COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of South Norfolk Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 15 December 2014 at 7.30pm


Apologies: Councillors, Bendle, Billig, Blowfield, Kiddie, Smith, Thomson, Watt and Windridge.

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Environment and Housing (A Jarvis), the Director of Growth and Localism (T Horspole), the Acting Director of Business Development (D Lorimer) and the Monitoring Officer (L Mickleborough).

3259 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared interests, as outlined below:

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<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Minute Number</th>
<th>Nature of Interest</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C Kemp</td>
<td>3264 (b)</td>
<td>Other interest as honorary solicitor to the Mid-Norfolk Railway Trust</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Report of the Scrutiny Committee Chairman</td>
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<td>L Dale</td>
<td>3264 (b)</td>
<td>Other interest as a Director of the Mid-Norfolk Railway Trust</td>
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<td>Report of the Scrutiny Committee Chairman</td>
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<td>M Gray</td>
<td>3265</td>
<td>Both members declared an other interest as members of the Broads Authority</td>
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<td>C Gould</td>
<td>Feedback on Outside Bodies</td>
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3260 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held Monday 22 September 2014 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman
3261 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman expressed his thanks to both members and staff for their support during his recent challenge, a sponsored parachute jump in aid of his two chosen charities for the year, Nelson’s Journey and Nelsonspirit Future Leader’s Fund.

With regard to his recent engagements, and in response to comments from Cllr V Bell, the Chairman expressed his thanks for an interesting and most enjoyable morning, spent in Costessey.

Cllr G Walden explained that he had been unable to attend the Fish and Chip Quiz night in Great Yarmouth, as listed in the Vice-Chairman’s engagements, but he had instead, sent a suitable donation.

3262 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

(i) Capital and Treasury Management Report – Quarter 2 2014/15

Cllr G Wheatley presented the recommendations from the Cabinet. He explained that two members had expressed concerns with regard to the recommendation concerning the retention of ten houses at Rosebery Park, Poringland, querying the reasons as to why this was felt to be the appropriate way forward. In light of these concerns, Cllr Wheatley proposed the following amendments to the recommendation (d):

To add at end: “subject to further financial analysis demonstrating the business case, to be presented to an informal meeting of the Finance, Resources, Audit and Governance (FRAG) Committee. Final approval to retain the houses to be delegated to the Acting Director of Business Development and the relevant portfolio holder, taking in to account the comments of FRAG.”

Cllr Wheatley added that this was an opportunity to examine in more detail the business case for the proposals.

Seconding the amendment, Cllr T Lewis explained that he was grateful to Cllr Wheatley for taking his concerns on board.

The amendment was then unanimously carried.

It was then unanimously

<table>
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<th>RESOLVED:</th>
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<td>a) Approve the 2014/15 prudential indicators for the quarter.</td>
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<td>b) Note the treasury activity in the quarter and that it complies with the agreed strategy.</td>
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<td>c) Agree to loan £200,000 to Build Insight Limited for working capital at a commercial rate of interest for a period of two years.</td>
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d) Agree to the principle of the retention of 10 houses identified in the report at Rosebery Park, Poringland for Private Rented Sector rental, subject to further financial analysis demonstrating the business case, to be presented to an informal meeting of the Finance, Resources, Audit and Governance (FRAG) Committee. Final approval to retain the houses to be delegated to the Acting Director of Business Development and the relevant portfolio holder, taking in to account the comments of FRAG.

(ii) Old Costessey Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

Cllr J Fuller presented the recommendations of the Cabinet regarding revisions to the conservation area boundary and character appraisal for Old Costessey.

Cllr Fuller explained that the proposals had been discussed in detail at the Cabinet meeting, and it was concluded that the proposed changes were a positive enhancement to the existing conservation boundary.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED: That the Old Costessey Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan, as set out in Appendix C of the report, is adopted.

(ii) Council Tax Support Scheme 2015/16

Cllr J Fuller introduced the recommendations from Cabinet, and outlined the proposed changes to the scheme, which would provide greater support for working age people with disabilities, and would provide officers with the discretion to backdate council tax support in special circumstances.

Referring to the hardship discretionary fund, Cllr Fuller explained that this was available to those families most in need, but that officers would look to signpost claimants to other sources of funding where appropriate. Recognising that wider support was needed in some cases, he referred to the Council’s holistic approach in looking for solutions and the Revenues Team’s close working relationship with the Early Help Hub.

Cllr T Lewis referred to the concerns raised by Gingerbread, a national charity which worked to promote the rights of single parents, and he asked for clarification regarding the Council’s current policy concerning child maintenance. He also suggested that it would be interesting to compare the Council’s Council Tax Policy with that of other local authorities. In response, Cllr Fuller explained child maintenance was taken in to account for some, but for lone parents with children under 5, it was disregarded. He stressed that the South Norfolk scheme was much more generous than most.
Cllr T East suggested that the Equalities Group could scrutinise in more detail the policy and the concerns raised by Gingerbread and this was welcomed by Cllr Fuller.

It was

**RESOLVED:** That the scheme’s features are retained, other than the changes outlined in section 3 of the report, to further support the disabled.

### 3263 MONITORING OFFICER REPORT

Cllr J Fuller presented the report of the Monitoring Officer, which sought approval to modify outside appointments and highlighted proposals regarding the community grant programme.

During discussion, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that the pre-election period would commence on the same date from which candidate nominations papers would be accepted. Members were advised that this was likely to be on 23 March, but noted that this date was yet to be confirmed.

Following queries, Cllr M Wilby confirmed that a funding update with regard to the current position of the Community Action Fund and the Member Ward Budget, would be forwarded on to all members.

**RESOLVED:** To approve the changes to outside appointments and the community grant ground rules, as proposed in the report.

### 3264 CHAIRMEN’S REPORTS

**a) Cabinet - Report of the Leader**

Members noted the report of the Leader of the Council.

After presenting his report, Cllr J Fuller raised the issue of devolution and the future delivery of local government services. He stressed that any new constitutional settlement would inevitably mean that the relationship between authorities would need to change, with more emphasis on combined authorities or services. He drew attention to the arrangements of the Norfolk Waste Partnership and suggested that the Scrutiny Committee might want to consider the impact of devolution in more detail.

Cllr T East asked Cllr Fuller if he agreed that the collapse of the proposal to build an incinerator at Saddlebow, near Kings Lynn, was good news for the people of the Norfolk. Cllr Fuller explained that he did not believe that a complete departure from incineration would necessarily serve local people well, suggesting that contracts with other areas that welcome incineration should be permitted.

Cllr P Allen drew attention to a recent successful litter pick in Broome, where volunteers had borrowed equipment from the Council, and asked whether such initiatives would be encouraged in other South Norfolk villages. Cllr Fuller explained
that these initiatives were taking place across the District and would always be encouraged.

In response to a query from Cllr B Riches, Cllr F Ellis explained that the Waveney Valley LAG was still waiting final confirmation from Norfolk County Council concerning the award of funding.

b) Report of the Scrutiny Committee

Members noted the report of the Scrutiny Committee Chairman, which updated members on the work of the Scrutiny Committee since the last meeting of the Council.

Cllr M Dewsbury thanked all members who had attended the Scrutiny Workshop held the previous week, explaining that it had been a useful and informative session.

c) Licensing, Appeals and Complaints Committee / Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee – Report of the Chairman

Members noted the report of the Licensing Committee Chairman, which updated members on the work of the Committee since the last meeting of the Council.

d) Development Management Committee – Report of the Chairman

Members noted the report of the Chairman of the Development Management Committee.

Cllr J Mooney referred to a recent Cabinet decision to introduce charging for pre-applications with effect from January 2015, explaining that this would be reviewed after six months.

Cllr T Lewis was pleased that the Council had achieved its five year land supply, but queried whether this could be open to challenge. Cllr Mooney explained that this was a “movable beast” and he expected that it would be subject to challenge at some point. Cllr Fuller added that he was satisfied that the five year land supply had been achieved, but stressed that the figures would be regularly reviewed.

3265 OUTSIDE BODIES – REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Cllr M Gray referred to the proposed rebranding of the Norfolk Broads and the potential benefits to the tourism and economy of the area, should the Broads be rebranded as a National Park. He stressed that there would be no change to the legal status of the Broads Authority, and he queried whether the Council had responded to a recent consultation regarding the matter.

The Director of Environment and Housing agreed to look into the matter further and ensure that a response to the consultation was forwarded to the Broads Authority before its deadline of 31 December.
(The meeting concluded at 8.27pm)

CHAIRMAN