

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 19 November 2019** at **10.00 am** when there were present:

Mr S Riley – Chairman

Mr A D Adams
Mr N J Brennan
Mr P E Bulman
Ms S J Catchpole

Ms N J Harpley
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 Hemsall also attended the meeting for its duration. Mrs Leggett was in attendance for item 85 - Waste Services Review.

Also in attendance were the Managing Director, Director Place, Director Resources, Director People & Communities, Chief of Staff, Assistant Director Regulatory, Assistant Director Planning, Assistant Director Finance, Assistant Director Governance & Business Support (Monitoring Officer), Assistant Director Community Services, Healthy Living Manager, Business Improvement Lead, Revenues and Benefits Manager, Policy Officer, Spatial Planning Manager, Strategic Marketing and Communications Manager (JM), Environmental Protection Manager (Special Projects), Private Sector Housing Manager and the Committee Officer (JO).

76 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Beadle and Mr Shaw.

77 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

78 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised the Committee that the following scrutiny training sessions were to be arranged:

- Scrutiny Questioning
- Scrutiny of the Budget

Members would be advised of the dates for the training sessions in due course.

CABINET REPORTS

79 HEALTH AND WELLBEING FRAMEWORK

The report recommended that the Council adopt the Health and Wellbeing Framework, which would set out the priorities of the Council for working with partners to reduce health inequalities and promote good health across the District.

The Framework was evidence led and identified the key characteristics of communities and their specific needs which required support and intervention. The Framework identified the following key health and wellbeing priority areas:

- Frailty and Falls
- Mental Wellbeing
- Activity and Healthy Lifestyle
- Employment and Aspirations

Members were advised that the initiatives in the Framework would complement a lot of the very good work already being undertaken by the Council, such as the Why Weight? scheme and Broadly Active.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that work could be undertaken with Norfolk County Council to make children's playgrounds more wheelchair friendly. It was also noted that parish councils could also be encouraged to use Community Infrastructure Levy funding for this purpose.

The Health Living Manager confirmed that she would organise a workshop so that Members could help develop the Health and Wellbeing Framework further.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

Cabinet is asked to support the Health and Wellbeing Framework and priorities and **recommend its adoption by Council.**

80 COUNCIL PERFORMANCE – BROADLAND BUSINESS PLAN

The report provided an update on delivery of the Business Plan objectives for the period 1 April to 30 September 2019. The report was in a new format, as officers were seeking to align the content and frequency of strategic performance reporting for both Broadland and South Norfolk.

Key changes in the report were an overview section containing more financial information and two further appendices; one reporting performance with graphic data and the second explaining financial variances against the budget.

The Assistant Director of Finance informed Members that the current total net budget position was a favourable variance of c£1.4m. If the trend continued the year-end outturn could be a favourable variance of c£2.5m. Members' attention was also drawn to the budgets for income, non-pay and pay, which were all on track for the financial year.

The Director of Resources also advised the meeting that the current variance of the Shared Services programme was £200,600, but was expected to be nil by the end of the Financial Year.

In answer to a question about provision for Business Rate Relief, the Director of Resources confirmed that the Council was compensated for a number of Rate Relief categories by the Government through a Section 31 Grant. Business Rate appeals were funded from reserves. It was noted that the challenge from NHS trusts over whether they should be classified as charities and so receive an 80 percent discount on their Business Rates bills was currently awaiting High Court judgement. The verdict was likely to be subject to appeal, whichever side won.

Members were also advised that a major variation was refurbishment work at Thorpe Lodge for drains, toilet and the heating/cooling systems. The Chairman noted that he had seen reference to the marketing of the Lodge, but it was confirmed that this referred to office space adjoining South Norfolk House in Long Stratton, not Thorpe Lodge.

The Council had stood down its Emergency Plan in respect of Brexit, but continued to liaise with local businesses to offer support, if needed.

In answer to a query about the number of new homes delivered, the Director of Place informed Members that current completions were likely to be significantly underestimated, due to difficulties in obtaining accurate figures before the end of the financial year. He, therefore, remained confident that the target of 706 new homes in the District was likely to be exceeded by quarter four. Similarly the number of affordable homes was expected to increase significantly by the same period.

Members were also informed that Broadland was one of the few local authorities to offer finance advice to parish and town councils to help them manage their Community Infrastructure Levy. The Council was currently in discussions with Great and Little Plumstead Parish Council regarding the provision of off-site open space in their area.

In respect of empty homes in the District; the Private Sector Housing Manager informed the meeting that the Council had a full programme of intervention that commenced after a property had been empty for six months with a letter, followed by a visit and high level enforcement up to Compulsory Purchase and Empty Dwelling Management Orders.

Members noted that the Council currently used a low-cost method to measure air quality, but was likely to enhance the quality of monitoring in line with anticipated Government legislation.

The Director of Place confirmed that he was unaware of any air quality issues in the District, but he would check on the areas in Hellesdon that a Member had raised concerns about and provide an update to him after the meeting.

Members were also advised that despite traffic congestion, air quality issues usually occurred only in built-up areas, rather than in rural locations.

In response to a query, the Director of Place confirmed that he was unaware of any S106 money ever being returned to developers because it had not been spent within a specific timescale in Broadland.

Members were also informed that Broadland Growth Ltd had looked into developing some Council owned land at Plumstead Road East, but had found the project to be unviable.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Options (1, 2, 3 and 4)

1. Note and consider the progress and performance made against the Council's objectives; and
2. Note the 2019/20 performance for the quarter and the year and the combined efforts across the Directorates to deliver the vision of the Council (detail contained in Appendix 1); and
3. Note the current position with respect to risks; and
4. Note the capital and revenue position and the reason for the variances on the General Fund (detail contained in Appendix 2).

81 REVIEW OF DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

The report proposed the alignment of Broadland and South Norfolk Council's Discretionary Rate Relief policies.

Where possible, synchronising rate relief policies across the two authorities

would make the schemes simpler for staff to administer and more transparent and accessible for ratepayers in both areas.

The proposed alignment would result in fifteen Broadland and eleven South Norfolk organisations gaining additional support from the policy changes. In addition to that four Broadland and two South Norfolk organisations would see an adverse effect on their relief entitlement.

The most significant areas of policy change were that South Norfolk would extend support for childcare providers, and Broadland would extend the level of support it provided to many Community Amateur Sports Clubs and other local sports clubs.

If the changes were accepted it would bring the total number of elements on which Broadland and South Norfolk aligned to 17 out of 21 policies of the relief schemes.

The Chairman suggested that the risk of giving the wrong advice where the policies did not align should have been acknowledged in the report, even if the risk was comparatively low.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that it had not been considered necessary to take the proposals to the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee in order to develop the proposed changes, as the changes were largely one of alignment.

Members also considered recommending a review after a certain period to assess if the aligned policies were operating effectively, but were reassured that the implementation of the policies would be monitored as a matter of course. However, it was noted that Members would remain free to propose amendments to the policies if they wished.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

The Cabinet **recommend to Council** that the revised discretionary rate relief policy shown at Appendix 4 is adopted.

82 NORFOLK STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK 2020/21

The report set out proposals for the continuation of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF), which was a document produced by all the planning authorities in Norfolk, together with the involvement of relevant bodies such as the Environment Agency.

The Framework sets 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 through a series of potential agreements on planning related topics. It was, therefore, seen as a Norfolk wide Statement of Common Ground for local planning purposes.

The Framework was produced by an officer group and each constituent authority contributed to its cost. Broadland's contribution was £10,000 per year. It was confirmed that the Council had been contributing to the costs of the Framework for a number of years.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Options (1 and 2)

Cabinet to **recommend for Council** to agree to:

1. Approve the proposed NSPF work-plan for 2020/21; and
2. Approve the contribution of £10,000 to the work on the NSPF for 2020/21

83 JOINT DOMAIN NAME

The report proposed submission of a joint domain name for Broadland and South Norfolk.

The process of identifying a joint domain name began with engagement with staff and Members for their suggestions, followed by a wider staff and Member survey. Suggestions were then put to an all-Member workshop and a shortlist completed that was taken to the Joint Lead Members' Group for determination. This process had resulted in the recommendation of a preferred choice of [southnorfolkandbroadland](https://southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk).

The Vice-Chairman advised the meeting that he could not support the proposal, as he felt that the names of the Councils should be in alphabetical order.

However, other Members noted that placing the names in alphabetical order would result in [broadlandandsouthnorfolk](https://broadlandandsouthnorfolk.gov.uk), which looked confusing.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

To agree that the Councils submit [southnorfolkandbroadland](https://southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk) as the preferred

choice to central Government for the single domain name for Broadland and South Norfolk.

84 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.

85 WASTE SERVICES REVIEW

The report set out proposed joint commissioning options for Waste Collection, Street Cleansing and Ground Maintenance Services, which were the largest and most universal services provided by both authorities.

To take the project forward a joint Member Working Group had been established to investigate the benefits of a single operating model and Eunomia, an environmental consultancy had been commissioned to help guide this process.

The Director of People and Communities advised Members that there were two key drivers to the proposals: the identified benefits of a joint delivery model, which could result in significant savings without sacrificing service quality and Broadland's waste contract with Veolia ending in March 2022.

A logistical review had also confirmed that the refuse depots of each Council were not fit for purpose without significant investment, so it was also proposed that the provision of a shared depot should be investigated as part of the business case.

It was emphasised that the report before Members was an outline business case and that if approved a full business case, including an environmental assessment would be brought before Members for final determination in spring 2020.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

That the Council notes the report and endorses officers to develop a full Business Case to explore a joint commissioning model, including the potential

provision of a shared depot, to deliver waste collection, grounds maintenance and street cleaning services on behalf of both Councils, to wholly replace both current operating models.

The meeting closed at 12.33