

Cabinet

Agenda

Date

Tuesday 8 December 2020

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr S A Vincent
Chairman (Leader) Policy

Cllr T M Mancini-Boyle
(Deputy Leader) Finance

Portfolio holders

Cllr J K Copplestone Economic Development

Cllr J J Emsell Transformation and
Organisational Development

Cllr L H Hemsall Planning

Cllr J Leggett Environmental Excellence

Cllr F Whymark Housing and Wellbeing

Time

6.00 pm

Place

To be hosted remotely at
Thorpe Lodge
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Thorpe St Andrew
Norwich

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If any Member wishes to clarify details relating to any matter on the agenda they are requested to contact the relevant Director / Assistant Director

Public Attendance

This meeting will be live streamed for public viewing via the following link:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZciRgwo84-iPyRlmsTCIng>.

If a member of the public would like to attend to ask a question, or make a statement on an agenda item, please email your request to committee.services@broadland.gov.uk no later than 5.00pm on 3 December 2020.

AGENDA

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1	To receive declarations of interest under Procedural Rule no 8	
2	Apologies for absence	
3	Minutes of meeting held on 3 November 2020	6
4	Matters arising therefrom (if any)	
5	Public Speaking	
	To consider representation from the members of the public who have expressed the wish to convey their views on items on this Agenda.	
	In accordance with the Constitution a period of 3 minutes is allowed per member of the public.	
6	Representations from Non-Cabinet Members	
	To receive the views from non-Cabinet Members on items on this agenda. Members are reminded to advise the Leader if they wish to attend and speak at the meeting.	
	In accordance with the Constitution a period of 3 minutes is allowed per non-Cabinet Member.	
7	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	23
	To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2020.	
	The following matters need consideration by Cabinet:	
	Minute No: 200 - Future of Community Grants – Call-In of Cabinet Decision	
	Referred back to Cabinet by the Committee	
	To reconsider introducing changes to the member-led ward grant system to utilise underspend in February each year.	
	Cabinet will also be advised of views expressed by the Committee at its meeting on 1 December 2020 in relation to items on this Agenda.	
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Trevor Holden
Managing Director

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

When declaring an interest at a meeting Members are asked to indicate whether their interest in the matter is pecuniary, or if the matter relates to, or affects a pecuniary interest they have, or if it is another type of interest. Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote. If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed. If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting. Members are also requested when appropriate to make any declarations under the Code of Practice on Planning and Judicial matters.

Have you declared the interest in the register of interests as a pecuniary interest? If Yes, you will need to withdraw from the room when it is discussed.

Does the interest directly:

1. Affect yours, or your spouse / partner's financial position?
2. Relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner?
3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council
4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own
5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in

If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary.

Please refer to the guidance given on declaring pecuniary interests in the register of interest forms. If you have a pecuniary interest, you will need to inform the meeting and then withdraw from the room when it is discussed. If it has not been previously declared, you will also need to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.

Does the interest indirectly affect or relate any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above?

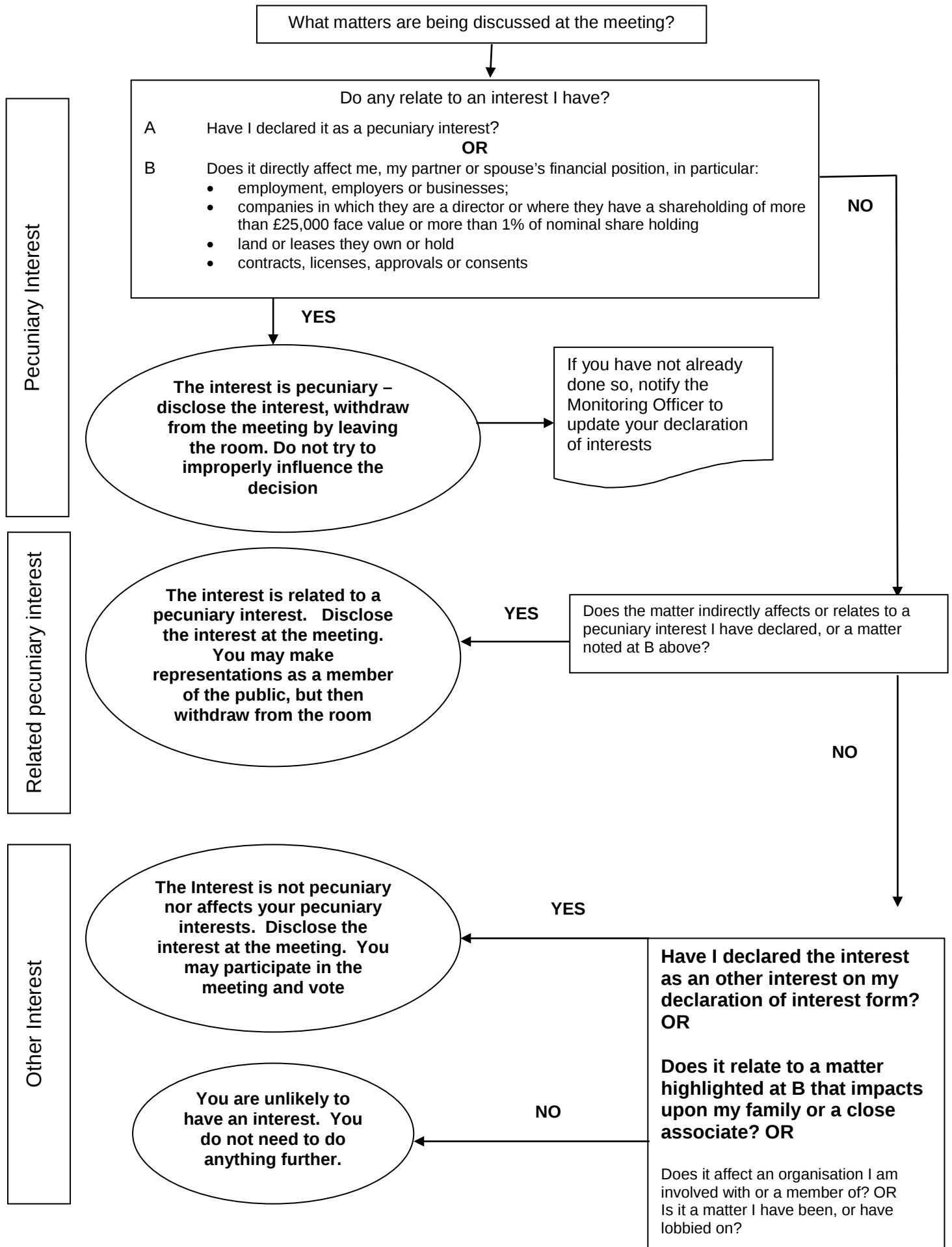
If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.

Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be another interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.

Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting, and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.

**FOR GUIDANCE REFER TO THE FLOWCHART OVERLEAF
PLEASE REFER ANY QUERIES TO THE MONITORING OFFICER
IN THE FIRST INSTANCE**

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF



Minutes of a meeting of **Cabinet** held by video link on **Tuesday 3 November 2020** at **6.00pm** when there were present:

Cllr S A Vincent – Policy (Chairman)

Portfolio holders:

Cllr J K Copplestone	Economic Development
Cllr J J Emsell	Transformation and Organisational Development
Cllr L H Hempsall	Planning
Cllr J Leggett	Environmental Excellence
Cllr T M Mancini-Boyle	Finance
Cllr F Whymark	Housing and Wellbeing

Cllr T Adams, Cllr K Kelly, Cllr K Leggett and Cllr S Riley also attended the meeting.

Also in attendance were the Managing Director, Director Place, Director Resources, Director People and Communities, Chief of Staff, Assistant Director Economic Growth, Assistant Director Regulatory, Assistant Director Finance, Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer), Assistant Director Individuals and Families, Governance Manager, Communities Senior Manager, Business Improvement Team Manager, Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager, Policy and Partnerships Officer and the Democratic Services Officer (JO).

146 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8

Member	Minute No & Heading	Nature of Interest
Cllr J Copplestone, Cllr J Leggett, Cllr S Riley	159 - Housing Standards Enforcement Policy	Pecuniary Interest, owner of a rental property.

147 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

148 MATTERS ARISING

Minute No: 137 – Updated Delivery Plan Post Covid-19

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development advised the meeting that Broadland had been allocated £428,000 from the Norfolk Strategic Fund and

would spend this funding on enterprise facilitation.

Minute No: 138 – Response to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Consultations.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning informed Members that the Council's response to the 'Planning for the Future' White Paper had been signed off; she would circulate the response to Members following the meeting.

149 REPRESENTATIONS FROM NON CABINET MEMBERS

The Chairman agreed that, at his discretion, all non-Cabinet Members in attendance be allowed to join the debate at the relevant point of the proceedings on request.

150 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised Members on the views expressed by the Committee when it reviewed the Cabinet Agenda on 27 October 2020, as each item was considered.

151 SERVICE IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee held on 5 October 2020

152 WELLBEING PANEL

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Wellbeing Panel held on 7 October 2020.

153 ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE PANEL

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Excellence Panel held on 8 October 2020. The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence informed the meeting that Members of the Panel had recently viewed a trial of an electric refuse collection vehicle; unfortunately it had not been able to complete two rounds on one charge.

A Norfolk Waste Partnership meeting was to be convened shortly and it was hoped that some good communications on recycling and reducing waste would result from it.

154 ECONOMIC SUCCESS PANEL

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Economic Success Panel held on 12 October 2020.

RESOLVED

To bring the Recycling Behaviour Change project to a close, as recommended by the Economic Success Panel at its meeting on 8 October 2020.

155 BUDGET UPDATE REPORT

The Assistant Director Finance introduced the report, which provided an additional update on the budgetary position at the Council, which was considered appropriate due to the exceptional circumstance caused by the pandemic.

As part of the response to COVID-19 and the New Ways of Working programme, staff had now been categorised as either: a permanent home worker (80 staff), a home enabled worker (396 staff working both at home and in the office) and 70 dedicated office workers. However, at present only 327 officers had laptops.

This left 219 laptops short and, therefore, to complete a roll out of laptops plus peripherals a further £256,000 (including 20% contingency) split BDC 45%, SNC 55% was required.

Member approval was, therefore, requested to increase the BDC 2020/21 Information Technology Capital Budget by £115,000 to fund the rollout of additional laptops to better facilitate the New Ways of Working.

Cabinet noted that this matter had caused a lot of debate at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Portfolio Holder for Finance confirmed that she fully supported increasing the IT budget to ensure that officers had the tools to do their jobs.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee informed the meeting that the Committee had recommended that this budget be increased to cover providing laptops to Members to help them do their job as well. He also noted that Members' iPads would need to be replaced in a few years and that this would be a relatively inexpensive way to allow them to access the greater functionality available in laptop computers.

In response, the Leader noted that iPads offered a safe and secure platform that had served Members well. Although he acknowledged that the pandemic

had brought its own problems for Members.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted that the Director of Resources was looking into Members' IT and suggested a separate additional budget of £35,000 be established to fund potential changes following a review of Members' IT.

The Assistant Director Business Support and Governance (Monitoring Officer) confirmed that a cross party Working Group would be established to scope out what Member IT requirements were. The Leader noted that this group might also include Members from South Norfolk as well.

However, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was of the opinion that Members just needed to be supplied with laptops, rather than establishing a Working Group to look into it.

The meeting was advised that South Norfolk had decided to postpone a decision on increasing their Revenue Budget by £44,000 to implement the actions set out in the Environmental Strategy, in order to focus on their response to COVID-19.

However, Cabinet supported the recommendation and were advised that a graduate apprentice was in place and scoping out the foundational work for the person who would take up this post.

It was agreed that the unspent 'joint waste budget' would be used to cover waste procurement. The reference to depot would be deleted from this recommendation.

The £45,000 increase in the budgetary provision to cover additional regulatory expenditure was supported. The reduction in the budgetary provision for COVID-19 direct hardship payment of £77,000 and the return of the money to the Council Tax Support Hardship Allocation was also supported. It was noted that this sum could be returned for direct hardship payments, if needed.

The proposed changes in the income budgets was supported. Also supported were the proposals to authorise the Assistant Director Regulatory to spend the Coronavirus Enforcement Grant; the removal of the Assistant Director Consultancy post from the establishment and to note the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy.

In response to a query, the Assistant Director Regulatory confirmed that he would bring an operational report back to Cabinet to keep Members informed about how the £49,421 Coronavirus Enforcement Grant was being spent.

It was noted that the final proposal for approval of the criteria for local lockdown grants had been overtaken by events and it was suggested that it be expanded to include consultation with the Portfolio Holder Finance and the Leader, as well as Assistant Director Economic Growth. Reference to 'discretionary' lockdown grants was also removed from the recommendation.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development also advised the meeting that the Council would receive £2.6m rolled out over 18 months to provide local lockdown grants.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

1. To increase the BDC 20/21 Information Technology Capital Budget by £115,000, to fund the rollout of additional laptops to better facilitate the New Ways of Working.
2. To increase the BDC 20/21 Information Technology Capital Budget by £35,000 to fund potential changes following a review of Members' IT.
3. To increase the BDC annual Revenue Budget by £44,000 (with a pro-rata adjustment for 20/21 as only a part year effect) to fund an additional resource to help implement the actions set out in the recently agreed Environmental Strategy.
4. To agree that the unspent 'joint waste budget' can be applied to cover the costs of the waste procurement.
5. To increase the budgetary provision for Covid-19 expenditure from £250,000 to £295,000 to cover the additional £45,000 regulatory expenditure.
6. To reduce the budgetary provision for Covid-19 direct hardship payments by £77,000 and return the money to the main Council Tax Support hardship allocation.
7. To agree the proposed changes to the 20/21 income budgets as set out in paragraph 4.17.
8. To agree that the Assistant Director Regulatory is authorised to spend the new Coronavirus Enforcement grant of £49,421, to help the public and businesses understand the latest Covid-19 regulation, and increase compliance work and enforcement checks on businesses.
9. To remove the post of Assistant Director Consultancy Team from the establishment.

RESOLVED

To note:

10. The updated Medium Term Financial Strategy.

11. That the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, the Leader and the Assistant Director Economic Growth will be asked to approve the criteria for the distribution of local lockdown grants, in line with Part 3 of the Constitution Para 16.5 (1) Delegation of powers to Portfolio Holders, and Para 19.18 (22) Oversight of the Council's Grants Policy.

Reasons for decision

The report was a factual account.

156 REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVES

The Assistant Director Finance introduced the report, which reviewed the Council's earmarked reserves and proposed that three reserves be closed, two merged and the two reserves created.

Earmarked Reserves were amounts that had been set aside to provide financing for specific future events. The Council's Earmarked Reserves as at 31 March 2020, were £8.733m.

The proposed changes were:

1. The closure of the following reserves:
 - a. External Funding Reserve.
 - b. Community Right to Challenge Reserve.
 - c. Systems Thinking Reserve.
2. The reduction in the Business Rates Reserve by £703,000.
3. The merging of the Economic Success Fund and the Broadland Growth Reserve.
4. The creation of the following Reserves:
 - a. Refuse Services - £7m.
 - b. New Ways of Working - £4m.

The proposed changes would result in the earmarked reserves being increased to £18.692m. This would reduce the General Fund to £5.387m,

which was still significantly above the minimum recommended level of £2m.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance confirmed that she had no objection to closing the three reserves. But would not want to reduce the Business Rates reserve by £703,000. Neither would she recommend merging the Economic Success Fund and the Broadland Growth Reserve.

Some concern was also expressed about creating the two new reserves and in response to a query, Cabinet were assured that any spending would be undertaken through the normal scheme of delegation, as set out in the Constitution. The Director of Resources also confirmed that money was not spent directly from reserves and would go into either the Revenue or Capital programme to be agreed by Cabinet.

However, it was agreed that further clarification was needed before reserves were set aside for Refuse Services and New Ways of Working. It was also requested that the split between the Marriott's Way bridges and the Bure Valley Railway bridges in the Bridge Maintenance Reserve be explained and brought back to the next meeting.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

1. The closure of the following reserves:
 - a. External Funding Reserve.
 - b. Community Right to Challenge Reserve.
 - c. Systems Thinking Reserve.
2. The retention of the Economic Success Fund and the Broadland Growth Reserve.
3. To defer a decision on the creation of the following Reserves:
 - a. Refuse Services - £7m.
 - b. New Ways of Working - £4m

Reasons for decision

To review the Council's earmarked reserves.

157 TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 2 REPORT 2020/21

The Assistant Director Finance introduced the report, which reviewed treasury management activity during the first six months of the financial year 2020/21.

As at 30 September 2020 the Council's investments totalled £43,770m. Around £400,000 investment income was forecast at year end, which was

£160,000 above budget. The Council had not needed to borrow during this period.

The Council had exceeded its counterparty limit for Barclays PLC, by £2.5m, due to a requirement to keep funds short to make money available for relief to residents and businesses during the pandemic.

The Chairman noted that the Council made some investments on behalf of charitable organisations and requested that he be provided with further information about the organisations after the meeting, as he understood they were located in his Ward.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

To

1. Note the report on treasury activity undertaken in the first half of the year and that it complies with the agreed strategy; and
2. Note the 2020/21 prudential indicators for the first six months of the year.

Reasons for decision

The report was a factual account.

158 STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE REPORT FOR QUARTERS 1 AND 2 2020/21

The Chief of Staff introduced the report, which was the first iteration of the new format Strategic Performance and Finance Report for Quarters 1 and 2.

The report provided an overview of the performance of the Council against key outcomes set out in the Delivery Plan for 2020/21.

In the Delivery Plan for 2020/21 not all delivery measures had been given targets. Where targets were provided a red, amber, green (RAG) status had been used to provide an update on progress. The majority of those measured under the RAG system were either baselined this year or had year-end targets which would be updated to Members as part of the Quarter four reports. For those with targets, seven measures were on target and green and four were currently red this Quarter.

Highlights in the report were:

- Over £5m of external funding was secured during Q1 and Q2. £2.7m through Government's 'Getting Building Fund' to support the delivery of the Food Innovation Centre. £521,976 has been secured from MHCLG to deliver the 'Next Steps Accommodation' programme and £428,572 has been secured from the Norfolk Strategic Fund to support with COVID-19 economic recovery initiatives.
- Supporting vulnerable residents was a focus area for Q1 and Q2 with 2,160 residents receiving support from the discretionary prevention services since April this year.
- The amount of collected waste being recycled had increased by 3 percent to 52.5 percent, which significantly outperformed the national recycling average of 44 percent.

Areas where improvements could be made were:

- The number of missed bins, (40 bins per 100,000) which was higher than the year-end target of no more than 30 bins per 100,000. This had been partly attributed to staff sickness.
- Homelessness prevention measures, which suffered a drop in performance due to a doubling of people being housed in temporary accommodation and the resultant impact on resources. It was highlighted that a programme of work named 'best in class housing' was currently being progressed to ensure the Council provided the best housing services for residents

The Quarter 3 report would also cover Strategic Risk. The draft Strategic Risk Register had been taken to the Audit Committee and was being developed further following the Committee's feedback before final review in November.

The Assistant Director for Finance drew Members' attention to the favourable variance in the budget of £2.1m, which had chiefly be due to receiving COVID-19 Government funding that had not been budgeted for. At the end of September this amount totalled £1.3m. It was emphasised that this would be spent on supporting residents and businesses by the end of the financial year.

In respect of the Capital Programme at the end of Quarter 2, the Council would have expected to have spent £1.2m, but in fact had spent £0.5m. However, there remained the opportunity to catch up with this spend by the end of the financial year.

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development noted that 2020 had been a very difficult year for everyone and commended staff for their performance in rising to the challenge of delivering services to residents and businesses.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted an error in the figure for variance in the income budgets in the report, but acknowledged that this was probably due to rounding up. The Assistant Director for Finance confirmed it would be amended.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance also noted that the processing of new Housing Benefit claims had a target of seven days and that this had reached 5.4 days, due to the huge increase in claims caused by the pandemic, but that this figure had now come back down to the pre-COVID-19 figure of 4.7 days and that staff were to be congratulated for their hard work in achieving this.

In respect of Council Tax collection, the Portfolio Holder for Finance confirmed that although the Council could now take legal action against residents in arrears, it would be putting this off until the New Year to give them more time given the current situation.

The Leader noted that the Council Tax debt was currently £650,000, but that this was out of a total of £87m collected, which put it in perspective and that as much should be done as possible to encourage residents in arrears to engage with the Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing commended the work of the Housing Team, which had faced unprecedented levels of demand and also the Communities Team who had worked very hard to support residents. He also drew Members' attention to the £521,976 funding secured from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government to deliver the Next Steps Accommodation programme, which would provide even more support for the Districts most vulnerable residents.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence congratulated staff in the Regulatory Team and the Environmental Health Officers for their hard work during the pandemic.

In respect of the performance measures she noted that too much was being made of the drop in performance for missed bins; from 27 per 100,000 in Quarter 1 to 40 per 100,000 in Quarter 2, as this figure was still good considering the number of bins collected.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence was also pleased to see a measure for the KGs of residual waste collected per household included in the report for the first time.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development thanked the Economic Development Team and the Finance Team for their hard work in distributing nearly £29m in support grants to 2,5000 businesses in the District. She noted that Business Rate relief had also been given to businesses affected by the pandemic and new local business support would be rolled out soon due to the second lockdown. She also noted that £2.7m had been secured to help fund the Food Innovation Centre, which would be delivered in partnership with the Local Enterprise Partnership, as well as the £428,572 secured from the Norfolk Strategic Fund, which would support enterprise facilitation initiatives. The Communities Team were also congratulated on their work with the Kick Start scheme, which would help young people into jobs.

The Leader noted that the pie chart in the dashboard overview section of the report was not particularly informative and a few other elements in the report needed further work and he suggested that an informal session with officers and Cabinet might be a good way to iron out these issues.

In response to a query regarding the refurbishment of Thorpe Lodge, the Leader confirmed that this was on hold, as options would need to be looked at to meet the new needs for accommodation once the pandemic was over.

The Assistant Director for Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) confirmed that the current focus had been on creating a safe COVID-19 secure office environment for staff. The work on hold was for the air conditioning system, the toilets and the showers.

RESOLVED

To

1. Note the revenue and capital position; and
2. Note the 2020/21 performance for Q1 and Q2.

Reasons for decision

The report was a factual account.

159 APPROVAL OF UK MUNICIPAL BOND AGENCY'S FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

The Director of Resources introduced the report, which sought approval for the Council to enter into a Framework Agreement with the UK Municipal Bonds Agency, which would be a potential source of borrowing for the Council, if required. This would represent an even cheaper source of borrowing than the Public Works and Loans Board.

The Council was required to sign up to the Framework prior to borrowing and Cabinet was advised that loans provided by the Agency were pooled and guaranteed by the borrowers. However, to date no UK local authority had ever defaulted on a loan.

It was confirmed that signing up to the Framework did not commit the Council to only borrowing from the Municipal Bonds Agency.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

to approve the Council's entry into a Framework Agreement and its accompanying schedules

Reasons for decision

To provide the Council with access to an additional loan facility.

160 THE VISION FOR A BEST IN CLASS HOUSING OFFER AND DRAFT ALLOCATIONS SCHEME

The Assistant Director for Individuals and Families introduced the report. He noted that housing was a core function of a local authority and that the proposals in the report represented a significant opportunity to establish a best in class housing model for residents across Broadland and South Norfolk, by working together to build efficiencies and economies of scale through a single officer team. The project had been assisted by the Local Government Association, who had funded external consultants and by the Joint Member Working Group, who had carried out a significant amount of work with officers to bring the housing offer forward.

The Policy and Partnerships Officer presented some more detailed aspects of the report, which had been drawn up following a number of workshops and considerable work to develop an efficient and consistent working approach. The review had been undertaken before and during the pandemic, which had created an opportunity to be mindful of the likely demand on the service from the crisis.

Following a successful bid to the LGA Housing Advisor programme, officers had been working in conjunction with external consultants Campbell Tickell and had developed a 'best in class housing offer'. A fundamental part of the offer was the proposed allocations scheme and a four-stage accommodation model, which sought to provide a universal service open to all with a housing need.

Key to the service was the proposed Allocations Scheme, which defined the procedures to be followed in allocating housing accommodation to ensure the

Council provided the most effective housing service through an up-to-date and legally compliant scheme.

It was proposed that the current banding system be changed from three bands to four to allow for a band to accommodate those in most urgent need.

Over the proposed four bands there was likely to be approximately 1000 people registered for accommodation. Whilst those in high bands were more likely to be allocated a property, difficult to let properties and S106 restrictions on the allocation of properties offered to those with a local connection would help to secure offers to those in lower bands. A willingness to move outside a specific area was also an option to help increase the likelihood of securing a property.

The new combined system would provide residents with a single point of access to bid for properties across both Councils with properties being allocated to those residing within the District where the property was located in the first instance, but ultimately offered to a bidder in the other District if the property was not taken, thereby helping to reduce the incidence of empty properties and facilitating mobility. The bidding process would be explicit about priority being given to the allocation of properties to bidders within the same District as the property.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing commended the report and the collaborative work undertaken to develop the proposed Allocations Scheme, which if adopted would be a significantly improved, transparent and proactive means of prioritising Broadland's most vulnerable residents.

In answer to a query, it was confirmed that the proposals in the scheme, emphasised partnership working with housing associations and other landlords to prevent houses being unoccupied longer than necessary.

Cabinet commended the proposals in the report and it was:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

1. To endorse Officers work towards the Best in Class Housing Offer; and
2. Agree to the adoption of the Housing Allocations Scheme.

Reasons for decision

To initiate the development of a best in class housing service.

161 HOUSING STANDARDS ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Assistant Director for Individuals and Families introduced the report, which proposed the adoption of a revised Housing Standards Enforcement Policy.

He explained that the new Policy would ensure that all statutory obligations and procedures that Housing Standard Officers initiated on behalf of the Council were up-to-date and in a single document. This would allow the Council to support landlords, but also set a clear bar for the standards of housing that they were expected to provide.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the Council would be more proactive in education regarding housing standards and that work with the Eastern Landlords Association was planned for 2020/21.

RESOLVED

To approve the Council's new Housing Standards Enforcement Policy.

Reasons for decision

To adopt a revised and improved policy.

162 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT PLAN AND STRATEGY

The Business Improvement Team Manager introduced the report, which presented an updated Enforcement Plan and Strategy, following an audit of the Planning Enforcement Service in early 2020.

He advised the meeting that the report had been considered and recommended for approval by the Place Shaping Panel, subject to the inclusion of headings for the legislative tools that were available to the Council (pre formal, formal and compliance) and to also include a flowchart to outline the enforcement process. The Panel had also asked that enforcement training be provided for parish and town councils. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also welcomed and endorsed these suggestions.

The Plan would now include a more proactive approach towards the monitoring of the commencement of developments with planning permission to ensure compliance with associated conditions.

To ensure that Members had an overview of current cases it was also proposed that a monthly report be provided to all Members, which would highlight work being undertaken.

Training would also be provided to allow Members to make best use of this information.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning commended the report and recommended it for approval.

RESOLVED

1. To agree the use of the Enforcement Plan for the Planning Enforcement Service at Broadland Council; and
2. To agree the use of the Enforcement Strategy for the Planning Enforcement Service at Broadland Council, subject to the inclusion of the headings and flowchart, as suggested by the Place Shaping Panel, as well as offering enforcement training to parish and town councils.

Reasons for decision

To adopt a revised Enforcement Plan and Strategy.

163 FUTURE OF COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Communities Senior Manager introduced the report, which reviewed the Member Grant Scheme and Community funding sources and put forward proposals for consideration.

It was proposed that the Member Grant Scheme would open at the beginning of the financial year, with £500 ring-fenced for each Member until January 31. Between 1 February and 1 March any remaining budget that had not been spent would be offered out to all Members on a first come, first served basis. This would allow Members to access funding for areas of high demand from areas where demand was lower.

An online form could be made available to the public which would enable them to share information about their project and why they would like the Member to consider allocating funds to them. This would also allow the community group to provide information such as their bank details, reducing the potential for duplication or error in the current system.

More emphasis would be placed on the naming and branding of the scheme to support its promotion.

Another proposal was to introduce start-up grants to kick start worthwhile community activity. Grants of up to £300 could be offered to informal groups (of 3 or more people) who were proposing a community project. This would be funded from the Community at Heart Lottery.

It was also proposed that by working closely with the Planning and Economic Development Teams, there was an opportunity to create a whole Council approach to funding, by linking together Community Grants, Community Lottery and CIL to provide the appropriate funding stream and support for local infrastructure projects.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development noted the hard work that had been put into the project, which had also been considered by the Economic Success Panel, but she proposed that the Member-led grant scheme should remain unchanged, as it was fair and equitable for all Members to receive a pot of £500. It was also not proposed to have formalised branding for the scheme, as it was for a relatively small amount. However, the proposal for Start-Up Grants linked to the Community at Heart Lottery was welcomed.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised the meeting that the Committee had recommended increasing Member Ward Grants to £1,000, the same sum that South Norfolk Council Members received and had also recommended that Community Action Grants be introduced in Broadland as well. The Committee had also supported greater accessibility in the application process and improved branding of the scheme.

The Leader noted a preference for a simple scheme to deliver community projects at a Ward Member level and Members concurred with this view.

RESOLVED

1. That the member-led ward grant system would remain unchanged for 2021/22; and
2. To introduce a start-up grant; linked to the new Community at Heart Lottery.

Reasons for decision

To support local community projects in the District.

164 TEMPORARY CHANGE TO HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY-UPDATE

The Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager introduced his report, which requested a three month extension to the temporary amendment to the criteria within the Council's Housing Policy, which had been agreed in June 2020. This would allow officers discretion to place eligible, and suitable, individuals currently living in supported accommodation within the 'High' category for allocation.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing informed Members that the amendment to policy had been very successful for residents and he

suggested an amendment to the recommendation to lengthen the extension to 31 March 2021.

RESOLVED

To agree an extension to the temporary amendment to the criteria within the Council's Housing Policy, agreed in June 2020, for three months, to allow officers discretion to place eligible, and suitable, individuals currently living in supported accommodation within the 'High' category for allocation. This extension will cease on the 31 March 2021 subject to further review by Cabinet if still required.

Reasons for decision

To reduce pressure on temporary accommodation in the District.

165 EXEMPT MINUTES

The exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

166 ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE PANEL

The Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Excellence Panel held on 8 October 2020, were noted.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held by video link on **17 November 2020** at **10.00 am** when there were present:

Cllr S Riley – Chairman

Cllr A D Adams
Cllr N J Brennan
Cllr P E Bulman
Cllr S J Catchpole

Cllr S I Holland
Cllr C Karimi-Ghovanlou
Cllr K S Kelly
Cllr M L Murrell

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

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

Also in attendance were the Managing Director, Director Place, Director Resources, Director People & Communities, Assistant Director Planning, Assistant Director Finance, Assistant Director Governance & Business Support (Monitoring Officer), Assistant Director Individuals and Families, Assistant Director Regulatory Services, Governance Manager, Communities Senior Manager, Housing Enabling Officer, Growth Delivery Manager, Senior Governance Officer (SW) and the Democratic Services Officers (LA and JO).

197 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Harpley.

198 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

Minute No: 186 – Budget Update Report

The Chairman advised the meeting that Cabinet had not agreed to the Committee's recommendation to increase the IT budget to fund laptops for Members. They had, however, agreed to a £35,000 increase in the IT budget to fund potential changes following a review of Members' IT. There had been no commitment, however, for this sum to cover laptops for Members.

199 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members that the Committee's annual budget review workshop would be held on 24 November 2020 at 10.00am.

200 FUTURE OF COMMUNITY GRANTS – CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had called-in the following Cabinet decision relating to the Future of Community Grants.

RESOLVED

1. That the Member-led Ward Grant system would remain unchanged for 21/22; and
2. To introduce a start-up grant; linked to the new Community at Heart Lottery.

The reasons for the call-in were:

- a) The Members grant scheme is not supported in line with Officers recommendations and the Overview and Scrutiny recommendation to Cabinet following a review of operating experience and Members feedback for community support.*
- b) The recommended mechanism for ensuring no underspend would allow it to be used where need is greatest.*
- c) More accessibility for community groups to input to the application process, including bank details given direct.*
- d) The introduction of a more formalised branding and promotion of the scheme.*
- e) The Members Grant Scheme is not supported in line with the Overview and Scrutiny recommendation to increase the grant funding. The total funding of just £23,500 represents just 0.1 of one percent on budget or available resurveys, is not adequate to support self-help groups and community needs and undermines current Council policies in respect of Wellbeing and the Council's policy statement on Community at Heart and community support.*
- f) The original risk as outlined in the portfolio holders PH1 decision submitted and subject to the previous call-in, was still of concern regarding Council policy.*

The Assistant Director of People and Families advised the meeting that it was good practice to review community grants on a regular basis to ensure that they were meeting the needs of residents and communities. He emphasised that it had been important to consider community grants as a whole when conducting the review, which had looked at a number of proposals. He noted, however, that any increase to the Member-led Grant funding would need to come from budgets elsewhere.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development informed Members that it had been the intention for Member Grants to enable Members to work closely with residents to problem-solve and assist communities with a budget that was considered adequate for this purpose. She also reminded the Committee that the Council did have a duty to protect the public purse.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development noted the underspend from last year and that Cabinet had considered the proposed mechanism to address this, but had concluded that it was fair and equitable for all Members to receive the same £500 pot. Cabinet had also considered the proposals for increased accessibility for community groups and a review of the branding, but had considered that the grant was something Members should promote as part of their role. The Committee was also reminded that the scheme had been successful and had featured in a good news story in *Broadland News* which detailed how the grants had been spent over the year.

Members raised various points of concern. These included: the areas in need in the District being denied through lack of a mechanism to distribute the underspend; that there was no means to fund awards retrospectively, and that the pot should be increased.

In response to a suggestion that officers at the Council should deal with bank details of the applicants, the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families advised the meeting that, as it was a Ward Member Grant, the Member was the data controller and had responsibility for the security of that data. He also confirmed that there was an audit trail for all grants that would show that the ground rules for making awards were being adhered to.

It was suggested that the £500 pot was not large enough in many cases and should be increased to £1,000. However, other Members considered that any increase in the grant should be discussed as part of the wider debate on the budget. A Member also suggested also that £500 was enough and it was the Member's responsibility to identify separate sources of funding to complement the grant.

In summary, the Chairman noted that there was a need in the District for Member grants that was not being met and he proposed that a vote be undertaken to decide whether reasons: B, C D and F, as detailed above, should be referred back to Cabinet.

Following a vote on these four issues, items C, D, and F were lost, but recommendation B, that a underspend mechanism be reconsidered by Cabinet, was carried.

REFERRED BACK TO CABINET

To reconsider introducing changes to the member-led ward grant system to utilise underspend in February each year.

The Committee adjourned at 11.24am and reconvened at 11.32am, when all of the Committee Members listed above were present.

201 RELOCATION OF THE ONE TEAM SERVICE AREAS

The Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) introduced her report, which had been requested by the Committee at its meeting on 27 October 2020, in response to concerns raised by Members about the relocation of the Planning department to South Norfolk House.

Joint team structures had been in existence since January 2020 and the Planning department had been a pilot service for working together since January 2018.

Covid-19 had an almost overnight impact on the way staff worked at the Council, with a reduction from 71 percent working in the office to about 12 percent working in the office and the remainder being provided with the equipment to work from home.

The importance of promoting the wellbeing of staff was an important element within the Council and, from an ongoing wellbeing survey, it had become apparent that staff had the desire for a hybrid approach to working, with some of the time being office-based and some of the time home-based. From discussions with every single member of staff in terms of their personal preference for working, the Council had been able to achieve an almost 90 percent match with the business need.

The wellbeing survey also highlighted that staff increasingly felt the need to be able to come together at one location as a service.

Therefore, a review had been undertaken to allocate a primary site for each service area. This was done on a Directorate basis to enable complementary services to be based near each other.

Risk assessments had been carried out to ensure that both offices were Covid-19 secure and assessment had also been undertaken to ensure a presence at each site, should a business need exist.

On 4 September 2020, following discussions with the Leaders and Deputy Leaders, an email had been sent to all Members confirming the steps that were being taken with regards to Directorate locations. The key points from the email were:

- Not everyone would return to the office full time.
- Having two sites enabled more people to have a working from home/office balance that staff asked for in the wellbeing surveys.
- The decision had been made as to where/which office services would be primarily based, recognising the need for a presence at the other site in some areas.
- Human Resources were now all based at South Norfolk House, as their primary site with a presence at Thorpe Lodge.
- The Elections Team were now primarily based at Thorpe Lodge. The Team had taken the opportunity of the cancelled elections to install a new IT platform and had benefited greatly from being based at the same location.

On the 5 October 2020 the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee received a report titled New Ways of Working Update, which covered office location and this item remained on their Work Programme.

It was important to note that Members would still have access to staff and support from officers, as they had done throughout the pandemic, either by phone, virtual meetings, or, when safe to do so, in person in the relevant office.

In response to the concern regarding the location of the Planning department it was important to consider it in the context of all services. For example, the Place Directorate, which Planning was part of, was primarily based at South Norfolk House, with a presence still available at Thorpe Lodge. A key customer service within the Place Directorate was CNC Building Control, a service which operated from The House for a number of local authorities.

It was clear that customers for the Planning service were much more willing and able to meet in ways other than face to face. Agents were more than happy to meet virtually, or attend Planning Committees over Zoom. Importantly, as already noted, it allowed staff to be able to work together as a team.

In contrast, the primary site of the People and Communities Directorate was Thorpe Lodge, with a presence at The House. Again, when discussions had taken place, it was felt that Thorpe Lodge, being closer to the City, would provide the best location for the service, due to the customer profile of the Directorate.

In response to some queries regarding the terms and conditions within the employment contracts of staff, the Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) advised the meeting that the terms and conditions within the new staff contracts introduced at the start of the year were being achieved. The contracts stipulated that employees could be expected to work from either site, although many worked from home. Mileage allowances could still be paid, if appropriate. All staff had discussed their individual situations and preferences with their line managers and arrangements could be put in place to best accommodate their needs. Most staff had expressed a preference, however, for a mix of working from home and coming together as a team in one location, which was proving to be a very effective means of working.

The Chairman suggested that the main driver for relocating the Planning department at South Norfolk House was co-locating with CNC.

In response, the Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) advised the meeting that there was no main driver for locating this service at The House, but the decision had been based on the best way for staff to work effectively and their wellbeing, as well as the best solution for customers.

Conversely the customer profile of the People and Communities Directorate leant itself to a location closer to the City. There were no figures at this stage on any savings that could be made; but the main driver remained the delivery of a high quality service to residents.

The Chairman advised the meeting that the main issue why the Committee had requested the report was the lack of transparency with the process and concerns over service provision and costs for residents, if they wanted to speak to officers as well as additional costs for officer travel between sites.

In response, the Director of Place reiterated that the location of the department would not have a detrimental effect on the service delivered to Broadland's residents, who would have access to a presence at Thorpe Lodge and if necessary access to a duty officer via Zoom at The House.

In response to a number of queries, the Managing Director advised the Committee that this issue related to the management of staff and how services should be organised to most effectively respond to the pandemic. It was clear, however, that working from home would remain a large element of staff deployment even after the pandemic, as it made for an agile and flexible workforce that could work in a number of ways according to the needs of the service. He emphasised that the most important factor was the delivery of services, rather than where staff were located.

The Leader advised Members that establishing one team of staff across the two Councils had been a key principle for collaboration and had worked well. An accommodation review had also been part of the Feasibility Study from the start and the Covid-19 pandemic had accelerated this process. He emphasised that it was difficult to predict what office accommodation would look like in the future, but it would be very different from that prior to the pandemic.

The Leader noted that the decision had been made to locate the Planning department in a Covid-19 safe environment that solved the problem of bringing together the team in one space when they came into the office. He added that he was sure that the Planning service would continue to deliver the high quality service that it had always done.

A Member suggested that the process of relocation had been flawed, as there had been no consultation and that whilst rationalisation was acceptable, customers would prefer to meet officers in person, rather than talking to someone who was working from home. He also suggested that this could be the beginning of the diminution of the sovereignty of each authority.

Other Member raised further concerns, such as how the service would be measured to ensure that there was no adverse effect on the residents of Broadland and questioned who had made the decision on where the Directorates would be located.

In response Members were advised that the performance of the Planning department would be reported in the usual way through the quarterly Performance Reports to Cabinet.

The Leader added that consideration of the accommodation review had been considered by the Joint Lead Members Group over the summer and, as already noted, by the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee.

The Managing Director advised the meeting that Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972, gave him, as Head of Paid Service, authority to deploy

staff in order to deliver the best service. The decision to exercise this authority had been taken following consultation with the Joint Lead Members Group and after the plans had been communicated by email to all Members with no adverse response. He added that the office environment had now changed significantly, with desks cleared and positioned to allow for social distancing, and that he did not expect to see this change post-pandemic.

The Chairman suggested that although the deployment of staff was a matter for the Head of Paid Service, it still could have been communicated to Members in a clearer and more transparent manner. He also questioned whether the new ways of working would cost more.

In response to the Chairman's last question, the Managing Director cited the example of the Elections Team, which was scheduled to be delivering some very complex elections in May 2021 and because they were now consolidated in one place would be able to deliver this with no increase in resources, at present. Similarly with the HR Team based at The House, savings were being made in line with the £8m projection in the Feasibility Study.

In response to the Chairman's suggestions about better communication, the Managing Director suggested the following wording in order to give some assurance to Members:

In the event that a matter was deemed to be novel or contentious and was not otherwise reported elsewhere, a report would be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

AGREED

1. To note the position with the location of the One Team; and
2. To confirm that in the event that a matter was deemed to be novel or contentious and was not otherwise reported elsewhere, a report would be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

The Committee adjourned at 13.05pm and reconvened at 13.10pm, when all of the Committee Members listed above were present.

202 AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE

The Housing Enabling Officer introduced her report, which provided an update on the delivery of affordable housing across the District, as well as the impact that Covid-19 had on projected affordable housing completions and an update on the activity of Registered Providers.

Members were asked to note a typographical error at paragraph 3.2, which stated an affordable housing target of 33 percent. This should, in fact, be 28 percent, which was in line with the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Broadland had achieved above this figure in most recent years with affordable housing delivery of 30 percent of all new build sites. The majority of these dwellings were Section 106 properties delivered by developers as part of their planning obligations. However, Members were asked to note that delivery of affordable housing was expected to be lower for

the current financial year due to the pandemic. The delay had been around three to six months and it was anticipated that this would pick up once the pandemic was over.

Registered Providers were bringing forth a range of schemes across the District. Clarion was taking additional open market units at a site in Newton St Faith to increase the on-site affordable housing delivery from ten percent to 49 percent. Clarion had also confirmed that it saw Broadland as a high priority local authority for the eastern region. Many other Registered Providers were also looking to expand their stock of social housing by purchasing open market properties in Broadland.

In response to a query raised at an earlier meeting regarding the lead-in time for delivery of one and two bedroomed housing in and around the City, it was understood that the query related to private rented stock and, therefore, it was a question of whether private developers were providing these properties, rather than relating to affordable housing. Appendix 2 to the report showed that Broadland had delivered a very good mix of properties during 2019/20, with 43 1-bedroomed and 61 2-bedroomed properties out a total of 137 affordable homes.

A shift in need had seen a greater requirement for 3-bedroomed family homes recently and the Enabling Team at Broadland was now putting a greater emphasis on developers providing this type of property.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that although only a relatively small number of wheelchair adapted properties had been delivered, the Enabling Team was seeking to increase this number.

AGREED

To note the delivery of affordable housing in the District.

203 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Senior Governance Officer took the Committee through their Work Programme.

As an update to the published Work Programme, Members were advised of the following:

A report on Early Intervention and Public Safety would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 26 January 2021 to enable members to make timely comments and recommendations to officers, prior to a final report being considered by Cabinet in May 2021.

A report on The Provision of Leisure Principles would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 March 2021, prior to the drafting of a report for the May 2021 Cabinet, to allow for early input from the Committee.

It was noted that the item on Broadband and mobile phone coverage in the District, was on hold until after January 2021, when it was expected that data from Openreach would be available regarding the two percent of properties with no connectivity in the District.

Following a brief update from Cllr Copplestone, the Council's representative on Water Resources East, regarding Water – supply, management and climate change, it was agreed that updates would be provided to the Committee as and when appropriate. The Work Programme would be updated accordingly. The Committee was also advised that a Water Cycle Study was also being carried out as part of the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

The Senior Governance Officer advised the Committee that she would be arranging training for Members in the New Year.

The meeting closed at 1.45pm.

DRAFT

BUDGET UPDATE – 2nd WAVE COVID FUNDING

Report Author: Rodney Fincham
Assistant Director Finance
rodney.fincham@broadland.gov.uk

Portfolio: Finance

Wards Affected: All

Purpose of the Report: To request additional funding is released to support the Council's response to Covid 19.

Recommendations:

Cabinet to recommend to Council the following:

1. To increase the general 20/21 Covid 19 emergency budgets by £250,000 to provide additional resource to support the Council's response to Covid 19. To be funded by the Government's Covid grant.
2. To increase the housing 20/21 Covid 19 emergency budget by £50,000 to meet the ongoing need for homelessness support. To be funded by the Government's Covid grant.
3. To agree that £350,000 should be including in the 21/22 budgets to help cover the cost of responding to the Covid 19 pandemic, to be funded from the Council's general reserve.
4. To increase the BDC 20/21 Information Technology Capital Budget by £50,000, to improve the technology in the council chamber.

1 COVID 20/21 Budget

1.1 Cabinet on 16 June agreed to increase the following budgets.

	Original Budget £'00	Change £'000	Revised Budget £'000
General Allowance for Covid 19 costs	0	250	250
Housing costs	154	250	404

1.2 These budgets have proved sufficient to meet the demands during the first wave of Covid 19. Although it should be noted that many officers worked significant extra unpaid hours and extra resources were able to be redeployed as some services (particularly the SNC leisure service) were curtailed.

1.3 As we have now entered the second wave it is important that the Council prepares for potential Covid challenges over the next few months. In particular if we wish to continue our business as usual activity at the same time as responding to the second wave there will be a need to be an increase in resource.

1.4 Officers have therefore undertaken a review of our state of readiness and have identified the following needs during the current financial year:

Requirement	Total Cost £'000	BDC Cost £'000	SNC Cost £'000
General Covid 19 Response Requirement			
2 FTE Housing Solution Officers to meet demand Need likely to continue for up to 18 months.	40	18	22
5 FTEs to meet potential surge in call volumes to community hub. Proposal is to redeploy staff from leisure, as they have the relevant skills and training, with leisure posts backfilled as required.	72	33	39
2 FTE community connectors to support: community capacity development; response in Broadland to identify and support shielded and isolated people, as well as support track and trace and support COVID recovery (BDC only) Need to employ on 18 month fixed term.	33	33	
Agency staffing to maintain waste service (SNC only). The figure is very much worst case scenario taking into account the loss of staff and where leisure staff cannot be redeployed to backfill, in the first wave we redeployed 12 leisure staff to the depot.	140		140
Continued use of hire cars to maintain 2 people in a refuse Collection Vehicle cab £7,500 per month	45		45
1FTE resource in HR to support bank of agency staff and recruitment of staff	16	7	9
1 FTE resource in HR to support Covid 19 potential cases within our organisation and OD / HR project work	14	6	8
1 FTE resources in IT to bolster team to meet demands of Covid and BAU work	26	12	14

Requirement	Total Cost £'000	BDC Cost £'000	SNC Cost £'000
1 FTE resource in democratic services to meet the additional demands of servicing remote meetings.	14	6	8
1FTE Electoral Services Officer to support the recruitment & training off external staff and to open postal votes.	14	6	8
0.5 FTE resource in NDR team to deal with new business grant schemes Likely to be agency resource due to need for NDR experience	25	11	14
0.5 FTE Resource for food safety and EHO team to meet additional demands to support businesses.	50	23	27
Extra 4 FTE resource to backfill consultancy roles where the officers are redeployed to support the Covid 19 response.	99	45	54
Extra 1 FTE resource to provide additional Comms capacity to support Covid 19 response	18	8	10
Extra 1 FTE admin post within Economic Recovery team to assist the team with administrative tasks and allow existing resource to be focussed on project delivery and direct business support	14	6	8
An expansion of our economic develop team to support the economic recovery work	100	45	55
Extra 2 FTE posts to support the discretionary grants programme for a 2 month period. These are likely to be funded by a specific grant from Government. But are included here for completeness.	12	5	7
	732	264	468
Homelessness Response Requirement			
Ongoing need for additional homelessness support at £16k a month Need likely to continue for up to 18 months.	96	43	53

1.5 Based on the above Members are therefore requested to increase the following budgets.

	Original Budget £'00	Revised Budget £'000	Proposed change £'000	New Budget £'000
General Allowance for Covid 19 costs	0	250	250	500
Housing costs	154	404	50	454

2 COVID 21/22 Budget

- 2.1 It is increasingly clear that the effects of Covid 19 will continue for many months if not years. As a Council we need to be prepared for this, in order to help our residents and our businesses recover.
- 2.2 In order to ensure a sustainable operating model, to meet heightened demand over the next 18 months, officers have identified that there will be a need to continue with extra support in the following areas, over and above our normal business as usual.
- The demands of the housing service will continue requiring extra housing solutions officers throughout 21/22.
 - The need to enhance our community connector capacity.
 - An increased demand on our housing benefit service.
 - An increased demand on our council tax and business rates recovery service.
 - An increased need for support from our economic development team.
- 2.3 In total it is anticipated that the Councils will need to continue to employ between 10-15 extra staff in order to help our residents and our businesses recover.
- 2.4 Furthermore, if demand continues at current levels there will be an increase in homelessness costs of up to £100,000.

Members are therefore requested to agree that officers should prepare the 21/22 budgets on the basis of including up to £350,000 to deal with the ongoing effects of Covid and that this should be funded from the Council's general reserve.

3 COUNCIL CHAMBER TECHNOLOGY

- 3.1 The current council chamber is not set up to support hybrid meetings i.e. where some Members attend in person and others attend virtually.
- 3.2 Given the success of virtual meetings it is envisaged that there will need to support hybrid meetings going forward.
- 3.3 A project therefore needs to be undertaken to work out how to improve the technology in the Council Chamber, and this is likely to conclude that we will need to invest in new equipment. At this stage we are only just starting to explore options, and thus there is no project timeline or accurate costing information available. Furthermore, if members wish to progress this quickly it will be necessary to re-prioritise existing IT projects in order to free up capacity to implement this.

Members are therefore requested to agree to increase the BDC 20/21 Information Technology Capital Budget by £50,000, to provide funding to support the outcome of the review of the Council Chamber technology.

4 FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVID 19

4.1 There have been numerous changes made to the budgets this year to respond to Covid 19.

4.2 The following table therefore sets out the overall position to date in respect of the current financial year.

	£'000	£'000
COVID-19 Emergency Funding for Local Government		
- Tranche 1 – May	-51	
- Tranche 2 – May	-1,301	
- Tranche 3 – Aug	-173	
- Tranche 4 – Nov	-100	-1,625
Allocation of Funding		
- General Expenditure (including this report)	500	
- Homelessness Expenditure (including this report)	300	
- Cost of Council tax support	224	
- Reduction in Council tax collection	120	
- Contribution to Norfolk Strategic Fund	150	
- Rollout of laptops	115	
- Member IT	35	
- Additional regulatory expenditure	45	
- Hardship money	100	1,589
Lost Income		
- Estimated lost income	431	
- Offset by compensation grant	-215	216
Saving used to offset pressures		-265
Overall position (positive is worse off/ negative is better off)		-85

5 OTHER OPTIONS

5.1 Members have discretion to agree the requested budget changes, or propose alternatives.

6 ISSUES AND RISKS

6.1 Resource Implications – See section 5.

6.2 Legal Implications – The Council has a legal duty to ensure its financial position remains robust, whilst at the same time responding to the needs of the community.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet to recommend to Council the following:

1. To increase the general 20/21 Covid 19 emergency budgets by £250,000 to provide additional resource to support the Council's response to Covid 19. To be funded by the Government's Covid grant.
2. To increase the housing 20/21 Covid 19 emergency budget by £50,000 to meet the ongoing need for homelessness support. To be funded by the Government's Covid grant.
3. To agree that £350,000 should be including in the 21/22 budgets to help cover the cost of responding to the Covid 19 pandemic, to be funded from the Council's general reserve.
4. To increase the BDC 20/21 Information Technology Capital Budget by £50,000, to improve the technology in the council chamber.

Background Papers

None

BUSINESS RATE POOLING 2021/22

Report Author: Rodney Fincham
Assistant Director Finance
rodney.fincham@broadland.gov.uk

Portfolio: Finance

Wards Affected: All

Purpose of the Report: To seek agreement to continue with Business Rates Pooling for 2021/22.

Recommendations:

Cabinet to agree:

1. In principle to continue with Business Rates Pooling for 2021/22.
2. That the Assistant Director Finance, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Finance, is authorised to withdraw BDC from the Norfolk pool, if the latest modelling undertaken by the Norfolk authorities no longer demonstrates a financial benefit from pooling.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Under the Business Rates Retention Scheme local authorities are able to come together, on a voluntary basis, to form a business rates pool.
- 1.2 In many cases, authorities that pool can be better off collectively. This is because the levy rate for a pool as a whole can be lower than that for individual pool members if they remain outside the pool – ie pool authorities get to keep more of any business rates growth.
- 1.3 Norfolk has formed a Norfolk wide pool since 2014/15, and to date has retained over £28m additional business rates growth due to pooling.
- 1.4 The Norfolk authorities have agreed that any additional retained growth is allocated to the 'Joint Investment Fund' which is used to fund projects across Norfolk.

2 2021/22 NDR FORECAST

- 2.1 A summary of the latest “best estimate” NDR forecasts for 2021/22 is shown in the table below. It is important to note that the districts have highlighted significant uncertainty and / or limited confidence in the forecasts at this stage.

	Baseline £m	Safety Net Level £m	Forecast £m	Levy £m	% reduction to move into safety- net
Breckland	3.959	3.662	4.443	0.242	4.7%
Broadland	2.876	2.660	4.032	0.578	8.9%
Great Yarmouth	3.841	3.553	3.690	n/a	0.9%
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	5.491	5.079	7.785	1.147	11.1%
North Norfolk	3.225	2.983	4.119	0.447	6.8%
Norwich	5.987	5.538	6.198	0.106	1.8%
South Norfolk	3.121	2.887	5.829	1.354	16.7%
Total				3.873	

- 2.2 This shows that pooling could generate approximately £3.873m for the Joint Investment Fund in 2021/22.
- 2.3 It also shows that maximum financial gain can be achieved by all Norfolk Councils being in the pool. Although Great Yarmouth are not forecasting a levy, they are also not in a safety net position and therefore do not impact on the gain from pooling. However, both Great Yarmouth and Norwich require only a relatively small adverse change in the forecast gross rates (0.9% and 1.8% respectively) before they would move into a safety net position.

3 POOLING RISKS

- 3.1 The pooling invitation for 2021/22 is unchanged from that in previous years. The Government would not support the 2021/22 Pool until or unless the Pool as a whole fell below the safety-net position.
- 3.2 The risk of pooling therefore remains that significant levels of losses / reductions in business rates income would have to be absorbed from Norfolk local authority retained rates, and that the gain of pooling overall would be insufficient to address these losses.
- 3.3 Financial risks to the Pool are considered to be higher this year than they have been when pooling proposals were submitted in previous years.
- 3.4 The largest financial risk to the Pool relates to the risks to all local authorities' business rates income which are considered to be significantly higher due to the impact of COVID-19 and the level of uncertainty around continued Government

support for businesses. This increases the risk that authorities will move to a safety-net position requiring pool funding.

- 3.5 In addition, there has still been no final resolution of the NHS Trusts legal appeal on application for business rates relief. In September 2019, the impact of a successful challenge by the NHS Trusts for Norfolk was estimated to be in the region of £40m if settled in 2020-21, of which £20m would be borne locally. There would also be an ongoing impact in future years of a successful challenge, permanently reducing the rates take in Norfolk by about £4-5m.
- 3.6 There is also a significant risk that Government could announce a full or partial NDR reset in the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review or, in the Provisional Local Government settlement announcement. If this reset affected 2021/22 then it is likely that the benefit of pooling would reduce or disappear altogether. If this happened then the provisional decision to pool would have to be reviewed, and potentially revoked.

4 TIMELINE / NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 The following table sets out the timetable / next steps regarding business rates pooling for 2021/22.

16 Sep 20	The Government (MHCLG) issued an invitation to form business rates pools for 2021/22. By law, existing pooling arrangements continue from year to year unless they are revoked.
24 Sep 20	Norfolk Chief Finance Officers considered the options for establishing a Business Rates pool in 2021-22. Chief Finance Officers agreed that options for pooling in 2021/22 should be referred to Norfolk Leaders.
09 Oct 20	Norfolk Leaders agreed that Norfolk authorities in principle intend to pool for 2021/22, and agreed to delegate to Chief Finance Officers to determine the optimum membership of the pool to maximise the financial gain for the whole county based on forecasts due to be provided.
15 Oct 20	Norfolk Chief Finance Officers agreed to pool with the current membership.
23 Oct 20	The Lead authority for the Norfolk pool (Norfolk County Council) confirmed the current pooling arrangements by the deadline of 23 October 2020.
End Nov / Early Dec 20	Updated forecasts due to inform final decision-making.
Date to be confirmed	Provisional local government finance settlement
28 days after provisional settlement	The Local Government Finance Act 1988 allows members of a pool to have a period of 28 days from the date of publication of the provisional local government finance settlement to make a request to revoke a pool. In such an event the only option is to dissolve the pool entirely, not alter membership.

5 OTHER OPTIONS

- 5.1 Members could consider the risk of pooling to be too great and withdraw from the pool. This would cause the pool to collapse, and Norfolk would lose the opportunity to generate approximately £3.8m for the Joint Investment Fund in 2021/22.

6 ISSUES AND RISKS

- 6.1 Resource Implications – Included in body of report.
- 6.2 Legal Implications – If none of the pooling authorities revoke the pool within 28 days of the provisional finance settlement, then the Norfolk Business Rates pool will continue for 2021/22.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet to agree:

- 7.1 In principle to continue with Business Rates Pooling for 2021/22.
- 7.2 That the Assistant Director Finance, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Finance, is authorised to withdraw BDC from the Norfolk pool, if the latest modelling undertaken by the Norfolk authorities no longer demonstrates a financial benefit from pooling.

Background Papers

None

REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVES

Report Author:	Madeleine Bussens Senior Finance Business Partner madeleine.bussens@broadland.gov.uk
Portfolio:	Finance
Wards Affected:	All
Purpose of the Report:	To review the Council's Earmarked Reserves.

Recommendations:

Cabinet to **recommend to Council** the following changes to the Council's Reserves:

1. To separate the Bridge Maintenance Reserve into two reserves.
 - a. One to be named Marriott's Way with an allocation of £60,000
 - b. One to be named Bure Valley Railway with an allocation of £270,000.
2. The addition to the following Reserves:
 - c. IT Reserve - £1.3m.
 - d. Broadland Growth Reserve - £5m.
3. The creation of the following Reserves:
 - e. Refuse Services - £3m.
 - f. Food Innovation Centre Reserve - £1.86m.

Cabinet to confirm that:

The Assistant Director Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, has the authority to agree additional economic growth projects to be funded from the Economic Success Fund.

1 GENERAL FUND RESERVE

- 1.1 The General Fund Reserve is the main unallocated reserve held by the Council. The balance on the General Fund Reserve as at 31 March 2020 was £15.346m. The current recommended minimum level of the General Fund Reserve, set by the Council's S151 Officer, is £2m.

2 EARMARKED RESERVES

2.1 Earmarked Reserves are amounts that have been set aside to provide financing for specific future events. The following table shows the breakdown of the Council's Earmarked Reserves.

Reserve	Usage	Balance 31 Mar 2020 £'000	Changes agreed by Cabinet 3 Nov 20
Repairs & Renewals (General)	To finance significant irregular replacement, repair or maintenance works to Council owned assets.	322	
Repairs & Renewals (Street Lighting)	To finance replacement and maintenance to footway lighting managed on behalf of town and parish councils.	70	
External Funding Reserve	To cover projects that are funded by specific government grants and contributions.	221	Reserve to be closed
Community Right to Challenge Reserve	To meet expenditure incurred on the challenges to potential community asset sales.	46	Reserve to be closed
Systems Thinking Reserve	To fund future Systems Thinking projects.	70	Reserve to be closed
Business Rates Reserve	To offset the effects of successful appeals against business rates charges.	2,703	
Economic Success Fund	To create jobs and foster economic growth within the Broadland area.	284	
Broadland Growth Reserve	To fund projects to encourage economic growth within the district.	2,177	
Spend Equalisation	To smooth out fluctuations in revenue expenditure incurred in irregular annual patterns.	688	
Insurance	To cover increased excess charges that were agreed as part of the revised insurance contract.	59	
Building Control Trading	To cover expected losses in revenue on the formation of the CNC Building Control Partnership.	14	
Housing Assistance Policy	To earmark repayments of housing loans in accordance with the Housing Assistance Policy.	260	
Developer Contributions – Adopted Land	To earmark S106 agreement receipts for the future maintenance of adopted amenity land.	445	
Developer Contributions - Play Areas	To earmark receipts received under S106 Agreements for the provision of children's play areas.	131	
Neighbourhood Plans - Front Runner	To fund work on the district's Forward Plan.	203	
Community Infrastructure Levy Reserve – 5% admin	To contain income from the Community Infrastructure Levy for expenditure on infrastructure projects.	393	
Community Infrastructure Levy Reserve - Surcharge	To contain income from the Community Infrastructure Levy for expenditure on infrastructure projects	10	
I.T. Reserve	To fund a rolling programme of hardware and software upgrades	305	
Bridge Maintenance Reserve	To fund maintenance on Marriott's Way bridges.	330	
Total		8,733	

3 PROPOSALS

Suggested Separation

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Bridge Maintenance Reserve is separated into two reserves. This will make it easier to identify the monies attributed to each element.
- 3.2 The balance of this reserve to be attributed to each reserve has been calculated based on the number of bridges as follows:
- There are 5 bridges along Marriott's Way, and 19 bridges and 4 culverts along the BVR. Therefore
- MW bridge reserve to be $\text{£}330\text{k} \times 5 / 28 = \text{c£}60\text{k}$
 - BVR bridge reserve to be $\text{£}330\text{k} \times 23 / 28 = \text{c£}270\text{k}$

Additions to Reserves

- 3.3 Over the next few years, there is a need to invest in updating a number of our IT software applications. It is therefore proposed to set aside a further £1.3m into the IT reserve to fund this investment.
- 3.4 The Council has an ambition to provide new housing in the district, potentially by investing via Broadland Growth. It is therefore proposed to increase Broadland Growth Reserve by £5m to set aside funds to support this initiative.

New Reserves

- 3.5 It is proposed that two new reserves are created as follows:
- A Refuse Services Reserve of £3m is created. This would be to help fund the purchase of a new fleet of refuse vehicles, and improvements to the depot. This investment will be required regardless of the new contract arrangements.
 - A Food Innovation Centre Reserve of £1.86 is created. This funding is required to support the new Food Innovation Hub. This project is currently approaching RIBA stage 3 sign off.

4 GOVERNANCE ON THE USE OF RESERVES

- 4.1 The BDC Constitution states under the Financial Procedure Rules, section 9 supplementary estimates:

*9.5 The Assistant Director Finance will have authority to create a supplementary estimate for any use of earmarked reserves, e.g. the repairs and renewals equalisation funds, **provided it is within Council policy.***

- 4.2 The key phrase here is 'within Council policy'. Unless it has been agreed within the **Budget and Policy Framework** for the Council to incur expenditure on a particular project then the Assistant Director of Finance has no authority to act.
- 4.3 In reality this means that either:

- Within the annual budget approval process, it will have been agreed that a new project will be undertaken and funded from a named earmarked reserve, or
- A specific report will have been agreed by Cabinet / Council to start a new project, again to be funded from a named earmarked reserve, or
- A delegation will have been agreed by Cabinet / Council for a specific reserve to be used at the discretion of particular officers / members.

4.4 It is not proposed as part of this report to agree a delegation for the two new reserves that are proposed to be created. Approval to spend will only be given by Cabinet / Council once firm proposals are put forward for approval.

4.5 Members may however wish to put in place / review the delegations for the other reserve. In particular:

- The Assistant Director Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, has the authority to agree additional economic growth projects to be funded from the Economic Success Fund.

5 SUMMARY OF CHANGES

5.1 The following table summarises the proposed changes.

Reserve	Balance 31 March 2020 £'000	Changes Cabinet 3 Nov 20 £'000	Suggested Split £'000	Additions £'000	New Reserves £'000	New Balance £'000
Repairs & Renewals (General)	322					322
Repairs & Renewals (Street Lighting)	70					70
External Funding Reserve	221	-221				0
Community Right to Challenge Reserve	46	-46				0
Systems Thinking Reserve	70	-70				0
Business Rates Reserve	2,703					2,703
Economic Success Fund	284					284
Broadland Growth Reserve	2,177			5,000		7,177
Spend Equalisation	688					688
Insurance	59					59
Building Control Trading	14					14
Housing Assistance Policy	260					260
Developer Contributions – Adopted Land	445					445

Reserve	Balance 31 March 2020 £'000	Changes Cabinet 3 Nov 20 £'000	Suggested Split £'000	Additions £'000	New Reserves £'000	New Balance £'000
Developer Contributions - Play Areas	131					131
Neighbourhood Plans - Front Runner	203					203
Community Infrastructure Levy Reserve – 5% Admin	393					393
Community Infrastructure Levy Reserve – Surcharge for Late Payment	10					10
I.T. Reserve	305			1,300		1,605
Bridge Maintenance Reserve – Marriott's Way	330		-270			60
Bridge Maintenance Reserve – Bure Valley Railway	0		270			270
Refuse Services					3,000	3,000
Food Innovation Centre					1,860	1,860
Total Earmarked Reserves	8,733	-337	0	6,300	4,860	19,556
General Fund Reserve	15,346	337	0	-6,300	-4,860	4,523

6 OTHER OPTIONS

- 6.1 Members have discretion to earmark reserves for any legitimate purpose. Members are therefore able to accept or reject the above proposals and / or propose other changes.

7 ISSUES AND RISKS

7.1 Resource Implications

The creation of the new Earmarked Reserves will reduce the General Fund Reserve to £4.523m. This is still above the minimum recommended level of £2m.

7.2 Legal Implications

None

7.3 Equality Implications

None

7.4 Environmental Impact

There may a positive environmental impact as a result of improving the Refuse Depot.

7.5 Crime and Disorder

None

7.6 Risks

None not mentioned elsewhere in this report

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet to recommend to Council the following changes to the Council's Reserves:

1. To separate the Bridge Maintenance Reserve into two reserves.
 - g. One to be named Marriott's way with an allocation of £60,000
 - h. One to be named Bure Valley Railway with an allocation of £270,000.
2. The addition to the following Reserves:
 - i. IT Reserve - £1.3m.
 - j. Broadland Growth Reserve - £5m.
3. The creation of the following Reserves:
 - k. Refuse Services - £3m.
 - l. Food Innovation Centre Reserve - £1.86m.

Cabinet to confirm that:

The Assistant Director Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, has the authority to agree additional economic growth projects to be funded from the Economic Success Fund.

Background Papers

None