

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

CABINET

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Cabinet held on
Tuesday, 6 May 2014 at 5.30pm in the Town Hall, Saturday Market Place,
King's Lynn**

PRESENT: Councillor N J Daubney (Chairman).
Councillors A Beales, Lord Howard, A Lawrence, B Long,
Mrs E Nockolds, D Pope and Mrs V M Spikings.

CAB164: **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 April 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB165: **LATE ITEM**

There was no urgent business.

However the a Late report was considered on Asset Management – Acquisition of Industrial Site – land at the Willows Business Park, Willow Road, King's Lynn. The item was brought as a late item in order to allow authorisation for negotiations to progress and a valuation to be sought.

CAB165: **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

CAB166: **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

CAB167: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

None

CAB168: **CALLED IN MATTERS**

None

CAB169: **FORWARD DECISIONS LIST**

The forward decision list was noted.

CAB170: **MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET FROM COUNCIL BODIES**

i) **Resources and Performance- Audit Committee : 29 April 2014**

The Committee made the following recommendations to Cabinet, which were dealt with when Cabinet considered the reports on the agenda:

ARC106: Cabinet Report: Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy, Whistleblowing Policy and The Fraud Response Plan

RESOLVED: That Cabinet recommends that Council agree the proposed Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy, Fraud Response Plan and Whistleblowing Policy.

ii) **Resources and Performance: 29 April 2014**

The Panel made the following recommendations to Cabinet, which were dealt with when Cabinet considered the reports on the agenda:

RP135: Cabinet Report: Pay Policy Statement

RESOLVED: That the Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

That Cabinet recommend to Council the attached Pay Policy Statement for 2014/2015, subject to:

10 Pension Provision

Being amended to read:

“All employees *will* join the Local Government Pension Scheme. ***However, new employees have the choice to opt out of the Pension Scheme.*** The scheme is a statutory scheme with contributions from employees and from employers.”

iii) **Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel – 30 April 2014**

The Panel made the following recommendations to Cabinet, which were dealt with when Cabinet considered the reports on the agenda:

REC154: Cabinet Report – Flood Support Schemes

RESOLVED: That the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

1. Agree delegation of schemes to the Chief Executive.

2. Agree implementation of the Repair and Renew Grant.
3. Agree implementation of the Business Support Grant.

REC155: Cabinet Report – Wash East Coastal Management Strategy

RESOLVED: That the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

1. Cabinet is invited to note the progress being made towards establishing a long-term funding arrangement for the sea defences for the South Hunstanton to Wolferton Creek area.
2. Cabinet is requested to agree a financial contribution of £50,000 towards the cost of the February/March 2016 beach recycling operation in partnership with Norfolk County Council and the Environment Agency.
3. Cabinet is requested to authorise the Cabinet Member for Environment to approve the consultation document for publication in the summer.

CAB171: ANTI-FRAUD AND ANTI-CORRUPTION STRATEGY, WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY AND FRAUD RESPONSE PLAN

The Audit Manager presented a suite of reports which explained that Council had had a suite of anti-fraud documents in place for a number of years, with amendments being made to take account of new legislation, in particular the Bribery Act in 2010. A full review of the documents had now taken place to ensure they were consistent, up-to-date and fit for purpose. This was particularly relevant in the current climate of fighting fraud nationally.

Councillor Daubney in proposing the recommendations reminded Members that the documents had been discussed at the Audit Committee which was responsible for the monitoring of them.

Councillor Beales asked where the documents would be stored and whether they were available for the public to access. It was explained that the documents were on the web site for the public and also available for members on the intranet.

RECOMMENDED: That Council agree the proposed Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy, Fraud Response Plan and Whistleblowing Policy.

CAB172: FLOOD REPAIR AND RENEW GRANT SCHEME

Councillor Mrs Nockolds presented a report which explained that as part of the Government's response to the recent flooding events the Prime Minister announced on the 12th February 2014 a new scheme to provide grants of up to £5,000 to homeowners and businesses that had been flooded since 1st December 2013. The report provided details of the scheme and how the Borough would implement it.

The Repair and Renew Grant was intended to fund measures over and above repairs that would normally be covered by insurance. Homeowners and businesses flooded between the 1st December 2013 and 31st March 2014 could apply for the grant of up to £5,000 to cover the cost of improving the flood resilience of their properties.

A new £10 million Business Support Scheme to help small and medium enterprises (SME) in flood affected areas was announced by the Prime Minister. Any SME affected by flooding could claim up to £2,500. This scheme was funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills but would be administered and delivered by local authorities. £60,000 has been allocated for the West Norfolk area.

The details of other schemes available were set out in the report.

Councillor Mrs Nockolds informed members that 37 businesses and 78 households were flooded in the tidal surge, so there was scope for those to apply should they need to do so. To date 7 people had applied for and been paid grants under the Norfolk and Lowestoft Flood Appeal.

Councillor Long in supporting the recommendations welcomed the scheme to future proof properties from flood which had already been flooded.

Councillor Pope asked what measures were in place to ensure the work which was grant aided was carried out, and whether the grant was paid up front or in stages on completion of works. It was explained that the member of staff administering the grants would check on works carried out. The Deputy Chief Executive agreed to check on the occurrences of payment. (NB: the application form states that grant will be paid after the completion of works and with the submission of a claim)

Councillor Beales commented that the grants were for simple common sense measures, the measures for new houses which were largely used were to increase the floor height of the building from ground level.

In response to a query the Deputy Chief Executive explained that the criterion of the Bellwin scheme were strict, and as the Councils cost didn't breach the 2% threshold it was unlikely to be awarded any finance through that route, although the costs of £6,081.95 had been

registered in case in case any further costs were incurred. The Council would be submitting a request for the second tranche of the Severe Weather Recovery Scheme further properties had been added to the list which now made the Council eligible to apply.

The Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel had considered the report and had supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to operate the schemes.
- 2) That the implementation of the Repair and Renew Grant be approved.
- 3) That the implementation of the Business Support Grant be agreed.

CAB173: **WASH EAST COAST MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Councillor Long presented a report which summarised the progress being made towards establishing partnership funding arrangements in accordance with the emerging Wash East Coastal Management Strategy (WECMS) for the sea defences for the South Hunstanton to Wolferton Creek (Snettisham beach) area.

The report also made a case for the Borough Council making a financial contribution towards the costs of a further beach recycling operation in the financial year 2015/16 (works in Feb/March 2016) in a proposed tripartite funding partnership with the Environment Agency (EA) and Norfolk County Council (NCC).

The WECMS project was set up in 2010 to take forward the policies set out in The Wash SMP. Working with the support of a local stakeholder group the project team had developed a range of options for consideration, all of which depended on a level of partnership funding. The stakeholder group had been chaired by Councillor Brian Long and administered by the Environment Agency (EA). The Council had been represented on the WECMS Project Team at officer level and the Project Board at Director and Cabinet Member level. The WECMS was currently due to be published for public consultation in the Summer of 2014.

Councillor Long in proposing the recommendations explained that at previous discussions with the business community in the flood risk area they had indicated some support for the partnership approach.

Councillor Beales in supporting the report commented that that it was critical that long term funding arrangements be put in place. He asked where the funding had been taken from. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the Corporate Projects budget had been set up to deal with such eventualities, along with potential expenditure on some of the major projects, such as the link road in the major housing project. The fund could be replenished at year end.

The Chief Executive explained that the proposal permitted a year to undertake the negotiations with the companies affected. He reminded Members that there was a level of expectation that public bodies such as the Borough and County Council would make a contribution. The consultation would be undertaken with the Environment Agency.

Councillor Long further commented that originally it was anticipated that primary legislation would be required but it was now felt that the not for profit organisation was the best route to take.

The Regeneration Environment and Community Panel had considered the matter and had supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED: 1) That the progress being made towards establishing a long-term funding arrangement for the sea defences for the South Hunstanton to Wolferton Creek area be noted.

2) That a financial contribution of £50,000 towards the cost of the February/March 2016 beach recycling operation in partnership with Norfolk County Council and the Environment Agency be agreed.

3) That the Cabinet Member for Environment be authorised to approve the consultation document for publication in the Summer.

CAB174: **ANNUAL PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2014/15**

Executive Director D Gates presented a report which explained that under Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 required English and Welsh Local Authorities to produce an annual pay policy statement.

The report summarised the Borough Council's relevant policies relating to levels and elements of remuneration for Chief Officers and included the relationship between the remuneration of Chief Officers and other officers. This report did not change any policies relating to remuneration.

Councillor Beales asked why only the pay of senior managers was publicised and no other officers. It was explained that it was a statutory requirement to publish the senior officers over a certain amount of salary.

The Resources and Performance Panel had considered the item and had recommended a small addition which as agreed as set out below:

RECOMMENDED: That Council approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2014/2015 attached to the report, subject to the following amendment:

10 Pension Provision

Being amended to read:

“All employees *will* join the Local Government Pension Scheme. ***However, new employees have the choice to opt out of the Pension Scheme.*** The scheme is a statutory scheme with contributions from employees and from employers. ...”

CAB175: **LATE ITEM - ASSET MANAGEMENT – ACQUISITION OF INDUSTRIAL SITE – LAND AT THE WILLOWS BUSINESS PARK, WILLOW ROAD, KING’S LYNN**

Councillor Daubney presented a late report which asked for authority for officers to seek agreement for the purchase of the site at the Willows Business Park, Saddlebow previously identified for the building of an incinerator. The site was in the ownership of Norfolk County Council (NCC).

The Chief Executive explained that he had held discussions with officers at Norfolk County Council on the matter, but now needed a clear mandate to progress to valuation stage. The report explained that in light of the past controversy in relation to the incinerator, there was considerable merit in proceeding on the basis of an independent valuation of the site carried out by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). Such an approach would be likely to reduce the risk of the two parties becoming entangled in protracted negotiations.

It further explained that if Members were willing to support this approach it would be appropriate to propose to Norfolk County Council that agreement be sought for the two parties to jointly commission the VOA to value the site at a price which reflected its current designations as an employment site and allocated waste disposal site. If agreement to this could be reached with NCC it was requested to give delegated authority to the Chief Executive to agree the basis upon which the valuation is to be carried out with officers from NCC.

Cabinet and Council approval would be required to proceed with the sale at the price identified in the valuation report.

Councillor Daubney explained that he had requested this to come forward, but that if it was possible to purchase the land it would be Councillor Beales who would then lead on the matter. Councillor Beales confirmed that he had seen the report in its early stages, and felt that the independent valuation route was the least contentious method.

Councillor Lord Howard asked if the valuation was jointly commissioned with the County Council, and whether the Valuation Office was going to provide a range or a specific figure, as he felt it important that the Council had room for manoeuvre.

RESOLVED: 1) That it be agreed in principle to purchase the site shown in Appendix 1 of the report.

2) The authority be granted to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, Property Services Manager and Section 151 Officer to agree a brief with NCC for the valuation to be carried out by the Valuation Office Agency.

3) That a further report be presented to Cabinet for formal approval to purchase the site.

The Meeting closed at 6.07 pm