# CABINET

**Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 31 March 2025 at the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 10.00 am**

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| **Committee Members Present:** | | |
| | Cllr W Fredericks (Deputy Chair) | Cllr L Shires |
| | Cllr T Adams (Chair) | Cllr H Blathwayt |
| | Cllr J Toye | Cllr A Varley |
| **Members also attending:** | Cllr J Boyle, Cllr C Cushing, Cllr N Dixon, Cllr A Fitch-Tillett, Cllr Dr V Holliday | |
| **Officers in Attendance:** | Director for Communities, Chief Executive, Assistant Director for Finance, Assets, Legal & Monitoring Officer and Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager | |
| **Apologies for Absence:** | Cllr A Brown<br>Cllr C Ringer<br>Cllr L Withington | |

**33 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 03 March were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**34 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS**

None received.

**35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

**36 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**37 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

The Chair advised members that they could ask questions as matters arose during the meeting.

**38 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Cllr N Dixon, informed Cabinet

that there were no recommendations from the meeting held on 12th March but that there was an updated recommendation from the meeting of the committee held on 12th February, which had been agreed when the draft minutes were presented for approval.

He explained that the agreed recommendation for the Corporate Plan Action Plan 2024/2025 – Mobile Phone Coverage was as follows:

'To ask the relevant portfolio holders and directors to review options to improve mobile signal hot spots, not spots and the reasons why mast applications fail and communicate actions to residents and businesses'.

It was RESOLVED
to accept the above recommendation from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

**39 LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND ROUND 3 - FUNDING FOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION**

Cllr W Fredericks, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Benefits, introduced this item. She explained that the Council had been successful in bidding for Round 3 funding through the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF). It was proposed to use the £588,000 of LAHF grant to help purchase a further six units of Temporary Accommodation for homeless households. Through negotiations with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, the Council had been given permission to purchase our initial request of six homes in the LAHF grant agreement, meaning that the Council would receive £588k grant for six homes, but the purchases would all be exempt from Stamp Duty.

The Chairman invited members to speak:

Cllr Dr V Holliday said that she welcomed the proposals. She said that the report referred to management and repair costs as part of the ongoing costs and queried whether there was a business case underpinning the proposal.

The Housing Strategy & Delivery Manager replied that there was a business case which compared the cost of between using paid for nightly bed and breakfast temporary accommodation versus NNDC housing stock and it showed a considerable saving as well as an improved quality of experience. She added that an external 'value for money' review had been carried by the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) which supported NNDC's investment in temporary accommodation. Cllr Fredericks added that the housing benefit received by claimants went towards the maintenance of the properties. It was anticipated that there would be 31 such properties in total by the end of year.

Cllr C Cushing referred to the £900k allocated from second homes council tax income for housing projects and asked about the level of risk associated with this funding stream as it was only an estimate. Cllr Fredericks replied that the £900k was a conservative estimate and it was anticipated that it was likely to be nearer to £1.3m. The additional money would go towards funding the building of affordable homes in the district. The Chairman added that spending on nightly temporary accommodation had been hugely reduced.

Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance, said that when the income from the second homes council tax was calculated, a variation of approximately 35% was

factored in to avoid over-estimating so she was confident that the level of risk was low.

It was proposed by Cllr W Fredericks, seconded by Cllr T Adams and

RESOLVED to

It is recommended that Cabinet:

**1.** Agree to accept the £588,000 of Local Authority Housing Fund grant

**2.** Use the LAHF grant to part fund the purchase six further units of temporary accommodation, with one to be prioritised for Afghan resettlement households.

**3.** Seek approval from full Council to allocate £0.9m of the additional income from the Second Homes Premium (both from the County Council and District Council elements) as match funding for the LAHF grant.

**4.** Give delegated authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Peoples' Services, to agree the actual purchases of up to six properties (within the identified budget limits).

Reasons for the decision:

To seek approval for the Council to accept the LAHF grant and use the grant to help acquire further homes to use as temporary accommodation

## 40 COASTAL MANAGEMENT - BUDGET FOR REACTIVE COASTAL WORKS

Cllr H Blathwayt, Portfolio Holder for Coast, introduced this item. He explained that the North Norfolk coast was very dynamic and unpredictable and when works were required, identifying an appropriate budget could be time-consuming and subject to debate, as each service area already had its own budgetary constraints and these works often sat between assets which were the responsibility of Coastal Management, NNDC Assets, Property Services or Leisure Services.

It was therefore proposed that a budget was established specifically for reactive works, which council services could request access to, but which sat within and was overseen by the Coastal Management team, which was where the technical expertise and oversight of such works resided.

The Chairman invited members to speak:

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett said that there was no central government fund for coastal maintenance and she urged the Portfolio Holder to continue to lobby for such funding via the Local Government Association Special Interest Group (SIG) for the Coast. Cllr Blathwayt confirmed that this was already being done.

Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Estates & Property Services said that it was a way of collating the money spent on reactive coastal works so that it could be monitored and the Coastal Team could respond quickly to any issues without having to locate funding.

It was proposed by Cllr H Blathwayt, seconded by Cllr L Shires and

RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council:

The establishment of a dedicated cliff works budget (£125k), administered by the Coastal Management Team.

Reason for the decision:

By establishing a dedicated budget for cliff related works, the ambiguity surrounding remedial and emergency works is removed, allowing such issues to be addressed in a timely manner. This new budget provision, which any service area needing cliff related works completed can request access to, should be the responsibility of the Coastal Management team, due to the existing expertise within the team and better ability to align and co-ordinate any necessary spend

**41 COAST PROTECTION WORKS AT OVERSTRAND**

Cllr H Blathwayt, Portfolio Holder for Coast, introduced this item. He explained that Overstrand's soft cliffs were protected at the bottom by a sea wall, which also acted as a walkway (promenade), on which the England Coast Path passed. This sea wall comprised a series of integrated concrete defences which, as beach levels had dropped, had become significantly undermined in several places. As a result of the undermining, they had sustained at least two major fractures from top to bottom, undermining the structure above. It was therefore proposed that £1.28m was added to the Capital Programme to be funded by receipts and grant funding and the remaining balance to be covered by borrowing.

The Chairman invited members to speak:

Cllr N Dixon asked why it was not included in the 2025/2026 capital budget that was approved by Full Council in February. The Chairman replied that it had been highlighted at the time that it would be coming forward.

Cllr H Blathwayt explained that the Council's approach to coastal issues was nuanced. It had previously been 'hold the line' but government funding could no longer be relied on and NNDC was having to manage incidents as they arose.

The Assistant Director for Sustainable Growth added that there was grant funding available from the Regional Flood and Coast Committee and this project seemed to match the criteria well. Applications needed to be submitted by 16th April.

Cllr Dixon asked for clarity regarding the second recommendation, specifically the following wording: 'to reallocate existing scheme budgets to reduce the level of overall borrowing if it is minded to do so'. The Chief Executive replied that the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) had been advised in 2024 that work was needed on the seawall but that there was no case for supporting the whole of the wall and that work would be focused on critical areas instead.

Following a further query from Cllr Dixon regarding the reference to the 'context of overall borrowing', the Chairman explained that if the schemes were left as they were, £649k of additional borrowing would be required.

The Monitoring Officer sought clarification on Members' preferred options. The Chairman confirmed that in terms of scope, Option 4 was supported and in terms of financing, Option 1 was preferred.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr L Shires and

RESOLVED

That Cabinet recommend to full Council that it approves the required works to the Overstrand sea wall (option 4 of this report at paragraph 3.9) and that £1.280m be added to the Capital Programme for 2025/26 for this scheme and that this be funded by £0.245m of capital receipts, £0.386m of grant funding if able to obtain grant funding and the balance from borrowing.

That Cabinet agree Option 1 for the financing of the scheme (as outlined in the table at paragraph 1.5 of Appendix A)

That Cabinet recommend to full Council that the scheme be funded by up to a maximum of £1.035m of borrowing. It should be noted that the Council may be able to access grant funding (c. £0.386m) for this scheme and if successful it is proposed that the level of borrowing be reduced to £0.649m.

That Cabinet approve that delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director for Sustainable Growth, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Coast, to procure, design and deliver the scheme, together with the development of any applications for external funding or necessary consents.

Reason for the decision:

To ensure appropriate measures are taken in a timely manner to maintain the integrity of the sea wall at Overstrand for as long as is feasible in the circumstances and in accordance with the Shoreline Management Plan.

## 42 DONATION STATION OPTIONS ON CROMER PIER

Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Estates and Property Services introduced this item. She explained that the Council was working towards preserving the future of Cromer Pier and the report set out potential options which would facilitate the public donating towards the costs incurred in maintaining the historic pier. It was suggested that donation stations were piloted over the 2025 summer season to establish if this could provide a viable way for the Council to generate additional revenue to maintain Grade 2 listed structure in sound condition for the future as a key element of North Norfolk's tourism appeal and offer.

The Chairman invited members to speak:

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett asked whether consideration had been given to the charity collection buckets that were operated by Openwide, which managed the Pier on behalf of the Council. The Chairman replied that Openwide had been consulted and that the donation stations would be at distinct, separate locations from the charity buckets. He said that there had previously been donations points at the entrance to the pier. He added that there would be no cash collection to protect from theft and fraud.

Cllr Dr V Holliday asked who would be responsible for the maintenance of the donation stations as they did not always work. The Chairman replied that the external provider would be responsible for the stations. He added that it was felt that turnstile entry would impact on concessions and businesses based on the pier and

that donation points seemed like a good alternative to trial.

Cllr J Boyle, local member for Cromer said that a resident had raised the issue of visitor donations for the pier and that they were supportive of the proposals.

Cllr J Toye said that he was supportive of a six month trial.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr J Toye and

RESOLVED to

**Approve the purchase of 2 Dona devices to use for the public to make voluntary donations towards the costs of maintaining Cromer Pier for a six-month trial period over the 2025 summer season. This will be funded from the Invest to Save Reserve.**

**Reason for the decision:**

- **Dona already works with a number of other Local Authorities.**
- **With the purchase of a Dona terminal, NNDC will also get a donation webpage and QR code at no additional cost, which can be used to allow donations via our website and social media as well.**

**43 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**44 PRIVATE BUSINESS**

The meeting ended at 10.51 am.

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Chairman