CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 23 March 2015 at 9.00 am.

Members Present:

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

Non-Appointed: Councillors R Savage, M Edney, T Lewis, R McClennning

Officers in Attendance: The Chief Executive (S Dinneen), the Director of Growth of Localism (T Horspole), the Acting Director of Business Improvement (D Lorimer), the Communities and Democratic Services Manager (L Mickleborough) and the Planning Policy Manager (A Nicholls)

2364 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Y Bendle was proud to announce that during the last four years, over 950 new affordable homes had been built across the District, exceeding targets by over 35%. Cabinet commended this achievement, and looked forward to higher targets and the provision of more affordable housing moving forward.

Cabinet referred to the staff GEM awards, which had taken place the previous Friday. Members commented on the venue and the complete transformation of the Long Stratton Leisure Centre, and special thanks was given to the event organisers.
Cllr Bendle announced that the Council had been awarded a grant of over £91,000 to fund the provision of additional domestic abuse refuge provision, over the next 2 years. It was proposed that the funds would pay for a support worker, who would be working closely with the Early Help Hub. This would be delivered in partnership with Orwell and Saffron Housing Associations.

2365 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16 February were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

With regard to minute 2632, the Use of Compulsory Purchase Powers to Deliver the Long Stratton Action Plan, the Director of Growth and Localism informed members that to date, there had been no progress in relation to the promotion agreement between the largest land owner and the site developer.

2366 LOCALISM ACT DUTY TO CO-OPERATE: STRUCTURE FOR FUTURE CO-OPERATION ACROSS NORFOLK

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Planning Policy Manager, which presented members with proposals for a structure for future co-operation across Norfolk, in preparing Local Plan documents.

The Chairman presented the report, explaining that the proposals would not only demonstrate the ongoing discharge of the Duty to Cooperate, but could also deliver significant cost savings for all authorities involved. He stressed the importance of demonstrating the Duty to Co-operate and he referred to recent stream of Local Plan failures at other authorities, where the Duty to Co-operate had not been demonstrated.

The Planning Policy Manager referred members to the paper at Appendix A of the report, which had been prepared by Norfolk Strategic Planning Officers and set out a range of proposals that could be taken forward. The Planning Policy Manager was satisfied, along with the other eight local authorities, that Option 3, the preparation of a statutory non-strategic framework, was the appropriate way forward.

In response to queries, the Chairman explained that the Norfolk Duty to Co-operate Member Forum would become a more regularised body, and would be officially appointed to at the Council, at its AGM on 1 June 2015. He was unsure as to the exact level of savings to be made from the proposed joint working, but he felt there was the potential to deliver significant savings through a more effective approach to cross-border strategic planning issues.
The Decision

RESOLVED: To agree that the preparation of a Norfolk county-wide statutory non-strategic framework (Option 3 of Appendix A of the report), should be prepared, with further details to be worked up by the Norfolk Strategic Planning Officers’ Group.

The Reasons for the Decision

To comply with the requirement to demonstrate the duty to cooperate through the adoption of an effective approach to address key cross-border strategic planning issues whilst delivering significant cost savings

Other Options Considered

As outlined in the report.

2368 MEMBER INDUCTION PLAN

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Communities and Democratic Services Manager, which informed Cabinet of the planned programme of induction for new members, following the election in May 2015.

Cabinet welcomed the proposals, acknowledging the importance of training for new members. The Chairman stressed the need to remain flexible when setting the dates and timings of elements of the programme, to accommodate those members with other commitments. He also drew attention to the transition to electronic working and the need to ensure that all members were provided with the right level of training to enable them to work confidently and effectively. Members also stressed the importance of ensuring that key areas such as the Local Plan and Local Government Finance, were clearly covered early on in the induction process.

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The Communities and Democratic Services Manager explained that the aim of the induction process was to ensure that all members were well informed to make and challenge decisions effectively. This would involve gaining knowledge with regard to the Council and how it worked, but also a clear understanding of their role within the community.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To agree the member induction programme 2015

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure that members are well equipped to make and challenge decisions effectively.

Other Options Considered

None

2369 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members noted the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda.

(The meeting concluded at 9.26 am)

Chairman