

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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 5 March 2019** at **10.00 am** when there were present:

Mr D G Harrison – Chairman

Mr A D Adams
Mrs C H Bannock
Mr D Buck
Ms S J Catchpole

Mr J J Emsell
Mr G Everett
Mr R F Grady
Mr K Leggett MBE

Mr G K Nurden
Mr V Ray-Mortlock
Mr S Riley
Mr D C Ward

Mr A Mallett also attended the meeting for its duration.

Also in attendance were the Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, Head of Corporate Resources, Head of Economic Development, Economic Development Manager, Environmental Protection Manager (Special Projects), Corporate Finance Manager, Interim Revenues and Benefits Manager, Appeals Officer and the Committee Officer (JO).

116 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8

Member	Minute No & Heading	Nature of Interest
Ms Catchpole, Mr Harrison and Mr Riley	121 – Disposal of Council Owned Land	Local Choice Non Pecuniary Interest as Members for Aylsham

117 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Tapp and Mrs Vincent.

118 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

In response to a query about the new report format, Members were advised that Broadland and South Norfolk's Committee reports had been aligned and were now a hybrid developed from the reporting templates of both authorities. No content had been lost as a result of the changes.

119 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

The Committee received the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2018-19, which provided details of the work, outcomes and achievements of the

Committee over the last year.

The report also included a record of recommendations that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee made between April 2018 and February 2019 when scrutinising Cabinet papers. The report also provided details of activities outside of the Committee, such as Joint Scrutiny Committees, Time and Task Limited Panels and Member training.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

to approve the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2018-19.

120 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.

CABINET REPORTS

121 DISPOSAL OF COUNCIL OWNED LAND

The report proposed options for the disposal of Council owned land. Following consideration of the report (as set out in the exempt Minutes) it was:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Options (1 and 4)

- (1) To enter into a Partnership Agreement with Norfolk County Council;
and
- (2) Agree to delegate any further legal decisions / instructions that need to be made to the Head of Economic Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development.

122 FOOD WASTE PROCESSING CONTRACT

The report sought approval for awarding a two year contract for processing food waste.

Following consideration of the report (as set out in the exempt Minutes) it was:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

To proceed with the award of a two year contract to Norse Environmental Waste Services Ltd for the processing of food waste.

The Press and public were readmitted to the meeting.

123 BROADLAND BUSINESS PLAN 2019 -2023

The report presented an updated Broadland Business Plan 2019-2020 following a small number of amendments agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 12 February 2019. The Business Plan also included more narrative for the Ambitions of Broadland, as well as measures that underpinned the objectives, which would be used to assess the performance of the Council.

The Committee was advised that the Managing Director had made some minor comments on the Plan and these had been taken into account.

Members had been consulted on the contents of the Plan through the Overview and Scrutiny Cabinet Review process as well as having the opportunity to comment through a questionnaire in *Broadland News*.

It was confirmed that the Plan was exclusively a Business Plan for the Council, as both Broadland and South Norfolk remained autonomous bodies.

It was requested that in future when the Business Plan and other similar documents were updated that any changes be tracked or listed to allow Members to see where revisions had been made. The Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer confirmed that he would advise report authors accordingly.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

to recommend to Council that the Broadland Business Plan 2019-2023 be formally adopted without amendment.

124 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2019-20

The report presented the Treasury Management Strategy 2019-20, which set out the Council's approach to management of its borrowing, cash flows and banking and the prudent management of investments including its methods for assessing and managing the associated risks.

Revised reporting was required for the 2019/20 reporting cycle due to revisions in financial guidance. The primary reporting changes included the introduction of a Capital Strategy, to provide a longer-term focus to the capital plans, and greater reporting requirements surrounding commercial activity undertaken under the Localism Act 2011. The Capital Strategy was approved by Council in February 2019.

Uncertainty over Brexit continued to affect confidence in the finance markets and there was not expected to be a rise in interest rates until June 2019 at the earliest.

The Council's primary investment objective for 2019-20 remained security of cash above liquidity.

It was emphasised that whilst the Strategy covered a wide range of investment options, only the most appropriate ones for the Council would actually be undertaken.

Members noted that today would be the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the Corporate Finance Manager would attend before leaving Broadland to take up a post elsewhere. The Committee thanked him for his hard work for the Council.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Options (1, 2 and 3)

To approve and recommend to Council:

- (1) the Treasury Management Policy Statement 2019/20;
- (2) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2019/20;
- (3) the Annual Investment Strategy 2019/20.

125 DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS POLICY

The report sought to revise the Council's current Policy for determining Discretionary Housing Payments from 1 April 2019 in light of decreasing central Government funding.

A Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) could be awarded when a local authority considered that a welfare claimant required further financial assistance towards housing costs. The budget for DHPs came from central Government and for 2019/20 this was £104,901; a decrease from the £129,145 received for 2018/19 of 18.8 percent.

DHPs were considered on a case by case basis and there was an element of conditionality placed on awards. However, there was no process in place to confirm that the claimant had taken steps to change their circumstances and no longer be dependent on DHPs, which could result in repeat awards.

To address this issue it was proposed that the DHP Policy include a 'Period of Award Matrix' to provide a guide on the maximum length and number of DHP awards and the conditionality attached to multiple awards.

The Chairman noted that Cabinet had already approved an additional £12,900 to the DHP budget for 2018/19 and it was confirmed that if necessary Cabinet would be asked to provide a similar contribution from reserves in 2019/20. It was emphasised that the Council did not seek to reduce the amount of awards to meet the funding figure received from central Government.

In response to a query, the Committee was advised that there were very few repeat awards for DHP and those in receipt of the benefit were some of the most vulnerable residents in the district.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Options (1 and 2)

- (1) To recommend to Council the adoption of the revised DHP Policy and 'Period of Award Matrix' from 1 April 2019; and
- (2) To note the Equality Impact Assessment.

The meeting closed at 11.38 am