



COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council of Broadland District Council, held on Thursday 23 March 2023 at 7pm at the Council Offices

Members Present: Councillors: J F Fisher (Chairman), A D Adams, N J Brennan, D J Britcher, P E Bulman, S J Catchpole, S M Clancy, J K Copplestone, A D Crotch, J Davis, J J Emsell, R R Foulger, S C Gurney, N J Harpley, S I Holland, N C Karimi-Ghovanlou, E C Laming, K E Lawrence, J Leggett, K G Leggett, T M Mancini-Boyle, I N Moncur, M L Murrell, J A Neesam, G K Nurden, D Roper, C E Ryman-Tubb, S A Vincent, J M Ward, F Whymark

Officers in Attendance: The Managing Director (T Holden), the Director Place (P Courtier), the Director Resources (D Lorimer), the Director People and Communities (J Sutterby), the Chief of Staff (Monitoring Officer) (E Hodds), the Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) (R Fincham) and the Democratic Services Officer (D Matthews).

197 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

198 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S C Beadle, C Eden, D Harrison, L H Hemsall, K S Kelly, I J Mackie, R E Potter, S Riley, L A Starling, D M Thomas J L Thomas and K A Vincent.

199 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2023 and 2 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

200 MATTERS ARISING

No matter were raised.

201 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members noted the civic engagements undertaken by the Chairman of the Council since the last meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised Council that the Benefits team had recently received a positive report from their quarterly call with the DWP, moreover, the DWP had asked if they could visit the team to learn some good practice to share with other councils. She commended the team on their work. She also thanked the Finance team who were currently dealing with an average of 335 calls per week compared to the normal 40 calls per week, mainly responding to residents wishing to pay for their garden waste bins.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence drew attention to the Green Loan Scheme which had now been launched which offered interest free loans of up to £5k for retrofitting homes.

202 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

203 PUBLIC SPEAKING

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

204 CABINET

The Decisions of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 March 2023 were received.

The following matters were considered by Council:

Greater Norwich 5 Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2023 to 2028 (5YIIP) and Annual Growth Programme (AGP) 2023/24

The Leader reported that the plan included a progress report on previously approved projects; proposals for new projects to be funded by pooled Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in 2023/24; updated forecasts of CIL income; and information on future project priorities. The recommendations also included proposals for three amendments to the existing infrastructure investment fund and a deed of variation for the Greater Norwich Partner drawdown and borrowing authorisations agreement for the Long Stratton bypass.

The Leader proposed, duly seconded, that Council support the recommendations from Cabinet.

A question was raised as to whether the signing of the deed of variation related to the one proposal or to other proposals and what mechanisms were in place to record the outcome of any decision taken in accordance with the delegation of authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Leader. The Leader responded that the signing of the deed of variation related solely to the delivery of the Long Stratton Bypass project and the mechanisms for how the growth board was able to draw down funding and loan out that funding. With regard to the delegated authority being sought for the Director of Place, in consultation with the Leader, to finalise and sign the variation, if there were any material changes to the proposals, the Leader would report these back to Council. Other Greater Norwich Growth Board Partners would also need to report back to their respective councils in this case.

Some members raised concerns about the proposals stating that whilst there were some valid green infrastructure schemes included in the proposals, which were to be welcomed, they were concerned about the overall approach to the Investment Plan. They made reference to the outcome of the recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change which referred to the issues and impact of constant rapid growth on the environment. Constant growth was an issue and it was not possible to build a way out of global climate collapse as was being proposed. The proposals focussed on increasing growth and there was concern this was not the right way forward and there was a need to create local supply chains and opportunities for a more sustainable way forward. They also commented that those projects involving new roads could not be supported because of their contribution to carbon emissions and there was concern about the impact of tying up CIL money long term for large infrastructure projects in the process of development. This reduced the ability to allocate money to more local projects and increasing costs were causing issues in the delivery of these major projects.

The Leader reminded members of the collaborative arrangement of the Greater Norwich Partnership, which had received accolade across the country for the way in which the three councils were working together to manage pooled CIL payments. The Partnership involved plan led development and it was vital to ensure that development continued to be plan led rather than unplanned. This provided a framework for what infrastructure was needed, when it was delivered and how it would be funded. He reminded members that CIL money could only be spent once and it was important to ensure this was spent in a planned way. There was a host of green infrastructure within the proposals and projects had been identified for implementation in Broadland. With regard to the provision of roads, the Leader commented that the provision of roads was much needed, particularly in the rural community of Broadland. Those road improvements already delivered had seen many benefits for local communities. The Council was still supportive of the Western link which would help free up congestion and remove the resulting impact on the environment. He commended the proposals to Council.

On being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED that Council

- a) approves of the Draft Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2023-28 and the proposed 2023/24 Annual Growth Programme, including:
 - i) the introduction of two new categories to the Infrastructure Investment Fund, Match Funding and Major Infrastructure Projects;
 - ii) that Education funding allocations from the Infrastructure Investment Fund can be used in whole or in part to repay Norfolk County Council's borrowing, on condition that it is used to support the delivery of a Schools Capital Programme that is ring fenced to the Greater Norwich area, and that annual programme delivery and budget updates are reported to the GNGB;
- b) agrees to the signing of a deed of variation to the agreement entitled, Partner Drawdown and Borrowing Authorisations, that was originally signed by all partners on 21st October 2015 and to delegate authority to the Director for Place in consultation with the Leader to finalise and sign any such variation.

Council Tax (2nd Homes) Premium – this item had been deferred by Cabinet.

Adoption of Updated Regulation of Investigatory Powers Policy

The Leader explained that, following a review, the Policy had been significantly updated and Cabinet had therefore decided to recommend the Policy to Council for approval. He proposed, duly seconded, that Council support the recommendations from Cabinet.

A question was raised about how the delegated authority referred to in the recommendations would be managed and recorded and what constituted minor amendments. It was felt it was important that such discussions and decisions were recorded. The Monitoring Officer explained that operational mechanisms existed for recording and communicating all delegated decisions.

RESOLVED

1. to approve, with any necessary amendments, the proposed Regulation of Investigatory Powers Policy and Guidance as set out in Appendix 1 and agrees to adopt the Policy; and
2. to delegate authority to make minor amendments to the Policy to the Assistant Director for Regulatory in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence.

205 LICENSING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

The non-exempt minutes of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee meeting held on 7 March 2023 were received.

206 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Members considered the report which summarised the work of the Audit Committee during 2022/23.

The Chairman of the Committee highlighted the work undertaken which included the Annual Governance Statement, the Counter Fraud Service, commencement of the process of appointing an independent person for the Committee, the Statement of Accounts, External Audit, Internal Audit and the Strategic Risk Update.

RESOLVED

to note the content of the Annual Report of the Audit Committee.

207 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Members considered the schedule of meetings for 2023/2024.

RESOLVED

to endorse the schedule of meetings.

208 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

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

1. Question from Cllr Laming

At the Norfolk County Council Scrutiny meeting held on 23 November 2022, General Lord Dannatt outlined the findings of the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance. The report said there was a serious shortfall in funding to implement flood defences and recognised that building on floodplains could be a contributory factor in increasing the scale of future flood events.

Will BDC be making any changes to its planning policies, and exercising more caution when making decisions on plans for new development on areas potentially prone to flooding?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Housing and Planning

The Portfolio Holder acknowledged the hard work of General Lord Dannet, Chairman of the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance, who had now stood down from his role. Henry Cater taken over and had already set about organising a number of meetings. He went on to state that there were already national and local plan policies in place requiring the impacts of flood risk to be assessed as part of any new applications. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) contained a whole section on planning and flood risk (paragraphs 159-169) and clearly stated that inappropriate development in areas of risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Policy CSU5 of the Broadland District Council Development Management DPD required measures to be in place to minimise the risk of flooding and made reference to the requirements of the NPPF. Mindful of these, the Portfolio Holder stated he did not consider that the Council needed to make any changes to its planning policies. He acknowledged that the NPPF was currently being updated and there might be changes arising from the current update.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Laming

Cllr Laming stated that this was a key issue for many residents of new homes who were now unable to benefit from government backed flood insurance schemes leaving them with houses which were uninsurable or which attracted very high insurance premiums. A new future flood map had recently been produced by a University with support of a risk modelling company which had used up to date met office projections. She asked if the Council was utilising the most up to date modelling information to assess flood risk in the district and to map flood plains in the district which would keep increasing as the climate changed.

The Portfolio Holder responded that the situation was constantly evolving and being examined. Any new planning proposal was assessed and if it was in an area of high risk, planning permission could not be granted. There should be no need for householders to rely on a government backed insurance schemes. At the present time the Council was taking all appropriate steps.

209 MOTIONS

No motions had been received.

Chairman

(Meeting closed at 7:33 pm)