

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Review of Cabinet Agenda** held by video link on **Tuesday 5 January 2021** at **10.00am** 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 S M Prutton
Cllr N C Shaw

Cllr J Copplestone, Cllr J Emsell, Cllr L Hemsall, Cllr J Leggett, Cllr T Mancini-Boyle and Cllr F Whymark also attended the meeting.

Also in attendance were the Director Place, Director Resources, Director People & Communities, Chief of Staff, Assistant Director Finance, Assistant Director Governance & Business Support (Monitoring Officer), Assistant Director Individuals and Families, Place Shaping Manager, Senior Governance Officer (SW) and Democratic Services Officers (LA and JO).

211 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Harpley and Cllr Nurden.

212 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

A Member requested that acronyms be set out in full in the Minutes in future to avoid confusion.

213 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised the meeting that an additional meeting of Cabinet was likely to be held in February to consider the Food Innovation Centre. This would in turn require an additional meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the Agenda. The dates of both meetings were still to be confirmed.

214 BUDGET QUESTIONS

The Committee noted the responses received from Cabinet to their budget questions.

The Chairman went through the paper and the following supplementary questions and responses were raised and received:

How close was the Council to achieving the £8.6m of savings from collaboration, as set out in the Feasibility Study?

The Council was well on the way to overachieving these savings within the five year period set out in the Feasibility Study. The latest estimate was to make savings of £9.3m.

How could Broadland have local pay arrangements when staff are part of One Team with South Norfolk? Are all staff part of the local agreement?

Staff are all part of One Team employed across both authorities; the local pay agreement applies to all staff.

How has Cabinet calculated the budget for Member IT training and will it be sufficient?

Extra resource from the Government's Covid-19 Grant to cover this was agreed at the 8 December 2020 meeting of Cabinet. Since then an extra £600,000 had been received from central Government, which could be used for any Covid-19 related need. This included providing Members with the IT to represent their residents effectively. A Member briefing was to be arranged for week commencing 25 January 2021 which would cover the roll out of IT equipment and training.

Was the staff resource that had been put in place in the first lockdown still available?

Yes, the Economic Development Team and the Finance Team were now very experienced and effective in distributing grants and support to residents and businesses in the District and had a plan of action in place to work with partners to provide further support during lockdown. Work would also be taking place with the NHS to help with the roll out of the vaccine.

Could the Council provide more clarity for Members about who they should direct residents to if in need?

A contact sheet would be forwarded to Members tomorrow. The Committee

was also asked to note that there was a very comprehensive Coronavirus help page upon the Council's website. The vital importance of Members in providing assistance to residents and as links to their town and parish councils and on the ground in their Wards should also be noted.

Broadland Growth Ltd

The latest project undertaken by the joint venture company had produced a 30% return on investment and a return to the public purse of £1.3m.

Was the Council looking at investing in electric vehicle charging points?

The pandemic had delayed work on the Council's Parking Strategy, but charging points would be looked at when that work recommenced. It was likely that charging points would be part of the work being initiated in market towns in the District. A new officer had also been appointed to deliver the Environmental Strategy and the provision of charging points would form part of that work.

Will the award of the waste service contract be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee?

Yes, this would be a Cabinet decision and, therefore, would be reviewed by the Committee.

Does the procurement of the waste service contract still need to be EU compliant?

Yes, as the tender went out before the end of the transition period. Moreover, a lot of the EU regulations were based on UK law so the legislation still stands.

When will the rough sleeping initiative come to an end?

It was due to end in August 2021, but it was hoped that this could be extended to March 2022.

CABINET REPORTS

215 WARM HOMES FUND – ADDITIONAL FUNDING – CONTRACT AWARD

The Assistant Director Individuals and Families introduced his report which requested that Cabinet approved the award of contracts for the delivery of external wall insulation, cavity and loft insulation work and air source heat pumps.

It was explained that the Council operated the Warm Homes Fund on behalf of Norfolk local authorities and had been awarded an extra £1.24 million in funding from the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, to allocate before 31 March 2021.

The Council was entitled to use the Procure East Midlands Framework to enter into a contract with Cornerstone East Anglia Limited to deliver external and cavity wall insulation and loft insulation work.

The potential value of the contract was in the region of £800,000.

The Council was entitled to use the Eastern Procurement Framework to enter into a contract with the Dodd Group to deliver Air Source Heat Pumps. The potential value of the contract was in the region of £200,000.

It was confirmed that the above figures were rounded down approximations and that the total award was for £1.24m.

Awarding contracts under framework agreements allowed contracts to be entered into quickly and also provided value for money, as they would have been competitively let.

It was requested and confirmed that an information sheet would be sent to Members, so they could assist in promoting the project.

It was also confirmed that the Warm Homes Fund was promoted through Food Banks, Children's Services and other social providers.

In response to some concerns about how the contracts had been arrived at the Assistant Director Individuals and Families advised Members that due diligence on the suppliers had been carried out through the frameworks. However, he would forward Members the technical details of the procurement process to reassure them that it had been arrived at in an appropriate way.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Options (1 and 2, subject to receipt of the procurement process details, as noted above)

- (1) To award a contract to Cornerstone East Anglia Limited under the terms of the East Midlands Framework for External Wall Insulation, Cavity and loft insulation work.
- (2) To award a contract to Dodd Group under the terms of the Eastern Procurement Framework for Air Source Heat Pumps.

216 GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN – REGULATION 19, PRE-SUBMISSION PUBLICATION

The Director of Place presented the report, which sought the agreement of Cabinet to publish the latest iteration of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

It was explained that whilst previous consultations had asked about the merits of site allocations, the focus of the Regulation 19 stage was to allow stakeholders to submit representations in respect of whether the plan was legally and procedurally compliant and 'sound' (ie positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy).

Changes to the plan had been made as a result of the Regulation 18 consultation, as well as changes in national policy. This included an overall increase in the number of homes to address a shortage of affordable housing, as had been made clear in the Government consultation paper 'Planning for the Future'. However, it should also be noted that 75 percent of housing had already been allocated in the existing plan and that 5,000 homes had been delivered.

For the Regulation 19 stage the Economic and Retail Study had been updated to take account of the pandemic. The Study had indicated that the approach being taken was sound and matched that being taken nationally. It was also considered that Greater Norwich was in a better position than many areas to bounce back from the economic crisis being caused by Covid-19.

It was noted that the Place Shaping Panel had requested to see the Economic and Retail Study and whilst this was usually used as an evidence base to inform the final plan and not for publication, it was acknowledged that Members had justifiable concerns about the economy and it would be shared in due course.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning advised Members that if they had any comments arising from the Economic and Retail Study they should pass them on to both her and the Director of Place so these could be reported to the meeting of Cabinet on 12 January 2021.

A Member expressed concern about the loss of shops in the City Centre and their conversion to housing, but it was noted that the Government did not want to see vacant shops and had, therefore, relaxed Permitted Development Rights to try to address this issue.

The meeting was advised that there would be an emphasis in the City on brownfield sites in east Norwich, which had been allocated 4,000 houses in the GNLP, and it could be assumed that during the lifetime of the plan that

Anglia Square would also be redeveloped.

A query was raised about the possibility of the economic downturn leaving large developments without retail centres, but it was confirmed that policies were in place to ensure that local centres which would meet the everyday needs of residents would form part of developments.

Members noted the additional sites being proposed and expressed concerns about infrastructure to meet these homes, but were advised that these figures were considered robust and reflected the Government's requirement for an increase in the delivery of housing.

However, Members were advised that where housing numbers had increased, the Regulation 19 stage would be an opportunity to challenge the process and procedure of allocation and subject it to independent examination.

Following a vote with 8 in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention it was:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Options (1 and 2)

- (1) To agree to publish the Greater Norwich Local Plan under regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012; and,
- (2) Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Planning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning Authority to make any minor or factual corrections to the GNLP ahead of its publication.

217 UPDATE TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Place Shaping Manager introduced the report, which proposed amending the Local Development Scheme (LDS) to reflect changes to the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) timetable.

The LDS set out the timetable for preparing new plans and summarised what they contained. The last update was in July 2020, but since then it had been agreed to accelerate the process to allow the plan to be put in place before an increased housing requirement was introduced by the Government using a revised methodology.

On 19 December 2020 the Government had published a further revision of the methodology which did not result in the scale of increase that it had earlier

implied. However, as substantial work on the Regulation 19 version of the Plan had been done it proposed to carry on with the new agreed timetable.

Publication of the pre-submission Regulation 19 plan would take place during February and March, with submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination in July 2021 and the anticipated adoption of the plan in September 2022.

The GNLP would directly replace the Joint Core Strategy and the Site Allocations documents, but not the Area Action Plan for the Growth Triangle or Development Management Documents.

Following a vote with 7 in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions it was:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

That Cabinet recommends to Council that it approves the proposed amendments to the current Local Development Scheme (LDS).

The meeting closed at 12.19pm