

## **CABINET**

**Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 5 February 2018 at 9.00 a.m.**

### **Members Present:**

**Cabinet:** Councillors J Fuller (Chairman), Y Bendle, M Edney, L Hornby and K Mason Billig

**Apologies:** Councillor B Stone

**Non-Appointed:** Councillors B Bernard, D Bills, F Ellis, N Legg, T Lewis, G Minshull and V Thomson

**Officers in Attendance:** 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 Health and Leisure (S Goddard), the Head of Planning (P Courtier), the Accountancy Manager (M Fernandez-Graham), the Business Improvement Programme Manager (A Mewes), the Commercial and Digital Marketing Manager (H Griffiths), the Interim Joint Spatial Planning Manager (J Walchester), the ICT Manager (C Balmer), the Group Accountant (J Brown), the Senior Governance Officer (E Goddard), the Senior Planning Officer (S Marjoram), and the Business Improvement Lead (E Pepper)

### **2616 URGENT ITEMS**

The Chairman was pleased to announce that a Housing Infrastructure Grant of £5.5M had been awarded to the Council, since the budget papers had been drafted.

## **2617 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held 8 January 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **2618 PERFORMANCE RISKS REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET POSITION REPORT FOR QUARTER THREE 2017/18**

### **The Subject of the Decision**

Members considered the report of the Business Improvement Programme Manager, the Senior Governance Officer and the Accountancy Manager, which detailed the Council's performance against strategic measures, risk position and the revenue and capital position at Quarter 3 2017/18.

The Business Improvement Manager summarised performance at the end of Quarter 3, explaining that 26 measures had met or exceeded target, 1 measure had been within an acceptable tolerance level, and 1 measure had failed to hit the stretch target. The Corporate Risk Capacity remained positive and members noted the positive variance on the revenue budget of £1.582M and the forecast of a year-end revenue surplus of £1.9M. With regard to the capital programme, there had been a £3.75M spend, against a budget of £5.78M.

The Business Improvement Programme Manager drew members' attention to key areas of performance. Members commented in particular on the performance of the leisure centres, noting that income at Wymondham Leisure Centre had increased by 20%. Members were also pleased to see that there had been an increase in customer self service via web forms.

With regard to CNC Building Control, members noted that fee earning income was below the Quarter 3 target, due to a significant down turn in work through Norwich and increased competition from Approved Inspectors across the area. The Director of Growth and Business Development explained that plans were in place to improve performance, through for example, a revised marketing approach and new website. Members noted that the loss of income had been carefully managed by working to reduced staffing levels.

### **The Decision**

**RESOLVED:** To note:

- (a) the 2017/18 performance for the quarter and the combined efforts across the Directorates to deliver the vision of the Council (detail contained in Appendix 1).
- (b) the current position with respect to risks and to accept the actions to support risk mitigation (detail contained in Appendix 2).
- (c) the capital and revenue position and the reason for the variances on the General Fund (detail contained in Appendices 3 and 4).
- (d) the outcome of the bid for a one-year pilot of 100% business rates retention as outlined in paragraph 3.2.

**The Reasons for the Decision**

To ensure processes are in place to improve performance, that the management of risks is sound, and that budgets are in place to meet the Council's corporate objectives.

**Other Options Considered**

None

**2619 BUDGET CONSULTATION 2018/19**

**The Subject of the Decision**

Members considered the report of the Group Accountant which detailed the results of the 2018/19 budget consultation for residents and businesses.

The Group Accountant explained that the consultation had attracted 113 responses by the close of the survey. Summarising the results, she advised that feedback regarding the proposed £5 Council Tax rise was mainly positive (72%) and that most respondents agreed with charging for discretionary services (77%) and supporting the business community by reinvesting business rates income (85%).

Members were pleased to note that the budget proposals were broadly in line with the results of the consultation.

### **The Decision**

**RESOLVED:** To note the feedback received during the consultation exercise.

### **The Reasons for the Decision**

To ensure that the views of the public and local businesses are taken in to account when determining the budget and level of council tax for 2018/19

### **Other Options Considered**

None

## **2620 2018/19 BUSINESS PLAN**

### **The Subject of the Decision**

Members considered the report of the Business Improvement Lead, which presented the Annual Business Plan for 2018/19.

The Business Improvement Lead provided a brief overview of the Plan, and drew members' attention to the recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee, which had been forwarded in full to members separately.

Members commended the Business Plan, suggesting it to be a well prepared, comprehensive document, setting out priorities for the year and highlighting the necessary resources required. The Chairman referred to the valuable input from partner organisations, which was instrumental to the delivery of the Plan.

### **The Decision**

**RESOLVED: To:**

- a) approve the 2018/19 Business Plan;
- b) agree the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee.

**The Reasons for the Decision**

To ensure that a sound business planning process is in place, setting out the vision and priorities set by members.

**Other Options Considered**

None

**2621 REVENUE BUDGET, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL TAX 2018/19**

**The Subject of the Decision**

Members considered the report of the Section 151 Officer and the Accountancy Manager, which detailed the proposed revenue and capital budgets for 2018/19, and updated capital programme for the next 5 years, the proposed use and level of reserves, the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2018/19 to 2022/23 and proposals for Council Tax for 2018/19.

The Section 151 Officer confirmed to members that the budget had been constructed on a prudent basis and he was pleased to present a balanced budget to members, during what he considered to be challenging but exciting times for the Council. The Accountancy Manager then outlined the key issues arising from the report. He referred to the reduction in New Homes Bonus compared with that received in 2017/18, and the higher than expected pay rise to staff of 2%. Members noted that the revenue reserves remained healthy, covering 152% of the base budget for 2018/19.

Looking ahead, and assuming a £5.00 increase in council tax for a band D property each year, deficits were forecast of £2.2M for 20/21, 21/22 and 22/23 and members noted that this would be addressed through “deep dive” reviews of services.

Turning to the capital programme for 2018/19 – 2022/23, this amounted to £61.7M for 2018/19 – 2022/23 and was funded from a combination of capital receipts and reserves, and revenue reserves. Some external borrowing would be required of approximately £44M.

The Accountancy Manager then drew attention to the recommendation at paragraph 21.1.3 of the report and explained that the Council's demand on the Collection Fund for Special Expenditure was to be £78.662, not £78.445 as indicated in the report.

During discussion, the Chairman referred to the proposed increase in council tax of £5.00 for a band D property, which he considered to be a fair and honest increase. He referred to the uncertainty around changes to the funding formula and further localisation of business rates, and he hoped that future change would result in a more simple and fair finance system for local government. The proposed budget indicated that the Council was addressing these challenges, through commercialisation, efficiencies, and economic growth, and the Chairman was proud that none of this had compromised service delivery.

Turning to appendices G and H of the report, the ICT and Digital Strategies, both the ITC Manager and the Commercial and Digital Marketing Manager outlined the salient points to members. Members agreed that years of investment in IT and digital services was starting to pay dividends, with efficiencies being realised and there being a real channel shift in the way customers were accessing services.

## **The Decision**

### **RESOLVED: 1. TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:**

- (a) the approval of the base budget; as shown in para 7.1, subject to confirmation of the finalised Local Government finance settlement figures which may, if significant, necessitate an adjustment through the General Revenue Reserve to maintain a balanced budget;
- (b) the use of the revenue reserves as set out in section 15;
- (c) that the Council's demand on the Collection Fund for 2018/19 for General Expenditure shall be £6,997,555 and for Special Expenditure be £78,662.17;
- (d) that the Band D level of Council Tax be £145.00 for General Expenditure and £1.63 for Special Expenditure;
- (e) that the assumptions on which the funding of the capital programme is based are prudent.

- (f) the approval of the capital programme for 2018/19 to 2022/23, noting that a Housing Infrastructure Fund of £5.5 million has been awarded since the capital programme was drafted.

2. To agree:

- (a) the charges for garden waste as set out in para 6.2 of the report;
- (b) the introduction of a charge for the Tenant Finder Service as set out in para 6.3 of the report.

3. To note:

- (a) that pricing changes will be made in accordance with the Charging Policy in section 6 of the report;
- (b) the advice of the Section 151 Officer with regard to section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003;
- (c) the future budget pressures contained in the Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendix B.

### **The Reasons for the Decision**

To provide a budget which meets the Council's priorities and to set a council tax affordable to residents  
To ensure that the Capital Programme is affordable and complies with Council policies.

### **Other Options Considered**

None

## **2622 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 1 APRIL 2018 TO 31 MARCH 2021**

### **The Subject of the Decision**

Members considered the report of the Accountancy Manager, which detailed the proposed Treasury Management Strategy, the Prudential Indicators, the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement and the Treasury Management Policy Statement for 2018/19 to 2020/21. Cabinet was also presented with the Annual Investment Strategy for 2018/19 and the Capital Strategy for 2018/19 to 2022/23.

The Accountancy Manager outlined the salient points of his report to members.

Following brief consideration of the report, the Chairman thanked the Section 151 Officer, the Accountancy Manager and the whole Finance Team who had contributed to the preparation and timely delivery of the budget reports.

### **The Decision**

#### **RESOLVED: TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL**

- a) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for April 2018 to March 2021.
- b) the Capital Strategy outlined in section 3 and Appendix A of the report.
- c) the Prudential Indicators and Limits for the next 3 years contained within Appendix B of the report, including the Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator.
- d) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement (section 9) that sets out the Council's policy on MRP.
- e) the Annual Investment Strategy 2018/19 (section 6) contained in the Treasury Management Strategy, including the delegation of certain tasks to the Section 151 Officer
- f) the Treasury Management Policy Statement (Appendix E).

### **The Reasons for the Decision**



To ensure that the Council's Investment Strategy remains prudent and complies with statutory requirements.

### **Other Options Considered**

None

## **2623 NORFOLK STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK (DECEMBER 2017)**

### **The Subject of the Decision**

Members considered the report of the Senior Planning Officer, which sought Council's endorsement of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (December 2017).

The Interim Joint Spatial Planning Manager presented the report to members, explaining that the document had been prepared by all of the Local Planning Authorities in Norfolk, to address key cross-boundary issues. This in turn addressed the Duty to Cooperate, introduced in the 2011 Localism Act, through both officer and member level co-operation.

Members noted that the document was a strong starting point in becoming part of a Statement of Common Ground, a future requirement for Local Plans, and agreed with proposals for the Norfolk Strategic Planning Group (member forum) to review and evolve the document.

During discussion, attention was drawn to paragraph 4.1 of the document, Population Projections, and it was noted that South Norfolk had the highest percentage current and projected population growth in Norfolk. Members agreed that careful planning was required, and that planning together, with neighbouring authorities, was the most effective way forward.

### **The Decision**

**RESOLVED: TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL**

- a) approves the Norfolk Strategic Framework (Appendix 1) and agrees to be a 'signatory' to it;
- b) continues to support the Norfolk Strategic Planning Group to evolve the Framework and associated work, to ensure it remains up to date and relevant; and
- c) continues to fund the work necessary to keep the Framework up to date, including the project management support, for 2018/19 and 2019/20

**The Reasons for the Decision**

To ensure that the Council demonstrates the Duty To Cooperate and is working towards a Statement of Common Ground, through the adoption of an effective approach to address key cross-border strategic planning matters.

**Other Options Considered**

None

**2624 GREATER NORWICH INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN 2018/19 – 2022/23**

**The Subject of the Decision**

Members considered the report of the Senior Planning Officer, which sought approval for the projects in South Norfolk, to be included in the Greater Norwich Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2018-19 to 2022-23, and endorsement of the wider Greater Norwich Programme.

The Senior Planning Officer presented the report, drawing attention to paragraph 3.3 of the report, which listed those schemes within South Norfolk, to be supported by CIL funding.

The Chairman also drew attention to the projects identified in previous Growth Programmes, referring in particular to the Long Stratton bypass and Hempnall crossroads junction.

### **The Decision**

**RESOLVED: TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL** approves the projects in South Norfolk to be included in the Greater Norwich Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2018-19 to 2022-23 (Appendix 1), and endorses the draft programme for Greater Norwich, including the 2018/19 projects as the Annual Growth Programme, for consideration by the next meeting of the Greater Norwich Growth Board.

### **The Reasons for the Decision**

To ensure that the Infrastructure Investment Plan is fair, and that priorities set are in line with the planned level and distribution of growth.

### **Other Options Considered**

None

## **2625 CABINET CORE AGENDA**

Members noted the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda.

## **2626 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was

**RESOLVED:** To exclude the public and press from the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended)

## **2627 LEISURE PRICING PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE DELIVERY**

### **The Subject of the Decision**

Members considered the *exempt* report of the Head of Health and Leisure Services, which proposed a new pricing structure for the Council's leisure facilities.

The Head of Health and Leisure presented his report, explaining that a review of pricing was required to ensure that it remained relevant, competitive and commercially viable. Members noted that any price increases would take effect from 1 April 2018, and be publicised from 1 March 18.

Cllr F Ellis confirmed that the Housing, Wellbeing, Leisure and Early Intervention Policy Committee had considered and endorsed the proposals.

Cabinet noted the reasons behind some of the planned increases, and still considered the service to be affordable and good value. During discussion, members referred to the improvement scheme at the Long Stratton Leisure Centre, noting plans for it to become a community hub for the village. The Head of Health and Leisure also referred to the success of the refurbishment at Wymondham, explaining that not only had membership increased, but the percentage of bookings on line had risen dramatically.

### **The Decision**

**RESOLVED:** To agree the proposed pricing structure for core prices as outlined in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

### **The Reasons for the Decision**

To ensure that the service remains relevant, competitive and commercially viable.

### **Other Options Considered**

- Do nothing
- Phased increase

(The meeting concluded at 10.47 am)

---

Chairman