

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 11 November 2019 at 9.00am.

Members Present:

Cabinet: Councillors: J Fuller (Chairman), K Kiddie,
K Mason Billig, L Neal and A Thomas

Apologies: Councillor: Y Bendle

Non-Appointed Councillors: D Bills, C Brown, V Clifford-Jackson, A Dearnly,
F Ellis, J Hornby, T Laidlaw, G Minshull
and V Thomson

Officers in Attendance: The Managing Director (T Holden), the Director of People and Communities (J Sutterby), the Director of Place (P Courtier), the Director of Resources (D Lorimer), the Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (E Hodds), the Assistant Director Individuals and Families (M Pursehouse), the Chief of Staff (H Ralph), the Business Improvement Leads (S Cook and E Pepper), the Group Accountant (J Brown), the Senior Governance Officer (E Goddard), the Environmental Management Officers (D Baillie-Murdon and A Old)

2746 MINUTES

Subject to minor amendments, the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14 October 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2747 PERFORMANCE, RISK, REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET POSITION FOR Q2 2019/20

Members considered the report of the Group Accountant, the Business Improvement Lead and the Senior Governance Officer, which detailed the Council's performance against strategic measures, risk position and financial position for the second quarter of 2019/20.

The portfolio holder, Cllr A Thomas commended the report to members, and congratulated staff on the positive position at the end of quarter 2. However, she stressed the need to remain prudent, as unexpected cost pressures might arise in the future.

Officers presented the report to members, highlighting particular areas of performance, risk capacity and budget position.

Members noted that targets had not been met with regard to achieving cost neutrality for the Council's leisure centres,

With reference to the performance of the Council's leisure centres, members noted that targets relating to income had not been met. Officers explained that the contract at Wymondham Leisure Centre's café had just been renewed and this would provide more guaranteed income for the Council, as would the extension to the car park, which was progressing. Members also noted that performance at the Centre's spa continued to improve.

The Chairman stressed that missing target should not deflect from the overall commendable performance of the leisure provision, and he referred to the Council's significant investment in leisure and the huge benefits in health and wellbeing to residents.

Members noted that officers had reviewed the measures relating to leisure and Cabinet agreed the proposed changes to measures HE1901 and HE1902. With regard to measure H1602, the % increase in the number of adults participating in exercise regularly to lead healthier lives (a Sports for England measure), it was felt appropriate that this figure continued to be reported to Cabinet annually.

In response to queries regarding the wrong treatment of VAT, the Group Accountant explained that this had been identified during a VAT review and had occurred when implementing a new IT system. Members were reminded that this was not an additional debt, but monies the Council had always owed.

Turning to member ward grants, members noted that only £3,809 had been spent out of a possible £46,000. Cabinet acknowledged that spend on this budget was always low at this stage during an election year, however, wished to remind members that the cut off date was 31 December, and that any unspent funds would be transferred to the Community Action Fund. Cllr Mason Billig reminded members that they could transfer funds to neighbouring wards, if it was in support of a project that would benefit multiple wards.

Referring to measure HE1603, the % of households in temporary accommodation for 8 weeks or less, members noted that this had not met stretch target. The Assistant Director of Individuals and Families explained that this had been due to additional support given to one family in need, and that due to the small numbers involved, this had impacted on target, and reduced performance from 100% to 75%. The Chairman suggested that in future, it would be helpful to highlight such information within the report.

Discussion also centred around areas of good performance, with reference being made to Housing Benefits and Council Tax, Social Prescribing and Waste. The Chairman referred to South Norfolk having the lowest contamination rate in the County, however, some residents were continuing to put dirty nappies in recycling, and members agreed that education was key in resolving these issues.

It was

RESOLVED: To

- a) Note the 2019/20 performance for the quarter and the combined efforts across the Directorates to deliver the vision of the Council (detail contained in Appendix 1).
- b) Note the current position with respect to risks and accept the actions to support risk mitigation (detailed in Section 6 of this report).
- c) Note the capital and revenue position and the reason for the variances on the General Fund (detail contained in Appendix 2).
- d) Approve the recommended amendments to the Leisure Measures HE1901 & HE1902 and that Measure HE 1602 continues to be reported annually.

The Reason for the Decision

To ensure that processes are in place to improve performance, the management of risks is sound, and that budgets are managed effectively.

Other Options Considered

None.

2748 TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 2 REPORT 2019/20

Members considered the report of the Group Accountant, which reviewed the treasury management activity during the first six months of the financial year 2019/20, the position on investments as at 30 September 2019, and reported on the prudential indicators as required by CIPFA's Treasury Management Code of Practice.

The Group Accountant presented the report, drawing members' attention to the key areas. Members noted that investments had risen by £7.27 million from 1 April 2019, to £51.799 million at 30 September. Cabinet agreed that this was excellent performance, given the state of the economy, and the Chairman referred to the fact that investments had doubled in the last 15 years.

The portfolio holder, Cllr A Thomas, made reference to the need for a member training session regarding Big Sky Ventures Limited and subsidiary companies, and suggested that it would be appropriate to involve members from Broadland. The Managing Director suggested that this might be an appropriate topic at the All Member briefing scheduled to take place on 4 December 2019.

It was

RESOLVED: To RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL:

1. Notes the treasury activity for the first half of the year and that it complies with the agreed strategy.

2. Notes the 2019/20 prudential indicators for the first six months of the year.

The Reason for the Decision

To ensure that the Council's investment strategy remains positive

Other Options Considered

None.

2749 ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN AND POLICY STATEMENT

Members considered the report of the Environmental Management Officers, which brought together the environmental aspirations for both Broadland and South Norfolk Councils into a single Action Plan, with a joint overarching Policy Statement, setting out the Councils' commitment to the Environment.

The Environmental Management Officers presented their report, drawing members' attention to the key issues. They explained that the proposals included an overarching statement of intent, supported by an Action Plan which reflected the shared and individual actions of each Council. Once approved, officers would carry out a baselining exercise, to gather data to be used to draw up targets, to be used in the Action Plan.

The Chairman explained that whilst he welcomed the main thrust of the document, he felt that further emphasis was required on street cleaning, recycling and fly tipping. It was also suggested that the documents could demonstrate more ambition, and that more focus was required on those activities that could be delivered by the Council.

During discussion, Cabinet noted that a number of changes had been made to the documents, following the meeting of the Growth Infrastructure and Environment Policy Committee. Members supported the documents, however, some agreed that the overall ambition and clarity of outcomes could be further emphasised. It was also suggested that the Action Plan did not contain enough detail, and reference was made to the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

The Managing Director reminded members that the documents provided a steer on the high-level principles, and that the Action Plan was work in progress. However, members concluded that the documents required further work and should be considered again by the Growth Infrastructure and Environment Committee, before returning to Cabinet and then on to Council.

It was

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the focus of the Policy Statement and detail of the Action Plan, be reconsidered by the Growth Infrastructure and Environment Policy Committee, with particular regard given to fly tipping, recycling and street cleaning;

2. That the recommendations of the Policy Committee be reported to Cabinet and then on to Council, by the end of December if possible.

The Reason for the Decision

To ensure that the Policy Statement and Action Plan reflect the environmental aspirations and ambitions of the Council.

Other Options Considered

To approve the Policy Statement and Action Plan in its current format.

2750 JOINT DOMAIN NAME

Members considered the report of the Strategic Marketing and Communications Managers, which sought approval for the single domain name for Broadland and South Norfolk Councils, for formal submission to Central Government.

The Chief of Staff presented the report to Cabinet, explaining that a shortlist of names was produced following member and staff suggestions. These were considered by an all-member and staff-survey. The most popular first choice was "South Norfolk and Broadland", and it was proposed that this be submitted as the Councils' preferred choice to Government.

Discussion followed, and Cllr K Mason Billig stressed the importance of submitting an application to Government, to ensure that the Councils had a platform to move forward, in terms of a single email system and website.

It was

RESOLVED: To agree to submit "South Norfolk and Broadland" as the preferred choice to Central Government, for the single domain name for Broadland and South Norfolk.

The Reason for the Decision

To enable Broadland and South Norfolk Councils to move forward with the development of a single website and email system.

Other Options Considered

A domain name of Central Norfolk or Greater Norwich.

2751 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members noted the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda.

2752 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was

RESOLVED: To exclude the public and press from the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended)

2753 UPDATE ON THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE BUILD INSIGHT COMPANIES

Members considered the exempt report of the Director of Resources, which reviewed the current status of the Build Insight Companies and provided a recommendation in relation to the future direction of the companies.

The Director of Resources outlined the background of her report, explaining the progress that had been made, since reporting to Council back in July 2019.

Members noted the options, that had been explored and agreed that in the circumstances, the proposals in the report were the most appropriate way forward.

It was

RESOLVED: To approve the proposal, as outlined in para 4.6 of the report.

The Reason for the Decision

To protect future Council finances and the interests of customers

Other Options Considered

As outlined in the report.

(The meeting concluded at 10.45 am)

Chairman