COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of South Norfolk Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 23 February 2015 at 7.30pm


Apologies: Councillors Y Bendle, G Walden, and M Windridge

Officers in Attendance: The Chief Executive (S Dinneen), 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 Accountancy Manager (M Fernandez-Graham).

Also in Attendance: 15 Members of the Public

3268 MINUTES

With regard to minute number 3266, members noted that the Chairman had wished Cllr G Walden a speedy recovery, not Cllr Goldson, as had been stated in the minutes.

Subject to this change, the minutes of the meetings held Monday 15 December 2014 and Monday 26 January 2015 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

3269 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman informed the meeting that he had recently visited the Vice Chairman, Cllr G Walden, and was pleased to report that he was making steady progress in his recovery.

The Chairman reminded Council that this was to be the last scheduled meeting of the Council before the elections in May. On behalf of the Council, he thanked all members for their efforts over the current term of office.
The Chairman referred to the following petition received:

“The South Norfolk Council (SNC) has recently announced the multi-million upgrade / refurbishment of the Wymondham Leisure Centre, coming up in the summer. We do of course welcome the refurbishment of the centre. The inclusion of a heated relaxation bench, an ice feature, a heat experience, a sauna, a nail bar, a salt steam room and an aroma steam room, and - not least - the tripling of the gym will of course appeal to many users and bring in much needed revenue. We are, however, puzzled and indeed utterly saddened by what appears to be a longstanding - and in our view unjustified - decision that the 3.1 million spending entails the scrapping of the Climbing Wall. By way of this petition we ask the Council to seriously and constructively re-consider this decision, by setting up a working group to identify a financially viable way in which the Wall can be kept in the Leisure Centre.[1]

We take issue with the way in which the decision to scrap the wall has been made. While SNC says there has been a consultation or ‘user and non-user survey’, details of this survey have nowhere been published, and even upon formal request to SNC have not been made available. Furthermore, no single user of the climbing wall we have talked to so far had actually been included in this survey, and certainly the instructors of the very popular climbing classes for children and adults have not been consulted either. Instead, as early as November 2014, well before the closure of any type of “consultation”, the instructors had received informal notification of their possible redundancy - unarguably the clearest sign that the decision to scrap the wall had long been taken, entirely outside the consultation!

We do appreciate and recognize the need for the Council and the Centre to “balance the books”, particularly in the current economic climate. However, it is quite obvious that there remains vast scope for increasing the attractiveness, popularity and hence revenue-generating potential of the Wall. The truth is that this potential has never even distantly been tapped in a structured way.

Ideas abound among the climbers on what could be done - and these ideas are in large part based on “what works” in other climbing walls around the county and country. We strongly believe it should be part of a fair democratic process to give us the chance to enter into a constructive, serious conversation with the Council and other stakeholders on how we can make the Wall a sporty, social and financial success. The fact that this is possible is evidenced by other climbing walls, including even the one in the Lowestoft Leisure Centre, located in a significantly less affluent environment than what we see in Wymondham, or the Stowmarket Leisure Centre.

Here is just a sub-set of initial ideas:

1) make the Wall more attractive by regular re-routing and grading these routes to ensure on-going keen interest in the use of the wall by all wall users
2) set up more climbing classes (as several of the current ones are routinely over-subscribed),
3) engage in some significant advertising of the Wall and run regular come-and-try sessions (as to date this clearly has not been done yet),
4) promote birthday parties on the wall, actively engage with the
5) run friendly competitions/open events for climbers from other walls
6) have a dedicated notice board/webpage (as part of the WLC website) to keep climbers up to date with what is happening at Wymondham and the wider world of climbing
7) have a proper climbing club to maintain a healthy core of regular climbers
8) have a climbing membership scheme whereby climbers pay a reduced up-front rate for multiple climbs

So far the outcry and dismay among the Wymondham population has been very palpable. Among other reflections thereof, two EDP and Mercury newspaper articles have been published on the subject and the reporter in charge says she has never had a topic with such an emotional, large-scale response. For just a “wall” this does mean quite something.

There are in fact many children for whom the climbing courses have been a major sports and indeed social highlight of the week over many years. Those courses also catered to an age group (i.e. below 16 years) that after the refurbishment of the Leisure centre will not have a suitable substitute activity, as they will be too young for the tripled gym. While it is true that climbing is a niche sport, the evidence also indicates that it is a growing sport (see Active People Survey figures). In addition, it is a unique, character-building physical and social activity opportunity in Wymondham, both for young and old.

In closing, please allow us to reproduce three quotes from the two newspaper articles that have been published recently and speak for themselves:

Aaron Symonds, 17-year-old Wymondham College student: I learnt to climb on that wall and I go three times a week and help out with the children’s club, so I will really miss it. It’s one of the best of the area and I really don’t want to see it go.

Bob Ames, an adult user of the climbing wall: “Some of the kids that use this wall don’t have anything else to do, and it’s a great way to keep them off the streets. It’s a dreadful shame - there’s a real range of users, right up to a 73-year-old man.”

Wymondham College student Samuel Thomsett-Hurrell, 17, who uses the wall with friends two or three times a week: I never enjoyed school taught sports such as football, but what I become is a very enthusiastic climber.

We look forward to discussing the matter with you in the next Council meeting.

[1] The exact composition of the Working Group can be determined later but could include the climbing instructors, parent representatives of the many climbing children, a junior climber, representatives of the schools in Wymondham, the SNC, the architect commissioned with the refurbishment of the Leisure Centre, senior staff from the Leisure Centre, etc.”

The petition organiser, Marc Suhrcke, presented the petition, drawing attention to its purpose, to ask that a working group be set up to identify a way in which the Climbing Wall could be kept at the Wymondham Leisure Centre. He welcomed the proposed changes to the leisure centre referring in particular to the much needed extension to the gym. However, he questioned the need for new changing rooms, and the plans to accommodate a nail bar, referring to the fact that this was not a facility that could be enjoyed by children. On the contrary, the climbing wall was enjoyed by both young and old. He felt that the Council had never maximised the wall’s use to its full potential. More could have been done over the years to promote the facility; the few classes on offer were oversubscribed and evidence suggested that it could become a popular and financially viable asset. Summing up, Mr Suhrcke
asked one petitioner to read a letter from an eight year old user of the facility to the Council, who explained that he really enjoyed climbing and the fun challenges it could bring; he was very disappointed that the facility would shortly no longer be available.

The Chairman then moved that the petition be received, and this was seconded by Cllr M Edney.

Cllr J Fuller thanked the petitioners for their presentation. He assured them that the Council did indeed take the fitness of residents seriously, and he had sympathy for users of the wall, however, the hall at the leisure centre could not be used to its full potential whilst the wall was in place. He suggested that officers, in consultation with the petitioners, progressed the options for the wall to be hosted in a new venue, and that should this not prove viable, the issue be referred to the Leisure Working Group for consideration. This amendment was seconded by Cllr S Thomson.

Cllr D Bills stressed that the Council was keen to work with petitioners to find a mutually agreeable solution, and that he was very hopeful that a suitable alternative venue could be found. He explained that the Council was awaiting a report regarding the viability of moving the structure.

During discussion, Cllr M Gray stressed that matters such as access and changing facilities, in addition to structural issues, would need consideration, if an alternative venue was to be considered. Cllr J Mooney felt that most people welcomed the changes to the leisure centre, but he hoped that by working together with the petitioners, the Council could find an alternative location.

Cllr A Pond asked whether the Council would be funding the costs involved in moving the wall, however Cllr Fuller felt that it was not appropriate to debate that particular issue, until the outcomes of further discussions were known.

The amendment was then unanimously carried.

It was unanimously

| RESOLVED | That officers, in consultation with the petitioners, progress the options for the climbing wall to be hosted in a new venue, and that should this not prove viable, the issue be referred to the Leisure Working Group for consideration. |

3271 MOTIONS

In accordance with Standing Order D4.11, at the request of Cllr M Windridge (who was unable to attend the meeting), and with the agreement of the Council, the motion as detailed in the agenda papers, was withdrawn.
3272 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

(i) Update on Commercial Activities;

Cllr G Wheatley presented the recommendations from the Cabinet. He drew attention to the additional recommendation from the Scrutiny Committee that had arisen as a result of the recent call in. Cllr Wheatley supported this additional recommendation which sought to impose more controls over the shareholder representative.

Cllr T Lewis explained that there had been two other elements to the call in to the Scrutiny Committee, one being to query any additional remuneration involved for officers involved. Cllr Lewis was satisfied now that it had been confirmed that there was no additional remuneration. The other element of the call in was regarding risks, and Cllr Lewis explained that based on the information provided, the Scrutiny Committee was satisfied that the risks were acceptable. He reminded officers that he was still awaiting a copy of the slides to the presentation made by officers at the Scrutiny Committee and he felt it wise to reserve his final judgement on the matter until he had had a chance to consider the slides in more detail.

It was then unanimously

RESOLVED:

1. To appoint the Leader of the Council as the Council's shareholder representative;

2. That the Shareholder Representative shall consult the Portfolio Holder and the Chairman of the Finance, Resources, Audit and Governance Committee before exercising any of their powers and shall report back to Cabinet, when necessary, through the quarterly Treasury Management Report.

(ii) Capital and Treasury Management Report Quarter 3 2014/15

Cllr G Wheatley presented the recommendations from the Cabinet regarding the Capital and Treasury Management Report, Quarter 3 2014/15. He explained that the Council had received more interest than had been budgeted for, during the quarter.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED:

To

a) Approve the 2014/15 prudential indicators for the quarter.

b) Note the treasury activity in the quarter and that it complies with the agreed strategy.
iii) Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2015/16

The Chairman proposed and Council agreed that, in accordance with Standing Order D4.5, Group Leaders, the portfolio holder and shadow portfolio holder for resources, be permitted to speak for 10 minutes each on the budget.

Cllr Fuller began by outlining the ultimate aim of the Council, to maximise the quality of life for residents, providing the best conditions for a successful economy, giving residents the best opportunities to make the most of their daily lives. He acknowledged that success was difficult to measure but he referred to a recent MORI poll which ranked satisfaction rates in South Norfolk at 94%, and drew attention to the results of a Halifax Bank survey, which rated South Norfolk with the best quality of life in East Anglia. He went on to compare the current financial strength of the Council, with that back in 2007, suggesting that the Liberal Democrats were on the path to make South Norfolk one of the weakest councils, whilst the Conservatives had made it one of the strongest. During a time of deep recession, the Council had managed to freeze council tax in seven out of the last eight years, with further freezes planned, and instead of making cuts, the Council's services had not only been sustained, but actually improved. He referred to a number of achievements, including the Early Intervention Hub, the number of affordable homes built which had been more than the rest of the county put together, the added value to assets and the commercial approach to leisure resulting in more funds to invest in other areas such as the Diss Heritage Triangle. Looking to the future, he drew attention to plans for super-fast broadband in rural villages, new investments in homes in Poringland and Long Stratton, improvements to the Leisure Centres, and delivery of the Local Plan, including the long awaited Long Stratton bypass. Summing up, he suggested that South Norfolk was better off with the Conservatives, and he commended the budget to members.

Cllr G Wheatley was pleased to second the proposals, referring to the Council's financial standing as truly remarkable. He recognised that such high performance came at a price, and he referred to the stresses on staff and the frequent changes to functions and directorates. He considered the Council very fortunate to have in place such a quality Chief Executive and workforce.

Cllr T Lewis explained that he did not necessarily disagree with much of what had been said. The Liberal Democrat Group supported much of the work of the Council, and he referred in particular to the Directorate Planning Workshop, which he felt to be a most useful way of involving all members in the budget process. However, he did have concerns with regard to the stress on staff, and the risks the Council was taking with regard to some investments. He stressed the importance of holding officers and the Cabinet to account; especially when making decisions that involved large sums of money and associated risks. He then moved an amendment to the budget, which was duly seconded by Cllr B McClenning:

1. To identify and promote a distinctive identity for South Norfolk, building on the Market Towns Initiative, by creating a separate South Norfolk Tourism website as a one year project, under the control of a creator (temporary post) who it is hoped can also personally represent South Norfolk's tourism interests with our Tourism partners. For implementation Autumn 2015, for review late summer 2016. The funding to be provided from a £50,000 reserve spread over the next two financial years, to be created from the Invest to Save Reserve (unused since 2012 with no current plans for use).
2. To offer £200,000 to local communities, preferably as match funding, for local capital and infrastructure projects. The funding to be provided from the removal of £200,000 from the toilet refurbishment programme to create a £200,000 Community Capital Support Fund over two years.

Cllr Lewis considered the amendments to be non-controversial minor changes. In light of the problems experienced with the new toilets at Harleston, he felt a slight change in direction might be welcome. He added that the proposals had been confirmed as deliverable by the Accountancy Manager.

Cllr K Weeks expressed his support for the amendment, suggesting them to be non-political points, made for the good of the residents of south Norfolk. He had always had concerns with regard to the investment made in to VisitNorwich.

Cllr Fuller could not support either of the amendments. He advised that the VisitNorwich website was infact created by South Norfolk Council; the organisation offered an integrated approach which attracted visitors to both the city of Norwich and the surrounding countryside, and to withdraw could cost the Council dearly. With regard to the proposals to trim the toilet refurbishment programme, Cllr Fuller explained that this initiative was not just about reducing costs, but also about recognising the Market Towns as shopping centres. The toilets at Loddon would include showers and would also serve to support tourism.

The vote on the amendments was conducted as a roll call vote as follows.

Cllrs Allen, Bell, East, Gray, Lewis, McClennning, Smith, Watt and Weeks voted in favour of the amendments.


The amendments were lost by 9 votes to 32.

Cllr B Spratt felt that there had been a positive culture change since the Conservative administration took over, some 8 years previous. He referred to the frozen council tax levels and the provision of affordable housing to be particularly admirable.

Cllr M Wilby then referred to the achievements under his portfolio of Communities and Localism. He considered the Council to be leading the way nationally in this area of work; he was particularly proud that the Local Member Budgets and Community Action Funds had helped to deliver over 100 projects during the last year, and attracted funding worth thousands from elsewhere. He gave mention to the continued success of the Pub of the Year competition, the Market Towns Initiative, the organised Litter Picks and the Community Awards, which celebrated the work of volunteers across the District. He felt so much had been achieved over the last eight years.

Cllr K Billig commended the budget to members. She was proud to be part of South Norfolk Council; it was the envy of other authorities across the country. The proposed budget was sound and she could not support what she felt to be trivial amendments offered up by the Liberal Democrat Group.
Cllr B McClenning endorsed the comments made by Cllr Wheatley with regard to the good work of the staff. He was disappointed that the Council had lost Andy Radford and would also be losing Andy Jarvis so soon after. He had found no fault with the budget, however did feel that there were some opportunities for a change in direction. The Liberal Democrat Group had made a constructive contribution over the last eight years, and its amendments that evening had been meant as non-controversial proposals for the good of the people of South Norfolk. He was disappointed that Cllr Fuller had fully diminished the work of his Group and dismissed the amendments so hastily.

Cllr K Weeks also commended the budget, suggesting it to be good for the people of South Norfolk. He considered the current workforce at the Council to be the very best quality, and was very highly valued. He was however, disappointed that the amendment to the budget had been dismissed by the Conservative Group.

Cllr J Mooney also confirmed his support for the budget, and was proud that the Council was cutting waste, not services. This, he stressed, had only been achieved due to shrewd financial management.

Cllr C Kemp also expressed his support for the budget, and explained that he was disappointed with the lack of ideas and ambition demonstrated by the Liberal Democrat Group.

Cllr T Lewis stressed that the Liberal Democrat Group was always happy to work to achieve the best for the people of South Norfolk, alone or in coalition. He was very disappointed that his amendments had been dismissed by the Conservatives on political grounds.

Cllr W Kemp suggested that if the Liberal Democrats wanted their amendments to be taken more seriously, more notice of the details contained within them should be given to the opposing groups.

Cllr Fuller explained that he had not rejected out of hand the aspirations of the Liberal Democrat amendments; in fact the broad ambitions were already built in to the Conservative proposals and he referred to the grant funding already available to support community projects. He did not fully dismiss the role of the Liberal Democrat group; he felt the recent call-in to be constructive and to be future proofing the proposals. Summing up, he explained that the Council had never been in such a strong position as it was today; he was proud to be leading such a forward thinking efficient and effective Council, which did not shy away from the challenges ahead.

The vote was then conducted as a roll call vote as follows:


Cllrs Allen, Bell, East, Gray, Lewis, McClenning, Smith and Watt abstained from the vote.

With 33 votes for and 8 abstentions, it was
RESOLVED:

   a) To approve the revised discretionary rate relief guidance as set out in appendix F of the report;
   
   b) To approve the base budget; as shown in para 8.1 of the report;
   
   c) To approve the use of the revenue reserves as set out in para 9.2 and 9.3 of the report;
   
   d) That the Council’s demand on the Collection Fund for 2015/16 for General Expenditure shall be £5,820,226 and for Special Expenditure be £72,597;
   
   e) That the level of Council Tax be £130.68 for General Expenditure and £1.63 for Special Expenditure.

iv) Capital Programme April 2015 to March 2020

   With 33 votes for and 8 abstentions, it was

RESOLVED:

   a) That the assumptions on which the funding of the capital programme is based are prudent.
   
   b) To approve the capital programme for 2015/16 to 2019/20.

v) Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy April 2015 to March 2018

   It was unanimously

RESOLVED:

   To agree
   
   
   b) The Prudential Indicators and Limits for the next 3 years contained within Appendix A of the report, including the Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator.
   
   c) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement (section 8 of the report) setting out the Council’s policy on MRP.
   
   d) The Annual Investment Strategy 2015/16 (section 5 of the report) contained in the Treasury Management Strategy, including the delegation of certain tasks to the Acting Director of Business Development.
   
3273 COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION 2015/16

The vote was conducted as a roll call vote as follows:


No councillors voted against and no councillors abstained from the vote.

It was unanimously RESOLVED

1) To approve the recommendations of the Cabinet meeting 16 February 2015 relating to the Council Tax Base for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relates as in the attached Appendix B.

2) To approve the recommendations of the Cabinet meeting 16 February 2015 relating to the Revenue and Capital Estimates 2015/16 be approved.

3) That the Council Tax requirement for the Council’s own purposes for 2015/16 (excluding Parish precepts and special expenses) be calculated as £5,820,225.84.

4) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2015/16 in accordance with Sections 30 to 36 of the Act.

a) £63,170,900.00 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils and any additional special expenses.

b) £54,373,776.00 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

c) £8,797,124.00 being the amount by which the aggregate at 5(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 5(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the 1992 Act).

d) £197.52 being the amount at 5(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts and special expenses).

e) £2,976,898.16 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts and special expenses) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per attached Appendix B).

f) £130.68 being the amount at 5(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 5(e) above by Item T (1 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with...
Section 34(2) of the 1992 Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept or special expense relates.

5) To note that Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Act for each category of dwellings in the Council’s area as indicated in the table below.

6) That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Act, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2015/16 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valuation Bands</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Precepting Authority</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Norfolk Council</td>
<td>87.12</td>
<td>101.64</td>
<td>116.16</td>
<td>130.68</td>
<td>159.72</td>
<td>188.76</td>
<td>217.80</td>
<td>261.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk County Council</td>
<td>763.38</td>
<td>890.61</td>
<td>1,017.84</td>
<td>1,145.07</td>
<td>1,399.53</td>
<td>1,653.99</td>
<td>1,908.45</td>
<td>2,290.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner</td>
<td>139.20</td>
<td>162.40</td>
<td>185.60</td>
<td>208.80</td>
<td>255.20</td>
<td>301.60</td>
<td>348.00</td>
<td>417.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate of Council Tax Requirements (excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses)</td>
<td>989.70</td>
<td>1,154.65</td>
<td>1,319.60</td>
<td>1,484.55</td>
<td>1,814.45</td>
<td>2,144.35</td>
<td>2,474.25</td>
<td>2,969.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7) The Council has determined that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2015/16, which reflects a nil increase, is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Act.

As the billing authority, the Council has not been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2015/16 is excessive and that the billing authority is not required to hold a referendum in accordance with Section 52ZK of the Act.

3274 DIRECTOR APPOINTMENTS

Cllr J Fuller presented the report, which sought agreement to appoint Director posts, following the departure of the Director of Environment and Housing. Cllr Fuller, on behalf of the Council, thanked the Director of Environment and Housing for his service to the Council, wishing him every success in his new position.

Cllr M Gray sought clarification with regard to the proposals to undertake an internal recruitment process for the appointment of the Director of Business Development, questioning the legality of this approach. The Chief Executive advised that the recruitment was being conducted in line with legal requirements and she reminded members that Director appointments had previously been made through an internal recruitment process.
With 38 votes in favour, and 3 abstentions, it was

**RESOLVED:**

To agree

a) the process to appoint the Director of Community Services and Director of Business Development as outlined in section 2 above.

b) the temporary delegation of responsibilities for services as outlined in section 3 of the report.

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**3275 MONITORING OFFICER REPORT**

Cllr J Fuller presented the report of the Monitoring Officer, which sought member approval to make minor changes to the constitution, arising out of the shift to electronic working from May 2015.

Cllr C Kemp queried whether a paper copy of the agenda would be kept on record and officers confirmed that this would be the case.

It was unanimously

**RESOLVED:**

To agree that the constitution be amended as outlined in paragraphs 2.2, 2.3 and 2.9.1 of the report, in order to implement electronic working for Councillors.

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**3276 PAY POLICY STATEMENT**

Cllr G Wheatley presented the report of the Head of OD and Communications, which sought Council approval for the Council’s 2015/16 Pay Policy Statement.

Referring to paragraph 19 of the Pay Policy Statement, Cllr K Smith queried the treatment of part time staff with regard to overtime payments, suggesting that part time and full time staff were not being treated equally.

In response, the Chief Executive explained that part time staff were always given the option of working additional hours, before overtime was offered to staff that were full time. Plain time was paid whether you were a full or part time member of staff. In response to a query from Cllr Lewis, the Chief Executive explained that all Chief Officer scales had been agreed nationally, however, the Chief Executive scales were yet to be agreed.

**RESOLVED:**

To approve the content of South Norfolk Council’s 2015/16 Pay Policy Statement, as outlined in the report.
3277 CHAIRMEN’S REPORTS

a) Cabinet - Report of the Leader

Members noted the report of the Leader of the Council.

Cllr V Bell asked Cllr J Fuller if he wished to join her in officially thanking Cllr T East, for his services to South Norfolk Council and Costessey over the last 32 years. She explained that Cllr East, who had always carried out his duties with compassion and wit, was not standing for re-election in May.

Cllr Fuller was delighted to associate himself with Cllr Bell’s comments. Cllr East had not only served as a South Norfolk District Councillor, but also as a Judicial Officer (JP) and as a member of the Costessey Town Council and Norfolk County Council; he considered Cllr East to be a public servant in every sense of the word. He had always worked with both candour and humour to secure the very best for the community. He wished Cllr East a well-deserved, long and happy retirement.

Cllr East thanked members for their comments. He had thoroughly enjoyed the last 32 years, and would be happy to stand for re-election, if it was not for his health.

The Chairman gave thanks to all retiring members, giving particular mention to Cllr B Spratt and Cllr K Weeks.

Cllr A Pond asked Cllr Fuller whether he could provide reassurances that the Council would fund all costs relating to the relocation of the climbing wall at the Wymondham Leisure Centre, which had been subject to a petition (discussed earlier in the meeting). Cllr Fuller stated that he could not pre-judge the outcome of discussions, and felt it advisable to keep all options open for now.

In response to a query from Cllr K Weeks, Cllr D Bills advised that as part of the planned improvements to the Wymondham Leisure Centre, the telephone system would be upgraded, making it easier for people to make contact by telephone. He added that members of the Leisure Centre would be issued with swipe cards, which would free up more time for receptionists to take telephone calls.

In response to a query from Cllr B McClenning, Cllr Kiddie agreed that it was disappointing that plans to purchase land in order to expand the Ketteringham Depot had fallen through. He added that the Council was actively looking for solutions and had identified a suitable plot of land within the depot’s current vicinity. Despite the restrictions of the current site, Cllr Kiddie was confident that it met all the required health and safety standards.

b) Report of the Scrutiny Committee

Members noted the report of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee.
c) Licensing, Appeals and Complaints Committee / Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee – Report of the Chairman

Members noted the report of the Chairman of the Licensing Committee.

d) Development Management Committee – Report of the Chairman

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

3278 OUTSIDE BODIES – FEEDBACK FROM REPRESENTATIVES

Police and Crime Panel for Norfolk

Cllr C Kemp presented his report regarding the Police and Crime Panel for Norfolk. With reference to paragraphs 5 and 6, Cllr Kemp advised members that since writing the report, the Independent Police Complaints Commission had published its full report concerning its investigation. The Panel was due to meet on 12 March, to consider the Commission’s findings.

Cllr M Gray expressed concerns with regard to some criticisms of the Commissioner within the report, which he felt was little more than personal abuse and could reflect badly on the Council. In response, Cllr Kemp felt his comments to be justified and he explained that he had not reported anything which he was not prepared to repeat in the Commissioner’s presence.

(The meeting concluded at 9.45 pm)

CHAIRMAN