

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Review of Cabinet Agenda** held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on **Tuesday 27 February 2018** at **10.00am** when there were present:

Mr D G Harrison – Chairman

Mr D Buck

Mr J J Emsell

Mr G K Nurden

Mrs J K Coplestone

Mr R F Grady

Mr D C Ward

Also in attendance were the Head of Finance and Revenue Services, Head of Planning, Local Taxation Manager, Corporate Finance Manager, Planning Projects and Landscape Manager and the Committee Officer (JO).

147 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Adams, Mrs Bannock, Mr Everett, Mr Peck, Mr Tapp and Mrs Vincent.

148 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CABINET REPORTS

149 COUNCIL TAX – LOCAL DISCOUNT FOR CARE LEAVERS

The report explained that the Council, as a Billing Authority, was being encouraged to offer a reduction in Council Tax for young people between 18 to 21 years age who were leaving care. The discount was intended to allow them to live independently and give them more time to learn how to manage their finances at a vulnerable stage in their lives.

Norfolk County Council, as a corporate parent, had a responsibility to support care leavers and had agreed, in principle, to fund 75 percent of the cost of the discount. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 would come into force on 1 April 2018, which would also place duties on Broadland in relation to the welfare of children and young people including care leavers.

At present there were five care leavers in the district that were solely responsible for Council Tax. If the discount was agreed the net cost to Broadland would be approximately £1,074 in this financial year, with Norfolk County Council bearing the remaining £3,221 of the costs.

If the County Council did not provide the funding the gross cost for Broadland would be £4,295.

Members supported the proposal and noted that the initiative would assist a particularly vulnerable group of people for a relatively small cost, even if the Council had to fund the discount fully.

It was also noted that this was a discretionary local discount that could be revisited if the costs became excessive and that the discount could even be extended to an older age group, if it was felt appropriate.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Options (1 and 2)

to

- (1) support adoption of the Policy with effect from 1 April 2018 *providing* Norfolk County Council agree on 13 March 2018 to fund 75 percent of the cost of the discount; or
- (2) agree that, should Norfolk County Council *not agree* to financially support the discount, then the Policy be adopted with effect from 1 April 2018 with the *full cost* borne by Broadland District Council (approximately £4,295 per year).

150 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION MUTUAL FOUNDING MEMBER

The report set out a proposal by the Local Government Association for developing an alternative to conventional insurance market products for local authorities, by forming a new Mutual for local government which would be owned and controlled by its members.

It was proposed that the Council participated in the scheme as a Founding Member of the Local Government Mutual. The financial liability of the Council would be limited to a £100 guarantee and there would be no contribution to the set up costs of the new Mutual. There would also be no obligation for the Council to use the Mutual in the future.

It was emphasised that the Council's current insurance arrangements were not due to expire until 31 May 2020 and that any proposals for taking up the services of the Mutual would need to be agreed by Cabinet following the presentation of a business case.

The Committee supported the proposal and noted that utilising a Mutual could be an effective means of making savings as well as income if the Council became a Founding Member.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Options (1, 2 and 3)

to

- (1) support the Council's participation as a Founding Member of Local Government Mutual and nominate the Council's Leader, Finance Portfolio Holder or relevant elected Member to be a Founding Member Committee Member and agree that attendance at any meetings be an approved duty under the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme; and
- (2) authorise the Head of Finance and Revenue Services to share the Council's relevant risk transfer and protection data with the LGA officers working on the project on a strictly confidential basis; and
- (3) agree to instruct officers to consider the business case for utilising the Mutual at the appropriate time and to report accordingly to Cabinet with a recommendation.

151 NORTH RACKHEATH MASTERPLAN

The report presented the North Rackheath masterplan, which was intended to stimulate development in one of the largest allocations of residential land within the Growth Triangle Area Action Plan and was crucial for the growth strategy of the Greater Norwich area.

The masterplan had been funded by the Council with money that had been allocated to Broadland by the Government for the now defunct eco-town programme and had been overseen by a joint board consisting of representatives from the Council, Barratt / David William Homes and the majority landowner (Manor Farms Ltd).

Members noted that the masterplan only proposed a total of ten percent affordable housing, in contrast with the Council's current planning policy requirement of 33 percent. In response, the Committee was advised that at present the masterplan was only able to progress as a viable proposition if it delivered no more than ten percent affordable housing. It was emphasised that only a very limited number of developers were large enough to deliver the masterplan and they would not commit to it if this figure was higher.

If the masterplan was endorsed it was expected that the developers would progress an application for submission to the Council later this year, with the final decision to be made by the Planning Committee.

Members were also advised that funding might be available through public subsidy, from bodies such as the Local Enterprise Partnership and Homes England, to increase the percentage of affordable homes at the site. An improvement in the economy might also lead to higher levels of affordable housing being achieved as future phases progressed.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

to endorse the North Rackheath masterplan.

The meeting closed at 10.51am