

# Cabinet

## Agenda

### Date

Tuesday 16 June 2020

### Members of the Cabinet

Mr S A Vincent  
Chairman (Leader) Policy

Mrs T M Mancini-Boyle  
(Deputy Leader) Finance

### Portfolio holders

Mrs J K Copplestone Economic Development

Mr J J Emsell Transformation and  
Organisational Development

Mrs L H Hemsall Planning

Mrs J Leggett Environmental Excellence

Mr F Whymark Housing and Wellbeing

### Time

6.00 pm

### Place

To be hosted remotely at  
Thorpe Lodge  
1 Yarmouth Road  
Thorpe St Andrew  
Norwich

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**If any Member wishes to clarify details relating to any matter on the agenda they are requested to contact the relevant Director / Assistant Director**



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### PUBLIC ATTENDANCE

This meeting will be live streamed for public viewing via the following link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZciRgwo84-iPyRlmsTCIng>.

If a member of the public would like to attend to ask a question, or make a statement on an agenda item, please email your request to [committee.services@broadland.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@broadland.gov.uk) no later than 5.00pm on Thursday 11 June 2020.

## **A G E N D A**

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<b>1</b>	<b>To receive declarations of interest under Procedural Rule no 8</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of meeting held on 10 March 2020</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Matters arising therefrom (if any)</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Public Speaking</b>	
	To consider representation from the members of the public who have expressed the wish to convey their views on items on this Agenda.	
	In accordance with the Constitution a period of 3 minutes is allowed per member of the public.	
<b>6</b>	<b>Representations from Non-Cabinet Members</b>	
	To receive the views from non-Cabinet Members on items on this agenda. Members are reminded to advise the Leader if they wish to attend and speak at the meeting.	
	In accordance with the Constitution a period of 3 minutes is allowed per non-Cabinet Member.	
<b>7</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>14</b>
	To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2020.	
	The Cabinet will also be advised of views expressed by the Committee at its meeting on 9 June 2020 in relation to items on this Agenda.	
<b>8</b>	<b>Economic Success Panel</b>	<b>20</b>
	To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2020	
<b>9</b>	<b>Review of 2020/21 Budgets</b>	<b>25</b>
	To receive a report from the Assistant Director Finance.	
<b>10</b>	<b>Insurance Procurement</b>	<b>40</b>
	To receive a report from the Director of Resources.	
<b>11</b>	<b>Armed Forces Covenant</b>	<b>43</b>
	To receive a report from the Policy & Partnerships Officer	

## **12 Temporary change to Housing Allocation Policies**

**48**

To receive a report from the Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager

Trevor Holden  
Managing Director

## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

When declaring an interest at a meeting Members are asked to indicate whether their interest in the matter is pecuniary, or if the matter relates to, or affects a pecuniary interest they have, or if it is another type of interest. Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote. If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed. If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting. Members are also requested when appropriate to make any declarations under the Code of Practice on Planning and Judicial matters.

Have you declared the interest in the register of interests as a pecuniary interest? If Yes, you will need to withdraw from the room when it is discussed.

Does the interest directly:

1. Affect yours, or your spouse / partner's financial position?
2. Relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner?
3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council
4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own
5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in

If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary.

Please refer to the guidance given on declaring pecuniary interests in the register of interest forms. If you have a pecuniary interest, you will need to inform the meeting and then withdraw from the room when it is discussed. If it has not been previously declared, you will also need to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.

Does the interest indirectly affect or relate any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above?

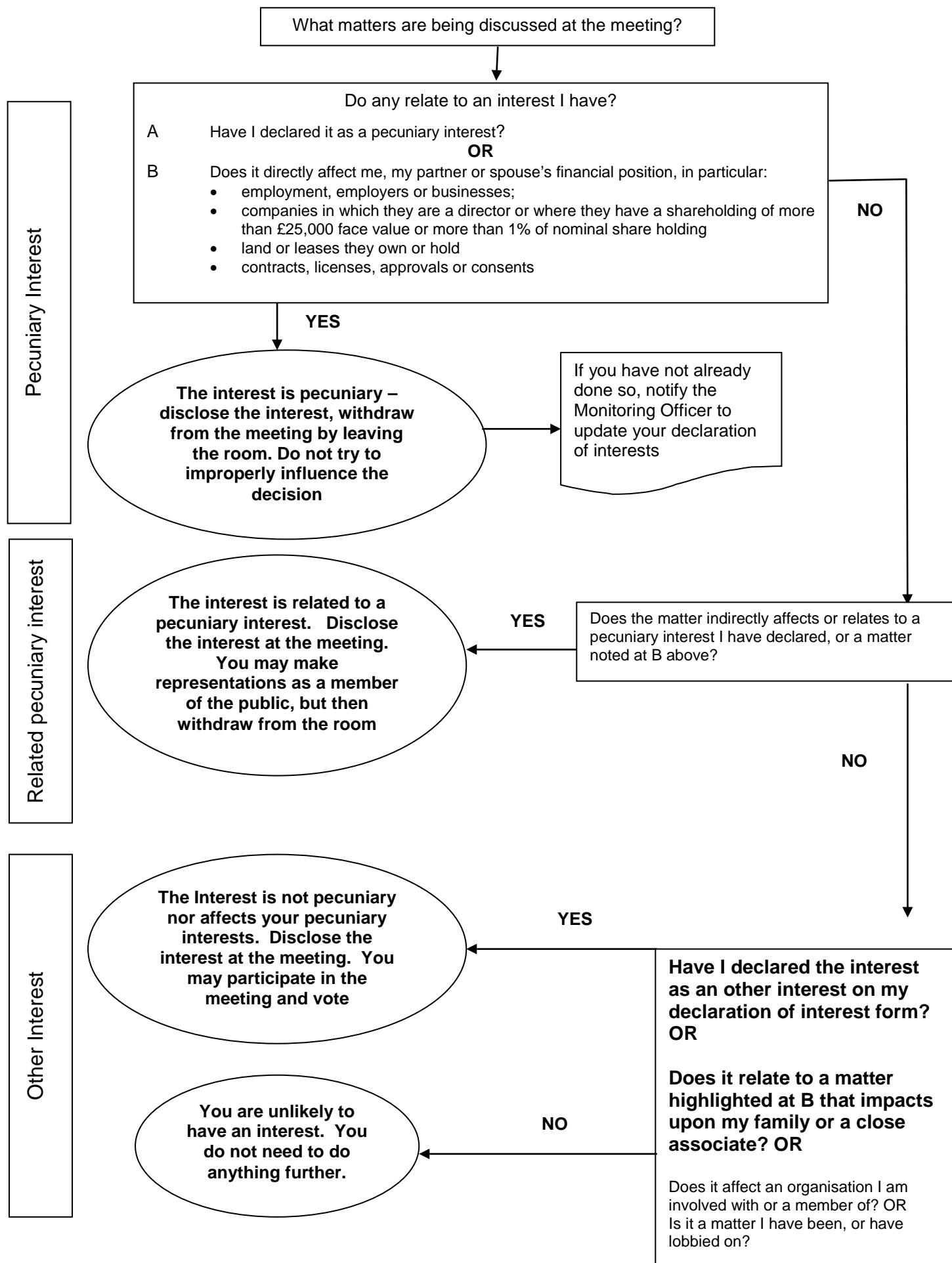
If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.

Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be another interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.

Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting, and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.

**FOR GUIDANCE REFER TO THE FLOWCHART OVERLEAF  
PLEASE REFER ANY QUERIES TO THE MONITORING OFFICER IN THE FIRST  
INSTANCE**

**DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF**



Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on **Tuesday 10 March 2020** at **6.00pm** when there were present:

Mr S A Vincent – Policy (Chairman)

Portfolio holders:

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

Mr T Adams, Mrs S Catchpole, Mr M Murrell, Mr S Riley and Mrs K Vincent also attended the meeting for its duration.

Also in attendance were the Managing Director, Director Place, Director Resources, Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer), Assistant Director Planning, Assistant Director Individuals and Families, Business Support and Promotion Team Manager, Infrastructure Delivery Officer and the Committee Officer (JO).

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

<b>Member</b>	<b>Minute No &amp; Heading</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Mr Whymark	94 – Bure Valley Railway and Path	Non-pecuniary interest, the Bure Valley Railway was located in the Member's Ward

## **88 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## **89 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.

**90 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 3 March 2020, as each item was considered.

**91 COMMUNITY LOTTERY**

The Assistant Director Individuals and Families introduced the report, which proposed establishing a Community Lottery to facilitate fund raising for local good causes.

The proposed scheme would provide a framework for 'incentivised giving', whereby local voluntary and community organisations could sign up to take part in the lottery and for each £1 ticket sold they would receive 50p for specific good causes.

Community Lotteries were considered to be low risk in respect to problem gambling, as there was no 'instant gratification', due to the midnight deadline and payment was via pre-arranged sign-up and online non-cash methods

It was suggested that the Assistant Director for Individuals and Families and the Assistant Director of Finance be nominated as Personal Management Licence Holders and that the scheme be called the Community at Heart Lottery.

Setting up the Lottery would cost approximately £7,300, with ongoing annual costs of around £1,042 for a Gambling Commission Licence and Lotteries Council membership.

The Business Support and Promotion Team Manager advised the meeting that it would be a very simple process for community organisations to sign up to the Lottery, which would help to fund their ongoing costs as well as being a useful means of engaging with local community groups.

Members noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had recommended that a 12 month break clause be inserted into the contract, but considered this to be unnecessary as the scheme would need to be run for at least two years before a thorough assessment could be made of it.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development advised the meeting that the scheme would be an excellent opportunity to support local communities and commended the proposal to call it the Community at Heart Lottery.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) To establish a Community Lottery for the purpose of raising funds to support good causes that benefit our residents;
- (2) To approve the procurement of an External Lottery Manager to run the operational side of the Lottery;
- (3) To authorise the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Economic Development team to establish criteria for determining which good causes can participate in the Lottery, and apply those criteria;
- (4) To nominate the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families and Assistant Director of Finance as the personal licence holder for the Lottery and authorises them to apply for the personal licence and delegate the running of the Lottery to them; and

**Reasons for decision**

To establish a Community Lottery to raise funds for good causes in the District.

**92 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT CHARGING FOR PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE**

The report proposed the introduction of a range of charges for pre-application planning advice from 1 April 2020 and to monitor and review the charging schedule after a period of 12 months.

The Feasibility Study had identified that the pre-application service was an area that had the potential to generate income, as Broadland was one of the only planning authorities in Norfolk that did not charge for pre-application advice.

The Place Shaping Panel had considered a proposal to introduce charging for the full range of pre-application services, including householder enquiries and from small housing developments and small commercial developments. However, following further discussions with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and to strike a balance between recovering officer costs and supporting households and small businesses, the proposed charging schedule has been amended, to provide free advice for householder enquiries and residential development of 1-2 dwellings. The charge for major proposals (51 dwellings or more and for 10,000sq.m or more) had also been increased.

It was conservatively estimated that the service could generate additional revenue for the Council of £184,725 phased over four years.



The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee informed the meeting that there had been considerable debate about this matter at the Committee and some Members had considered that parish and town councils should also receive free advice, as they were already charging a parish precept.

In response, Cabinet were reminded that the charge for parish and town councils, charities and voluntary groups would only apply to larger developments and that advice for smaller developments would remain free.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development thanked the Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Assistant Director for Planning for protecting small businesses from the charges.

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development noted that the charge of up to £400 for residential developments of up to nine dwellings was very little in comparison with other development costs.

Cabinet were informed that advice in respect of trees would also be included in the free category. Members, were also reassured that monitoring to assess if the charges were discouraging customers would also be carried out over the initial 12 month period.

#### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

- (1) To introduce charging for pre-application advice as outlined in the proposed charging schedule, from 1 April 2020; and
- (2) To review the charging schedule after 12 months.

#### **Reasons for decision**

To introduce charges for pre-application advice.

### **93 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY ANNUAL UPDATE**

The report set out the activities that the Council had undertaken over the last year, which demonstrated its compliance with its Public Sector Equality Duty, as required by the Equality Act 2010.

The report was a joint one with South Norfolk Council, which set out the shared equality objectives of the Councils, which were: being inclusive employers, having inclusive services and an increased awareness of protected characteristics and equality issues.

The report included a snapshot of the population by age and ethnicity across the Districts and provided details of the age profile of Members and representation by gender.

The report also set out the work undertaken to have a positive impact on staff and customers in relation to the shared equality objectives.

It was requested that more narrative be added to the staff turnover and ethnicity sections and that it be confirmed if paragraph titles were statutory or could be amended. The Assistant Director Governance and Business Support confirmed that she would address these issues before publication of the report.

In response to a query, the Managing Director confirmed that although there was a Single Officer Team, with aligned terms and conditions, the employment of staff was allocated equally across both authorities.

The Leader commended the report and thanked the Policy Partnership Officers for their hard work in putting it together.

## **RESOLVED**

To approve the Public Sector Equality Duty Annual Update for publication, as amended.

### **Reasons for decision**

The report is a factual account.

## **94 BURE VALLEY RAILWAY AND PATH**

The Director of Place informed the meeting that the report provided a comprehensive update to Members on the Bure Valley Railway and Path and sought endorsement for amendments to associated maintenance and management budgets.

In June 2017 the Council had resolved to transfer the asset to the Bure Valley Railway Ltd. However, the implementation of the resolution had been delayed for legal reasons and in August 2019 the Council agreed to sign a Public Service Cooperation Agreement with Norfolk County Council for a 10-year period to enable £1.2m of funding from an Interreg Visitor Economy fund to be drawn down as investment in the asset. In September 2019 it was resolved to retain the asset and enter into negotiations regarding the future relationship with the BVR Ltd.

As the Council intended to retain the asset, a series of works were required across the site to bring it back up to pre-sale-negotiation standards and address the series of dilapidations that had occurred over the last five years whilst the 'bare-minimum' approach was adopted. This was also the reason that a rent review was not carried out in 2016. The next rent review would take place in September 2021, when much of the maintenance would have been carried out, including replacement of the nine mile length of outer-fencing.

It was, therefore, proposed to separate budgets for the BVR/BVP and Marriotts Way, which had previously been combined. This would simplify the process for awarding maintenance contracts and budget forecasts.

Approval of additional funding for the replacement of the outer fencing was also sought, as was approval of the £18,005 overspend for the 2019-2020 maintenance budget.

Members were asked to note that maintenance costs in 2021/22 would be higher due to a requirement for rabbit control fencing.

Cabinet was also informed that the Managing Director and the Director of Place had had a very productive meeting with the Chief Executive of BVR Ltd, to discuss the ongoing relationship and to brief him on the contents of the Cabinet report.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development advised the meeting that Bure Valley Railway was celebrating its 30th anniversary this year and suggested that the Council should mark this milestone and acknowledge its social benefits.

It was confirmed that a visit for Members was being arranged to the Bure Valley Railway to give them greater insight and understanding into the tourist attraction.

It was requested that recommendation four be amended to include consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) To agree to separate budgets for the BVR/BVP and Marriott's Way and to increase the annual budget allowance for the BVR/BVP to £29,000 per annum, as contained within 4.6 of this report;
- (2) To agree to a separate budget and allowance of £9,000 per annum for the Marriott's Way, as contained within section 4.7 of this report;

- (3) To reallocate the £30,000 per annum rental income from the BVR Ltd into the asset to cover all annual maintenance costs for the site. Under this proposal any under spends could also be allocated into the reserve for 'large-capital' items;
- (4) To approve the additional funding required to make good the outer-fence along the Bure Valley Railway line and to delegate the procurement strategy for these works to the Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and the Portfolio Holder for Finance;
- (5) To approve the annual overspend, as outlined in 4.19 of this report, incurred in the period 2019-2020 on the combined BVR/BVP and Marriott's Way budget.

#### **Reasons for decision**

To approve ongoing budgets for the retention of the BVR/BVP.

### **95 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.

### **96 INSURANCE PROCUREMENT**

The report explored the options available to the Council for procuring insurance cover, which expires on 31 May 2020.

Following discussion it was:

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) To agree the terms of the Local Government Mutual's offer to the Council; and
- (2) To delegate to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance authority to enter into all necessary legal agreements and applications necessary to give effect to this decision.

**Reasons for decision**

To procure insurance cover for the Council.

*The meeting closed at 6.59pm*

DRAFT

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on **Tuesday 17 March 2020** at **10.00 am** when there were present:

Mr S Riley – Chairman

Mr A D Adams  
Mr S C Beadle  
Mr N J Brennan  
Mr P E Bulman

Ms S J Catchpole  
Ms N J Harpley  
Ms S I Holland  
Mr K S Kelly

Mr D King  
Mr M L Murrell  
Mrs S M Prutton  
Mrs C E Ryman-Tubb

Also in attendance were the Director Resources, Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer), Senior Governance Officer and the Committee Officer (JO).

### **123 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Nurden and Mr Shaw.

### **124 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2020 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### *Minute no 117 – Community Lottery*

The Chairman advised the meeting that the Committee's recommendation to insert a 12 month break clause in the initial two year Community Lottery contract had been rejected by Cabinet.

The Chairman requested that Members be provided with a summary setting out the number of recommendations made by the Committee that were accepted by Cabinet over the last five years.

The Vice-Chairman advised Members that he was very disappointed by the number of Committee recommendations that were rejected by Cabinet. He questioned the value of the Committee continuing to review the Cabinet Agenda as a critical friend, if the views expressed by Members were not taken into account.

### **125 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman advised the meeting the Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) would provide Members with an update

on the Council's response to coronavirus situation after the meeting.

### 126 LOCAL AUTHORITY COMMERCIALISATION

The Director for Resources gave a presentation which looked at commercialisation activities at local authorities across the country and some of the opportunities that might be considered by Broadland, according to the Council's appetite for risk.

The Localism Act 2011 allowed local authorities for the first time to set up trading companies that could generate a profit that could be reinvested in Council services.

The main driver for commercialisation was to generate income to fill the revenue budget gap, due to the likelihood of a reduction in New Homes Bonus, and other Government funding. With the advent of the coronavirus pandemic, a reduction in Business Rates retention was also now likely. The Council also had a large capital programme that required significant investment in the waste service and IT.

Commercialisation was a common approach to this problem and as of September 2018 there were 743 Local Authority Trading Companies (LATC) in Great Britain, with 59.2% of local authorities owning at least one. Commercial property companies made up 23.2% of all LATCs.

Examples where commercial enterprises had been established were:

- Birmingham City Council which had raised income from cafes and gift shops.
- Warrington Borough Council had raised a £150 million Consumer Price Index linked bond to support a range of financing initiatives including developing the new Local Authority Mortgage Scheme concept, which had realised over 200 loans valued at £5.5 million.
- Cheshire East Council had recognised a skills shortage in their area and set up a company to provide training in specific areas needed in the locality. This had helped local people stay in the area, supported local businesses and generated a profit.
- Sevenoaks District Council had a property investment portfolio, which included an office block, a petrol station, a working men's club and transformed a car park into a new hotel to be lease to a hotel chain. Sevenoaks had also developed their own bespoke staff training programme that delivered an excellent return on investment. Moreover,

performance had increased by 41 per cent, productivity was up by 45 per cent and resident satisfaction was up to 80 per cent

- West Lindsey District Council had bought and now ran a staff agency they had been using.
- Nottingham City Council's in-house waste service had seen a reduction in marginal collection cost of 14.6 per cent per tonne of commercial waste and a reduction in operating costs for domestic waste by £575,000 per annum. Nottingham also operated trade waste collection services for a number of local businesses and neighbouring local authorities.
- Birmingham and Derby Councils had founded the Council Advertising Network, which allowed councils to charge for website advertising and had earned £1m in their first year.

Local authorities with property investments include:

- Luton Borough Council, which owned London Luton Airport.
- Winchester City Council, which had built a doctor's surgery
- At South Norfolk, Big Sky Housing was developing for the public good rather than purely for monetary gain, with high design and build standards.
- Rutland County Council had purchased a former prison for conversion to affordable office, industrial and leisure premises.
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council had partnered with a Scottish charity to build a specialist children's home.

Norse Group was owned by Norfolk County Council and was by far the largest LATC in the country with an annual turnover in excess of £250 million. The Group covered facilities management, property design, management consultancy; and residential care homes and employed over 10,000 people nationwide.

There had been failures, however, Bournemouth Borough Council established a 'Bank of Bournemouth' in 2014 as a community finance company, which was forecast to return up to £24m over its first 10 years. However, it was forced to close in 2015 after lending to just 22 businesses in 18 months.



In 2012 Shropshire Council agreed to set up Inspiring Partnerships and Enterprises, to sell the council's services to outside bodies, but was forced to close in 2016 after securing minimal external business and suffering from huge overheads.

Lessons learnt from other local authority ventures included:

- Engage Members, staff and trade unions at an early stage.
- Align commercialism with the broader council agenda.
- Be bold and opportunistic and be prepared to think outside of your comfort zone.
- Establish a broad set of success criteria.
- Take appropriate external professional advice.
- Understand risk and be risk aware not risk adverse; the risk of doing nothing could sometimes be greater.
- Ensure that there was the commercial acumen to develop a robust and deliverable business plan.
- Ensure a good governance model was adopted.

The Director of Resources confirmed that ideas for commercial ventures from Members and staff would be welcomed and Member engagement workshops would be held to help develop ideas. As resources were limited, any ideas would be subject to a 'quick and dirty' appraisal to assess if they had merit before any further more detailed research was done. However, the final decision on pursuing commercial ventures would be made by Members.

There were also a number of different fees and charges that the Council could increase to ensure full cost recovery. They included, leisure services, licensing, trade waste, grounds maintenance and parking charges. The Council had already agreed to implement a range of charges for pre-application planning advice.

The Chairman emphasised the importance of commercial projects having a good business case and not being driven by political motivation.

A Member advised the meeting that he was working with officers to establish a Community Land Trust in Taverham. Community Land Trusts developed and managed affordable housing and other assets locally and the Leader had

been very supportive of the initiative. A proposal for the scheme would be brought to Members in due course.

In answer to a query the Director of Resources confirmed that Big Sky Developments' income from housing rental was approximately 3.5 to 4 per cent of its income, as it only had 25 properties currently. The optimal number of dwellings would be around 80.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Resources for her comprehensive report.

### **127 NORFOLK HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE**

The Council's representative on the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, provided a report on the meeting held on 13 February 2020.

The Committee had received a report on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn, which had received an 'inadequate' rating by the Care Quality Commission in spring 2019. Since then a number of improvements had been made and it was anticipated that the rating would be improved when it was next assessed in autumn 2020.

The Committee also received a report on the Fairstead branch surgery, which it had now been decided to refurbish, instead of closing.

### **128 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER**

The Committee noted that the EcoCube Time and Task Panel's recommendations had been agreed by Cabinet and were being implemented. The final set of Minutes from the Time and Task Panel would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Chairman noted that the Panel had carried out a very good piece of scrutiny.

### **129 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Senior Governance Officer informed the Committee that dates for the items on the Work Programme were not yet available until the Programme of Meetings was agreed by Council on 24 March 2020.

The Chairman advised Members that the letter to parish and town councils requesting topics for the Committee's Work Programme had yet to be sent out. He noted that by sending out a formal letter, it would ensure that the

matter was given due consideration on the Agenda of parish council meetings.

The Committee confirmed that they wished that the letter be sent out as soon as possible.

It was confirmed that arrangements for the Apprenticeships Time and Task Limited Panel to meet would be made in due course.

A five year summary of recommendations made to Cabinet, setting out how many were agreed and how many rejected was added to the Work Programme.

*The meeting closed at 11.48am.*

DRAFT

Minutes of a meeting of the **Economic Success Panel** held by video link on **Friday 15 May 2020** at **2.00pm** when there were present:

Mrs J K Copplestone – Chairman

Mr S C Beadle

Mr A D Crotch

Mrs K A Vincent

Ms S J Catchpole

Mrs T M Mancini-Boyle

Mr N J Brennan and Mr S Vincent were also in attendance.

Also in attendance were the Director Place, Acting Assistant Director Economic Growth, Governance Manager, Democratic Services Manager and the Committee Officer (JO).

### **15 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Mr Bulman.

### **16 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

### **17 COVID-19 BUSINESS RECOVERY PLAN**

The Chairman advised the meeting that the Government's recently published COVID-19 Recovery Strategy set out the plan for the economic recovery of the Country, which would take a gradual approach to reopening businesses and protecting livelihoods.

The Council had played its part in this by distributing over 2,000 Small Business Grants and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants, which equated to 97 percent of eligible businesses in the District.

It had recently been announced that the Furlough Scheme was to be extended to October and on 13 May 2020 a Discretionary Grant Fund had been set up to accommodate certain small businesses that had previously been outside the scope of the Business Grant Fund schemes. It was anticipated that the Council would receive £1.15m to administer this fund.

The Chairman also noted that the Government had established a Gigabit Voucher Scheme to help businesses access full fibre broadband in rural areas. She proposed that the Council could also use its Hardship Fund to similarly assist vulnerable residents in rural areas access broadband.

In response to a query regarding the criteria for the awards of the Discretionary Grant Fund, the Acting Assistant Director Economic Growth, advised the meeting that the Council could adopt a flexible approach as the Government guidelines on this were quite wide. Officers from all the Norfolk local authorities were meeting next week to work out a common approach across the County. It was anticipated that there would be a high demand across the District for the grants, which it was hoped would begin to be awarded on 1 June 2020. The Economic Development Team were contacting businesses that qualified for the grant to ensure that they did not miss out on this support.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance stressed that not all local authorities in Norfolk had the same type of business needs and that Broadland should ensure that a bespoke fund was established that met local needs.

The Acting Assistant Director Economic Growth then gave a presentation to the Panel on Operation Beacon, which was a coordinated response by Broadland, South Norfolk and Breckland Councils to protect jobs and grow business in the face of the pandemic.

Operation Beacon was a 'whole Council' response to the crisis. For example, to assist the development sector, £3.6m in Community Infrastructure Levy payments had been deferred to assist builders with their cash flow.

The project was the biggest ever engagement exercise undertaken by Broadland and was being driven by an understanding of the economy in the District, which was forecast to suffer a 32 percent decline in Gross Value Added as a result of the pandemic.

Datasets produced had shown that a high number of the workforce being furloughed were in the accommodation food and leisure sectors, with younger workers being most affected. With knowledge of those areas worst affected a focused and targeted approach could be taken to support the economy.

Operation Beacon was divided into the following three main strands:

### **1. CLEAN SAFE AND VIBRANT MARKET TOWNS**

- Tactical street closures and pavement widening, for social distancing and expanded trade provision
- Floor markings, signage, one-way systems, marshals and Help Hubs

- Accessibility, public transport, cycling and parking enhancements
- Enhanced street cleaning and public toilet adaptations
- Increasing public confidence and safety; including visible signs of meeting government guidelines, Environmental Health support
- Focus on positive (not sterile!) environment / Woonerf Concept
- Increased attraction; including campaigns and socially distanced events

### **2. TOTAL COUNCIL MOBILISATION**

- Pro-growth and pro-business continuity approach to Licencing, including maximising taxi capacity, trading support
- Proactive and proportionate approach to Planning, including pre-commencement deferral, proportionate enforcement etc.
- Focused procurement, prioritising local value and jobs
- Targeted Business Rates support, and use of grants
- Leverage Leisure to support employee wellbeing
- .... and beyond –mobilising every part of the Council which could support in some way

### **3. SUPPORTING EVERY BUSINESS**

- Biggest-ever business engagement exercise (to inform, and receive input / suggestions)
- Develop 'Unlocked' service, front-door to any company to resolve Covid trading issues
- Individual risk assessment and support plans for key businesses
- Support plans and solutions for most vulnerable sectors
- Skills support to enabled both continued trading, and growth

- Development of robust evidence base and global insights
- Maximisation of investment and financial support to business

It was anticipated that an initial reopening of retail premises would commence from Monday 1 June with a wider retail and leisure return on 6 July. But these dates could be subject to change according to how the pandemic progressed.

The project would be massive and complex and would involve the County Council, as well as town and parish councils and elected Members. The Engagement and Liaison Teams would be contacting Members next week to advise them on this further.

The Leader noted that the project would present the Council with an opportunity to drive forward the economy of the District following the devastation caused by the coronavirus. He emphasised the importance of giving people the confidence to go out, whilst continuing to practice social distancing in order to avoid the danger of a second or third wave of Covid-19. He noted that working across three broadly similar districts would allow for the optimal use of resources to do this.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance commended the proposal and noted that this would be a good opportunity to encourage businesses to locate in more rural areas like Broadland.

A Member suggested that business in the District would be reshaped by the pandemic and the Council had an important role in bringing businesses together to take different business models forward. This could be facilitated through forums and groups that could help businesses to adapt and support one another. The Acting Assistant Director Economic Growth confirmed that the Council would explore setting up a virtual business forum.

In summing up the Chairman, noted the excellent work being done by the Economic Development Team and proposed that supporting Operation Beacon be recommended to the Cabinet, along with the establishment of a bespoke Discretionary Grant Fund and that the Hardship Fund be used to assist vulnerable residents in rural areas gain access to full fibre broadband.

The proposal was supported unanimously by the Panel.

### **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET**

1. To support Operation Beacon; the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic;

2. To establish a bespoke Discretionary Grant Fund; and
3. To assist residents in rural poverty access full fibre broadband through the Council's Hardship Fund.

### **18 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.

### **19 EXEMPT MINUTES**

The exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

The Panel was advised that the bid to the European Regional Development Fund for the Food Innovation Centre had been submitted in late March and it had been expected that the Council would have been notified if the bid had been successful in early June. However, formal notification had been received that the timeline would now slip due to the pandemic and it was likely to be the New Year before any decision would be made.

*The meeting closed at 3.12pm.*



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## **REVIEW OF 2020/21 BUDGETS**

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<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Finance
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Purpose of the Report:</b>	This report provides information on the financial impact of Covid 19 on the Council's Budgets, and provides proposals to mitigate the impact.

### **Recommendations**

- 1 That Cabinet recommends the following to Council:
  - S2 The proposed changes to the 20/21 income budgets, as set out in the table at paragraph 2.2.
  - S3 The proposed changes to the 20/21 expenditure budgets.
  - S5 The following request for additional funding - Hardship Payments (£150 Council Tax Support) (£100,000)
  - S7 The 20/21 estimated surplus of £62,000 is retained as a contingency for any additional spending pressures.
  - S9 The proposed in year savings.
- 2 That Cabinet notes the following:
  - S4 The impact on Broadland Growth Limited.
  - S6 The impact on the Capital Programme.
  - S7 The impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy over the longer term.
  - S8 The proposed mitigation actions.

### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The 'Financial Implications of Covid 19' report presented to Full Council on 21 May 2020, estimated that if the lockdown lasts until the end of July the full financial impact on this Council in 20/21 could be close to £2m. If the impacts last until the end of November, the impact could be closer to £4m
- 1.2 It is therefore prudent to review the Council's Revenue and Capital budgets and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 1.3 Although aspects of the lockdown are easing, there is a risk of a second wave. This report therefore takes a balanced view in estimating the financial impact on the Council for the complete financial year 20/21

## **2 IMPACT ON 2020/21 INCOME BUDGET**

2.1 A key impact of Covid 19, will be on the income received by the Council.

2.2 The following table summarises the proposed changes to the gross income budgets for 20/21.

	Methodology	Original Budget £'000	New Budget £'000	Change £'000
Planning	25% reduction	980	735	-245
Car Parking	N/A	1	1	-
Waste Charges	25% reduction	51	38	-13
Land charges	25% reduction	220	165	-55
Housing Benefit Overpayment	25% reduction	400	300	-100
Council Tax recovery	25% reduction	70	52	-18
Licensing	No change proposed	164	164	-
Recycling credits	No change proposed	768	768	-
Green Waste	No change proposed	2,212	2,212	-
Other income and service specific grants	No change proposed	2,165	2,165	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>7,031</b>	<b>6,600</b>	<b>-431</b>

2.3 Some of these income reductions may be offset by compensating expenditure reductions. The above changes are the gross income changes.

2.4 Regarding the change in the planning income budget. There has been a slowdown in construction activity, however it is currently difficult to predict the impact on planning income. Furthermore, any such income is likely to be delayed, as opposed to lost, as developers are still keen to get planning permission - The growth will still happen, but we don't yet know how long the income will be delayed for.

2.5 It is therefore proposed that the 20/21 budget will be rebased to reduce the planning income budgets by 25% for the period 1st April – 31st March. This will equate to lost income of approximately £245,000 (£82k x 25% 12 months).

**Members are requested to agree the proposed changes to the 20/21 income budgets.**

### **3 IMPACT ON 2020/21 EXPENDITURE BUDGETS**

3.1 Covid 19 will also have an effect on the expenditure of the Council.

#### **A) Emergency Response to Covid 19**

3.2 The Council is incurring additional costs in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. Primarily on:

- Additional communications to residents and businesses.
- Additional costs of ensuring all homeless persons are provided with safe accommodation.
- Additional IT costs to enable effective homeworking and video conferencing, and software to facilitate grant payments.

3.3 It is therefore proposed to increase the following budgets.

	Methodology	Original Budget £'000	New Budget £'000	Change £'000
General Allowance for Covid 19 costs	£50,000 a month for 5 months	0	250	<b>250</b>
Housing costs	£50,000 a month for 5 months	154	404	<b>250</b>

*Nb: Although the methodology is based on a monthly calculation, the intention is that these will be annual budgets to be drawn upon throughout the year.*

**Members are requested to agree the proposed changes to the 20/21 expenditure budgets.**

#### **B) Investing in the Public Realm / Supporting the Economic Recovery**

3.4 In order to support the recovery of the economy, Broadland Council is working with South Norfolk and Breckland Councils to launch Operation Beacon to provide support to businesses, one element of that is support for the High Streets.

3.5 There is therefore a need to:

- make changes to street layouts,
- provide additional hand washing facilities,
- improve seating,
- provide street marshals, and
- make other changes to the public realm.

3.6 Any changes will need to be made working with Norfolk CC and the relevant Town or Parish Council.

3.7 The Government has announced a new £50 million fund to support the recovery of our high streets The Reopening High Streets Safely Fund will help councils in England introduce a range of safety measures in a move to get people back to work and customers back to the shop.

- 3.8 Local authorities will be able to spend money on eligible activities from 1 June 2020 and claim it back from CLGU in arrears. As part of the funding agreement, the Council will need to acknowledge the ERDF on any publicity. BDC has been allocated £116,155.

**Members are requested to note the £116,115 funding. If additional resources over and above the £116,115 are needed, then a further request for funding will be made at a later date.**

### **C) Council Tax Support**

- 3.9 The cost to BDC of providing Council Tax support is £668k a year.
- 3.10 There has already been a 17% increase in claims processed, and new claims are still arriving daily.

	Apr-20	May-20
Total number of working age LCTS caseload	3,484	3,505
Total <i>expectation</i> of working age LCTS caseload	3,000	3,000
<b>Increase</b>	16%	17%

- 3.11 It is therefore proposed to increase the following budgets.

	Methodology	Original Budget £'000	New Budget £'000	Change £'000
Cost of Council Tax Support	4 months based on a 50% increase (£28k a month x 4 months)  4 months based on a 25% increase (£28k a month x 8 months)	668	892	224

**Members are requested to agree the proposed changes to the 20/21 expenditure budgets.**

## **4 IMPACT ON BROADLAND GROWTH LIMITED**

- 4.1 As the Council's jointly owned development company, Broadland Growth Limited is one element of the Council's Economic Recovery Programme, demonstrating its commitment to local growth and delivering much needed housing.
- 4.2 The company has reviewed its future plans and intends to continue with its ambition to secure land to deliver between 50 to 100 dwellings per year. In order to achieve this, it plans to utilise the £10m funding identified in the Council's five-year capital programme, agreed in February 2020, once suitable sites have been identified within the district primarily but also potentially Greater Norwich.
- 4.3 This has been taken into account in the review of the Council's current agreed capital programme to ensure it remains affordable following the potential draw on reserves to cover the additional cost and loss of income as a consequence of the pandemic.

- 4.4 In relation to the current development at Rosebery Fields a number of sales have been on hold due to the pandemic but are now being progressed. The remaining properties are being marketed with selling prices being monitored and flexed to reflect the market changes, although this is being considered within the overall profitability of the site. Currently there is interest in site viewings and arrangements are in place for those to go ahead but nationally there is great uncertainty around the impact of Covid 19 on the housing market. Should there be a longer-term problem in disposing of the remaining properties then other solutions such as renting them out for a time to allow the housing market to improve could be considered. The Development's risk register has been updated to include this risk.
- 4.5 A consequence of a decline in the housing market and fewer sales would be a delay in the repayment of the loans to both Broadland Council and NPS and the payment of more interest on those loans. In order to assist Broadland Growth Limited with its cashflow, should there be the need, the Directors of the Company could consider asking both Broadland Council and NPS to defer the collection of the interest on those loans. The interest would still be due, but it would enable the Company to retain the cash in the short term, the impact could potentially be greater on NPS as the Broadland Council Loan is due to be repaid first.

**Members are requested to note the impact on Broadland Growth Limited.**

## **5 REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING / SUPPORT**

- 5.1 The Council has received £1.352m of additional funding from Government, to help address the pressures being facing in response to the Covid-19 pandemic across all service areas.
- 5.2 This funding is intended to cover the Council's additional operating costs and offset the Council's lost income.
- 5.3 However, there is pressure to allocate funding to meet new schemes, and details of these are detailed below.
- 5.4 When considering these, Members need to bear in mind that any new funding that is agreed will increase the need to draw on reserves or make additional savings to balance the budgets. Any changes could also have an impact on the affordability of the capital programme.

### **A) Hardship Funds**

- 5.5 To ensure residents are able to continue to work, or come back to the workplace quickly, we need to ensure they are housed, safe and not making poor choices regarding borrowing, choices that will restrict their options for a long time to come. By utilising our discretionary funds, we can quickly intervene and provide overall stability, especially regarding their housing

#### **Hardship – Direct Payment Payments**

- 5.6 At present the Council has allowed £100k to cover direct hardship payments to residents during the Covid 19 pandemic. This budget is considered to be adequate at present.

#### **Hardship Payments - £150 Council Tax Support**

- 5.7 The Government provided £637,216 in hardship funding, primarily to cover the cost of awarding £150 council tax support to all working age Council Tax Support claimants.
- 5.8 So far, the Council is predicting to award £442,000 under this scheme, and has top sliced £100,000 to fund the Direct Payment Scheme. This leaves £95,000, which is sufficient for c650 more claims.
- 5.9 There are however concerns that as we have a requirement to award £150 discounts to new all new working age claimants, the remaining balance will not be sufficient to cover these costs. At present we are processing c70 new claims a week. At this rate we will us up our remaining funds in about 9 weeks.
- 5.10 **It is therefore recommended that an additional £100,000 is set aside to cover this cost pressure.**

#### Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

- 5.11 In 20/21 DWP is providing a grant of £158,116 to allow the payment of DHP. Government allows local authorities to award up to 2.5 times this amount, but any costs over the grant amount fall on the local authority.
- 5.12 The current embargo (anticipated to end in June) on evictions means that that current DHP claim rate is only slightly above normal. However, all indicators lead us to believe that there are people who are now in unaffordable accommodation who will need assistance to move. Any move takes time and DHP allows us to help prevent people getting into significant and unsustainable debt. As the embargo on evictions lifts, we are therefore expecting a surge in support needs.
- 5.13 To ensure residents are able to continue to work, or come back to the workplace quickly, we need to ensure they are housed. By using DHP we can quickly intervene and provide stable housing.
- 5.14 Officers will continue to monitor DHP spend, and lobby Government to increase the DWP allowance. **If additional resources over and above the £158,116 are needed, then a further request for funding will be made at a later date.**

#### B) Bure Valley Railway (BVR)

- 5.15 The BVR is a much-valued business and is important to our leisure / tourism offering in Broadland. It also provides added positive social benefit to the volunteers and friends of the railway.
- 5.16 The BVR pays £30,000 rent a year to BDC, and officers have agreed to defer any rental payments until July, as the Railway has had to be closed due to Covid 19.
- 5.17 BVR have since approached the Council to ask if the rent could be waived for the whole of this financial year.
- 5.18 BVR would have paid Business Rates of £22,455 in 2020/21. However, it has received full relief this year, so does not have anything to pay. Additionally, as a small business it received a £25,000 Business Support Grant. It has also furloughed some of its staff.
- 5.19 **Prior to considering any request for funding, is it recommended that the Economic Recovery team look to assist BVR to develop a re-opening plan.**

### **C) Broadband**

- 5.20 The Covid Crisis has meant we have all had to quickly adapt to a new online world, and the 3% of businesses and private households without any fibre Broadband solution planned are disadvantaged.
- 5.21 Although the Government have a gigabit voucher scheme available, often the cost of connecting the most isolated homes is high and unobtainable for those households in rural poverty.
- 5.22 Furthermore, many school children in our rural areas who do not have access to Broadband are being disadvantaged as their education whilst isolated at home is increasingly difficult.
- 5.23 The Council has made significant contributions to the Better Broadband for Norfolk.
- 5.24 Members are asked to consider whether the Council should make a bid to the CIL infrastructure fund, to further invest in Broadband.**

### **D) Payments to Town / Parishes**

- 5.25 The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government wrote to all town and parish councils on 30 April  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-letter-to-town-and-parish-councils>
- 5.26 In this letter he said:  
*As Local Government Secretary I want you to know that I am behind you and will support the vital work that you are doing in your communities. That is why I have made £3.2 billion of additional funding available to councils, with the latest tranche of £1.6 billion including a larger share for lower tier councils. **If you have questions regarding funding I would encourage you to speak with your principal council***
- 5.27 As yet no Town or Parish Council has approached us for funding, and the general approach in Norfolk to date is that this would only be considered in exceptional circumstances, after the Town or Parish Council has exhausted its Reserves.
- 5.28 Furthermore, Town and Parish Councils do not, unlike this council, have any constraints on their ability to raise additional income through their precepts. Thus, loans to help cashflow could be offered if necessary, until the Town or Parish Council was able to increase its precept.

**Members are requested to endorse this approach.**

## **6 IMPACT ON CAPITAL BUDGET**

- 6.1 **Appendix 1** details the current 20/21 and 21/22 Capital Programme. It includes comments on each project regarding the effect of Covid 19.
- 6.2 No changes are proposed to the Capital Budgets.

Members are requested to discuss any required changes to the Capital Programme.

## 7 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) UPDATE SNC MTFS at present**

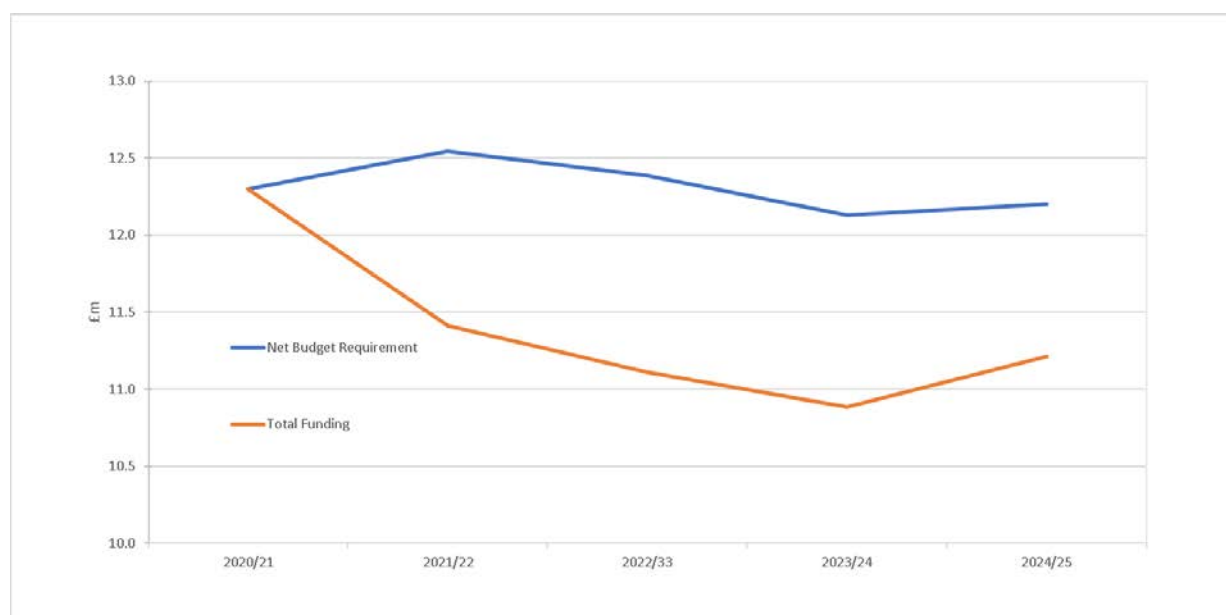
7.1 This section of the report provides and update on the MTFS.

### **A) MTFS - As Presented in Feb 20**

7.2 The 'Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2020/21' report presented to Cabinet on 11 February 2020, included a MTFS.

7.3 This reported a balance budget in 20/21, followed by a funding gap of approximately £1m in future years as follows.

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/33 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>12,300</b>	<b>12,545</b>	<b>12,389</b>	<b>12,130</b>	<b>12,203</b>
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>12,300</b>	<b>11,415</b>	<b>11,110</b>	<b>10,886</b>	<b>11,211</b>
<b>Funding Gap</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>1,279</b>	<b>1,244</b>	<b>992</b>



### **B) MTFS – Update**

7.4 The MTFS assumptions have now been reviewed and the following changes made.

#### **Impacts on Net Budget Requirement**

- £360k per year has been included for the likely increase in the MRF gate fee (12,000 tonnes x £30). There is only a half year impact in 20/21.
- Lost income of £431k in 20/21 has been assumed.
- £500k has been included as a one-off pressure in 20/21. This is made up of £250k general Covid 19 spending pressures and £250k additional homelessness costs.
- £224k has been included for additional Council Tax Support costs in 20/21, reducing to £168k in 21/22, before dropping back to current levels in 22/23.



- An additional £100k has been allowed for additional hardship support along with in year savings of £265k.

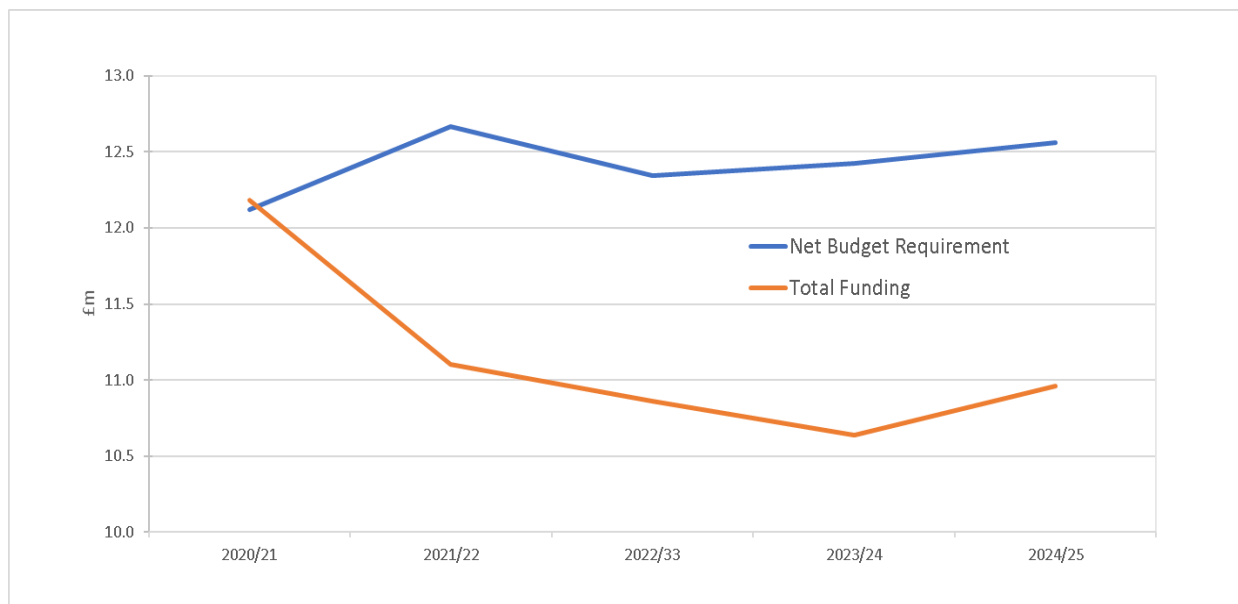
### Impacts on Funding

- Additional Covid 19 Government grant of £1.352m.
- Reductions in Council Tax collection rates totalling £120k in 20/21 and £60k in 21/22. Representing a cut in the collection rate of 2% / 1% respectively.
- An ongoing cut of £250k in the likely amount of business rates growth retained.
- No change has been made to income from New Home Bonus, as the original MTFS already assumed this was being phased out.

7.5 Further details are shown in **Appendix 2**.

7.6 The updated MTFS now shows that the 2020/21 is still in balance. However, the future funding gap has grown to approximately £1.5m a year.

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>12,118</b>	<b>12,668</b>	<b>12,344</b>	<b>12,422</b>	<b>12,563</b>
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>12,180</b>	<b>11,105</b>	<b>10,860</b>	<b>10,636</b>	<b>10,961</b>
<b>Funding Gap</b>	<b>-62</b>	<b>1,563</b>	<b>1,484</b>	<b>1,786</b>	<b>1,602</b>



7.7 The following table shows how the funding gap has changed.

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
<b>Original Funding Gap / (Annual Suplus)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>1,279</b>	<b>1,244</b>	<b>992</b>
<u>Impacts on Net Budget Requirement</u>					
Collaboration savings		-405	-405	-68	
Recycling Gate Fee	180	360	360	360	360
Lost Income	431				
COVID 19 - Spending Pressures	500				
Additional Council Tax Support	224	168			
Requests for additional funding	100				
Measures to reduce in year spend	-265				
<u>Impacts on Funding</u>					
COVID 19 - Government Funding	-1,352				
Reduction in Council Tax Collection Rates	120	60			
Reduction in assumed Business Rates Growth		250	250	250	250
New Home Bonus					
<b>New Funding Gap / (Annual Suplus)</b>	<b>-62</b>	<b>1,563</b>	<b>1,484</b>	<b>1,786</b>	<b>1,602</b>

### **C) Summary**

7.8 The key point to note is that that the updated MTFS is showing that:

- The additional Government grant has helped offset the spending pressures and lost income in 20/21.
- The longer term financial outturn has got worse by approximately £0.5m.

7.9 It should also be noted that progressing with savings from the collaboration with South Norfolk Council, still remains an important element in the MTFS.

**Cabinet is recommended to request Council note that the 20/21 budget remains in balance and that the small surplus of £62,000 is retained as a contingency for any additional spending pressures. Measures to address the longer term funding gap will be considered as part of the normal budget setting cycle later in the year.**

## **8 MITIGATION ACTIONS**

8.1 The following actions have occurred, or are proposed, to help mitigate the impact of Covid 19 on the Council's finances.

### **A) Staff Redeployments**

8.2 As at mid-May, across BDC and SNC, we have redeployed a total of 97 staff to directly support COVID19 work. Whilst the bulk of this resource came from the SNC leisure centres, we have also redeployed staff from areas such as Chief of Staff, Waste Services, Customer Support, Planning and CNC Building Control.

8.3 The ability to redeploy staff across BDC and SNC, has been a real benefit in allowing the Council to respond appropriately. Without the One Team in place responding to the needs would have been more difficult.

8.4 We have redeployed people to support the following service areas:

- 68 people to the Communities (Help Hub) to either take or make calls to vulnerable residents, or work out in the community delivering food/prescriptions etc.
- 13 people to SNC Waste Services working as drivers, loaders and logistic support.
- 12 people to Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates) to either take calls from businesses (to release capacity to process grant applications) or to make calls to businesses who are potentially eligible but are yet to claim grants.
- 1 person to Council Tax to process work items and applications and release core staff to deal with increased demand.
- 1 person to Housing Options to release core staff to deal with increased demand.
- 1 person to HR to support high priority work.
- 1 person to facilities to support Caretakers at the Lodge as backfill for vulnerable staff.

8.5 It should also be noted that a number of people have picked up additional work to support COVID19 work whilst remaining with their core service. These are not within the numbers above but include Economic Growth staff who have also been supporting Business Rates work and our reception staff who have supported Housing Benefits.

8.6 We have also released a very small number of our staff, who we were unable to directly redeploy, to work with food banks and the NHS.

### **B) Increased Marketing Activity and Promotion of Other Services**

8.7 When appropriate, we will carry out an active marketing campaign to encourage take up of our chargeable services, for instance Garden Waste Bins and Bulky Waste Collections.

### **C) Commercialisation and Supporting the Local Economy**

8.8 Officers are investigating charging for optional services, where possible, to mitigate the impact of the loss of income. Where feasible these charges will focus on areas which also support the local economy.

8.9 The Council will also look to procure goods and services locally, wherever feasible, and ensure payment is made as quickly as possible to assist businesses with cashflow.

### **D) Working with Partners**

8.10 The Council will also continue to work closely with the other public bodies in Norfolk to deliver both savings from economics of scale, and better outcomes for our residents. This could include expansion of shared service arrangements in certain areas.

**Members are requested to note the proposed mitigation actions.**

## **9 IN YEAR SAVINGS**

9.1 This section of the report provides various in year saving for members to review.

### **A) Holding Vacancies**

9.2 As at 30<sup>th</sup> April 20 there were 65.6 FTE vacancies across both Councils which had yet to progress to offer stage. The annual cost of these posts is c£2.2m.

9.3 Assistant Directors have reviewed all these vacancies to determine whether we should:

- Continue to recruit
- Freeze the post for a while
- Delete the post.

9.4 The result of the review is shown in the table below.

	Comment	No of FTEs	Salary Saving BDC £'000	Salary Saving SNC £'000
Posts to be deleted	Full year saving	1.5	27	32
Posts to be frozen	Six months saving	14.1	67	147
Posts to be frozen	Covered by redeployments	4.0	-	-
Posts to be recruited	Three months saving	41.0	148	199
Posts to be recruited	No saving as agency costs	5.0	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>65.6</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>378</b>

*The savings are higher for SNC as a number of the vacancies are / leisure / waste.*

**Members are requested to note the proposed mitigation savings.**

### **B) Training Budgets**

9.5 There is a total training budget in 20/21 across the two Councils of £300k. During the lockdown, training has either been deferred or carried out online. This budget therefore needs to be reviewed

9.6 However, any reduction to this budget would reduce the amount of training and would be counter to the One Team approach of investing in our staff and members.

9.7 The recent staff survey has indicated a need to invest heavily in both our staff to drive forward the one team culture and our Managers to ensure they provide their staff with the support they need. There is also a need to embrace the new agile way of working.

**9.8** However, the ability for staff to attend training in 20/21 has been affected by the social distancing restrictions. Therefore, a one-year temporary pro-rate reduction of £50,000 to this budget would be a reasonable reflection on the current situation.  
**The impact on Broadland budgets is a reduction of £22,500 (45% as per the collaboration agreement).**

## **10 ISSUES AND RISKS**

- 10.1 Resource Implications – This paper provides an update on the financial implications of Covid 19 on the Council. We are still at an early stage, and the numbers in this report are therefore subject to significant variation.
- 10.2 The Council currently has £14m in general reserves and £8m in earmarked reserves.
- 10.3 The Council also has limited capital reserves (c£3m) However, in general capital reserves can only be used to fund capital expenditure and are not permitted to be used to fund revenue deficits.
- 10.4 The key risks / issues raised in this paper are:
- There could be a second wave of infections, which could require a second full lockdown incurring further costs and income losses to the Council.
  - There is uncertainty over whether Government will provide any more funding to help deal with the financial implications.
- 10.5 Legal Implications – The Council has a legal duty to ensure its financial position remains robust.

## **11 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 That Cabinet recommends the following to Council:
- The proposed changes to the 20/21 income budgets, as set out in the table at paragraph 2.2.
  - The proposed changes to the 20/21 expenditure budgets.
  - The following request for additional funding - Hardship Payments (£150 Council Tax Support) (£100,000)
  - The 20/21 estimated surplus of £62,000 is retained as a contingency for any additional spending pressures.
  - The proposed in year savings.
- 11.2 That Cabinet notes the following:
- The impact on Broadland Growth.
  - The impact on the Capital Programme.
  - The impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy over the longer term.
  - The proposed mitigation actions.

## **APPENDIX 1: IMPACT ON 2020/21 CAPITAL BUDGET**

	Team	Provisional Projects	Estimate 2020/21 £	Estimate 2021/22 £	Comments re Covid 19 effect
Disabled Facilities Grants	Housing		900,000	900,000	No change
Minor Improvement Grants	Housing		30,000	30,000	No change
Warm Homes Fund	Housing		59,800		No change
Depot Refurbishment / Replacement	Waste	Y		1,000,000	No slippage in project timescales, expenditure profile dependent upon outcome of waste review
Vehicles - Waste and Streets	Waste	Y		5,600,000	No slippage in project timescales, expenditure profile dependent upon outcome of waste review
Brown Recycling Bins	Waste		24,000	24,000	No change budget is for purchase of new and replacement bins
Domestic Waste Bins	Waste		67,800	67,800	No change budget is for purchase of new and replacement bins
Street Lighting	Economic Growth		37,500	34,600	No change, work will be carried out as originally planned
Historic Blgs Grants/ Blgs at Risk	Planning		15,000	15,000	Grants likely to be given, so please retain for both years
Bure Valley Railway	Economic Growth	Y	220,000	90,000	No change, work will be carried out as originally planned
Contribution to Food Hub Project	Economic Growth	Y	870,000	990,000	No change, work will be carried out as originally planned
Thorpe Lodge Refurbishment	Facilities		167,000	84,000	Spending the £167k for 20/21 Thorpe Lodge Refurbishment works (£70k toilets, £50k heating and cooling, £20k EV charging points and £27k lift works) will much depend on the outcome of the proposed Accommodation Review
Information Technology	ICT and Digital		666,700	100,000	No change, work will be carried out as originally planned. It should also be noted we are intending to commit a further £200,000 during 2020/21 which is current contained within the ICT Reserve at BDC.
Investment Borrowing	Finance	Y	5,000,000	5,000,000	No change – Reliant on proposals from Broadland Growth.
<b>Total</b>			<b>8,057,800</b>	<b>13,935,400</b>	

## APPENDIX 2: MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP)

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	Comment
Base Net Expenditure	12,225	12,405	12,425	12,269	12,347	
<u>Recurring Adjustments:</u>						
Inflationary Pressures		245	249	246	241	2% annual increase
Collaboration Savings		-405	-405	-68		Based on 45% of latest figure from cost and savings tracker
Waste contract				-100	-100	No allowance for expansion of food waste, or increased disposal costs
Recycling Gate Fee	180	180				£30 per tonne extra x 12,000 tonnes. Half year effect 20/21.
Base Net Expenditure for following year	12,405	12,425	12,269	12,347	12,488	
<u>Lost income</u>	431					
<u>Non Recurring Adjustments</u>						
COVID 19 - Spending Pressures	500					One off cost 20/21.
Investing in the Public Realm	0					Initial costs covered by grant
Additional Council Tax Support	224	168				20/21 50% increase. 21/22 reducing to 25%. Then back to current levels.
Requests for additional funding	100					Hardship Payments - £150 Council Tax Support
Measures to reduce in year spend	-265					eg freezing vacant posts
COVID 19 - Government Funding	-1,352					One off income 20/21.
Investment Income - General	-207	-207	-207	-207	-207	Assume remains stable over time
Investment Income - Loans to companies	-75	-225	-300	-300	-300	Assume income from Broadland Growth covers interest payable
Interest Payable	75	225	300	300	300	Financing costs for £10m investment to Broadland Growth
Internal Drainage Board Precept	252	252	252	252	252	Assume remains stable over time
Transfers to / (from) Earmarked Reserves	30	30	30	30	30	Assume remains stable over time
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>12,118</b>	<b>12,668</b>	<b>12,344</b>	<b>12,422</b>	<b>12,563</b>	
<b>Funded by</b>						
Council Tax - District Element	5,828	6,133	6,444	6,762	7,087	
Reduction in Council Tax Collection Rates	-120	-60				20/21 2% cut. 21/22 1% cut. Then back to current levels.
Council Tax - Special Expenses	141	141	141	141	141	Assume remains stable over time
NNDR (Business Rates)	3,983	3,983	3,983	3,983	3,983	Assuming maintain current level of income
Reduction in assumed Business Rates Growth		-250	-250	-250	-250	Amount of funding from growth likely to be scaled back in future.
RSG	30					
New Homes Bonus	2,318	1,158	542			Falling in line with figures in 20/21 provisional finance settlement
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>12,180</b>	<b>11,105</b>	<b>10,860</b>	<b>10,636</b>	<b>10,961</b>	
<b>Funding Gap</b>	<b>-62</b>	<b>1,563</b>	<b>1,484</b>	<b>1,786</b>	<b>1,602</b>	
<b>Council Tax Calculation</b>						
Council Taxbase (Homes)	46,430	46,987	47,551	48,122	48,699	1.2% annual increase
Council Tax	125.52	130.52	135.52	140.52	145.52	£5 annual increase
Broadland's share of precept (£000)	5,828	6,133	6,444	6,762	7,087	
<b>New Homes Bonus Calculation</b>						
2017-18	511					
2018-19	616	616				
2019-20	542	542	542			
2020-21	649					
	2,318	1,158	542	0	0	

## **INSURANCE PROCUREMENT**

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**Portfolio:** Finance

**Wards Affected:** None

### **Purpose of the Report:**

The Council's current insurance contract expires on the 31 May 2020 and this report provides an update to the previous exempt report to Cabinet on the 10 March 2020.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Cabinet is recommended:
  - 1.1 To endorse the extension of the Council's current Insurance Contract until the 30 September 2021.



## **2 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Council's current insurance contract expired on the 31 May 2020 and this report provides an update on the current situation and makes a recommendation to Cabinet to endorse the decision to continue with the current provider.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Council's current insurance contract is with Zurich Municipal and is a three-year contract which has the option to be extended by two years. The premium paid for 2019/20 which includes the 5% PTA is shown below:

- Combined Insurance policy £90,282.36
- Mortgaged Properties Inadvertently Uninsured £282.11
- Terrorism £4,351.57
- Engineering Inspection service £1,717.49

## **4 CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 The previous exempt report to Members in March 2020 recommended that Officers agree the terms of the Local Government Mutual insurance offer to the Council.

Unfortunately this has not been possible as the other prospective members of the mutual withdrew as their attention focused on dealing with Covid 19.

## **5 PROPOSED ACTION**

- 5.1 Officers have been in discussions with the current providers, Zurich Municipal and are proposing that the Council takes advantage of the option to extend the existing contract, however instead of the two year period this would be reduced to sixteen months from 1 June 202 to 30 September 2021, in order to align contract dates with South Norfolk council. Zurich have agreed to a four-month extension to the 31 September 2020 to ensure the Council has insurance cover in place at a pro-rata charge using the 2019/20 charge without any inflationary rate applied. Zurich will then provide a one-year renewal to the 30 September 2021.
- 5.2 Aligning the end dates of the individual insurance contracts for both Councils, to the 30 September 2021, will provide the opportunity to jointly procure in future and ensure that the procurement activity does not clash with the financial year end work.

## **6 OTHER OPTIONS**

- 6.1 The only other option would have been to look for a framework through which insurance could have been purchased as there wasn't sufficient time to undertake an OJEU procurement exercise, however this would not have allowed the dates of the insurance contracts between both Councils to be aligned for future procurement

exercise. Potentially this could still be an option for the one-year renewal in September, at the end of the four-month period, but practically it would cost more to administer and would also harm the goodwill shown by Zurich in allowing the four month extension at the same rate for 2019/20.

## **7 ISSUES AND RISKS**

- 7.1 There is minimal risk in taking up the option to extend the existing contract.
- 7.2 **Resource Implications** – The four-month extension has been charged at the 2019/20 rate pro rata, which has avoided the usual annual inflationary increase for that period. The cost of the one-year renewal to 30 September 2021 is not available until they have processed the Council's renewal information, which is an annual process, but is unlikely to change significantly apart from the annual inflationary increase.
- 7.3 **Legal Implications** – There no legal implications from extending the existing contract.
- 7.4 **Equality Implications** – there are no equality implications.
- 7.5 **Environmental Impact** – there is no environmental impact.
- 7.6 **Crime and Disorder** – there is no impact upon crime and disorder.

## **8 CONCLUSION**

- 9 The most efficient way to ensure the Council had insurance cover in place from 1 June 2020 was to exercise the option under the original procurement exercise to extend the current contract. The extension has been granted by Zurich for a four-month period to the 30 September 2020 with a subsequent one-year contract to the 30 September 2021 to take the opportunity to align contract end dates with South Norfolk Council. Aligning year-end dates will provide the opportunity to jointly procure insurance in the future which should provide efficiencies and savings.

## **10 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is recommended:

- 10.1 To endorse the extension the Council's current Insurance Contract until the 31 September 2021.

### **Background Papers:**

Cabinet Paper 10 March 2020 Insurance Procurement

## **ARMED FORCES COVENANT**

**Report Author:** Victoria Parsons  
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**Portfolio:** Policy

**Wards Affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report:**

To summarise progress made by Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council towards fulfilling its obligations under the Armed Forces Community Covenant and working towards a Gold status under the Employer Recognition Scheme

To request approval to implement a policy of ten days additional paid leave for Reservist employees.

### **Recommendations:**

1. To note the actions and progress towards achieving Silver and Gold status through the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme; and
2. To approve the proposed policy change to offer an additional ten days paid leave to reservists employed by the Councils.

## **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report to Cabinet details our current position in the Council's ambitions to become the first local authorities in Norfolk to achieve Gold status. It sets out proposed actions to cement our Silver nomination. Finally the report seeks approval to implement a policy offering 10 days additional, paid leave to reservist employees. This is an essential criteria to meet in securing a successful Gold nomination.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Broadland and South Norfolk Councils are both proud signatories of the Norfolk Armed Forces covenant which sets out a voluntary statement of support between a civilian community and the local armed forces community.
- 2.2 In addition, the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) encourages employers to support defence personnel and inspire others to do the same.
- 2.3 The scheme encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the Armed Forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant. The awards themselves can be broadly themed in the following areas and each build on the previous award:
- Bronze – pledging to support the Armed Forces
  - Silver – proactive support for recruitment and employment of defence personnel and their spouses
  - Gold – as an advocate within the community for defence and former defence personnel and their families
- 2.4 In December both councils were awarded Bronze status through the ERS. This provides the Councils with national recognition of our commitment to support the Armed Forces community through our employment practices and our pledge to the Armed Forces was proudly published on our website.

## **3 CURRENT POSITION**

- 3.1 Nominations for the Silver award were submitted in May and it is expected that notification of whether the Councils have been successful will be made by early August.
- 3.2 To be considered for the award, the Councils were required to demonstrate; employment of defence people, for example, reservists, veterans and spouses; the support for reservist staff members through the provision of at least five days leave; and support for the recruitment of defence people through the provision of our guaranteed interview scheme.
- 3.3 In addition, the councils appointed Armed Forces Champions from the One Team, ensuring a Champion within each directorate. This is in addition to the Armed Forces Member Champions within Broadland and South Norfolk.

- 3.4 An event to celebrate VE Day on the 8 May 2020 was planned which aimed to celebrate the veterans in our community and to thank them for their service, with agreement from General Sir Lord Dannatt, former Army Chief of General Staff to attend. Furthermore, the event would have been an opportunity to bring together reservists, veterans and spouses employed by the Council and those in the community, alongside defence support organisations, such as the Royal British Legion and the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association in a round table discussion considering our current offer for defence people and where we can improve.
- 3.5 With the outbreak of Covid-19, the event was postponed, and it is proposed that this could take place in conjunction with Remembrance Sunday in November, Covid/Social distancing depending. This would be in addition to the proposed activities below to mark Armed Forces Week in June. Holding the celebration in November means we can also highlight and promote the council's silver awards.

#### **4 ACTIONS– SILVER STATUS**

- 4.1 In order to cement our Silver status and to further demonstrate our commitment to the Armed Forces, the Councils will undertake a series of additional activities.
- 4.2 The Councils will seek to offer engagement and support to our local cadet forces, through proactive communications to apprise them of funding that may be available through our grants and bid writing support with our Communities Team.
- 4.3 The Councils will also explore the support offer through Help Hubs, for those returning or returned to civilian life, for example, through housing and debt advice.
- 4.4 The Armed Forces Champions will develop a survey to identify defence people employed across the directorates, so that the Councils can better understand their experiences of working for Broadland and South Norfolk and identify if, or where improvements can be made.
- 4.5 The Armed Forces Champion for Resources is currently researching the provision of e-learning for staff for them to better understand service life and its impacts.
- 4.6 The Councils will also celebrate Armed Forces Week from 22-27 June. Proposed activities include:
- Proudly displaying the Armed Forces flag from The Lodge and The House
  - Encourage social media use through the hashtag #saluteourforces
  - Ask residents to create Armed Forces Day flags and bunting with templates provided by the councils
  - Celebrate Cadets Day on 22 June through promotion and sharing of their activities
  - Celebrate Reservists Day on 24 June, asking local reservists to share photographs of themselves in uniform

- Members and managers to take part in #saluteourforces sharing photographs of them saluting
- Encouraging people to take part in Sitting Room Knees Up using a suggested Armed Forces playlist.

## 5 PROPOSED ACTION – GOLD STATUS

- 5.1 If successful in our nominations to Silver status, the Councils can apply for Gold in 2021 and are already taking proactive steps to meeting the criteria for that award. However the requirement for the provision of an additional ten days, paid leave for armed forces reservists would need to be approved as a policy change by Cabinet.
- 5.2 Reservists are required by the MOD to meet an annual minimum training commitment, including a 10 day exercise, usually undertaken in the summer. Reservists are paid by the MOD for any training they undertake and currently they are able to take either unpaid leave or paid leave through their holiday entitlement from the Councils in order to attend.
- 5.3 For the Councils to benchmark themselves against other organisations as a Gold employer, ten days additional, paid leave would need to be available to reservist employees.
- 5.4 The table below provides an illustration of potential costs for employees up to salary band J and is inclusive of 29% on-costs.

Pay range for BDC/SNC Grades (lowest, medium and highest band)		Gold Award 10 days additional paid leave inc. 29% on-costs
<b>A</b>	£17,940 - £19,176	£635.79 - £679.58
<b>E</b>	£31,120 - £35,484	£1,102.87 - £1,257.54
<b>J</b>	£55,039 - £59,864	£1,950.56 - £2,121.56

- 5.5 To provide an example of a worst case estimate, the Councils currently have two members of staff that are Reservists. If both were employed at the top of salary band J, there would be a maximum annual cost to the councils of £4,243.12.
- 5.6 The implementation of this policy supplies a clear message to reservist colleagues that their skills, knowledge and experience gained through their connection to the Armed Forces are highly valued by the Councils. Furthermore, when promoted through recruitment portals, including those Armed Forces specific, will demonstrate Broadland and South Norfolk as an employer of choice, thus attracting high calibre applicants into the area which would benefit not just the councils but the community as a whole.

## **6 ISSUES AND RISKS**

- 6.1 **Resource Implications** – there would be a small, ongoing financial impact if the proposals are implemented, however this can be met through the salary budget. There may be an increase in costs if additional Reservists make themselves known or are recruited by the Councils. However, as shown above these costs are relatively low.
- 6.2 **Legal Implications** – there are no specific legal implications to be considered.
- 6.3 **Equality Implications** – The proposals and actions to achieve Silver and Gold status through the ERS are designed to positively impact on defence people within the Councils and our community, some of whom may have one or more of the protected characteristics.
- 6.4 **Environmental Impact** – there are no specific environmental impacts to be considered
- 6.5 **Crime and Disorder** – there are no specific impacts with crime and disorder
- 6.6 **Risks** – The provision of ten days additional, paid leave for Reservists is an essential criteria for organisations to achieve Gold status in the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme. If we choose not to implement this policy, we would be unable to progress further with our application.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Broadland and South Norfolk councils are making good progress in our aim to be the first local authorities in Norfolk to be awarded ERS Gold status.
- 7.2 Although there is a financial cost to implementing the proposed leave policy, it is a relatively small impact on staffing and budgets if compared to the recognition of being awarded Gold status, which places the Councils as national exemplars and demonstrates our commitment to our serving and retired Armed Forces Personnel and their families.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 For Cabinet to note actions and progress towards achieving Silver and Gold status through the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme.
- 8.2 For Cabinet to approve the proposed policy change to offer an additional 10 days paid leave to Reservists employed by the Councils.

### **Background Papers**

None.

## **TEMPORARY CHANGE TO HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICIES**

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<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Housing and Wellbeing
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Purpose of the Report:</b>	To outline temporary adjustments to the Home Options Allocation Policy to help reduce unprecedented demand on temporary accommodation caused by the current Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Agree a temporary amendment to the criteria within the Council's Housing Policy to allow officers discretion to place eligible, and suitable, individuals currently living in supported accommodation within the 'High' category for allocation.
2. Subject to recommendation 1 being agreed that this will be in place for an initial period of 3 months, extendable to 6 months, with approval of the Director of People and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

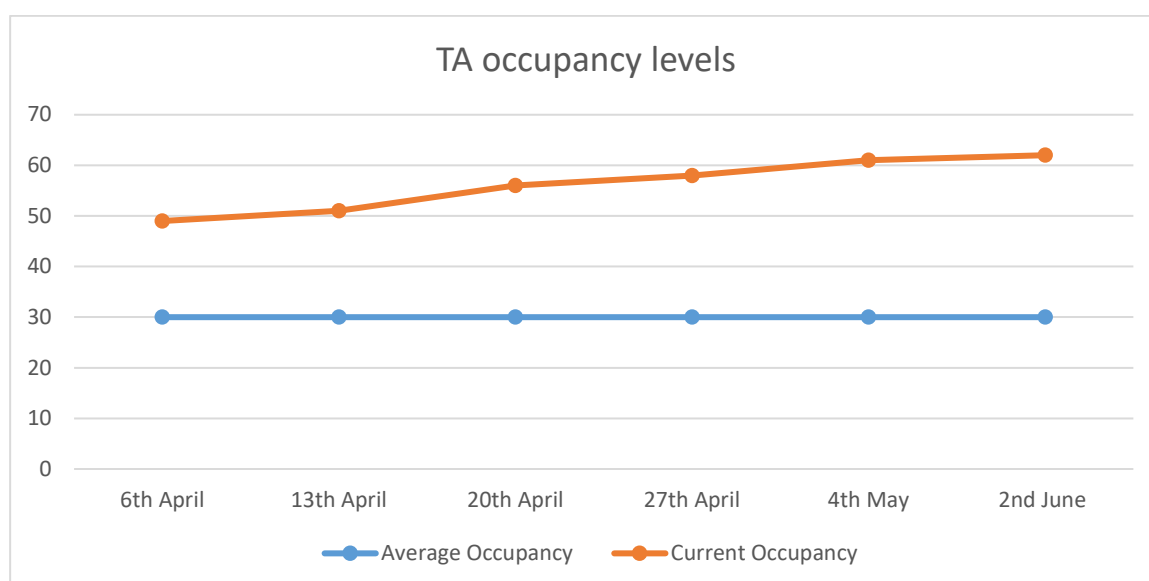


## 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Due to the unprecedented demand on our housing services through the Covid-19 crisis, the Council needs to review temporary arrangements for allocating properties, to relieve the pressure on temporary accommodation. The proposed changes will not only be more cost effective for the taxpayer but will also move eligible residents into more sustainable accommodation, providing stability.

## 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 During the Covid-19 pandemic officers have seen a sustained rise in numbers housed within temporary accommodation. Numbers in all forms of temporary accommodation would typically be around 30 at any one time for both Broadland and South Norfolk combined, this number jumped to 50 within the first week and rose steadily to between 60 and 70.



- 2.2 There are a number of key drivers for this:

- (1) The Government's 'Everybody in' requirement placed a duty on all councils to accommodate no matter the persons circumstances during the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the success of Councils' Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) officers were very well placed to meet this additional requirement, only needing to accommodate two rough sleepers.
- (2) The largest driver of demand has been the increase in presentations from sofa surfers and hidden homelessness. These are residents who have a network of family and friends who allow people to stay at their home for limited periods of no more than a few days. Covid-19 resulted in a reduction in accommodation options due to the restrictions on movements put into place. Residents within this category are generally lower priority need so are not normally afforded Council

temporary accommodation and/or have refused accommodation through the RSI. In normal circumstances they also tend to have a number of options so generally manage to have a roof over their head each night.

- (3) Due to their often-chaotic nature these people are often not ready to take on a property for themselves.
- (4) The suspension of the housing sector – to compound the above increase in demand all available housing outcomes stopped immediately. This has resulted in a pathway suspension that led to the numbers now being accommodated by the Council.

### **3 CURRENT POSITION**

#### **Cost**

- 3.1 During an average year the Councils spend approximately £70,000 a year (£5,800 per month) on B&B accommodation, when in-house temporary accommodation is not viable. This is offset by the income raised from Housing Benefit, income from residents and income from in-house own temporary accommodation stock.
- 3.2 In March at the start of the lockdown and social distancing requirements, costs jumped to £20,000 and rose further to £32,000 per month since. These costs have been considered by the Council in recent papers considering the costs of responding to the pandemic, but officers are concerned to minimise ongoing unbudgeted costs as quickly as possible to alleviate financial stress on the Council.

#### **Action taken so far**

- 3.3 The social housing sector is once again moving, albeit very slowly. In any four month period availability is anticipated to be between 200-240 properties. During the Covid-19 period there have been two. With Housing Associations now undertaking void work it is anticipated that a backlog of 66 social properties will be made available over the next month. It is essential that officers enable these houses go to those who need it most and enable flow out of temporary accommodation to ensure more sustainable cost on the Council.
- 3.4 To enable this and as allowed by current housing policy, officers have temporarily moved to a nominations process for those in temporary accommodation and directly nominated anyone who is ready and suitable for a social tenancy. Officers continue to strive to link residents to the area and tenancy type they most preferred, providing as much choice as possible. Once allocated, local Housing Associations will focus their depleted resource in turning these properties around as quickly as possible in order to reduce people's time within temporary accommodation.

- 3.5 By taking this action officers will be able to reduce the Temporary Accommodation numbers by 40 over the next month as properties are finished and assist to maintain more manageable and affordable levels of temporary accommodation in the coming months.
- 3.6 The 23 who have not been allocated have been assessed as 'not ready' to take on a property due to having support needs. South Norfolk and Broadland have a good supply of supported housing provision to which officers can look to move individuals or families into and out of temporary accommodation, providing the right levels of support prior to seeking longer term tenancies. However, demand for supported accommodation is currently high, and the only way of creating space for new incoming residents is to create flow, in most cases to a Housing Association property. To enable this, officers are working with supported accommodation providers so that current identified residents can 'Move on' through more direct nomination into a sustainable and suitable property whereby the Council receive exclusive nomination rights to backfill the subsequent space from those housing in the Councils' temporary accommodation.

### **Issue**

- 3.7 Whilst the above will work well as a strategy, it is incredibly labour intensive under current policy requirements. The Council's allocation policies work well in normal times and tend to identify those in supported accommodation as a silver (SNC) or medium (BDC) priority banding, which is appropriate in business as usual terms. However, as the policies were not set up to meet the needs of the current pandemic in sudden influx of demand and reduction of supply. Due to the more limited properties available at present this will not create the required throughput needed to alleviate continued demand and cost pressure on our temporary accommodation system.
- 3.8 It is also important to add that there is an anticipated dormant demand within the system at the moment. Landlords have not been able to take action on their tenants for three months now, families are strained, calls to domestic abuse services remain circa 30 percent higher than normal to name a few. The team is preparing for this increase by reaffirming partnership strategic approaches and making sure they are up-to-date. Whilst it is difficult to quantify the true demand that this will place on the service, namely whether it will be urgent immediate need thus requiring temporary accommodation, it is important that officers plan and act now to allow us to meet any future demand without costing the Council an unsustainable amount.

## **4 SOLUTION**

- 4.1 Officers suggest allowing the temporary change in allocation policy whereby those in supported accommodation are placed in gold or emergency (SNC) or high (BDC) priority bandings which will enable the necessary throughput to reduce temporary accommodation numbers. This change in banding will only be allowed when a suitable current temporary accommodation occupant has been identified and accepted by a supported accommodation provider to fill

the subsequent void.

## **5 ISSUES AND RISKS**

- 5.1 **Resource Implications** – Failure to take this action will create sustained additional resource pull on an already stretched team. This impact is also felt by our partners who will feel the delay the nominations process creates.
- 5.2 **Legal Implications** – There are no specific legal implications to be considered.
- 5.3 **Equality Implications** – Due to the limited number of houses becoming available there is of course increased competition. Emergency is only awarded to those in high levels of need. By increasing the numbers of people within this band officers will be increasing competition. Officers will also be placing people in a more favourable position than those in lower bands. Those people within the lower bands however are currently housed and although not suitable in all circumstances they are in a better position than those currently located in temporary accommodation. By taking this action officers will be having the most positive impact on those in most need.
- 5.4 **Environmental Impact** – There are no specific environmental impacts to be considered.
- 5.5 **Crime and Disorder** – There are no specific impacts with crime and disorder.
- 5.6 **Risks** – Failing to take this action is very likely to create sustained financial implications on the Council with temporary accommodation costs currently sitting at 500 percent higher than usual. This action will allow the team to take action to mitigate these costs moving forwards.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 Broadland and South Norfolk Councils have been incredibly successful in meeting the extra demand created by Covid-19. It is essential now that the Council acts quickly to make sure that these numbers do not become business as usual, or become worse if anticipated demand on the Housing Team increases. By taking the action officers will be able to reduce team demand, increase stock resilience to normal levels and make sure long-term housing is made available to those who have been facing homelessness, albeit hidden, for some time.

## **7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 Agree a temporary amendment to the criteria within the Council's Housing Policy to allow officers discretion to place eligible, and suitable, individuals currently living in supported accommodation within the 'High' category for allocation.

- 7.2 Subject to recommendation 1 being agreed that this will be in place for an initial period of 3 months, extendable to 6 months, with approval of the Director of People and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.
- 

### **Background Papers**

There are no background papers.