

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday 03 July 2017 at the Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer at 10.00am

Members Present:

Mrs S Arnold	Mr J Lee
Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds	Mr W Northam (for items 9 and 13)
Mr N Dixon	Miss B Palmer
Mr T FitzPatrick(Chairman)	Mr R Price

Also attending:

Mrs S Butikofer	Mr B Hannah
Mr V FitzPatrick	Mr R Shepherd
Mr B Smith	Ms K Ward
Mr N Pearce	Mr J Rest
Mr R Reynolds	Mrs A Fitch-Tillett

Officers in

Attendance:

The Corporate Directors, the Monitoring Officer, the Head of Finance and Asset Management, the Policy & Performance Management Officer, the Coastal Manager, the Democratic Services Team Leader and the Democratic Services Officer.

Also in Attendance: David Bale, Eastern Daily Press

The Leader welcomed all to the meeting and explained that items 9 and 13 would be taken while the portfolio holder, Mr W Northam, was present rather than in the order they appeared on the agenda.

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Ms M Prior and Mrs J Oliver.

19. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 05 June 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None

21. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

23. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

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

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

None

25. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

None

26. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT WORKING PARTY

This item was introduced by the Portfolio Holder, Mr W Northam, who said it had been a good meeting.

The Council Tax Support scheme would continue unchanged for 2018/19 for the following reasons:

- a) The case load and the number of pensioners seeking support had reduced.
- b) A balanced budget for 2018 was forecast.
- c) Had an increase been recommended, consultation would have been necessary. This would have been costly.
- d) The Working Party did not consider that Cabinet would approve a recommendation for an increase in costs at a time when the Council needed to challenge all areas of spend.

It was proposed by Mr W Northam, seconded by Mr N Dixon and

RESOLVED

To receive the minutes of the Council Tax Support Working Party meeting of 08 May 2017

27. ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

The report was introduced by the Leader. It outlined the key elements of the Annual Report 2016/17 to be published for discussion and eventual approval and presented the key contents of the report. The Annual Report would present the delivery of the Annual Action Plan 2016/17 and show achievement against targets.

It was proposed by Mr T FitzPatrick, seconded by Ms B Palmer and

RESOLVED

- 1) That Cabinet note the contents of this report.**
- 2) That Cabinet give authority to the Leader of the Council and the Heads of Paid Service to approve the final public version of the report.**

28. CROMER ADMIN BUILDINGS IMPROVEMENT WORKS

The report was presented by the Leader in the absence of the portfolio holder, Mrs J Oliver.

The building was 27 years old and works were required to address the roof glazing on the northern elevation of the building and also to undertake remedial works to the glulam beams. A recent energy efficiency survey had also recommended a number of improvements which would help reduce the financial costs of operating the building while also improving the carbon footprint.

The Council could continue to operate the building without undertaking these improvements in the short-term but, if not addressed, the highlighted issues would only get worse and ultimately cost more to rectify in the future.

Seconding the recommendation, Mrs S Arnold asked for a larger display cabinet for awards presented to the Council and for somewhere to display certificates.

It was proposed by Mr T FitzPatrick, seconded by Mrs S Arnold and

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cabinet delegates to the Head of Finance and Assets to procure the works as described in the report.**
- 2. That once the final tenders have been received in respect of the works that the necessary budget is drawn down from the capital programme budget, funded from capital receipts.**

29. CROMER PIER SURVEY AND WORKS

The report was presented by the portfolio holder, Mr J Lee.

Cromer Pier was an iconic landmark structure within North Norfolk, and a major tourist attraction. Due to the age and nature of the structure it was recommended that a routine survey regime should be introduced to inform capital works and repairs and maintenance requirements over the medium to long term. This was a common sense approach which should reduce the amount of money that would need to be spent on the Pier. The Council could continue with the current ad hoc survey arrangements. However it was felt that the regular survey regime being recommended would result in better asset management and ultimately lead to lower maintenance and repair costs as issues would be identified at an early stage. It was essential, due to the age of the structure and its environment, that regular inspections were undertaken along with maintenance and repairs, not only to ensure that it was safe for users but also to prolong the life of the Pier structure.

Mr R Price, seconding the proposal, agreed that it made sense to keep on top of the work.

It was proposed by Mr J Lee, seconded by Mr R Price and

RESOLVED to

- agree to fund the 5 year rolling programme of surveys and that the estimated £150k costs are financed through the use of General Reserves**
- agree to waive Standing Orders to allow consulting engineers Hemley Orrell Partnership (HOP) to be engaged to undertake the survey works**

30. PROCUREMENT EXEMPTION REQUEST

The report, which was introduced by the portfolio holder, Mr W Northam, supported the procurement exemption request which would enable the Authority to enter into a new contract with the existing supplier of the Revenues and Benefits software, associated support and maintenance, rather than going out to tender.

The existing Civica Revenues and Benefits system provided integrated functionality for the administration of Council Tax (CT), Non-Domestic (Business) Rates (BR), Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Support (CTS). The system was known to the Authority and used and supported by NNDC staff including IT System Administrators, Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services staff. Since implementation, Civica had provided the required software to ensure that the Authority had not missed any key deadlines in service delivery. It was reliable and officers were experienced in its use. To change systems again, only five years following a previous conversion, would not represent good value for money.

It was proposed by Mr W Northam, seconded by Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds and

RESOLVED

To grant an exemption from contract standing orders to enable the Authority to remain with the existing supplier of the Revenues and Benefits software, this being Civica UK Ltd.

31. ENFORCEMENT BOARD UPDATE

The report was introduced by the portfolio holder, Mrs S Arnold. It provided an update for Members on the work of the Enforcement Board over the past six months and also gave an assessment of progress made by the Board on the difficult enforcement cases since its inception. It was the 9th half-yearly progress update since the Board had been in operation.

The Board had been set up to tackle difficult, often longstanding, enforcement issues and to provide an additional focus on complex Long Term Empty Homes Cases which blighted neighbourhoods across the District. Since the last update the Board had brought about a change of owner in eight of the long-term empty properties and in all cases the new owners had either commenced or committed to undertaking work to return these properties into occupation. A further five properties had been added to the Board's caseload. There has been significant progress made in all cases, which Mrs Arnold commended.

As a result of lessons learnt through the Enforcement Board activities, a new Planning Enforcement Policy had been introduced in 2016 and, at the same time, a new combined Enforcement Team was formed to deliver a more positive enforcement approach to property related Council Tax issues and Planning Enforcement cases.

Mr N Dixon, seconding the recommendation, said that he was pleased to see that the combined Enforcement Team was fully resourced. Many Parish Councils welcomed the new combined approach and the progress made with difficult issues.

Ms K Ward said that significant improvement had been achieved in some of her parishes where there had been long-standing issues. She thanked the Team and urged progress to continue throughout the summer months.

Mr B Smith expressed gratitude to the Team for the result they had achieved regarding Trafalgar Court, Mundesley. It had been an eyesore for many years but the new owners were taking an interest in the property and it looked good – enhancing the approach to Mundesley.

It was important that local Members brought any issues in their Ward to the attention of the Enforcement Board.

It was proposed by Mrs S Arnold, seconded by Mr N Dixon and

RESOLVED

That Cabinet notes the progress made by the Enforcement Board and the Combined Enforcement Team.

32. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION UPDATE & FUNDING BID FOR INFORMATION SYSTEM

The report was presented by the Leader. It provided the 7th six monthly update on progress within the Digital Transformation Programme (DTP).

Overall, the technology infrastructure improvement programme continued to progress well. Significant deliveries in this period included the new Website and the Customer Contact System, although both continued to be developed on an incremental basis.

The Business Process Review (BPR) in Planning, continued to progress, with changes to key processes being rolled out on a phased basis. Work was also progressing well on the BPR within the Environmental Health Service.

The project timelines, expenditure and expected outcomes for the Programme were on track although the Planning BPR had taken much longer than anticipated to deliver.

Ms K Ward, referring to a recent occasion when the system had gone down, asked if there was a contingency plan. The Strategic Director (NB) advised that contingency work was being done. Members would receive more information when it was in place.

It was proposed by Mr T FitzPatrick, seconded by Miss B Palmer and

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cabinet notes the progress made on the Digital Transformation Programme.**
- 2. That Cabinet approves the release of £50,000 from the previously identified Digital Transformation funding to enable procurement of a Management Information System, along with the necessary third party consultancy support.**

33. JOINT BACTON TO WALCOTT COASTAL MANAGEMENT SCHEME

The report was presented by the Portfolio Holder, Mr J Lee.

The Bacton to Walcott Coastal Management Scheme was an opportunity for NNDC to work with the Bacton Terminal Operators to protect nationally important infrastructure and benefit local communities.

The proposed scheme would use Sandscaping, a UK first, to protect the terminal and enhance the coastal management of the villages. It involved the placement of a large volume of sand on the beaches in front of the Bacton Gas Terminal and down the coast to include Bacton village and Walcott village. Over time this material is designed to erode and is expected to move in a predominantly south easterly direction, not only mitigating the loss of sediment supply, but even increasing sediment supply which had the potential to nourish beaches further down the coast. This sand is expected to increase beach levels which would extend the life of existing defences for the Villages. This is a multi-million pound scheme. Bacton Gas Terminal would fund most of it provided that the Council took the lead in the delivery of consents, procurement and construction of the scheme.

Subject to approval of the recommendations and finalisation of the agreement, there would be public drop-in events at Bacton and Walcott on 12 and 13 July 2017 to provide further information for the communities.

Officers were thanked for all the work they had done.

Mr R Price seconded the recommendations.

Mr B Smith, a local Member, said that sand was vital protection. Walcott had always suffered from flooding during storms. There was a lot of flat countryside around Walcott. The scheme had been effective in Denmark and Holland. Use of it would be a first for this country and a credit to the Council.

It was proposed by Mr J Lee, seconded by Mr R Price and

RESOLVED

- a) **To delegate authority to Corporate Director with consultation with Portfolio Holder to finalise negotiation and agree a Development Agreement with the Terminal Operators whereby NNDC is the lead partner for the delivery of the scheme.**
- b) **To delegate authority to Corporate Director with consultation with Portfolio Holder to negotiate and agree a position with The Crown Estate and any other asset owners as required for the delivery of the scheme.**
- c) **To agree to appoint personnel resources as appropriate for the delivery of the scheme, funded via Environment Agency Grant in Aid.**
- d) **Commence the process for tendering the construction contracts with appointment subject to Development Agreement conditions precedent being delivered.**

The meeting ended at 10.30 am

Chairman