

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk Council, held on Monday 18 October 2021 at 9.00am.

Committee Members Present:	Councillors: J Fuller (Chairman), M Edney, R Elliott, K Mason Billig, L Neal and A Thomas
Apologies for absence:	Councillor J Worley
Other Members in Attendance:	Councillors: D Bills and F Curson
Officers in Attendance:	The Managing Director (T Holden), the Director of Place (P Courtier), the Director of People and Communities (J Sutterby), the Assistant Director Chief of Staff (E Hodds), the Assistant Director Economic Growth (G Denton), the Assistant Director (S Phelan), the Assistant Director Finance (R Fincham), the Assistant Director Individuals and Families (M Pursehouse) and the Strategic Growth Projects Manager (N Cunningham)

2934 URGENT ITEM – LGA CIVILITY IN PUBLIC LIFE REPORT

The Chairman referred to the recent tragic murder of the Member of Parliament, Sir David Amess on 15 October 2021.

He explained that these tragic events had led some members to consider further their own safety, and that of their families. Members were often subject to abuse, in person, or online, and it caused distress and deterred people from standing for public office.

He believed that such behaviour should not go unchallenged and he referred to the Local Government Association's report "Civility in Public Life", which laid out some templates and expectations for acceptable behaviour, between members, and the public and members. He proposed that the Scrutiny Committee, along with the Standards Committee, examined further what could be done to address the issues of intimidation and abuse, taking in to account the LGA report and making recommendations to Council in December. He suggested that these recommendations might result in amendments to the Council's Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Complaints procedures.

Cllr K Mason Billig explained that she had been fortunate enough to have met Sir David Amess, and she was both shocked and saddened by his tragic death. Seconding the Chairman's proposal, she suggested that such attacks not only risked the personal safety to members, but undermined local democracy and decision making. Local members wanted and needed to be accessible, but she stressed the need for this to be balanced with their public safety.

Cllr Thomas explained that she had been the subject of such abuse, and stressed the impact this could have on the wider family, especially children. She referred to the need to represent residents openly, honestly and fairly and without fear of abuse, and she expressed her support for the proposals.

Cllr F Curson, who had worked close to Sir David Amess' office, referred to him as kind, gentle and welcoming, and she felt it important that the Council reflected on what had happened, and considered further how it could keep its members safe.

RESOLVED:

That the Local Government Association's report on Civility in Public Life be referred to both the Scrutiny Committee and the Standards Committee for consideration, with a view to making recommendations to Council in December 2021, regarding the need to implement any required changes to the Council's Code of Conduct and other policies

The Reason for the Decision

To support members in addressing intimidation and abuse, and keeping themselves safe.

2935 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr A Thomas declared an other interest with regard to minute number 2942 (Ella May Barnes building), by virtue of her representing Norfolk County Council as a Governor of the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital.

2936 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18 October 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

2937 INDEPENDENT LIVING ASSISTANCE POLICY

Members considered the report of the Housing and Health Manager, which presented members with the Independent Living Assistance Policy, which included a range of proposals to assist vulnerable residents of all ages across the District.

The Portfolio Holder, Cllr A Thomas, commended the report to members, explaining that it allowed more flexibility and discretion around social care projects, and allowed the Council to provide timely practical assistance, when it was really needed.

The Assistant Director of Individuals and Families briefly outlined his report, explaining that the proposals were a good opportunity to build on what the Council already did to support the most vulnerable in society. Members noted that the changes allowed for a more effective approach to the use of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding.

The Chairman of the People and Communities Policy Committee, Cllr D Bills, explained that the Committee had recently fully endorsed the proposals, and had been really encouraged by the number of ways in which the Council was able to assist those in need. He thanked officers for all their work.

The Chairman welcomed the proposals and the improvements this would bring to individuals, whilst reducing the burden on the wider state. He suggested that this might be an ideal topic for a future edition of the Council's Link magazine.

RESOLVED:

To agree the proposed:

- a) Independent Living Assistance Policy.
- b) Revised Care and Repair fees procedure.
- c) Revised Land Charges procedure.

The Reason for the Decision

To use DFG money more effectively and to ensure the quality, suitability and sustainability of the housing provision

Other Options Considered

None.

2938 SOUTH NORFOLK COUNCIL MOBILE HOMES FEES POLICY

Members considered the report of the Housing Standards Senior Manager, which sought approval for the Council to implement new duties and powers under the Mobile Homes (Requirement for Manager of Site to be Fit and Proper Person) (England) Regulations 2020.

The Portfolio Holder, Cllr A Thomas supported the proposals, explaining that this was a legal requirement that would impact on four sites in South Norfolk. She stressed the need to set appropriate fees and explained that the Council would work with the mobile homes sites to ensure that they nominated someone who was fit and proper and met the relevant criteria.

The Assistant Director of Individuals and Families explained that this change would result in one person being allocated responsibility for the site, whereas in the past, this had sometimes been difficult to ascertain. He drew members' attention to the fee structure and costings, and stressed that South Norfolk Council would support individuals where necessary.

The Chairman suggested that it would be sensible to round up fees to the nearest £50.00, to avoid the need for their revision each year, and members supported this proposal. The Assistant Director individuals and Families agreed that as long as the Council was able to justify the costs, this was acceptable.

It was

RESOLVED:

To agree:

- a) The inclusion of the enforcement of new regulations as part of the Housing Standards responsibility.
- b) That the proposed fees within the fee structure, be rounded up to the nearest £50.00.
- c) To delegate authority to the Senior Housing Standards Manager to approve Fit and Proper Person applications.

The Reason for the Decision

To implement procedures, in line with statutory requirements, and to recover the costs required.

Other Options Considered

To reject the proposed charge for licencing actions involved in the application and registration process for the fit and proper person assesement

2939 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members noted the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda.

It was noted that the report regarding the procurement for the EIAS Internal Audit provider would move from November to 4 January 2022 meeting.

2940 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was **RESOLVED** to exclude the public and press from the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended)

2941 REVIEW OF MATERIAL RECYCLING FACILITY CONTRACT

Members considered the exempt report of the Assistant Director Community Services, which summarised the negotiations recently carried out by the Norfolk Waste Strategic Officer Group, on behalf of all Norfolk's Waste Collection Authorities, with Norse Waste Environmental Services Ltd, regarding the existing Joint Venture Company Material Recycling Facility Contract.

The Assistant Director of Community Services provided a presentation for members, which outlined the background to the report, the proposals, other options available to the Council, and the risks involved. The Assistant Director requested that Cabinet approve an additional recommendation, to delegate authority to officers, in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder, the final details of any agreement, and this was agreed by Cabinet.

The Portfolio Holder, Cllr M Edney, commended the report to members and highlighted the need to ensure that additional budget was in place, should it be required.

Brief discussion followed and members suggested that the public communication campaign regarding recycling be reinvigorated.

RESOLVED:

To

1. Approve the recommendations as outlined at paragraph 9 of the report.
2. Delegate to the Director of People and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Clean and Safe Environment, the final details of the agreement.
3. Reinvigorate the public communication campaign regarding recycling.

The Reason for the Decision

To ensure best value of money for the Council.

Other Options Considered

As outlined in the report

2942 ELLA MAY BARNES BUILDING – BUILDING LEASE

Members considered the exempt report of the Strategic Growth Projects Manager, which sought approval to enter into an agreement, to lease out the Ella May Barnes building.

The Strategic Growth Projects Manager drew members' attention to the background of the report and outlined in detail the proposals, and options available to members.

Members expressed their support for the proposals and it was

RESOLVED:

To approve the recommendations as outlined at paragraph 9 of the report.

The Reason for the Decision

To help stimulate growth at the Norwich Research Park and to achieve best value for the Council.

Other Options Considered

As outlined in the report

2943 PROPOSED ASSIGNMENT OF LEASE AND SUBLETTING OF COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

Members considered the report of the Commercial Property Manager at Big Sky Living, which sought Cabinet approval for the assignment of a lease and subletting of commercial property.

It was

RESOLVED:

To

1. Approve, retrospectively, the lease assignment as set out in the report.
2. Approve, retrospectively, the sub-letting and minor alterations as set out in the report.

3. **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** an amendment to the Constitution Part 4 Rules of Financial Governance at 13.4 for an additional clause:

- Allow all Lease assignments, sub-lettings, alterations and other dealings within the terms of the lease, to be approved under delegation to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Finance.

The Reason for the Decision

To allow other small businesses to grow in the District and to ensure future requests are facilitated in a timely manner.

Other Options Considered

None

(The meeting concluded at 9.57 am)

Chairman