

## Scrutiny Committee

### *Members of the Scrutiny Committee:*

Cllr G Minshull (Chairman)  
Cllr V Clifford-Jackson (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr B Bernard  
Cllr B Duffin  
Cllr J Hornby  
Cllr J Rowe  
Cllr R Savage  
Cllr T Spruce  
Cllr J Wilby

### **PUBLIC ATTENDANCE**

**This meeting will be live streamed for public viewing via the following link:**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZciRgwo84-iPyRlmsTCInq>

If a member of the public would like to attend to speak on an agenda item, please email your request to [democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk), no later than 5.00pm on Thursday 17 December 2020.

## Agenda

### **Date**

Monday 21 December 2020

### **Time**

9.30 am

### **Place**

To be hosted remotely at:  
South Norfolk House  
Cygnet Court  
Long Stratton  
Norwich  
NR15 2XE

### **Contact**

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If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting,  
please let us know in advance

**Large print version can be made available**

# **AGENDA**

1. **To report apologies for absence and to identify substitute members;**
2. **Any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972. Urgent business may only be taken if, "by reason of special circumstances" (which will be recorded in the minutes), the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency;**
3. **To Receive Declarations of Interest from Members;**  
(Please see guidance form and flow chart attached – page 4)
4. **Minutes from the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held 9 September 2020;**  
(attached at page 6)
5. **Member Led Funding;** (report attached – page 14)
6. **Scrutiny Work Programme, Tracker and Cabinet Core Agenda;**  
(attached – page 22)

## **Working style of the Scrutiny Committee and a protocol for those attending**

### **Independence**

Members of the Scrutiny Committee will not be subject to whipping arrangements by party groups.

### **Member leadership**

Members of the Committee will take the lead in selecting topics for and in questioning witnesses. The Committee will expect members of Cabinet, rather than officers, to take the main responsibility for answering the Committee's questions about topics, which relate mainly to the Council's activities.

### **A constructive atmosphere**

Meetings of the Committee will be constructive, and not judgmental, accepting that effective overview and scrutiny is best achieved through challenging and constructive enquiry. People giving evidence at the Committee should not feel under attack.

### **Respect and trust**

Meetings will be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and trust.

### **Openness and transparency**

The Committee's business will be open and transparent, except where there are sound reasons for protecting confidentiality. In particular, the minutes of the Committee's meetings will explain the discussion and debate, so that it could be understood by those who were not present.

### **Consensus**

Members of the Committee will work together and, while recognising political allegiances, will attempt to achieve consensus and agreed recommendations.

### **Impartial and independent officer advice**

Officers who advise and support the Committee will give impartial and independent advice, recognising the importance of the Scrutiny Committee in the Council's arrangements for governance, as set out in the Constitution.

### **Regular review**

There will be regular reviews of how the overview and scrutiny process is working, and a willingness to change if it is not working well.

### **Programming and planning**

The Scrutiny Committee will have a programme of work. Members will agree the topics to be included in the work programme, the extent of the investigation to be undertaken in relation to resources, and the witnesses to be invited to give evidence.

### **Managing time**

The Committee will attempt to conclude the business of each meeting in reasonable time. The order of business will be arranged as far as possible to minimise the demands on the time of witnesses.

## 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?

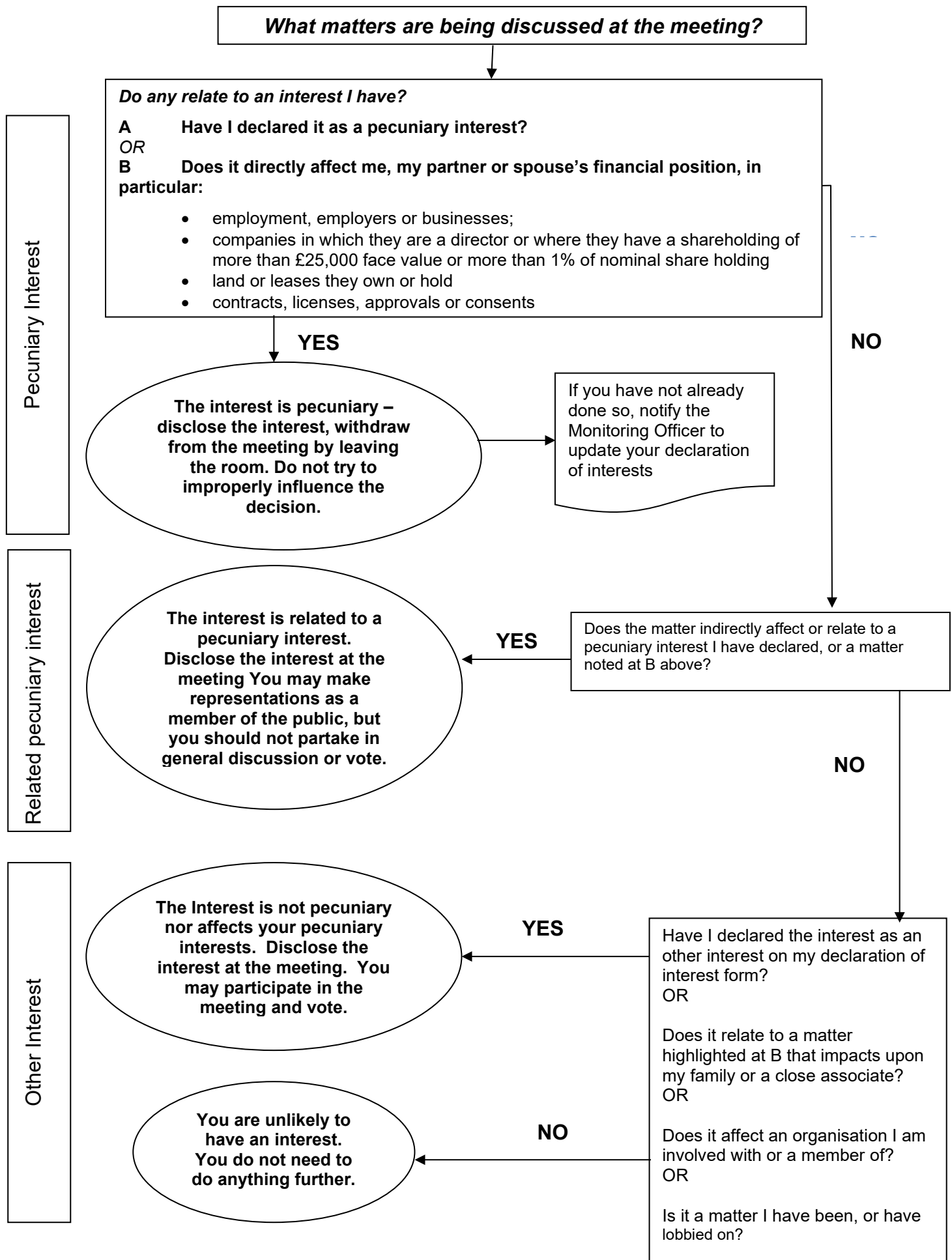
If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but you should not partake in general discussion or vote.

Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be an other 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





## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a remote meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of South Norfolk District Council, held on Wednesday 9 September 2020 at 9.30am.**

**Committee Members Present:** Councillors: G Minshull, V Clifford-Jackson, B Duffin, S Nuri-Nixon, J Rowe, R Savage and J Wilby

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors: B Bernard, J Hornby and T Spruce  
**Cabinet Member Present:** Councillor: Y Bendle

**Officers in Attendance:** Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) (E Hodds), Chief of Staff (H Ralph), Assistant Director Finance (R Fincham), Assistant Director Individuals and Families, (M Pursehouse), Democratic Services Manager (C White) and the Senior Governance Officer (S Utting)

### 1271 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Cllr V Clifford-Jackson declared that she was a trustee of Voluntary Norfolk.

### 1272 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 5 August 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

*Minute No: 1269 – Review of Market Towns Confidence Campaign*

The Chairman advised the meeting that officers would be reporting back on the Committee's suggestions regarding the Market Towns Confidence Campaign, at the next meeting on 19 November 2020.

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the following recommendation made by the Committee at the last meeting:

*That Cabinet considers future free parking in the Council's car parks during the Covid-19 pandemic, in order to encourage continued local support of the Market Towns.*

He asked the Committee to note that charges had been re-introduced on 7 August 2020 and that he had been advised by officers that one of Wymondham car parks had been extremely busy and that having discussed this matter with the Portfolio Holder, and without any supporting evidence to the contrary, he doubted that Cabinet would consider going back to free parking at this point.

In the light of this the Chairman, therefore, recommended withdrawing the recommendation.

A Member noted that the pandemic was a very fluid and fast moving situation and that Cabinet should ensure that it could be flexible and make decisions on matters such as this outside of the normal cycle of meetings, if necessary.

The Portfolio Holder for Better Lives confirmed that with the increase in coronavirus cases and the possibilities of further lockdowns Cabinet would keep this issue under review.

## **AGREED**

To withdraw the following recommendation to Cabinet:

*That Cabinet considers future free parking in the Council's car parks during the Covid-19 pandemic, in order to encourage continued local support of the Market Towns.*

## **1273 REVIEW OF COVID 19 RESPONSE**

The Chief of Staff introduced the report, which covered three key areas of the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic:

1. the governance arrangements put in place to support the Council's response;
2. the support provided to residents and businesses; and
3. the financial implications of the coronavirus.

The Council had been a key member of the County-wide response to Covid-19 through the Norfolk Resilience Forum (NRF), which was the overarching body for a whole range strategic and operational response groups.

A number of Council officers heavily supported this work, including the Managing Director who chaired the Tactical Coordination Group and the Director for People and Communities who co-chaired the Community Response Delivery Group. The leadership role that officers took on during the response meant that the Council was well-placed to influence and lead the County response, as well as respond to local needs. A key lesson from this, however, was the need to consider resource options and substitutes to ensure the long-term resilience of officers to both support the County and direct the Council response.

Internally, at the start of March an officer Pandemic Strategic Group was set up, which initially met on a daily basis to update on progress, review government policy changes and NRF directives and which in turn oversaw the activities of three Working Group cells covering Governance, Community Response and Business and the Economy.

Overall, it was considered that the Council had been quick to set an organisational governance framework to coordinate its operational response to the pandemic.

The Assistant Director – Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) informed the meeting that the Leader and the Managing Director had discussed standing up the Emergency Committee in mid-March and following the announcement of the Prime Minister on the 23 March 2020, the Managing Director decided to convene the Committee, with its first item of business being to review its Terms of Reference.

A review of the Terms of Reference was important, as previously it had been envisaged that the Emergency Committee would be convened in the recovery phase following a disaster. Covid-19 pandemic brought a different challenge and it was key that the Committee continued to allow officer delegations to be in place to enable operational continuity, whilst drawing to itself the powers of Full Council and Cabinet. The decision to stand down the Emergency Committee would be at the discretion of the Managing Director, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and the Leader. Licensing and Development Management (with a smaller membership) would be convened if required, but all other Committee meetings, were suspended.

The first two meetings of the Emergency Committee were held via Skype for Business, but it soon became more appropriate to use Zoom, which allowed meetings to be live streamed via YouTube.

Key items considered by the Emergency Committee were:

- Financial Implications of COVID
- Business Grants and Hardship Fund
- Economic Recovery Plan
- Leisure Services Recovery Plan
- Review of Portfolio Holder Responsibilities and Policy Committee's

Members were asked to note that the Council rapidly went back to the normal Committee timetable, which was much quicker than many Councils across the country. It was suggested that if the Emergency Committee were to be reconvened the frequency and demands of these meetings, both formal and informal might need to be reviewed.

When lockdown formally commenced the senior management team were split between the House, the Lodge and working from home, to maintain cover at each site and build an element of resilience through home workers should either site be badly affected by the virus. All office-based staff were allocated a primary site and would no longer be travelling between sites.

The Council moved almost overnight from 71 percent of staff working in the office, to about 12 percent, with the remainder being provided with the equipment to work from home. Display Screen Equipment assessments were also encouraged to ensure that staff working from home had a suitable environment.

Zoom had been rolled out to all staff, which allowed team, as well as the committee, meetings to be held in the virtual environment. This new way of working had already begun to be embedded in the organisation and real benefits were being seen for both for staff, customers and Members.



As the pandemic continued staff welfare had been a key focus; with a number of staff wellbeing surveys conducted, the launch of the A to Z wellbeing campaign and a mental health first aider scheme.

A Member noted the excellent response by the Council to the pandemic and commended officers on their work. She noted that working from home could have major benefits for the work/life balance of staff and also that Zoom meetings could make Council meetings more accessible and create a better understanding of the work of the Council and Members.

A Member suggested that in future these reports should contain a timeline in order to give a better understanding of the actions taken. He also noted that there were a confusing number of groups under the NRF and he questioned how coordinated the response through so many different bodies had been.

It was also suggested that the Emergency Committee had been set up to make a rapid local response to a disaster, not a long term pandemic and it was questioned if this had been the appropriate response to the situation and that Cabinet should have instead taken on these additional powers. It was also questioned if the decision to stand down the Emergency Committee should have been given to the Managing Director.

The Portfolio Holder for Better Lives confirmed that Cabinet had been kept fully informed of the decisions taken and activities being overseen by the Emergency Committee. She also wished to place on record her thanks to staff and Members for their commendable response to the pandemic.

The Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) advised Members that drawing the powers to Cabinet had been considered, but it was decided that the Emergency Committee, with a revised Terms of Reference, was a more suitable body to respond to the crisis as it enabled cross party working and the ability to draw into the Committee the right skills and experience. The only area that might be looked at again was how swiftly the Council had returned to a full Committee programme, which had placed a strain on officer resources at a time when the recovery phase was still active.

The Chairman noted that whilst there had been considerable suffering during the pandemic that had also been benefits, in areas such as housing the homeless and identifying people who were suffering loneliness, who might never have come to the Council's attention.

A Member noted that since staff were working from home phone response time had improved at the Council. She also noted that a small group like the Emergency Committee was the right sort of body to respond to fast moving Government directives and suggested that Members should be surveyed on whether they had found the Emergency Committee to be the right body to deal with the crisis.

A Member noted that the Council's response showed the vital importance of local government, in terms of local knowledge and expertise, but noted that it had been

resource intensive both physically and financially and she wondered if there would ever be any recompense for Council Tax payers.

In response, the Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) emphasised that the response to the pandemic had shown the calibre of staff and the benefit of engaging with partners and that the learning derived from this working had far outweighed the financial costs.

The Portfolio Holder for Better Lives added that a major benefit of engaging with partners was the amount of invaluable first hand data that was made available directly to the Council.

The Assistant Director – Individuals and Families took the Committee through the Community Response section of the report.

The community response approach had been to focus on older and more vulnerable, residents by utilising the Help Hub and over 4,000 volunteers to identify and help those people in need.

The Help Hub team was currently dealing with a 25 percent increase in workload in supporting residents affected by Covid-19 and housing and benefits staff were dealing with a 50 percent increase in demand. Staff were also watching out for the possibility of an increase in evictions due to the coronavirus. One of the main lessons learned from the pandemic was how effectively communities could respond to a crisis and staff would be taking this forward for the future.

The Committee wished to record their thanks to staff in the Help Hub and Community Teams for their hard work during these difficult times.

The Portfolio Holder for Better Lives noted that homelessness would be an ongoing problem, as the fallout from the pandemic unfolded.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that recruitment of staff for the Housing and Benefits Teams to cope with the increase in workload was being looked at and a Member briefing on housing and benefits related issues would be held at the end of the month.

Members were also advised that a new number had been set up for the Norfolk Vulnerability Hub that linked all the Help Hubs across the County, so that residents could be forwarded directly to their own district council for assistance.

A Member observed that leaflet distribution at the start of the pandemic had not been as quick as it should have been and that there had been a lack of consultation with local Members in respect of the rearrangement of streets in market towns to adapt to social distancing measures. He also asked if the Council was using the track and trace system to address the pandemic

In response the Committee was informed that a new track and trace scheme was being implemented tomorrow and Community Connectors had personally contacted all 67 staff at Banham Poultry who had contracted the coronavirus, which had contributed to a considerable amount of knowledge about the hardship some people were facing and how the Council could assist them.

The Assistant Director of Finance advised the Committee that Covid-19 had the potential to have a very significant financial impact on the Council and therefore was closely monitored.

Central Government had provided the Council with significant additional funding received in three tranches of £55,000, £1.3m and £200,000, to support services during the crisis.

However, a key risk was the potential loss of income of up to £2m from the closure of the leisure centres, although it should be noted that the Government had recently announced that it would be launching an Income Recovery Scheme, which would provide the Council with 75 percent of its lost income. A report would be taken to the November Cabinet to provide a further budget update.

Members were reminded, that the Council had been prudent and had significant reserves, so remained in a position to support residents through the pandemic.

In response to a query, the Assistant Director of Finance confirmed that the funding from Government was currently covering the Council's costs, however if there was a second wave and a further lockdown it would have a considerable further effect on the Council's income. Investment income had been low for some time and had not been affected by the pandemic. In respect of the local government pension scheme, there was a three yearly review of the pension scheme, which would look at contributions made by local authorities. It remained to be seen if the contribution from South Norfolk would increase.

The Assistant Director of Finance confirmed that despite the loss of income from the Leisure Centres the money from central Government meant that the Council should not need to use its reserves to fund services this year and would have a fully balanced budget.

In response to a suggestion that a cost/savings analysis of staff working from home be conducted; the Assistant Director of Finance advised Members that there had been clear examples of increased productivity from staff working from home. For example, the increase in the number of Housing Benefits claims being processed by staff in the benefits department.

The Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) added that flexible and agile working were central to the ethos of One Team working for two Councils, outcomes and output are the key deliverables for staff and ensure that services are delivered in the most effective and efficient way.

The Assistant Director of Finance advised the meeting that on 24 March 2020 the full continuity response for Finance and Revenues had been invoked, which meant that officers could focus on the priority areas identified as essential.

In respect of debt collection, it was recognised that some residents were in financial difficulty, due to the pandemic, so it was decided to suspend recovery

action including in relation to overpaid Housing Benefit reminders, which also reduced the workload on the Housing Benefits Team.

An emphasis had also been placed on allowing staff to make a judgement on deferring Council Tax payments on a case by case basis, according to individual circumstances.

Debt collection had now restarted, although the court service had not yet started. It was stressed, however, legal action was only taken as a last resort.

Overall, there had been a slight reduction in collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates, but they were holding up well in comparison with a number of other local authorities.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director Individuals and Families advised the meeting that although Member Grants allocation had a deadline of the end of the year there was an argument that this should be extended or rolled over due to the coronavirus. Members were also informed that there were plans to hold two Zoom meetings for community groups in the autumn to identify further funding pots.

The Assistant Director of Finance advised the meeting that mandatory business grants had been very successful. Payments had been made quickly to those eligible businesses where the Council held the relevant bank details, other businesses were required to submit claims, so that the Council could obtain their bank details and assess their claims.

The Government had encouraged business grant payment to be carried out as quickly as possible, so there had been limited checks that the businesses qualified for the grants. There were now extensive post payment checks being undertaken to ensure that all of those in receipt of the grant were valid and to ensure that any money was returned, if not. Approximately ten such cases were currently being looked at in South Norfolk.

Discretionary Business Grants had proved more difficult to administer, as a criteria had to be decided upon before they were allocated. The Council had been given £1.5m for the Discretionary Grant Fund and had explored pooling the money for a Norfolk wide scheme, but it was decided by the end of May that this would not be the best approach.

In response to a query regarding newly formed businesses, who had not qualified for mandatory business grants, the Committee was informed that Cabinet had recently agreed to contribute £150,000 to the Covid-19 Fighting Fund, which would go towards a pot of around £7m that would also support businesses. There was no further money on top of this at that moment; however the Council would continue to lobby Government for more assistance.

The Chief of Staff advised the meeting that in July the Council had endorsed the Recovery Plan, which was based around a six point plan based on three key themes: the economy, communities, organisation and governance.

A report that captured an update of the Delivery Plan, as a result of the impact of Covid-19 on Council plans would be taken to the next meeting of Cabinet.

The Chairman noted that one of the key elements of the Recovery Plan was to support every business, which would include those recently started businesses that might not have qualified for mandatory grants.

The Committee confirmed its approval of the key learning from the Council's response to the Coronavirus pandemic and requested that the key point regarding home working be expanded to reflect Members' comments.

It was also requested that consideration should be given to the resource impact of the Emergency Committee and the most effective future governance mechanisms to support the Council response in the most efficient and impactful way.

## **RESOLVED**

To

1. Note the response of the Council to support the District's communities and businesses during the Covid 19 pandemic; and
2. Endorse the key learning identified in the report.

## **1274 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND CABINET CORE AGENDA**

The Committee noted the Work Programme and Cabinet Core Agenda.

(The meeting concluded at 10.50 am)

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Chairman

## **MEMBER LED FUNDING**

**Report Author(s):** Kerrie Gallagher  
Communities Senior Manager  
01508 533741  
kgallagher@s-norfolk.gov.uk

**Portfolio:** Better lives

**Ward(s) Affected:** All wards

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

The purpose of the report is to provide an opportunity to review how the member-led grant scheme is operating, the spend from the member led funding stream in 2019/20 as per the ground rules, and to provide an update on spend to date in 2020/21.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The committee is asked to comment on members spend according to the ground rules.
2. The committee is asked to comment on the impact the scheme has on the local community and reducing demand on Council services and recommend any changes for the future.

## **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Member grants have been operating at the Council since 2016-17. As part of the ground rules, member-led grants are required to be submitted to the Scrutiny committee for review, including outcomes achieved. The Scrutiny Committee will hold members to account, and request that members present their reasons for funding projects to the panel for scrutiny.
- 1.2 The member-led scheme provides an opportunity for members to support their community, offering direct financial support to build community capacity.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 All community grants at the Council are discretionary, there is no statutory requirement for this work. At a time when Councils budgets (and other funding bodies) are under pressure, we need to ensure that future community grant schemes have a clearly defined role in supporting the prevention agenda to reduce demand on current and future council services by building capacity and infrastructure within the community to allow our residents to help themselves and each other.
- 2.2 Due to the current pandemic many community groups have been placed on hold, which has resulted in a loss of income. However, many of our community groups have really stepped up and out of their comfort zones to support those impacted by the COVID crisis, by providing volunteers and support to residents in need.
- 2.3 The budget has been consistently underspent over the last three years, the average being a 15% underspend. Feedback from members is that some years they struggle to spend the money in their ward, whilst other years they could spend more.
- 2.4 We have a clear purpose in the ground rules (appendix 1) for community grants, in terms of reducing demand on services, supporting inclusive growth and promoting health and wellbeing. However, this is interpreted in many different ways by the community and members, it is also challenging to track the impact that grants have.
- 2.5 This year we have seen the positive impact our communities make as we have tackled head on the impact of Covid. We have seen both existing groups and newly formed mutual-aid groups work closely with us to support our vulnerable residents with essentials such as food and prescriptions.

## **3 CURRENT POSITION/FINDINGS**

### 2019/2020

- 3.1 In 2019/20 total spend was £39,456.90. This was 85.7% of the total funds available and fell short of the performance target of 90% spent.

3.2 A full breakdown of each members spend can be found here: [https://forms.south-norfolk.gov.uk/pub/MembersSpend.ofml?Prepopulate=true&Url\\_theme=SNC](https://forms.south-norfolk.gov.uk/pub/MembersSpend.ofml?Prepopulate=true&Url_theme=SNC) This will link to the current year spend, clicking on the previous year's tab will enable viewing of previous budget years.

3.3 Of the spend last year

- Three members did not spend any of their funding in 2019/20:
- Three members spent between 1-50% of their funding in 2019/20:
- Three members spent between 51-90% of their funding in 2019/20:
- 37 members spent 90% + of their funding in 2019/20

### 2020/2021

3.4 To date (23/11/20) total spend in 2020/21 is £12,279.99. This is 26.6% of the total funds available. This is an unprecedented year with Covid and many groups have not been running as normal. Of this spend this financial year:

- Seven members have spent between 1-50% of their funding
- Three members have spent between 51-90% funding
- Eight members have spent over 91% of their funding
- 28 members have not spent any funds

## **4 PROPOSED ACTION**

- 4.1 Whilst most members have met the performance target of 90%, there is a consistent underspend. We need to find ways to ensure that we do not have any underspend, to ensure we maximise our funding to communities.
- 4.2 No specific patterns have been identified regarding member ward underspend. There is an increase in multi-member wards following the local Government review but this has not created any difference in spending patterns between single and multi-member Wards.
- 4.3 Community groups are feeding back that Covid has limited their ability to raise funds and therefore more community groups are reporting concerns about their future funding models. The Council has a strong ethos in supporting local community groups and therefore our role will be as important as ever as we move into Covid recovery.
- 4.4 The Council's aim of building community capacity is linked to our prevention agenda and enabling communities. It can be difficult to place a direct causal link between a member grant and the reducing demand on Council services but members need to be satisfied, that there is a demonstrably impact on reducing demand on Council services and improving our communities, and not funding "nice to have" projects.
- 4.5 The Councils financial governance mechanisms and ground rules are in place to ensure there is a clear accountability to ensure that public money is well



spent and there is an audit trail to track expenditure. This accountability includes having a clear understanding of the purpose for why we provide funding to community groups, and a criterion that ensures we channel funding into projects that support the Councils agenda. The decision notice that members complete is a fundamental part of this process which provides a necessary audit trail for public funds.

## **5 ISSUES AND RISKS**

- 5.1 Member-led funding is a positive programme; however, it has been difficult to measure the impact of success of community grants. As we move into Covid recovery our evaluation framework needs to ensure we demonstrate value for money and we are targeting funding where it has the maximum benefit.
- 5.2 **Resource Implications** – none
- 5.3 **Legal Implications** – none.
- 5.4 **Equality Implications** – none.
- 5.5 **Environmental Impact** – none.
- 5.6 **Crime and Disorder** – community capacity building and cohesion contributes to safer communities.
- 5.7 **Risks** – none.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 Now in its fourth year, member-led funding continues to be an effective mechanism to support our communities. As we approach the Covid recovery, we can continue to build on member-led funding and the Covid response to ensure we are funding those groups who have the biggest impact on supporting our local community.

## **7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1. The committee is asked to comment on members spend according to the ground rules.
- 2. The committee is asked to comment on the impact the scheme has on the local community and reducing demand on Council services and recommend any changes for the future.

## **South Norfolk Council Member-Led Grant Rules**

### **MEMBER WARD FUND**

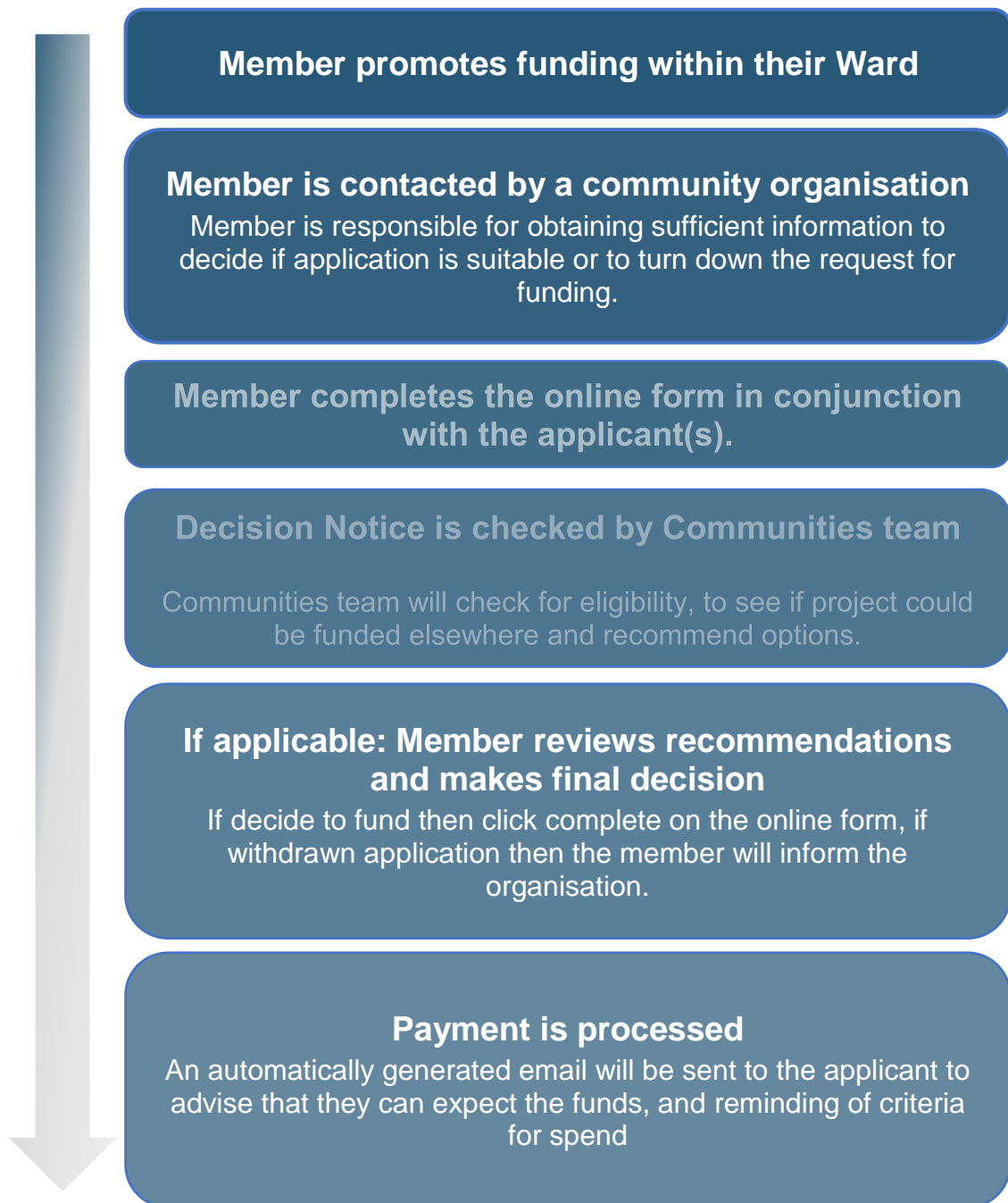
These ground rules set the criteria in awarding grants from the Member Ward Fund. The purpose is to be flexible and responsive to local decision-making; therefore, members are encouraged to make quick, sound decisions which support groups or initiatives that meet identified local need.

#### **1. Role of members**

- 1.1 The Council supports its members in meeting the ambitions of the community and identifying and delivering local solutions, which in turn support the Council's corporate priority areas and the way in which we work.
- 1.2 All members should take a central role in identifying and delivering improvements to the quality of life of people in their communities. Members are expected to be active in consulting with the community, identifying local needs and working with the communities to identify how best to achieve these needs.
- 1.3 This means combining and utilising all the experience, knowledge, skills and networks of the members to understand what goes on in their communities and what the important issues are for local people, and to come up with innovative and effective solutions to make the necessary improvements.
- 1.4 Each member will be allocated a budget (the Members' Ward Fund) to:
  - increase levels of community capacity at a very local level;
  - allow flexible and timely funding of very small initiatives within communities;
  - enable communities to help themselves, as early as possible; and
  - enhance the social, economic or environmental wellbeing of the community.
- 1.5 Each member is accountable for making decisions to allocate funding from their budget. The decisions must meet the following criteria:

- The payment must be over £100;
- The funding will normally go to a community group, but may be awarded to social enterprises, businesses, charitable organisations or other public agencies if the aims are being met - but **NOT** to an individual.
- The granting of the funding is for a specific activity and will not imply an ongoing commitment by the Council nor have a revenue implication;
- The activity being funded:
  - Has not already taken place (retrospective funding is not permitted);
  - Could not easily be funded elsewhere
  - Does not cover costs of routine maintenance
  - Can demonstrate support in the community
  - Has not received member-led Council funding over the past 2 years.
- The project or activity must promote communities working together and enhance the quality of life of people living or working in the Ward, this may be within the Ward boundary or beyond.
- The funding can be used by the community group during the 12 months following receipt.
- The funding cannot be used to support any activity more than once in a two-year period.
- As far as the member is aware, making the payment to the recipient would not result in fraudulent or illegal activity or any practices which would bring South Norfolk Council into disrepute. This would include ensuring that all recipients have any required permissions in place.
- The funding must not replace funding previously provided by other statutory agencies such as the County Council.
- Precepting authorities raise their own budgets and therefore funding must not go to another local authority such as County, Town or Parish Council for projects / services that they are required to fund through their own precept, are a service that they normally fund, or that the precept could cover. Examples of what would not be included are village signs, parish notice boards, general maintenance.
- Funds may be provided for additional services where the local authority is not required to fund or is a substantial investment that could not be normally covered by the local authorities precept. Examples of what could be funded include defibs, major refurbishments.

## Member Ward Fund: allocation of funds



## **2. Follow Up**

2.1 It is the members responsibility to ensure that the funded projects and activities are delivered as agreed. Where that is not the case, the member, together with the Communities Manager will be responsible for resolving disputes and taking action, including withdrawal of funding where appropriate.

2.2 If a grant has been used for the purpose that it was not originally intended or has not been spent within the given time period then the Communities Manager will work alongside the member who awarded the funds, to follow the Corporate Debt Policy to recover the funds from the community group.

2.3 Twice a year, grants awarded will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee for review, including outcomes achieved. The Scrutiny Committee will hold members to account, and request that members present their reasons for funding projects to the panel for scrutiny.

## **3. Governance**

3.1 There must be a transparent audit trail in respect of decisions. In compliance with the legislation, the individual member is responsible for ensuring a record is made in writing of any decision or action she or he has taken. The online member Ward Grant Notice of Decision Form will form both the request to process a payment and also the record of that decision and reasons for it.

3.2 Following submission of the online decision form the Finance team will process payment of the grant. From the point that the form and all supporting evidence is received, officers in the Finance team have 5 working days to process the payment.

3.3 The fund will start on April 1<sup>st</sup> each year and must be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> December each year. The only exception is an election year when the fund will start the day after the election, and close on 31<sup>st</sup> December.

3.4 If more than £10,000 is left in the budget then money will be rolled over into a CAF Panel, if less than £10,000 then will be put into savings.

## Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme

In setting future Scrutiny **TOPICS**, members are asked to consider the following: **T**imely – **O**bjective – **P**erformance – **I**nterest – **C**orporate Priority

- T** Is this the right **time** to review this issue and is there sufficient **officer time** and resource to conduct the review? What is the **timescale**?
- O** What is the reason for review; do officers have a clear **objective**?
- P** Can **performance** in this area be improved by input from Scrutiny?
- I** Is there sufficient **interest** (particularly from the public)? The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny.
- C** Will the review assist the Council to achieve its **Corporate Priorities**?

Date of meeting	Topic	Organisation / Officer / Responsible member	Objectives
27 Jan 2021	<i>No items scheduled</i>		
11 Feb 2021	2021/22 Budget & Longer-Term Financial Strategy	S151 Officer; and Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources	Scrutiny Committee to consider the Council's 2021/22 budget and the recommendations of Cabinet. Members to also formulate a recommendation to Council regarding the budget for consideration at its meeting on 24 February 2021.
25 Feb 2021	<i>To be held in the event of a call-in only</i>		
31 March 2021	<i>No items scheduled</i>		
May 2021	Early Help Approach	Assistant Director – Individuals & Families; and Portfolio Holder for Better Lives	The Committee to consider and review the Council's Early help Approach and the future model and make any recommendations to Cabinet. Partners in the Hub to also be invited to attend the meeting.
Sept 2021	Environment Strategy	Environment Manager and Portfolio Holder for Clean & Safe Environment	Scrutiny Committee to review the effectiveness of the Strategy and assess whether outcomes have been achieved. To make recommendations as appropriate.
TBC	Market Towns Strategy	Assistant Director – Economic Growth; and Portfolio Holder for Stronger Economy	Members to review the new Market Towns Strategy and receive an update on the success of the <i>Confidence Campaign</i> and how the Council has assisted traders and businesses since start of the COVID-19 outbreak

## Scrutiny Committee- Tracker

Date	Topic	Responsible Officer	Resolution and Recommendations	Progress	Outcome
5 Aug 2020	<b>REVIEW OF MARKET TOWNS CONFIDENCE CAMPAIGN</b>	Assistant Director of Economic Growth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To note the contents of the report; and</li> <li>To recommend that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers consider the suggestions put forward by the Committee and provide feedback at a future meeting in six months' time.</li> <li>Cabinet considers future free parking in the Council's car parks during the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to encourage continued local support of the market towns.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>Officers have reviewed this and have reported back to the Committee via email</p> <p>Recommendation withdrawn at mtg on 9 Sept 2020. Officers to keep watching brief, and will report as above</p>	Members were able to review the work undertaken in order to support the reopening of businesses in the Market Towns. This will enable the Council to effectively respond to a future second wave of the virus, which could lead to further lockdowns. In addition, the review allows lessons to be learned and ways of working adapted accordingly.
9 Sept 2020	<b>REVIEW OF COVID 19 RESPONSE</b>	Assistant Director Governance and Business Support, Chief of Staff, Assistant Director Finance , Assistant Director Individuals and Families	<p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p>To</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the response of the Council to support the District's communities and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic; and</li> <li>Endorse the key learning identified in the report</li> </ol>	<p>No further action necessary</p> <p>No further action necessary</p>	<p>The Committee was able to assess key areas of the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the governance arrangements put in place to support the Council's response;</li> <li>the support provided to residents and businesses; and</li> <li>the financial implications of the coronavirus.</li> </ol> <p>The report provided the key learning that officers had identified and members were able to endorse these without the need to make further recommendations.</p>

# CABINET CORE AGENDA 2020/21

Date	Key	Title of Report	Responsible Officer	Portfolio Holder	Exempt?
Council Meeting 14 December 2020					
<b>11 Jan</b>	N	Procurement Options	Rodney Fincham	Josh Worley	N
	K	Zone 4 Building Lease	Spencer Burrell/ Tig Armstrong	Lisa Neal	E
	Y	Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/2022	Richard Dunsire/ Louise Tiernan	Josh Worley	N
	Y	Greater Norwich Local Plan Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Publication of Plan	Mike Burrell/ Paul Harris	John Fuller	N
	Y	Contract for the Purchase of Laptops	Debbie Lorimer	J Worley	E
	Y	Contract for the IT Infrastructure to Support the One Network	Debbie Lorimer	J Worley	E
	Y	ICT Infrastructure to support One Network – preferred supplier(s)	Tom Sayer	Kay Billig	E
<b>8 Feb</b>	N	Revenue Budget 21/22, Capital Budget 21/22, Treasury Management Strategy 21/22	Rodney Fincham	Josh Worley	N
	Y	Greater Norwich 5-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan and Annual Growth Programme 2021/22	Paul Harris	John Fuller	N
	N	NEWS Recycling Facility Funding Arrangements (MRF)	Simon Phelan	Michael Edney	E
	N	Leisure Pricing Review	Simon Phelan	Alison Thomas	N
	Y	Poringland Neighbourhood Plan	Richard Squires	Lisa Neal	N
Council Meeting 24 February 2020					
<b>15 Mar</b>	N	Q3 Strategic Performance/Finance and Risks	Mel Wiles/ Sinead Carey	Josh Worley	N
	K	Review of Bawburgh Temporary Stopping Place for Gypsies and Travellers	Kevin Philcox/ Leigh Booth	Yvonne Bendle	N
	N	Eligibility for Affordable Home Ownership	Keith Mitchell/ K Oglieve-Chan	Yvonne Bendle	N
<b>19 Apr</b>	N	Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework Update 2021	Paul Harris		N
Council AGM 17 May 2020					

Key decisions are those which result in income, expenditure or savings with a gross full year effect of £100,000 or 10% of the Council's net portfolio budget whichever is the greater which has not been included in the relevant portfolio budget, or are significant (e.g. in environmental, physical, social or economic) in terms of its effect on the communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral wards in the area of the local authority.