

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk Council, held on Monday 13 September 2021 at 9.00am.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: J Fuller (Chairman), R Elliott, K Mason Billig, L Neal, A Thomas and J Worley

Apologies for Absence: Councillor: M Edney

Other Members in Attendance: Councillors: D Bills, C Brown and T Laidlaw

Officers in Attendance: The Managing Director (T Holden), the Director of Place (P Courtier), the Director of People and Communities (J Sutterby), the Assistant Director Chief of Staff (E Hodds), the Assistant Director Economic Growth (G Denton and T Armstrong), the Assistant Director Planning (H Mellors), the Assistant Director Regulatory (N Howard), and the Place Shaping Manager (P Harris)

2927 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred to the Council's One Awards, which had taken place the previous Friday 10 September 2021. He thanked all staff involved explaining that the evening had drawn attention to the breadth of work and the fantastic achievements of officers over the last twelve months

2928 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

With regard to minute 2931, the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance Strategy Consultation Response, Cllr A Thomas declared an "other" interest as having been personally impacted by the flooding across the district in December 2020.

2929 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

With regard to minute number 2918, the Skills and Training Programme officers advised members that the Council had recently held a very successful apprenticeship recruitment evening. Twenty-six apprenticeship positions had been appointed to or were at various stages of the recruitment process, and the Council was looking likely to achieve its target by the end of the year. Members noted that the scheme would feature in the Council's Link magazine and officers would continue to lead and grow the apprenticeship programme across the public sector in the county.

2930 TRANSPORT FOR NORWICH STRATEGY CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Members considered the report of the Place Shaping Manager, which sought approval of the Council's response to the Transport for Norwich (TfN) Strategy Consultation.

The Place Shaping Manager outlined the background to the report and referred members to Appendix A, which outlined the Council's proposed response to the consultation. He reminded members that they were able to make their own individual representations to Norfolk County Council.

During discussion, members expressed their support for some elements of the Strategy and also the aspiration for a carbon neutral environment. However, Cabinet was concerned that the key objective of the Strategy appeared to be the need to reduce travel on the premise of reducing carbon emissions. It was felt that the document had failed to anticipate the move to electric and hydrogen vehicles.

Concerns were expressed with regard to accessibility for the elderly and disabled, especially those who were unable to use public transport, and it was felt that more consideration was required with regard to the impact on those residents having to commute in to the city, from more rural areas. A move to a traffic free city centre could lead to excluding whole sections of society, and it was felt that the Strategy needed to consider further the impact on the wider economy and the economic recovery in Norwich.

One member raised the need to provide residents with a reasonable alternative to using their own vehicles, and referred to the County Council's need to balance its aspirations with its support for the rural bus network and the need to increase the rural bus subsidy. It was also suggested that the old diesel buses used to transport residents in and out of Norwich should be replaced with electric buses, which would improve air quality and significantly reduce carbon emissions.

Cllr K Mason Billig, who represented the Council on the County Council's Transforming Cities Joint Committee, felt a more long term strategic approach was required, and whilst she supported the move to a carbon neutral future, she stressed that this could not happen without the appropriate infrastructure in place. She was disappointed that the Strategy had failed to give mention to the potential to encourage electric boats along the river, and also that the

A146 as one of the major routes into the city, had been omitted for the document.

Cabinet agreed that final sign off of the consultation response, should be delegated to officers in consultation with the relevant portfolio holders, and that the response should be accompanied with an executive summary which could provide greater weight to the points made.

RESOLVED:

To delegate to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Stronger Economy, the final sign off of the Council's response to the Transport for Norwich (TfN) consultation.

The Reason for the Decision

To help shape the final version of the Transport for Norwich Strategy.

Other Options Considered

None.

2931 NORFOLK STRATEGIC FLOOD ALLIANCE STRATEGY CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Members considered the report of the Emergency Planning Officers, which invited members to ratify the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance (NSFA) Strategy.

The Assistant Director Regulatory presented the report to members, explaining that the NSFA had been established in early 2020, and had been chaired by Lord Dannatt and involved strategic lead officers and Leaders from a range of agencies involved in flood response and water management across the county. Its purpose was to develop a more co-ordinated response to flood and water management to reduce the impact of any future flooding. Members noted that the member representative on this Group for South Norfolk Council was Cllr G Minshull.

The Assistant Director went on to outline the goals and visions of the Strategy and he referred to the Action Plan and key tasks to be undertaken. He explained that 16 flood sites in the county, with particularly complex and challenging issues, had been prioritised. Members noted that Long Stratton and Redenhall had been identified on this initial list, and that further tranches would follow and include other sites in South Norfolk.

Cllr A Thomas pointed out there were some inaccuracies in the draft report regarding Long Stratton and stressed that it was important to get things right so that residents had confidence in the relevant authorities. Whilst she was very supportive of the Strategy, she stressed the need for a deliverable action plan and the need to involve local communities, and she suggested that a guide on how to implement the Strategy at a local level, would be welcomed

by communities. She hoped that the new Water Management Officer post would be working proactively with local communities to build on local knowledge and expertise.

Members also stressed the need to involve parish councils and the requirement to ensure that Anglian Water, the Environment Agency, and the Internal Drainage Boards, were all on board and communicating effectively.

Members noted that a leaflet had been produced listing emergency contact numbers to be used in the event of a flood, and the Managing Director suggested that this information could also be included in the Council's Link magazine. He stressed that the Strategy would take time to make a significant impact but was confident that it was the foundations for a more coordinated response. He advised that the NSFA was working closely with NALC (National Association of Local Councils) to ensure that parish councils and local communities were involved. Members also noted that the NSFA, alongside the Norfolk Resilience Forum, would be carrying out an exercise in October, to test whether agencies could deliver an effective response in the event of flooding.

The Chairman referred to the new Water Management Officer position and queried whether the job description required revision. In response, the Assistant Director confirmed that the Council had been struggling to appoint to the position and that a review of the job description and grading, was planned.

Members welcomed the Strategy which provided clarity for the way forward, and Cabinet agreed that a more local focus was required on how South Norfolk Council should respond. The Chairman suggested that it be referred to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

It was

RESOLVED:

1. To ratify the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance Strategy.
2. That the Scrutiny Committee consider the delivery of the Strategy and
3. That officers review the required resources and make any necessary revisions to the job description for the Water Management Officer post.

The Reason for the Decision

To demonstrate the Council's commitment to working collaboratively and assisting local communities where possible.

Other Options Considered

Not to ratify the Strategy.

2932 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members noted the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda.

The Chairman suggested that it would be appropriate to review the definition of key decisions at South Norfolk Council and officers agreed to take this forward.

2933 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

The Chairman thanked Tig Armstrong, the Assistant Director of Economic Growth for his service to the Council and wished him well with his move to Australia.

Cabinet welcomed his replacement, George Denton, to the Council.

(The meeting concluded at 10.12 am)

Chairman