COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 11 December 2017 at 7.30 pm

Members Present: Councillors, Duffin (Chairman), Amis, Bell, Bendale, Bernard, Bills, Blundell, Broome, Dale, Dewsbury, Easton, Foulger, Fulcher, Fuller, Goldson, Gould, Gray, J Hornby, L Hornby, Hudson, C Kemp, W Kemp, Kiddie, Mason-Billig, Minshull, Neal, Overton, Palmer, Pond, J Savage, R Savage, Thomson, Wheatley and K Worsley

Apologies: Councillors, Edney, Ellis, Hardy, Legg, Lewis, Mooney, Riches, Stone, Thomas, J Wilby and M Wilby

Officers in Attendance: The Chief Executive (S Dinneen), the Director of Growth and Business Development (D Lorimer), the Director of Planning and Environment (T Horspole), the Assistant Director (P Catchpole) and the Head of Business Transformation (H Ralph)

Also in Attendance: Ms S Heal and Mr M Chubbock – Norwich and Waveney Branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association

3411 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared an “other” interest by virtue of sitting on the Development Management Committee, for the meeting that considered the planning application referred to at item 9 of the agenda (minute 3415 refers):

Cllrs Broome, Duffin, Gould, Gray, C Kemp, Minshull, Neal and Thomson

3412 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18 September 2017, were agreed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.
3413 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman was sad to report the death of former councillor, Keith Morgan. Cllr Morgan served on the Council as an Independent member for the Clavering ward, from 1982 until 1995, and had sat on numerous committees. Members stood and observed a minute’s silence, in memory of Mr Morgan.

The Chairman then referred members to his list of engagements, for the period 19 September to 10 December 2017.

3414 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

The Chairman referred members to copies of the Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Charter, which had been circulated. He then introduced Ms S Heal, and Mr M Chubbock from the Norwich and Waveney Branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association, to the meeting.

Ms S Neal addressed the meeting, thanking Cllrs Y Bendle and L Hornby, for putting forward the motion, in support of the Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Charter. She outlined the symptoms of MND and the devastating impact this had on patients and families. It was estimated that there were up to 5,000 adults affected by the disease at any one time in the UK, with between 60 and 70 adults living with the disease in Norfolk. She explained that the Charter was a statement of care, respect and resource that people living with MND, and their carers deserved, and she urged members to support the motion.

Cllr Y Bendle then moved the following motion:

“I propose that South Norfolk District Council supports the Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Charter, which defines the level of care and support that people living with MND and their carers might legitimately expect.”

Cllr Y Bendle explained that MND was a tragic disease, with no known cure, and that she felt it important to publicly show support for the Charter, and raise awareness, Whilst the Council was not directly responsible for social care, it could assist through aids and adaptations, and through the many opportunities it had in engaging with those affected by the disease.

Cllr L Hornby seconded the motion, explaining that adopting the Charter sent a powerful message of support to those living with MND in the community.

It was then unanimously
RESOLVED: That South Norfolk District Council supports the Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Charter, which defines the level of care and support that people living with MND and their carers might legitimately expect.

3415 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

(a) (i) Treasury Management Quarter 2 2017/18

The Chairman referred members to the Cabinet agenda for the meeting held 30 October 2017.

Cllr Fuller presented the recommendations from Cabinet, referring in particular to Appendix A of the report, which outlined the prudential indicators.

It was unanimously

RESOLVED:

To

a) Note the treasury activity between April and September and that it complies with the agreed strategy.
b) Approve the 2017/18 prudential indicators for the first six months of the year.

(b) (i) Conservation Area Appraisals and Boundary Amendments for Bawburgh, Dickleburgh, Hempnall, Mulbarton, and Scole Conservation Areas

The Chairman referred members to the Cabinet agenda for the meeting held 4 December 2017, and the Cabinet decisions, tabled at the meeting.

Cllr L Hornby presented the recommendations of the Cabinet, regarding proposed amendments to conservation area boundaries, appraisals and management guidelines, for Bawburgh, Dickleburgh, Hempnall, Mulbarton and Scole conservation areas. It was

RESOLVED:

TO:

(a) Approve and adopt the amended conservation area boundaries for Bawburgh, Dickleburgh, Hempnall, Mulbarton, and Scole Conservation Areas;
(b) approves and adopts the conservation area appraisals and conservation management guidelines for the conservation areas of Bawburgh, Dickleburgh, Hempnall, Mulbarton, and Scole.
(b) (ii) Council Tax Support Scheme 2018/19

The Chairman referred members to the Cabinet agenda for the meeting held 4 December 2017, and the Cabinet decisions, tabled at the meeting.

Cllr J Fuller presented the recommendations from the Cabinet, which proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/19.

It was unanimously

| RESOLVED: | To agree the proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/19 |

3416 MONITORING OFFICER REPORT

Members considered the report of the Monitoring Officer, regarding various constitutional matters, and a recent Local Government Ombudsman report regarding a planning permission granted by the Council.

Cllr J Fuller outlined the proposed changes to the Council’s Scheme of Delegation, the appointment of Emma Hodds, Head of Governance, as the Council’s Monitoring Officer, and the change to the membership of the Scrutiny Committee.

Turning to paragraph 3 of the report regarding the Local Government Ombudsman Case, Cllr Fuller referred members to a letter received from CPRE Norfolk (tabled at the meeting) which suggested that the Council report was deficient in that it failed to clearly identify the material considerations leading to the decision of the Development Management Committee, which was contrary to the Local Plan. Cllr Fuller advised members that the Ombudsman had found fault with the Council’s handling of the application “because officers did not make a valid material planning consideration known to the Committee before it made its decision”, however, the Ombudsman did not consider this failing to be significant, or that it had affected the outcome of the planning application. The Ombudsman did not consider that any injustice had been caused to the complainant.

Cllr Fuller explained that having considered the conclusions of the Ombudsman, and noting that officers had taken on board any necessary learning points, he considered that no further action should be taken. He added that the Development Management Committee was a quasi-judicial committee made up of experienced and trained councillors, and he felt it would be entirely inappropriate to revoke or amend its decision.
This view was seconded by Cllr C Kemp, who agreed with the sentiments of Cllr Fuller, and suggested that some complaints were being inappropriately directed to the Ombudsman, as a cheaper alternative to a judicial review. Cllr M Gray, despite having voted against the planning application at the Development Management Committee meeting, agreed entirely with Cllr Fuller, that no further action should be taken.

Cllr Fuller then referred to the departure of Tim Horspole, the Director of Planning and Environment, and paid tribute to Mr Horspole’s contributions, having been involved in the work of three separate Local Plans for the Council, and for his tremendous patience and depth of knowledge which he had exhibited over the years. He thanked Mr Horspole for his services to the Council.

Cllr Gray echoed the sentiments of Cllr Fuller, explaining that he had always been impressed with Mr Horspole’s expert advice with regard to planning issues, and he thanked Mr Horspole on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group, for all his contributions over the years.

With 32 votes for and 0 against, it was then

| RESOLVED: To: |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| a) Approve the changes to the Council’s Constitution, outlined in section 2 of this report. |
| b) Appoint Emma Hodds, Head of Governance, as the Council’s Monitoring Officer, as of 1 January 2018. |
| c) Note the change to the membership of the Scrutiny Committee |
| d) Agree with officers, that no further action is required with regard to the Local Government Ombudsman case outlined in section 1 of the report. |

3417 EASTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2017 – 2042
MAKING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Members considered the report of the Director of Planning and Environment, which recommended that the Easton Neighbourhood Plan should be formally “made” as part of the Development Plan for South Norfolk, following a majority vote in favour, at the local referendum on 1 September 2017.

Cllr J Fuller commended the report to Council, and gave credit to Cllr M Dewsbury for her involvement in the process. He referred members to the recommendations of the report, explaining that following the changes to the scheme of delegation (see minute 3415), authority to publish and publicise the plan should be delegated to the Director of Growth and Business Development.
Cllr Dewsbury explained that the successful production of the Plan had been down to the dedication and work of the Easton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. She added that extra CIL monies would be welcomed in Easton, to help fund the much needed infrastructure, in a rapidly expanding village.

It was then unanimously

RESOLVED: To make the Easton Neighbourhood Plan with immediate effect and delegate to the Director of Growth and Business Development to publish and publicise the Decision Statement as soon as possible afterwards, in line with the legislative requirements.

3418 QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMEN AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

a) Cabinet

Cllr Fuller explained that Cllr M Edney was not able to attend the Council meeting that evening, but had now resumed his Council duties, following his recent illness. On behalf of the Council, he wished Cllr Edney a continued and speedy recovery.

Cllr C Easton asked Cllr J Fuller (in Cllr Edney’s absence), for an update on the provision of broadband across the District. Cllr Fuller explained that the Council had already invested in the Better Broadband for Norfolk Programme which had seen access to Superfast Broadband increase from 15% to 83% in five years. This was expected to rise to 91% coverage by 2020. However, some rural areas would never benefit from this work, so to help residents and businesses in these areas, the Council had awarded a one-year contract to InTouch Systems, a Norwich based company, to help deliver faster broadband in these areas.

Cllr B Bernard asked Cllr Y Bendle if there was any news on the Universal Credit roll out in South Norfolk. Cllr Bendle explained that South Norfolk claimants were dealt with at the Beccles, Diss and Norwich Job Centres. The roll out for new claimants had already begun in Beccles and officers from South Norfolk had visited the Job Centre to ensure that the service was running smoothly, although take up had to date been very limited. Members noted that the roll out in Diss had been delayed until May or June time, with Norwich likely to be in October.

Cllr M Gray, asked Cllr K Mason Billig, what was happening with the Harleston toilets, now that the car parking issues in the town had been resolved. Cllr Mason Billig explained that arrangements were in hand, and that the new toilet block would shortly be removed to a new site.
b) Scrutiny Committee

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

c) Licensing Appeals and Complaints Committee /Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee

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

d) Development Management Committee

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

Cllr V Thomson reminded members that there was a Development Management Committee meeting scheduled for 3 January 2018.

e) Electoral Arrangements Review Committee

Cllr C Kemp advised Council that the recommendations of the Electoral Arrangements Review Committee regarding the Community Governance Review, would be presented to Council at its meeting in February 2018. Members noted that the Committee would shortly be considering a Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations, which was a requirement every five years, however, it would be more pertinent this year, due to boundary changes.

3419 OUTSIDE BODIES – FEEDBACK FROM REPRESENTATIVES

Members noted the report from Cllr C Kemp, regarding the Norfolk Police and Crime Panel. Cllr C Kemp drew members’ attention to the consultation concerning the setting of the Police precept for 2018/19.

In response to a query from Cllr M Gray, Cllr V Thomson confirmed that the conclusions arising from the Peer Review of the Broads Authority, had not yet been published. He was hopeful that they would be made public before the New Year.

(The meeting concluded at 8.22 pm)