

Overview & Scrutiny Committee



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Tuesday, 4 January 2022

A meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** of North Norfolk District Council will be held in the **Council Chamber - Council Offices** on **Wednesday, 12 January 2022 at 9.30 am**.

At the discretion of the Chairman, a short break will be taken after the meeting has been running for approximately one and a half hours

Members of the public who wish to ask a question or speak on an agenda item are requested to notify the committee clerk 24 hours in advance of the meeting and arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. This is to allow time for the Committee Chair to rearrange the order of items on the agenda for the convenience of members of the public. Further information on the procedure for public speaking can be obtained from Democratic Services, Tel: 01263 516047, Email: matthew.stembrowicz@north-norfolk.gov.uk.

Anyone attending this meeting may take photographs, film or audio-record the proceedings and report on the meeting. Anyone wishing to do so must inform the Chairman. If you are a member of the public and you wish to speak on an item on the agenda, please be aware that you may be filmed or photographed.

Please note that Committee members will be given priority to speak during the debate of agenda items

Emma Denny
Democratic Services Manager

To: Mr N Dixon, Mr S Penfold, Ms L Withington, Mr H Blathwayt, Mr P Heinrich, Dr V Holliday, Mr N Housden, Mrs E Spagnola, Mr A Varley, Mr C Cushing, Mr A Brown and Mr P Fisher

All other Members of the Council for information.
Members of the Management Team, appropriate Officers, Press and Public



**If you have any special requirements in order
to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance**
If you would like any document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in
a different language please contact us

Chief Executive: Steve Blatch
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A G E N D A

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. SUBSTITUTES

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS & STATEMENTS

To receive questions / statements from the public, if any.

4. MINUTES

1 - 10

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8th December 2021.

5. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

To determine any other items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

11 - 12

Members are asked at this stage to declare any interests that they may have in any of the following items on the agenda. The Code of Conduct for Members requires that declarations include the nature of the interest and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest.

7. PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To consider any petitions received from members of the public.

8. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY A MEMBER

To consider any requests made by non-executive Members of the Council, and notified to the Monitoring Officer with seven clear working days' notice, to include an item on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

9. RESPONSES OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CABINET TO THE COMMITTEE'S REPORTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS

To consider any responses of the Council or the Cabinet to the Committee's reports or recommendations:

Summary:

Car parking income represents a significant income source to the Council and as such has a substantial contribution to make to the Council's longer term financial sustainability and helping to set and maintain a balanced budget.

There are significant costs associated with a range of Council services which support the tourism economy, with provision of public conveniences, foreshore activities, parks, open spaces and woodlands representing a combined annual revenue spend in excess of £2.2m. It is appropriate for the costs of these services to be met in part by various fees and charges as they form an integral part of the visitor experience. These are all discretionary areas of spend but help to ensure that our district remains a beautiful place both to live and work in but also to visit, it is however becoming increasingly difficult to support all of these areas in the current financial climate.

The current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) projections for future years are still projecting budget deficits of around £2.5m by 2025/26 in the midst of continuing uncertainty regarding the Fair Funding and Business Rates reviews. The Council must therefore consider all available options to generate additional income and reduce costs wherever possible.

Car park charges have not been increased since July 2016. This report considers the current car park fees and charges and provides the Overview and Scrutiny committee an opportunity to consider the range of potential options prior to any consideration by Cabinet. Members are therefore asked to consider options and proposals for future charging arrangements and to make recommendations for further consideration by Cabinet as required.

This is an opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to discuss and comment on the options and issues raised as a pre-scrutiny exercise. At this time, the paper has not been the subject of any consideration or discussion by the Cabinet.

Options considered:

A number of options are considered within the report as follows;

1. Do nothing – the Council could opt to do nothing and not change the current fees and charges.
2. Alternatively the report considers a number of different proposals to fee structures for potential introduction from July 2022.

Conclusions:

As one of the Council's largest external income sources car parking charges have a significant contribution to make in terms of the Council's financial sustainability in the medium to long term. Financial Sustainability and Growth is one of six key themes within the Corporate Plan and links directly with objective 2.2 of the Delivery Plan.

The Council incurs significant levels of expenditure on discretionary service areas which help to ensure that our district remains a beautiful place both to live and work in but also to visit, it is however becoming increasingly difficult to support all of these areas in the current financial climate. These costs cover a range of Council services which support the tourism economy, from provision of public conveniences, maintenance and operation of Cromer pier, foreshore activities, parks, open spaces and woodlands which represent a combined annual revenue spend in excess of £2.2m. It is appropriate therefore for the costs of these services to be met in part by various fees and charges as they form an integral part of the visitor experience.

There are clearly multiple variations on the possible range of pricing options and initiatives for car parks. Due to the nature of parking charges and for simplicity it is best to make any increases to the nearest 10p. Even a relatively modest annual increase of 3.5% from 2016 would have increased the hourly charge at our 'Coastal' car parks from £1.50 per to £1.84 (unrounded) by April 2022.

To ensure that this and other key income streams are given enough focus in terms of growth, improvement and efficiency to support the Council's medium and longer term budget position and to strengthen day to day car park management to minimise losses by more timely resolution of machine breakdowns etc, the Scrutiny Committee are invited to comment on the issue of resource for improved management of the service.

Recommendations: **The Overview and Scrutiny committee are asked to consider the various options discussed within the report and to make recommendations regarding future charging arrangements and resources for further consideration by Cabinet.**

Reasons for Recommendations: Car parking income represents a significant income source to the Council and as such has a substantial contribution to make to the Council's longer term financial sustainability and helping to set and maintain a balanced budget.

Car parking income needs to be considered against

the context of our discretionary service provision which people value but which is often difficult to charge for, such as we public conveniences, the seafront environment and Blue Flag beaches, beach lifeguards, additional street cleansing, litter bins etc. It is becoming increasingly more difficult for the Council to continue to provide these services at the level expected by local residents, businesses and tourist visitors from Council Tax payers alone. Further to this it is not fair or equitable across the District as a whole and doesn't operate under the 'user pays' principle.

Car park charges have not increased since July 2016, there are a number of options that Members need to consider in relation to any potential changes to the car park fees and charges so that any alterations can be implemented through a new Car Park Order (CPO). Members of the Overview and Scrutiny committee are being provided with the opportunity to consider the officer report ahead of any consideration by Cabinet.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

Cabinet Member(s); Cllr Eric Seward

Ward(s) affected; All

Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Duncan Ellis, 01263 516330,
duncan.ellis@north-norfolk.gov.uk

11. **PRE-SCRUTINY: DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023-26 INCORPORATING DRAFT BASE BUDGET 2022-23**

43 - 72

Summary: To provide Members with the opportunity to discuss assumptions around Medium Term Financial Planning and the impact on NNDC finances.

Options considered: The Council is required by law to set a budget in advance of the financial year. The report to Full Council will present options for budget setting with respect to Council Tax and other items.

Conclusions: The Council is required to agree a budget in advance of each financial year. This is done in February of each year at Full Council, after meetings of Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny. To aid the Committee, an early draft of the Medium Term Financial Plan is presented here for scrutiny and discussion.

Recommendations: **That Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the report**

Reasons for Recommendations: To support the work to prepare the budget for the 2022-23 financial year. The Council is legally required to approve a budget and financial strategy in advance of each financial year. This is scheduled for February 2022.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

*Budget Monitoring Reports 2021/22
Outturn Report 2020/21
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-25*

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected
Cllr Eric Seward	All

Contact Officer, telephone number and email:
Lucy Hume, Chief Technical Accountant, 01263 516246

12. PRE-SCRUTINY: DRAFT NET ZERO STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 73 - 124

Summary: North Norfolk District Council's (NNDC) Corporate Plan commits to the delivery, and adoption, of an Environmental Charter and Action Plan.

In May 2021 The Council adopted an Environmental Charter and, subsequently, began developing the 'Action Plan' element of this commitment.

This report presents the Draft Action Plan for achieving Net-Zero Carbon emissions by 2030 in the format of a Draft Net-Zero Strategy and Action Plan (referred to from here on in as the NZSAP).

The NZSAP also documents NNDC's existing pathway by providing carbon emission figures for the years 2018/2019, 2019/2020, and 2021/2022.

Options considered: **Option One:** To recommend adoption the Draft NZSAP. This option fulfils the Corporate Plan commitment to develop an Action Plan and provides a route map from which the Council will continue to address the Climate Emergency.

Option Two: To recommend not adopting the Draft NZSAP. This option however contradicts the Council's Corporate Plan objectives and commitments to addressing the Climate Emergency.

Option three: to recommend adopting an amended version of the Draft NZSAP. This could risk not achieving the carbon reduction outcomes and will necessitate alternative actions by which these might be achieved.

Conclusions: The NZSAP is a fundamental step in the Council's approach to dealing with the Climate Change Emergency declared in April 2019 and the subsequent net-zero 2030 target. Its significance stems from the fact that it outlines how a net-zero 2030 target can be achieved as well as reporting on The Council's existing emissions pathway for the years 2018/2019 through to 2020/2022.

The NZSAP is also an important internal, and external, document which clearly communicates

The Council's commitment to environmental excellence and a net-zero carbon emissions future.

It is therefore recommended that the Council should adopt the NZSAP and in doing so commit to delivering the actions made within the NZSAP.

Recommendations: **To recommend the adoption of the Draft Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan.**

Reasons for Recommendations: The NZSAP is a hugely important document as it outlines how a net-zero 2030 target can be achieved as well as reporting on NNDC's existing emissions pathway for the years 2018/2019 through to 2020/2022.

NNDC's Corporate Plan commits to delivering an Action Plan. Once approved the NZSAP will become an adopted Council document which will set the framework for achieving the Environmental Charter's Net Zero objective whilst simultaneously reinforcing NNDC's commitment to addressing the climate change emergency, which it declared in April 2019.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

N/A

Cabinet Member: Ward(s) affected:
Cllr Nigel Lloyd District Wide

Contact Officer:
annie.sommazzi@north-norfolk.gov.uk

**13. NORTH WALSHAM HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE 125 - 128
PROJECT UPDATE: JANUARY 2022**

To receive and note the report.

14. MARKET TOWNS INITIATIVE PROCESS REVIEW & MONITORING

129 - 134

Summary: The MTI Project has been active for approximately three years. Most projects from rounds one, two and three of funding are now complete, and it is therefore appropriate to review the process in order to consider any learning opportunities for the future, celebrate the successes and review what could have been improved. It is also necessary to continue to monitor any projects still active, that have been significantly impeded in their progress by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Options considered: N/a.

Conclusions: The Market Town Initiative has successfully helped the District's four inland market towns to fund and implement numerous improvements, host events and encourage more residents and visitors into town centres. Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the outputs of various projects and has delayed the overall completion of the initiative, however it is hoped that the delays caused can be overcome in the near future.

Recommendations: **To note the overall success of the MTI Grant Fund, review the process and continue to monitor ongoing projects.**

Reasons for Recommendations: To review the MTI process as a whole and take note of the outcomes.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected
Cllr R Kershaw	Holt, Lancaster North, Lancaster South, North Walsham East, North Walsham West, North Walsham Market Cross, and Stalham

Contact Officer, telephone number and email:

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Rob Young, 01263 516162, Robert.young@north-norfolk.gov.uk

WORK PROGRAMMES

15. THE CABINET WORK PROGRAMME 135 - 138

To note the upcoming Cabinet Work Programme.

16. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND UPDATE 139 - 150

To receive an update from the Scrutiny Officer on progress made with topics on its agreed work programme, training updates and to receive any further information which Members may have requested at a previous meeting.

17. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To pass the following resolution, if necessary:

“That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph _ of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act.”