

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 8 January 2018 at 9.00 a.m.

Members Present:

Cabinet: Councillors J Fuller (Chairman), M Edney, L Hornby, K Mason Billig and B Stone

Apologies: Councillor Y Bendle

Non-Appointed: Councillors B Bernard, L Dale, M Gray, N Legg, T Lewis and G Minshull

Officers in Attendance: The Chief Executive (S Dinneen), the Director of Communities and Well-Being (J Sutterby), the Director of Growth and Business Development (D Lorimer), the Assistant Director – Resources (P Catchpole), the Head of Business Transformation (H Ralph), the Head of Environmental Services (B Wade) and the Head of Governance (E Hodds)

2611 GUIDELINES FOR RECREATION PROVISION IN NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) REVISED DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

The Chairman announced that due to a number of late issues that had arisen regarding the Guidelines for Recreation Provision in New Residential Developments Supplementary Planning Document (item 7 on the agenda), it had been decided to defer this item to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

2612 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 4 December 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2613 MANAGEMENT OF STREETLIGHTS – PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Director of Communities and Well-Being, and the Head of Environmental Services regarding the future management of street lights, currently managed by South Norfolk Council.

The Chairman reminded members of the background to the report and advised that most street lights across the District, were managed by Norfolk County Council as a highway lighting authority, and that some lights were already managed by town and parish councils. He stressed that those lights managed by the District Council, were not the traditional highway street lights, but foot way lights, and that the report proposals affected only nine town and parish council areas.

The Director of Communities and Well-Being outlined the results of the stock condition survey, and future proposals regarding decommissioning, financing and future management of stock. He drew members' attention to the needs criteria, explaining that officers had concluded that 312 locations required ongoing street light provision, and that this was subject to consultation with town and parish councils. He stressed that if the same level of light could be provided by fewer lighting points and use of more modern LED lights, then the Council would pursue this as a more cost-effective model.

Cllr K Mason Billig commended the report to Cabinet, and explained that due to the condition of South Norfolk's stock of foot way lights, and increasing financial pressures on the Council, it was an appropriate time to assess need and options for the future management of the lights. She stressed that due to the condition of the lights, to do nothing was not an option, however, to maintain all footway lights would cost the Council, and council tax payer, £1.4 million. Members noted that many modern housing developments did not include street lighting unless for highway purposes, and that many of the existing foot way lights had been erected during the 1970s, and were currently paid for through special expenses on council tax bills. Cllr Mason Billig explained that some residents had already welcomed the decommissioning of lights, however, she was very conscious of the anxiety of some local people in the affected areas, and she assured members that a comprehensive assessment of need had been carried out, and that the Council would be consulting town and parish councils to ensure that any important local information around road safety, crime or vulnerability, had not been missed.

Members noted that the Council's preferred position was for town and parish councils to take on the running of the stock of footway lights, with costs being funded through the precept. In response to a query, Cllr Mason Billig assured members that parishes, especially the smaller ones, would be fully supported in any transition of stock. She also agreed that whilst more modern lighting might be more efficient, it was important to ensure that any new lighting did not adversely impact on local communities, and she acknowledged that solutions would differ in each location.

During discussion, Cllr T Lewis stressed the need to consult those members of the public directly affected by any decommissioning of lights, and Cllr Mason Billig explained that the Council would be speaking with town and parish councils regarding how best to inform local people. She added that there had already been and would continue to be publicity on face book and the Council's website, and that local members would have a role in ensuring that residents had been consulted.

The Chairman concluded that it was time for the Council to adopt a more modern and intelligent approach to street lighting, and he thanked officers and the Police for their input in the report. Cabinet considered the report to have been a fair and evidence based review on what was required going forward and members expressed their support for the recommendations.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To agree:

- a. To adopt the definition of 'need' of provisionally 312 locations requiring ongoing streetlight provision (as outlined in the report), subject to consultation with Town and Parish Councils (TPCs), noting that if the same level of light can be provided by fewer lighting points and use of more modern LED lights then the Council will pursue this as a more cost-effective model.
- b. To crop all red lights as a priority, as they have reached the end of their useful life. Following this and consultation with TPCs, 'needed' red lights will be replaced, and those not 'needed' will be fully decommissioned.
- c. The capital budget of £531k to replace all 'needed' lights as they reach the end of their useful life, and the funding required to decommission lights no longer needed up to £450k. For the avoidance of doubt this will include 'amber' and 'green' lights no longer necessary.

- d. That should the Council retain any management of lights, special expenses are increased to fund the full life of the asset, not just the revenue costs, to be split proportionately across the taxable households within each TPC area.
- e. That the Council can fund the TPC to the tune of the cost of decommissioning any light, if the TPC chooses to retain and manage any lights beyond those 'needed'.

The Reasons for the Decision

To provide a more modern and efficient approach to street lighting

Other Options Considered

None

2614 BROADLAND AND SOUTH NORFOLK – COLLABORATIVE WORKING OPPORTUNITIES

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Joint Lead Members Group, which outlined the opportunity for a 12-month interim shared planning management team to support the delivery of an effective and efficient planning service at both Broadland District and South Norfolk Councils.

The Head of Business Transformation presented the report, and explained the rationale behind the proposals, drawing attention to the similarities in growth and planning priorities and structures of the two authorities, and the benefits of the proposed arrangements. She explained that the recommendations had been approved by the Joint Lead Members Group and Joint Scrutiny Group back in December, and had since been discussed at the Scrutiny Committees at both South Norfolk and Broadland Councils.

Cllr G Minshull, the Chairman of South Norfolk Council's Scrutiny Committee, explained that there had been an in-depth discussion at its meeting held 2 January 2018, and that it had made a number of additional recommendations; that the Scrutiny Committee should review the arrangements after 6 months, and that the delegation to officers should be limited to opportunities regarding

shared posts when vacancies occur, and other contract opportunities. The Committee had also asked officers to expand on the rationale in the report prior to the Cabinet meeting, and this had since been actioned and circulated to all South Norfolk members.

The Head of Business Transformation updated members on the outcomes of Broadland District Council's Scrutiny Committee meeting held 4 January, explaining that it had endorsed the changes suggested by the South Norfolk Scrutiny Committee, and had also requested that the Head of Planning develop a clear plan of the implementation of future arrangements.

Cabinet members welcomed the report's proposals, and endorsed the changes proposed by South Norfolk Council's Scrutiny Committee. Cllr K Mason Billig explained that she recognised the importance of ensuring all members were kept up to date at key stages in the process and she advised that in future, to ensure smooth running of processes, the Chairman of the Joint Lead Member Group would attend all Joint Scrutiny meetings.

During discussion, the Chairman queried the increase in overall staffing costs, and the Chief Executive explained that this was only a short-term increase and had occurred due to the temporary appointment of Tim Horspole for three days a week, for a period of three months, to oversee the Regulation 18 consultation process for the Greater Norwich Local Plan. Once this was complete, the planning shared service approach would be able to recognise savings.

Cllr T Lewis informed Cabinet that he had felt the pre-scrutiny process to have been most beneficial on this occasion, and he suggested that this approach should be utilised more frequently in future. He felt the pre-scrutiny approach to be more constructive than the call-in procedure. In response, the Chairman reminded members of the role of the Policy Committees, which gave members, including opposition members, an opportunity to be involved in policy development. Cllr Mason Billig informed members that both South Norfolk and Broadland Councils had agreed that pre-scrutiny on this occasion would be beneficial, however, this would not necessarily be the approach going forward.

Summing up, the Chairman concluded the proposals to be a good opportunity to provide capacity, resilience and efficiencies, whilst continuing to provide quality services to the public. He envisaged the same methodology being applied to other vacancies, should they occur.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To agree

1. The introduction of an interim shared planning management team between Broadland District Council and South Norfolk District on the basis set out in the report;
2. That the new structure and post holders be in place by 22 January 2018; and
3. That a review of the impact of the interim arrangements will take place 3, 6, 9 and 12 months after being established. Reviews will be taken back to the informal joint member groups at each reviewing stage. After 9 months, both Councils to consider whether as a result of the wider Feasibility Study outcomes, the arrangement is made permanent and a formal recruitment process is undertaken. South Norfolk Council's Scrutiny Committee to consider the review in 6 months-time at its meeting scheduled for 27 June 2018;
4. That officers be delegated authority to pursue other early opportunities regarding shared posts where vacancies arise and other contract opportunities without the need to go through the formal Member governance process;

The Reasons for the Decision

To provide capacity and resilience, and opportunities to make efficiencies, whilst continuing to deliver quality services to residents.

Other Options Considered

None

2615 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members noted the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda.

Referring to the 30 April 2018 meeting of the Cabinet, Cllr M Gray requested further details regarding the item concerning the Statement of Co-operation with Waveney District Council, and officers agreed to provide this after the meeting.

(The meeting concluded at 9.50 am)

Chairman