

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 20 May 2026 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 A Fitch-Tillett	Cllr T FitzPatrick
	Cllr A Fletcher	Cllr M Gray
	Cllr M Hankins	Cllr C Heinink
	Cllr P Heinrich	Cllr V Holliday
	Cllr L Paterson	Cllr S Penfold
	Cllr P Porter	Cllr J Punchard
	Cllr C Ringer	Cllr C Rouse
	Cllr L Shires	Cllr M Taylor
	Cllr J Toye	Cllr K Toye
	Cllr L Withington	

Also in attendance: The Chief Executive, The S151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Director for Service Delivery, the Democratic Services & Governance Officer, the Democratic Services & Governance Officer (Regulatory) Members of the Public.

1 OUTGOING CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Annual General meeting of Council. He began by outlining recent civic events that he had attended:

- 14th April – Chair of Norfolk County Council Outgoing Reception, County Hall
- 16th April – Breckland District Council Chair's Civic Reception, St Mary's Church, Attleborough
- 23rd April – Cllr Peter Fisher, Chair of NNDC's Civic Reception, Blakeney Harbour Rooms
- 26th April – Mayor of Cromer Town Council's Civic Reception, Cromer Parish Church
- 8th May – The Garden Party, Buckingham Palace
- 16th May – Act of Remembrance – the Dams raid - at Halsey House

The Chair said that it had been a huge honour to take on the role and he thanked members for their support throughout his year in office. He had raised a total of £5000 for his chosen charity – North Norfolk Wheely boat and a short video, outlining the important role of the boat was shown.

The Chair invited representatives from the charity to come forward and presented them with a cheque. They thanked the Chair and members for their support and generosity.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR

The Chair invited nominations for the Chair of the Council, for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

Cllr P Porter nominated Cllr M Taylor. This was seconded by Cllr T Adams.

It was RESOLVED unanimously to elect Cllr M Taylor as Chair of the Council for 2026 – 2026.

The Outgoing Chairman presented the chain of office to Cllr Taylor.

3 INCOMING CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Cllr Taylor thanked members for electing him as Chair of the Council. He then presented the outgoing Chair with his medal and a gift.

The Chair elect then signed the declaration of office. He thanked members again for electing him and said that his focus for the forthcoming year would be on local uniform groups across the district such as brownies, guides, cubs, scouts and cadets. As North Norfolk's youngest ever Chair, he wanted to show support for young people across the District.

4 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL

The Chair invited nominations for Vice-Chair of the Council for 2026-2027.

Cllr T Adams nominated Cllr K Toye. Cllr S Butikofer seconded the proposal.

There being no further nominations, it was unanimously

RESOLVED to elect Cllr K Toye as Vice-chair of the Council.

The Chair invited Cllr K Toye to accept the chain of office and sign the declaration of office.

5 VOTE OF THANKS TO THE RETIRING CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

The Leader of the Council, Cllr T Adams, then thanked the outgoing Chair, Cllr Fisher for being an exceptional ambassador for the Council during his year in office. Everyone appreciated and valued his hard work and commitment, and he commended the way Cllr Fisher had shone a light on the ward that he represented. He proposed a vote of thanks.

6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs P Bailey, N Dixon, W Fredericks, N Housden, K Leith, G Mancini-Boyle, L Paterson, E Tooke, A Varley and L Vickers,

7 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 25th March 2026 were agreed as a correct record.

8 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

None.

9 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

10 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader began by thanking the Elections Team for their hard work supporting the recent County Council elections. He then spoke about the retention of the six blue flags on local beaches and thanked officers for their work in achieving this.

Cllr Adams said that his time was being increasingly dominated by Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Recent changes to the political landscape at both regional and national level had added a layer of uncertainty to the situation and he assured members that he would keep them updated on any significant changes.

He said that he was concerned about mixed messaging at county level regarding challenges to the three unitary model and broader opposition to LGR and he wasn't sure if the intent of the pre-action letter sent by the County Council was widely understood. Regardless, there was little likelihood of such a challenge being successful.

11 UPDATE BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive confirmed that he had nothing further to add to the statement made by the Leader. The official position remained unchanged. The Secretary of State had issued the 'minded to' decision on 25th March and that position had not changed.

12 REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND PANELS.

The Chair invited Cllr Adams to introduce this item. Cllr Adams explained that central Government had recently published draft regulations setting a limit on the size of committees responsible for determining planning applications (Development Committee). The current committee had 14 members and the maximum size set out in the new regulations was 13 members. Development Committee members had been asked to recommend their preferred size to Full Council and had agreed to 13 members. Any changes to committee size must be approved by Full Council, along with the impact on the allocation of committee seats.

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

RESOLVED

1. That Council approves the change to the size of Development Committee from 14 members to 13.
2. That Council approves the allocation of seats to political groups as shown at Appendix B, taking into consideration any arrangements agreed by the Group Leaders
3. That delegation is given to the Group Leaders to make any appointments to

committees, sub-committees, working parties & panels.

13 REPORT ON APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO CABINET

The Leader confirmed that there were no changes to Cabinet at this time.

14 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS AND SUBSTITUTES TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND PANELS

The Chair asked the Group Leaders in turn if they wished to make any appointments to committees, sub-committees, working parties or panels.

Cllr Adams, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group said that he wanted to make the following changes:

Cllr A Varley to be removed from Development Committee (to meet the re-sizing requirements)

Cllr K Toye to be appointed as a substitute on Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Cllr C Rouse to replace Cllr J Toye on Development Committee, with Cllr J Toye and Cllr A Varley to be appointed as substitutes.

Cllrs P Bailey, M Gray and K Toye to be appointed as substitutes to the Constitution Working Party.

Cllr C Cushing, Leader of the Conservative Group made the following changes:

Cllr G Mancini-Boyle to be replaced by Cllr T FitzPatrick as a substitute on Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Cllr G Mancini-Boyle to be replaced by Cllr T FitzPatrick as a substitute on the Employment & Appeals Committee

Cllr J Punchard, Leader of the Independent Group confirmed that he did not want to make any changes.

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

RESOLVED unanimously to approve the appointment of members to committees, sub-committees, working parties and panels as set out in Minutes Appendix A.

15 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS TO COMMITTEES

The Chair invited the Group Leaders to nominate members to the positions of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees.

Cllr T Adams proposed the following:

Cllr P Fisher to be appointed as Chair of the Licensing Committees, with Cllr C Rouse appointed as Vice-Chair.

Cllr Lucy Shires to be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Employment & Appeals Committee

Cllr R Macdonald to be appointed as Chair of Standards Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr M Hankins and

RESOLVED unanimously to approve the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs, as set out at Minutes Appendix B.

16 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Chair invited the Group Leaders to propose any changes to appointments to Outside Bodies.

Cllr T Adams proposed the following:

Cllr S Penfold to replace Cllr L Withington on the Norfolk Records Committee
Cllr S Penfold to replace Cllr L Withington on the Norfolk Museums Committee
Cllr P Bailey to replace Cllr C Heinink on the Sheringham Little Theatre Society

Cllr C Cushing proposed that Cllr T FitzPatrick be appointed to one of the vacant positions on the Norfolk Rivers Internal Drainage Board.

Cllr Adams said that he understood there may be some changes in the coming weeks to Norfolk County Council led outside bodies and he would update members when he had more information.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr A Brown and

RESOLVED unanimously to
RESOLVED to approve

1. To **approve** Council appointments to Outside Bodies and Joint Committees (Minutes Appendix C)
2. To **approve** the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's appointment to the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Minutes Appendix D)
3. To note Executive appointments to Outside Bodies and Joint Committees (Minutes Appendix E)

17 COUNCILLOR ACCESS TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (LGPS)

The Democratic Services & Governance Manager introduced this item. She explained that the Government had introduced changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), including restoring access for councillors and extending access to certain elected mayors in England.

The Local Government Pension Scheme (Elected Member Pensions) Regulations 2026 amended the LGPS Regulations to reinstate access for councillors in England and came into force in April 2026.

The Leader, Cllr T Adams, added that the right for elected members to join the LGPS had been removed in 2014. He welcomed the reinstatement and explained that it was a procedural matter so that the changes would be reflected in the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances and the Constitution.

Cllr T FitzPatrick urged members to take advantage of joining the scheme. He said that it had been a serious mistake to remove the right of members to join the

scheme.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr A Brown and

RESOLVED unanimously to

1. Note the recent legislative changes restoring access to the LGPS for councillors in England on an opt-in basis from Monday 11 May 2026,
2. Amend the Members Allowances Scheme to reflect the change.

18 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE - RESOURCE REVIEW

Cllr A Brown, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Enforcement, Introduced this item. He explained that additional resource was needed in the Planning Service to ensure it could deliver timely planning decisions in the wider public interest following adoption of the Councils Local Plan on 17 December 2025 and the expected increase in planning application submissions. He went on to say that with increased planning fee income, now was the right time to review resourcing options to ensure a clearer division of labour and increased resource capacity to help maximise the value of skills and experience already in the team and to drive forward improved planning outcomes and timeliness of decision making.

It was proposed by Cllr A Brown, seconded by Cllr M Hankins and

RESOLVED to

1. Approve "Option Three – Managed Growth" as set out in the report across paragraphs 3.14 to 3.30 to deliver a re-structured DM Service as set out at Appendix A Figure 2
2. Authorise immediate recruitment to the four new posts.

19 PLANNING POLICY RESOURCES: LOCAL PLAN REVIEW & SENIOR LANDSCAPE (ECOLOGY) OFFICER

Cllr A Brown, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Enforcement, introduced this item. He explained that in line with the immediate Local Plan Review project proposal agreed by Cabinet on 9 March 2026, in order to meet the 30 month review timeline, as detailed by central Government, a review of resources identified that a further two professional Planning Policy Officers would be required to take the project forward.

It was also proposed to reinstate the Planning Policy Manager role, with the Team Leader role being deleted from the establishment. These would be supported by recently announced MHCLG New System Plan Funding.

In addition, with additional responsibilities imposed upon the Council as the Local Planning Authority through Nutrient Neutrality & Biodiversity Net Gain, the Senior Landscape Officer (Ecology) post required additional hours which would be funded by a new Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring fee, now being collected from developers.

Cllr Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance, referred members to section 5.1 of the report, which set out the financial implications.

Cllr J Toye said that it was important to acknowledge the additional workload that

officers were having to undertake and a high standard of service needed to be maintained. He supported the proposals.

It was proposed by Cllr A Brown, seconded by Cllr J Toye and

RESOLVED to

Approve Option Three and progress the immediate appointment of: 1 x Planning Policy Manager (removing the Team Leader role from the establishment), 1 x Senior Planning Policy Officer & 1 x Planning Policy Officer as detailed in the report. Also, approve the additional hours for the Senior Landscape Officer (Ecology) post.

20 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

21 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at 6.55 pm.

Chairman