

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of North Norfolk District Council held on 15 November 2017 at the Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer at 6.00 pm.

Members Present:

Mrs S Arnold	Mr S Hester	Mr J Rest
Mr D Baker	Mr M Knowles	Mr R Reynolds
Dr P Bütikofer	Mr J Lee	Mr E Seward
Mrs S Bütikofer	Mr N Lloyd	Mr S Shaw
Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds	Mrs A Moore	Mr R Shepherd
Mr N Coppack	Mr P W Moore	Mr B Smith
Mrs H Cox	Mr W J Northam	Mr D Smith
Mr N Dixon	Mrs J Oliver	Mrs V Uprichard
Mrs A Fitch-Tillett	Ms B Palmer	Mrs L Walker
Mr T FitzPatrick	Mr N Pearce	Ms K Ward
Mr V FitzPatrick	Mrs G Perry-Warnes	Mr A Yiasimi
Ms V Gay	Mr R Price	Mr D Young
Mrs A Green	Mrs M Prior	
Mrs P Grove-Jones		
Mr B Hannah		

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

Press: Present

67. PRAYERS

The Chairman invited Cllr Hilary Cox, Methodist Lay Preacher to lead prayers.

68. PRESENTATION OF STAFF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The Head of Paid Service (SB) introduced the winners of the Council's inaugural staff achievement awards: Russell Tanner (Volunteer of the Year), Nicola Wray (Outstanding Achievement), John O'Halloran (Change and Innovation) Customer Services (Team of the Year) and Kevin Peacock (Employee of the Year). The Chairman presented each of the winners with a pin in recognition of their achievement.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

Before starting his communications, the Chairman said that he would like to show Members a short video outlining the work of his nominated charity, Nelson's Journey. There would be a collection for the charity at the end of the meeting.

The Chairman then said that he had been very busy during November and December and had attended the following events:

15 November – Christmas lights, Sheringham
22 November – Blakeney Primary School visit
25 November – Christmas show, Cromer Pier
26 November – Christmas fete for Nelson's Journey, Tattersett
03 December – carol service, Cromer church
– Thanksgiving service for Diane Evans, Sheringham
05 December – Pantomime, Sheringham Little Theatre
06 December – Stars of Norfolk, Norwich
08 December – NNDC staff achievement awards
11 December – Carols at Yarmouth Minster
14 December – Sheringham Town Council service

69. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

Mrs J Oliver – Agenda Item 10b – North Norfolk Community Sports Hub
Miss B Palmer - Agenda Item 10b – North Norfolk Community Sports Hub
Ms J English – Agenda item 10c – Sutton Mill Loan Proposals

70. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mrs B McGoun, Mr J Punchard, Mr P Rice, Mr N Smith and Mr G Williams

71. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

72. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

73. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS

None

74. APPOINTMENTS

Following the resolution at the Council meeting on 15 November that a review of committee chairman and vice-chairman appointments would be undertaken at the meeting of Council on 19 December 2017, the Chairman explained that nominations could be put forward for the following committees:

- Development Committee
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Licensing & Appeals Committee
- Governance, Risk & Audit Committee
- Standards Committee
- Constitution Working Party

He said that he would take nominations for the Chairman of each committee and then once that was voted on and agreed he would take nominations for the Vice-Chairman. The vote would be taken in the order that the nominations were received.

Mr R Price said that he wanted to remind Members that the Conservatives had won the 2015 election on their manifesto and that it was right that their priorities should be delivered. He requested a recorded vote for each of the nominations.

Ms M Prior said that she supported Mr Price's comments.

Mr B Hannah said that as the longest serving Member of the Council he hoped that lessons would be learnt from recent changes to the political groups.

Development Committee

It was proposed by Mr N Coppack and seconded by Mr J Rest that Mrs A Fitch-Tillett be nominated as Chairman

It was proposed by Mr T FitzPatrick and seconded by Mrs S Arnold that Mr R Reynolds be nominated as Chairman

Before moving to the vote, the Portfolio Holder for Planning asked to speak. She said that Development Committee was non-political and very challenging to chair. The role required judgement and sensitivity and the Chairman should be experienced and highly competent.

Mr T FitzPatrick proposed that the nominees should briefly outline their suitability for the role to help members reach a decision. Ms M Prior seconded the proposal. It was put to the vote and lost.

The Chairman then asked members to vote on the nominations for Chairman of Development Committee in the order received.

RESOLVED

That Mrs A Fitch-Tillett be elected as Chairman of Development Committee
(23 votes in favour, 19 against)

The Chairman then asked for nominations for Vice-Chairman of Development Committee.

It was proposed by Mrs S Bütikofer and seconded by Mr E Seward that Mrs V Uprichard be nominated as Vice-Chairman of Development Committee.

It was proposed by Mr T FitzPatrick and seconded by Mrs S Arnold that Mr B Smith be nominated as Vice-Chairman of Development Committee.

RESOLVED

That Mrs V Uprichard be elected as Vice-Chairman of Development Committee
(23 votes in favour, 19 against)

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

It was proposed by Mrs S Bütikofer and seconded by Mrs V Uprichard that Ms K Ward be nominated as Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Mr T FitzPatrick said that he accepted this nomination and would not request a recorded vote.

RESOLVED

That Ms K Ward be elected as Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

It was proposed by Mr N Coppack and seconded by Mrs G Perry-Warnes that Mr S Hester be nominated as Vice-Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

It was proposed by Mr T FitzPatrick and seconded by Mrs J Oliver that Mr G Williams be nominated as Vice-Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED

That Mr S Hester be elected as Vice-Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
(23 votes in favour, 19 against)

Licensing & Appeals Committee

It was proposed by Mr N Coppack and seconded by Mr J Rest that Mr S Hester be nominated as Chairman of the Licensing & Appeals Committee.

It was proposed by Mr T FitzPatrick and seconded by Mr R Price that Mrs H Cox be nominated as Chairman of the Licensing & Appeals Committee.

RESOLVED

That Mr S Hester be elected as Chairman of the Licensing & Appeals Committee
(23 votes in favour, 19 against)

It was proposed by Mrs V Uprichard and seconded by Mr D Young that Mr P Bütikofer be nominated as Vice-Chairman of the Licensing & Appeals Committee.

It was proposed by Mr T FitzPatrick and seconded by Mr R Price that Mr S Shaw be nominated as Vice-Chairman of the Licensing & Appeals Committee.

RESOLVED

That Mr P Bütikofer be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Licensing & Appeals Committee.
(23 votes in favour, 19 against)

Governance, Risk & Audit Committee

It was proposed by Mrs A Fitch-Tillett and seconded by Mr S Hester that Mr J Rest be nominated as Chairman of Governance, Risk & Audit Committee.

It was proposed by Mr N Dixon and seconded by Mr W Northam that Mr V FitzPatrick be nominated as Chairman of Governance, Risk & Audit Committee.

RESOLVED

That Mr J Rest be elected as Chairman of Governance, Risk & Audit Committee.
(23 votes in favour, 19 against)

It was proposed by Mrs S Bütikofer and seconded by Mr E Seward that Mr D Young be nominated as Vice-Chairman of Governance, Risk & Audit Committee.

It was proposed by Mr T FitzPatrick and seconded by Ms M Prior that Mr M Knowles be nominated as Vice-Chairman of Governance, Risk & Audit Committee.

RESOLVED

That Mr D Young be elected as Vice-Chairman of Governance, Risk & Audit Committee.
(23 votes in favour, 19 against)

Standards Committee

It was proposed by Mrs S Bütikofer and seconded by Mr E Seward that Mr P W Moore be nominated as Chairman of Standards Committee.

It was proposed by Mr T FitzPatrick and seconded by Mrs S Arnold that Mr R Stevens be nominated as chairman of Standards Committee.

RESOLVED

That Mr P W Moore be elected as Chairman of Standards Committee.
(22 votes in favour, 19 against, 1 abstention)

It was proposed by Mrs S Bütikofer and seconded by Mr E Seward that Mr B J Hannah be nominated as Vice-chairman of Standards Committee.

It was proposed by Mr T FitzPatrick and seconded by Mrs S Arnold that Ms M Prior be nominated as Vice-chairman of Standards Committee.

RESOLVED

That Mr B J Hannah be elected as Vice-Chairman of Standards Committee.
(23 votes in favour, 19 against)

Constitution Working Party

It was proposed by Mrs S Bütikofer and seconded by Mr E Seward that Ms V Gay be nominated as Chairman of Constitution Working Party.

It was proposed by Mr T FitzPatrick and seconded by Mrs J Oliver that Mrs H Cox be nominated as Chairman of Constitution Working Party.

RESOLVED

That Ms V Gay be elected as Chairman of Constitution Working Party.
(23 votes in favour, 19 against)

It was proposed by Mrs S Bütikofer and seconded by Mr E Seward that Mrs A Moore be nominated as Vice-chairman of Constitution Working Party.

It was proposed by Mr T FitzPatrick and seconded by Mr J Lee that Mrs J Oliver be nominated as Vice-chairman of Constitution Working Party.

RESOLVED

That Mrs A Moore be elected as Vice-Chairman of Constitution Working Party.
(23 votes in favour, 19 against)

Mr T FitzPatrick said that he respected the democratic process and accepted the outcome. He added that the previous Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen had worked very hard for the Council and the District as a whole and he would like to thank them. Mr N Coppack, Leader of the Independent Group, said that he agreed with Mr FitzPatrick's comments and congratulated all

of those newly appointed to posts and said he was confident that they would work hard. He concluded by saying that he was looking forward to 2018 when every member would be free to play their part in the Council's decision making process.

Mrs S Bütikofer, Leader of the Liberal Democrat group reiterated the previous comments and said that she hoped that all Members could work together to move the agenda forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET – 05 DECEMBER 2017

a) AGENDA ITEM 09: LEISURE CONTRACT PROCUREMENT AND SHERINGHAM LEISURE FACILITY

The Portfolio Holder for Assets, Mrs J Oliver, introduced this item. She briefly outlined the proposals for the replacement of the Splash Leisure Centre in Sheringham and the procurement of a new Leisure Services Management Contract. She proposed the recommendations.

Mr D Smith, Local Member for Sheringham North, said that fully supported the proposals and that Members appreciated the hard work that had gone into this project. He seconded the proposal.

Mr B Hannah, Local Member for Sheringham North, said that he was delighted to see this project coming forward, particularly as it would support the health and wellbeing of local residents. However, he felt that Option 2 was the preferred option and said that he wished to propose that recommendation was amended to reflect this. Mr S Hester seconded the proposal.

The Head of Finance and Assets advised members that Option one had an estimated cost of £10.667m and Option 2 was estimated at £11.448m – and additional £781,000 of capital costs. The annual revenue cost of Option 2 was £154,000 – an additional £40,000 pa.

Mr T FitzPatrick said that he was fully supportive of health and fitness but it was important to clarify where the additional funding for Option 2 would come from. Mr Hannah replied that the Council was just considering the viability of the proposals at the moment and he felt that it could aim higher.

The Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Ms K Ward, said that the Committee had recommended that all options were kept open, with the exception of Option 3 which was not supported.

Mr J Lee commented that Recommendation 3 allowed for the financing to be adjusted to maximise value, essentially giving additional flexibility already.

The Head of Paid Service (SB) advised Members that if Option 2 was supported instead of Option 1 then the capital budget would need to be increased to £11.448m.

Ms M Prior pointed out that the procurement process was already underway.

Mrs J Oliver said that Mr Hannah's proposal effectively replaced Option 1 with Option 2 thus removing Option 1 from the process and this did not reflect the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Mr Hannah replied that his main concern was to keep all options open.

Mr T FitzPatrick said that the financial implications of choosing Option 2 were substantial and consideration should be given as to how they would be funded.

Mrs J Oliver proposed the following additional amendment to reflect Mr Hannah's concerns:

This Council will continue to ensure Option 1 delivers best value to the taxpayer and the community.

Ms M Prior seconded the amendment. Mr Hannah agreed to withdraw his proposal following the inclusion of 'community' in the amendment.

RESOLVED

- a) **To approve the necessary capital budget to support the delivery of a replacement leisure facility (Option 1) at an estimated cost of £10.667m as detailed in this report, subject to the necessary external funding being in place.**
- b) **That the provisional financing be agreed as follows;**
 - Part land disposal £0.750m**
 - Sport England grant £1.00m**
 - Capital receipts/reserves £4.00m**
 - Borrowing £4.917m**
- c) **That delegated authority is given to the Head of Finance and Assets to adjust the financing outlined above if required to maximise the value for the tax payer.**
- d) **This Council will continue to ensure Option 1 delivers best value to the taxpayer and the community.**

b) AGENDA ITEM 10: NORTH NORFOLK COMMUNITY SPORTS HUB

The recommendations were introduced by Mrs J Oliver, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Assets. She outlined the opportunity of developing a Community Sports Hub at the Cromer Dual Use Sport Centre via the provision of an indoor tennis facility and new gym and fitness centre, along with different management arrangements, in partnership with both Cromer Academy and Cromer Tennis Club.

Mr E Seward commented that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee had recognised the benefits of the proposals but had highlighted the necessity of rolling the project out across the District to ensure that everyone could benefit. He said that he would like to propose an additional recommendation:

'In developing the project proposal, priority is given to a comprehensive development plan for the wider use of tennis facilities across the District'

Mrs Oliver said that she was supportive of the amendment and was happy to second it.

Mr T FitzPatrick thanked Mr Seward for raising the issue and said that health and fitness was a priority for the whole of the District.

RESOLVED

- 1) **To approve of the necessary capital budget for the project, subject to the external funding being made available, as described in the report:**
 - a) **The approval of the necessary capital budget to support the delivery of a Community Sports Hub at an estimated cost of £2.681m, and additional tennis facility improvements at an estimated cost of £250k, as detailed in this report, subject to the necessary external funding being in place.**
 - b) **That the provisional financing be agreed as follows;**
 - Lawn Tennis Association Grant £733k**

(25% of tennis related cost)

Capital receipts/reserves £1.465m

Lawn Tennis Association Interest free loan £733k

(25% of tennis related cost, to be funded from capital receipts)

- c) That delegated authority is given to the Head of Finance and Assets to adjust the financing outlined above if required to maximise the value for the tax payer.**
- d) In developing the project proposal, priority is given to a comprehensive development plan for the wider use of tennis facilities across the District**

Ms B Palmer abstained.

c) AGENDA ITEM 11: SUTTON MILL LOAN PROPOSALS

Mr N Dixon, Portfolio Holder for Business and Economic Development, introduced this item. He explained that the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) mills section wanted to acquire and refurbish the “At Risk” Grade 2* Listed Sutton Mill and establish a national millwrighting centre at the mill to ensure the traditional skills of millwrighting and milling are preserved for future generations. A community interest company (CIC) had been set up to take this project forward.

Total project costs, excluding site purchase, but including refurbishment, training costs and staff amount to £2.5m. SPAB had pledged £100k towards the site purchase and £400k towards the repair of the mill.

A private investor, a director of the CIC, had pledged £100k. The CIC was currently investigating funding sources including the Architectural Heritage Fund and Heritage Lottery.

The CIC had also approached the District Council to seek funding in the form of a loan for £350k to be repaid over a period of 8 years (or sooner if funds permit) Approval was sought to provide loan finance of £350,000 to the National Millwrighting Centre CIC to acquire and refurbish Sutton Mill. Any loan would have to be provided on a commercial basis to comply with State Aid.

The Chairman invited Members to speak:

Ms V Gay said that she wished to propose deferral of this decision so that due diligence could be fully explored. Mr Dixon replied that this was already covered in the second recommendation.

Mr T FitzPatrick said that he was very disappointed in Ms Gay’s proposal. The mill was already in a neglected and abandoned state and it would deteriorate further if work was delayed.

Mrs J Oliver referred to section 5 of the report ‘Financial Implications and Risks’ which she said had been addressed thoroughly. She added that if Members felt that further due diligence was required then that could be looked at but it should not be a reason to delay the project.

Mr P W Moore suggested that any due diligence requirements could be reported back to future Council meetings.

Mr S Hester said that the project should not be delayed and that work should begin as soon as possible.

Mrs P Grove-Jones, Local Member for Stalham and Sutton, said that it was a wonderful project and although she could understand Ms Gay’s reservations, it should be acknowledged

that the mill had already suffered considerable damage and the opportunity to bring other services to the area was too good to miss.

Mr V FitzPatrick said that it was a 'win-win' project and he fully supported it.

The Head of Finance & Assets explained that there were tight timescales in place and that the loan was contingent on various aspects. He said that the site needed to be purchased before the owner could apply for further funding and loans. He added that the requirement for collateral in the form of a legal charge against the mill would be at least 110% of the value of the Council's loan.

It was proposed by Mr N Dixon, seconded by Mr J Lee and

RESOLVED

- 1) That the Council provides loan funding as detailed in this report to the National Millwrighting Centre CIC to facilitate the acquisition and improvement of Sutton Mill to be finance from capital receipts**
- 2) that, following the due diligence process, delegated authority is given to the Corporate Director and Head of Paid Service (Steve Blatch), in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, to agree the final terms of any loan**

d) AGENDA ITEM 13: FEES & CHARGES 2018/19

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Mr W Northam, introduced this item. He explained that the report recommended the fees and charges for 2018/19 that would come into effect from April 2018. The fees and charges as recommended would be used to inform the income budgets for the 2018/19 budget. Approval for the fees ahead of presenting the detailed budgets would allow for implementation of changes where applicable and also informed the 2018/19 budgets. It would also enable bills for chalet charges etc to be sent out in a timely manner. Consideration was also being given to installing individual meters to chalets so that the actual usage, rather than a set fee, could be charged.

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Ms K Ward said that the committee had requested a few amendments and these had been completed and shared ahead of the Council meeting.

The Chairman invited Members to speak:

Mrs A Fitch-Tillett asked whether consideration could be given to providing local residents with a discount on beach hut rental rates.

The Monitoring Officer suggested that this issue could be referred to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for consideration. Mrs Fitch-Tillett supported this approach, Mr S Hester seconded the proposal and when put to the vote it was carried.

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

RESOLVED

- a) The fees and charges from 1 April 2018 as included in Appendix A.**
- b) That Delegated Authority be given to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and relevant Heads of Service, to agree those fees and charges not included within Appendix A as required as outlined within the report**

60. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13 DECEMBER 2017

Ms K Ward, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, informed Members that the Committee had undertaken pre-scrutiny of the Asset Management Plan and supporting documents and had recommended some changes. She thanked the officers for their hard work in preparing the documents.

61. DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS 2018/19

Mr W Northam, Portfolio Holder for Finance, introduced this item. He explained that report set out alternative options for the level of council tax discounts which Council could resolve to apply to second homes for the financial year 2018/19. The determinations were made by the Council under sections 11A and 11B, and of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, subsequent enabling powers and Regulations made under the Act.

The legislation provided local authorities with the power to make changes to the level of council tax discount in relation to second homes. The Council had to approve its determinations for each financial year. The calculation of the tax base for 2018/19 would be made on the assumption that the determinations recommended would apply.

Mr Northam explained that this review of discounts afforded to second homes gave Members an opportunity to address residents' concerns over the high number of second homes in North Norfolk and enabled a council tax charge for a second home to be made which was more closely aligned to that of a sole or main residence.

Mr T FitzPatrick seconded the proposal and reserved his right to speak at the end of the debate.

The Chairman invited Members to speak:

Mr D Young urged those Members who were also County Councillors to continue to push for the return of second homes money to NNDC.

Mr T FitzPatrick said that he had always worked hard to retain the second homes money for the District and he had been pleased to see cross-party support at County Council level. He added that the problems had been exacerbated by the parish and town council campaign to deprive NNDC of this income. He concluded by saying that he had recently met with representatives from the County Council to discuss the issue further and he was also planning to meet with representatives from Kings Lynn and West Norfolk BC who faced the same problem. Mr Northam thanked Mr FitzPatrick for all of the work he had done so far to retain this income for the District.

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

RESOLVED that

- (a) the council tax discount for dwellings defined as being within Class 'A' be reduced to 10% for the year 2018/19;**
- (b) the council tax discount for dwellings defined as being within Class 'B' reduced to nil for the year 2018/19.**

62. DETERMINATION OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2018/19 AND THE TREATMENT OF SPECIAL EXPENSES

Mr W Northam, Portfolio Holder for Finance, introduced this item. He explained that the purpose of the report was to determine the Council's tax base for 2018/19 and the 2018/19 tax base for each parish in accordance with legal requirements.

It was proposed by Mr W Northam, seconded by Mr R Price and

RESOLVED

a) That the calculations set out in the report are used to produce the Council's tax base be approved, and the tax base for 2018/19 be determined as 39,844;

b) That the tax base for each parish area for the financial year 2018/19 is as set out at paragraph 2.1 of the report

63. DRAFT PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS

The Portfolio Holder for Democratic Services, Mrs J Oliver, introduced this item. She thanked the Member Support Administrator for her hard work in preparing the schedule of meetings.

It was proposed by Mrs J Oliver, seconded by Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds and

RESOLVED

To adopt the Programme of Meetings for 2018-19.

64. TO RECEIVE THE APPROVED MINUTES OF THE UNDERMENTIONED COMMITTEES

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

- 1) Cabinet – 30 October
- 2) Development Committee – 31 August, 28 September 2017
- 3) Governance, Risk & Audit Committee – 05 September 2017
- 4) Licensing & Appeals Committee – 11 September 2017
- 5) Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 12 July, 13 September, 11 October 2017

65. 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 draw Members' attention to the excellent performance figures for the planning department. She said that she was delighted to report that the judicial review regarding a decision relating to a planning application in Blakeney had found in the Council's favour.
- ii. Mr T FitzPatrick informed Members that the Council had had a number of successful recruitment campaigns which had led to a full headcount in Revenues and Benefits and also filling some posts in Planning. The Council currently had 8 apprentices and was looking to recruit a further 7 apprenticeship posts next year. A number of apprentices had gone on to secure permanent posts. He added that the Council's Wellbeing Strategy would be extended to members. He concluded by referring to the high level of attendance by members of the public at the recent Cabinet meeting and said that this was to be welcomed.
- iii. Ms B Palmer advised Members that a visit to the Council offices by Woodfield School, Sheringham (not Woodside as stated in the report) was planned for 24th January.

The Chairman invited Members to ask questions:

Mr J Rest referred to Ms B Palmer's report regarding customer services (circulated prior to the meeting). He queried the following statement: 'cashiers have shown a marked increase in income with transactions reducing'. Ms Palmer replied that she would look into it and provide a written response as soon as possible.

Mr B Hannah said that he wished to commend the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement on the excellent work that she was doing with local schools.

66. QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS

None received

67. NOTICE OF MOTION

The following motion had been proposed by Mrs S Bütikofer and seconded by Mr E Seward:

'This Council should give consideration in its budget preparations for 2018/19 to provide funding of up to two hundred thousand pounds for dedicated beat police constables for North Norfolk'

The Chairman invited Mrs Bütikofer to introduce the motion.

Mrs Bütikofer began by saying that Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) provided a great service to the county and everyone welcomed the additional funding recently outlined by central government. However, this was still not sufficient and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Chief Constable had requested more funding. The PCC had launched a consultation to ascertain whether residents were willing to pay more council tax to help fund policing and the Chief Constable had recently announced plans to change the way policing was delivered in the county. The latter proposal would see a reduction in the number of PCSOs and the closure of 7 public enquiry offices and 7 police stations.

Mrs Bütikofer said that parish and town councils and community groups had expressed alarm at the proposals and she reminded Members that 49% of all events attended by the police related to public safety, this together with an ageing demographic meant that residents wanted more police 'on the beat'. She concluded by saying that as a member of the Police & Crime Panel for the County Council, she knew that the Police had a very low level of reserves whereas NNDC had large reserves to draw on.

Mr E Seward said that he seconded the proposal but reserved his right to speak at the end of the debate.

The Chairman invited Members to speak:

Mr J Lee said that it was not in the Council's remit to fund the police and that residents already paid through the police precept. He said that the Council could not afford to undertake such a commitment and he asked which services would be cut to pay for it. He concluded by asking where the line was drawn and whether the Council would be expected to fund additional nurses and firefighters in the future.

Mr T FitzPatrick said that he was not unsympathetic to the request for more police but that the outcome of the 2020 consultation should be respected. He drew Members' attention to new legislative requirements that would require funding in the future such as the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and questioned where the additional beat officers would go. Mr FitzPatrick went on to say that the PCC consultation regarding an increase to police funding via the council tax precept was ongoing and it therefore seemed odd that another precepting authority

would put forward these proposals at the same time. For these reasons he said that he could not support the motion.

Mrs J Oliver asked Mrs Bütikofer to clarify which body had responsibility for keeping people safe. Mrs Bütikofer replied that she felt it was a moral duty that was not enshrined in law. Mrs Oliver said that there were a huge number of statutory and discretionary services that the Council funded already and they should not start funding other services that were not in their remit.

Mr V FitzPatrick said it looked as though the Council was telling the Police what to do and that NNDC would not like it if it was the other way around.

Mr R Price said he sympathised but that the Police had the power to raise their precept by £12 per household and that it was too early to be discussing this issue. He urged the withdrawal of the motion and suggested that it could come to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at a later date for discussion.

Mr J Rest commented that the timing of the proposals caused a dilemma for Members and he asked Mrs Bütikofer to reconsider.

Mrs Bütikofer said that she hadn't asked Members to commit at this stage just to consider the issue as part of the budget process. She said that she had spoken to the Police Constable about the proposals and he had welcomed them. She added that the funding would provide 5 beat officers across 5 market towns in the District.

Mr E Seward said that sympathy from Members was not enough and the time had come to try and address the problem and find a solution. He referred to his own ward of North Walsham and said that there were proposals to reduce the 9 current PCSOs to just 1. Safety concerns were paramount and only beat constables could address this. Addressing the concerns that the motion was premature, Mr Seward said that he welcomed the recent Government announcement but that all that was being asked was that consideration was given to the proposals as part of the budget process. By February the outcome of the PCC consultation would be known as well as the Council's own financial situation. He acknowledged that it was a new service for NNDC to fund but said that legally there was no reason why it couldn't be done. Finally, in response to the queries regarding how it would be funded, he said that the reserves would be used.

It was proposed by Mrs S Bütikofer, seconded by Mr E Seward and

RESOLVED that

This Council should give consideration in its budget preparations for 2018/19 to provide funding of up to two hundred thousand pounds for dedicated beat police constables for North Norfolk

There was one abstention.

68. PRIVATE BUSINESS

None

The meeting concluded at 9.22pm

Chairman