

## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 11 May 2022 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 9.30 am

<b>Committee Members Present:</b>	Mr N Dixon (Chairman)	Mr S Penfold (Vice-Chairman)
	Ms L Withington	Mr H Blathwayt
	Mr P Heinrich	Dr V Holliday
	Mr C Cushing	Mr A Brown
	Mr P Fisher	
<b>Members also attending:</b>	Mr R Kershaw (Observer)	Mr N Lloyd (Observer)
	Mr J Rest (Observer)	Mr E Seward (Observer)
	Mr J Toye (Observer)	Ms V Gay (Observer)
<b>Officers in Attendance:</b>	Democratic Services and Governance Officer - Scrutiny (DSGOS), Chief Executive (CE), Director for Resources/Section 151 Officer (DFR), Estates and Asset Strategy Manager (EASM), Director for Communities (DFC) and Assistant Director for Finance, Assets, Legal & Monitoring Officer (MO)	
<b>Also in attendance:</b>	Anglian Water: Director of Quality and Environment (DQE) and Regional Engagement Manager (REM)	
	Parklands Residents Association: Mr T MacKeown and Mr T Amos	

### 191 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr N Housden, Cllr A Varley and Cllr E Spagnola.

### 192 SUBSTITUTES

None.

### 193 PUBLIC QUESTIONS & STATEMENTS

A public statement had been received from Mr Tom MacKeown of Parklands Residents' association, which would be heard during the relevant agenda item.

### 194 MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 195 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

An item of urgent business on proposals for the Levelling-Up Fund had been received, though it was agreed that the item could be taken after the Engagement Strategy report as a courtesy to public speakers and officers attending the meeting.

### 196 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

**197 PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

None received.

**198 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY A MEMBER**

None received.

**199 RESPONSES OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CABINET TO THE COMMITTEE'S REPORTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The DSGOS informed Members that at the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, Cabinet accepted the Scrutiny Panel for Environment & Quality of Life's recommendation in relation to the Quality of Life Strategy.

**200 ANGLIAN WATER SEWAGE OUTFLOWS BRIEFING**

The Chairman introduced the item and informed Members that the briefing had been arranged as a result of a recommendation from Full Council to request that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee monitor the efforts made by Anglian Water (AW) to mitigate sewage outflow events in North Norfolk. It was noted that the Director of Quality and Environment (DQE) and the Regional Engagement Manager (REM) were in attendance for the briefing.

Questions and Discussion

- i. The DQE began with responses to questions submitted in advance and noted that these fell into two categories relating to planning, or sewage overflows and storm discharges. The REM stated that with regards to planning, AW were not statutory consultees for planning applications, though they did play a role as developers had a 'right to connect' to the existing water and drainage infrastructure. He added that AW sought to work with local planning authorities and developers to ensure that any development proposed would be sustainable and not cause detriment to the environment. It was noted that the first question asked whether the existing networks in the region were combined foul drainage and surface water sewers or separate, to which it was confirmed that the region was mixed, though coastal areas often had more mixed networks, as a result of historical installations. The REM stated that inland drainage systems were more likely to be separated into distinct surface water and foul sewerage networks. He added that AW were responsible for foul sewage and some combined systems, whilst the majority of surface water drainage systems were managed by the lead local flood authority - NCC. It was suggested that going forward, all new developments would have separate systems wherever possible.
- ii. The second question related to network capacity, and the extent to which AW were consulted on any planning decisions that may impact the network. The REM stated that AW did seek out and request planning authorities to apply conditions where these were considered necessary. It was noted that developers could not be charged for fixing any existing issues, which necessitated efforts to ensure that any new development would not cause detriment to the network. The REM reported that the Strategic Flood Alliance

had made excellent progress in bringing together key stakeholders to address areas with persistent surface water flooding issues.

- iii. The third question related to the frequency and issues caused by heavy rainfall events, and the REM noted that AW were one of the most effected water companies in the UK for issues related to climate change, including periods of excess water flow and water scarcity. He added that generally speaking foul flows were entirely manageable within the constraints of AW's existing assets, and where growth was expected investment was concentrated to mitigate potential issues. It was noted that surface water issues remained the responsibility of NCC, though AW did encourage and advise on the best solutions to avoid overwhelming the foul drainage network. The REM stated that where all other options were exhausted, some surface water drainage would occasionally be connected to the existing foul network, in which case efforts would be made to ensure this would not cause future issues.
- iv. The Chairman stated that in terms of focus, the Council had requested the Committee to review sewage discharge events, and to report progress on any investment in mitigation measures. He added that communications were a key issue, and asked what relationship AW had with the Environmental Health Team to communicate these issues quickly and effectively to ensure public safety. The DQE stated that communication of sewage outflow events and event duration monitoring (EDM) data was published on the AW website, and also passed to the Rivers Trust, Surfers Against Sewage, and the AW Beach Alert system. He accepted that this was not agile enough, and the new Environment Bill would require water companies to move to near real-time publication of information on these issues. It was noted that the Beach Alert system was in place to alert users to possible contamination events, and it was expected that the same system would be replicated for rivers by year end with a postcode check system.
- v. On combined sewage overflows (CSOs), the DQE noted that combined systems had been historically installed to prevent sewer flooding with pressure release valves that would discharge high pressure into the environment. The now questionable theory at time of installation, was that during a high rainfall event, sewage would be very dilute with rivers in full flow to further dilute effluent. The DQE stated that this theory was unacceptable by modern standards, and AW were therefore implementing a strategy to address issues with old systems still in place. This would include installation of EDM monitors on all 53 CSOs within North Norfolk, with the network coverage currently at 71%, with 100% coverage expected by 2023 in advance of the original March 2025 target. The DQE stated that spills did not automatically equate to environmental damage or harm, as sewage outflows only equated to approximately 1% of environmental harm, though all efforts were taken to ensure that good ecological status was maintained. He added that monitoring would form part of a risk assessment process to better understand where high spillage events were most likely, to target investment as necessary. It was noted that EDM monitors in Cromer has suggested 1219 hours of spills on 154 occasions, but this was unquestionably the result of a broken monitoring system and the fault would be addressed as soon as possible.
- vi. The DQE stated that AW had already removed 300 highest risk CSOs from their network and planned to invest £200m into resolving further issues by

2025. He added that whilst some of this would include the installation of EDM monitors, a large part would be used to improve the capacity of the network itself. It was noted that many CSOs operated as a result of blockages in the network that were caused by incorrect materials being placed into drains, such as plastic containing wet wipes, and AW welcomed the opportunity to work with partners to avoid these issues. The DQE suggested that he would also welcome the opportunity to invite Councillors to visit a water treatment facility in the District to see these issues first hand. He added that the other reason CSOs operated was water ingress, and additional capacity would be created to help mitigate this. It was noted that additional storm storage tanks were not a final solution, and efforts must continue to create more upstream solutions such as working with developers, lobbying against the automatic right to connect, and developing sustainable urban drainage schemes within all new developments.

- vii. The DQE stated that in addition to increased demand from new developments, there was also a legacy issue that had to be addressed with thousands of older surface water drainage systems potentially connected to the foul network. He added that following an investigation of 10k properties in the town of March – Cambridgeshire, approximately 2k homes had their rain water catchment directly connected to the foul water system, in addition to 425 highways gullies. It was noted that there were also 425 hectares of impermeable surfaces, which contributed to surface water entering the foul network. The DQE reiterated the efforts AW were making to address these issues, and stated that it was crucial to improve partnership working to create upstream solutions.
- viii. The Chairman referenced communication and noted that the public had to visit a website to determine whether it was safe to go swimming, and asked whether this information could be better placed in the public domain. The DQE replied that when CSOs operated the Beach Aware system would send out an automated alert to the relevant local authority, the Environment Agency and Surfers Against Sewage (SAS). He added that SAS had a Safer Seas and Rivers app, which the public could download for real time information on swimming safety. The Chairman referred to communication with local authorities, and asked who received these notifications. The REM confirmed that the notification were sent to Members of the Environmental Health Team, though it was suggested that links could be improved and a written response would be provided on the specific individuals that received notifications. The DQE added that efforts to improve river bathing were also underway as one of five pledges made by AW for residents to be no more than one hour away from a designated bathing area either coastal or inland. It was noted that engagement with local residents would be undertaken, and it was possible that environmentally friendly UV disinfection or other methods such as PerFormic Acid could be utilised.
- ix. Cllr L Withington referred to the removal of 300 CSOs and asked whether a progress update was available. She added that she was pleased to hear that the target had been brought forward to 2023, and suggested that Parish and Town Councils could help promote any water safety messages, alongside efforts to improve awareness of the Safer Seas and Rivers app in coastal areas. The DQE replied that AW could provide regular annual or six-monthly updates on investment schemes. The Chairman suggested that at present the Council received snapshot information, but it would be helpful to receive a more continual flow of information to identify patterns and help to resolve

issues.

- x. Cllr A Brown referred to storm overflows and noted that when dealing with AW, he had found the service provided to be efficient, though there was a slight communication problem with no dedicated helpline for the issue. He added that communicating these messages had been a long process, with little cooperation from NCC on the need to clear their assets. Cllr A Brown asked whether it would help to make unauthorised connections to the foul network a criminal offence. The REM replied that this would help, and AW were continuing to lobby Government on this issue, and that with regard to communications, it was important to ensure that all issues were reported through customer contact centre to ensure they were included in the corporate recording process. It was suggested that the REM could also be a regional point of contact for Councillors to report issues. Cllr A Brown asked a subsequent question on whether AW were engaging pro-actively on resolving nutrient neutrality issues. The DQE replied that AW had been taken by surprise on the nutrient neutrality issue, though data was being provided at a regional level to carefully monitor phosphate levels, with many sites already over-treating to achieve required phosphate standards and nitrogen levels. He added that AW were also working with the Norfolk Rivers Trust to undertake a scoping study on the development of wetlands alongside other nature-based solutions that would seek to promote biodiversity net-gain and carbon sequestration. It was noted that AW had also been asked to contribute ideas to the Environment Agency on how developers could better contribute to help speed up the development of AW assets that would protect against environmental harm.
- xi. Cllr N Lloyd referred to a location in which AW surface water drains ended on land of indeterminate ownership, and noted that he had tried to engage on this issue to highlight a responsibility to maintain the area and pipeline. The DQE suggested that discussion could take place after the meeting to resolve the issue.
- xii. Cllr S Penfold stated that it was helpful to have more data going forward, and asked whether sewage outflow events were declining or getting worse. The DQE replied that data suggested the number of events and duration were declining, which suggested improvement from 38 CSO events in 2018, to 25 in 2021. Cllr S Penfold asked whether it was AW's intention to achieve zero CSO events, to which the DQE replied that spills did not necessarily equate to environmental harm, and the efforts required to achieve zero CSOs could be more harmful than the events themselves.
- xiii. Cllr A Fitch-Tillett noted that the region had one of the most dynamic coasts in Europe that was particularly susceptible to coastal erosion related to surface water issues, and asked how AW would address issues in future, to which it was noted that a written reply would be provided.
- xiv. The Chairman noted in summary that there were issues to address in regards to communicating with the public, a requirement for improved data sharing arrangements, and a need for improved partnership working. He added that many issues could be helped by the involvement of Parish and Town Councils. It was noted that the Chairman was also surprised to learn of the scale of unknown connection into the foul network, given that residents often paid for this service. The Chairman noted that he was also surprised to hear that AW had been caught off guard by nutrient neutrality legislation, and

assumed it was likely the timescale that was the issue, given that AW would have monitored nutrient levels in rivers for many years.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. To receive and note the briefing.**

## **ACTIONS**

**Anglian Water to consider the following actions relating to combined sewer overflows (CSOs):**

- 1. To implement improved means of communication with residents and tourists in North Norfolk to notify of emergency discharge of raw sewage in coastal, river and broads locations to allow members of the public to make informed decisions about swimming or other waterborne activities and the related health risks in these areas.**
- 2. To develop partnership working with NNDC Environmental Health and other partners on data sharing of emergency sewage discharges and other pollution events harmful to human health and the environment, to identify trends and improve performance monitoring.**
- 3. To work with NNDC and communities most effected by emergency sewage discharges to ensure that the causes of current problems are understood, and that all possible mitigation measures are taken to relieve issues and ensure that discharge events are less frequent and shorter in duration.**
- 4. To facilitate an NNDC visit to a Water Recycling Facility, so that Members develop a better understanding of the practical challenges in managing CSOs.**

## **201 PRE-SCRUTINY: SALE OF PARKLANDS MOBILE HOMES SITE - PUDDING NORTON, FAKENHAM**

The EASM introduced the report and informed Members that it sought to outline the process that had been undertaken to ensure due diligence in relation to the disposal of the Parklands residential site near Fakenham, which was a 38 pitch mobile home site owned and operated by the Council.

A public statement was made by Mr Tom MacKeown – Chairman of the Parklands Residents Association.

### Questions and Discussion

- Cllr E Seward informed Members that the report outlined the process of the commercial sale of the Parklands site, and the Committee were invited to scrutinise the robustness of this process, to ensure that they were satisfied the sale would meet the necessary requirements. He added that he was not aware who the highest bidder would be, but was assured that all due diligence had been adhered to during the bidding process. It was noted that he was aware of similar sites in other parts of the District, and Members were reminded that all residents had a right to security and peace.
- Cllr V Holliday asked whether the due diligence included consideration of

each bidders prospective plans for the site. The EASM replied that this question had been part of the interview process for each bidder, with the interview Panel comprised of officers, the selling agent, and two members of the Parkland Residents Association.

- iii. Cllr H Blathwayt asked who would make judgement on the fit and proper person, to which it was confirmed that this was established via Licensing as a relatively new requirement.
- iv. It was confirmed following a question from Cllr A Brown, that there were bidders from outside of North Norfolk.
- v. Cllr P Heinrich suggested that any successful bidder could potentially sell the site in the future, and asked whether there were any guarantees that could be provided on the long-term commitment to the site and residents. It was noted that all bidders had suggested a long-term commitment to the site, but protections would also be provided by the Mobile Homes Act.
- vi. Cllr L Withington asked whether there were any constraints on the sale of homes, to which the EASM replied that the Mobile Homes Act did protect owners from being forced to sell or otherwise harassed by park owners.
- vii. Cllr J Rest referred to the existing homes on the site and asked whether there was any age limit on mobile homes and any requirement to continue this. The EASM replied that she was not aware of an age limit, though the mobile homes were expected to be kept in reasonable condition by owners.
- viii. Cllr C Cushing asked for clarification on the timescale of shortlisting and selection of bids, to which the EASM replied that initial bids had been received in October and officers had been reviewing them since to ensure due diligence, and were now at the point of assessment to be determined by Cabinet on June 6<sup>th</sup>.
- ix. Cllr S Penfold asked if representatives of the Residents Association were satisfied with the process. Mr MacKeown replied that there were differing views and opinions amongst residents, but most would prefer that the successful bidder was someone known locally to the Council and residents.
- x. Mr T Amos of Parklands Residents Association stated that they had undertaken their own due diligence, during which some bidders had not come across positively, and asked the Council to ensure that it was certain of all information prior to making a decision.
- xi. The recommendations were proposed by Cllr H Blathwayt and seconded Cllr P Heinrich.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. To note the robust process and extensive due diligence carried out regarding assessment of the bids received.**
- 2. That Officers present a report to Cabinet recommending sale of the Parklands mobile home site to the highest bidder on the basis of best value in accordance with section 123 Local Government Act 1972.**

## 202 PRE-SCRUTINY: ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The DFC introduced the report and informed Members that engagement was an aspect of the customer focus theme of the Corporate Plan, and a framework had been developed to deliver a high level and consistent approach across all service areas. He added that it had been developed alongside the Quality of Life Strategy, as this also placed an emphasis on engagement with residents. It was noted that the Council already undertook a substantial amount of public engagement, though feedback suggested that this was done in varying ways and was not consistent. The DFC noted that five questions had been posed to Members on the Strategy document, which would also be shared with other consultees.

### Questions and Discussion

- i. The Chairman noted that there had not been a Member workshop during the developmental stages of the Strategy, and suggested that he felt this would have engaged more thoroughly with Members. The DFC replied that the document had only been prepared in draft form, and he would be happy to seek wider comments from Members if required. The Chairman suggested that it would be beneficial to host a workshop to ensure that input could be gained from a wider selection of Members, rather than just those present at the meeting.
- ii. Cllr A Brown stated that engagement had been demonstrated recently on two conservation area appraisals, which had been undertaken differently with one more successful than the other. He added that one had been criticised and he would therefore reiterate comments that some improved consistency would be beneficial.
- iii. Cllr V Holliday stated that the proposed steps for measuring engagement did not appear to have any SMART objectives, and asked whether this could be improved. The DFC replied that metrics could be developed as part of the action plan, but this would require engagement to determine what should be included. Cllr V Holliday suggested that the delivery capacity of Parish Council was limited, and comments on p11 were a concern. The DFC replied that many Parish Councils already undertook autonomous activities, such as establishing flood warning teams that NNDC had empowered to operate without the need for control. He added that empowerment of local groups and Parish Councils would not always be pursued, but it was a positive opportunity in some cases to give communities ownership of their services.
- iv. Cllr V Gay stated that she recommended the Strategy and reiterated the importance of its connections with the Quality of Life Strategy, as research had shown that giving residents a voice within their communities improved their sense of self. She added that it also had an effect on democratic engagement, which was important to show residents that their input mattered. It was noted that there were also many different kinds of communities, and recognising different groups and their interests would lead to better engagement.
- v. Cllr L Withington referred to comments on p31 that suggested outcomes would be used to inform Policy, strategies, and the delivery of services. She added that this important statement did not appear to be consistent throughout the Strategy document, and asked whether this could be strengthened to ensure that engagement remained outcome focused. It was



suggested that better links to the Communications Team and linking the Engagement Strategy to the Communications Strategy could also be helpful. Cllr L Withington suggested that community engagement could also be considered on all reports that came to Council.

- vi. Cllr S Penfold referred to comments on p7 that referred to community of identity, and suggested that the Council should be careful as this was a delicate topic, and asked whether advice had been sought on this issue. The DFC replied that this point had been advised from a range of other documents, and would allow groups to self-identify, though further advice could be sought if necessary. Cllr S Penfold asked whether there was a specific officer responsible for diversity, to which the DFC replied that whilst there was not a specific officer, diversity fell within the responsibility of People Services, where there was a range of specialist knowledge available.
- vii. The DFC noted that questions proposed in the document had not been answered, and whilst it was possible these could be addressed as part of a workshop, it would delay the process of approval.
- viii. The Chairman summarised comments and suggested that there appeared to be a proposal to hold a workshop on further development of the Strategy, and also to consider the inclusion of more measurable outcomes or metrics that could be discussed in greater detail at a workshop. The recommendation was proposed by Cllr S Penfold and seconded by Cllr A Brown.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. To support approval of the Engagement Strategy in principle, subject to fulfilment of the Committee's request for further discussions at a Member Workshop, and the inclusion of appropriate metrics within the action plan to measure Council engagement.**

## **203 ITEM OF URGENT BUSINESS - LEVELLING-UP FUND ROUND 2**

The CE introduced the report and informed Members that the programme deadlines meant that the item had to be brought to Committee as an item of urgent business. He added that the Government's prospectus for round 2 of the Levelling-Up Fund had been released in March, with North Norfolk increasing from a priority two to priority one area, which provided increased capacity funding to help develop proposals. It was noted that in this context, it was expected that the Council would submit proposals, and Cabinet had therefore given consideration to potential projects. The CE stated that there had been challenge and scrutiny of the District's limitations, which primarily related to utility provision and the viability of development, that were beyond the control of the Council. He added that projects that were successful would be given a two year timeframe for completion, expected by March 2025, or March 2026 under exceptional circumstances. It was reported that officers and Cabinet had reviewed potential projects and had developed initial proposals for improved community sports provision in Fakenham, which would include a 25m swimming pool and potentially a 2G hockey pitch, to address the existing lack of provision in the area. Upon further consideration the second proposal included investment into the sunken gardens and North Lodge Park in Cromer, which had not seen investment for a considerable period of time. The CE informed Members that engagement with key local stakeholders had begun with Fakenham Town Council, Sport England and Everyone Active for the Fakenham proposal, alongside Cromer Town Council and the Friends of North Lodge Park for the Cromer Proposal, with

bids to be submitted by July 6<sup>th</sup>.

### Questions and Discussion

- i. The Chairman raised a concern regarding process priorities and distribution, and stated that whilst he made no comment on the two proposals, areas east of North Walsham did not appear to feature in any major projects. He added that it was likely that Members and residents from this area would feel some discontent as a result, and suggested that there ought to be a list of project proposals that could be considered in the area. It was suggested that consultation could take place with local stakeholders during fallow periods, to have potential proposals ready in outline for consideration.
- ii. Cllr H Blathwayt asked whether the eastern area of the District could be prioritised for the next tranche of funding, as he felt the area had been ignored. He added that he would like to see a proposal put in motion that the east is given priority. The Chairman suggested that waiting until the next round of funding would be too late, and proposals were needed now so that they would be ready for implementation on a call-off list.
- iii. Cllr C Cushing stated that he strongly supported the Fakenham application as it was twelve years since the Town's last swimming pool had closed, with the next closest being in Dereham or Wells. He added that he also supported the provision of the 2G pitch, which tied in with the vision for the Fakenham extension, as improved facilities would be required. Cllr C Cushing suggested that he would also be interested to understand how bids would be put together, and more details on how stakeholders would be engaged throughout the process.
- iv. Cllr R Kershaw stated that he did not dispute that there was a need for projects in the eastern parts of the District, and it was clear that efforts were required to determine the needs of the area, so that projects could be in place ready for funding opportunities announced at short notice. He added that the Shared Prosperity Fund was expected which would provide £1.26m over three years, and whilst there was a tight schedule, he suggested that a Members briefing to review options and explain the limitations of the fund could be helpful.
- v. Cllr A Brown referred to the Shared Prosperity Fund and noted that a recent study by the Rural Services Network had shown that historically there had been consistent underfunding of rural areas, which received 38% less than urban areas. He added that the Levelling-Up Fund appeared to have been launched with indecent haste, and asked to what extent proposals in the east had been given equal consideration. The CE replied that the Levelling-Up agenda and associated data had deemed wards in the east of the District low in terms of need relative to the programmes objectives, and as a result, it was possible that projects would not be supported in the area. He added that competition amongst bids would be strong, and the Council therefore had to submit bids with the strongest chance of success. It was noted that this did not mean that there wasn't a need for support or proposals in the eastern parts of the District, but work would be required to properly identify these needs relative to the unique features of the area. The CE noted that previous proposals had considered improving employment land in areas such as Catfield, though the level of investment required did not appear to be matched by the level of demand.

- vi. The Chairman accepted that time limitations had restricted the available proposals considered, and suggested in future that a wide variety of pre-prepared proposals should be made available to ensure that all areas could be given equal consideration.
- vii. Cllr V Holliday suggested that she did not feel comfortable supporting proposals for Cromer, as she was not convinced that it would result in levelling-up for the wider District.
- viii. Cllr S Penfold suggested that Members raise awareness of the Council's own Sustainable Communities Fund, as whilst not at the same level, this could provide support for multiple projects in the east of the District. He added that very few applications were received from this region, with only one application east of Worstead in 2021 from Stalham.
- ix. Cllr V Gay stated that she had experienced the same issues when receiving notification of funding opportunities with short timescales, which allowed for very little project exploration. She added that developing projects could take months or years, so there was a case for developing proposals in advance. Cllr V Gay stated that she did support the Fakenham proposal as it would provide real opportunities to all residents, and similarly so would the woodlands and gardens of Cromer.
- x. Cllr R Kershaw stated that the Government aims of the project were very specific, and projects had been chosen for their adherence to the supplied guidance, as it was important to achieve funding success, rather than submit bids that were unlikely to succeed. He added that there was deprivation in Cromer that justified the need for funding support.
- xi. The CE noted that bids for both the Levelling-Up fund and the Shared Prosperity Fund were expected within a relatively short timescale, therefore it was important that opportunities to share proposals with Members in advance of any bids being submitted were taken.
- xii. The Chairman suggested that whilst the Committee was not required to make a recommendation on the funding proposals, it might be helpful to share the comments and concerns raised for future funding opportunities.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. To note the report.**

## **ACTIONS**

- 1. Briefing to be arranged on potential future project proposals and the Shared Prosperity Fund.**

## **COMMITTEE OBSERVATIONS/COMMENTS**

- 1. The process by which proposals are promoted and prepared for short notice funding schemes needs to be transparent, objectively scored against agreed priorities and fairly distributed across the District.**
- 2. Opportunities needed for Town & Parish Councils to submit possible**

**project proposals well ahead of funding scheme announcements, so that they are defined in outline and added to an approved investment list to be matched to scheme criteria, strategic priorities and equitably distributed, to enable more detailed proposal submission work to be efficiently targeted.**

- 3. Both proposals had obvious merits; Fakenham facility appeared to be strongly supported for the BCA with clear infrastructure and regeneration benefits. Cromer proposal had to be seen in context of a wider range of possibilities across the NNCA. Given that there were no other outline project proposals for comparison or judgement, and the short funding scheme deadline, there was pragmatic agreement to support both proposals.**

#### **204 OFFICER DELEGATED DECISIONS - FEBRUARY TO APRIL 2022**

- i. The Chairman noted that he had commented previously at Cabinet on increased mileage rates and asked whether any neighbouring Councils had been contacted or consulted on the increase. The CE replied that the decision had been made under delegated powers in consultation with Cabinet and the Director for Resources to reflect recent increases in travel costs. He added that the change had been made to address a short-term requirement and would be kept under review going forward. It was noted that NNDC had consulted with Unison, but was not required to consult with other authorities on the matter. The CE noted that the LGAs were in the process of undertaking a pay review for the eastern region that would allow benchmarking, and it was expected that NNDC would be amongst the lower paying authorities in the region, though this was under review to ensure that the organisation remained competitive.
- ii. Cllr J Toye noted that increases to the fuel allowance would only generate a relatively small increase in costs, but would help staff.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. To receive and note the report and the register of officer decisions taken under delegated powers.**

#### **205 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME SETTING 2022/23**

The DSGOS informed Members that a draft work programme was included for consideration with regulatory items and others requested for consideration by the Committee. He added that some items had been listed as Cabinet recommendations, which had been done with the aim of streamlining the work of the Committee. It was noted that there were four additional items proposed for consideration, and the Committee were required to indicate whether they were supportive of adding these to the work programme. These included coastal defences, mental health support, the economic development strategy, and the cost of living crisis.

#### Questions and Discussion

Members indicated that they were supportive of the work programme and the additional provisional items, with approval proposed by Cllr P Fisher and seconded by Cllr A Brown.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. To agree the draft Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme for the 2022-23 municipal year, with the inclusion of additional items proposed by Members.**

**206 THE CABINET WORK PROGRAMME**

The DSGOS informed Members that a number of items discussed at the meeting as pre-scrutiny were due for consideration by Cabinet in June, such as the Parklands property disposal. As a result, there was little further substantial business expected in the coming months that the Committee had not already considered.

**RESOLVED**

**To note the Cabinet Work Programme.**

**207 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND UPDATE**

- i. The DSGOS noted that there was an annual review of appointments to outside bodies, with the Committee required to make a recommendation on appointments to the NHOSC. He added that given that there had not been any alternate proposals, he assumed that the Committee were happy to continue with Cllr E Spagnola as representative and Cllr V Holliday as substitute.
- ii. Cllr J Toye noted that due to issues with GDPR, officers were not able to undertake the Planning Customer Experience Survey as planned. He added that a Customer Experience Strategy would still be brought before the Committee for consideration in September. Members agreed that they were supportive to continue as planned, despite setbacks.

**RESOLVED**

**To note the update.**

**208 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The meeting ended at 12.35 pm.

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Chairman