



COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council of Broadland District Council, held on Thursday 30 September 2021 at 7pm at the Council Offices

Members Present:	Councillors: R R Foulger (Chairman), A D Adams, S C Beadle, N J Brennan, D J Britcher, S J Catchpole, S M Clancy, B Cook, J K Copplestone, A D Crotch, J Davis, J J Emsell, N C Karimi-Ghovanlou, K S Kelly, E C Laming, K E Lawrence, J Leggett, K G Leggett, I J Mackie, T M Mancini-Boyle, I N Moncur, M L Murrell, J A Neesam, G K Nurden, R E Potter, S M Prutton, S Riley, D Roper, C E Ryman-Tubb, D M Thomas, J L Thomas, K A Vincent, S A Vincent, J M Ward, F Whymark
Officers in Attendance:	The Managing Director, the Director Resources, the Director People & Communities, the Chief of Staff (Monitoring Officer) and the Democratic Services Officers (DM/LA)

45 PRESENTATION BY NORFOLK CONSTABULARY

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Chief Inspector Chris Harvey and Inspectors Kerry Woodbine (Aylsham area) and Andy Terry (Sprowston area). Chris Harvey thanked members for the opportunity to return in person to update them on the work of the Constabulary in Broadland and how crime was changing and the challenges the Constabulary faced going forward. It was proposed that members would receive regular local updates on line, approximately 3 per annum, from the designated Inspectors for their area.

The Chief Inspector went on to state that burglaries in the Broadland area had been incredibly low throughout COVID and had continued to remain low as had car theft. Increased activity had been seen in relation to domestic violence with over 160 reports per month and this was still increasing. Antisocial behaviour was relatively low but the nature of it had changed. There was now a large degree of online activity and issues between neighbours. There had been a degree of antisocial behaviour from young people returning to outdoor freedom following relaxation of COVID rules. With regard to County Lines and the grooming of vulnerable young people, work on this by the force and the tactics being used had been incredibly successful in discouraging activity in the area. Previously, approximately 35 County Lines had been active in Norfolk and this

had been reduced to 12. This work was important to retain safe use of open spaces and avoid gang culture. The force was utilising Home Office funding to facilitate an operation to provide wrap around support for families to help break the chain of offending. An area of increased activity was in relation to sexual offences and assaults but this was largely amongst people known to each other. There were very few cases of assaults on strangers. In essence, the district was one of the safest in Norfolk and in the Country but crime patterns were changing which was keeping the force actively engaged. Changes in processes now required police officers to disclose all unused material with a greater burden on investigations and preparing files for prosecution. There was still a strong desire to keep officers on the beat and this year the Park Walk Talk initiative had been introduced. The two broadland policing areas were well served by 2 inspectors, 12 sergeants and circa 60 police constables and this had continued throughout lockdown. Inspectors Woodbine and Terry then introduced themselves to members giving an outline of their backgrounds and they invited members to make contact with them.

The Chief Inspector then answered questions from Members. With regard to the SNAP, it was hoped these would resume in person eventually but, for the time being, would continue on line. In the light of the Sarah Everard tragedy and the fear amongst women, a member asked if there was anything the Council could do to work with the Police to make women and girls feel safer. The Chief Inspector expressed his horror at the tragedy and that the force was awaiting instructions following which he would pick up with the Council any areas of activity in which they could play a role. A suggestion was made that the supply of personal alarms was a potential area for consideration. A question was raised regarding the increase in domestic crime and whether there was a commensurate increase in prosecutions. Members were advised that there was still a reluctance amongst many victims to seek prosecution with 40-50% not progressing action. Police officers were being encouraged to activate body worn video to record incidents on arrival to provide evidence when needed. With regard to cybercrime, this was an area generating a lot of activity and there was a need to continue to develop a response to it, particularly as it targeted vulnerable people. In response to a query regarding potential anomalies between the crime statistics provided to parishes and those on the Police website, the Chief Inspector urged members to talk to their local Inspector as any anomalies were probably due to necessary recording/reporting restrictions.

The Leader thanked the Inspectors for attending and for the ongoing work undertaken in Broadland and the support given by all officers. The district continued to be well served. He wished Chief Inspector Harvey well in the future and thanked him personally for all his hard work.

46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P E Bulman, J F Fisher, S C Gurney, N J Harpley, D Harrison, L H Hempsall, S I Holland, D King, S Lawn, G Peck, N C Shaw and L A Starling.

48 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

49 MATTERS ARISING

Arising from consideration of minute no: 34 (Cabinet minutes of 15 June 2021 Minute no: 23 – Moving Towards a First Class Customer Service), a member questioned if the Council was delivering a first class customer service. They shared their recent experience of having difficulties making contact with a service department to resolve a query. The matter had not been resolved until nearing the end of the working day.

The Managing Director commented that the query appeared to have been resolved. The member stated this was just one example of a more systematic problem. The Managing Director said that that he would be happy to discuss the matter further with the member.

Other comments were made that there was a more widespread issue of members not being able to make contact with service providers and this needed to be addressed. The phone system rolled out to facilitate home working did not appear to be as reliable as it should and there was confusion with staff working from home. The Managing Director advised that arrangements for home working and the phone system were now more accessible but that there had been some challenges with hunt groups which was being sorted. He welcomed an approach from any member experiencing particular difficulties.

With regard to the delivery of a first class service, the Managing Director commented that the Council would continue to strive to offer a first class customer service and continue to improve services and facilities to overcome any challenges and fix any issues.

A request was made that the Managing Director update Council at its next meeting on proposals to resolve the current issues as there was concern about the impact on customers who may be trying to contact the Council and giving up as they could not get through. The Managing Director undertook to report to the next Council meeting.

50 ELECTIONS 28 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Returning Officer reported the results of the District By-Elections held on 28 September 2021 which were as follows:

Brundall Ward: Turnout – 32.18% (1579 papers issued)

CATMULL, Timothy John - The Conservative Party Candidate - 480

DAVIS, Jan - The Green Party - 594 - ELECTED

FREE, Alice Myfanwy - Labour Party - 161

LAMING, Eleanor Clare - The Green Party - 530 - ELECTED

MASON, Eleanor Rose - Liberal Democrats - 425

PHELPS, Michael John - The Conservative Party Candidate - 453

SCRIVENS, Victor Keith - Liberal Democrat - 303

SPRINGETT, Glenn John - Labour Party - 137

Old Catton and Sprowston West Ward: -

BOOTH, Martin Alexander - Labour Party Candidate - 332

CHAPMAN, Ian Peter - The Green Party - 110

CHETTLEBURGH, John Francis - Liberal Democrats 278

**POTTER, Richard Edward - The Conservative Party Candidate 721
ELECTED**

The Managing Director and the Chairman of the Council congratulated Cllrs Davis, Laming and Potter on their election to the Council and welcomed them to their first meeting.

The Leader and other members then took the opportunity to pay tribute to the work of retired Councillor Mike Snowling MBE. Mike Snowling had been a serving councillor for over 20 years for the Brundall ward. He had served as Chairman of the Council for 4 years, Chairman of Planning Committee for 10 years as well as undertaking a number of other roles. He had worked hard for the Council and the area and would be missed. Particular reference was made to his work with the children of Chernobyl. In addition to his hard work, Mike Snowling would be remembered by his fellow councillors for his wicked sense of humour and his ability to communicate in way which was unique to him. On behalf of the Council, the Leader thanked Mike for his hard work and commitment to both the local and the wider community.

51 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members noted the civic engagements undertaken by the Chairman of the Council since the last meeting. The Chairman drew attention in particular to the reception at the Octagon Barn which the previous chairman of the council and he had hosted jointly. It had been a successful event culminating in an auction of promises to raise funds for their respective chosen charities. With regard to other engagements carried out, the Chairman stated that a strong message being received at the events was the communities' appreciation of the work undertaken by the Council to support people during COVID.

In addition to the events listed, Cllr Kelly advised that, as the Member Champion for the Armed forces, he had attended Norwich Cathedral on 19 September on behalf of the Chairman, for the British Legion Flag presentation and Battle of Britain RAF march past and service at the Cathedral.

The Leader reported on progress with the delivery of the Food Innovation Centre project and that a model of the building was on display at the meeting. The centre would be a pinnacle for moving forward with food development and enhanced processing in Broadland and the wider area and he welcomed the opportunity for the Council to be part of this exciting project and its impact on the local and wider economy.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development reported on the local flavours event held recently at showground which had been very well attended by food businesses in the area and by a Dutch trade delegation. The event had seen the launch of the Council's Food Innovation Centre. She also reported that businesses could now apply for innovation support and engage in the food innovation cluster. Hethel Innovation was providing innovation support for businesses and the UEA was developing the emerging cluster. The Council's Economic Development Team was leading the delivery of the FIC on the Food Enterprise Park and agents were in touch with potential tenants. The Condimentum Building was already on site milling mustard and mint sauce for Colmans and the largest vertical farm in Europe was now being built on a 5 acre site equal to over 240 acres.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence reported that, following a stringent procurement process, Veolia had been awarded the 10 year contract for waste collection services commencing in April next year and the roll out of a food waste collection service across the district. A further report on the food waste collection service would be considered by Cabinet in the near future. She was also pleased to report that the vehicles would be using HVO fuel which would reduce emissions by 90% which was a welcome contribution to the Environmental Strategy. The latest recycling figures for the Broadland District indicated that Broadland had the highest recycling rates in Norfolk at 49% (a small reduction from last year) with the next nearest being South Norfolk with 41.8%. In response to a question, the Portfolio Holder reiterated that the procurement process had been robust and competitive.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing reminded members that the next Wellbeing Panel meeting would be on Wednesday 6 October and encouraged members to attend – the last meeting had been inquorate. Domestic Abuse legislation had recently been through Parliament and some important changes were emerging including a statutory definition of abuse which was much wider reaching than violence alone. Also welcome in the legislation was the formal recognition of children as victims of abuse. He drew members' attention to the launch of a free 45 minute E Learning facility hosted by the Norfolk Autism Partnership available at www.norfolkautismpartnership.co.uk and encouraged members to take advantage of the learning opportunity.

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development drew attention to the all-member briefing on Monday 4th October at 4pm via Zoom on the accommodation review.

The Head of Paid Service advised members that George Denton had now taken up his role as the new Assistant Director of Economic Development.

52 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

53 PUBLIC SPEAKING

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

54 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 24 August and 7 September 2021 were received.

55 CABINET

The minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 31 August and 14 September 2021 were received.

56 PLANNING COMMITTEE

The decisions of the Planning Committee meeting held on 29 July 2021 were received.

57 AUDIT COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 8 July 2021 were received. It was noted that the minutes needed to be corrected in that they recorded Cllr Mancini Boyle as being in attendance and she had not been at the meeting. The Chairman of the Committee drew members' attention to the Internal Audit Manager's comments in the minutes that there were no urgent or important recommendations outstanding which was unprecedented and a very positive position for the Council to be in. He thanked the Managing Director and the senior management team for their proactive efforts to resolve outstanding matters.

58 LICENSING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee meeting held on 26 August 2021 were received.

59 OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS – FEEDBACK FROM REPRESENTATIVES

Members received and noted the feedback from members on Outside Organisations.

60 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

The following questions and answers were noted:

Question 1 from Cllr Karimi-Ghovanlou

I understand Norfolk has initially agreed to take 50 Afghan refugees; how many of these are being relocated in Broadland, and are they being properly supported with education, health and mental wellbeing programmes to be able to integrate successfully?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing

The Portfolio Holder responded that there were many families for whom it had no longer been safe for them to stay in their home country and were now being assisted to resettle. Norfolk County Council was leading on the resettlement project in Norfolk, providing the necessary support with jobs and schooling and working with all district councils to rehome 50 people. These would be allocated to the area by the Home Office. As yet no families had arrived in the area. Broadland had identified a number of properties across the sectors and was continuing to source more if needed. There was a need for support by way of donations of furniture, household appliances, gardening equipment and vouchers and a refugee fund had been set up by the Bishop of Norwich.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Karimi-Ghovanlou

Is there a mental wellbeing programme and what about support for dealing with cultural differences?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that provision was being made to provide a range of support services and there was a call for volunteers to come forward to help families integrate. Mental health support would be vital to deal with the trauma experienced by many refugees and this would need to be established as soon as possible.

Question 2 from Cllr Karimi-Ghovanlou

Do we have the capacity to take more, and how can we, as councillors, help to support these families? For example, can I be told if I have any families in Taverham that need support?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing

The Portfolio Holder commented that there was scope to extend the capacity and find additional homes in the long term. It was not possible to comment on the location of any families rehoused but again he urged people to volunteer to offer help to families.

Question 3 from Cllr D Thomas

Is there an update for the Best in Class roll out for housing?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing

The Portfolio Holder responded that there was no update at the current time but the Wellbeing Policy Development Panel was scheduled to receive an update at its meeting on 24 November 2021. With regard to the Best in Class Housing Model, he reminded members that they had all had the opportunity to comment on the policies making up the model and he encouraged members to continue to feed back on the roll out of the new policies. Particular case studies would be analysed and assessed in time to ensure continued improvements and there would be a review by Cabinet in the New Year. Homelessness enquiries remained high possibly linked to the new domestic abuse legislation. The housing register of circa 682 was immense with 56 applications being received per month - 85%-90% of applicants received some form of resolution of their housing issues, thereby avoiding homelessness.

Question 4 from Cllr Roper

What work is the Council undertaking to support increased use of electric vehicles in the district?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Economic Success

The Portfolio Holder reported that electric vehicle charging points had been identified as one of the 5 key priorities in the Environmental Strategy. Officers were commencing a full review of car parking provision across the district including proposals for a network of vehicle charging points on council owned carparks. The review had been delayed as officer resources had been redirected during collaboration and the pandemic but work was now underway. The Council was looking to secure government funding to develop the network. Usage data would be gathered to expand the network as demand increased and to explore other strategic sites. It should be noted that the majority of charging would take place at home addresses. The District Council's approach would feed into the recently published Norfolk County Council EV charging strategy. The Council was also researching the potential of collective buying for domestic and business charging points similar to the "Solar Together" scheme.

Currently there were no local plan policies requiring developers to provide electrical charging points, however, officers did encourage this where there was a willing applicant. There was a new planning policy in the GNLP which once adopted would give greater weight to require the provision of EV charging points and, where appropriate, conditions could be attached to the permission to secure this. Consent had been granted for Gridserve to deliver an EV service Station on

the Broadland Business Park and officers would continue to actively engage and promote such uses alongside EV associated with individual premises.

Furthermore in terms of planning for EV, officers continued to engage with the County Council through the development of the Local Transport Plan and the Transport for Norwich Strategy. Both these documents identified a need for an EV Strategy to support the transition to net zero carbon transport emissions. The Council's draft response to the Transport for Norwich Strategy offered strong support for the development of an EV strategy, sought alignment between the strategies' development and emphasised the need to engage strategically to ensure adequate energy supplies to the County to support the roll out of an EV strategy. The Council would continue to engage with Norfolk County Council in the development of actions plans setting out how its transport policies, including those relating to EVs, would be implemented.

Some car manufacturers were offering free charging points with the purchase of vehicles and the Office for Low Emission Vehicles was offering grants to help with the cost of installing domestic charging points. New legislation was due by end of this year requiring all new houses to have electric charging points installed – this would be overseen by the Planning process.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Roper

Cllr Roper stated that Liberal Democrat controlled North Norfolk District Council currently had 40 charging points. He asked how long before Broadland got to the same level?

Response by the Portfolio Holder for Economic Success

The Portfolio Holder responded that work on the Council's review of its carpark strategy had been delayed due to resources being redirected to respond to collaboration and the pandemic but it was now anticipated that work would progress at pace. She was however unable to confirm a date.

Question 5 from Cllr Roper

It has been estimated that proposals in the government's election bill, particularly requirements for photographic voter ID could cost the taxpayer £180m. Will the leader make representations to the minister to ensure that none of these additional costs are passed on to local councils?

Response by the Leader

The Leader responded that the costs referred to were for all districts. He confirmed that local authorities were working with the Cabinet Office on the implementation of voter identification to ensure that the impact was properly understood and properly funded. Local authorities had been assured that the

Cabinet Office would meet the cost of the new voter card process and its implementation. It was still unclear how this would be done but he gave assurance that Broadland, together with other local authorities, would make the necessary representations.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Roper

Cllr Roper stated that mindful of the low levels of voter impersonation, he felt there were more pressing matters which could benefit from £180m of funding and would the Leader make these representations?

Response by the Leader

The Leader agreed there were far bigger issues and problems that could be tackled for example electric charging points and educating to change behaviours but that the Government was targeting a perceived problem of voter impersonation.

61 MOTIONS

It was noted that no motions had been received.

62 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.

63 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The exempt minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 7 September 2021 were received.

Chairman

(Meeting closed at 8:36 pm)