligible residents may automatically access their Go4Less card through their 'My Norwich' account.</p>	<p>Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)</p>	<p>Work is underway to launch a digital version of the Go4Less discount card, making it easier for eligible residents to access their card online through their 'My Norwich' account. While this is still in development, a postal option is now available for those unable to collect their card from Riverside Leisure Centre or the Norman Centre. We are also putting the necessary information governance in place so we can start collecting demographic data on Go4Less users, helping us to better understand who is benefiting from the scheme.</p>

2.2.3	Advance our efforts to install physical adaptations to council-owned public buildings to facilitate greater accessibility for all.	Accessibility audits are carried out on public, council-owned buildings and wherever else required; adaptations aimed at improving the experience for customers with disabilities and other additional needs are made.	Iterative (ongoing)	Accessibility remains a key priority in all council projects. Audits and improvements are ongoing, and accessibility is being built into major developments such as The Halls and the upgraded facilities at Sloughbottom Park to ensure spaces are welcoming and inclusive for everyone.
2.2.4	Support eligible city residents, regardless of tenure, to remain living in a safe and secure environment, through our Healthy Homes scheme and the provision of a range of grants, loans and funding.	Offer financial assistance and support residents to access funding for adaptations to their homes, promoting longer, healthier and more independent living.	Iterative (ongoing)	Over the past 12 months, 788 grants have been successfully delivered, with distribution of more than £3.7 million in funding. These grants support a wide range of improvements, including disabled adaptations such as level-access showers and ramped entrances, heating upgrades for low-income households, and essential works that facilitate hospital discharge.
2.2.5	Facilitate minor tasks in older residents' homes which promote safety and independence.	Launch an accessible tenure neutral handy-person service for older residents.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	A new handyperson service has been launched to help vulnerable residents with small tasks that improve safety and independence at home. The service is already being used by key VCSE partners to support those who need it most.
2.2.6	Pilot early support provision which we may offer to reduce a variety of risks to council tenancies.	Review tenancy breakdown data to enable early identification of those at risk of breakdown	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2024)	We have begun piloting early support for residents at risk of tenancy breakdown. Since January 2025, 27 individuals have been referred for support, though none are currently council tenants. A

		risk of experiencing difficulties in maintaining their tenancies.		<p>dedicated Tenancy Coach, funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund until March 2026, is working closely with housing teams to identify and assist those who may benefit.</p> <p>Support for tenants was expanded from June 2025, with the Tenancy Coach offering help to both council and non-council tenants.</p> <p>It is too early to assess the impact on tenancy breakdowns as this data will likely take six months to become evident, but uptake of support is growing and will be monitored over time.</p>
2.2.7	Through our bereavement and burial service provision, continue to work closely with local faith groups to ensure conformity to specific burial traditions and customs.	Maintain effective relationships with local faith groups and continue to support them to conform with the burial traditions and customs maintained within their religions and beliefs.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>Progress on this action is pending while the new Cemeteries Team is being established. Bereavement Services Officers are being recruited in late 2025. Once the team is in place, a list of priorities will be shared with them, including engagement with local faith groups to ensure burial practices continue to reflect religious traditions and customs.</p>
<p>EDI Aim Priority: Ensure that our knowledge about the people and communities we serve informs our service planning, and that their voices are heard.</p>				
2.3.1	Develop and embed an improved, accessible and consistent approach to public and partner consultation on the activities we undertake.	Work with council colleagues to develop the best engagement/consultation approach for each project, ensuring transparency and a clearer	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	<p>We are reviewing our consultation and survey processes to make them more accessible and consistent, while ensuring compliance with statutory obligations. Priority will be given to consultations that provide meaningful insights and have the potential to influence council decisions,</p>

		understanding of the degree to which views can influence outcomes.		helping to ensure transparency and clarity for all participants.
2.3.2	Develop a Norwich Council of Sanctuary strategy to guide our work and ensure service provision is truly supportive of our refugee and asylum-seeking community.	Through engagement with the City of Sanctuary, develop a strategy to guide our positive action, delivering a welcome environment, and ensuring the safety and inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers within our service provision and beyond.	Medium-term (2026-27)	<p>A Norwich Council of Sanctuary Strategy has been fully drafted and shared with key stakeholders and voluntary sector partners for feedback. The strategy was developed through co-production, including two workshops with organisations supporting sanctuary seekers, individuals with lived experience, and council officers. Its priorities reflect what sanctuary seekers identified as most important. Once any final feedback from partners has been incorporated the strategy will go through our governance process for approval.</p> <p>Alongside this, we hosted Refugee Week events such as the official launch in the council chamber, “Speak Up for Sanctuary” training for over 30 officers and members, and community activities including a football match with sanctuary seekers. The council has also worked closely with the police and VCSE partners to respond to recent community tensions and to help ensure community safety.</p>
2.3.3	Refresh the Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs) framework to identify areas of the city facing disproportionate levels of deprivation.	Build a framework and toolkit which officers and partners may use to target resources in the areas of Norwich that need it most.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	Last year, we refreshed our Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs) framework to better focus resources where they are needed most. Using the latest deprivation data and local insight, nine neighbourhoods have been identified as priority areas, and these will be reviewed again following the release of new Indices of Multiple Deprivation data in October 2025. The framework is being

				<p>rolled out with partners to influence how local resources are targeted, helping address disproportionate levels of hardship in these communities. For example, we are working with the Norwich Health and Wellbeing Partnership to reduce health inequalities in RITA areas, ensuring that interventions are directed where they can have the greatest impact.</p>
2.3.4	<p>Celebrate gender diversity and advance equality and inclusion for Transgender and Non-Binary people.</p>	<p>Review our service provision and implement changes which promote equality and inclusion for Transgender and Non-Binary communities.</p> <p>Review and ensure our communications, including our website and forms, are free from gendered language.</p> <p>Implement changes to EDI training for our employees to promote knowledge of Transgender and Non-Binary communities.</p>	<p>Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)</p>	<p>Following the recent Supreme Court ruling on the legal definition of biological sex, we are awaiting national guidance before making any changes to policies or procedures. This will ensure that any updates are compliant with the law and informed by Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs), so that no group is disadvantaged when accessing council services or within our workforce. In readiness, an audit to identify where potential updates might need to be applied has been undertaken.</p> <p>While some work has been deferred until the guidance cited above is published, we have made progress in other areas. Forms within our control are being updated to remove gendered salutations, using first name and surname only. As part of our website redesign project, we are reviewing around 250 online forms to remove title fields entirely. Some have already been updated, and the remainder will be completed by March 2026.</p> <p>We are also improving how we collect demographic data to avoid conflating gender and biological sex. For example, on our digital consultation platform, Get Talking Norwich, people can now provide both gender identity and where</p>

				<p>relevant their biological sex, with neither field being mandatory. This work has been informed by the Sullivan Report.</p> <p>Additionally, our new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion webpage will soon include a directory of LGBTQIA+ support services to help residents access the information and assistance they need.</p>
2.3.5	Maintain our offer to assist waste collections for residents with reduced mobility or other factors which limit their ability to do this independently.	Continue to work closely with our waste collection contractors to offer free assisted waste collections for anyone in Norwich who needs it.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We continue to offer free assisted waste collections for residents who are unable to put their bins out due to reduced mobility or other factors. To make this service easier to access, we've updated our website with a dedicated "Get help with putting out your bins" button on the Bins and Recycling homepage, along with a new page explaining how to apply and the eligibility criteria. These improvements ensure the process is clear and accessible.</p> <p>Over 900 residents are receiving assisted collections, covering services such as domestic waste, recycling, food waste, and garden waste. Most recipients are aged over 65, our records show that over 350 recipients identify as disabled.</p>
2.3.6	Make reasonable adjustments for service users with physical, sensory, mental and/or learning disabilities/difficulties.	<p>Where appropriate, incorporate reasonable adjustments in all relevant service strategies/policies.</p> <p>Endeavour to anticipate adjustments needed for other groups falling</p>	Iterative (ongoing)	We continue to make reasonable adjustments for service users with physical, sensory, mental, and learning disabilities wherever needed. These adjustments are being built into relevant service strategies and policies, and we are working to anticipate the needs of other groups covered by our EDI policy through the completion of Equality

		within the scope of our EDI policy.		Impact Assessments to ensure services are accessible and inclusive for everyone.
2.3.7	Improve accessibility to our services, through continual collaborative engagement with partners, such as the Inclusive Norwich Partnership, to identify areas requiring improvement and co-design alterations to service delivery.	Co-design improvements to our services with external partners who support local disadvantaged groups and have lived experience.	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>We have continued to work closely with the Inclusive Norwich Partnership (INP) to make our services and public spaces more accessible. Over the past year, the INP has played a key role in shaping major council projects, including the design of our new website, improvements to Hay Hill, the Mile Cross roundabout, Lakenham Way, Castle Gardens, and Norwich Market, as well as the accessibility review of City Hall. They have also contributed to the Sloughbottom Park steering group and other local initiatives.</p> <p>The INP's network now spans over 400 local contacts, enabling them to gather valuable feedback and lived experience to inform consultations. Beyond council consultations, the INP has represented disabled communities at strategic forums such as the Norwich Cultural Strategy roundtable and a Future Norfolk Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Workshop. They have also delivered practical solutions, including a mobility bus scheme developed with Norwich City Football Club and local charities to help disabled fans travel to the Carrow Road football ground.</p> <p>The Partnership continues to evolve, prioritising co-production and recently re-establishing the Norwich Access Group to strengthen collaboration with disabled residents. Alongside this, a Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group has worked with the INP to develop recommendations for</p>

				<p>embedding inclusive design into council policy, focusing on the built environment, transport, and support services. Together, these efforts ensure accessibility is not an afterthought but a core principle in how we design and deliver services.</p> <p>Additionally, our Equality Impact Assessment templates and guidance have been updated to reflect accessibility as a core principle for consideration when we are developing new proposals.</p>
2.3.8	Strengthen our data driven approach to addressing local inequality.	<p>Continue to undertake Community Conversations across the city, focussing on our most deprived communities.</p> <p>Develop an internal EDI data platform for officers/councillors to use and guide decision-making.</p> <p>Ensure EqIAs are used to record the results of EDI impact analyses on our activity after a project or change has been implemented.</p>	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>We continue to strengthen our data-driven approach to tackling inequality. The annual <i>State of Norwich</i> report provides headline equality data for everyone to access, and we've refreshed our Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs) to focus resources where they are needed most. Nine neighbourhoods have been identified using the latest deprivation data and local insight, and these will be reviewed again after the new Indices of Multiple Deprivation are released in October.</p> <p>Internally, we have improved how we track and use equality data. A central log of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) is now available for officers, making it easier to update assessments throughout a project's lifecycle. We have also refreshed our EqIA process, including updated templates, guidance, and training. Work is underway to develop an equalities dashboard to support evidence-based decision-making.</p>

EDI Aim 3: Norwich is a fair city where people facing inequality can share in and contribute to the city's success.

EDI Aim Priority: Ensure that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion outcomes inform wider council policies, strategies and programmes.

3.1.1	Meet all requirements for our Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation.	Demonstrate our commitment to providing quality and timely support for victim-survivors of domestic abuse, by implementing and embedding policies and procedures aimed at ensuring we respond effectively when made aware of domestic abuse within our housing stock.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	<p>We are progressing towards DAHA accreditation, reaffirming our commitment to supporting victim-survivors of domestic abuse. In 2024, all required documentation was submitted, and a new safety-led case management system was launched in early 2025.</p> <p>Key improvements include a full review of policies and procedures, and the development of a domestic abuse e-learning package for staff, which is currently being finalised.</p> <p>We're working with the Norfolk DAHA group to create shared resources and webpages, and are incorporating learning from the new Domestic Abuse Related Death review process. In 2024/25, the council received 403 domestic abuse contacts and provided support in 77% of cases.</p>
3.1.2	Support our tenants with low incomes to reduce their energy bills through the development of a new asset management strategy, outlining how we will manage, improve and utilise our physical assets to deliver the best outcomes	Publish a refreshed Asset Management Strategy to guide our continued efforts to ensure our housing stock meets national safety and quality standards and we accelerate our decarbonising efforts to	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	An Asset Management Strategy has been developed and will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting in December 2025. This strategy sets out our approach to managing housing stock and provides a foundation for future plans. Background work, including stock condition surveys, energy performance checks, and retrofit studies, has informed the strategy and will continue to guide investment decisions and shape future asset

	for our tenants and the city more broadly.	reach our goal of becoming a net-zero Norwich by 2045.		management approaches. The action will be complete by the time this report is published.
3.1.3	Support residents experiencing financial hardship through the provision of financial relief on their council tax bills.	<p>Conduct regular reviews of our local council tax reduction scheme, whilst maintaining our discretionary support offer for care leavers, those taking in refugees and those fleeing domestic abuse.</p> <p>Support eligible residents in receipt of a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to find longer term solutions which reduce the gap between their housing costs and the ability to meet those costs.</p> <p>Support residents to maximise their income by promoting and supporting take-up campaigns.</p>	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We have recently updated our web pages to make information about discretionary support clearer. We have presented options for the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme to members, but with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on the horizon, we do not plan to make major changes at this stage.</p> <p>We work closely with our Housing Team and the Financial Inclusion Consortium (FIC) to support tenants facing rent shortfalls. Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are intended as a short-term measure while tenants find longer-term solutions. The DHP policy is reviewed annually, and spending is monitored monthly, with regular meetings to address any issues.</p> <p>We also meet regularly with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to help support people into work. When asked, we promote take-up campaigns through in-person engagement, social media, and our website.</p>
3.1.4	Work to support council tenants on low incomes to access discounted and	Work with charity partners to reuse furniture left in our	Short-term (delivered	Since its launch in April 2025, the upcycling project has cleared more than 20 empty properties, recovering over 60 items - including chest of

	affordable furniture when taking on a new tenancy with the council.	properties following the end of tenancies. Offer eligible council tenants vouchers to purchase second hand furniture from our charity partner.	by Feb 2026)	drawers, microwaves, fridge freezers, and TV units. These items have been repurposed and saved from landfill and are credited to an account that enables council residents to access essential household goods at significantly reduced prices.
3.1.5	Update our licensing policies to implement new legislation and improve the accessibility of local taxi and private hire services.	Review and publish a suite of revised taxi, driver and vehicle policies which implement new legislation and promote greater awareness and access for users with disabilities.	Medium-term (2026-27)	<p>We have reviewed and updated our taxi and private hire driver policies in line with Department for Transport (DfT) guidance. These updated policies were presented to Full Council on 30 September 2025.</p> <p>Next, we will review vehicle standards in quarter three 2025/26 and plan to consult on these in quarter four, with implementation expected in September/October next year (2026).</p> <p>The revised standards will align with DfT guidance and include measures to improve accessibility.</p> <p>The review of vehicle standards has not yet started, so we cannot confirm what changes will be proposed at this stage. We will provide an update once the consultation begins.</p>
3.1.6	Continue to promote local businesses which produce wider positive social impacts through offering our business merit awards.	Using our business merit awards, promote and celebrate local businesses who provide additional environmental and	Iterative (ongoing)	We continue to champion local businesses that go the extra mile for their communities and the environment through our Business Merit Awards. This initiative highlights and celebrates those who embed positive social impacts into their work, from

		health related benefits to their consumers through best practice.		<p>promoting healthier lifestyles to adopting sustainable practices.</p> <p>The scheme remains active, and we are proud to see businesses across Norwich recognised for their commitment to best practice.</p>
3.1.7	Review and, where possible, adopt key policies covered under the 'socio-economic duty'.	<p>When developing strategies and policies, consider what more can be done to reduce the inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>Formally incorporate poverty and socio-economic disadvantage, alongside the existing nine protected characteristics in equality impact assessments, equality plans, and our broader decision-making processes and strategies.</p>	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>We have adopted the socio-economic duty, ensuring that poverty and socio-economic disadvantage are actively considered in strategic decision-making and policy development. A new Vulnerability Framework sets out the clear steps we will take to support those impacted by socio-economic disadvantage and has been shared with Cabinet and key staff across the organisation.</p> <p>To embed this approach, revised equality impact assessment templates and guidance now prompt further consideration of how council work affects those experiencing hardship. The refresh of the Reducing Inequality Target Areas has also helped direct resources to communities most affected by disadvantage.</p>
3.1.8	Support eligible residents and businesses struggling to pay their council tax	Eligible businesses are offered temporary relief from some or all of their business rates. Page 106 of 140	Iterative (ongoing)	We continue to support residents through a 100% Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme. In addition, there are a range of council tax discounts and exemptions, and central government sometimes

	/business rates by offering temporary hardship relief.	Eligible residents are offered short-term assistance with their council tax bills.		<p>provides extra grants for specific situations such as flooding or national emergencies.</p> <p>Businesses can access several types of relief, both mandatory and discretionary. We also have a hardship relief policy, which is intended as a temporary measure to help businesses recover rather than sustain those that are no longer viable.</p> <p>We work closely with the Financial Inclusion Consortium (FIC) and monitor performance and Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) uptake. Where funding is likely to be underspent, we collaborate with Members and the FIC to encourage appropriate claims.</p>
3.1.9	Develop an inclusive approach to support multifaith events / significant dates.	A calendar of dates we support and detail what this support looks like.	Medium-term (2026-27)	We are currently working on the development of a multi-faith and awareness calendar that highlights key dates important to our communities and aligns with council priorities. Once complete, this calendar will be shared and embedded across all council services, helping teams work together to support events and activities that celebrate diversity and inclusion.
3.1.10	Review how Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, can be embedded within the revised Contract Management Framework and Procurement Strategy.	<p>Develop a revised Contract Management Framework.</p> <p>Develop a revised Procurement Strategy.</p> <p>Produce guidance outlining the role of</p>	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	Our new Contract Management Framework (CMF) went live on 1 October 2025. It references that the foundations for successful post-award contract management are supported by a thorough procurement process, ensuring all the right elements (including EDI) are included within the specification that underpins the contract and the delivery of goods and/or services. Compliance of managers to adhere to the whole CMF will be

		<p>procurement in promoting EDI.</p> <p>Deliver training on our responsibilities for Procurement Team and contract managers.</p>		<p>reported to our Assurance Board in quarter one of the 2026/27 financial year.</p> <p>It has been determined that due to Local Government Reorganisation a revised Procurement Strategy shall not be drafted.</p> <p>The Procurement Team are reviewing the wide scope of social value, environmental impacts and EDI in conjunction with the Strategy Team.</p> <p>Training for Procurement Team and contract managers shall be incorporated into a Contract Managers Forum meeting. Content and date are to be determined; however, it is anticipated this will be complete by 31 March 2026.</p>
3.1.11	Promote inclusive play within our parks and open spaces.	<p>Continue to deliver a programme of investment within our parks and open spaces which improves wider accessibility for all, including families.</p> <p>Update our website to include useful information about the inclusive play equipment and accessible play areas within our parks and open spaces.</p>	Medium-term (2026-27)	<p>A major consultation on play has recently been completed by the Parks Team, with strong engagement and valuable feedback from residents. These insights will help shape a new Play Strategy, which is now in development. In early October, the Youth Advisory Board presented their “Making Play Matter” work at a Members Briefing, which was warmly received. The new strategy will guide future investment in inclusive and accessible play across our parks and open spaces.</p>

3.1.12	<p>Ensure ethical debt recovery which considers debtors' individual circumstances.</p>	<p>Encourage customers to discuss debts owed to the council at an early stage, and to seek support and advice before their situation worsens.</p> <p>The council and its enforcement agents recognise vulnerability and have procedures in place to support debtors.</p>	<p>Iterative (ongoing)</p>	<p>The Revenues Recovery Team now offers drop-in sessions for anyone who has received a summons, giving people the chance to discuss their financial situation before going to court. These sessions have been well received.</p> <p>We continue to provide an extra reminder before issuing a summons; an approach introduced during the pandemic to give people more time to pay or contact us. We are also working with the Financial Inclusion Consortium (FIC) to find ways to support people earlier, before their situation becomes critical.</p> <p>In June 2025, Cabinet approved a new Corporate Debt Strategy, Policy, and Vulnerability Framework. Enforcement agents operate under the Enforcement Board Code of Conduct and our policy, with vulnerable cases referred to specialist teams or us for further support. Quarterly contract review meetings monitor performance, including complaints.</p> <p>As part of new contracts, we will hold joint drop-in sessions with enforcement agents at City Hall, starting in January 2026, so people can discuss debts face-to-face.</p> <p>Following a finance restructure, a Corporate Debt Manager has been appointed to continue work from the debt project, which has so far resulted in £4.5 million of income being collected, written off, or placed in repayment arrangements.</p>
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EDI Aim Priority: Focus our efforts on the places and communities in the city that face the biggest disadvantages, improving our use of data to help us do this.

3.2.1	Maintain our commitment to supporting a minimum of 90 refugees per financial year to access suitable and safe accommodation through the UK's Resettlement Schemes.	With continued financial support from Norfolk's six other district councils, we will continue to work closely with Norfolk County Council's People from Abroad Team to support and house refugees under the ARAPs, ACRS, H4U and other national government resettlement schemes.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>Using targeted government funding, we have established a specialist team within the Housing Options service.</p> <p>This team focuses specifically on preventing homelessness among those granted refugee status and supporting their transition into settled accommodation.</p> <p>The team has developed strong, positive relationships with statutory and support agencies to provide an enhanced service, carry out assessments and provide personalised housing advice to those clients at risk of homelessness having been granted refugee status.</p> <p>In the past year the team has supported over 140 refugees into accommodation.</p>
3.2.2	Maintain our gold standard for homelessness and prevention services by continuing to support residents facing homelessness and rough sleeping through the provision of accommodation and holistic wrap around support tailored to individual need.	<p>We will continue to deploy the 'Housing First' principles to support individuals facing on-street homelessness and rough sleeping.</p> <p>Working in collaboration with housing association partners, we will</p>	Iterative (ongoing)	We continue to perform well in the prevention of homelessness, meeting all targets and in 2024/2025 preventing homelessness for 83% of clients seen. We have recently used external funding to establish new posts to work with ex-offenders facing homelessness and entrenched rough sleepers with complex needs.

		provide bespoke and supportive plans aimed at addressing vulnerable people's housing needs, in addition to the many other complex needs that often accompany those facing homelessness.		
3.2.3	Through the work of our Neighbourhood and Community Enabling Team, support local communities to build on their asset base, focusing efforts within our Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs).	We will advance our support for local community groups through the provision of a variety of grants aimed at helping community projects and groups to establish themselves.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>The Neighbourhood and Community Enabling Team has continued to support local communities in Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs) through small grants that help groups build on their strengths.</p> <p>Grants awarded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get Growing: 1 grant (£485) • Get Started: 4 grants (£1,200) • Get Together: 6 grants (£274) <p>Examples of Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melbourne Cottages (Get Together): A small grant funded the purchase of a CD player and radio for use during weekly coffee mornings at this sheltered housing scheme. This simple intervention has helped residents come together in a shared space, reducing isolation and encouraging social interaction through music and conversation.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism Explorers (Get Started): This new group received support to become formally constituted, including advice on legal structures. The grant enabled them to secure liability insurance and affordable hall hire, allowing them to launch weekly social groups for autistic children and peer support for families. They have since expanded their offer to include sessions for home-educated autistic children and were recognised with a Flourish Award in the Friends and Family category. • Sherbourne Place (Get Together): A £50 grant supported a community garden celebration attended by 70–80 residents from Sherbourne Place and nearby estates. The event featured healthy cooking demonstrations using garden produce and brought together neighbours including elderly and disabled residents who had not left their homes in months. This helped them to build new connections and celebrate shared achievements. • Yare Valley Meadow Makers (Get Growing): Funding supported the purchase and hire of equipment for wildflower meadow creation. This volunteer-led project is enhancing local biodiversity while bringing people together to make a lasting environmental impact. The initiative also provides opportunities for residents to engage in outdoor activity and environmental learning.
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				<p>These initiatives demonstrate the value of small-scale funding in fostering inclusion, wellbeing, and community resilience.</p> <p>Norwich has secured £20 million over the next decade through the Government's Pride in Place programme. This funding will give local communities greater influence over how money is spent in their neighbourhoods, whether that's improving parks and green spaces, revitalising high streets, or upgrading leisure facilities. The areas of Heartsease, Pilling Park, Bowthorpe and West Earlham will benefit most.</p> <p>These neighbourhoods are part of our Reducing Inequality Target Areas, where we're already working with residents to expand opportunities, strengthen community assets, and create safer, greener public spaces. This investment allows us to accelerate that work and ensure funding is directed towards what matters most to local people.</p>
3.2.4	Take every opportunity to challenge religious or faith-based hatred within our city and celebrate the benefits that come from diversity and the important role different faiths play in communities.	Work collaboratively with religious or faith representatives to initiate a dialogue and explore opportunities to support and share the celebration of faith-based festivals, recognising the diversity of faith groups	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	<p>We continue to support faith events and celebrations across the city, such as Eid and Hanukkah. Our Events Team provides safety advice and logistical support where needed, helping ensure these occasions are inclusive and welcoming for all communities.</p> <p>To support our commitment to challenging faith-based hatred and celebrating diversity, we have subscribed to the Norwich Interfaith Link, a local forum that brings together representatives from multiple faith communities. This membership</p>

		in the city and their contribution.		enables ongoing dialogue, provides insight into issues affecting faith groups, and creates opportunities to consult diverse perspectives when shaping policy or responding to community concerns. Through this collaboration, we can better recognise and celebrate faith-based festivals, strengthen relationships across communities, and ensure the contributions of different faith groups are valued within the city.
3.2.5	Support our residents to become more active and realise the benefits of physical activity on their overall health through referrals to the Active NoW service.	Where need is identified, we will refer residents to the Active NoW service, through which they can access tailored physical activity programmes, incorporating leisure, community and digital options.	Iterative (ongoing)	We and our health partners continue to refer residents to the <i>Active NoW</i> service, which provides tailored physical activity programmes to support health and wellbeing. By early September 2025, 1,247 referrals had been made across Norwich, with many participants coming from areas experiencing higher levels of deprivation. Around a quarter of those referred identify as having a disability, and the service is reaching people of all ages, particularly older residents, who benefit most from staying active and connected.
3.2.6	Work closely with local organisations and community groups to aid the delivery of accessible events and encourage participation of people who typically might not engage.	Continue to ensure all council-run events are inclusive through the provision of facilities such as accessible viewing areas, quiet areas and, where appropriate, the use of our parks and open spaces for free.	Iterative (ongoing)	The Lord Mayor's Weekend has been awarded bronze accreditation from <i>Attitude is Everything</i> , recognising our commitment to making events more accessible for everyone, including attendees, performers, staff, and contractors. We are using the learning from this to improve accessibility at future events, starting with the Festive Light Switch-On, and will share best practice with external organisers to help make events across the city more inclusive.

3.2.7	Continue to ensure people experiencing domestic abuse are able to access a range of housing options and support through our Sanctuary Scheme.	Our trained housing and domestic abuse advisors offer tailored support to victim-survivors of domestic abuse and, where required, arrange for free security focussed adaptations which promote safety within properties.	Iterative (ongoing)	We continue to provide a specialist housing advice service to victim-survivors of domestic abuse. We also fund specialist support services, a 'sanctuary' scheme and has recently added to its refuge and safehouse provision for those who have experienced abuse.
3.2.8	Empower and support those experiencing self-neglect and/or a hoarding disorder to make positive changes by working in partnership to deliver the Safe and Habitable Homes Service.	Support residents on a tenure neutral basis to access specialist tailored advice and support to address issues of self-neglect and/or a hoarding disorder.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>The Safe and Habitable Homes Service is now fully operational, with a dedicated team supporting residents across all housing tenures. The service is in high demand, with a full caseload and a waiting list. Residents are being supported to make meaningful changes, significantly reducing risks in their homes linked to self-neglect and hoarding behaviours.</p> <p>The Safe Habitable Homes Service received 53 referral this year and are currently working with 40 individuals, and have a waiting list of 17.</p>
3.2.9	Implement our Sustainable Warmth Strategy.	<p>Deliver our Green Doctor fuel poverty advice service.</p> <p>Offer emergency winter fuel payments to eligible residents.</p>	Long-term (beyond 2027)	We continue to deliver a wide range of measures under its Sustainable Warmth Strategy to support residents in fuel poverty. Through the £5 million Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, insulation and solar panels have been installed in 250 of the least energy-efficient council homes.

		Domestic retrofit capital grants.		<p>Further investment is being delivered through the £12 million Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund, with £10 million in council co-funding. This will upgrade 1,482 council homes by 2028, including the installation of 1,400 solar PV systems, 140 air source heat pumps, and a ground source heat pump system for 24 dwellings, all targeted at energy inefficient homes.</p> <p>In the private sector, £4.7 million from the Warm Homes: Local Grant will support upgrades to 330 owner-occupied and privately rented homes, focusing on low-income households in the most deprived areas. pre- and post-works EPC surveys will be used to track improvements.</p> <p>We continue to work with the ‘<i>Green Doctor</i>’ service, which has completed over 300 home visits to fuel-poor households, offering free energy advice and simple energy-saving measures.</p> <p>Fuel poverty in Norwich has fallen from 15.5% in 2021 to 12.1% in 2023. While 2024 sub-regional data is not yet available, regional figures show a continued downward trend. The percentage of homes in Norwich with an EPC rating of C or higher has also increased, from 49.01% in November 2024 to 49.71% in October 2025.</p> <p>Heat pump installations more than doubled in 2024 compared to 2023, and are expected to rise further in 2025, supported by ongoing capital grant programmes.</p>
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3.2.10	Support those experiencing fuel poverty to reduce their energy costs through the implementation of our Citywide Climate Action Plan.	Develop and deliver a citywide domestic retrofit plan.	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>We continue to support a range of initiatives to help residents reduce energy costs and improve home energy efficiency.</p> <p>We are commencing delivery of works under the Warm Homes: Local Grant following a successful £4.7 million funding bid. This is expected to upgrade 330 private sector homes (owner-occupied and privately rented) with energy efficiency measures and low-carbon heating systems by March 2028, at no cost to residents. Support is targeted at fuel-poor households in the most deprived areas of the city.</p> <p>Community schemes such as ‘Solar Together’ and the ‘Big Community Switch’ have also been promoted. In 2024, 492 households registered for Solar Together, with 345 registrations so far in 2025.</p> <p>In June 2025, 101 households switched to a better energy deal through the Big Community Switch scheme, which helps households to access a cheaper energy tariff whilst switching to green electricity (sourced from renewables).</p> <p>We continue to offer a ‘Flex’ service for national insulation and energy schemes, widening eligibility to include residents with medical conditions and other indicators of vulnerability. This has helped more households access funded improvements.</p> <p>As of October 2025, the average domestic EPC score in Norwich is 66.5 (high D rating), and we are working towards achieving an average rating of</p>
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				<p>C. Heat pump installations in Norwich more than doubled in 2024 compared to 2023, and are expected to rise further in 2025, supported by capital grant programmes.</p> <p>Citywide CO₂e emissions also continued to fall from 474 kilotonnes in 2022 to 419 kilotonnes in 2023, reflecting the impact of ongoing decarbonisation efforts. Data from 2024 onwards is not yet available, however, it is anticipated emissions have continued to fall. We will continue to monitor the latest available emissions data to assess the impact of citywide decarbonisation efforts.</p>
3.2.11	Promote resident wellbeing through the implementation of our Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2032.	Development of a nature recovery network to improve wellbeing through improved access to nature.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We have recently secured £775,000 in grant funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for ‘NatureCityNorwich’ a three-year partnership project with Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Norfolk County Council, and South Norfolk & Broadland District Councils. Running until 2028, the project will engage communities across Greater Norwich to plan the development of an urban Nature Recovery Network (uNRN), alongside developing innovative funding models, enhance biodiversity and improve doorstep access to nature for households in Norwich.</p> <p>Pilot projects are already underway, including ‘Back Garden Nature’, which enhances biodiversity in underused council housing gardens. Planning is also underway for improvements at Heartsease Recreation Ground this winter, where 315 metres of mixed native fruiting hedge and 6,000 m² of wildflower meadow will be introduced - boosting</p>

				<p>biodiversity while preserving space for play and sport.</p> <p>We continue to support partner-led initiatives such as The Common Lot's <i>Mousehold to the Marsh</i> nature-show which was free and toured the city's parks making it accessible to 1000s of people. We are monitoring Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standards data on access to nature and Eco-system services, to track progress.</p> <p>This work reflects our commitment to improving wellbeing through better access to green and blue spaces and improving the quality of the environment through nature-based Solutions.</p>
3.2.12	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Retrofit Programme.	Develop and deliver a retrofit plan for the council's 15,000 social housing dwellings.	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>We continue to invest in improving the energy efficiency of its social housing stock, through the delivery of capital grant retrofit programmes. Under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave one, solid wall insulation was installed in 45 of the least energy-efficient council homes. This work has continued under another wave of SHDF funding, which is currently delivering solar panel and insulation upgrades to 260 dwellings.</p> <p>Most recently, we secured £12 million from the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund with an additional £10 million committed in co-funding by us. This will support improvements to 1,482 council homes by 2028, targeting those most at risk of fuel poverty.</p> <p>Retrofit planning is also underway for all low-rise blocks (around one third of our housing stock) in</p>

				<p>partnership with a specialist architect firm. This work will help identify the most equitable and cost-effective ways to achieve improved energy efficiency and decarbonisation in these dwellings.</p> <p>The Environmental Strategy Team is contributing to the HRA Business Plan to ensure energy efficiency and decarbonisation are embedded in both short and long-term planning. As of October 2025, the average standard assessment procedure (SAP) score for council dwellings is 70.8, equivalent to an EPC rating of C. Progress will continue to be monitored through EPC ratings.</p>
3.2.13	Identify and deliver mitigations to support those disadvantaged by the 'Poverty Premium'.	<p>Identify opportunities to increase the take up of low-cost home contents insurance for council tenants.</p> <p>Promote awareness of the affordable services offered by local credit unions and community development finance institutions.</p> <p>Review the use and effectiveness of homeless prevention loans.</p>	Medium-term (2026-27)	<p>A proactive case finding pilot is underway, using Household Support Fund and housing data to identify residents who may be financially vulnerable. Direct contact is being made, and those struggling with debt are being signposted to appropriate support services. This reflects a wider increase in demand, with Norfolk Community Advice Network reporting a 20.1% rise in debt and money advice referrals in 2024/25 compared to the previous year.</p> <p>Despite efforts to promote low-cost home contents insurance for council tenants, uptake has declined from 1,068 tenants in March 2024 to 996 in March 2025. Policy restrictions linked to rent arrears and increased costs for accidental damage may have contributed to this reduction.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to promote awareness of affordable financial services, including credit unions and community development finance</p>

				institutions, and to review the effectiveness of homeless prevention loans.
3.2.14	Tackle and reduce the prevalence of child poverty in Norwich.	Work with financial inclusion and other partners to develop a clear picture of child poverty within Norwich, developing plans to mitigate the risk of further children falling into poverty.	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>Targeted work is underway in the Pilling Park area, led by the health inequalities sub-group. This involves close collaboration with local stakeholders including St Matthew's Church, Lionwood Surgery, local schools, the library, and the wider community, to better understand local needs and shape support accordingly. Public Health funding is enabling community-led projects that, while health-focused, also help reach families in financial hardship.</p> <p>Data continues to inform our approach. Support is being targeted using RITA and health data, and figures from Norwich Foodbank show a slight reduction in demand: in 2024/25, food was provided to just over 12,500 people, including 4,100 children, down from 13,200 people and 4,500 children the previous year.</p>
EDI Aim Priority: Develop our leadership capacity and capability around equalities.				
3.3.1	Realise an Age Friendly Norwich through collaboration with our partners and local community, and encourage our older population to remain active, connected and supported as they grow older.	Engage our older residents and wider community to understand what an Age-friendly Norwich looks like to them and co-design improvements to the built environment	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>Since starting our Age Friendly Norwich journey in October 2024, we've been working closely with Age UK Norwich and other partners to make the city more inclusive for older residents. Our first priority has been transport, and we've set up the Age-Friendly Norwich Transport Group to improve accessibility and mobility support. This group is creating a plain-English guide to help older and disabled residents navigate local transport options,</p>

		services which address barriers to ageing well.		<p>including passenger assistance schemes and ticketing, and ensuring information is available in both digital and printed formats.</p> <p>Alongside this, Age UK Norwich is leading work on housing and encouraging local businesses to become Age Friendly Employers. So far, 12 local employers have signed the pledge and met the accreditation criteria, helping to make Norwich a more inclusive place to work. We're also collaborating with other Norfolk districts to share ideas and best practice, recognising that many visitors to Norwich come from neighbouring areas.</p>
3.3.2	Work to address the problem of in-work poverty through the continued promotion of the 'Real Living Wage'.	<p>In partnership with the Norwich Living Wage Action Group, lead the campaign to make Norwich a Living Wage city.</p> <p>Use our influencing power to raise the profile of this socio-economic challenge and encourage and support local employers to implement the Real Living Wage for their staff.</p>	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We continue to campaign to make Norwich a Living Wage City, in partnership with the Norwich Living Wage Action Group. However, the cost-of-living crisis, a rising National Minimum Wage, and increased National Insurance contributions have made it more difficult for some employers to commit to or maintain Real Living Wage accreditation. The loss of a few large, accredited employers within the city has impacted overall figures.</p> <p>As of the end of October 2025, Norwich had 80 accredited Real Living Wage employers, collectively employing 6,400 people. Of these, 1,039 employees received a pay uplift directly resulting from their employer's commitment to the Real Living Wage.</p> <p>Public narratives around struggling businesses have also created a more cautious environment for recruitment of new Living Wage Employers.</p>

				Despite these challenges, a new three-year Living Wage Action Plan is being drafted to support re-accreditation later in 2025 and to renew efforts to raise awareness and influence local employers.
EDI Aim Priority: Continue working with partners to influence investment and target resource.				
3.4.1	Continue to support Norwich's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs) to deliver their services and positive outcomes for Norwich residents.	We will support local VCSEs to develop their capacity, through provision of equipment loans, access to data, funding, governance advice, and networking support.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We continue to work closely with a wide range of voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) partners to strengthen their capacity and deliver positive outcomes for residents. Examples of this include regular engagement with organisations supporting refugees and asylum seekers in response to recent community tensions, as well as focused work in Reducing Inequality Target Areas to build localised community networks and partnerships.</p> <p>Ongoing networking events help identify local issues from the perspective of residents, ensuring resources are targeted effectively. In addition, we provide practical support such as equipment loans through the LUMi platform, alongside access to data, funding advice and governance support to help VCSEs thrive.</p>
3.4.2	Continue to work in conjunction with local VCSE groups to alleviate food poverty and target resources effectively towards those facing food insecurity.	We will continue to facilitate and support local voluntary organisations to operate social supermarkets and foodbanks within the city.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We continue to play an active role in tackling food poverty by supporting local voluntary organisations and networks.</p> <p>Notably, we previously helped establish Norwich's first social supermarket and the Norwich Food Network, while much of our current work is driven by the Nourishing Norfolk Network, which brings</p>

		<p>city.</p> <p>Where possible we will provide access to council owned premises from which these services may be offered to those who need them.</p>		<p>together grassroots groups to ensure communities have access to affordable, healthy food.</p> <p>Two social supermarkets in Norwich operate from council-owned properties at peppercorn rents, reducing costs for providers. In addition, through the Household Support Fund, we have issued 551 awards totalling £76,000 this financial year to help residents facing financial hardship with essential costs such as food and energy.</p> <p>These efforts aim to ensure that no one in Norwich goes hungry and that resources are targeted where they are needed most.</p>
3.4.3	Uphold our commitment to working with residents and community groups to improve green spaces across the city, so that they may better serve and be enjoyed by residents.	Provide opportunities and support for residents and community groups to assume responsibility for local green spaces, so that they may provide health and social benefits for local communities. Examples include using green space to garden and grow food.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We continue to support residents and community groups in taking responsibility for local green spaces, helping transform them into vibrant, community-focused areas that provide health and social benefits. Across Norwich, 44 groups now care for 72 community garden sites, with six new sites adopted by local residents this financial year. These efforts showcase the commitment of Norwich's communities to improving shared spaces, creating opportunities for gardening, food growing, and social connection.</p>
3.4.4	Support community associations to run council-owned community centres and provide affordable leisure, cultural, educational	Maintain council-owned community centres so that they remain accessible and welcoming spaces for	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We continue to support community associations in operating 15 council-owned community centres, which provide affordable, inclusive opportunities for residents across Norwich.</p>

	and social activities across the city.	which a wide range of social activities may be offered to residents.		<p>These centres deliver significant social value, attracting around 137,000 visits annually, with three-quarters of usage by local residents and more than half of activities priced at or below the city's affordability benchmark, including an average of 64 free sessions each week.</p> <p>They play a vital role in reaching those who need them most, with 39% of visitors from high-deprivation neighbourhoods and 34% from the city's lowest-income areas, while supporting 168 local jobs and generating £440,000 in annual participant spend.</p> <p>Over 370 volunteers help deliver a diverse programme of leisure, cultural, educational and social activities, ensuring the centres remain welcoming spaces for all ages.</p>
3.4.5	Offer culture grants which support local organisations and community groups to host events aimed at celebrating diversity and providing opportunities for people from a diverse range of backgrounds and needs to engage with local activities.	Invite applications for small culture grants to support our local creative talent, and to keep innovating and producing activities which enrich our society and bring people together to improve lives.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>Our Small Culture Grants have supported 12 projects across music, theatre, heritage, dance, and other cultural activities. These projects are helping engage a wide range of communities, including children and young people, families, people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and their carers, residents in RITA areas, those facing economic barriers, the LGBTQ+ community, and individuals at risk of loneliness.</p> <p>The events also provide opportunities for early-career creative practitioners and freelancers.</p>

				Guidance on evaluation has been included in grant offer letters to help track the impact of these projects.
3.4.6	Promote better health and wellbeing outcomes for residents experiencing challenges related to their housing circumstances, through referrals to the INTERACT service.	In partnership with local public health and charitable organisations, provide bespoke support on a referral basis to residents facing difficulty resulting from their housing circumstances.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>Over the past year, the INTERACT service received 630 new referrals, successfully completing support with 281 individuals. Currently, 141 people are actively being supported by the service. Notably, 39% of referrals came from our Reducing Inequalities Targeted Areas. Of those referred, 67% were working-age adults and 33% were older people.</p> <p>The service achieved significant outcomes, including increasing clients' annual income by over £192,000 and connecting them with more than £37,000 in grants. People reported greater independence, were supported to maintain their tenancies, and experienced improved wellbeing among carers with carers receiving vital support to prevent breakdown and avoid long-term residential care.</p>
3.4.7	Strengthen partnership working to ensure those in need of additional support are assisted to access all of the relevant services to address their needs.	Work in partnership to shape how we deliver our support services in a more joined up way, through the Early Help Hub and Support Now referral system.	Iterative (ongoing)	We continue to strengthen multi-agency working through the Early Help Hub and Support Now referral system. The Early Help Hub meets weekly and is attended by over 30 partner organisations, ensuring a joined-up approach to supporting residents. Regular information sessions are held on a range of topics and are well attended, helping partners stay informed and connected.

3.4.8	Continue working with partners through the Norwich Health & Wellbeing Partnership (NHWP) to influence investment and target resource to improve the health of local residents and address health related inequalities.	Develop and publish a new Norwich Health and Wellbeing Partnership Strategy, which outlines how the partnership will target available resources towards improving the wider determinants of health, including socio-economic disadvantage.	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>Proposals to use funding to join up RITA and health work in North City and Pilling Park projects, to address health inequalities and provide succession planning after year end 2026 are currently on the table. Other sources of local funding through businesses are being explored through the Pilling Park project.</p> <p>The NHWP strategy 25-35 is now drafted and will be finalised for December 2025. A full health inequalities action plan has been published for 2025-35 and priority areas for 2025-26 are being reviewed.</p>
3.4.9	Support those experiencing financial hardship through the implementation of the Financial Inclusion Action Plan.	Continue to work in partnership with the Financial Inclusion Consortium (FIC) to implement the Financial Inclusion Action Plan, aimed at improving the processes through which we and local financial support agencies assist those facing socio-economic hardship in Norwich.	Medium-term (2026-27)	<p>We continue to work closely with the Financial Inclusion Consortium (FIC) to deliver targeted support for residents facing financial hardship. In 2024/25, FIC partners supported 1,307 debt management cases, with an average individual debt of £7,922. Over £1.48 million in debt was written off, renegotiated, or reduced. Additionally, 2,191 new welfare benefit cases were supported, generating over £4.39 million in annualised benefit income.</p> <p>We are also part of the newly formed Norfolk Anti-Poverty Alliance, led by Norfolk Community Advice Network and Norfolk County Council. This partnership brings together local authorities, VCSE organisations, people with lived experience, and other stakeholders to improve crisis support</p>

				delivery, food provision, and tackle the wider drivers of poverty.
EDI Aim Priority: Mitigate the disproportionate inequalities of climate change impacting specific sectors of the community.				
3.5.1	Develop a Climate Adaptation Plan for Norwich which works to alleviate the disproportionate impacts of climate change on our socio-economically disadvantaged residents.	A Climate Adaptation Plan and workstreams to ensure Norwich remains, resilient and prosperous as the climate changes.	Medium-term (2026-27)	<p>We are finalising its '<i>Net Zero Pathway for Norwich</i>' which will serve as a decarbonisation and climate mitigation plan for the city. Work to develop a Climate Adaptation Plan is ongoing and will form part of our Climate Responsive Norwich Programme 2025-2035.</p> <p>We already have resilience arrangements in place for extreme weather events, in line with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and continues to work with partners through the Norfolk Resilience Forum.</p> <p>To support long-term climate resilience, we are developing data tools with our partners, such as heat hazard index mapping to identify areas most vulnerable to rising temperatures, particularly where these overlap with Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs). This work reflects recognition of the need for a just climate transition, ensuring that the impacts of climate change do not fall disproportionately on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.</p>



Committee name: Scrutiny

Committee date: 18/12/2025

Report title: Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025-26

Portfolio: Councillor Padda, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Justice

Report from: Head of legal and governance

Wards: All wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

To assist scrutiny committee members to review the scrutiny committee work programme 25/26.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that that the Scrutiny Committee reviews and agrees the proposed work programme for the 25/26.

Policy framework

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- An open and modern Council.
- A prosperous Norwich.
- A fairer Norwich.
- A climate responsive Norwich.
- A future-proof Norwich.

This report meets the “open and modern council” corporate priority.

Report details

1. The Scrutiny Committee had an informal session on 5 June 2025 outlining the principles of good scrutiny and setting a work programme.

2. There are certain items that are considered by the Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis. These are the Committee work programme (each meeting of the Committee), Equality Information Report (December each year) and pre-scrutiny of the proposed budget (January-February each year).
3. Updates are also received from the Council's representatives on the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (NHOSC).

Consultation

4. Scrutiny committee members took part in an informal session and the work programme will be a standing item at each meeting of the scrutiny committee.

Implications

Financial and resources

5. Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its community-led plan "We are Norwich" and budget.
6. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources.

Legal

7. There are no specific legal implications of this report.

Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	None
Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs)	None
Health, social and economic impact	None
Crime and disorder	None
Children and adults safeguarding	None
Environmental impact	

Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
None		

Other options considered

8. There have been no other options considered for this report.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

9. This report will allow scrutiny to review the work programme for scrutiny for 2024-25.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A: Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Appendix B: Forward Agenda

Contact officer:

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If you would like this agenda in an alternative format, such as a larger or smaller font, audio or Braille, or in a different language, please contact the committee officer above.

Appendix A – Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025/26

Topic	Purpose	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
5th June 2025			
Informal Work Programming Session			
19th June 2025			
Participatory Democracy Scope			
NCSL Business Plan		Cllr Harper, Cabinet Member for Finance and Major Projects	ELT / NCSL
Report from the Making Norwich a truly accessibly city Task and Finish Group	To summarise the discussions of the group and propose recommendations for both Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee.	Cllr Padda, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Justice	Executive Director of Communities and Housing
Work Programme	To review and update the committee's work programme	N/A	Head of Legal and Governance
17th July 2025			
Provision for rough sleepers with a focus on health and wellbeing		Cllr Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing	Executive Director of Communities and Housing
Update from Cllr Jones	To receive an update from the Cabinet Member on homelessness and refugees.	Cllr Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing	Executive Director of Communities and Housing
Scrutiny Committee 2024-25 Annual Report	To review the work and progress that has been made by the Scrutiny Committee for the period 2024-25.	N/A	Head of Legal and Governance
Work Programme	To review and update the	N/A	Head of Legal and

	committee's work programme		Governance
18th September 2025			
HR Processes		Cllr Padda, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Justice	Executive Director of Resources
Updates from Norfolk Health Overview Select Committee	To receive updates from the Council's representatives on this body.	N/A	Head of Legal and Governance
Work Programme	To review and update the committee's work programme	N/A	Head of Legal and Governance
16th October 2025			
Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Review	To consider the value of partnership working in sport and physical activity at a community and formal provision level.	Cllr Kidman, Cabinet Member for Culture and Wellbeing	Executive Director of Housing and Communities
Pre-Scrutiny Norwich City Hall Reimagined Cabinet Report	To provide an opportunity to pre-scrutinise the report going to Cabinet in November 2025	Cllr Harper, Cabinet Member for Finance and Major Projects	Interim Executive Director of Major Projects
Lion Homes Information Bulletin	To provide an update on Lion Homes	Cllr Harper, Cabinet Member for Finance and Major Projects	Chief Executive
Work Programme	To review and update the committee's work programme	N/A	Head of Legal and Governance
20th November 2025			
Community Safety Partnership (Safer Norwich Board)	To report on the progress of the council's Community Safety service and Safer Norwich Board during 2024-25 and provide an update on priorities for 2025-26.	Cllr Jones, Cabinet Members for Housing	Executive Director of Housing and Communities
Good Neighbourhood Management Policy	To provide an update on the development of a Good	Cllr Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing	Executive Director of Housing and Communities

	Neighbourhood Management Policy.		
Updates from Norfolk Health Overview Select Committee	To receive updates from the Council's representatives on this body.	N/A	Head of Legal and Governance
Work Programme	To review and update the committee's work programme	N/A	Head of Legal and Governance
18th December 2025			
Call In of IT Infrastructure Refresh Decision taken at the meeting of the Cabinet on 3 December 2025	To consider the call in request.	Cllr Padda, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Justice	Executive Director of Resources
Pre-Scrutiny of Anglia Square Business Plans	To pre-scrutinise the plans.	Cllr Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing	Executive Director of Major Projects
Equality Information Report	To consider the Equality Information Report.	Cllr Padda, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Justice	Strategy Manager and Strategy Officer (Equalities)
Work Programme	To review and update the committee's work programme	N/A	Head of Legal and Governance
15th January 2026			
Housing Development at Mile Cross Depot Site		Cllr Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing	
Social Housing Allocations Process		Cllr Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing	Executive Director of Communities and Housing
Work Programme	To review and update the committee's work programme	N/A	Head of Legal and Governance
5th February 2026			
Budget Scrutiny			
19th March 2026			

Anti-Social Parking			
Nutrient Neutrality			
Updates from Norfolk Health Overview Select Committee	To receive updates from the Council's representatives on this body.	N/A	Head of Legal and Governance
Work Programme	To review and update the committee's work programme	N/A	Head of Legal and Governance

TBC

Website Redesign and Customer Journeys

Information bulletin on ethical and sustainable management of cash balances and investments (as reviewed by Audit Committee and Treasury Management Committee)

Information bulletin on tenant-facing version of Good Neighbourhood Management Policy

Appendix B – Forward Agenda

Meeting	Date	Report	Purpose	Head of Service	Director	Portfolio Holder	Key Decision	Exempt?
Council	06/01/2026	Response to the Government's Consultation on Local Government Reorganisation	To consider the Council's response to the Government's Consultation on Local Government Reorganisation	Helen Chamberlin	Lou Rawsthorpe	Stonard	No	No
Cabinet	06/01/2026	Response to the Government's Consultation on Local Government Reorganisation	To consider the Council's response to the Government's Consultation on Local Government Reorganisation	Helen Chamberlin	Lou Rawsthorpe	Stonard	Yes	No
Cabinet	14/01/2026	Anglia Square update, business planning and next steps	To consider an update on Anglia Square and the next steps involved	Neville Murton	Davina Howes	Harper	Yes	No
Cabinet	14/01/2026	Anglia Square update, business planning and next steps - Exempt Appendix	To consider the exempt appendix to the report	Neville Murton	Davina Howes	Harper	No	Yes (Para 3)
Cabinet	14/01/2026	Award of contract - new horticultural machinery, new mechanical sweeper and new fleet for NCSL	To agree the award of contract relating to the procurement of new horticultural machinery, new mechanical sweeper and new fleet for NCSL.	Oliver Furbur	Nick Austin	Hampton	Yes	No
Cabinet	14/01/2026	Award of contract - new horticultural	To consider the exempt appendix to the report	Oliver Furbur	Nick Austin	Hampton	No	Yes (Para 3)

		machinery, new mechanical sweeper and new fleet for NCSL - Exempt appendix						
Cabinet	14/01/2026	Planning Enforcement Policy	Adoption of a planning enforcement policy	Sarah Ashurst	Nick Austin	Giles	Yes	No
Cabinet	14/01/2026	Pavement Licensing	To request authority to go out to consultation on a revised pavement licensing policy and fees	Sarah Ashurst	Nick Austin	Giles	No	No
Cabinet	14/01/2026	HMO Licensing Policy Revisions	To agree to adopt the new HMO Licensing Policy	Sarah Ashurst	Nick Austin	Jones	Yes	No
Cabinet	14/01/2026	HRA Compliance Contract	To consider delegated authority to award long term partnering contracts	Tony Wiggins	Davina Howes	Jones	Yes	No
Cabinet	14/01/2026	HRA Compliance Contract - Exempt Appendix	To consider the exempt appendix to the report	Tony Wiggins	Davina Howes	Jones	No	Yes (Para 3)
Cabinet	14/01/2026	Equality Information Report	To consider the Equality Information Report 2026	Helen Chamberlin	Davina Howes	Padda	No	No
Cabinet	14/01/2026	Climate Responsive Norwich Programme 2025-2035	To adopt the Climate Responsive Norwich Programme 2025-2035		Nick Austin	Hampton	Yes	No
Cabinet	14/01/2026	Anglia Square - Acquisition of affordable housing in Block C	To consider the Council acquiring Block C of the Anglia Square development for Council housing	Mark Brown	Davina Howes	Jones	Yes	Yes (Para 3)
Council	27/01/2026	Polling District Review	To agree the revised Polling Scheme	Jan Robinson	Emily Yule	Padda	No	No

Council	27/01/2026	Treasury Management Mid-Year Review Report - 2025-2026	This report sets out the Council's Treasury Management performance for the first six months of the financial year to 30 September 2025.	Robert Mayes	Isabel Brittain	Harper	No	No
Cabinet	11/02/2026	HRA Heating Servicing and Repairs Contract					Yes	Yes (Para 3)
Cabinet	11/02/2026	Disposal of Assets (Housing)	To consider the disposal outlined in the report.		Davina Howes	Jones	No	Yes (Para 3)
Cabinet	11/02/2026	Airport Surface Access Strategy	To endorse/adopt the Norwich Airport Surface Access Strategy	Sarah Ashurst	Nick Austin	Giles	Yes	No
Cabinet	11/02/2026	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	To consider the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy		Davina Howes	Jones	No	No
Cabinet	11/02/2026	Home Options Allocation policy	To agree an update to the Home Options allocation policy		Davina Howes	Jones	No	No
Cabinet	11/02/2026	The Council's 2026-2027 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy	To recommend to Council the Council's 2026-2027 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy	Robert Mayes	Isabel Brittain	Harper	No	No
Cabinet	11/02/2026	Corporate Performance Report 2025-26 - Quarter 3	To consider the Corporate Performance Report for Quarter Three of 2025-2026	Helen Chamberlin	Davina Howes	Stonard	No	No
Cabinet	11/02/2026	Budget Monitoring Report 2025-2026 - Quarter Two	To provide an update on the Council's overall financial position at Quarter Two of 2025-2026	Robert Mayes	Isabel Brittain	Harper	No	No
Cabinet	11/02/2026	Corporate Risk Register 2025-2026 - Quarter Three	To provide an update to the Council's corporate risk register based on the position for Quarter	Robert Mayes	Isabel Brittain	Harper	No	No

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Cabinet	11/02/2026	Corporate Risk Register 2025-2026 - Quarter Three - Exempt Appendix	To consider the exempt appendix to the report.	Robert Mayes	Isabel Brittain	Harper	No	Yes (Para 3)
Cabinet	11/02/2026	Greater Norwich Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan	To adopt the Greater Norwich Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan	Sarah Ashurst	Nick Austin		No	No
Council	24/02/2026	The Council's 2026-2027 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy	To agree the Council's 2026-2027 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy	Robert Mayes	Isabel Brittain	Harper	No	No
Cabinet	11/03/2026	Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy Supplementary Planning Document	To adopt the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy Supplementary Planning Document	Sarah Ashurst	Nick Austin	Giles	No	No
Cabinet	11/03/2026	Greater Norwich Local Plan Policy 2 Supplementary Planning Document	To adopt the Greater Norwich Local Plan Policy 2 Supplementary Planning Document	Sarah Ashurst	Nick Austin	Giles	No	No
Cabinet	11/03/2026	Biodiversity Duty Reporting	To consider the reporting on the policies and actions that have been carried out to comply with the Council's Biodiversity Duty under the Environment Act 2021		Nick Austin	Hampton	No	No
Council	17/03/2026	Greater Norwich Local Plan Policy 2 Supplementary	To adopt the Greater Norwich Local Plan Policy 2 Supplementary Planning Document	Sarah Ashurst	Nick Austin	Giles	No	No

		Planning Document						
Council	17/03/2026	Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy Supplementary Planning Document	To adopt the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy Supplementary Planning Document	Sarah Ashurst	Nick Austin	Giles	No	No