

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 27 July 2022 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 6.00 pm

Members Present:	Ms P Bevan Jones	Mr D Birch
	Mr H Blathwayt	Mr A Brown
	Dr P Bütikofer	Mrs S Bütikofer
	Mr C Cushing	Mrs A Fitch-Tillett
	Mr T FitzPatrick	Mr V FitzPatrick
	Mrs W Fredericks	Ms V Gay
	Mrs P Grove-Jones	Mr C Heinink
	Mr P Heinrich	Mr N Housden
	Mr N Lloyd	Mr G Mancini-Boyle
	Mr S Penfold	Mrs G Perry-Warnes
	Mr J Rest	Mr E Seward
	Miss L Shires	Mrs E Spagnola
	Mrs J Stenton	Mr J Toye
	Mr A Varley	Ms L Withington
	Mr A Yiasimi	

Also in attendance:

The Chief Executive, the Director for Communities, the Monitoring Officer, the Democratic Services Manager, the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny)

36 MANCROFT ADVICE PROJECT (MAP) PRESENTATION

Dan Mobbs, The Chief Executive of the Mancroft Advice Project (MAP), one of the Chairman's nominated charities for her civic year, gave a presentation to members outlining their work. He spoke about the mission of MAP which was to ensure young people had the access to quality information, advice, counselling and support they need for their holistic development.

A short video was then shown, highlighting the ongoing work of MAP and how it had provided support to several young people in Norfolk. Mr Mobbs said that there were a few key trends that MAP was focussing on – including mental health issues and how to access support locally, the cost of living crisis and the isolation of living in a rural area.

He concluded by thanking members for their support and said that it was really appreciated.

Cllr L Shires commented that NNDC had recently launched a recruitment campaign for a steering group for the new Youth Council and MAP's input would be greatly appreciated.

Cllr A Yiasimi commented on the excellent work of MAP.

37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllrs T Adams, N Dixon, P Fisher, G Hayman, Dr

V Holliday, R Kershaw, N Pearce, J Punchard, M Taylor, E Vardy and Dr C Stockton.

38 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 22nd June 2022 were approved as a correct record subject to the following amendment on page 4, paragraph 3:

‘Cllr T FitzPatrick said that **Cabinet** members’ behaviour during portfolio holder reports was unacceptable’

39 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None received.

40 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

None.

41 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman spoke about the civic events that herself and the Vice-Chairman had attended since the last meeting of Full Council:

29 June 2022 – Platinum Jubilee Reception, Royal Norfolk Showground
01 July 2022 – Royal Anglian Regiment, Reception and Beating of Retreat
02 July 2022 – Cromer Pier Show
22 July 2022 – Cromer Tennis Club Reception, Men’s Summer County Cup
24 July 2022 – Civic Service at Great Yarmouth Minster.

She told members that she had attended 15 civic functions since her inauguration in May.

42 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr E Seward, Deputy Leader, spoke in the absence of the Leader, Cllr Adams. He began by Congratulating Cllr Adams and his partner, Amanda, on the birth of baby Ella on 18th July. He then thanked Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service colleagues across North Norfolk for their responses over the past week / 10 days in fighting a number of field and wild fires in the District as a result of the hot temperatures and very dry conditions. Sadly a fire at Ashmanhaugh on 19th July resulted in two households losing their homes and NNDC staff (Civil Contingencies Manager and Housing Staff) were involved in the multi-agency response both at the time of the incident and in the days which followed. He said it was important to remind local residents and visitors of the exceptional conditions which prevail at the present time and discourage use of BBQs in open areas, discarding rubbish and cigarette ends. Consequently, given the ongoing dry and hot temperatures, the Council had introduced a temporary ban on smoking on Cromer Pier to reduce the fire risk associated with discarded cigarette ends as a potential source of ignition on the very dry decking boards. This was a precautionary measure.

Cllr Seward reminded members that Monday 25th July was the second ‘Respect the Water Campaign and World Drowning Prevention Day’ and with 45 miles of coastline, large areas of The Broads and other areas of open water in the

District said that he would like to take the opportunity to thank colleagues in the RNLI beach lifeguard service, but also the RNLI and local volunteer lifeboat services for their partnership work with NNDC keeping residents and tourists safe in these environments.

Cllr Seward went on to say that as it was now peak holiday season, large numbers of visitors to the District were placing demands on many of the Council's services and facilities. The Council operated an evening and weekend 'Out of Hours' service so that contact could always be made with a Duty Officer outside of core business hours in case of emergency reporting about NNDC facilities, issues of anti-social behaviour, noise nuisance, unsafe structures or critical incidents. He reminded members to bear in mind that over the next few weeks many members of staff would take periods of leave if local members wanted an early response to an issue it would be best to contact service email addresses rather than trying to contact individual officers by email.

He then updated members on the Nutrient Neutrality issue, which had made some progress recently with a Ministerial announcement made on Wednesday 20th July, followed by a letter to local planning authorities from the Government's Chief Planning Officer detailing proposals being developed by Natural England to develop a strategic mitigation strategy to address the issue of water quality through the development of some form of developer credit scheme. Officers were involved with colleagues across Norfolk in further meetings and conversations to understand how this strategic mitigation scheme might be implemented and would keep members updated as to progress.

Cllr Seward concluded by saying that the Council had developed its Investment Plan for submission to Government detailing how it would propose spending its allocation of £1.23million of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund over the next three years. The Plan proposed spending monies under seven of the Government's indicative themes, albeit the largest annual allocation is Year 3 April 2024 – March 2025. Further details would be shared with members during the autumn.

43 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

None received.

44 PORTFOLIO REPORTS

The Chairman invited members to put questions to Portfolio Holders.

Cllr C Cushing said that at the last meeting, himself and several colleagues had asked questions which were ruled out on grounds of the 'convention' that any staffing were should not be discussed. On behalf of Cllr Dixon, who was absent due to ill health, he said that no response had been received to Cllr Dixon's request for more information on this convention and where it was referenced either at NNDC or more widely. He sought clarification on this issue now. Cllr E Seward replied that he was aware that Cllr Dixon had emailed the Leader on this matter and that he had sought guidance from the Monitoring Officer. He confirmed that a response would be provided on Cllr Adams return from paternity leave. He added that the Chief Executive had offered to meet with the Group Leaders to clarify the various issues that had been raised at the last meeting.

Cllr J Rest commented that there was an error in the agenda. He said that the

names of the Portfolio Holder was not listed at the top of some of the reports. The Chairman replied that she had advised members of this at the start of the meeting and that the version on the website was corrected and up to date.

Cllr J Toye said that a resident had contacted him regarding concerns with noise issues relating to events. He asked Cllr N Lloyd, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, what powers could be used to deal with such problems. Cllr Lloyd replied that the Environmental Protection team worked closely with event organisers to ensure that it complied with noise limits. However, if a nuisance did occur, officers did have powers to intervene and stop the source of the noise.

Cllr V FitzPatrick referred to Cllr Gay's report and the reference to 43,000 visitors to the Council's leisure facilities during June 2022. He said that this was not the full story and referred to ongoing correspondence from a resident to Cllr Gay which raised concerns about management of the Reef in Sheringham. The resident outlined how they had been asked to leave the swimming pool after just 20 minutes and had received a reply stating that this approach allows the contractor, Everyone Active to run the leisure centre more effectively. Cllr FitzPatrick asked when the Council would run its leisure centres for the benefit of the public rather than the convenience of the contractor. Cllr Gay replied that she had already followed up on this. She explained that after Covid, a booking system was put in place for swimming and this had worked well. She said that she was concerned about someone being asked to leave after 20 minutes and had raised the matter with Everyone Active and they were looking into it. As a supplementary question, Cllr V FitzPatrick asked when the contractor would start to manage the leisure facilities more effectively. Cllr A Brown raised a point of order. He said that this was a repeat of the initial question.

Cllr P Heinrich asked the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Cllr A Brown, about the current situation with nutrient neutrality. He referred to the recent Ministerial statement on the matter and the detailed briefing for members from the Planning Policy Manager. Despite this guidance, there was very little information on timescales. He asked, given that developers are going to have to fund their own scheme or pay into the national nutrient mitigation scheme, he wondered how this would impact on the viability of schemes – particularly affordable housing. Cllr Brown replied that there was now some constructive movement on nutrient neutrality. Over 100k properties were affected across the UK (one third of the annual target) and it was inevitably impacting on supply and demand and there was no doubt that fewer properties being built would affect viability and it remained a significant obstacle. It was recognised that only 12% of water courses currently met acceptable standards and that there was a lot of work to be done to identify and then purchase suitable land for the required mitigation schemes. This would take considerable time. Cllr Brown said that the Council would work with Royal Haskoning (the consultant appointed by the Norfolk local authorities) to continue to calculate where the most nutrient pressure was so that sites that were not so affected could be released. It was hoped that by September, some schemes could be released.

Cllr S Penfold said that he welcomed the return of Greenbuild and the progress of the bus terminal / travel hub in North Walsham. Both were important schemes in helping the Council achieve its Net Zero target. He asked Cllr Seward, Portfolio Holder for Finance, whether he agreed that future Government and County plans to deliver on Net Zero, must include a rural transport strategy. Cllr Seward replied that he agreed. He said that main challenge faced by many rural communities across the country was one of isolation. Such communities were highly car dependent and those who did not have access to a car were impacted heavily. He said that the transport hub in North Walsham would become operational on 1st August and would

provide a safe and welcoming place to access buses. He concluded by saying that the scheme was an excellent example of councils at all levels working together.

Cllr E Spagnola said that she wished to ask Cllr V Gay, Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing, about the Carer Friendly Tick award, which the Council was working towards achieving. She asked if Cllr Gay could provide some examples of the benefits that had already been achieved with the Council seeking to embrace the five key standards of the scheme. Cllr Gay replied that the first benefit was that it had raised awareness throughout the Council. Secondly, there was an excellent officer working hard to achieve the standards. Thirdly, there was a draft policy that would be going through Joint Staff Consultative Committee in due course and other members would be welcome to attend this meeting.

Cllr T FitzPatrick asked Cllr Gay, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, about the opening times at the Sports Centre at Fakenham. He said that several residents in his ward had raised concerns with him that the stated opening times were not complied with and that on many occasions, the changing rooms were closed at least half an hour before the centre closed. He asked if Cllr Gay could investigate. She confirmed that she would.

Cllr E Withington asked Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Organisational Resources, about the Section 106 software and whether there was a planned update. Cllr Shires replied that it was scheduled for 4th September and she thanked the Planning Team and the IT team for working together on ensuring that there was no slippage.

Cllr G Mancini-Boyle asked Cllr N Lloyd, Portfolio Holder for Environment, about the Council's Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan and what work had been undertaken to date and approximate cost estimates. Cllr N Lloyd replied that the focus to date had been on 'easy wins' and some of these had been big achievements – such as the Reef which was one of the most environmentally friendly pools in the country. Moving forwards, there would be a focus on capital projects such as the solar car port at the Reef car park. He concluded by saying that there would not be a summary of costs but each project would be costed as they came forwards for consideration. He said that it would not be helpful to publish anticipated costs now as there were so many variables that could change – such as materials and energy costs, inflation and supply issues.

Cllr H Blathwayt asked Cllr A Fitch-Tillett, Portfolio Holder for Coast about the coast between Sea Palling and Winterton and asked whether the Environment Agency about the standard of the concrete blocks that were being used for coastal protection. Cllr A Fitch-Tillett said that she had recently had a conversation with a supplier of environmentally-friendly concrete products and said that she agreed that this was an important avenue to explore further. She said that she would speak to officers involved with Coastal Partnership East (CPE) to see if they could investigate further.

45 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET 11TH JULY 2022

No recommendations were made to Full Council at the 11th July meeting of Cabinet.

46 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 15TH JUNE 2022

Recommendations from the meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 15th June were considered at the June meeting of Full Council.

47 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTION WORKING PARTY 7TH JUNE 2022

The Chairman of the Constitution Working Party, Cllr A Varley, introduced this item. He explained that there were two recommendations. The first related to the strengthening of estate matters and the second sought agreement to commence the process for recruitment of two independent persons to support the Standards Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr A Varley, seconded by Cllr V Gay and

RESOLVED

To approve the proposed amendments to the Constitution regarding estate matters (as set out in sections 3 and 4 of the report)

Cllr J Rest asked why the current Independent Person (IP) was being replaced. Cllr Varley replied that the current IP had reached the end of two terms in the role (8 years in total) and it was considered best practice to recruit a replacement to ensure that they were fully independent. It was felt that by appointing two IPs, there would be more resilience and flexibility.

Cllr G Perry-Warnes asked about the recruitment process. Cllr A Varley explained that the recommendation was to initiate the process. It had not yet commenced but would be in line with the process adopted previously and by other local authorities.

Cllr S Penfold asked whether the IP role was remunerated. The Monitoring Officer replied that there were different methods of remuneration and this could be in the form of expenses or a stipend.

It was proposed by Cllr A Varley, seconded by Cllr L Shires

RESOLVED

To approve the commencement of the recruitment process for two Independent Persons.

48 OUTSIDE BODY APPOINTMENTS

Cllr E Seward explained that the number of representatives from the District Council appointed to the Internal Rivers Drainage Board had been reduced from 5 members to 4.

RESOLVED

That Cllr Dr P Butikofer would be removed as a representative to the Internal Rivers Drainage Board

49 CROMER AND FAKENHAM LEVELLING-UP BIDS

The Deputy Leader, Cllr E Seward, introduced this item. He began by thanking the officers for their hard work in preparing the bids and the two local MPs for their support, which would be crucial to how they were progressed. He said that the Council had to submit applications which met the criteria and that had the best

chance of succeeding. The two bids that had been prepared were both very strong and met the criteria.

The Chief Executive apologised for the lateness of the report. A number of the officer team had recently had Covid. He said that there had been a presentation to Cabinet on 11th July. It had been explained that Cabinet had been advised that there was ongoing work regarding the costs for each project. This work was progressing well. The deadline for submission via the Government portal was midday on 2nd August. He concluded by saying that both bids reflected the Council's ambitions as well as the Government's levelling up agenda. He then invited the Corporate Director for Communities to introduce the Fakenham bid.

The Corporate Director for Communities explained that the bid for Levelling Up funding in Fakenham related to the proposed extension to the existing sports facility at Trap Lane in Fakenham; owned by the Council and operated by Everyone Active as part of the existing Leisure contract. The current facility comprised a sports hall, fitness suite, multi-use area, dance studio, changing rooms and reception area. The proposal saw an extension, which would include a 25m four-lane swimming pool with moveable floor and relocation of the fitness suite. Additionally, a new 3G all-weather artificial grass pitch was proposed to the north of the existing buildings. He showed members some images of the proposed facilities. He then explained that an allocation of £1,000,000.00 had been made within the cost amount for the provision of carbon reduction measures. The measures would be split between retrofitting the existing building and new provision on the new development. A public consultation process had received over 1000 responses, all overwhelmingly positive. He concluded by saying that FMG had provided a business model, setting out projected membership and usage of the facilities and details of this were set out in the exempt appendix.

The Chairman invited members to speak:

Cllr G Perry-Warnes asked what would happen if the project went over budget and if the Council would be liable for any excess payments or whether a 10% to reflect contribution to reflect the match-funding would be sufficient. The Director for Communities replied that the Council would be liable for funding any increase but everything had been done to mitigate this happening. Including 'inflating' the prices to reflect the likely award date, in line with industry standards.

Cllr J Toye asked whether there would be a full tender process later on if the bid was successful. The Director of Communities confirmed that the full process would be followed.

Cllr C Cushing thanked officers for all their hard work in such a short space of time. He asked if there was any indication of when the Government might respond. The Chief Executive replied that there was a lot of uncertainty at Government level generally, however, the message to local authorities was that it was 'business as usual'. It was expected that an analysis of the bids at government level would be made in October and an announcement on the awards would occur in November or December. The programme of delivery was for the period to March 2025. For Fakenham, if successful, it was anticipated that procurement would take place in the first six months of 2023.

Cllr N Housden referred to the costings and the projected commencement date and he asked whether the profiling of building costs could be adjusted in line with likely increases as the project progressed. The Director for Communities replied that once the bid was submitted that was it as far as funding was concerned. He added that he

was confident the project could be delivered within the proposed timeframe, however, if it slipped for any reason then that would put additional pressure on the cost. Cllr Housden then asked if inflation increased dramatically, if the project could come back to Full Council for further consideration before a decision to proceed was taken. The Director for Communities replied that if funding was awarded, then once the tenders were received, the Council would need to take a decision at that point as to whether to proceed or not.

Cllr J Rest sought reassurance that the submission of two bids would not cause a conflict with one another by effectively being in direct competition with each other. The Chief Executive replied that there was one bid for each Parliamentary constituency and they went through a separate appraisal process. He added that all efforts had been made to ensure that both bids were pitched at a scale that was robust and provided value for money, however, it was possible that one could be successful and the other not.

Cllr T FitzPatrick thanked the officers for their hard work. He said that it was a high quality bid, adding that it was important to apply for any Government funding that was available, especially for Fakenham and would support ambitions to 'level up'.

It was proposed by Cllr J Rest, seconded by Cllr T FitzPatrick and

RESOLVED to:

A. The Broadland Constituency proposal – Fakenham Sports and Leisure Hub (FLASH) project

1. Sign off the submission of the Levelling Up Fund bid for the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub for a total cost of £10,951,419.00 with grant amount of £9,856,277.00 being applied for.
2. That, in the event that the Levelling Up fund bid in respect of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub is successful:
 - Agree to the release of the equivalent value of the Section 106 monies for off-site indoor sports provision for the Fakenham Urban Extension to the value of £408,337.00
 - Agree to underwrite the provision of match funding for the 3G pitch to a maximum value of £575,000.00 in the event that Football Foundation funding is not forthcoming or the funding does not meet the full contribution level.
 - Recognise the ongoing revenue cost implications associated with the enhanced facility and impact that will have on future revenue or contract payments.

The Chairman then asked the Chief Executive to introduce the bid submission for Cromer.

He began by explaining that this bid differed to the Fakenham one, as that was a complete project and this one was an 'umbrella' bid, aimed at reviewing and strengthening the tourism offer in Cromer. He said that if the principle of the project was endorsed, then there was scope to discuss with the Government, a priority

ranking of elements within any cost envelope that was approved.

The Chief Executive said that the financial modelling, reflecting construction inflation and 'optimism bias' had resulted in a bid valued at £8.5m. If the grant application was successful, detailed costs would be prepared for each project element, packaged as appropriate to achieve value for money.

He explained that, as for the Fakenham bid, there was a match-funding requirement of 10%. Detailed consideration had been given to how this match-funding sum might be financed relative to ongoing obligations and liabilities the Council had in respect of the maintenance and repair of tourism infrastructure assets and contract costs with respect to grounds maintenance, lighting, pest control etc where the provision of new infrastructure could realise efficiencies for the Council moving forward and it was proposed that the Council should seek to confirm matchfunding of the full £730,000 from the capital receipts budget, which would only be drawn down for this project if the Levelling Up application was successful. He added that Cromer Town Council and the Friends of North Lodge Park had provided match-funding offers of £120k between them.

The Chairman invited members to speak:

Cllr J Toye requested that the cycling offer was as strong as possible and that storage was considered too at the railway stations. The Chief Executive replied that the offer on the Runton Road car park included a cycle hire, repair and hub stop with lockers too. It was hoped to establish Cromer as a potential cycle hub area.

Cllr E Spagnola, said that as a local member, she welcomed the inclusion of changing places facilities and increased accessibility for everyone. She said that she lived in an area of the town that was quite poverty stricken and there were several children who were neuro-diverse and she was delighted to see the increase in access provision. In addition, the provision of a free splash pad and play are would make a huge difference to these families in particular.

Cllr L Shires agreed with Cllr Spagnola that there were high levels of inequality in Cromer for wellbeing and health. The provision of free, green areas for families to access easily would be true levelling up and should be welcomed.

Cllr S Penfold asked whether the Cromer bid linked up with any other projects such as the Deep History Coast. The Chief Executive replied that there were appropriate references throughout the bid to the Deep History Coast and that it would enhance the green flag status of the District. He added that there was strong community engagement with the project.

It was proposed by Cllr E Seward, seconded by Cllr V Gay and

RESOLVED that

B. The North Norfolk Constituency proposal – “Cromer – New Facets for Norfolk’s Gem” project

1. Council signs off the submission of the Levelling Up Fund bid for the Cromer, New Facets for Norfolk’s Gem project for a total cost of £8,495,000 with a grant amount of £7,645,000 being applied for.

In the event that the Cromer Levelling Up fund bid is successful:

2. Agree to the District Council providing £730,000 in match-funding financed from Capital Receipts.

50 QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS

None.

51 OPPOSITION BUSINESS

None received.

52 NOTICE(S) OF MOTION

None received.

53 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

54 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm.

Chairman