

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 2 December 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 Toye	Cllr A Varley

Members also attending:

Cllr C Cushing
Cllr N Dixon
Cllr A Fitch-Tillett

Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Director of Resources, Director for Place & Climate Change and Director for Communities

Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager for item 10

Also in attendance:

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr L Withington

57 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 04 November 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

58 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

None

59 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

60 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None Received

61 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

None Received

62 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Cllr Dixon updated Cabinet to let them know that since the Overview and Scrutiny

meeting the People strategy has been discussed and will provide an overarching document into which other policies will feed in but will not deal with the items the Overview and Scrutiny committee had discussed.

A workshop will be held in the spring of next year to discuss those services that are statutory and those that are discretionary and how these affect the Council's budget.

Due to the current speculation about a tier 1 and tier 2 local government review the Government has planned and how this will affect us, the primary function for the Council for the time being must to focus on the deficit over the next few years.

Budget monitoring stands as written.

Cllr Adams thanked Overview and Scrutiny committee for their thorough review and considerations of the recommendations.

It was RESOLVED to approve the following recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Visitor Information Centre

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that Cabinet consider:

- The building being made available for an alternative income generating use.
- What provision can be made to continue a tourist information service – be that through an enhanced online presence, electronic information boards or physical leaflet stands at prominent locations within Cromer such as the Pier and other visitor attractions.
- Relocation of the current Deep History Coast display housed within the North Norfolk Visitor Centre to a suitable alternative location, possibly Cromer Museum.

Budget Monitoring

O&S noted the contents of the report and the current forecast year end position and recommended that:

1. Officers to work to further reduce the overall projected General Fund deficit for 2024/25
2. In respect of item 7 below, the Estates Team to explore the most cost-effective materials options (in addition to rethatching) for the re-roof of the Collectors Cabin with competitive quotes and that the budget for the work should be up to £30,000.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee supports Cabinet seeking approval from Full Council in respect of the following:

3. to include an addition to the revenue budget of £13,000 for an addition to existing Exacom software as laid out in paragraph 4.8.1
4. to include a permanent increase to the revenue budget of £34,000 for an additional member of staff in the Licensing Team as detailed in paragraphs 4.8.2 to 4.8.5. This will be funded from the ring-fenced licencing income.
5. to include an additional capital budget of £22,000 to complete the Cromer Offices LED lighting project. This is to be funded from

- the Net Zero Initiatives reserve as detailed in paragraph 5.4.2
- 6. to include an additional capital budget of £5,600 to pay the retention sum for the Crinkle Crankle Wall and that this is funded from the Major Projects Reserve as detailed in paragraph 5.4.3
- 7. to include an additional capital budget of £30,000 to rethatch the Collector's Cabin roof and that this is to be funded from the Asset Management reserve as detailed in paragraph 5.4.4
- 8. to include an additional capital budget of £23,400 to develop the customer services C3 software and is to be funded from the Development Plan reserve. as detailed in paragraph 5.4

BUDGET MONITORING P6 2024/25

Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the contents of the report and the current forecast year end position.
- 2. Noted that officers will work together to take action to reduce the overall projected Decision List Monday, 2 December 2024

General Fund deficit for 2024/25.

Cabinet seek approval from full Council:

- 3. to include an addition to the revenue budget of £13,000 for an addition to existing Exacom software as laid out in paragraph 4.8.1
- 4. to include a permanent increase to the revenue budget of £34,000 for an additional member of staff in the Licensing Team as detailed in paragraphs 4.8.2 to 4.8.5. This will be funded from the ring-fenced licencing income.
- 5. to include an additional capital budget of £22,000 to complete the Cromer Offices LED lighting project. This is to be funded from the Net Zero Initiatives reserve as detailed in paragraph 5.4.2
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63 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PLANNING POLICY & BUILT HERITAGE WORKING PARTY

Cllr Brown introduced the recommendations from the Planning Policy and Built Heritage Working Party.

Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy

The proposed strategy provides a plan to spend £22million received from revenue from planning application fees raised over the next 20-22 years. The key aims are trying to mitigate harm to the main tourist attractions by creating other facilities across the County. All the District Councils are a member in this scheme, and the funds will be managed by Norwich City Council. Work is also underway to try to bring the County Council to the table to consult alongside other representatives from organisations such as the Campaign To Protect Rural England (CPRE) and Natural England. Cllr Holliday will be the Council's

representative on the board.

Cllr Brown recommended that this appointment was endorsed by Cabinet.

Cllr Cushing read out a message from Cllr Holliday which said that she would have wanted to expand on the caveats which were in addition to the inclusion of the County Council, which Cllr Brown says is now being sorted out. She wanted to emphasis more around the governance ensuring an evidence base for proposed interventions and measurement of outcomes. She is still concerned some of the proposed interventions have the capacity to increase footfall rather than control it.

Planning In Health Protocol

It was necessary to ensure that dentistry provision was included in the modelling, and this has led to the revised protocol.

All significant planning applications will need to take into account provision for health services in the surrounding area.

It was RESOLVED to approve the recommendations from the Planning Policy and Built Heritage Working Group.

Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy

- I. The Action Plan and Governance arrangements are endorsed, subject to caveats, with additional requests made to the Norfolk Strategic Framework that other stakeholders (such as Norfolk County Council) and those that have wider environmental interests across the County are actively engaged with and, where appropriate, invited to attend board meetings. Final Wording to be delegated to the Acting Planning Policy Manager in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder and Chairman of Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party.
- II. Nominate appropriate Member to sit on the GIRAMS board. The Working Party endorsed Cllr Victoria Holliday as its preferred nominee.

Planning In Health Protocol

- I. The revised Planning for Health Protocol be used when preparing Local Plans and determining planning applications.

64 HICKLING PUBLIC TOILET LEASE SURRENDER

Cllr Shires introduced this item, saying that it was a good news story for the District. It is wonderful news that the new landlord, The Norfolk Wildlife Trust, is happy to take the lease back and to continue to run the facility as a free public toilet.

Cllr Blathwayt confirmed that the Parish Council is relieved that this has come to such a good conclusion.

Cabinet approved:

- To surrender the Council's lease of the public toilet at Hickling Staithe
- Delegated authority to the Asset Strategy Manager to agree terms and associated costs relating to the lease surrender.

65 HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME PROPOSALS 2024

Cllr Fredericks introduced this item by explaining that the Council has become increasingly challenged by having an allocations policy that is not fit for purpose due to changing economic climate and housing market within the district. The demand for social housing has outstripped the availability of such homes.

During this process the Scheme has been out to consultation with our registered providers and tenants, with an aim of ensuring that people in the greatest housing need have the greatest opportunity to access suitable housing that best meets their needs, to prevent and relieve homelessness and reduce placement in temporary accommodation. To make effective use of the available housing stock to meet the legal requirements for the allocation of social housing. To help contribute to the development of sustainable communities. Make the housing process, accessible, transparent and fair. Provide information about the availability of homes and being more efficient, and user friendly for applicants to the Council's housing associations and other partner organisations.

The Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager was present for questions.

Cllr Toye thanked officers for their work on this. This is a difficult and complex problem to navigate, and it is pleasing to hear that this scheme has been trialed and has already shown success, which can be built on moving forward.

Cllr Cushing asked if there were further details as to the cost of changing the system.

The Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager responded that there is a quote contained within the paper of £35-48,000 for implementation of the system, but there are a number of different approaches which can be taken. There is likely to be a combination of solutions using varying levels of IT assistance and manual ways of working. The Council need to work with the provider to determine the best way to proceed, which is why the implementation time frame has been set at 18 months as this allows for these discussions. Looking for a solution that provides the least disruption to applicants and staffing within the Housing Options team and provides best value for money while still implementing the changes required.

Cabinet:

- Agreed the proposed allocations scheme summarised in this report and attached as Appendix A
- Gave delegated authority to officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Peoples' Services, for the implementation of the revised allocation scheme over the next 18-months within allocated service budgets.

66 DELEGATED DECISIONS (SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2024)

Cabinet received and noted the report and the register of decisions taken under delegated powers.

67 VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICE

This item was deferred to the Cabinet meeting on Monday 20 January 2025

68 BUDGET MONITORING P6 2024/2025

Cllr Shires thanked Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their consideration of this item. It was a very beneficial conversation.

She also thanked all the staff within the organisation, who all understand the challenges that the Council faces financially.

Cabinet's attention was drawn to:

Item 4 which is an additional member of staff for Licensing team. This is a growth position due to growth in Licensing workload.

Item 7 – Currently we have not received quotes for different type of roofs for the Collectors Cabin asset. Cabinet indicated that they are happy to approve the capital budget provided all options are explored.

Cabinet:

1. Noted the contents of the report and the current forecast year end position.
2. Noted that officers will work together to take action to reduce the overall projected General Fund deficit for 2024/25.

Cabinet seek approval from Full Council:

3. to include an addition to the revenue budget of £13,000 for an addition to existing Exacom software as laid out in paragraph 4.8.1
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69 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025-2029

Cllr Shires explained that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2025/2029 has already been to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. It is felt that the Finance Team have found a report that works for everyone.

Thanks were expressed to The Assistant Director Finance and Assets for the work he has done on this.

In section 8 which looks at closing the budget gap, there are a number of headings

as to how this will be achieved, moving forward any budget savings will be linked to these headings.

It is also necessary to ensure in year and multiple year savings are clearly identified throughout the reports.

Cabinet noted the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2025-2029

70 FEES & CHARGES 2025/26

Cllr Shires explained that the car parking charges has been through committee separately.

Some of the fees and charges are set by Government and some are capped by Government, and we can only charge to a level that allows us to cover our costs. Discretionary fees are the only area where the Council is able to choose the fees it sets.

Cabinet agreed and recommended to full Council

- The fees and charges from 1 April 2025 as included in Appendix A.
- That delegated authority be given to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and relevant Directors/Assistant Director to agree the fees and charges not included within Appendix A as required (outlined within the report).

71 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

None

72 PRIVATE BUSINESS - EXEMPT APPENDICES - HICKLING PUBLIC TOILET LEASE SURRENDER & TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

The meeting ended at 10.30am

Chairman