

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 6 June 2022 at the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 10.00 am

Committee

Members Present:

Mrs W Fredericks
Ms V Gay
Mr N Lloyd
Miss L Shires
Mr T Adams (Chair)

Mrs A Fitch-Tillett
Mr R Kershaw
Mr E Seward
Mr J Toye

Members also attending:

Cllr A Brown
Cllr C Cushing
Cllr N Dixon
Cllr J Rest

Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive, Democratic Services Manager, Democratic Services and Governance Officer - Scrutiny, Director for Communities, Assistant Director for Finance, Assets, Legal & Monitoring Officer, Health and Communities Team Leader, Housing Strategy & Community Support and Policy and Performance Management Officer

Also in attendance:

Public

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 3rd May were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

The Chairman advised members that he would re-arrange the order of the agenda to accommodate Mr McKeown, who wished to speak in relation to Agenda item 16 – Freehold Sale of Parklands Mobile Home Site.

Mr McKeown said that he was speaking on behalf of the residents of Parklands Residential Homes site, Pudding Norton. He said that whilst the residents acknowledged that the Council was duty bound legally to obtain best value, it should be recognised that best value was not always delivered by the highest bidder. He added that residents were concerned about problems that had arisen at the Hardwick Park Homes site in Kings Lynn following its sale and sought reassurance that such issues would not occur at Parklands. In conclusion, he urged members to consider the options before them carefully and consider the residents too.

The Chairman thanked Mr McKeown and said that agenda item 16 would be brought

forward.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

5 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The Chairman advised members that they could ask questions as matters arose.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET WORKING PARTIES

The Chairman invited Cllr A Brown, Chairman of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party, to introduce this item. Cllr Brown explained that the Working Party had deferred approval of the Glaven Valley Conservation Area Appraisals until the May meeting to ensure that they were fully acceptable to members.

He thanked officers for their hard work. The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Cllr J Toye, echoed Cllr Brown's comments and thanked the officers for the considerable amount of work that they had put into this.

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

RESOLVED

1. That, subject to final amendments being delegated to the Conservation Design and Landscape Team Leader, in consultation with the Chairman of the Working Party, Cabinet adopts the six Glaven Valley Village Appraisals for statutory planning purposes and for the Appraisal documents to become material considerations in the planning process.

2. That, subject to the final amendments being delegated to the Conservation Design and Landscape Team Leader, in consultation with the Chairman of the Working Party, Cabinet agrees the proposed boundary changes as recommended in the draft Appraisal documents and that they be published in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

3. That Cabinet agrees the proposed Local Listings as identified within the draft Appraisal documents.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Cllr N Dixon, introduced this item. He outlined the three recommendations, highlighting the committee's request for a member workshop to facilitate further discussion and input regarding the Engagement Strategy. He then spoke about the 'Levelling up Fund, Round 2' which had come to the committee as an item of urgent business. He said that he wanted to draw particular attention to the first recommendation which highlighted the importance of the process for promoting and preparing for short-notice funding streams, being transparent and objectively scored against agreed priorities as well as being fairly distributed across the District. He added that this fed into the second recommendation for linking into Town and Parish Councils. He concluded by saying that it was very disappointing that there were no proposals ready to go when such

funding rounds came up and the Council needed to be more prepared in future for such opportunities.

The Chairman thanked him for his comments and said that the Changing Places funding was a good example of the Council being well prepared in advance to submit bids that reflected the Council's ambitions. He acknowledged the challenges that had been presented by the Levelling up fund and said that he would welcome further discussions with Cllr Dixon on how to address such issues in the future.

8 FREEHOLD SALE OF PARKLANDS MOBILE HOME SITE, PUDDING NORTON, FAKENHAM

The Chairman invited Cllr E Seward, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets, to introduce this item. He began by saying that it was recommended that the Council sold the site to Bidder C, adding that the bid was in accordance with independent market valuations. He then drew attention to paragraph 2, which set out in detail the disposal process and due diligence, adding that the Council was anxious to ensure that the site was sold to a buyer that was 'fit and proper' and that it would be properly managed in recognition that people's homes were involved. He explained that a thorough process of due diligence was undertaken between October 2021 and February 2022, culminating with interviews with the bidders which were then scored.

Cllr Seward added that if there had been any concerns at all about the highest bidder, being the most appropriate buyer, the Council could opt to use a Disposals Consent Order. The legal implications of opting for this route were set out at paragraph 7 and he thanked the legal team for their advice regarding this.

In conclusion, Cllr Seward said that he was acutely aware of the challenges presented by mobile homes parks and how quickly things could go wrong if they were not well managed.

Cllr J Rest sought clarification of the process which would be followed if a bidder wanted to come back with an increased offer. The Strategic Surveyor replied that all seven interested parties had been interviewed and following that, two indicated that they wished to submit a higher offer. All other parties were then notified of this and given a deadline to respond with a higher offer if they wished to. None did.

It was proposed by Cllr E Seward, seconded by Cllr T Adams and

RESOLVED

To approve the sale of the site to Bidder [C] as outlined in the Exempt Appendix A at best consideration and in accordance with s123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Reason for the decision:

The provision and operation of this site does not directly support any of the key themes contained within the Corporate Plan and is not part of the Council's core business. Some of the asset therefore allows the capital receipt generated by the sale of the asset towards the Council's corporate priorities

9 NORTH NORFOLK SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FUND ANNUAL REVIEW

Cllr V Gay, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Wellbeing introduced this item. She

explained that this was an annual report which summarised the work of the North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund, which was now in its second year of operation (having previously been the Big Society Fund).

Cllr Gay said that it was a very illustrative report and highlighted the work of the panel. She added that she was concerned about the 'gaps' across the District, which indicated where no applications had been submitted to the Fund and she said she was keen to write to those parishes encouraging them to apply.

The Chairman said that it was frustrating that the Council's share of second homes council tax was no longer returned as this had been the main funding source for several years.

Cllr R Kershaw said that he had promoted the fund to all of the parishes in his ward, adding that when applications were submitted they were very well handled by the team at NNDC.

Cllr N Dixon said that he supported efforts to secure wider engagement with the fund from across the District. He asked whether there were any trends to be aware of when compared with previous years, adding that the town and parish councils were significant stakeholders and it was fundamental that they were encouraged to apply and engaged with the process.

Cllr W Fredericks said that members had a responsibility to promote the fund. She suggested that the report was circulated to all members and they were asked to share it within their communities.

Cllr C Cushing referenced the Big Society Fund which had started in 2013 and said it would be useful to compare the spread of grant awards and see if there were any key trends. The Chief Executive replied that historic annual reports were available on the Council's website but the comparative information could be collated if required.

The Leader said that it was important to remember that it was not just town and parish councils that needed to be encouraged to apply to the fund, community groups were also important.

Cllr J Toye said that it could be beneficial to link up successful applicants with those that were considering applying. It could be an effective way of encouraging more applications, particularly from smaller community groups and parishes.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr R Kershaw and

RESOLVED

To receive the report and note the contribution that the NNSCF makes on Council priorities in respect of Quality of Life and Climate and Environment

10 COUNCIL TAX ENERGY REBATE (DISCRETIONARY) SCHEME

Cllr W Fredericks, the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Benefits, introduced this item. She explained that the Government had announced the Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme to provide a £150 non repayable rebate for eligible households in council

tax bands A-D and included discretionary funding for billing authorities to support households which were in need but not eligible for the rebate under the mandatory scheme. This report set out proposals to establish a scheme to provide support to such households. It was intended to be easy to administer to each eligible household and payments would be made in a timely manner. Cllr Fredericks concluded by thanking officers for their hard work in bringing the proposals together.

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

RESOLVED

To agree the scheme for the Council Tax Energy Rebate (Discretionary) scheme as detailed in Appendix 1.

To delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer, or their deputy, in consultation with the Assistant Director for People Services and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Benefits, to make amendments to the scheme eligibility criteria and the amount of the discretionary award.

Reason for the Recommendations:

The Government is providing all billing authorities with discretionary funding to support other energy bill payers who are not eligible under the mandatory scheme for the £150 council tax rebate, and to provide carefully targeted “top-up” payments to the most vulnerable households in bands A-D.

It is for each Local Authority to determine agreed guidelines setting out the eligibility criteria for their discretionary funding and have regard to government guidance. It is important to have a written scheme for North Norfolk District Council outlining these and the administration of support payments to provide clarity to individuals.

The delegated authorities would ensure any required technical scheme amendments could be updated promptly where there is revised government guidance providing assurance to the scheme and also clarity to households. Any changes in eligibility criteria or the amount of discretionary awards could be changed quickly to ensure spending of the funding allocation is managed to maximise support to households in need and that the fund is not overspent

11 DISCRETIONARY HARDSHIP & SUPPORT GRANT

Cllr W Fredericks, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Benefits, introduced this item. She explained that the People Services team at NNDC were focussing on ways to improve the targeting of support to those in the greatest need and the creation of a Discretionary Hardship would provide payments that could help to prevent further interventions being required. In the long term it was anticipated that the scheme would become a tool for support and resettlement to sustain vulnerable residents' independence in the community. Cllr Fredericks explained that the scheme was unique to North Norfolk, there was no statutory requirement to provide hardship support in this way but it was felt that it would diversify and complement the support already provided by the Council. She concluded by thanking officers for their hard work in pulling the scheme together.

Cllr J Toye referred to section 3.8 of the report which outlined resettlement support. He said he applauded the preventative, rather than reactive, approach of the scheme.

Cllr L Shires echoed Cllr Toye's comments. She said she welcomed the reference to mental health issues within the eligibility criteria.

The Chairman commented that he also welcomed the preventative aims of the proposals, adding that there would also need to be discussions with partners such as foodbanks to ensure support was co-ordinated and reaching everyone it needed to.

Cllr J Rest asked whether there was an initial figure for how many people would benefit from this fund immediately. He said it would be useful if the Council could then monitor whether numbers of those requiring such support were going up or down. Cllr Fredericks replied that the grants would be distributed via the Social Prescribing team and the Early Help Hub. They were using the Council's new 'poverty dashboard' to identify eligible families and those on pension credit. She said that it would be monitored. Cllr Rest asked for regular updates – ideally monthly so that it could be closely monitored.

Cllr Kershaw referred to paragraph 2.3 which set out the current number of residents considered to be eligible for the scheme.

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

RESOLVED

To agree the scheme for the Discretionary Hardship & Support Grant as detailed in Appendix 1.

As this is a new scheme, monitoring and evaluating the impact of the scheme will be particularly important. It is therefore requested that amendments to the scheme, where required, should be delegated to the Assistant Director for People Services.

Reason for the recommendation:

More households are facing extreme crisis situations due to experiencing the highest cost of living increase in 30 years and expecting further rises, and this may now be even higher due to the war in Ukraine. The financial pressures on households have also magnified following the cessation of Covid-19 support, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), and the Universal Credit uplift.

In this precarious environment, the economic realities mean that many residents are more vulnerable than previously to acute financial shocks and are at risk of falling into crisis. It is more important than ever that we find new ways to support our residents.

As we respond to these challenges, the Discretionary Hardship & Support Grant will provide support to vulnerable households who are in a crisis situation or require support to resettle or remain in the community.

As part of the decision making process we will also be able to connect residents to support which can help them to find financial inclusion through budgeting and debt advice.

Cllr E Seward, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets, introduced this item. He explained that Full Council had approved the revised car parking charges for 2022/23 on 23 February. The consultation period had now closed and the report provided a summary of the objections that had been received. Cllr Seward said that the increase that the income generated from this increase would be £230k. He added that the Council was dependent on such income for providing a range of discretionary services – including public conveniences and the maintenance of parks and woodlands which were valued by both residents and visitors. He reminded members that the increase based on the consumer price index (CPI), adding that season ticket prices were frozen and continued to provide very good value for money.

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett commented that coastal management was also a discretionary service.

The Chairman referred to a small number of comments regarding motorcycle parking at Queen's Road, Fakenham and asked whether this could be addressed.

The Chief Executive outlined the main comments and objections that had been received during the consultation. Regarding Queen's Road in Fakenham, he said that the Council was currently undertaking work to provide a new toilet block and it was possible that a motorcycle bay could be provided when the car park spaces were being re-lined. He then referred to the request to allow long-stay season tickets to use Staithe Street in Wells and said that as there were only 8 spaces, it was felt that this would have a detrimental impact on other users of the car park.

It was proposed by Cllr E Seward, seconded by Cllr T Adams and

RESOLVED

- 1. To introduce the car parking consolidation order (as advertised) on Tuesday 5 July 2022. (Tariff changes will be downloaded to machines overnight of Monday 4 July 2022 after signage changes have taken place).**
- 2. To make the order without modification (as above) but with the exception of retaining the restricted use of long stay season tickets on Albert St, Holt and Staithe street, Wells car parks.**

Reason for the recommendations:

To complete the process of introducing changes to car parking tariffs.

13 MANAGING PERFORMANCE QUARTER 4 AND CUMULATIVELY FOR 2021/2022

The Chairman (and Leader), Cllr T Adams, introduced this item. He began by mentioning the impact of the 'nutrient neutrality' guidance on the provision of affordable housing. He said that he had considerable sympathy with those struggling to get decent housing for their families and like many members, much more of his ward work was centred around housing and social issues now. The cost of living crisis would only exacerbate such problems and Cllr Adams said that he welcomed the recent appointment of an Energy Officer.

The Leader then spoke about the increase in new investment in the east of the District which would hopefully continue to grow and the continued achievements of

the Heritage Action Zone project in North Walsham. He highlighted the success of the tree planting programme over the winter season and it was on track to achieve its overall target in the next year. In conclusion, he spoke about the rising membership numbers at the Reef Leisure centre in Sheringham. The project had been a great success and was valued by both residents and visitors.

Cllr J Toye, Portfolio Holder for Planning, said that the pressures on affordable housing provision were concerning and it was not yet clear how the nutrient neutrality guidance would impact on long term viability. He added that the Council was working hard to deliver affordable homes. The Leader said that North Norfolk had a greater mix of pressures on housing provision – including second homes. He said that it would be helpful if the Council could deliver housing itself.

Cllr C Cushing referred to the nutrient neutrality issue and asked when the Council would receive an update on the matter. The Leader replied that it was hoped to hear something in the next two weeks. Cllr Toye added that the guidance being issued by Natural England was not helpful. They were not offering solutions and that was exacerbating the problem. He said that himself and Cllr Brown attended cross-authority working groups which were working hard to address the issues. The Leader added that other sectors were also being impacted including the construction industry, care homes and possibly seasonal camp sites. The Chief Executive replied that seasonal camp sites were not affected as they were limited to 28 days and were not permanent. He said that a consultant had been appointed to advise the Duty to Co-operate Forum and it was hoped that the position would be clearer by September.

Cllr A Brown said that he had no issues with Natural England trying to improve the quality of water courses. The difficulty was regarding the lack of guidance being provided to local authorities on how to address the problems that it was presenting.

Cllr J Rest referred to page 117 of the report and said that the toilets in the Queen's Road car park, Fakenham would not be ready in June 2022 now as there was a delay due to power cable supply issues.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr R Kershaw and

RESOLVED

To note the report and endorse the actions being taken by the Corporate Leadership Team as detailed in Appendix A.

Reason for the decision:

To ensure that the objectives of the Council are achieved.

14 CHANGING PLACES PUBLIC CONVENIENCE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME JUNE 2022

The Portfolio Holder for Assets, Cllr E Seward, introduced this item. He explained that the report updated members in respect of a recent grant award of £300k by the Government to help support the provision of Changing Places facilities and made recommendations regarding further investment at the locations identified and updates to the capital programme to reflect the new funding stream. He drew members' attention to section 10 of the report which outlined the financial and resource implications and highlighted ongoing discussions with the Museum of the

Broads in Stalham around siting a facility there. Cllr Seward concluded by saying that there was a possibility of a second round of funding and the Council may be able to apply again. The Chairman agreed, saying that it was hoped that some funding could be generated for the larger villages in the District. Cllr Fredericks, local member for Mundesley, said that that the village was pushing for a changing places facility due to the large footfall generated by visitors.

Cllr J Toye commented that Cllr E Spagnola had championed the provision of 'changing places' facilities across the District and she should be very proud of her achievements. It also demonstrated the value of member champions and how beneficial they were to the Council.

Cllr N Dixon referred to section 5 of the report and asked whether there had been any discussions with Stalham Town Council around their preferred siting of changing places facilities. He then mentioned section 7 and asked whether consideration had been given to having discussions with parish council representatives from Hoveton, Potter Heigham, Horning, Ludham and Mundesley. He said that Hoveton, together with Wroxham, formed the major tourist centre of the Broads and there could be a case for working with Broadland District Council to deliver key public facilities such as this. The Chief Executive replied that the Broads Authority had approached NNDC and confirmed that they had had discussions with the Museum of the Broads and were prepared to make a contribution towards a facility there. He said that, across the county as a whole, there was only a modest number of changing places facilities and the challenge was that they were best located alongside other facilities so that there was support and supervision available nearby. Regarding villages in the Broads area, he said that they had not been looked at yet as the initial focus had been on the 7 principle towns. He said that Norfolk County Council (NCC) had unilaterally decided to provide a changing places facility at Wroxham library and they were considering additional provision at either Morston or Brancaster quay.

Cllr Dixon sought confirmation that there had been no discussions to date with respective parish councils. The Chief Executive reiterated that the initial focus had been on the 7 major settlements in the District and wider discussions had not been held. The Chairman added that there had been some discussions about toilet provision with Stalham Town Council and he confirmed that Mundesley parish council had also approached NNDC on this matter. Cllr Dixon replied that the main thrust of his point was that this was a good opportunity to engage with the town and parish councils across the District. The primary opportunity for such engagement was at officer level and he would like to see more communication and dialogue in the future. The Chairman thanked him for his comments and said that the NNDC Town & Parish Council Engagement Forum could be a beneficial channel for such discussions. Cllr Fredericks concurred, adding that the next one was taking place on 4th July and it could be a good time to raise such matters.

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

RESOLVED to

- **Agree to the officer proposals for the further Changing Places investments at the locations identified;**

- **Agree to the recommended changes to the capital budget identified within section 10 the report; and**
- **Delegate authority to the Director for Resources to develop and agree governance and reporting arrangements with the Broads Authority and funding providers.**

Reasons for the recommendations:

To allocate the grant funding awarded to various schemes across the district to continue with the Council's investment in Changing Places facilities.

15 CROMER PIER INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS

Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Organisational Resources, introduced this item. She explained that the report summarised the results of the latest detailed survey of Cromer Pier and this had been used to develop a works package for the ongoing maintenance of the structure, adding that the works were essential for health and safety reasons.

Cllr C Cushing said that the sums involved were sizeable and he queried that the details of the proposed costs and overall budget were within an exempt appendix. He felt that it was in the public interest to have this information in the public domain. Cllr N Dixon supported this, adding that an indicative figure should be in the public papers and discussed in open session to ensure full transparency. The Chief Executive agreed, saying that the recommended budget envelope could be in the public domain and suggested that the figure should be specified when the recommendation was taken through to Full Council and included in the public agenda.

The Chairman said that the overall project had been discussed previously as part of the capital works programme. Cllr R Kershaw confirmed that this was the third phase of the works on the Pier. He agreed regarding the transparency of an indicative figure.

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett seconded the proposal, saying that it was important to maintain the pier as it was a fundamental part of the District's tourism offer.

It was proposed by Cllr L Shires, seconded by Cllr A Fitch-Tillett and

RESOLVED to

- **Approve the award of the contract to the preferred supplier (Supplier A as identified within the exempt appendix) and;**
- **Recommend to Full Council that a capital budget of £1,134,000 is approved to enable the works to be completed, to be funded from capital receipts**

Reason for the recommendation

The establishment of the capital budget and completion of the recommended works will enable the Council to continue to maintain the pier structure

In order to ensure the structural integrity of the pier for the future it is essential that appropriate maintenance is undertaken.

16 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

RESOLVED that:

Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act.

17 PRIVATE BUSINESS

18 APPROVAL OF INSURANCE CONTRACT

It was proposed by Cllr A Fitch-Tillett, seconded by Cllr J Toye and

RESOLVED to approve the following option:

Cromer Pier Option 3

- 1. Approve Option 1 in relation to the insurance for Cromer Pier.**
- 1. Approve the Zurich insurance tender.**
- 2. Recommend to Full Council that additional budget provision is made for 2022/23 of £81.2k to be funded from the Delivery Plan Reserve if required at the year end.**

Reason for the decision:

The Council's current insurance arrangements are due to expire on 30 June 2022 and it is therefore necessary to enter into a new contract to ensure that the Council continues to have adequate cover in place

The meeting ended at 11.35 am.

Chairman