CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 25 March 2013 at 9.00 a.m.

Members Present:

Cabinet: Councillors J Fuller (Chairman)

Y Bendle, D Bills, K Kiddie, G Wheatley
and M Wilby (for part of the meeting)

Non-Appointed: Councillors P Allen, T Blowfield, M Edney, C Foulger, M Gray,
N Legg, T Lewis, L Neal and R Savage

Also in Attendance: Mr R Earl – Chairman of Broome Parish Council
Mr T Robson – Politics Student
4 members of the public

Officers in Attendance: The Chief Executive (S Dinneen), the Deputy Chief Executive
(A Radford), the Director of Environment and Housing (A Jarvis), the
Director of Growth and Localism (T Horspole), the Head of Asset
Management (R Garfoot), the Head of Finance (D Lorimer), the
Conservation, Design and Landscape Manager (D Edelston), the
Planning Policy Manager (A Nicholls), the Senior Planning Officer (S
Marjoram) and the Conservation Officer (P Whitehead)

2168 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that representations had been made with regard to item 5, the Site Specifics Allocations and Policies Document (Local Plan), late on Friday, relating to the proposals at Trowse and the position regarding objections received from Norfolk County Council’s Children’s Services. Officers were currently attempting to contact relevant officers at Norfolk County Council and the land owners concerned to ascertain the current position. He therefore proposed that this item was not considered until after 11am and he apologised for any inconvenience this might cause members of the public in attendance.

It was noted that Cllr D Blake was currently in hospital having recently undergone surgery. Members joined the Chairman in wishing him a speedy recovery.
The Chairman welcomed Theo Robson, a politics student from the Notre Dame High School, to the meeting.

2169 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared interests in the matters listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Minute No.</th>
<th>Nature of Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Cllr J Fuller</td>
<td>2176</td>
<td>'Pecuniary Interest' as Director of Sentury Ltd which currently farms land at Broome Heath at sites 440b and 440c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr T Lewis</td>
<td>2176</td>
<td>'Other Interest' as resident of Trowse.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Cllr Fuller took no part in the debate regarding sites at Broome and Cllr G Wheatley took the Chair for this part of discussions

2170 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 4 February 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2171 LONG STRATTON AREA ACTION PLAN (AAP) PREFERRED OPTIONS – REGULATION 18, PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Director of Growth and Localism, which presented Cabinet with the full Long Stratton Area Action Plan Preferred Options Document and Interim Sustainability Report, as a basis for a consultation, to commence in May 2013.

The Chairman referred to the rise in traffic volumes through Long Stratton and the associated environmental impacts and safety concerns. He felt that the proposals provided an excellent opportunity for Long Stratton to expand in a sustainable manner, improving quality of life, providing job opportunities, whilst delivering the much needed bypass.

The Director of Growth and Localism drew attention to the identification of a bypass corridor, which was based on the previously approved Norfolk County Council route to the east of the village, with a number of changes which would allow more development to be accommodated between the village and the bypass. In response to queries, he explained that the proposed bypass did not extend in to Hempnall; this would add considerable expense to the proposal and would require further negotiations with different land owners. Cllr M Gray had noted that reference was made in the consultation Area Action Plan document to the requirement of a roundabout at the Hempnall crossroads (Chapter 5, Housing and Delivering a Bypass). Cllr Gray requested that the roundabout was explicitly referred to, where relevant, throughout the document, and was not simply referred to as “improvements”. Officers agreed to make the required amendments.
The Senior Planning Officer outlined the two potential options on which the consultation was based. Option 1 proposed 1800 new homes in one location, on land to the east. Option 2 proposed 1200 new homes to the east of the village with a further 600 to the North West. Members noted that there were advantages and disadvantages to both options. There was a benefit to all the allocations being placed in the one location, providing an clear link to the proposed bypass. The alternative option which would include a combination of sites would provide the additional benefit of a direct link road between the A140 and Swan Lane and would create more choice and competition, in accordance with the NPPF, potentially leading to better value for residents. The Senior Planning Officer explained that if the housing allocations were split, then so too would the proposed employment areas. Both options proposed an extension to Tharston Industrial Estate, involving the relocation of Stratton Motor Company, which in turn would allow for a new access on to the bypass from the east.

The Chairman referred to the additional option for 1800 units to the east of the village, plus an additional 600 units to the north-west, referred to in the Area Action Plan. The Senior Planning Officer assured members that he had examined this alternative and was satisfied that this was not a reasonable alternative to Options 1 or 2, at this stage.

Cllr T Blowfield, local member for Long Stratton thanked officers for their work and was pleased to report that both he and the other local member for Stratton, Cllr A Pond, had been fully briefed throughout the process. He broadly welcomed both options proposed and he looked forward to the consultation process.

The Senior Planning Officer explained that all local parish councils would be fully briefed, and officers would be available to attend parish council meetings if necessary. The consultation would commence some time in May, the exact date to be confirmed.

The Decision

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the Preferred Options consultation document, subject to minor amendment and that officers proceed with the public consultation of at least eight weeks, commencing May 2013;
2. To delegate authority to the Director of Growth and Localism to make necessary minor changes to the document prior to publication for consultation.

The Reasons for the Decision

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

Other Options Considered

None
2172 LONG STRATTON CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Conservation Officer, which sought approval for the revision of the Long Stratton Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan.

Cllr K Kiddie commended the report to Cabinet, explaining the importance of both the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan and the Long Stratton Area Action Plan, running in parallel.

Officers explained that the work had been undertaken in consultation with colleagues in Planning Policy and they drew attention to the proposed amendments and the revised conservation boundary.

The Chairman praised officers for a very comprehensive piece of work, and members supported the proposed amendments.

The Decision

RESOLVED:

1. To note the comments received from the consultation exercise and the associated officer responses at Appendix A of the report;

2. TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL the Long Stratton Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan, as amended.

The Reasons for the Decision

To provide a sound basis and analysis of the area to assist with development proposals.

Other Options Considered

None

2173 NON-DOMESTIC RATES – AUTHORISATION OF BAD DEBT WRITE-OFF

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Head of Finance, which sought authorisation from Cabinet to write off an uncollectable non-domestic rate debt.

Cllr G Wheatley outlined the report to members, explaining the importance of the debt being written off before 1 April 13, allowing the lost income to be borne by the national non-domestic rate pool. Members noted that should the debt be written off
after 1 April 2013, under the business rates retention scheme, the Council would effectively bear 40% of the cost.

The Decision
RESOLVED: To approve the write-off of the bad debt, as detailed in the report.

The Reasons for the Decision
To ensure that the lost income can be recovered from the national non-domestic rate pool.

Other Options Considered
None

2174 ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2013/16

The subject of the decision
Members considered the report of the Head of Asset Management, which presented Cabinet with an updated version of the Council’s Asset Management Plan.

Cllr G Wheatley referred to the updated Plan as a most comprehensive document and he briefly outlined its contents. Members noted a correction to the report at paragraph 2.2.3; the word “indemnify” to be replaced with “identify”.

The Chairman cited the document as an excellent example of the Council’s organised and professional approach to maintaining its assets. He was proud that the Council had achieved over a 6% return on its investment assets for the period April – December 2012.

Discussion followed with regard to the membership of the Asset Management Group. The Chairman explained that this Group consisted of officers and Cllr G Wheatley as the relevant portfolio holder and local members were invited to attend when necessary. The Chairman reminded members that the development of the Asset Management Plan had involved a joint informal meeting of both the Asset Management Plan Group and the Finance Resource Audit and Governance Committee and he felt this arrangement had worked well. He rejected suggestions that the status of the Asset Management Group required consideration.

The Decision
RESOLVED: To approve the draft Asset Management Plan, subject to minor amendment.

The Reasons for the Decision
To ensure an integrated, sustainable and risk based approach to asset management, seeking optimal use of assets.

Other Options Considered

- To continue with the existing plan

2175 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members noted the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda

2176 SITE SPECIFIC ALLOCATIONS AND POLICIES DOCUMENT (LOCAL PLAN) CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO PREFERRED OPTIONS

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Director of Growth and Localism which presented Cabinet with the proposed significant amendments to the Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document Preferred Options. These changes had been proposed following the analysis of representations received during the consultation on the site specific allocations in autumn 2012, and other factual updates. Cabinet noted that these changes would be subject to a consultation period of eight weeks, to run from 27 March to 22 May 2013.

The Director of Growth and Localism stressed that each site put forward had been assessed in accordance with the assessment framework previously agreed by Cabinet. New evidence that had emerged since the site selection had in a number of cases changed the outcome of the assessment. The consultation period to be held from 27 March for 8 weeks would be the final opportunity for members of the public to influence the outcome of the options selected.

Members noted that as the process progressed, more weight could be placed upon the emerging sites and policies; however, full weight could not be applied to them until the document was adopted. The Council was currently about 800 homes short of that required for the 5-year land supply for the South Norfolk part of the Norwich Policy Area.

Members’ attention was then drawn to the changes to the proposed Plan and these were considered by members in turn.

Regarding the sites at Trowse, members noted the late representations from Norfolk Homes in response to the proposed deletion of the two allocated sites. These sites had been deleted following an objection from the Norfolk County Children’s Services regarding the provision of primary school education. The agents to Norfolk Homes had suggested that Norfolk County Council may have withdrawn their objection, as a new strategy for primary education was currently being considered in conjunction with a proposed development at the Deal Ground Site, in close proximity to Trowse, but within the Norwich City Council area. Officers had, that morning, been in communication with officers at Norfolk County
Council. As the County Council was not yet in a position to confirm any new proposals for primary education in the area, it was not inclined to withdraw its objections at this stage. Members agreed that the two sites should be deleted, noting that should the County’s objection be withdrawn during the consultation period, the sites could potentially be reallocated. Cllr T Lewis, local member for Trowse, agreed that this was the most appropriate way forward.

With regard to the allocations at Broome, members noted that site 822a had been deleted and that a new site allocation for 5 dwellings was proposed at Broome Heath (site 440b). The Planning Policy Manager explained that this site, along with 440c (also part of Broome Heath), had previously been subject to objection from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT), however the Trust had subsequently withdrawn its objections at site 440b and was satisfied that it could accommodate 5 dwellings, subject to certain safeguards.

Mr R Earl, Chairman of Broome Parish Council welcomed the new allocation at site 440b. The Parish Council did not believe that the objections from the NWT with regard to 440c were justified and would support development on this site.

Mr Earl did not support development at site 775, which he felt would have an adverse impact on the local landscape, and was too remote from local schools and shops. He also expressed concerns with regard to drainage and access to the site. Cllr P Allen supported Mr Earl’s concerns, explaining that the allocation would extend ribbon development in to a remote area, too far away from local amenities in neighbouring Ditchingham.

Officers informed Cabinet that there had been no objections from the Highways Authority with regard to the site at 775 and reminded members that it had satisfied the original site assessment criteria agreed by Cabinet. Whilst Cabinet had noted the concerns conveyed at the meeting, on balance, and with no other suitable alternative sites, it agreed that the site should not be deleted. With regard to Broome Heath, members agreed that currently there was not sufficient evidence to support development at site 440c, however should further evidence arise from the NWT during the 8 week consultation period, the site could be reassessed.

Turning to Little Melton, members noted that the allocation had been reduced from 50 to 20, following Highway Authority objections. Officers had received a request from consultants on behalf of Timewell Properties to defer any reduction in the allocation, pending the outcome of 3 current planning applications in Little Melton; however Cabinet agreed that there was no value to be had by deferring the process.

Members considered all other proposed amendments in turn, noting the reasons for change.

After officers had agreed to amend the headings in the consultation document to read “Amendments to sites in the Norwich Policy Area” and “Amendments to sites in the Rural Service villages”, it was

The Decision

RESOLVED: To approve the proposed amendments to the Preferred Options document, subject to minor changes, and that officers proceed
with an eight–week consultation commencing 27 March 2013.

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure the co-ordinated delivery of the Joint Core Strategy.

Other Options Considered

- Not to implement all of the proposed amendments
- To add site 440c

2177 EXCLUSION OF 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).

2178 DISPOSAL OF LAND AT WYMONDHAM

The subject of the decision

Members considered the exempt report of the Head of Asset Management, which sought permission from Cabinet to dispose of land at Harts Farm, Wymondham.

The Head of Asset Management outlined the salient points of the report to members and drew attention to the implications and risks.

Cabinet agreed that the proposals of the report were the most appropriate way forward.

RESOLVED: To agree to the proposal as outlined in paragraph 3 of the report, subject to it being demonstrated that there is a need for, and ability to provide the extension(s) to local schools serving the Harts Farm development, in accordance with the S106 agreement.

The Reasons for the Decision

The current site is no longer suitable for current day requirements.

Other Options Considered
None

(The meeting concluded at 12.00 pm)

______________________________
Chairman