CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 26 March 2012 at 9.00 a.m.

Members Present:

Cabinet:  Councillors  J Fuller (Chairman)
          Y Bendle, D Bills, K Kiddie, G Wheatley, M Wilby

Non-Appointed:  Councillors  D Blake, T Blowfield, F Ellis, D Goldson, M Gray,
                 L Hornby, W Kemp, N Legg, T Lewis, A Palmer,
                 B Riches, R Savage, B Spratt, G Walden, K Weeks.

Officers in Attendance:  The Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive, the Director of Development and Environment, the Corporate Business Manager, the Design and Landscape Manager, the Financial Services Manager, the Housing and Advice Services Manager, the Planning Policy Manager, the Marketing Officer, the Planning Officer, the Property Consultant and the Scrutiny Officer

2052 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following member declared a prejudicial interest in the matter listed below and left the room whilst the item was discussed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Minute No.</th>
<th>Nature of Interest</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr M Wilby</td>
<td>2054</td>
<td>Land owner</td>
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2053 MINUTES

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Monday 6 February 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Planning Policy Manager which sought Cabinet approval with regard to sites, which would form part of the next consultation stage of the Council’s Site Specific Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD).

The Chairman introduced the report, explaining that the site specific policies and allocations would be dealt with in two distinct phases. The first of those phases was made up of smaller settlements in the more rural areas; the second phase would be made up of larger towns and settlements closer to Norwich and would be reported to the April meeting of the Cabinet.

The Planning Policy Manager advised members that this was a crucial stage in planning policy. He stressed that each site put forward had been assessed in accordance with the assessment framework previously agreed by Cabinet.

Cabinet was informed that the Local Planning Steering Group had considered all the allocations at its meeting on 12 March and had raised a number of queries and issues of concern. Since that meeting, officers had revisited each of the sites that had been queried and responded as follows:

**Bergh Apton**
Officers suggested that both sites be shown as preferred options for housing allocations, as one site alone was not enough to fulfil the requirements of the Joint Core Strategy.

**Brooke**
Officers had re-examined the proposed development sites and recommended that the size of the allocation needed to be reduced. A further site in the village had been re-examined and following discussion with Highways, an additional modest allocation was proposed.

**Broome**
Having re-examined the assessment results for the proposed site, officers did not consider that the proposed development would be detrimental to the countryside.

**Thurton**
The assessment framework showed that the proposed development was constrained, largely due to evidence received from Norfolk County Council. Officers did not propose a change to the allocation.

**Wortwell**
Officers had re-examined the assessment results for an alternative site but most of the site fell within a flood zone and had been rejected under the assessment criteria and in accordance with national guidance.

Cllr D Blake, as Chairman of the Local Development Policy Steering Group confirmed that he was satisfied with the officers’ responses.
During discussion, Cllr W Kemp, Chairman of the Planning Committee, stressed the need for consistency throughout the process. Cllr M Gray suggested that some of the allocations in the first tranche of sites might be unnecessary, following the assessment of the sites in the Norwich Policy Area and main growth locations. The Chairman confirmed that there were no development proposals in some of the smaller, rural areas for those very reasons.

In response to queries from members, the Planning and Housing Policy Manager confirmed that he was happy to go through individual site allocations with members outside of the meeting. The Chief Executive stressed the importance of members understanding the assessment criteria on which sites were judged.

**The Decision**

**RESOLVED:**

To agree the sites shown as preferred options in the appendices to the report as the Council’s preferred options for settlements in the “service village”, “other village” and “small rural communities” categories of the Joint Core Strategy’s settlement hierarchy for the rural area, noting that these sites will be included in the preferred options consultation document, which will be published in June 2012.

**The Reasons for the Decision**

To ensure planned and co-ordinated future development, allowing residents to be involved in shaping communities.

**2055 SOUTH NORFOLK PLACE MAKING GUIDE – DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION**

**The subject of the decision**

Members considered the report of the Design and Landscape Manager which summarised the work undertaken in the preparation of the South Norfolk Place-Making Guide, and sought approval of the draft for consultation.

The Conservation, Design and Landscape Manager presented the guide to members, explaining that the purpose of the guide was to promote and secure good quality design in new development. He advised Cabinet that following consultation with members, it had already been decided to reduce the number of photographs of churches and add more photographs of recent developments. There would be a greater emphasis on the balance between traditional and contemporary design and photographs of design winning developments would also be included.

The Chairman thanked all those involved in the production of the document, reminding members that following consultation, the document would evolve in to a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and become a material planning consideration.
Members praised the content and quality of the document and Cllr M Gray suggested that the completed guide would be worthy of a Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) award.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To approve the illustrated draft guide for the purposes of consultation, subject to minor amendments.

The Reasons for the Decision

To promote and secure good quality design in new development.

2056 UPDATE ON CHANGES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCING

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Financial Services Manager, which drew members’ attention to a number of key challenges affecting local government financing, over the coming year.

The Financial Services Manager outlined the key areas of her report to members, drawing attention to the project timetable at Appendix A of the report. The Chairman stressed the need to consider the issues in a holistic way, planning ahead to maximise the opportunities and minimise the risks.

In response to queries, the Chairman stressed that there was no guarantee that the Council would be part of the Government’s proposals for a pilot programme to administer universal credits. He reminded members that the Council’s duty was to safeguard its most vulnerable residents; not all of the initiatives were about making the Council money. With regard to borrowing monies, he agreed that the Council would need to give consideration to the risks involved and would do so as part of the budget process, when required.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To endorse the approach being taken with regard to changes to Local Government Financing.

The Reasons for the Decision

To plan for the future, maximising the benefits and minimising the risks.

2057 MARKETING STRATEGY

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Corporate Business Manager, which presented members with the Council’s Marketing Strategy for the period 2012-15.
The Corporate Business Manager presented her report to members, explaining the aim of the Strategy was to ensure that the Council was presented in a clear, accurate, consistent and recognisable manner.

The Chairman stressed the importance of the Strategy which was last reviewed back in 2007, referring to the need for the Council to be more proactive, adjusting its processes to take account of the changes to the media environment.

Referring to paragraph 5 of the Strategy, first bullet point, some members objected to the sentence “Members are elected to support Council work”, suggesting the words “influence and” be added after “to” and before “support”. Cllr M Gray also commented that the sentence made no account for the role of the opposition. The Chairman agreed that minor amendments were required.

In response to a query from Cllr T Lewis, the Corporate Business Manager explained that the effectiveness of the Strategy would be monitored through the annual marketing plan. Performance measures would be monitored through the Corvu system, and would be revised accordingly.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To approve the Marketing Strategy, subject to minor amendments.

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure that the Council’s services are promoted in a consistent and effective manner.

2058 SOUTH NORFOLK HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Housing and Advice Services Manager, which presented members with the South Norfolk Housing Allocations Scheme.

The Housing and Advice Services Manager explained that the Greater Norwich Home Options Partnership along with the joint allocations scheme would end on 31 March 2012 and that the Council would need to have its own allocations scheme in place. Members were advised that the new scheme was more user friendly and was clearer with regard to eligibility.

In response to queries, members were informed that residents of supported accommodation who were ready to move to independent accommodation would be given a silver band rating. This had provoked much discussion during the workshop consultations, but it had been felt that a gold band rating might deter individuals from considering all of the options, such as private rented accommodation. This was a different approach to that previously taken and would involve encouraging and assisting the individuals involved.

With regard to a query from Cllr T Lewis, members were advised that the Final Code of Guidance on Allocations would soon be issued by the Department for
Communities and Local Government (CLG). This document had already been out for consultation and the new scheme had taken in to account all of its recommendations.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To approve and adopt the South Norfolk Housing Allocations Scheme.

The Reasons for the Decision

To comply with legislation and offer choice and transparency to customers with a housing need and local connections.

2059 DISS BUSINESS CENTRE

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Corporate Asset Manager, which sought Cabinet approval to continue with the lease agreement for the Diss Business Centre until 2023.

Cllr G Wheatley commended the report to members.

Cllr K Weeks was not impressed with the record of losses and small profits made over the years and suggested that it was time to terminate the lease agreement. He referred to ongoing maintenance costs and the recent expenditure of replacement windows.

The Chairman stressed the need to assist smaller businesses and encourage growth during the present economic climate. Cllr Wheatley reminded members that one of the Council’s Corporate Priorities was to support a thriving local economy and Cllr D Bills added that the Council was currently leading the way in its support for start up businesses.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To approve the continuation of the lease to the end of the term in 2023.

The Reasons for the Decision

To continue to support start up and small businesses, in line with the Council’s corporate objectives.
2060 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Scrutiny Officer, which detailed the recommendations from Scrutiny Committee, following consideration of the call–in of “Community Empowerment” Delivering the Localism Agenda in South Norfolk.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To endorse the resolution of the Scrutiny Committee regarding the call in of “Community Empowerment” Delivering the Localism Agenda in South Norfolk.

The Reasons for the Decision

To deliver a key element of the Localism Act 2011

2061 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members noted the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda.

2062 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).

2063 CONTRACT FOR THE DISPOSAL OF GREEN WASTE

The subject of the decision

Members considered the exempt report of the Environment Manager, which advised Cabinet of the process and outcome of the retender of the Green Waste Disposal contract and sought approval to award the contract to the most financially advantageous bid.

The Environment Manager responded to a number of queries on points of detail.
The Decision

RESOLVED: To
1. Agree the award of the green waste disposal contract as outlined in the report;
2. Note that the remainder may be offered to other bidders, subject to confirmation of price under separate contract.

The Reasons for the Decision

To secure a competitive disposal service, whilst making savings to the Council.

2064 HARLESTON – PROPOSED PURCHASE OF INVESTMENT PROPERTY

The subject of the decision

Members considered the exempt report, detailing the proposed purchase of investment properties in Harleston.

The Property Consultant outlined the salient points of the report to Cabinet and members indicated their support for the proposals.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To approve the proposed purchases under the Rules of Financial Governance.

The Reasons for the Decision

To support the investments in line with the Council’s Economic Development Strategy and corporate priorities.

(The meeting concluded at 10.59 am)

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Chairman