

# CABINET

**Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, on Tuesday 29 November 2022 at 6.00pm.**

**Cabinet Members Present:**

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

**Other Member in Attendance:**

Councillor: M Murrell.

**Officers in Attendance:**

The Managing Director (T Holden), the Director for Resources (D Lorimer), the Director of Place (P Courtier), the Director for People and Communities (J Sutterby), the Chief of Staff (Monitoring Officer) (E Hodds), the Assistant Director of Finance (R Fincham), the Assistant Director for Regulatory (N Howard), the Assistant Director for Community Services (S Phelan), the Assistant Director for Economic Growth (G Denton), the Assistant Director for Planning (H Mellors), the Capital and Strategy Accountant (D Slowther), the Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager (R Dunsire), the Help Hub and Communities Senior Manager (K Gallagher), the Strategic Growth and Projects Manager (N Cunningham), the Clean Growth and Sustainability Manager (A Sommazzi), the Community Safety Interventions Lead (T Munro), the Environmental Coordinator (K Burns) and the Democratic Services Manager (C White).

## 55 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 1 November 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

**56 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 22 November 2022, as each item was considered.

**57 ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL**

Cabinet received the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2022.

**58 ECONOMIC SUCCESS POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL**

Cabinet received the minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2022.

**59 COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND PLANNING POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL**

Cabinet received the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2022.

**60 STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE REPORT FOR QUARTER 2 2022/23**

The Director for Resources introduced the report, which provided an overview of the performance of the Council against the key outcomes set out in the Delivery Plan for 2022/24.

Members' attention was drawn to page 41 of the Agenda (Performance Dashboard Overview), which set out the 27 performance delivery measures used to analyse performance according to red, amber and green ratings. During the Quarter 2 period, 18 measures had met the green year-end success criteria; no measures had been rated red and nine measures had not met the year-end target and were rated amber. The measures rated amber would be monitored and mitigations put in place, where necessary. Appendix 2 to the report provided more detailed analysis of the measures and Appendix 3 was an updated Delivery Programme.

Cabinet was asked to note that the cost of living crisis was likely to impact on performance measures going forward. A report on the work being undertaken by the Council to address these issues would be considered by Cabinet later in the meeting.

The Assistant Director for Finance informed members that inflationary pressures had led to overspends in the Waste Service, where the cost of fuel had increased and in Housing, which had seen an increase in homelessness and demand for temporary accommodation. A report on proposed mitigation measures for temporary accommodation would be considered in more detail later in this meeting.

Cabinet was informed, however, that these cost pressures were being offset by the Council's buoyant investment income due to increasing interest rates, which were now reaching four percent. This was resulting in a predicted underspend for this financial year. Capital expenditure during this period would be around £10.775m; the main schemes funded would be the Food Innovation Centre and the Horizon Building.

Cabinet was advised that there were two additional recommendations in the report. These were an increase in land charge fees and charges and to bring forward the Capital Budget of £135,000 for remote working from 2023/24 to 2022/23.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted the economic pressures facing the Council and the welcome increase in income, which would offset this. She advised members that it was the duty of the Council to recover the costs for its services and that it was right that the cost of land charge searches should fall on those requesting them, rather than the general Council Tax payer. Areas to also note in the report were the high level of Council Tax and Business Rates collection and the level of support that was offered to those that were having difficulty in paying them.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence highlighted the draft recycling rate for 2021/22, which was 50.6 percent (21.4 dry recycling and 29.2 green recycling). Since an expanded kerbside collection scheme was introduced in April the Council had also collected 80 tonnes of textiles, small electrical items and batteries, which would have previously gone into residual waste.

In respect of food waste collection the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence suggested that the number of caddies put out should be measured, rather than the tonnage collected, as reducing food waste was to be encouraged.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Housing and Planning drew members' attention to the measure for the number of residents supported in living independently and the number of grants and adaptations available to allow residents to remain in their homes. He also highlighted the number of planning decisions being made within statutory timescales, which was well above national targets.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development highlighted the external funding of £1.3m to support growth received from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and nearly £570,000 of capital funding from the Rural England Prosperity Fund to support rural businesses. Also members were asked to note the Business Builder scheme that was funded through the Norfolk Strategic Fund, which was providing support, training, mentoring and grant aid for local businesses.

Minor typographical errors were pointed out on pages 85 and 89 of the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development informed the meeting that a lot of work was being undertaken on reaching the target for customer satisfaction. This was a new measure that was being developed during a challenging time and when Council services were under significant pressure. However, he was pleased that it was moving in the right direction. Staff satisfaction and staff absences were both rated green and it was anticipated that this would be maintained after the move to the Horizon building. Staff retention was projected to be slightly above the 90 percent target and it was notable that this was a problem nationally. However, the Council was increasing the percentage in the workforce in apprenticeships or graduate roles, which was a very positive development.

The Leader commended the report, which he noted demonstrated how well the One Team was working.

Following a show of hands it was

**RESOLVED**

To

1. Note the revenue and capital position for Quarter 2 (variance details in Appendix 1).
2. Note the 2022/23 performance for Quarter 2 (detail in Appendix 2).
3. Note the mid-year update of the 2022/24 Delivery Plan (detail in appendix 3).
4. Approve the proposed change in reporting frequency which will bring forward an additional performance and finance report to Cabinet in Quarter 3 each year.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

1. To approve the land charge fees and charges as detailed in paragraph 3.28; and
2. That the 23/24 Remote working Capital Budget of £135,000 is brought forward to 22/23.

**Reasons for Decision**

The report was factual account.

**61 TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 2 REPORT 2022/23**

The Capital and Treasury Accountant introduced the report, which reviewed the treasury management activity during the first six months of the financial year 2022/23 and reported on the prudential indicators.

Cabinet was informed that interest rates had increased significantly since the budget was agreed in February and the Council had taken advantage of this by the use of fixed term investments, some of which had reached five percent. Interest rates appeared to be levelling off now to between 3.5 to 4 percent.

Income had been derived from a number of sources including cash balances, money market funds, long-term investments and a diversified income fund. There had been no need to externally borrow so far this financial year and there had been no breaches of the Council's Prudential Indicators.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised the meeting that she was pleased to see there had been no breaches of the Prudential Indicators and that the increase in investment income had been achieved whilst meeting the ethical standards set by the Council.

The Leader commended the very healthy return on investments being achieved by the Council.

Following a show of hands, it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED**

To

1. Endorse the treasury activity for the first half of the year and that it complies with the agreed strategy; and
2. Note the 2022/23 prudential indicators for the first six months of the year.

**Reasons for Decision**

The report was a factual account.

**62 BEST IN CLASS HOUSING – TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION**

The Assistant Director for Individuals and Families introduced the report, which set out the Council's response to the anticipated increase in demand for temporary accommodation in the District.

Cabinet was advised that Broadland had a strong track record of delivering housing services and was highly rated by its partner organisations. However, due to the worsening economic climate, the Council was facing a significant increase in homelessness, caused by the pandemic, the cost of living crisis and pressures on housing stock.

To address this issue it was proposed to increase the amount of temporary accommodation stock that the Council directly owned and managed to 43 units. This investment would help mitigate the increasing costs of funding bed and breakfast accommodation.

Cabinet was also informed that regionally there had been a 26 percent reduction in the private rental sector and a 19 percent increase in rents. The number of repossessions was also increasing, as were rent arrears. These factors were all increasing demand on the housing service.

The prevention of homelessness in the first place was a key priority of the Council and to allow the Core Team to focus on this it was proposed that additional staff be recruited for every ten units of temporary accommodation. The cost of these staff would be paid for by the additional income and would be at nil cost to the Council.

The extra properties would be managed by the One Team, which would be operating with the advantage of being able to locate residents in either District if necessary. However, the authority which owed the homelessness duty would pay for the accommodation costs. Moreover, each Council would retain its own stock and be responsible for costs and maintenance.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities Housing and Planning emphasised that the report was about people more than buildings and it was a response to a number of factors that were out of the control of the Council. The proposal in the report would help mitigate the

unsustainable costs of funding bed and breakfast accommodation and would allow for temporary accommodation to be managed to the right quality for the residents that the Council owed a duty to. He proposed the recommendations in the report for approval, subject to amending recommendation 1, to remove the delegation for the purchase of individual properties to the Portfolio Holder for Communities Housing and Planning. In seconding the proposal, the Portfolio Holder for Finance commended the aim to make the energy efficiency of a property part of the criteria for selection, with the commitment to make them carbon neutral as soon as financially possible.

In response to a query about the number of properties to be purchased it was confirmed that the total target was 43 temporary accommodation units per Council.

The Leader noted that this proposal was people focused, forward looking and investing in a solution to address the increasing demand on both the Council's finances and its housing service.

Following a show of hands, it was unanimously

### **RESOLVED**

To delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Finance to purchase individual properties up to £750,000.

### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

1. To create an additional capital budget of £1,356,000, to purchase additional temporary accommodation and to capitalise the staff costs of any purchases;
2. To increase the current allocated opportunities reserve from £900,000 to £1,000,000, to facilitate the purchase of a property and pay for the renovation works to make the property ready for use; and
3. To agree to the increase in establishment of 1 x FTE officer for every additional purchase of 10 units of temporary accommodation, which will be paid for by the additional income received from those properties.

### **Reasons for decision**

To respond to an increase in demand for Temporary Accommodation in the District.

## **63 REPORT ON BROADLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL'S COST OF LIVING RESPONSE**

The Help Hub and Communities Senior Manager introduced the report, which set out the Council's initial response to the cost of living crisis and asked Cabinet to support the proposals in it.

Members were reminded that key areas of high inflation were currently transport, food and energy and it was anticipated that 33 percent of people in the UK would be in fuel poverty

after April 2023. Vulnerable groups included those on benefits, low income households, people of pensionable age, families with children and lone parents.

The overarching aim set out in the report was to enable residents, employees and businesses to weather the impacts of the cost of living crisis now and in the future. This accorded with the strategic aims of the Council to grow the economy, support individuals, empower communities and protect and improve the natural and built environment, whilst maximising quality of life.

To help support vulnerable residents a programme had been developed with the following four work streams:

- **Business Support** – including the Business Builder and Regulatory Support.
- **Staff** – support and training to help staff deal with the rising demand on services, alongside the personal impacts of the crisis.
- **Living Well** – ensuring residents had the necessities for everyday life.
- **Participating in Daily Life** – allowing residents to be part of their local communities and carry on with their daily lives.

Work currently being undertaken included, the funding of community warm spaces across the District and an Energy Rebate Scheme to support residents across Broadland who were on a low income and needed help with increases to their energy bills. The Council also offered debt, welfare and budgeting support through the Help Hub and a Household Support Fund to provide grant support to help cover the costs of household bills or essential items for those in need. Social supermarkets were also going to be established with Reepham and Acle, as the initial prioritised areas. A grant would also be available for organisations to undertake food related activity, such as training, equipment and food stock.

To identify households that might be in need a new LIFT (Low Income Family Tracker) tool would also be used, so that support could be targeted and prioritised.

In order to ensure that this support reached those in need, the Help Hub was being promoted as the key point of contact through a campaign that would commence in December.

The Leader noted that the campaign would also be promoted in *Broadland News*.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities Housing and Planning emphasised the importance of good communication, as there was a lot of funding and support available for those in need. He also noted the importance of working with the Health and Wellbeing Partnership, which enabled more to be done with less. This had enabled approximately 2,500 people to be helped by the Council, so far this year. He proposed approving the recommendations in the report

In seconding the proposal, the Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development noted that the Council was leading the way in its support for residents.

It was pointed out that paragraph 4.11 of the report incorrectly stated that grant funding for the Business Builder programme was being delivered through the 'Norfolk Shared Prosperity Fund'. It was in fact being delivered through the 'Norfolk Strategic Fund'.

The Leader congratulated the Team on its work and that it was delivering the programme within budget.

Following a show of hands, it was unanimously

### **RESOLVED**

To endorse the current programme and direction of travel of the Council to support the rise in cost of living, as set out in the report.

### **Reasons for Decision**

To support residents during the cost of living crisis.

## **64 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

The Assistant Director for Regulatory introduced the report, which proposed a new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy for adoption, with South Norfolk Council as a collaborating partner, to reflect common geographic and community concerns across both districts.

The Policy would establish a documented framework that would inform the Council's approach to anti-social behaviour and how it would be dealt with whilst working with partner organisations. It would also provide information and assurance to residents in respect of anti-social behaviour.

The Policy sets out a progressive and robust approach in a fresh and more documented format and included specific considerations concerning balanced engagement with vulnerable people.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that as the adoption of the Policy required an amendment to the Council's policy framework, it required final determination by full Council, rather than by a resolution of Cabinet.

Following a show of hands, it was unanimously

### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

To agree the adoption of the proposed Anti-social Behaviour Policy at Appendix 1.

### **Reasons for Decision**

To adopt a balanced prevention and intervention enforcement policy that would meet the expectations of recognised good practice.

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**65 RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND**

The Strategic Growth Projects Manager introduced the report, which sought approval for Broadland's Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) proposal.

The REPF for capital projects aimed to support rural business development, farm business diversification and community infrastructure initiatives with the aim of improving productivity and generating growth to strengthen rural economies and communities.

The Council had been allocated £569,552, subject to the receipt of a compliant proposal. The report proposed that the funding should focus on the Supporting Business Investment Priority comprising £319,552 for business grants and up to £250,000 to purchase a key piece of food processing equipment to be located at the Broadland Food Innovation Centre, which could actively support the growth plans of a number of micro and small food and drink businesses.

The Assistant Director for Economic Growth added that this was an excellent opportunity to support local businesses and these projects would form part of a holistic package of support being offered by the Council to businesses in the District. It would complement the Business Builder Programme and would help break down entry barriers to competitive markets such as food processing. In particular, it would provide an opportunity to further develop agri-tech, which was a key business sector for the District.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development welcomed the capital funding, which was a rare opportunity for the Council to provide equipment for businesses, and proposed the recommendations in the report.

Following a show of hands, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED**

To

1. Approve the principal areas of investment as set out in section 4 of this report;
2. Delegate to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Managing Director and the Leader of the Council, for the sign off and submission of an addendum to the UKSPF investment plan to meet the requirements of the funding;
3. Delegate to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Managing Director and the Leader of the Council, to make any non- substantive changes to the principal areas of investment as required by the Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs; and
4. Agree a mid-point review of the Rural Business Builder grant programme in March 2024.

**Reasons for Decision**

To utilise Government funding to support rural business in the District.

**66 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINT INSTALLATION ON COUNCIL OWNED LAND**

The Clean Growth and Sustainability Manager introduced the report, which sought approval for the installation of Public Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) infrastructure within Council carparks.

The report proposed that the Council awarded a contract to a third-party supplier for an end-to-end delivery solution. This would require the supplier to pay the Council an annual licence fee for any EVCPs and be responsible for funding and delivering the necessary civil engineering works, as well as the ongoing management, maintenance and operation of EVCPs on Council owned and managed carparks. At the end of the licence fee term there would be the opportunity for the EVCP infrastructure to be transferred to the Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development informed the meeting that this was the easiest means of delivering EVCPs across the District at no cost to the Council.

In answer to a query from the Leader about timescales for the roll out of phase two of the project, which would include solar canopy carports, Cabinet was informed that a report would be brought to them in early 2023.

Following a show of hands, it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED**

To

1. Agree to the principle that EVCPs should be installed at Council owned and managed carparks.
2. Delegate to the Assistant Director of Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, decisions regarding an award of contract to a third-party supplier.
3. Agree to explore, as per Economic Success Policy Members recommendation, solar canopy carports and the role they may play in supporting with a phase two roll out of EVCP infrastructure as an additional project.

**Reasons for Decision**

To enable the transition towards low emission vehicles and improving air quality in the District, whilst supporting the Council's economic growth agenda.

**67 ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY & DELIVERY PLAN**

The Clean Growth and Sustainability Manager introduced the report, which recommended the approval and adoption of an updated Environmental Strategy and the associated Delivery Plan.

Members were advised that the revised Strategy has been drafted to replace the one agreed in 2020 and to demonstrate the Council's achievements to date and to set more ambitious environmental targets.

The Delivery Plan would be a companion document that outlined the activities that would take place over the next two years to support net-zero commitments and would include wider actions to address climate change.

The Environmental Strategy and Delivery Plan would continue to be living documents, updated regularly to ensure they continued to address local priorities and opportunities. Progress against activities would be presented to Members as part of existing performance management reports.

The report also proposed amending the scheme of delegation to agree that the Assistant Director for Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence, had the authority to agree additional environmental projects to be funded from the Environmental Projects Reserve.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence thanked the Team for updating the Strategy and noted that significant progress had been made since it was first adopted in 2020, most notably by setting a 2030 net-zero target for organisational emissions. The Strategy provided an opportunity to demonstrate what the Council had achieved and how it would work towards its ambitious targets, including the 2050 target for district wide decarbonisation.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Housing and Planning noted the objective in the Strategy to assist residents and communities to make the switch to electric vehicles and suggested that this was something that could be looked at as part of planning policy for new developments in the District.

The Leader concurred with this view and noted that some Neighbourhood Plans already proposed EVCPs in new developments and that this might be replicated in the Council's Planning Policies.

Following a show of hands, it was unanimously

### **RESOLVED**

To

1. Approve and adopt the updated Environmental Strategy (Appendix 1);
2. Approve and adopt the Delivery Plan (Appendix 2); and
3. Amend the delegation agreed by Cabinet in December 2021 and agree that the Assistant Director for Economic Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence, has the authority to agree additional environmental projects to be funded from the Environmental Projects Reserve, each project to be no more than £100,000 in value.

**Reasons for Decision**

To demonstrate the Council's commitment to the environment and confirm its aspirations to meet its environmental targets.

**68 FORWARD PLAN**

Cabinet noted the Forward Plan.

**69 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED**

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

**70 FRETtenham DEPOT - AWARD OF REDEVELOPMENT CONTRACT**

The Assistant Director for Community Services introduced the report (as detailed in the exempt minute), which sought approval for capital funding for the redevelopment of the Frettenham depot.

Following consideration of the report and a show of hands, it was

**RESOLVED**

To agree the recommendations as set out in the exempt minute.

**Reasons for Decision**

To authorise the award of a contract.

(The meeting concluded at 7.33 pm)

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Chairman