



**GREAT YARMOUTH**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# **Policy and Resources Committee**

## **Minutes**

Tuesday, 27 September 2022 at 18:00

### **PRESENT:-**

Councillor Smith (in the Chair); Councillors Candon, P Carpenter, Flaxman-Taylor, Grant, P Hammond, Jeal, Myers, Wainwright, Wells, Williamson, A Wright.

Ms S Oxtoby (Chief Executive Officer), Ms C Whatling (Monitoring Officer), Mrs S Wintle (Corporate Services Manager), Ms K Sly (Finance Director), Mr J Wedon (Senior Information & Data Protection Officer), Mr D Barker (Conservation Manager), Mr S Best (Inward Investment Manager), Mr S Hubbard (Strategic Planning Manager), Ms L Snow (Finance Manager), Mr M Mann (Leisure, Strategy & Contract Manager), Mr J Goffin (Media & Communications Manager), Mr D Zimmerling (IT Support) & Mrs C Webb (Democratic Services Manager).

### **01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Myers & B Walker.

### **02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors P Hammond & P Carpenter declared a personal interest in item 8, Levelling-Up Parks & Open Spaces as there were Parish Councillor & Ward Councillor for Caister.

Councillor Wells declared a personal interest in item 9, Refurbishment of Gorleston Cliff Top Tennis Courts, as a family member was a former employee of the LTA.

However, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, they were allowed to both speak and vote on the items.

### **03 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2022 were confirmed.

### **04 FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee received and considered the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:-

That the Forward Plan be noted.

### **05 ADOPTION OF THE SOUTH DENES LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Strategic Planning Manager.

The Strategic Planning Manager reported that drafts of the LDO's were considered by the Local Plan WP in September 2021 and were approved for consultation by P & R on 2 November 2021. Consultation took place for 28 days from 15 November 2021. This report recommends the adoption of the South Denes Revised LDO.

The Strategic Planning Manager informed the Committee that the South Denes Local Development Order is a short document which sets out what development is permitted within area covered by the order. It is accompanied by a Design Code setting out the design requirements which development proposals must also accord with.

The South Denes Local Development Order permits the following uses:

- Development associated with port and energy industries
- Electronic communications
- Security Cameras
- Fences
- Temporary uses of land for exhibitions and trade fairs for 56 days in any calendar year.

The permissions granted by the order are subject to several conditions to ensure well-planned development, including compliance with the Design Code. The Design Code sets out specific design parameters which developments being undertaken under the

Local Development Order need to adhere to. The South Denes Local Development Order as proposed to be adopted is appended in Appendix 1 to this report. The Design Code is appended in Appendix 2.

Councillor Candon thanked officers and reported that he supported this important document which would assist the formation of the Energy Park.

Councillor Williamson also thanked the Strategic Planning Team for their excellent work.

**RESOLVED:-**

That the Policy & Resources Committee adopt the South Denes Local Development Order.

## **06 2022-23 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Information Governance Lead & Data Protection Officer.

The Information Governance Lead & Data Protection Officer presented an update on performance for the first quarter of 2022/23 (Apr to Jun) where progress is assessed against Targets which are set at the start of the financial year. The report also provides an update on the position of key projects that are linked to the corporate priorities from 'The Plan 2020-2025'. A summary of progress for the suite of key projects and individual highlight reports for each of these key projects are presented in Appendix 1 of this report. The performance measures, see Appendix 2, give a comprehensive overview of how the authority as a whole is performing and cover most Council functions.

Councillor Wainwright referred to page 155 of the agenda and complimented the Council in delivering the new Marina Centre under budget which had been overseen by a strong Member Working Group.

Councillor Wainwright referred to page 157 of the agenda and questioned why the Wintergardens project status was green when there had not been a Member Working Group meeting for several months. The Chairman informed Members that the next MWG meeting was scheduled to take place on Friday, 7 October 2022 via Teams.

Councillor Williamson referred to page 165 of the agenda and asked for clarification as to why the North Quay status was green as this project was heavily reliant on a successful bid for levelling-up funding and therefore, at best, should be designated as amber.

Councillor Wainwright referred to page 180 of the agenda, Contact Centre Telephone Calls, which noted that the wait call time was 5.12 mins which was unacceptable and he was concerned that the caller would be charged for this call waiting time. The Chairman confirmed that the calls would be charged the local call rate.

Councillor Wainwright referred to page 186 of the agenda and highlighted the waiting times for social housing applications which was unacceptable.

Councillor Wainwright referred to page 187 of the agenda, Average Cost for Void Repair, which was £2225 and had reduced dramatically and he asked what was the driving force behind this reduction.

The Chief Executive Officer informed the Committee that she would compare the current status of all major projects against the Corporate Project Plan and assured Members that all risks were proactively managed.

The Chief Executive Officer confirmed that the North Quay project was reliant of a successful LUF bid. The latest statistics provided by the Head of Customer Services indicated that the wait time for telephone calls was 1.13 mins in August which was in line with the service performance level requirements and on-target. The excess wait time had been a result of a high level of staff sickness which was being pro-actively managed and enquires regarding the energy rebate.

Councillor Wainwright reiterated the need for regular member involvement in all big projects going forward. The Chairman assured members that all current projects would be delivered on time and on budget. The Chairman assured Members that regular project meetings via Teams or face-to-face meetings, if there was time, were beneficial to both officers and Members.

Councillor Jeal referred to page 50 of the agenda and that the Middlegate project status should be red as there had been no MWG meeting for over 3 years. The Chief Executive Officer reported that there been delays in finalising the business case and that there was no identified funding stream at the moment to deliver the project but it was hoped that Homes England would take a different view in the future. The CEO would look at the status for the next quarter's report to Committee.

Councillor Williamson highlighted the success of the Marina Centre project which had been driven by a successful cross-party MWG.

A Member highlighted EM05 which stated that the Council had achieved a 99% score which was difficult to believe as the gateways to the town were dirty and unkempt. The Chairman reported that these areas came under the remit of NCC and involved H & S issues to protect operatives whilst cleansing the roads. Councillor Wells, Chairman of Environment Committee, reported that the gateways in to the town were kept to a good standard which involved multiple tiers of responsibility.

The Chairman informed Members that the Corporate Services Manager had confirmed that the last Wintergardens MWG was held on 29/03/2022 and that she would forward the minutes to Councillor Wainwright. The next Middlegate MWG meeting was scheduled to take place on 02/11/2022.

**RESOLVED:-**

That the Committee agree:-

- (i) All measures to be monitored during the next quarter; and
- (ii) All key projects will continue to be monitored over the next quarter with the aim of maintaining a green status and where possible attaining a green status for those key projects which are currently amber.

## **07 COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS POLICY**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Information Governance

Lead and Data Protection Officer.

The Information Governance Lead & Data Protection Officer gave an update on the Council's Corporate Complaints & Compliments Policy. The policy had been revised to incorporate the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman as set out in the recently published Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. Changes had been made to complaint response timescales to allow for a more thorough investigation and response, enabling complaints to be handled more efficiently and further improving customer service.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee review and approve the policy.

## **08 LEVELLING UP - PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Strategic Director.

The Head of Inward Investment informed the Committee of the proposals for the refurbishment of Diana Way Park in Caister, in response to the Government's recent allocation of funding in relation to its Parks & Green Spaces Levelling Up Fund.

Councillor Wainwright reported that he was pleased with the planned investment in Caister but the Magdalen, Shrublands & Nelson wards were in desperate need of play equipment but did not qualify for s106 spending as they were urban areas.

Councillor Grant declared a personal interest in this item as he was a Parish Councillor for Ormesby St Margaret with Scratby. Councillor Grant asked for confirmation that the s106 monies totalling £75k from the Pointers East development earmarked for play equipment in Ormesby & Scratby Ward had been ringfenced. The Head of Inward Investment agreed to take this matter away and make further enquiries. Councillor Grant suggested that the access to s106 funds should be simplified for communities to be able to access their own funding pot.

Councillor A Wright asked for confirmation of the funding formulae in regard to the awarding of s106 monies as the award of £40k to improve pathways at Caister seemed to be an imbalance as Blackfriars Road playground had only been awarded £37k including maintenance to upgrade the condemned play equipment.

The Chairman informed the Committee that a report on play areas and equipment would be presented at the next Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee. Councillor Wells reported that this had been discussed at the recent Environment Committee meeting.

Councillor Jeal reiterated the need for the provision of new play equipment at Blackfriars and St Georges Park which were in the most deprived ward in the borough. He complimented the Council for the marvellous work undertaken in the Middlegate play areas.

Councillor P Hammond informed the committee that Caister PC had fundraised to fund the provision of new play equipment in Caister.

Councillor P Carpenter reported that as a ward councillor, she was delighted that Diana Way would be refurbished which was a little gem in Caister and she thanked all the officers concerned.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee:

- (i) Note the content of this report,
- (ii) Agree to allocating £75,000 from the Council's section 106 monies from the Pointers East development (06/15/0309/F) to be spent on this Diana Way Park, Caister, as part of this project; and
- (iii) Subject to the agreement of 2 above, approve the inclusion of £160,000 in the Council's capital programme to be funded from the Parks and Green Spaces Levelling Up Fund (£85,000) and allocated section 106 monies (£75,000).

**09 REFURBISHMENT OF GORLESTON CLIFFTOP TENNIS COURTS**

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

**10 2021/22 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Finance Director.

The Finance Director's report presents the treasury management activity for the 2021/22 financial year and includes for the year:

1. The overall treasury position
2. The borrowing requirement and debt
3. The borrowing outturn

The Finance Director reported that the treasury management strategy for 2021/22 was approved at a meeting of the Council in February 2021 and this report provides the final treasury activity for the 21/22 financial year and performance against the indicators set within the treasury management strategy.

As at 31 March 2022, the Authority had net borrowing of just over £85m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. This was made up of £135m of loans, which was only slightly increased from the 31 March 2021, investments stood at just under £50m at the end of 2022 up the previous financial year due to the timing of cash received.

The report also includes the performance compared to the indicators set within the Treasury Management strategy set out in section 7 for which one of the limits were exceeded in the year.

The Council exceeded the investment limits in table 7 on page 235 of the agenda when during December 2021 maximum limit per fund of £4m was breached in that the Council had invested at the highest point £4.830m. This was due to the Council having higher retained cash balances than anticipated due the timing of receipt of grant monies ahead of monies being paid out and due to the Debt Management Office investment rate being negative at the time therefore it was considered that the

use of the Money Market Funds as the most appropriate course of action. It is recommended that Policy and Resources Committee recommend to Council the Treasury Management outturn report and indicators for 2021/22.

Councillor A Wright asked for clarification as to whether the Government's mini-budget and rising inflation rates would have repercussions on the Council's future borrowing position.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee recommend to Full Council to approve the Treasury Management outturn report and indicators for 2021/22.

## **11 2022/23 PERIOD 4 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Financial Services Manager.

The Financial Services Manager reported that the original base budget for 2022/23 was approved by Council in February 2022 and assumed a transfer from the general reserves of £208,205. This report provides an updated forecast for the year compared to this position.

The General Fund Summary at appendix A shows the high level forecast position at 31 July 2022 of a deficit position of £421k (a deficit of £213k against the budget of £208k).

However there are further in-year budget pressures that have not yet been allocated at a service level, namely the outstanding agreement of the 2022/23 pay award which is estimated currently at £140k and the impact of increases to energy and transport costs estimated at £90k. Based on the latest information received following the production of the report, these are likely to be under estimated, however we are awaiting further information on whether the Council is eligible for the recently announced energy cap.

The report as written estimated the impact in the current year to be £605,000 deficit, options to mitigate the impact in the current year are being considered, including review of vacant posts and one offs from reserves.

The current capital budget is £70.5m with actual spend until the end of July 2022 of £4.7m. The forecast spend for 2022/23 on capital projects is estimated at £60.2m at the end of period 4, recognising that a number of the large projects will span financial years so that the balance will be rolled forward.

The Council is currently experiencing increased construction & materials costs across its capital projects, mainly due to inflationary pressures. Whilst committed capital projects are potentially at less risk (depending on the contract), those projects at the planning development stage are at greater risk of not being delivered within their approved budgets.

To partially mitigate this risk a £2.5m centralised major capital projects contingency has been approved. However, the Capital Programme will need to be constantly reviewed during the year and projects may need to be reconsidered and/or reprioritised according to funding available.

The overall position for 2022/23 will continue to be monitored during the year and will be reported to Management team and Members accordingly. This is also the basis of the work to inform the medium term financial strategy.

Councillor Wainwright reported that the forecast budget gap was concerning as were

the inflation pressures with the economy crashing and it was a worrying time for all local authorities. Councillor Wainwright asked for assurance that all up-to-date information in regard to the increased cost of living expenses had been accounted for. The Finance Director reported that work on the MTFS was constantly revisited and was ongoing at a high level.

Councillor A Wright referred to page 265 of the agenda report and asked for clarification in regard to the future of Maritime House, which was the former Tourism Centre, and was now closed but had a forecast of £42K for upkeep/running/maintenance included in the report. The Chairman reported that the future of this building would be crucial moving forwards and it might involve disposal of this asset.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) That the Committee note the contents of the report and revised forecast for the General Fund for 2022/23; and
- (ii) Recommend to Full Council to approve the updated capital Programme as outlined in the report at paragraphs 4.4 to 4.6 in relation to the Market and Operations and Maintenance project contributions.

## **12 TOWN DEAL INTERVENTION 8 - WAYFINDING SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIVITY**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Heritage, Culture and Design Manager.

The Heritage, Culture & Design Manager reported that at the Town Deal Board on the 16 March 2022, nine Investment Priorities were agreed for submission to Government constituting a Town Investment Plan totalling £20.1 million including Intervention 5: Restoration and sustainable repurposing of three vacant historic buildings. This report sets out intervention No 8 Public Wayfinding and Sustainable Connectivity, members are asked to review and comment on the updates to the Wayfinding Project, the schedule and milestones.

Councillor Jeal requested that a statue in remembrance of Ernie Childs be erected as part of this initiative. Councillor A Wright seconded this request and asked for clarification regarding timescales. The Heritage, Culture and Design Manager reported that a call for art would begin early next year.

Councillor Wells reported that the choice of sculptures for an Arts Sculpture Trail was subjective and requested that Members had a say in the final decision to ensure that the pieces were tasteful and fitted in with the ethos of the borough and their setting. The Heritage, Culture & Design Manager assured Members that the chosen works would not be controversial, they would be contemporary, permanent and robust and not detrimental to the townscape and would be selected by a Member & Stakeholder Panel. A briefing report would be prepared for ELT. The CEO assured Members that P & R Committee would decide the Panel membership.

**RESOLVED:-**

That the Committee recommend to Full Council the release of £594,953 Town Deal funding subject to compliance with funding conditions and the parameters set out in this report.

**13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman reported that there was no other business being of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the meeting.

**14 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:-**

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act.

**15 CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX 1 - TOWN DEAL INTERVENTION 8 BUSINESS CASE - WAYFINDING**

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

**16 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

**17 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - UPDATE FROM MONITORING OFFICER**

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

**18 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - DELEGATION TO OFFICERS (MARKET PLACE)**

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

**19 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - UPDATE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

The meeting ended at: 20:00