

# Full Council

## Minutes

Tuesday, 26 January 2016 at 19:00

### PRESENT :

Councillor S Weymouth (in the Chair), Councillors Andrews, Annison, Bird, Carpenter, B Coleman, M Coleman, Collins, Connell, Cutting, Davis, Fairhead, Fox, Grant, Grey, Hanton, Jeal, Jermany, Jones, Lawn, Linden, Mavroudis, Myers, Plant, Pratt, Reynolds, Robinson-Payne, C Smith, J Smith, Sutton, Thirtle, H Wainwright, T Wainwright, Walker, Williamson and Wright

Also in attendance were:

Mrs S Oxtoby (Interim Chief Executive Officer), Mr C Skinner (Monitoring Officer), Mrs J Beck (Director of Customer Services), Mr R Read (Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods), Mrs K Watts (Transformation Programme Manager), Ms K Sly (Section 151 Officer) and Mr R Hodds (Cabinet Secretary).

### **1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Blyth, Rodwell and Stenhouse.

### **3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

a) Question from Helen Farrow, Chair of Great Yarmouth Indoor Bowls Club:-

"The members of Great Yarmouth Indoor Bowls Club would like to ask the Council which of the various options available to them, they have decided to implement in the redevelopment of the Marina Centre. This decision is vital to the future of the bowls club moving forward, and it is essential we know as soon as possible, so we can plan our next season. We are also enquiring, should the Marina plans, despite our vigorous campaign, go against us remaining in the existing building, what is Council going to do about rehousing us elsewhere in the Borough?"

In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment reported that the decision on the redevelopment of the Marina Centre is a very important one for the Council in terms of its long term transformation programme. The aims of the Leisure Programme have

been to create 21st century leisure facilities for the residents of the Borough whilst reducing the subsidy from the Council and ensuring the cost of redevelopment is met through increased revenue.

We recognise that in considering how to achieve our aims we may need to make some difficult decisions, to help us do that we have asked for design and financial details for a range of options for the Marina Centre and a Working Group of Members are currently considering these in advance of the Council being asked to make a final decision.

We appreciate that this is taking us longer than we originally envisaged and that this may have an impact on users being able to plan ahead. However, the decision will be one that will have a long term impact for the residents, the Council and the provision of leisure services. It is important therefore that we fully consider all of the options.

The decision will be informed by the Council's Sports Play and Leisure Strategy and should the decision that is taken impact on existing users the Council will work closely with them to look at alternative options.

In accordance with the Constitution, Helen Farrow was then entitled to ask a supplementary question as follows :-

"Does the Council not think that after 31 years of the Indoor Bowls Club operating from the Marina Centre that they should derive a benefit back from this use?"

In response, the Cabinet Member asked Helen Farrow to email him the details of this particular question and that he would respond as soon as possible.

b) Question from Mr J Cannell, Great Yarmouth Trades Council:-

"The characteristics of Great Yarmouth's economy include low wages, seasonal, part-time work and a dependency on welfare benefits such as in work tax credits.

Does the Leader of the Council believe that the introduction of a £8.25 living wage and the ending of the dependency on seasonal employment in favour of full-time, 52 weeks a year jobs would improve the local economy?

Do you agree that the Council should seek to ensure that rate payers money is not used to subsidise employers that offer zero hour contracts and that do not pay a living wage, that through doing so contribute to the poor state of the local economy?"

In response, the Leader reported that he agreed with the first question as outlined above as presented by Mr Cannell.

With regard to the second question the Leader reported that from April 2016 employers will be obliged to pay the National Living Wage. Although zero hour contracts are a feature of the wider economy, the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 prohibits enforcement of such contracts with exclusivity clauses, meaning that workers are free to gain employment elsewhere should the hours of work on offer be too few.

In accordance with the Constitution, Mr Cannell was then entitled to ask a supplementary question as follows :-

Mr Cannell commented on his belief that the zero hour and living wage in Great

Yarmouth would be in the region of £8.17 per hour but following a ruling Her Worship the Mayor this was not deemed to be a question in accordance with the Constitution and Mr Cannell was therefore asked to cease his comments.

## **4 REPORTS TO COUNCIL FOR DECISION**

### **a Honorary Aldermen**

Council consider the Cabinet Secretary's report asking Council to agree to the appointment of Councillors Linden and Blyth and former Councillor Stone as Honorary Aldermen in accordance with the agreed criteria such appointment to be effective as from the 1st June 2016.

Proposer : Councillor Plant  
Seconder : Councillor B Coleman

That Councillors Linden and Blyth and former Councillor Stone be appointed as Honorary Aldermen of the Borough of Great Yarmouth with effect from the 1st June 2016.

CARRIED

## **5 MINUTES**

### **a) Minutes of Council of the 24th November 2015**

The Mayor presented the Council Minutes for the 24th November 2015.

With regard to the issue regarding the terrorist incident in Paris the Shadow Leader asked that in future all letter of this nature should be copied to all Members of Council.

With regard to the item in respect of the Motions on Notice in respect of the British Steel Industry, Councillor B Coleman asked whether the Council has as yet received a response from the Prime Minister. The Cabinet Secretary reported to date that no response had been received.

### **b) Minutes of Council of the 21st December 2015**

The Mayor presented the Council Minutes of the 21st December 2015.

With regard to the item in respect of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Investment 2015/16, the Shadow Leader asked whether the St Georges Theatre Trust had responded with regard to the Borough Council's request that the Council's representation be increased on the Theatre Trust.

Councillor B Coleman, in his capacity as Chairman of the Theatre Trust, reported that this matter would be considered by the Trustees at their meeting on the 4th February.

The Shadow Leader also referred to the discussion at Cabinet on the 11th November when the issue of grants to the Voluntary Sector had been discussed and that the issue of 12 month protection had been agreed and the Leader gave an assurance that this would be adhered to.

(Councillor Jeal declared a non pecuniary interest in the discussion on this matter in his capacity as a Member of a Voluntary Sector Organisation in the Borough).

With regard to the item in respect of the Budget Council meeting to be held on the 24th February 2016 Councillor Sutton asked whether the Budget papers would be ready for consideration at this meeting and the Leader gave his assurance that the necessary reports would be available.

c) Scrutiny Minutes - 3rd December 2015.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd December 2015.

d) Audit and Risk - 7th December 2015

The Chairman presented the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee held on the 7th December 2015.

e) Cabinet - 9th December 2015

The Leader presented the minutes of the meeting held on the 9th December 2015.

## **6 MOTION ON NOTICE**

Council considered the following Motion on Notice from Councillors Jeal, Pratt, T Wainwright, H Wainwright, Sutton and Williamson :-

"Norfolk Fire and Rescue proposals if implemented would see day time coverage in Gorleston and Great Yarmouth reduced to 2 whole time crews and one retained crew and night time cover reduced to one whole time crew and one retained crew. Night time cover will in effect be cut in half.

The loss of a whole time crew at night will inevitably lead to an increase in response times as retained crews take between 3 and 7 minutes longer (up to 7 minutes 20 seconds longer) to dispatch than whole time crews.

Modelling data in the proposals indicates this will lead to an increase in the loss of life the exact increase for our Borough is unclear as projections of 1.14 lives lost for the whole time and 0.51 lives lost for the retained reductions each year include other areas.

Norfolk County Council has saved over £245m in the last 3 years and through further cuts to Local Government funding is faced with finding a further £111m in savings. This is a result of the 29% cut at the Department for Communities and Local Government announced in November and agreed by Ministers that are being passed onto fire and local authorities. It is because of this pressure on its budget that Norfolk County Council finds itself in the unenviable position of considering cuts to one of the most efficient Fire and Rescue Services in England.

This Council recognises difficult decisions must be made as a result of Westminster imposed cuts however this Council resolves to write to the Leader of Norfolk County Council to object to the proposed reduction in fire crews and the loss of a fire tender from the Borough. That any reduction at our three fire stations of Martham, Gorleston and Great Yarmouth would lead to an increase in the risk to the lives of residents and visitors, that this is unacceptable and is opposed by this Council.

Furthermore it is noted that an one off grant from Norfolk County Council and DEFRA funded a flood risk capability in Norfolk, that in our "hour of need" during the storm surge of December 2013 deployed 17 specialist teams and has recently been commended for work in flood rescue in Northern England. This funding ends in 2017.

This Council resolves to write to Brandon Lewis MP to request that Norfolk's flood rescue capability is again supported through a grant from Government. Recognising the benefit and reassurance that such a capability brings to a community at risk of flooding."

In presenting the Motion Councillor Jeal asked the Council to give its full support to the details of the Motion now presented. Councillor Reynolds stated that he fully supported the Motions and referred to the likely growths in the Borough resulting in the need for further fire fighters.

The Leader reported that he fully supported both Motions and he proposed that with regard to the issue of the specialist teams that an addition be made to the Motion to state that whilst the funding ends in 2017 this should be extended beyond that date and that the specialist teams should be retained.

The Shadow Leader commented that this issue was about reducing cover for the fire service and was also about the degrading of the service provided by the Fire Brigade. Councillor Myers commented that this would be a cut to a important front line service.

Proposer : Councillor Jeal

Secunder : Councillor Williamson

1) That the Council resolves to write to the Leader of Norfolk County Council to object to the proposed reduction in fire crews and the loss of a fire tender from the Borough, and that any reduction in service at the 3 fire stations of Martham Gorleston and Great Yarmouth would lead to an increase in the risk to the lives' of residents and visitors and that this is unacceptable and is opposed by this Council.

2) Furthermore it is noted that a one off grant from Norfolk County Council and DEFRA funded a flood risk capability in Norfolk and that in our "hour of need" during the storm surge of 2013 deployed 17 specialist teams and has recently been commended for work in flood rescue in Northern England and that this funding should be extended beyond 2017 and that the specialist teams should be retained, and that the Council resolves to write to Brandon Lewis MP to request that Norfolk's flood rescue capability is again supported through a grant from Government recognising the benefit and reassurance that such capability brings to a community at risk of flooding.

CARRIED

## **7 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR MEMBERS ALLOWANCES**

On reference from the Governance Committee of the 18th January 2016 Council was advised that Borough Council requires an Independent Remuneration Panel to give recommendations on the Members Allowances once the Constitution has been revised and adopted. North Norfolk District Council has already established an Independent Remuneration Panel and Council were asked to agree that this panel be asked to consider Members Allowances for Great Yarmouth Borough Council.

Councillor Sutton commented that in his opinion the Independent Remuneration Panel should include representation of local people from the Borough of Great Yarmouth. The Monitoring Officer clarified that the Independent Remuneration Panel remit would be to make recommendations to the Borough Council and that the final decision with regard to Members Allowances would rest with Council to decide.

Proposer : Councillor Plant  
Secunder : Councillor T Wainwright

That approval be given to the establishment of an Independent Remuneration Panel, and that the already established North Norfolk District Council Panel be asked to consider Members Allowances for Great Yarmouth Borough Council.

CARRIED

## **8 MINUTES - PRIVATE ITEMS**

Council agreed that the confidential minutes of Cabinet of the 9th December and Council of the 21st December 2015 be approved.

## **9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

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

The meeting ended at: 19:50