

Minutes of a meeting of the **Council** held remotely on **Thursday 25 February 2021** at **7.00pm**.

A roll call was taken and the following members were present:

Cllr K A Vincent – Chairman

Cllr A D Adams	Cllr D Harrison	Cllr G K Nurden
Cllr S C Beadle	Cllr S I Holland	Cllr S M Prutton
Cllr N J Brennan	Cllr N C Karimi-Ghovanlou	Cllr S Riley
Cllr D J Britcher	Cllr K S Kelly	Cllr D Roper
Cllr P E Bulman	Cllr D King	Cllr C E Ryman-Tubb
Cllr S J Catchpole	Cllr S Lawn	Cllr N C Shaw
Cllr S M Clancy	Cllr K E Lawrence	Cllr M D Snowling
Cllr J K Copplestone	Cllr J Leggett	Cllr D M Thomas
Cllr A D Crotch	Cllr K G Leggett	Cllr J L Thomas
Cllr J Emsell	Cllr I J Mackie	Cllr S A Vincent
Cllr J F Fisher	Cllr T M Mancini-Boyle	Cllr S C Walker
Cllr R Foulger	Cllr M L Murrell	Cllr J M Ward
Cllr N J Harpley	Cllr J A Neesam	Cllr F Whymark

Also attending were the Managing Director, the Director of Resources, the Director of Place, the Director of People and Communities, the Assistant Director Governance & Business Support (Monitoring Officer), the Assistant Director Finance & Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer), the Governance Manager and the Democratic Services Officers (DM & LA).

## **229 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8**

No declarations were made.

## **230 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr B Cook, Cllr R M Grattan, Cllr S C Gurney, Cllr L H Hemsall, Cllr G Peck, Cllr I N Moncur and Cllr L A Starling.

## **231 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting on 14 January 2021 were, by way of a roll call, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to a correction to the spelling of Cllr Whymark on page 11.

**232 MATTERS ARISING**

No matters were raised.

**233 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman stated she wished to take the opportunity to recognise and thank the one-officer team who not only continued to provide the services expected from the Council but were going above and beyond to reach out to those residents in need and to support businesses in these challenging times.

On behalf of all members she wished to formally record thanks to the one officer team during this challenging time and asked the Managing Director to pass on these thanks. She also expressed her gratitude to the community groups in the district for all their efforts to step up once again to support their communities at this time.

Members noted the civic engagement undertaken by the Chairman of the Council since the last meeting.

The Vice Chairman expressed his appreciation to all those involved in protecting the community at this time and for the help and assistance being offered to residents. He also expressed his appreciation for the measures being put in place to encourage people to take up their vaccinations when offered. The vaccination programme would be a critical element in the recovery and a return to social events and travel.

The Leader of the Council (Cllr Vincent) updated members on the latest position with COVID. Numbers of cases were now down and preparations were in place to respond to the staged release from lockdown announced recently. The vaccination programme continued to offer hope and was progressing well with 40% of adults over 16 now having had their first dose. He reminded everyone that there was still a long way to go and current support work would need to continue and he thanked everyone for the work being undertaken. An example of this work recently involved the one-officer team responding to a situation of an outbreak of the South African variant in Norfolk and demonstrating resilience and capacity in meeting the challenge of leading the delivery of a testing programme and supplying testing kits to residents. The Council would continue to work with partners in driving the local recovery in accordance with the Government's recently announced road map out of lockdown.

Members heard reference made to the fact that offers of vaccinations several miles away was due to a glitch in the system.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance (Cllr Mancini-Boyle) reported on the welcome news that the latest tranche of the governments business support grants had

been offered to over 960 businesses in the district with grants totalling circa £2 ¼ m reaching those businesses by 26 February which was an astonishing achievement.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development (Cllr Copplestone) welcomed the forthcoming opening of non-essential businesses on 12 April. She thanked officers involved in the roll out of the business support grants referred to above.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence (Cllr J Leggett) expressed her thanks to the waste and recycling crews who had continued to deliver services during the recent period of snow and she thanked residents for their understanding of any disruption to collections.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing (Cllr Whymark) referred to the recent collaborative work undertaken with external consultants Campbell Tickell to develop a “best in class housing offer” and that this work now appeared on the consultant’s website as a case study. He undertook to send members a link to the webpage.

The Managing Director thanked members for their appreciation of the efforts of staff at this time which he undertook to pass on. A number of staff were now working within the NHS and alongside other partners to support the response to the pandemic. He drew member’s attention to a number of key dates:

21 March – Census day and all were encouraged to respond to the Census and to contribute to the collection of valuable information which helped shape services to residents.

6 May elections – Residents would be able to vote in person, by post or by proxy as normal and with Covid secure measures in place. The last date for registering to vote was 19 April and the deadline for applications for postal votes was 5pm on 20 April.

## **234 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

It was noted that there had been no questions from the public.

## **235 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

It was noted that there had been no requests for public speaking.

**236 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings on 26 January 2021 and 2 February 2021 were received.

**237 CABINET**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 12 January 2021 were received. (It was noted that the matters referred to Council at minute no: 184 had been resolved at the Council meeting on 14 January 2021.)

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 9 February 2021 were received and the following matters considered:

***Minute no 193: Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2021/22 (see minute no 239 below)***

***Minute no 194: Capital Budget Strategy and Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26 (The Chairman stated it was her intention to alter the order of business on the agenda to consider this item at minute no 239 below as they were intrinsically linked.)***

***Minute no 195: Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22***

The Portfolio Holder for Finance invited Council to consider the recommendations from Cabinet in relation to the Council's approach to management of its borrowing, investments, cash flow, banking, money market and capital market transaction and the effective control of the associated risks and performance, all of which were managed in accordance with relevant guidelines. The Council's current capital expenditure plans continued to indicate no need to borrow but sources including the recently added Municipal Bonds Agency were listed if needed. The Portfolio Holder for Finance proposed, duly seconded that Council to support the recommendations of Cabinet subject to an amendment to remove Hong Kong from the list of approved countries for investments. A further suggestion was made that Abu Dhabi (UAE) also be excluded from the list which was accepted by the proposer and seconder.

In response to concerns raised by a member that it appeared that no mention had been made to risks in relation to environment/social/governance as legally obliged to do so, the Portfolio Holder and the Section 151 Officer confirmed that the Treasury Management Strategy Statement had been prepared in accordance with all the appropriate guidance and they were not aware of any issues but the Section 151 Officer undertook to discuss the matter further with the member after the meeting to gain a better understanding of their concern.

In answer to a question, the Section 151 Officer outlined the current levels of investment held by the Council in each country.

It was then, by way of a roll call,

**RESOLVED**

to approve

- (1) The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22;
- (2) The Treasury Management Policy Statement 2021/22 (attached at appendix 1 to the signed copy of these minutes);
- (3) The Annual Investment Strategy 2021/22 attached at appendix 2 to the signed copy of these minutes);
- (4) The Treasury Management Practice (TMP1) attached at appendix 3 to the signed copy of these minutes);
- (5) The Treasury Management Scheme of Delegation attached at appendix 4 to the signed copy of these minutes);
- (6) The Prudential Indicators (attached at appendix 5 to the signed copy of these minutes);
- (7) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement attached at appendix 6 to the signed copy of these minutes).

***Minute no 197: Greater Norwich Growth Board: Joint Five Year Investment Plan***

The Leader invited Council to support the recommendation from Cabinet to approve the Greater Norwich Joint Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2021-2026 and the allocation of CIL to 4 specified projects, which would form the 2021/22 Annual Growth Programme (AGP); the allocation of £2m to support the Education Capital Programme within Greater Norwich; and the allocation of an additional £341,000 to projects GP46 and GP53 that were initially allocated funding within the 2018/19 AGP.

He drew attention to the fact that two of the four projects identified by the Delivery Board to be put forward for the investment infrastructure fund were in Broadland – Brundall Sports Hub and the Bure Valley Path.

It was then, by way of a roll call,

**RESOLVED to**

- (1) agree the Greater Norwich Joint Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2021-2026, (attached at appendix 7 to the signed copy of these minutes);
- (2) approve the allocation of CIL to 4 specified projects, these projects will form the 2021/22 Annual Growth Programme (AGP); the allocation of £2m to support the Education Capital Programme within Greater Norwich; and the allocation of an additional £341,000 to projects GP46 and GP53 that were initially allocated funding within the 2018/19 AGP.

***Minute no. 198 – Delivery Plan 2020/21***

The Leader invited Council to endorse the Delivery Plan for 2021/22 which set out the activities and projects the Council would be undertaking to meet the priority areas outlined in the four-year Strategic Plan. At the heart of the Plan were the four elements forming the Council's vision - growing the economy, supporting individuals & empowering communities, protecting & improving the natural & built environment whilst maximising quality of life and moving with the times, working smartly & collaboratively.

The Plan was welcomed by Council as a very comprehensive document and members thanked staff involved in its preparation.

The Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing welcomed the initiatives in the Plan relating to communities and early help support, in particular the proposal to redesign the early help and prevention model as part of the transformation agenda, the non-statutory services to support vulnerable residents and continued development of the community wellbeing offer. He also welcomed the inclusion of a review of the new Best in Class Housing Programme in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence drew attention to confirmation given at Cabinet that the alignment of the waste customer services and the full business case for the future of Frettenham and Ketteringham depots (C3 and C4 of the Plan) would not be brought forward until the new waste contract was in place. Subject to this, the Leader proposed, duly seconded, that the Plan be endorsed.

It was then, by way of a roll call, subject to the amendment above,

**RESOLVED**

to approve the adoption of the one-year Delivery Plan for 2021/22 (copy attached at appendix 8 to the signed copy of these minutes).

**238 PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The decisions of the Planning Committee meeting on 27 January 2021 were received.

**239 COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION**

Members considered the report of the Assistant Director – Finance on the ***Council Tax Resolution for 2021/22*** together with the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting on 9 February 2021 detailed at item 9.1 and 9.2 on the agenda (minute 237 above) regarding the ***Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2021/22*** (minute no: 193 of Cabinet) and the ***Capital Budget Strategy and Capital Programme 2021/22*** (minute no: 194 of Cabinet).

The Portfolio Holder for Finance stated that before Council was the 2021/22 Revenue Budget & Council Tax setting supported by the Capital Strategy & Capital programme through to 2025/26. The Local Government Settlement and New Homes Bonus had now been confirmed with no change to what was in the agenda papers, other than the addition of Revenue Support Grant of £30,630. She made reference to the fact that this was a 1 year settlement and indeed the lower tier services grant was new and it had been stressed it was a one off. She advised that the New Homes Bonus Grant had gradually been reducing over time and was estimated to fall to £250K in 23/24. Business rates income was clearly extremely important to the Council but there was also uncertainty around this, both because of the potential business rate reset and future collection rates.

The Council had been asked by central government, as the billing authority, to hold back bills until after Government set their budget on March 3rd.

As a result it could be seen from the Medium Term Financial Strategy that a funding gap appeared from 2022/23. The Council was therefore proposing an increase in council tax of £4.39 pa or 9p pw on a band D property, which took the total to £129.91. It was worth noting that this was still considerably lower than the surrounding authorities.

The funding gap was the driver behind the ambitious 5 year capital programme and would help deliver the Council's vision for the district:

- Growing the economy.
- Supporting individuals & empowering communities.
- Protecting & improving the natural & built environment whilst maximising quality of life.
- Moving with the times. Working smartly & collaboratively.

Collaborative working was on course to deliver £2.26m in savings by the end of 2020/21 and savings would continue to be identified as the two councils worked together on projects.

The pandemic had presented all with so many challenges and Central Government had provided the Council with just shy of £57m to help support business & residents and to help keep everyone safe. The Portfolio Holder added that there would be papers coming forward to identify where to best direct the £662K of covid funding recently received. There would also be work coming forward to identify how the Council could help residents with either business startups, training, apprenticeships or anything necessary to drive growth in the economy.

The Portfolio Holder said she was sure the entire Council would like to join her to thank the whole one team for everything they had done in the last 12 months and continued to do, from getting the money out of the door to the right businesses and residents as quickly as possible, to making sure the most vulnerable and indeed everyone had everything they needed to cope in this most difficult of times.

The budget proved how well the Council had coped with 12 months of financial strain in the midst of a pandemic. Earmarked reserves and base budgets across all directorates had been reviewed and added to, thus building in the resilience and futureproofing that members would expect from a Council that historically had always been prudent and exercised strong financial management. This had been achieved with a very small potential draw on general reserves of £35K.

Finally, the Portfolio Holder thanked Rodney Fincham and his entire team for working with her to put the robust budget together – she was aware what an extremely busy time this had been for them. She then invited Council to support the recommendations set out in the **Council Tax Resolution for 2021/22** report, together with the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting on 9 February 2021 regarding the **Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2021/22** (minute no: 193) and the **Capital Budget Strategy and Capital Programme 2021/22** (minute no: 194).

In supporting the proposals, the Leader of the Council stated that the budget proposals needed to be set in context with the current difficulties of operating in a global pandemic with constantly changing priorities, requirements and pressures. He was extremely proud of the efforts of the Council's staff and partners for the incredible work they continued to do and the budget would provide the platform for the Council to take the necessary steps to continue to provide the services residents valued. The budget continued with a strong ethos of sound financial control and management. The Conservative administration remained passionate about Broadland, providing the homes and jobs needed whilst protecting the environment and providing value for



money. The budget also recognised the ambitious plans for improvements for residents as set out in the Delivery Plan. The Council had demonstrated it had made the right choices at the right times to continue to be a financially sound and high performing council. Whilst no one wanted to see a council tax rise, it had been necessary at this time for a small increase in council tax to enable the ambitions to be met. He did not support unwise calls for a council tax freeze this year and for reserves to be used as these could only be spent once and once used would not be available again. The next financial year was likely to be challenging as national support schemes fell away leaving hard choices to be made. The proposed budget demonstrated the Conservative administration's strong financial management which would put the Council in the best place to continue to move forward and to respond to the future demands in a way residents would expect.

An alternative budget proposal was then put forward by the Liberal Democrat Group. Cllr Riley proposed that Council support:

- *a Council tax freeze for 2021-22 funded by draw on general reserves of £204,837 and*
- *to better align the grants policies of Broadland with those of South Norfolk District Council. To increase the budget for community grants by £50,000 and increase local member grants to £1000 per member. This will be at a total cost of £73,500 to be funded from in year efficiency savings and a draw from general reserves. The maximum draw on general reserves will be £73,500.*

Cllr Riley drew attention to the assurance given by the Section 151 Officer that these proposals were financially sound and robust and that the level of reserves was adequate. Cllr Riley stated that the level of reserves held by the Council as at 1 April 2020 had been £4.5m which was significantly more than the circa £2m recommended by the Section 151 Officer. He made reference to the work undertaken as part of the feasibility study into collaboration with South Norfolk Council which had identified a number of areas of savings to ensure cuts were not necessary and to continue to better serve the residents and keep council tax bills down. In reality the levels of reserves had increased over this time and it was not appropriate to consider increasing council tax at this time as the real impact of COVID was unknown and the furlough scheme was still currently in place. Many people would be facing difficulties and it was not appropriate to raise council tax whilst holding such healthy levels of reserves.

With regard to the grants scheme, Cllr Riley made reference to the scheme operated by South Norfolk which made funding of £1,000 available to members compared to £500 for Broadland members. The increased provision proposed would enable more direct funding for vital community groups which was even more important in the current climate. The increases proposed had been supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

General discussion then took place on the budget proposals before members.

The Leader of the Opposition thanked staff for all their efforts in responding to the pandemic. He stated that the alternative proposals put forward by the Liberal Democrat Group would help support recovery from the pandemic and provide direct help in the community. The proposal would better align the grant schemes across the two councils and demonstrate that the Broadland valued its communities. With regard to the council tax increase, the Leader of the Opposition stated national government was expecting local government to secure increased funding by way of council tax increases and he was of the view the money was best left with the council tax payer and this could help support local recovery and give people the local choice. With the current level of reserves available there was no need to increase the council tax.

A concern was raised that council tax assistance claims had seen an increase of 106% because of the pandemic which demonstrated that residents would find it difficult to cope with a council tax increase.

In response to a comment regarding comparisons with adjoining local authorities, the Portfolio Holder for Finance clarified that she had referred to the level of council tax in Broadland as being lower than surrounding districts and not the level of increase proposed.

A number of members expressed the view that it would not be prudent to use reserves at this time to support the alternative proposals and, without a definite plan for how this would be funded going forward, it could impact on reserves each year. The nominal increase in council tax, if left with residents, was so small it was not likely to have any real impact on supporting the recovery. Collectively however, the increase in council tax could more effectively be used by the Council to aid recovery. A question was raised as to whether the alternative proposals constituted an alternative budget or where instead two amendments to be funded from reserves. The assumption was that the rest of the budget was acceptable. With regard to comments about the increase demand on the council tax assistance scheme, reference was made to recent changes to the scheme to increase the fund and ensure it reached those finding it difficult to pay their council tax. Not all the funding available had been used. With regard to the issue of community grants, this matter had been considered fully only recently and the decision taken to retain the level of the member grant scheme at £500. It was acknowledged that this did not align with the scheme at South Norfolk but they did not have a community lottery which had been launched in Broadland in January 2021. To date circa £39k had been raised and 45 good causes registered with the Council for potential receipt of funding, several of which were in Aylsham. One of the many positives of the lottery scheme was that it gave residents the choice whether or not to buy tickets and support local good causes.

In seconding the Liberal Democrat Group alternative proposals, Cllr Catchpole referred to the number of people currently facing financial

difficulties, particularly in rented accommodation who were often on low incomes. She felt any increase should be deferred until such a time as there had been some recovery from the pandemic. She felt the increase in member grant to £1,000 would be invaluable in ensuring that those who were best placed to know where local funding was needed could meet that demand, particularly at this difficult time.

Cllr Riley expressed his frustration that the community grant scheme did not align across both councils. He also added that the alternative budget proposed would not result in a year on year call on reserves as provision would be made for it in the budget in future years and it had been demonstrated that savings were available. He suggested the Council should not accrue the level of reserves currently held.

The Chairman then invited Council to vote on the alternative budget put forward by the Liberal Democrat Group as set out above.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, which set out the requirement for a recorded vote to be taken on all budget and Council Tax setting matters, a recorded vote was taken as follows:

### FOR THE PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE BUDGET - 12

Cllr S C Beadle, Cllr D J Britcher, Cllr S J Catchpole, Cllr N J Harpley, Cllr D Harrison, Cllr S I Holland, Cllr N C Karimi-Ghovanlou, Cllr K E Lawrence, Cllr J A Neesam, Cllr S Riley, Cllr D Roper, Cllr D M Thomas.

### AGAINST THE ALTERNATIVE BUDGET - 28

Cllr A D Adams, Cllr N J Brennan, Cllr P E Bulman, Cllr S M Clancy, Cllr J K Copplestone, Cllr A D Crotch, Cllr J Emsell, Cllr J F Fisher, Cllr R Foulger, Cllr K S Kelly, Cllr D King, Cllr S Lawn, Cllr J Leggett, Cllr K G Leggett, Cllr I J Mackie, Cllr T M Mancini-Boyle, Cllr M L Murrell, Cllr G K Nurden, Cllr S M Prutton, Cllr C E Ryman-Tubb, Cllr N C Shaw, Cllr M D Snowling, Cllr J L Thomas, Cllr K A Vincent, Cllr S A Vincent, Cllr S C Walker, Cllr J M Ward, Cllr F Whymark.

### ABSTENTIONS - 0

**The proposed amended budget was therefore LOST.**

The Chairman then invited Council to vote on the recommendations proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Finance, seconded by the Leader, as follows:

***Recommendation from Cabinet - Minute no: 193- Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2021/22***

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, which set out the requirement for a recorded vote to be taken on all budget and Council Tax setting matters, a recorded vote was taken as follows:

**FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS - 28**

Cllr A D Adams, Cllr N J Brennan, Cllr P E Bulman, Cllr S M Clancy, Cllr J K Copplestone, Cllr A D Crotch, Cllr J Emsell, Cllr J F Fisher, Cllr R Foulger, Cllr K S Kelly, Cllr D King, Cllr S Lawn, Cllr J Leggett, Cllr K G Leggett, Cllr I J Mackie, Cllr T M Mancini-Boyle, Cllr M L Murrell, Cllr G K Nurden, Cllr S M Prutton, Cllr C E Ryman-Tubb, Cllr N C Shaw, Cllr M D Snowling, Cllr J L Thomas, Cllr K A Vincent, Cllr S A Vincent, Cllr S C Walker, Cllr J M Ward, Cllr F Whymark.

**AGAINST THE RECOMMENDATIONS - 12**

Cllr S C Beadle, Cllr D J Britcher, Cllr S J Catchpole, Cllr N J Harpley, Cllr D Harrison, Cllr S I Holland, Cllr N C Karimi-Ghovanlou, Cllr K E Lawrence, Cllr J A Neesam, Cllr S Riley, Cllr D Roper, Cllr D M Thomas.

**ABSTENTIONS - 0**

**RESOLVED**

- (1) The approval of the 2021/22 base budget (as set out in appendices 9A to 9F attached to the signed copy of these minutes) subject to the amendments proposed by Cabinet;
- (2) The use of the earmarked reserves (as set out in Appendix 9E attached to the signed copy of these minutes);
- (3) That the Council's demand on the Collection Fund for 2021/22 for General Expenditure shall be £6,061,601 and for Special Expenditure shall be £169,801;
- (4) That the Band D level of Council Tax be £129.91 for General Expenditure and £3.64 for Special Expenditure.

***Recommendation from Cabinet - Minute no: 194- Capital Budget Strategy and Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26***

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, which set out the requirement for a recorded vote to be taken on all budget and Council Tax setting matters, a recorded vote was taken as follows:

**FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS - 28**

Cllr A D Adams, Cllr N J Brennan, Cllr P E Bulman, Cllr S M Clancy, Cllr J K Copplestone, Cllr A D Crotch, Cllr J Emsell, Cllr J F Fisher, Cllr R Foulger, Cllr

K S Kelly, Cllr D King, Cllr S Lawn, Cllr J Leggett, Cllr K G Leggett, Cllr I J Mackie, Cllr T M Mancini-Boyle, Cllr M L Murrell, Cllr G K Nurden, Cllr S M Prutton, Cllr C E Ryman-Tubb, Cllr N C Shaw, Cllr M D Snowling, Cllr J L Thomas, Cllr K A Vincent, Cllr S A Vincent, Cllr S C Walker, Cllr J M Ward, Cllr F Whymark.

AGAINST THE RECOMMENDATIONS - 12

Cllr S C Beadle, Cllr D J Britcher, Cllr S J Catchpole, Cllr N J Harpley, Cllr D Harrison, Cllr S I Holland, Cllr N C Karimi-Ghovanlou, Cllr K E Lawrence, Cllr J A Neesam, Cllr S Riley, Cllr D Roper, Cllr D M Thomas.

ABSTENTIONS - 0

### **RESOLVED**

to approve the Capital Strategy (attached at Appendix 10A to the signed copy of these minutes) and the Capital Programme for 2021/22-2025/26 (attached at Appendix 10B to the signed copy of these minutes) subject to a business case being drafted for the proposed street lighting budget.

### ***Council Tax Resolution 2020/21***

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, which set out the requirement for a recorded vote to be taken on all budget and Council Tax setting matters, a recorded vote was taken as follows:

FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS - 28

Cllr A D Adams, Cllr N J Brennan, Cllr P E Bulman, Cllr S M Clancy, Cllr J K Copplestone, Cllr A D Crotch, Cllr J Emsell, Cllr J F Fisher, Cllr R Foulger, Cllr K S Kelly, Cllr D King, Cllr S Lawn, Cllr J Leggett, Cllr K G Leggett, Cllr I J Mackie, Cllr T M Mancini-Boyle, Cllr M L Murrell, Cllr G K Nurden, Cllr S M Prutton, Cllr C E Ryman-Tubb, Cllr N C Shaw, Cllr M D Snowling, Cllr J L Thomas, Cllr K A Vincent, Cllr S A Vincent, Cllr S C Walker, Cllr J M Ward, Cllr F Whymark.

AGAINST THE ALTERNATIVE BUDGET - 12

Cllr S C Beadle, Cllr D J Britcher, Cllr S J Catchpole, Cllr N J Harpley, Cllr D Harrison, Cllr S I Holland, Cllr N C Karimi-Ghovanlou, Cllr K E Lawrence, Cllr J A Neesam, Cllr S Riley, Cllr D Roper, Cllr D M Thomas.

ABSTENTIONS - 0

### **RESOLVED**

- (1) that it be noted that the following amounts for 2021/22 have been determined under delegated authority and in accordance with regulations made under the local Government Finance Act 1992:

- a) **46,660** being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance

with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax Base for the year.

b) the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amount of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items (i.e. Parish precepts) relate, as shown in appendix 11A attached to the signed copy of these minutes;

(2) that the Council calculates the following amounts for 2021/22 in accordance with Sections 31A, 31B and 34 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011):

a) **£43,188,722** being the aggregate expenditure which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act (including the General Fund, Special Expenses and Parish Precepts).

b) **£33,013,253** being the aggregate income which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act.

c) **£10,175,469** as its council tax requirement for the year including Special Expenses and Parish Precepts being the amount by which the aggregate expenditure at 2(a) above exceeds the aggregate income at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act.

d) **£218.08** as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year, being the council tax requirement at 2(c), divided by the Council Tax Base for the year (46,660) at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act.

e) **£4,113,868** being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (i.e. Parish Precepts and street lighting special expenses).

f) **£129.91** as the basic amount of its Council Tax for dwellings in its area, excluding Special Expenses and Parish Precepts, being the amount at 2(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2(e) above by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act.

g) the amounts given by adding to the amount at 2(f) above the amounts of the special items for the relevant Parish divided in each case by the Council Tax Base for the Parish at 1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in each Parish is as set out in Appendix 11B attached to the signed copy of these minutes;

h) the amounts given by multiplying the basic amounts for each Parish 2(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands;

- (3) that it be noted that for the year 2021/22 the main precepting authorities have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with s40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

<b>Band</b>	<b>Norfolk County Council £</b>	<b>Police &amp; Crime Commissioner £</b>	<b>Total Preceptors £</b>
<b>A</b>	981.96	185.34	1,167.30
<b>B</b>	1,145.62	216.23	1,361.85
<b>C</b>	1,309.28	247.12	1,556.40
<b>D</b>	<b>1,472.94</b>	<b>278.01</b>	<b>1,750.95</b>
<b>E</b>	1,800.26	339.79	2,140.05
<b>F</b>	2,127.58	401.57	2,529.15
<b>G</b>	2,454.90	463.35	2,918.25
<b>H</b>	2,945.88	556.02	3,501.90

- (4) that, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts of the District's and preceptors requirements, in accordance with s30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets amounts of the council tax for the year 2021/22 for each category of dwelling as follows:

<b>Band</b>	<b>District &amp; Parishes Council Tax £</b>	<b>Total Preceptors £</b>	<b>Total 2021/22 Council Tax £</b>
<b>A</b>	145.39	1,167.30	1,312.69
<b>B</b>	169.62	1,361.85	1,531.47
<b>C</b>	193.85	1,556.40	1,750.25
<b>D</b>	<b>218.08</b>	<b>1,750.95</b>	<b>1,969.03</b>
<b>E</b>	266.54	2,140.05	2,406.59
<b>F</b>	315.00	2,529.15	2,844.15
<b>G</b>	363.47	2,918.25	3,281.72
<b>H</b>	436.16	3,501.90	3,938.06

The council tax for each category of dwelling by parish is as set out in

*Appendix 11C attached to the signed copy of these minutes;.*

- (5) to determine that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax (including special expenses) for 2021/22 is not excessive, in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and thus there is no need to hold a Council Tax referendum.

***[The Chairman adjourned the meeting for a 5 minute comfort break. The meeting was reconvened at 9.10pm with all members still in attendance with the exception of Cllr Riley]***

## **240 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS MAY 2021 TO MAY 2022**

Members considered the draft schedule of meetings for May 2021 to May 2022. In response to a question, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that the current legislation enabling remote meetings to be held ended in May 2021 and further guidance was awaited from Government about holding meetings after that date. It was by way of a show of hands

### **RESOLVED**

To approve the schedule of meetings for May 2021 to May 2022 (attached at appendix 12 to the signed copy of these minutes)

## **241 PAY POLICY STATEMENT**

Members considered the report which sought Council's approval of the Annual Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22, as required by Section 38 of the Localism Act 2012, prior to its publication on the Council's website. It was by way of a show of hands,

### **RESOLVED**

to approve the content of Broadland District Council's 2021/22 Pay Policy Statement (attached at appendix 13 to the signed copy of these minutes) in advance of its publication on the Council's website by 31/3/21.

## **242 MONITORING OFFICER REPORT**

Members considered the report of the Monitoring Officer. The Leader of the Council invited members to support the recommendations to amend the terms of reference of the Policy Development Panels and the consequential



changes to the Standing Policy Panels and Advisory Panels and the Special Responsibility Allowances. The report also asked Council to note arrangements for the appointment of a member as the Armed Forces Champion.

The Leader of the Opposition raised a concern about the legality of the proposal to pay a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) to the Chairmen of the Policy Development Panels. He recollected discussions in 2015 with the Leader of the Council at the time regarding the Policy Panels and he was of the opinion that the Policy Development Panels did not replace the Standing Policy Panels. The proposed SRAs for Policy Development Panels were therefore an amendment to the members' allowances scheme and could not be agreed without first being considered by the Independent Remuneration Panel in accordance with Section 19 (1) of the Local Authority (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. There had been a significant increase in the last 10 years in the number of roles qualifying for a SRAs from 12 to 21 which he felt was excessive and did not comply with guidelines which stated there should not be too many. He requested a separate vote be taken on the recommendation set out at bullet point 4 regarding the SRA.

In response, the Monitoring Officer stated she would have welcomed a discussion on this matter prior to the meeting and she drew attention to the report setting out the situation regarding the Standing Policy Panel, which had not been convened since their establishment 10 years ago, and the Policy Development Panels which it was understood had replaced the Standing Policy Panels. The role of the Standing Policy Panels was overseen by the Cabinet as was the case with the Policy Development Panels and the proposed changes would seek to regularise the situation and include terms of reference for the Policy Development Panels in the Constitution to aid transparency.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the current level of SRA to be paid would be £1150 pa unless the member already received an SRA. It was also stated that no member received more than one allowance.

The Leader of the Opposition stated he would welcome early consultation on any changes proposed to the Constitution.

It was then, by way of a roll call, with all members voting in favour of recommendations (1), (2) (3) and (5) below and 24 members voting for recommendation (4), 11 against and 4 abstentions

### **RESOLVED**

to approve:

- (1) the updated Terms of Reference for the Policy Development Panels and consequential references within the Constitution (copies of the

Terms of Reference of each of the Panels attached at appendix 14 to the signed copy of these minutes);

- (2) The following amendments to the appointments to Panels:
  - a. Economic Success - Cllr Nigel Brennan to replace Cllr Jo Copplestone and Cllr Sam Walker to replace Cllr Trudy Mancini-Boyle;
  - b. Environmental Excellence - Cllr Adrian Crotch to replace Cllr Judy Leggett;
  - c. Place Shaping - Cllr Justine Thomas to replace Cllr Lana Hempsall
  - d. Wellbeing - Cllr Claire Ryman-Tubb to replace Cllr Fran Whymark
  - e. Service Improvement and Efficiency - Cllr Ken Kelly to replace Cllr Jonathan Emsell;
- (3) the removal of references to Standing Policy Panels;
- (4) payment of the Special Responsibility Allowance for Chairmen of Policy Development Panels.

And

- (5) To note the request for nominations for the Armed Force Champion.

## **243 OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS – FEEDBACK FROM REPRESENTATIVES**

Members received and noted the feedback from members on outside organisations.

## **244 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

The following questions were received in accordance with Procedural Rule 12.4.

### **Cllr S Catchpole - Question to the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence**

*According to Broadland District Council's current Environment Strategy (p10), "threats to our biodiversity include habitat loss and fragmentation, pollution, invasive non-native species and climate change." One of the strategic approaches to this challenge of our natural environment here in Broadland, identified in the Strategy, is to "Enhance existing local green spaces, in terms of their recreational offer and their biodiversity value." On inspection of the £82k Community and Environmental Protection budget, only the usual costs to satisfy regulation of air quality and water sampling etc. are provided for. Without a 2021/22 budget to make enhancements of local green spaces, how will this be achieved and when.*

### **Response by the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence**

In addition to the Community and Environmental Protection budget there were a number of other funding sources available to support the enhancement of local green spaces across Broadland.

These included budget provision for the following: core grounds maintenance (£74,600), grounds maintenance 'repairs and renewals' (£6,700), amenity trees budget (£15,000), woodland budget (£37,800) and tree Warden budget (£3,000).

In excess of £3.5m of S106 contributions secured through development was currently held by the Council for the provision of green infrastructure, open space and recreational facilities. Of this, approximately £1.7m was committed to the following projects: Broadland Country Park (£288,919), Catton Park (£164,294) and provision of green infrastructure in Strumpshaw (£26,466).

Of the remaining uncommitted S106 monies £296k was explicitly available for green infrastructure projects. Furthermore within the existing work programme, the re-wilding broadland project was being delivered leaving grass areas uncut to encourage a more diverse range of grasses and wildlife to flourish providing food and cover for a wide range of insects and in turn supporting birds and small mammals such as hedgehogs and bats. To date successful trials had taken place over 10 sites and where possible this was being extended this year. The Community Assets team was also working on developing an action plan to help increase biodiversity in public open spaces by leaving these more natural. A new tree policy would be coming to members for adoption later this year. Budget provision had also been made for a new post of Environmental Strategy Coordinator which would be open for applications shortly and would be working in Broadland only, focusing on developing and delivering an action plan for the Council's adopted Environmental Strategy.

#### **Cllr D Thomas – Questions to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Success**

Question 1:

*The North West Woodlands/Houghen Plantation is causing frustration for a lot of residents, I am receiving more messages than I would like regarding its name which appears to be in the public domain - is there anymore work on the name or has this been agreed?*

#### **Response by the Portfolio Holder for Economic Success**

The name of the country park had been decided as Broadland Country Park on the grounds that it was a well-established name which avoided confusion and which confirmed the general location of the facility in Broadland. It was acknowledged that some alternative names had been suggested by local people but there had been no strong or consistent local preference. These suggestions had included a number of names which were quickly dismissed such as: 'Parky McPark Face'. Consideration had been given to suggestions such as: Fenland Forest, Whinney Hills, Brackenwood, Felford, and Horsfell and to retaining the name Houghen Plantation. However, to enable people to identify the general location of the site and be a name which people would

find easy to spell and say, it had been concluded that the proposed suggestions, or retaining the name Houghen Plantation, did not achieve these ambitions.

**Question 2**

*I recently asked the Cabinet member if they could advise why a recent cycle paths survey for the land was not put on the BDC webpage but Twitter and Facebook, I was delighted to hear that there were over 750 responses (more than the recent budget consultation - 22) but why not the BDC page? At the time when I first asked Cllr Copplestone wasn't aware, I was wondering if there is any update?*

**Response by the Portfolio Holder for Economic Success**

The survey had been required to support a funding bid which had a tight deadline. A collective decision, including the communications team, had been taken to focus on Facebook in order to maximise response numbers. It had been felt that adding the survey to the Broadland webpage would not lead to a significant number of additional responses and indeed the team had been delighted to receive 750 responses via social media. The team were happy to be led by members if this was something they would like to see on the Broadland webpages in the future. In addition to Facebook, adverts had been placed in the EDP and the EN and the Council was currently waiting to hear if its bid for funding for the scheme mentioned had been successful.

Cllr D Thomas welcomed the response and suggested that where possible as many options as feasible be utilised for increasing engagement.

**Question 3/request**

*Lastly could I ask that myself and my ward colleague Cllr Starling are kept in the loop about items like I've asked as I am finding out more about the park via EDP24 or Social media before my Cllr Inbox, thank you"*

**This question was withdrawn by the questioner as it had been actioned.**

**Cllr D Roper – Question to the Leader**

*Would the Leader please advise on whether he feels there is any likelihood at all of the collaboration project being extended to include Breckland District Council.*

**Response by the Leader**

Broadland Council had always led the way in terms of partnership working and had been clear in moving forward with the feasibility study and collaboration work with South Norfolk that opportunities for partnership

working would always be explored to see if these were advantageous for the Council and its residents. The Council had long been part of joint service arrangements such as the internal audit consortium which provided a service for seven local authorities, the NEWS joint venture with all 7 local authorities working together for effective disposal of recycling, the CNC partnership which provided services for five local authorities and procurement which was jointly provided to three local authorities. Discussions were underway to expand both the internal audit and the procurement shared services. Broadland had a successful history of partnership working and where this made sense would look to explore opportunities presented. Turning to Breckland, the Council had a history of working successfully in partnership on a number of ventures for example, the confidence campaign launched after the last lockdown which saw the three councils working together to build confidence amongst residents returning to market towns, high streets and village shops. Options would be explored for similar collaborative work following the route out of the current lockdown. There were no proposals at the current time to expand collaboration options but instead the Council would continue with South Norfolk to build on the successful work being undertaken to improve services for residents over the coming year.

### **Supplementary Question**

*Cllr Roper asked if the Leader would go further and rule it out that collaboration would be extended within the next 2 years.*

### **Response by the Leader**

The Leader stated it was highly unlikely that this would happen in 2 years and was not something in which the Council had taken part in any exploratory conversations. At this point in time he did not foresee that happening and instead the Council would be concentrating on the excellent achievements to date with South Norfolk on collaboration and continue to deliver services in the excellent way it was currently.

## **245 MOTIONS**

No motions were received under Procedural Rule 13.

## **246 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

### **RESOLVED**

to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the remaining business because otherwise, information which was exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part I 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.

**247 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The exempt minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 2 February 2021 were (by a show of hands) received.

**248 CABINET**

The exempt minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 9 February 2021 were (by a show of hands) received.

*The meeting closed at 9:50pm*