

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday 08 May 2017 at the Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer at 10.00am

Members Present: Mrs S Arnold Mrs J Oliver
Mr N Dixon Mr R Price
Mrs A Fitch-Tillett Ms M Prior
Mr T FitzPatrick (Chairman)
Mr W Northam

Also attending:

Mrs S Butikofer Mr R Shepherd
Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds Mr B Smith
Mr N Pearce Mr N Smith
Mr R Reynolds Mrs K Ward
Mrs B McGoun

Officers in Attendance:

The Corporate Directors, the Monitoring Officer, the Head of Finance and Asset Management, the Housing Strategy and Community Development Manager, the Coastal Management Team Leader, the Democratic Services Team Leader and the Democratic Services Officer.

127. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Miss B Palmer

128. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 03 April 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

129. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None

130. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

131. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

132. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

The Leader confirmed that Members could ask questions as each item arose.

133. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OR COUNCIL FOR RECONSIDERATION

None

134. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered at length the Housing Allocations report at their meeting held on 12th April 2017. As a result of the discussions at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee a change had been made to the scheme to clarify when an applicant would be demoted from Band 1 to Band 2 as a result of rent arrears (section 4 of the report).

135. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PLANNING POLICY & BUILT HERITAGE WORKING PARTY

This item was introduced and proposed by Mrs S Arnold, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Planning Policy and the Chairman of the Planning Policy and Built Heritage Working Party. It was seconded by Ms M Prior.

Discussion:

- a) Referring to the phrase “accepts and publishes” in the recommendations, Ms K Ward expressed concern that some Parish Councils might not fully understand the process. It was suggested that explanatory text could be incorporated into the next Local Plan newsletter. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Planning Policy would discuss this with the Planning Policy Manager.
- b) Mr N Dixon said that the Planning Policy and Built Heritage Working Party was an important forum which formulated plans that would affect towns and villages over a long period of time as well as giving them opportunity to make representation. He urged more Members to attend and engage and gain a better understanding of the work being undertaken by the Working Party. Mrs S Arnold said that this had already been emphasised to Members, and she reiterated the invitation to them to attend.
- c) The Corporate Director (SB) reminded Members that there had been significant cross-party support for the original preparation of the Local Plan. It was a very important document which would affect the District for the next 15 years. It was essential that the authority worked closely with Town and Parish Councils. He would be happy to work with Members to explore how further engagement could be brought about.
- d) Mr R Shepherd praised the work of the Planning Policy Manager and his team. He recalled that an invitation to participate had gone out to Town and Parish Councils.
- e) Ms M Prior said that attendance at the Planning Policy and Built Heritage Working Party was an excellent way for Members to absorb information which they could take back to their Town and Parish Councils.
- f) Mrs S Arnold said that sites were now being identified and that site visits would soon be arranged. Town and Parish Councils would be invited to attend.

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cabinet accepts and publishes the Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Study as a source of evidence to support the emerging Local Plan for North Norfolk to cover the period 2016-2036.**

2. **That Cabinet:**
 - a) **Accepts and publishes part one the HELAA to support the emerging Local Plan for North Norfolk to cover the period 2016-2036.**
 - b) **That delegated authority is given to Planning Policy Manager to undertake minor amendments to the report and associated mapping in order to publish.**

136. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME

The report was introduced by Mr R Price, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Licensing, who explained that it had been subject to pre-scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 April 2017. As a result of the discussions a change had been made to the scheme to clarify when an applicant would be demoted from Band 1 to Band 2 as a result of rent arrears (section 4 of the report).

The revised Allocations Scheme was essentially a review of the current Scheme which had been in operation since 2013. Since then changes had been necessary to reflect new statutory guidance and regulations and to address the operational changes required to ensure the scheme operated efficiently and effectively. The 2 stage allocation process had not changed.

The proposed new Housing Allocations Scheme had been subject to consultation with Registered Providers, local Housing Associations, Norfolk County Council and providers of supported housing in North Norfolk.

Mr Price proposed the recommendations to Full Council. He was seconded by Mrs S Arnold who commended the scheme for being up-to-date and strengthening the principle of local connections.

Mrs B McGoun thanked the Housing Strategy and Community Development Manager and her team for listening to local residents in relation to the forthcoming change to the status of Hoveton in relation to exception sites.

RESOLVED

1. **Cabinet recommends that Full Council adopts the new Housing Allocations Scheme.**
2. **Cabinet recommends to Full Council that up to £20,000 is made available through the capital programme towards the cost of the required IT changes for the implementation of the Housing Allocations Scheme to be funded from capital receipts.**

137. BIG SOCIETY FUND ANNUAL REPORT

The report, which was introduced by the Leader in his capacity as Portfolio Holder for Big Society, provided an update on the operation of the Big Society Fund during the last financial year. He proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Mr N Dixon who said that the Big Society Fund was an exemplary success story. In 5 years it had made 183 grants, totalling £1.4m to 150 organisations across the District. This was for a range of community projects that were meeting community need.

Discussion:

- a) Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds and Mr R Reynolds expressed concern that, at some Parish Council meetings, District Councillors might be giving the impression that award of Big Society funding was dependent on the number of second homes in the applicant town or village. This was perceived to be party political activity. However Mr N Dixon observed that such presentations were not necessarily well-received.
- b) The Leader said that the scheme was set up to enable people to get funding for community projects and was supported by a team who would help applicants to apply or signpost them to other sources if their project is not eligible. The Big Society Fund was a success. The money came from the County Council. It should be used not for political ends but for the good of North Norfolk.
- c) The Corporate Director (SB) informed Members that a group known as the North Norfolk Town and Parish Council Forum was making a case for Big Society Funding to be targeted to areas with a large proportion of second homes. The Finance Department had done some analysis which didn't support this view. The North Norfolk Town and Parish Council Forum had also suggested that the application process should be made simpler for the smaller parishes. NNDC was always open-minded to proposals coming from across the District. However, where there is lack of capacity in an applicant, they could be supported by officers of the Council.
- d) Mrs J Oliver observed that the North Norfolk Town and Parish Council Forum only had membership from 25% of the parishes.
- e) The Monitoring Officer said that One-to-One for Parish Councils had just been introduced. It was being used by a significant number of parishes. She suggested featuring the Big Society Fund with facts about how it operated and examples of some successful schemes. It was important to keep putting out correct information.
- f) The Corporate Director (SB) said that concerns about how NNDC spent money across the District were addressed by the Big Society Fund. There was a net diversion from inland towns to coastal areas of funding. Big Society funding ensured that money was spent across the District. The principle of a grant-giving scheme was open and transparent.

RESOLVED

To note the success of the Big Society Fund and to recommend to Council:

That the Big Society Fund grant scheme should continue at its current level of funding (£225,000) for another year

138. PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL GRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

Reports on the Graphical Information Systems (GIS) had been to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny on a regular basis.

The Digital Transformation Programme was generating a significant increase in the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to support business processes and improve the reporting and presentation of information to the public, Members and officers.

In order to deliver this work stream the report requested the release of previously identified funding to fund a fixed term (two years) post with the IT team to support the increased use of GIS within the Council. The Leader proposed the recommendations which he had discussed at length with the Head of Business Transformation and IT.

The recommendations were seconded by Mrs S Arnold who looked forward to seeing the post established.

RESOLVED

To approve the release of £57,000 (previously identified Digital Transformation funding) to allow the establishment of a two year fixed term post within the GIS team of the IT section.

139. MEASURED TERM CONTRACT FOR SMALL SCALE COASTAL WORKS

The report was introduced by Mrs A Fitch-Tillett, Portfolio Holder for Coastal Management. The current contract had run its full term and would terminate on 31 May 2017. It was desirable to ensure arrangements were in place for a new contract so that there was no gap in provision.

17 companies had initially expressed interest, 11 had tendered and 4 had been shortlisted. The Coastal Management Team had set them exercises to gauge how they would respond. The tender included a Measured Term Contract for small scale coast defence works up to £10,000 per order to an approximate £100,000 per annum. Some additional tasks, e.g. small scale promenade and cliff top path repairs, were not included in the £100,000 and would be funded via the appropriate budgets, e.g. Property Services.

The recommendations, which were urgent because the contract was due to run out, were proposed by Mrs A Tillett and seconded by Mr W Northam, who said that NNDC had an excellent reputation for timely coastal repairs.

RESOLVED

(a) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director (SB) in consultation with Cabinet Member for Coastal Management to appoint to the Coastal Measured Term Contract.

(b) That following appointment members are subsequently notified.

140. CLOSING REMARKS

- a) The Leader congratulated those Members who had been elected or re-elected at the County Council elections on 4 May 2017. He commiserated with those who had been unsuccessful. He thanked all staff who had been involved in the election process. There had been lots of favourable comments from candidates.
- b) The Leader thanked all staff involved in the Sculthorpe Enquiry. A lot of work had been involved. People from Sculthorpe had contacted him to express their gratitude for NNDC's handling of the Enquiry. Mrs S Arnold added her thanks to staff, especially the Planning Policy Manager, our Counsel, and Members who had turned up to support.
- c) Mrs J Oliver, Portfolio Holder for Democratic Services, announced that the Democratic Services Team had been placed second in the National Association of Civic Officers Civic Team of the Year Awards. They had been placed third in 2016. The presentation would be on 24 May at Full Council.

The meeting ended at 10.40 am

Chairman