

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of North Norfolk District Council held on 20 September 2017 at the Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer at 6.00 pm.

Members Present:

Mrs S Arnold	Mr J Lee	Mr J Rest
Mr D Baker	Mr N Lloyd	Mr R Reynolds
Mr P Butikofer	Mrs B McGoun	Mr R Shepherd
Mrs S Butikofer	Mrs M Millership	Mr B Smith
Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds	Mrs A Moore	Mr R Stevens
Mrs H Cox	Mr P W Moore	Mrs V Uprichard
Mr N Dixon	Mr W J Northam	Mrs K Ward
Mrs J English	Mrs J Oliver	Mr G Williams
Mrs A Fitch-Tillett	Mr N Pearce	Mr A Yiasimi
Mr T FitzPatrick	Mrs G Perry-Warnes	Mr D Young
Mr V FitzPatrick	Mr R Price	
Ms V R Gay	Mrs M Prior	
Mrs A Green	Mr J Punchard	
Mrs P Grove-Jones		
Mr B Hannah		

Officers in Attendance: The Corporate Directors, the Monitoring Officer, the Head of Finance & Assets, the Communications & Marketing Manager and the Democratic Services Manager

Press: Present

37. PRAYERS

The Chairman invited Reverend David Head, Church of the Holy Trinity, West Runton, to lead prayers.

38. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman said that he had attended the following events since the last meeting of Council:

24 June – Cromer Hospital Fete, 300th Anniversary of the Freemasons and the Cromer Pier Show
8 July – Lord Mayor's procession and fireworks
15 July – award of the Blue Flag to West Runton Beach
16 July – 200th anniversary of the RNLI at Sheringham
21 July – start of the summer repertory season at Sheringham Little Theatre
23 July – launch of Cromer County tennis week
31 July – Paschendaele ceremony at Cromer
13 August – Sheringham Lifeboat day service
29 August – attended the Benjamin Court consultation event
02 September – Shantymen performance at the Forum, Norwich to raise funds for Nelson's Journey

07 September – Civic Reception on the Sheringham steam train
09 & 10 September – Greenbuild
11 September – Battle of Britain commemoration at City Hall, Norwich
15 September – Battle of Britain youth celebration at County Hall
16 September – judging of the market stalls and traders at the 1940s weekend in Sheringham
19 September – Royal British Legion president's reception at the Old Hospital, Norwich

He said that he had been proud to represent the Council at all of these events.

39. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

None received

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr N Coppack, Mr M Knowles, Mrs A Moore, Ms B Palmer, Mr P Rice, Mr E Seward and Mr D Smith.

41. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st June 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:

Mrs A Fitch-Tillett was recorded as being in attendance when she had sent her apologies.

42. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There was one item of urgent business: Rate Relief Policy

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Mr W Northam, introduced this item. He explained that as part of the Budget on 8th March 2017, the Government had announced that it would make available a discretionary fund of £300m over four years to support those businesses facing the steepest increases in their business rates bills as a result of revaluation. Every authority had been awarded a share of this fund and billing authorities were free to decide on an appropriate scheme to allocate this to their ratepayers.

Mr Northam said that a working group of Norfolk authorities met on 7 April 2017 to discuss options and methodologies for a relief scheme and to model the different options within their funding allocations. On 26th May it was agreed that a banded scheme based on the value of the increase in ratepayer's bills was the preferred option. The County Council had indicated that it would like to see a consistent relief scheme across the County and were supportive of this approach.

Mr Northam then outlined the key points of the preferred scheme. He said that it would be fully funded through a Section 31 grant and urged Members to support the recommendations. He concluded by thanking the Head of Finance and the Revenues Manager for their hard work in bringing this forward within a very tight timescale.

The Chairman invited Members to speak:

Mrs S Butikofer said that she was pleased to see this coming forward and that local businesses deserved the Council's support. She added that she was concerned that it had apparently taken a letter from a Minister to bring it forward now. Mr T FitzPatrick said that he was pleased to second the proposal and in response to Mrs Butikofer's concerns, he said that there had been issues with the software yet despite this work was well underway by 22 July. He said that it was imperative that the Council ensured that the system change was correct.

Central Government were aware that that the software would need updating and he had spoken to the Minister concerned, Marcus Jones, on 12th and 13th September about this issue. He concluded by saying that he had decided to bring it straight to Full Council so that Government could be informed as soon as possible that NNDC were participating. As it was a fully funded scheme he could see no reason why it wouldn't be supported.

Mr N Lloyd said that he would be supporting the proposals but that he also had concerns regarding the reference to delays in the letter. He said that as a local member for North Walsham he was worried that some businesses in the town could have benefitted if the relief had been introduced earlier and he queried whether it would be backdated and how many businesses might have failed since April due to a delay in its introduction.

The Revenues Manager confirmed that all businesses that were entitled to rate relief would receive it. Regarding the software issues he said the suppliers were addressing the problems and he was confident that the deadlines would be met.

Mr FitzPatrick added that the Government had sent out a standard letter to all affected councils and it had been acknowledged that some local authorities were ahead of the game. He reminded Members that NNDC had lobbied for business rate relief and this proposal should be welcomed.

In response to a question from Mr P W Moore about the businesses that may have failed since March 2017, the Revenues Manager confirmed that all businesses in occupation on 31st March and 1st April and entitled to discretionary relief would receive it.

Mr T FitzPatrick requested a recorded vote (attached at Appendix 1).

It was proposed by Mr W Northam, seconded by Mr T FitzPatrick and

RESOLVED unanimously that

1. The new Local Discretionary Revaluation Relief Scheme for Year 1 (2017/2018) is a banded scheme where a fixed amount of relief is awarded based on the amount the ratepayer's bill has increased as at 1 April 2017.
2. The principle of a banded scheme is retained in Years 2, 3 and 4 with delegated authority given to the s151 Officer, in consultation with the Discretionary Rate Relief Panel, to review and decide the bandwidths and the value of the relief given to each band.
3. Delegated authority is given to the Discretionary Rate Relief Panel to consider individual applications for the new Local Discretionary Revaluation Relief scheme that do not meet these criteria.
4. That the Rate Relief Policy which has been updated to include the Local Discretionary Revaluation Relief, the Supporting Small Businesses Relief and the Pub Relief as indicated in Appendix A.

43. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS

There was one public speaker, Mr O'Brien.

The Chairman stopped Mr O'Brien during his question as it involved the disclosure of details relating to employees.

The Monitoring Officer advised Mr O'Brien that the Council would be happy to provide him with a written response as long as there was no breach of confidentiality relating to any employees.

She added that the Council as a whole is not permitted to discuss individual cases in full session and that he was straying into confidential matters.

The Chairman thanked Mr O'Brien.

Mr B Hannah asked to speak. He asked about the engagement of members.

The Monitoring Officer stated that, except for circumstances specified in the Constitution, Members did not get involved. She said that if he had a particular question or concern around how the employment policies apply to officers then that could be discussed with Members.

Mr FitzPatrick queried Mr Hannah's inference to the Leader being aware of certain employment related matters. He said that he had not been involved in any direct discussions regarding any staffing matters and confirmed that day to day staffing matters were dealt with by HR.

44. APPOINTMENTS

The Leader informed Council that there was a vacancy on Development Committee and he wished to appoint Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds to the committee.

The Leader of the Opposition said that she wished to remove Dr P Butikofer from the Development Committee and appoint Mr N Pearce to the committee. She went onto thank Mr P W Moore for all his hard work as chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee over the previous 3 years.

RESOLVED

To approve the following appointments:

Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds and Mr N Pearce to Development Committee

45. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GOVERNANCE, RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE – 05 SEPTEMBER 2017

a) AGENDA ITEM 07: 2016/17 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Chairman of the Governance, Risk & Audit Committee, Mr V FitzPatrick, introduced this item. He began by thanking the Head of Finance and his team for their hard work in preparing the Statement of Accounts. He went onto say that the Statement of Accounts was produced in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. The draft accounts were produced by 31st May 2017 and had been subject to external audit review. The outturn position was reported to Council in June 2017 and was used to inform the annual accounts for 2016/17.

Mr FitzPatrick said that the Governance, Risk & Audit Committee had given full consideration to their review of the Statement of Accounts for 2016/17 and were confident in recommending their approval to Full Council.

It was proposed by Mr V FitzPatrick, seconded by Mr D Young and

RESOLVED

To approve the Statement of Accounts for 2016/17

45. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13 SEPTEMBER 2017

There were no further recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13 September 2017.

46. TO RECEIVE THE APPROVED MINUTES OF THE UNDERMENTIONED COMMITTEES

The minutes of the meetings below were noted as a correct record;

- 1) Cabinet – 03 July 2017
- 2) Development Committee – 11 May, 08 June, 06 July, 03 August 2017
- 3) Governance, Risk & Audit Committee – 06 June 2017
- 4) Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 17 May, 14 June 2017

47. REPORTS, UPDATES AND BRIEFINGS FROM CABINET

The Chairman asked whether any Cabinet member wished to add a further update to their written report.

- i. Mrs S Arnold, Portfolio Holder for Planning, said that she wished to commend the staff in the Planning and Planning Policy service areas for all their hard work – as highlighted in her report. She reminded Members that the Graham Allen awards were taking place on 21st September and all members were encouraged to attend the awards ceremony.
- ii. Mrs J Oliver, Portfolio Holder for Asset Commercialisation, said that she was delighted to announce that the Council had completed its acquisition of the Itteringham Community Shop.
- iii. Mr W Northam, Portfolio Holder for Finance, said that he was delighted to inform members about the recent appointment of a new Chief Technical Accountant, Lucy Hume.
- iv. Mr R Price, Portfolio Holder for Housing, informed Members that a Community Housing Fund grant had been given to Holt Housing Society to purchase 3 properties in the new Kings Meadow development. He added that the works were now completed regarding the recent purchase of temporary housing premises.
- v. Ms M Prior, Portfolio Holder for Sports & Leisure, said that she wished to thank the teams involved in the Sporting Centre of Excellence programme. The second year was now underway and was set to be another success.
- vi. Mr J Lee, Portfolio Holder for Coast, thanked the Coastal Manager for all his hard work over recent weeks.
- vii. Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds, Portfolio Holder for Waste and Environmental Services, said that she was pleased to be able to inform Members that the waiting lists for brown bins were being reduced with over 25% of people having now received bins and an average timescale of 2-3 weeks. She added that the business process review of Environmental services would include garden waste administration.

48. QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS

Mrs V Uprichard had submitted the following question:

'In view of the concerns raised by BBC Watchdog, where faecal material was found in ice being served in soft drinks I would like to know

1. *Does ice get checked for purity in premises serving iced drinks?*
2. *If not do we need to introduce this as policy?*

For your information, ice was checked at Costa Coffee, Starbucks and Cafe Nero and also fast food outlets such as Kentucky Fried chicken, McDonalds and Burger King. Most samples failed in testing. Many councils have introduced routine testing as a result. As a council concerned with the well-being of thousands of tourists as well as residents I feel that we should take urgent action.'

Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds, Portfolio Holder for Waste and Environmental Services confirmed that ice in food and drink establishments was not checked routinely. She referred to the Council's sampling policy for the microbiological examination of food which outlined in depth how samples were taken and the procedures underpinning this process. She said that this information would be circulated to all members after the meeting. Mrs Claussen-Reynolds then referred to a leaflet covering the safe production of ice for drinks, which provided details on storage, contamination, handling ice and the training of staff. Again, she offered to circulate this to all members.

Mrs H Cox said that she wished to reiterate Mrs Claussen-Reynolds' comments. As someone who had previously managed licensed establishments she said that she could reassure members that very thorough checks were undertaken of ice machines. This was a very important issue and it was vital that the production of ice was checked rigorously.

Mrs Uprichard said that she was reassured by the response and her question was to clarify which processes were in place.

49. NOTICE OF MOTION

None

50. PRIVATE BUSINESS

None

The meeting concluded at 7.02pm

Chairman