

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Review of Cabinet Agenda** held by video link on **18 August 2020** at **10.00 am** when there were present:

Cllr S Riley – Chairman

Cllr A D Adams
Cllr S C Beadle
Cllr N J Brennan
Cllr P E Bulman

Cllr S J Catchpole
Cllr N J Harpley
Cllr K S Kelly
Cllr D King

Cllr K Lawrence
Cllr G K Nurden
Cllr S M Prutton
Cllr N C Shaw

Cllr J Copplestone, Cllr J Leggett, Cllr T Mancini-Boyle and Cllr S Vincent also attended the meeting.

Also in attendance were the Director Resources, Director People & Communities, Assistant Director Economic Growth, Assistant Director Planning, Assistant Director Finance, Housing Standards Senior Manager, Governance Manager, Senior Governance Officer and the Democratic Services Officer (JO).

150 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8

Member	Minute No & Heading	Nature of Interest
Cllr S Beadle Cllr J Copplestone	153 – Covid-19 Response – Norfolk Wide Fighting Fund	Director of a company in receipt of Covid-19 Government Grant

151 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Holland and Cllr Murrell.

152 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2020 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Minute No: 145 Broadland and South Norfolk – Our Plan for Recovery from the Covid-19

A Member advised the meeting that as well as the typographical errors he had noted in the report he had also drawn attention to the lack of balance in the report, which had focused far too much on South Norfolk Council.

Minute No: 146 Council Performance – Broadland Business Plan

It was confirmed that the Apprenticeships Time and Task Panel had been delayed due to the pandemic, as well as the need to conclude the investigations of the EcoCube Time and Task Panel. Preparations were now in place for the Apprenticeships Time and Task Panel to meet to agree its Terms of Reference.

153 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised the meeting that Sara Utting, the Senior Governance Officer, was leaving the Council to take up a post elsewhere next month. The Committee wished to record their thanks to Sara for her work at the Council over many years and wished her well for the future.

154 COVID-19 RESPONSE – NORFOLK WIDE FIGHTING FUND

The Assistant Director of Finance introduced the report, which set out a proposal by Norfolk Leaders to establish a 'fighting fund' to support local authorities and local businesses adapt, restart and recover from the Covid-19 emergency situation across the County.

The County Council had agreed, in principle, to contribute £1m to the fund and was looking for this to be matched by Norfolk local authorities contributing £150,000 each. The 2019/20 Business Rate Pool would contribute £3.7m and it was hoped that the Local Enterprise Partnership would contribute £2m, making a total of £7.7m. The fund could help make the case to Government to support recovery by matching the local pot.

The £150,000 contribution could be funded from the third tranche of Covid-19 Emergency Funding received from central Government.

A Member expressed concern that it was not clear who would manage the fund and the processes in place for its allocation. He emphasised that before the Council made a contribution it should ensure that the funding would be distributed equitably.

In response, the Assistant Director of Finance drew Members' attention to the precedents for local authorities working together, such as the pooling of Business Rates and the Greater Norwich Local Plan and that the Council should get more back than it contributed to the scheme. It was anticipated that the first areas that would be awarded grants would be in the tourism sector.

In the light of the concerns raised by Members it was suggested that the recommendation should be amended to ensure that greater clarity was

obtained in respect of the budget allocation, and following a vote it was:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1), as amended.

That Cabinet recommends the following to Council:

That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Finance, in consultation with the Leader, to allocate £150,000 to the Norfolk Wide Fighting Fund, *on condition that greater clarity be obtained regarding the budget allocation of the fund.*

155 REVIEW OF MANDATORY LICENSABLE HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION FEES

The Housing Standards Senior Manager introduced the report which recommend revisions to the chargeable fees for mandatory licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

HMOs that required a licence were defined as, properties rented by five or more people, who form two or more households, and shared facilities such as a toilet, bathroom or kitchen.

The chargeable fee for a mandatory licensable HMO licence had been reviewed in order to ensure that the Council levied a charge that complied with central Government guidance and did not 'profit' from the charge.

It was, therefore, recommended that the Council fee for mandatory licensable HMO's be set at the following:

- £825 for a new five-year licence;
- £133 for variations on an existing five-year licence; and
- £514 for renewal of a five-year licence

Current fees were £593 for a new-five year licence, £28 for variations on an existing five-year licence. The renewal of a five-year licence had not been previously determined.

The Committee noted that the Wellbeing Panel had rejected the increase at its meeting on 8 July 2020 where it had concerns that the charges would be passed on to tenants and the increase in charges for landlords was too high compared to the current fee.

The Chairman advised the meeting that the Wellbeing Panel did not make any recommendations regarding revised fees, but in the light of their concerns a revised fee of £700 for a new five-year licence was proposed as an alternative recommendation in the report.

In answer to a query, it was confirmed that all fees and charges were adjusted each year for inflation.

Members were also advised that there was not a significant number of HMOs in the District with around 14 five-year licenses being issued over the last five years.

A Member informed the Committee that at the Health and Wellbeing Panel it had been emphasised that the fees at both Councils needed to be aligned as they were carried out by the same staff. She considered that it was wrong in principle to increase fees simply to align with South Norfolk.

In the light of the concerns expressed about the proposed increases it was

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (2), as amended

That the Council fees for mandatory licensable HMO's be held at their current levels.

156 UPDATE TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Assistant Director Planning introduced the report which proposed amendments to the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) to reflect a revised Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) timetable. This would allow for a further Regulation 18 Consultation, to ensure that the evidence base was robust and for further work to be undertaken in respect of viability studies and economic information. This would also allow for the opportunity to consider progress with the Western Link scheme.

The new Regulation 18 Consultation would take place over November/December 2020. This would have a knock on effect and delay the pre-submission publication of Plan (Regulation 19), as well as the examination and mean that the final adoption of the Plan would occur in November/December 2022; four months later than originally intended.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

That Cabinet recommends Council to approve the proposed amendments to the current, May 2019, Local Development Scheme.

157 EXCLUSION OF 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.

The Committee adjourned at 11.08 am and reconvened at 11.15 am, when all of the Committee Members listed above were present.

158 WASTE SERVICES REVIEW

The Committee considered the report which set out a business case for a joint Broadland and South Norfolk Waste Service, as detailed in the exempt Minutes.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Options (1) and (4)

(1) To note the final business case; and

(4) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

159 FOOD INNOVATION CENTRE

The Director of Resources introduced the report, which provided an update of the proposed new financial arrangements and conditions to deliver the capital element of the Food Innovation Centre, as detailed in the exempt Minutes.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Options (1-5), as set out in the exempt Minutes

160 EXEMPT MINUTE

The Committee received the exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2020.

Minute no: 149 – Review of Legal Services Provision

Discussion took place on the decision made by Cabinet for the provision of legal services, as detailed in the exempt Minutes.

The meeting closed at 12.42pm