

## **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 14 December 2022 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 9.30 am**

<b>Committee Members Present:</b>	Mr N Dixon (Chairman)	Mr S Penfold (Vice-Chairman)
	Ms L Withington	Mr H Blathwayt
	Mr P Heinrich	Dr V Holliday
	Mr N Housden	Mr A Varley
	Mr C Cushing	Mr P Fisher
<b>Other Members Present:</b>	Mr J Toye (Observer)	Mr T Adams (Observer)
	Mr A Brown (Observer)	Mr J Rest (Observer)
	Mr E Seward (Observer)	
<b>Officers in Attendance:</b>	Democratic Services and Governance Officer - Scrutiny ( DSGOS), Democratic Services Manager (DSM), Estates and Asset Strategy Manager (EASM), Director for Communities (DFC), Assistant Director for Finance, Assets, Legal & Monitoring Officer (MO), Assistant Director for Sustainable Growth (ADSG), Director for Resources / S151 Officer (DFR), Assistant Director for Planning (ADP) and Policy and Performance Management Officer (PPMO)	
<b>Also in attendance:</b>	Member of the Press	

### **87 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr E Spagnola and from Cllr R Kershaw as the relevant Portfolio Holder for the NWHSHAZ report.

### **88 SUBSTITUTES**

None.

### **89 PUBLIC QUESTIONS & STATEMENTS**

None received.

### **90 MINUTES**

- i. Minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
- ii. The Chairman noted that there were outstanding issues raised in the minutes relating to the production of an Economic Growth Strategy, and asked whether any update was available. The DSGOS replied that he had discussed the matter with officers and had been informed that whilst there would not be a formal Economic Growth Strategy, an action plan could be expected in its place for consideration in due course. Cllr T Adams stated that at present, the Council's focus was to retain and support as many existing businesses as possible, given the challenging economic

circumstances. He added that opportunities for creating economic growth were limited given the economic situation and as a result, whilst individual projects would move forward, a Strategy was not being developed at the current time. The Chairman asked if an action plan could be confirmed at a future meeting. Cllr N Housden stated that some form of Strategy should be presented to the Committee in advance of the election.

**91 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None received.

**92 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr A Brown declared a pecuniary interest for agenda item 17 and stated that he would excuse himself from the meeting during debate of the item.

**93 PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

None received.

**94 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY A MEMBER**

None received.

**95 RESPONSES OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CABINET TO THE COMMITTEE'S REPORTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The DSGOS noted that GRAC had accepted the Committee's recommendation to include the forecasted budget overspend as a separate risk on the Corporate Risk Register.

**96 CAR PARK INCOME DATA MONITORING - OCTOBER 2021 TO SEPTEMBER 2022**

- i. Cllr E Seward – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets requested that the report be deferred as a result of missing and incorrect information. He noted his apologies and suggested that the report could return to the Committee for consideration once amended. Cllr S Penfold asked whether officers were confident that the report could be updated in time for the January meeting, to which the DFR replied that it should be possible.
- ii. The Chairman noted his concern that the report was not ready for consideration and the lack of notice given, but accepted that it was necessary to defer the report in order to make the necessary amendments for consideration at a future meeting.

**RESOLVED**

**To defer the report for consideration at a future meeting.**

**97 FEES AND CHARGES 2023-24**

Cllr E Seward – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets introduced the report and informed Members that it outlined which charges were set by Government and those

set by the District.

### Questions and Discussion

- i. Cllr V Holliday referred to non-statutory charges such as filming, and asked whether there was any scope for further increase in-line with the true rate of inflation. Cllr E Seward replied that whilst the Council did have discretion to set these charges, the fees and charges set-out within the report had been recommended for 2023-24. The DFC stated that whilst there was discretion for the non-statutory charges, competition had to be taken into account and charges were set to remain competitive with neighbouring authorities. He added that raising charges further would ultimately act to deter interest and lower the overall revenue generated by the Council. Cllr V Holliday asked whether the fees and charges had at least been benchmarked to determine whether they were competitive with neighbouring authorities. The DFC replied that it would be difficult to benchmark charges such as filming on the Pier, as this was a unique location. The Chairman noted that market forces would always impact fees and charges, but it would be helpful to better understand this impact.
- ii. Cllr H Blathwayt noted that he had previously set charges for commercial piers which had been a difficult process, with charges often going in the opposite direction to inflation.
- iii. Cllr P Heinrich noted that customers and residents all helped to generate income for the Council, and they too could be struggling financially under the current circumstances.
- iv. Cllr T Adams stated that discussions with other Council Leaders across the County had suggested that some garden waste collection fees were up to £20 higher than NNDC's, which had only risen in-line with inflation. He added that whilst some fees could potentially be raised further, the Council had to remain competitive and fair to its customers.
- v. The DFC suggested that it may be helpful for Members to see comparison data on filming and garden bin charges in order to justify the recommendations. Cllr Holliday and Cllr Housden agreed that this would be useful, whilst Cllr Withington and Cllr Penfold raised concerns that requesting a range of additional information could strain the limited resources available during the budget-setting process. It was agreed that comparison data could be provided on filming and garden bin charges in February, with Cllr V Holliday proposing the request and Cllr N Housden seconding.
- vi. The recommendations to Council were proposed by Cllr H Blathwayt and seconded by Cllr P Heinrich.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1. To recommend to Full Council: a) The fees and charges from 1 April 2023 as included in Appendix A. b) That Delegated Authority be given to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and relevant Heads of Service, to agree those fees and charges not included within Appendix A as required as outlined within the report.**
- 2. To request that comparison data on filming and garden bin charges be**

**added to the work programme for consideration in February.**

**98      TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEAR REPORT**

Cllr E Seward – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets introduced the report and informed Members that it provided details of the Council's investments and borrowing within the economic context in which the Council was operating. He added that the Council did not have or plan to have any long-term borrowing, which placed the Council in a good position whilst costs continued to rise. Short-term borrowing costs used to manage cash-flow were reported to have risen from 0.36% to 2.65%. It was noted that local authorities were not permitted to borrow for commercial investment, and whilst this had previously been an option for Councils, it was no longer possible.

**Questions and Discussion**

- i. The Chairman referred to commercial investments and noted that some Councils had seen very unfortunate consequences from these activities, and it was therefore prudent to limit this practice.

**RESOLVED**

**To note the information provided on the mid-year treasury activity.**

**99      ANNUAL REVIEW OF BEACH HUTS AND CHALETS 2022**

Cllr E Seward – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets introduced the report and informed Members that monitoring continued following a review undertaken by the Committee in 2018. The EASM stated that the past year had been a challenging period for beach huts and chalets as a result of the lasting impacts of Covid-19 and associated lockdown periods, but the service was turning a corner with chalet refurbishment underway and advertising increased for weekly bookings. She added that occupancy had increased to 40% for weekly bookings from 28% when the initial review was undertaken. It was noted that annual-let beach huts and chalets occupancy remained very strong with an extensive waiting list still in place. The EASM reported that nine new beach hut plots had been added this year, though it had been difficult to find appropriate sites, with many beach front locations reserved for parking spaces. She added that a small increase in income was expected in 2023 across weekly lets, though it was not yet known how cost of living pressures would impact the service.

**Questions and Discussion**

- i. Cllr L Withington referred to the annual-let waiting list, and asked whether consideration could be given to prioritising local residents, who would be more likely to use the huts throughout the year. The EASM replied that this issue had been raised before, but placing restrictions on the waiting list would be unlikely to have any meaningful impact, given that most people on the waiting list were North Norfolk residents. She added that it was also important to note that despite the high number of residents on the waiting list, they did not appear to make use of vacant weekly-let beach huts.
- ii. Cllr H Blathwayt stated that there was a shortage of beach huts in the East of the District, and asked whether there were any plans to increase the provision at locations such as Clink Road car park in Sea Palling. The EASM

replied that this site had been considered, but the decision had been taken not to move forward as a high number of parking spaces were required during peak periods. Cllr H Blathwayt accepted that the car park was well used, but suggested that beach huts and chalets may be a better use of the space, given the shortage in the East of the District.

- iii. Cllr J Toye referred to requests from residents to consider local usage during quieter winter months, and noted that whilst this had been given consideration, he asked that it be kept under review, given the pressures placed on local amenity assets by tourism during the summer season.
- iv. Cllr V Holliday referred to comments on additional beach huts and suggested that there were already too many car parks on the coast and the Council should be discouraging increased car usage. She added that using the Council's car parks for beach huts would be a more environmentally friendly approach and should be encouraged. Cllr V Holliday asked whether the balance between annual and weekly lets was right, given the comparison between an extensive annual-let waiting list and low weekly-let occupancy levels. The EASM replied that there was a significant disparity in income between the two offerings, as annual-lets produced less income per plot, and even with lower occupancy levels weekly-lets still generated more income. She added that as a result, it would be a difficult decision to increase occupancy but reduce income, even if changing weekly to annual lets would potentially lead to 100% occupancy. It was suggested that it may be useful to undertake analysis on the full effects of changing the balance between weekly and monthly lets in the future.
- v. It was clarified that voids within the context of the report referred to vacancies for weekly-lets, which stood at approximately 60%. She added that it would be difficult to expect to achieve 100% occupancy, given that the data took into account winter and out of season occupancy levels. It was noted that block bookings for the off-season would be trialled this year and it was hoped that they would improve winter occupancy levels. Cllr N Housden suggested that another option may be to reconsider the pricing structure to boost bookings during winter. The EASM replied that the Council had previously promoted a weekly winter rate of £21, though this had not covered the management costs of bookings and had also failed to increase occupancy. The Chairman noted that it was important to consider net income alongside occupancy rates, and suggested that boosting occupancy at the expense of income may not be the best solution.
- vi. Cllr S Penfold stated that he was supportive of boosting beach hut and chalet numbers in the East of the District.
- vii. The Chairman noted that there were two potential recommendations to consider relating to the increase of beach hut and chalet provision in the East of the District, and the consideration of a scheme of local prioritisation. The recommendations were proposed by Cllr A Varley and seconded by Cllr L Withington.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. To receive and note the update.**
- 2. To recommend that consideration is given to increasing the provision of**

**beach huts and chalets in the East of the District.**

- 3. To recommend that consideration is given to a local prioritisation scheme for the annual-let beach hut and chalet waiting list.**

**100 NORTH WALSHAM MARKET PLACE IMPROVEMENT SCHEME**

Cllr E Seward – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets introduced the report and informed Members in the absence of Cllr R Kershaw that he had been involved in the scheme as a local Member, resident and Cabinet Member for its duration. He added that the scheme included a range of projects, some of which had already been delivered. It was reported that the physical works were expected to be completed by spring, and sought to bring significant benefits to the town and improve footfall. Cllr E Seward stated that the scheme had begun with an initial funding allocation from Historic England, which the Council had matched, followed by further successful bids including £1.3m from the Local Enterprise Partnership. He added that funds had been provided with time constraints, which had presented challenges, but had also helped the Council to avoid more significant materials cost inflation. As a result, the funding uplift requested was approximately 16-18% of the total budget, and represented substantially lower cost inflation than had been seen throughout the construction industry and in other local authority's projects. Cllr E Seward stated that the scheme had attracted further external investment to undertake projects such as developing a new bus interchange, which had significantly improved traffic flow through the town. He added that further investments included the development of the City Gates site and businesses opening on Hornbeam Road which showed growing confidence in the town. It was stated that the uplift funding would enable the completion of the Market Place works, and make significant improvements to the Bank and Black Swan Lokes.

Questions and Discussion

- i. The Chairman noted that the Committee did not seek to challenge the merits of the scheme, but it was right to seek assurances on project delivery, planning, governance and management. He added that risks also had to be considered, including the impact of using £400k from reserves that would no longer be available for use elsewhere.
- ii. The ADSG explained that if approved, £227k of the £400k funding request would be used to complete the Market Place works as currently scoped, whilst the remaining £173k would fund improvements to the Bank and Black Swan Lokes. He added that the Loke works could be scaled to fit the available budget, given that whilst various designs had been considered, a final design was yet to be adopted. It was suggested that there were several options for improving Bank Loke, with minor improvements already made which included decluttering the area of bins and other mobile street furniture. The ADSG informed Members that a planning application had also been submitted that would create an amenity area in Black Swan Loke.
- iii. The Chairman referred to contingency funds and sought clarification that this had been 10% of the overall budget. The ADSG replied that the contingency had not been 10% of the overall budget, as it had not take into account fees beyond the physical works. He added that the contingency had now been spent as a result of the previously noted construction cost inflation. It was noted that funding conditions had required external funding to be spent in-year, which meant that budget planning and allowing headroom had been

more challenging. The ADSG noted that contingencies had also taken other forms, such as allowing for variation in the laying rates of paving for large sections of the physical works. He added that whilst the scheme had grown as a result of additional funding allocations, there was no longer a definitive cost as the scheme had been modified on multiple occasions throughout its delivery. It was noted that the funding time constraints had helped to avoid more substantial inflation in materials costs.

- iv. The Chairman noted that project updates had been regularly received by the Committee, and whilst some issues had been raised, there had not been any indication that further funding would be required to complete the project. He added for example that the use of contingency funds would have been a prudent point at which to raise concerns about the potential need for additional funding. It was suggested that as a result, it was now crucial to be able to fully explain why additional funding was required. The Chairman noted that it had been difficult to obtain information on the contingency figures, which had made it difficult to properly scrutinise the project's delivery.
- v. Cllr N Housden stated that the budget uplift request had not been itemised, and the funding for works on the Lokes was only estimated, therefore it was difficult to justify what level of funding was required. He added that further fundraising opportunities had been mentioned for the Lokes, which raised concerns that more funding could be requested again in the future. It was noted that the paper suggested the project could be finished within the existing budget, but there was no indication of whether this included the additional £400k funding request. The Chairman suggested that a more detailed breakdown of the £400k would be required to properly determine what was driving the need for additional expenditure. The ADSG replied that the additional funding required to complete the Market Place project was the result of an overrun of costs in areas such as management fees, with NCC requiring project management costs which included various TROs. He added that there were also design consultancy fees, which included works beyond the Market Place, such as the bus interchange designs. The ADSG stated that he could provide an itemised budget, but it should be noted that whilst the scheme had begun with a target cost, the project had been delivered under challenging circumstances that had necessitated re-scoping throughout delivery. He added that it was not known until a project review in September, that additional funding would be required to complete work on the Lokes.
- vi. The Chairman asked why a more detailed breakdown of the additional costs had not been given in advance, to which Cllr N Housden added that even when divided between the Market Place and Lokes, it was still unclear how the funding would be spent. The ADSG replied that the additional funding was required as a result of overspends on the Market Place, alongside funding to undertake works the Lokes. The Chairman stated that it would be helpful to see more detail for each, to which the DFC suggested that this could be supplied in writing in advance of the next meeting.
- vii. Cllr C Cushing stated that he had considerable concerns about the way in which the project had been managed, given that an update in September had not provided any indication that the project was not on track. He added that a key component of good project management was to ensure that there were no surprises, such as a request for additional funding. It was suggested that in order to relieve concerns, detailed information should be provided to

explain exactly why the additional funding was required and how it would be spent. Cllr C Cushing noted that other projects such as the A148 Fakenham roundabout required additional funding to meet increased costs, and the £400k requested would no longer be available for this important infrastructure.

- viii. Cllr S Penfold asked whether the scheme had suffered from project creep with the addition of new projects such as the Lokes, and whether this was the reason for increased costs. The ADSG replied that the physical placemaking works had been scoped to determine what could be done to improve the town. He added that the original scope had been bigger than initial funding allowed, hence further funding had been sought which had then increased the scale of the deliverable works. It was noted that additional funding had been made available at the end of each year that was used to deliver projects such as the bus interchange and as a result, it had become an agile scheme that had grown where funding allowed. The ADSG noted that other areas had been scaled back and de-scoped in order to account for constraints faced during delivery. Cllr S Penfold noted that rescoping the project would present inherent risks, and it was possible that this may have caused issues. He asked whether there was any opportunity to seek a funding uplift from Historic England to offset the funds requested. The ADSG replied that whilst Historic England had great confidence in the scheme and had provided additional funding on other occasions, no further funding was available.
- ix. Cllr V Holliday stated that she was surprised to hear of NCC's project management role, then referred to the de-scoping of the scheme to fit the budget, and asked whether this had been reversed given the request for additional funding. Cllr E Seward replied that the HAZ Project Board and Cabinet had closely monitored the budget, and had been assured that the existing budget would be satisfactory, however the Council had faced unforeseen challenges as a result of high levels of inflation. He added that original scope included improvements beyond the Market Place to surrounding streets, however these had not been included which explained the de-scoping of the project. It was noted that some aspects of the project did present as potential risks, but these had been acknowledged from the start. Cllr E Seward explained that NCC had been asked to manage the project as result of preferred contractor requirements for highways work and TROs, which were primarily NCC responsibilities.
- x. Cllr H Blathwayt stated that overall the project appeared to have helped North Walsham improve its reputation as a destination, but concerns remained regarding NCC's project management role. He noted that the scheme appeared to show good value overall, but asked whether two projects had been joined together. The ADSG replied that the Council had sought to do as much as it could in the town with the available funding, and had taken advantage of opportunities for additional funding to have maximum impact. He added that the scheme included a number of projects, which made it difficult to define as a single project.
- xi. Cllr S Penfold noted that he had worked with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and informed Members that they recommended contingency funds of 20%, alongside an inflationary allowance of 10% on all projects. He added that the Council may have therefore underestimated the level of contingency required, however the risk of inflation was not known at the time. Cllr S

- Penfold asked whether there would be any further re-scoping prior to completion, to which the ADSG replied that whilst there would be no further expansion of the project, the project could be further de-scoped or re-engineered, if required to fit the available budget. The ADSG added that the Loke works were yet to be fully costed, and could therefore be adapted to fit the available budget. It was confirmed that there was no risk that the Loke works would exceed the additional budget, but it was possible that savings could be found to avoid spending the full funding allocation.
- xii. Cllr L Withington sought clarification of whether cost increases for the physical works had been kept to approximately 16% as suggested, whilst other authorities had reported cost inflation above 40%, which suggested that the NWHSHAZ scheme had been well managed. The ADSG noted that the industry standard for inflation in the construction industry had been reported as approximately 12%, however it was known to be much higher, depending on the type of work and the materials used.
- xiii. Cllr J Toye noted that inflation was beyond the control of the Council and officers had done well to keep costs at their current levels, whilst many projects elsewhere had been cancelled. He added that the need to finish the project was essential, and the funds were available within the appropriate reserve to do this.
- xiv. The Chairman noted that it was appropriate to determine whether the project had followed the project governance and management framework as agreed by GRAC, and it may be necessary to review this at a future date. He added that the key responsibility of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee was to ensure that the additional funding request was justified, and this would require a further report with a full breakdown of the £400k. Cllr J Rest stated that as GRAC Chairman, he would be content to consider whether the project had correctly followed the project management and governance framework.
- xv. The Chairman noted that the Committee was not opposed to the funding recommendation, but more information would be required at a future meeting to justify the request. It was confirmed following a request from Cllr N Housden that other projects such as the Levelling-Up bids were still awaiting approval, and there were no other active projects that would suffer as a result of approving the recommendation. The DSGOS noted that the recommendation was due to be considered by Full Council the following week, and it would be too late to wait until the next meeting to receive additional information. The ADSG noted that it may be possible to get the information in advance of Full Council, but due to staffing issues he could not fully commit to this deadline. The Chairman noted that given the circumstances, it would be helpful to receive more detailed information in advance of Full Council, alongside a recommendation to request that GRAC consider the management and governance of the project at a future date.
- xvi. Cllr N Housden asked for clarification of whether the £400k funding would allow for completion of the project and whether the information supplied in advance of Council would provide details of how this would be spent. The ADSG replied that this would be possible for the Market Place works but not for the Lokes as the designs were yet to be fully agreed and costed. Cllr N Housden stated that it would be difficult to agree the recommendation without being able to confirm completion of all aspects of the project. The ADSG

replied that whilst designs were available they were yet to be fully costed and further details could not be provided until this was complete. The DFR stated that works would be scoped to fit within the available budget.

- xvii. The recommendations were proposed by Cllr P Heinrich and Cllr S Penfold.

**RESOLVED**

1. **To recommend to Full Council that £400,000 be allocated from the Business Rates Retention Reserve for the completion of the NWHSHAZ place-making scheme.**
2. **To request that a full breakdown of the uplift funding request be provided in advance of Full Council.**
3. **To recommend that GRAC review the Project Governance and Management Framework for the Scheme to verify whether it followed and complied with the template and whether there are lessons to be learnt in assessing, mitigating and reporting project risks.**

**101 MANAGING PERFORMANCE QUARTER 2 2022/23**

Cllr T Adams – Council Leader introduced the report and informed Members that it covered preparation of the Levelling-Up bid applications, as well more challenging issues such as a peak in demand for customer service calls. He added that there had been some affordable housing delivered, which had been approved prior to the advent of nutrient neutrality legislation.

Questions and Discussion

- i. Cllr V Holliday noted that beyond Serco related issues within the Customer Focus section of the report there were 28% of delivery plan actions with amber RAG status, as well as a further 25% under the Financial Sustainability heading that had not been addressed in the executive summary. Cllr T Adams replied that demand for customer service calls in relation to the Serco waste service had reduced significantly and were no longer a pressure on the service. He added that a number of projects had been impacted by inflation such as the Fakenham roundabout, and whilst it remained the Council's ambition to see the project completed, it would be challenging. Cllr V Holliday noted that the number of calls being answered was only 62.8% on InPhase, which highlighted that a significant number of calls were not being answered.
- ii. Cllr N Housden referred to staff shortage pressures and asked for clarification of the Council's recruitment position, and whether there were any particular issues precipitating staff shortages. Cllr T Adams replied that there were recruitment issues across the Local Government sector for planning officers, however Planning performance was still positive and measures were in place to boost recruitment. Cllr A Brown noted that the Planning Service Improvement Plan – Action Plan was being developed for consideration in the new year, and this would seek to address a number of issues such as increasing efficiency in the delivery of affordable homes.
- iii. Cllr C Cushing referred to delays with the Fakenham Roundabout project and asked for an update, to which Cllr Adams replied that an update was

expected in the week ahead, but significant progress was not expected as funding and increased costs remained the key issues. He added that he would seek to provide a written update as soon as possible, taking into account that many affordable homes were dependent on delivery of the roundabout.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. To note this report and endorses the actions being taken by Corporate Leadership Team detailed in Appendix A – Managing Performance.**

## **102 NNDC PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKING**

Cllr T Adams – Council Leader introduced the report and informed Members that the Council continued to perform well against similar authorities on matters such as Council Tax collection and Planning Performance. He added that Benefits change of circumstances performance was an exception, though work was underway to address this, with delays now down to twelve days, well within the target fourteen days.

### Questions and Discussion

- i. Cllr V Holliday referred to time to process housing benefits changes and noted that the Council remained the worst in the benchmarking group, whilst also being fourth worst in household waste recycling, though it was noted that the latter was reportedly a result of not collecting food waste. She asked for clarification on whether the justification for poor recycling performance was correct, given that all Councils had different food waste collection arrangements. Cllr T Adams replied that that measures were in place to address benefit changes performance, and on household waste recycling this appeared to be a Norfolk-wide issue, which the anticipated mandatory food waste collections may help to address. He added that small electrical items and home collections were further measures expected as part of the waste contract in 2023, with plans also being developed for Comms to help promote recycling. It was noted that efforts were ongoing to reduce recycling contamination in communal bins through housing providers. Cllr V Holliday noted that the Council was also worsening for residual waste collections, and appeared to be lower performing than the nearest neighbours group. She added that it was also time to consider which benchmarking measures should be considered going forward, and suggested that total expenditure for central services by population would be helpful, as the Council appeared to be more expensive than its peers. The rate of births for new enterprises was also suggested, as the Council was reported to have very low performance. Cllr T Adams stated that he shared concerns with overall refuse collections, and noted that in the long-term, the Council did need to see a reduction in the tonnage of residual waste. The DFC noted that there may be more context to explain performance on matters such as residual waste collections, and suggested that a more detailed discussion could be useful to better understand performance issues.
- ii. The PPMO noted that there had previously been a detailed report on housing waiting lists, and managers had been given an opportunity to provide additional contextual information to the benchmarking report, though none had been received. She added that this approach had been helpful with the deep dive that had followed the benefits change performance issues. It was

suggested that any new measures should be focused on areas where performance needed investigating, to help the Council improve.

- iii. Cllr J Toye asked what the effect of reducing contamination in recyclable collections to zero would be, and how would this impact the Council's performance. The DFC replied that there was a level of contamination within the recyclables collected caused by a number of issues, and whilst the Council did have reasonable performance in reducing contaminants, there was still room for improvements. He added that it would be useful for Members to support any future campaigns that sought to reduce contamination.
- iv. Cllr N Housden stated that with few exceptions there appeared to be a general decline in the percentage of household waste being recycled across the authorities represented in the report.
- v. The benchmarking measures available for consideration were discussed and it was suggested that central services expenditure by population should be included going forward. Cllr V Holliday suggested that the rate of new businesses being developed and residual waste per household should be added, as the Council was not performing well in these areas. It was noted that Council Tax non-collection rates should be removed from the report as performance was not a concern. Cllr T Adams suggested that whilst performance was positive, it may be prudent to maintain oversight of planning applications performance, in order to see the impact of the Planning Service Improvement Plan.
- vi. The recommendations were proposed by Cllr A Varley and seconded by Cllr H Blathwayt.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. To receive and note the benchmarking information.**
- 2. To request that the following annual measures be added to future reports:**
  - **CIPFA 8 Total expenditure - Central Services per head of population (RSX)**
  - **CIPFA 9 Rate of births of new enterprises per 10,000 resident population aged 16 and above**
  - **CIPFA 10 Residual household waste per household (annual)**
  - **(Remove) CIPFA 1 Council tax not collected as a percentage of council tax due - annual**

#### **103 ENFORCEMENT UPDATE - DECEMBER 2022**

The ADP introduced the report and informed Members that he was happy to answer any questions.

##### Questions and Discussion

- i. Cllr N Housden referred to the Tattersett case and asked whether there was any update available from the Environment Agency (EA), to which the ADP

replied that there was little progress to report as the EA regarded NNDC to be the responsible authority under the enforcement notice. He added that the enforcement notice was being pursued with the Council moving toward prosecution, and local Members could expect to be kept up to date on progress, but should take into account current delays in court proceedings. Cllr N Housden noted that it was disappointing that the EA did not take any responsibility for enforcement, given that they had issued the permit for the site.

**RESOLVED**

**To note the continued progress of the Enforcement Board and the Combined Enforcement Team.**

**104 THE CABINET WORK PROGRAMME**

The DSGOS reported that the Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme would go to Cabinet in January, and would form a significant part of Costal Partnership East's work going forward. He added that whilst the Committee would have limited influence on the project, it may be helpful to have a briefing on the progress and work undertaken as part of the Programme. It was noted that other reports included property transactions and improvements that were not ordinarily considered by the Committee.

**RESOLVED**

**To note the Cabinet Work Programme.**

**105 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND UPDATE**

The DSGOS informed Members that the draft Budget and MTFS were expected to come to the Committee for pre-scrutiny in January, prior to going to Cabinet and finally Full Council for approval in February. He added that the Sheringham Leisure Centre Project Review was also expected January, alongside the NWHSVAZ update and the Car Parking Revenue report, if it could be updated in time. It was noted that Serco were expected to return in February, alongside the Action Plan for the Planning Service Improvement Plan. The DFC noted that given the Christmas break it would be difficult to amend the Car Parking Revenue report in time for the January deadline and as a result, it may be prudent to expect the report in February.

**RESOLVED**

**To note the Work Programme.**

**106 FORMER SHANNOCKS HOTEL SITE - SHERINGHAM**

Cllr A Brown introduced the report and informed Members that he was pleased to see that the CPO was advancing. He added that whilst there was a perception that it was a quick way to resolve issues, this was not the case, but that the Shannocks site was a prime location requiring development, and he therefore fully supported the recommendation. It suggested that it could be helpful for the Government to streamline the CPO process to be more in-line with the charging order process.

Questions and Discussion

- i. Cllr L Withington reiterated that progressing the CPO would be welcome news in the town, and the amount of work that NNDC had put into the CPO was recognised by residents. She added that it was difficult for communities to understand the extent to which the Council had been bound to process, and why it had taken so long to progress the CPO, but the report helped to explain.
- ii. The recommendations were proposed by Cllr P Heinrich and seconded by Cllr L Withington.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. To confirm support for the serving of the General Vesting Document to take ownership of the site as soon as possible.**
- 2. To recommend to Full Council that it approves the addition of a capital budget of the valuation cost as set out at section 6 of the confidential appended report, and an additional £10,000 to cover the costs associated with the purchase of the property to be financed by the use of capital receipts, use of reserves and borrowing if required.**

The meeting ended at 12.41 pm.

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Chairman