

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 6 May 2025 at the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 10.00 am

Committee

Members Present:

Cllr W Fredericks (Deputy Chair)	Cllr T Adams (Chair)
Cllr A Brown	Cllr H Blathwayt
Cllr C Ringer	Cllr J Toye
Cllr A Varley	

Members also attending:

Cllr J Boyle
Cllr C Cushing
Cllr N Dixon
Cllr V Holliday

Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive, Director for Communities and Assistant Director for Legal (Monitoring Officer)

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr L Shires
Cllr L Withington

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 31st March were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

None.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr W Fredericks declared a non-pecuniary interest regarding Agenda item 10.

4 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman informed members that there was one item of urgent business regarding the appointment of a temporary S151 Officer.

Following the Council's Director of Resources leaving the authority at the end of April, it is necessary for the Council to appoint, under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, a Chief Finance Officer.

The Council's Deputy Section 151 Officer, Daniel King, Assistant Director of Finance and Assets has advised that whilst appropriately qualified this isn't a responsibility he would wish to take on permanently so early in his career. He has therefore

agreed to take on the statutory role for the month of May, whilst interim arrangements are made to cover the designation with another local authority in Norfolk, pending advertising and recruiting a new Director of Resources.

A report on the appointment of an interim Section 151 Officer resource would be prepared for the Full Council meeting of the 21st May 2025. In the meantime, Daniel King will take on this responsibility, supported by deputies Jenny Carroll, Chief Group Accountant and Claire Waplington, Chief Technical Accountant.

The above arrangements have been put in place under delegation to the Chief Executive exercising urgency provisions, as advised by the Monitoring Officer.

It was **RESOLVED**

To note that the Chief Executive had taken a decision under delegated authority to appoint the Deputy S151 Officer on a temporary basis as S151 Officer for the month of May, whilst interim arrangements are made to cover the designation with another local authority in Norfolk, pending advertising and recruiting a new Director of Resources.

Reason for the decision:

The Council is required to have a S151 Officer as this is a statutory role.

5 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The Chairman advised that questions could be raised throughout the meeting.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Cllr N Dixon, confirmed that there were no recommendations to Cabinet at this time.

7 REPORTING PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING CORPORATE PLAN 2023-27 ACTION PLAN 2024-25 - TO END OF QUARTER 4 - 31 MARCH 2025

The Chairman introduced this item. He explained that the purpose of this report was to present an update on the progress being made in implementing the Corporate Plan 2023-27 Action Plan 2024-25 and to give Cabinet an opportunity to discuss and agree decisions that should be taken regarding any issues raised. He said that nineteen of the actions were in progress and on track and eighteen completed. No actions were identified as red and seven actions were identified as amber. He then, addressed the actions in turn, highlighting achievements and challenges. He reminded members that two items had been cancelled due to the pressures placed on the Council by local government reorganisation (LGR).

The Chairman invited members to speak:

Cllr V Holliday welcomed the progress set out in the report. She said that residents in her ward had expressed some frustration regarding mobile phone and internet connectivity and she was concerned that time may be running out to address some of these issues. Cllr J Toye, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth said that it was not down to the District Council to deliver on this action but engagement with key stakeholders was important and the evidence base clearly showed that there was a

difference in delivery across the district and this needed to be addressed. There was very little information provided by the installation companies as to why some areas had reduced provision and this made it hard to explain the disparity to residents. He said that officers were working hard to improve this and to address some of the misinformation that was currently being shared. He said that members could assist with this by providing feedback and evidence from their residents.

Cllr Holliday said that a timeframe would be helpful and although she acknowledged that emergency calls could still be made in 'not spot' areas, payment transactions could not and this had an impact on daily life. She said that she was supportive of engaging proactively with the telecom providers to ensure that any mast installations were beneficial to the community and reflected their needs. She was supportive of anything that could be done to improve a joined-up approach. Cllr Toye agreed, adding that any evidence he could present to providers to demonstrate where the most pressing needs lay, would be beneficial in supporting this. In conclusion, he said he hoped to contact key stakeholders within the next month.

The Chief Executive said that the Council's role in this matter was essentially one of lobbying and raising key questions. He said that members may want to consider whether this was one of the main issues that should be highlighted as the Combined Mayoral Authority took shape, as it would be an issue that would cover a much larger area. The Chairman agreed that this would be a matter of focus for the new Mayoral authority.

Cllr C Cushing referred to Action 27, which referred to 'working with partners in Fakenham to retain banking and post office services in the town centre through establishing a banking hub facility by September 2024'. He acknowledged that delivery of this project was not the responsibility of NNDC but given that the last bank in the town was due to close in July 2025, and there was no sign of a banking hub or post office, he questioned the green RAG status, which implied everything was on track.

The Chairman replied said that the Council supported the provision of a banking hub and had even considered whether practical intervention was needed, this approach was not supported by Cash Access UK. They wanted an enhanced deposit solution to ensure that there were banking solutions and support for businesses in particular. He said that he felt this approach would change in the coming months as more pressure was felt by local communities, with the departure of high street banks. It wasn't just about cash access and there were other banking products that residents needed. It was an ongoing piece of work but still in its infancy. The Council's Data Officer would continue to work with providers in both Holt and Fakenham and North Walsham had also expressed an interest in progressing with a banking hub. In conclusion, he said that he was satisfied that there had been a lot of progress. Cllr Cushing commented that he still felt that a green RAG rating was not reflective of the current position.

Cllr N Dixon commented on Action 43 'Further embed and develop our Youth Council work'. He said that it had been shown as red in the previous quarter and was now amber and he asked what justified this change in status. The Chairman replied that this item had been cancelled due to a lack of resources. He said that this had been done reluctantly as the Youth Council had been well received but it was not possible to retain support for it any longer. The focus was now on achieving a level of youth engagement and some of this would be funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), including activities at the country parks. The amber RAG rating reflected that the Council was achieving some of its objectives in this area but

in a different way to that originally envisaged.

Cllr J Toye added that part of his portfolio included engagement in education and training and although this was not linked in directly via the Youth Council, it was still taking place.

Cllr Dixon said that he struggled with the wording of 'exploring ways to engage with young people' compared to hosting a Youth Council. He said that this seemed a big shift in approach and he wasn't convinced that it justified a change in RAG status from green to amber.

RESOLVED to note the report

Reason for the decision: to monitor the Council's performance.

8 PROCUREMENT OF VEHICLES AND CONTAINERS FOR A WEEKLY FOOD WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

The Chairman invited the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Waste, Cllr C Ringer, to introduce this item.

Cllr Ringer began by saying that following Full Council's approval to add the procurement of vehicles and equipment required to deliver a separate weekly food waste collection service in the area of North Norfolk District Council to the capital programme for 2025/26, Cabinet was now requested to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Place and Section 151 officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for IT Environmental and Waste Services and the Portfolio Holder Finance, Estates and Property Services to pursue the procurement of equipment required to deliver a separate weekly food waste collection service in the district.

The Chairman invited members to speak:

Cllr W Fredericks sought clarification on the decision being made and said it was not about the number of vehicles being purchased.

It was proposed by Cllr C Ringer, seconded by Cllr T Adams and

RESOLVED

To give delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Communities and The Section 151 officer (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for IT Environmental and Waste Services and the Portfolio Holder Finance, Estates and Property Services) to pursue the procurement of Vehicles and equipment required to deliver a separate weekly food waste collection service in the area of North Norfolk District Council.

Reason for the decision:

To ensure compliance with the introduction of a new legislation

9 NORTH NORFOLK VISITOR CENTRE LETTING

The Chairman introduced this item in the Portfolio Holder's absence. He reminded members that there were exempt appendices and the meeting would need to go into closed session if any matters within these documents were discussed.

He began by explaining that a decision was taken by Cabinet on 20th January 2025 to cease operation of the visitor information provision at the North Norfolk Visitor Centre (NNVC) in Cromer and advertise it to let. This report had been prepared to allow Cabinet to review the offers received for the property and to make a decision on its future use.

Eight bids had been received for the lease of NNVC. Due diligence had been undertaken on each of these bids with Proposal 1 being considered to offer the best financial consideration as well as wider social and economic benefits to the district. If Proposal 1 did not progress it was recommended options 2-8 should be reconsidered.

He reassured members that investment was still being made in support of tourism promotion and this was evidenced by the increase in visitor usage of the Council's car parks during April. He said that displays and artefacts relating to the Deep History Coast project would be donated to the Sheringham Museum.

The Chairman said that there had been a lot of interest in the site and it was reassuring to see so many businesses keen to invest in Cromer. However, in terms of service provision it was felt that an NHS-backed dentist would present the most advantageous outcome for residents.

The Chairman invited members to speak:

Cllr J Toye welcomed the proposals and said he was reassured by the reference in section 3.2 of the report which said that officers had 'assessed the bids for best consideration taking into account the requirements of Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the General Disposals Consent Order 2003 which considers issues of economic, social and environmental well-being'.

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett sought confirmation that it would be an NHS dentist. The Chairman said that it was NHS backed and would be valuable in the local context. Cllr Fitch-Tillett welcomed this and said that Cromer in particular, lacked a full dentistry offer, with even the private practices being full.

The Chairman confirmed that it was a reputable company with several successful practices in operation. He added that if, for any reason, this option did not proceed then there were several other bids that could be considered. He added that the public toilets which were based in the building, would remain operational.

Cllr J Boyle, spoke as the local member for Cromer. She said that it had been challenging to lose the tourist information centre but she said that as the Council's representative on the Norfolk Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (NHOSC), dentistry was one of the biggest problems in the County and this presented the best outcome for local residents.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr J Toye and

RESOLVED to approve

- To enter into the lease set out Proposal 1 as outlined in the Exempt Appendix A which demonstrates best consideration and in accordance with s123 of the LGA Act 1972, with delegated approval granted to the Asset Strategy Manager to agree the exact terms for the legal agreement.
- To grant delegated approval to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Estates &

Property Services in consultation with The Chief Executive to enter into one of Proposals 2-8 in the event that Proposal 1 does not proceed.

Reason for the decision:

Leasing the property utilises the space made available by ceasing the tourist information centre provision generating income that can be used to fund Council Services.

10 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

11 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at 10.44 am.

Chairman