

Minutes of a meeting of the **Council** held remotely on **Thursday 19 November 2020** at **7.00pm**.

A roll call was taken and the following Members were present:

Cllr K A Vincent – Chairman

Cllr A D Adams	Cllr L H Hemsall	Cllr G K Nurden
Cllr N J Brennan	Cllr S I Holland	Cllr G Peck
Cllr D J Britcher	Cllr N C Karimi-Ghovanlou	Cllr S M Prutton
Cllr P E Bulman	Cllr K S Kelly	Cllr S Riley
Cllr S J Catchpole	Cllr D King	Cllr D Roper
Cllr S M Clancy	Cllr S Lawn	Cllr C E Ryman-Tubb
Cllr J K Copplestone	Cllr K E Lawrence	Cllr N C Shaw
Cllr A D Crotch	Cllr J Leggett	Cllr M D Snowling
Cllr J J Emsell	Cllr K G Leggett	Cllr L A Starling
Cllr J F Fisher	Cllr I J Mackie	Cllr D M Thomas
Cllr R R Foulger	Cllr T M Mancini-Boyle	Cllr S A Vincent
Cllr R M Grattan	Cllr I N Moncur	Cllr S C Walker
Cllr S C Gurney	Cllr M L Murrell	Cllr J M Ward
Cllr D Harrison	Cllr J A Neesam	Cllr F Whymark

Also in attendance were the Managing Director, the Director of Resources, the Director of Place, the Director of People and Communities, the Assistant Director Governance & Business Support (Monitoring Officer), the Assistant Director Finance & Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer), the Governance Manager and the Democratic Services Officers (DM & LA).

## **186 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Minute No &amp; Heading</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Cllr Copplestone Cllr Grattan Cllr Nurden	197 – Updated Delivery Plan to Reflect the Impact of COVID-19	Other interest - recipient of Government business support grant arising from the COVID-19 crisis.

## **187 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr S C Beadle, Cllr B Cook, Cllr N J Harpley and Cllr J L Thomas.

**188 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2020 were, by way of a roll call, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the deletion of Cllr Roper from the list of members in attendance.

**189 MATTERS ARISING**

No matters were raised.

**190 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Members noted the civic engagements undertaken by the Chairman of the Council since the last meeting. The Chairman stated that she had been pleased to join the deputy Leader at the good causes launch of the Broadland Community Lottery. A number of good causes had attended and heard about how the new Lottery could benefit them and how they could register. She urged members to view the Zoom event on YouTube to learn more about the Lottery. She also drew attention to the Community at Heart Awards screened on 12 November at which the Council had been able to celebrate the good work of individuals and groups within the district and where she had the pleasure of presenting some of the awards. It had been humbling to hear of the inspirational work being undertaken and again she encouraged members to view the event which because of COVID restrictions had been held remotely on Zoom and was as available to view on YouTube. The Chairman offered her congratulations to all the winners and gave her heartfelt thanks to them and to everyone who had been nominated for a Community at Heart award. Each nomination demonstrated the positive impact an individual or group had on the community. She thanked the sponsors of the event Price Bailey and thanked Dan Goodwin and Jack Edwards for organising the online event.

The Leader of the Council (Cllr Vincent) made reference to the difficult times being faced again with the second lockdown due to the rising levels of COVID cases and reminded all to stay safe and follow the guidelines and that hopefully we would soon see a downturn in the number of cases. The Council had started preparing for the end of the second lockdown and was currently recruiting a number of COVID Marshalls to help assist and advise people following the lifting of the current lockdown and provide some local track and trace to help with keeping the virus under control.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance (Cllr Mancini-Boyle) advised that the Council was currently in the process of budget setting and was, not unexpectedly, seeing some large demands from directorates because of the current difficult circumstances. It would be a challenging budget setting process and options would be presented to members in the near future.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development (Cllr Copplestone) reported on a number of exciting initiatives emanating from Government. The recently announced Green Industrial Revolution would have a great impact on the region. Last year the Local Enterprise Partnership had issued the local Industrial Strategy and identified ways in which the district could increase productivity in the area and renewables was one of these. She was looking forward to businesses coming to the area and providing jobs in the green energy sector. Options were being explored by a local MP and Government to see if it was feasible to secure an off-shore ring main in the area which would put the region at centre of energy production by offshore wind in addition to other new emerging technologies. The Government had also recently announced the new Agricultural Act which would replace the Common Agricultural Policy and would give farmers security post Brexit. The Act would see public money for public goods such as better air quality, water quality, thriving wildlife, soil health and measures to reduce flooding and tackle the effects of climate change, with a positive effect on the region. The Government had also given £1.1b to local authorities to help business in their region, with Broadland receiving £1.6m to provide additional restrictions grants. In addition to this, lockdown grants for businesses forced to close were available worth up to £3,000 per month. In the first month of the scheme, £64k of grants had been paid to Broadland businesses. The furlough scheme had also been extended to the end of March. This was the largest package of support made available in post war history to create and support jobs.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning (Cllr Hemsall) reported that work was continuing on the local plan and the consultation would be considered by the relevant committees shortly for member input prior to public consultation.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing (Cllr Wymark) reported receipt of correspondence from the Motor Neurone Disease organisation drawing attention to recent report “act to adapt” and inviting the Council to examine the report and post a message of support on the organisation’s website. The campaign was seeking to secure safe and accessible homes for people suffering with MND and raise awareness. The report would be considered at a future meeting of the Wellbeing Panel. He also reported that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government had recently awarded a grant of £1m for the Next Step Accommodation Programme. The Council would be working with Clarion who would utilise three quarters of the funding and add an additional half a million pounds to the pot to fund the purchase of 10 properties which would be ring fenced for 30 years for people with drug and alcohol problems. The aim being to provide accommodation which would otherwise be impossible for them to secure and then provide dedicated support to deal with the drug and alcohol issues. The remaining grant would be used to employ 2 dedicated staff to undertake this work on a daily basis. He also made reference to Project Adder, a cross government pathfinder project involving a variety of partners, including the home office, social care, public health and the county council, working together to support

people with difficulties – particularly in relation to drugs. One of the aims was to promote use of drug testing on arrest and provide alternatives to custody orders by early identification of drug issues and the provision of other support options in place of criminal proceedings. The Council was one of four areas in the Country to be included within the initial projects and this work would complement the Council's work within the new housing options service.

The Managing Director took the opportunity to thank all staff for their efforts in response to the second COVID lockdown working again at maximum effort across the board to respond to the crisis. He also pointed out that 19 November was International Men's day and he provided the opportunity to encourage men to have conversations about their health and wellbeing.

#### **191 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

It was noted that there had been no questions from the Public.

#### **192 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

It was noted that there had been no requests for public speaking.

#### **193 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The non-exempt minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 22 September and 27 October 2020 were received.

#### **194 CABINET**

The non-exempt minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 29 September and 3 November 2020 were received.

##### **29 September 2020**

***Minute no: 137 – Updated Delivery Plan to Reflect the Impact of Covid-19 – see minute 198 below.***

***Minute no: 142 – Risk Management Policy and Strategy***

The Portfolio Holder for Finance invited Council to endorse the recommendations from Cabinet and thanked the Chairman and members of the Audit Committee for their contribution in shaping the Policy and Strategy.

It was then, by way of a roll call,

**RESOLVED**

to approve the Risk Management Policy (attached at Appendix 1 to the signed copy of these minutes), subject to the amendment of the title of the risk impact table in appendix B to “impact on Delivery of Services”.

**3 November 2020**

***Minute no: 155 – Budget Update Report***

The Portfolio Holder for Finance invited Council to support recommendations 1-9 set out in the Cabinet minutes.

There was general support for the proposals with the exception of recommendation 2 regarding the information technology capital budget for potential changes following a review of members’ IT. Concerns were raised by some members that the current provision of iPad for use by members did not offer them the functionality they needed to undertake their roles effectively. This had been further exacerbated by the need to attend remote meetings with the added expense of having to be posted paper copies of agenda as they did not have the ability on iPad to read papers and contribute fully to zoom meetings. The matter had been discussed at length at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee who had recommended that the Council rollout the issue of laptops to all members. A scheduled replacement of iPad was due within the next couple of years in any event and any additional costs could potentially be funded from unallocated COVID-19 grant monies. It was suggested that there was no need to await a review members’ IT as there were really only two viable options: iPad or laptops. There was a preference for laptops which could properly support office 365, provide the required larger screens and facilitate full functionality for all members to undertake a wide range of administrative processes which were not easy on an iPad. A variety of preferences were shared about various hardware options and providers.

Other members, however, were of the view that there was still a need to await the response to the recent IT questionnaire sent to all members and to fully review the current IT provision for members and assess requirements and functionality going forward. The current recommendation at paragraph 2 allowed for such a review and a proper evaluation of all options and budget provision was being recommended for a solution.

It was suggested that there was no merit in waiting for the outcome of a review as members needed the equipment now to undertake their responsibilities effectively and the provision of laptops would be cost neutral. An amendment was therefore put forward to alter recommendation 2 to read: “to increase the BDC 20/21 Information Technology capital budget by £35,000 to fund the rollout of laptops to Members to better facilitate new ways

of working and support the existing functional requirements for members' IT". On being put to the vote by way of a roll call, however, the amendment was lost.

It was then agreed that voting on the original recommendations 1-9 be held on block except for recommendation 2, which each member voted on separately. With the majority of members voting in favour, it was

### **RESOLVED**

- (1) To increase the BDC 20/21 Information Technology Capital Budget by £115,000, to fund the rollout of additional laptops to better facilitate the new ways of working.
- (2) To increase the BDC 20/21 Information Technology Capital Budget by £35,000 to fund potential changes following a review of Members' IT.
- (3) To increase the BDC annual Revenue Budget by £44,000 (with a pro-rata adjustment for 20/21 as only a part year effect) to fund an additional resource to help implement the actions set out in the recently agreed Environmental Strategy.
- (4) To agree that the unspent 'joint waste budget' can be applied to cover the costs of the waste procurement.
- (5) To increase the budgetary provision for Covid-19 expenditure from £250,000 to £295,000 to cover the additional £45,000 regulatory expenditure.
- (6) To reduce the budgetary provision for Covid-19 direct hardship payments by £77,000 and return the money to the main Council Tax Support hardship allocation.
- (7) To agree the proposed changes to the 20/21 income budgets as set out in paragraph 4.17 of the report.
- (8) To agree that the Assistant Director Regulatory is authorised to spend the new Coronavirus Enforcement grant of £49,421, to help the public and businesses understand the latest Covid-19 regulation, and increase compliance work and enforcement checks on businesses.
- (9) To remove the post of Assistant Director Consultancy Team from the establishment.

***Minute no: 156 – Review of Earmarked Reserves***

The Portfolio Holder for Finance invited Council to support recommendations 1-3 detailed in the Cabinet minutes.

It was then, by way of a roll call,

**RESOLVED to**

- (1) endorse the closure of the following reserves:
  - a. External Funding Reserve;
  - b. Community Right to Challenge Reserve;
  - c. Systems Thinking Reserve;
- (2) endorse the retention of the Economic Success Fund and the Broadland Growth Reserve;
- (3) defer a decision on the creation of the following Reserves:
  - a. Refuse Services - £7m;
  - b. New Ways of Working - £4m.

***Minute no: 157 – Treasury Management Quarter 2 Report 2020/21***

The Portfolio Holder for Finance invited Council to support recommendations 1 and 2 set out in the Cabinet minutes.

It was then, by way of a roll call,

**RESOLVED to**

- (1) note the report on treasury activity undertaken in the first half of the year and that it complies with the agreed strategy; and
- (2) note the 2020/21 prudential indicators for the first six months of the year.

***Minute no: 159 – Approval of UK Municipal Bond Agency's Framework Agreement***

The Portfolio Holder for Finance invited Council to support the recommendation of Cabinet to enter into the Framework Agreement.

It was then, by way of a roll call,

**RESOLVED**

to approve the Council's entry into a Framework Agreement and its accompanying schedules.

***Minute no: 160 – The Vision for a Best in Class Housing Offer and Draft Allocations Scheme***

The Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing made reference to the work which had taken place to prepare the Vision for a Best in Class Housing Offer and Draft Allocations Scheme and commended all those involved in the preparations, the workshop and the formulation of the documents which was an excellent example of collaborative working, in particular, Victoria Parsons and Richard Dunsire. The Council had been successful in securing a bid for funding to engage consultants to work with the Council on the Vision. The consultants had found the previous policy to be passive, haphazard, not proactive, a race to the bottom and not transparent and much work had been undertaken to develop the service to overcome these issues and provide a service that prioritised the vulnerable.

The “Shape our Housing Service” consultation on the proposals had taken place from 9 -23 October and had asked the public and stakeholders to comment on the proposed Allocations Scheme. A total of 184 responses had now been analysed and a small number of amendments proposed to the scheme including increasing the age from 21 to 25 for care leavers. Additional changes being proposed were:

Page 108 – criteria 3.2 (j) amended to read “be a divorced, separated or civil ex-partner of armed forces personnel and is required to vacate a Ministry of Defense property in the next 56 days or has been required to do so in the previous 5 years.

Pages 123/124 - Housing Priority Banding:

- Care leavers to move from band 3 to band 2
- Combining households be added to band 3
- Intentionally homeless to move from band 4 to band 3

Page 132 - Local Lettings Policy – appendix Q of the previous Allocation Scheme remained unchanged and would now form appendix 4 of the new Allocations Scheme.

It was noted that the Equalities and Communities Impact Assessment had been updated to reflect the consultation responses.

In response to a question, the Portfolio Holder assured members that any impact on the proposals following Brexit would be monitored at the time and



action taken should the need arise.

Members welcomed the document and the extensive work undertaken in the collaborative approach to the service. It was then, by way of a roll call,

**RESOLVED to**

- (1) endorse officers' work towards the Best in Class Housing Offer; and
- (2) adopt the Housing Allocations Scheme (attached at Appendix 2 to the signed copy of these minutes).

***[The chairman adjourned the meeting for a 5 minute comfort break. The meeting was reconvened at 9.01pm when a roll call was taken to confirm all members were still in attendance.]***

**195 PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The decisions of the Planning Committee meetings held on 16 September, 7 October and 4 November 2020 were received.

**196 AUDIT COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 22 October 2020 were received. The Chairman drew attention to the work of the Committee in shaping the draft Strategic Risk Register which it had felt initially was not sufficiently balanced as 85% of the risks identified related to the strategic priority of moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively. Few risks had been identified in the strategic priority of growing the economy and improving the natural and built environment. Further work had been undertaken on the register which would be considered at the next meeting of the Audit Committee. The Chairman thanked the Managing Director for attending the last meeting and assisting with the issue of overdue Audit recommendations. The Committee would be looking at the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts at its next meeting and he encouraged other members to attend the meeting.

**197 LICENSING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee meetings held on 23 September, 29 October and 5 November 2020 were received.

**5 November 2020 – Minute no: 10 – Licensing Act 2003 – Review of Licensing Policy**

The Chairman of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee invited members to endorse the amended Licensing Policy and drew attention to the amendments made at the meeting and set out in detail in the minutes of the meeting.

**RESOLVED**

that the amended Licensing Policy be endorsed, subject to the amendments set out in the minutes of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee on 5 November 2020.

**198    UPDATED DELIVERY PLAN**

The Leader invited members to consider the updated Delivery Plan and support the Cabinet recommendations from its meeting on 29 September 2020 (minute no: 137 refers) to endorse the Plan. He referred to the significant impact of COVID-19 and the challenges that would need to continue to be met over the coming months. The report set out the resetting and repositioning necessary to face the challenges.

The updated delivery plan included the changes necessary (tracked changes) to the key priority focus areas and projects including the recovery plan, the continuing and ongoing recovery work, impacts on timescales and key milestones, adjustments to focus areas based on resource allocations and budgetary implications of particular projects/work programmes. The updated Delivery Plan would take the Council to April 2021 and allow for a one-year plan to be developed alongside the budget setting for consideration by Council in February 2021 instead of the originally proposed two year Plan.

A member commented that they felt there were four main areas where the plan was lacking: it needed to ensure that the Council could build back better post COVID, that sustainability was properly covered to ensure the Plan addressed concerns in this regard, there needed to be proper acknowledgement of the need for access to the natural environment and the need to ensure that the Plan was in line with existing Council strategies for example the Environmental Strategy already agreed. The member had identified a number of individual suggestions for potential incorporation into the document to support these four main areas and gave examples of these. It was suggested they would help avoid a lost opportunity to aim for a post COVID recovery which was better than before. Particular reference was made to the Bure Valley Railway and issues of excessive vegetation management and the North West Woodland Country Park and it was suggested both elements needed strengthening in relation to sustainability and to be

managed in line with the Environmental Strategy and Habitat regulations. Members were advised by the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development that a public service cooperation agreement to facilitate the spending of the £1.2m grant on the Bure Valley Railway and Path project had recently been signed which would see an improved visitor experience and improved biodiversity plan. A new member of staff had recently been recruited to oversee the management of the North West Woodland, together with volunteers and mindful of the higher level Stewardship Scheme inherited from the previous owners of the woodland and managed by DEFRA.

In response to the concerns raised, it was agreed that the suggestions referred to could be considered by officers as part of the updated current Plan or future updates of the Plan and this could be done in conjunction with the member briefing sessions scheduled for December. An invitation was extended for these suggestions to be shared with the Managing Director for this purpose. The current Plan set out the aims for the next 6 months and would be updated over time to reflect the ongoing changing situation – the Council had at this meeting agreed the funding for additional resources to support the implementation of actions in the Environmental Strategy and it was hoped to see real progress in next 6 months.

Members were reassured that the discharge of the Delivery Plan would be consistent with the wide range of policies and strategies in place across the Council.

## **RESOLVED**

to approve the adoption of the updated Delivery Plan for 2020/21 and the development of a one-year plan for 2021/22, returning to this Council in February 2021.

## **199 MONITORING OFFICER REPORT**

Members considered the report of the Monitoring Officer. The Leader of the Council invited Members to support the recommendations regarding changes to appointments to committees and the appointment of an independent person.

## **RESOLVED to**

- (1) approve the following amendments to the appointments to Committees (as noted in section 2 of the report):
  - the appointment of Cllr Sue Holland to the Joint Scrutiny Committee as a substitute and, as a consequence, Cllr Steve Riley returns to the main membership of the Committee;

- Cllr Nigel Brennan to replace Cllr Rebecca Grattan on the Planning Committee;
- (2) approve the appointment of the Independent Person, Mr Mark Hedges, for an initial period of four years, till 30 November 2024.

## **200 OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS – FEEDBACK FROM REPRESENTATIVES**

Members received and noted the feedback from Members on Outside Bodies. Cllr Shaw was invited to email his comments to members regarding his attendance at the local authority forum: Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group.

## **201 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

The following questions were received in accordance with Procedural Rule 12.4.

### **Question 1 from Cllr N C Karimi-Ghovanlou**

*“QR codes are presently only mandatory for establishments serving food. In response to several residents’ questions, I would like to ask if the council are actively encouraging other retailers, especially supermarkets within Broadland, to display an NHS QR code to aid with Track & Trace?”*

### **Response to Question 1 by the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development:**

It was not just food establishments which were required to display the QR code but a much wider group of leisure, hospitality, close contact industries and public service outlets. Other businesses were not being asked to display a QR code because the way customers visited them was quite different, and this affected individual exposure to risks of Covid disease transmission. Instead, officers were encouraging businesses to use a Business Toolkit which contained specific information about how to safeguard customers, including Test and Trace implications. It was important in local management of the Covid pandemic that the Council preserved clear targeted messaging catering for different business circumstances. Furthermore, it should be noted that retailers were required to adopt mitigating measures such as the cleaning and disinfection of hand contact surfaces, the provision of hand sanitisers and facilities to clean baskets, trolleys and scanners on entering, redesigning the layout of the business or implementing a one way system of travel around the store. Also, customers were required to wear face coverings which provided additional mitigation where social distancing cannot be maintained at 2m. These measures were reactively and proactively monitored by the Food,

Safety and Licensing Team / Regulatory Services and all contributed to reducing the risk of transmission of Coronavirus within retailers.

**Question 2 from Cllr N C Karimi-Ghovanlou**

*“If the lockdown continues past 2nd December, will food boxes be available again for our most vulnerable residents, or are we to continue to rely on the goodness of our communities to support those in dire need?”*

**Response to Question 2 by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing**

This Council and its officers continued to actively participate in the Norfolk wide Community Resilience work, along with the voluntary sector, other Norfolk districts and the County Council. Through COVID wave 1, an operating model was established which ensured that, between those participating agencies, any resident in need or made vulnerable through COVID and the requirement to isolate (including the Extremely Vulnerable ‘shielded’ population) had access to the support needed. This operating model had remained in place and was being adapted for the expected circumstances of a second wave. This includes a number of support mechanisms including access to the Norfolk Assistance Scheme which could provide financial and other essential support, and access to the Government’s recently announced rolled out hardship support payments to those who were eligible via benefits teams.

As part of wave 2 preparations, and recognising the shift in emphasis from Government from nationally procured and delivered food boxes for the shielded population, plans had been put in place to ensure access to and delivery of the required food support would be available locally. This included essential supplies and covered basic dietary requirements. A supply chain through a number of local and regional food providers had been established to ensure a good stock of essential food for the shielded population and those who may need it. Council officers would also work hard, and as a first port of call, to make sure those residents who could afford it, had access to a private sector supply chain – be this supermarket slots or local food producers and retailers, again continuing from the good work in wave 1 to support residents. Officers were also putting in place contingency plans to re-establish a food distribution operation if the demand were great enough to require it. Community teams were working 7 days a week until 10pm weekdays and from 10am to 4pm at weekends to offer support to residents.

**Supplementary Question from Cllr N C Karimi-Ghovanlou**

*“If residents received a food box in the first lockdown would they automatically receive a box and, if they did not get one in the second wave, could they apply for one?”*

**Response to Supplementary Question by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing**

It was hoped that in the second lockdown there would not be a similar need for food boxes as systems were in place to support residents and help them to support themselves. Food parcels offered had not always been needed in the first lockdown.

The Director of Communities and Housing added to this that the Government had now rolled out the National Shielded Support Service which encouraged those on the shielded list to register and make their needs known which in turn gave them access to either supermarket priority deliver slots or access to local procured food delivery services.

**Question 3 from Cllr D Roper**

*“Please could the Leader provide a timeline of member involvement in the decision to relocate the planning department to South Norfolk House prior to the all member email on 4th September? In particular could the leader outline which elected members were involved in making the decision and when?”*

**Response to Question 3 by the Leader**

The feasibility study highlighted the collaboration work which would be undertaken by the two Councils and one of the emerging projects was an accommodation review. Things had moved on with COVID and this had created an opportunity to review the way staff worked and to understand some of the benefits of working in lockdown. The deployment of staff was a responsibility of the Head of Paid Service. Regular wellbeing surveys have been undertaken and an outcome of these was the need for staff to have the ability to continue to work from home but also to return to the office to foster the one-team culture missing through lockdown. In order to achieve this it was necessary to identify prime locations for staff recognising that there was need for presence at both sites. To ensure the offices were COVID compliant each building was able to accommodate 250 staff at each location meaning the workforce of 500 was evenly split across the two sites. On 10 July the Joint Lead Member Group had received an update on Sparks projects and the accommodation review and on 14 August, the Group had received an update and picking up the new requirements emerging to ensure the offices were COVID compliant. On 1 September a briefing had taken place with the JLMG to confirm proposals identified for the primary locations. An all staff briefing had been held on 3 September followed by an email to all Members on 4 September giving details of planned return to work of staff in a safe environment making use of the two office locations.

**Supplementary Question from Cllr D Roper**

*The Joint Lead Members Group is not a decision making body and in response to my question, which members of Council signed off the decision, was this yourself and the Leader of South Norfolk or were no Members involved.*

**Response to Supplementary Question by the Leader**

The deployment of resources was a function of the Head of Paid Service. It was for him to allocate resources in the appropriate way and it was an operational decision to determine how the teams would be split. When advised of the proposals, the Leader believed them to be appropriate and pragmatic.

**Question 4 from Cllr D Roper**

*“Will the Leader please outline what he sees as the next steps in progression of the collaboration project, in particular what he hopes will be achieved in the next 12 months.”*

**Response to Question 4 by the Leader**

The initial work on feasibility study outlined proposals to form one officer team across two councils and good progress had been made in delivering this. Progress of the transformation programme had been affected by COVID in March with the need to reprioritise activities. Key delivery elements included the appointment of a Managing Director and Senior Management team and the delivery of one team structures by January this year. A Strategic Joint Plan had been published in April 2020 outlining the combined ambitions of the two councils and key focus areas for 2020/21. Since July 2020 focus had returned to the transformation programme and a few elements of progress included the single telephony programme, the preparation of the organisational development strategy alongside the new intranet for all staff and members, the implementation of the new joint elections software and joint HR system. Looking forward a variety of different projects were underway which would be worked on over the next 12 months and reported back through the Sparks transformation programme and the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee. Specific projects included the IT and digital programme incorporating the joint website, the one IT network and joint email, the business intelligence and governance programme developing and implementing a new framework to give better intelligence into ways to deliver continuous improvement, ongoing work on looking at new ways of working, customer satisfaction and experience programme and assess how services impact on residents and continued development of the organizational development programme and example of which was the Best in Class Housing Service review approved earlier in the meeting.

### Supplementary Question from Cllr D Roper

*Will the Leader take the opportunity to dispel rumors that the Council would be leaving Thorpe Lodge and that no work would be undertaken on this in the next 12 months.*

### Response to Supplementary Question by the Leader

Thorpe Lodge as a building was not currently fit for purpose in some elements and there were already issues for the Council in continuing to use the building as an office. A lot of investment was needed to enable the building to continue to be used as an office and funds were in the budget for this. One of the areas for further investigation was to review all of the accommodation available to the two councils and to explore if there was a better location for the one team to more readily support both councils. There was no plan to leave Thorpe Lodge but there was no guarantee this would not happen in the future. In response to the question this would not happen in the next 12 months.

## 202 MOTIONS

Council considered the following motion received under Procedural Rule 13:

Proposer: Cllr Sue Lawn      Second: Cllr Jo Copplestone

*Broadland District Council stands firmly against all inequality, unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other form of activity that creates disadvantages for individuals within the community. The Council will continue to promote equality of opportunity, challenge inequality and ensure respect for **everyone**: - within the local community, as an employer and as a partner.*

*The Council forges strong links with a range of groups, within both Broadland and our neighbouring authorities. We will continue to promote fairness and accessibility to our services, as well as employment opportunities for all. We will do this through the Council's Equality Objectives:*

- *Ensure we are inclusive employers, identifying any underrepresented groups in the workforce*
- *Ensure that Broadland continue to provide accessible and inclusive services for all our customers*
- *Active engagement with those service users who have one, or more of the protected characteristics:*
- *Implement increased awareness of equality issues across the Council*



*As times and perspectives are evolving, it is even more important to reinforce our commitment to promoting equality and challenging inequality, therefore this Council **RESOLVES** to:*

- *Review and refresh the actions set out in the Council's Equality Objectives and Actions 2019/2023 in light of the current situation and in line with guidance, such as that issued by Public Health*
- *Ensure Council employees and Members continue to be fully informed and updated through annual Equality and Diversity training in order to promote positive and inclusive attitudes.*
- *Continue to work with local partners in order to offer support for those at greatest risk of the impact of Covid-19*

In response to a question as to why the Motion had been put forward, Council was advised that it was felt an appropriate time to re-emphasise the ongoing work of the Council to promote equality.

In supporting the motion, two minor amendments were put forward and accepted by the proposer and seconder of the motion, namely that the words "and monitor" be added to the first paragraph of the resolution (Review, refresh and monitor the actions.....) and that the word "mandatory" be added to the second paragraph of the resolution (annual mandatory equality and diversity training.....).

A further suggestion was put forward that the motion could include reference to the Harvard Implicit Association Test to help measures the strength of associations between concepts and evaluation or stereotypes and assist with understanding training needs. This suggestion was however not supported as it was not felt it would add to the resolution.

On being put to the vote, by way of a roll call, the motion as amended was **CARRIED**.

### **RESOLVED to**

- (1) review, refresh and monitor the actions set out in the Council's Equality Objectives and Actions 2019/2023 in light of the current situation and in line with guidance, such as that issued by Public Health;
- (2) ensure Council employees and members continue to be fully informed and updated through annual mandatory equality and diversity training in order to promote positive and inclusive attitudes;
- (3) continue to work with local partners in order to offer support for those at greatest risk of the impact of Covid-19.

**203 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.

**204 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The exempt minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 22 September 2020 were received.

**205 CABINET**

The exempt minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 29 September 2020 were received.

***Minute no: 144 – Updating the Food Innovation Centre Business Case***

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Success invited Council to support the recommendation of Cabinet to facilitate progress on this key project.

It was then, by way of a roll call,

**RESOLVED**

that the capital programme for the Food Innovation Centre is increased to cover the full capital cost and contingency amount, as set out in the report, recognising that a portion of the amount, as set out in the report, would be funded from external sources.

*The meeting closed at 10:50pm*