CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Tuesday 3 May 2016 at 9.00 a.m.

Members Present:

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

Apologies: Councillor Y Bendle

Non-Appointed: Councillors B Bernard, F Ellis and N Legg

Officers in Attendance: The Chief Executive (S Dinneen), the Director of Business Development (D Lorimer), the Director of Community Services (P Boyce), the Director of Growth and Localism (T Horspole), the Housing Access and Standards Manager (T Cooke), the Planning Policy Manager (A Nicholls) and the Senior Planning Officer (C Baker)

2455 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 21 March were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Arising from the minutes, the Director of Growth and Localism advised Cabinet that the Local Plan “call for sites” would commence the following week.
With regard to the control of advertisements in South Norfolk, the Director of Growth and Localism advised members that following a meeting with Norfolk County Council regarding enforcement powers on highway land, officers had agreed to review a protocol already in place between the two authorities, as a basis of moving forward. He urged members to continue to report incidents to Norfolk County Council and he agreed to circulate relevant contact details of officers in the Highways department. Officers also agreed to forward on a map detailing “Areas of Special Control of Advertisements” within the District.

2456 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Bethan Webb, Member of the Youth Parliament, and student at Diss High School, to the meeting.

2457 SOUTH NORFOLK COUNCIL HOME OPTIONS POLICY REVIEW

The Subject of the Decision

The Housing Access and Standards Manager introduced his report, which proposed changes to the South Norfolk Council Housing Allocations Scheme. He explained that the proposals fell in to five categories; Local Connection, Hard to Let Flexibility, Restricting Area of Choice, Restriction of Qualification to the Register, and the Removal of Under-Occupancy Priority.

Members noted that the proposed changes would bring the Policy in line with Government guidance to ensure that housing supported the aim of helping people seeking and retaining employment, and would also assist landlords in better managing their stock.

The Chairman suggested that further clarity was required in some areas, and it was stressed that the Policy needed to be more explicit to assist both officers and applicants. Cabinet agreed that full consideration of the item should be deferred until the following meeting, and officers were requested to include worked examples of the options.
RESOLVED: That full consideration of the proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Scheme be deferred to the 13 June 2016 meeting of the Cabinet.

2458 SOUTH NORFOLK COUNCIL RESPONSE TO CONSULTATIONS ON THE DRAFT BROADS PLAN 2017 AND THE BROADS LOCAL PLAN ISSUES

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Director of Growth and Localism, which sought Cabinet approval for the Council’s response to consultations on the Draft Broads Plan 2017 and the Broads Local Plan Issues and Options document.

The Senior Planning Officer outlined the key areas of the responses, outlined at Appendix 1 and 2 of the report.

Members welcomed the suggestion that the Broads Local Plan could better align with the work of the Market Towns Initiative, especially in relation to Loddon. The Director of Growth and Localism added that as part of the New Homes Bonus funds were transferred to the Broads Authority, there was an expectation that this was partly used by the Authority to fund South Norfolk Council initiatives.

Referring to Appendix 2 of the report, the Chairman suggested that under Section 21, Issue 38, the response concerning redundant boat yards should include a reference to commercial use, and that other references to commercial / economic development should be made where appropriate. Members noted that a “no comment” response indicated that the Council was supportive of the Broads Authority view, and Cabinet asked that these be amended to explicitly confirm that this was the case.

Referring to the wider remit of the Broads Authority, the Chairman suggested that it would be beneficial to hold a joint meeting with the Authority and other councils, to discuss issues of mutual interest such as tourism and economic development. He suggested that Cllr L Neal, in her role as the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, be involved in this process.
RESOLVED:

1. To delegate authority to the Director of Growth and Localism, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for External Affairs, to agree amendments to the responses, and to submit these responses formally to the Broads Authority;
2. That officers seek to hold discussions with other Councils and the Broads Authority, on issues of mutual interest.

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure a strategic and coordinated approach to planning policy throughout the county.

Other Options Considered

To leave the officer responses unmodified.

2459 STARTER HOMES REGULATIONS: TECHNICAL CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Planning Policy Manager, which sought Cabinet approval for a proposed consultation response regarding Starter Homes Regulations.

The Planning Policy Manager outlined the salient points of his report and the consultation response, explaining that the level of need for Starter Homes was not included in the recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and it was likely that this would require updating. Members noted that the Equalities Assessment and Impact Assessment was yet to be published by the Government.

During discussion, some concerns were expressed with regard to the incentives to buy and how the scheme might be open to abuse. With regard to the proposal that starter homes should not be sold on at full market value for at least 5 years, members...
favoured a tapered method during the period of restriction, as opposed to a “cliff edge” approach. Officers confirmed that the response would be adjusted to reflect this preference.

The Chief Executive explained that the District Council’s Network was currently evaluating amendments made to the Housing and Planning Bill by the House of Lords, and Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to share these comments with local MPs, if it was felt appropriate.

The Decision

RESOLVED:  To:

1. Agree the proposed consultation response (outlined at Appendix 1 of the report), delegating power to the Director of Growth and Localism to make any necessary minor amendments (including fully populating the answers relating to the Equalities and Impact Assessment questions once these assessments have been published) and to submit the consultation response;

2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to forward on appropriate literature from the District Councils Network to local MPs, with regard to amendments from the House of Lords, in respect of the Housing and Planning Bill.

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure that the views of the Council are conveyed to the Government and that any such scheme is workable, effective and fair.

Other Options Considered

To agree the original proposed response.

Cab Min 03/05/16CLW
REQUEST FROM GISSING PARISH COUNCIL FOR SOUTH NORFOLK COUNCIL TO EXERCISE COMPULSORY PURCHASE POWERS TO PURCHASE LAND

The Subject of the Decision

Members considered the report of the Director of Growth and Localism, which considered a request from Gissing Parish Council for South Norfolk Council to exercise compulsory purchase powers to purchase land, to be used as public open space.

The Director of Growth and Localism presented his report to members, outlining the background to the request. He explained that the Parish Council believed that the current asking price of £160,000 failed to take in to account that Japanese Knotweed was present on the site. However, members noted that the Council’s Property Consultant had reported that £160,000 was a reasonable current market value for the land.

Members therefore concluded that since the valuation had been deemed as reasonable, and the landowner was willing to sell, the request for a compulsory purchase order should be declined. Whilst Cabinet supported the aspirations of the Parish Council to enhance the centre of the village, it believed that the Parish Council could achieve its ambitions for the site, without the Council having to take legal action to force a sale. Cllr L Hornby added that the Council needed to be careful that it was not used simply as a tool for negotiation in such matters.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To decline the request from Gissing Parish Council to undertake Compulsory Purchase Order action, on the grounds the site is being actively marketed at a reasonable asking price.
The Reasons for the Decision

The current asking price for the land has been deemed reasonable and the landowner is willing to sell. Legal Action to force a sale is not necessary for the Parish Council to achieve its ambitions for the site.

Other Options Considered

To exercise a compulsory purchase order.

2461 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members referred to the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda. It was noted that the report regarding the Council’s Housing Allocations Scheme would be considered at the 13 June meeting of the Cabinet.

(The meeting concluded at 9.55 a.m.)

Chairman