COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 30 June 2016 at 7.00 pm

Members Present: Councillors, Wheatley (Chairman), Duffin (Vice-Chairman), Amis, Bernard, Bills, Broome, Dale, Dewsbury, Easton, Edney, Ellis, Foulger, Fuller, Goldson, Gould, Gray Hardy, L Hornby, Hudson, C Kemp, W Kemp, Kiddie, Larner, Legg, Lewis, Mason-Billig, Minshull, Mooney, Neal, Palmer, Riches, J Savage, Stone, Thomson, J Wilby, M Wilby and Worsley

Apologies: Councillors, Bell, Bendle, Blundell Fulcher, J Hornby, Overton, Pond, R Savage and Thomas

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Business Development (D Lorimer), the Director of Growth and Localism (T Horspole), the Director of Community Services (P Boyce), and the Monitoring Officer (L Mickleborough).

3345 URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman agreed that due to the timeframes concerned, Cllr C Kemp should be permitted to update Council on the Local Government Boundary Commission Electoral Review of South Norfolk Council.

Cllr Kemp informed Council that the Local Government Boundary Commission had agreed that the number of members for South Norfolk should be retained at 46. The next stage in the process would involve the re-drawing of ward boundaries, to ensure that each councillor represented approximately the same number of electors, whilst ensuring that the pattern of wards reflected the interests and identities of local communities. This was part of a consultation process which would end on 5 September, involving the Council, members of the public and other interested parties. Cllr Kemp suggested that as the Chairman of the Electoral Arrangements Review Committee (EARC), he should meet with Cllrs J Fuller and T Lewis, to draw up a number of options, before presenting them to the EARC in the latter half of August. Having formed a view, the EARC would need to then send its submission to the Boundary Commission, before the deadline of 5 September. He stressed that all members were invited to participate in the consultation process and to attend the EARC
meeting in August. Both he and Cllr T Lewis were concerned at the short timescales involved, during what was traditionally the holiday period, and he would therefore be writing to the Boundary Commission to ask for an extension to the consultation period.

Cllr T Lewis expressed his satisfaction with the proposed arrangements. Members noted that should the Boundary Commission grant an extension to the consultation period, and should timescales allow, the EARC’s proposals would be reported to the next meeting of the Council.

3345 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held Monday 23 May were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3346 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman was sorry to report the death of former councillor Arthur Cook. Mr Cook had served as a councillor between 1973 and 1991 and represented the Council as Chairman between 1984 and 1988, serving on numerous committees including Finance and Planning. He was appointed Honorary Alderman of South Norfolk Council in 2010.

Cllr M Dewsbury explained that she had been elected on to Mr Cook’s seat, after he had stood down as councillor in 1991. She knew that Mr Cook had been very well respected by residents in the area he had represented.

Council then stood and observed a minute’s silence in Mr Cook’s memory.

The Chairman informed members that he had chosen two charities to support his theme of “inclusiveness”. Firstly, the Break charity, which supported vulnerable young people from a whole range of different backgrounds, and also the Nook Appeal, which was raising funds to provide a new hospice for children in Norfolk.

3347 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

(i) Performance, Risks and Revenue Budget Position Report for the Financial Year 2015/16

Cllr M Edney presented the recommendations of the Cabinet to members.
Cllr T Lewis raised concerns with regard to the valuation of land sold to Big Sky Developments at Maple Park, an issue which he had noted whilst examining the Council’s draft accounts for the year, at a recent meeting of the Finance, Resources, Audit and Governance (FRAG) Committee. Cllr Edney had provided an explanation, however, Cllr Lewis still felt that further investigation was required to ensure that future expectations on sales and lettings were realistic. He suggested that this be added as an additional resolution of the Council.

Cllr J Fuller explained that Cllr Lewis was referring to land that had been re-categorised as stock, resulting in a revaluation by an independent valuer. The land had been sold to Big Sky Developments at the full market value determined by the valuer. The Chairman suggested that Cllr Lewis should, if he still felt it necessary, raise the issue at the next meeting of the FRAG Committee.

It was unanimously

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<td>a) the budget virements which exceed £100,000 in accordance with the rules of financial governance;</td>
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<td>b) the slippage requests totalling £720,281;</td>
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<td>c) the movements in reserves as outlined in Section 8 of the report.</td>
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(ii) Capital Provisional Outturn Report 2015/16

Cllr M Edney outlined the recommendations arising from the Cabinet meeting held 13 June 2016.

It was unanimously

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<td>a) the slippage requests summarised in 3.1 of the report.</td>
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<td>b) the amended Capital programme and its financing for the next five financial years as set out in Appendices B and C of the report.</td>
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(iii) Treasury Management Annual Report 2015/16

Cllr M Edney outlined the recommendations arising from the Cabinet meeting held 13 June 2016.

It was unanimously
RESOLVED:  

(a) Approve the 2015/16 prudential indicators for the quarter;  
(b) Note the treasury activity in quarter four and that it complies with the agreed strategy

3348 NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT

The Director of Business Development explained that it was the recommendation of officers that members considered the report and recommendations without regard to the decisions made by other local authorities.

Cllr J Fuller advised Council that he had been informed that despite the decisions of some local authorities to reject the Devolution Deal, the Government intended to proceed with the process.

Cllr Fuller then explained that the Deal was an opportunity to secure funds and generate growth in the local area, whilst improving the quality of life for residents. The transfer of significant resources and powers would not only boost the local economy, creating more jobs and improving skills and employment prospects of residents, but would also bring with it the necessary infrastructure and housing through an integrated approach in the wider area. He made reference to the benefits that devolution would bring to the area, referring to the location of the Waveney Valley, and the much needed Long Stratton bypass.

Referring to the recent debate at the Scrutiny Committee, he acknowledged that there were still some concerns over governance arrangements but these could be resolved as the Deal progressed.

Cllr Lewis had felt the debate at the Scrutiny meeting to be helpful and he reminded members that the public consultation might still influence the decision of Government and the contents of the Deal. Whilst respecting the recommendations of officers, he did however feel, that the decisions to reject the Deal, already made by three Norfolk authorities, could not be ignored. With local authorities choosing to opt out, he could not envisage how the deal could effectively operate and he regretfully could no longer view the approach as a sensible arrangement. He advised Council that he could no longer support the recommendations.

Cllr L Neal referred to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee, tabled at the meeting, and she stressed the importance of a consistent consultation process.

Cllr C Kemp also expressed his support for the recommendations, and he agreed that members should have no regard to the decisions made by other local authorities, when considering the report.

As member for the Harleston ward, which lay on the Norfolk/Suffolk border, Cllr J Savage felt it was his duty to vote in favour of the recommendations, in support of an integrated and joined up approach across the two counties.
Cllr K Billig stressed that the Council was not beholden on the decisions made by other local authorities, and she urged members to make a decision based on what was best for the residents of South Norfolk.

Summing up, Cllr Fuller stressed that the Deal was not about the carving up of powers, but about more investments to build the economy. This was a one off opportunity to inject considerable funding into the area, and he urged members to support the recommendations of the report.

It was unanimously

| RESOLVED:     | To agree to remove the right for Councillors to undertake a suspensive call-in with respect to the decisions of the Cabinet as outlined in paragraphs 7.2.1 to 7.2.8 of the report. |

With 35 votes for, 1 against and with 1 abstention, it was

| RESOLVED:     | 1. To agree |

|               | a) To endorse the signing of the Norfolk and Suffolk Devolution Agreement by the Leader. |

|               | b) That, on the basis of the Governance Review, and having regard to any impact on equalities explored in the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) attached, the establishment of a Mayoral Combined Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk is the option which most fully permits the effective discharge of the functions that Government is prepared to devolve to this area |

|               | c) To support the publication of the draft Scheme for a Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoral Combined Authority as attached to this report for consultation purposes, subject to such final revisions as may be approved by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, and prior to the commencement of the formal consultation exercise. Such formal consultation, on the Scheme, to commence once all Norfolk and Suffolk Councils have considered the matters in this report and, in any event, no later than the 4 July 2016. In the event that a Constituent Authority named in the attached Scheme does not agree to endorse the Deal Agreement and/or the Scheme, Cabinet authorises the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to agree the relevant changes to be made to the Deal Agreement, the Scheme and the Governance Review to reflect that Authority's non-participation. |

|               | d) That the outcome of the consultation exercise is submitted to the Secretary of the State by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, by 9 September. |
e) That Council meets by 28 October 2016 to consider giving consent (or endorsing Cabinet to give consent) to an Order establishing a Mayoral Combined Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk.

f) Insofar as any of the matters referred to in this report concern the discharge of functions ancillary to the endorsing and signing of the Norfolk and Suffolk Devolution Agreement and the publication of the Scheme, authority is delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, to take all necessary steps and actions to progress the recommendations detailed in this report.

g) In the event that any technical changes are required to reflect legislative requirements and the contents of the Deal Agreement, authority is delegated to the Chief Executive in agreement with the other Chief Executives across Norfolk and Suffolk to make the necessary changes to the Scheme.

h) That further reports are presented to the Council as appropriate as the Devolution process develops.

3348 QUESTIONS TO CHAIRMEN AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

a) Cabinet

There were no questions put to Cabinet members.

b) Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee

There were no questions put to the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee.

c) Chairman of the Licensing Committee

There were no questions put to the Chairman of the Licensing Committee.

d) Development Management Committee
There were no questions put to the Chairman of the Development Management Committee.

3344 OUTSIDE BODIES – FEEDBACK FROM REPRESENTATIVES

There was no feedback to report with regard to the Council’s outside bodies.

(The meeting concluded at 7.50 p.m.)

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Chairman