Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Review of Cabinet Agenda

Agenda

Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Mr D G Harrison (Chairman)	Mr J J Emsell (Vice Chairman)
Mr A D Adams	Mr F O'Neill
Mrs C H Bannock	Mr V Ray-Mortlock
Mr D Buck	Mr S Riley
Ms S J Catchpole	Mr V B Tapp
Mr G Everett	Mrs K A Vincent
Mr R F Grady	Mr D C Ward
Mr G K Nurden	

Substitutes Conservative	**Substitute Liberal Democrat**
Any Members not appointed to the Committee or to Cabinet	Any Members not appointed to the Committee

Date

Tuesday 8 January 2019

Time

10.00 am

Place

Council Chamber
Thorpe Lodge
1 Yarmouth Road
Thorpe St Andrew
Norwich

Contact

James Overy tel (01603) 430540

Broadland District Council
Thorpe Lodge
1 Yarmouth Road
Thorpe St Andrew
Norwich NR7 0DU
E-mail: james.overy@broadland.gov.uk

@BDCDemServices

If any Member wishes to clarify details relating to any matter on the agenda they are requested to contact the relevant Head of Service.

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

A G E N D A

		Page No
1	**To receive declarations of interest under Procedural Rule no 8**	
2	**Apologies for absence**	
3	**Minutes of meeting held on 11 December 2018**	**3 – 13**
4	**Matters arising therefrom** (if any)	
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.	
7	**Cabinet Reports** To consider the Cabinet reports in respect of the 15 January 2019 meeting.	**To follow**

Trevor Holden
Managing Director

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 11 December 2018** at **10.00 am** when there were present:

Mr J J Emsell – Chairman

Mr A D Adams
Mrs C H Bannock
Ms S J Catchpole
Mr G Everett
Mr R F Grady
Mr G K Nurden
Mr S Riley
Mr M D Snowling
Mr V B Tapp
Mrs K A Vincent
Mr D C Ward

Mrs Copplestone, Mr Fisher, Mr Foulger, Mrs Mancini-Boyle and Mr Vincent attended the meeting for item 79 – Budget Questions.

Also in attendance were the Deputy Chief Executive; Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer; Head of Corporate Resources; Head of Economic Development; Interim Head of Housing and Environmental Services; Environmental Protection Manager (Special Projects); Environmental Protection Manager; Corporate Finance Manager; Local Taxation Manager;Projects and Training Officer; Development Manager; Private Sector Housing Manager; Housing Enabler and the Committee Officer (JO).

Mr D Newell, Operations Manager at NEWS Ltd, was in attendance for Minute no: 83 - NEWS Joint Venture Company – Update Report

77 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Buck, Mr D Harrison and Mr O'Neill.

78 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

79 BUDGET QUESTIONS

The Committee discussed its budget questions with Cabinet:

MAXIMISE COUNCIL FUNDING

How was the Council seeking to utilise and maximise its assets?

The Council's assets were not extensive but work was ongoing about the viability of the assets we held to maximise those or reduce cost and how this was best applied. A report would be coming to Cabinet on this in the New Year.

Was the Council considering investing to earn and generate income?

Any business cases which included invest to earn options would be brought forward at an appropriate time. The Business Plan was the key planning document of the Council and would drive forward policy. The Cabinet would be receiving a report on the new Business Plan in February 2019.

A Panel had been convened to consider new ideas and areas for the new Business Plan. One of these was how Carrowbreck could generate further income. The Chairman noted that social enterprise businesses were being supported by the Economic Development Team at Carrowbreck.

Members were also asked to note that the sale of Council owed land at Panxworth was also to be considered by Cabinet next week. This issue had taken quite some time and illustrated that it could be difficult to move these items forward as quickly as would be wished. A Member also noted that it was clear that the land would only be given planning permission if it was of exceptional quality and would not be agreed by the Planning Committee simply because it had been submitted by the Council.

Broadland Growth Ltd was also seeking to bring more projects on stream, so there would not be any breaks between the end of one development and the commencement of another.

Another initiative being looked at was the provision of charging points for electric vehicles. A business case was being drawn up to assess if it was a viable project.

The Leader advised the meeting that the Business Plan was a high level strategic document that set out the ambitions and objectives of the Council that was in turn underpinned by a lot of detailed work and initiatives that went to meet these aims.

It was suggested that a cash machine in Thorpe Lodge might be a way of generation some income for the Council. Investing in carparks, as well as commercial properties to promote startup businesses was also suggested by Members.

In response to a suggestion that the Council should invest in its own stock of social housing, it was pointed out that this would require significant addition resource to manage, maintain and administer.

The Council did own some properties in Sprowston, which saved it money, but housing stock would not be a means of generating income.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development advised the meeting that the Council had recently attended MIPIM UK, one of the largest shows in the property trade market, to encourage investment in Broadland and would be taking a group of investors on a tour to showcase the business potential of the District in the near future.

The Economic Development Team was also assisting Blofield Business Centre and B A Crisp in Aylsham with LEADER bids.

Members were advised that a lack of doctors, not surgeries, was the significant factor in local healthcare and that it would not be a viable option for the Council to build a facility that it could was not guaranteed would be used.

Was it proposed to increase fees and charges above inflation, as a means of maximising Council revenue?

The Council was strictly regulated when it came to fees and charges and therefore should only seek to recover the cost of providing a service. At this stage the Council had not set up another vehicle for the purpose of trading.

What is the Cabinet doing to significantly increase the ongoing revenue income stream of this Council?

The Council had set up Broadland Growth Ltd and a corporate fraud service to generate income and make efficiencies. Other ideas coming forward would be subject to a business case for each project.

Part of the remit of the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee was also to look at efficiencies as well as generating income.

Members also suggested expanding the Handyperson+ scheme as well as providing training for parish clerks.

COLLABORATIVE WORKING

The feasibility study had indicative estimates of savings of £8.6m. How will savings be brought forward for consideration by Council to contribute to this figure?

The collaborative agreement was not predicated on generating savings.

The £8.6 million was only an indicative figure based on what could potentially *be achieved. It was arrived at based on evidence from other councils who had followed a similar path. It was never a target. Specific pieces of work on projects developing joint working, as we worked through the route map, could identify future savings which, at that point, would be factored into future budgets.*

When will collaborative working start to be reflected in the Medium Term Financial Plan?

There would be a line in the Medium Term Plan showing the indicative figures and any agreed changes will also be highlighted in the plan for 2019/20.

FREE THINKING

Will budget pressures impact on the level of performance and services over the next financial year?

There are no plans for a reduction in performance or services. The Council's financial position enabled a business as usual approach.

How much of the Medium Term Financial Plan do we have discretion over?

The Medium Term Financial Plan was draft until agreed by Council in February, therefore, could be altered before then. The Cabinet agreed with Finance the priorities and any changes were reflected in reports which were submitted before the Council meeting.

What has / what will the Council raise in capital receipts through sale of assets in 2018/19? In addition, what are the projected capital receipts for each year of the Medium Term Financial Plan?

To date this year we were due to receive £10,000 for the sale of land at Wood Lane, Burgh. As for forthcoming years, any receipts would be very much dependent on the results of the piece of work being done to assess the viability of the potential sale.

The Economic Development (Partnerships & Growth) Manager continued to review Council assets, although this work had been delayed by the collaboration project. The Leader suggested that it would be useful for Cabinet to receive an update with some targets for the disposal of land and estimates of value at a future meeting.

The Chairman thanked the Members of Cabinet for their attendance at the meeting.

CABINET REPORTS

80 COUNCIL PERFORMANCE – BROADLAND BUSINESS PLAN

The report provided a comprehensive view of the Council's performance for the last six months, as well as details of the Local Government Ombudsman decisions received and formal complaints received over the same period.

Stakeholder and resident engagement activities were currently being undertaken to inform the content for a revised Business Plan for 2019 to 2023. An updated Business Plan based on feedback from the engagement activities would be presented to Cabinet in February 2019.

Members of the Committee considered and commented on the following Objectives in the Business Plan:

Objective 1

To back Broadland businesses by providing information, help, advice and guidance to help them grow and prosper

Members were advised that many of the people seeking advice from Economic Development were lifestyle businesses.

There were also a number of examples of companies which had been introduced to each other by the Council trading with one another, as well as working collaboratively on areas such as procurement to drive down costs.

In response to a request, the Head of Economic Development advised Members that local business groups very much depended on the willingness of individuals to drive them along. He confirmed that he would investigate if there was any interest in Brundall to reviving the Ingenuity in Business Group.

Members confirmed that they would not want to see the support for small and medium sized businesses in the district diluted by collaboration with South Norfolk Council, which had a more strategic approach to economic development.

In answer to a query, the Head of Economic Development confirmed that there was little immediate concern about Brexit within the local business community.

<u>Objective 2</u>

To support the people of Broadland and their communities by offering a range of opportunities, skills and/or employment prospects.

The Community Grants Scheme was scheduled to cease at the end of 2018/19 and would be replaced by a Members' Grant scheme.

<u>Objective 3</u>

To minimise waste and maximise recycling

The Committee was informed that there were no plans to expand the food waste collection service before the renewal of the waste collection contract in 2021.

The brown bin service generated income for the Council and had grown by another 1,000 households to the end of September.

The Committee was asked to note that Broadland had the best recycling rate in Norfolk and it was continually striving to improve the service. A targeted campaign to address contamination hotspots had been held over the summer and would be held again next year. Education was seen as the key in reducing contamination further.

<u>Objective 4</u>

To improve energy efficiency and increase the uptake of renewable energy throughout the district

The Council had now delivered four installations in fuel poor household through the Warm Home Fund and had commitments for another 30 installations across the district.

<u>Objective 5</u>

To keep Broadland clean and tidy

Fly tipping was known to fluctuate periodically. No evidence had been found that any recent increase in fly tipping was due to the introduction of charges by the County Council for the disposal of DIY materials.

<u>Objectives 6 and 7</u>

The Committee expressed their disappointment that the Head of Planning was not available to answer their questions on these objectives or that another Planning Officer had not been present to discuss them.

Members confirmed that they would like the Head of Planning to attend their next meeting to discuss the planning objectives.

Objective 9

To understand people's housing problem and help them solve it

The reduction in affordable homes in the district was due to a mixture of a lack of exceptions sites, as well as development viability issues.

The Council had looked at alternative means of construction for affordable housing, but the key remained to secure the land and capital to facilitate delivery.

The Council had made a response to the Housing Green Paper in November. More details on this would be available in the Annual Housing Briefing in June 2019.

Objective 10

To address the needs of the older population to ensure they can continue to live independently

The Handyperson+ scheme continued to operate within capacity, with 324 jobs completed over the period.

Objective 13

To use system thinking principles to improve services, maximise new income streams and deliver savings and efficiencies

It was noted that the collaboration project had impacted on the rollout of the Systems Thinking programme. A clearer understanding of the way forward with the programme should be apparent once the new management structure was in place.

Objective 14

To maximise staff engagement

Staff turnover was in line with previous years. Most staff had left for career progression at other public sector organisations.

The last staff survey, undertaken in October 2018, showed a continuing high level of staff engagement.

A Member requested that the response rate to the survey be included in future performance reports.

The Committee noted that the sickness absence statistics for the Council were good.

Objective 15

To promote healthy lifestyles and encourage behaviour change

A Member requested that activities such as Broadly Active, Why Weight and the Referral Scheme should not be diluted by collaboration.

Objective 16

To help support and protect vulnerable residents

Members were advised that there had been considerable pressure on the Hub, due to the departure of some staff. Recruitment for a number of posts had now taken place and the team was now back on track.

The consultation on the closure of Children's Centres had now ended. A response from the County Council was now awaited.

Objective 17

To broaden the scope, impact and significance of joint working through partnerships

Much of the partnership working would continue, but reports were likely to be made to both Broadland and South Norfolk in the future.

The Committee also noted the Local Government Ombudsman decisions and the formal complaints received from 1 April to 30 September 2018.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

to note and consider the progress made against the objectives outlined in the appendices.

81 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.

82 NEWS JOINT VENTURE COMPANY – UPDATE REPORT

The report provided an update on the financial performance of the NEWS Joint Venture Company (JVC) that the Council had a seven percent share in, as well as an update on the situation with the recycling markets.

The JVC operated the Material Recycling Facility at Costessey as well as a number of other waste facilities in Norfolk including the Marsham Composting Plant.

In January last year, China announced that it was no longer willing to accept unsorted grades of paper and new stringent quality requirements for sorted papers would be introduced. The immediate effect of the changes had been a reduction in the price paid and an increase in equipment, labour and disposal costs, as well as a drop in income for the materials leading to losses for this financial year.

The Council continued to benefit, however, by low and stable gate fees for processing garden waste and dry recyclables. The JVC had also protected the Council from the risk of the contract being ended due to the crash in material prices.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Options (1 and 2)

(1) to note the contents of the report; and

(2) to endorse the continuing progress made by NEWS to provide a cost effective way for this Council to process recycling it collects.

83 LAND AT SALHOUSE ROAD PANXWORTH

The report explored options for the disposal of Council owned land at Panxworth.

Broadland Growth Limited had considered the site for housing, but did not believe the site was viable and had given a number of reasons why it did not wish to take the site forward.

Members considered the issues pertinent to the site and concluded that to offer the land for sale without planning permission was the best option for the disposal of the site.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

to offer the site for sale without planning permission and allow the market to take the site forward.

The Press and public were then readmitted to the meeting.

84 ADDITIONAL DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS FUNDING

The report explained that the Council's Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) allocation for 2018/19 had decreased by £20,886, whilst the Housing Benefit expenditure to date had been on par with the previous year. Cabinet was therefore asked to consider approving a contribution from Council funds to top up the central Government funding received for the financial year 2018/19.

DHPs were used by local authorities to provide financial assistance to claimants in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, where it was considered that additional help with housing costs was required.

It was proposed that the Council contributed £12,900 to the DHP fund for the current financial year. This would top up the funding received from central Government to £142,045, which was the total amount spent on DHP applications in 2017/18. Any of this funding that was not spent would be returned to the general budget.

Members noted that tenants who were under-occupying their property by two or more bedrooms could be subject to a reduction in Housing Benefit of 25 percent a week, but be unable to move to a smaller property due to a lack of one bedroom accommodation.

The Committee considered that it was the right thing for the Council to support residents who needed additional help with their housing costs.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

to approve the additional in year funding of £12,900.

85 ANNUAL AUDIT INSPECTION LETTER – YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018

The Committee received the Audit report for year-end 31 March 2018.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

to note the Audit report for year-end 31 March 2018.

The meeting closed at 1.35 pm