

# CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 3 February 2025 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 C Ringer
Cllr J Toyne	Cllr A Varley

### Members also attending:

Cllr N Dixon  
Cllr C Cushing  
Cllr T FitzPatrick  
Cllr Dr V Holliday

### Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive, Director for Resources / S151 Officer and Assistant Director for Finance, Assets, Legal & Monitoring Officer, Director for Communities

### Apologies for Absence:

Cllr L Withington

## 1 MINUTES

The Chairman advised members that the minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> January would be approved at the next meeting of Cabinet.

## 2 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

## 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

## 4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

None.

## 5 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

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

## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chairman invited Cllr N Dixon, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to introduce this item. Cllr Dixon said that the Committee had considered the items in detail.

Regarding the Treasury Management Strategy, he said that the second recommendation was for the Leader to engage with the Leaders of neighbouring district councils to agree a collective approach to central Government and its advice and guidance on the impact of devolution and local government reorganisation on the financial stability of councils in Norfolk. He added that there was a significant element of concern that the inevitable transition period required full engagement with central government and a clear understanding of the 'rules of engagement' for the Council's own financial systems and the wider systems of the county.

With regards to the Capital Strategy 2025 – 2026, it was proposed that the Committee, together with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Estates & Property Services, undertake a review of the capital bids process to consider how the committee could effectively engage with the process for 2026 – 2027. The Portfolio Holder added that the recommendation came about because the committee did not understand the process which Cabinet undertook when agreeing the capital bids. She said that she would like to link this into a wider piece of work that was being undertaken about ensuring a clear understanding of which of the Council's services were discretionary and which were statutory. Cllr Dixon replied that in his view, the recommendation had two aspects to it, firstly to ensure that the committee understood the process and secondly how it could engage in a meaningful and proactive way that would add value.

Finally, regarding the draft Revenue Budget 2025/2026, Cllr Dixon set out the following four recommendations:

1. Cabinet considers the list of proposed savings and agree on which ones should be taken so that a balanced budget can be recommended to full Council.
2. an alternative option for balancing the budget should be agreed to replace savings not taken if there are any.
3. Cabinet agree that any additional funding announced as part of the final Local Government Settlement announcement be transferred to reserves.
4. Cabinet decides which proposed new capital bids should be recommended to full Council for inclusion in the Capital Programme.

The Portfolio Holder clarified that the second recommendation would only come into effect if Cabinet did not agree to support the list of proposed savings as set out in the budget report.

The Chairman added that regarding the impact of devolution on local authorities, he was pleased to confirm that there were ongoing discussions with his counterparts across Norfolk and Suffolk and there had recently been representations to Government seeking clarity on various issues.

The Chairman proposed that the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee were accepted. Cllr Shires seconded the proposal.

## **7 DELEGATED DECISIONS - DECEMBER 2024 TO FEBRUARY 2025**

The Chairman explained that this was a statutory report and proposed that it was accepted.

## **RESOLVED**

To note the list of delegated decisions

### **8 REPORTING PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2027, ACTION PLAN 2024 - 2025 TO END OF QUARTER 3 - 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

The Chairman outlined the key points from the report and provided an update on items that had an 'amber' rating. He advised members that with the reorganisation of local government underway, the number of actions would be reviewed and reduced over the next year to reflect a shift in priorities to a significant focus on service delivery and core services.

Cllr N Dixon asked whether an analysis would be undertaken on the opportunities presented by local government reorganisation and the Council's strengths and weaknesses as it entered the 'transition' period, as well as identifying the threats and risks ahead. He added that all organisations going through considerable change were at risk of 'performance dip' and thought should be given as to how to mitigate against this.

The Chairman agreed and said that this work would be developed in the coming months. The Chief Executive added that the points raised by Cllr Dixon were appropriate. He said that there was no detail at the current time as to how local government reorganisation could look. The published guidance was minimal and indicated that new unitary authorities should have a minimal population of 500k, which was very challenging in a diverse county such as Norfolk. Work was ongoing with district and county partners and further guidance was awaited. As soon as this was available an all-member briefing would be held. He said that a report on the Corporate Plan Action Plan would come to the next meeting of Cabinet and it was proposed that space would be created within this to ensure that officers and members engaged and ensured that North Norfolk's interests were promoted in the context of local government reorganisation. A request had already been submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government seeking clarity regarding the district's tourism offer and how it might be financed going forward. He added that the pressure on discretionary provision was likely to increase over the coming months and that officers were aware of this. He assured members that senior management was abreast of the situation and would keep members updated. The Chairman added that there were a lot of questions regarding the future of the Council's assets.

Cllr Dixon acknowledged that it was hard to move forward until further information was available but reiterated the need to be prepared.

Cllr Dr V Holliday commented on mobile coverage and said she was surprised to this rated as 'green' as at least two villages in her ward had limited coverage. She then asked about the need to recruit a Strategic Head of IT, given the focus on reorganisation and whether there was a business case underpinning this.

Cllr J Toye, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth, said that he was aware of the challenges around mobile coverage and that he was working to tackle it but ultimately there was no government department responsible for this and it was down to individual companies to provide a mast. He assured members that there was work ongoing and he was engaging with county council colleagues to address the shortcomings and possibly identify pieces of land where a mast could be sited. Cllr Holliday said she had undertaken some work on this and it would be helpful if she

could work with Cllr Toye to ensure that they were coordinating efforts.

Regarding recruitment of a new Head of IT, the Leader said that services needed to continue for the foreseeable future as local government reorganisation would not happen imminently.

### **RESOLVED**

To note the report.

## **9 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025 - 2026**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr Shires, introduced this item. It had been considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and they had commented on the accessible format. She added that it was a fluid document that we would be updated as the Council's financial position changed.

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

### **RESOLVED**

To recommend that Full Council approves the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/2028

To recommend that Full Council approves the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/2028

Reason for the decision:

To ensure that the Council's financial position is secure.

## **10 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REPORT 2025/26**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr L Shires, introduced this item. She said that this strategy had been through the Scrutiny process and she welcomed the input of the committee.

Cllr N Dixon said that the committee considered this report in its 'overview' capacity as the scrutiny role now sat with Governance, Risk & Audit Committee.

Cllr Shires added that s 5.1.2 had been updated to correct an error.

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

### **RESOLVED**

To recommend to Full Council that the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 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 MHCLG 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

## **11 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2025 - 2026**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr L Shires, introduced this item. She said that this strategy had been considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and she thanked them for their input. The Chairman said that it was a very thorough document and he commended officers for their hard work.

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

### **RESOLVED**

To recommend to Full Council that the Capital Strategy 2025/2026 is approved.

Reason for the decision:

The Council is required to approve a Capital Strategy to demonstrate compliance with the Codes and establishes the strategic framework for the management of the capital programme.

## **12 COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS & PREMIUMS DETERMINATION 2025-26**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr L Shires, introduced this item. She said that this was an annual report and just wanted to remind members that it included the introduction of a new second homes premium which had been discussed at the extraordinary meeting of Full Council on 29<sup>th</sup> January.

The Chairman thanked officers for their work in preparing this report, acknowledging the complexity involved when calculating the impact of the second homes premium on the council tax base.

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

### **RESOLVED to**

Recommend to Full Council that under Section 11A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 and other enabling powers that:

- 1) The discounts for the year 2025-26 and beyond are set at the levels indicated in the table at paragraph 3.1.
- 2) To continue to award a local discount of 100% in 2025-26 for eligible cases of hardship under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended). See the associated policy in Appendix B.
- 3) That an exception to the empty property levy charges may continue to be made by the Revenues Manager in the circumstances laid out in section 4.2 of this report.
- 4) The long-term empty-property premiums for the year 2025-26 (subject to the empty premium exceptions shown in Appendix C) are set at the levels

- indicated in the table at paragraph 4.2
- 5) To continue to award a local discount of 100% in 2025-26 for eligible cases of care leavers under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended).
  - 6) Those dwellings that are specifically identified under regulation 6 of the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) Regulations 2003 will retain the 50% discount as set out in paragraph 2.1 of this report.
  - 7) Those dwellings described or geographically defined at Appendix A which in the reasonable opinion of the Revenues Manager are judged not to be structurally capable of occupation all year round and were built before the restrictions of seasonal usage were introduced by the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, will be entitled to a 35% discount.
  - 8) A new second homes premium of 100% as detailed in paragraph 4.3 (subject to the second home premium exceptions shown in Appendix C) is applied from 1 April 2025.

Reasons for the recommendations:

To set appropriate council tax discounts and premiums which will apply in 2025-26 and to raise council tax revenue.

### **13 2025/2026 BUDGET - SAVINGS FROM PUBLIC TOILETS BUDGET**

The Chairman thanked parish councils, businesses and local members for their positive engagement on this matter. He said that it was acknowledged that with the possibility of the formation of a large unitary authority on the horizon, that the provision of services such as public conveniences were being put under considerable pressure. He added that discussions were ongoing as the Council sought to ensure that these quite disparate assets were retained for the long term, whilst recognising that many of them were isolated from any nearby revenue opportunities. Discussions continued regarding Potter Heigham and Stalham would be retained in its current location for at least 12 months to allow for further engagement with the Town Council. Likewise, the site in Walsingham would be retained until March 2026 and West Runton until the end of the summer season. The Chairman said that appreciable savings had already been achieved and further ongoing savings would be detailed in the Budget report. There was still a lot of work to be done however to ensure future provision was retained in some form.

Cllr L Shires added that it was important to focus on how assets could be protected for local communities in the future. It was the revenue spend that required savings but the achievement of a balanced budget for this year had bought some time for the immediate future. Cllr Toye reiterated that work was ongoing to ensure that facilities were retained where they were most needed.

Cllr V Holliday sought assurance that Weybourne Eco toilet would be kept open. The Chairman said that the level of abuse at that facility meant that it would be reviewed and if it became too much to deal with then it would be closed. Conversations with the Parish Council would continue to see if a more sustainable option was available.

Cllr T FitzPatrick thanked the Chairman and the Chief Executive for attending a meeting in Walsingham to discuss concerns regarding the public conveniences in the village. He said that he was also appreciative that a year's delay for the introduction of any changes had been agreed. He then referred to page 142, section 2.44 and the reference to the facilities being used by a large number of pilgrims and the cost being borne by the churches. He said that there were actually toilet

provisions at both shrines and that a lot of the visitors to the council-owned toilets were not pilgrims but members of the public – either walking or visiting the miniature railway. He asked that the approach set out in the paper was reconsidered to reflect this. The Chairman replied that the Council understood the value of the services provided in Walsingham and he recognised that, like many of the facilities across the district, they were unique in terms of usage, location etc. He added that Walsingham's importance to the tourism offer of the district was acknowledged and it was hoped that the facility could be retained. He offered to liaise with Cllr FitzPatrick and the local community in the coming months.

Cllr H Blathwayt said that he welcomed these conversations taking place before devolution so that there was an opportunity to preserve local facilities before a larger unitary authority was formed.

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

### **RESOLVED**

- 1) to confirm its support for discussions being progressed with local businesses at Potter Heigham with the objective of securing sponsorship to meet the costs of retaining the Potter Heigham public toilets;
- 2) to agree that proposals and a business case be prepared for a new public toilet facility to be developed on, or adjoining, the District Council's public car park and principal bus stop at the western end of the High Street in Stalham with a report being presented to Cabinet on such a proposal in the future. In the meantime, the existing toilets will be retained for a minimum of twelve months.
- 3) to agree that the public toilets in Walsingham be retained at least until March 2026 with further discussions being held with local partners as to whether a sustainable financial model for the facilities can be agreed in the medium-term.
- 4) to retain the West Runton public toilets at least for this summer (through until the end of September 2025) with further discussions being held with local partners as to whether a sustainable financial model for the facilities can be agreed in the medium-term.
- 5) to confirm its support for the position adopted in removing the leased unit at Beach Lane, Weybourne realising a financial saving of approximately £26,000 per annum and retaining the eco-loo at this location and monitoring its use / mis-use and to advise that we will continue to work with Weybourne Parish Council to establish if a more sustainable location can be found for the provision of a public toilet in the village.

Reasons for the decision:

To deliver savings from the public toilet budget as part of preparing the 2025/26 budget and help reduce the deficits shown in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy given contract, wage and energy inflation, significant increases in the Temporary Accommodation and homelessness support and no increase in the District Council's spending power.

## **14 DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2025 - 2026**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr L Shires, introduced this item. She said that it had been to Cabinet previously and to Overview & Scrutiny Committee. She added that the final settlement from central Government had not yet been confirmed. She

thanked members for their engagement and input so far.

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

## **RESOLVED**

1. To agree the list of proposed savings so that a balanced budget can be recommended to full Council.
2. That an alternative option for balancing the budget should be agreed to replace savings not taken if there are any.
3. To agree that any additional funding announced as part of the final Local Government Settlement announcement be transferred to reserves.
4. To agree to the proposed new capital bids and recommend them to full Council for inclusion in the Capital Programme.

Reason for the recommendations

To achieve a balanced budget for 2025/2026.

## **15 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF) 2025-26 TRANSITION YEAR FUNDING**

Cllr J Toye, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth, introduced this item. He explained that the Government had announced the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) funding allocations to local authorities in December 2024 for a 'transition' year of funding, with anticipated new models of funding from 2026/27. NNDC would receive a total allocation for the next financial year (2025-26) of £405,095, composed of £330,302 of revenue and £74,793 of capital funding. The one-year allocation of UKSPF funding would continue to support businesses and communities in North Norfolk to address identified local challenges. This would be achieved through the development of business and community support schemes and would seek to complement existing business and community support. He added that a review of the previous funding would come to Overview & Scrutiny Committee in April. He drew members' attention to the focus on collaboration and said that this would be continued.

He said that the successful initiatives to reduce fuel poverty and carbon reduction in households would be continued. The majority of the funding would go towards working with local stakeholders to identify and deliver projects that foster local economic growth and support the vitality of the district's towns.

The Chairman thanked officers for their hard work on this scheme and the excellent outcomes that had been achieved so far. He expressed disappointment that the level of funding had effectively been halved but said that the Council would focus on achieving the best possible outcomes with the allocated funding. He said it was hoped that further information on the Rural England Prosperity Fund would be received soon.

Cllr Toye added that through collaborative working, more than the headline figure would be delivered by leveraging in additional support.

Cllr V Holliday welcomed the funding and asked if there were business cases



underpinning the projects that would be supported by the scheme. Cllr Toye replied that there was a basic outline in the report of the high-level schemes. The detail would then be worked up and then, depending on the schemes applying for grant funding, they would go through a robust application process before funding was allocated. The Assistant Director for Sustainable Development added that a report was going to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in April outlining the delivery of the programme for the previous three years. A dissemination of the grant funding for this would be provided in this report. He said that it was hoped to be able to also outline what would be coming up for the next year. He reiterated that the Council was still waiting to hear about the future of the Rural Prosperity Fund which contained the grants to businesses.

It was proposed by Cllr J Toye, seconded by Cllr W Fredericks and

### **RESOLVED**

1. To confirm Cabinet's support for the approach to the UKSPF programme (transitional year 2025/26) outlined in this report
2. To delegate to the Assistant Director for Sustainable Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth, the detailed definition of the projects to be delivered within the overall programme headings and the commissioning of specific projects and the procurement and/or appointment of any project delivery partners or contractors, as appropriate.

## **16 NON-DOMESTIC (BUSINESS) RATES POLICY 2025-26**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr Shires, introduced this item. She explained that the Council's Policy had been revised to reflect the changes to schemes announced by the Government and included guidelines as to how the schemes were to be implemented.

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

### **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council**

1. That the Revenues Manager continues to have delegated authority to make decisions up to the NNDC cost value of £4k as indicated in Appendix A.
2. That the Revenues Manager continues to have delegated authority to make Hardship Relief decisions up to the NNDC cost value of £4k as indicated in Appendix C.
3. That the Rate Relief Policy is revised as indicated in Appendix A, B and C.

Reason for the decision:

The new policy will enable the Retail Hospitality and Leisure Relief, Supporting Small Business Relief, Hardship Relief, Film Studios and Flood Relief to be awarded discretionary reliefs.

## **17 PROHIBITION OF INCONSIDERATE AND INAPPROPRIATE VEHICLE USE RELATED TO ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR.**

Cllr C Ringer, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, introduced this item. He explained that the Councils proposed to introduce 4 new public space protection

orders (PSPOs) in Fakenham, North Walsham, Cromer, and Stalham. The introduction of these orders was to support the Norfolk Constabulary and in particular the multi-agency operation entitled 'Operation Octane', specifically to enhance enforcement powers to deal with antisocial driving activities. As part of this process a 6-week public consultation was launched and was concluded on the 11<sup>th</sup> of Dec 2024. During the consultation, 7 responses were received from the public and all were unanimous in their support for these proposals.

Although North Norfolk received a small number of complaints relating to these issues, it was recognised that it was important to support Norfolk Constabulary in their efforts to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Cllr L Shires thanked officers for their work on this. North Walsham residents were grateful as they had been experiencing an increase in such incidents in the town.

Cllr W Fredericks said that she welcomed these proposals and the flexibility to add areas in the future. She added that any requests needed to be supported by evidence and encouraged members of the public reporting any concerns to ensure that they were well evidenced, where possible.

Cllr A Brown asked how frequently the policy would be reviewed. He raised concerns about the way noise nuisance was monitored and actioned and which organisation was responsible for enforcement. The Chairman replied that the areas included in the current proposal had been put forward by Norfolk Constabulary and were based on evidence. Any future additions would need to go through a consultation process.

The Director for Communities clarified that public protection orders were reviewed every 3 years and the review process began in the months leading up to the expiration date. In response to Cllr Brown's concerns, he said that when issues appeared in any areas not covered under the current order, then the Police would assess the evidence and where necessary commence the consultation process in order to bring forward a separate new order for that locality. He confirmed that the relationship between the Council's environmental protection team and the Police was excellent and he had full confidence in it. He concluded by saying that in regards to vehicle noise and anti-social behaviour, it gave the Police an additional 'tool' to deal with problems where it was effectively on private land and challenging such behaviour could be challenging.

Cllr Shires added that in North Walsham there were ongoing issues with modified cars and although car owners were often willing to reverse the modifications, it was not always the case and the Police were able to issue a statutory notice to enforce compliance.

Cllr J Toye said that it was important to tackle anti-social behaviour as it gave other car owners a bad name. The Director for Communities concurred that these orders were not aimed at reducing planned car meets but tackling street racing, revving engines and general abusive language and intimidating behaviour.

It was proposed by Cllr C Ringer, seconded by Cllr J Toye and

## **RESOLVED**

To introduce four new public space protection orders (PSPOs) within the North Norfolk District to prohibit inconsiderate and inappropriate vehicle use related to

antisocial behaviour.

Reason for the decision:

- Fulfil the council's contribution to Operation Octane (refer to appendix 2) and support the Norfolk Constabulary initiative.
- Support our local authority partners and maintain consistency regarding enforcement.
- Provide additional enforcement powers to NNDC regarding this type of ASB.

## 18 FUTURE OF CAR PARK MANAGEMENT AND ENFORCEMENT

The Chairman on introducing this item said that there was some exempt information included within the report and he had received a request to discuss this. The meeting would therefore need to go into private session.

It was **RESOLVED**

To pass the following resolution:

"That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act."

Information in this appendix involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3, Part 1 of schedule 12A (as amended) to the Local Government Act 1972.

This paragraph relates to:

Para 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:

The information is commercially sensitive, relating to commercial options being considered by the authority. Releasing this information would be likely to have a prejudicial impact upon third parties as well as the Council in obtaining best value.

*The meeting went into private session 11.22 am. The meeting reconvened at 11.28 am.*

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr Shires, said that the contract provided excellent value for money and residents were familiar with the enforcement vehicles. The agreement had been in place for some time and a new agreement would start on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

The Chairman said that alternative options had been explored and assessed and it was agreed that the existing arrangements provided the best service and value for money.

Cllr A Brown referred to paragraph 4.19 which referred to synchronising ticket machines to avoid the third-party transaction 5 pence cost. He asked whether this was factored into the proposals. Cllr Shires replied that this was in relation to an upgrade to the machinery and this would be an invest to save opportunity that could be considered in the future.

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

1. That Cabinet agree to sign an updated SLA with BCKLWN for the full car park enforcement arrangement to include the patrolling of enforcement officers, cash collection and banking of cash and processing of PCNs.
2. That the signing of the SLA be delegated to the Director of Resources.

RESOLVED

3. to sign an updated SLA with BCKLWN for the full car park enforcement arrangement to include the patrolling of enforcement officers, cash collection and banking of cash and processing of PCNs.
4. That the signing of the SLA be delegated to the Director of Resources.

Reason for the decision:

To allow the Council to continue to deliver a car park enforcement service throughout the district that provides value for money for the council and council taxpayers.

**19 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**20 PRIVATE BUSINESS**

**21 EXEMPT APPENDIX - CAR PARK MANAGEMENT AND ENFORCEMENT**

The meeting ended at 11.32 am.

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Chairman