

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 6 July 2020 at the remotely via Zoom at 10.00 am

Committee

Members Present:

Mr A Brown
Mrs A Fitch-Tillett
Mr G Hayman
Mr N Lloyd

Mrs S Bütikofer (Chair)
Ms V Gay
Mr R Kershaw
Mr E Seward

Members also attending:

Mr C Cushing
Mr N Dixon
Mr J Rest

Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive, Democratic Services Manager, Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance and Asset Management/Section 151 Officer, Democratic Services and Governance Officer (Scrutiny), Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager, Head of Planning and Head of Environmental Health

1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18th May were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

None.

3 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

5 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The Chairman reminded Members that they could ask questions during the meeting as issues arose.

6 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MATTERS

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee informed Members that there was nothing to report.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET WORKING PARTIES

The Chairman invited Cllr R Kershaw, Portfolio Holder for Economic & Career Development and Chairman to introduce the first recommendation. He explained that the Working Party was moving to a new phase of overseeing the implementation of the scheme now and the terms of reference had been revised to reflect this.

NORTH WALSHAM HIGH STREET ACTION ZONE WORKING PARTY – 3RD JUNE 2020

Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

To approve the revised Terms of Reference for the North Walsham High Street Action Zone Working Party

The Chairman then invited Cllr A Brown, Portfolio Holder for Planning to introduce the subsequent recommendations. He explained that the Planning Policy and Built Heritage Working Party had made a series of recommendations during May and June and he commended them to Cabinet.

PLANNING POLICY & BUILT HERITAGE WORKING PARTY - MAY 2020

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve:

- 1: The identified sites for inclusion onto the Local Plan in the settlements listed in the report and that
2. The final policy wording is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager

PLANNING POLICY & BUILT HERITAGE WORKING PARTY – 15 JUNE 2020

SITE SELECTION REPORT B: HOLT, HOVETON AND MUNDESLEY

Cabinet **RESOLVED** to endorse:

- 1: The identified sites for inclusion onto the Local Plan in the following settlements and that
2. The final policy wording is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager
3. The following site is removed from the Local Plan: Holt, H04, Land south of Beresford Road

Agenda Item 8: OPEN SPACE

Cabinet **RESOLVED**

1. That the findings of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (Part 1) are accepted and the Open Space calculator used for subsequent planning applications and the proposed allocations within the Local Plan.
2. That the revised wording of Policy ENV 7 is endorsed and that responsibility for drafting such an approach, including that of finalising the associated

policy is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager.

8 APPOINTMENT TO THE BROADLAND FUTURES INITIATIVE FORUM

The Chairman informed Members that the Broadland Futures Initiative Elected Members Forum was a new body. The overall initiative aimed to work in partnership with local communities and other stakeholders to identify the way forward regarding flood risk management in the Broads. The Elected Members Forum would be making the core decisions in order to agree a framework for future flood risk management that would cope with the changing climate more effectively. The Chairman said that she nominated Cllr H Blathwayt for the role. She thanked Cllr Fitch-Tillett, Portfolio Holder for the Coast for offering to help support Cllr Blathwayt in the role.

Cllr J Rest sought clarification on the whether the initiative related specifically to the Broads or to the wider Broadland constituency. The Chairman replied that it related to the Broads and as Cllr Blathwayt was the Council's representative on the Broads Authority and he would be the ideal person to sit on the Forum. Cllr A Fitch-Tillett added that the initiative focussed on the Broads National Park and would look at how water resources were managed and how to improve synergy with coastal management schemes.

It was proposed by Cllr S Butikofer, seconded by Cllr A Fitch-Tillett and

RESOLVED

To appoint Cllr H Blathwayt to the Broadland Futures Initiative Forum

9 NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL'S TRANSITION FROM RESPONSE TO RECOVERY IN RESPONDING TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The Chairman began by thanking everyone for their support and hard work as the Council entered the recovery phase of the pandemic. She referred to the 'You are Welcome' campaign which had been recently launched. North Norfolk District Council had redeployed a number of officers to help coordinate the District's recovery following the Government's relaxation of lockdown rules. Their role was to provide support, offer advice, signpost people to guidance and liaise between relevant stakeholders. The aim was to ensure a safe environment for businesses, residents and visitors to the area and deliver the 'You are Welcome' message to everyone. They would be working in partnership with other public bodies, such as Town and Parish Councils, Chambers of Trade and the County Highways Department to assist in the delivery of this recovery stage and help businesses who were hoping to reopen their doors. She said that despite a lot of positive response to the scheme, she had been dismayed to hear of the poor treatment of some officers and contractors.

The Chairman then went on to inform Members that unfortunately play parks could still not open as the regulations did not currently allow for this. The Council had made representations to central Government and were hopeful of a resolution soon.

The Chairman then spoke about the exceptional work undertaken by the Business Support and Finance teams in recent weeks, with almost £50m of grants now paid to local businesses. However, she said that it should be acknowledged that the road to

recovery would not be easy and the Economic Development Team were stepping up efforts to provide support where it was needed.

She said that a huge amount of work was ongoing to manage any local outbreaks of the virus should any arise and a Norfolk Local Outbreak Control Plan had been drafted to support this. She concluded by referring to a meeting of the Norfolk Leader's Group on 3rd July and asked the Chief Executive to outline the details of what had been agreed.

The Chief Executive began by saying that, as part of its response to COVID19, the District Council had been working with local authority partners across Norfolk and with the New Anglia LEP to propose and agree a package of measures to help local businesses respond to and recover from the significant economic "shock" which had been brought about by the COVID lockdown, which had impacted upon all sectors of the economy. This work had culminated in agreement of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Recovery and Restart Plan and a proposal to establish a Norfolk Strategic Fund aimed at "kick-starting" some key economic infrastructure and workforce skills projects across the County in support of the Government's objectives of accelerating delivery of projects which would enable or facilitate the earlier delivery of economic recovery. It was proposed that the Norfolk Strategic Fund be made up with £1million from Norfolk County Council; £1million from the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership; £1,050million from the seven District Councils (£150,000 each) and with a proposition being put to Government that the local funding commitment was "matched" through either Business Rate Pool funds or other Government funds available locally giving a "Fund" of at least £6million.

The Fund would be administered by the County Council's Economic Programmes Team, using similar criteria as for projects developed for funding through the existing Business Rate Pool Programme, with projects being approved through the Norfolk Leaders Group. The Chief Executive said that the Council was therefore being asked to provide a £150,000 match-funding contribution towards the Norfolk Strategic Fund and, following discussion with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Head of Finance and Assets, it was advised that this contribution could be met from the previously agreed North Norfolk District Council Delivery Plan Reserve.

Cabinet was asked to approve the District Council's participation in the Norfolk Strategic Fund proposal through providing a match-funding contribution of £150,000 and attaching any conditions, if appropriate.

The Monitoring Officer advised Members that this was a key decision and the consent of the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee was required before a decision was taken.

The Chairman invited Members to speak:

Cllr E Seward, Portfolio Holder for Finance said that he would like to see some examples of the projects that the investment would be funding.

Cllr G Hayman, Portfolio Holder for Commercialisation & Assets, asked whether the Council would have a 'seat at the table' when decisions were being made. He also sought clarification as to whether the Council would receive the money back if match-funding was not secured. If it was secured, then could Members be reassured that a proportion of the funding would be invested in the District. In conclusion, he

asked whether the Council had 'oven-ready' plans prepared to put forward to the decision-making meetings in September. The Chairman confirmed that the Council would have a 'seat at the table' as she had some concerns about how funding provided by other bodies had been distributed across the District in recent weeks and she was determined to ensure that the Council would receive its fair share from the Norfolk Strategic Fund.

The Chief Executive said that Members could decide to attach conditions to the funding, potentially agreeing that a proportion of the overall pot should come back to the District. All projects that were put forward would be assessed by Norfolk County Council's Economic Project's team and would be reported through the Chief Executives and then the Norfolk Leader's Group. There was a strategic element to some of the proposals and this could be why North Norfolk had been disadvantaged in the past. He added that the Leader and himself would continue to press the Council's strategic partners on this. Regarding the match-funding element of the scheme and whether the Council could withdraw if other partners or the Government did not contribute in the way that was anticipated, he said that he felt that the scheme would continue in some form. In response to the issue of projects that were ready to be put forward, he confirmed that there were several that could go forward for assessment and said that he would share details in the coming days.

Cllr C Cushing commented that North Norfolk had been somewhat slower than Broadland District Council in distributing the decals and hand sanitising stations across the market towns. He asked the Leader to confirm that they were now all distributed. She replied that although the Council may have appeared slower it was because there were nine towns to support as part of this initiative compared to just two for some other areas. She said that the Council had worked closely with town and parish councils and that there had been a slight delay due to the coverage for the decals having to come from Germany. Most of the stickers were now in place and there were just a few more hand sanitising stations to install. The Head of Environmental Health confirmed that his team had been working hard to ensure that everything was in place across the District. He said that the number of towns combined with the level of tourists visiting, meant that more support was required than in neighbouring areas. The Chief Executive added that the Council had opted for decals rather than paint sprayed signs as these were failing in excessive rain or footfall. Fifty hand sanitising stations had been ordered which was a large number and this had led to some delays in the delivery. However, they had now all been received and were in the process of being installed.

Cllr Cushing asked how much was paid to the company that had produced the decals and whether a procurement process was followed to secure the contract. The Chief Executive confirmed that prices were invited from three companies with Structure Flex submitting the most competitive price. The cost of the decals was £33,000 which came from the 'Reopening the High Street' budget. He said that disappointingly, this funding had been awarded on the basis of population and this had presented some challenges. The Council wanted to re-open towns and resort areas safely and this had taken a little longer due to the numbers and spread – ten key locations in total. He concluded by saying that he felt that the Council had responded well. Some of the towns had wanted a different approach and the Council had worked with them to accommodate this where possible.

Cllr Cushing then requested an update on the financial impact of the pandemic on the Council. He asked whether a report would be coming forward. The Leader confirmed that this would be coming to an August meeting of Cabinet. It would

outline the losses as well as any savings that had been made due the closure of some facilities. Cllr Cushing then asked whether the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr Seward, remained sanguine about the Council's financial position or whether his views had changed.

Cllr Seward replied that this was a 'moving exercise'. He said that the Government had recently come forward with further support for local authorities which included loss of income on parking. If the Council received a reasonable allocation from this, then it would improve the financial position considerably. He added that he remained relaxed about the situation as it remained fluid. Some savings had been made from the closure of facilities, and this together with the possibility of further Government funding meant that the impact of the loss of income may be mitigated to some extent.

Cllr Hayman asked whether any conditions placed on the Council's contribution to the Norfolk Strategic Fund needed to be agreed at this meeting or whether they could be worked up subsequently. The Chief Executive replied that it would be beneficial if they were agreed as part of the decision taken at the meeting.

The Leader then asked the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Dixon, whether he was prepared to consent to a decision being taken regarding the funding contribution to the Norfolk Strategic Fund. Cllr Dixon confirmed that he was.

The Leader said that she would be reluctant to put a specific figure on the amount of money that the Council would like to see coming back to the District. She asked the Portfolio Holder for Finance if he wished to comment. Cllr Seward said that he would be looking for an appropriate return that matched the significant role that tourism played in the District's economy and the assistance that would be required to ensure that it survived. The Leader agreed, saying that tourism was fundamental to the District and this had already been highlighted as a key issue during discussions with other Leaders.

The Chief Executive thanked Members for their comments. He said that Members had indicated their support for contributing to the fund on the proviso that the important role of the tourism sector was acknowledged and that the proportion of funding returning to the District should reflect this and that any additional funds should be available for drawing down on that basis.

Cllr V Gay, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Wellbeing, referred to the recent announcement from central Government regarding funding for cultural industries. She said that it was welcomed but as yet very little detail had been provided and it may not be known for some time to what extent entertainment venues in North Norfolk would benefit from this.

It was proposed by Cllr S Butikofer, seconded by Cllr R Kershaw and

RESOLVED

To agree the District Council's support for and participation in the Norfolk Strategic Fund proposal with a £150,000 contribution being funded from the Delivery Plan Reserve. This contribution is subject to the following conditions;

1. That the importance of the District's tourism sector to the local economy is

recognised by the Fund

2. That funding returning to the District should reflect the significant contribution that is made by our tourism sector and that additional funds should be available for drawing down on this basis.

AGREED

to note the Council's response and arrangements made to support Recovery from the Coronavirus Pandemic; and specifically comment upon the following:-

- the short-term actions proposed in respect of:-
 - opening up the Council's services and facilities;
 - the development and implementation of social distancing measures through the "You are Welcome" programme to assist the Re-opening of our High Streets and Tourist Areas Safely
 - delivery of the Discretionary Business Grant Programme
 - the Council's planning for the return of staff to their main roles from working at home and redeployment into other roles;
 - the implementation of measures so that the Council is able to demonstrate compliance with the COVID-secure workplace guidelines
 - understanding the contribution North Norfolk District Council will make in supporting the partnership actions outlined in the Norfolk Local Outbreak Control Plan which will be a key element of managing any future outbreaks of COVID19 in the District over the coming months.
- the longer term need to review the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy in light of the changing financial situation of the Council and as a result undertake a review of the Council's proposed programme of activity as previously detailed in the Corporate Plan and Delivery Plan.

Reason for the decision:

To inform corporate learning from experience gained through the Response and initial Recovery phases of the pandemic, the implication of which will remain with the District for many months to come.

10 DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER OFFICER DELEGATION

The Leader advised Members that this report was for information. It provided a summary of decisions taken by senior officers under delegated powers from 20th May to 18 June 2020.

AGREED

To receive and note the report and the register of officer decisions taken under delegated powers.

Reason for the Decision:

The Constitution: Chapter 6, Part 5, sections 5.1 and 5.2. details the exercise of any power or function of the Council where waiting until a meeting of Council or a

committee would disadvantage the Council. The Constitution requires that any exercise of such powers should be reported to the next meeting of Council, Cabinet or working party (as appropriate)

11 PURCHASE OF FURTHER PROPERTY FOR USE AS TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, Cllr A Brown, introduced this item. He explained that the report identified a further suitable property to be purchased for use as temporary accommodation for homeless households. This was the fourth property to be purchased from the allocated budget of £610,000. The property was in a good location and in good condition.

Cllr J Rest referred to the recent Government announcement to suspend stamp duty and he wondered whether this would generate a saving for the Council. Cllr Brown replied that the level of stamp duty on these properties seemed high because the Council owned more than one property, the purchase was subject to a 3% second property stamp duty charge in addition to the stamp duty calculated on the purchase price.

It was proposed by Cllr A Brown, seconded by Cllr V Gay and

RESOLVED

That Cabinet agrees to the purchase of the identified property (subject to an independent valuation and survey) using the budget provision.

Reason for the Decision:

To provide authority for expenditure over £100,000

12 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

13 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at 11.04 am.

Chairman