

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 19 November 2025 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 6.00 pm

Members Present:

Cllr P Bailey	Cllr M Batey
Cllr D Birch	Cllr J Boyle
Cllr A Brown	Cllr S Bütikofer
Cllr C Cushing	Cllr N Dixon
Cllr P Fisher	Cllr A Fitch-Tillett
Cllr T FitzPatrick	Cllr A Fletcher
Cllr W Fredericks	Cllr M Gray
Cllr V Holliday	Cllr K Leith
Cllr R Macdonald	Cllr G Mancini-Boyle
Cllr P Neatherway	Cllr L Paterson
Cllr S Penfold	Cllr P Porter
Cllr C Ringer	Cllr C Rouse
Cllr L Shires	Cllr M Taylor
Cllr J Toye	Cllr K Toye
Cllr A Varley	Cllr L Vickers

Also in attendance: The public.

60 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr T Adams, Cllr K Bayes, Cllr H Blathwayt, Cllr M Hankins, Cllr C Heinink, Cllr P Heinrich, Cllr N Housden, Cllr J Punchard, Cllr E Tooke and Cllr L Withington.

61 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 24 September 2025 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the correction of a typing error.

62 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

63 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

64 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair and Vice-Chair had attended the following civic events:

4th October – 901 Troop Marine Cadets Trafalgar Night Mess Dinner
12th October – High Sheriff of Norfolk's Justice Service
16th October – YMCA Norfolk Annual Celebration
21st October – Mayor of Kings Lynn Charity Trafalgar Supper
9th November – Remembrance Day Service at Wells Next the Sea
11th November – Armistice Day at the Poppy Sculpture, NNDC Council Offices

The Chair then spoke about the recent passing of former councillor, Joyce Trett, who had served as Chair of the Council from 2006 – 2007. He said that she had been dedicated to public service and would be sorely missed.

65 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

None received.

66 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

In the absence of the Leader, the Chairman invited the Deputy Leader, Cllr W Fredericks, to speak. She began by saying that she had recently attended the Christmas Show on Cromer Pier and she encouraged everyone to go.

Cllr Fredericks then said that preparations for the 2026/2027 Budget were underway and the financial settlement from central Government was still awaited. She then spoke about recent requests to support the horse racing industry in the district and said that the Council opposed harmonising betting duty with remote gaming duty as it would harm Fakenham race course and was asking Government to focus on high harm online casino gaming instead.

The public consultation on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) had been announced. It would run until 11th January 2026 and the link would be shared on the Council's website. The Council would be encouraging its partners, including statutory bodies, stakeholders and town and parish councils to respond.

Cllr Fredericks then asked the Chief Executive to provide a further update on the LGR process. He explained that the statutory consultation had been launched on the proposals for the six devolution 'priority areas'. He explained that the Government would be inviting statutory consultees to respond but that town and parish councils and the public were also able to provide comments via the link that was available on the NNDC website. The Council, together with six other District Councils across Norfolk, continued to support the three unitary model based on the principles of 'people, place and progress'. All the information relating to this proposal could be found online at [Future Norfolk - Future Norfolk](#). He added that NNDC would convene a Special Meeting of Cabinet to agree the Council's formal response to the consultation at a date to be confirmed.

67 APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Fredericks said that she was standing down from Cabinet and as Deputy Leader, with immediate effect. Cllr J Boyle would be joining Cabinet and would take on the Housing & People Services Portfolio. She wished her all the best.

Moving onto other appointments, it was proposed by Cllr W Fredericks, seconded by Cllr J Boyle and

RESOLVED to appoint:

Cllr M Gray as Vice-Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Cllr Fredericks then informed members that Cllr K Leith would replace Cllr J Boyle on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Cllr C Cushing said that he wished to make a couple of changes to substitute appointments to committees and he would notify the Democratic Services & Governance Manager in writing of these. He added that wished Cllr Boyle every

success in her new role on Cabinet and commended Cllr Fredericks for her passion and commitment to the Housing Portfolio.

68 PORTFOLIO REPORTS

The Chair invited members to ask questions. He reminded them that it was not a debate and that the session was limited to 30 minutes.

Cllr G Mancini-Boyle asked Cllr A Varley, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change & Net Zero, if he was prepared to admit that the Council would not be able to achieve Net Zero by 2030 – as originally pledged. Cllr Varley replied that the current administration had done a huge amount to achieve Net Zero. He referred to the Conservative-led County Council which had never declared a climate emergency and said that he would urge opposition colleagues to encourage their county council counterparts to do so. He strongly rebutted the assertion that the Administration was ‘virtue signalling’ and gave the examples of millions of pounds of warm homes funding distributed to residents, the installation of solar panels on NNDC buildings, including leisure centres and the provision of astute eco advice to businesses to assist them in reducing their carbon footprint. Cllr Mancini-Boyle replied that he would like a response as to whether Cllr Varley believed that Net Zero would be achieved by 2030. He went on to say that the Council’s waste collection service produced carbon emissions and would continue to do so until they were able to operate with Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO). He believed that the Council was not investing in the right projects to show demonstrate that it was seriously committed to achieving Net Zero. Cllr Varley said that he had already provided an answer.

Cllr R Macdonald asked Cllr C Ringer, Portfolio Holder for IT, Waste and Environmental Services, about the reference to environmental crime in his portfolio report (page 53) and asked for more information on these figures as they indicated that levels had doubled in the last six months. Cllr Ringer replied that an increase in figures was not always a bad thing. In this case it showed that efforts to ensure compliance was working. He added that the recently introduced booking system at recycling centres may have exacerbated fly-tipping.

Cllr V Holliday asked Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Estates & Assets, about recent findings from Box Power, a not-for-profit energy consultancy, NNDC overpaid for electricity by 9 pence per kilowatt hour (KH) compared to the best performing councils. NNDC was paying 31.5p per KH compared to 22.2 pence at the best performing council. She asked how much could have been saved annually, had NNDC obtained a better deal and how soon contracts could be renegotiated. Cllr Shires thanked her for her question and bringing the matter to her attention. She said that she would look into it and provide an answer, adding that she would be like to meet with Cllr Holliday to discuss it further, rather than simply providing a written response.

Cllr M Gray asked Cllr C Ringer if he would join him in thanking the Council’s Civil Contingency Team in keeping the public safe at this time of year, especially with extreme weather events and the ongoing challenge of rising sea levels. Cllr Ringer agreed and added that he also wished to thank other agencies too such as the volunteer flood wardens. They constantly had to adapt to new challenges as well as ongoing issues.

Cllr L Paterson asked Cllr A Varley about the Net Zero target date of 2030. He was supporting of reducing emissions but was concerned about the cost and asked

about the return on investment to achieve Net Zero. He added that technologies were getting cheaper over time and wondered if it was always the best approach to move quickly. Cllr Varley replied that regarding the financial aspect, projects and initiatives were always factored into budgets. He went on to say that the use of HVO would decrease emissions by more than half but the financial implications of making such a switch needed to be considered. He concluded by saying that the Council was sticking to its 2030 target and acknowledged that it would become increasingly challenging as the journey progressed. He said that if any members had ideas for any initiatives to share them.

Cllr T FitzPatrick asked Cllr Varley about the 110k tree planting project. He said that this was the first and easiest step on the Net Zero journey. He said that young tree survival was crucial to the long-term success of the project and he asked how many of the trees that had been planted had survived and whether ongoing survival was tracked. Cllr Varley said that the tree planting project had been hugely successful thanks to his predecessor, Cllr N Lloyd. He went on to say that following the planting, it was down to private landowners and community groups to ensure that the trees thrived, with knowledge imparted by NNDC. Cllr FitzPatrick pushed for a figure on how many had survived and Cllr Varley replied that it was not possible to ascertain this information as most of the planting was on private land.

Cllr S Butikofer asked Cllr J Toye, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth, about the reference in his portfolio report on business activity in the district's towns and asked what more could be done to support businesses in rural areas. Cllr Toye replied that 80% of North Norfolk businesses had 10 or fewer employees and the Council worked hard to signpost them to the website for support and information as well as signing up to the newsletter so that they can be contacted and engaged with.

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett asked Cllr L Shires about the decision to remove the provision of parking permits on the promenade for the Cromer Lifeboat crew and the impact of this, as they would now have to park a considerable distance away. Cllr Shires replied that this was not a true account of the situation and said that she would be happy to meet with the person who had informed Cllr Fitch-Tillett of this and discuss the matter further.

Cllr A Fletcher asked Cllr W Fredericks about the 'Better off' calculator, referred to on page 35 of her portfolio report. Cllr Fredericks replied that it was now live on the Council's website and it was better than most other online calculators. She asked members to spread the word.

Cllr C Cushing asked Cllr Fredericks about the process for re-registration of people on the Housing Register, as referred to in her portfolio report, was up to date and asked whether there was an update to the figure in the report and also, what precautions were being taken to ensure that no one was inadvertently left off the list. Cllr Fredericks replied that there was no update as yet as the process was ongoing. She said that when the Council had not heard from someone, they took a proactive approach and tried to contact them to check that they were actively looking for a home. They would also enquire about their circumstances and if necessary, refer them to the Council's Financial Inclusion team for additional support. She added that Cllr Boyle would provide an update in December.

Cllr K Toye asked Cllr Fredericks if the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) had been activated due to the recent cold weather. Cllr Fredericks replied that Council staff actively sought out any rough sleepers if the temperature dropped below zero and offered them blankets and hot food.

Cllr L Vickers asked Cllr Ringer about the reference in his portfolio holder report to the introduction of a food waste collection service in the latter half of 2025 and asked whether this was achievable given the very short deadline. Cllr Ringer said that was a typing error and it was the end of 2026 not 2025. He said that Council officers were working very hard to achieve this date. Food waste caddies had been ordered and should be received in mid-2026. Cllr Vickers asked that her thanks were passed onto the Environmental Services Team, which had been very helpful in addressing residents' concerns in Fakenham recently.

Cllr P Neatherway said that he wanted to thank the Council's waste collection service for resolving several recent issues in Knapton and the surrounding area. He asked Cllr Ringer if there was an update on the situation, as he understood the problems were caused by a waste vehicle. Cllr Ringer said that normal service had already resumed. There had been a couple of breakdowns recently but the crew always worked hard to catch up when issues arose.

69 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET 03 NOVEMBER 2025

Cabinet 3rd November 2025:

1. Cabinet Agenda Item 8 – Budget Monitoring P6 2025 -2026

The Chair invited Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finances, Estates & Assets, to introduce this item.

Cllr Shires began by thanking the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their full discussion at their meeting.

She then provided a brief update on the current budget position. When the outturn report was presented to Council last year, the surplus was put into the General Reserve for future unseen deficits. This year, there was a surplus predicted at Period 6 and in line with this, the additional income from second homes council tax would be put into a reserve to assist with any overspends in the housing and temporary accommodation budget. All of this was to prepare for the next round of Government funding and it was hoped that the settlement announcement would be favourable but it was possible that it would be similar to last year which had proved to be disappointing and very challenging to deal with. She said that the recent publication of the deprivation indexes, which indicated areas of deprivation in the district would influence the Government this time. He second unknown related to Business Rates. To date there had been no indication from central government regarding this, adding to the uncertainty. Finally, there was additional uncertainty around food waste costs and the funding package that would come with it. She asked Cllr Ringer to provide an update on this.

Cllr Ringer said that in March 2025, when Full Council had considered the funding for waste vehicles and caddies, it was apparent that the costs had been underestimated by about a third. New burdens funding was anticipated for the actual operation of the service but there was a good chance that the Government would undervalue this too.

The Chair invited members to speak:

Cllr C Cushing referred to the Fair Funding Review and said that concerns had been raised that central government would take money away from rural areas and give it

to metropolitan areas, and he asked if Cllr Shires had any idea of the settlement that the Council was hoping to get and, if was not forthcoming, what contingency plans were there to make up the shortfall. Cllr Shires replied that it was a real concern across Norfolk and she said that she was hopeful of enough funding to achieve the ambitions of the Council but did not feel comfortable putting a figure on it at this time. She hoped that the Government had heard the concerns of district councils and would act accordingly. She went onto say that there were concerns about contingency plans if the funding was not sufficient. Difficult decisions were taken last year to ensure that a balanced budget was set and some of the reserves that had been established had not been fully utilised and would need to be reviewed, alongside wider savings. She was hoping that there would be some money to set aside this time but her biggest concern at the moment was the costs relating to food waste collection and this could lead to an unstable financial situation.

The Chair moved to the vote and it was

RESOLVED

To increase the 2025/26 capital budget for the Holt Country Park Eco Learning Space to £140,000. This is to reflect the apportionment of £40,000 from external S106 contribution towards the scheme

One member abstained.

1. Cabinet Agenda item 9: Net Zero Strategy Review & Related Climate Reports

The Chair invited Cllr A Varley, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change & Net Zero, to introduce this item. He outlined the proposals and provided details of the supporting documents, saying that they had been developed following workshops with staff and members. He added that Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee had considered the report in depth and were supportive of the recommendations.

Cllr V Holliday said that she had asked about the carbon footprint of tourism at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting and she now sought clarification as to whether the transport component included private travel to Norfolk as well as within Norfolk of the 9 million visitors a year. Cllr Varley said that he would provide a written response.

Cllr J Toye said that he wanted to ask members to think about the cost of not supporting these proposals.

The Chair put the proposals to the vote and it was

RESOLVED

- a) To adopt the revisions to the Environmental Charter
- b) To adopt the Decarbonisation Strategy and associated action plan.

Seven members abstained.

70 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 15 OCTOBER & 12 NOVEMBER 2025

The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Cllr V Holliday, introduced this

item. She outlined the recommendations from the Committee's Annual Report 2023-2025 and thanked Cllr N Dixon who had chaired the committee during this period.

She explained that there had been five Scrutiny Officers supporting the committee during the period covered by the report and this was the reason for recommending some additional training. She added that further work was being undertaken to ascertain how many recommendations were made to Cabinet and their response and this information would be shared in due course.

Cllr S Butikofer commented that she was disappointed not to receive an invitation to the meeting which the Police & Crime Commissioner had attended. As the Council's representative on the Police & Crime Panel, she felt that it would have been useful to have been there.

It was proposed by Cllr V Holliday, seconded by Cllr J Toye and

RESOLVED

To receive the report, affirm the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and acknowledge the concerns highlighted in the 'key issues' section of the report.

71 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE LICENSING (REGULATORY) COMMITTEE 22 OCTOBER 2025

Cllr C Ringer, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services (Licensing), introduced this item. He thanked the Licensing team for their hard work and proposed the recommendations.

Cllr D Birch, Chair of the Licensing Committee, said that street trading was very important to the district and a key component of the tourism offer.

It was proposed by Cllr C Ringer, seconded by Cllr D Birch and

RESOLVED

To approve and adopt the revised Street Trading Policy 2025–2028, with effect from 1 April 2026.

72 QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS

None

73 OPPOSITION BUSINESS

None.

74 NOTICE(S) OF MOTION

None.

75 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

76 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at 7.04 pm.

Chairman