

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 30 January 2018** at **10.00 am** when there were present:

Mr D G Harrison – Chairman

Mr A D Adams

Mrs C H Bannock

Mrs J K Copplesstone

Mr J J Emsell

Mr G Everett

Mr R F Grady

Mr K Leggett

Mr G K Nurden

Mr G Peck

Mr V Ray-Mortlock

Mrs T Mancini-Boyle attended the meeting for its duration. Mr A Proctor attended the meeting for item 137 – Minutes.

Also in attendance were the Chief Executive, Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, Head of Planning, Spatial Planning Manager, Environmental Protection Manager (Special Projects), Corporate Finance Manager, Economic Development (Partnerships and Growth) Manager, Housing, Health and Partnership Officer, Overview and Scrutiny Research Officer and the Committee Officer (JO).

136 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Buck, Mrs Hemsall, Mr Tapp, Mrs Vincent and Mr D Ward.

137 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Minute no: 127 – Minutes (Minute no: 120 – Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2018-2021)

In response to a request by the Committee, the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Finance were in attendance to discuss the Cabinet decision to recommend to Council a £5.00 increase in the Special Expense to cover footway lighting, which a Member of the Committee had described as grossly unfair.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance advised the meeting that increase in the Special Expense was in the Medium Term Financial Plan, not the budget that was to be agreed by Council in February 2018. The proposed increase in the Special Expense would give the Council the opportunity to negotiate with the five parishes in question, before a firm decision was made at this time next year.

Reference was made to a previous decision to convene a meeting with the five Parish Councils affected, which had initially been postponed due to the snap General Election and subsequently cancelled due to the invitation either being declined or not responded to. It was confirmed that the Parish Councils in question would be contacted again to try to arrange a meeting so the matter of footway lighting could be discussed.

The Committee thanked the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Finance for their attendance at the meeting.

138 COUNCIL REGISTER OF POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The report presented the Register of Council Policies and Strategies that the Committee monitored on an annual basis.

Significant amendments since the Committee had last seen the Register were:

- Overpayments and Write-Off Recovery policies had been merged with the Debt Recovery Policy.
- The Empty Homes Strategy had been integrated into the Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy.
- The Regional Food Strategy had been incorporated into the Food Safety Plan.
- The Community Involvement Strategy 2007-2012 had expired and was now included in the Communications Strategy.

In response to a query, the Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer confirmed that a major piece of work was being undertaken on reviewing all of the Council's Policies and Procedures to ensure their compliance with the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Members were also advised that an event was being organised for Parish and Town Councils to receive a briefing on the GDPR.

Members considered that it was no longer necessary for the Committee to review the Register on an annual basis and instead proposed that it be considered every four years following the District Elections.

AGREED

to

- (1) note the Policy and Strategy Register as presented; and
- (2) review the Register every four years at the first meeting of the Committee following the District Council Elections.

CABINET REPORTS

139 FINANCIAL MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2017

The report summarised the financial position of the Council at 31 December 2017.

There was a capital underspend of nearly £0.5m which had been largely set aside for the County Council's Superfast Broadband project, which was not being drawn on as much as had been expected.

There were also underspends on Community Grants and Brown Bins; however it was expected that 90% of the Capital budget would be spent by the end of the financial year. Expenditure against capital budgets was monitored to ensure that projects were proceeding with as little slippage as possible, but they could be subject to delays that were beyond the control of the Council.

The importance of good financial monitoring had been emphasised to all staff, which had led to the levels of unspent revenue budgets carried over to the following year being reduced significantly in recent years. At 31 December 2017 the level of revenue budgets spent was 87.1 percent.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

to note the report.

140 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018/19

The report set out the proposed Treasury Management Policy, Treasury Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2018/19.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy had issued a revised Treasury Management Code of Practice in 2017 and the Treasury Management Policy Statement 2018/19 had been amended to incorporate these changes.

Interest rates had recently risen by ¼ percent, but continued to remain low and this had been reflected in the investment income in the 2018/19 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Treasury Strategy Statement set out the aims and limits of the Treasury function for 2018/19, but also took note that the Council was seeking to secure a better return on its investments and acknowledged that a less risk adverse approach might be taken in some non-treasury investments, such as property portfolios.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance confirmed that discussions about alternative investments had taken place with financial advisors, but any decisions about them would be deferred until the collaboration Feasibility Study was concluded.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Options (1 and 2)

- (1) to adopt the proposed Treasury Management Policy and Treasury Strategy Statements for 2018/19; and
- (2) recommend the adoption of the Annual Investment Strategy for 2018/19 by Council.

141 JOINT 5 YEAR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN

The report proposed that Cabinet recommend to Council that the Greater Norwich Joint Five Year Investment Plan be approved.

The report was brought to Members annually for approval and set out the priorities for infrastructure spending for 2018/19, as well as the infrastructure funding priorities for the subsequent four years to 2022/23

Within Broadland for 2018/19 there were five projects, supported by £1,440,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy funding from the Infrastructure Investment Fund. These were:

- Improvements to the Marriott's Way between Thorpe Marriott and Costessey (£100,000)
- Community Sports Hub proposal for Horsford Manor site – (£1,000,000)
- Thorpe Marriott Greenway – £105,000

- Marriott's Way: Surfacing Works (Drayton) – £85,000
- Access for All – a five-year pot of £150,000 to allow various smaller-scale improvements to trails across Greater Norwich to be made (such as surfacing and gate/fence improvements), with decisions being made by the Infrastructure Delivery Board.

In the 2017/18 Plan, a cash reserve of roughly £2.6m was proposed to be built up over three years towards repayment of the £50m which has been borrowed or committed to support the delivery of the Northern Distributor Road and the Long Stratton bypass.

In addition, the Plan proposed an allocation of £2m for 2018/19 for the purposes of helping to deliver the Children's Services' Capital Programme and exploring funding opportunities for the new Broadland Growth Triangle High School.

Members commended the Plan and the projects being supported in the district.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

to agree the Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan in general and the 2018/19 projects proposed for consideration by the next meeting of the Greater Norwich Growth Board, with the first year of the Infrastructure Investment Plan to be considered as the Annual Growth Programme for 2018/19.

142 NORFOLK STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The report presented the proposed Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework that was being considered for approval and endorsement by all the local planning authorities in Norfolk. The report also proposed that the work of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Group, which had drafted the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework, continue and that the Council contributed £10,000 per annum for two years towards this.

The Framework set out guidelines for strategic planning matters across the county and beyond and demonstrated how the planning authorities would work together under the Duty to Co-operate on planning related topics.

Although the Framework was not a statutory planning document, it set out strategic matters to be taken account of in the production of Local Plans and would be monitored and reviewed as necessary in the following years.

The Framework was also subtitled an 'Emerging Statement of Common Ground', which anticipated the Government's introduction of a requirement that all local planning authorities produce a statement of common ground setting out cross boundary matters, including the housing need for the area and proposals for meeting any shortfalls.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that the Framework was a complementary document to the Greater Norwich Local Plan, and that when the Plan was completed it should demonstrate that a five year housing land supply could be achieved.

In answer to a question about the Council contribution to the Norfolk Strategic Planning Forum it was confirmed that all Norfolk district authorities paid the same amount and it was in the council's interest to do so, as a Local Plan would be more difficult to produce without this resource.

In response to a question about the Western Link to the Norwich Northern Distributor Road, it was confirmed that it was a shared priority for the area and could be incorporated in the GNLP if deemed appropriate.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

to approve the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework and continue the Council's involvement in the Norfolk Strategic Planning Forum.

143 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY ANNUAL UPDATE

The report summarised progress made by the Council during 2017 in respect of its Public Sector Equality Duty and sought approval to publish the Annual Report, as required under the legislation.

The Corporate Equalities Group was the key mechanism by which equality issues were promoted and monitored and consisted of staff from departments across the Council, as well an elected Member.

The Group's actions for 2017/18 included: working to connect with religious and faith groups in Broadland; promoting a Health in all Policies approach; updating the Single Equality Scheme and working in partnership to better understand mental health issues for children and young people

Examples of good practice cited in the Annual Report included; Community at Heart Grants, the Choices Programme and District Direct (a project to identify patients at risk of a delayed discharge from hospital and put in place interventions to allow them to return home).

Members commended the comprehensive and positive report.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

to approve the Public Sector Equality Duty Annual Report for publication.

144 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

to exclude the Press and public from the meeting for the remaining business because otherwise, information which was exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 would be disclosed to them.

145 ASSET MANAGEMENT

The report was a high level analysis of the land assets owned by the Council, which allocated them into the following three categories:

- Possible development sites
- Possible disposal sites
- Opportunities to explore further those that might achieve savings.

It was emphasised that only those assets that might present an opportunity for development were to be considered at this stage and that reports would be brought back to Cabinet for each agreed project.

Seven sites were proposed for consideration together with a further nine sites that were not owned by the Council, which might present commercial opportunities.

The Committee requested that a covenant be placed on a piece of land proposed for disposal, so that in the event that it was developed the Council would receive recompense for the uplift in value.

Subject to this condition the Committee endorsed the sites and actions set out in the report.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

to agree the opportunities set out at section 5 and the recommendations identified as to how each of them might be progressed.

146 WASTE COLLECTION, STREET CLEANSING AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SERVICE – CONTRACT UPDATE

The report provided an update on progress with procuring a new joint contract for Refuse and Recycling Collection, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance.

The report was the result of a decision to explore procuring a single contract that others would be able to join in the future and it also looked at options to extend the existing contract, so as to align with the contracts of other local authorities as well as extending the food waste collection service.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (3)

to extend the current Waste, Street and Grounds Contract for a period of 24 months to November 2021, allowing for an additional 1,500 properties to be added to the Food Waste Service, and the contract savings identified in section 6.3, with a one off capital cost of £6,500 to purchase the food waste caddies to be funded from the contract savings.

The meeting closed at 12.24 pm