Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 28 July 2014 at 10.00 am.

Members Present:

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

Apologies: Councillor M Wilby

Non-Appointed: Councillors Allen, Edney, Ellis, Foulger, Goldson, Gray, Hornby, Lewis, McClenning, Pond, Riches, R Savage, Walden and Weeks

Also in attendance: Cllr A Thomas (Norfolk County Council),
Mr S Adcock (Chairman of Long Stratton Parish Council)
Mr C Skinner (nplaw)
Mr B Fowler (Bruton Knowles)
Mr M Haslam (Consultant to Norfolk Homes)

One member of the press and 3 members of the public.

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Environment and Housing (A Jarvis), the Director of Growth and Localism (T Horspole), the Planning Policy Manager (A Nicholls), the Accountancy Manager (M Fernandez-Graham), the Business Improvement Manager (W Salmons), the Revenues and Benefits Manager (A Adams), the Scrutiny and Information Rights Officer (E Goddard), and the Senior Planning Policy Officer (S Marjoram)

2305 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Senior Planning Policy Officer which presented Cabinet with the Pre-Submission version of the Long Stratton Area Action Plan (LSAAP) seeking approval of the document for publication for pre-submission consultation, which was due to take place from 29 August to 24 October 2014.

The Chairman outlined the process which had taken place up to this point, reminding members of the strategic importance of the plan particularly with regard to the proposed bypass with was of such significance for the delivery of growth throughout the District. He reminded members that the bypass had been an aspiration for Long Stratton for 70 years, and was important for many reasons but particularly the health, safety and wellbeing of the residents of Long Stratton who had suffered the pollution and danger of the road for so long. Further, the road represented the principle economic artery running through the District, providing access to employment and business opportunities from one end of the District to the other.

The Chairman stressed to members that this was a ‘once in a generation’ opportunity, and that, following several rounds of public consultation, local people had clearly shown an appetite for the development of new houses in the village provided the provision of the bypass was part of the plan.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer confirmed that the LSAAP proposed development across two sites – 1200 dwellings to the east and 600 to the north-west, in a single policy, simplifying the trigger-points for improvements to infrastructure, and avoiding unnecessary repetition or confusion. The Chairman emphasised the importance of the single allocation approach, in that every new home built would contribute to the bypass.

Members were advised that discussions were ongoing with Anglian Water and the Environment Agency with regard to the need for a waste water recycling centre. There was also ongoing dialogue with all relevant landowners.

Responding to members’ questions, officers confirmed that the bypass would be a single carriageway, and although future ‘dualling’ of the road could not be ruled out, the curve at the north end of the bypass route, together with financial constraints meant it was unlikely to be altered to a dual carriageway in the foreseeable future.

Members discussed the junction of the A140 at the Hempnall crossroads, describing it as dangerous. Cllr M Gray suggested that the final sentence of paragraph 5.7 of the LSAAP be reworded to say “This roundabout will need to be agreed with Norfolk County Council and delivered early in the phasing of development”. Members were in agreement with this amendment. Cllr Gray further suggested that the Council seek to ensure that improvement works at this junction be triggered at an early point in the development process (for example at the 100th new home) but the Director of Growth and Localism suggested this may not be financially viable, and at this stage he felt it was preferable not to be too specific in this regard. By way of reassurance he confirmed that Norfolk County Council had indicated that it anticipated improvements to the
Hempnall crossroads would take place at an early stage of the development. This approach was confirmed by County Cllr A Thomas who also advised members that there was a strong steer from Norfolk County Council to commence work on the bypass early on in the development of the new homes in Long Stratton (and possibly at the 250<sup>th</sup> new home stage).

The Chairman reminded members that the key to the provision of the bypass was the availability of funding. He was confident that with some monies forthcoming for this purpose from the Public Sector Works Loan facility secured as part of the Greater Norwich City Deal, as well as funding available through future CIL monies, he felt that the bypass was achievable at an early stage, and he would continue to liaise with officers about how best to achieve this.

Members discussed the other benefits of the LSAAP for local residents, including the enhanced town centre with a ‘market town’ feel, which would be more attractive, more economically viable and would improve the vitality and viability of Long Stratton. Mention was given to the proposed gateways to the village centre, traffic calming, and provision for pedestrians and cyclists.

Mr S Adcock, Chairman of Long Stratton Parish Council queried the reference throughout the document to Long Stratton as both a village and a town, and asked officers to be consistent as its designation was of consequence to the Parish Council. Officers confirmed this would be clarified.

Cllr A Pond, one of the local members for Long Stratton, asked whether it was possible for the future dualling of the bypass to remain a possibility. The Planning Policy Manager suggested this was not financially viable at this stage. He confirmed that although it may have been physically possible to alter the proposed alignment of the bypass to incorporate dual carriageways, achieving funding to enable the construction of a dual carriageway road was not a realistic possibility. The Chairman reminded members of the need to keep the project viable.

The Director of Growth and Localism read to the meeting an email from Mr R Gibbs, representing some of the land owners confirming that a number of local landowners had recently agreed heads of terms on a collaborative agreement. This showed that there was a will among some of the landowners to work together to agree a mutually acceptable way forward in the development of Long Stratton.

County Cllr A Thomas thanked officers for the steps taken so far and members of the Cabinet were in agreement that the LSAAP would ensure a better quality of life for the residents of Long Stratton.

**The Decision**

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<th>RESOLVED:</th>
<th>a) <strong>TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL</strong></th>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Authorises the Director of Growth and Localism to make any further necessary minor corrections, factual updates, formatting changes and other non-material changes that are identified prior to the publication of the LSAAP;</td>
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2. Agrees the publication of the LSAAP (incorporating any later suggested modifications approved under recommendation 9.2 of the report), for representations to be made by statutory bodies and members of the public, over an 8-week period from 29 August to 24 October 2014, in accordance with Regulation 20 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012; and

3. Authorises the Director of Growth and Localism, in consultation with the Leader and the Environment, Regulation and Planning Policy Committee, to review the Pre-Submission representations made following the close of the representations period, prior to the presentation of the final Submission version of the LSAAP to Council in late 2014/early 2015.

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

- To select more, fewer or different sites to those proposed
- Not to progress the LSAAP to adoption

2307 LONG STRATTON AREA ACTION PLAN: EXPLORATION OF THE POTENTIAL USE OF COMPULSORY PURCHASE POWERS FOR LAND AT LONG STRATTON

The Subject of the Decision

The Chairman introduced the report of the Planning Policy Manager, advising members that the potential use of Compulsory Purchase (CPO) powers was being considered at this early stage as a ‘last resort’ - only to be used if it was the only way to achieve delivery of the objectives contained within the LSAAP. He confirmed that it was important for officers to continue with the CPO work in case the negotiations between landowners failed to advance with the development proposed for Long Stratton.

Mr C Skinner of nplaw was introduced to the meeting, advising members that the Council was giving all relevant landowners the opportunity to reach an agreement on the way forward. Only if this failed would the Council step in and seek Compulsory Purchase powers, and he was confident that the Council would have a compelling case. Government guidance encouraged the use of CPO powers where necessary for the implementation of local development plans. Additionally, planning legislation advised the use of CPO for the proper planning of an area. Both were relevant in this case for the delivery of the LSAAP, and provided confidence that the Council would be successful if this course of action were necessary.
The Chairman introduced Mr B Fowler of Bruton Knowles to the meeting. Mr Fowler advised the Cabinet that it was prudent for the Council to be considering CPO at this stage of the LSAAP process. His opinion was that the potential exercising of CPO powers was a viable prospect with a likely successful outcome for the Council. The Accountancy Manager confirmed that the Council had access to a range of funding that could be used to allow the Council to secure any necessary CPOs.

Mr M Haslam asked the meeting whether it would be necessary for planning permission to be in place prior to any CPO but Mr Skinner confirmed that government guidance did not require planning permission to be in place for the overall development but it may help the Council’s case for CPO if it was.

Cllr A Pond sought clarification as to the likely timing of the potential exercise of CPO powers, particularly in relation to the District elections which would take place in May 2015. The Chairman suggested that at this stage the timing was not certain and that the Council’s decision to take any such action would be dependent on the outcome of discussions with relevant landowners (or their representatives), once it had a better understanding of their intentions and timescales.

The Decision

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<td>1. Agree that officers continue preparatory work necessary to allow the later submission of a compulsory purchase order (such as confirming all land ownerships and tenancies and seeking to gauge interest from potential development partners);</td>
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<td>2. Agree the principle that the main Long Stratton landowners who are jointly promoting land to deliver 1,800 homes and the bypass be asked by the Council to demonstrate that appropriate progress is being made on finalising the formal collaboration agreement and also on background work leading to the submission of a formal planning application covering the entire allocation site;</td>
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<td>3. Delegate to the Director of Growth and Localism, in consultation with the Leader, the formulation and timescales of the precise ‘milestones’ that the Council will judge progress on recommendation b) against (with the ability to vary these if appropriate); and</td>
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<td>4. Agree that if any milestones are missed without good reason, Cabinet will, through consideration of a further paper, consider formally submitting a compulsory purchase order at the earliest appropriate opportunity to try to bring forward land necessary to achieve the aims and objectives of the Long Stratton Area Action Plan.</td>
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The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure all options are considered with regard to the Pre-Submission version of the LSAAP.

Other Options Considered

- Not to investigate the CPO process, in relation to the LSAAP
- To formally commence the CPO process immediately

2308 GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS LOCAL PLAN DOCUMENT – ISSUES AND OPTIONS AND INTERIM SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Planning Policy Manager and the Gypsies and Travellers Local Plan Document, which set out how the Council would meet the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community across the District in order to meet identified future needs, probably until 2031.

The Planning Policy Manager outlined his report to Cabinet. Members were pleased to note the Council’s good record of delivery, and that officers were confident in South Norfolk Council’s ability to demonstrate to an inspector, at examination, that meaningful progress had been made.

During discussion, members noted that during the Issues and Options stage, input and views would be sought from all relevant parties as part of the consultation, in order for the Council to assess and identify potential sites which would best meet the assessed needs.

In response to a member’s questions, the Planning Policy Manager advised members that Appendix 3, as referred to in the report, was available for viewing on the Council’s website. It was also agreed that officers would amend minor errors in the report and Plan Document. It was suggested and agreed that officers would consider the case for amending the Council’s preference for well related sites to be located in or near to settlements classed as ‘Service Villages’, as opposed to ‘Other Villages’, as detailed in Issue 6, para 4.23 of the report.

The Decision

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<td>1. Approve the Issues and Options Gypsies and Travellers Local Plan Document and Interim Sustainability Appraisal for eight weeks public consultation, beginning in August 2014; and</td>
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<td>2. Authorise the Director of Growth and Localism to make any necessary minor corrections, factual updates, formatting changes and other non-material changes that are identified prior to the publication of the GTLP documents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Agree that officers consider amending the Council’s preference for well related sites to be located in or near to settlements classed as Service Villages (as opposed to Other Villages) and above in the</td>
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hierarchy, as defined in the JCS and for sites on previously developed land, as detailed in Issue 6, para 4.23 of the report. Final wording to be agreed between the Leader of the Council and the Director of Growth and Localism.

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure that the Council fully consults with all interested parties to ensure that all factors are taken into account when identifying potential sites which best meet the assessed needs.

Other Options Considered

Not to progress the Gypsies and Travellers Local Plan to consultation.

2309 PERFORMANCE, RISK AND REVENUE BUDGET POSITION REPORT APRIL TO JUNE 2014/15

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Scrutiny and Information Rights Officer, the Accountancy Manager, and the Business Improvement Manager which provided Cabinet with a quarterly update on the Council’s performance through the Council’s strategic performance indicators and management of risk, and detailed the financial performance on the Revenue Budget for the first quarter of 2014/15.

In response to a member’s question regarding the benefit of forming a baseline in the number of benefit claimants moving into work, the Chairman advised that the intention was to assist people in moving back into employment.

A brief discussion followed, after which members were pleased to note the exceptional achievements of the Council’s Homelessness Team who had scored 77% in the recent Peer Review Assessment, well above many other authorities.

The Decision

RESOLVED:

To

1. Note the performance in Q1 for 2014/15;
2. Note the current position, particularly the organisational capacity, with regard to risk and accept the actions to support risk mitigation; and
3. Note the revenue position and the reason for the variances on the General Fund.
The Reasons for the Decision

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

Other Options Considered

None

2310 CAPITAL AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT – QUARTER 1 2014/15

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Accountancy Manager, which monitored capital expenditure in the first quarter of 2014/15, against the amended capital programme as approved by full Council on 7 July 2014.

Members noted the report and there were no questions.

The Decision

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<td>1. Note the progress on the Capital Programme during the first quarter; and</td>
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<td>2. Approve the request to:</td>
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<td>a. Fund the additional cost of the travellers site from low cost housing;</td>
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<td>b. Transfer £145,000 from the transformation fund for the Eastern Region Building Control model; and</td>
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<td>c. Invest £25,000 in equity funding in the Municipal Bonds Agency.</td>
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TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL:

1. Approves the addition to the capital programme of the renewal of play equipment at a number of sites throughout the District with funding from the S106 provision;

2. Approves the 2014/15 prudential indicators for the quarter; and

3. Notes the treasury activity in the quarter and that it complies with the agreed strategy.

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure that the capital programme is aligned to the Council’s priorities and is fully funded.
Other Options Considered
None

2311 MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2015/16 TO 2017/18

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Accountancy Manager which set out a revised Medium Term Financial Plan covering the period 2015/16 to 2017/18. After the salient points had been summarised, members gave their support for the recommendations contained in the report.

The Decision

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<td>1. Agree the assumptions on which the plan is based, in particular:</td>
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<td>a) That the increase in the budget for Performance Related Pay is acceptable;</td>
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<td>b) That the assumptions about the level of Pay Awards are reasonable; and</td>
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<td>c) That the approach to Council Tax Support for Parishes is acceptable;</td>
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<td>2. Approve the Medium Term Plan described in the report as a basis for further work, particularly preparing the 2015/16 budget and Directorate Planning.</td>
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The Reasons for the Decision

To enable the Council to continue to reduce its cost base in a managed way through long term financial and service planning.

Other Options Considered
None

2312 DIGITAL WORKING FOR SNC MEMBERS 2015-2019

Members noted the latest position with regard to digital working for SNC members.
2313 BANKING TENDER

Members noted the latest position with regard to the banking tender.

2314 PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING CHARGES

Members noted the latest position with regard to pre-application planning charges.

2315 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members noted the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda.

(The meeting concluded at 11.58 am)

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Chairman