

Minutes of a meeting of **Cabinet** held by video link on **Tuesday 9 February 2021** at **6.00pm** when there were present:

Cllr S A Vincent – Policy (Chairman)

Portfolio holders:

Cllr J K Copplestone	Economic Development
Cllr J J Emsell	Transformation and Organisational Development
Cllr L H Hempsall	Planning
Cllr J Leggett	Environmental Excellence
Cllr T M Mancini-Boyle	Finance
Cllr F Whymark	Housing and Wellbeing

Cllr T Adams, Cllr K Kelly, Cllr K Leggett, Cllr M Murrell, Cllr S Riley and Cllr K Vincent also attended the meeting.

Also in attendance were the Managing Director, Director Place, Director Resources, Director People and Communities, Chief of Staff, Assistant Director Economic Growth, Assistant Director Planning, Assistant Director Finance, Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer), ICT Lead Housing Standards, Communities and Help Hub, Senior Economic Development Officer: Funding and Strategy and the Democratic Services Officers (LA, JO).

186 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2021 were confirmed as a correct record, save for the following typographical error:

Minute No 182 – Warm Homes Fund – Additional Funding – Contract Award

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing confirmed that he would bring this project to the notice of the SNAPB Community Links Group, when he attended their meeting next week.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing advised Members that the meeting referred to above was the South Norfolk and Broadland Community Links Group. The Warm Homes Fund project had been well received at the meeting.

187 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.

188 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised Members on the views expressed by the Committee when it reviewed the Cabinet Agenda on 2 February 2021, as each item was considered.

189 ECONOMIC SUCCESS PANEL

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Economic Success Panel held on 7 December 2020.

190 SERVICE IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee held on 11 January 2021. The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development informed the meeting that the Committee would receive a further update on Member IT in April.

191 PLACE SHAPING PANEL

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Place Shaping Panel held on 18 January 2021.

192 ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE PANEL

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Excellence Panel held on 28 January 2021. The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence advised members that the post for an Environmental Coordinator, to deliver the Environmental Strategy, was currently being advertised.

193 REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2021/22

The Assistant Director Finance introduced his report, which covered the various elements that needed to be considered when setting the Council's budget for the coming year as well as the Council Tax for the District.

The report proposed that Broadland increase its Council Tax for a Band D property from £125.52 to £129.91 for 2021/22. This equated to a rise of 3.50%.

Cabinet was advised that the proposed 2021/22 revenue budget was balanced and had no calls on general revenue reserves.

The proposed revenue budgets and associated Delivery Plan sought to advance the following priority areas:

- Growing the Economy
- Supporting individuals and empowering communities
- Protecting and improving the natural and built environment, whilst maximising quality of life
- Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively.

The Assistant Director Finance drew members' attention to Appendix B, which showed the main changes to the base budget for 2021/22

The revenue budget took account of Covid-19, which would have a long lasting impact on residents, businesses and the Council's operations. For 2021/22 the budgets include provision for £662,000 of additional expenditure to respond to the pandemic. This was fully funded from Government grants.

Since the report was drafted the final Local Government Financial Settlement had been announced and it was confirmed that none of the main figures had changed from the provisional settlement.

The Council was reliant on income of around £2.8m in Business Rates for delivering its services and there was the risk of a significant drop in this figure for 2021/22. Similarly, the New Homes Bonus Grant was being reduced from £2.3m in 2020/21 to £1.6m in 2021/22.

A new one-off Lower Tier Services Grant of £366,000 had been introduced by the Government in response to the current exceptional circumstances.

It was proposed to increase most discretionary fees and charges this year in line with inflation, based on the September RPI figure of 1.1%. The only exception to this was the Green Waste Bin charge, which had remained the same since 2018/19. This year it was proposed to increase the charge by £5 to reflect inflationary growth in operating costs.

It was also proposed to increase the special expense band D charge by £5 in order to provide funding for future essential street lighting works in Drayton, Great Witchingham and Hellesdon.

Cabinet was advised that the budget requirement compared to the predicted total funding over the next few years, showed a funding gap in 2022/23 of approximately £1m. The primary reason for this was an anticipated reduction in New Homes Bonus Grant.

The meeting was informed that the Local Government Act 2003 required the Assistant Director Finance, as Section 151 Officer, to report on the robustness of the estimates included in the budget, and secondly on the adequacy of the financial reserves.

In summary this advice was:

- Overall, in my opinion the budget has been based on a reasonable set of assumptions with due regard to the risks and is therefore robust.
- Assuming Cabinet and Council agree the revenue budget as set out in this report, then in my opinion the level of reserves is adequate for known and potential risks at this time.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised members that the Cabinet was reluctantly proposing an increase in Council Tax due to the funding gap in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

She also drew Members' attention to Appendix B and informed the meeting that Cabinet wished to propose some amendments under Cost Pressures.

The Portfolio Holders then suggested the following changes to the Base budget:

	Per Report	Change	As agreed	Reason
Cost Pressures				
Governance – Internal Audit days	10.0	-10.0	0.0	Audit days in 21/22 now anticipated to be lower than originally estimated
HR – Training budget	48.0	-12.0	36.0	Reduction in allowance for Member training to £250 per Member
ICT & Digital – Software licenses	85.0	-7.5	77.5	Provision for desk booking system to be funded by Covid-19 monies
ICT & Digital – Allowance for additional upgrades	50.0	-50.0	0.0	Rather than providing an annual budget, to consider need on a case by case basis
ICT & Digital – Additional consultancy to help align systems	30.0	-30.0	0.0	Rather than providing an annual budget, to consider need on a case by case basis
Community Assets – Northwest Woodlands County Park	27.0	-27.0	0.0	Initial maintenance costs are able to be funded from transferred funding
Community Assets – Play areas	55.0	-27.0	28.0	Reassessment of likely need.
Planning – £10k NSP, £145k GNLP, £31k GNGB, £12.5k GNGB Sports	199.0	-145.0	54.0	£145k GNLP to be funded from Equalisation Reserve in line with treatment in previous years
Waste – Disposal costs	186.0	375.0	561.0	Increase to provide for potential increase in gate fee
Extra RSG	0.0	-30.6	-30.6	
Draw on reserves	0.0	-35.9	-35.9	
	690.0	0.0	690.0	

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised the meeting that the additional Revenue Support Grant of £30,630 together with the reductions made in the base budget would go towards the anticipated increase in the Waste Disposal Gate Fee although this would still leave a draw of around £30,000 on General Reserves.

The Assistant Director Finance confirmed that none of the proposed changes would affect the robustness of the budget.

Voting was carried out by way of a roll call and it was unanimously:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- The approval of the 2021/22 base budget; subject to the amendments proposed above (Appendix A to F attached to the signed copy of these minutes).
- The use of the earmarked reserves as set out in Appendix E.
- That the Council's demand on the Collection Fund for 2021/22 for General Expenditure shall be £6,061,601 and for Special Expenditure shall be £169,801
- That the Band D level of Council Tax be £129.91 for General Expenditure and £3.64 for Special Expenditure.

RESOLVED

- Changes to the proposed fees and charges as set out in section 5.

To note:

- The advice of the Section 151 Officer with regard to section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, contained in section 10 of this report.
- The future budget pressures contained in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Reasons for decision

The report was a factual account.

194 CAPITAL BUDGET STRATEGY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22 TO 2025/26

The Assistant Director Finance presented the report that consisted of two elements; the Capital Strategy and the proposed Capital Programme for 2021/22 to 2025/26.

The Capital Strategy set out the Council's approach to the use of its capital assets and resources and was the framework for determining the capital programme and the effective use of the Council's resources.

The Capital Programme expenditure for 2021/22 was estimated to be around £17.6m, which was significantly higher than in previous years. Projects included:

- £2m investment in Broadland Growth Ltd to develop housing in the District and generate income for the Council and the public purse.
- £8.8m for the Food Innovation Centre (although Members were asked to note that the majority of this sum would be made up from European funding and the LEP).
- £3m to allow for the potential purchase of refuse vehicles and/or the refurbishment of the existing waste depot at Frettenham.
- £885,000 for Disabled Facilities Grant to help people stay in their own homes. This was fully funded by Government grant through the Better Care Fund.
- The IT System Replacement Programme was estimated at £485,250 for 2021/22.

The Assistant Director Finance confirmed that the Capital Programme was affordable and that there was no requirement to borrow to fund it.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised the meeting that she had some concerns regarding the proposed street lighting budget and would like a business case to be drafted for it, before it was approved.

Voting was carried out by way of a roll call and it was unanimously

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

To approve the Capital Strategy (Appendix A attached to the signed copy of these minutes) and the Capital Programme for 2021/22-2025/26 (Appendix B attached to the signed copy of these minutes), subject to a business case being drafted for the proposed street lighting budget.

Reasons for decision

The report was a factual account.

195 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2021/22

The Assistant Director Finance introduced the report, which set out the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22 and associated policies.

He advised the meeting that there were three key treasury management principles:

The first was security; which was maximised by ensuring that the Council's money was placed with appropriate high quality counterparties commensurate with the organisation's risk appetite.

The second was liquidity; which sought to ensure that the cash flow was adequately planned, with cash being available when it was needed.

The third principle was yield, which sought to maximise investment returns, commensurate with risk.

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2020/21 encompassed a number of areas including the following:

- The Treasury Management Policy Statement – an overarching policy statement that set out the member steer for the Treasury Management of the Council.
- The Annual Investment Strategy – which set out the investment risk management policy and the key parameters that underpinned this approach.
- Expected Investment Returns – these were expected to be low as the bank rate was unlikely to rise above 0.10 percent for the foreseeable future.
- Prudential Indicators – these were used to ensure that the Council's capital expenditure plans were affordable and prudent.
- Borrowing Strategy – the Capital Programme did not indicate any need to borrow. But this situation might change in the future, for example, for the development of a new waste depot.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted that the expected investment return for 2021/22 was better than expected at £346,300. She also noted that the Council had the option of borrowing from the UK Municipal Bonds Agency, if necessary.

Voting was carried out by way of a roll call and it was unanimously

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (1) The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22
 - (2) The Treasury Management Policy Statement 2021/22 (Appendix 1)
 - (3) The Annual Investment Strategy 2021/22 (Appendix 2)
 - (4) The Treasury Management Practice (TMP1) (Appendix 3)
 - (5) The Treasury Management Scheme of Delegation (Appendix 4)
 - (6) The Prudential Indicators (Appendix 5)
 - (7) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement (Appendix 6).
- (Appendices 1-6 attached to the signed copy of these minutes).

Reasons for decision

The report was a factual account.

196 COUNCIL TAX ASSISTANCE SCHEME 2021/22

The Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager introduced the report, which requested that Cabinet approved the Council Tax Assistance Scheme, with no changes, for the financial year 2021/2.

He advised the meeting that the Council was required to review and approve its Council Tax Assistance Scheme annually and that as the scheme had worked well over the last year no changes were proposed for 2021/22.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted the 106 percent increase in claims for Council Tax Assistance due to the pandemic.

In response to a query about assistance for residents it was explained that Universal Credit claimants could notify their local authority as part of the claims process. It was emphasised that officers were building up relationships with their counterparts at Job Centres in order to signpost residents to the support that was available for them and that the Early Help Hub was playing a key role in this.

RESOLVED

To approve the Council Tax Assistance Scheme for 2021/22.

Reasons for decision

To support residents in need of help with their Council Tax bills.

197 GREATER NORWICH GROWTH BOARD: JOINT FIVE-YEAR INVESTMENT PLAN

The Director of Place introduced the report which asked Members to consider the Five-Year Investment Plan for 2021-2026, in addition to the Annual Growth Programme (AGP) for 2021-2022.

It was explained that the three Greater Norwich local authorities pooled their Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding and allocated it to priority projects that supported the growth agenda across the three districts.

Members were asked to note that two of the four projects identified for funding in the 2021/22 AGP fell within Broadland. These were: £100,000 for the Brundall Sports Hub and £312,000 for the Bure Valley Path: Access and Recreational Enhancement project. In addition, it was proposed that £2m be awarded to support the education capital programme across Greater Norwich.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development noted the importance of the Bure Valley Path as green infrastructure and as a safe means of crossing the A140.

It was also noted that improvements to areas outside the District, such as Marriott's Way could have benefits for Broadland.

The Leader noted how well the three local authorities worked to pool their CIL money and deliver infrastructure across Greater Norwich.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (1) To agree the Greater Norwich Joint Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2021-2026, included in Appendix A; and
- (2) To approve the allocation of CIL to 4 specified projects, these projects will form the 2021/22 Annual Growth Programme (AGP); the allocation of £2M to support the Education Capital Programme within Greater Norwich; and, the allocation of an additional £341,000 to projects GP46 and GP53 that were initially allocated funding within the 2018/19 AGP.

Reasons for decision

To support the provision of infrastructure in the District

198 DELIVERY PLAN 2021/22

The Strategy and Programme Manager introduced the report, which recommended the adoption by Council of the 2021/22 Delivery Plan and set out the activities and projects the Council would be undertaking to meet the priority areas outlined in the four-year Strategic Plan.

Members were informed that it had been intended that the Council would develop a new two-year plan for 2021/22, aligned to a new two-year budget setting process. However, the impact of Covid-19 pandemic meant that it would be too challenging to develop a two-year plan at this stage and, therefore, a one-year plan had been drafted for 2021/22 instead.

The Delivery Plan set out the key activities and budgets for 2021/22, which were broken down by directorate and also included delivery measures to enable the success of activities to be monitored.

The Plan also set out the ways in which the Council would respond to the challenges the pandemic had brought and how it would for support the District in the future.

In response to a query from the Portfolio Holder for Organisational Development it was confirmed that the redesign of the Early Help and Prevention model would be taken to the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee as part of the development of the project.

It was also confirmed that the alignment of the waste customer services and the full business cases for the future of the Frettenham and Ketteringham depots would not be brought forward until the new waste contractor was in place.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning noted the excellent work being carried out by the Planning Team in liaising with parishes to assist with their spend programmes for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 receipts.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development drew attention to the importance of the Council's work in supporting aspirations and the skills of residents, in particular through the Kickstart scheme and the Choices programme, which were more important than ever during the pandemic.

She also noted the Action Plan for the North West Woodland Country Park and the work being carried out to provide a coordinated integration in Market

Towns regeneration and the Bure Valley Path and Railway improvements and enhancements facilitated by £1.2m of funding from Interreg Visitor Economy fund.

The Leader noted that Cabinet were keen to see the Choices programme being brought forward. In response, the Director of Place confirmed that he would be bringing a report to an informal meeting of Cabinet in due course.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing highlighted the work that the Council did in partnership with other bodies and organisation to support the vulnerable in the District

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

To approve the adoption of the one-year Delivery Plan for 2021/22.

199 COVID-19 UPDATE

The Internal Consultancy Lead - Housing standards, Communities and Help Hub introduced the report, which provided an overview of the impact of Covid-19 on the people, communities and businesses in Broadland, together with the detail of the Council's ongoing response.

The report set out the rapidly changing environment caused by the pandemic. Members were asked to note the significant level of funding that had been provided by the Government to alleviate hardship and to support businesses and the number of staff that had been redeployed in response to a request from the NHS.

Since the advent of Covid-19 the Council had also developed a series of interventions designed to support staff and promote their wellbeing during this crisis. These included:

- Training 43 Mental Health First Aiders
- Wellbeing surveys.
- Launched 'Your home workout' which allowed free access to a variety of virtual fitness classes.
- Workout and desk stretches available on the intranet, created by the Leisure Team
- Guidance provided to employees on flexible working, working remotely and email management.

The good news was that over the past two weeks the infection rate in Broadland had declined from 515 per 100,000 to 205 per 100,000.

The Council was actively involved in supporting the vaccination programme and in Norfolk and Waveney 90 percent of over 80s had been vaccinated, with 12 percent having received their second dose. In the 75 -79 age group 81 percent had been vaccinated.

The Leader noted the huge number of activities and support being provided by the Council to combat the pandemic, including enhanced contact tracing for which the Hub were dealing with 300 cases a week. The Director for People and Communities emphasised that this demonstrated the value of the local intelligence that the Council had to support residents.

Members commended the remarkable response of staff to the crisis and thanked the volunteers who were working in support of the NHS.

The Managing Director thanked members for their kind words and emphasised that the whole of the One Team had played their part in supporting and helping residents and businesses throughout the District and collectively working to make a difference.

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

Reasons for decision

To provide effective and targeted local support in response to the pandemic.

200 MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT NORFOLK AND WAVENEY HEALTH & CARE PARTNERSHIP

The Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) introduced the report, which confirmed that the Council had entered into a mutual aid agreement as a voluntary reciprocal exchange of employees between partners in the area.

The agreement would maximise an efficient response to the management of Covid-19 across Norfolk, by providing much needed resource to the NHS through those staff who were able to be redeployed.

Following a call to arms to the One Team, over 100 members of staff had put themselves forward to offer their time and help. Twenty one staff members

had been inducted at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and had confirmed they were being well supported.

It was confirmed that the agreement did not override employee terms and conditions and made no change to contracts of employment. No employee would be made available to another party without their agreement and without the agreement of their Assistant Director.

Cabinet was advised that the Moratorium of Understanding would put the Council in good stead for an ongoing reciprocal relationship with the NHS.

Voting was conducted by way of a roll call and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

To retrospectively agree the decision to enter into the Mutual Aid Agreement, as agreed under urgency provision between the Leader and the Managing Director.

Reasons for decision

To maximise an efficient response to the management of Covid19 across Norfolk.

201 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining items of business because otherwise, information which is exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 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.

202 FOOD INNOVATION CENTRE –CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENT

Cabinet considered the exempt report from the Assistant Director Economic Growth, which requested delegated authority be given to senior officers and Portfolio Holders to enter into specific contracts, service level agreements and tenancy agreements on behalf of the Council in relation to the Food Innovation Centre project.

Voting was conducted by way of a roll call and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

To agree recommendations 1-7, as set out in the exempt minutes.

Reasons for decision

To progress the development of the Food Innovation Centre.

203 CONTRACT FOR THE ICT INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT ONE NETWORK

Cabinet considered the exempt report of the Transformation Manager and the ICT and Digital Manager, which sought approval from Cabinet to award a contract to the preferred provider for the provision of new ICT Infrastructure.

Voting was conducted by way of a roll call and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

To approve recommendations 1-3, as set out in the exempt minutes.

Reasons for decision

To support the creation of One Network.

The meeting closed at 8.06pm