

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Review of Cabinet Agenda

Agenda

Date

Tuesday 4 February 2020

Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Mr S Riley
(Chairman)

Mr A D Adams
(Vice Chairman)

Mr S C Beadle
Mr N J Brennan
Mr P E Bulman
Ms S J Catchpole
Ms N J Harpley
Ms S I Holland
Mr K S Kelly

Mr D King
Mr M L Murrell
Mr G K Nurden
Mrs S M Prutton
Mrs C E Ryman-Tubb
Mr N C Shaw

Substitutes Conservative

Mr A D Crotch
Mr J F Fisher
Mr R R Foulger
Ms R M Grattan
Mr K G Leggett
Mr I J Mackie
Mr G F Peck
Miss J L Thomas
Mrs K A Vincent
Mr J M Ward

Substitutes Liberal Democrat

Mr D G Harrison
Mrs C Karimi-Ghovanlou
Dr K E Lawrence
Mr D Roper

Substitute Labour

Mrs B Cook

Time

10.00 am

Place

Council Chamber
Thorpe Lodge
1 Yarmouth Road
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

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

Under the above Regulations, any person may take photographs, film and audio-record the proceedings and report on all public meetings. If you do not wish to be filmed / recorded, please notify an officer prior to the start of the meeting. The Council has a protocol, a copy of which will be displayed outside of each meeting room and is available on request.

**The Chairman will ask if anyone wishes to
film / record this meeting**

A G E N D A

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| 5 | Chairman's Announcements | |
| 6 | 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.

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|----------|------------------------|------------------|
| 7 | Cabinet Reports | To follow |
|----------|------------------------|------------------|

To consider the Cabinet reports in respect of the 11 February 2020 meeting.

N.B. the Cabinet Agenda will be published on the Council's website on 30 January 2020.

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.

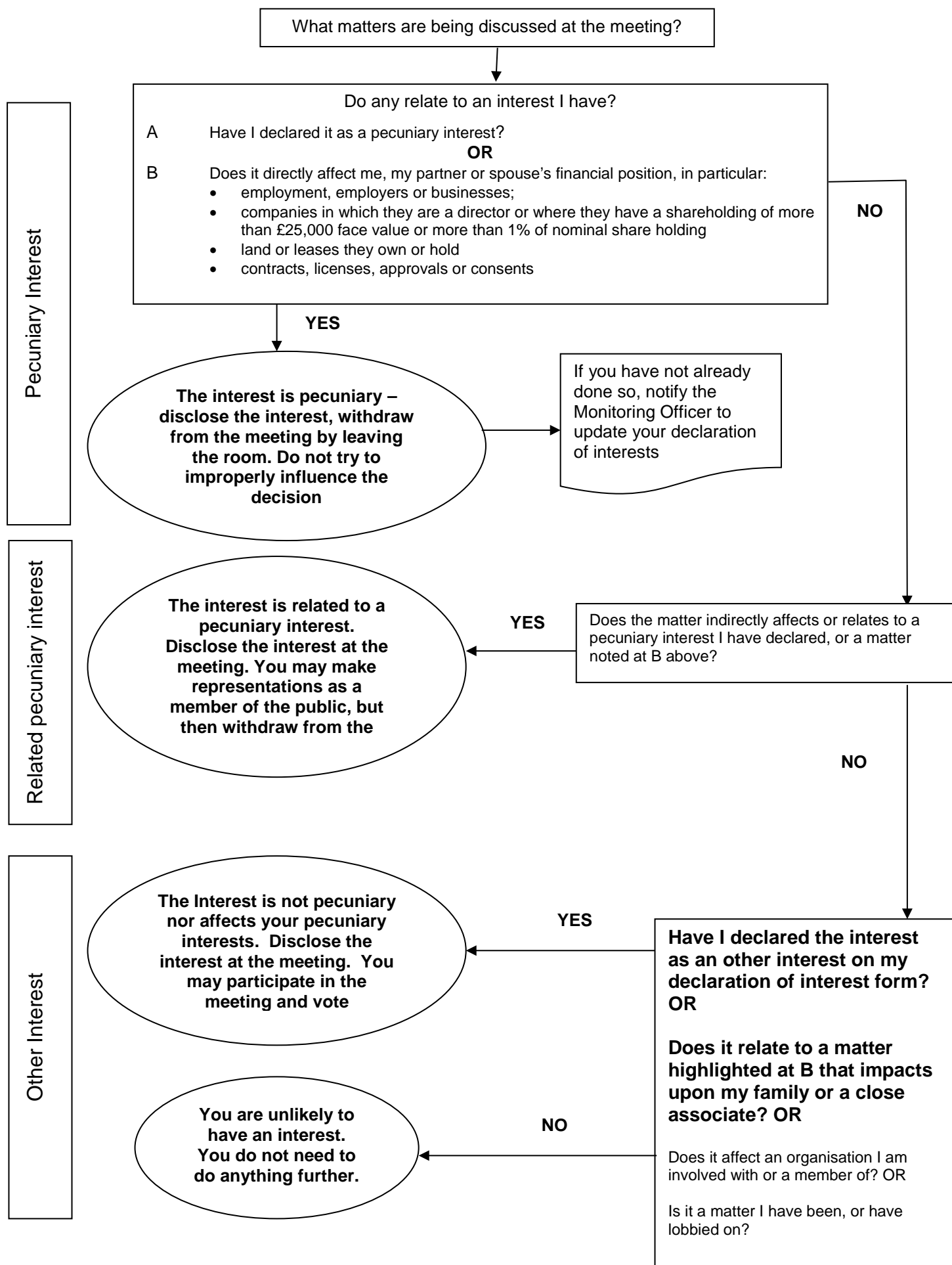
Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be another interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.

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 the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on **Tuesday 28 January 2020** at **10.00 am** when there were present:

Mr S Riley – Chairman

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

Ms S J Catchpole
Ms S I Holland
Mr M L Murrell
Mr G K Nurden

Mrs S M Prutton
Mrs C E Ryman-Tubb
Mr N C Shaw

Mrs J Copplestone, Mr J Emsell, Mrs L Hempsall, Mrs J Leggett, Mrs T Mancini-Boyle, Mr S Vincent and Mr F Whymark were in attendance for item 96 - Budget Questions for Cabinet.

David Allfrey, Infrastructure Delivery Manager Community & Environmental Services - Highways was in attendance for item 97 - Broadland Northway.

Also in attendance were the Director Place, Director Resources, Assistant Director Finance, Senior Governance Officer and the Committee Officer (JO).

94 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Ms Harpley and Mr Kelly.

95 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2020 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Minute No: 93 Renewal of Microsoft Licencing

The Chairman of the Audit Committee asked Members to note that this item had been presented by an officer, which, in his opinion, had been contrary to the new process that he had proposed. He considered that reports for expenditure above £100,000 should be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by the respective Portfolio Holder, not an officer. This would demonstrate that that Portfolio Holder had ownership of the decision and would be fully accountable for it.

In response the Portfolio Holder for Finance confirmed that Portfolio Holders presented reports at Cabinet already, but if given notice in a timely manner would be willing to attend the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as well.

96 BUDGET QUESTIONS FOR CABINET

The responses from Cabinet to the Committee's questions were tabled at the meeting and are appended to these Minutes at Appendix 1.

The following additional comments, responses and supplementary questions and were noted by the Committee:

- (1) Is the budget adequate to support all the objectives regarding transitioning and fit in with the four-year plan?

The Committee were satisfied with the response received.

- (2) Are you going to make more innovative use of the Council's usable reserves (e.g. Community Land Trusts)?

Initial discussions regarding Community Land Trusts had taken place and there was a desire to promote such schemes. Funding for this would be from existing resources, but officers would also seek to access external funding as well. If any additional resource was required it would be brought to Cabinet on a case by case basis with a business case.

- (3) What is the size of the Council's usable and unusable reserves and what are they committed to?

The Committee was advised that a large part of the Council's unusable reserves were due to the Council's liabilities in relation to the deficit of the Norfolk Pension Fund.

- (4) Are you incorporating the Broadland Business Plan into the Medium-Term Financial Plan?

The Committee were satisfied with Cabinet's response.

- (5) Has the Greater Norwich Local Plan been incorporated into the Medium-Term Financial Plan?

The Committee were satisfied with Cabinet's response.

- (5a) What financial plans to deal with the infrastructure requirements of the Greater Norwich Local Plan were in place?

There were a whole range of sources of funding for the delivery of the Local Plan, including private sector, Business Rates and even EU funding.

The three Greater Norwich Councils were the only local authorities in the country to pool their Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This money was then drawn down to fund a range of infrastructure projects set out in the Joint Five Year Investment Plan. CIL was going to be reviewed shortly and one of the matters to be considered was if it should be used to fund health facilities.

- (6) How are different budget allocations for the same service managed across both Councils by one officer team?

The Committee were satisfied with Cabinet's response.

- (6a) Has account been taken of the cost of Planning Officer time to support the additional Local Plan work that South Norfolk Council was undertaking on 'Village Clusters'?

Yes, all funding for this additional work on the Local Plan is to be paid for by South Norfolk Council. Both Councils were sovereign authorities and would each fund separately any activities that were not aligned.

- (6b) Where was the evidence that the 45/55 split had been revisited and agreed by External Audit as sound?

This had been reviewed by the Joint Lead Members Group. The ambition was to move to a 50/50 split eventually, but if this was done now it would lead to a significant increase in Council Tax in Broadland. Confirmation of the opinion of External Audit regarding this would be forwarded to Members following the meeting.

- (7) Is there a sufficient budget for IT and phones to ensure that the Council can deliver what is required?

Members were also advised the Council had paid its £560,000 commitment to the Better Broadband for Norfolk project in July 2019.

- (8) Is there sufficient budget available for advertising posts etc. and ensuring that we recruit the best staff to enable the Council to progress?

The Committee was informed that an additional provision to pay relocation expenses if required to attract the best staff had been made available.

- (9) Is there budget available for providing Councillors with the equipment that enables better functionality and allows Councillors to do their job in the best way?

It was acknowledged that there were some mobile phone connectivity issues in some parts of Thorpe Lodge for some networks and although the Council would not be investing directly to improve coverage at Thorpe Lodge. Broadland might consider investing in mobile phone infrastructure as part of its income generation strategy in the future.

The Council also had Public Sector Network Accreditation and had a comprehensive disaster recovery strategy in place for IT security.

A Working Group was also going to be convened to review Member IT and further training that would meet all levels of IT competency was to be provided.

- (10) Is there sufficient budget available to provide training for Members to enable them to undertake their role in the best way and ensure sufficient skills are in place?

It was noted that Members had recently been sent a questionnaire on their training requirements and it was confirmed that the budget for training was flexible enough to meet the needs of both Members and staff.

- (11) What is the plan for the Member Ward Grant? and is there a plan to (a) review the level and (b) look at providing a wider pot of money to allocate to a community grant scheme?

There were no plans to increase this sum, as take up had been low. It was also noted that only six members attended a training session that had been held for the Member Grants programme. The 2019/20 scheme ended on 1 March 2020 and Members were encouraged to contact the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families, if they wanted to assistance with the grant process. It was confirmed that smaller bodies also could access CIL funding by applying to their local parish or town council.

- (12) In order for Overview & Scrutiny to be able to appropriately research topics, it is necessary for the Committee to be given appropriate officer support. Will Cabinet ensure that there is Budget provision to continue to employ a

dedicated research officer; maintained on a part time basis of 15 hours per week, specified in the Members' Overview and Scrutiny hand book and previously supported with in the budget?

The Chairman advised the meeting that the Committee would be better served by a dedicated Scrutiny Research Officer, than a Senior Governance Officer.

However, the Leader confirmed that the draft 2020/21 budget retains provision for flexible support to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee according to its Work Programme and it was for the Committee to direct the Senior Governance Officer to coordinate projects that it wished to investigate.

97 BROADLAND NORTHWAY

David Allfrey, Infrastructure Delivery Manager Community & Environmental Services – Highways gave a monitoring and evaluation presentation on Broadland Northway, as well as a brief look at other major projects that would be coming forward in Norfolk over the next few years (attached at Appendix 1 to the signed copy of these Minutes).

Following the presentation Members raised the following issues regarding Broadland Northway:

- The roundabouts on the road were dangerous and needed more signage/lighting/speed awareness signs.
- Side road approaches to roundabouts were not wide enough to allow left turning traffic to filter through, causing long tailbacks.
- A lot of trees had been lost on the embankments due to unfavourable weather conditions.
- The signage at the Postwick Interchange was very confusing.
- The access roads at Honingham were over-engineered and should be reduced in size.

In response the Committee was advised that work was to be undertaken to make the roundabouts safer and more accessible. However, although the accident rate was high it was on a downward trend and most accidents were low speed collisions. There was no identified trend for a greater number of accidents at night and, as additional lighting could have an adverse effect on bats, it was not intended to install more. The trees that had been lost along Broadland Northway were to be replaced

The Committee also raised the following issues regarding forthcoming projects:

- The proposed viaduct for the Western Link was in an area of outstanding natural beauty and should be as attractive as possible to complement this. It should also have a cycle/footpath if possible.
- Were the costs of the projects likely to rise considerable, as had been seen with HS2?

- Had the lessons learnt been shared with other authorities?
- Did Transport for Norwich focus solely on urban areas?
- Would the Long Stratton bypass be a single or dual carriageway?

In response to these questions it was confirmed that work was ongoing on with the Planning Team regarding the viaduct, although a cycle path/walkway along it was likely to be financially unviable given their likely level of use.

Costs for the projects were well focused and managed, so should be on target. Lessons learnt had been shared with Suffolk County Council in respect of the third river crossing at Lowestoft and the DfT was to be contacted regarding identifying other authorities carrying out similar schemes.

Transport for Norwich focused on rural, as well as urban areas, and the Long Stratton bypass would be single carriageway.

The Chairman thanked David Allfrey for his comprehensive presentation.

98 LOCAL AUTHORITY COMMERCIALISATION

This item was deferred to the 17 March 2020 meeting.

99 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

The Committee went through the items on the Recommendation Tracker.

The Member representative on the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee confirmed that she would discuss gaps in mental health support with the Democratic Support and Scrutiny Team Manager at Norfolk County Council in due course.

It was confirmed that the query regarding the NEWS JVC's payments of Directors' fees, which were contrary to the Articles of Association, would need to be raised through Broadland's representative on the Board.

It was confirmed that the EcoCube recommendations had been agreed by Cabinet and were being implemented.

100 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Work Programme was amended to reflect the role of the Senior Governance Officer in supporting, coordinating and enabling the Work Programme. Minor amendments were also made to confirm who were the responsible officer for a number of topics on the Work Programme.

It was:

AGREED

that the following items would go to the 17 March 2020 meeting

- Local Authority Commercialisation

- Annual Overview and Scrutiny Letter to Parish and Town Councils

The reconvening of the EcoCube Time and Task Limited Panel would also be added to the list of Time and Task Panel reviews.

It was confirmed that a meeting with the Chairman and the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee at South Norfolk would be arranged to consider a joint scrutiny of Housing Allocations Policies and Affordable Housing Provision at both Councils.

The meeting closed at 2.00 pm

DRAFT

BDC O&S Scrutiny of Budget Workshop**Questions for Cabinet**

- (1) Is the budget adequate to support all the objectives regarding transitioning and fit in with the four-year plan?

The Broadland and South Norfolk Plan has been developed in conjunction with the Budgets. It is also being approved at the same time as the Budgets. This helps ensure that the Plan and the Budgets are aligned, and that all the Plan objectives are funded.

With regard to our One Team programme. The budgets for 2020/21 are set based on the one team structure, that was implemented on 1st January 2020. This includes funding for 4 full time generic Internal Consultancy posts and several service specific consultancy posts to help drive our programme of alignment of Practice, Process and Procedures, which will not only deliver a better service for the customer who will be at the centre of any review but also savings.

There is also a budget of c£60,000 across the two councils to fund additional external support if this is needed.

Major specific transformation projects will have their own business cases and budgets as appropriate.

- (2) Are you going to make more innovative use of the Council's usable reserves (e.g. Community Land Trusts)?

Cabinet will be proposing setting aside monies in the capital programme to support Broadland Growth Limited. Other innovative use of reserves, such as the Food Innovation Centre on the Food Enterprise Zone, will also be included within the capital programme. However, in both cases business cases will need to be produced prior to significant sums being invested.

- (3) What is the size of the Council's usable and unusable reserves and what are they committed to?

The usable reserves will be detailed in an appendix to the main Budget Report that will be presented to Cabinet on 11 February and O&S on 4 February as at 31 March 2019 they totalled £25,401K; split between the General Fund £14,299, Earmarked reserves of £8,248K, Capital Grants unapplied reserves £133K and Capital receipts reserve £2,721K.

The Final Accounts for the Council for 2018/19 provides a breakdown of the Council's unusable reserves which at the 31 March 2019 totalled a negative £23,174K.

Reserve	31 March 2019 £000
Pensions Reserve	31,121
Capital Adjustment Account	(6,950)
Revaluation Reserve	(2,217)
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	1,137
Deferred Capital Receipts	(60)
Financial Instruments Adjustments Account	143
Total	23,174

These reserves cannot be used to fund expenditure or reduce Council Tax. Please see the final accounts for further detail on each reserve.

- (4) Are you incorporating the Broadland Business Plan into the Medium-Term Financial Plan?

Please see the answer to question 1.

- (5) Has the Greater Norwich Local Plan been incorporated into the Medium-Term Financial Plan?

The Council has a Spend Equalisation Reserve to smooth out fluctuations in revenue expenditure, incurred in irregular annual patterns. Funds are set aside into this reserve each year, and one of the main items funded from this reserve is the Greater Norwich Local Plan. As at 31 March 2019 the balance on this reserve was £560,000.

- (6) How are different budget allocations for the same service managed across both Councils by one officer team?

Although many costs are shared with South Norfolk, there remain separate budgets at each Authority for any activities that are specific to each Authority. For instance, leisure facility budgets only exist for South Norfolk. Where the one team delivers a common service for both Councils then the costs will be split 45% to Broadland and 55% to South Norfolk as per the Feasibility Study. This ratio has been revisited to ensure it remains valid and agreed with External Audit as a reasonable methodology to split the costs.

- (7) Is there a sufficient budget for IT and phones to ensure that the Council can deliver what is required?

The 2020/21 budget will be increasing both the revenue and capital budgets for IT.

Further details of the proposed IT budgets will be detailed in an appendix to the main Capital Budget Report that will be presented to Cabinet on 11 February and O&S on 4 February.

- (8) Is there sufficient budget available for advertising posts etc. and ensuring that we recruit the best staff to enable the council to progress?

The 2020/21 Broadland budget will include an allowance of £45,000 for advertising / recruitment costs.

The new Terms and Conditions, that were recently approved, also include provision to pay relocation expenses if required to attract the best staff.

- (9) Is there budget available for providing Councillors with the equipment that enables better functionality and allows Councillors to do their job in the best way?

All Councillor are provided with i-pads to facilitate their work in an efficient way. Councillors also have access to the Democratic Services and the IT teams to provide support.

We are always looking to improve the IT offering, provided this demonstrates value for money. The purchase of Office 365 will provide Councillors with the ability to access their Broadland emails on other devices.

- (10) Is there sufficient budget available to provide training for Members to enable them to undertake their role in the best way and ensure sufficient skills are in place?

An induction programme is provided to new members to help them when they start and updates / training sessions are carried out as required – For instance we have provided training on Local Government Finances, Overview and Scrutiny training and will be offering training later this year on Local Government Treasury Management.

Recognising that it's important to upskill Members as well as officers there is provision in the budget for training. Training requests will be assessed on a needs basis to ensure the right level of knowledge and skills to meet the terms of reference of the committees.

- (11) What is the plan for the Member Ward Grant? and is there a plan to (a) review the level and (b) look at providing a wider pot of money to allocate to a community grant scheme?

The draft 2020/21 Broadland budget retains provision for £500-member ward grants. Cabinet have requested that officers bring forward a paper on options during 2020/21. One of the options to be considered is setting up a local lottery in order to provide funding to local good causes. There remains the Community Infrastructure

Fund for those areas where development will result in future CIL receipts, to borrow in advance of receiving this funding.

- (12) In order for Overview & Scrutiny to be able to appropriately research topics, it is necessary for the Committee to be given appropriate officer support. Will Cabinet ensure that there is Budget provision to continue to employ a dedicated research officer; maintained on a part time basis of 15 hours per week, specified in the Members' Overview and Scrutiny hand book and previously supported with in the budget?

The draft 2020/21 budget retains provision for a Senior Governance Officer to provide support to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. As the work requested by the Committee will change according to its work programme, this will be a flexible resource.

The Members' Overview and Scrutiny hand book referred to is not a statutory document having been internally generated some years ago. As Norfolk is a two-tier County, it is Norfolk County Council who are designated as the Principle Authority which is recognised in legislation as requiring a Scrutiny Support Officer. As Broadland is a District Council this is not a statutory requirement.

In devising the work programme, the Committee need to utilise the experts within the One Team, and the Senior Governance Officer's role is therefore to support, co-ordinate and enable the work programme.