

## COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 24 July 2019 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer, NR27 9EN at 6.00 pm**

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

**Also in attendance:**

### **1 PRAYER**

The Chairman invited Reverend Catherine Dobson of the Coastal benefice to lead prayers.

### **2 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chairman began by expressing his sadness at the death of former councillor, Mr Michael Baker. He conveyed his condolences to Mr Baker's family, particularly Cllr Duncan Baker, the elected member for Holt. He then invited the Leader to speak.

The Leader, Cllr S Bütikofer, offered her condolences to Cllr Baker and his family. She said that Michael Baker was well respected and well liked and a consummate gentleman whenever she had met him on the campaign trail.

The Chairman thanked the Leader for her comments and then went on to speak about recent events that he had attended:

- Gala night at Cromer Pier on 29<sup>th</sup> June
- Norfolk Wildlife Trust at Hickling Wildlife Centre, 3<sup>rd</sup> July
- Garden reception for the Lord Lieutenant, Sir Richard Jewson, Gressenhall Museum of Rural Life, 4<sup>th</sup> July
- Lord Mayor's celebration, Norwich, 6<sup>th</sup> July
- Centre 81 Classic car event, 7<sup>th</sup> July
- High Sheriff of Norfolk and Lord Agnew reception at the Hippodrome, Great

Yarmouth, 14<sup>th</sup> July

- The Felbeck Trust at Spurrell's Wood, 14<sup>th</sup> July
- Launch of the Deep History coast at the Mo, Sheringham, 16<sup>th</sup> July
- Civic Reception at Kings Lynn Town Hall, 19<sup>th</sup> July
- Annual Civic service at St Mary's, Great Yarmouth, 21<sup>st</sup> July
- Queen's Award for voluntary service at Langham Dome, 22<sup>nd</sup> July

### **3 LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Leader began by saying that her administration had been working tirelessly since winning the election two months ago, focussing on delivering their manifesto promises for the people of North Norfolk. She referred to inheriting several unfinished projects from the previous administration and a looming £2m deficit, which was exacerbated by the overspend on the leisure facility at Sheringham. She expressed her frustration at the tennis hub project in Cromer which benefitted only a small number of residents and said that it was likely that a decision to terminate this would be taken at the Cabinet meeting in September.

The Leader then outlined two other projects that were being reviewed – the business zone at Egmere and the sale of the town council building in North Walsham. At Egmere, the principal tenant was no longer moving to the site and it was likely that the Council would now withdraw. In North Walsham, the situation had been ongoing for 5 years and the site was being sold for less than its market value. All options were being considered.

The Leader then spoke about the capability review of the organisation that she had commissioned when she took office. It had shown that the Council's leadership needed strengthening and that project management skills needed to be developed. Both areas deserved investment and this would be made.

She concluded by informing members that she was making two changes to Cabinet portfolios. Cllr Karen Ward would now lead on special projects and Cllr Andrew Brown would lead on Planning and Housing.

### **4 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS**

None received.

### **5 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Cllrs D Baker, V FitzPatrick, B Hannah and E Spagnola.

### **6 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2019 were approved subject to the following amendment: Cllr A Brown was in attendance.

Cllr J Rest queried when he was likely to receive a response to a question he had asked at the last meeting. The Chairman advised him that the minutes were for approval only.

## **7 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

## **8 PUBLIC QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS**

The Chairman invited Liz Withington, Deputy Mayor of Sheringham to speak. She said that she wished to speak about Agenda item 12 – Sheringham Leisure Centre Redevelopment. Ms Withington began by saying that she had been frustrated to hear about the decision coming forward via Facebook. This had meant that there had not been time to discuss it at a town council meeting.

She said that the redevelopment of the facility was essential for the health and wellbeing of residents and that it was also an important tourist attraction. She said that if there was any opportunity to reinstate the wave machine and flume then this should be considered as they increased the popularity of the facility – particularly with young people.

## **9 PORTFOLIO REPORTS**

1. Cllr A Brown said that there was no written update for his portfolio area of special projects. He had spent a lot of his time overseeing issues that had been inherited from the previous administration.
2. The Leader, Cllr S Bütikofer, said that the written reports covered the main issues. She highlighted the success of the Council's apprentices and said that she was delighted to hear that they had received an award at the recent apprenticeship challenge. She then spoke about the changes to the Council's car loan policy to ensure that it was more environmentally friendly.  
The Leader said that she welcomed the enhancement of customer service delivery in the Benefits team, with claimants now receiving end to end contact with one adviser throughout their engagement with the Council.  
She concluded by reminding Members that the Council was holding an Environment Forum on 15<sup>th</sup> August at the Atrium in North Walsham. Everyone was welcome to attend and feed in their views.
3. Cllr A Fitch-Tillett, Portfolio Holder for Coast, thanked members for attending the recent Coastal Forum annual field trip – which on this occasion had been to look at the sandscaping scheme at Bacton. A brief video on the scheme was then shown and Cllr Fitch-Tillett explained that the sand was almost halfway to the terminal now, with a completion date of end of August. She went on to say that Natural England's summer field trip to Bacton and Sidestrand had gone very well. Finally, she said that on 23<sup>rd</sup> July at the Coastal flooding and adaptation to climate change inquiry (Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee), evidence had been given by Malcolm Kerby, Coastal Concern Action Group, Happisburgh, Karen Thomas, Head of Coastal Management, Coastal Partnership East and Bill Parker, former Head of Coastal Management, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils.
4. Cllr V Gay, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Wellbeing informed Members that the number of applications for the Arts and Culture Fund was currently low. This could be due to the Norfolk Arts Forum not including it in their latest bulletin. She explained that the funding was aimed at community projects and not individual artists. Cllr Gay concluded by referring members to the section in her report on social prescribing. She said that the concept was becoming increasingly important, with total referrals to date at 662. New funding had been established for Social Prescribing Link Workers

administered by Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and the PCN intended to work with NNDC in relation to the Council's key role in the delivery of this service.

5. Cllr G Hayman outlined key projects within his portfolio. He said that improvement works to the Lusher's Passage toilets in Sheringham had been completed with the work programme for remaining improvements being pulled together and advertised shortly. Other projects were being assessed to ensure they were the best use of the Council's assets. A complete register of all the Council's assets was being compiled and any scheduled disposals and leases were being reviewed.
6. Cllr N Lloyd, Portfolio Holder for Environment, spoke about the installation of signs for Public Space Protection Orders for dog control outside of beaches and promenades. There had been some negative responses, particularly in relation to play parks. Cllr Lloyd then reminded members that if they were aware of any empty properties in their wards they should notify the Combined Enforcement Team. He concluded by saying that he had attended an Extinction Rebellion event in Aylsham which had been very well attended.

Cllr T Adams referred to the campaign by the Friends of Horsey seals to highlight the problems caused by hollow/ring frisbees to seals and asked whether public protection orders could be put in place to restrict their use on beaches. Cllr Lloyd replied that it was a fine balance between protecting wildlife and encouraging tourism. He said he would look into it and respond fully in writing.

7. Cllr R Kershaw, Portfolio Holder for Economic and Career Development began by thanking the Economic Growth team and the Heads of Paid Service for facilitating several meetings with businesses across the District. He said there was an appetite to work with the Council and support local communities. Cllr Kershaw had recently attended a meeting regarding the Bure Valley water abstraction issue and as a result of that then attended the Water Resources East Conference. It was hoped that this would support ongoing work to maintain water supplies at a safe level. He then informed members that the Council had given permission to Swift Air to use the runway at Coltishall for test runs. This would support STEM students and apprentices and was a welcome move.
8. Cllr E Seward, Portfolio Holder for Finance reminded Members that there would be budget training over the next few weeks and he encouraged them to attend.
9. Cllr K Ward, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, referred to the written updates which were very comprehensive. She said that she welcomed the move to bring the housing teams together. She thanked the Housing Options Manager for her support in providing information to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government for another audit (the third in 12 months) following a change in personnel. Cllr Ward then drew members' attention to homelessness numbers which were creeping up. On a positive note, the Council's launch of the 'Your Choice, your Home' had been well attended by registered housing providers and they had provided positive feedback and indicated that they wished to continue working with NNDC. She concluded by saying that herself, Cllr Cushing and Cllr T FitzPatrick had all attended the breaking ground ceremony for the Fakenham Extra Care scheme.

## **10 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET 08 JULY 2019**

### **Debt Recovery 2018/19**

Cllr E Seward, Portfolio Holder for Finance, introduced the report. He said that it had been to Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee and he proposed that the recommendations were approved.

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

### **RESOLVED**

- 1) To approve the annual report giving details of the Council's write-offs in accordance with the Council's Debt Write-Off Policy and performance in relation to revenues collection.
- 2) To approve the updated Debt Write Off Policy
- 3) To approve the updated Benefit Overpayment Policy and the use of High Court Enforcement Agents if considered necessary

## **11 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 17 JULY 2019**

### **Overview & Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2018/19**

Cllr N Dixon, Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee, introduced this item. He explained that it covered the work of the committee during the previous year. He thanked the Scrutiny Officer for his support and for collating the report. He highlighted the increased use of task and finish groups and said that they increased the capacity of the committee and encouraged member engagement.

It was proposed by Cllr N Dixon, seconded by Cllr P Bevan Jones and

### **RESOLVED**

To receive the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2018/19.

## **12 SHERINGHAM LEISURE CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT**

Cllr V Gay, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Wellbeing, introduced this item. She began by saying that she was apprehensive about supporting the proposals as the project was costing so much more than originally estimated. In response to the point raised earlier during public questions, she said that it was not practical to undertake a redesign at this stage. She also acknowledged the concerns regarding communications around the project. Cllr Gay said that despite her reservations, she did feel that the project should continue and that it was necessary to have a swimming pool in Sheringham. She concluded by referring Members to Recommendation 4 which outlined a new system of governance and suggested that Overview & Scrutiny Committee should be included in this.

The Leader, Cllr S Butikofer, said that she also had concerns about the rising cost of the project but said that it was important that Sheringham had a new wet facility. She added that she wished to propose two amendments to the recommendations:

1. Recommendation 2: That delegated authority is given to the Head of Finance and Assets, *in conjunction with the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Culture & Wellbeing* to adjust the detailed financing of the scheme if required to maximise the value for the taxpayer.
2. Recommendation 4: That the project be taken forward under a new system of governance, as a pilot of the Council's project management methodology, with officers leading on the delivery and implementation, providing frequent status updates to the portfolio holder and regular updates to Cabinet and *Overview and Scrutiny Committee*.

The amendments were seconded by Cllr K Ward.

The Chairman invited Members to debate the amendments:

1. Cllr Fitch-Tillett questioned how the project had gone so wrong. She said the Coastal Management team had managed several large projects and they always allowed 60% for 'optimism bias.'
2. Cllr J Rest said that he was very concerned about the rising cost of the project. He said that he had attended the project board meetings and at the last meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> April everyone had been advised that the project was 'progressing well'. He asked the Leader to request that a review was undertaken to establish why the escalation in costs was not addressed earlier. Cllr S Penfold said that he supported this.
3. Cllr G Perry-Warnes referred to the £750k needed to address ground conditions. She asked why the consultants had not picked up these issues when the site was assessed.
4. Cllr N Dixon proposed that for Recommendation 4, the words 'frequent' and 'regular' should be refined to be more specific and precise. This was seconded by Cllr Kershaw. Cllr Kershaw added that members should be aware that the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the project had already been changed.
5. Cllr J Punchard commented that when the consultants looked at swimming provision across the District, the site at Sheringham was identified as providing good value for money. He said that given the rise in costs, residents from across the District may feel hard done by.
6. Cllr T FitzPatrick said that he was concerned that the Project Board had been reassured that the project was progressing well. He said that he could not support spending an additional £2m.

The Chairman thanked members for their comments. He put Cllr Butikofer's amendments, seconded by Cllr Ward to the vote and they were supported.

He then asked Cllr Dixon to clarify his amendment. Cllr Dixon proposed that the word 'frequent' in recommendation 4 should be changed to 'monthly'. This was seconded by Cllr R Kershaw. The amendment was put to the vote and supported.

Cllr N Housden proposed that for Recommendation 2, '*adjust*' was changed to '*review*'. This was seconded by Cllr Punchard, put to the vote and supported.

Cllr E Seward proposed that the project should be referred to the Governance, Risk & Audit Committee (GRAC) so that a review could be undertaken regarding how and why the financial shortcomings had happened. This was seconded by Cllr V Gay, put to the vote and supported.

The Chairman then asked Members to move to the substantive debate. The Motion before them now included all of the amendments. Cllr N Housden said that any review of the project must be thorough. Cllr K Ward, in seconding the substantive motion, said that a full review would be undertaken and the outcome brought back to a future meeting of Full Council.

It was proposed by Cllr V Gay, seconded by Cllr K Ward and

### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That Council approves the additional borrowing requirement of £2.03m for the Splash leisure Centre project to increase the approved budget to £12.7m.**
- 2. That delegated authority is given to the Head of Finance and Assets in conjunction with the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Culture & Wellbeing to review the detailed financing of the scheme if required to maximise the value for the tax payer**
- 3. That, assuming 1) above is approved, Council approves the formal award of the construction contract to Bidder B who provided the most economically advantageous compliant tender.**
- 4. That the project be taken forward under a new system of governance, as a pilot of the Council's project Management methodology, with officers leading on the delivery and implementation, providing status updates to the portfolio holder and monthly updates to Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee.**
- 5. That the project should be referred to the Governance, Risk & Audit Committee (GRAC) so that a review could be undertaken regarding how and why the financial shortcomings had happened.**

### **13 QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS**

None received.

### **14 OPPOSITION BUSINESS**

None received.

### **15 NOTICE(S) OF MOTION**

The following Notice of Motion had been proposed by Cllr P Heinrich, seconded by Cllr V Gay:

'This Council believes as the first local authority in Norfolk to declare a climate emergency that the programme to combat climate change must include encouraging residents to make greater use of public transport. It is therefore regrettable that it is reported that Greater Anglia are to introduce parking charges at North Walsham and Hoveton & Wroxham railways stations at a rate of £3 per day from July 15th. This will not encourage greater use of the Bittern Line and is being done at a time when Greater Anglia will supposedly want to attract more passengers with the coming introduction of new and greater carriage capacity. It is also contrary to the Council's

wish to preserve, wherever practical, existing free car parking either at, or in the vicinity of, stations on the Bittern Line. The Council therefore agrees:

- 1) To write to Greater Anglia opposing the introduction of parking charges at North Walsham and Hoveton & Wroxham railway stations and asking them to rescind their decision to introduce such charges.
- 2) To ask the Local Member of Parliament to join the Council in opposing these charges.
- 3) To encourage relevant Town and Parish Councils, rail community groups and residents to express their opposition to these charges.'

The Chairman invited Cllr Heinrich to introduce the motion. He said that the new charges would add an extra £15 a week onto traveller's costs. He added that people would be discouraged from using the train at a time when more focus was being put on using greener forms of travel.

Cllr S Penfold (Worstead ward) said that he was supportive of the motion. He was concerned that the introduction of parking charges at North Walsham could result in increased parking problems at Worstead.

Cllr V Gay said that the Bittern Line Partnership had not been informed of the proposed changes but found out about them via a local newspaper. She seconded the motion.

It was proposed by Cllr P Heinrich, seconded by Cllr V Gay and

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1) To write to Greater Anglia opposing the introduction of parking charges at North Walsham and Hoveton & Wroxham railway stations and asking them to rescind their decision to introduce such charges.
- 2) To ask the Local Member of Parliament to join the Council in opposing these charges.
- 3) To encourage relevant Town and Parish Councils, rail community groups and residents to express their opposition to these charges.'

Six members voted against the motion.

#### **16 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

#### **17 PRIVATE BUSINESS**

The meeting ended at 7.24 pm.

---

Chairman