

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on **Tuesday 6 November 2018** at **10.00 am** when there were present:

	Mr D G Harrison – Chairman	
Mr A D Adams	Mr J J Emsell	Mr V B Tapp
Mrs C H Bannock	Mr G Everett	Mr D C Ward
Ms S J Catchpole	Mr G K Nurden	

Also in attendance were the Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance and Revenue Services, Communications and Engagement Manager and the Committee Officer (JO).

Martin Barrell, Kellie Fisher, Charlotte Scales and Eleanor Stewart of the Environment Agency were in attendance for item 66 - Flood Alleviation.

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

Member	Minute No & Heading	Nature of Interest
Mrs Bannock, Mr Nurden and Mr Tapp	66 - Flood Alleviation	Board Members of Norfolk Rivers Internal Drainage Board.

### 64 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Grady, Mr O'Neill, Mr Riley and Mrs Vincent.

### 65 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

*Minute no: 56 – Appointment to Joint Scrutiny Committee*

The Committee noted that Council had agreed that the following Members be appointed to the Joint Scrutiny Committee:

Mr T Adams, Mr J Emsell, Mr D Harrison, Mr G Nurden, Mrs K Vincent and Mr D Ward.

### 66 FLOOD ALLEVIATION

The Committee receive a presentation from the Environment Agency on Flood Alleviation (attached at Appendix 1 to the signed copy of these Minutes).

In response to Members' questions the Committee was advised of the following:

- The Environment Agency advised Local Planning Authorities at both the Strategic Development Plan and the Planning Application stage.
- The Environment Agency worked closely with a range of partners to access funding. Partners included districts, county councils and the Broads Authority.
- Major developments could be subject to call-in and a final decision by the Secretary of State, if they ran contrary to Environment Agency advice.
- The reclassification of main rivers to ordinary watercourses (a term called 'de-maining') and the transfer of maintenance responsibility to Internal Drainage Boards would only take place with the agreement of the relevant Board.
- The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment included Flood Maps that took into account one in 100 chance of flood risk.
- The drainage problems in the Sustainable Drainage Systems adjacent to Broadland Northway had not been identified during the planning stages. Measures to deal with this issue were now being implemented.
- The Environment Agency had commented on early proposals for the Western Link, including the river crossings. Horizontal Directional Drilling, rather than open trench, was the preferred method for any consequential cabling under the river.
- In respect of surface water management; the Environment Agency was responsible for maintaining water quality, not its removal.
- The Broadland Futures Initiative, which aimed to protect land and property from flood risk for the next 50 years, should go out to tender in early 2019 and the Strategy completed within five years.

The Committee thanked the officers from the Environment Agency for their very informative presentation.

### 67 COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications and Engagement Manager provided the Committee with an update on the communications activities at the Council over the past year.

Last year the Council agreed that Community at Heart would be the focus of a whole Council approach to communications, by bringing Officers and Members together in a co-ordinated way to deliver its key messages. This included the creation of a Community Projects officer post to help better engage with people who lived and worked in Broadland and the introduction of Community at Heart logo across all published materials. Brand guidelines for Broadland had also been established to ensure that engagement packs and equipment taken to events had the same livery and the team had the same look and feel.

This whole Council approach encouraged staff at all levels to step outside of their routine roles and engage with residents. Similarly, Members were encouraged to develop deeper links with communities to reinforce this message.

Communications and engagement work over the last year included:

- Working with Norfolk Community Foundation to promote Community at Heart Grants for activities from £500 up to £2,000.
- The production of a Community at Heart – Health & Wellbeing pamphlet, which had proven very popular and was recommended as a model to replicate by a partner organisation.
- A Sports Grant of a £1,000 to athlete Iona Lake to help her attend the Commonwealth Games in Australia.
- Taking a pro-active Media Management approach to provide positive stories about the Council such as the 14 awards for the development at Carrowbreck Meadow by Broadland Growth Ltd and the highest figures for Business Rates collection and recycling in Norfolk.
- The promotion of Business Training courses.
- Collaboration work with South Norfolk Council.
- A Broadland Growth Triangle prospectus had been published to encourage businesses to locate and expand in the District.

Broadland campaigns included: Top Dog, Buy in Broadland, Bike Walk Scoot, Recycle Better and addressing Fuel Poverty.

Training for communities on how to run an event had been held and staff had attended eight Flu Clinics, reaching 2,000 residents to advise them of the services that the Council could provide.

A series of very successful events to mark the bicentenary of the death of Humphry Repton, one of Britain's greatest landscape gardeners, who was buried in Aylsham had been held in the District.

A number of Neighbourhood Plans had been promoted by the Council and the Parish AGM had also taken a community based approach.

The Council had agreed the extension of the Handyperson+ scheme and a whole range of community activities such as, Broadly Active, District Direct, Broadland Dementia Alliance and the Broadland Older People's Partnership had been supported by the Council.

Broadland was also providing external Communications support for the Greater Norwich Growth Board, as well as the current consultation for the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

Members noted and commended the large range of activities that were being carried out by the Communications Team, but requested that as this work was so extensive they would like a paper to accompany any verbal report in future.

Members also confirmed that they had recommended to Cabinet that greater effort be made to communicate to residents and businesses the valuable services that the Economic Development Department provided. In response, the Communications and Engagement Manager confirmed that this was part of the day-to-day job of the Communications Team and they would continue to do so. He also advised Members that the content of Broadland News had been questioned in the past for being too focused on business issues and needed whole Council approval.

The Committee noted that this would be the last meeting before the Communications and Engagement Manager left the Council to take up a post elsewhere. Members thanked him for his hard work at Broadland and wished him well for the future.

### 68 BUDGET QUESTIONS

The Head of Finance and Revenue Services advised the meeting that the Council was operating in a changing financial climate. The initial proposal by the Government for 100 percent Business Rates retention could not be implemented without primary legislation, so was now likely to be limited to 75 percent by 2021. Currently 50 percent of Business Rates were retained.

A Comprehensive Spending Review was to be held in 2019 and the Local Government Association had estimated that by 2025 the gap in local government finance would increase to £7.8b. Moreover, the Fair Funding Review in 2019 could affect how funding was allocated and redistributed between local authorities from 2020 onwards.

Social care prevention work and the costs associated with it was also being taken on by the Council to try to reduce the costs for the County Council.

It was clear that the level of future Government funding would not increase, but that the Council had reasonable levels of reserves. The Medium Term Financial Plan, therefore, assumed a similar level of funding as current for the next five years.

The Vice-Chairman noted that the Council had maintained similar levels of reserves through efficiencies for at least seven years and he was confident that it could continue to do so.

The Committee **AGREED** the following budget questions for Cabinet:

#### 1 MAXIMISE COUNCIL FUNDING

- 1.1 How was the Council seeking to utilise and maximise its assets?
- 1.2 Was the Council considering an invest to save policy?
- 1.3 Was it proposed to increase fees and charges above inflation, using an appropriate vehicle?
- 1.4 What is the Cabinet doing to significantly increase the ongoing revenue income stream of this Council?

#### 2 COLLABORATIVE WORKING

- 2.1 Can you demonstrate how collaborative working can generate £8.6m in savings over the next five years?

- 2.2 What happens if the predicted budget savings are not achieved?
- 2.3 How does the Medium Term Financial Plan reflect budget savings through collaborative working?

### **3 FREE THINKING**

- 3.1 How will budget pressures impact on performance and services over the next financial year?
- 3.2 How much of the budget is set and how much do we have discretion over?

## **69 NORFOLK HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Members noted the Outcomes and Actions of the meeting of the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 October 2018.

## **70 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee was advised that a presentation from Healthwatch Norfolk would be made to the 29 January 2019 meeting.

Members confirmed that they would like to invite the new Joint Managing Director to give them his views on the role of the Committee at the earliest convenient meeting in the New Year.

*The meeting closed at 12.38 pm.*