CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 16 June 2014 at 9.00 am.

Members Present:

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

Non-Appointed: Councillors Blake, Dale, Foulger, Goldson, Legg, Lewis, Neal, R Savage and J Wilby.

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 Finance (D Lorimer), the Accountancy Manager (M Fernandez-Graham), the Business Improvement Manager (W Salmons) the Commercial Property and Conferencing Manager (C Hewitt), the Housing and Public Health Manager (M Swann), the Communities Officer – Safety (M Pursehouse), and the Listed Buildings Officer (P Whitehead) and the Scrutiny and Information Rights Officer (E Goddard)

2293 URGENT ITEM – QUEEN’S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

Members were pleased to note that both Mrs A Chapman of Pulham St Mary and Mrs B Ford of Wymondham had recently been awarded the British Empire Medal in the Queen’s Birthday Honours. Mrs Chapman had raised over £335,000 for Cancer Research UK through the Pink Ladies Tractor Road Run, and Mrs Ford was a committed volunteer, working tirelessly for her local community.

RESOLVED: To write to Mrs A Chapman, and Mrs B Ford, to congratulate them both on being recognised in the Queen’s Birthday Honours.
2294 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2295 PERFORMANCE RISK AND REVENUE OUTTURN REPORT QUARTER 4 2013/14

The subject of the decision

Members considered a report detailing the progress on the Council’s performance, risk and revenue budget for the year 2013/14.

The Business Improvement Manager outlined the Council’s performance for 2013/14, drawing particular attention to the performance during the fourth quarter of the year and proposed measures for 2014/15. Members were very pleased to note that performance against all of the Council’s strategic indicators during 2013/14 had been strong, with none of the indicators falling below acceptable levels at any time throughout the year. Members noted key areas of success centred on the Council’s financial performance and meeting the housing needs of the District, such as the provision of affordable homes and the reduction of empty homes. Cabinet was advised that the Council had recently been ranked as 3rd best in the East of England for the provision of affordable homes and the number of targeted long term empty homes in the District brought back in to use during 2013/14 had been 77.

In response to a query regarding the strong performance at the Wymondham Leisure Centre, members noted that this could be attributed to the popularity of the centre’s swim school. The performance at the Diss and Long Stratton Leisure Centres had not been as high, but members were reminded that the Diss Leisure Centre had closed for a period during the year for refurbishments and that future improvements were planned for Long Stratton as part of the Leisure Enhancement project.

Turning to risks, the Scrutiny and Information Rights Officer explained that Council’s risk acceptability factors remained positive, leaving the Council in a position where it could accept a higher level of risk, or take opportunities that may expose the Council to some further degree of risk, if needed. Members noted that the Council was putting appropriate measures in place to ensure the smooth transition of staff and services following the departure of the Deputy Chief Executive. The Chairman advised members that this was in fact the last Cabinet meeting where the current Deputy Chief Executive (A Radford) would be in attendance, and he thanked Mr Radford for his services to the Council during his employment.

With regard to the revenue budget, Cabinet welcomed the net favourable variance of £2.677 million. The Head of Finance explained that the key movements were as a result of large favourable variances in income from Leisure, Garden Waste and Planning Fees. The non-pay positive variances included the £500,000 transformation funding for the development of the regional building control model which had been committed by the end of the financial year for the technical system solution. Other non-pay variances were technical adjustments for Council Tax and business rates. The pay budgets had a positive underspend of just 1%. Members agreed that this was a significant achievement for the Council, and would be the envy of most other local authorities. The Chairman suggested that this
performance was an indication of the strength of economic recovery throughout the District.

With regard to Reserves and Balances, the Chairman explained that Neighbourhood funding had not been utilised as quickly as had been hoped. However, members were advised that the Market Towns Initiative was progressing well, and noted that that the Local Government Association (LGA) had recently referred to the project as ambitious and unique. The LGA had been particular impressed that the initiative was covering all of the market towns in the District.

In response to a query concerning the replacement of staff, the Chief Executive informed Cabinet that every single vacancy in the Council was checked for future need, to ensure that the right resources were available in the right place at the right time. The Council was currently shifting its resource to a more commercial approach and 3 or 4 senior posts would be recruited to on fixed term contracts to accommodate this need.

The Decision

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<th>RESOLVED:</th>
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<td></td>
<td>a) Approve the base set of Strategic Measures proposed for 14/15;</td>
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<td>b) Remove the measures mentioned from the Quarterly Performance Report but to continue to monitor them internally;</td>
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<td>c) Approve the approach to bring other indicators of success and performance to Cabinet on a quarterly basis as they emerge and are identified by management and portfolio holders;</td>
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<td>d) Note the performance in Q4 and the end of year outturn for 2013/14;</td>
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<td>e) Note the current position, particularly the organisational capacity, with regard to risk and accepts the actions to support risk mitigation;</td>
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<td>f) Note the revenue outturn position and the reason for the variances on the General Fund;</td>
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2. **TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL**

   a) Approves the budget virements which exceed £100,000 in accordance with the rules of financial governance;

   b) Approves the slippage requests as outlined in section 9 of the report;

   c) Approves of the movements in reserves as outlined in section 10 of the report.

The Reasons for the Decision

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

Other Options Considered

None

2296 CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT FOR 2013/14

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Accountancy Manager, which outlined the outturn of the Capital Programme for the financial year 2013/14.

The Accountancy Manager outlined the salient points of his report, explaining that expenditure for the year was £3,571,820, compared to a budget of £9,874,089.

With regard to the Council’s property development activities, the Commercial Property and Conferencing Manager advised that the use of procurement frameworks for construction services would appear to provide greater advantages to the Council than the formation of a joint venture, in terms of speed and financial returns. Members agreed that the Council should terminate the existing joint venture procurement process and employ suitable frameworks on a case by case basis going forward.

The Decision

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<td>1. That Cabinet note the outturn for Capital Expenditure and its financing for the Financial Year 2013/14;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. With regard to the Council’s property development activities, to agree that the Council ceases the current procurement to secure a Joint Venture partner, to an approach of using procurement frameworks;</td>
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<td>3. TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) Approves the slippage requests summarised in 3.1 of the report;</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Approves the financing of the amended Capital programme for the next three financial years.</td>
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The Reasons for the Decision

• To ensure that the capital programme is aligned to the Council’s priorities and is fully funded
• To maximise the financial returns to the Council.
Other Options Considered

None

2297 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2013/14

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Accountancy Manager, which reviewed the treasury management activity during the financial year 2013/14 and reported on the prudential indicators as required by CIPFA’s Treasury Code of Practice.

The Accountancy Manager outlined his report to Cabinet. Members were pleased to note that despite interest rates remaining low, the interest received during the financial year had been £354,586 which was £32,586 above the budget.

During discussion, officers referred to the Council's approach to make short term rather than long term investments, and whilst it was noted that this enabled the Council to react faster to changes to financial markets, members were mindful that all the Council’s higher yielding investments would mature in 2014/15, for that reason Officers recommended increasing the maximum term for deposits with RBS Group from 6 months to 2 years.

Referring to the return on investment properties, the Commercial Property and Conferencing Manager was pleased to report that a vacant unit in Wymondham had been recently let to a local business, looking to expand. Members welcomed the 6.30% gross return on investment properties, which was an improvement on the previous year, and was significantly better than if the same value was invested with the Council’s counterparties.

The Decision

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<td>a)</td>
<td>Approves the actual 2013/14 prudential indicators.</td>
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<td>b)</td>
<td>Notes the treasury activity in quarter four and that it complies with the agreed strategy;</td>
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<td>c)</td>
<td>Agrees to increase the maximum term for deposits with RBS Group to 2 years as outlined in section 8 of the report.</td>
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The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure that the Council adheres to the Prudential Code and that investments are made in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy.

Other Options Considered

None
2298 EARLY HELP SOUTH NORFOLK

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Community Officer – Safety, which provided an overview of the multi-agency Early Help Initiative being jointly led by South Norfolk Council and Norfolk County Council’s Children’s Services.

Cllr Y Bendle commended the report to members explaining that the Council was, in conjunction with Norfolk County Council, leading the way through a pioneering initiative which would ensure that help was provided to families sooner and in a more joined up, multi-agency way. The project would bring together a number of agencies, including the Police, Job Centre Plus, Housing Associations, Public Health, the Clinical Commissioning Group and voluntary sector organisations, to ensure a faster and more co-ordinated service to families, at an early stage.

The Chief Executive explained that this was a considerable change in strategy for the County Council, and it was a challenge to change the direction of resources in this way, but the impact would be considerable, positive and localised. She explained that in addition to the considerable contribution by the Community Officer (M Pursehouse), both the Housing and Public Health Partnerships Officer (S Cayford) and the National Management Trainee (H Ralph) had been instrumental in driving the project forward and bringing relevant agencies together.

Cabinet welcomed the report, viewing the initiative as a fantastic opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of families in South Norfolk.

The Decision

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<tr>
<td>1. Endorse the Early Help initiative, to be delivered through the collaboration hub, the delivery hubs and through the day-to-day working of South Norfolk staff;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Note South Norfolk Council’s resource to the project;</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Endorse the development of further delivery hubs in the South Norfolk District as the opportunity arises.</td>
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The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure families receive help sooner, in a joined up multi-agency way, improving their quality of life and delivering long term efficiencies as the number of high need families reduce.

Other Options Considered

None
2299 GREATER NORWICH INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN – SOUTH NORFOLK BUSINESS PLAN 2014/15

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Director of Growth and Localism, which presented Cabinet with the Annual Business Plan for 2014/15 for strategic infrastructure projects in South Norfolk, to support planned growth in the Joint Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan documents. The Business Plan would be presented for consideration at the Greater Norwich Growth Board meeting for delivery in 2014/15, from pooled Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

Members noted that the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital Health Wood Walks was the only scheme in the District being put forward for delivery in 2014/15. The Director of Growth and Localism explained that initially South Norfolk would have fewer projects than the other two planning authorities, as recent planning permissions for major developments secured infrastructure requirements through S106.

With regard to queries regarding the proposed new rail bridge / subway at Wymondham, the Director of Growth and Localism advised that if the scheme received a loan from the Local Infrastructure Fund the bridge widening/subway could be delivered at a much earlier stage than currently planned (as much as five years early). He went on to explain the purpose of new local infrastructure fund (part of the Greater Norwich City Deal) was to help developers bring forward the delivery of new infrastructure at an earlier stage, unlocking growth potential and bringing forward benefits to existing and new communities.

The Decision

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<th>RESOLVED:</th>
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<td>a) Agrees the 2014/15 Business Plan attached at Appendix A of the report, for consideration at the 31 July 2014 Greater Norwich Growth Board meeting;</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Grants the Director of Growth and Localism delegated powers to make any further factual changes to Appendix 1 of the Business Plan, for projects beyond the current 2014/15 Business Plan period.</td>
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The Reasons for the Decision
To promote the delivery of schemes in South Norfolk, ensuring that planned housing and jobs growth are on track.

Other Options Considered
None
2300 CRINGLEFORD CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Listed Building Officer, which proposed revisions to the Cringleford conservation area boundary and character appraisal document.

The Listed Building Officer introduced his report to Cabinet. It was noted that the proposed changes had been endorsed by the Environment Regulation and Planning Policy Committee and would also be considered at a future meeting of Cringleford Parish Council.

Members commended officers on what was felt to be an excellent Appraisal and Management Plan, that had captured the essence of Cringleford.

The Decision

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<tr>
<td>1. To note the comments received from the consultation exercise and the associated officer responses in Appendix A of the report and to agree to the recommended amendments to the conservation area boundary and character appraisal document;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL approves the Cringleford Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan.</td>
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The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure:
- The preservation and enhancement of the conservation area
- That the appraisal can be used as a material consideration for development proposals.

Other Options Considered

Not to adopt the document

2301 GELDESTON, ELLINGHAM MILL AND LANGLEY ABBEY CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISALS AND MANAGEMENT PLANS

The subject of the decision
Members considered the report of the Listed Buildings Officer, regarding revisions to the conservation area appraisals for Geldeston, Ellingham Mill and Langley Abbey.

The Listed Building Officer briefly outlined the proposed changes. Members noted that the conservation areas fell in both South Norfolk and the Broads Authority areas; the appraisals had been produced by the Broads Authority.

The Decision

RESOLVED:

1. To note from the Broads Authority Planning Committee Reports the comments received from the consultation exercise and associated responses, and to agree to recommended amendments to conservation area boundaries and character appraisal documents;

2. TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL approves the revised Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans.

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure:
- The preservation and enhancement of the conservation area
- That the appraisal can be used as a material consideration for development proposals.

Other Options Considered

Not to adopt to the appraisals

2302 LONG STRATTON AREA ACTION PLAN: EXPLORATION OF THE POTENTIAL USE OF COMPULSORY PURCHASE POWERS FOR LAND AT LONG STRATTON & LONG STRATTON AREA ACTION PLAN PRE-SUBMISSION VERSION

Members noted that specialist advice was being sought with regard to the use of compulsory purchase powers to bring forward the proposed growth and infrastructure in Long Stratton, and that a preliminary report was expected shortly. It was noted that reports on both the use of compulsory purchase powers and the pre-submission version of the Long Stratton Area Action Plan, would be considered at the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 28 July 2014.
2303 GYPSY AND TRAVELLER LOCAL PLAN DOCUMENT: ISSUES AND OPTIONS

Members noted that the Issues and Options Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan Document would be considered at the 28 July 2014 meeting of the Cabinet.

2304 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members noted the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda.

(The meeting concluded at 10.30 am)

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Chairman