

CABINET

Minutes of a remote meeting of the Cabinet of Broadland District Council, held on Tuesday 20 April 2021 at 6.00pm.

Cabinet Member Present:	Councillors: S Vincent (Leader), T Mancini-Boyle, J Copplestone, J Emsell, L Hemsall, J Leggett and F Whymark.
Other Members in Attendance:	Councillors: T Adams, N Brennan, M Murrell and S Riley.
Officers in Attendance:	The Managing Director, Director of Resources, Director of Place, Director of People and Communities, Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer), Assistant Director of Finance, Assistant Director of Individuals and Families, Assistant Director of Planning, Assistant Director Regulatory, Assistant Director Economic Growth, Senior Enforcement Officer, Senior Economic Development Officer: Funding and Strategy, Project Co-ordinator Broadland Country Park, Senior Governance Officer (SW) and Democratic Services Officers (LA, JO)
Public in Attendance	Ms Eleanor Laming

218 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16 March 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

219 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Ms Eleanor Laming, a resident of the District, addressed Cabinet in respect of item 13 on the Agenda - Endorsement of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) Update.

Ms Laming advised the meeting that although the NSPF had produced some sound guidance to address climate change the Norfolk Planning Authorities were delaying considering the approaches put forward in its Climate Change

Research Paper until the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) was updated, which was at least five years away (Agreement 19 in the NSPF).

She informed the meeting that respondents to the latest GNLP consultation had raised concerns about the lack of policies in respect of low carbon construction, low energy homes, renewable energy and the quantum and spatial distribution of the proposed housing.

Ms Laming reminded members that there was a legal duty for Local Plans to include climate change mitigation policies and failure to do so could undermine the soundness of the Plan and leave it open to legal challenge. She also asked Cabinet to note that if the approaches put forward in the NSPF were implemented now millions of tons of CO₂ could be saved during the lifetime of the Plan.

In summing up Ms Laming asked Cabinet if they would request the Greater Norwich Development Partnership to review the GNLP against the new NSPF strategic guidance to address climate change issues now.

The Chairman thanks Ms Laming for her contribution to the meeting and it was confirmed that this matter would be discussed during consideration of the Endorsement of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework Update later in the meeting.

220 REPRESENTATIONS FROM NON CABINET MEMBERS

The Chairman agreed that, at his discretion, all non-Cabinet Members in attendance be allowed to join the debate at the relevant point of the proceedings on request.

221 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 March 2021.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised Members on the views expressed by the Committee when it reviewed the Cabinet Agenda on 13 April 2021, as each item was considered.

222 SERVICE IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 March 2021.

223 ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 25 March 2021.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence advised the meeting that an Environmental Co-ordinator had been appointment and should commence in post in mid-May.

224 COVID RECOVERY REPORT

The Director of People and Communities introduced the report, which provided an update on the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on the District and the Council's ongoing response, as well as the funding streams that had been provided to tackle the pandemic. This funding included an additional £399,000 from the Containing Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) and the report set out how this could be allocated over the coming months.

The Assistant Director Finance advised the meeting that a key element of the report centred on the General Covid-19 funding of £891,000 that the Council had available to support the implementation of the Recovery Plan and further reports would be brought forward with proposals for how this should be spent over the coming months. However, in the interim it was requested that £50,400 be released to provide additional resource for the Council Tax and Recovery Team, who were under significant pressure due to an increase in workloads generated by the pandemic.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised the meeting that since the report was drafted more funding had been received from Government and that a further report would be coming to Cabinet in June with a wider allocation of funding to support residents and businesses in the District. She also noted the increased volume of work and complexity of cases being faced by the Council Tax Team and supported the increase of resources being proposed.

The Chairman noted that it was beneficial for members to see all the schemes being proposed and the allocation of £466,000 that would be used if all the projects progressed.

Voting was carried out by way of a roll call and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

1. To note the local impact of Covid-19, together with the activities the Council is taking to mitigate those impacts.

2. To note the progress made towards delivering the actions set out in 'Our Plan for Recovery from the Covid-19 Crisis', and to recommend the update of the Recovery Plan to be considered by Cabinet in June.
3. To release the following sums to further support the Covid recovery (from the Un-Ringfenced Covid money)
 - Council Tax and Recovery Team Resource £50,400.
4. To agree a delegation to the relevant director, in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder and the portfolio holder for finance, to release COMF funds to support activities consistent with the projects listed in this report.

Reasons for Decision

To provide additional resource to enhance the Council's Covid-19 recovery response.

225 SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

The Communities Senior Manager introduced the report, which highlighted the impact and opportunities that a Social Prescribing approach could have in the District.

Members were advised that Social Prescribing was a nationwide approach that was being utilised to relieve pressure on the NHS through a Community Connector model that provided support and assistance for non-medical issues through local GP surgeries and NHS partners. There was a Social Prescribing model in Broadland already that was delivered by a voluntary sector consortium, but this was far less effective than that delivered by Community Connector models elsewhere.

Cabinet were informed that the recruitment of Community Connectors in Broadland would enhance community working, whilst placing the Council in a stronger position to support vulnerable residents through the Covid-19 recovery and prevent increased demand on the Council's statutory services.

The report proposed that the Council employ two Community Connectors to cover the whole of the District for 12 months at a cost of £62,530 per annum, which would be funded through external Covid-19 recovery funds. The long-term aim was to bid to run Social Prescribing in Broadland and to draw in full salary costs from NHS sources, which would be a nil cost to the Council.

Cabinet was advised that in South Norfolk Community Connectors had been in operation for six years, with funding secured through the NHS for a further three years. However, due to the NHS funding cycle it would not be possible to bid for funding in Broadland until 2022, therefore, if the scheme was to be

launched sooner than this the Council would need to fund the posts for the first year through the Covid-19 Recovery Fund.

In response to a query from the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing, it was explained that staff who were operating the Community Connector scheme in South Norfolk had been selected as Lead Provider in the NHS Eastern Region for the National Academy of Social Prescribing. As these staff were part of the One Team across both Districts Broadland now had that same status.

It was also explained that a comprehensive communications plan would be used to make best use of staff and target those most in need. The Community Connectors would also use existing volunteers and mutual aid groups who were very knowledgeable about their communities to provide care and support for those who might otherwise slip through the net, such as people using food banks.

Members were also reassured that Community Connectors were monitored and measured against national benchmarks for best practice.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing proposed that recommendation 2 should be amended to include a review after six months of the Community Connectors being in post to evaluate the benefits to residents being provided by the service.

The proposal was duly seconded and voting was then carried out by way of a roll call and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

1. To use COVID money (specifically the “containing outbreak management fund”) to implement a Community Connector service in Broadland district, to work as part of the Council’s early help offer and alongside the existing social prescribing service;
2. To agree to recruit 2 FTEs on a 12-month contract with the intention to review in six months from when they commence in post to evaluate the benefits to residents of the Community Connectors, as part of setting the 2022/23 budget.

Reasons for Decision

To further enhance community working in the District, through the Covid-19 recovery and beyond.

226 THE DEBT RESPITE SCHEME (BREATHING SPACE AND MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS MORATORIUM) REGULATIONS 2020 & STATUTORY DEBT REPAYMENT PLAN (FINANCIAL SERVICES BILL) – REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

The Senior Enforcement Officer introduced the report, which explained the additional level of demand that was anticipated to result from the introduction of Breathing Space Regulations and the Statutory Debt Repayment Plan, and requested a temporary additional resource in the Recovery Team to deal with the resulting workload.

The Debt Respite (Breathing Space) Regulations would come into force on the 4 May 2021 and would provide eligible debtors with legal protections from their creditors, including the halting of additional charges and enforcement action. The Statutory Debt Repayment Plan legislation would come into force shortly after this.

As a creditor, when the Council was told that a debt owed was in Breathing Space, all action related to that debt had to be stopped and the mandatory protections provided within the regulations applied. It was considered that the existing resource would not be sufficient to cope with the demands of these regulations without significant detriment to the Team's primary function of debt recovery.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted that the Council had a statutory duty to comply with the regulations and help give residents the support that they needed.

In response to a query from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, the Assistant Director for Finance confirmed that although the new regulations were not being introduced as a direct result of the pandemic, as the pandemic has increased demand and made it impractical to fund the additional work from within existing resources the post could be funded from the un-ringfenced Covid-19 monies that the Council had available to support services.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised the meeting that to ensure this service was being delivered effectively she proposed a second recommendation to review the Recovery Team capacity after 12 months, to assess if the increased resource was meeting the anticipated increase in workload.

The proposal was duly seconded and voting was then carried out by way of a roll call and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

1. To increase the Recovery Team capacity by 1 x FTE for a period of 18 months to deal with work arising from the impact of the new Breathing

Space and Statutory Debt Repayment Plan regulations in Broadland and South Norfolk. The cost to be shared 45/55 between BDC / SNC in line with the One Team agreement; and

2. To review the Recovery Team capacity after 12 months, to assess if the increased resource is meeting the anticipated increase in workload.

Reasons for Decision

To put in place temporary additional resource in order to meet increased demand on the Council Tax Recovery Team.

227 ENDORSEMENT OF THE NORFOLK STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK UPDATE

The Assistant Director Planning introduced the report, which sought members' agreement to endorse the third update to the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF).

Members were advised that the Council, as a local planning authority, had a legal duty to engage constructively with other public bodies on strategic cross boundary planning matters (known as the Duty to Cooperate) and to document the cross boundary issues being addressed (the Statement of Common Ground). The NSPF provided the structure for doing so.

The NSPF included 31 formal agreements and was prepared by officers from the constituent Norfolk authorities, under the oversight of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum, on which the Portfolio Holder for Planning sat.

A number of changes were proposed in the revised document to ensure that the NSPF remained up-to-date and included changes to reflect the National Planning Policy Framework, the Covid-19 Recovery Plan, the Health Agreement as well as a new section on climate change. These changes were already included in the latest version of the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

In respect of the issues raised by Ms Laming during public speaking earlier in the meeting; it was confirmed that the Local Plan consultation had now closed. However, the Plan included a section that considered if the Duty to Cooperate had been met and if the Plan was compliant on soundness in relation to climate change, so these issues would be tested by the Planning Inspector at the Independent Examination later in the year.

Voting was carried out by way of a roll call and it was unanimously:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

To endorse the update to the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework and to agree to remain a signatory to the document.

Reasons for Decision

In order to meet legislative requirements.

228 MEMBER IT

The Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) introduced the report, which summarised the conclusions drawn from the Members IT Survey and set out the deliberations of the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee and their recommendation to Cabinet for the provision of Member IT.

The report confirmed that the majority of the issues raised through the IT Survey were in relation to the software and that these would be addressed through the implementation of O365 and the provision of training for the new software.

The following three options had been considered by the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee: to continue with iPads or replace them with laptops or for members to use their own equipment. By a majority vote the Committee recommended retaining iPads, as the devices had two years of life remaining and the O365 rollout should solve many of the issues that had frustrated members with the Blackberry software.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning commended the recommendation in the report and reminded members that they had a duty to protect the public purse and to ensure money was spent as effectively as possible.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised the meeting that many of the survey respondents were dissatisfied with the iPad device, not just the software on it.

He advised the meeting that the Committee had recommended retaining the iPads for the next two years and to hold a full review of member IT provision by October 2022; and that the final decision on member IT provision should be made by Council.

In response, the Chairman advised the meeting that he considered that the issue was not with the iPads, but with the software and that he would not wish to wait 18 months before a review of member IT was conducted. Instead a review should be held within a few months to ensure that members had the right equipment to meet their needs.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance expressed disappointment that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had spent so much time on the member IT provision, when there were so many items on the agenda that were providing support to the Council's residents during this difficult time. She added that the budget for member IT had only been set in case it was needed and that this was not the time use it, as the focus should be on residents.

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development noted that member IT should be regularly reviewed to ensure that it was allowing members to serve their residents effectively and he proposed an amendment to the recommendation in the report, to include a review in July of the O365 rollout and training and another member survey and workshop to allow officers to report back on the software improvements to the October Cabinet.

The proposal was duly seconded and voting was then carried out by way of a roll call and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

To approve the recommendation from the Service Improvement and Efficiency Committee to retain the current provision of iPads; with a review in July covering the O365 rollout and training undertaken by members with another member survey and workshop to enable officers to have information on software improvements to report back to the October Cabinet.

Reasons for Decision

To retain the current provision of member iPads for the next two years and to review the new rollout of software.

229 REVIEW OF POLICIES

The Assistant Director Finance introduced the report, which presented updated versions of the Counter Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy, Anti-Money Laundering Policy and Whistleblowing Policy. These policies had been reviewed to ensure they were in line with best practice and had been approved by the Audit Committee at its 11 March 2021 meeting. The reports were presented to Cabinet for review and approval, prior to being presented to Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance commended the work of the Audit Committee in reviewing the policies.

In response to a query, the Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support advised that training on the policies would be made available to members and officers in due course.

Voting was carried out by way of a roll call and it was unanimously:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

The adoption of the:

- Counter Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy
- Anti-Money Laundering Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Reasons for Decision

To ensure that the Council's policies remain up-to-date and in line with best practice.

230 PLUMSTEAD ROAD: PROPOSED COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER (CPO) TO ENABLE A NEW ROUNDABOUT

The Director for Place introduced the report, which sought Council approval for a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for land adjacent to Plumstead Road to enable a new roundabout to be constructed. The junction was a key piece of infrastructure in facilitating the proper planning of the area, but to date the landowners to the south of the junction would not sign the agreement required to enable highway works to be carried out on their land.

The report and the proposed CPO demonstrated the Council's intention to deliver this scheme whilst, in parallel, also seeking to reach an amicable way forward with the respective landowners.

In response to a query it was confirmed that there was the potential to lose £1.3m in external funding for the delivery of the roundabout, if it was not carried out expediently.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning confirmed that the Council would rather deliver the roundabout without resorting to a CPO, but as this was such an important piece of infrastructure it had no choice in the matter.

Voting was carried out by way of a roll call and it was unanimously:

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- i. That officers continue to engage with the respective landowners with the intention that they sign the s.278 agreement to enable the construction of the proposed roundabout at Plumstead Road; and
- ii. That, in parallel with the ongoing engagement with the landowners, all appropriate steps as set out in this report are taken to secure the necessary land via a compulsory purchase order to enable the roundabout at Plumstead Road to be delivered. In the event that the s.278 agreement is signed to the satisfaction of Broadland District

Council and Norfolk County Council as Highway Authority the action being taken to secure a compulsory purchase order will cease.

Reasons for Decision

To demonstrate the Council's determination to deliver a key piece of infrastructure for the facilitation of proper planning in the District.

231 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY ANNUAL REPORT

The Senior Governance Officer presented the report, which summarised the progress made by Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council during 2020 in complying with their duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty, as required by the Equality Act 2010.

This was the second year that the report had been published jointly and during 2020 the responsibility for equalities had passed from the Policy Team to the Governance Team, who now produced the report.

The Equality Act 2010 required the Councils to have due regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.*
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.*
- c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.*

The duty covered nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership.

The Senior Governance Officer then took Cabinet through the Annual Report, pointing out and highlighting examples under each of the areas that the Councils must have due regard to, as well as looking at activities planned to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty for the coming year.

Members were advised that South Norfolk Council had considered the Annual Report yesterday and had requested that some additional figures be added to underpin the examples set out in the Report. It was, therefore, requested, that if Cabinet were minded to approve the report that final approval being delegated to the Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development.

Voting was carried out by way of a roll call and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

To approve the joint Public Sector Equality Duty Annual Report for publication, subject to minor amendment, with final approval being delegated to the Assistant Director of Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development.

Reasons for Decision

To meet legislative requirements.

**232 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC
RESOLVED**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining items of business because otherwise, information which is exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, would be disclosed to them.

233 ST FAITHS COMMON – LEASE

The Project Co-ordinator Broadland Country Park introduced the report, which asked Cabinet to agree, in principle, the signing of a new lease for land at St. Faith's Common to facilitate the ongoing delivery of Broadland Country Park, as set out in the exempt report.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development thanked the Project Co-ordinator for her hard work on the project and commended to proposal to Cabinet.

Voting was carried out by way of a roll call and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

To agree to sign the lease, subject to final terms being agreed by the Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development.

Reasons for Decision

To facilitate the ongoing delivery of Broadland Country Park.

234 MANAGED SERVICE – PAYROLL

The Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer) introduced the report, which sought Cabinet approval to continue with the agreement for the provision of the managed service for payroll for a period of five years from September 2021, as set out in the exempt report.

Following consideration of all the options, the Portfolio Holder for Finance proposed the recommended option, which was duly seconded. Voting was then carried out by way of a roll call and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

To

1. Agree to enter into a five-year agreement for the provision of a managed service for payroll and recruitment; and
2. Agree to delegate the detail of the agreement to the Director Resources and the Assistant Director Governance and Business Support (Monitoring Officer), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

Reasons for Decision

To maintain the provision of a managed payroll service.

235 FOOD INNOVATION CENTRE

The Assistant Director for Economic Growth introduced the report, which provide an exempt update on the Food Innovation Centre Project.

Cabinet gave thorough consideration to the proposed changes to the financial model of the Project.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development thanked officers for their work on the Project and emphasised the importance that this would have for the agri-food sector across the whole of Norfolk. It was also confirmed that the Project continued to meet its objectives, as set out in the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's Local Industrial Strategy.

The Chairman proposed a minor amendment to recommendation 2, which was duly seconded. Following this voting was carried out by way of a roll call and it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

To

1. Agree to changes to the FIC financial model and funding bid to increase the Project operating costs to offset any potential operating surplus/profit; and
2. Agree to defer any repayment of BDC's initial investment in the FIC for a period of 15 years.

Reasons for Decision

To progress the delivery of the Food Innovation Centre.

(The meeting concluded at 8.03 pm)

Chairman