



Cabinet

Minutes

Tuesday, 25 July 2023 at 14:00

PRESENT:-

Councillor Smith (Leader & Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Major Projects) (in the Chair), Councillors Bensly (Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Culture & Coastal), Candon (Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Growth), Flaxman-Taylor (Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health & Communities), Plant (Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Operational Property and Asset Management) & Wells (Portfolio Holder for Environment & Sustainability, Waste and Licensing).

Ms S Oxtoby (Chief Executive Officer), Ms C Whatling (Monitoring Officer), Mrs P Boyce (Executive Director - People), Mrs N Hayes (Executive Director - Place), Ms K Sly (Executive Director - Finance), Mr I Robertson (Executive Director - Major Projects), Mr C Furlong (Executive Director - Housing Assets), Mrs M Lee (Head of Customer Services), Mr B Ogden (Head of Property & Asset Management), Ms K Price (Head of Health Integration & Communities), Mr S Hubbard (Strategic Planning Manager), Ms L Snow (Finance Manager), Mrs S Wintle (Corporate Services Manager), Mr J Wedon (Information Governance Lead & Data Protection Officer), Ms R Harrison (Technical Assistant) & Mrs C Webb (Democratic Services Officer).

01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence given at the meeting.

02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Wells declared a personal interest in item number 7, as he had supported the bid for improvements to the play area at Marine Parade, Gorleston. However, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, was allowed to both speak and vote on the item.

03 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

(i) The Chairman proposed that in line with paragraph 26.11.2 of the Council's Constitution, that if the meeting overran the allotted two hour meeting time, that the meeting be extended by a further 30 minutes. This motion was seconded by Councillor Plant and unanimously voted for by Cabinet.

(ii) The Chairman thanked Kate Price and her team for all their hard work to assist the residents who were left homeless following a fire at the weekend in a large property situated in the south of the town.

04 MINUTES

Cabinet confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2023.

05 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022-23

The Leader of the Council reported the salient areas of the Council's annual performance for the financial year 2022-23. The report was broken down into two sections:-

(i) Progress of key projects as at Quarter 4 2022-23 (Appendix 1); and

(ii) Annual performance report of key performance indicators 2022-23 (Appendix 2).

Councillor Candon thanked the officer for a comprehensive, ambitious and positive report. Councillors Bensly & Plant echoed Councillor Candon's sentiments.

RESOLVED:-

(i) Cabinet is asked to review and approve the Annual Performance report for 2022-23; and

(ii) All key projects will continue to be monitored over the forthcoming financial year with the aim of maintaining a green status (on target) and where possible attaining a green status for those key projects which are currently amber.

06 2023-24 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

The Leader of the Council introduced the Annual Action Plan for 2023-24.

The Leader of the Council reported that the Annual Action Plan documented the projects and activities that would be taken forward by the Council during 2023-24. This built upon the previous year's Action Plan and continued the delivery of "The

Plan 2020-2025".

The Annual Action Plan also included a suite of Performance Indicators which related to "The Plan" and on-going service delivery of the Council. This data would be presented quarterly to the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holders.

RESOLVED:-

That Cabinet review and approve the Annual Action Plan 2023-24.

07 SPENDING OF DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS (SECTION 106-SECTION 111) ON OPEN SPACE - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPEND

Councillor Candon, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Growth, set out the recommendations for the first tranche of spend of developer contributions (Section 106/Section 111 agreements) for open space following approval of a revised process last Autumn.

Councillor Plant welcomed the report and reported that he was pleased that the funding had been spread across the Borough.

Councillor Wells thanked the officers for all their hard work and that he was pleased that maintenance costs had been factored in to the funding.

Councillor Bensly highlighted that this was the first tranche of recommendations for funding from s106 obligations. A further round would be opened in August and officers would invite previous unsuccessful applicants to apply again where their project accorded with s106 funding. He asked that this message be passed on to all those applicants who had been unsuccessful in round 1 and offer assistance to improve their applications for round 2.

RESOLVED:-

That Cabinet approves the use of section 106 funds to deliver the following projects:-

- (i) Beaconsfield Road play area Improvement -£57,400 (£41,000 capital, £16,400 future maintenance)
- (ii) Blackfriars West play area Improvements - £56,000 (£40,000 capital, £16,000 future maintenance)
- (iii) Gorleston Marine Parade play area improvements - £39,300 (£29,500 capital, £9,800 future maintenance)
- (iv) Improvements to Wellesley Football Pitch – new dugouts and goals - £18,007.20 capital
- (v) Magdalen Square play area improvements - £47,880 (£34,200 capital, £13,680 maintenance)
- (vi) Mill Lane, Bradwell - Adizone Improvements - £72,324 capital
- (vii) Rollesby Playing Field – new goals and basketball hoop to complete multi-use games area - £8,800 capital

(viii) Pier Plain Play area improvements -£30,800 (£22,000 capital, £8,800 future maintenance; and

(ix) Lichfield Road Play Area Improvements - £31,000 capital

08 NORFOLK COAST PARTNERSHIP MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Councillor Bensly, Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Cultural and Coastal, reported that the Norfolk Coast Partnership was an Outside Body partnership comprising officer and local councillor membership from the Norfolk Coast Local Authorities to manage the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Partnership was a longstanding commitment which required a relatively small contribution based on the size of the AONB area and crucially, it met the Council's legislative requirements to manage AONB. A revised MoA had been prepared setting out the roles, responsibilities and increased contributions of the partnership. It had been requested that each Norfolk Coast LA signed up to the agreement.

RESOLVED:-

That Cabinet endorses the content of the Norfolk Coast Partnership Memorandum of Agreement and authorises the Director as signatory.

09 RESILIENT COASTS PROJECT - COASTAL PARTNERSHIP EAST

Councillor Bensly, Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Culture and Coastal reported that the formation of the Resilient Coasts Project Board, as the governing board for the Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme (FCRIP). Funding for this programme was approved in June 2022.

The initial governing group Joint Coastal Project Board is recommended for amendment to become Resilient Coast Project Board with the Members representing the Coastal Partnership East Board to attend on behalf of the Borough Council.

The Leader of the Council congratulated Councillor Bensly on becoming Chairman of Coastal Partnership East.

RESOLVED:-

That Cabinet approves the creation of a Sub-Group (Resilient Coasts Project Board) of the Coastal Partnership East and that representatives be those that were appointed to the Coastal Partnership East.

10 GREAT YARMOUTH HEALTH AND WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Communities updated Cabinet on the collaborative work of the Great Yarmouth health & Wellbeing Partnership and associated Council-led projects.

The Leader of the Council congratulated all concerned for their excellent partnership working which was an example of best practice.

Councillor Bensly asked how many agencies were involved in the partnership. Councillor Flaxman-Taylor reported that there were 35+ involved at the moment but that it was growing month on month.

Councillor Candon reported that the Council was leading the way and laying a strong foundation for future partnership working and collaboration.

RESOLVED:-

That Cabinet:-

(i) Endorses the Activity Plan as set out in Appendix 1 in respect of the GY Health & Wellbeing Partnership projects funded by Norfolk Public Health and Adult Social care respectively and support the use of officer time in the development of detailed action plans under the workstreams; and

(ii) Promote membership of the Community Partnerships, networks and projects to local organisations in Members' wards.

11 GREAT YARMOUTH COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Communities provided an update for Members on the impact of the GY Community Investment Fund (CIF) grant spend in 2022/23 and sought approval for the Fund to continue in partnership with the Norfolk Community Foundation in this current year 2023/24 and 2024/25 subject to budget reviews.

This report also included an update on the Great Yarmouth Community Champions' Programme seed funding for the two community-operated Food Clubs with additional VCSE investment.

Councillor Candon informed Cabinet that he would welcome the opportunity to work with Councillor Flaxman-Taylor to improve the skills agenda in the Borough.

RESOLVED:-

That Cabinet:-

(i) Notes the impact of the GY Community Investment Fund and its ability to leverage additional funding from other external sources which benefits the Borough's community groups; and

(ii) Supports the continuation of the GY CIF in partnership with the Norfolk Community Foundation including a contribution of £50,000 for 2023/24 and 2024/25 (subject to budget reviews).

12 ANNUAL DEBT REPORT 2022-23

The Leader of the Council informed Cabinet that this was an annual report detailing the Council's collection performance and debt management arrangements for 2022/23. The report included a summary of debts written off in each debt area showing the reasons for write-off and values, collection performance for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates, level of arrears outstanding and level of provision for bad and doubtful debts.

Councillor Wells was concerned how the cost of living crisis would affect future debt write-off. The Head of Customer Services reported that the Council was still operating a Council Tax Hardship Fund for 2023/24 and was working closely with Citizens Advice & DIAL to look at debt as a whole and work out the best outcome for the customer and it was hoped to sustain this moving forwards.

RESOLVED:-

That Cabinet approve the annual report giving details of the Council's write-offs in accordance with the Council's Recovery Guidelines and performance in relation to revenues collection.

13 TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION - PURCHASE OF HOMES FOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

Councillor Plant, Portfolio Holder for Operational Property and Asset Management, reported that as per the report contained within the agenda pack, Great Yarmouth Borough Council together with 229 other Local Authorities, had been notified that assistance was required to support the resettlement of Afghan families as part of the Government's Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

The scheme prioritised those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy, woman's rights, freedom of speech, and rule of law. Priority was also given to vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups at risk (including ethnic and religious minorities and LGBT+).

There are a significant number of these families still within bridging accommodation across the Country in need of a self-contained home. Whilst The Council accepted and acknowledged the current housing pressures facing those already living within the Borough, the homes required to support Afghan Families will be let on a temporary basis until such time as the families secure more permanent homes and will therefore not impact upon the wider Council efforts to provide housing to those who qualify.

Central Government also acknowledged the current position and shortage of homes, and therefore, had allocated £526k to enable the Council to seek 5 properties to meet this requirement.

The benefits of accepting the grant funding were three-fold:-

(i) The Council had to provide these homes with or without the funding. The funding would enable the acquisition of 5 additional homes so as not to impact on current

temporary accommodation provision or the Borough existing social housing stock.

(ii) Under the terms of the funding agreement, once the resettlement programme ends, the homes acquired could be retained by the Council as part of its temporary accommodation portfolio and would therefore provide long-term assets that can be used to support those in need of emergency accommodation.

(iii) The grant funding will support the scheme financially. Whilst there would be an element of Council borrowing, the rental income generated from the homes was sufficient to cover all expenditure on repairs, management, interest payments on the borrowing and repay the capital invested.

In addition to these benefits, this scheme highlighted the Borough's collective responsibilities as a society and an opportunity to fulfil our humanitarian obligations by providing safe and welcoming homes to those who have faced conflict and lost everything as a result.

Councillor Plant recommended that the Council accepted the funding allocated from Central Government, authorise the total expenditure of £1,230,000 and delegate authority to the Executive Director for people and Section 151 Officer in relation to the acquisition of the 5 homes required for the scheme.

RESOLVED:-

That Cabinet:-

(i) Agrees to the purchase five properties to deliver additional Temporary Accommodation as part of the Government's Afghan Resettlement Scheme.

(ii) Recommends to Full Council the approval of the expenditure of up to £1,230,000 supported by up to £704,000 of Council borrowing to deliver this granted-aided Temporary Accommodation Scheme.

(iii) Notes that in accordance with the Property Acquisitions and Disposals Policy, the decision to acquire this Temporary Accommodation is delegated to the Executive Director – People and the Section 151 Officer, and

(iv) Subject to Government confirmation, agrees to accept the Local Authority Housing Fund grant funding and conditions, delegating the signing of the Government's Memorandum of Understanding to the Executive Director – People in association with the Portfolio Holder for Operational Property and Asset Management.

14 BUILDING RATIONALISATION

Councillor Plant, Portfolio Holder for Operational Property and Asset Management.

Councillor Plant reported that the way in which the Council worked and the way our residents expected to access our services had changed significantly over recent years. As part of its wider transformation agenda, the Council sought to use our building assets more effectively, co-location teams in the best place and making our services easier to access for our residents. Within these proposals, was a commitment to deliver a saving in the 2023/24 budget for the rationalisation of council office buildings from four to three. Buildings occupied currently included the Town Hall, Greyfriars House, Novus House and The Catalyst.

The report identified opportunities to relocate the staff to offer dedicated customer support at Novus House and Civic and office spaces at the Town Hall, making best use of council resources by reducing the cost of our buildings.

Councillor Wells reported that he fully supported the proposal but asked if the Council could dovetail the de-carbonisation of the buildings at the same time if this was possible. Councillor Plant informed Cabinet that County was undertaking this with buildings in their ownership but that our property portfolio was very different as it included several Listed Buildings.

Councillor Bensly stressed the importance of staff engagement to avoid unnecessary worry.

The Chief Executive Officer assured Cabinet that all staff were engaged in the process and that she had emailed staff across all sections once the report had been made public last week, and at present, she had received very little feedback. The Chief Executive Officer reported that this idea had stemmed from a suggestion from the Staff Engagement Group (SEG).

RESOLVED:-

- (i) To vacate Greyfriars House office accommodation, relocating customer facilities and staff across Town Hall, Novus House and The Catalyst buildings; and
- (ii) To approve a capital budget allocation of £225k to facilitate the relocation works.

15 BEACON PARK OPTIONS FOR RELOCATION OF PLAY FACILITIES

Councillor Plant, Portfolio Holder for Operational Property & Asset Management reported that with the anticipated removal of the Beacon Park Playground due to the new build for the James Paget University Hospital. This report aimed to summarise options to create new play provision at alternative sites around the area.

Councillor Wells reported that officers had engaged with both Ward Members and the three Members who represented the Magdalen Ward during this process which had worked extremely well.

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor wished her thanks to Rachel Harrison be minuted for all her hard work which had achieved the best outcome for all local residents.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That Cabinet approves the relocation and improvement of facilities located at the Magdalen Recreation Ground; and
- (ii) To recommend that a budget of £400k be made available for removal of existing equipment and improvements at the approved site.

16 2022/23 FINANCIAL OUT TURN REPORT

The Leader of the Council reported that this report presented the provisional outturn for the 2022/23 financial year for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) including the respective capital programmes and financing. The report seeks an update to the 2023/24 capital programme following re-profiling between financial years and presents a revised reserves statement. The outturn position for the General Fund is a deficit of £974,522 compared to the budgeted deficit of £227,795, this will require an additional use of reserves in 2022/23 of £746,727 above the level previously planned. The HRA outturn shows a surplus of £1.841m, against a budget deficit of £3.129m, resulting in a favourable variance of £4.970m and a higher year end balance than previously forecast. The commentary in the report and appendices details the variances against the budget.

Councillor Plant referred to paragraphs 2.1 & 2.2 of the report and emphasised the importance of continued lobbying of Central Government for funding.

Councillor Wells highlighted the additional spend of £113k for refuse fleet vehicles as the fleet had been in dire need of investment for a significant period of time.

Councillor Wells asked for clarification as to whether the income from business waste had been factored in to the report. The Finance Manager assured Councillor Wells that it had been factored in.

RESOLVED:-

That Cabinet:-

- (i) Agree the provisional outturn for 2022/23 for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account,
- (ii) Agree the transfers to and from reserves as detailed in the report and appendices,
- (iii) Agree the financing of the capital programmes (GF and HRA) as detailed within the report and appendices,
- (iv) Agree the updated capital programme for 2023/24 as included in the report and appendices,
- (v) Agree the extra £113k capital spend to allow the purchase of the six diesel and one electric refuse vehicles and associated infrastructure as agreed as part of the fleet strategy work, and that these costs are passed onto GYS as part of the service level agreement around asset lease and replacement; and
- (vi) Agree delegated authority for the Executive Director, Place to enter a contract for the procurement of the main build contract for "The Place" subject to DLUHC agreeing the re-allocation of the project adjustment request as outlined in the report.

17 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

That under Section 100 (A)(4) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local