

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 29 January 2025 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 6.00 pm

Members Present:

Cllr T Adams	Cllr M Batey
Cllr K Bayes	Cllr D Birch
Cllr H Blathwayt	Cllr J Boyle
Cllr A Brown	Cllr S Bütikofer
Cllr C Cushing	Cllr P Fisher
Cllr W Fredericks	Cllr M Gray
Cllr P Heinrich	Cllr V Holliday
Cllr R Macdonald	Cllr G Mancini-Boyle
Cllr J Punchard	Cllr C Ringer
Cllr L Shires	Cllr E Spagnola
Cllr M Taylor	Cllr J Toye
Cllr E Vardy	Cllr A Varley
Cllr L Vickers	

Officers in attendance: The Chief Executive, The S151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer

89 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs P Bailey, N Dixon, A Fitch-Tillett, T FitzPatrick, A Fletcher, M Hankins, C Heinink, N Housden, P Neatherway, L Paterson, S Penfold, P Porter, K Toye and L Withington.

90 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

91 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

92 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET 20 JANUARY 2025

Cabinet Agenda Item 10: Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme 2025 – 2026:

The Leader, Cllr T Adams, introduced this item. He thanked the members and officers involved in the Council Tax Support Working Party for their support and hard work and the public for responding to the consultation.

Cllr W Fredericks, Portfolio Holder for Benefits, explained that the Working Party considered several options for the new council tax support scheme and after careful consideration, they recommended option 2. She said that this option was largely a continuation of the 2024/25 CTS scheme for working-age people, with changes proposed to align the scheme with Universal Credit, simplifying the process of claiming, and to bring efficiencies in the administration of these CTS claims. She added that CTS Scheme rules would also continue to reflect any relevant welfare benefit changes made to the working-age Housing Benefit scheme or Pension Age CTS scheme.

Cllr Fredericks explained that by choosing option 2, which introduced a flat rate, claimants would receive more money and the administration of the scheme would be simplified.

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

RESOLVED

To approve the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2025/2026

93 CALCULATION OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE 2025/2026

Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets, introduced this item. She explained that an extraordinary meeting of Full Council had been called to consider this report due to the timing of the agreement of the 100% premium on second homes. Cllr Shires said that the implementation of an increase should have happened last year but had been delayed due to the slow progression of the Levelling Up Bill. This had now been enacted and a decision could now be taken. She invited the Leader, Cllr Adams, to update members on some additional information regarding the second homes premium.

The Leader thanked officers for their hard work on this issue which included engaging with their counterparts in neighbouring authorities to ensure that an agreement was reached. The same applied to elected members.

He said that the additional income generated by the 100% second homes council tax premium would be put towards addressing the housing crisis in North Norfolk. This would include investment in temporary accommodation as well as new affordable housing, adding that there could be a range of responses to address the issue. This would be reported back through future Cabinet meetings. He said that it was a significant additional amount that had been agreed and it would be put to good use. In conclusion, he said that it was an annual agreement and the same process would need to happen next year.

Cllr G Mancini-Boyle sought clarification on other projects in addition to temporary accommodation and affordable housing. The Leader replied that there were several housing projects coming up and said that temporary accommodation was a priority, with investment in affordable housing a longer-term aim. The County Council was intending to spend their portion of the settlement on social care and children's services. He said the settlement for the Police was quite harsh and it was not yet known how they would spend it.

Cllr Shires added that these figures were in addition to a balanced budget and confirmed the money was ring-fenced to spend on affordable housing. As it was an annual negotiation, this funding would not be incorporated into the budget process but sit alongside it.

Cllr C Cushing said that it was an essential step to address the homelessness crisis in the district. He added that he hoped that it would be communicated to second home-owners that this is what the money would be used for. He welcomed Cllr Adams assurance that it would be ring-fenced for temporary housing matters and he suggested that it would be helpful if members could be kept updated as the year progressed as to where the money was being spent. Cllr Adams confirmed that any spend would be monitored by Cabinet and via the budget monitoring process too.

A recorded vote was taken and it was unanimously **RESOLVED**

To approve that the Council Tax Base for 2025/26 be set at 45,024.1 Band D equivalent properties.

94 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

95 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at 6.25 pm.

Chairman