

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Broadland District Council, held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on Tuesday 7 September 2021 at 10.00 am when there were present:

Committee Members Present: Councillor: S Riley (Chairman), M L Murrell, (Vice-Chairman), A D Adams, N J Brennan, P E Bulman, S J Catchpole, S I Holland, C Karimi-Ghovanlou, K G Leggett MBE, D King, G K Nurden and S M Prutton.

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor: J Leggett.

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Place, Director of People and Communities, Chief of Staff (Monitoring Officer), Place Shaping Manager, Emergency Planning Officer and Democratic Services Officers (LA, JO)

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Adams and Cllr Riley declared non-pecuniary interests as County Councillors in respect of item 44 - Transport for Norwich (TfN) Strategy Consultation Response.

39 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Harpley, Cllr Kelly and Cllr Shaw.

40 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 August 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

41 MATTERS ARISING

Minute No: 37 Strategic Environmental Service Contract

Members raised concerns that Cabinet had not recommended the rollout of food waste across the District, as had been proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence at the Environmental Excellence Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In response, the Director of People and Communities advised the meeting that the Cabinet minutes stated the following by way of explanation for the decision:

Members were asked to note a recent Government consultation on the proposal to introduce a universal weekly food waste collection service from 2024/25 across the whole of the country and from 2023/24 for those areas who currently provided a partial food waste service. The meeting was advised that it would be prudent to wait until the Government made clearer the level of New Burdens funding it would provide to support such a scheme. Cabinet confirmed that a District wide food waste service remained an ambition of the Council, but noted the current lack of clarity on the Government's position on New Burdens funding.

In order to discuss this matter further it was decided that the Committee should go into closed session:

42 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining items of business because otherwise, information which is exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, would be disclosed to them.

43 MATTERS ARISING

The Committee discussed matters relating to the Strategic Environmental Service Contract, as set out in the exempt minutes, and it was:

AGREED

That the Committee requests that Cabinet commits to a District wide rollout of the food waste collection service and that provision be made for this in the 2022/23 budget. The Committee also requested that a report be made to Cabinet on this matter by February 2022.

The Committee adjourned at 10.53am and reconvened at 11.02am, when all the Committee members listed above were present.

The press and public were readmitted to the meeting.

CABINET REPORTS

44 COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN 2021 – 2022: PROGRESS UPDATE

The Director for People and Communities introduced the report, which provided an overview of progress with implementation against the Covid-19 Recovery Plan, along with an outline of actual costs and their allocation under the One Team.

In response to a query about the funding resources beyond the pandemic and the possible detrimental effect that this might have on the collaboration savings target, members were advised that the Council was well aware of the risk of creating a cliff edge in service delivery terms when funding was exhausted. This risk would be kept under careful review as the impact and outcomes achieved by the various strands of work were better understood and considered against business as usual and core services.

The Committee was informed that two new members of the Economic Development department had been recruited to support businesses and provide business training in the District. The new Assistant Director for Economic Growth had also started in post this week. A decision on employing the former Assistant Director for Economic Growth on a temporary consultancy basis was still to be made.

It was confirmed that the Economic Development Team had faced a very challenging last 18 months and that at one time it was distributing £1m a week in business support grants. The Committee was advised that the vacancies in the Team had now all been filled and that contact details for the Team would be circulated to members. The Director for Place advised the meeting that he would be happy to arrange a briefing on the Economic Development Team and the projects they were undertaking, if members wished.

The Committee was informed that One Team contact details were available on members' iPads and that parish clerks also had the contact details of all teams at the Council.

In answer to a query from the Chairman about accommodation proposals for the office, members were informed that the cost of the project would be very much dependent on the direction that it took. It was expected that a report on office accommodation would be taken to Cabinet in the autumn.

Following a show of hands it was unanimously:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

To acknowledge the contents of the report

45 TRANSPORT FOR NORWICH (TfN) STRATEGY CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Place Shaping Manager introduced the report, which asked Cabinet to agree the Council's response to the Transport for Norwich (TfN) Strategy consultation.

The TfN Strategy set out transport policies for Norwich and the Strategic Growth areas around it. Once adopted the TfN Strategy would replace the current Norwich Area Transport Strategy.

The TfN Strategy would be accompanied by an Action Plan that would set out a commitment to the major actions that would be undertaken to achieve the vision, objectives and aspirations of the Plan. The Action Plan would accompany the final version of the TfN Strategy to be published at the end of 2021.

The main drivers of the Strategy were:

- The environment:
 - Reducing carbon emissions, particularly from transport, by facilitating zero emission vehicles, active travel, public transport and reducing the demand for travel;
 - Protecting and improving the environment;
 - Improving air quality, particularly in the built up urban areas
- The economy:
 - Supporting economic growth and recovery, including from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic;
 - Providing and enhancing connectivity between key hubs and locations such as key employment sites, rail stations, ports and airports, and key cities and places both within the county as well as nationally and internationally.
- Society, health and equality
 - Improving access to education, training and employment opportunities and tackling deprivation;
 - Encouraging equality and equal access to travel for all;
 - Improving the health of communities and increasing levels of physical activity;
 - Improving air quality for the health of communities;
 - Providing access to green space;

- Encouraging and enabling active travel by providing safe, continuous, direct and comfortable routes;
- Providing a safe, healthy and attractive environment for people to live and work in.
- Technology
 - Adapting to and embracing of new technologies in transport. For example, electric vehicles, micromobility and autonomous vehicles.

It was explained that the response to the consultation had been on a section by section basis, where issues had been identified. Mainly these issues had covered accessing services beyond the Norwich fringe and the phasing of interventions or restrictions. It had also been recommended that to address the expected ongoing need for reliance on private transport there should be a dovetailing of the Strategy with any wider Local Transport Plan interventions to support electric vehicle infrastructure in rural areas.

In answer to a question from the Chairman members were informed that Broadland ranked significantly worse, in terms of access to housing and services, than Norwich under the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and that this had been pointed out in the Council's consultation response. It had, therefore, been suggested that Broadland had pockets of deprivation related to the physical proximity to local services and that this should be taken into account.

A member suggested that there were only limited benefits in the Strategy for Broadland residents beyond the Norwich fringe.

In response the Place Shaping Manager advised the meeting that the need for improved connectivity to rural areas had been emphasised in the Council's response and that the County Council was aware of this issue and would be working with bus providers to improve the delivery of services.

The Council's response had also stressed the importance of focusing on areas of emerging growth, as well as existing growth areas, as these areas would be changed significantly by housing development.

In respect of market towns the Council was supportive of providing transport solutions to influence sustainable transport behaviours if sufficient infrastructure was put in place to enable it.

It was confirmed that the Council's consultation response had been drafted in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, who also sat on the Transport for Norwich Joint Committee. Members could also have input into the response prior to its agreement by Cabinet.

Members requested that greater emphasis be placed on connectivity to rural areas beyond the Norwich fringe.

Following a show of hands it was unanimously:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

(Options 1 and 2, *as amended*)

1. That the consultation response place greater emphasis on connectivity to rural areas beyond the Norwich fringe to allow access to those seeking employment, education and training; and
2. That Cabinet agree the amended response to the Transport for Norwich (TfN) Strategy Consultation.

46 NORFOLK STRATEGIC FLOOD ALLIANCE (NSFA) STRATEGY CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Emergency Planning Manager introduced the report, which asked that the Council ratify the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance (NSFA) Strategy.

The NSFA had been established in early 2021 following the flooding experienced across Norfolk over Christmas and New Year 2020/21 and its membership included, the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, the Association of Drainage Authorities, the Water Management Alliance, Water Resources East, the Norfolk Resilience Forum, the Broads Authority and Norfolk's local authorities.

The NSFA had produced a Strategy which had been circulated to all agencies involved with flood response across Norfolk.

Through the Strategy it was aimed to develop a more coordinated approach to flood and water management with closer working between agencies in order to reduce the impact of future flooding on Norfolk residents.

For example, there were longstanding flooding issues where ownership of and responsibilities for land, ditches and drains had been unclear. The NSFA sought to highlight these areas and drive these issues forward at a more visible level than had been done previously.

The vision of the Strategy was that through this approach the people of Norfolk would have a high level of confidence that flood risks were as low as reasonably practicable and were being managed effectively.

In response to a query about action to be taken to prevent flooding at Strumpshaw, the Emergency Planning Manager confirmed that Norwich Road Strumpshaw was included in the first tranche of locations that the NSFA would inspect to assess how to minimise or mitigate local flooding risk.

The Emergency Planning Manager also confirmed that like many other districts, the Council did not currently issue sandbags to residents unless a Major Incident has been officially declared.

At all other times it was the residents' responsibility to source their own flood protection measures. Any future decision to offer sandbags on a different or wider basis would need further consideration. Broadland currently had approximately 540 sandbags in stock at its depot. South Norfolk also had its own supply.

Following a show of hands it was unanimously:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

Cabinet to ratify the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance Strategy, as set out at Appendix A.

(The meeting concluded at 12.06pm)

Chairman