CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 20 July 2015 at 9.00 am.

Members Present:

Cabinet: Councillors J Fuller (Chairman) Y Bendle, M Edney, L Hornby, K Mason Billig and M Wilby

Non-Appointed: Councillors P Broome, D Bills, F Ellis, C Foulger and D Goldson

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Growth of Localism (T Horspole), the Director of Business Improvement (D Lorimer), the Director of Community Services (P Boyce), the Accountancy Manager (M Fernandez-Graham), the Housing and Public Health Manager (M Swann) the Development Manager (H Mellors), the Project Manager (W Salmons), the Business Improvement Manager (S Pontin), the Housing and Public Health Partnerships Officer (L Pickering) and the Property Consultant (S Bizley)

2379 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded members that sadly, Derek Blake had passed away since the last meeting of the Cabinet. He also referred to Cllr J Mooney’s recent accident, and members conveyed their best wishes to Cllr Mooney for a speedy recovery.

The Chairman thanked all those involved in the recent South Norfolk on Show event. Despite the poor weather, hundreds of people had been in attendance.
2380 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr K Mason Billig declared a pecuniary interest in item 13, “Lease re-gear for Trustees of Phelan Plant Hire Retirement Benefit Scheme at Ayton Road, Wymondham.” Cllr Mason Billig left the room whilst this item was discussed.

2381 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15 June were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2382 PERFORMANCE, OPPORTUNITIES/RISKS AND REVENUE BUDGET POSITION REPORT FOR QUARTER 1 2015/16

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Project Manager, the Accountancy Manager and the Scrutiny and Information Rights Officer, which detailed the Council’s performance against strategic measures, risk position, and the revenue budget position at the end of the first quarter for 2015/16.

The Project Manager explained that there had been no strategic measures below acceptable performance levels in the first quarter of 2015/16. BV012, the number of working days lost due to sickness absence was the only measure that had been awarded amber status for this period, and members noted that this indicator would be monitored closely. Cllr M Edney stressed that this figure was the result of genuine staff long term sickness, and on the whole, he felt that the performance of the Council in the first quarter, to have been outstanding.

The Project Manager drew attention to the performance highlights of the quarter (outlined at paragraph 5 of the report), and also the proposed changes to the measure set, detailed at paragraph 7. Cllr Y Bendle welcomed the new measures for homelessness and the Early Help Hub, and Cllr M Wilby commented on plans for a new measure regarding keeping people active, making reference to the recent Village Games. Cllr L Hornby drew attention to the excellent performance in development management, and also that of CNC, who had recently won three awards at the Local Authority Building Control Awards for the East of England.

Discussion followed with regard to the % of municipal waste recycled and composted, with Cllr K Mason Billig reporting that this was already over target at 45%. The Director of Community Services explained that the amount of residual waste collected had increased slightly over the whole of Norfolk; she believed that more education was required in order to increase recycling rates.
further. The Chairman suggested that the Environment and Regulation Policy Committee could examine in more detail the targets for this indicator, looking in particular at whether a 50% rate was realistic, and if so, how it could be achieved.

Turning to risks, the Director of Business Improvement drew members’ attention to the amendments to the strategic risks, as detailed at paragraph 8.3 of the report. Referring to S1, the shortage of a 5 year land supply, the Chairman stressed the importance of explicitly detailing how this was to be mitigated.

Referring to the Revenue Position for Quarter 1, the Accountancy Manager explained that there was a positive variance of £0.3 million to the end of June, with favourable variances across all directorates. Members noted that income budgets had been increased for 2015/16, to reflect higher income levels received in 2014/15, which meant that variances were generally lower at this point compared to previous years. Particular attention was drawn to the alternative leisure facilities at Wymondham which had managed to sustain levels of income, and the income from investment properties, which had been higher than budgeted at the end of the first quarter.

The Decision

RESOLVED:

To:

a) Note the 2015/16 performance for the first quarter and the combined efforts across the Directorates to deliver the Vision of the Council;

b) Agree to the proposed changes to the strategic measure set reported to cabinet (as outlined in paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 of the report);

c) Note the current position, particularly the organisational capacity, with regard to risks and accepts the actions to support risk mitigation;

d) Note the revenue position and the reason for the variances on the General Fund.

The Reasons for the Decision
To ensure that process are in place to improve performance, that the management of risks is sound, and to ensure that reserves and revenue budgets are in place to meet the Council’s corporate objectives.

Other Options Considered

None
The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Accountancy Manager, which detailed the position on the Council’s capital programme and reviewed the treasury management activity, for the first quarter of the financial year.

The Accountancy Manager outlined the salient points of his report to members.

During discussion, the Chairman queried whether parish councils could form part of the new insurance contract, however officers advised that this had already been investigated, but due to compatibility around parishes, the Council and its partners in the joint procurement exercise, had been advised against going down this route.

Cllr Y Bendle made reference to the Green Deal, explaining that since the last Cabinet meeting, extensive marketing had been carried out, and out of a budget of £335,000, less than £100,000 was left. She also drew members’ attention to an additional project called Solar Together, which had recently been launched in partnership with Norwich City and Broadland Councils, and the first installations would take place during September.

The Decision

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<td>1. To:</td>
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<td>a) Approve the request for a budget of £40,000 for the Wellbeing Walk at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, to be funded from CIL, as outlined in paragraph 2.3 of the report;</td>
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<td>b) Note the award of the contract for play area refurbishments as outlined at paragraph 2.15 of the report;</td>
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<td>c) delegate the decision to award a contract for insurance services to the Director of Business Development in consultation with the portfolio holder for Finance and Resources.</td>
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<td>2. TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL</td>
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<td>a) Approves the 2015/16 prudential indicators for the quarter;</td>
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<td>b) Notes the treasury activity in quarter one and that it complies with the agreed strategy.</td>
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The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure that the capital programme is on target and is aligned to the Council’s priorities.
To ensure a balanced portfolio in terms of risk rates and liquidity.

Other Options Considered

None

MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2016/17 TO 2019/20

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Accountancy Manager, which presented Cabinet with a revised Medium Term Financial Plan, covering the period 2016/17 up to 2019/20.

The Accountancy Manager briefly outlined his report to members, drawing members' attention to the key risks, on which the Plan was based. Cllr M Edney stressed that as long as these risks were managed effectively, a balanced budget could be achieved for 2016/17 and for 2017/18, however, he warned that a funding gap of £1 million was yet to be addressed for years 2018/19 and 2019/20.

During discussion, members noted in particular the future cost pressures arising from the introduction of the flat state pension in 2016/17.

The Decision

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| 1. Agree the assumptions on which the plan is based, in particular:  
  a) That the increase in the budget for Performance Related Pay is acceptable;  
  b) That the approach to council tax support for parishes is acceptable. | |
| 2. Approve the Medium Term Plan as outlined in the report as a basis for further work, particularly preparing the 2016/17 budget, the Corporate Plan and thematic Business Plans. | |
The Reasons for the Decision

To enable long term financial and business planning, identifying risks early so that they can be managed effectively.

Other Options Considered

None

2385 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF CHARGING FOR PRE-APPLICATIONS

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Development Manager, which outlined how the Council had dealt with pre-application advice, reviewed the fees schedule, and considered whether charging should be extended to all enquiry types.

The Development Manager outlined the key issues of her report to members, drawing attention to the fact that income in the first six months had exceeded expectations. Members were satisfied with the proposals, and considered that the introduction of exemptions would allow key community groups to still access the advice they needed at a reduced cost. Members also noted the proposed low fee for householder applications.

In response to a query, the Development Manager explained that implementation of the charges would not take place until 1 January 2016, to allow time to communicate the changes to residents and key partners.

Discussion followed with regard to CIL payments to parish councils, and officers confirmed that all parishes would receive an explanation of CIL payments made, detailing how they were calculated and now these monies could be spent.

The Decision

RESOLVED:

To agree

1. The exemption categories and clarification notes added to the charging schedule;

2. The charging of householder applications with effect from 1 January 2016.
The Reasons for the Decision

To maximise income for the Council, whilst allowing for an improved service with respect to guaranteed response times and more detailed information.

Other Options Considered

- To keep the fee schedule as set,
- Not to introduce exceptions
- To continue to give free advice to householder enquiries

2386 SOUTH NORFOLK HOUSING STRATEGY 2016-19

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Housing and Public Health Partnerships Officer, which sought Cabinet approval to issue the draft South Norfolk Housing Strategy 2016-19, for consultation.

Cllr Y Bendle explained that the Strategy had been considered by the Housing, Wellbeing and Early Intervention Policy Committee at its meeting on 25 June, and it had, after minor amendments, recommended that Cabinet, approve the draft Housing Strategy for consultation.

The Housing and Public Health Manager presented the draft Strategy, explaining the document served the Council, its residents and its key partners. Members noted the four priority outcomes on which the strategy was built and delivered, through key focus areas.

The Housing and Public Health Partnerships Officer explained that the proposed consultation process would commence on 3 August, for a twelve week period, involving key stakeholders, as detailed in the Strategy.

The Decision

RESOLVED: That the draft Housing Strategy, attached as Appendix A to the report, be issued for consultation.
The Reasons for the Decision

To build on existing services, taking advantage of opportunities and maximising outcomes for South Norfolk residents.

Other Options Considered

None

2387 CABINET TASKS AND FINISH GROUPS: TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Communities and Democratic Services Manager, which presented Cabinet with the terms of reference of the three Task and Finish Groups, the formation of which were agreed at the Cabinet meeting back in June.

Cllr C Foulger, the Chairman of the Gypsies and Travellers Local Plan Task and Finish Group, and Cllr D Bills, the Chairman of the Leisure and Community Facilities Task and Finish Group, outlined the terms of reference, respectively.

Cllr Foulger reported that the Task Group had been encouraged by the number of sites coming forward for its consideration against the approved selection criteria. With regard to the Leisure and Facilities Task Group, Cllr Bills explained that work was progressing to ensure more leisure provision east of the A140.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To agree the Task and Finish Group terms of reference, as attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure that each Task Group has clear objectives and outcomes.

Other Options Considered

None

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2388 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members noted the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda.

With regard to the Local Plan, the Director of Growth and Localism explained that he could not confirm when the Inspectors’ reports would be received on either the Long Stratton AAP, or the wider plan. He advised Cabinet that once an Inspector’s report was received, it would carry enormous weight, although it would not officially be adopted until after the six week legal challenge period. Members noted that the six week legal challenge period for the NNDR, had recently expired with no challenge.

2389 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 item 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).

2390 LEASE RE-GEAR FOR TRUSTEES OF PHELAN PLANT HIRE RETIREMENT BENEFIT SCHEME AT AYTON ROAD, WYMONDHAM

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the exempt report of the Property Consultant, which sought Cabinet consent to surrender a ground lease, and re-grant a new modern lease, for tenants at a property on Ayton Road Industrial Estate, Wymondham.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To approve the proposed surrender and re-grant on the terms outlined in the report, and to authorise officers to proceed to conclude the lease formalities without further reference to Cabinet.
The Reasons for the Decision

To improve the security of the tenant’s investment plans, whilst increasing the rental income and improving the capital value of the asset for the Council.

Other Options Considered

- Do nothing
- Sell the freehold

(The meeting concluded at 10.35 am)

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Chairman