

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on Tuesday 19 October 2021 at 6.00pm.

Cabinet Members Present: Councillors: S Vincent (Chairman), T Mancini-Boyle (Vice-Chairman), J Copplestone, J Emsell, S Lawn, J Leggett and F Whymark.

Other Members in Attendance: Councillors: E Laming and S Riley.

Officers in Attendance: The Director for People and Communities, Director of Place, Chief of Staff (Monitoring Officer), Assistant Director of Finance, Assistant Director Community Services, Housing Standards Senior Manager, Help Hub and Communities Senior Manager and Democratic Services Officers (LA, JO).

Before the commencement of the meeting the Leader asked those present to join him in a minute's silence in remembrance of Sir David Amess MP and Ben Whitmore (Finance Business Partner).

The Leader advised the meeting that the One Team had recently been crowned overall winner for Best Local Authority at the East of England Local Government Authority Senior Management Challenge.

The One Team were finalists in all five categories and won the awards not only for Best Local Authority, but also Best Stakeholder Engagement and Best Chief Executive.

Cabinet congratulated the six members of staff who took part for their outstanding achievement.

45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Vincent declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of item 59 - Review of the Material Recycling Facility Contract, as a Director of NORSE Environmental Waste Services Ltd.

46 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 14 September 2021 were agreed as a correct record

47 MATTERS ARISING

Minute No: 38 – Minutes

The Director for People and Communities confirmed that a report setting out the benefits of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil fuel would be brought to Cabinet in November and a report on the implementation of the Waste Contract in the New Year.

Minute No: 39 –Matters Arising

Cllr Eleanor Laming asked the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence:

I note that the Strategic Environmental Services Contract has been awarded to a company who will be using some 2nd hand Euro 6 compliant vehicles. Although these would need replacement when 10 years old providing the Council with the flexibility to introduce electric refuse vehicles, I would argue that we need to be using EV's now. I also note that a report has been requested on the environmental benefits of using Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil fuel to reduce CO2 together with detail on how the Council's incentive payment mechanism would be used to encourage HVO fuel use. This would at best be a very short term interim solution as HVO still locks the council in to use of internal combustion engines and contributes to air pollution.

Would the council be willing to state its intention to move towards using EV's or hydrogen cell fuelled vehicles as soon as possible, and request a more expansive report to be provided which gives details of alternative fuel uses and their CO2 output, rather than just HVO?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence

Reducing the environmental impacts of our waste collection services was a key strategic outcome when we were re-tendering the Environmental Services Contract. We actively looked at and discussed with all the bidders the various options available to reduce the environmental impacts of the service. They were required within their bid documents to demonstrate how they would work with the authority to improve and reduce the environmental impacts.

We explored the potential to introduce electric Refuse Collection Vehicles (RVC's) from day one of the contract, but all the bidders indicated that the technology was not yet viable to provide the operational certainty required. In fact, in October 2020 Veolia trialled a 26T Dennis eCollect electric RCV, but unfortunately this trial clearly demonstrated that the vehicle was not capable of completing a full round due to the mixed urban/rural nature of the District.

Following further discussions with the bidders the specification was changed to allow bidders to come forward with a mixed aged fleet option, as long as all vehicles were Euro VI compliant and less than ten years old, meaning some vehicles could be replaced during the life of the Contract when electric RCVs would be both cheaper and more operationally reliable. Currently electric RCVs are in excess of £400K, more than twice the cost of diesel RVCs.

In the case of the successful bidder, they are proposing to utilise five existing Euro VI RVCs out of a total of 24, which will be replaced in April 2025 with electric RCVs or other technology such as hydrogen cell fuelled vehicles. They will also explore the options for retrofitting electric motors and batteries to the existing diesel RVCs as and when the technology becomes viable.

As it became clear that it would not be possible to introduce electric RCVs from the commencement of the contract, the Council, looked at other ways of reducing the amount of CO2 that would be produced. At the final tender stage, the Council introduced a match funding pot of up to £50,000 to encourage bidders to utilise 100 percent HVO fuel, in their final submissions all bidders proposed to use 100 percent HVO fuel. In the case of the successful bidder the use of 100 percent HVO fuel will reduce the amount of CO2 being emitted by the vehicle fleet from 1,110T to 22Ts – 98 percent.

Other environmental features that will be incorporated include dust suppression technology on mechanical sweepers to minimise the impact of PM10 and PM2.5 on air quality and electric bin lifts will be fitted on all new RCVs.

Prior to the commencement of the Tender process the Council commissioned Groundforce Norfolk (2020) to undertake a Greenhouse Gas Audit of the waste service, the report highlighted a range of options that could be considered to reduce the CO2, concluding that the use of electric RCVs would offer the greatest benefits, but that the technology was not currently available.

48 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.

49 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised Members on the views expressed by the Committee when it reviewed the Cabinet Agenda on 12 October 2021, as each item was considered.

50 PLACE SHAPING POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2021.

51 WELLBEING POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2021.

52 ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL

Cabinet received the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2021

53 INDEPENDENT LIVING ASSISTANCE POLICY

The Senior Housing Standards Manager introduced the report, which proposed an Independent Living Assistance Policy, which would align the Disabled Facilities Grant with a range of other services that would streamline how the Council enabled vulnerable residents of all ages live independently in their homes.

The Policy included grants to assist a resident move to an adapted property, rather than adapting an existing property as well as others such as an Architect Grant for complex cases.

It was noted that supplementary information had been provided in response to issues raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, regarding the removal of the £1,500 cap on the Care and Repair fee.

The Policy also proposed retaining the existing land charge procedures for a land charge of up to £10,000 for grant values between £5,000 and £15,000, which would be redeemed if the property was sold or otherwise disposed of within ten years of completion of adaptation to further assist vulnerable residents.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing advised the meeting that the Policy would improve support for vulnerable residents and highlighted that the community was at the heart of the Council's decision making process. He added that recommendation 2 (A revised Care and Repair fees procedure) should be amended to a recommendation to Council, to meet the requirements of the Constitution.

In response to a query, members were advised that it was not intended to promote the Policy, rather it was an additional tool that would help the Council assist residents that previously had been difficult to help.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee informed Cabinet that the Committee had supported, by a split vote, an amendment to recommend that Cabinet ensured that the removal of the cap on the Care and Repair service did not adversely affect the service. He noted that the supplementary information supplied by officers had been helpful in clarifying the position on this matter.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing advised members that although the cap was being removed there were other elements in the Policy that would ensure that residents were not disadvantaged and the money saved by removing the cap would be used to fund even more discretionary assistance.

Following a show of hands it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

To approve:

1. The Independent Living Assistance Policy; and
2. The revised Land Charges procedure.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

To adopt the revised Care and Repair fees procedure.

Reasons for Decision

To improve and enhance the housing service that the Council provides for vulnerable residents in the District.

54 WARM HOMES FUND – ADDITIONAL FUNDING

The Senior Housing Standards Manager introduced the report, which explained how the Council led a consortium of all seven Norfolk local authorities in the delivery of the Warm Homes Programme and set out proposals to expand and renew contracts for its delivery.

The Council had already been awarded sums of £1.24m and £1.78m to help deliver the scheme and a further bid of £3.75m had been submitted to expand the delivery of energy efficiency and renewable heating technologies. If this bid was successful, modifications to existing contracts, as well as new contractual arrangements would be required.

With supply chain issues in the construction industry, it was considered essential to secure the necessary contractors as soon as possible to deliver existing and future commitments to improve the warmth and efficiency of the homes of fuel poor residents across Norfolk. Cabinet approval was therefore sought to expand and renew current contracts through Efficiency East Midlands and Eastern Procurement Frameworks, as well as accessing additional contracts within the Fusion 21 Procurement Framework. All three organisations provide OJEU (Office Journal of the European Union) compliant national procurement frameworks facilitating the public sector to deliver energy efficiency and renewable heating measures.

In answer to a query about delivery, Cabinet was advised that expenditure of £320,000 through one contract equated to between 40 and 50 cases, many of which were to provide insulation for poor quality mobile homes. If the bid for a further £3.75m was successful, £1.7m would be set aside for additional energy measures such as solar panels, double glazing, loft and cavity insulation and heat efficient doors.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing noted that the recommendations would help the Council deliver the programme more efficiently and he suggested that there should be an additional recommendation to provide Cabinet and the Environmental Excellence Policy Development Panel with progress reports on the delivery of the Warm Homes Programme on a six monthly basis. He added that he

would like to see details of the number and type of installations, interventions and assistance being provided in the report.

Following a show of hands it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

1. To agree to the development of contracts to complete the £1.78m allocated through LAD1b for energy efficiency and heating measures to support residents in Norfolk to live in warm homes.
2. To agree to the delegation of procuring future successful funding bids to procurement frameworks, to the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families in consultation with the Portfolio Holder until July 2023.
3. That Cabinet and the Environmental Excellence Policy Development Panel be provided with progress reports on the delivery of the Warm Homes Programme on a six monthly basis.

Reasons for Decision

To provide an extended and enhanced delivery of warm homes in Norfolk.

55 MOBILE HOMES FEES AND CHARGES POLICY

The Senior Housing Standards Manager introduced the report, which had been drafted in response to new legislation, which introduce an offence for a protected mobile home site to operate unless the Council was satisfied that the occupier or the appointed site manager was a fit and proper person to manage the site.

The Housing Standards Team currently administered a Mobile Homes Procedure, including the application processes of site licences and site inspections. A fee was charged for this service to recover costs.

The new Regulations only affected relevant protected sites where residents had rights regarding occupancy and rents as detailed in the 1983 Mobile Homes Act. Private family residential sites and holiday sites were not included in the requirement.

Registering as a fit and proper person required a comprehensive application procedure involving a Criminal Records Bureau check, land ownership details, financial capability and a test to determine whether the relevant person could secure the proper management of the site, including compliance with the site licence and the long-term maintenance of the site.

The Council currently had four sites that were used for business purposes, where homes were freely brought and sold by the residents.

It was proposed to implement a new fee structure as part of the application and

registration process, as detailed in the legislation, although it was not considered necessary to introduce an annual fee as this was already incorporated in the existing policy. Members were also advised that the recommendation to approve the fee structure detailed in the revised Mobile Homes Fees Policy should be amended to a recommendation to Council, to meet the requirements of the Constitution.

It was also proposed to delegate the decision process for determination of a Fit and Proper Person application to the Housing Standards Senior Manager.

In answer to a query from the Leader about concerns that the fee would be passed on to residents, the Housing Standards Senior Manager confirmed that he had received no complaints regarding this issue and as the fee covered five years, if it was passed on it would only be a very small amount. Moreover, residents felt more protected by the new legislation and they were also protected by the 1968 Rent Act against undue increases in their rent.

Following a show of hands it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

1. To include the enforcement of the new regulations as part of the Housing Standards responsibility; and
2. To delegate authority to the Housing Standards Senior Manager to approve Fit and Proper Person applications.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

To approve the fee's structure detailed in the revised Mobile Homes Fees Policy.

Reasons for Decision

To meet legislative requirement.

56 SOCIAL PRESCRIBING: CONTRACTING WITH THE NHS

The Help Hub and Communities Senior Manager introduced the report, which provided an update on the development of social prescribing in Broadland and recommended expanding the service by entering into a contract with North Norfolk Primary Care.

Cabinet was reminded that Social Prescribing was a means of providing support in a medical setting and referring residents to a range of local non-clinical services and that officers undertaking social prescribing (community connectors) were effectively an outreach arm of the Help Hub sited in GPs surgeries.

Currently there were two Community Connectors operating in the District, but if the new contractual arrangement with the NHS was agreed this would increase to four in areas covered by Primary Care Networks NN3 and NN4. The service would be

externally funded through the NHS, by £344,000 over the next two years. Moreover, the NHS had discussed expanding the service in the future to meet increased demand in growth areas.

Cabinet was informed that the proposed expansion of the service would place the Council in a very good position to move to the next phase, which would look at expanding the service across the urban fringe. Members were also asked to note that Community Connectors were accessible through the Council's website and that it was not necessary to make a GP appointment to access the service.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing noted that Social Prescribing in Broadland had come about as a direct result of the successful delivery of the service in South Norfolk by the Team. He also noted that the Contain Outbreak Management Fund money might be looked at to extend the service to the urban fringe in the near future.

The Leader thanked officers for their work in bringing this service to Broadland, which was based on a very good model already being delivered in South Norfolk.

Following a show of hands it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

1. Cabinet to agree to contract with North Norfolk Primary Care to deliver social prescribing, effective from December 2021. Once the contract is signed, Cabinet agree to recruit community connectors to bring the complement to four full time equivalents.
2. Cabinet agrees to delegate authority to the Assistant Director Individuals and Families to enter into this contractual arrangement.

Reasons for Decision

To enhance and expand the Council's Social Prescribing service.

57 FORWARD PLAN

The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted that a review of Licensing Fees and Charges was being brought to the February 2022 Cabinet, as she understood that fees and charges were to be considered en bloc, with a view to aligning them with fees at South Norfolk.

In response, the Assistant Director for Finance advised members that to look at fees and charges en bloc would be a considerable task, but he confirmed officers would look at the best way to progress this work.

The Leader noted that budget meetings with Portfolio Holders were ongoing and fees and charges should be considered as part of this.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence advised the meeting that the Regulatory and Enforcement Policy, to be considered by Cabinet in December, had been incorrectly listed as confidential on the Forward Plan.

Cabinet noted the Forward Plan.

58 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining item 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.

59 REVIEW OF THE MATERIAL RECYCLING FACILITY CONTRACT

The Assistant Director for Community Services introduced the exempt report, which summarised the negotiations that had recently been carried out in respect of the Material Recycling Facility contract to 2027.

An additional recommendation was proposed by the Assistant Director for Community Services to delegate him authority to finalise the agreement in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Environmental Excellence and Finance.

Following discussion and consideration of the report members went to the vote and with a show of hands it was unanimously:

RESOLVED

1. To approve the recommendations as outlined at paragraph 9 of the report; and
2. To delegate the final details of the agreement to the Assistant Director for Community Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Environmental Excellence and Finance.

Reasons for Decision

To achieve the best value for money for the Council's Waste Recycling Contract.

(The meeting concluded at 7.27pm)

Chairman