

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 18 September 2018** at **10.00 am** when there were present:

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| | Mr D G Harrison – Chairman | |
| Mrs C H Bannock | Mr G Everett | Mr S Riley |
| Mr D Buck | Mr R Knowles | Mr V B Tapp |
| Mr J J Emsell | Mr G K Nurden | Mr D C Ward |

Also in attendance were the Head of Planning, Head of Finance and Revenue Services, Economic Development Manager, Private Sector Housing Manager, Environmental Protection Manager (Special Projects), Housing Enabler and the Committee Officer (JO).

45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Adams, Ms Catchpole, Mr Grady, Mr O'Neill, Mrs Vincent and Mr D Ward.

46 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CABINET REPORTS

47 COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAMME REVIEW 2017/18

The report reviewed the operation of the Community Grants Programme in 2017/18 and proposed options for the future implementation of the programme.

Since October 2017 the Norfolk Community Foundation (NCF) had delivered the Council grants scheme, very effectively. However, it was not proposed that this funding would be added to and it was envisaged that by the end of March 2019 these funds would be mostly allocated to projects. Currently balances being held by the NCF for Community Activities and Small Grants was £37,375 and £27,003 for Community Capital Grants. It was proposed that the scheme remained 'live' with the NCF until all the budgets were spent. Other Service Level Delivery Agreements would continue to be funded, but from a different source.

At South Norfolk Council a scheme operated that allowed Members £1,000 each to allocate to community projects within their Wards. Members had suggested that a similar scheme could be adopted at Broadland.

Should Members wish to proceed with a scheme similar to the South Norfolk scheme, a growth bid would be included in the budgets for the 2019/20 financial year. It was proposed that initially the scheme could start with a sum of £500 per annum per Member. If approved guidelines and criteria for the scheme would be drawn up for consideration at a future meeting.

A Member confirmed his support for the principle of Member allocated grants, but suggested that there should be flexibility, as some Wards had three Members in denser areas, whilst other had widely spread communities over single Member Wards. Allocation should, therefore, reflect population to ensure that funding was fairly distributed, particularly across more rural areas. To meet this requirement the bid for base budget growth should be increased to a maximum of £27,500. Concerns were also expressed about the appropriateness of the scheme being overseen by the Communications and Engagement Manager, instead of an officer from Economic Development.

It was confirmed that the Member Grants Programme could be taken to the Economic Success Panel for consideration as it was developed.

Members requested that recommendation 3 be amended to reflect the Committee's concerns about ensuring a proportionate and fair distribution of funds across all Wards.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Options (1, 2, 3 as amended, and 4)

To recommend to Council

- (1) to note the performance of the Community Grants Programme in 2017/18;
- (2) to allow the NCF to continue to operate a 'live' Community Grants programme until the current budgets are exhausted (likely to be sometime in 2019/20);
- (3) to bid for base budget growth of £27,500 to fund a Members' grants scheme *that would be distributed proportionately across Wards and take account of rural populations*, and implemented from June 2019;
- (4) Subject to (3) above to work in collaboration with South Norfolk Council to provide guidelines and criteria for a Members' grants scheme which will be overseen by the Communications and Engagement Manager.

48 ESTABLISHMENT OF A GROWTH DELIVERY TEAM

The report proposed the establishment of a permanent, dedicated Growth Delivery Team consisting of three officers to work with existing teams, partners and consultants to accelerate and promote quality development in the delivery of strategic sites and add value to the new and existing communities in Broadland and South Norfolk.

Local authorities were now seen as key players in housing delivery and could be rewarded for being proactive with funding opportunities and Government support, whereas less ambitious authorities could face a potential reduction in their regulatory leverage.

The delivery of new jobs was also as important for both councils and three of the strategic sites, which would be the initial focus of the Growth Delivery Team, (Rackheath, Long Stratton and Beeston Park) included a significant amount of employment land. An economic development function would, therefore, be an integral part the Teams role and purpose.

A further core function of the Team would be to secure funding and/or deliver crucial upfront infrastructure costs to support delivery of strategic sites.

The estimated cost of the Team was £150,000 – £200,000, with a consultancy budget of £100,000 per annum; with the cost split initially at 55 percent South Norfolk and 45 percent Broadland. However, a bid of £150,000 to the Norfolk Business Rates Pool might limit this draw in the first year and the Growth Delivery Team should help to bring in additional income to both councils, which could offset the costs in the longer term. Members were advised that the Team could be increased in size at a later date, if its workload increased or its remit broadened.

In response to concerns expressed that the establishment of the team could have a detrimental effect on the Economic Development department, the Head of Planning assured Members that this was not the case as the Growth Delivery Team would have a strategic economic growth role, rather than the operational role carried out by the Economic Development department.

Nevertheless, the Committee recommended to Cabinet that it should be ensured that the establishment of the Growth Delivery Team should not have an adverse effect on the Economic Development department.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Options (1, (i), (ii) and (iii))

(1) to:

- (i) agree to the establishment of the Growth Delivery Team and the appointment of the three new posts; and
- (ii) delegate authority to the respective Chief Executives to agree any interim reporting arrangements; and
- (iii) *ensure that the existing Economic Development Service would be strengthened and enhanced and not diminished by the establishment of the Growth Delivery Team.*

49 HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION LICENSING

The report proposed the adoption of amenity and facility standards for licenced houses in multiple occupation (HMO) in order to meet the Council's statutory duty to licence all HMOs, with five or more people residing in the property, from 1 October 2018.

Broadland District Council currently had one HMO that required a Licence, but the amendment to the definition of an HMO could increase this number to between 50 to 100. To ensure consistency the Private Sector Housing Team had developed standards in respect of room sizes, occupancy levels, fire safety, amenities, facilities, refuse arrangements and the management of a HMO. The standards had been consulted upon with the National Landlords Association, the Eastern Landlords' Association and the Fire Authority and had been amended to reflect their comments. Neighbouring local authorities' standards had also been considered to ensure consistency across district boundaries.

A programme of communication to alert landlords of their responsibility to request an application should their property fit the new requirement would be initiated and licensing would commence from 1 October 2018.

The new licensing procedure would significantly increase the workload on the Private Sector Housing Team, which was currently reduced due to the long-term sickness of an Environmental Health Officer. Therefore, a recruitment procedure had been initiated to appoint an Environmental Health Officer on a one year contract.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

to recommend to Council to adopt the standards detailed in Appendix 1 'Amenity and facility standards for Licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation' as part of the Council's House in Multiple Occupancy licensing procedure (attached at Appendix 1 to the signed copy of these Minutes).

50 TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE FOR 2017/18

The report summarised treasury management activity during 2017/18, including the outturn of the Prudential Indicators for the year.

The Council's investments as at 31 March 2018 were as follows:

| Counterparty | £(m) | Interest Rates |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Investec | 10.34 | Return varies, dependent on the performance of the underlying fund |
| Payden & Rygel | 3.13 | |
| Public Sector Deposit Fund | 1.00 | |
| Certificates of Deposit | 2.00 | 0.47% |
| Banks | 9.00 | 0.72% to 0.98% |
| Instant access deposits with banks | 7.30 | 0.35% to 0.40% |
| Total | 32.76 | |

The Council's Investec funds were invested with an 80:20 split between Short Dated Bonds and Target Dated Funds, however, due to poor performance, the Short Dated Bond had been closed and moved to a Diversified Income Fund.

The Council also had an investment of £1m with the Public Sector Deposit Fund, but would be moving this investment back to bank deposits shortly. These, as well as some other movements from external funds, should increase the investment income of the Council. The situation would be monitored and reviewed regularly.

Actual capital expenditure during the year was £1,181,660, against a revised budget of £2,143,200. The main reason for the reduced total capital expenditure compared to base budget was a zero-spend against a budget of £560,000 for contributions to a Norfolk countywide Broadband improvement initiative.

The Head of Finance and Revenue Services could confirm the Prudential Indicators set for 2017/18 had been complied with in full and that none had reached a level that indicated any cause for concern.

Treasury advisors had submitted options for the Council's investments, which were included as exempt appendices for information only.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1)

to note the outcome in respect of 2017/18 treasury management activities.

51 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.

52 LAND AT SALHOUSE ROAD, PANXWORTH

The report set out the potential options for the use or disposal of Council owned land at Salhouse Road, Panxworth.

The land at Salhouse Road had been in local authority ownership since 1956 and was a small green field site of 0.34ha. The parish was classified as countryside within the Joint Core Strategy and as such had no settlement limit. The site was removed from any larger settlement and some distance from services and therefore would be deemed unsustainable.

Analysis of the current housing list data was unable to demonstrate an established local housing need within the parish and therefore it could not be considered an exceptions site for the delivery of affordable housing. Moreover, Norfolk County Highways had concerns over site access and would be likely to object to any proposed development above three dwellings at the site.

The Council also had a five year housing land supply in rural parishes, which would make it unlikely that an application for open market or custom build housing would be supported. Only very significant material considerations could outweigh planning policy in this case, such as an exceptional design development.

Therefore, in the light of these issues, it was proposed to offer the land for sale as open space or agricultural land.

The Committee disagreed with the recommendation in the report and considered that developing the site for housing would be a far better use for this Council owned asset. It was therefore:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (2)

that surveys / investigative reports of the land be carried out to explore the possibility of developing the land for housing (for up to three dwellings).

53 FOOTWAY LIGHTING PROVISION

The report considered the Council's options in respect of footway lighting provision in the District.

The Council had taken legal advice from more than one source regarding its future responsibility for footway lighting and it had been confirmed that a Section 98 (5) Highways Act 1980 Notice could be served on the County Council confirming that Broadland wished to relinquish its responsibility as a lighting authority.

A requirement of the Section 98 (5) Highways Act was that the Council must give Notice within the first nine months of the calendar year, therefore the Notice would need to come into effect before 30 September 2018. If Members agreed to the proposal it would be necessary to make the decision not subject to the 'call in' period to meet this deadline.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

Option (1, a and b)

to recommend to Council to endorse the following decision:

(1)

- (a) to agree to serve a Section 98 (5) Highways Act 1980 Notice on the Highways Authority (NCC) by 30 September 2018 with the intention to cease responsibility for lighting provision from 1 April 2019, including any new lighting installed in the future; and
- (b) agree that the decision is not subject to the normal call in period due to the requirement to serve the Notice within the first nine months of the calendar year.

The meeting closed at 12.05 pm