

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the **Council** held remotely on **Thursday 17 December 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 D Harrison	Cllr G K Nurden
Cllr S C Beadle	Cllr L H Hemsall	Cllr G Peck
Cllr N J Brennan	Cllr S I Holland	Cllr S M Prutton
Cllr D J Britcher	Cllr N C Karimi-Ghovanlou	Cllr S Riley
Cllr S J Catchpole	Cllr K S Kelly	Cllr D Roper
Cllr S M Clancy	Cllr S Lawn	Cllr N C Shaw
Cllr J K Copplestone	Cllr K E Lawrence	Cllr D M Thomas
Cllr A D Crotch	Cllr J Leggett	Cllr J L Thomas
Cllr J J Emsell	Cllr K G Leggett	Cllr S A Vincent
Cllr J F Fisher	Cllr T M Mancini-Boyle	Cllr S C Walker
Cllr R R Foulger	Cllr M L Murrell	Cllr J M Ward
Cllr S C Gurney	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).

**206 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Minute Nos &amp; Heading</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Cllr Copplestone and Cllr Nurden	211 – Cabinet 212 – Covid-19 Update Report	Other interest – recipient of Government business support grant arising from the COVID-19 crisis.

**207 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr B Cook, Cllr R M Grattan, Cllr N J Harpley, Cllr D King, Cllr I J Mackie, Cllr I N Moncur and Cllr C E Ryman-Tubb.

**208 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020 were, by way of a roll call, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

Inclusion of the names of Cllrs Riley and Roper respectively in the third paragraph on page 22. To read: *In supporting the motion, two minor amendments were put forward **by Cllr Riley and Cllr Roper respectively** and accepted* .

**209 MATTERS ARISING**

No matters were raised.

**210 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

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

**211 CABINET**

The decisions of the Cabinet meeting held on 8 December 2020 were received.

***Item no: 8 – Budget Update – 2<sup>nd</sup> Wave Covid Funding***

The Portfolio Holder for Finance invited Council to endorse the recommendations from Cabinet regarding updates to the budget in respect of Covid funding.

It was then, by way of a roll call,

**RESOLVED to**

- (1) increase the general 20/21 Covid 19 emergency budgets by £250,000 to provide additional resource to support the Council's response to Covid 19. To be funded by the Government's Covid grant;
- (2) increase the housing 20/21 Covid 19 emergency budget by £50,000 to meet the ongoing need for homelessness support. To be funded by the Government's Covid grant.

***Agenda item no: 10 – Review of Earmarked Reserves***

The Portfolio Holder for Finance invited Council to support recommendations from Cabinet regarding changes to the Council's reserves. In answer to a question as to how the figures had been arrived at, the Portfolio Holder outlined the rationale for each of the changes and stated that in many cases the sums were estimates of the potential funds required. The Leader added that the allocation of these earmarked reserves would ensure the Council was best placed to proceed with these projects at the appropriate time.

It was then, by way of a roll call,

**RESOLVED to**

- (1) separate the Bridge Maintenance Reserve into two reserves:
  - a. One named Marriott's Way with an allocation of £60,000
  - b. One named Bure Valley Railway with an allocation of £270,000.
- (2) make additions to the following Reserves:
  - c. IT Reserve - £1.3m.
  - d. Broadland Growth Reserve - £5m.
- (3) create the following Reserves:
  - e. Refuse Services - £3m.
  - f. Food Innovation Centre Reserve - £1.86m.

**212 COVID-19 UPDATE REPORT**

The Leader invited members to consider the report giving an overview of the impact of Covid-19 on the people, communities and businesses in Broadland and the Council's ongoing response. The Covid-19 pandemic was an unprecedented global crisis which had impacted on all council services, communities and businesses. The incidence of Covid in the District was still relatively low compared to the national average but on occasions there had been peaks associated with community infections commonly in care homes or education settings. There was a continued need to be vigilant, particularly over the Christmas period and confirmation had just been received that the district would remain in tier 2 at the present time. The report outlined the measures taken by the Council in response to the crisis, including the strong community hub operating model used to support the vulnerable. There had been a noticeable increase in the need for support for homelessness and hardship and the Leader thanked all the staff involved in responding to this. The Council had recently recruited a number of Covid Support Advisors funded by central government to complement existing staff efforts to help support communities and offer help and guidance and help with local track and trace efforts. Progress in rolling out vaccines was to be welcomed and

the Council continued to work to support vaccination programmes. The Council continued to offer advice and assistance to businesses and a further £1.1m of funding had been allocated to local businesses with extra funding available from the additional restrictions grants scheme. The crisis had impacted on staff resources with staff not only having to respond to the additional demands on council support services but also whilst having to adapt to different ways of working, largely remotely.

As the crisis continued, the Council remained well placed to continue to respond to the pandemic across the district and the wider area and the Leader thanked staff for all their efforts at this difficult time. With regard to the increase in homelessness and hardship activity, a question was asked about the main causes of this increase and the Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing advised members there were a number of factors contributing to the increase, for example family breakdowns, domestic abuse and the impact of hidden homeless people no longer able to continue sofa surfing. In addition, as the crisis continued and the full implications of job losses became apparent, there would likely be further increases in homelessness.

The Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing expressed his thanks to all the staff involved in dealing with the increase in demand for support for homelessness and hardship which had almost doubled in volume. On behalf of all members the Chairman endorsed these comments and the efforts of all staff for their hard work at this difficult time.

The Leader of the opposition added his appreciation and gratitude to all staff, and communities for their efforts during the pandemic.

## **RESOLVED**

to note the content of the report regarding the local impact of Covid-19 together with the activities the Council is taking to mitigate those impacts.

## **213 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 sections of the constitution, to reinstate the 6-month rule and consider the appointment of a representative and substitute on an outside body.

With regard to the Joint Informal Cabinet, the Leader commented that the role of this group had evolved over time and it was necessary to update its terms of reference. He drew attention to a further suggested change to remove the reference to voting in the terms of reference as the group was a non-decision making body and there was no need for voting arrangements. He also drew attention to proposals to facilitate a review of the terms of reference of the

Joint Scrutiny Committee and that this would be done in consultation with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A number of concerns were raised that not all members were fully aware of the Joint informal Cabinet and its meeting dates and that agenda and minutes of these meetings were not available. It was suggested it was not appropriate for decisions to be taken by this group and clarification was sought on the role of the Group. The Leader and the Managing Director reassured members that the Group was not a decision making forum hence the suggested removal of the voting references in its terms of reference. The group had been set up as part of the collaboration work and was referenced in the current constitution. It provided a forum for the Cabinet members of both councils to come together to talk through and explore ideas and options. The meetings were open to any member to attend. Any initiatives felt worthy of exploration would then be developed by officers in the normal way and form part of the normal decision making process through the Panels, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and ultimately Council, if required, thereby retaining the voting arrangements of each sovereign council as part of its own decision making governance process. Going forward the meetings would be scheduled quarterly and assurance was given these dates would be publicised. There were no reports submitted to the meetings and no minutes recorded as the group was not a decision making body.

Some members were of the view that this was in effect a decision making body as the group would be determining which areas of activity would be put forward for consideration.

The Managing Director re-emphasised that the group was not a decision making body but it existed within the constitution and with terms of reference to provide transparency and a framework within which to operate. Again it was stressed that all members were welcome to attend.

With regard to the proposed changes to the terms of reference of the group, it was noted that all references to voting needed to be removed but that reference to the quorum would at this stage remain.

It was noted that reinstatement of the 6 month rule would be effective from the date of this Council meeting. It was also noted that Portfolio Holders would continue to be voting members of the Panels.

With regard to reference to voting at meetings, it was noted that it was as yet still not possible to facilitate transparency by using electronic voting but that provision had been included in the constitution to facilitate electronic voting as and when the software was able to deliver this transparently. In response to a suggestion that the alphabetical roll call be mixed up to avoid the same order of names in the roll call, it was noted that this could delay the roll call and was not desirable at the present time.

Voting then took place on recommendations 8.1 and 8.2 in the report and on recommendations 8.3 to 8.6 on block.

It was then, by way of roll calls,

**RESOLVED** to

- (1) amend the Constitution in respect of the Terms of Reference for Joint Informal Cabinet, including all references to voting (copy attached at Appendix 1);
- (2) disband Joint Lead Members Group;
- (3) amend the Constitution in respect of voting at remote Committee meetings as follows:

*Unless a recorded vote is demanded, [which may be confirmed by the requisite number of Members confirming the demand verbally when requested by the Chairman,] the Chairman will take the vote:*

- (a) by use of the electronic voting system[s], where enabled, for Remote Voting; or*
- (b) by the affirmation of the meeting if there is no dissent [by assent]; or*
- (c) by roll-call and the number of votes for or against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be recorded;*

- (4) approve amendments to the appointment to Committees and Panels as follows:
  - Economic Success Panel - Cllr Adrian Crotch to become Chairman and Cllr Peter Bulman to remain as Vice Chairman
  - Environmental Excellence Panel - Cllr Ken Kelly to become Chairman Cllr Nigel Brennan to replace Cllr Adrian Crotch and to become Vice Chairman
  - Place Shaping Panel - Cllr Peter Bulman to replace Cllr Justine Thomas, Cllr Peter Bulman to become Chairman and Cllr Sue Lawn to remain Vice Chairman
  - Wellbeing Panel - Cllr Martin Murrell to become Chairman and Cllr Sue Prutton to be Vice Chairman
  - Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee - Cllr Justine Thomas to become Chairman and Cllr Grant Nurdén to remain Vice Chairman;
- (5) reinstate the six-month rule;
- (6) approve the appointment of Cllr L Hempsall to the Broadland Futures Initiative Elected Members Forum, with Cllr Bulman as substitute.

*At the conclusion of the meeting, the last of 2020, the Chairman reflected that 2020 had been an extraordinary year, one which few would of envisaged. The pandemic had had a significant impact on everyone - residents, communities, businesses and the work of the Council. She believed we would emerge from the experience stronger and that it had helped us to remember what was important; the true meaning of families, the importance of communities and friendship and how resilient they could be. On behalf of the Council, members and the one officer team she wished everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas and a new year full of hope and good times. She thanked fellow councillors and officers for their hard work and resilience over the last very challenging year and hoped they were all able to have an enjoyable Christmas. She urged all to keep safe, keep well and be kind to each other.*

*The meeting closed at 9.13 pm*