

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of North Norfolk District Council held on 15 November 2017 at the Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer at 6.00 pm.

Members Present:

Mrs S Arnold	Mr S Hester	Mr J Rest
Mr D Baker	Mr J Lee	Mr R Reynolds
Dr P Bütikofer	Mr N Lloyd	Mr R Shepherd
Mrs S Bütikofer	Mrs B McGoun	Mr B Smith
Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds	Mrs A Moore	Mr D Smith
Mr N Coppack	Mr P W Moore	Mr N Smith
Mr N Dixon	Mrs J Oliver	Mrs V Uprichard
Mrs A Fitch-Tillett	Ms B Palmer	Mrs L Walker
Mr T FitzPatrick	Mr N Pearce	Mr G Williams
Mr V FitzPatrick	Mrs G Perry-Warnes	Mr A Yiasimi
Mrs A Green	Mr R Price	Mr D Young
Mrs P Grove-Jones	Mrs M Prior	
Mr B Hannah	Mr J Punchard	

Officers in Attendance: The Corporate Directors, the Monitoring Officer, the Communications & Marketing Manager and the Democratic Services Manager

Press: Present

51. PRAYERS

The Chairman invited Reverend David Roper, St Mary the Virgin, Northrepps, to lead prayers.

52. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman began by welcoming the newly formed Independent Group. He said he hoped that all members would continue to work hard for the residents of the District.

The Chairman then informed said that he had attended the following events since the last meeting of Council:

- 03 October – opening of Cromer Crematorium
- 07 October – opening of the new community shop at Itteringham
- 09 October – Sheringham in Bloom
- 09 October – Justice service, Norwich Cathedral
- 16 October – NNDC Centre of Sporting Excellence at Greshams School
- 19 October – British Empire Medals presentation
- 21 October – Trafalgar Day celebrations in Kings Lynn
- 25 October – Cromer Hospital open day
- 29 October – Annual closing of the Mo Museum, Sheringham
- 12 November – Remembrance Services at Cromer and Sheringham

He said that he had been proud to represent the Council at all of these events.

53. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

None received

54. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mrs H Cox, Ms J English, Ms V Gay, Mrs M Millership, Mr W Northam, Mr R Stevens, Ms K Ward.

55. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th September 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:

Mrs L Walker was recorded as not being in attendance when she had been present

56. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

57. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS

None

58. REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE AND APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, SUB COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND PANELS

The Head of Paid Service (SB) introduced this item. He explained that the formation of a new political group had led to a change in the political balance of the Council. He advised Members that there was one change to the table appended to the report. To ensure that the allocation of seats fully reflected the adjusted political balance, the Independent Group had agreed to give one of their seats on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to the Liberal Democrat Group. This resulted in the Liberal Democrat Group having 5 seats on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman invited Members to speak.

Mrs S Bütikofer said that following the changes to the allocation of committee seats to reflect the new political balance of the Council, she felt that it would be appropriate to review the chairmanship of committees at the next meeting of Council on 19 December. Mr N Coppack seconded the proposal. The amendment was put to the vote and it was

RESOLVED

That a review of committee chairman and vice-chairman appointments would be undertaken at the meeting of Council on 19 December 2017

It was proposed by Mr N Coppack, seconded by Mr E Seward and

RESOLVED

- 1. That Council approves the revised political balance calculation as per section 2.4 of the report**

2. That Council approves the allocation of seats to political groups as shown in Appendix A (subject to the change outlined above)

The Chairman then invited the group leaders to put forward any nominations for appointments to committees required by the change in the political balance.

Mrs S Bütikofer said that she had one change – to appoint Mrs B McGoun to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Mr N Lloyd as a substitute to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Mr T FitzPatrick and Mr N Coppack had provided a list of their appointments to the Democratic Services Manager.

It was proposed by Mr B Hannah, seconded by Mr T FitzPatrick and

RESOLVED

That Council approves the appointment of each committee, sub-committee, working party and panel as outlined above.

59. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET – 30 OCTOBER 2017

a) AGENDA ITEM 08: MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2018/19 TO 2021/22

The Leader, Mr T FitzPatrick introduced this item in the absence of the Portfolio Holder, Mr W Northam. He explained that the report presented an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2018/19 to 2021/22. The strategy had been updated to support the Corporate Plan for the period 2015 to 2019 and had been refreshed in the year to provide an updated financial projection in support of the 2018/19 budget process.

The Council was in a good financial position with a small surplus forecast for 2018/19, however a current deficit was forecast for 2019/20 onwards. There were however uncertainties including the future of local government funding and business rates retention, which made it difficult to forecast too far into the future at the present time. The situation would continue to be reviewed and feed in to the 2018/19 budget process.

The Chairman invited Mr G Williams, Vice-Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to outline recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny meeting on 08 November 2017.

Mr Williams explained that the Committee was broadly supportive of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and supported the recommendations. They had raised concerns that the second homes council tax return from the County Council was due to end in 2020 and had made the following amendment, proposed by Mr S Hester and seconded by Mr E Seward:

‘That the Council’s Policy is to seek a return from Norfolk County Council of a significant proportion of Second Homes Council Tax from the financial year 19/20 onwards and asks for the support of County Cllrs representing North Norfolk to help achieve this.’

The amendment was put to the vote and carried.

Mr Williams then went onto say that, as in previous years, the Committee had raised a lot of questions regarding the reserves and had asked whether the following could be addressed:

1. That as part of the budget setting process officers produce a report on the earmarked reserves statement setting out what future expenditure plans, if any, exist to use the substantial balances of some £8.2 million forecast for the financial year commencing April

2020 for asset management, communities, housing, new homes bonus and restructuring and invest to save proposals.

2. That as part of the budget setting process officers produce a report showing for each of the last ten years what payments have been made from the benefits earmarked reserve.

Mr Williams said that he had been reassured that these were already in hand and therefore they were not formal recommendations to Council.

It was proposed by Mr T FitzPatrick, seconded by Mr N Dixon and

RESOLVED

To approve the revised reserves statement as included at Appendix 1 to the financial strategy.

b) AGENDA ITEM 10: TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEARLY REPORT

The Leader, Mr T FitzPatrick introduced this item in the absence of the Portfolio Holder, Mr W Northam. He explained that it set out the Treasury Management activities actually undertaken during the first half of the 2017/18 Financial Year compared with the Treasury Management Strategy for the year. Treasury activities for the half year had been carried out in accordance with the CIPFA Code and the Council's Treasury Strategy. The Council continued to be prudent and was currently debt-free.

The Chairman invited Members to speak:

Mr D Young referred to Paragraphs 8.3 and 8.4 regarding the £6m increase in the limit for Pooled Funds. He noted that the current level of short term investments was £7.9m, approximately 25%, and stated that as drafted the increase in the limit for Pooled Funds, i.e. long term investments, could be made entirely at the expense of short term investments. He asked for some assurance to be made concerning the maintenance of an adequate level of liquidity. In the absence of the S151 Officer, it was agreed that there would be a written response.

Mr G Williams, Vice-Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee confirmed that the Committee supported the recommendations.

It was proposed by Mr T FitzPatrick, seconded by Mr N Dixon and

RESOLVED

1. That the Treasury Management Half Yearly Report 2017/18 is approved.
2. To approve changes to the Counterparty Limits.

c) HIGHFIELD ROAD CAR PARK, FAKENHAM

Mrs J Oliver, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Assets introduced this item. She explained that the report detailed the options available to the Council with respect to the future of the Highfield Road Car Park at Fakenham. This followed the recommendation made by the Council's strategic property partner, Gleeds, that the car park should be sold for development and the Council undertaking a public consultation exercise inviting public comment on future options for the use of this asset. Several options had been considered but it was proposed to retain the car park, to improve it and to introduce charges.

Mrs Oliver went onto say that the proposed capital budget of £75,000 for improvement works did not include refurbishment of the public toilets. Improvement of the toilets could, however, be the subject of one of the Council's work streams with Fakenham Town Council. There would be no problem with removing the height barriers and allowing coaches to use the car park for the Christmas period but the resurfacing work and markings would not be done by then and there would need to be further discussions regarding coach parking going forward.

The Chairman invited Members to speak:

Mr J Rest queried the issue of coach parking. He said that the Town Council was hoping for two bays and the cost of providing two pads for this this was not unreasonable but it appeared that the District Council wanted to relocate them elsewhere in the town. He concluded by saying that the report did not reflect the discussions with the town council. Mr T FitzPatrick replied that he had attended a meeting with two of the Fakenham District members, one of the Corporate Directors and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Fakenham Town Council and it had been agreed that coach parking would be allowed on the Highfield car park on a temporary basis until Christmas and they had agreed to look at alternative sites. The Head of Paid Service (SB) added that there was historic use of the car park by coaches but it was not clear when this had started. However, it had been used by organised coach tours rather than public transport and the results of the consultation had indicated that residents wanted the site to stay as a car park.

Mr D Young referred to paragraph 5.2.3 of the report where it was stated, in the context of bringing the car park into a charging regime, that the surface would be upgraded at a cost of £75,000. He asked if this up-grade, involving geo-textile matting, resulted in a surface that was better than compacted rough ground that is liable to pot-holing. He was assured that it was. He noted that the car park in Weybourne did not have such an upgraded surface, though it had been subject to charging for many years. The Head of Paid Service (SB) explained that, as outlined above, the surface was being improved to for use by cars and light vehicles not coaches. There would be an ongoing discussion about the future siting of coaches and this would be considered in tandem with the County Council's traffic and transport review of the town. With reference to the second part of the question, he said that in the absence of the S151 Officer, Cllr Young would be provided with a written response.

Mrs J Oliver thanked the Property Services team for removing the barriers to the car park so promptly and said that she was looking forward to a good relationship with the Town Council following the establishment of a working party.

It was proposed by Mrs J Oliver, seconded by Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds and

RESOLVED

That a capital budget be established of £75,000 to fund the proposed improvement works, to be financed by capital receipts.

d) AGENDA ITEM 13: IMPROVED ACCESSIBLE TOILET AND PARKING FACILITIES, WELLS NEXT THE SEA

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Assets, Mrs J Oliver, presented the report. The proposal, subject to the agreement of the Wells Maltings Trust, was to provide a grant to the Wells Maltings Trust for the provision of a fully accessible Changing Places facility within the new Maltings development or for the Council to fund such provision, with a view to changing the Staithe Street Public Car Park (owned and operated by the District Council) to Blue Badge holders parking only. NNDC was consulting with Wells Town Council about additional disabled car park spaces.

There were not enough Changing Places facilities in the District which had some of the highest levels of older people in the country and a high concentration of people suffering from dementia. North Norfolk was a tourist area and facilities were needed for visitors as well as residents with health conditions.

Provision of the facility at the Maltings was completely separate from the discussions regarding Beach Road. It would be an additional facility provided by NNDC.

Mr V FitzPatrick, Local member for Wells, said that he welcomed the recommendations the new facilities would be an excellent addition to the Maltings and make it more accessible.

Mr S Hester, Local member for Wells, said that he was in full support of the scheme. However, when it was discussed recently at a meeting of Wells Town Council, concerns had been raised about turning all of the available parking spaces in the Staithe Street car park into disabled spaces.

Mr T FitzPatrick said that he applauded the installation of a changing places facility in Wells. It had been a dementia friendly town since 2015 and this scheme supported that. He said that he hoped to see it extended across the District.

It was proposed by Mrs J Oliver, seconded by Mr V FitzPatrick and

RESOLVED

That a capital budget be established of £40,000 to fund the proposed provision of a Changing Places facility in the Wells Maltings development, or as part of the wider Wells Maltings and Sackhouse development, to be financed by capital receipts.

60. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 08 NOVEMBER 2017

Mr G Williams, Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, said that the Committee had received a presentation from the Police on the 2020 proposals. The Committee had accepted that a low level of crime required a flexible police resource but had raised concerns regarding the risk of closing police stations and the loss of contact with PCSO's and consequently had sought confirmation from the Police that that commitment to keep in contact with local communities would be continued.

61. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTION WORKING PARTY 11 OCTOBER 2017

The Chairman suggested that this item and the next item, 'Recommendations from the Standards Committee 7th November 2017' were dealt with together. In the absence of the Chairmen of both committees, he asked the Monitoring Officer to introduce the reports.

The Monitoring Officer explained that the Chairman of the Constitution Working Party, Mrs H Cox, had convened a meeting following the events at the Council meeting on 20 September and it was agreed that the Standing Order 3.8 (public questions and statements) was reworded to require that statements should be submitted to the committee clerk in advance of the meeting.

It was proposed by Mrs J Oliver, seconded by Mrs S Bütikofer and

RESOLVED

- a) That the Monitoring Officer should redraft Standing Order 3.8 (Public Questions/Statements) with the following wording:**

'3.8 Public Questions/ statements

Members of the public must notify the committee clerk 24 hours in advance of the meeting of their intention to ask a question or make a statement and at that time provide a copy of the proposed question or statement. Statements should not exceed 3 minutes. The Monitoring Office may reject a question if it is not about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which particularly affects the Council. It may also be rejected if it is defamatory, frivolous or offensive or requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information. If the Monitoring Officer rejects a question or statement then s/he will notify the Group Leaders of the subject matter of the question and the reasons for rejection. One supplementary question will be allowed on the day. If an answer cannot be provided at the meeting a written response will be provided.

Different deadlines apply for speakers at Development Committee (see Chapter 5 Part 3)'

b) That the Constitution be amended to reflect the revisions.

The Constitution Working Party had also agreed that the Member/Officer Protocol should be referred to the Standards Committee for review. This committee met on 7th November and recommended the following amendment to the Protocol:

'3. Members' Constituency Role and Individual Employees

3.1 A Member may be asked for advice and support by an employee who is one of their constituents. Employees are entitled to seek such assistance in the same way as any other member of the public. However, Members should be careful not to prejudice the Council's position in relation to disciplinary procedures or employment matters in respect of an employee. A Member approached for help in such circumstances should seek to signpost employees to other sources of help and not become directly involved.

The Monitoring Officer thanked all those members who had attended the meetings of the above committees.

Members were invited to speak:

1. Mr B Hannah said that he would like to see the following wording added to section 3.1 of the Member/Officer Protocol 'Members should be careful not to prejudice the Council's position *or their own position*'.
2. Mrs A Moore said that 'direct' should be used instead of 'signpost'.

The above amendments were supported.

It was proposed by Ms M Prior, seconded by Mr B Hannah and

RESOLVED

That the following amendment be made to the Member/ Officer Protocol:

'3. Members' Constituency Role and Individual Employees

3.1 A Member may be asked for advice and support by an employee who is one of their constituents. Employees are entitled to seek such assistance in the same way as any other member of the public. However, Members should be careful not to prejudice the Council's position or their own position in relation to disciplinary procedures or

employment matters in respect of an employee. A Member approached for help in such circumstances should seek to direct employees to other sources of help and not become directly involved.'

62. TO RECEIVE THE APPROVED MINUTES OF THE UNDERMENTIONED COMMITTEES

The minutes of the meetings below were noted as a correct record;

- 1) Cabinet – 04 September, 02 October 2017
- 2) Development Committee – 31 August, 28 September 2017

63. REPORTS, UPDATES AND BRIEFINGS FROM CABINET

The Chairman asked whether any Cabinet member wished to add a further update to their written report.

- i. Mrs S Arnold, Portfolio Holder for Planning, said that she wished to show appreciation to the Planning team for the excellent results outlined in her report. The results were well above target and this had been achieved in spite of staff shortages.
- ii. Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds made reference to a query raised at Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party by Mr J Rest regarding waste on the travellers' site at Fakenham. She said that having spoken to officers, they had informed her that they had checked the site and a small amount of rubbish had been collected. She then spoke about the new community fridge in Fakenham which had been funded by Sainsburys. The aim was to reduce food waste which currently amounted to 63k tonnes per annum in Norfolk. She explained that the fridge was looked after by a host and there were strict conditions in place, although anyone could take food out for a small donation. There were seven community fridges in Norfolk – the highest number outside London. The Fakenham fridge had been very well received and Mrs Claussen-Reynolds asked for feedback from Members to explore options in other towns. She concluded by saying that the latest log showed 45917g of food had been donated and 35864g had been taken.
- iii. Mrs J Oliver said that she wished to highlight Eastlaw's shortlisting for an award and that she wished them every success
- iv. Ms M Prior said that she wished to congratulate the Sports Clubs & Hubs team who had won the Activity in the Community award at the Norfolk Sports Awards.

The Chairman invited Members to ask questions:

1. Mrs G Perry-Warnes asked the Portfolio Holder for Waste & Environment whether there was any liaison with local food banks regarding the siting of community fridges. The Head of Paid Service (NB) said that he understood that foodbanks only took non-perishable goods. Mrs Perry-Warnes replied that volunteers at the Cromer foodbank were not aware of the scheme and would have liked to have been involved. Mr T FitzPatrick added that the community fridge scheme was a good initiative which would hopefully expand into other market towns. He added that all possibilities should be explored.
2. Mr E Seward said that he wished to ask the Portfolio Holder for Business and Economic Development whether he shared his disappointment that the County Council would not support NNDC's request for North Norfolk to be better represented in the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's strategy document.

64. QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS

The following question had been submitted by Cllr E Seward:

'In drawing up the specification for a new waste and related services contract what improvements/changes are envisaged to the existing contract. In particular:

- What improvements in recycling rates for waste may be expected in the new contract given that during the long tenure of this contract innovations in waste management can be expected?
- Will the collection of food waste be considered in the new contract?
- Will the emphasis in the new contract be on the quality of the service to be provided or will it solely be about cutting costs?
- What are the type/level of cost savings envisaged by having a joint contract with three other District Councils in Norfolk?
- Will bidders of the new contract be given the opportunity to express innovative ways for the collection and disposal of waste?
- Is consideration being given to contracting out separately grounds maintenance work to town/parish councils and/or bringing it back to North Norfolk District Council?'

The Portfolio Holder for Waste, Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds had provided a written response (Minutes Appendix A) which Mr Seward thanked her for. He said that he was concerned that the Council did not believe that it could increase its recycling rates by more than 1 or 2% and that he felt there should be more effort.

The Head of Paid Service (NB) said that ultimately the issue was about avoiding the disposal cost for waste going to landfill or incineration. The disposal function sat with the County Council with the District Council having responsibility for collection. Giving the example of food waste, he said that recycling credits did not cover the additional cost of collection and the cost to the District Councils would be significant. He concluded by saying that the main issue was to look at what the Council could do at a reasonable cost.

65. NOTICE OF MOTION

None

66. PRIVATE BUSINESS

None

The Chairman invited Members to join him for Christmas drinks after the next meeting of Council on 19 December 2017

The meeting concluded at 7.24pm

Chairman

