

Minutes of a meeting of **Cabinet** held by video link on **Tuesday 29 September 2020** 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 S Catchpole, Cllr K Kelly, Cllr K Leggett, Cllr G Nurden and Cllr S Riley were also in attendance.

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), Assistant Director Individuals and Families, Assistant Director Economic Growth, Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager, Policy and Partnerships Officer and the Democratic Services Officer (JO).

132 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8

Member	Minute No & Heading	Nature of Interest
Cllr J Leggett	140 – Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025, South Norfolk and Broadland Rough Sleeper Statement 2020-2022.	Non- pecuniary interest, trustee of Leeway Domestic Violence and Abuse Services.

133 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 August 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

Minute No: 123 Covid-19 – Norfolk Wide Fighting Fund

Cabinet was advised that the £150,000 for the Fighting Fund had been

allocated, but not yet released.

134 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.

135 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8 September 2020.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised Members on the views expressed by the Committee when it reviewed the Cabinet Agenda on 22 September 2020, as each item was considered.

136 WELLBEING PANEL

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Wellbeing Panel held on 5 August 2020.

137 UPDATED DELIVERY PLAN POST COVID-19

The Chief of Staff introduced the report, which set out the updated Delivery Plan for 2020/21 in the light of the updated priorities of the Council following the recent impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was originally intended that the plan would be an interim one-year plan for 2020/21, whilst a new two-year plan was developed for 2021/22. However, with the ongoing impacts of Covid-19 and a constantly changing environment, it was recommended that the development of a two-year Delivery Plan and Budget setting process be postponed for one year and allow for the development of a one-year plan for 2021/22, alongside the budget, returning to Council in February 2021.

The updated Delivery Plan for 2020/21 outlined the proposed amendments to be made to the key priority focus areas and projects for the Council. These had been revised to take account of; ongoing Covid-19 response work; impacts on timescales; adjustments to resource allocations and budgetary implications.

Overall, in light of the ongoing implications and challenges of Covid-19, the Plan ensured that organisationally the Council had a clear overview of its

priorities and the right resources and plans in place to support the recovery effort for the District.

In response to a query, Cabinet was advised that the disparity between Broadland and South Norfolk in the total controllable funding for 2020/21, was due to South Norfolk's leisure centres, as well as their larger commercial portfolio.

It was noted that the options for a single waste model and the alignment of waste customer support services projects were out of date. It was confirmed that these projects would be updated for the Quarter 2 Performance Report, which would be brought to Cabinet in November.

In answer to a query about the number of vulnerable residents supported by the discretionary prevention services, and homelessness interventions it was confirmed that these figure covered both authorities. However, when they were presented to Cabinet in Performance Reports they would be split to show the figures for each council.

The Assistant Director Individuals and Families advised the meeting that the pandemic had presented an opportunity to build upon collaboration and partnership working and as remote meetings were more convenient to attend they had made this process easier. There had been a very good community response to the pandemic with many volunteers coming forward and it was the officer's intention to maintain this level of community engagement and participation after the crisis had passed.

Members were also advised that although collection rates of Council Tax and Business Rates were likely to be down within the year due to the pandemic the collection targets would remain the same, so that any variance could be clearly identified.

It was noted that proposals to install electric vehicle chargers in the carpark, as well as the other internal works at Thorpe Lodge were on hold due to the pandemic and the 'new ways of working' project.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development noted that there was a lot of work going on in Broadland to improve the aspirations and skills of residents and that the Norfolk Strategic Fund was also leading specific targeted projects across the County.

Cabinet was also advised that an officer had been appointed to drive forward a new country park at Houghen Plantation.

In response to a query about the Food Innovation Centre, the Director of Place informed the meeting that it could also be seen as a long term investment for South Norfolk, as the Food Enterprise Zone crossed over both Districts.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised the meeting that the Committee had raised concerns that the Council had implemented measures in market towns in response to Covid-19, without consulting Ward Members. The Leader noted this point and emphasised the importance of Members being made aware of activities taking place in their Ward.

Cabinet was also informed that a Customer Satisfaction Survey across a number of activities was being developed and would be brought to the November Cabinet meeting with further details.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (1) To approve the adoption of the updated Delivery Plan for 2020/21; and
- (2) To approve the development of a one-year plan for 2021/22, returning to Councils in February 2021.

Reason for decision

To support the response and recovery to the Covid-19 pandemic.

138 RESPONSE TO MINISTRY OF HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MHCLG) CONSULTATIONS

The Assistant Director Planning introduced the report which informed Members of the key changes proposed by MHCLG on the future of the planning regime and proposed consultation responses to two planning related documents: a White Paper entitled 'Planning for the Future' and a consultation paper on 'changes to the planning system'.

In the White Paper, the Government proposed the most radical changes to the planning system since 1947 and sought to simplify the role of Local Plans, so that they focused on identifying land under one of three categories: Growth Areas, Renewal Areas and Protected Areas.

It was proposed that Local Plans would set clear rules, rather than general policies for development and the frontloading of the local plan process would ensure that there was significant community engagement at the development allocation stage.

In addition housing numbers would no longer be set locally, but by Government. The Local Plan process would be restricted to 30 months and would be based on a more digitally accessible format.

It was also proposed to replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and S106

agreements with a new Infrastructure Levy. This proposal was lacking in detail about how the transition between the two systems would work and this had been raised in the response as a concern.

The second key topic in the White Paper was Development Management. Here it was proposed that where land had been allocated in a more detailed way there would be a presumption in favour of planning permission. Whilst the principle of generic policies to cover the majority of subject areas was accepted, it was suggested in the Council response that consideration needed to be given to local characteristics and constraints as well.

Proposals in the White Paper for web based digitised local plans were welcomed, but the Council had also made the point in its response that not all members of the public had access to IT.

The White Paper also proposed strengthen enforcement powers to ensure planning standards were maintained.

The consultation on the White Paper would run until 31 October 2020.

The second consultation: 'Changes to the current planning system', proposed changes to the standard methodology for assessing local housing need and introduced a new set of proposals to secure First Homes, which would be available at a 30 percent discount in perpetuity. It was also proposed to lift the small sites threshold, below which affordable housing was not required, from 10 homes to either 40 or 50 homes and extend the current Permission in Principle provisions to major developments.

The proposed changes to the standard methodology was a concern, as under the current system there were around 2,000 homes being delivered in Greater Norwich per year, but if the revised methodology was adopted this would rise to 3,256 per year. This figure was seen as unreasonable and it was hoped that the Government would modify this proposal in light of the rate of delivery already being achieved in Greater Norwich.

The paper proposed that 25 percent of all affordable housing should be First Homes, which would be homes for first-time buyers with a minimum 30 percent discount against market value in perpetuity.

First Homes would be calculated as part of the affordable housing allocation for Greater Norwich.

Of particular concern was a proposal to temporarily raise the threshold for contributions to affordable housing from 10 dwellings to 40 or 50 homes, for 18 months. In Greater Norwich a significant percentage of affordable homes were delivered through small sites, whereas larger sites sometimes failed to deliver as many affordable homes, as infrastructure requirements could

reduce viability and the number of affordable homes delivered. The officer response was, therefore, to object to this proposal.

The final change proposed in the paper was to extend the current Permission in Principle consent regime to major developments.

Cabinet were advised of the amendments and suggestions proposed by the Place Shaping Panel at its meeting on 18 September 2020, when it had considered this report.

For question 1 of the Planning for the Future White Paper response it was suggested by the Panel that the three words they most associated with the planning system were:

Fragmented, overly complicated and time-consuming.

The Panel's top three priorities for planning (question 4) were:

- (1) Increasing the affordability of new housing.
- (2) The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change needs to be addressed as part of the design and location of new homes and places.
- (3) Supporting the local economy with more or better local infrastructure.

However, it was noted that the choice of priorities was from a prescribed list and that if only these were available when the online consultation was completed, the priorities should be:

- (1) The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change.
- (2) Supporting the local economy.
- (3) Increasing the affordability of new housing.

For question 8a, (page 107) it was agreed that figures should be included to show clearly that the increase in housing numbers in Broadland would not be deliverable, if the standard methodology for housing need was revised.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning noted that there was a lack of clarity regarding the distribution of affordable housing, as well as the protection of the landscape in the White Paper; which was especially relevant to low lying areas, such as the Waveney Valley and the Broads. She suggested that the Environmental Strategy should be used to shape some of the responses to

the White Paper.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development suggested that a strong response should be made regarding the provision of infrastructure to support economic growth and she also emphasised the importance of cross boundary arterial roads, especially if the Duty to Cooperate was to be abolished.

The Assistant Director of Planning confirmed that consultation on the White Paper did not close until 29 October, so the suggested comments from Cabinet could be included in the final response, which would be signed off by the Portfolio Holder for Planning

RESOLVED

Option (1, as amended and 2)

- (1) To agree the draft responses to the following MHCLG consultation documents as outlined in appendices 2 and 3 of this report; *with the addition of the suggestions made by the Place Shaping Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;*

Changes to the current planning system

White Paper: Planning for the future

- (2) Delegate any updates to these responses to the Director of Place in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning.

Reason for decision

To respond to Government consultation papers.

139 GREATER NORWICH HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2020-2025 SOUTH NORFOLK AND BROADLAND ROUGH SLEEPER STATEMENT 2020-2022.

The Policy and Partnerships Officer introduced the report, which presented the Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025 and the South Norfolk and Broadland Rough Sleeper Statement 2020-2022 for publication.

This was the fourth iteration of the Homelessness Strategy, which was produced in partnership with Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council. Also presented for approval was the Rough Sleeper Statement, which it was proposed that from 2022 would be developed into a Greater Norwich Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The Homelessness Strategy set out the following four priorities under which sat a series of actions which were ambitious in scope, realistic to achieve and reflected the urban/rural context within which the Strategy was located.

- (1) Domestic Abuse
- (2) Preventing Homelessness
- (3) Single and Youth Homelessness
- (4) Financial Inclusion, Welfare Reform and Economic Growth

The priorities were developed using an evidence and data based approach in consultation with partners. There was a desire to look to alleviate the drivers of homelessness i.e. low income, skills training and accessing affordable housing. The Covid-19 pandemic had delayed progress with development of the Strategy but had provided an opportunity to review the priorities to see if they were still relevant and had concluded that they were even more important post Covid-19.

With regard to rough sleeping, at the beginning of lockdown, the Council had been able to offer accommodation to all rough sleepers in the District, as per the Government's 'Everyone In' emergency measure. There was a desire to continue this work to ensure those accommodated could continue to secure housing suitable to their needs.

In summary, the Strategy and Statement aimed to further develop the existing joined up working with partners on homelessness and rough sleeping which fed into the work underway to redesign the housing offer across Broadland and South Norfolk and to take a person centred approach to increasing resilience and offering background support.

The Leader commended the work undertaken across Greater Norwich to accommodate rough sleepers during the lockdown.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing noted the increased workload of the Housing Team, who were taking around 2,000 calls per week from people worried about their housing situation. During normal times this figure was around 750, which demonstrated the extent of concern being felt by residents in the District. He also noted that the average age of death of a rough sleeper was only half that of a person in settled accommodation, which underlined the importance of the work being done by the Council to address this issue.

RESOLVED

to approve adoption of the Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025 and the South Norfolk and Broadland Rough Sleeper Statement 2020-2022.

Reason for decision

To meet legislative requirements.

140 LOANS TO PARISH COUNCILS

The Assistant Director – Finance introduced that report, which set out the governance arrangements for the distribution of loans of under £25,000 to parish and town councils, which had been agreed as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic at the 16 June 2020 Cabinet.

The report recommended that the agreement of any Covid-19 related loans to parishes under £25,000 and repayable within five years be delegated to the Assistant Director – Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance. Any loan request above £25,000 would be subject to a report to Members.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance added that loans under £25,000 would be charged at base rate plus one percent.

RESOLVED

To delegate to the Assistant Director Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, authority to agree Covid-19 related loans to parish councils of up to £25,000 provided these are repayable within five years.

Reason for decision

To provide financial assistance to parish and town councils during the Covid-19 pandemic.

141 COUNCIL TAX COVID-19 HARDSHIP FUND 2020-21 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES/POLICY

The Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager introduced the report, which asked Cabinet for retrospective authority to continue administering the Covid-19 Hardship Fund 2020-21.

In March 2020, as a response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Government announced local authorities would receive a grant to support working age economically vulnerable residents.

Broadland received £637,216 to administer the fund and following the instruction from central Government officers took immediate action to ensure the money was provided to reduce Council Tax bills and support working age vulnerable residents as soon as possible.

It was now necessary to request authorisation from Cabinet to retrospectively consider the policy, so that officers could align Council Tax policy to reflect the instruction.

Those residents eligible for the grant were all working age residents who received Council Tax Reduction during the financial year 2020-21. If the resident's liability was less than £150.00 their liability would be reduced to nil.

As part of the fund Broadland had also allocated £100,000 to a Covid-19 Severe Hardship Fund for working age residents who were experiencing severe hardship due to the Coronavirus pandemic. However, following the recent Government announcement that it would be awarding £500 to people told to self-isolate and losing income as a result, it was anticipated that the demand on the Severe Hardship Fund would be reduced.

In response to a query from the Leader, it was confirmed that the £150 Council Tax reduction had only been made in line with the policy.

RESOLVED

To retrospectively agree the policy for Council Tax COVID-19 Hardship Fund 2020-21, so we can continue to administer hardship fund following the central Government guidelines.

Reasons for decision

To support economically vulnerable residents during the Covid19 pandemic.

142 RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY

The Assistant Director – Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) presented the report, which consisted of two elements: the Risk Management Policy and the proposed risk appetite within the Policy.

The Risk Management Policy had been drafted by the Internal Audit Manager and developed through the Audit Committee and brought the Council in line

with best practice.

The Risk Management Policy included the following key features:

- The Policy now outlined the Risk Management framework.
- A process for the management of risk was outlined.
- Roles and responsibilities and governance arrangements for the reporting of risk were outlined.
- A risk appetite statement and accompanying scoring system was provided.
- Guidance was provided on the scoring of risk in line with the risk appetite.

Members' attention was drawn to the Risk Impact table at Appendix B to the report, which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had asked to be retitled 'Impact on Delivery of Services' in order to provide greater clarity.

The Assistant Director – Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) asked Cabinet to consider the Risk Appetite and confirm if they were happy with the approach proposed.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance thanked the Chairman of the Audit Committee and commended officers for their hard work in putting together the document and confirmed that the proposed Risk Appetite was acceptable.

The Assistant Director – Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) confirmed that the risk scores would be used in performance reports, which would also include Red, Amber and Green status reporting.

RESOLVED

To approve the proposed risk appetite within the Risk Management Policy;
and

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

To approve the Risk Management Policy, *subject to amendment of title to risk impact table in Appendix B to 'Impact on Delivery of Services'.*

Reasons for decision

To endorse a revised and updated Risk Management Policy, in line with best practice.

143 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.

144 UPDATING THE FOOD INNOVATION CENTRE BUSINESS CASE

The Assistant Director - Economic Growth introduced the report, which provided an update of the proposed new financial arrangements and conditions to deliver the capital element of the Food Innovation Centre, as detailed in the exempt Minutes.

RESOLVED

- (1) To approve the revised funding package, as set out in the report; and
- (2) To delegate authority to the Director of Resources to adjust the amount of any specific component within the overall revised funding package by +/- 10%, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance; and
- (3) To allocate the revenue funding, as set out in the report; and
- (4) To delegate authority to sign off on the RIBA Stage 2 concept design to the Director of Place.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

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.

Reasons for decision

To submit the funding bid for the Food Innovation Centre, whilst recognising

that a range of unresolved project details would be addressed and brought back to Cabinet before final approval of the scheme.

145 EXEMPT MINUTES

The exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 25 August 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm