Cabinet

Monday 27 March 2017

9.00 am, Colman and Cavell Rooms
South Norfolk House, Cygnet Court, Long Stratton, Norwich, NR15 2XE

If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance
Large print version can be made available

Contact Claire White on 01508 533633 or democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk
Members of the Cabinet

John Fuller (Chairman)  The Economy and External Affairs

Mr M Edney (Vice Chairman)  Finance and Resources

Mrs Y Bendle  Wellbeing and Early Intervention

Mr C Hudson  Stronger Communities and Leisure

Mr L Hornby  Regulation and Public Safety

Mrs K Mason Billig  Environment and Recycling

This meeting may be filmed, recorded or photographed by the public; however anyone who wishes to do so must inform the chairman and ensure it is done in a non-disruptive and public manner. Please review the Council’s guidance on filming and recording meetings available in the meeting room.

Group Meetings

Conservatives – 8.00 am, Cabinet Office

Liberal Democrats – 8.15 am, Blomefield Room
Agenda

1. To report apologies for absence;

2. Any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972. Urgent business may only be taken if, "by reason of special circumstances" (which will be recorded in the minutes), the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency;

3. To Receive Declarations of Interest from Members; (please see guidance – page 6)

4. To confirm the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Monday 6 February 2017; (attached – page 7)

5. Discretionary Rate Reliefs; (report attached – page 24)


7. Visitor Economy Initiative; (report attached – page 43)
8. **Smoking and Vaping Policy**;  
(report attached – page 61)

9. **Advice Note on Proposals for Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing**;  
(report attached – page 68)

10. **Open Space Supplementary Planning Document**;

    Consideration of the draft Open Space SPD has been deferred due to the need for further work to ensure consistency with the Council’s Community Assets Strategy.

    Adam Nicholls  
    Planning Policy Manager

11. **Greater Norwich Joint Five Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2017-18 to 2021-22**;

    At an earlier meeting on 12 September 2016, Cabinet agreed to defer consideration of the Infrastructure Investment Plan, due to concerns about funding of maintenance from CIL; the need for clear criteria to be in place for small projects; and that it would be premature to consider long-term commitments to the IIP in the light of the ongoing national CIL Review. Further work is progressing on these matters, and it is hoped that a revised IIP will be able to be considered at Cabinet and Council in the Spring.

    Adam Nicholls  
    Planning Policy Manager
12. **Introduction of Charges for Street Naming and Numbering and Review of the Street Naming and Numbering Policy and Acts used for Service;**

This item will now be considered at a later date to allow officers to undertake a more comprehensive review of charges likely to be incurred by developers.

Stuart Pontin  
Business Improvement Manager

13. **Long Stratton Leisure Centre Development;**

Long Stratton Leisure Centre Development will now be considered at a later date to allow officers to conclude discussions with Norfolk County Council, Long Stratton High School and the ieTrust regarding the Joint Use Agreement for Long Stratton Leisure Centre following the anticipated academisation of Long Stratton High School.

Mark Heazle  
Community Leisure Manager

14. **Cabinet Core Agenda;**  

(attached – page 78)
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

Members are asked to declare any interests they have in the meeting. Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates.

- In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote on the matter.
- If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed.
- If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting.
- Members are also requested when appropriate to make any declarations under the Code of Practice on Planning and Judicial matters.
- In any case, members have the right to remove themselves from the meeting or the voting if they consider, in the circumstances, it is appropriate to do so.

Should Members have any concerns relating to interests they have, they are encouraged to contact the Monitoring Officer (or Deputy) or another member of the Democratic Services Team in advance of the meeting.
CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 6 February 2017 at 9.00 a.m.

Members Present:

Cabinet: Councillors J Fuller (Chairman) M Edney, L Hornby, C Hudson and K Mason Billig

Apologies: Councillor Y Bendle

Non-Appointed: Councillors M Dewsbury, F Ellis, D Goldson, C Gould, M Gray, T Lewis, L Neal, A Palmer and V Thomson

Also in Attendance: Mr P Milliken – Chairman of Easton Parish Council
Two members of the public

Officers in Attendance: The Chief Executive (S Dinneen), the Director of Business Development (D Lorimer), the Director of Growth and Localism (T Horspole), the Head of Environmental Services (B Wade), the Head of Resources (P Catchpole), the Accountancy Manager (M Fernandez-Graham), the Business Improvement Programme Manager (A Mewes), the Planning Policy Manager (A Nicholls), the Senior Accountant (J Brown), the Senior Governance Officer (E Goddard) and the Senior Planning Officer (C Raine).
2518 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred to the recent Peer Review, explaining that the Review Team had provided positive feedback with regard to the Council’s priorities and current projects. He looked forward to the final report, and conveyed his thanks to the Review Team, and all staff and councillors involved in the Review.

2519 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9 January 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2520 PERFORMANCE, RISKS, REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET POSITION REPORT FOR QUARTER THREE 2016/17

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Accountancy Manager, the Business Improvement Projects Manager and the Senior Governance Officer, which detailed the Council’s performance against strategic measures, risk position and the Council’s financial position, at the end of the first quarter for 2016/17.

Cllr M Edney introduced the report, and was pleased to report good performance across all indicators, on what were already stretched targets. He drew members’ attention to LI 613, the number of new business start-ups supported in South Norfolk, EG 1605, the number of apprenticeship placements available, and BV012a, the working days lost per FTE due to short term sickness absence.

The Business Improvement Programme Manager then presented an overview of the report to members, drawing attention to key areas of performance. Members also noted the planned changes to MI 1041, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claimants moving in to work, and Cabinet supported the proposed new measure regarding the amount paid in benefit to people in work.
During discussion, members referred to the Council’s recycling rates, which remained consistently high. The Chairman explained that the next step to push performance figures higher, would involve the recycling of food waste, but he stressed the need for a cautious approach, as it was very expensive to invest in the needed equipment. Cllr K Mason Billig explained that the Norfolk Waste Partnership was investigating the potential for food waste collection, with a pilot in the Broadland area. She referred to the ongoing need to educate residents, and it was suggested that smaller black bins could be provided, to encourage households to recycle more. The Chairman reminded the meeting that South Norfolk had the lowest contamination rates across the county.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To:

a) Note the 2016/17 performance for the third quarter and the combined efforts across the Directorates to deliver the Vision of the Council (detail contained in Appendix 1).

b) Note the current position with regard to risks and accepts the actions to support risk mitigation (detail contained in Appendix 2).

c) Note the capital and revenue position and the reason for the variances on the General Fund (detail contained in Appendices 3 and 4).

d) Agree the virement of £43,079 from the existing capital programme of the neighbourhood projects budget to the car park improvements budget as outlined in paragraph 3.4.

e) Delegate to the S151 Officer the amendment of the capital budget and financing for Equity Home Loans as and when these loans occur during the financial year as outlined in paragraph 3.9.

f) Agree to measure and track the amount paid in benefit to people in work and the number of people in work who are receiving benefit rather than MI 1041 ‘The number of Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support claimants moving into work’ or the number of residents on Universal Credit.
The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure processes are in place to improve performance, that the management of risks is sound, and that budgets are in place to meet the Council’s corporate objectives.

Other Options Considered

None.

2521 BUDGET CONSULTATION 2017/18

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Senior Accountant which detailed the results of the 2017/18 budget consultation for residents and businesses.

Cllr M Edney introduced the report, explaining that the survey had produced some interesting results.

The Senior Accountant then summarised the results of the survey, explaining that the results had been updated since the production of the report. Members noted that there was more support for a £5.00 or £3.00 per year rise in Council Tax, but less support for a £4.00 increase. Respondents also strongly supported charging for discretionary services and supporting the business community by reinvesting business rates income.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To note the feedback received during the consultation exercise.
The Reasons for the Decision

To take into account the issues raised when determining the budget and level of council tax for 2017/18.

Other Options Considered

None

2522 2017/18 BUSINESS PLAN

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Business Improvement Programme Manager, which presented the Annual Business Plan for 2017-18.

Cllr M Edney introduced the report, referring to the member-led Scrutiny workshops and the 10% challenge, where staff had been fully engaged in finding additional income and efficiency savings for the Council.

The Business Improvement Programme Manager outlined the Plan to members, and drew members’ attention to recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee regarding the proposed dog bin charges, detailed at paragraph 1.2 of the report.

Mr P Milliken, Chairman of Easton Parish Council, addressed the Cabinet in relation to the proposed increase in dog bin charges. He expressed his concern at the increase in charges, explaining that this had resulted in a £500 (50%) increase for Easton Parish Council. This increase had come to the attention of the Parish Council only days after the precept had already been set, and he suggested that a 25% phased increase would be a fairer approach.

The Chairman explained that the Council had a duty to recover costs wherever possible, and to ensure that smaller parishes were not subsidising the larger ones. However, he accepted that there had been an issue with the timing of the communications, and he proposed a compromise to the proposals, which would see those bins not previously charged for, attracting a lesser fee of £50.00
for 2017/18, rising to the full fee in 2018/19. He suggested that those bins where there was current charge, would attract a £100 fee for 2017/18. Cabinet members indicated their support for these proposals.

Cllr K Mason Billig stressed that the delay in communicating the increase in charges to all parish councils was regrettable, and she urged parish councils to review dog bin usage to ensure that they were value for money and placed appropriately.

The Decision

RESOLVED: 1. To approve the 2016-17 Business Plan
2. That the proposed new charges relating to dog bin services, are phased in as follows:
   - For those not previously charged, that the fee be £50.00 from 2017/18, increasing to the full charge in 2018/19
   - For those currently being charged, that the fee increases to £100 from 2017/18

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure that a sound business planning process is in place, as a mechanism for the vision and priorities set by members.
To ensure that the Council maximises its income, with a fair and transparent approach.

Other Options Considered

None
2523 REVENUE BUDGET, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL TAX 2017/18

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Section 151 Officer and the Accountancy Manager, which detailed the proposed revenue and capital budgets for 2017/18, and the proposed level of council tax.

Cllr M Edney commended the report to members. He referred to the new combined report for revenue and capital, suggesting that this was more helpful and easier to understand.

The Section 151 Officer outlined the key issues arising from the report. Members noted in particular that the changes to the New Homes Bonus were more severe than anticipated, with the Council receiving £807,000 less for 17/18 than planned for in the October Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Section 151 Officer advised that as a high performer, the Council was one of the hardest hit, and the Council was continuing to campaign for transitional relief. Members’ attention was also drawn to the healthy level of revenue reserves, and the deficit of almost £2 million forecast by 2021/22.

Turning to the capital programme, the Section 151 Officer explained that the programme continued to concentrate on projects that supported the Council’s 3 priority areas, with many projects linked to economic growth.

In response to a query, officers advised that the tax base had increased by 1.9%.
RESOLVED: 1. TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

(a) the approval of the base budget; as shown in para 7.1, subject to confirmation of the finalised Local Government finance settlement figures which may, if significant, necessitate an adjustment through the General Revenue Reserve to maintain a balanced budget.
(b) the use of the revenue reserves as set out in section 15.
(c) that the Council's demand on the Collection Fund for 2017/18 for General Expenditure shall be £6,596,800 and for Special Expenditure be £76,806;
(d) that the Band D level of Council Tax be £140.00 for General Expenditure and £1.63 for Special Expenditure.
(e) that the assumptions on which the funding of the capital programme is based are prudent.
(f) the approval of the capital programme for 2017/18 to 2020/21.

2. To Agree

(a) the charges for garden waste as set out in para 6.2
(b) the pricing for leisure services from 1st April 2017 as set out in paras 6.5 to 6.9 and Appendix B Table 1.
(c) the associated refund and cancellation policy changes for leisure as set out in paragraph 6.10

3. To note

(a) the pricing changes made in accordance with the Charging Policy in section 6
(b) The advice of the section 151 Officer with regard to section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003
(c) The future budget pressures contained in the Medium Term Strategy as set out in Appendix C
The Reasons for the Decision

To provide a budget which meets the Council’s priorities and to set a council tax affordable to residents
To ensure that the Capital Programme for 2017/18 is affordable and complies with Council policies.

Other Options Considered

None

2524 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 1 APRIL 2017 TO 31 MARCH 2020

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Accountancy Manager, which detailed the proposed Treasury Management Strategy, the Prudential Indicators, the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement and the Treasury Management Policy Statement for 2017/18 to 2019/20. Cabinet was also presented with the Annual Investment Strategy for 2017/18.

Cllr M Edney commended the report to members and the Accountancy Manager outlined the salient points of his report to members.

The Decision

RESOLVED: TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:

b) The Prudential Indicators and Limits for the next 3 years contained within Appendix A of the report, including the Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator.
c) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement (section 8) sets out the Council’s policy on MRP.
d) The Annual Investment Strategy 2017/18 (section 5 of the report) contained in the Treasury Management Strategy, including the delegation of certain tasks to the Section 151 Officer


The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure the security of the Council’s cash above the liquidity of the investment and that the Council’s Investment Strategy remains prudent and complies with statutory requirements.

Other Options Considered

None

2525 CAPITAL FINANCING FOR BIG SKY DEVELOPMENTS

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Head of Resources, which provided an update on the developments at Poringland and Long Stratton, and sought approval for an "overdraft" facility to support the cashflow of Big Sky Developments.

Cllr M Edney referred to the delays in construction on the development sites, some of which were due to utilities, and he hoped that the Government’s White Paper would go some way in addressing issues such as these.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To agree to the temporary overdraft, as detailed in paragraph 4.1 of the report.
The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure that the cash flow for Big Sky Developments Ltd (BSD) remains positive, allowing it more flexibility.

Other Options Considered

None

2526  LDO GREATER NORWICH FOOD ENTERPRISE ZONE: BROADLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Director of Growth and Localism, which sought Cabinet’s views on a proposed Local Development Order (LDO) for the Greater Norwich Food Enterprise Zone, as part of a consultation from Broadland District Council.

The Chairman briefly outlined the background to the report, explaining that although the LDO fell wholly within the Broadland area, the eastern boundary lay adjacent to the parish of Easton. He advised that as part of the Food Enterprise Zone Programme, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had provided finance to support the development and implementation of an LDO, and that an LDO was required as part of all designated Food Enterprise Zones. Members therefore noted that “not having an LDO” was not an option.

The Director of Growth and Localism presented his report, explaining that an LDO would allow developers to carry out proposals without the need for planning permission applications, unless proposals fell outside of the prescribed permissions/definitions provided by the LDO. He outlined the Council’s proposed response, detailed at paragraph 3 of the report.

Cllr M Dewsbury, local member for Easton, questioned whether the site was an appropriate location for a Food Hub, explaining that local people had expressed a number of concerns. She referred in detail to a number of issues that had caused concern, including the access to the site off the A47, which was, she suggested, already a dangerous and busy junction. She raised issues relating to flooding, access to the church, noise and odours, and explained that health and safety and pollution were real concerns. She stressed the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to be undertaken, explaining that local residents were
disappointed that Broadland Council had concluded that an EIA was not necessary. Whilst Cllr Dewsbury understood that an LDO would allow greater flexibility for new business related development, she stressed the importance of considering all eventualities.

Mr P Milliken, Chairman of Easton Parish Council then addressed the Cabinet. He explained that Easton Parish Council could not support the current LDO, due to a number of reasons. He referred to the roundabout at Easton which was already considered dangerous due to the heavy amounts of traffic, the lack of an alternative access point, flood risks, the visual impact on the countryside, pollution and air quality. He was concerned that the development would severely affect the setting of the local church, and that the proposed route past the church would become dangerous and would become cut off from residents. He felt the timing of the proposals to be premature, believing that they would be better placed to tie in with infrastructure improvements to the A47, scheduled for 2020. He understood that the development would become a material consideration for Highways England, when considering a Norwich Western Link Road, but did not believe that this justified rushing the development through.

During discussion, officers explained that the site did not fall in to the mandatory category for an EIA, and that EIAs were usually conducted where it was judged that significant effects were likely on a larger site than the one proposed. Broadland District Council had identified the need to screen the site, accepting that there was some impact, but had concluded that an EIA was not required. Officers stressed that the decision to undertake an EIA was a decision made by Broadland Council, not South Norfolk.

Cabinet agreed with the proposed amendments detailed within the report, however, it also felt it was necessary to ask Broadland to reassess the need for an EIA, taking in to account the responses received from the current LDO consultation exercise. It was also suggested that officers from Broadland District Council should be invited to a meeting of the Council’s Scrutiny Committee, to provide more details regarding the proposals.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To make the following representations to Broadland District Council:

1. That South Norfolk Council supports the principle of the draft Local Development Order, on the condition that Broadland District Council incorporates all the amendments to the draft order as set out in Section 3 of this report;
2. Request that Broadland District Council assess the need to undertake a full Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposals and in making the reassessment, take in to account the responses received from the consultation exercise;
3. Invite officers from Broadland Council to attend a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, and/or consider a joint Scrutiny Committee meeting, to provide more details regarding the proposals.

The Reasons for the Decision

To support the creation of a Food Hub, in line with Policy 5 of the Joint Core Strategy, but to also ensure that the views and concerns of local residents are fully taken in to account.

Other Options Considered

None.

2527 GREATER NORWICH JOINT FIVE YEAR INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN 2017-18 TO 2021-22

Members noted that this report would be considered at a future meeting of the Cabinet.

2528 SOUTH NORFOLK COUNCIL PROPOSED RESPONSE TO THE BROADS LOCAL PLAN PREFERRED OPTIONS CONSULTATION

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Planning Policy Manager, which sought approval of South Norfolk Council’s response to the Broads Authority Preferred Options Local Plan Consultation.

The Planning Policy Manager outlined the key areas of the Council’s response to members. The Chairman explained that Local Member for Chedgrave, Cllr J Larner, was unable to attend the Cabinet meeting, but had contacted him to make representations regarding the proposed designations of Local Green Space (LGS), near the boat yards in...
Chedgrave, and had asked that these objections be recorded at the meeting. Cllr Larner was concerned that the Broads Authority had not contacted the relevant land owners in advance of the assessment process, and that this process appeared to have taken no account of the potential economic damage to the boatyards and other local businesses. He also questioned whether other LGS designations had been subject to the same systemic failures.

Cllr C Gould, local member for Loddon, supported the views of Cllr Larner, expressing concern at the lack of consultation with the local community and the adverse effect the LGS designation would have on the viability of the local boatyards and Loddon as a whole.

The Chairman then invited some local businesses directly affected by the proposed green space allocations, to comment. Mrs F Husband, from a local boat hire company, explained that local land owners had not been contacted in advance of the assessment process, and the whole section of land in question was used for storage. Mr Greenway, from a local boatyard, explained that the income of his business would be significantly reduced, should he not be able to store boats on that area of land. He added that he believed that the land could never be developed, due to underground electrical cables.

Members were satisfied with much of the Council’s existing response to the consultation, and welcomed in particular the Council’s comments relating to the need to better align the Plan, with the Council’s Visitor Economy Initiative. However, Cabinet was also concerned at the apparent lack of consideration of the potential economic impacts of Local Green Space designations, in particular the designation proposed at Chedgrave, and requested that these concerns also be recorded in the Council’s response.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To agree the South Norfolk Response to the Broads Local Plan Preferred Options consultation, subject to objecting to the apparent lack of appropriate consideration of the potential local economic impacts of Local Green Space designations in the Broads and surrounding areas, and in particular to object to the proposed Chedgrave Local Green Space and request that it be “de-allocated” from the Local Plan.

The Reasons for the Decision

To try to protect local businesses and to ensure that the Broads Authority has adequately considered the potential local economic impacts of Local Green Space designations.

Cab Min 06/02//17CLW
Other Options Considered

To agree the Council’s response, unaltered.

2529 ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION FOR DWELLINGS WITHIN TROWSE WITH NEWTON CONSERVATION AREA

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Senior Conservation and Design Officer which sought authorisation for an Article 4 direction to remove permitted development rights from selected dwellings in the Trowse with Newton conservation area.

The Senior Conservation and Design Officer outlined his report to members, explaining that the original suggestion for the Article 4 suggestion had come from Cllr T Lewis. Members viewed photographs that clearly illustrated how modifications over the years had affected the character of the area.

Cllr Lewis welcomed the report and hoped that residents in the area would support the proposals. He noted that applications for planning permission required as a consequence of any Article 4 Direction, would be free, and he wondered if this would extend to pre-application advice. The Chief Executive explained that officers would provide advice but it would be unrealistic to expect this to be unlimited.

Members noted that a work experience graduate had carried out the required detailed survey on the relevant properties, and Cabinet felt this felt to be a great example of when work experience staff can add value to the organisation.

The Decision

RESOLVED:

1. To authorise making an article 4 direction for dwelling houses within Trowse with Newton as prescribed in the Schedules at Appendix A (I) and shown on the map at Appendix A (II);

2. To agree that the direction can be confirmed within 6 months by the Director of Growth & Localism unless there are significant representations which result in a material change to the direction notice, upon which an amended notice will be reissued and re-consulted upon.
The Reasons for the Decision

To protect the architectural character of the area.

Other Options Considered

Not to authorise an Article 4 Direction.

2530 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Member noted the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda.

2531 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was

RESOLVED: that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting on the grounds of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).
2532 WHEELED BIN PROCUREMENT

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the exempt report of the Head of Environmental Services, which sought approval for the award of a contract for wheeled bin supplies.

The Head of Environmental Services outlined the key issues, and responded to questions from members on points of detail.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To agree the award of the contract, subject to contract and a ten day standstill period, as proposed in the report.

The Reasons for the Decision

That the contract is awarded in line with the Council’s Contract Standing Orders and is the most efficient approach for the Council.

Other Options Considered

None

(The meeting concluded at 12.00 pm)

Chairman
Cab Min 06/02/17CLW
Discretionary Rate Reliefs

Report of the Policy Officer
Cabinet Member: Cllr Yvonne Bendle, Wellbeing and Early Intervention Portfolio.

CONTACT
Paul Chapman 01508 533892
pchapman@s-norfolk.gov.uk
1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to get Cabinet approval for South Norfolk Council to provide further support through its discretionary rate relief powers from April 2017 to help the Government deliver on commitments it made in the Spring Budget of 2016 and Autumn Statement 2016.

1.2 The report seeks approval to award 50% discretionary rural rate relief in 2017/18 to qualifying village post offices, general stores and public houses as well as specialist food shops in rural settlements. Approval is also sought to award £1,500 relief per year in respect of the offices of local newspapers. Officers recommend approval as this will help local businesses and will be fully funded by Government.

2. Background

2.1.1 South Norfolk Council can award discretionary rate relief under powers in Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988

2.1.2 The Council has a guideline document setting out our general approach to the award of discretionary reliefs which sets the parameters within which officers assess cases. These are guidelines only as we are required to be able to consider any case on its own merits.

2.1.3 The full guideline document was last updated and approved by Cabinet on 21 March 2016

3. Current Position/Findings

3.1 The scope of discretionary rate reliefs has grown considerably over many years from initially being focussed on rate relief for charities, local sports clubs and non-profit making organisations to support for key facilities in smaller settlements (post offices, general stores, specialist food shops and public houses) and now to a wide power to provide support to any type of business – a power which is utilised by Government to deliver locally on national initiatives for support.
3.2 Since Cabinet last approved our guideline document we have received further details from Government of additional support with rates that they intend to provide nationally. The Government requests that to avoid changing legislation local authorities administer discretionary rate relief to award support that delivers on Government commitments to provide support with rates. This additional rate relief is fully funded by Government and South Norfolk is fully reimbursed for the loss of retained income of awards made under specific relief schemes.

3.3 There are two new themes under which Cabinet are sought to agree that we will award discretionary rate relief:

- An increase in rural rate relief so that post offices, general stores, specialist food shops and public houses with post revaluation rateable values that are beneath existing qualifying threshold levels receive 100% rural rate relief (50% discretionary to be provided by local authorities in 2017/18 until legislation can be changed from which point there will be 100% mandatory relief).

- A new business rate discount for the offices of local newspapers of £1,500 in each of 2017/18 and 2018/19. This is a temporary measure to support local newspapers adapt to technological changes within the industry.

3.4 The first of these new initiatives above addresses an issue identified previously that affected some businesses in South Norfolk who because they qualified for mandatory rural rate relief were precluded from qualifying for small business rate relief and were worse off as a result. In 2016/17 South Norfolk independently introduced local support to ensure that they were brought up to the same level of support they would have received had this not been the case. The Government’s commitment means that this local solution will no longer be required and the action is welcomed.

3.5 There are a further set of measures that the Government announced in the Spring Budget of 2017 to provide further support to businesses affected by the revaluation of rateable values and knock-on effects if the new rateable values mean they no longer qualify for small business rate relief or rural rate relief. Some of these new measures are subject to consultation at present and further guidance is awaited from Government. Officers will be working on plans to deliver this additional support and will be bringing a further report to Cabinet in April or May when we are in a position to give effect to those budget announcements.
4. Proposals

4.1 That Cabinet agree to use discretionary rate powers to award further Government funded discretionary rural rate relief and discretionary local newspaper relief from April 2017 to help provide additional support to qualifying businesses in the South Norfolk area. In doing so Cabinet will authorise officers to administer those awards with immediate effect.

4.2 That officers develop proposals to award further Government funded support that will be provided to deliver on new commitments made in Spring Budget 2017. A scheme for discretionary business support will be brought back to Cabinet to be adopted.

5. Risks and implications arising

5.1 Further support will be provided to businesses in South Norfolk but there will be no additional cost falling on South Norfolk council Tax payers as Government will fully reimburse South Norfolk for our share of the lost revenue (under the local rate retention scheme) in the form of a s.31 grant based on the actual value of awards made.

6. Recommendation

6.1 Cabinet to agree to additional discretionary rural rate relief to be awarded in 2017/18 (to those businesses qualifying for mandatory rural rate relief) in addition to the provisions contained within the previously approved discretionary rate relief guidelines.

6.2 Cabinet to agree to award £1,500 business rate discount in each of 2017/18 and 2018/19 in respect of the offices of local newspapers.
Committee Name: Cabinet
Committee Date: 27 March 2017

Agenda Item 6

Member Ward Grants and Community Action Fund 2017/18

Report of the Community Capacity Manager
Cabinet Member: Cllr Clayton Hudson

CONTACT
Kerrie Gallagher
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1. Introduction

1.1 South Norfolk Council has successfully run a Member Ward (MW) and Community Action Fund (CAF) grant scheme over the last three years. Building on this success, and supporting the continued business like and efficient agenda of the Council, it is proposed to improve the mechanisms of awarding both the MW and CAF schemes to make them streamlined, and reduce the overall CAF budget.

2. Proposal

2.1 The following changes are proposed to the Member-led grants system for 2017/18; to be implemented from 5th April. A revised set of Neighbourhood Ground Rules are attached to this report (appendix A) which reflect the proposed amendments, this is supplemented by two flow charts which display the proposed process for the two types of grants. (appendix B.).

2.2 Member Ward Grants
The proposal is to continue with the existing £1,000 allocation per member for local community grant awards in line with the existing ground rules. To minimise the administration around these grants and maximise efficiencies, the existing web form for Members to complete will incorporate a minimal number of additional sections to enable Members to self-regulate the eligibility of spend according to the existing ‘Ground Rules’. The form will be submitted directly to the finance team who will process the payment. The Scrutiny Committee will provide Members with an opportunity to review grants and ensure compliance with the ground rules and make recommendations on any changes to the existing scheme. Overall the local Member Grant budget for 2017/18 will remain at £46,000, which is to be spent within the current year as there will be no carry over into the next financial year.

2.3 Community Action Fund
The proposal is to maintain a member-led scheme whereby individual local Members or groups of Members work together to identify projects that fit with the Council’s Corporate Priorities, and meet the existing ground rules criteria. The overall funding for the CAF will reduce from £150,000 to £50,000. The CAF grants will be managed via a newly formed CAF Panel (terms of reference at appendix C), replacing the existing role of the Neighbourhood Chairman and administered through a more streamlined process through the Democratic Services and Community Capacity teams, thus providing a saving to both member’s budgets, and a reduction in resources in the Community Capacity team.
2.4 Application/approval process - Members will be able to submit an application via a web-form for CAF funding from £1,000 and up to £15,000 towards a local project. Applications must fit with the Council’s Corporate Priorities and ideally, the projects in question should be able to demonstrate some level of other fund raising or in-kind match funding.

2.5 The CAF Panel will meet up to two times per year to consider requests for CAF applications, but may allocate the full budget at the first Panel. Applications can be awarded full or part funding. There will be a simple approve or reject system, with rejected applications (based on insufficient information only) having one further chance to resubmit to the next Panel meeting.

2.6 The first meeting of the Panel will take place in May/June and a second in September/October. All applications which meet the criteria will be assessed by a judging Panel with the Director responsible for Communities making the final decision, in consultation with the Members on that Panel.

2.7 The proposed Community Action Fund Panel to consist of:

- Portfolio Holder for Stronger Communities and Leisure or substituted by another Cabinet member.
- Chairman of the Stronger Communities & Leisure Committee, or Deputy chairman, if not available, another member from the Committee can be substitute.
- Shadow Portfolio Holder, or substitute from the party.

The Portfolio Holder for Stronger Communities and Leisure shall be the Chairman of the Panel.

The following officers are also in attendance at Panel meetings, but not voting members:

- Director responsible for Communities (or substitute Director if necessary)
- Either the Community Capacity Manager or Early Help & Prevention Manager.
2.8 The voting members will make recommendations for allocation of the grant monies; the final decision will be with the Director for Communities (or substitute) who will consider the views of voting members of the Panel. The Panel has no decision making powers.

2.9 Members who submit applications can attend the Panel meeting and speak on behalf of their application.

3. Savings

3.1 The savings from these changes will be £100,000 from a reduction in monies allocated to the grant budget, £18,000 from a reduction in officer support, and £12,530 from a reduction in Neighbourhood Chairman special responsibility allowance, totalling £130,530.

4. Role of Scrutiny

4.1 The Scrutiny Committee’s role in reviewing grant spend will be aimed at the process in awarding grants to ensure it is efficient and that the grant monies (Local Ward Grants and Community Action Fund) are spent effectively to meet community needs, and in line with Corporate Priorities.

5. Recommendation

5.1 That Cabinet considers and approves the proposals to amend member-led grants awarded by South Norfolk Council in order to realise savings, and create efficiencies.

5.2 Cabinet are requested to give delegated authority to:

5.2.1 The Director responsible for communities, or a substitute Director to award funds from the Community Action Fund, and

5.2.2 Members to award funds from their Member Ward budget.
These ground rules set the criteria in awarding Member-Led Grants. However as the purpose is to increase flexible and responsive local decision-making, Members are encouraged to make quick, sound decisions which support groups or initiatives that meet identified local need.

1. **Local working**

1.1 The Council has a long standing commitment to empowering people and organisations to do more to help communities throughout South Norfolk. The Council supports its Members in meeting the ambitions of the community and identifying and delivering local solutions, which in turn support the Council’s corporate priority areas and the way in which we work:

- Economic Growth, Productivity and Prosperity: Providing the conditions to stimulate growth, productivity and prosperity, sharing the benefits of growth with our communities
- Health, Well-being and Early Help: Proactively working with communities to provide help at the earliest opportunity and enhancing the health and well-being of our residents
- Place, Communities and Environment: Improving the quality of life of our communities and enhancing the built and natural environment in our towns and villages
- MFT: Customer focussed, can do and collaborative and business like, efficient and entrepreneurial

1.2 All Members will take a central role in identifying and delivering improvements to the quality of life of people in their communities. Members are expected to be active in consulting with the community, identifying local needs and working with the communities to identify how best to achieve these needs.

1.3 This means combining and utilising all the experience, knowledge, skills and networks of the Members to understand what goes on in their communities and what the important issues are for local people, and to come up with innovative and effective solutions to make the necessary improvements.

1.4 The key to effective community empowerment is strong community involvement. We want to ensure that the priorities of the Council and the priorities of local people and communities can be aligned wherever possible, and delivered upon.

3. **The Community Action Fund**
3.1 There will be some initiatives which will require larger amounts of funding and to support this, the Community Action Fund is in place. The aim of this funding is to:

- build capacity within communities so that groups are enabled to be self-sustaining without ongoing practical and financial support from the Council,
- stimulate local economic growth, and
- facilitate creative partnership approaches to helping people in need at the earliest opportunity.

3.2 Each Member is responsible for receiving, considering and proposing applications for funding from the allocated budget. The applications must meet the following criteria:

i) The funding will normally go to a local community group, but may be awarded to social enterprises, businesses, charitable organisations or other public agencies if the aims are being met - but not to an individual.

ii) The granting of funding is for a specific activity and will not imply an ongoing commitment nor have a revenue implication for the council;

iii) The activity being funded:
   a. Has not already taken place (retrospective funding is not permitted);
   b. Could not easily be funded elsewhere
   c. Can demonstrate how it meets a local need and provides support to the community
   d. Does not cover costs of routine maintenance
   e. Supports the Council’s priority areas
   f. Has not received Member-Led funding from the Council funding over the past 2 years.

iv) The project or activity promotes communities working together and does not unfairly discriminate against people from different backgrounds or religions;

v) The funding can be used by the community group during the 12 months following receipt;

vi) The funding cannot be used to support any activity more than once in a two year period;

vii) As far as the Member is aware, making the payment to the recipient would not result in fraudulent or illegal activity or any practices which would bring South Norfolk Council into
disrepute. This would include ensuring that all recipients have any required permissions in place

viii) The funding must not replace funding previously provided by other statutory agencies such as the County Council; and

ix) Funding must not form part of the Parish precept.

3.3 Funding can be used for new or existing projects and work carried out by community groups and other agencies within South Norfolk. Projects should support the Council’s priority areas. Members should also be satisfied that the project or activity being funded would increase community capacity and enhance the quality of life for local residents. They should also be clear that it will promote sustainable development in the area (that is, it balances social, economic and environmental objectives and does not cause damage in any of these areas).

4. The Application Process

4.1 Clear process needs to be followed when allocating large amounts of public money, therefore procedures will be followed to administer the Community Action Fund:

a) It is the Member’s responsibility to obtain sufficient information on which to base an application for funding. If the Member does not consider that project or activity fits the criteria or they do not wish to fund it, the Member should liaise directly with the organisation to inform them of their decision.

b) Once the Member is satisfied that the project or activity fits the criteria and are happy to allocate their funding, they should complete the online application form in conjunction with the applicant(s). Two or more Members wishing to support the same project or activity should fill in one application form.

c) Once submitted, the online application forms will automatically be sent to an allocated Inbox.

d) All applications will be considered at the Community Action Fund Panel which meets up to twice a year (May/June and September/October).

e) The Panel will consider all applications in order to reach a decision as to who will receive funding, and how much. In some cases a decision may be made to assign a proportion of the total monies requested to ensure that the budget is optimised.

f) The Community Action Panel consists of:

- Portfolio Holder for Stronger Communities and Leisure or substituted by another Cabinet member.
• Chairman of the Stronger Communities & Leisure Committee, or Deputy chairman, if not available, another member from the Committee can be substitute.
• Shadow Portfolio Holder, or substitute from the party.

The following officers are also in attendance at panel meetings, but not voting members:

• Director responsible for Communities (or substitute Director if necessary)
• Either the Early Help & Prevention Manager OR the Community Capacity Manager

A minimum of two Members must be present at the Panel for it to be quorate.

The voting members will make recommendations for allocation of the grant monies; the final decision will be with the Director for Communities (or substitute) who will consider the views of voting members of the Panel.

g) Members who submit applications can attend the panel meeting and speak on behalf of their application.

h) The Panel cannot defer an application. It is either awarded or rejected at the meeting. If it’s refused due to insufficient info, the application can be resubmitted at the next Panel meeting. However an application cannot be submitted more than twice. If it is refused twice a period of 12 months must pass before being submitted again.

i) There is no limit to the amount awarded at any one Panel; but the total budget must be spent within the financial year.

j) Officers will advise Members of the outcome of the application. The Member should request successful organisations to advise them of the outcomes achieved as a result of the funding, which can be published by both the applicant and the Council to promote good practice.

k) All funding allocations and outcomes achieved will be made public on the Council's website and will be reported back to the Scrutiny Committee through monitoring reports twice a year.

l) Those recipients of funding towards a physical asset are encouraged to place a Council plaque or sticker on the asset to recognise the funding contribution.

5. Role and responsibilities of local Members
5.1 The primary aim of community capacity building is to encourage and enable individuals, groups and relevant organisations to shape their local area and the provision available. All Members have a vital role to play, working in and with their communities to identify important issues, to help to develop potential solutions, to influence outcomes and to have a positive impact on the quality of life in South Norfolk.

5.2 Members must be able to represent their local community effectively to maintain open communication with the Council.

The minimum commitments all Members are expected to make are:

   a. to keep informed on key local issues and promote their community; and

   b. to be accessible to members of the community to act as a conduit and facilitator for local people and groups to provide information to the Council on local needs and issues.

5.3 Each Member will be allocated a budget (the Members’ Ward Fund) to:

   a. increase levels of community capacity at a very local level;
   b. allow flexible and timely funding of very small initiatives within communities;
   c. enable communities to help themselves, as early as possible
   d. enhance the social, economic or environmental wellbeing of the community.

5.4 Each Member is responsible for approving applications for funding out of their budget. The applications must meet the following criteria:

   i) The payment must be over £100 (or 10% of the overall budget – whichever is the lesser);

   ii) The funding will normally go to a community group, but may be awarded to social enterprises, businesses, charitable organisations or other public agencies if the aims are being met - but **NOT** to an individual.

   iii) The granting of the funding is for a specific activity and will not imply an ongoing commitment by the council nor have a revenue implication;

   iv) The activity being funded:

       a. Has not already taken place (retrospective funding is not permitted);
       b. Could not easily be funded elsewhere
       c. Does not cover costs of routine maintenance
       d. Can demonstrate support in the community
e. Has not received member-led Council funding over the past 2 years.

v) The project or activity enhances the quality of life of people living or working in the Ward and does not unfairly discriminate against people from different backgrounds or religions;

vi) The funding can be used by the community group during the 12 months following receipt;

vii) The funding cannot be used to support any activity more than once in a two year period.

viii) As far as the Member is aware, making the payment to the recipient would not result in fraudulent or illegal activity or any practices which would bring South Norfolk Council into disrepute. This would include ensuring that all recipients have any required permissions in place.

ix) The funding must not replace funding previously provided by other statutory agencies such as the County Council.

x) Funding must not form part of the Parish precept.

5.5 Each Member is responsible for assessing, agreeing and evaluating each initiative against these criteria. Each Member must satisfy himself/herself that the funding of money would not bring the Council into disrepute or result in fraudulent or illegal activity. It is the responsibility of each Member to evaluate the merits of any payments.

5.6 Following submission of the online application form the Finance team will process payment of the grant. From the point that the application and all supporting evidence is received, officers in the Finance team have 5 working days to process the payment.

5.7 In performing this role local Members will be expected to work with a range of partners and stakeholders including town/parish councils, local community groups, town teams, local action groups, and County Councillors.

5.8 Members will be encouraged and supported to undertake a “ward walk” at least once per year from which they will have drawn evidence for the decisions they make about how to allocate their budget.

5.9 Twice a year the Scrutiny Committee will review grants paid in the previous six months and make any necessary recommendations.

6. Identifying other funding streams
6.1 Members should ensure that relevant community groups are aware of other funding that is available and assist if the activity or project they wish to be funded would be more appropriately funded from another source (including other Council funding schemes). Details of both schemes will be available on the council’s website.

6.2 Members should seek to assist organisations in securing funding from other sources if their application does not fit the criteria of either funding schemes or they require additional funds. Advice may be sought from the Community Capacity Team.

7. Interests and Reputation of the Council

7.1 The following process should apply to any applications where Local Members declare an interest (including pecuniary) in the project for which they are making an application.

Community Action Fund

7.2 Where a Member has an interest they will be prompted to supply details on the online application form before they can continue with the grant application.

7.3 The application form will be shared with all Members of the Community Action Fund Panel for approval, prior to final approval from the Director for Communities. Details of the interest will be cited.

7.4 Should concern be expressed about the interest the case it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer, or the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

Members’ Ward Fund

7.5 Where a local Member has an interest (excluding pecuniary) they will be prompted to supply details on the online application form before they can continue with the grant application.

7.6 The Director of Community Services will consider the interest prior to final approval of the application.

7.7 Should concern be expressed about an interest, it will be referred to the Monitoring Officer, or the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

Community Action Fund – declaring an interest in the approval process

7.8 Should a Member of the Community Action Fund Panel have an interest (excluding pecuniary) in a grant application that they are approving, the Member may continue to act in processing the application; however, should they believe the nature of their interest means that they cannot consider the application with an open mind, they will refrain from the process.
7.9 If more than half of the Members of the Community Action Fund Panel have an interest in the application then it will be passed directly to the Director for Communities for consideration.

8. Finance and Recovery of Unused Funding

8.1 All spend will be subject to sufficient funds in the specific budget.

8.2 As stated in the criteria for both funding schemes, funding will not be paid to individuals. For un-constituted bodies that wish to obtain funding from these budgets, they should consider the following:

a) opening a relevant bank or building society account relating to the activity;

b) collaborating with a local organisation that would meet the funding criteria

8.3 The Scrutiny Committee will give consideration to budgets, spend and projections. The Council will incorporate those reports into its financial and performance management and reporting arrangements.

8.4 Any underspend from the Community Action Fund or Members’ Ward Fund of over 10% of the budget amount will be brought back into the Council. This is unless the money has been specifically allocated to a project that has been delayed. In which case the underspend can be carried forward but this will be the exception rather than the norm. Members should aim to spend their full allocation for the year.

8.5 In the first year of a new administration Members will be able to carry forward any underspend from their budget into the following financial year. This accounts for the period of time lost in the run up to elections and training for new Members regarding spending the fund. Members are required to discuss options for spend before budget is carried over into the following financial year.

8.6 Members should make sure that the funded projects and activities are delivered as agreed. Where that is not the case, the Member, together with the Community Capacity Manager will be responsible for resolving disputes and taking action, including withdrawal of funding where appropriate.

8.6 If a grant has been used for the purpose that it was not originally intended, or has not been spent within the given time period then the Community Capacity Manager will follow the Corporate Debt Policy to recover the funds from the community group, alongside the Member who awarded the funds.
Community Action Fund

Online application form submitted → Form automatically sent to CAF@s-norfolk.gov.uk

Democracy Services

Out of Office message goes to applicant to advise that the application will be considered at next CAF Panel → Organise two CAF Panel meetings per year (May/June and late September)

CAF Panel

The panel will make a recommendation on how much and to who the fund should be given. Signed off by Director

Community Capacity Team

All applicants are advised of the outcome of the panel (cc to members)

Payment Control Team

Signed application sent to PaymentControlTeam@s-norfolk.gov.uk → Payment processed within 5 working days
## Member Ward Fund

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### Member

- Online application form submitted

### Payment Control Team

- Form automatically sent to PaymentControlTeam@s-norfolk.gov.uk
  - Check that the form has been completed by the Member
  - Payment processed within 5 working days

### Management Accountant

- Monthly update of the "grants paid" list on SNC website at www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/community-grants

### Scrutiny Committee

- Review grants paid, and make any necessary recommendations
COMMUNITY ACTION FUND PANEL

1. Terms of Reference

To consider and make recommendations to the Director responsible for Communities (or substitute Director if necessary), in relation to the awarding of grants from the Community Action Fund.

2. Membership

The Panel will consist of 3 members of the Council and will be:
- Portfolio Holder for Stronger Communities and Leisure.
- Chairman of the Stronger Communities & Leisure Committee.
- Shadow Portfolio Holder

- The Chairman of the Panel will be the Portfolio Holder for Stronger Communities and Leisure.

3. Substitutes

Named substitutes may attend and vote at the Panel, these will be:

- Portfolio Holder for Stronger Communities and Leisure may be substituted by another Cabinet member.
- Chairman of the Stronger Communities & Leisure Committee may be substituted by the deputy chairman, or if not available, another member from the Committee.
- Shadow Portfolio Holder may be substituted by another member of their party.

The following officers will also be in attendance at Panel meetings, but will not be voting members:
- Director responsible for Communities (or substitute Director if necessary)
- Either the Community Capacity Manager or Early Help & Prevention Manager.

4. Quorum

A minimum of 2 members (either members of the Panel or named substitutes) must be present to transact any business of the Panel.

5. Procedures, protocol and public speaking

- The Chairman of the Panel shall be responsible for maintaining order and the effective conduct of business at meetings of the Panel.
- Members who have put in applications may attend and speak at the Panel at the discretion of the Chairman.
- Members of the public may not attend the Panel.

6. Voting

Voting shall be by a simple majority by show of hands. Voting members may request that their votes are recorded.
Cabinet
27 March 2017
Agenda Item 7

Visitor Economy Initiative

Report of the Senior Economic Growth Coordinator
Cabinet Member: Cllr. John Fuller

CONTACT
Dave Disney 01508-533731
ddisney@s-norfolk.gov.uk
1. Introduction

1.1 The Market Towns Initiative has demonstrated South Norfolk Council’s commitment to supporting local businesses and communities in and around the hinterland of our Market Towns. The evolution of the programme has revealed a further need to coordinate a targeted place based programme and focus effort on the wider business community and the important visitor economy in particular.

This report examines how the new programme will increase visitor numbers, create jobs and boost economic growth with the following outcomes:

- Better definition of the distinctive offer and USP’s for each locality.
- Better understanding and connection of retailers to the visitor economy.
- Collaborative working across district boundaries to improve the tourism offer
- Increased numbers of visitors in our towns and villages; boost to the local economy.
- Increased community awareness of the visitor economy and its importance to the growth of South Norfolk.
- Greater connectivity between localities in marketing the overall offer.
- Enhanced sense of place and identity for residents and visitors.
- Enhanced relationships between South Norfolk Council and local businesses.
- Increase in business support activity and networking events.
- Improved digital capacity of our businesses
- Increased online presence of South Norfolk Businesses
- Coordinated overarching visitor destination offer
- Less reliance on public funds.
1.2 How will we achieve this?

We will:

- Set out a clear action plan for the programme.
- Work with the Funding Manager to focus on tourism grant opportunities.
- Define, coordinate and promote the visitor economy offer via Destination Marketing Organisations.
- Develop new products around themed itineraries with other District Councils and Local Tourism Action Groups.
- Continue to encourage the digital capability of our businesses and enable better online presence.
- Further develop digital interpretation of our heritage assets and Market Towns.
- Measure and review our performance based on the annual Destination Research Tourism review.

2. Background

2.1 The use of New Homes Bonus (NHB) to create the Market Towns Initiative (MTI) had a central principle which was outlined in the Cabinet report of December 2013:

*The MTI is a programme that brings together a mixture of new initiatives, partnerships with others and a re-focussing and joining together of some Council core services. But the purpose is a clear unified one, to bring economic growth and vibrancy to the Market Towns as hubs for the whole of South Norfolk generating wealth which in turn will ensure the wellbeing of residents and provide the capacity to support those in need.*

*South Norfolk’s market towns play an important role for the local economy and the communities they serve; they play an important role in the future growth, and economic and social vibrancy, of the district. South Norfolk Council wants to do all it can to strengthen the economic and cultural base of our market towns but recognises neither it, nor any other single organisation can do this on its own. What we are working with our partners on is a shared vision and approach which brings together stakeholders and expertise. Working with and alongside Town Councils is essential to the success of this initiative, but it is also important that residents and businesses are involved in the initiative.*
2.2 Phase 1. The Market Towns Initiative saw successes since its launch in December 2013, including:

- The establishment of strong Town Teams that have shaped the programme of events and interventions.
- The creation of a strong “brand” for each of the market towns, based on the unique offer they present.
- Better cohesion between community groups and businesses.
- A series of events in the town centres that have drawn in large numbers of visitors.
- The improvement of the street scene, including directional signage and increased street cleaning.
- Capital investment programme including improved public facilities.
- The increase in capacity of high street shops via the Retail Skills Academy.
- Strategic co-ordination of the individual local initiatives.

2.3 Phase 2. An 8th December 2014 Cabinet report identified the following drivers for change:

- The need to deliver growth in our Market Towns in a manner that integrates the new housing areas into the existing town community.
- Need for a greater emphasis on drawing visitors to the towns, and increasing tourism.
- There is a need to widen the scope of the MTI, to include all sectors of economic growth and not solely focus on retail.
- Need for town teams to be sustainable in the long term, with a higher degree of autonomy.
- The need to start “future proofing” our market towns to ensure they evolve to maximise their contribution to economic growth.
- Changes to the Council’s approach to Community Development.
2.4 These drivers led to the following changes:

- Establishment of formal but flexible structures within the Town Teams to deliver locally devised projects.
- Terms of reference to clearly identify South Norfolk Council’s collaborative role within each Town Team.
- Engagement with local businesses in the town and promotion of the Town Teams.
- Internal realignment introduced Head of Growth and Economic Development strategic role.
- Daily operational lead - Market Towns Coordinator role created.
- New Homes Bonus (NHB) top slice £20k seed funding to kick start local projects.
- SNC programme of infrastructure investments in line with core activities.
- Workshops to deliver Phase 2 message and promote best practice collaboration.
- Established close links and support for Visit Norfolk and Visit Norwich to promote local activity.

2.5 These changes enabled the following:

- The complete immersion of the Market Towns Coordinator into the fabric of the teams led to a mutual trust and understanding between the Coordinator and the committees and this we believe has been invaluable in enabling the collaboration to deliver events and projects.

- A campaign on the high streets in the towns themselves saw the Market Towns Coordinator visit all retailers within the towns supporting them in their own development and encouraging membership of the Town Teams.

- A series of workshops to deliver the core messages of Phase 2 to both retailers and town team representatives saw presentations by a number of officers to 65 attendees outlining the strategy and included the release of the marketing toolkits which enabled retailers to utilise the jointly developed branding.
• The annual Independent Retailer Award programme which encouraged customers in each town to vote for their favourite retailer in each of three categories requiring retailers to utilise the skills picked up at the Retail Academy Workshops held during 2014.

• A full programme of town centre events across the district which increased footfall in every town which was widely reported in the local media including the EDP, Local Mercury and independent press. Increases of over 7,000 at Wymondham Carnival, some 3,000 at the Harleston Antiques Market and 2-300 at the St. Nicholas Fair held in the yards in Diss.

• Action for Market Towns benchmarking surveys in each town which showed a district average between 3% and 5% lower than national and regional average shop vacancy rates and at almost 50% across the district, higher than average levels of visitor numbers from outside the town postcodes.

• A 4% overall increase in business turnover from 2014 to 2015 as a result of tourism spending in South Norfolk, according to the Economic Impact report by Destination Research.
3. Current Position/Findings

3.1 A review of both MTI phases has led us to consider what we have learned from the intervention so far, and has highlighted what still needs to be done. In the context of our Economic Growth Strategy 5 year targets, we have considered where we need to concentrate our future efforts for maximum effect and how the next phase should be shaped- and why.

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<th>National Trends</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Opportunity</th>
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<tr>
<td>The UK population is changing in age, ethnic mix and household size, and these demographic shifts have significant implications for retailers.</td>
<td>There are more people aged 60 and above than under-18s. By 2020 the number of over-60s will hit 30 million. (Age UK). Smaller households and singles spend less on food, with smaller shops, more often. (Retail Week)</td>
<td>Retailers will need to change their traditional offer to attract customers. Improve the parking balance to accommodate multiple short stay visits. Make the High Street more of a destination with USP’s to be experienced.</td>
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<td>11% of business that would have traditionally gone through the tills of traders normally associated with the High Street is conducted on the Internet. Only 55% of High Street retailers nationally have an online presence, and less than 40% having a social media profile, the rest are totally invisible.</td>
<td>90% of people under 30 research online before buying non-regular items. This includes review sites, social media and in only 10% of cases actually involves an ecommerce retailer site. (Nominet, UK domain name registry) and (FSB)</td>
<td>Local businesses need to have an online presence to compete. Workshops to improve digital capability and create social media profile. Potential to exploit click and collect opportunities across retail centres.</td>
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Nationally, footfall figures have been falling month on month since the last recession. Some areas of the country are suffering more than others, with shopping malls faring marginally better than traditional High Streets.

UK Markets Index August footfall report shows an overall annual decline for the last year of 13.5%.

To identify the USP’s of our Market Towns, creating a unique experience for each destination. To major on the Heritage and Cultural assets of South Norfolk, the Boudicca Way and the Waveney Valley.

The English tourism industry is booming and is predicted to grow faster than the overall economy every year for the next decade, outpacing the overall economy. The sector had an 11% increase in overnight trips in 2015.

LGA research figures showed there were 103m overnight trips in England in 2015, an 11% increase on 2014, while expenditure jumped 8% to £19.6bn.

To form Local Tourism Action Groups to coordinate and communicate the accommodation, heritage, attraction and retail offer via collaboration of our own and partners in house resources and all DMO’s.

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<th>Local Trends</th>
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<tr>
<td>The impact of the falling footfall is inconsistent across the District and seems to be affected by different drivers in each locality.</td>
<td>Our own surveys find that Harleston is up year on year at + 0.5%, better than most -7% in Loddon, -12% in Diss, (despite the construction work taking place in the Triangle)</td>
<td>With a higher than national average number of visitors (50% of the total) we can work with the visitor economy sector to maximise the opportunities and changing demands of the</td>
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<tr>
<td>We don’t have an accurate figure for the number of businesses who have an online presence.</td>
<td>but at -15% Wymondham has performed worse than the national average of -13%, the consensus of business owners attribute this to the new supermarket situated outside the town centre, drastically affecting footfall.</td>
<td>High Street customer. Improved balance of car parking provision will encourage longer dwell times. Also, to support online activity in attracting visitors to the area by feeding content to our DMO’s.</td>
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<td>Local tourism has increased to Norfolk and is forecast to continue to grow. UK tourism is set to increase further as the staycation trend fuelled by Brexit implications and fear of terrorism in EU increase.</td>
<td>VEA volume and value report shows 3,364,600 trips to South Norfolk resulting in 875,000 overnight stays producing £212,355,170 boost to the local economy.</td>
<td>Opportunity for L- Tags to define the local heritage and cultural offer in Wymondham and Hingham, the Boudicca Way and the Waveney Valley to the South. To develop and market itinerary based themed products to draw visitors to South Norfolk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism employment in South Norfolk only accounts for 7.3% of total employment; however, the County average is 17.3%</td>
<td>Destination Marketing volume and value survey released by VEA</td>
<td>Huge potential to increase better quality employment in the Tourism sector by a coordinated marketing of the offer to increase demand and confidence in the sector which will encourage growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in self-containment within the Market Towns in South Norfolk.</td>
<td>Locality audit reveals low self-containment and high commuting levels to other districts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of availability of available spaces in our car parks and inconsistent tariffs.</td>
<td>Review of car parks and analysis of data, ticket sales and occupation surveys reveal a lower than the ideal 15% availability in Market Towns</td>
<td>Implementation of proposals agreed by members to rebalance provision, reduce space blocking and offer wider choice of payment methods on a district wide basis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2 Key Drivers:

- People demand more unique experiences
- People demand richer cultural and educational based activities
- People seek new experiences in their leisure time – which might be cultural, heritage, outdoors, food and drink, quality shopping ambiance, entertainment and diversion.
- People increasingly prefer to engage with places and seek information in different ways – particularly in a digital and interactive based format
- People are seeking to interpret and interact with places in different and more meaningful ways
- Market Towns are too reliant on unsustainable local footfall
What is driving the strategy?

**Regional**
- LEP's Strategic Economic Plan
- Greater Norwich Local Plan
- LEP's Cultural Strategy

**Local**
- South Norfolk Local Plan
- Economic Growth Strategy
- Neighbourhood Plans

**Operational**
- Tourism Framework
- Business Engagement Strategy
- Skills and CSR Programmes

**Drivers**
- National Trends
- Shift in Consumer Behaviour
- Unsustainable High Streets too reliant on local footfall and low paid jobs.

**Core Priorities**
- Economic Growth, Productivity and Prosperity
- Place, Communities and Environment
- Health, Well-being and Early Help

**Corporate Plan**
- Sustaining the character and supporting the vitality of Market Towns
- Promotion of Tourism/ Focus on Visitor Economy
- Digital Infrastructure supporting online business presence

Visitor Economy Initiative
4. Proposals

4.1 **Visitor Economy Initiative (VEI)** - The VEI is initially a three year place based economic development programme for South Norfolk targeted at key rural population centres and their hinterland to enhance their unique sense of place and destination marketing activity, as well as focusing on specific local business growth and job generation initiatives. It builds on the Market Towns Initiative and overall, aims to improve economic self-containment and community cohesion.

4.2 It is rooted in the Economic Growth Strategy of South Norfolk Council and will collaboratively apply the principles of the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan and Cultural Strategies, the Greater Norwich Local Plan and South Norfolk Local Plans, and will have a direct influence on the outcomes of the Corporate Priorities in our Business Plan.

4.3 The visitor economy has been defined as the food and drink offer, the accommodation offer, the leisure offer, the heritage and culture offer, the retail offer and of course the traditional tourist attractions. There are currently 3,811 jobs in South Norfolk associated with the tourism sector in approximately 1261 businesses and the economic impact of tourism in South Norfolk is £212,355,170. Tourism continues to be a key component of economic growth in the UK and the sector supports 1.6 million jobs across the Country. Last year tourism generated over £62 billion in Gross Value Added revenue to the British economy.

4.4 Following the referendum, the fall in the value of the pound has made holidays in the UK cheaper for overseas visitors. In August 2016, the number of overseas visitors to the UK was 3.8 million, an increase of 2% from the previous year. Overseas visitors spent £2.6 billion in the UK during their visits, an increase of 4% on the previous year. Britain's residents are increasingly choosing domestic holidays also fuelling a boost to UK tourism. The rate of growth to some regions being higher than London, it presents a significant opportunity for places such as East Anglia within close proximity to London. With Norfolk’s tourism industry worth £3.1bn, almost 50% larger than Cornwall’s, the future opportunity for rural based tourism in the County is highly significant and looks to be a strong economic driver.
4.5 Looking ahead England’s tourism industry is predicted to grow faster than the overall economy over the next decade (Source: LGA study 2016). Domestic tourism is predicted to grow 2.9% per annum over the next 10 years outpacing the overall economy which is expected to expand by 2.5%p.a. There are significant opportunities for existing and new enterprises in rural areas; examples include farm based diversification and visitor attractions, promotion of local food and drink, walking and cycling trails and development of the rich environmental, cultural and heritage offer. A District such as South Norfolk has high potential to develop its offer to visitors and residents alike. A significant proportion of the local ‘tourism offer’ is either hidden or untapped. This includes its wealth of important heritage sites located across the District and importantly the historical narrative that could be developed. The cultural and arts offer is also currently understated and could be promoted in a more coordinated and proactive way as well as the farm based and environmental offer and increasing interest in locally produced food and drink.

4.6 Visitors are attracted to places that have a defined or unique offer/product or specific attractions and events. Enhancing a strong ‘sense of place’ with a rich culture and heritage and unique identify wherever possible will help improve the attractiveness of a particular locality. Events and festivals can help also the quality of the built environment.

4.7 In August 2016, the Government published the ‘Tourism Action Plan’, a report setting out the Government’s next steps to make tourism more internationally competitive and resilient post-Brexit, while ensuring that its growth delivers for everyone.

As such, the action plan focuses on the following five areas:

• The tourism landscape: strengthening co-ordination and collaboration
• Skills: boosting apprenticeships and attracting more people to careers in tourism
• Common sense regulation: examining the scope for deregulation
• Transport: making it easier for visitors to explore by rail, bus and coach
• A GREAT Welcome: driving continuous improvements in our visa service

With local authorities playing a key role in the visitor economy due to its devolved nature, there is a need to ensure the way forward for local tourism to take full advantage of the benefits the country has to offer.
What are we going to do?

**Place**
- Improve a ‘sense of place’ through identifying and enhancing unique assets and creating place based narrative around the cultural and heritage offer in Wymondham and Hingham, the environmental draw and importance of the Boudicca Way through the spine of SN, and local food, drink and the experiential offer of the Waveney Valley to the South.
- Increase the level and promotion of key events and festivals activity across the District and beyond via Visit Norwich, Visit Norfolk, Norwich and the Broads.
- Increase the attraction of external public funding and private sector investment in rural areas to enhance the infrastructure and place shaping opportunities.

**People**
- Enhance collaboration across wider geographies to promote a stronger tourism offer e.g. Greater Norwich, Waveney Valley, The Broads, working in partnership with industry and benefiting from wider strategic marketing by Visit East Anglia and Visit Norfolk and neighbouring partner DMO’s.
- Support businesses in increasing their digital capacity and online presence
- Engage a dedicated Coordinator to be operational point of delivery of the initiative.

**Innovation**
- Improve the quality and quantity of the visitor destination offer with targeted marketing at key segment groups and more ‘product led’ activity and campaigns
- Improve the physical and digital infrastructure to support and encourage the growth of locally based enterprises, innovation and higher value job creation
- Increase the ‘digital offer’ and add to the Chronicle project with other interpretation products to engage with and attract visitors and residents
- To develop a Top 100 visitor economy/tourism business list to engage with in order to determine best practice, and then roll out the methodology.

**Enterprise**
- Engage with local enterprises active within the wider Visitor Economy and build stronger, more productive and sustainable businesses
- Develop key metrics to track the performance of the local visitor economy and allow us to measure the direct impact of interventions.
- Support home grown, high quality ‘lifestyle and boutique businesses’ in key niche sectors including food and drink and artisan arts and crafts; promoting the offer to a wide audience.
5. **Action Plan**

5.1 **Provisional project plan and first steps.**

First 12 months:

1. Complete an audit of accommodation providers using online review data to assess the offer (including digital presence/marketing strategy) and identify and define the target areas and audience; using Trip advisor, Booking.com reviews etc.
2. Assess the value of the segments i.e. Visiting friends and family, overseas visitors, business tourism, the grey pound, families, empty nesters and DINK’s (dual income, no kids)
3. Complete a similar audit of the food and drink offer outlets, including cafés, restaurants, and pubs.
4. Complete an audit of food and drink producers in or near the district.
5. Compile lists of the top accommodation, food and drink outlets and food and drink producers to provide an overall Top 100.
6. Create layered heat maps to provide natural trail and itinerary content information.

5.2 Review and analyse the audit research, the Destination Research annual report and pilot project data captured to inform and prioritise a coordinated series of projects for the three year programme which should include:

a. Capitalising and highlighting the potential economic benefits of our main assets; to the south of the district, reinforcing the Waveney Valley message, then showcasing the significance and historical importance of the Boudicca Way through the spine of the district and also developing the important Wymondham and Hingham heritage offer to the north. - *This will provide us with three clear, separate and uniquely significant target areas to focus our intervention and resource.*

b. To devise theme based itineraries to include day, weekend and weeklong products, promoting them through a managed marketing campaign financed separately via a potential L-Tag funding bid or working across district boundaries with our own in house joint resources, to provide a more complete and joined up offer for visitors, pushing relevant content via Visit Norwich, Visit Norfolk, The Suffolk Coast and Waveney Valley, Visit Suffolk and our own social media channels. –*This will create product based activities which will increase visitor numbers to the district, increase footfall to our Market towns and stimulate the visitor economy and encourage growth and better quality jobs to the industry with a more marketing focused approach.*
c. To fully research the opportunity presented by Artisan Craft Markets/Vintage Memorabilia/Antiques and Book Fairs etc. in South Norfolk with provision for start-ups and micro-businesses to have a presence; to explore the possibility of managing or the joint venture operation of a unique product which could be run anywhere in the district to create an activity based draw, not necessarily tied to a specific location. -This will create both a local destination interest but also a regional and even national attraction to the area for those wishing to explore the local produce and craft scene, also creating a potential extra trading day for each market location if held on a Sunday, and will benefit the local economy. It will also provide a low risk foot on the ladder for tentative entrepreneurs.

d. To explore the opportunity of creating cycling hubs, i.e. equipment supplies, pit stop repairs, refreshments, etc. based at leisure centres for example; utilising the numerous cycling events that are already happening in the region to promote a food, drink and appropriate accommodation offer. -This will stretch out and piggy-back on the activity already happening and will encourage more stays and longer visits to South Norfolk; boosting the visitor economy.

e. To further enhance our digital platform offer, by adding to the Chronicle project with a Museum artefact digital interpretation and potentially a retailer offer using the platforms to carry advertising and other local offer information. –This will enhance the visitor experience, add to the overall tourism offer and provide another opportunity for retailers to maximise the important visitor spend.

f. To obtain funding to provide a series of workshops aimed at encouraging smaller business operators to improve their marketing strategy and develop an effective online presence and explore click and collect schemes; utilising best practice adopted and proven by the top 100. This will potentially create higher paid employment opportunities across the sector.

– This will ensure that our retailers and smaller accommodation providers are at least visible to the increasing number of people who research online. It will also promote best practice which will attract a bigger number of visitors, encourage shoppers to our Market Towns, increasing footfall and vibrancy in our high streets. The introduction of click and collect hubs for local businesses will effectively offer a competitive alternative to the widely adopted online supermarket and national multiples.
6. Risks and implications arising

6.1 The risks of not continuing to support our Market Towns include:

- The reduction of footfall and economic growth within the district and its towns.
- The loss of momentum the three years of intervention has gained.
- The wasted opportunity the visitor economy presents.
- South Norfolk performing below County average in terms of tourism jobs.
- The reputation of South Norfolk Council.

6.2 Budget implications:

- Removal of the £20k per town top slice report.
- Coordinator role included in budget.

7. Other options

7.1 We opt to do nothing. This would undermine the three years of NHB investment and send the wrong message to both residents, Town Teams and Businesses in South Norfolk. It could also lead to job losses if we are not seen to be investing in our Market Towns and other localities. It would not encourage inward investment or economic growth and businesses may choose to re-locate to other areas.

7.2 Further to the recommendations of the 9 March Growth, Infrastructure and Environment Committee to pursue the option of actively seeking alternative parking provision potential in our busy Market Towns; this has been passed to officers in the service for consideration and already forms part of the Off Street Parking Proposals agreed by Cabinet in 2016. It was also suggested that Big Sky Developments should consider the question of hotel provision in South Norfolk generally and it’s potential to invest in the sector;
this suggestion will be passed on to the officers in the relevant service. Officers would like to reiterate that the measurement of success of this initiative would be taken from visitor numbers reported annually by Visit Norfolk’s Destination report, any reported increase in web traffic via the DMO’s and the actual number of downloads of our digital trails, Chronicle stories and other products developed within the project.

8. Recommendation

8.1 We recommend that Cabinet approve the programme.
Smoking and Vaping Policy

Report of the HR Specialist
Cabinet Member: Michael Edney

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HR Specialist
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1. Introduction

1.1. Smoking and breathing in second hand smoke has been medically proven to cause a number of illnesses and ill health conditions including lung cancer and heart disease. The NHS States that:

‘Smoking is one of the biggest causes of death and illness in the UK. Every year 100,000 people in the UK die from smoking with many more living with debilitating smoking related illnesses. Smoking increases your risk of developing more than 50 serious health conditions. Some may be fatal and others can cause irreversible long-term damage to your health’

1.2. South Norfolk Council recognises its duties under the Health and Safety at Work Etc Act 1974 and the Smoke free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006 to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of their employees, visitors and users of Council facilities. The Council also recognises its role in in promoting good health and healthier lifestyles across the district, with this in mind, it is proposed to introduce a smoking and vaping policy.

2. Background

2.1. Across the country many public sector premises already have a non-smoking policy in place from local authorities through to the NHS, recognising the importance of promoting the health and wellbeing of staff and visitors. The Council’s staff forum in recognition of this held a ballot for all staff on whether the Council’s sites should become smoke free which resulted in the majority of staff voting in favour of doing so.

2.2. Officers have recently consulted the Council’s Joint Consultative Committee on a proposal to introduce a no smoking and vaping policy on all South Norfolk Council Sites. However the Joint Consultative Committee raised a number of concerns over the proposed policy including how this would be enforced for some staff in certain roles and the potential difficulty of ensuring all visitors/customers compiled.
2.3. Taking on board these concerns a revised policy is attached as Appendix 1. This policy promotes the Council's commitment to health & wellbeing through recommending restricting Council employees, agency workers, contractors and workers from partner agencies from using tobacco or vapers in work time and the location of where they can smoke on certain Council premises. The policy reinforces the Council's position on smoking at work and its commitment to discourage smoking and vaping through breaking the regular dependency on tobacco based products while supporting staff who wish to cease smoking to do so. Removing the ability to smoke during work time will also increase the Council’s productivity.

3. Proposals

3.1. The key points in the proposed policy attached as appendix 1 are as follows;

a) Council employees who currently smoke will be given assistance and support to help cessation.
b) Employees, casuals, agency workers, contractors and staff from partner agencies will not be permitted to take specific smoking/vaping breaks. Smoking/vaping is limited to unpaid lunch breaks as defined by the Working Time Directive.
c) Employees are not permitted to smoke/vape at Council Leisure Centres sites.
d) Employees working at other Council premises may smoke/vape during unpaid lunch breaks in the designated smoking area. Smoking/vaping in an employee’s car on Council premises is not permitted.
e) Flexi- time cannot be used to take smoking breaks.
f) Employees who take an unpaid lunch break off site and who wish to smoke/vape should be as discreet as possible to prevent them being easy identified as a Council worker.
g) Appropriate signage will be displayed on Council grounds, and the SNC website.

4. Recommendation

4.1. Members are asked to approve the attached new Smoking and Vaping Policy which will come into force on 1 April 2017.
Smoking and Vaping Policy

1. Policy Statement

Smoking and breathing in second hand smoke has been medically proven to cause a number of illnesses and ill health conditions including lung cancer and heart disease.

South Norfolk Council recognises its duties under the Health and Safety at Work Etc Act 1974 and the Smoke free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006 to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of their employees, visitors and users of Council facilities. The Council also recognises its role in in promoting good health and healthier lifestyles across the district with this is mind smoking and vaping is restricted for employees and workers. For the purposes of this policy the reference to employees/workers includes all Council employees, agency workers, casual employees, contractors and workers from partner agencies.

1.1 Policy Aims

The policy aims to:

1. Discourage smoking while at work by not permitting employees/workers to take breaks specifically for the purpose of smoking. The Working Time Regulations 1998 provide a statutory right to a rest break of at least 20 minutes for those who work more than six hours per day and in this time employees may smoke or vape as defined within this policy.
2. Outline its commitment to restrict smoking and vaping for its employees, on designated Council premises
3. Promote awareness of the damaging effects of smoking on health and the benefits of not smoking
4. Provide assistance to those employees who currently smoke, to give up smoking

1.2 Restrictions Whilst Working on Council Premises

This policy applies to the following Council owned premises;

1. South Norfolk House
2. Ketteringham Depot
Smoking and vaping is restricted to lunch breaks see section 2.0 and in the designated smoking area or with discretion for those taking lunch breaks off site see section 2.0.

3. Long Stratton Leisure Centre
4. Diss Leisure Centre
5. Wymondham Leisure Centre
6. Hethersett School Leisure Facilities
   All leisure centres are deemed smoke free sites where smoking or vaping on the
   premises is prohibited for all employees. Employees may smoke/vape during
   their lunch breaks see section 2.0.

7. Temporary accommodation
8. ‘Ben Burgess’ bin storage area
9. Diss Business Centre
10. Loddon Business Centre
11. Crafton House
12. Public car parks

Smoking and vaping is restricted to lunch breaks and with discretion for those
taking lunch breaks off site see section 2.0.

1.3 Tobacco Products, Vaping and E cigarettes

All forms of smoking of tobacco and non-tobacco products including:

1. Cigarettes
2. Cigars
3. Pipe smoking
4. Vaping
5. e cigarettes

1.4 Vehicles

1. Smoking is prohibited in Council owned, hired, leased or operated vehicles.
2. Staff are encouraged not to smoke or vape in their own vehicles when driving for
   work purposes, if accompanied by other people e.g. customers, clients or other
   Council staff
3. Staff are prohibited from smoking or vaping in their cars on designated Council
   premises.

2. Smoking on Lunch Breaks

a) Employees who wish to smoke or vape may do so during their unpaid lunch
   break, at South Norfolk House and Ketteringham Depot this must be in the
   designated smoking area. Employees are not permitted to use the Councils’ flex
   time scheme to facilitate smoking breaks. This includes not flexing out for periods of
   time to facilitate a smoking break.

b) Employees taking their unpaid lunch break off-site may smoke/vape discreetly to
   limit them being identified as Council workers. This could be achieved by covering
   identifiable logos or for depot staff by stepping behind a stationary refuse vehicle so
   they are not visible from the road etc.
3. **Fire Safety**

There are some situations where smoking is strictly prohibited due to the high risk of fire or explosion, such as:

1. Areas where fuel including petrol, diesel, flammable gases and hazardous substances are stored and used
2. During refuelling operations
3. Any other places or processes where a similar risk exists

4. **Signage**

Appropriate signs will be displayed as follows:

1. A sign or sticker in each Council vehicle with the international no smoking symbol of at least 70mm in diameter.
2. Appropriate signage as necessary to inform of the smoking restrictions

5. **Support for Smoking Cessation**

For up to 3 months following the implementation of this policy and subject to operational needs and management approval, Council employees who currently smoke will be:

1. Allowed reasonable time off work to attend a recognised smoke cessation programme in consultation with the Council’s Workplace Health Champion
2. Given assistance to pay for smoking cessation products e.g. nicotine replacement therapy

6. **Promotion of this Policy**

All new staff members will be signposted to the Policy on their appointment.

7. **Implementation and Enforcement of this Policy**

1. All staff are encouraged to ‘challenge’ people who do not observe the Councils Smoking and Vaping Policy.
2. You may be fined for not complying with the requirements of the Smoke free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006 i.e. by smoking in a place where smoking is prohibited, including smoking in buildings, an enclosed place or in a work vehicle.
3. Disciplinary action will also be taken for breaches of this policy this can include taking specific smoking breaks, defacing or the removal of any signs displayed on buildings or in vehicles.
4. Failure to observe any specific smoking related restrictions for fire safety reasons may be considered to be a gross misconduct.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Contractors</th>
<th>Onsite Partner agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal disciplinary procedures will apply</td>
<td>Informal intervention. Referral to agency. Serious breaches may result in withdrawal of offer of work</td>
<td>Client Officers are to ensure that contractors are aware of any smoking prohibitions and monitor contractors to ensure compliance</td>
<td>Referral to appropriate manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains effective.
Advice Note on Proposals for Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing

Report of the Senior Planning Officer
Cabinet Member: Cllr John Fuller, The Economy and External Affairs

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1. Introduction

1.1 The 24 October 2016 Cabinet considered a report on the update of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the South Norfolk Local Plan which included the possibility of preparing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Self- and Custom-Build Housing. Subsequently, the 21 November 2016 Planning Policy and Regulation Policy Committee considered a report on the possible scope of various SPDs, which concluded that Self- and Custom-Build be developed as an Advice Note, rather than a formal SPD. In addition, the 5 December 2016 Cabinet considered a report on the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register, which has established how the register is operated in South Norfolk.

1.2 The Advice Note, attached at Appendix A, draws together in one place a range of information on from various sources relating to the register, planning policy, development management, and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 (S106) contributions. The intention is to make it easier for those proposing a self-build or custom-housebuilding scheme to navigate the available information, which is currently distributed across the different sections of the Council’s website, and to highlight various issues to help prospective self-builders bring forward proposals which accord with the Council’s requirements.

2. Background

2.1 The Government has been keen for some years to encourage an increased proportion of housing development to come forward as self- or custom-build units. The Council is a strong supporter of self- and custom-building, as evidenced by it being chosen by the Government to be one of the 11 Vanguard authorities on self-build in 2014. The Council is keen to work with landowners and developers to increase the number of custom- and self-build dwellings permitted and delivered in the district as part of an overall increase in housing delivery.

2.2 Various pieces of legislation covering self- and custom-build have been enacted which make some specific requirements of local authorities. These include the requirements to keep a register of those seeking a serviced plot, requirements to permit a sufficient number of plots that could be delivered as self-build within given timescales, and requirements to consider self-build across other functions and activates of the Council. The importance of self-build has been re-emphasised through the recently published Housing White Paper ‘Fixing our broken housing market’ (February 2017). The White Paper notes that this sector can provide quickly-delivered, high-quality (sometimes innovative) homes, that better meet people’s needs and provides low-risk opportunities
for small builders; it goes on to set out various measures to improve access to finance and land for potential custom- and self-builders.

3. Proposals

3.1 Various aspects of self- and custom-Building are already covered by information that is available on the Council’s website; this Advice Note aims to bring the information together in one place in an easy-to-follow format. Broadly the Note covers:

- Where/how to register interest in acquiring a serviced, self-build plot;
- The relevance of the Council’s Local Plan policies and ensuring the proposals achieve a high quality of sustainable development;
- Ensuring that there is a balance between allowing self-builders to tailor homes to suit their requirements and maintaining a high standard of design;
- Advice on claiming the CIL exemption for self-Build;
- Highlighting other considerations which may be useful to consider as part of the process of developing a proposal and planning application.

3.2 As an Advice Note, rather than a formal SPD, the contents can be updated relatively simply to reflect changes in circumstances: for example, should the exemption from CIL change as part of the wider CIL review being undertaken by Government, this could be reflected in the Advice Note by bringing an update back to the relevant Committee(s).

3.3 The Advice Note will have been considered by the Council’s Regulation and Planning Policy Committee on 20 March 2017 and their views and recommendations will be reported verbally to Cabinet.

4. Risks and implications arising

4.1 As the Advice Note is pulling together information which is already available in the public domain, there are not considered to be any risks arising from its publication. The intention is for the note to guide prospective self-builders to the available information with the ultimate aim of them being able to achieve higher quality proposals which accord with the Council’s requirements.
Government’s Housing White Paper notes (paragraph 3.18) that ‘if we do not believe local authorities are taking sufficient action to promote opportunities for custom-building and self-building, we will consider taking further action including possible changes to legislation’; as such an Advice Note which helps self- and custom-builders bring forward suitable proposals could assist in meeting the Government’s aspirations.

5. Other options

5.1 The main options are (a) to pursue a more formal Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) or (b) not to produce either the Advice Note or SPD.

5.2 As noted in the report, the aim of the Advice Note is to pull together a range of information into a single, easy-to-follow format which is also relatively straightforward to update as circumstances change. The Advice Note does not make any additional requirements of potential self-builders, but does seek to guide them towards making suitable proposals that meet with the Council’s exiting requirements. Because the requirements made by Government via recent legislation are likely to be met through existing mechanisms, principally the continued permitting a significant numbers of smaller, windfall sites across the District, a more formal SPD is no longer considered necessary, and as stated above in para 1.1, this was agreed by the Planning Policy and Regulation Policy Committee in November 2016. As such, the Advice Note is considered to strike a suitable balance between relying on the information that is already currently available and putting that into a more useable format.

6. Recommendation

6.1 That Cabinet:
   • Agree the ‘Advice note on proposals Custom- and Self-Build Housing (March 2017)’, attached as Appendix A, for publication on the ‘Custom and Self Build Homes’ page of the Council’s website;
   • Authorise the Director of Growth & Localism, in consultation with the Leader, to finalise any desired wording changes prior to publishing the Advice Note.
Advice Note on proposals for Custom and Self-Build Housing (March 2017)

1. Background

1.1. The Government has put in place a series of Acts and Regulations which require Local Authorities to support increasing the number of developments which come forward as custom and self-build properties. South Norfolk Council was part of the national Vanguard Project for delivering self-build and it is keen to support appropriate proposals.

1.2. Self- and custom-build can cover a broad spectrum, from people undertaking self-build projects themselves for affordability reasons (generating so-called ‘sweat equity’) to those wanting 'aspirational' homes. There are various types of potential self-build, including (1) individuals or associations of individuals applying for their own self-build plot(s), (2) land owners/developers providing plots for sale either as standalone self-build developments or (3) as part of a larger mixed tenure development or (4) affordable self-build units on ‘exceptions’ sites. The broad principles for these types of development (suitable locations, criteria against which applications will be assessed, affordable housing requirements etc.) are already covered under a range of adopted Local Plan policies.

1.3. For the purposes of this Advice Note, custom and self-build dwellings share the same definition1 and the terms are used interchangeably. The practical difference is that custom-build is where a person commissions a specialist developer to help to design, build and deliver their own home, while self-build is where a person is more directly involved in delivering and constructing their home themselves (for example, doing their own brick-laying and plumbing).

1.4. This Advice Note aims to highlight some of the key issues that need to be taken into account when someone is considering/proposing a custom-build development and signposts useful information which is already available on the Council's website, with direct links to relevant pages.

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1 Government definition from the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended): ‘Self build and custom housebuilding’ means the building or completion by - a) Individuals; b) associations of individuals; or c) persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, of houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals. But it does not include the building of a house on a plot acquired from a person who builds the house wholly or mainly to plans or specifications decided or offered by that person'.

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2. Registering your interest in a self-build plot

2.1. In line with the Government’s requirements, the Council keeps a register of those people interested in acquiring a serviced plot for self-build development within South Norfolk, known as the ‘self-build and custom housebuilding register’. Currently most people register as individuals, although groups of individuals can also register as an association. At 30 October each year the Council will take the number of people who have been added to the register in the previous 12 months and this will form the basis of the requirement the Council will address over the following three years. At 30 October 2016, 112 people were on the register, and the Council will therefore need to ensure sufficient plots that could be used for self–build are granted permission by 30 October 2019; these will need to be serviced plots or plots which can, in the opinion of the Council, be provided with the services before the permission expires.

2.2. The Council applies ‘local connection criteria’, meaning that the register is in two parts; those who meet the local connection criteria are on Part 1 whilst others are in Part 2. The Government requires Councils to ensure that sufficient plots that could be delivered as self-build are permitted to meet the numbers on Part 1 of the Register (but not Part 2). At present the Council makes no charge for being on the register and whilst the registration form (which is used by several Norfolk authorities) asks about the budget available to the self-builder for delivering the self-build, it does not currently use this as a criterion for being on the register. Full details of the local connection criteria and how to be added to the register are on the self-build page of the website.

3. Location of proposals

3.1. The Government and the Council are keen to promote self-build development within the overall framework of achieving sustainable development. Proposals will need to be in accordance with national and local policy and the fact that the proposal is for self-build will be a material consideration and given appropriate weight in the planning balance when making a decision. Whilst the registration form asks a number of questions about the type of plots and property being sought by those registering, the Council is
not required to match the suitable sites that come forward with those requests; however, the Council will seek to meet self-builders’ requirements where these are consistent with other local and national policies

3.2. The Council has an adopted Local Plan which sets Development Boundaries for a wide range of settlements across the district. The majority of these can be found in the Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document, whilst Long Stratton and Wymondham are covered by separate Area Action Plans. The Council is broadly supportive of sites coming forward within those Development Boundaries. Proposals within boundaries will need to be considered in the context of a range of criteria, including (but not limited to): design, access, residential amenity, impact on environmental and heritage assets, and drainage/flood risk. The Local Plan also details circumstances where dwellings can be located outside Boundaries, such as where they are part of the conversion of an existing building or replace a current dwelling. A range of policies in the Council’s Development Management Policies document will be relevant, depending on the location and nature of the specific proposal. In terms of assessing proposals, potential applicants may find it useful to consider the pre-application service offered by the Council. Through the pre-application service the Council will alert all of those proposing smaller residential developments, of up to 5 units, of the possibility of bringing some or all of the site forward as self-build. For larger developments the Council will also encourage promoters to consider self-build as part of the overall mix of properties.

3.3. In order to provide a variety of development types in South Norfolk, the Council has made a number of smaller allocations in the Site Specific Allocations document, many of which are still undeveloped and which could be particularly suitable for self-build. It is possible that some (or parts of some) larger allocations or existing sites with outline planning permission may also be suitable for an element of self-build. The Council is currently working on a new Local Plan, jointly with Broadland District and Norwich City Councils, and potential self-builders may wish to put sites forward to be considered for inclusion in the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan. In addition to Local Plans, a number of South Norfolk parish councils have already undertaken Neighbourhood Plans; a Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan, but could allocate additional sites, make amendments to the development boundary or introduce a new policy to facilitate self-build. Consequently self-builders may wish to contact the relevant parish council to find out whether a Neighbourhood Plan is being considered; contact details can be found on the Town and Parish Councils page of the South Norfolk website.
3.4. The Council publishes annually a list of all planning permissions which have yet to be completed, called the ‘Residential Land Availability’ (RLA). This is available on the Monitoring section of the Planning Policy page of the Council’s website. The RLA includes details of numerous smaller sites (set out by parish) which may provide a source for those seeking available and suitable locations. Details of what each permission is for can be found by using the application reference at the Council’s online applications page.

4. Design

4.1. Many self-build applications will come forward in the same way as those for other housing and the same requirements will be made in terms of achieving an appropriate design. However, the benefits of self-build include delivering properties tailored to the requirements of the self-builder and potentially providing a greater variety of design. Advice on key considerations can be found in the Development Management Policies part of the Local Plan and the South Norfolk Place-Making Guide. Where self-build units form part of a larger scheme, it may well be useful to include a requirement for a design code at the outline permission stage, so that the constituent units come forward in a coherent (but not prescriptive) manner and achieve the requirement of Development Management Policy DM 3.8 ‘to achieve high quality design and positive improvement from all development’. A design code could include specifying the minimum requirements in terms of plot form, density, minimum/maximum floorspaces, building line/frontages, parking arrangements, massing and specific building/townscape features etc. Further advice can be sought through the Council’s pre-application process.

4.2. An alternative approach may be to have a more specific design code and overriding vision document for a group of houses to be designed to have a more harmonious appearance as a distinctive group, but with freedom to selectively ‘pick and mix’ design elements to meet individual plot purchaser/self-builders requirements at the build stage. Such an approach could be design led and coordinated by an architectural practice for example and may be desirable in areas of greater contextual sensitivity such as being close to listed buildings or conservation areas, or being very visible within areas of open countryside.
5. **Community Infrastructure Levy**

5.1. One of the ways in which self-build housing is supported is through exemption from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This exemption is not automatically applied and needs to be claimed by the applicant before the commencement of development. The exemption cannot be retrospectively claimed after construction of the house has started. There are two main considerations to ensure that the CIL exemption can successfully be claimed:

- **Phasing** - If the development includes more than one dwelling, then either the self-build exemption needs to be claimed for all of the self-build houses before any of the development is started, or the development needs a phasing condition as part of the planning permission, so that each self-build unit is a separate phase and the need for an exception is not triggered until development of that phase is ready to commence;

- **Evidence** - The potential evidence which must be provided to claim the exemption is set out below:

5.2. In terms of phasing the development, advice can be sought from the Council’s Planning Officers through the pre-application process or as part of the determination of the planning application itself. The Council would strongly encourage consideration be given to this issue before the submission of an application. In particular, consideration will need to be given as to whether the implementation of shared infrastructure, such as an access road, would need to be phased separately before any of the dwellings are commenced.

5.3. In terms of the evidence that is needed to claim the self-build exemption from CIL, this is set out by Government. In summary, this must include:

- Proof of the date of completion – a copy of the building completion or compliance certificate for the home issued by Building Control
- Proof of ownership – a copy of the title deeds (freehold or leasehold)
• Proof of occupation of the dwelling as the applicant’s principal residence – a Council Tax certificate – and two further proofs of occupation of the home as a principal residence (a utility bill, bank statement or confirmation that the applicant is on the local electoral roll).

In addition to the above, applicants must also provide a copy of one of the following:

• An approved claim from HM Revenue and Customs under ‘VAT431: VAT refunds for DIY housebuilders’; or
• A Specialist Self Build Warranty; or
• An approved Self Build Mortgage from a bank or building society.

5.4. Further details can be found on the [CIL pages](#) of the Council’s website, which are updated regularly.

5.5. The Government’s Housing White Paper ‘Fixing our broken housing market’ (February 2017) has committed to ‘ensure the exemption from the Community Infrastructure Levy for self-build remains in place while longer term reforms to the system of developer contributions are being explored’.

6. Other contributions to infrastructure

6.1. Whilst self-build units are not required to pay any CIL, the overall development may trigger other infrastructure requirements. Amongst other things, those proposing larger schemes will need to consider whether there will be a need to provide affordable housing units, and children’s play space/recreational space. The Council can provide guidance on the up-to-date requirements at the time an application is proposed to be submitted. The Council will work with the applicants to ensure that requirements do not undermine the viability of the development.

South Norfolk Council
March 2017
## CABINET CORE AGENDA 2017

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- Procurement Strategy
- Commercialisation Strategy
- Commercial Property Strategy
- Residential Strategy
- Strategic and Annual Audit Plans
- Code of Corporate Governance

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Key decisions are those which result in income, expenditure or savings with a gross full year effect of £100,000 or 10% of the Council's net portfolio budget whichever is the greater which has not been included in the relevant portfolio budget, or are significant (e.g. in environmental, physical, social or economic) in terms of its effect on the communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions in the area of the local authority.