

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of South Norfolk District Council held in the Edwards Room at County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich on Thursday 12 July 2018 at 8.15 pm

Members Present: Councillors; Overton (Chairman), Amis, Bell, Bendle, Bernard, Bills, Blundell, Broome, Dewsbury, Duffin, Easton, Edney, Ellis, Foulger, Fulcher, Fuller, Goldson, Gould, Gray, J Hornby, C Kemp, W Kemp, Kiddie, Lewis, Mason Billig, Minshull, Mooney, Neal, Palmer, R Savage, Stone, Thomas, Thomson, J Wilby, and M Wilby

Apologies: Councillors; Dale, Hardy, L Hornby, Hudson, Larner, Legg, Pond, Riches, J Savage, Wheatley and Worsley

Officers in Attendance: The Chief Executive (S Dinneen), the Director of Growth and Business Development (D Lorimer), the Assistant Director of Resources (P Catchpole) the the Head of Business Transformation (H Ralph) and the Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer (E Hodds)

Also in Attendance: P Grant and J Jackson (on behalf of SNC UNISON)
N Tullock (on behalf of SNC Staff Forum)

3445 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared other interests as detailed below:

Member	Item and Minute Number	Declaration
Cllr C Kemp	Appointment of Joint Managing Director (minute 3449)	Member of the Employers Panel of the East of England Local Government Association
Cllr J Fuller		SNC Representative on the East of England Local Government Association

The Committee Clerk also declared an interest on behalf of all staff present, with regard to item 7 (minute 3448), the Broadland and South Norfolk Feasibility Report, as the decision would affect all employees of the Council.

3446 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14 May 2018, were agreed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

3447 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman proposed and it was then agreed by Council, that due to the nature of the venue, standing order D 4.2 (the requirement to stand when addressing the Chairman), be suspended for the duration of the meeting.

The Chairman then referred members to the list of civic engagements attended during the period 14 May to 12 July 2018.

3448 BROADLAND AND SOUTH NORFOLK FEASIBILITY REPORT

Members considered the report of the Chief Executive, which presented members with the Feasibility Study, and recommendations from the Cabinet, regarding the opportunities and benefits of South Norfolk and Broadland Councils working closer together through shared services and one joint officer team.

Cllr K Mason Billig hoped that the briefing session held earlier that evening, had addressed any queries or concerns. Commending the recommendations to Council, she encouraged members to support the proposals, so that both councils, and all staff, could move forward together.

Mr P Grant, UNISON Branch Secretary, was then invited to address the meeting. Mr Grant referred members to an email he had forwarded to all members on 5 July, which outlined a number of concerns. He drew attention in particular to staff buy-in, reminding members that the success or otherwise, of this new venture, was reliant on the cooperation of employees. He stressed that staff were worried about their jobs, changes to terms and conditions, and the impact on service delivery. The employees were the Council's most important asset, and he urged members to provide firm reassurances regarding redundancies and terms and conditions, suggested that a joint leaders' statement might be the way forward.

Regarding culture change, Mr Grant hoped that members would recognise that this would require time, and that changes could not be imposed overnight. He was pleased that the services of the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) would be sought, to oversee the development of new joint values, and he hoped very much that UNISON and staff from all levels, would be involved in the process. With regard to terms and conditions, he referred to the need for UNISON to be involved in negotiations, adding that it would be representing all staff, including those those in senior roles. He stressed that this was a radical step for both councils, and he hoped that members had taken note of UNISON's concerns.

Mrs N Tullock, then addressed the Council, on behalf of the Staff Forum. Mrs Tullock explained that the Forum represented all staff at the Council, including those that were members of UNISON. She advised that Forum representatives had tried to encourage more staff to complete the staff survey, and she acknowledged that the return rate had been disappointing. With regard to the results of the survey, she felt that it had been quite a positive response from South Norfolk Council, as the staff in the organisation were used to change and viewed it very much as “part of the day job”. The Forum was of course concerned about redundancies, but did not view a “non-redundancy policy” as a realistic way forward, adding that broken promises would only damage any trust between staff, management and members. The Forum did however, seek further reassurances regarding the shorter than average length of service at South Norfolk Council, not wishing these to be viewed as “easy pickings”, should redundancies be sought. Summing up, Mrs Tullock explained that the Forum looked forward to representing all staff, being involved in future negotiations, and helping to shape the Council’s future.

In response, Cllr Mason Billig thanked both Mr Grant and Mrs Tullock for their frank representations. She explained that a no redundancy policy was not viable, and would tie the hands of any future Managing Director, and new Council, following the elections in May 2019, but stressed that redundancies would only be sought as a very last resort. She agreed that culture change was an organic process, that required careful planning, and she stressed that both UNISON and the Staff Forum would be very much involved in the process, including any negotiations concerning terms and conditions.

Cllr J Fuller stressed that staff had nothing to fear, and he agreed that although a no-redundancy policy was not a viable option, a joint statement from both leaders providing reassurances to staff, would be a way forward. Redundancies would be avoided wherever possible, and changes to terms and conditions would be fair to both organisations and employees, enabling both councils to move forward, whilst responding to the needs and aspirations of residents. He added that the proposals would offer employees the opportunity to work on a bigger canvass, which in turn would create more opportunities to each organisation and their employees. Referring to the higher turnover of staff at South Norfolk Council, he explained that he was proud of the fact that the Council had developed staff who had then gone to gain promotion outside of the Council.

Referring to recommendation 2, concerning the ceasing of employment of the Chief Executive and exit arrangements, Cllr Gray proposed an amendment in that the arrangements should be cross party inclusive, and shared with the Leader of the Opposition Group, in addition to the South Norfolk Leader, and Deputy Leader. He suggested that South Norfolk was an “open Council” and he could see no reason why such information should be exclusive to the Leader and Deputy Leader only. This amendment was seconded by Cllr V Bell.

In response, Cllr Fuller explained that whilst he sympathised with Cllr Gray’s view, independent legal advice had been sought regarding these particular arrangements, in addition to advice received from the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer. He therefore could not support the amendment. In response to a query, he explained that the Leader of the Opposition would have the opportunity to be involved in the recruitment of the new joint Managing Director.

Cllr C Kemp, whilst also sympathetic to Cllr Gray's point, explained that there were reasons for the legal advice given, and suggested that to amend the proposals might invalidate the process. He therefore could not support the amendment.

With 6 votes for, 28 against and 1 abstention, the amendment was then lost.

In response to a query, Cllr Fuller explained that the proposed new Joint Managing Director would need to be officially employed by only one of the two Councils, and that a decision would be made regarding which council this would be, by members of the Joint Appointments Panel. He added that the appointment of a management company to take on this role, was not an option.

During discussion, Cllr T Lewis drew attention to the fact that any severance costs relating to the exit arrangements of the Chief Executive had not been included in the savings figures presented to Council. Cllr Fuller agreed and explained that costs and savings had been apportioned on a 55:45 split, due to the fact that South Norfolk carried out more functions than Broadland. He added that costs or savings generated solely from one Council, would not be shared with the other.

It was then unanimously

RESOLVED:	<p>To</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree the proposals set out in the feasibility report for collaborative working, forming One Joint Officer Team across the two autonomous Councils. The required interdependent elements to deliver this are set out below: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the routemap for delivery of the collaborative working. (Sections 9 to 19) (b) the deletion of both councils' current Chief Executive roles and that a new post of Joint Managing Director (Head of Paid Service) be created. Details of the proposed appointment to this post will be provided to the Councils in line with the timeline outlined in this report. (Sections 10.4 to 10.8) (c) subsequent to the appointment of a Joint Managing Director, the establishment of a joint senior management team and one joint officer team across the two autonomous councils. (Sections 10.10 to 10.12) (d) that the current joint management arrangements in planning continue in line with the existing 12 months interim arrangements until January 2019 and that work commences on the development of a joint planning team in accordance with the timeline as set out in the report. (Section 10.13) (e) the establishment of a growth delivery team to accelerate and promote quality development in the delivery of the districts' strategic sites as set out in Appendix 4, and that a report be brought to the September meeting of the Cabinet, detailing the most appropriate operational approach and resource to establish the growth delivery team within an agreed budget. (f) the budget for the one joint officer team transition costs, and the other identified implementation costs.
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	<p>(Sections 20.33 to 20.37)</p> <p>(g) the provisional costs/savings split as set out in section 20 of this report and its accompanying principles and that responsibility to refine this cost/savings split be delegated to the S151 officers of both Councils, in consultation with the Leaders of each Council, as part of the development of budgets for 2019/20. The final decision by Members on the cost/saving split between the two councils will be made as part of the budget setting process for 2019/20. (Sections 20.16 to 20.25);</p> <p>2. Approve the ceasing of employment of the Chief Executive with the delegation of the exit arrangements, including the effective date and terms, to the South Norfolk Section 151 Officer and the lead HR Business Partner, the details of which will be shared with the South Norfolk Leader and the Deputy Leader. This is in line with South Norfolk Council's Constitution and the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001. This decision is subject to a five-day objection period. (Sections 10.4 to 10.9)</p>
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3449 APPOINTMENT OF JOINT MANAGING DIRECTOR

Members considered the report of the Monitoring Officer regarding the recruitment of a joint Managing Director and the establishment of a Joint Appointments Panel.

Cllr Fuller commended the report to members, explaining that the formation of a Joint Appointment Panel was required to take ownership of the recruitment process for the proposed Joint Managing Director, and would provide members with the opportunity to meet with candidates. The Panel would be made up of a 3:1 political split for both Broadland and South Norfolk councils, and he announced that the South Norfolk Conservative membership would consist of: Cllrs Fuller, C Kemp and Mason Billig. Members noted that to keep the process entirely independent, the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) had been asked to support the recruitment process.

Members welcomed the support of the EELGA and recognised that the process would be demanding. In response to a query, Cllr Fuller confirmed that no "half-hearted" appointments would be made.

Cllr Fuller then paid tribute to the service of the current Chief Executive, explaining that he was very sad that she would not be joining the Council on its future journey. He referred to the Council's fantastic successes under her leadership, and thanked her for all that she had achieved. Cllr T Lewis agreed that the Chief Executive had been a great leader and he referred to her proactive, open and friendly style of management.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED:	To: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) agree the setting up of the Joint Appointments Panel for the recruitment of the Joint Managing Director post as set out in paragraph 2 with the membership of the Panel delegated to the respective Group Leaders of Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council and 2) agree to the appointment of EELGA as recruitment advisor for the process.
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3450 MONITORING OFFICER REPORT

Cllr Fuller presented the report of the Monitoring Officer, which sought Council approval to make amendments to the Cabinet portfolios and then subsequent changes to the constitution.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED:	To approve the changes to the Council's Constitution, outlined in paragraph 2.1 of the report.
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3451 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

i) Performance, Risks, Revenue and Capital Budget Position Report for the Financial Year 2017/18

Cllr B Stone presented members with the recommendations of the Cabinet, arising from the meeting held 11 June 2018.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED:	To approve <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the budget virements which exceed £100,000 in accordance with the rules of financial governance (detail contained in Appendix 6). (b) the movements in reserves as outlined in Section 2.3.5. (c) the slippage requests of £333,447 on revenue and £22,318,465 on capital (d) the amended Capital programme and its financing for the next four financial years as set out in Appendices 7 and 8.
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ii) Treasury Management Annual Report 2017/18

Cllr B Stone presented members with the recommendations of the Cabinet, arising from the meeting held 11 June 2018.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED: To:

- a) note the treasury activity for the second half of the year and that it complies with the agreed strategy;
- b) approve the 2017/18 prudential indicators for the latter six months of the year.

3452 QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMEN AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**a) Cabinet**

Cllr Mason Billig reminded members that a question was put to her at the last meeting of the Council regarding the use of recyclable cups in the canteen.

She explained that officers had looked in to the matter and all cups used by the canteen were recyclable, if washed after use. A number of steps had recently been taken to increase staff awareness with regard to the opportunities for recycling a number of different materials in the office, including paper and plastic cups, paper, card and batteries, and a number of new blue bins had been placed in the meeting rooms, council chamber and ancillary area, to ensure all cups, from both the canteen and water dispensers, were recycled.

Cllr M Edney referred to the South Norfolk On Show, held 1 July 2018. The day had been a great success and he thanked all those staff who had been involved in the event. Cllr Edney also reminded members that the Pub of the Year Awards for 2018 had been launched and he urged members to encourage residents to vote, adding that it would be good to see some different pubs coming forward in the nominations.

Cllr J Fuller informed members that there had been a road accident involving a South Norfolk Street Cleaning vehicle and a car earlier that day. The Chief Executive advised that the driver of the Council's vehicle had been discharged from hospital, however the loader had been kept in hospital over night, although had no significant injuries. Members noted that there was no information relating to the condition of the driver of the other vehicle involved, however it was understood that they had not sustained any serious injuries.

b) Scrutiny Committee

There were no questions to the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee.

c) Licensing Appeals and Complaints Committee / Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee

There were no questions to the Chairman of the Licensing Committee.

d) Development Management Committee

There were no questions to the Chairman of the Development Management Committee.

e) Electoral Arrangements Review Committee

In response to query, Cllr C Kemp explained that following the Council's consideration of the Community Governance Review, back in February, the relevant Orders had been made and had been agreed by the Local Government Boundary Commission.

A meeting of the Electoral Arrangements Review Committee was scheduled to take place in August and the Committee would be considering a review of Polling Districts and Polling Places, and also the potential for the Council to take part in a Voter ID Pilot Scheme during the May 2019 election.

3453 OUTSIDE BODIES – FEEDBACK FROM REPRESENTATIVES

Cllr C Kemp presented his report to members, regarding the Police and Crime Panel for Norfolk. He informed members that a consultation on the proposal to transfer the functions of the Fire and Rescue Authority to the Commissioner had commenced, and the Council's views would be sought as part of this consultation process. He explained that it had been decided that a Special Meeting of the Cabinet, to be held in August, would be the appropriate place to debate the matter, and not at a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, as had been previously suggested in his report.

(The meeting concluded at 9.18 pm)

Chairman