COUNCIL

Monday 21 September 2015

7.30 pm
Council Chamber
South Norfolk House, Long Stratton, Norfolk, NR15 2XE

Mr D Bills – Chairman of the Council
Mr G Wheatley – Vice-Chairman of the Council

If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance
Large print version can be made available

This meeting may be filmed, recorded or photographed by the public; however anyone who wishes to do so must inform the Chairman and ensure it is done in a non-disruptive and public manner. Please review the Council’s guidance on filming and recording meetings available in the meeting room.

Group Meetings
Conservatives : Cavell & Colman Rooms 6.00pm
Liberal Democrats : Blomefield Room 6.15pm

Contact Claire White on 01508 533669 or democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk

South Norfolk Council
Working with you, working for you
Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence;

2. Urgent Items;

   Any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as matters of urgency pursuant to Section 100 B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act, 1972; [Urgent business may only be taken if, "by reason of special circumstances" (which will be recorded in the minutes), the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency.]

3. To Receive Declarations of Interest from Members; (please see guidance – page 6)

4. To confirm the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on Monday 13 July 2015; (attached – page 7 & 12)

5. Chairman’s Announcements; (engagements attached – page 19)

6. To consider any petitions received under Section I of the “Rights of the Public at Meetings”
7. Notice of Motions:

Cllr T Lewis and Cllr M Gray

That this Council supports the Government's decision to admit to the United Kingdom refugees who have fled from Syria into neighbouring countries, and stands ready to welcome, and provide its share of support to, any that come to South Norfolk. The Chief Executive is accordingly instructed to notify this to Central Government, the District's MPs and Norfolk County Council.

8. Recommendations from the Cabinet;

PLEASE REFER TO YOUR CABINET PAPERS FOR THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JULY 2015

(i) Capital and Treasury Management Report Quarter 1 2015/16;

(item 6, page 53 of the 20 July Cabinet agenda)

RESOLVED: 1. TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Approves the 2015/16 prudential indicators for the quarter;</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Notes the treasury activity in quarter one and that it complies with the agreed strategy.</td>
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9. Monitoring Officer Report;

(report attached – page 20)
10. **Chairmen’s Reports;**
To receive/hear reports and to take questions from Councillors and the public.

Note: [Time allocated to be at the discretion of the Chairman. No notice is required of questions, however it may be necessary for written answers to be provided where an immediate response cannot be supplied]. If members choose to submit questions in writing in advance, they will be circulated before the meeting.

a. **Cabinet – Report of the Leader**
   
   Questions to the Leader and other Cabinet members as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Martin Wilby</td>
<td>Deputy Leader, Stronger Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yvonne Bendle</td>
<td>Wellbeing and Early Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Edney</td>
<td>Finance and Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lee Hornby</td>
<td>Regulation and Public Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kay Mason Billig</td>
<td>Environment and Recycling</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

b. **Annual Report on Standards Activity – questions to the Chairman**
   
   (report attached – page 28)

c. **Scrutiny Committee - questions to the Chairman**
   
   There have been no meetings of the Scrutiny Committee since the last meeting of the Council

d. **Licensing, Appeals and Complaints Committee/ Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee - questions to the Chairman**
   
   (report attached – page 36)

e. **Development Management Committee - questions to the Chairman**
   
   (report attached – page 37)
11. Outside Bodies – Feedback from Representatives
   None received

12. To consider any correspondence
Agenda Item: 3

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

Members are asked to declare any interests they have in the meeting. Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates.

- In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote on the matter.
- If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed.
- If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting.
- Members are also requested when appropriate to make any declarations under the Code of Practice on Planning and Judicial matters.
- In any case, members have the right to remove themselves from the meeting or the voting if they consider, in the circumstances, it is appropriate to do so.

Should Members have any concerns relating to interests they have, they are encouraged to contact the Monitoring Officer (or Deputy) or another member of the Democratic Services Team in advance of the meeting.
SPECIAL COUNCIL

Minutes of a Special meeting of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 13 July 2015 at 7.30 pm


Apologies: Councillors, Edney, Kiddie, Minshull, Mooney, R Savage and V Thomson

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Growth of Localism (T Horspole), the Director of Business Improvement (D Lorimer) and the Director of Community Services (P Boyce)

Also in Attendance: Mr W Dinneen, T East, R Hoare, R Walden (on behalf of G Walden), K Weeks and M Wynne Two members of the public

3292 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Referring to the recent passing of Cllr D Blake, the Chairman reminded Council that the evening was a time of celebration, but also of reflection on the loss of a friend and colleague.

Cllr J Fuller referred to Cllr Blake as a real character, with public service at his very heart. He had been a very active and loyal member of the Council, and would be particularly remembered for his role as Design Champion, providing leadership in generating enthusiasm and commitment for design quality. He worked tirelessly for the local community serving not only as a district, but as a parish and county councillor. He would be greatly missed.

Cllr M Gray, speaking also on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group, spoke of Cllr Blake's interest and skill in planning and design. He considered his passing to be a sad loss to the Council and all his colleagues.
Council then stood and observed a minute’s silence in memory of Cllr Blake.

The Chairman also reported that Cllr J Mooney had recently been involved in a road traffic accident, and was recovering in hospital. Members conveyed their very best wishes to Cllr Mooney, for a speedy recovery.

3293 APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMEN

The Chairman referred to the list of nominations for Honorary Alderman, recommended by the Aldermanic Review Panel. He invited members to speak on each nominee, and once appointed, each honorary alderman was presented with a certificate and addressed the Council in turn.

(a) Mr W Dinneen

Cllr V Bell briefly outlined some of Mr Dinneen’s achievements during his time as councillor at South Norfolk Council. He had first been elected on to the Council in 1991, had served on numerous committees and was Chairman of the Council during 1999/2000. He had also been a member of Costessey Town Council for 26 years, serving as its Chairman for over 20 years. He was loved and respected by all and had served Costessey and the District admirably.

Mr Dinneen addressed the Council and thanked members for the unexpected honour that had been bestowed upon him. He asked members not to lose sight of what was really important; to benefit the local community they served and he suggested that party politics should not take priority.

(b) Mr T East

Cllr M Gray briefly outlined some of Mr East’s achievements during his time as councillor at South Norfolk Council. Cllr East had served as a district councillor for over 32 year and was Chairman of the Council during 1997/98. He had served on numerous committees and had been a member of the Planning Committee / Development Management Committee, for nearly all of his 32 years with the Council. Mr East also served as a county council and a Costessey Town councillor and was remembered in particular for his commitment in supporting various campaigns such as the Northern Distributor Route, his passion for equalities and his tireless work in supporting his constituents in Costessey.

Mr East addressed the Council and thanked members for the honour that had been bestowed upon him. He had thoroughly enjoyed the 32 years he had served the Council, and was extremely flattered to have been nominated. He greatly appreciated the honour and kind words from members.
(c) Mr R Hoare

Cllr J Fuller briefly outlined some of Mr Hoare’s achievements during his time as councillor at South Norfolk Council. Cllr Hoare had served as district councillor from 1999 until 2007 and was leader of the Conservative Group from 2003 until 2004. He had served on numerous committees, and having stood down in 2007, was invited back to chair the Gypsy and Traveller Working Group, earning the respect of land owners and the travelling community.

Mr Hoare addressed the Council and thanked members for the honour that had been bestowed upon him. He felt privileged to have served on the Council.

(d) Mr G Walden

Cllr T Palmer outlined some of Mr Walden’s achievements during his time as councillor at South Norfolk Council. Elected in 2007, Mr Walden had sat on numerous committees, and had served as Vice-Chairman of the Council during 2014/15. Sadly, ill health had prevented him from standing for re-election in May. Having also served on Feltwell, Downham Market and Tivetshall Parish Councils, and Diss Town Council, he had served a total of 40 years as a councillor. His record of service to local government and the local community was enviable, and mention was given to his achievements as Chairman of the Corn Hall Trustees in Diss, as an author of children’s books, his interest in healthy communities, music, and raising funds for charities such as the British Heart Foundation.

Mr R Walden, on behalf of his father, who was unable to attend due to illness, addressed the Council, and thanked members for the honour bestowed on Mr Walden. He explained that Mr Walden had recently endured four separate strokes, but was dealing with his ordeal in his usual calm and positive manner. Reading a message from his father, he explained that he was proud and honoured to receive such an award and thanked all those who had supported him through such challenging times.

(e) Mr K Weeks

Cllr C Gould outlined some of Mr Week’s achievements during his time as councillor at South Norfolk Council. Mr Weeks had been elected to South Norfolk Council in 2003, standing down in May 2015. His approach had always been methodical and with purpose, with his analytical, research and questioning skills making him a real asset, particularly as a member of the Scrutiny Committee. He had served on numerous committees, and had held the position of Chairman of both the Planning Housing and Environmental Services, and the Environment, Health and Recycling Overview Sub Committees.
Mr Weeks addressed the Council and thanked members for the honour that had been bestowed upon him. He recalled being shocked to have been elected back in 2003, and was even more shocked to have been nominated as an honorary alderman. He had enjoyed his work at South Norfolk Council, and was particularly proud of his work in support of rural public houses, making reference to the Pub of the Year competition.

(f) Mr M Wynne

Cllr M Wilby outlined some of Mr Wynne’s achievements during his time as councillor at South Norfolk Council. Mr Wynne had served three terms as member for the Wymondham Town ward, during which he served on numerous committees and played a key role in development management, design, chairing the Planning Committee, Local Area Planning Committee and the Local Development Framework Steering Group. He was instrumental in the formation of the Local Plan, working closely with Cllrs Fuller and Blake on the Greater Norwich Development Partnership. He was also a valued member of Wymondham Town Council and had led on a number of community projects for the town.

Mr Wynne addressed the Council and thanked members for the honour that had been bestowed upon him. He had thoroughly enjoyed his time serving the Council, and had been proud of the achievements made working with colleagues and officers on the Joint Core Strategy, Planning Committee and Design Awards.

It was then unanimously

RESOLVED: That Mr W Dinneen, T East, R Hoare, G Walden, K Weeks, and M Wynne, be appointed as Honorary Aldermen of South Norfolk Council, in recognition of the eminent service they have rendered to the Council as former Councillors.

Before the meeting concluded, the Chairman drew members attention to an additional recommendation from the Aldermanic Review Panel, that former County Councillor, Mr A Gunson, was also given special recognition from South Norfolk Council, for services rendered within the District. Members noted that unfortunately Mr Gunson had been unable to attend the meeting.

Cllr J Fuller outlined a number of Mr Gunson’s achievements, explaining that he had served as County Councillor for the Loddon division since 1970, until his recent retirement after an unprecedented 45 years of service. During his service, he had chaired the Transport Committee, served as Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation, was champion of community transport and was highly committed to attending all parish council meetings and community events whenever possible. Cllr Fuller felt he was a glowing example to all and it gave him great pleasure is proposing that South Norfolk awarded Mr Gunson with a certificate of appreciation for his outstanding contribution and services to the people of Norfolk. This was duly seconded by Cllr A Thomas.
It was then unanimously

**RESOLVED:** That Mr A Gunson be awarded a certificate of appreciation from South Norfolk Council, for his outstanding contribution and services to the people of Norfolk.

(The special meeting concluded at 8.33 pm)

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Chairman
3294 URGENT ITEMS – CLLR J MOONEY

Members noted that Cllr J Mooney had been badly injured in a recent road traffic accident, and it was uncertain as to how long Cllr Mooney would take to recover. Cllr J Fuller therefore proposed, seconded by Cllr A Thomas, that Council grant Cllr Mooney a dispensation, excusing him from meetings until further notice.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED: That following Cllr J Mooney’s recent accident, and for the purposes of Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972, that he be excused from attending meetings of the Council and the Committees on which he serves, until further notice.
3295 MINUTES

With reference to minute 3285, it was noted that the Chairman wished to continue supporting Nelson’s Journey, in addition to his chosen charity, Alzheimer’s Research UK.

Subject to this minor amendment, the minutes of the Council meeting held 1 June 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3296 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred members to the list of the Chairman’s and Vice-Chairman’s engagements since the last meeting of the Council. He explained that unfortunately the cricket festival on 7 July, organised by Hethersett and Melton’s Sports Association, was rained off and had to be cancelled.

3297 PRESENTATIONS TO FORMER MEMBERS

The Chairman welcomed former councillors, Mr T East, Mr N Ward, Mrs S Thomson, Mr K Tilcock, and Mr K Weeks to the meeting.

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman thanked the 15 former members whose terms of office ended in May 2015 (Mr T Blowfield, Mr T East, Mrs K Smith, Mr K Tilcock, Mr K Weeks, Mr B Spratt, Mr N Ward, Mr G Walden, Mrs P Allen, Mr B McClennning, Mr M Windrige, Mr J Herbert, Mr G Watt, Miss L Webster and Mrs S Thomson), for their services to the Council. He gave special mention to Cllr T East who had served on the Council for a total of 32 years.

The Chairman presented those former members present with certificates and gifts from the Council.

3298 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

(i) Greater Norwich Growth Programme 2016/17 – South Norfolk Infrastructure Plan

Cllr J Fuller outlined the recommendations from the Cabinet, regarding the proposed 2016/17 Annual Infrastructure Business Plan for South Norfolk, and the pooling and use of CIL payments.
Cllr Fuller proposed an amendment to the recommendations as detailed below, which was duly seconded by Cllr K Worsley:

At the end of recommendation 3, to add the words “recognising in order to deliver the programme it will be necessary for Norfolk County Council to draw down from the Public Works Loan Board preferential rate loan fund of £60million, as agreed by the Greater Norwich City Deal. This agreement requires the Council to make payments from its CIL until the loan is repaid, but will not place a call on our general reserves. In doing this Norfolk County Council agrees to offer short-term flexibility in relation to repayments”.

Cllr Fuller stressed that this did not materially change the recommendation, but added clarity. The purpose of the amendment was to ensure that the proposals were explicit, so as not to mislead members, or the public. In response to questions, Cllr Fuller explained that the pooled CIL would be used to repay a loan from the Public Works Loan Board, drawn upon by Norfolk County Council. He added that the contribution was capped, with any risk being borne by Norfolk County Council, not South Norfolk.

This amendment was then unanimously carried.

With regard to a query regarding the references to the Long Stratton bypass, Cllr Fuller suggested that this would indeed include the Hempnall crossroads, which he believed to be an integral part of the bypass itself.

It was unanimously
**RESOLVED:**  To:

1. Agree the 2016/17 Infrastructure Business Plan for South Norfolk (outlined at Appendix A of the report) for consideration by the October meeting of the Greater Norwich Growth Board as part of the 2016/17 Growth Programme; and

2. Agree to pool CIL payments for 2016/17 to help ensure the delivery of the Growth Programme;

3. Agree in principle to use pooled CIL in future years to ensure the delivery of NATS projects, including particularly the Norwich Northern Distributor Road and the Long Stratton bypass, recognising in order to deliver the programme it will be necessary for Norfolk County Council to draw down from the Public Works Loan Board preferential rate loan fund of £60million, as agreed by the Greater Norwich City Deal. This agreement requires the Council to make payments from its CIL until the loan is repaid, but will not place a call on our general reserves. In doing this Norfolk County Council agrees to offer short-term flexibility in relation to repayments.

Cllr J Fuller presented the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held 15 June 2015, regarding the revenue budget position of the Council for the financial year 2014/15.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED: To approve:
   a) The budget virements which exceed £100,000 in accordance with the rules of financial governance;
   b) The slippage requests totalling £516,891
   c) The movements in reserves as outlines at paragraph 6 of the report.

(iii) Capital Programme Outturn Report 2014/15

Cllr J Fuller presented the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held 15 June 2015, regarding the Council's Capital Programme.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED: To approve:
   a) The slippage requests summarised at paragraph 3.1 of the report;
   b) The financing of the amended capital programme for the next five financial years, as set out in Appendices B and C of the report.

(iv) Treasury Management Annual Report 2014/15

Cllr J Fuller presented the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held 15 June 2015, regarding treasury management activity during the financial year 2014/15.

It was unanimously
RESOLVED: To:
  a) Approve the actual 2014/15 prudential indicators;
  b) Note the treasury activity in quarter four and that it complies with the agreed strategy.

3299 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE, RESOURCES, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT AND OPINION FOR 2014/15, INCLUDING REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

Cllr G Wheatley, Chairman of the Finance, Resources, Audit and Governance Committee, presented the recommendations to Council.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED: To approve:
  a) The Annual Report and Opinion of the Internal Audit Consortium Manager
  b) The Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit.

3300 MONITORING OFFICER REPORT

Cllr J Fuller presented the report to members, which sought Council agreement to changes to the officer employment procedures, and to make amendments to Committee appointments.

Cllr Fuller explained that following the untimely death of Cllr D Blake, Cllr L Neal was to be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Development Management Committee. Cllr Neal was to also replace Cllr Blake as substitute member on the Norfolk Duty to Cooperate Forum. Cllr Y Bendle was to replace Cllr Blake as a member of the Development Management Committee.

In Cllr Mooney’s absence following his recent accident, Cllr Neal would be chairing Development Management Committee meetings. During this time, Cllr A Thomas was to act as Vice-Chairman of the Committee, supporting Cllr Neal. It was also noted that Cllr J Hornby was to be appointed to the Development Management Committee Pool of Substitutes.

With regard to the proposal that responsibility for individual community governance reviews be transferred to the Electoral Arrangements Task Group, Cllr C Kemp proposed that the name of this Group be changed to the Electoral Arrangements Review Committee, and this proposal was seconded by Cllr B Stone.
With reference to the amendments to the Contract Standing Orders, Cllr M Gray suggested that it would be helpful if the amendments could have been highlighted in the appendix. Cllr Fuller pointed out that a summary of the changes had been outlined at paragraph 6 of the report.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED: To

  a) Agree the principle of the changes to the Officer Employment Rules as outlined in section 2.5 above, and to authorise the Monitoring Officer to make any further changes to the rules necessary to ensure the rules are in line with the relevant Regulations and the principles outlined in this report;

  b) Agree the creation of the Hearing Panel and Appeals Panel in line with the Terms of Reference at Appendix 1 of the report;

  c) Appoint
     • Cllr L Neal as the Vice-Chairman of the Development Management Committee and the substitute member of the Norfolk Duty to Co-operate Forum;
     • Cllr A Thomas as “Acting” Vice-Chairman of the Development Management Committee
     • Cllr Y Bendle as a member of the Development Management Committee
     • Cllr J Hornby to the Development Management Committee Substitute Pool.

  d) Authorise the Monitoring Officer to make the changes to the Policy Committee Terms of Reference as highlighted at section 3.3 of the report;

  e) Transfers the responsibility for the function of the undertaking of Community Governance Reviews as identified within s.79 to s.102 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to the Electoral Arrangements Task Group, including the approval of all necessary orders and consents, and that the Task Group be renamed as the Electoral Arrangements Review Committee;

  f) Agree the revised Contract Standing Orders, as outlined at Appendix 2 of the report.
3301 CHAIRMEN'S REPORTS

(a) CABINET – REPORT OF THE LEADER

Members noted the report of the Leader of the Council.

In response to a query regarding the Long Stratton Area Action Plan Examination, which was due to commence the very next day, Cllr Fuller explained that the Inspector would be leading the three day hearing. The Council had already considered the Inspector’s list of matters, issues and questions and had sent responses to the Inspector in advance of the hearing. With reference to concerns from Newton Flotman Parish Council, he explained that representations had also been made from Tasburgh, and that all representations would be taken in to account.

With regard to the Long Stratton bypass, Cllr A Thomas hoped that any changes to the Hempnall crossroads, would not have an adverse effect on the Hall Lane junction, pushing more traffic in to that area. Cllr Fuller assured members that these points had been taken in to account.

(b) SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members noted the report of the Scrutiny Committee Chairman, which had been emailed out to all members.

(c) LICENSING COMMITTEE

Members noted the report of the Chairman of the Licensing Committee

(d) DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Members noted the report of the Chairman of the Development Management Committee, which had been emailed out to all members

(The meeting concluded at 9.17 pm)
### CIVIC ENGAGEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD: 14 July to 21 September 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAIRMAN: CLLR DAVID BILLS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>15 July</td>
<td>Presentation of Trophies</td>
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<td>To present trophies to the winners of the novice cycle race held by Lotus League Racing and Revolution Events, which is linked to the Council’s legacy work around the Tour of Britain.</td>
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<td>19 July</td>
<td>Civic Service</td>
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<td>The Mayor of St Edmundsbury’s Civic Service held at St Edmundsbury Cathedral.</td>
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<td>24 July</td>
<td>Summer Reception</td>
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<td>The Chairman of Norfolk County Council’s Annual Summer reception held at Norwich Castle Museum.</td>
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<td>25 July</td>
<td>100th Birthday</td>
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<td>To present a bouquet of flowers to a lady at Walcott Nursing Home in Diss in celebration of her 100th birthday.</td>
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<td>1 August</td>
<td>100th Air Refuelling Wing</td>
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<td>A Tailgate-style BBQ held at RAF Mildenhall in honour of new Mayors and Chairmen of Councils.</td>
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<td>4 September</td>
<td>Reception and Auction of Promises</td>
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<td>The Chairman of North Norfolk’s annual Reception and auction held in Cromer.</td>
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<td>6 September</td>
<td>Civic Reception</td>
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<td>The Mayor of Great Yarmouth’s civic reception held on board the Swedish Ship, Gotteburg, as part of the Maritime Festival.</td>
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<td>9 September</td>
<td>Parade and Sunset Ceremony</td>
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<td>A procession through the streets of Bury St Edmunds, followed by a cocktail reception, in celebration of the Queen becoming the longest reigning monarch in Britain.</td>
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<td>12 September</td>
<td>Tour of Britain</td>
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<td>In celebration of the Tour passing through Hethersett.</td>
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<td>14 September</td>
<td>Battle of Britain 75th Anniversary</td>
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<td>To witness the Lord Mayor of Norwich formally opening Battle of Britain Week, followed by lunch.</td>
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<td>20 September</td>
<td>Battle of Britain Commemoration Service</td>
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<td>An invitation from the Mayor of Thetford to attend a service commemorating the Anniversary of the Battle of Britain, followed by refreshments.</td>
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<td><strong>VICE CHAIRMAN: CLLR GARRY WHEATLEY</strong></td>
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<td>25th August</td>
<td>Carers’ Day</td>
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<td>To welcome carers in the Wymondham area to an information-sharing day for carers.</td>
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Monitoring Officer Report

Report of the Communities and Democratic Services Manager
Portfolio Holder: John Fuller, Leader of the Council

CONTACT
Leah Mickleborough
lmickleborough@s-norfolk.gov.uk
01508 533954
1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of this report is to inform Council regarding the process for the review of Members’ Allowances and Expenses, to be undertaken in May 2016.

2. Review of Members’ Allowances and Expenses

2.1. The last comprehensive review of the Scheme for Members’ Allowances and Expenses was undertaken in May 2012, for the following 3 years (i.e. up to 2015). It will therefore be necessary to undertake a review to be reported to Council in May 2016. Since the review in 2012, various minor tweaks have been made to the scheme to ensure it is aligned to Council structures etc., however it is now opportune to revisit the scheme to take into account the shift to Bring Your Own Device (electronic working) for Councillors. The Council must ensure the review process is open to public scrutiny.

2.2. Prior to setting the Scheme, Council must take into account the views of an Independent Panel, made of a minimum of 3 persons, who examine the Scheme and make recommendations for changes. The Council has taken account of statutory guidance in forming its panel, which is made of a representative of each of the following sectors – media, business, voluntary / community, Parish / Town Councils.

2.3. The current media and Parish / Town Council representatives have confirmed that they are willing to remain on the panel. Whilst these representatives have served for some time, it is important that there are representatives with some experience on the Panel. The business and voluntary / community sector representatives have now changed roles and therefore we need to recruit to these positions.
2.4. In line with the statutory guidance, it is proposed a press notice of the vacancy will be placed, as well as representations made to sector bodies to seek potential appointees to the business and voluntary / community sector representative posts. It is then proposed that the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive, will appoint members to the Panel, an interview process being held if necessary.

2.5. The process to enable the Panel to consider the Scheme is now well established and generally works well. The Panel will convene to agree the evidence they seek; an evidence gathering period will follow, with a report produced with their findings. The evidence gathering period usually requires members to keep timesheets for a short period to demonstrate the Council work they undertake, and allows the opportunity for members to make personal representation to the Panel on the matters they think should be taken into account when reviewing the scheme. Due regard is given to the Statutory Guidance and relevant legislation.

2.6. Following the Panel review, the Council will then meet to consider the findings and agree the new Scheme, in May 2016.

3. Recommendation

3.1. It is recommended that the Council endorses the proposals for the recruitment and appointment of the Independent Panel on Members Remuneration.
Council
21 September 2015
AGENDA ITEM: 10 (a)

Report of the Leader of the Council

John Fuller, Leader of the Council

CONTACT
Claire White 01508 533669
cwhite@s-norfolk.gov.uk
1. Cabinet Meeting 20 July 2015

1.1. Performance, Opportunities/Risks and Revenue Budget Position Report for Quarter 1 2015/16

1.1.1 We received another pleasing report detailing the Council’s performance against its strategic measures, risk position and revenue budget for the first quarter of 2015/16.

1.1.2 Performance across services continues to be high, with no strategic measures falling below acceptable target levels. Cabinet agreed to some changes to the strategic measure set, ensuring that our measures say up to date and meaningful. We discussed at some length the targets for recycling and suggested that that the Environment and Regulation Committee could examine in more detail how performance could improve further in this area.

1.1.3 It was noted that the Council continues to manage its risks effectively and proactively, and is realising opportunities as they materialise.

1.1.4 With regard to the revenue position for Quarter 1, officers reported a positive variance of £0.3 million to the end of June, with favourable variances across all directorates.

1.2. Capital and Treasury Management Report Quarter 1 2015/16
1.2.1 Cabinet received a report detailing the position of the Capital programme and reviewed the treasury management activity for the first quarter of the financial year 2015/16.

1.2.2 Cabinet noted that capital expenditure was £2.434 million compared to a budget for the quarter of £4.051 million. The main positive variances related to the property development at Poringland, the Vehicle Replacement Programme and Low Cost Housing.

1.2.3 We noted that due to an improvement in market conditions, the Council has started to make longer term cash investments and that the interest earned on cash investments was now forecast to be more than that budgeted. However, the return on investment properties continues to compare more favourably, with a net rate of return of 6.5%.

1.2.4 Cabinet was advised that the joint insurance tender exercise with North Norfolk and Great Yarmouth was progressing well and to ensure that the timetable was adhered to, we delegated the decision to award the contract to the Director of Business Development, in consultation with Cllr Edney.

1.2.5 Council is asked to approve the prudential indicators for the quarter, and note the treasury management activity, elsewhere on today’s agenda.

1.3 Medium Term Plan 2016/17 to 2019/20

1.3.1 Cabinet was presented with a revised Medium Term Financial Plan, covering the period 2016/17 up to 2019/20

1.3.2 The Plan was based on three major risks; the increase in New Homes Bonus, growth in income from commercialisation, and income from the Council’s building control and property development companies.
1.3.3 Cabinet was satisfied that as long as these risks could be managed effectively, a balanced budget could be achieved for 2016/17 and 2017/18, however it was recognised that a funding gap of £1 million was yet to be addressed for 2018/19 and 2019/20.

1.4 Development Management Review of Charging Pre-Applications

1.4.1 Cabinet reviewed the charging schedule for pre planning application advice, and it was agreed that this should be extended to householder applications, bringing in additional income for the Council.

1.4.2 Members welcomed the introduction of exceptions which would allow key community groups to still access the advice they needed at a reduced cost.

1.5 South Norfolk Housing Strategy

1.5.1 Cabinet considered a draft Housing Strategy, which had been recommended for approval by the Housing, Wellbeing and Early Intervention Policy Committee, and provided the basis for housing activity in the District, until 2019.

1.5.2 We agreed that the draft Housing Strategy was to be issued for consultation, to commence on 3 August, for a twelve week period.

1.6 Cabinet Task and Finish Groups

1.6.1 Cabinet agreed the terms of reference for the three task and finish groups, the formation of which were agreed at Cabinet back in June (Broadband, Growth and Infrastructure Task and Finish Group, Leisure and Community Facilities Task and Finish Group, and the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan Task and Finish Group).
1.7 Lease Re-Gear for Trustees of Phelan Plant Hire Retirement Benefit Scheme at Ayton Road, Wymondham

1.7.1 Cabinet agreed that the ground lease for an industrial unit be surrendered and a new lease be re-granted, increasing rental income and capital value of the asset for the Council, whilst improving the security of the tenant’s investment plans.

2. Cabinet Meeting 14 September 2015

2.1 Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan Document – Preferred Options

2.1.1 Cabinet was due to consider the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan Document Preferred Options, at its meeting on 14 September, but on Monday 31 August, the Government amended its Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.

2.1.2 It is important that the Council carefully considers the implications of these amendments, to ensure that the emerging Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan has appropriate regard to the updated Planning Policy. It was therefore decided to defer this report until the full implications of the changed national policy have been fully assessed.

2.2 Other Items

2.1 An oral update of the other items discussed at the Cabinet meeting on 14 September, will be provided at the meeting.
Annual Report on Standards Activity

Report of the Monitoring Officer
Chairman of the Standards Committee, Kay Mason Billig

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Leah Mickleborough, 01508 533954
lmickleborough@s-norfolk.gov.uk
Foreword

2014/15 has been the third year for the operation of our Standards regime and the system still seems to be working well, in that most complaints are handled without having to be referred to the Chairman/Vice Chairman or going to a full Standards Committee hearing.

We are still receiving a number of complaints but most of these are able to be dealt with by the Monitoring Officer and the Independent Person.

There are two main areas of conflict which seem to lead to the potential for a complaint to be made:

1. Where there has been a personality clash and tensions have arisen, causing a division of opinion locally. Some outside intervention is then useful to suggest a way forwards and to get Councillors and their electorate working together again. These types of problems will naturally arise but having someone independent to turn to can often diffuse the situation.

2. Where there has been a misunderstanding of the system and interests, pecuniary and other, have been wrongly or not declared or procedures not followed correctly. These situations help identify where additional training would be useful for Councillors and we should encourage new (and established) Councillors and Clerks to attend the free training that is available. A better understanding of the system for all may reduce these types of complaints further.

Often a complaint is found not to come under the remit of our Standards regime, as it is outside of the Code of Conduct or relates to someone who is not bound by it. The decisions made do not always please those involved but I am confident that we are applying the rules fairly across the District and as a result, we have fewer complaints and those that do come through, are dealt with effectively.
I am grateful to the staff, especially The Monitoring Officer and our Independent Person, for their attention to detail and for all the work they do in this regard. The people who come to us with a complaint are often upset and can be angry and disillusioned when they call on our services. Our experienced staff are to be congratulated for their skill and tact in handling people sensitively and in helping to resolve difficult situations.

Kay Mason Billig, Chairman

**Introduction**

This is the third annual report of the Standards Committee following the transition to a local Standards Regime introduced under the Localism Act 2011.

The report outlines how the Standards regime has operated during the year at South Norfolk Council, and how the Council fulfils its duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members across the District.

**Standards Allegations and Investigations**

It is pleasing to be able to report that the number of standards cases has continued to fall during the year, to the extent that the level of concerns raised is now at the lowest point for 6 years. Over the past year, just 7 complaints were raised against a total of 10 Councillors, which reflects just 0.1% of the Parish and District Councillors within South Norfolk. All complaints raised related to Parish or Town Councillors - there were no complaints raised against District Councillors. Comparative statistics on the volume of complaints in comparison to prior years have been included at Appendix 1 for reference, and more detail provided in relation to the complaints raised during the year at Appendix 2.
For the second year in a row, no complaints were referred for further investigation. We encourage both complainants and subjects to provide substantive evidence to support the claims that they make, which, in many cases, allows for a more straightforward consideration as to whether the Code of Conduct has been breached and identification of ways in which the issues, if necessary, can be locally resolved.

Although it was not necessary to convene a Standards Committee during the year, a complaint raised shortly after the end of the financial year was subsequently resolved by the Committee following referral by the Monitoring Officer. This resulted in a Parish Councillor having been found to have breached the Localism Act and Code of Conduct through failing to declare a pecuniary interest, and the Committee recommended measures that seek to restore effective working relations for the Parish Council.

In reviewing each complaint and determining the action that should be undertaken, the Council is required to consult with an Independent Person, Mr Alex Oram. In all cases Mr Oram’s views have been consistent with the Monitoring Officer as to how the complaint should be taken forward.

Both complainants, and subjects of the complaint, also have the right to appeal the decision of the Monitoring Officer to the Chair of the Standards Committee. Unusually, both cases which were appealed in the year occurred in the Chairman’s ward, and in line with adopted practice, the appeals were referred to the Vice-Chair of the Committee. Again, the Vice-Chair agreed with the Monitoring Officer’s opinion.

One complainant elected to refer their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) following an unsuccessful appeal against the Monitoring Officer’s decision. The LGO did not consider the matter warranted further investigation.
Working with District Councillors

The Committee for Standards in Public Life, in their 2014 Annual Report, recognised the importance of promoting ethical standards in public life. This highlighted the induction process as a key area for embedding positive behaviours for new Councillors.

With this in mind, the member induction process has served to reinforce the positive culture of South Norfolk Council. Sessions have focused on areas such as the culture of the organisation, standards and ethics and the member role in development management. Councillor buddies have been introduced to provide a personal support to new Councillors as they learn more of their role, and forthcoming sessions (amongst others) will help Councillors to learn more about how they can support their Town and Parish Councils, deliver their community casework role and chair meetings effectively.

Working with Town and Parish Councils

One of the key concerns held in relation to the new Standards Regime has been the extent to which individuals have sought to complain because they disagree with a decision made by the Parish or Town Council, as opposed to the conduct of an individual Councillor. Many residents find it disappointing to learn that as a District Council, we have no supervisory responsibility in relation to the actions taken by Parish or Town Councils more generally. Whilst the Parish or Town Council’s external auditors are able to act in relation to concerns of financial impropriety, there is no body which investigates more general concerns other than the Council itself.

Whilst this position preserves the level of accountability that the Parish or Town Council has to its own electorate, it should be recognised that Parish and Town Councils have generally seen their role and influence grow and there are now many smaller Councils which control a significant amount of public funding and assets. In this regard, recent proposals have been introduced by Central Government to extend the scope of the Local Government Ombudsman to larger Town and Parish Councils, which many residents may welcome.
The role and powers of this Council to investigate complaints and the powers the Ombudsman may have in the future serve to act as a deterrent to potentially errant Councillors. However, it is far better to ensure that Councillors are well educated in the obligations placed on them to avoid issues arising in the first instance. Regular training has been provided to Parish and Town Councils over the past few years, and an offer has already been made to host training and refresher sessions for Councillors following the 2015 elections.

Looking Ahead, 2015/16

Recent developments have highlighted the importance to Councillors of maintaining high standards of Conduct. The recent Casey report into the Rotherham Child Sex Abuse Scandal identified the importance Councillors held in setting the culture of the organisation, and there has been subsequent debate as to whether Councillors should face greater criminal sanctions for failing to take appropriate action in regard to concerns raised. Meanwhile, we have recently seen the first prosecution of a Councillor in Dorset who failed to declare a pecuniary interest. This case emphasised the need for Councillors to ensure they maintain a strong oversight of their interests and fully understand the decisions they are making and how they can impact on organisations they are involved with.

This report highlights that at South Norfolk Council, standards of behaviour are high with a strong cultural and training emphasis to maintain these standards. Nonetheless, we cannot be complacent, and it is through continuing this work over the next year we will hope to maintain this positive outcome.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Council adopts this Annual Report of the Standards Committee.
Appendix 1

Standards Cases, 2009-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of complaints</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parish</td>
<td>District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 old regime</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 New regime</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>9 (inc 6 referred to above)</td>
<td>3 (inc 3 referred to above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note – in 2013/14, standards reporting transferred to a financial year basis, as opposed to a municipal year basis
Appendix 2

Standards Cases, 2014/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Brief Description of allegation</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>140416</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Subject failed to leave meeting after declaring a pecuniary interest</td>
<td>Interest was not pecuniary. No further action necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140524</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Subjects failed to register and declare interest in land, act appropriately regarding the interests and abused their position</td>
<td>Breach of the Code – failure to register interest accurately. No further breaches identified. Recommended training. Appealed – appeal dismissed. Referred to LGO – no further action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140821</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Subject failed to declare interests properly and influenced voting</td>
<td>Matter too long ago to warrant further investigation. Appealed – appeal dismissed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140924</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Subject ignored council and undermined public confidence</td>
<td>Complaints unsubstantiated, no further action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141209</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Subjects failed to declare interest in matter</td>
<td>Interests too tenuous to have warranted declaration. No further action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150202</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Subjects acted inappropriately in handling Council business</td>
<td>Subjects no longer standing for the Parish Council, no further investigation warranted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150220</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Subject bringing Council into disrepute</td>
<td>Referred to neighbouring District Council as not a Councillor in SNC area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Report of the Chairman of the Licensing and Homelessness Appeals Committee

1. Licensing Appeals and Complaints Committee

1.1 There have been no meetings of the above Committee since the last report

2. Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee

2.1 There have been no meetings of the above Committee since the last report.

3. Homelessness Review Panel

3.1 The Homelessness Review Panel met on 12th August and upheld the officers’ decision that the appellant was intentionally homeless. Although the decision meant that the Council had no duty to provide accommodation, officers would continue to offer advice to the appellant.

4. Statements of Policy

4.1 Revised Statements of both Licensing and Gambling policy have been drafted by officers and are subject to public consultation until 12th October.

David Goldson
Chairman
DMC Report

Since Cllr Joe Mooney’s last report in July I have taken on the role as Acting Chairman of the Committee with Cllr Alison Thomas the Acting Vice-Chairman. I am pleased to report that Cllr Joe Mooney is making a good recovery and should be back as the Chairman on the 16 September. I would like to thank Cllr Alison Thomas for stepping in at short notice as Acting Vice Chairman and the support that she provided me. I would also like to thank all the Committee Members and the Officers for helping me when I had to Chair some very difficult meetings.

The Committee has met on three occasions and dealt with a wide variety of applications. These have included approving Solar Farms in Trowse and Mulbarton, an Anaerobic Digester in Bressingham and a number of reserved matters applications for new dwellings, which have included, 50 dwellings and commercial office space in Long Stratton; 13 dwellings in Brooke and revisions to a scheme in Mulbarton for 180 dwellings. We also have a Committee meeting on the 16 September and Cllr Joe Mooney will update you on this orally at the Council meeting.

A number of applications (3 in total) for new dwellings in the open countryside have also been considered in light of paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF makes it very clear that local planning authorities should avoid allowing new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances. These four circumstances relate to – the design being truly outstanding or innovative; reflect the highest standards in architecture; significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area. Two previously refused applications which were subject to appeals have now been dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate making it very clear all four criterion of paragraph 55 should be met. In light of this all three applications were assessed against this policy requirement and resulted in all three applications being refused by the committee.

Cllr Lisa Neal
Acting Chairman
Devolution in the New Anglia Area

Report of the Chief Executive
Cabinet Member: John Fuller, Leader of the Council

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1. Urgent Report

1.1. This report is considered urgent by virtue of s.100B(4)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972, given the current status of the negotiations across Norfolk and the potential agreement of a negotiation document on 22 September.

2. Introduction

2.1. This report outlines the devolution agenda that has emerged over the last few years and most recently in Norfolk since May 2015. It details some of the benefits and opportunities that the current Devolution agenda offers in areas such as skills, transport, infrastructure, housing, policing, health and welfare.

3. Background

3.1. Since 2011, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), based broadly on county areas, were established following the abolition of regional government and enterprise bodies.

3.2. The last four years has also seen the development of ‘City Deals’ where urban areas have worked with Government to agree greater control of spending and resources in their locality. Additionally, Essex County Council, with the constituent district councils, has undertaken a pilot project for whole place, community budgets, where public spending controlled at a national level is devolved to enable more effective and efficient delivery. These initiatives have helped to inform the Government’s approach to Devolution.
3.3. Nationally, there is an active debate about the need for Government to pass significant powers down to local government in England to match the powers devolved to the parliament in Scotland and the National Assemblies in Wales and Northern Ireland.

3.4. So far ‘deals’ between the Government and local authorities have tended to focus on English cities and large urban areas. More recently Cornwall has been the first rural area to agree a devolution deal by the Government after submitting proposals. The Cornwall Devolution proposal covers a range of key areas including transport, employment and skills, EU funding, business support, energy, health and social care, public estate, heritage and culture. The Government has also agreed to work with agencies in Cornwall on a number of proposals to improve employment and skills opportunities. These include reshaping training and learning provision, developing new apprenticeship opportunities and improving careers advice for young people.

3.5. Currently across the country many two-tier areas are also keen to take part in the discussion and the government is now seeking expressions of interest in further potential devolution projects, including those from two tier areas. There has subsequently been a growing momentum of the national agenda for devolving powers from Westminster and the Government announced that any area wishing to engage with this agenda during the current spending review period would need to submit proposals by the 4th September.


4.1. An expression of interest has been submitted to Government within the 4th September deadline. The covering letter (appendix 1) and Norfolk Offer (appendix 2) set out the scope of the devolution expression of interest (EOI) in more detail.
4.2. The purpose of this EOI is so that Government and local public sector partnerships can explore what policy/budget areas might be advantageous to both if they were to be devolved for more local control.

4.3. There are significant potential benefits associated with devolution. These include support and devolved government funding to encourage economic growth and infrastructure provision, better use of public funds in areas such as health and wellbeing allowing cross sector investment to reduce demand on services and more coordinated decision making in respect of major issues such as strategic housing and infrastructure delivery. These points are made within the EOI.

4.4. It is important to stress that the status of the document submitted to date is an EOI aimed at opening dialogue with Government about devolved powers and the appropriate governance arrangements that will be needed. This Council and all partners will need to agree to support any devolution ‘deal’ and associated governance arrangement. If the EOI is successful there is considerable work to be done to bring this to fruition.

4.5. New forms of Governance based around a ‘Combined Authority’ model, will be required. Suffolk and Norfolk are committed to discussing arrangements with the New Anglia LEP. The Combined Authority proposal could include a ‘Double Devolution’ approach, which sets out functional clusters of districts, and this is currently being considered.

5. Proposals

5.1. This report outlines the devolution agenda that has emerged over the last few years. It details some of the benefits and opportunities that the current devolution agenda offers in areas such as skills, transport, infrastructure, housing, policing, health and welfare.

5.2. The austerity back drop of reduced funding and a reduced state presence has meant a greater focus on localism and a closer examination of the effectiveness of the current funding streams and their ability to deliver improved outcomes.
5.3. Public sector partners, the LEP and higher education organisations have recognised potential benefits of achieving devolved powers and budgets and also in developing closer and more effective working between public sector bodies.

5.4. The Norfolk offer document in appendix B invites the Government to enter into discussions about these additional powers and the governance arrangements that would be necessary to operate them. The expression of interest focuses on the benefits of this approach including:

- Delivering economic growth and prosperity
- Coherent planning and housing
- Employment and skill
- Physical Asset and infrastructure
- Action on flood risk
- Improved health and social care

5.5. This is very much the first stage in the process and if taken up by Government then much more work will need to be undertaken with partners to develop for example, a more integrated approach to health and social care. Essentially it will involve the development of greater powers over areas of public spending which are currently controlled centrally and more detailed information will be required in respect of the actual ‘asks’ of Government and benefits to be achieved. This further work would involve consultation with all partners.

5.6. On 17th September, Norfolk Leaders will meet to consider a more detailed negotiation document, which will then be reviewed by Suffolk Leaders on 18th September. All Leaders within the LEP are meeting on the 22nd September for a joint sign off. On the 22nd October there is a Government challenge process regarding content and Governance of the negotiation document ahead of a final discussion and announcement in the Autumn Statement on the 25th November.
6. Risks and Implications arising

6.1. This report relates to an expression of interest which is an early stage of the potential implementation of a devolution deal. Governance proposals to establish how any deal will be delivered will have to be developed in association with the development of the deal following acceptance by Government.

6.2. The remaining implications will be considered should the EOI lead to further development work.

7. Other Options

7.1. A key focus for Government is scale of a prospective deal and a Norfolk only devolution option is not seen by Government as a viable option.

7.2. The new Anglia LEP area including Suffolk is the geographical scope of the devolution deal and sets out the list of partners.

8. Recommendation

8.1. That Members note the contents of this report and, in doing so, acknowledge that devolution provides a potential opportunity for the transfer of resources, powers and accountability from central government to local government.

8.2. Agree that South Norfolk Council follows up work on the initial expression of interest undertaken with partners across the Norfolk and Suffolk area to maximise the opportunity presented by the Government’s commitment to devolution.
8.3. Delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader any resources required providing costs are met from the existing approved council budget.
To whom it may concern

Re: Devolution – Letter of Intent

We invite you to consider an exciting proposal that will further transform the economy of much of East Anglia. It comes with the strong endorsement of the Councils in Norfolk together with the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and our universities. It conveys our commitment to continue to work together to maximise the benefits of devolution for businesses and communities. Our proposals in summary are to:

- improve productivity, drive growth and improve housing delivery
- invest in transport and improve infrastructure
- transform skills and employment
- transform the delivery of health and social care

These represent a significant commitment to achieve the local/national dividend desired through devolution and to rebalance the local economy.

Building on the Norwich & Ipswich City Deals we will develop the existing strong relationships which we have created with private and public sector partners through the New Anglia LEP and develop further Enterprise Zones focused on agri-tech, food and health and digital ICT. We will also complete our commitment to provide Superfast Broadband to 100% of our premises by 2020.

We are proud of our collaboration which has led to two Round 2 City Deals; our Enterprise Zone, covering Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, has exceeded job creation targets; our Growth Hub has blazed the trail for simplified and streamlined support for businesses and our Growing Business Fund has created more than 1,000 new jobs and levered in £60m in private sector investment.

Productivity
At the heart of our collaboration would be a Productivity Commission, led by the private sector and the New Anglia LEP which will examine the root causes of the productivity gap in Suffolk and Norfolk and make positive recommendations on how we can tackle these issues head on.

Rural Issues
Our productivity commission will incorporate a 10 point rural productivity plan for boosting productivity in the two counties, in support of the national programme, to address the challenges faced by businesses and local communities in rural and isolated areas.

**Financing Infrastructure Investments**
A key role for the LEP in a combined authority would be to create investable investment and infrastructure opportunities in a way that lever-in private finance, perhaps from individuals, pension funds or sovereign wealth without relying exclusively on the UK Government for funding.

**Strategic Connections to Neighbouring Areas**
Whilst our immediate focus is Norfolk we see strengthening connections, both physical and economic, to Suffolk and further still to Cambridgeshire and our neighbouring LEP as key to unlocking the whole area’s economic potential, especially in respect of strategic transport provision.

**Strategic Transport**
We have welcomed and supported government investment in transport infrastructure, including the A11, A47 and A14, but we are ambitious for more. We see the devolution of funding for investment in our roads infrastructure as essential to enable the further development of an integrated, modern transport system that would be the key to developing employment and housing sites across the counties. In this respect we are committed to looking outside our boundaries to areas such as Cambridgeshire and beyond to deliver benefits for the wider region. An effective transport system is the lifeblood of our rural area.

We also want greater local influence over planned improvements to the Strategic Road Network and greater local engagement and influence over the development and operation of the Greater Anglia Rail franchise. We believe this will ensure that government and private sector investments provide better value for money and are focussed strongly on making East Anglia a more attractive place to start up, locate and grow business.

Our “Norwich in 90” rail campaign has brought together private and public sector partners around a compelling business plan to support investment and growth and we have established effective delivery through the Local Transport Body and Skills Board. Not only will such infrastructure unlock business and housing investment throughout East it will also ensure the port of Felixstowe, the UK’s busiest container port, continues to grow and contribute to UK economy.

**Supporting Business Growth**
Building on the success of our Growth Programme, we will enhance the Growth Hub which is already exceeding ambitious performance targets. This will continue to provide a single point of contact for business support. By seeking devolution of national support schemes, including UKTI, MAS and Growth Accelerator this will ensure that businesses have the support they need to help them grow, compete and win in the global marketplace.

**Co-operation amongst Key Partners**
All the Norfolk and Suffolk Councils have played a major role in the acknowledged success of New Anglia LEP, judged to be one of the most successful in England. This is testament to the strong and enduring collaboration and leadership from private and public sector organisations across Norfolk & Suffolk. We all want this to continue and strengthen so that together we can release the further potential that exists, particularly on growth and in tackling the productivity challenge.

Our submissions to the Comprehensive Spending Review on the wider opportunities presented by devolution represent the respective positions of the authorities. We believe that devolution presents a once in a generation opportunity for public service reform and
improved collaborative working, not just on growth and productivity, but the range of opportunities highlighted above. Working with other partners to improve health economies is critical to delivering sustainable public services and we are committed to working with our partners to make the most of the opportunity offered by devolution to do so.

**Support for Key Industry Sectors**

Focusing on growth, we know the East Anglian economy, already a net contributor to the Exchequer, has the potential to grow faster, with strengths in key sectors such as agritech, energy, ports & logistics and the digital economy. Linking Greater Cambridge and Greater Norwich with their two world-class universities and research facilities with the A11 growth corridor should further accelerate jobs and growth.

Our innovation and research pedigree is world class, with Norwich Research Park (NRP), hosting the Institute of Food Research, The Genome Analysis Centre (TGAC), The Sainsbury Laboratory and The John Innes Centre. We have the University of East Anglia (UEA) with its established record across disciplines, and the Norwich University of the Arts’ international reputation.

In Suffolk, the University Campus Suffolk, opened in 2007 has grown quickly and is applying for Taught Degree Awarding Powers currently. In addition our private sector includes Adastral Park, home to BT’s global research facility and other tech companies and the Hethel Engineering Centre, a hub for innovation.

Growth in the IT and Digital sector supported by Norwich University of the Arts (NUA), presents a huge opportunity for East Anglia, even more so when you factor in collaboration with Cambridgeshire and the Greater Cambridgeshire and Greater Peterborough LEP.

Close to mainland Europe and the wider South East we want East Anglia to be a centre for global business, offering high value, secure and sustainable jobs to everyone who lives there.

**Employment & Skills**

We are already making good progress. 88% of 18-24 year olds are in work or education and the number of young Job Seekers has fallen by almost 40% in the last 12 months. However, 2,675 16-24 year olds remain on Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), 2,770 on Employment Support Allowance and the rate of youth unemployment in our most deprived towns and some rural areas is still above regional and national average. With the help of Government, we will deliver the national Youth Obligation through a local promise that all our 14-24 year olds will receive the personal support they need to make a successful transition into post-16 learning, get an apprenticeship, work experience or a job within three months of leaving education or employment. This is our Youth Pledge.

**Democracy & Governance**

We appreciate the need for clear and democratically accountable governance which in turn recognises and reflects the nature of the distinct economic and social geographies within a larger Combined Authority based on clusters of Districts or City Deal geography. This proposal will incorporate clear, decisive and accountable decision making at the geography that best matches effective local delivery.

We will explore new forms of governance, based around a Combined Authority model, customised for Norfolk, focused on growth and productivity and our other headline proposals. Suffolk is committed to discussing arrangements with Norfolk and the New Anglia LEP as they evolve further. We will happily enter into discussion about governance arrangements which cross our county borders.

**Meaningful Double Devolution**

Built into a combined authority will be the importance of a meaningful double devolution approach based on district clusters or City Deal areas, especially in respect of strategic
planning and housing delivery. The Greater Norwich partnership is a prime example of how this can work successfully.

This way we can build on the strengths of the New Anglia LEP Board, its active collaborations across public and private sectors, the universities and the LEP Sector Groups.

We are confident that you will see these proposals as a clear commitment to build on what we have achieved already, to strengthen the economy of East Anglia and recognise that all the councils in the New Anglia LEP area are ambitious not just to support this growth, but to exploit the wider opportunities presented by devolution for the benefit of our communities and the country.

We can move at pace and look forward to a positive response to this expression of interest. We are committed to working with you to meet the Spending Review deadline.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Nick Daubney
Leader - Borough Council of King’s Lynn & West Norfolk and Chair of Norfolk Leaders

Mark Pendlington
Chair - LEP

Cllr George Nobbs
Leader – Norfolk County Council

Professor David Richardson
Vice-Chancellor - UEA

Professor John Last
Vice-Chancellor - NUA

Cllr Michael Wassell
Leader – Breckland District Council

Cllr Andrew Proctor
Leader – Broadland District Council

Cllr Graham Plant
Leader – Gt Yarmouth Borough Council

Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick
Leader – North Norfolk District Council

Cllr Alan Waters
Leader – Norwich City Council

Cllr John Fuller
Leader – South Norfolk Council
• A prosperous Norfolk is fundamental to the UK’s continued push to be a global economic leader in the 21st century. It is vital we get the support necessary to capitalise on our opportunities and create growth in high value jobs and business.

• We want greater devolution for Norfolk and there is much that can be gained by partners joining forces to increase productivity. New solutions will focus on clusters of districts such as Greater Norwich.

• We are keen to explore larger scale options, based on our LEP footprint of the combined counties of Norfolk and Suffolk and we are actively engaged in working with Suffolk.

• Our ambition doesn’t stop there. We will also pursue strategic links with Cambridgeshire, our historic East Anglian partners, now even more accessible, thanks to the newly dualled A11.

• This statement of intent is very much the start of a process and we want to begin discussions with Government on how we accelerate the pace of growth and prosperity in Norfolk and beyond.

Norfolk has for centuries contributed to the economic growth of the country, through innovation and technological advancement in agri-business and environmental management.

This has never been more true than today with innovation in the county at the heart of tackling the major global challenges of food production, energy security and climate change.

The county is a world centre for hi-tech research, and in specialist manufacturing. The gas and offshore wind industry, supported by world class engineering technology developing along the A11 Technology Corridor, underpins our Green Energy Coast. We have both a well-established and diversified financial sector which is internationally recognised, and new areas of growth, like the digital and creative sectors, are fuelled by our second university, the highly successful Norwich University of the Arts.
As Leaders, we want to build upon our current success and reap the benefits that devolution could offer our communities.

The county areas of Norfolk and Suffolk, with their centuries of common interest and culture, represent the core element of a combined authority, working with our Universities and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership. The work of the LEP has been underpinned by the support of local authorities across Norfolk and Suffolk and city deals in Greater Norwich and Ipswich.

Our immediate focus is Norfolk but we see strengthening connections, both physical and economic, to Cambridgeshire and our neighbouring LEP as key to unlocking our area’s economic potential.

Our Devolution Deal
Devolution - initially with Suffolk and the New Anglia LEP – will help us realise our vision for a 21st century economy. Government has recognised the potential of Norfolk, with welcome investments in key infrastructure including the A11, NDR and A47 and the Norwich Research Park. But we are ambitious for more.

With greater devolution we could deliver:

Economic Growth & Productivity
- A new Anglia LEP productivity commission with a 100 day challenge to examine the scale of the productivity gap and establish the root causes of the problem.
- A network of rural enterprise zones with innovation and improved productivity at their heart.

Coherent Planning & Housing
- A combined authority to provide a single vision to stimulate the growth, overcome blockages and provide better integration and efficiencies, with the appropriate cluster level democratic governance to ensure delivery.
- Work with Government to identify new settlements, utilising Homes and Communities Agency powers and resources to plan and deliver.
- Strengthened compulsory purchase powers to accelerate housing delivery.
Employment & Skills
- To work with Government on the roll-out of Universal Credit and test new approaches to providing in work progression to support raising incomes and reducing welfare dependency.

Physical Assets and Infrastructure
- A five year funding settlement for local transport schemes to fund an integrated investment package to deliver our local economic, housing and employment priorities. This will deliver better value for money and greater connectivity through integrated transport solutions.
- Direct influence over the new Greater Anglia rail franchise and accelerate much needed improvements on the Norwich to Liverpool Street (Norwich in 90) and King’s Lynn to Cambridge King’s Cross lines.

Action on Flood Risk
- Responsibilities, and associated budgets and funding, currently exercised by Environment Agency to transfer to the Combined Authority to meet local priorities.
- Improved Health & Social Care
- Integrated commissioning to tackle the challenges facing Norfolk’s health and social care offer.

Foundations for growth
The Greater Norwich area represents 50% of the GVA of Norfolk and is a focus for housing and employment growth; Great Yarmouth is an established energy centre; and there is also additional potential from growth in Kings Lynn and along the A11 corridor towards Cambridge.

Norfolk is England’s primary offshore energy county, having serviced the oil and gas sector in the Southern North Sea for 50 years. This has helped its rapid growth to become a centre for new technology energy industries, especially offshore renewables. Around £20bn of investment is planned around the UK by 2020 and the Southern North Sea basin presents by far the largest portion. The East Anglia Array, situated off our Green Energy Coast, will ultimately comprise around 1000 turbines. This is infrastructure development on a scale seldom seen outside of the Far East. Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft are already recognised as one of the six national Centres for Offshore Renewable Engineering (CORE) and their Enterprise Zone is considered to be one of the most successful in the country, delivering jobs and growth well ahead of its original target.
Car maker Lotus is synonymous with Norfolk. There is now a high tech cluster of businesses in this area, building on the Lotus heritage and attracting further new high performance technology businesses to start up. This is the heart of the A11 Technology Corridor, where hundreds of companies with links to the automotive and motorsports sector are based. We have available space and plans to create significant numbers of new high performance engineering jobs.

**Norwich Research Park** (NRP), Home to Europe’s largest concentration of agri-tech scientists, is turning world class science into world class jobs. It houses the Institute of Food Research, The Genome Analysis Centre (TGAC), The Sainsbury Laboratory, The John Innes Centre and the University of East Anglia (UEA). It is also a globally renowned centre for the study of climate change, due to the close association between the Tyndall Centre and the Climatic Research Unit at UEA. This is coupled with leading edge research at UEA through the Energy Materials Laboratory. The Park has superb business incubation facilities – the NRP Innovation Centre, the Bio Incubator, the new Centrum building and the unique Enterprise Centre at the UEA - Britain’s greenest building. New companies benefit from the cluster effect of specialist researchers and the NRP has 52ha of development land, with the Greater Norwich City Deal set to create 7,000 jobs there by 2031.

The 200 year old Norwich financial services cluster –which includes the largest concentration of insurance business in the UK outside of London - and new hi-tech industries (including Norwich Tech City), are both ideally placed to benefit from the success of London and Cambridge. The emerging Centre for Advanced Knowledge Engineering campus which is being developed by Aventa Capital Partners at Downham Market in the west of the county is a case in point, with expectations of more than 4,000 new jobs in the new & rapidly growing data analytics sector.

As well as these unique facilities, Norfolk has two further attributes that can support rapid economic growth. It has an ambitious public service - in local government, higher education and health services - that supports innovation and takes pride in providing space for new businesses to grow. We work closely to both support fledgling business and get out of their way when they are ready to fly.

And, importantly, Norfolk also has the room to grow. Situated less than 100 miles from the nation’s capital (albeit with a number of infrastructure projects still necessary to capitalise on this proximity), we have space for new business and new homes and we are committed to creating the business growth, jobs and housing needed to achieve that growth.
As part of any devolution agreement for Norfolk and Suffolk, opportunities should be seized to develop a local Rural Productivity Plan for the two counties, in support of the national programme, to address the challenges faced by businesses and local communities in rural and isolated areas. Examples of where local solutions might be developed could include problems faced by young people accessing education and training opportunities; centralisation of many public and financial services; development of successful market town programmes to compete with internet based shopping; and developing new approaches to business development in rural areas through conversion of agricultural buildings to business, rather than second or holiday home use. This would deliver more balanced and sustainable rural communities.

We recognise the need for clear and democratically accountable governance which recognises and reflects the nature of our economic social geography. This is likely to incorporate clear decisive, and accountable decision making, built into a combined authority which reflects the importance of greater Norwich and our mixed urban/rural area. A meaningful double devolution approach will provide appropriate local governance to the delivery of growth.

We can move at pace and look forward to a positive response to this expression of interest.