

# CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 5 February 2024 at the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 10.00 am

## Committee

### Members Present:

Cllr W Fredericks (Deputy Chair)	Cllr L Shires
Cllr T Adams (Chair)	Cllr A Brown
Cllr H Blathwayt	Cllr P Heinrich
Cllr A Varley	Cllr L Withington

### Members also attending:

Cllr C Cushing  
Cllr N Dixon  
Cllr L Vickers

### Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive, Democratic Services Manager, Assistant Director for Environment & Leisure, Director for Place & Climate Change, Assistant Director for Finance, Assets, Legal & Monitoring Officer and Director for Resources (DFR) / S151 Officer

### Apologies for Absence:

Cllr C Ringer

## 16 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

## 17 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

None received.

## 18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

## 19 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

## 20 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

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

## 21 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chairman said that Cabinet accepted the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> January.

**RESOLVED** to support the following recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

Agenda Item 9: Draft Revenue Budget 2024/25

A) Council's budget monitoring to include the expected level income streams within the Council budget should be reported in future to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and

(B) the Director of Resources be requested to produce at the start of the new financial year a timetable that sets out the key events as the budget is developed throughout the year such as which committee meetings it will be reported to and periods of public consultation.

Agenda item 11: Corporate Peer Review Draft Action Plan

(A) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees that the Peer Review Action Plan be presented to Cabinet for agreement and adoption.

(B) a report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following the Local Government's Association revisit to the Council on the progress that had been on the changes proposed within the Action Plan.

**22 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LICENSING COMMITTEE**

The Chairman said that the Licensing Committee (Regulatory) had made a recommendation to Cabinet regarding an increase in Hackney Carriage fare charges. Hackney Carriage Fares (maximum chargeable) are set by the District Council under a provision made in Local Government Misc. Provision Act 1976. The Council had been requested by the taxi trade to review these maximum fares. Consultation had taken place with representatives from the North Norfolk taxi trade. Further public consultation, via the local press would occur if the recommendations were accepted.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr P Heinrich and

**RESOLVED**

To AGREE to increase the current Hackney Carriage fare charges by 15%, subject to successful statutory consultation.

**23 DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2024-2025**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Assets, Cllr L Shires, introduced this item. She referred to Appendix F, Capital Bids and said that this was not the final list and would be assessed prior to the start of the next financial year.

The DFR said that the final Local Government Financial Settlement (LGFS) announcement was still awaited. A 1% estimated increase in funding was included in the projections and the report to Full Council would include the final figure.

Cllr C Cushing referred to page 23 and £250k of savings yet to be identified. He asked for more information on this and if the Portfolio Holder could provide an

update on the progress being made with these additional savings, when members would know what they were and whether they would be impacted by the anticipated 1% allocated by the LGFS. Cllr Shires replied that they would not be impacted by the 1%, she said that the £250k savings included lots of good proposals from officers which warranted further investigation and once these had been fully assessed, she was confident that the additional savings could be found. The Chairman added that there were implications and consequences for some of the proposed savings that needed to be fully explored. He added that the pressures on local government were unprecedented, particularly with the impact of inflation and temporary housing costs.

Cllr N Dixon sought clarification as to whether the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (agenda item 7) had been accepted by Cabinet. The Chairman confirmed that they had.

It was proposed by Cllr L Shires, seconded by Cllr T Adams and

### **RESOLVED**

1. To consider the list of proposed savings, the use of reserves and the settings of a savings target and decide on the combination to include in the Budget for 2024/25 so that a balanced budget can be recommended to Full Council
2. To agree to the use of any additional funding announced as part of the final Local Government Settlement to replace the use of reserves.
3. To decide which proposed new capital bids should be recommended to Full Council for inclusion in the Capital programme.

Reason for the decision:

To enable the Council to set a balanced budget.

## **24 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024 - 2025**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr Shires introduced this item. She said that it was coming through to Cabinet later than anticipated, due to Overview & Scrutiny Committee requesting training for members before scrutinising it. She said that this had now taken place and Overview & Scrutiny Committee had recommended its approval.

It was proposed by Cllr L Shires, seconded by Cllr T Adams and

### **RESOLVED**

To recommend to Full Council that the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 is approved.

Reason for the decision:

Approval by Full Council demonstrates compliance with the Prudential Codes to ensure;

- A flexible investment strategy enabling the Council to respond to changing market conditions.
- Ensure compliance with CIPFA and DHLUC guidance.
- Confirming capital resources available for delivery of the Council's capital

programme.

It is a requirement that any proposed changes to the prudential indicators are approved by Full Council.

## **25 NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE - DRAFT ACTION PLAN**

The Chairman said that officers and members had been pleased with the recent LGA Corporate Peer Review. The report provided a response to the recommendations set out in the Peer Review, with proposed actions. He added that it had been presented to Overview & Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

Cllr N Dixon reiterated the recommendation from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee – ‘that a report be submitted to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee following the LGA’s revisit to the Council on the progress that had been made on the changes proposed within the Action Plan’.

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

**RESOLVED**

To agree to adopt the NNDC Corporate Peer Challenge Draft Action Plan.

Reason for the decision:

To ensure that the objectives of the Council are achieved and to support the Council in its future development, learning and continuous improvement.

## **26 CABBELL PARK, CROMER**

The Chairman introduced this item. He explained that ownership of Cabbell Park (previously home to Cromer Town Football Club) was taken on by NNDC in 2015, with a section at the front of the site sold to make way for a new medical practice. The capital sum from that sale was held for the purpose of providing football facilities in the town. For many years Cromer Youth Football Club (CYFC) had been seeking a home. A project was currently underway to build a 3G football facility on the adjacent Academy / Sport Centre site, for which CYFC were a partner club. It was therefore proposed that Cabbell Park could become the home of CYFC.

The Chairman said that there may be some concerns from residents regarding the impact on parking on Blair Road and Mill Road and the hospital. The Assistant Director for Environment & Leisure Services said that the development of Cabbell Park would not impact on parking at the hospital. The lease that they had signed was between 6am and 6pm and it was not envisaged that it would be dual use at all. The Chairman agreed that this would be of comfort to residents.

Cllr L Shires referred to section 5.2 of the report which stated that the actual cost of the works was not yet known. She said that this report was very much about the intent to undertake the work but that officers had been asked to provide costs in advance of any work commencing.

It was proposed by Cllr L Withington, seconded by Cllr W Fredericks and

**RESOLVED**

1. To support in principle the necessary improvements and provision of additional facilities to Cabbell Park to enable Cromer Youth Football Club to lease the ground and have a home for all of their football operations.
2. To instruct officers to undertake further work to develop the scope of improvements, design of additional facilities and appropriate permissions and costings and present these in a paper to a future Cabinet meeting for consideration.

Reason for the decision:

This is the first time in 30 years that a tangible option exists to provide a home for CYFC, a solution which will also maximise the use of Cabbell Park. A permanent home in Cromer for the club would enable them to grow and secure football in the town for a number of years to come. Football clubs for many are the heart of the community and this is an opportunity to bring this back to the town.

## **27 PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF HIGHFIELD ROAD CAR PARK FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Cllr W Fredericks, introduced this item. He explained that the report set out a proposal to dispose of the NNDC owned car park at Highfield Road, Fakenham to Flagship Housing for the development of affordable homes. She welcomed the support of local members.

Cllr L Vickers, member for Lancaster South, sought reassurance that the affordable homes that would be built would be restricted to people who had a link with Fakenham or the surrounding villages. Cllr Fredericks replied that affordable housing was allocated on the basis of greatest need across the district. She added that there were other housing schemes underway in Fakenham and these included affordable housing, so there would be more homes available than just those on the Highfield Road site.

Cllr C Cushing sought further clarification regarding the actual area that was being sold and whether the residential parking to the side of the plot included any spaces for public use. He said it would be helpful for members to have a map of the site. The Housing Strategy & Delivery Manager confirmed that the area to the left of the car park, to the rear of Church Lane, was excluded from sale.

Cllr Cushing how quickly the sale would proceed. Cllr Fredericks replied that the sale process would be very quick but that the development of the site could be held up by nutrient neutrality. The Housing Strategy & Delivery Manager added that the toilet block on the site would be demolished as soon as possible to limit any vandalism and then a legal agreement would be entered into with Flagship Housing based on an option to purchase subject to planning permission. Although nutrient neutrality (NN) could impact on the construction of the housing, it was hoped that the challenges presented by NN were close to being resolved.

Cllr Cushing referred to the demolition of the toilet block and whether there was a risk that the sale could proceed but the site would be empty for a considerable length of time. He asked whether the car park would close once the site was sold. The Chairman confirmed that this was the intention but that access for residents' parking would continue. Cllr Cushing asked for more detail around the reasons for closing the toilets. He said that he wasn't aware of any anti-social behaviour on the site at all. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr Shires, replied that once the decision had been taken to dispose of the site, the facilities on there would no longer belong

to the Council and there was a requirement to clear the area. Cllr Cushing expressed concern that the site may remain empty for a considerable time and this may cause alarm with residents. He then sought confirmation regarding the price that Flagship was paying. The Housing Strategy & Delivery Manager confirmed that the price offered by Flagship was indicative and the value of the land would be determined by planning permission and the number of units that could be built. She confirmed that, indicatively, £300k was the amount offered but this was ahead of a proper viability study and the number of units was confirmed. She said that the amount offered by Flagship for the land was above the book valuation but acknowledged that there was some way to go before a final valuation was agreed.

Cllr L Vickers referred to an email that was sent to members prior to the meeting, making several assertions and she asked whether the Portfolio Holder or the Housing Strategy & Delivery Manager could clarify the situation.

The Chairman confirmed that a resident had raised a number of questions and clarified that the site was surplus to requirements and that the toilet was used by transient users such as lorry drivers. He reiterated that the private parking area would remain in place for residents of Church Lane. In conclusion, he said that the development was subject to planning permission. Cllr Vickers thanked him for the explanation and said that it was important that the residents of Fakenham had a clear understanding of the facts.

Cllr N Dixon said that it would have been helpful for a plan of the site to have been included with the report, particularly for members who were not familiar with the site. He then referred to the unrestricted site value and said that it seemed to be a very modest figure and sought reassurance that this would not be the final value for disposal of the site. He said that it was important that the Council received the best value that it could for the site. He accepted that due weight should be given to it being developed for affordable housing. The Chairman confirmed that this was a key part of the value. The Housing Strategy & Delivery Manager said that it was a site that was affected by nutrient neutrality and was also quite small. She added that she was confident that the final price would be higher than the market valuation that had been provided.

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

## **RESOLVED**

- To agree that Highfield Road is surplus to requirements
- That NNDC enter into an option agreement with Flagship Housing (subject to Planning Permission) for sale of the Highfield Road car park to be developed for affordable housing.
- That demolition of the existing toilet block on the site is undertaken as soon as is possible

Reason for the decision:

The development of the Highfield car park offers the opportunity to make better use of an under-used car park, to deliver badly needed affordable homes, to generate a capital receipt and to reduce the current revenue liabilities at the site.

**28 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**29 PRIVATE BUSINESS**

The meeting ended at 10.34 am.

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Chairman