

CABINET

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

Members Present:

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

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

Officers in Attendance: The Chief Executive (S Dinneen), the Director of Growth and Business Development (D Lorimer), the Director of Communities and Wellbeing (J Sutterby), the Head of Environmental Services (B Wade), The Head of Health and Leisure Services (S Goddard) the Accountancy Manager (M Fernandez-Graham), the CNC Manager (S Fulcher) the BDC/SNC Collaborative Working Programme Manager (A Mewes), the Senior Planning Officer (S Marjoram) and the Senior Governance Officer (E Goddard).

2667 URGENT ITEM – KONECTBUS SERVICE

The Chairman agreed that this should be considered as an urgent item, as the implementation date for the proposed changes to the konectbus timetable was early January 2019.

Cllr T Lewis drew attention to plans to change the konectbus timetable from January 2019, which would result in cuts to routes 87 and 88, affecting Poringland, Arminghall, Upper and Lower Stoke, Stoke Holy Cross, Caistor St Edmund and Trowse. Cllr Lewis explained that these changes would result in some areas having a restricted service or no service at all.

The Chairman agreed that this was an important issue and advised that these cuts would also impact on other areas of the District. He suggested that the Scrutiny Committee could consider the issue further, and the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, Cllr G Minshull, agreed that this might be an appropriate area for review.

Cllr V Thomson, who was also the County Councillor for the area, explained that County Council officers were already considering this announcement and the impact on Norfolk residents. He further explained that subsidised services (those which ran on a Sunday and bank holiday) were protected, and that the County Council might choose to look at which services were subsidised in future.

RESOLVED: To request that the Scrutiny Committee consider the recent announcement regarding cuts to konectbus services, planned to come in to effect from January 2019.

2668 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held Monday 10 September and 8 October 2018, were confirmed as correct records, and signed by the Chairman.

2669 PERFORMANCE, RISKS, REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET POSITION REPORT FOR QUARTER TWO 2018/19

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Accountancy Manager, the Business Improvement Lead and the Senior Governance Officer, which detailed the Council's performance against strategic measures, risk position and the revenue and capital position, for the second quarter of 2018/19.

The Collaborative Working Programme Manager summarised the Council's performance against the strategic measures, under each corporate priority, drawing attention to key areas of performance. Members noted that the position for Quarter 2 was very positive with 23 measures meeting or exceeding target, two measures within an acceptable tolerance target, and only two measures not meeting stretch targets.

The Accountancy Manager summarised the position with regard to the revenue and capital budgets, and members noted that there was a positive variance on the revenue budget of £1.483 million at the end of September, and that the capital spend was £8.975 million against a budget of £10.363 million.

The Senior Governance Officer advised members that a new strategic opportunity (S7) has been added to the Risk Register, in relation to collaborative working with Broadland. This would track key actions required to ensure that the opportunities sought were realised. Cllr K Mason Billig explained that the Joint Lead Members' Group was still meeting regularly and would be considering progress and the priorities moving forward. The Chairman stressed the need for alignment and consistency with Broadland.

During discussion, members referred to performance measure HE1601, the % increase in Leisure Centre Members, which had failed to hit target. The portfolio holder, Cllr Y Bendle explained that this was always the service's most challenging quarter and reminded members that the total income from Leisure Centres was increasing year on year. She looked forward to the opening of the completion of the refurbishment of the Long Stratton Leisure Centre, and was pleased to report that the Spa at the Wymondham Leisure Centre was continuing to grow. The Head of Health and Leisure Services added that a new marketing campaign had been prepared and would commence in the new year.

Turning to performance measure HE 1606 (the number of days taken to process new Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims), which had failed to hit target, Cllr Bendle advised that she was confident that performance would be back on target for quarters 3 and 4. She stressed that the Council was still out performing all other Norfolk authorities, with regard to this measure.

Members were pleased to note the positive performance with regard to the Early Help Hub, with referrals to social prescribing increasing by 29% for Quarter 2, and the number of families helped to achieve positive outcomes already nearing its year-end target. The Chairman stressed the need for measurable outcomes, and the Chief Executive assured members that work was underway to demonstrate that the reduction in demands on GPs, was a direct result of social prescribing.

With regard to recycling, Cllr K Mason Billig advised that the Council would continue to educate residents through recycling campaigns with the Norfolk Waste Partnership, explaining that the quality of recycling was important in the current recycling market. Members noted that the optimisation of the brown bins collection service was going well, and that this had been necessary to ensure that the service could take on more customers.

Cllr T Lewis referred to the need to ensure that statistical information was carefully presented, and he referred in particular to LI 350, the number of new affordable homes. He explained that some homes included in the figures had become available through the Government's Help to buy Scheme, over which the Council had no control, and that this should be made clearer in the report. The Chairman agreed that in future, these figures could be presented differently, so as not to cause confusion.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To:

- a) Note the 2018/19 performance for the quarter and the combined efforts across the Directorates to deliver the vision of the Council (detail contained in Appendix 1).
- b) Note the current position with respect to risks and accepts the actions to support risk mitigation (detail contained in Appendix 2).
- c) Note the capital and revenue position and the reason for the variances on the General Fund (detail contained in Appendix 3 & 4).
- d) Agree to the write-off of an NNDR debt of £47,673.84 relating to 2014/15 as outlined in paragraph 3.2.
- e) Endorse the decision of the Leader of the Council to participate in the bid for a one-year pilot of 75% business rates retention as outlined in paragraph 3.2.
- f) Approve the increase to the ongoing "overdraft" facility to Big Sky Developments Limited to £2,000,000 as outlined in paragraph 3.4.
- g) Agree to bring forward £130,000 from the 2019/20 capital programme for an additional refuse vehicle as set out in paragraph 3.13.
- h) Agree to include a budget of £36,000 in the capital programme for essential work on the roof of South Norfolk House as set out in paragraph 3.15.
- i) Approve the decision to procure an insurance provider and to undertake a procurement exercise to achieve this as set out in paragraph 3.16.

- j) Agree to bring forward £100,000 from the 2019/20 capital programme to accelerate the roll-out of Windows 10 as set out in 3.18.

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 management effectively.

Other Options Considered

None.

2670 TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 2 2018/19

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Accountancy Manager, which detailed the Treasury Management activity during the first six months of 2018/19, the position on borrowing and investments as at 30 September 2018, and performance against the prudential indicators required under the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

The Accountancy Manager presented his report, explaining that investments had increased by £13.343 million from 1 April, to £49.48 million at 30 September 2018. These investments included £20.357 million in loans and equity in Council companies. Members noted that if the cash used for loans and investments to the companies had been invested instead in a bank, the return would have been approximately £63K at 2017/18 interest rates, compared to a return of £496k which was actually received.

The Accountancy Manager also explained that the returns on cash were forecast to be £19k above budget, reflecting the higher interest rates. More cash was being held in short term investments, in order to ensure that funds are available to borrow externally if required. At the present time, it was anticipated that any external borrowing in 2018/19, would be limited to the Enterprise Zone.

In response to a query regarding Investment Properties, the Accountancy Manager confirmed that all commercial properties were held by the Council, with domestic properties being rented out by Big Sky Ltd. With regard to the current position on Trumpeter

House, the Chief Executive confirmed that one unit was currently occupied, one shortly to be occupied, and that negotiations were taking place with three other potential tenants.

The Chairman thanked the Accountancy Manager for his successful contribution in lobbying for a statutory over-ride for pooled investments, explaining to members that he had been involved in the District Councils Network's response to the Government consultation.

The Decision

RESOLVED: TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL:

- a) Notes the treasury activity for the first half of the year and that it complies with the agreed strategy.
- b) Approves the 2018/19 prudential indicators for the first six months of the year.
- c) Amends the Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19 so that the Council can invest in Money Market Funds that have converted to LVNAV pricing as set out in 5.9.

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure that the Council's investment strategy remains prudent.

Other Options Considered

None

2671 COURTAULD COMMITMENT 2025

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Head of Environmental Services, which sought agreement to "sign up" to the Courtauld Commitment 2025.

Cllr K Mason Billig commended the report to members, explaining that the Council was being asked to sign up to the Commitment as part of the Norfolk Waste Partnership, adding that many other councils had already signed up.

The Head of Environmental Services explained that the purpose of the Commitment was to bring organisations involved in the food system together with an aim of making food and drink production and consumption more sustainable. He drew attention to the benefits of signing up, referring to the vision and goals of the project.

Members indicated their support for the proposals, agreeing that it would build on the existing good work of the Norfolk Waste Partnership.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To agree to sign the Courtauld Commitment 2025 as a partner with the Norfolk Waste Partnership.

The Reasons for the Decision

To support the reduction in food waste, thus reducing the cost burden on council tax payers, in terms of collection, processing and disposal.

Other Options Considered

Not to sign the agreement.

2672 UPDATE TO THE SOUTH NORFOLK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Joint Spatial Planning Manager, which sought Cabinet approval for amendments to the Local Development Scheme (LDS), to ensure that it was brought in to line with the latest progress on the main Local Plan documents.

The Senior Planning Officer presented the report, explaining that the Local Development Scheme had been updated to reflect the revised Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) timetable, with final adoption being moved from December 2020 to September 2021. Other amendments included the adoption of the “Open Space” Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and the removal of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework and the Brownfield register, as they were not classed as formal Local Plan documents.

During discussion, some members expressed their disappointment that the final adoption of the Plan had slipped from December 2020, to September 2021. Attention was drawn to an error in Appendix 1 (the timetable), where it had indicated that a Regulation 18 Consultation would be taking place from January to March 2019. Officers agreed that this required amendment as the consultation had commenced in October

The Decision

RESOLVED: To approve the updated South Norfolk Local Development Scheme (subject to a minor change), with immediate effect.

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure an up to date Local Development Scheme, that is closely aligned with that of Broadland.

Other Options Considered

None

2673 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members noted the Cabinet Core Agenda.

The Chairman advised that since the agenda had been published, Electric Vehicle Charging Points, and the Council Tax Support scheme, had been added to the agenda for 10 December. He also suggested that an Assessment of the Medium Term Financial Plan, and Disabled Facilities Grants be reported to the January meeting.

Noting that the 7 January 2019 meeting would be the first Cabinet meeting for Trevor Holden, the new Managing Director for both South Norfolk and Broadland Councils, the Chairman suggested that this would be a good opportunity for Mr Holden to outline his plans for his first 100 days in post.

2674 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 items 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)

2675 CNC BUILDING CONTROL BUSINESS PLAN

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the *exempt* report of the CNC Manager, regarding future proposals for the CNC Building Control Service.

The CNC Manager outlined the salient points of his report, referring in particular to resources and the level of fees.

Members noted that the proposals would allow CNC to be more responsive to the market and legislation, whilst potentially growing its market share.

The Decision

RESOLVED:

- To:
1. Note the proposals around staffing for CNC Building Control;

2. Approve the proposed fee increases as detailed in Appendix B of the report;
3. Delegate to the relevant Director for the service, currently the Director of Growth and Business Development, to increase all fees and charges annually, in accordance to the charging policy, by the level of inflation (as measured by the Retail Prices Index) from 2020/21

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure that CNC Building Control remains competitive in the market place.

Other Options Considered

None

2676 FUNDING FOR ACCELERATED CONSTRUCTION

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the exempt report of the Chief Executive regarding an application for a grant for infrastructure works, to accelerate the rate of delivery of housing on one of the Council owned sites.

The Chief Executive outlined the proposals in her report, and drew attention to the conditions of any agreement, outlined at Appendix A. In response to a query, she assured members that any acceleration in construction, would not compromise the quality of build.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To agree with the recommendations, as outlined at paragraph 8.1 of the report.

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure the speedy delivery of housing and infrastructure.

Other Options Considered

As outlined in the report

(The meeting concluded at 10.20 am)

Chairman