

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK****CABINET**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 7th January, 2020 at 3.30 pm in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

**PRESENT:** Councillor B Long (Chair)  
Councillors R Blunt, I Devereux, P Gidney, P Kunes, A Lawrence,  
G Middleton and E Nockolds

**CAB77 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** The Minutes of the meetings held on 12 November and 6 December 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**CAB78 URGENT BUSINESS**

None

**CAB79 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**CAB80 CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chair reported receipt of an email drawing attention to the environmental implications of the Contract Standing Orders item and encouraging members to take account of them.

**CAB81 MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

None.

**CAB82 CALLED IN MATTERS**

The Member delegated decision on the Norfolk County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan Review (M&Wlpr) – Preferred Options Consultation was called in and considered by the Corporate Performance Panel on 26 November 2019. The Call In was upheld by the Panel and the Cabinet Member for Development agreed to amend the delegated decision and re-issue it.

**CAB83 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET FROM OTHER BODIES**

None

CAB84 **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT - FINAL SCHEME FOR 2020-21**

Cabinet considered a report which reminded Members that the council must review and agree its 2020/2021 Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for working age people by January 2020. It must first consult with the major preceptors then publish a draft CTS scheme for public consultation. The draft CTS Scheme was agreed by delegated decision and the public consultation ran from 7 October 2019 to 15 November 2019. The final CTS Scheme must then be agreed by full Council.

This report detailed the results of the consultation and the recommended final CTS scheme for working age people for 2020/2021.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the draft CTS scheme for 2020/2021 which went to public consultation be adopted as the final CTS scheme for 2020/2021.

**Reason for Decision**

To ensure a CTS scheme for working age people for 2020/2021 is agreed by Council by 11 March 2020.

CAB85 **CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN**

Cabinet considered a report which appended the new corporate business plan for the period to the next local elections in 2023. It set out the priorities of the current administration and how the achievement of these priorities and objectives will be monitored.

It had been informed by several rounds of consultation with all the council's policy development panels.

In discussing the document Cabinet commended the Senior Policy and Performance Officer for his work with all Councillors in producing the document. It was emphasised that it was a high level document and that a raft of further strategies and policies would come forward from this.

Members expressed satisfaction that the document expressed the healthy and active element of people's lives and the encouragement by the council of businesses to thrive.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Corporate Business Plan attached to the report be adopted.

**Reason for Decision**

To establish the council's policy framework for the term of the current administration, showing how the council will focus its resources over the next four years.

CAB86 **CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS - REVIEW**

Cabinet considered a report which explained that since the current version of Contract Standing Orders was approved by Council on 24 September 2015 there have been several changes in procurement policy. These changes took account of the Council's current Procurement Strategy adopted in April 2018, the transition to electronic tendering and the focus on social value. Contract Standing Orders had been reviewed and amendments were proposed that included measures to take account of the changes mentioned above. It was explained that once the Council's Environmental Policy had been approved it would be incorporated into the document.

The Procurement Officers, in particular the Procurement Trainee, were thanked for their work on the review, and for the work on single use plastics in the contractual framework.

In response to question it was confirmed that invoices were paid within 30 days, but where possible, local suppliers were paid faster than that.

Following a question on Brexit and the references to EU regulations in the document it was noted that the EU tender system would be replaced by a UK one.

**RECOMMENDED:** 1) That the new version of Contract Standing Orders be approved.

2) That delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and the Monitoring Officer, to make minor changes from time to time to make CSO consistent with legal requirements, changes in Council structures and personnel and best practice;

3) That delegated authority be granted to the Leader, appropriate Portfolio Holder, and the Chief Executive, to add a section on compliance with the Council's Environmental Policy, when that policy has been completed and adopted.

**Reason for Decision**

To ensure that the Council's purchasing and disposal procedures continue to reflect best practice in order to obtain best value and to

guard against corruption, discrimination and breaches of public procurement regulations.

**CAB87 VACANT BUILDING CREDIT**

Cabinet considered a report which explained that Local Planning Authorities were required to apply a Vacant Building Credit when calculating affordable housing contributions. The guidance within National Planning Policy Guidance for implementing the Vacant Building Credit was limited and had caused some anomalies with the CIL guidance on what was classed as a vacant building, to the detriment of the affordable housing provision. Therefore, further formal guidance setting out the Council's approach would offer clarity in dealing with planning applications.

In responding to questions from members it was explained that although the number of applications affected by this scheme were small, to date the sites were large and had a large effect on the provision of affordable housing. It was also explained that a safety net in the process was the ability to put forward the issue of viability for the schemes.

It was explained that in order to notify developers about the change, the website would be updated with a fact sheet which automatically notified many agents, and they would be reminded through the agents meeting.

In discussing the detail of the scheme, Councillor Blunt asked that officers come to the Local Plan Task Group to explain the scheme.

**RESOLVED:** That the application of the Vacant Building Credit in line with the CIL regulations in order to offer increased clarity for applicants and decision makers be adopted.

**Reason for Decision**

To adopt a clear and transparent approach to applying the Vacant Building Credit and avoid uncertainty when dealing with planning applications.

**CAB88 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY**

Cabinet considered a report which explained that the existing Homelessness Strategy needed to be replaced by a plan that reflected recent changes to the legislative framework and current local circumstances in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping.

The draft Strategy had been presented to the Environment and Community Panel on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019 – The Panel supported the draft Strategy.

The Assistant Director Regeneration, Housing and Place explained that there had been a stakeholder event in December to consult on the strategy which had been well received. He explained that the Strategy would be reviewed every 5 years, but the Action Plan would be reviewed annually. He drew attention to the Environment and Community Panel's Task Group on Homelessness which it was anticipated would keep the Action Plan under review and report back to the Panel annually on progress.

In discussing the content of the Strategy the importance of the private rented sector in the process was referred to in terms of housing supply and homelessness.

He also made reference to the new software which had been procured to assist with the relay of the large amount of information on homelessness to the Government. This was permitting the preparation of the statistics around homelessness to be published on the web in due course which would assist with the large number of freedom of information requests received on the subject. It was noted that the large number of information provided to the Government did not elicit any information back from the Government on overall statistics etc, but this would be chased at a forthcoming meeting with them.

In response to a question of the provision of personal housing plans for individuals, the Assistant Director explained that as part of the Housing Act it was a requirement to produce these which would include the provision of the support offered.

**RESOLVED:** That the Strategy be adopted and that the role of the Environment and Community Panel group - Homelessness and Housing Supply Task Group in overseeing the delivery of the Action Plan endorsed.

#### **Reason for Decision**

The Council has a statutory duty to produce a homelessness strategy setting out the issues it faces locally and what it is doing to prevent homelessness. The Council's commitments to preventing homelessness are set out in the Corporate Plan.

**The meeting closed at 4.12 pm**