

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

CABINET

Minutes from the Meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 17th October, 2017 at 5.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillor B Long (Chairman)
Councillors A Beales, R Blunt, I Devereux, P Hodson, A Lawrence, Mrs K Mellish
and Mrs E Nockolds

CAB66 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 September 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB67 **URGENT BUSINESS**

None

CAB68 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

CAB69 **CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE**

None

CAB70 **MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Pope attended for all items and Councillor Bambridge attended for the Townscape Heritage item.

CAB71 **CALLED IN MATTERS**

None

CAB72 **FORWARD DECISIONS**

The Forward Decision List was noted.

CAB73 **MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET FROM OTHER BODIES**

The Corporate Performance Panel had considered the Refit Proposals for Council Building Assets item, supported the recommendations and agreed to monitor the progress of the project.

CAB74 **NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

The Leader presented a report which explained that the new Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy was the New Anglia LEP's economic blueprint that would guide its work and investment up to 2036.

The strategy committed local authorities and other partners to working together to pool resources and coordinate activity in some key areas such as inward investment, skills, place marketing and infrastructure investment. This stronger collaboration and joint effort was vital if the LEP area was to punch above its weight and get the investment needed to ensure its economic competitiveness in an increasingly global and competitive world.

The new strategy summarised the economic evidence. It set clear, challenging but achievable ambitions that described the place that the LEP area aspired to be. It then set out the actions proposed to deliver future success by five themes. It was focused on place, setting out where growth was most expected to happen in the years ahead. It also had clear economic indicators and targets, which would be used to measure success.

This was a strategy for all Norfolk and Suffolk. As such many organisations will be involved in delivering different elements. Clear action and investment plans will be developed over the autumn on major priorities such as Transport and Skills.

The strategy identified King's Lynn as a priority place with clear ambitions and plans to deliver economic growth.

The strategy also identified the A47 and A10 as priority places, emphasising their importance to delivering economic growth along those corridors.

It was recommended that Cabinet endorse the strategy and work with the LEP and the public and private sector partners on developing the action and investment plans necessary to ensure the successful implementation of this new economy strategy.

In discussing the report, it was noted that the strategy incorporated the importance of the visitor economy and culture which was important to the area. The importance to the whole LEP area of the A10 and the Ely North Junction work was also included in the document. It was agreed that information on the considerable benefits to the area of the Ely North Junction works be provided for Members. The Chief

Executive confirmed that the Secretary of State had been extremely positive about the scheme at a recent meeting.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Pope asked about the current situation with staffing for the Tourism work in the authority following the departure of the Tourism Manager. It was explained that a review of the service were being carried out to look at its future operation.

RESOLVED: That the Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy be endorsed.

Reason for Decision

The Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy reflects several Borough Council corporate priorities, as stated in the Corporate Business Plan 2015/16-2019/20:

Priority 2: Drive local economic and housing growth

We will support new and existing businesses to help them thrive
We will meet our housing growth targets

Priority 4: Celebrate our local heritage and culture

We will support the improvement of our built heritage, drawing in third-party funding wherever possible

We will support leisure and tourism within the Borough

CAB75 RE-FIT PROPOSALS FOR COUNCIL BUILDING ASSETS

Councillor Long presented a report which explained that the Council had made an objective to reduce council emissions and its carbon footprint and has a target to reduce the total emission of Greenhouse Gases and Carbon Footprint by 5% each year.

The UK target was for 15% of all energy to be from renewable sources by 2020. The former Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) now Department for Business, Energy and Industrial strategy had announced that, to achieve this, 30% of electricity, 12% of heat and 10% of transport fuel would come from renewable sources.

Electricity costs were expected to continue to rise above inflation in the next five years due to the government's 'electricity market reform' and energy commodity prices were continuing to rise.

There was significant scope for improving energy performance of council buildings that were likely to be retained for the foreseeable future.

In order to improve energy efficiency in Council buildings significantly, investment was now required. The Refit option allowed the Council to develop a relationship with a pre-approved supplier that would deliver guaranteed savings and measured against an approved Measurement & Verification (M&V) plan. Refit was a joint venture between HM Treasury and the Local Government Association that allowed public bodies to achieve substantial guaranteed financial benefits through energy efficiency and / or generation. This was delivered by Local Partnerships.

Over the past year the Council has been working with Local Partnerships and their Refit Programme, to scope a large scale energy efficiency project, which will reduce carbon emissions, energy use and associated costs.

A discussion was held on the monitoring of the level of carbon savings achievable with the schemes. It was confirmed that as part of the procurement process the position would be established to allow monitoring once completed.

Cabinet requested that the schemes be developed, a full business case to the design stage be presented for formal submission to Cabinet before sign off. It was anticipated that if it went according to schedule this would be approximately March and commencing work June subject to sign off.

Under Standing Order 34 Councillor Pope asked whether the Government's cap on energy prices would also include commercial concerns or the increase in prices referred to was still the case. It was confirmed that the cap was only for the domestic market.

The support of the Corporate Performance Panel for the recommendations was noted and the fact that the Panel intended to monitor the project was welcomed.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That the Refit scheme is adopted by the Council

2) The revenue budget to be amended to meet the £70,000 project costs as detailed in the report.

3) That delegated authority be given to Executive Director – Finance Services (S151 Officer) in consultation with the Monitoring Officer to sign the necessary agreements to enter into the Refit scheme.

- 4) That a report come back to Cabinet for final approval of the costed schemes prior to commencement.

Reason for Decision

Undertaking this project will significantly reduce energy consumption and expenditure across the Council estate.

CAB76 PAY POLICY STATEMENT - 2017/18 UPDATE

Councillor Long presented a report which 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.

The report did not change any policies relating to remuneration – it merely updated the figures to reflect changes to pay grades and salaries as a result of the 2017 annual pay award.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That the Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18 attached to the report be approved.
2) That delegated authority be given to the Executive Director, Central and Community Services, to update the Policy annually to reflect changes arising from the annual pay award, thus ensuring that it remains compliant with legislation.

Reason for Decision

To comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

CAB77 BUSINESS RATES PILOT 2018-2019

Councillor Long presented the report which explained that the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had published the business rates pilot prospectus on 1 September 2017. This included an invitation to Local Authorities to apply to pilot 100% business rates retention in 2018-19. The Government invitation set out that it is particularly interested in piloting in two-tier areas and wished to focus on rural areas. It was proposed that Norfolk County Council take forward an application for pilot status in conjunction with Norfolk districts subject to district support.

All Norfolk districts were currently forecasting to receive business rates in excess of their settlement business rates baselines for 2018-19. These forecast levels of business rates allowed a Business Rates Pool

to be beneficial, with Norfolk predicted to retain an additional £4m of business rates in saved levy payments.

Under the current 50% rates retention system, central Government received half of the growth in Norfolk's business rates. By piloting 100% business rates retention, Norfolk local authorities would retain the central Government share of rates growth. This was the financial benefit of becoming a pilot for Norfolk. Current forecasts indicated that this could be around £10m in 2018-19. This would be a one-off benefit as the pilot prospectus indicated that pilots would be offered for one year only.

The Executive Director - Resources confirmed that the Government was expecting a number of applications for the pilots, not all of which would be successful. None of the pilots would be offered a "no detriment clause" because the Government expected the financial positions to be better than the existing taking into account the growth assumptions. However the risk of the NHS Trust appeals for business rates was seen as a risk for all authorities participating, so this would be drawn attention to in the bid. It was confirmed that any pilot would be for the 1 year only, and after that the local authorities would revert to the 4th year of the multi year settlements.

Under Standing Order 34 Councillor Pope asked for clarification on the point 2.5 that the pilot would not take into account any future devolvement of responsibilities should they take place. It was confirmed that should any new matter be devolved from Government it would not be assumed that this was included in the pilot financial agreement.

RESOLVED: 1) That the Council participate in an application to DCLG for a Business Rates Pilot for Norfolk in 2018-2019.

2) That Cabinet delegate to the Leader, Chief Executive and Executive Director – Financial Services (S151 Officer) to agree the final details of a pilot bid in consultation with the other Norfolk Authorities.

3) That it be noted that the Norfolk Business Rates Pool will be discontinued in the event of a successful pilot application.

Reason for Decision

To submit an application to DCLG for a Business Rates Pilot for Norfolk in 2018-2019 by the deadline of 27 October 2017.

CAB78 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely

disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CAB79 **TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE TWO**

Councillor Beales introduced a report which reminded Members that the Townscape Heritage (TH) funding programme administered by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) had been identified as a potential funding source to assist in delivering one of the corporate priorities to rejuvenate empty and derelict land and buildings in the Conservation Area in King's Lynn.

Consultation with the HLF, property owners and stakeholders was ongoing and had received a positive response on the proposal to submit an application to the HLF to request £1,400,000 funding contribution to the £2m scheme. The report outlined the terms of the funding programme, the project proposal and the authorisation required from Cabinet in order to progress to the project and submit an application to the HLF.

Cabinet discussed the significant benefits the THI scheme had created for the Saturday Market Place and St James Street area. The proposals for the TH2 scheme were supported, and the potential for carrying out some tree planting along the route was supported.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Bambridge welcomed the proposed changes to the width of Railway Road in part, and expressed her regret that the proposed TH2 scheme would not include London Road, but hoped that some of the problem properties could be addressed in other ways. She also asked if private residences could be included in the ability to ask for funding.

In response, the THI Officer explained that the boundaries put forward were proposed following discussions with the HLF. He also confirmed that private residences could also apply for funding.

The level of private sector investment that the previous THI scheme had attracted to the area in addition to the HLF and Borough Council money was welcomed.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That the submission of an application to the HLF for £1,400,000 as detailed in section 4 of the report be approved.
2) That £600,000 is allocated in the capital programme over 5 years from 2019/20 - 2024/25 as the Borough Council's match funding contribution to the project.
3) That if the stage one application is successful, Cabinet agree to the appointment a dedicated Project Officer as a condition of the HLF funding, to progress the stage 2 application and implementation of the project if successful.

Reason for Decision

To progress the project to improve the quality of the built environment in line with the corporate business plan, Urban Development Strategy for King's Lynn and the Local Plan.

CAB80 **DEVELOPMENT APPRAISAL - ALEXANDRA ROAD, HUNSTANTON**

Councillor Beales presented the report which used a development appraisal to help consider the housing use for the site at Alexandra Road, Hunstanton. It proposed that the site be developed by the Council, using the Major Housing Contract. The proposed development would include 14 "low cost" units to help some of the local residents excluded from the market due to the strong holiday home market in the area, funded by the Community Housing Grant awarded to the Council.

The report considered the three viability tests laid out in the Major Housing contract and how they can be applied to this site.

Cabinet supported the option E set out in the report for Hunstanton which had been supported by Hunstanton ward Councillors and would provide dwellings in a sustainable area where people could access employment, and resolve existing issues with the access road.

RECOMMENDED:

1. That it be confirmed that the 3 financial viability tests discussed in section 6 of the report have been met.
2. Agree that the Alexandra Road, Hunstanton site be developed using option E set out in the report (Private Sale/ Affordable (SO) & using £1.5 million grant), as the tenure mix (subject to changes to the final tenure mix, delegated to Chief Executive in consultation with Portfolio Holder for Corporate Projects and Assets). With the works being undertaken within the Major Housing Contract by Lovell and to authorise contracts to be entered into for this purpose.
3. That £1,546,300 be used from the Community Housing Grant to fund the additional Affordable housing units.
4. Authorise the Councils Housing department to initiate a community engagement process in line with section of this report.

Reason for Decision

To progress the delivery of sustainable housing.

To achieve a commercial return for the Council (through capital and revenue receipts).

To stimulate economic activity in the local area

The meeting closed at 6.34 pm