

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 4 November 2024 at the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 10.00 am

Committee

Members Present:

Cllr W Fredericks (Deputy Chair)	Cllr L Shires
Cllr T Adams (Chair)	Cllr A Brown
Cllr H Blathwayt	Cllr C Ringer
Cllr J Toyne	Cllr A Varley
Cllr L Withington	

Members also attending:

Cllr N Dixon
Cllr A Fitch-Tillett
Cllr V Holliday

Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive, Director for Resources / S151 Officer, Assistant Director for Finance, Assets, Legal & Monitoring Officer, Director for Place & Climate Change, Assistant Director for Planning, Planning Policy Team Leader and Estates and Asset Strategy Manager

43 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held Monday 7th October were approved as a correct record.

44 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

None received.

45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

46 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

47 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

No questions were raised.

48 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PLANNING POLICY & BUILT HERITAGE WORKING PARTY

- a. Cllr A Brown outlined the recommendation from the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party to proceed with the public consultation. He noted that the emerging Local Plan had been in development since January 2015 and had taken considerable resources to reach this stage.

The consultation, if agreed to proceed, would allow the public and elected Members the opportunity to express their individual views with respect to the proposed additional sites, small growth villages, and updated gypsy and travellers' policy following legislative changes.

Cllr A Brown recognised that views had been expressed suggesting the Council should challenge the Inspector and the government regarding changes to the transitional arrangements and the increased housing figures. He cautioned that three other Local Authorities who had recently paused their plans were now at risk of having their plans thrown out altogether. In the case of Elmbridge Borough Council, it was noted that the Local Authority was asked to provide an additional 6,300 homes, not dissimilar to the 70% increase asked of North Norfolk District Council. Elmbridge Borough Council subsequently requested a 12–15-month time extension to enable changes to be made. The Planning Inspector rejected this request and indicated the Local Plan would be cancelled should Elmbridge Borough Council proceed with this course of action, which the Borough Council was in the process of challenging. The Planning Inspector had made it clear that the Local Plan must be found sound at the examination stage with limited additional work to address soundness issues. Delays of six months or more would be considered unacceptable. Cllr A Brown stressed the risk to the Local Authority should the recommendation fall and affirmed that without a five-year housing land supply, North Norfolk would be at risk of speculative planning applications on sites which may be considered far less acceptable than those proposed within the Plan. Furthermore, the Local Plan process would need to be restarted, wasting nine years' worth of work, and at the additional expense of £2.5 million.

- b. The Chairman thanked current and former staff for their work in developing the emerging Local Plan. He recognised the many positive elements the emerging Plan would bring, including better development standards, meeting the Council's climate resilience aspirations, and sustainable growth, amongst others.

The Chairman acknowledged concerns regarding the proposed increased scale of development and whether this could be realistically achieved in North Norfolk given local constraints owing to vast areas of protected landscape and infrastructure limitations. The Chairman confirmed that he would separately write to the Deputy Prime Minister on housing targets and the inability of Local Authorities nationwide to deliver increased housing growth.

The Chairman shared the concerns raised by Cllr A Brown with respect to the risks of not progressing with the Plan and agreed that it was important for the Local Authority to swiftly proceed with the proposed consultation. He confirmed that Members would not be precluded from submitting their own personal comments and sharing their concerns regarding site allocations within the consultation process. He expressed his own reservations for several of the proposed sites, specifically Clifton Park, which offered important ecological and biodiversity value, and the infrastructure limitations in Briston.

- c. Cllr W Fredericks asked if additional sites could be brought forward as

exception sites as opposed to allocated sites, as she considered exception sites better addressed local need for affordable housing.

- d. Cllr L Shires stated that as Local Member for North Walsham, she was broadly supportive of housing growth in the town, specifically the development of affordable housing. She expressed her reservations for the newly proposed NW16 site allocation, which she considered would place additional pressure on existing infrastructure. Cllr L Shires agreed it was important to proceed with the consultation and welcomed residents submitting their comments through the correct channels.
- e. Cllr J Toye noted the proposed changes and shared the hope that the Inspector would fully consider comments and concerns submitted. He agreed it was right to proceed with consultation and to work with the Inspector.
- f. Cllr A Brown stated that it was a sobering statistic that between 2000 and 2024, just under 400 dwellings were built per annum. It was now expected that an additional 573 dwellings would need to be developed per annum to achieve government targets.

Cllr A Brown proposed, Cllr J Toye seconded.

RESOLVED

I. The draft Action Plan is endorsed and taken forward to the timelines outlined;

II. The updated evidence and background papers are endorsed;

III. The consultation arrangements and communication plan are endorsed;

IV. That delegated authority is given to the Acting Planning Policy Manager in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder to finalise the Action Plan and consultation material and continue to respond to the Inspector's questions during the examination period and hearing(s)

49 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny introduced the recommendations and confirmed they had received unanimous support from the cross-party Committee. He advised that the Committee had challenged the Officer recommendation for Beach Huts and Chalets and proposed an alternative recommendation. The Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny spoke positively of the level of discussion and engagement at the Committee and considered that the Committee had been able to add value to the recommendations presented to Cabinet.

The Chairman thanked the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny and agreed that it had been a productive meeting which had helped inform decision-making. He further thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their response to issues at Benjamin Court.

Noted.

50 CAR PARKING FEES AND CHARGES

- a. Cllr L Shires thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their contributions, and for the shared understanding and recognition of the Council's financial position. She thanked the Committee for their boldness and spoke highly of the wide-ranging and productive discussions which had taken place.

With respect to the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cllr L Shires expressed her support for some of the recommendations but advised she would be unable to support all of them.

Cllr L Shires considered an increase of 10p per hour for Standard Car Parks, 20p per hour for Resort Car Parks, and 30p for the Coastal Car Parks would more fairly reflect inflation. She felt the proposed 25% increase suggested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Resort Car Parks of 30p per hour would be too much. Further, she was uncomfortable with the 40p per hour increase on Coastal Car Parks, as this would be an above-inflation rise.

Cllr L Shires endorsed the recommendation not to increase seasonal charges at this time, nor to introduce evening charges.

With respect to Season Ticket prices, Cllr L Shires expressed her support for option 4. She thanked Cllr V Holliday for her balanced perspective and comments at Committee for a stepped increase, rather than enacting an inflationary increase all at once.

Regarding Coach Parking charges, Cllr L Shires advised, having researched the matter, that the 24-hour ticket charge was far higher than comparable sites across the UK. Therefore, she suggested a £13 charge for 24 hours would be far more reasonable.

Cllr L Shires agreed with the introduction of charges to Hornbeam Road (North Walsham), via app only, with permit holders also having usage.

Having reflected on the differences between a Resort and a Coastal Car Park, set out within the Officer's report, S.1.5m, Cllr L Shires argued that Mundesley Car Park should be reclassified as a Resort Car Park.

In addition, Cllr L Shires affirmed that car park charges should be reviewed again in 2025/2026 as opposed to in two years' time.

- b. The Chairman confirmed that in reviewing car parking charges, the Council had considered charges at other local authorities and local private providers. It was felt that the Council-owned car parks aligned with, or were cheaper than, many other similar locations nationwide.

The Chairman welcomed the competitive pricing of Coach Parking fees to encourage the tourist economy, noting that this was not a significant revenue consideration for the Council, rather it was more of a service provision consideration. He considered that a review of coach parking locations would be beneficial, though this would not preclude the Council from responding to or accommodating individual requests for specific sites.

The Chairman endorsed Victory Car Park (North Walsham) having a three-hour rather than two-hour restriction to better enable leisure facility users.

- c. Cllr L Withington endorsed comments made by Cllr L Shires with respect to

Resort Car Park charges, noting that in Sheringham the Station Road and Morris Street car parks were used by residents and visitors alike. Additionally, she reflected that local people in coastal communities were often reliant on seasonal car parking tickets and welcomed the stepped charge approach suggested. Cllr L Withington supported the reduced increase to Coach Parking and stated the importance of retaining this provision to ensure the vitality of towns. She noted that several towns were seeking Coach Friendly status in recognition of the important role this played.

Cllr L Withington asked if a review of accessible car parking could be undertaken for 2025/2026, to ensure appropriate provision was available at the appropriate locations.

- d. Cllr J Toye reflected on his prior experience as a coach driver and affirmed that a primary consideration in deciding where to go was based on pricing. He welcomed the Coach Friendly approach which aligned with the Council's net-zero ambitions to reduce individual car movements.

Cllr J Toye endorsed the recommendation to redesignate Mundesley Car Park to a Resort Car Park, and to review car parks again in 2025/2026.

- e. Cllr W Fredericks welcomed the redesignation of Mundesley Car Park.
- f. Cllr H Blathwayt asked if Officers could continue to monitor the offerings of other Local Authority-owned car parks, specifically whether any innovative schemes were forthcoming to provide different charging rates to registered residents.
- g. The Chairman noted charges were being introduced and/or increased across the County. He stated North Norfolk District Council welcomed innovation and expressed his disappointment that certain options were not available to the public sector as they were to the private sector.
- h. Cllr C Ringer endorsed comments made and agreed that whilst it was not appropriate to introduce seasonal charges at this time, this may be an option the Council wishes to revisit in the coming years.
- i. The Chairman summarised the proposals and confirmed the off-street car parking order would be subject to a statutory consultation period.
- j. Cllr L Shires reiterated that she would not support the introduction of a weekly coach parking charge having considered the offering of other Local Authority-owned car parks. She confirmed the wording for the car parking order relating to three-hour use of Victory Leisure Centre.
- k. The S151 Officer noted that Great Yarmouth offered weekly coach parking at £61 per week. She suggested if a charge was introduced it should be treated as seven days for the price of four, in line with other offerings.
- l. The Chairman noted bespoke arrangements were in place on request of coach companies. He was satisfied with the current arrangement offered.
- m. Cllr J Toye agreed that a weekly coach parking charge should not be introduced, and welcomed the opportunity to push forward with Coach Friendly status.

Cllr L Shires proposed, and the Chairman seconded.

RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council

- a. Fees for the Council's Standard Car Parks be increased by 10p per hour, 20p per hour for Resort Car Parks, and 30p for the Coastal Car Parks.**
- b. No Evening or Seasonal Charges be introduced at this time.**
- c. Season Ticket prices be increased in line with inflation.**
- d. Coach Car Parking Charges be increased £2.5 hr / £13 for 24hr. No weekly charge to be introduced at this time.**
- e. 3hrs Car Parking be offered for leisure users at Victory Leisure Centre. Hornbeam Road (North Walsham) to be as standard but charged via app only with permit holders also having usage.**
- f. Beach Road and Gold Park (Mundesley) be re classified as a Resort Car Park.**
- g. To proceed with consultation on the updated Off-Street Parking Places Order.**
- h. Car Parking fees and charges be reviewed again in 2025/2026.**

51 ANNUAL REVIEW OF BEACH HUTS AND CHALETS

- a. Cllr L Shires thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their comments and cross-party contributions. She noted the recommendation from the Committee that half of the weekly let units be transferred to longer leases, with a review of whether the remaining units should also be transferred for longer lets. The Committee and Cllr L Shires considered that more information would have been beneficial to provide a clear steer. Cllr L Shires was uncertain how the 14% figure for the increase of lets had been determined and confirmed that the estates team were reviewing charges for lets.

Following comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and discussions with the Estates Team, Cllr L Shires proposed a bolder course of action given the known demand for longer-term lets and recommended that all 33 short-term leases be converted into long-term leases. She noted frustration from some local residents about the length of time they had been on the waiting list and considered that the revenue provided by the short-term lets did not justify the level of officer time or resources.

She confirmed she would speak with the Estates Manager regarding the increased charge for new lets.

Cllr L Shires noted that circumstances may change in the future with respect to weekly let demand and reflected that it would be beneficial for Officers to be able to consider the matter and respond accordingly.

- b. The Chairman agreed that a flexible approach was required to allow Officers delegated authority, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to respond and react to changes in demand.
- c. Cllr J Toye asked whether, when allocating beach huts, weight could be given to North Norfolk residents.

- d. Cllr L Shires clarified that the wait time figures were somewhat erroneous, as some on the waiting list had very specific requests for a certain town or plot. It was not the case that those on the waiting list always lacked the opportunity to have a beach hut.
- e. Cllr L Withington welcomed the approach suggested. She considered the weekly lets involved a greater level of resourcing compared to the revenue provided. She agreed with Cllr J Toye that a local priority should be introduced.
- f. Cllr H Blathwayt considered the Beach Huts offered fantastic value for money for the occupiers.
- g. Cllr W Fredericks expressed her support for the recommendation and noted usage figures detailed in the officer's report, reflecting the lack of use in April and May 2024.
- h. Cllr L Shires asked if the new lets should be limited to North Norfolk residents only. She advised that the majority of those on the list already lived in the district.
- i. The Chairman suggested the allocation system should not be reviewed at this time but could be reviewed in the future.

Cllr L Shires proposed, and Cllr J Toye seconded.

RESOLVED

The 33 existing weekly lets be converted into leased (5 year) units, with delegated authority given to the Asset Strategy Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Estates & Property Services, to consider market demands for weekly lets in future when voids arise and act accordingly.

52 ANNUAL UPDATE - REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA)

- a. Cllr C Ringer reiterated it was Home Office guidance to review the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 Policy and Procedures annually. No changes had been made to the policy.

Cllr C Ringer proposed, The Chairman seconded.

RESOLVED

Members note that there are no amendments required to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 Policy and Procedures.

Members note that there are no amendments required to the Internet & Social Media Research & Investigations Policy.

Members note there has been no activity undertaken under RIPA within the period since the last report.

**CORPORATE PLAN 2023-27 ACTION PLAN 2024- 25 – TO END OF QUARTER 2
– 30 SEPTEMBER 2024**

- a. The Chairman introduced the report and highlighted some of the actions contained therein:

Action 2: It was noted that Carbon literacy training was ongoing, with further sessions planned for Members.

Action 3: The project was soon to commence at the Victory Swim and Fitness Centre (North Walsham). Work was ongoing to secure grants for further work elsewhere.

Action 13: Work had now been completed, as far as could be achieved in this action plan. North Norfolk District Council was committed to the ongoing partnership with Active Norfolk.

Action 14: Levelling Up funding for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub proposal had now been confirmed by the Government, following the Autumn budget.

Action 17: The next tranche of data would be shared with Parish Councils soon.

Action 25: A statement had been issued on the potential developments at Bacton Gas terminal. The Council would seek to engage with the operator to discuss their vision.

Action 27: Further developments would be reported soon with respect to bank hubs in Fakenham and North Walsham.

Action 30: Meetings had been held with external bodies, and reporting of these meetings would be shared in due course.

Action 37: Temporary Accommodation continued to be the biggest pressure for North Norfolk, and many other District Councils. An initial analysis was undertaken by officers into the Value for Money of the Council's Temporary Accommodation, with a further review considered.

- b. Cllr V Holliday questioned the colour grading of actions 9 and 31 and asked how two projects, both listed as 'Not Started', could be colour-coded differently. Cllr V Holliday stressed the need for consistency.
- c. The Chairman advised that action 9 would be further appraised with the next corporate plan progress review. The Chairman agreed that action 31 should be updated to 'in progress' as opposed to 'not started'.
- d. Cllr J Toye advised that work had started with respect to action 31, which would be reported with the next update.
- e. Cllr V Holliday noted that action 20 was marked red. She recognised this was an especially important action and asked what work was taking place to push this forward.
- f. The Chairman confirmed discussions were ongoing with the Norfolk Local Authorities to have a common position. He had requested the status remain marked red, due to the risk associated with this not going ahead.
- g. Cllr A Varley thanked the Climate Change Project Officer for delivering the in-house training and thanked all those who had engaged in the process to date. He encouraged those members who had not attended the training to get trained as soon as possible. He confirmed the Council was seeking to attain bronze status as a Carbon Literate Organisation.

- h. Cllr H Blathwayt endorsed the provision of an ATM in Hoveton, as one of the district's primary tourist economies, and considered this needed to be elevated as an issue.
- i. The Chairman commented he would discuss this matter with Cash Access UK.
- j. Cllr D Nixon welcomed Cllr H Blathwayt's comments.

Noted - Action 31 to be amended as in progress rather than "not started".

54 RESIDENTIAL SOLAR ADVISE AND INSTALLATIONS

- a. Cllr A Varley introduced the report and thanked officers for their continued hard work. In 2019 NNDC declared a Climate Emergency and pledged to district wide Net Zero ambitions by 2045. Furthermore, the Council has set out in its latest Corporate Plan and Annual Action Plan specific goals and objectives to help achieve this, including "Supporting homeowners upgrade the environmental performance of their homes". Cllr A Varley endorsed option 5, which had been successfully modelled at another Local Authority.
- b. Cllr N Dixon considered it may be beneficial to partner with more than one business.
- c. Cllr A Varley advised a vetting process had been undertaken, and the intention was to align with the one company and replicate what they had done at another Local Authority.
- d. Cllr V Holliday asked if there was a sufficient number of vetted local suppliers.
- e. Cllr A Varley was informed that there was sufficient numbers, and confirmed the approved organisation would work with local contractors.
- f. The Climate and Environmental Policy Manager advised that Norfolk County Council currently vet local suppliers on their trusted trader, and don't currently vet anyone in North Norfolk. It was the expectation that the third-party organisation would work to establish relationships with local contractors to fulfil this work. The third party would take responsibility for contract delivery of the installation.

Cllr A Varley proposed, the Chairman seconded.

RESOLVED

To contract with the most suitable company to deliver a combination of solar modelling and impartial advice with optional managed installation for north Norfolk householders at no cost to the Council.

To delegate authority to the Director for Place and Climate Change to reach a suitable agreement with an appropriate contractor.

55 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

56 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at 11.23 am.

Chairman