

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 21 July 2021 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 6.00 pm

Members Present:	Mr T Adams	Mr H Blathwayt
	Dr P Bütikofer	Mrs S Bütikofer
	Mr C Cushing	Mr N Dixon
	Mr P Fisher	Mrs A Fitch-Tillett
	Mr T FitzPatrick	Mr V FitzPatrick
	Mrs W Fredericks	Ms V Gay
	Mrs P Grove-Jones	Mr G Hayman
	Mr C Heinink	Mr P Heinrich
	Dr V Holliday	Mr R Kershaw
	Mr N Lloyd	Mr G Mancini-Boyle
	Mr N Pearce	Mr S Penfold
	Mrs G Perry-Warnes	Mr J Punchard
	Mr J Rest	Mr E Seward
	Miss L Shires	Mrs E Spagnola
	Mrs J Stenton	Mr J Toye
	Mr E Vardy	Ms L Withington

Also in attendance: The Chief Executive, The Monitoring Officer, the HR Manager, The Democratic Services Manager

61 PRESENTATION ON THE CHAIRMAN'S NOMINATED CHARITY

Mr E Gough spoke about the Firefighter's Charity, one of the Chairman's nominated charities for his year in office. He outlined the services that they provided, which included supporting the mental, physical and social needs of all serving and retired members of the UK firefighters. He explained that the charity relied solely on donations and fundraising and he thanked the Chairman for his support. He then introduced a colleague who spoke about the ongoing support that he received from the charity following a work-related injury.

62 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr D Birch, Cllr A Brown, Cllr N Housden, Cllr M Millership, Cllr Dr C Stockton, Cllr A Varley, Cllr A Yiasimi

63 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th May were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

The Leader requested that the statement that she had made at the meeting was included in full as an appendix to the minutes.

64 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None received.

65 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

66 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone back into the Council Chamber. He thanked Emyr Gough for speaking to Members about the work of the Firefighter's Charity which he would be supporting throughout his year as Chairman. He said that civic events remained limited due to the pandemic but that he had recently attended the civic reception of the Mayor of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council at King's Lynn Minster.

67 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader began by expressing frustration at the requirement for local government committee meetings to take place in person. She said that some members and the public felt unable to attend due to concerns about risks to their health, with the pandemic still so prevalent. She urged the Government to introduce hybrid style meetings so that the views of all members and residents could be heard.

She then referred to an update prepared by the Chief Executive on the Council's preparedness for dealing with an influx of visitors to the District during the summer season. She said that a copy of the paper would be circulated to all members after the meeting.

68 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

None received.

69 PORTFOLIO REPORTS

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett, Portfolio Holder for Coast introduced her report as written.

Cllr W Fredericks, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Benefits, introduced her report as written.

Cllr V Gay, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Wellbeing & Culture, introduced her report and the previously circulated report covering the period from May to June 2021. She referenced the opening night of the Cromer Pier Show, which many Members had attended and spoke about the burying of the time capsule at the new leisure centre, the Reef, in Sheringham.

Cllr R Kershaw, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth, said that he was pleased to inform members that confirmation had been received that day from the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, advising that the Council had been awarded an additional £760,411 in additional restrictions grant funding to further support the recovery of businesses and the local economy. This was in addition to the \$3.02m of discretionary grants that had already been awarded this year. There was only one other authority in Norfolk which had met the deadlines and criteria to receive this additional funding. He praised the staff for working tirelessly to issue the grants to local businesses. The additional funds would be used to establish a grant scheme to support the recovery process for local businesses to help them become more resilient.

Cllr Kershaw concluded by announcing that these efforts had been recognised with

the council being shortlisted for two prestigious national awards; the Public Finance Awards 2021 for Digital Finance Project of the Year and the Institute of Revenues, Rating & Valuation performance awards for Excellence in Innovation.

Cllr T FitzPatrick asked about support for the manufacturing base in North Norfolk, specifically in the west of the District. He asked about contact that had been made with companies and the view of the Portfolio Holder regarding the health of the sector during the pandemic. Cllr Kershaw replied that there had been several visits to West Raynham Airfield. There had also been visits to firms in Fakenham. He was pleased to say this had been well received. Cllr FitzPatrick said that he was particularly interested in the manufacturing industry. Cllr Kershaw replied that this was a challenging sector and there were some issues with labour supply, particularly with the recent 'pingdemic'. He said that the Council would like to help with this and the team was now visiting more businesses, including those in the West. Cllr FitzPatrick said that he felt his question regarding manufacturing in the district had not been responded to. The Chairman suggested that he contact Cllr Kershaw directly regarding this.

Cllr N Lloyd, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Environment, said that there were additional items to update members on. One of the Environmental Health team's responsibilities was to check on the status and quality of private water supplies across the District. The standard of this work had recently been recognised by the Drinking Water Inspectorate in their 2020 report, singling out NNDC.

Cllr Lloyd then informed members that the eco toilet in Weybourne had been opened the previous week and that the Bagot goats would be returning to graze on the cliffs in Cromer shortly.

Cllr G Mancini-Boyle referenced the council's current recycling rate of approximately 40%. He asked what options were available within the waste contract to facilitate improvement of the council's carbon footprint and whether there was an opportunity to switch to electric vehicles and improving the infrastructure to facilitate this. He also asked whether consideration had been given to the collection of small electrical items. Cllr Lloyd replied that the new refuse trucks were 30% more efficient via the use of electrically driven compactors. Serco would be publishing their annual carbon footprint data shortly. He said that Serco had already introduced some smaller electric vehicles and they were installing EV charging points around the district. He said that in such a large rural district the use of electric waste vehicles was very challenging. He added that there was a range of technologies, including hydrogen, but these were currently very expensive to implement. There were lots of provisos regarding carbon reduction written into the contract, so he was hopeful that Serco would move towards this.

Cllr C Cushing asked what work was being undertaken to support parishes in the installation of electric vehicle charging points. Cllr Lloyd replied that Cley and Blakeney had expressed interest and support and information had been provided but the Council could only install EV charging points on NNDC owned land.

Cllr S Penfold sought clarification regarding the asking of questions. The Monitoring Officer replied that it was one question per member plus a supplementary question.

Cllr T Adams requested that his thanks were sent to Serco for the work that they had been doing in Cromer.

Cllr E Seward, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets, informed members that the

Final Accounts for 2020/21 would be published in draft at the end of July. He said that zero based budgeting exercise would commence in August. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be receiving a briefing on this in September.

Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Organisational Resources, began by expressing her thanks to Mr D Williams, the Customer Services Manager, who had recently retired following a long career in public service. She then highlighted the following points:

- There had been a drop in the number of calls to the Council's dedicated Covid line, from 2790 in April 2020 to just 164 in June 2021.
- The Customer Services team continued to assist the NHS in reminding people to attend vaccination appointments.
- Following the recent Domestic Abuse Forum sessions hosted by Cllr Fredericks, the 'safe spaces' facility had been quickly incorporated into the Council's website.
- the Council's accessibility rating for the website was now 27th in the national list, with NNDC listed as the top local authority in the Norfolk.
- About with Friends was now operating the Council's canteen service and had been warmly welcomed by members and staff
- The Digital Mailroom team were running a lateral flow testing service for staff
- North Norfolk Information Centre was now in a prominent place on the website

Cllr J Rest queried the reference in the written report to a contract with the tenant at Fakenham Community Centre. He said that there were three ward members for Fakenham and none of them were aware of this matter. Cllr Shires said that she would provide a written reply as this was something that would sit with the Assets team.

Cllr E Vardy referred to the objective in the Corporate Plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. He said animal-based agriculture was responsible for 40-80% of all greenhouse gas emissions. The new menu for the Council's in-house canteen had recently been produced yet there were very few non-meat or dairy options. He asked what level of governance was in place when the menu was agreed and sought assurance that he would be reviewed to demonstrate commitment to the Corporate Plan. Cllr Shires invited Cllr Vardy to work with her on this to ensure that everything was being done to achieve a positive outcome.

Cllr Penfold referred to page 49 and the North Walsham West consultation site. He asked for more information on this. Cllr Shires referred to Cllr J Toye as Planning Portfolio Holder. He replied that a lot of data had been submitted and a paper would be brought forward to members to share the results.

Cllr J Toye then introduced his report. He referred to page 44 and the developments that were likely to produce affordable housing. He also highlighted a new email address for any Section 106 enquiries.

Cllr J Stenton referred to section 106 payments. She asked how much funding was held by the Council for these payments and what was the longest period that such payments had been held for. Cllr Toye said that he would provide a written

response.

Cllr G Hayman referred to the listing of meetings in the Portfolio Holder reports. He said that attendance at parish council meetings was not the remit of Cabinet members and he asked why this level of detail was included. Cllr Toye replied that it was to make members aware of his active engagement across all areas of his work.

70 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET 07 JUNE AND 05 JULY 2021

Cabinet 07 June 2021

Agenda Item 12: North Norfolk District Council Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy 2021

Cllr E Seward introduced this item. He said that a lot of work had been undertaken on the policy and it had been to Overview & Scrutiny Committee twice.

It was proposed by Cllr E Seward, seconded by Cllr W Frederick and

RESOLVED:

To adopt the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2021 and the equality objectives

That an annual report be produced and reported to the relevant committees

Cabinet 05 July 2021

Agenda Item 8: Housing Strategy 2021 – 2025

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Cllr Fredericks, introduced this item. She said that there has been a lot of collaboration between stakeholders and partners in producing the strategy and she was pleased to recommend it to Council.

It was proposed by Cllr Fredericks, seconded by Cllr Toye and

RESOLVED

To adopt the Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025.

8 members abstained.

Agenda Item 9: Community Renewal Fund (CRF) Match Funding

Cllr R Kershaw, Portfolio Holder for Economic Sustainability, introduced this item. He said that there had been a lot of work undertaken by officers to a very tight timescale and the project had been supported by cross-party councillors and the two local MPs.

It was proposed by Cllr R Kershaw, seconded by Cllr J Rest and

RESOLVED

To establish new capital budgets for the North Walsham and Fakenham schemes of £800k each, with each scheme being funded through the CRF bid (£600k) and the balance (£200k) as match funding from the Council.

71 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 16 JUNE 2021

Agenda Item 12: Overview & Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2019/20 and 2020/21

The Chairman, Cllr Dixon explained that the report covered two years due to the pandemic. He highlighted three concerns that had been raised within the report;

- Additional Committee substitutes required to adequately address the number of apologies given.
- Late submission of reports has caused ongoing volatility in the Work Programme.
- Better communication on business planning required to maintain Work Programme stability

He suggested that the Corporate Leadership Team was responsible for actioning the second and third points, with Cabinet supporting the third point.

It was proposed by Cllr N Dixon, seconded by Cllr P Fisher and

RESOLVED

To note the report, affirm the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and consider the following concerns raised within the report:

- Additional Committee substitutes required to adequately address the number of apologies given.
- Late submission of reports has caused ongoing volatility in the Work Programme.
- Better communication on business planning required to maintain Work Programme stability.

One member abstained.

72 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EMPLOYMENT & APPEALS COMMITTEE 20 OCTOBER 2020 AND 21 APRIL 2021

The Chairman of the Employment and Appeals Committee, Cllr E Seward, introduced the report and outlined the recommendations.

It was proposed by Cllr E Seward, seconded by Cllr R Kershaw and

RESOLVED

To approve the appointment of the Director of Place & Climate Change and Director of Communities

73 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTION WORKING PARTY 13 APRIL AND 28 JUNE 2021

The Chairman of the Constitution Working Party, Cllr V Gay, introduced this item. She explained there were four recommendations and she introduced them in turn.

1. Protocol on Member / Officer Relations

Cllr Gay explained that the protocol had undergone a substantial review and it was now much more explicit what officers and members should expect of one another. The Standards Committee had supported the proposed changes.

It was proposed by Cllr V Gay, seconded by Cllr T FitzPatrick and

RESOLVED

To approve the revised Protocol on Member / Officer Relations

2. Dispute Resolution Process – Full Delegation to Chief Officers

Cllr Gay explained that this had been requested by the Council's auditors in case of a dispute over the use of delegated powers by an officer. Such a situation had not arisen but it was considered good practice to have a process in place.

It was proposed by Cllr V Gay, seconded by Cllr P Grove-Jones and

RESOLVED

That the Constitution be updated to include a dispute resolution procedure in the event of any disagreement between a chief officer and elected member, following consultation about use of delegated powers.

3. Review of Portfolio Holder reports to Council

Cllr Gay said that this concerned the way Portfolio Holder reports were treated at Full Council. She said that she had concerns about this recommendation as it had could have implications for the length of Full Council meetings and there were a range of alternative options which could be explored. She said that would like to propose that this item was deferred to allow for further consideration. Cllr S Butikofer seconded the proposal.

Cllr T FitzPatrick said that as a member of the Constitution Working Party, he felt that it would have been appropriate for the Chairman to notify the members of the working party, particularly as the recommendation had been unanimously supported at the meeting. Cllr Gay acknowledged his concerns.

It was proposed by Cllr Gay, seconded by Cllr S Butikofer and

RESOLVED to

Defer this item

Nine members abstained.

4. Contract Standing Orders (Procurement) Exemptions

Cllr Gay said that this was an important item and the recommendations had arisen following an audit of the Council's contract procurement exemption process. She outlined the recommendations in turn.

The Chairman of the Governance, Risk & Audit Committee, Cllr J Rest confirmed that the committee supported the recommendations.

It was proposed by Cllr V Gay, seconded by Cllr T FitzPatrick and

RESOLVED

To approve the following;

- a. The updates and amendments to the Exemption Form as contained within Appendix 2 of the report
- b. That the Section 151 Officer is a required signatory on the Contract Procurement Exemption form.
- c. The updates and amendments to the Constitution as contained within Appendix 3 of the report
- d. That the Constitution states that the contract cannot commence until the exemption form has been satisfactorily completed, with the exception of an emergency situation, when the form must be completed as soon as practical and that this is included in the Constitution
- e. That a standing item for the reporting of contract procurement exemptions is added to the Governance, Risk & Audit Committee agenda
- f. To publish the contract procurement exemptions on the Council's website on a quarterly basis.

74 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM STANDARDS COMMITTEE 27 APRIL 2021

Adoption of Model Code of Conduct

The Chairman of the Standards Committee, Cllr H Blathwayt introduced this item. He said that the Committee had unanimously supported the adoption of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

Cllr T FitzPatrick said that the Constitution Working Party had requested that the Code should be numbered in line with the Council's committee reports to ensure it was simple to use.

It was proposed by Cllr H Blathwayt, seconded by Cllr J Rest and

RESOLVED

To adopt the Model Code of Conduct

75 PROGRAMME OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS - CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS FOLLOWING STAGE ONE CONSULTATION

The Leader introduced this item. She explained that the initial stage review process had started in February 2021 and this report summarised the results of the consultation ahead of moving to the second stage consultation which would run to 31st October 2021, with the final recommendations being brought to Full Council for consideration in December 2021.

Cllr T FitzPatrick referred to Sculthorpe, which was in his ward. He said that 16 responses had been submitted as part of the consultation process, with 10 objections to the proposals being put forward. He questioned the point of having a consultation if the responses were ignored.

The Chief Executive replied that there was a second consultation phase and all efforts would be made to work with communities and address any concerns which had been raised.

Cllr C Heinink said that he had some concerns about Upper Sheringham.

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett commented that she was relieved to hear that there would be a further opportunity for consultation.

It was proposed by Cllr S Butikofer, seconded by Cllr R Kershaw and

RESOLVED

To approve the draft recommendations proposed and authorise the second stage consultation which will run to 31st October 2021 when the final recommendations would be prepared for consideration once again by Full Council on 15th December 2021

One member voted against, 8 members abstained.

76 QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS

None received.

77 OPPOSITION BUSINESS

Cllr Cushing began by saying that since the Council's formation in 1974, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) had been a non-partisan event, bringing all Members together to celebrate the achievements of the outgoing Chairman and to welcome the new Chairman and Vice-Chairman to their roles. Instead, the Leader of the Council had made a 'state of the Union' style address, to which he, as Leader of the Opposition had no right of reply. He said that he had brought this item of business forward as a response to the Leader's statement at the AGM.

He explained that the first recommendation was to ensure that the AGM remained a purely ceremonial affair. The remaining three recommendations were in response to the Leader's statement at the AGM and attempt to present the Opposition's view of the Administration and its achievements to date.

He said that the Administration was process-focussed, lacked plans and was devoid of ideas on how to tackle future challenges. He referred to the forecast deficits in future years and said that nothing was being done to prepare for this. A dynamic Council should strive to find savings and have a plethora of ideas to generate income. He drew comparisons with the Conservative-run councils across the County and said that they were very different in their approach in coming up with solutions to meet their medium to long-term needs. He referred to Great Yarmouth Borough Council which had successfully bid for millions of pounds in grants, resulting in £220m income in the last 12 months alone – from a mixture of grant funding and their own investment income.

He then spoke about the Corporate Plan, which had taken nine months to come to fruition, there were 95 actions listed within it, of which 71 were process-driven. He then referred to what he perceived to be a high level of dysfunction within the Council, including the recent Capability Review. He then spoke about a number of Cabinet members who were not on top of their portfolios as well as some senior officers. In his view, the appointment of members to Cabinet seemed to be based on their loyalty to the Leader rather than knowledge of their portfolio areas.

He concluded by referring to secrecy that pervaded the Administration. This ranged

from changing recommendations at meetings at the last minute, announcing council tax changes via the media and not informing members of the sale of a council-owned property. He said that in summary, although a council could not be run like a business it should at least be business-like.

Cllr Dixon seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

The Chairman invited Cllr Rest to speak. He said that he didn't have any comment to make.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr S Butikofer, was then invited to respond.

Cllr Butikofer began by thanking Cllr Cushing for giving her the opportunity to set the record straight. In response to his first recommendation that the AGM should be non-political, she referred him to page 17 of the Constitution, which set out the business for the AGM. She said that the nature of council meetings was that they were political, which was unsurprising given the nature of the work that elected members did. She said that in a previous year that had been a very lengthy debate over the election of the Chairman and of Chairmen of committees which was far more political than the Leader reporting on achievements to the Council's residents. She drew members' attention to page 192 of the Constitution which set out the role and duties of the Leader of the Council and which included informing the community of policy and strategy. She said that if the Opposition group wished to take the matter further, the most appropriate avenue would be the Constitution Working Party.

Cllr Butikofer then responded to Cllr Cushing's assertion that the Administration had not achieved very much. She said that the start of their term in office had involved cleaning up a myriad of problems left by the previous administration. Despite this, the Administration had continued to deliver projects against their manifesto of pledges. She said that she was proud of the Council and its achievements and the recent shortlisting for two national awards demonstrated that it continued to work to an exceptional standard during a pandemic.

Regarding governance, Cllr Butikofer, said that the Administration had some concerns about governance and procedural matters when it took control of the Council and it had worked with officers and the auditors to address these. She said that she believed in clarity. The Council's objectives were set out in the Corporate Plan and quarterly updates on progress were reported to Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee. In the near future there would be a visual 'traffic light' style display in the reception area so visitors to the Council offices could easily see how the objectives were being worked towards.

Cllr Butikofer then addressed the last recommendation regarding transparency. She said that members of her group were elected to all positions, including Cabinet members.

She said that opposition members had every opportunity to look scrutinise and challenge the work of the Administration via the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The annual report of the committee, which had been presented to Council showed that five items had been pre-scrutinised, allowing members to feed into the development of policies and strategies, including the Corporate Plan. Many of the recommendations made by the Overview & Scrutiny committee had been incorporated into the final versions.

Cllr Butikofer said that at the start of the pandemic she had invited the leaders of the opposition groups to join her at the high level Gold meetings of the Council. This was the forum for dealing with and responding to emergency situations. She said that Cllr Cushing had declined to join and said that he would prefer to hold the Administration to account.

The Chairman then opened the debate to Members.

Cllr E Seward said that it was impractical for the AGM to be purely ceremonial. The fact that appointments were made meant that politics was inevitable. He referred to the Norfolk County Council's agenda for the AGM and said that it included motions and item for political debate and that was a Conservative administration. He referred to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's Annual report which acknowledged that most of their recommendations were accepted by Cabinet. This indicated a willingness for the Administration to listen and respond positively to proposals. He then spoke about the suggestion that the Administration was not enthusiastic about its ambitions. He said that in North Walsham, members were extremely excited about the Heritage Action Zone project and invited Cllr Cushing to come and see what was being achieved there. He added that NNDC was the only Council to address the challenges of the climate emergency, £126m had been paid out in business grants and a new swimming pool was almost completed. He talked about several property- related projects that were transforming the town of Cromer.

Cllr S Penfold said that in terms of demonstrating dynamism to tackle important issues, the declaration of a climate emergency was an absolutely crucial first step. He also referred to the HAZ project, the increase in affordable houses being built. He suggested that Cllr Cushing re-read all of the portfolio holder reports that had been prepared for Full Council meetings since 2019 as these would clearly set out the Administration's achievements.

Cllr G Hayman said that the Administration needed to 'up its game'. He said that there was no clear direction provided by the Leadership, despite what was being claimed. He said that the assertion that the Administration was open and transparent was not his experience as a former member of Cabinet. Most decisions were taken by a small, closed group of Members and when he had asked for information about several matters, he had been informed that it was not available to share. He said that this led to poor decision making and policy drift. He concluded by saying that the achievements listed by the Leader had all been initiated by officers.

Cllr V Gay said that in 2019, a decision was taken to allocate more money to the building of the new Sheringham Leisure centre and it was agreed that regular updates were provided to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. This indicated a willingness to engage and work in an open and transparent manner.

Cllr J Toye said that the Opposition Group just wanted to oppose. They did not want to engage positively to move things forward. He outlined several achievements within his own portfolio of Planning, that he was very proud of – including the increased number of affordable homes that were being built. Regarding leadership, he said that his group voted on any appointments and there was no whip in place. He added that the Administration sometimes took longer to deliver projects because they consulted and engaged with residents and stakeholders. In conclusion, he said that he had recently responded to concerns that had been raised regarding second homes in the District by ensuring that the Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee was copied into his correspondence to the Leader and senior officers.

Cllr Shires reiterated the previous comments by other members that her Group were voted into positions. She said that this was a challenging process to go through but it was important that members had the support of their peers when appointed to roles.

Cllr R Kershaw commented that only issues relating to personnel and employment matters that could not be shared with other members.

The Chairman invited Cllr Dixon as seconder of the motion to speak.

Cllr Dixon began by saying that no one like to be treated unfairly and if the Leaders speech at the AGM had mentioned the issues that hadn't gone so well, then it was unlikely that this discussion would be taking place. It was only fair that people were aware of both 'sides of the coin'.

He questioned why there was so little openness with the current Administration. He, along with other members, had repeatedly learned about key matters such as the sale of Parklands in Pudding Norton and the delayed opening of the Reef in Sheringham by reading about them in the local newspaper. Sharing such information was in compliance with the Protocol on Member /Officer Protocol. He said that so many Motions to Full Council had been about tokenistic politics and were rarely followed up with substantive actions. He asked why the Administration had lost so much momentum, capacity and morale following the Capability Review. The Leader raised a point of order, saying that she took exception to these comments. The Monitoring Officer clarified that the statement was not defamatory as it was not a personal comment.

The Chairman reminded members that the 30 minutes allocated for this item was almost up.

Cllr G Hayman proposed that standing orders were suspended to allow a further 10 minutes of debate. Cllr E Vardy seconded the proposal. When put to the vote, it was not supported.

Cllr Dixon said that the vote was a good example of the lack of openness. He concluded by saying that the Leader's speech at the AGM could have been clearer in acknowledging the Council could have done better and there were many lessons to learn. These were reflected in the recommendations and he asked Members to reflect on this rather than relying on party unity when they cast their vote.

The Chairman invited Cllr Cushing as proposer of the motion to make the final comments. Cllr Cushing said that despite the Leader's assertions regarding her group being elected to any roles, he remained dubious that it was an open and transparent process. He said that the Reef in Sheringham was a project that had been initiated under the previous Conservative administration. He welcomed Cllr Seward's invitation to North Walsham and said that he would like to invite him to visit Fakenham, the second largest town in the District as it had not received very little funding. He concluded by saying that Cllr Hayman's comments had been astounding and had exposed the dysfunctional way in which the Administration operated. The Administration was now in the second half of its term and he was hopeful they would not be elected in 2023.

The Chairman said that he would like to take the recommendations in two parts:

It was proposed by Cllr C Cushing, seconded by Cllr N Dixon

That the Annual General Meeting should be limited to ceremonial matters and that no political statements will be allowed.

When put to the vote, the recommendation was not supported. 9 members voted in favour of the proposal.

It was proposed by Cllr C Cushing, seconded by Cllr N Dixon

That the Leader and Cabinet:

- Demonstrate some dynamism, creative thinking and leadership to tackle North Norfolk's immediate and long term needs.
- Deliver competent governance with clear deliverables and measurable outcomes.
- Govern in an open and transparent manner.
- that the Leader reports back to the next meeting of Full Council, setting out with clear timescales, how the above matters will be addressed.'

When put to the vote, the recommendation was not supported. 9 members voted in favour of the proposal.

78 NOTICE(S) OF MOTION

Cllr J Toye, Portfolio Holder for Planning, introduced this item. He explained that the new Planning Reforms Bill had started its journey with him within days of taking over the portfolio. He said that some of the concerns raised in response to the White Paper had been addressed – such as the number of minimum affordable homes to be built. He said the ability to consult at all stages was imperative. He went onto say that the weakening of residents rights to voice their views on planning applications was a serious concern. He said that the Council had a strong record of listening to residents' views and that it was essential to maintain the right of local communities to have a voice on planning issues in their area.

Cllr J Rest, in seconding the motion, said that he received between 6 and 8 planning applications a month in his ward. He said that the Planning Bill would strip away the rights of local people to voice their views and concerns on planning matters in their community. He asked why the government did not feel that local views were not important. If the Government wanted to build more homes now, then they should compel developers who already had full planning permission to get on with it.

The Chairman opened the debate.

Cllr P Grove-Jones spoke as Chairman of the Development Committee. She said that she supported the motion. The Committee provided an opportunity for local residents to express their views on planning applications and to facilitate a discussion on key issues. Planning applications and wider local development were of great importance to local communities and any attempt by the Government to impose development on an area would cause great unrest – not just in the District but across the country, leading ultimately to a loss of respect and trust in national and local government.

Cllr P Heinrich said that the proposals set out in the Planning Bill would be a disaster for North Norfolk and for his own ward of North Walsham West.

Cllr T FitzPatrick commented that in his view this was a virtue signalling motion. The

only comment that was valid so far was to ensure that developers were forced to build sites with planning consent. The intent seemed to be to score points off the local MPs.

Cllr E Vardy said that he agreed with some sentiments of the motion. He added that he was grateful for Duncan Baker MP for his tireless efforts in creating changes to the consultation paper, which was now a draft paper up for further submission to local government. He agreed with the principle that planning should be plan-led and not developer-led.

Cllr N Dixon said that he thought the motion was premature. He did not believe that the local MPs would support proposals which would deny local communities the right to voice their views on individual planning applications. The Bill has yet to be published and the motion was therefore speculative. He added that he was surprised that the motion only mentioned new homes and not sustainable employment opportunities or infrastructure.

Cllr J Toye as the proposer of the motion said that it was important to make representations before the decision was made not when it was too late. He said that sustainable development and economic growth were separate issues.

It was proposed by Cllr J Toye, seconded by Cllr J Rest and

RESOLVED to support the following motion:

North Norfolk District Council believes that planning works best when developers and the local community work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary new homes; and therefore calls on our local MPs – Duncan Baker and Jerome Mayhew and the Government to protect the right of communities to object to individual planning applications.

One member voted against, 7 members abstained.

79 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

80 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified.

Chairman