

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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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 July 2019** 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 I Holland

Mrs C Karimi-Ghovanlou  
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

Mr Emsell attended the meeting for its duration. Mr Vincent was in attendance for item 33 - Member Grant Scheme - Call in of Portfolio Holder Decision. Mrs J Leggett was in attendance for item 35 – Household Wheeled Bin Charging for New Properties.

Also in attendance were the Director Resources, Director People and Communities, Assistant Director Economic Growth, Assistant Director Governance & Business Support (Monitoring Officer), Assistant Director Individuals and Families, Planning Projects and Landscape Manager, Environmental Protection Manager, Operations Manager, Kettringham Depot, Revenues and Benefits Manager, Projects and Training Officer and the Committee Officer (JO).

### 29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8

Member	Minute No & Heading	Nature of Interest
Mr Beadle	36 - Council Tax Reduction 2020/21	Member of Valuation Tribunal and Housing Benefit Panel

### 30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Ms Catchpole.

### 31 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, save for the following amendment:

*Minute no: 11 – Minutes*

The Chairman advised the meeting that he had requested that the letter from the Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring

Officer) be forwarded to the Committee.

He added that the Committee would send a response to the letter in due course.

### *Minute no: 19 – Chairman’s Announcements*

It was confirmed that the EcoCube Time and Task Panel report would not be available in time for the August meeting of the Committee.

### *Minute no: 20 – Council Performance 2018/19 – Broadland Business Plan*

The Committee was informed that the minimum level of grant that could be awarded through the Member Grant Scheme had been reduced from £100 to £50.

## **32 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman advised the meeting that an IT workshop for Members was being held that afternoon at 2.00 pm. A further workshop would be held on Thursday 1 August at 5.30 pm. Both workshops were in the Council Chamber.

## **33 MEMBER GRANT SCHEME – CALL IN OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION**

The Chairman informed Members that he had called-in the decision of the Portfolio Holder for Policy relating to the Member Grant Scheme, as when it was agreed to establish a Member Grant Scheme in September 2018, Members were informed that South Norfolk’s scheme would be reduced to £500 from the original £1,000 grant. However, the Scrutiny Committee at South Norfolk had rejected this proposal and its Cabinet had subsequently accepted its recommendation to retain a £1,000 allocation.

Moreover, Members were unaware that South Norfolk was retaining a £50,000 Community Action Fund alongside the Members Grant Scheme, whilst Broadland’s Community Grants Scheme was being closed down. The Chairman questioned whether the Committee would have agreed with the proposal if it had been aware of these issues and suggested that the decision should be reviewed.

The Assistant Director Individuals and Families confirmed that Broadland did not have any funding in the base budget for the Community Grants Scheme, as agreed by Council on 1 November 2018. He emphasised that Broadland and South Norfolk were autonomous authorities and it was for Members to decide

what grants programmes they wanted to operate. He confirmed that the base budget could not be changed for this year but, the grants programme could be looked at as part of the budget setting process for next year.

The Leader advised the meeting that it had been decided to cease funding the Community Grants Programme following a review in 2013 and the money in that budget had finally been used up earlier this year. There was no provision to increase the budget for the Member Grant Scheme in 2019/20. He stressed that the Portfolio Holder's decision related to the process for administering the Members' Grant Scheme, not size of the allocation or the Community Grants Programme as a whole. He suggested that the scheme be looked at in the autumn as part of the budget setting process, when Members would have a clearer idea of how it was working. He also highlighted the facility for parish and town councils to access in advance funding that they would be due to receive through the Community Infrastructure Levy, by applying to the Council for a loan through the Community Infrastructure Fund.

In response to a query it was confirmed that the scheme would run from 1 April to 1 March each year to allow the grants to be processed by the end of the financial year. It was also confirmed that Ward Members could pool their money on larger schemes if they wished.

There was some disagreement on the amount that should be allocated for the Member Grant and whether there was time in this financial year for an informed assessment of the size of allocation to be made. It was also suggested that a review of a scheme that had not even started was impractical.

The Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) confirmed that any increase the allocation for the Member Grant scheme would need to be proposed as part of the budget setting process for 2020/21. In respect of the processing of the scheme, she suggested that time should be given to allow the scheme to become established so that an informed assessment could be made of it.

Following further discussion it was

### **RESOLVED:**

To recommend to Cabinet

- (1) To increase the allocation for the Members' Grant Scheme to a minimum of £1,000 per Member in the next budget; and
- (2) To review and contrast the Council's Community Grants Programme with the scheme being operated by South Norfolk Council.

### **34 PROCUREMENT OF NEW GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT WITH SOUTH NORFOLK DEPOT – CALL IN OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION**

The decision of the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development had been called-in by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further clarification about risk and the nature of the proposed service in contrast with the new one, as well as staff considerations.

The Planning Projects and Landscape Manager informed Members that as the current contract with NORSE was due to expire in November 2019, it was an opportune time to explore collaborating with South Norfolk by using their in-house service.

The Council had been advised that the cost of a contract renewal with NORSE was likely to lead to an increase of approximately ten percent, whilst the proposed contract with South Norfolk Council would make savings on the existing contract, when the spare capacity in the ground maintenance service had been marketed. A Service Level Agreement was not required, as had been incorrectly stated in the report as a S113 Agreement would be put in place for the contract. The standards of the new service would be at least as good as the standard of the current service. Staff being transferred as a result of the new contract would be given protection through a TUPE agreement.

The Director People and Communities also confirmed that this would be a relatively short term contract, as a review of the entire waste service across Broadland and South Norfolk was expected to be concluded by April 2022.

Following the assurances received it was

#### **RESOLVED:**

To confirm that the Committee was content to proceed with delivery of this service by the Ketteringham depot

### **CABINET REPORTS**

### **35 HOUSEHOLD WHEELED BIN CHARGING FOR NEW PROPERTIES**

The report proposed options for the introduction of a charging policy for household waste bins for new developments, in accordance with legislation, to enable the Council to cover significant ongoing and rising costs of supplying them, which currently stood at £31,000 per year.

Breckland, Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Norwich and South Norfolk already had in place charges for the provision of bins to both new and existing households. Broadland was only proposing to charge for new developments.

A charge of £50.30 for two 240 litre bins would cover the £31,000 cost to the Council. An alternative option, proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence, was to include a ten percent surcharge within the price model, rounded off to the nearest pound, to build in resilience for cost fluctuations throughout the year. The total charge would then be £55.00.

There was some concerns expressed by Members that developers or housing associations might refuse to pay the charge, which could then be passed on to the householder and which might also lead to an increase in fly tipping. However, Members were reassured that there had been no problems associated with the introduction of the charge when it was introduced in South Norfolk two years ago.

Members were minded to make the charge at no more than cost and it was therefore

### **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:**

Option (1) as amended

To accept the recommendations of the Environmental Excellence Panel, namely to accept the proposals for charging for the provision of waste bins at cost to new properties as outlined in the report, excluding the raised charge; agree to the use of the enforcement powers available under the EPA 1990 to require householders to use the specified types of wheeled bin or be refused a waste collection.

## **36 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION 2020/21**

The report proposed options to mitigate the impact of Universal Credit on the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme.

It was required that the CTR Scheme be reviewed annually, with any proposed changes which had the potential to reduce a claimant's entitlement to a reduction in Council Tax being subject to consultation with stakeholders.

Work had been conducted with staff at South Norfolk on a tolerance scheme, which would reduce administration and maintenance of CTR claims, where Universal Credit was in payment.

It was confirmed that previous consultations had resulted in a response rate of around 1,200 people. To ensure accessibility the consultation would be published in a number of formats.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that the Council had a Hardship Fund for those experiencing severe financial hardship and could also write off Council Tax in some cases.

### **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET**

Options (1 and 2)

- (1) The commencement of an eight week consultation with residents and stakeholders on the introduction of an income tolerance for CTR claimants who receive the Housing element of Universal Credit; and
- (2) Note the work officers will continue to undertake across the two Councils on processes to mitigate the wider impact of Universal Credit on Council Tax billing and collection.

### **37 PUBLIC SERVICE CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT WITH NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL TO BRING £1.2M INVESTMENT TO THE BURE VALLEY PATH AND RAILWAY**

The report sought approval to sign up to a Public Service Cooperation Agreement with Norfolk County Council to access £1.2m from an Interreg Visitor Economy Fund to invest in refurbishment projects along the Bure Valley Path and with the Bure Valley Railway 1991 Ltd.

Members expressed some concerns that the Agreement had not been finalised, but noted that there were tight timescales to be met and were reassured by the independent legal opinion from Birketts solicitors, which had found the principle of the agreement to be sound.

It was confirmed that the funding could not be used for the maintenance of the bridges that the Council was responsible for along the Bure Valley Railway.

The Chairman noted that the issue of the sale of the Bure Valley Railway had still not been resolved and that Members needed some clarity on this matter as soon as possible. He would raise this matter at Cabinet next week.

### **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET**

Option (1)

To approve the signing of the Public Service Cooperation Agreement with Norfolk County Council for a 10 year period and delegate authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development to agree anything other than changes to the principle of the agreement.

### **38 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.

### **39 EXEMPT MINUTES**

The exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

*The meeting closed at 12.22 pm*