

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 7 January 2019 at 9.00am.

Members Present:

Cabinet: Councillors: J Fuller (Chairman), M Edney, Y Bendle, K Kiddie and L Neal

Apologies: Councillors: K Mason Billig

Non-Appointed Councillors: D Bills, F Ellis, M Gray, T Lewis, G Minshull and V Thomson

Officers in Attendance: The Managing Director (T Holden), the Director of Communities and Wellbeing (J Sutterby), the Director of Growth and Business Development (D Lorimer), the Head of Business Transformation (H Ralph), the Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer (E Hodds), the Head of Planning (P Courtier), the Housing Standards and Community Protection Manager (T Cook), the Group Accountant (J Brown) and the Senior Planning Officer (S Marjoram)

2688 WELCOME TO TREVOR HOLDEN

The Chairman welcomed the Council's new Managing Director, Trevor Holden, to his first Cabinet meeting for South Norfolk Council. The Chairman looked forward to working with Mr Holden, and the new challenges that lay ahead through collaborative working with Broadland. He felt this was an exciting time and a real opportunity to realign how district councils could work and become an exemplar for best practice in Local Government.

The Managing Director agreed that this was a fantastic opportunity for the Council to be smart and different through its collaborative work, impacting positively on residents, and he referred in particular to the need to improve social mobility in the area. He looked forward to the challenges ahead, suggesting that there would be a need for compromise by all along the way. He had been impressed with the positive attitudes of staff across both South Norfolk and Broadland Councils and he stressed the importance of pressing ahead with staff restructures, so that the focus for both Councils, could be on residents and external matters.

2689 SHARED SERVICES, WASTE AND RECYCLING PORTFOLIO

The Chairman reminded members that Cllr K Mason Billig was taking a break from her councillor responsibilities, due to a family bereavement. Cabinet expressed its sincere sympathies to Cllr Mason Billig.

The Chairman informed the meeting that in Cllr Mason Billig's absence, both Cllrs K Kiddie and L Neal would be taking on portfolio responsibilities relating to waste and recycling.

2690 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 10 December 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2691 IMPACT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT ON THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Members considered the report of the Accountancy Manager, which updated Cabinet on the results of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, announced on 13 December 2018.

The Group Accountant outlined the key issues in the report, drawing attention to the positive impact of the settlement on the Council. Members noted that the settlement was better than expected, and that the Council was £1.25 million better off when compared to the Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by Cabinet back in February 2018. This was due to a combination of the settlement and the strong performance on new homes built, which in turn increased the amount of New Homes Bonus received. The Council had delivered a total of 1,145 new homes, including a record number of 290 affordable homes, resulting in the New Homes Bonus being £103k higher in 2019/20, than in 2018/19.

Members were reminded that the £636k benefit from the 75% Business Rates Pilot and the £47k from the national levy surplus, were one off gains that should not be factored in to the Council's base budget and attention was drawn to the proposal to add the gains from the Business Rates Pilot to general reserves in 2019/20.

Regarding Homelessness Prevention, members noted that the settlement had confirmed that there would be no separate funding allocation for this work, and that the Council would need to fund more of its homelessness work, from its own income.

In response to queries, the Group Accountant confirmed that these were only indicative figures, and that there was a small risk that the final figures would change. Members noted that an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy would be presented to Cabinet in February, incorporating details of the settlement.

It was then

RESOLVED: To

- 1) Agree that the one-off financial benefit from participation in the Business Rates Pilot should be added to general reserves in 2019/20.
- 2) Note the report and the impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Reason for the Decision

As some of the gains were for one year only, it was felt prudent for some of the additional funding to be added to general reserves for 2019/20

Other Options Considered

None.

2692 GREATER NORWICH JOINT 5-YEAR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN 2019/20 – 2023/24 AND THE ANNUAL GROWTH PROGRAMME 2019/20

Members considered the report of the Head of Planning, which sought member endorsement for the Greater Norwich Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan (5YIIP) for 2019/20 to 2023/24, and the Annual Growth Programme (AGP) for 2019/20.

The Senior Planning Officer presented the report to members, explaining that the 5YIIP and the AGP was being considered by the Greater Norwich authorities, before returning to the Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) for consideration in February. Members noted that due to a shortfall in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), only a limited 2019/20 AGP was proposed. The Senior Planning Officer informed members that a review of CIL for Greater Norwich would be considered at a future meeting of the GNGB.

Members' attention was drawn to the progress on a number of projects that had already been funded. Cabinet was also pleased to note that initial works were due to commence that very day on the new roundabout at the Hempnall crossroads.

During discussion, the Chairman stressed the need for a review of CIL for Greater Norwich, and the importance of collecting maximum amounts from the best sites. He acknowledged that there were concerns regarding the implications of Norwich City Council's newly adopted policy to allow CIL exemptions in certain instances, and advised that a report from Norwich City Council would be made to the February GNGB meeting, concerning the implications of its CIL exemption proposals. Members noted that South Norfolk Council's Scrutiny Committee would also be considering the matter at its next meeting on 23 January 2019.

With regard to queries concerning the new proposed development at Anglia Square in Norwich, the Joint Head of Planning explained that the developers were awaiting a decision from the Secretary of State, as to whether or not the decision would be called in and a public inquiry held. Members noted that the developer could not make an application for an exemption from CIL, until the planning decision had been issued.

It was then

RESOLVED: **TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL** endorses the Greater Norwich Joint 5-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan (5YIIP) for 2019/20 to 2023/24 and agrees the Annual Growth Programme (AGP) for 2019/20, for consideration at the next meeting of the Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB).

The Reason for the Decision

To ensure that projects are appropriately prioritised and that sufficient funds are available to cover commitments within the agreed Programme.

Other Options Considered

None.

2693 SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE – DISABLED FACILITY GRANTS

Members considered the report of the Housing Standards and Community Protection Manager, which advised members on the recommendations of the recent national review of Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs) and the injection of additional funding, and sought member approval for three schemes to assist vulnerable residents.

The Housing Standards and Community Protection Manager presented his report, explaining that a recent national review of Disabled Facility Grants had resulted in 31 recommendations, against which the Council performed strongly. This position of strength was mainly down to a South Norfolk led review of the Norfolk Disabled Facility Grant process and a Norfolk wide journey of improvement that had first commenced back in 2011. The Council continued to strive to improve, and this approach had ensured that processes were ahead of many other local authorities.

Members noted that the Government had recently awarded the Council an additional £96,000 DFG for 2018/19, and the Housing Standards and Community Protection Manager outlined schemes relating to three priority areas; winter deaths, hospital avoidance, and dementia, where it was proposed that the additional funding be allocated.

Cllr Y Bendle, the portfolio holder, commended the report and the recommendations to members, and Cabinet expressed its support for the three schemes outlined. With reference to the Going Home Pack, the Chairman suggested that the wording concerning time limits be softened, so that cases could be considered on a case by case basis, as opposed to a strict 12-week period, and this amendment was agreed by officers.

It was

RESOLVED: To agree to allocate the £96,000 recently awarded by the Government to support the schemes detailed in this report.

The Reason for the Decision

To ensure that the additional funding is used in priority areas where the Council's interventions can make the biggest difference.

Other Options Considered

To allocate the additional funding in to the general DFG budget.

2694 2019-20 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Members considered the report of the Housing and Benefit Manager which reviewed the Council Tax Support Scheme and proposed no changes for 2019/20.

The Housing and Benefit Manager presented his report, and advised members that the Housing Wellbeing, Leisure and Early Intervention Policy Committee had also considered the proposals and had been satisfied that the current scheme remained fit for purpose. Members noted the scheme's ethos was to encourage work, and to protect those that could not, whilst remaining as simple as possible to administer.

The Housing and Benefit Manager explained that a public consultation had taken place, and although the response rate had been low, no negative feedback had been received with regard to the current scheme.

Cllr Y Bendle commended the report, reminding members that the hardship fund was in place as a safety net for one-off cases, and that its introduction had been the start of the Council's early help approach. She added that the following year, a more robust review of the Council Tax Support Scheme was required, to take account of any implications resulting from the roll out of universal credit.

It was

RESOLVED: **TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that it keeps the Council Tax Support Scheme in its current form for a further 12 months.

The Reason for the Decision

To ensure a scheme that remains fit for purpose.

Other Options Considered

None.

2695 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members noted the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda.

(The meeting concluded at 10.01 am)

Chairman