



COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council of Broadland District Council, held on Thursday 13 October 2022 at 7pm at the Council Offices

Members Present: Councillors: A D Adams, S C Beadle, N J Brennan, P E Bulman, S J Catchpole, S M Clancy, J Davis, J J Emsell, J F Fisher, R R Foulger, S C Gurney, S I Holland, N C Karimi-Ghovanlou, K S Kelly, D King, E C Laming, S Lawn, K E Lawrence, J Leggett, K G Leggett, I J Mackie, T M Mancini-Boyle, I N Moncur, M L Murrell, G K Nurden, G Peck, S Riley, C E Ryman-Tubb, L A Starling, D M Thomas, K A Vincent, S A Vincent, J M Ward, F Whymark

Officers in Attendance: The Managing Director, the Director Resources, the Director Place, the Governance Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer), the Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer), and the Committee Officer (DM).

Council stood for a minutes silence to remember Queen Elizabeth II and Councillor Nigel Shaw. The Chairman paid tribute to Cllr Shaw who had served as a district councillor since 2002 and as a county councillor and a town councillor. He had been a member of a number of committees and had been Chairman of the Audit Committee. He had also been a representative on a number of outside organisations, in particular, the Strategic Aviation (Special Interest Group).

133 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Member/Officer	Minute No & Heading	Nature of Interest
Cllr F Whymark	146 - Community Governance Review – Spixworth	Non- pecuniary interest – Member of Norfolk County Council for the area the subject of the Review
Cllr S Holland		Non – pecuniary interest – Member of the District Council for Spixworth

134 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D J Britcher, J K Copplestone, A D Crotch N J Harpley, D Harrison, L H Hemsall, J A Neesam, R E Potter, S M Prutton, D Roper and J Thomas.

135 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

136 MATTERS ARISING

No matters were raised.

137 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members noted the civic engagements undertaken by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council since the last meeting. The Chairman added that he had also attended the opening of the Bure Valley footpath on 23 September 2022 which had been secured with European funding. On 11 September 2022, the Chairman stated it had been a very great honour to undertake the proclamation of the new King and he thanked all officers and members who had joined him on this very important occasion. He thanked all staff for the arrangements put in place following the sad passing of Queen Elizabeth II. The Chairman then went on to congratulate all those who took part in the Marriott's Way 10k race, including Cllrs D Thomas and J Davis.

The Leader of the Council made the following announcements:

County Deals

The Secretary of State, Simon Clarke, for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had confirmed the intention to progress County Deals. Norfolk County Council remained as one of the front runners to conclude a deal and discussions had been ongoing between the Government and the County about the text of the deal. Information regarding the North York and Yorkshire Deal had been published, albeit it appeared to be policy information as opposed to an actual deal in terms of a contract, but this gave an indication of the nature of the possible text of a Norfolk deal. The Leader had met with the Minister for Levelling Up and other Norfolk Leaders the previous day and a number of questions and points for clarification had been put forward, the responses to which were contained in a letter from the Minister received earlier that day which was circulated to all members (attached at appendix 1 to the signed copy of these minutes). With regard to the relocation of functions between tiers of local government, the letter confirmed these would remain unchanged and there was no plan for a top down reorganisation of local government. Regarding engagement with district councils, the Minister had apologised for the lack of engagement and going forward this would be improved and that one of the

district Leaders representing Norfolk (the Leader at Gt Yarmouth and Chairman of the Norfolk Leaders Group) would now have sight of the draft text when available. It was recognised in the Minister's letter that it was important to seek a deal which delivered for residents and businesses in all local authorities in Norfolk. It was likely the draft text would be with the Secretary of State for consideration in the near future, which would then lead to wider approval within other Whitehall departments. Once that process had been concluded, the County Council would receive the text of a deal which would, amongst other things, confirm the ultimate scope of the deal including long-term investment funding and other investment in Norfolk that would follow from the deal.

The timing of any announcement of the deal would be determined by the Government with Norfolk County Council having the ultimate final say through a resolution to move towards a directly elected Leader in approximately a year's time. The Leader undertook to keep Council informed of progress on this matter.

Investment Zones - Expression of Interest

On 2 October 2022 Simon Clarke the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had written to all local authority leaders and chief executives outlining the intention to invite expressions of interest from upper tier local authorities for Investment Zones.

Each upper tier authority (in this region, Norfolk County Council) would be able to submit one expression of interest for an Investment Zone which could include several sites. Submission would be subject to an assessment of economic opportunity, pace of delivery and wider strategic considerations. Any proposal required the support of the Local Planning Authority.

Investment Zones ranged from being zones which included limited taxes, planning restrictions and regulation to being simply a call for sites based on established treasury templates. A comparable example was the Local Development Order established by Broadland District Council for the Food Enterprise Park which had seen the setting of planning requirements thereby avoiding the need for each developer to go through the normal planning process as the same planning parameters applied to the whole development order area.

The concept was still evolving and Council would be kept informed of progress. The current position was that the Council had been working with Norfolk County Council officers to produce a list of potential sites for inclusion in the expression of interest. The list of possible sites had been evaluated by County officers over the weekend of 8/9th October and considered by district Leaders at a meeting on 12 October to secure Leaders' endorsement for: inclusion of the sites, the strategic approach and the outline governance model. This was the first time Leaders had seen the list of sites and the grading for each.

There had been much speculation that an Investment Zone would be offered to Norfolk. Should this be the case, and the Investment Zone included sites in Broadland, the Council would need to develop the proposal further in terms of:

- how the site would benefit from changes/relaxation of any regulation or tax incentives;
- consideration of any development board;
- planning authority delegations (or not) and any formal approvals;
- staffing to accelerate delivery;
- overall governance of any Norfolk sites or more local delivery model;
- any financial implications.

All of these issues would require formal approval but at this Expression of Interest stage there were no wider questions for Council to consider. The Leader undertook to keep members informed of progress.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised members that details would soon be emailed to all members about two grants schemes: “Keep it Going” and “Warm Spaces Grants” and she encouraged applications. She was also pleased to announce that, following much work on the 2023/24 budget, the current administration were intending to recommend to Council that the Broadland element of Council Tax for 2023/24 should be frozen. She hoped this would go some way to help in the current difficult financial climate.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence thanked staff and Veolia for the smooth rollout of the extended food waste service. She made reference to the “Solar Together” initiative currently detailed on the Council’s website and that £95k of funding had been made available to help with interest free loans to take part in the scheme. The Portfolio Holder also made reference to the “Sustainability Fund” launched by Veolia in partnership with the district council which provided funding to support inspirational ideas and projects aiming to make a positive change in local communities. Applications could be made up to 4 November and further details were again available on the Council’s website.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Housing and Planning reminded members that member grants were available on application which could be used in their communities and also grants were available from the Norfolk Community Foundation to support voluntary organisations, charities and individuals with good work in their local communities. Loneliness continued to be a big area of concern and funding could be used to support events or provide equipment at village/community halls.

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development thanked all staff involved in the Horizon project, the purchase of which was now complete. A fact sheet of information had now been circulated to all Councillors explaining the latest position. He commended the project which had benefits for residents, for the OneTeam and for the environment, with the Council’s building carbon footprint being reduced by over 80% as a result of the purchase.

The Managing Director reminded members that, as from 4 November 2022, South Norfolk House would be closed with all staff in the OneTeam operating out of Thorpe Lodge. The facilities at Thorpe Lodge would also now be shared with Councillors from South Norfolk whilst the OneTeam were preparing for the move to the Horizon building.

138 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The following question had been received from a Broadland resident:

“ADEPT (a coalition of local government, environmental, and research organisations) has produced a “Blueprint for Accelerating Climate Action and a Green Recovery at the Local Level” that makes five priority recommendations including: climate-resilient renewable energy and electric vehicle charging; support of reskilling, retraining and research to accelerate the move to a net-zero economy; upgrade of homes to ensure they are fit for the future; making it easy for people to walk, cycle, and work remotely; and accelerating tree planting, green spaces and other green infrastructure. Will Broadland District Council join with many other Councils and sign up to show support for this initiative and if not why?”

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence stated

ADEPT, was the association of directors of environment, economy, planning and transport. They represented directors of county, unitary and combined authorities, along with directors of local enterprise partnerships, sub-national transport boards and corporate partners drawn from key service sectors throughout England. Broadland Council was not a part of this group.

ADEPT had identified five priorities of the "Blueprint for Accelerating Climate Action and a Green Recovery at the Local Level". These already aligned closely with the Council's Environmental Strategy and would be reflected in the forthcoming Environmental Delivery Plan. The document also set out a number of actions that upper tier authorities and central government could take to accelerate the ability of local authorities to influence the transition to a Net Zero economy. Those priority recommendations falling within the remit of the Broadland District Council were already being actioned. The draft Environmental Strategy was available on the Council's website and would be considered at the forthcoming meeting of the Environmental Excellence Panel. The Council would continue to get on with delivering environmental targets and not just talking about it.

139 PUBLIC SPEAKING

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

140 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 6 September and 20 September 2022 were received.

The Leader of the opposition commented that the minutes of the above meetings had not as yet been approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

141 CABINET

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2022 were received.

A member raised a concern about what they regarded as the abdication of duty in respect of minute 43 of Cabinet – Economic Awarding of Contracts in Relation to the Mobilisation of the Horizon Centre - and the delegation to officers (in consultation with the Leader of the Council) of authority to award the contracts for the fitting out of the centre as long as they were within budget. This made scrutiny of the matter more difficult.

The following matter needed consideration by Council:

Minute no: 40 – Using Intelligence to achieve a First-Class Customer Service

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development invited Council to support the recommendations, stating that the proposals would enable the Council to use data and intelligence efficiently and effectively and enhance customer service. Examples given were the improving situation with the telephony system and progress being made within the housing service.

It was then proposed, seconded, and on being put to the vote,

RESOLVED to support

1. the agreement of funding to establish a Business Intelligence Service as set out in section 4.7 of the report;
2. that funding for 2022/23 is drawn from the corporate contingency;
3. that funding for the Business Intelligence Service is built into the base budget from 2023/24.

142 PLANNING COMMITTEE

The decisions of the Planning Committee meetings held on 10 August and 7 September 2022 were received.

143 AUDIT COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Audit Committee meetings held on 21 July and 22 September 2022 were received.

The Chairman of the Committee drew attention to the Committee's approval of the Annual Governance Statement, subject to amendments, including some amendments that may have been missed in error. He also drew attention to outstanding internal audit recommendations and the Committee's request for more detailed information from officers on progress on these. Members' attention was also drawn to the completion of the external audit for 2020/21 and

that this would now be considered at an additional meeting of the Audit Committee on 27 October 2022.

144 LICENSING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

The non-exempt minutes of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee meeting on 5 September 2022 were received.

145 STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Standards Committee meeting on 27 September 2022 were received. The Chairman drew attention to the Committee's desire to endorse the new Councillor Code of Conduct which would replace the existing code which had been in place for a number of years and needed updating. A consultation on the new proposals would take place until 16 November 2022 before the final code was recommended to Council.

The following matter needed consideration by Council:

Minute no: 6 – Civility in Public Life

The Chairman advised members that the Committee was keen to adopt a member protocol to include a number of issues set out in the report/minutes. The final protocol would be submitted to Council for approval.

It was then proposed, seconded, and on being put to the vote,

RESOLVED

To adopt a member protocol to include the following measures identified in the report:

- a) Appoint an officer to act as a point of contact for any councillor who has received intimidatory contact or communication from an external or internal source. The protocol to include examples of abusive, intimidatory or threatening behaviour to assist members to identify when it is not appropriate to not accept such behaviour from members of the public.
- b) Each political group within the Council to appoint either the Leader of the group and/or one of their number to perform a similar role as above for their elected member.
- c) Members be encouraged to follow the LGA's councillors' guide to handling intimidation and to use the model rules of engagement developed by the LGA on their personal websites and social media. The guidance and resource should also form part of the members' induction.

- d) Officers to ensure that members can check the information on the potentially violent persons register, prior to a home visit.
- e) A protocol be established with the police as to how councillors should report intimidation and threats, and establish a named officer for handling serious threats to councillors.

146 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - SPIXWORTH

Members considered the report of the Governance Manager which set out details of an issue with a previous parish boundary change which inadvertently resulted in changes to ward and county boundaries being made incorrectly. This matter had been considered by the Electoral Arrangements Committee and the committee was recommending that the Council requested the Boundary Commission to make alterations to the ward boundaries in time for the 2023 elections.

The Chairman of the Electoral Arrangements Committee stated that effectively the proposal was to correct a previous error and ensure that voters were able to vote in the correct district ward and county division. He invited Council to endorse the proposals.

RESOLVED

to submit a request to the Boundary Commission making consequential recommendations for related alterations to the boundaries for the Coltishall and Spixworth with St Faiths district wards and the current Hevingham & Spixworth and Wroxham county divisions.

147 REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

The Leader introduced the report of the Monitoring Officer which sought agreement for a request for a dispensation from the six month rule for a member who was currently not able to attend meetings.

RESOLVED

to grant a further dispensation to Councillor Harrison from attending meetings of the Council and the Committees on which he serves, until the end of April 2023.

148 OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS/MEMBER CHAMPION FEEDBACK

Members received and noted the feedback from members appointed to represent the Council on Outside Organisations and as member champions.

149 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

The following questions had been received in accordance with Procedural Rule 12.4:

1. Question from Cllr Laming

CPRE, the Countryside Charity, published a report in July 2022 entitled "Building on our Food Security." It emphasises that we are losing our Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land to housing development, despite the fact that this land is theoretically protected by national planning policy. Does this council recognise the need to retain BMV Grades 1, 2 and 3a land?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Housing and Planning

Yes, the Council recognised the need to retain the best and most versatile agricultural land. Government policy and legislation sought to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land from significant, inappropriate or unsustainable development proposals, and protect all soils by managing them in a sustainable way. More specifically, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) stated that "planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, recognising the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land".

Supplementary Question from Cllr Laming

Since 2010 there had been no systematic monitoring in the UK to show what had happened to high grade agricultural land. Would the Council be willing to introduce a system to identify and track land use patterns in its district.

Response from Portfolio Holder for Communities, Housing and Planning

The Portfolio Holder stated he was not sure if this was happening and if it was not he felt it was something that could be looked into.

2. Question from Cllr D Roper (read out by Cllr Catchpole, in the absence of Cllr Roper)

In the light of the earlier announcement by the Leader of the latest position on the County Deal, the questioner amended the question as follows:

How confident are you that district council will be retained?

Response from the Leader

The Leader commented that he was surprised to receive a question on a County Devolution Deal from a councillor who was also a county councillor as it was the County Council who were the lead authority in relation to County Deals. He stated he would rather this was not the position but it had been reinforced very recently at a meeting with the Minister who had also confirmed this the proposal was not reorganisation by the back door and district council powers would remain with districts. The Leader stated he was confident from Minister's assurances that the district council would remain as it was.

The Leader reiterated that, in terms of the deal for Norfolk, this was a deal which would be agreed by the County Council and the Government. He was however keen to see that the deal was one that was worth it in terms of additional investment in Norfolk and its impact on Broadland. With regard to the decision-making structures, there was a need for assurance that the Council could continue to build on the strong partnerships that already existed across Norfolk and retain the successful and strong relationships in Norfolk across Local Government and the wider Public Sector. There was already a good track record of working together in partnerships and on big projects, including Greater Norwich, Shared CIL, Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor and the Public Sector Leaders Board.

The Leader undertook to ensure the Council was kept informed but reiterated that County Deals were negotiated between the County Council and Central Government and this Council had not as yet seen a copy of the proposed draft agreement.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Catchpole

The Investment Zone was likely to be linked to the County Deal and planning regulations would be simplified in the Investment Zone – are we likely to see a nuclear power station in Norfolk?

Response from the Leader

The Leader stated he would be surprised if there was a proposal for a Nuclear Power Station and he stressed that the local planning authority would continue to set the planning requirements within Investment Zones.

3. Question from Cllr D Roper (read out by Cllr Beadle, in the absence of Cllr Roper)

Members of staff and elected members were recently informed of the completion of purchase of the Horizon building and impending movement of staff to Thorpe Lodge via a YouTube video. Do you consider that this is the best way to communicate important changes within the Council?

Response from the Leader

With regard to the purchase of the Horizon Centre, the completion of the purchase was really good news and would enable the OneTeam to come together, and would see a significant reduction in running costs and the Council's Carbon footprint.

With regard to the way the information was communicated, members took the decision to purchase the building following a very comprehensive process. Having agreed to the purchase, members had been kept up to date via the regular member's bulletin. Members were informed by video clip that the purchase had been completed, which was followed up with the article in the member's bulletin.

The use of a video clip was not new. The Managing Director regularly used video clips as a way to communicate to all staff and this worked well in terms of giving short, bit sized updates. It was the Managing Director's decision to extend this to members, and it was felt it worked well. The Council needed to be open to different ways of communication with the purpose of delivering a clear message, in a timely fashion that was easily understood. The video achieved all these aims and efforts would continue to explore different ways of communicating with podcasts and video clips forming an important part of the approach.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Beadle

There was a lack of detail within the fact sheet circulated to members. Can members be reassured that members and officers will be consulted on the layout of any conversion and that the fact sheet will include savings of joint working and not just the office move?

Response from the Leader

The Council had already taken steps to ensure these were in place and would move forward in the appropriate way and, yes, members would be kept informed in the appropriate way.

4. Question from Cllr S Holland

At a recent Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, members of the committee were presented with a report regarding the purchase and restructuring plans for the Horizon building. During that meeting, when in closed session under exempt papers, the Director of Resources stated that the price paid for the building was subject to a non-disclosure agreement and that this included Councillors who could not be told.

What legislation is the administration relying on to exclude elected members from information about the spending of residents' taxes?

Response from the Leader

The Council signed a Mutual Confidentiality Agreement that was legally binding. Under Part 4 of the Council's constitution - Members access to information and council documents - Section 4.4 stated that members did not have the right to documents/information in relation to contract negotiations. The purchase had now moved on and subsequently been completed and the information was no longer bound by the non-disclosure agreement and had been therefore been released.

The Leader went on to add that elected members were not excluded from the decision making process: members had set the price envelope within which the purchase could take place and members had agreed the budget for the associated works. All these documents had been shared with members and agreed by Council.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Holland

Whilst section 4.4 controlled access to information and council documents, section 4.5 provided a stronger common law right for members to understand how money was spent. She was aghast that there was never a direct reply to any question. The purchase of the Horizon Centre had already gone through when the request for information was made and she could not understand why the information was not available when requested. What was the date of the purchase?

Response from the Leader

The Leader stated that he believed the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting that had sought the information was held on 20 September 2022 which was prior to the completion. A press article had been published on 23 September stating that the purchase had failed. The purchase had actually been completed on 24 September 2022. Within the non-disclosure agreement was a requirement that permission be sought from the other party to share information. That permission was sought following the completion of the purchase and the information shared at the earliest opportunity on 12 October 2022.

150 MOTIONS

The following motion had been received in accordance with Procedural Rule 13.

Proposer: Cllr J Leggett, Seconder: Cllr T Mancini-Boyle

"Broadland District Council recognises the need to take action to combat the effects of climate change. The Council has a track record for putting environmental concerns at the heart of delivery and has made great progress both understanding and reducing its carbon emissions, therefore, Broadland

District Council agrees to adopt an organisational 2030 target for achieving net-zero carbon emissions”.

In proposing the motion, the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence stated that the current Environmental Strategy set a net zero target well ahead of the Government’s target of 2050. The Council was now in a position to formally set its net zero target for 2030. The Council had measured and published its carbon footprint for the past 3 years and, based on the 2021 report, two actions: HVO fuel for waste vehicles and moving to the Horizon building, would lead to an 87% reduction in the Council’s omissions. Other activities undertaken by the Council included measuring its tree canopy which was at 19% and the provision of tree grants for community groups. The Council had also promoted the “Solar Together” scheme and had provided interest free green loans to those taking part. The refreshed Environmental Strategy reflected what else needed to be done and this was currently going through the committee process. Residents would be able to see the actions proposed and could hold the Council to account for these.

Cllr Davis stated he supported the target of 2030 but felt more could be achieved in terms of Broadland as a whole. Planning had a huge impact on carbon emissions and, mindful of the large amount of housebuilding being undertaken, measures could have been taken to ensure these houses were more energy efficient and of a higher quality to achieve a higher target reduction across Broadland as a whole. Whilst the target was to be welcomed across the Council’s estate, it would be good to be ahead of the Government target and to look to achieve this target across Broadland as a whole.

He proposed an amendment to the motion, seconded by Cllr Laming, to read as follows:

“Broadland District Council recognises the need to take action to combat the effects of climate change. Therefore Broadland District Council agrees to adopt an organisational 2030 target for achieving net-zero carbon emissions and across Broadland as a whole in Panel and Committee deliberations.

Some members expressed support for the amendment stating that the amendment would enable the Council to take a leadership role in seeking a Net Zero carbon emission and help influence the behaviour of others. It would support the development of a design code which sought Net Zero carbon emission buildings and help influence planning going forward.

In seconding the amendment, Cllr Laming said she felt the Council was slower than many others to publicly declare the need to address the issue of climate change and that progress was being made only because the Council had started from such a low base. Declaring an organisational target was a first step but was late in coming. A lot more should have been done to enable the Council to face the looming climate crisis. The Council needed to set its own operational Net Zero target but also needed to lead and guide on making the whole district Net Zero by retaining local control of planning, rejecting the idea of investment zones, insisting that existing protections for the environment and nature were

fully enforced, promoting the insulation of homes and work places, using cleaner cheaper renewable energy, putting systems in place that promoted active travel, encouraging local business to produce food locally and most importantly by seeking more funding and investment from Central Government.

Other members felt the Council should prioritise its own carbon footprint and focus on those areas it could directly impact as opposed to areas where it had no power to take action. The onus was on Central Government to address the wider challenges. The proposed amendment lacked clarity and was unspecific in what it hoped to achieve. The Council had been a place leader in terms of the environment and driving forward Net Zero despite the acknowledged constraints of the National Planning Policy Framework which did not require this. If it did then the Council could seek to enforce this through planning policy. In any event, the Council did strive to encourage this. Through Broadland Growth the Council had sought levels of development which were well above normal standard and had seen the completion of the passive homes and the first passive plus home in Norfolk. It had also seen the creation of the Food Enterprise Zone and the building of the Food Innovation Centre which would see the construction of what was believed to currently be the largest vertical farm in Europe.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence stated she was disappointed that some members did not recognise the achievements of the Council and she reiterated the need for the Council to put its own house in order before endeavouring to tell others what to do. The Council could use its own actions as examples to help influence others. She stated that the Environmental Strategy Action Plan was available on the Council's web site and this made reference to the work of the Council and to actions which could be taken by others.

In supporting the amendment, Cllr Davis welcomed the refresh of the Council's Environmental Strategy which was a vast improvement on the previous strategy and had come about partly as a result of the many deliberations in Panel and Committees. It had been claimed that the Council was leading the way and he stated that, if this was the case, members should support the amendment to demonstrate its commitment to leading the way by giving examples, encouraging and providing guidance and reviewing its policies to ensure it was moving to Net Zero as quickly as possible.

Members then voted on the amendment and, with 10 members voting for, 23 against, the amendment was lost.

In seconding the original motion, the Portfolio Holder for Finance stated that the Council's priority, unlike others, was to deliver outcomes and not to focus on making declarations about a climate emergency. The Council continued to deliver on its environmental priorities and she welcomed the opportunity to support the motion.

Members then voted on the original motion and it was, with 31 members voting for, 0 against and 2 abstentions,

RESOLVED to support the following motion:

“Broadland District Council recognises the need to take action to combat the effects of climate change. The Council has a track record for putting environmental concerns at the heart of delivery and has made great progress both understanding and reducing its carbon emissions, therefore, Broadland District Council agrees to adopt an organisational 2030 target for achieving net-zero carbon emissions”.

Chairman

(Meeting closed at 8:34 pm)



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Dehenna Davison MP
Minister for Levelling Up
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Cllr Andrew Proctor, Norfolk County Council
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen, Breckland Council
Cllr Shaun Vincent, Broadland Council
Cllr Carl Smith, Great Yarmouth Council
Cllr Stuart Dark, King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Council
Cllr Tim Adams, North Norfolk Council
Cllr Alan Waters, Norwich City Council
Cllr John Fuller, South Norfolk Council

13th October 2022

Dear colleagues,

Thank you for your time at our meeting on 12th October on the devolution deal for Norfolk. I committed to write to you regarding the concerns that you raised as Norfolk district leaders.

As Government set out in the Levelling Up White Paper in February 2022, County Deals will be agreed with areas which have, or are able to put in a place, a single institution over a sensible geography, recognising that county geographies carry political and cultural resonance. Though the deal will be agreed with Norfolk County Council, we expect close working with Norfolk district councils to most effectively deliver the powers being provided.

I recognise the critical role that district councils play in delivering for local people and we want districts to continue to play that crucial role alongside Norfolk's County deal. In the deal agreement Norfolk County Council and HMG agree to work with district and other Norfolk leaders on the right mechanisms for districts leaders to influence deal implementation and Norfolk's future devolution ambitions; using the public sector leaders board as a starting point. It does not however hand down a pre-agreed model for doing this as we know it would be inappropriate to design such a mechanism without District involvement.

First, I was asked whether the deal would lead to reallocating functions between tiers of local government or whether a directly elected leader for the County Council would have the ability to take powers from Norfolk's districts without their consent. District councils will continue to exercise the same level of autonomy over competencies which fall within their current scope of responsibilities and this deal will not change that.

Second, concerns were put to me about whether the deal leads to a reorganisation of local government by the backdoor. I want to be very clear about this: the Government has no plans for a top-down reorganisation of local government. Though reorganisation remains a locally-led avenue available, we also recognise that there is no appetite for this in Norfolk. I would, however, expect the final deal text to set out the importance of a strong and collaborative relationship between tiers of local government in Norfolk, and the involvement of city, district and borough councils will be pivotal to the success of the devolution deal. We have seen good examples of this in other deals.

Third, you conveyed clearly and forcefully that the level of involvement from districts in developing the deal had been below that which you were expecting. I can only apologise for this, and assure you that, as we move forward, I will do all I can to ensure you as district

leaders feel fully valued and part of the process. I trust you will understand that the parties to the deal (the County and the Government, in this case) need to be able to develop and conclude negotiations in a manner that they are both comfortable with. However, recognising the strength of views and the paucity of time left in the process, myself and Cllr Andrew Proctor are in full agreement that Cllr Carl Smith be given the opportunity to read the current draft of the deal text in full, as a representative of the districts as agreed in our meeting. I would emphasise that negotiations are ongoing, and Government does not comment on the detail of devolution deals until they are concluded. Norfolk County Council will be in touch to organise this very shortly.

As we discussed, I would also reiterate that the announcement of the deal is just the next stage of the process and there will be further opportunities for districts to have their say. The deal will need to be agreed by Norfolk County Council and a public consultation will be carried out as part of the implementation of the deal. Norfolk County Council will also need to resolve to change its governance model in advance of the first election of the directly elected leader.

I appreciate how important this matter is to you and I am grateful to you for your engagement on these important issues as we seek to agree a deal which delivers for residents and businesses in all local authorities in Norfolk.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dehenna'.

DEHENNA DAVISON MP