

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on **Tuesday 31 July 2018** at **9.00 am** when there were present:

Mr S A Vincent – Policy (Chairman)

Portfolio holders:

Mrs J K Copplestone	Economic Development
Mr J F Fisher	Environmental Excellence
Mr R R Foulger	Communities and Housing
Mrs T M Mancini-Boyle	Finance
Mr I N Moncur	Planning
Mr G Peck	Transformation

Mrs C Bannock, Mr N Brennan (co-opted member of the Standards Committee) and Mr D Harrison also attended the meeting for its duration.

Also in attendance were the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer, Head of Economic Development, Head of Corporate Resources, Economic Development (Partnerships & Growth) Manager, Service Improvement Officer and the Committee Officer (JO).

21 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22 REPRESENTATIONS FROM NON CABINET MEMBERS

The Chairman agreed that, at his discretion, all non-Cabinet Members in attendance be allowed to join the debate at the relevant point of the proceedings on request.

23 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 July 2018

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised Members of the views expressed by the Committee when it reviewed the Cabinet agenda on 24 July 2018, as each item was considered.

24 ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE PANEL

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Excellence Panel held on 19 July 2018.

25 COUNCIL PERFORMANCE – BROADLAND BUSINESS PLAN

The report provided a comprehensive overview of the Council's performance for the last 12 months by assessing how Broadland had delivered against the objectives and ambitions within its Business Plan and the measures being used to evidence this. The report used a mix of numerical and narrative data and also looked at risks and what mitigations were in place to address them. Also included in the report were details of Local Government Ombudsman decisions and formal complaints received during the period.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning noted that the number of homes delivered in the district in 2017/18 was reported as variously 678 and 693 (it was confirmed later in the meeting that the number of new homes was 693). Members would be advised if this had also led to an increase in the reported number of affordable homes for the year.

It was confirmed after the meeting that the net figure for new homes was 678 (which was the actual number of houses gained, taking into the account the number of houses lost / replaced). Therefore the percentage figure for the provision of affordable homes was 26.5%. The gross completions figure represented the number of houses built (693).

It was noted that there were in excess of 9,000 new homes that had been granted planning permission but not yet built in the district and it was requested that a new measure be added to Objective 7 to assess how many strategic sites were being currently developed.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development suggested that Business Rate retention should be included as a measure in Objective 1 to supplement the information on business support provided by the Council.

In response to a query regarding the Local Investment in Future Talent (LIFT) programme, the Head of Economic Development confirmed that the programme, which was funded by the European Union and administered by Norfolk County Council, thus far had not offered the Council good value for money. The scheme required match funding, was quite bureaucratic and was a much more complicated system for training rather than the in-house service that the Council could provide. It was therefore considered that the Council's Economic Success Fund was a more effective means of supporting residents improve their skills and employment prospects. However, if appropriate opportunities arose through the programme in the future, officers would take advantage of these.

It was noted that bookings for in-house business courses were up 12 percent and that this increase was likely to have been driven by greater use of social media to promote the services that the Council provided.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development advised the meeting that tourism was a major contributor to the economy of Broadland and suggested that it should be a specific objective within the Business Plan. It was noted that the Business Plan was being revised to cover the period 2019/23 and that a tourism objective could be included in it.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted the high collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates being achieved by the Council and congratulated the Revenues Team for their hard work. She also observed that there was a £560,000 underspend on the Better Broadband for Norfolk project due to slippage. Some of this money was likely to be retained by the Council and some might be used to fund Broadband in areas where no coverage was currently available.

Members were advised that Housing Benefits overpayment levels continued to improve despite the volume of cases increasing. Work was ongoing to reduce the overpayment figures even further.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence pointed out that much of the narrative in Objective 3 reported under brown bins actually referred to food waste. He also advised the meeting that an additional 3,000 food waste caddies had been provided across the district in the last year. It was confirmed that there had been no recorded complaints about the cleanliness of food waste bins and the only complaints received in respect of residual waste bins had been as a result of disputes between neighbours.

Cabinet was informed that a lot of work was being done to improve the contamination rate of recycled materials and in particular paper that could be sent to the Chinese market. However, recycling companies appeared reluctant to commit to the Chinese market at this time due to the high cost of bringing the paper back if it was rejected.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence advised Members that Fixed Penalty Notices were being issued for fly tipping and he requested that the penalty be set at the maximum level for this offence.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Housing informed the meeting that the Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board had established a sub-committee for district councils. This would help raise awareness of the preventative work being undertaken by districts such as Handyperson + schemes, Disabled Facilities Grants and housing staff support for hospital discharge initiatives.

Members were advised that affordable housing delivery remained low by comparison although the number of empty homes was reducing (the threat of compulsory purchase had proved to be an effective tool in prompting owners to bring properties back into use). The Private Sector Leasing Scheme was also proving effective and provided better quality housing than found in traditional bed and breakfast temporary accommodation.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised the meeting that the Committee had been disappointed with the reduced level of affordable housing being delivered, due to developers arguing that the Council's policy of 33 percent affordable housing made development unviable.

Members noted that the resource impact of the Feasibility Study into collaboration with South Norfolk Council had meant that Systems Thinking interventions had been deferred whilst the study was undertaken. The Portfolio Holder for Transformation confirmed that it was intended to continue and promote with the Systems Thinking programme in the long-term.

It was also confirmed that a review of Performance Related Pay would be brought to a future meeting.

Members commended the report which they noted clearly set out the aims and objectives of the Council and the progress that it was making towards them.

RESOLVED

to note the progress made against the objectives outlined in the report.

Reasons for decision

The report was a factual account.

26 CHANGES TO APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS (EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS)

The Chairman confirmed the following changes to appointments to outside organisations:

District Councils' Network – Leader

East of England LGA – Leader

LGA General Assembly – Leader

Norfolk's Health and Wellbeing Board – Leader

Norfolk Water Management Partnership Strategic Forum – Mr Moncur

The Chairman advised Members that the Portfolio-Holder for Communities and Housing had been delegated as his representative on Norfolk's Health and Wellbeing Board.

RESOLVED

to confirm the appointments to outside organisations.

Reasons for decision

to appoint representatives of the Council to outside organisations.

27 EXCLUSION OF 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.

28 LAND AT REEDHAM ROAD, ACLE

Cabinet noted there was an opportunity for the Council to acquire the freehold of a parcel of land in Acle to develop for employment use. A feasibility and viability study had been undertaken and had concluded that an employment scheme was not financially viable and that the risks associated with such a venture would outweigh any benefits.

Members concurred with the study and it was suggested that the land should instead be used for residential development.

RESOLVED

- (1) not to purchase the land off Reedham Road, Acle and
- (2) to encourage the development of residential housing on the site.

Reasons for decision

The land was not viable for commercial development.

The meeting closed at 9.43 am