

# COUNCIL

**Minutes of a meeting of North Norfolk District Council held on 25 June 2019 at the Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer at 6.00 pm.**

**Members Present:**

Mr T Adams	Ms W Fredericks	Mrs G Perry-Warnes
Mr D Baker	Ms V R Gay	Mr J Punchard
Mrs P Bevan Jones	Mrs P Grove-Jones	Mr J Rest
Mr D Birch	Mr G Hayman	Mr E Seward
Mr H Blathwayt	Mr C Heinink	Ms L Shires
Mr A Brown	Mr P Heinrich	Ms E Spagnola
Dr P Butikofer	Mr N Housden	Mrs J Stenton
Mrs S Butikofer	Mr R Kershaw	Dr C Stockton
Mr C Cushing	Mr N Lloyd	Mr J Toye
Mr N Dixon	Mr G Mancini-Boyle	Mr A Varley
Mr P Fisher	Mrs M Millership	Ms K Ward
Mrs A Fitch-Tillett	Mr N Pearce	Mr A Yiasimi
Mr T FitzPatrick	Mr S Penfold	

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

**Press:** Not present

## 20. PRAYERS

The Chairman invited Reverend Janet Frymann, Roughton Benefice, to lead prayers.

## 21. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman spoke about recent events that he had attended. He began by talking about the excellent production of Dirty Rotten Scoundrels at the Pier theatre, Cromer on 25<sup>th</sup> May. Then, on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, he attended the re-opening of the Horse & Groom pub, Tunstead, as a 'pub hub'. The Chairman said he had been very moved by the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D Day organised by Great Yarmouth Borough Council on 6<sup>th</sup> June. On 9<sup>th</sup> June he had attended the civic service for the new mayoralty, hosted by Norwich City Council.

The Chairman then spoke about the launch of the Stars of Norfolk and Waveney awards and encouraged members to put forward nominations for this excellent event. He concluded by saying that he had been pleased to attend the West Norfolk NSPCC AGM on 19<sup>th</sup> June and the Annual civic service for North Walsham Town Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

The Chairman said that he was delighted to be able to announce his chosen charities for his year in office. He had selected two projects for the Norfolk Wildlife Trust – 'Children and Nature' and 'Conservation Grazing'. Leaflets and slides on both projects would be circulated to all members.

**22. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS**

Cllr J Toye declared an interest in Agenda Item 12 'Questions from members' due to a question being raised relating to an issue in his ward.

**23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs V FitzPatrick and B Hannah

**24. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 24<sup>th</sup> April and 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**25. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None

**26. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS**

None received

**27. PORTFOLIO REPORTS**

The Chairman invited each Portfolio Holder to provide an update on their portfolio areas:

1. Cllr A Brown said that his portfolio (special projects) was still developing and that was why there was no written report included in the agenda. He said that he would be working across several portfolios covering key projects relating to leisure, local homes and transport. He would be providing a full update to the next meeting of Council.
2. Cllr S Bütikofer, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Corporate Services began by thanking the Democratic Services team for delivering the Member Induction Programme. She said that she looked forward to the ongoing training. She also thanked the IT team for their help in rolling out new equipment to Members, saying that she had received very good feedback on this.

She then spoke about key projects and developments within her portfolio: Universal Credit had now been rolled out to all Job Centre Plus offices in the North Norfolk area. This meant that NNDC could no longer accept housing benefit claims from working age residents unless they occupied temporary or supported accommodation or were entitled to a Severe Disability premium.

The Leader said that she was pleased to report that the Council's gender pay gap had reduced from 14.6% last year to 11.1% and that it was moving in the right direction. She thanked the media team for their work in supporting the Antiques Roadshow which had been hugely successful, adding that regarding project support going forward there would be more focus on strengthening the Council's social media presence in future.

She concluded by saying that the recent IT outage was not acceptable that a full report on the incident would be coming to the next meeting of Council.

The Chairman invited Members to ask questions:

- a) Cllr C Cushing asked whether there were service level agreements (SLAs) in place for the Council's IT provision, specifically restoring servers. The Leader replied that

she had spoken to the IT team and raised a lot of questions around the service provision and this would be covered in the report to Council.

- b) Cllr T FitzPatrick said that he was concerned about the length of time that it took to notify members of the IT outage. He said that in future a group text message would be quicker and easier rather than telephoning members individually. The Leader said that this was a good idea and would be included in the findings.
3. Cllr A Fitch-Tillett, Portfolio Holder for Coast began by saying that her written report was brief due to coastal staff being very busy. She said that she had been pleased to see local members attending the Bacton sandscaping scheme meeting recently and she had been delighted with the £25,000 donation from the contractor, Van Oord for local parishes to bid for projects. Cllr Fitch-Tillett then spoke about Coastal Partnership East. She said that she was delighted to have been appointed as Chair for the forthcoming year and then outlined the background to the establishment of the partnership and highlighted key points from the current work programme. Cllr Fitch-Tillett concluded by reminding members about the Coastal Forum field trip which was taking place on 15 July.
4. Cllr V Gay, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Wellbeing began by saying it was a privilege and pleasure to hold the position. Both culture and wellbeing were discretionary services but the Council had always distinguished itself in its provision. She said that had met with a lot of interesting and inspiring people
5. Cllr G Hayman, Portfolio Holder for Commercialisation and Assets, apologised that his written report had not been included in the agenda. He said that the Council's previous approach had been to focus on the custody of its assets rather than commercialisation. This would be focussed on over the next few months. He then outlined key projects where progress had been made.

The Chairman invited Members to ask questions:

- a) Cllr D Baker referred to the decision to take the Wetherspoon's development in North Walsham 'off the table'. He said that at the Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019, the Portfolio Holder had informed Members that contracts were ready to be exchanged. He asked whether the references in the local press to Wetherspoon's being ready to exchange were true and if the Council pulled out knowing this. Cllr Hayman replied that Cabinet had not 'pulled the plug' but asked for a review of the proposals. He said that it had been ongoing for 5 years now and the new administration had inherited it. It was important that the Council assessed whether it would deliver good value for money so a temporary halt had been called to allow time to investigate how to proceed. Cllr Baker replied that he was pleased to hear this and said that it should be a priority to get the project over the line.
- b) Cllr P Heinrich said that North Walsham members had recently had a tour of the 'Wetherspoon's' site and there was considerable commercial potential for the site and the Council could achieve greater value by exploring all opportunities – including housing. Cllr Hayman agreed, saying that the wider site had huge potential. He added that the Administration had great plans for North Walsham to help it become a destination and to support the town centre.
6. Cllr R Kershaw, Portfolio Holder for Careers and Economic Development, updated Members on his portfolio areas. He said that in addition to his written report, he wanted to inform members that he had received excellent briefings from the Heads of Paid Service and had visited two sites – Alfred Bartlett potatoes and Kelling Estate.

7. Cllr N Lloyd, Portfolio Holder for Environment, said that work was underway to bring a community fridge to North Walsham and it was hoped it would be in place by the end of the summer. He informed Members that he had recently attended the Norfolk Waste Partnership and was pleased to confirm that only 10% of the District's recycling went out of the UK and all of that was cardboard. He concluded by saying that following the decision to declare a climate emergency, there would be an Environment Forum on 25<sup>th</sup> July to engage with the views of experts and residents.
  - a) Cllr T Adams thanked staff for the response to the palm oil deposits on local beaches. He asked what could be done to prevent this happening in the future? Cllr Lloyd replied that the Council had a statutory duty to clear up the beaches. He said he was happy to contact key organisations to see if there were any preventative measures that could be taken. Cllr Fitch-Tillett added that she had requested that the issue was considered at the Local Government Special Interest Group (SIG) Coastal meeting.
8. Cllr E Seward, Portfolio Holder for Finance updated members on his portfolio. He said that it was hard to plan ahead in the current financial climate – with a number of government reviews underway. It was hoped that these would be delayed for at least a year as they were likely to have a negative impact on the Council.
9. Cllr K Ward, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Planning referred members to her written report which provided a substantial amount of information. She said that in addition to this there had been a very productive meeting a couple of months ago with a representative from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for the East England. There was a new representative in place now and a meeting was arranged soon to review the Council's Homelessness Strategy. A meeting was also arranged with James Skinner from the Economic Forum to discuss funding streams for environmentally sustainable housing. Cllr Ward concluded by saying that recruitment to the Planning team was going well. She thanked Sarah Tudhope who was leaving the Council after 18 years and congratulated her on her new role at the Planning Inspectorate.

## **28. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET 3<sup>RD</sup> JUNE 2019**

- a) **OUTTURN REPORT 2018/19**
- b) **TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19**

Cllr E Seward, Portfolio Holder for Finance, proposed the recommendations, saying that they had been supported by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Cllr D Baker referred to the large surplus and said that it effectively plugged two thirds of the deficit. He asked whether Cllr Seward would admit that the Council's finances were not as bad as first thought and whether consideration would be given to giving a rebate to council tax payers. Cllr Seward replied that nothing was certain. For the Council's finances to be sustainable, regular income was needed. He referred again to the delay to the financial review and said that calmer waters were needed before he could be confident of financial certainty.

It was proposed by Cllr E Seward, seconded by Cllr N Lloyd and

**RESOLVED to approve**

### **1. OUTURN REPORT 2018/19:**

- a) The provisional outturn position for the General Fund revenue account for

2018/19;

- b) The transfers to and from reserves as detailed within the report (and appendix C) along with the corresponding updates to the 2019/20 budget;
- c) Transfer the surplus of £969,666 to the General Fund Reserve (£500,000) and the Asset Management Reserve (£469,666);
- d) The financing of the 2018/19 capital programme as detailed within the report and at Appendix D;
- e) The balance on the General Reserve of £1.956 million;
- f) The updated capital programme for 2019/20 to 2022/23 and scheme financing as outlined within the report and detailed at Appendix E;
- g) The outturn position in respect of the Prudential Indicators for 2018/19 as detailed in Appendix F.

## **2. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19**

The Treasury Management Annual Report and Prudential Indicators for 2018/19.

### **29. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE GOVERNANCE, RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE 11 JUNE 2019**

It was proposed by Cllr J Rest, seconded by Cllr A Fitch-Tillett and

#### **RESOLVED**

To note the Governance, Risk & Audit Committee Annual Report 2018/19.

### **30. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

- a) Cllr J Rest referred to the Council meeting held on 24 April 2019 when he had asked a question relating to the Egmore Business Zone. He queried when he was likely to receive a response. He requested that a brief background report was provided to new members so that they understood the issues that he was referring to. The Leader, Cllr S Bütikofer, replied that the issue was ongoing and that the scheme had not been stopped. She said that work was underway to see if anyone had been misled during the process. She agreed that a written chronological report would be provided to all members.
- b) Cllr N Housden referred to a report in the local press on 14<sup>th</sup> June regarding a 99 year lease for Itteringham shop. He queried whether the Council would retain responsibility for ongoing maintenance. Cllr K Ward replied that the purchase of the property had taken place in 2016 and the community shop was attached to the house. The press release that Cllr Housden referred to had come from the community shop not the Council and the lease had been signed in April 2019. She said that copies of the lease and the business case could be shared with all members. The project would be monitored as part of the Council's asset commercialisation programme and members would be kept informed. Cllr Housden asked whether the lease was for the house and the shop. Cllr Ward confirmed that the Council owned the freehold of the house and leased out the shop.

### **31. OPPOSITION BUSINESS**

None received.

### **32. NOTICE OF MOTION**

None received.

**33. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

None

**34. PRIVATE BUSINESS**

None

The meeting concluded at 6.48 pm

---

Chairman