

Council

Minutes

Thursday, 30 June 2016 at 19:00

PRESENT :

His Worship the Mayor Councillor Bird (in the Chair); Councillors Andrews, Annison, Bensly, Borg, Carpenter, B Coleman, M Coleman, Connell, Cutting, Davis, Fairhead, Fairhead, Flaxman-Taylor, Grant, A Grey, K Grey, Hammond, Hanton, Jeal, Jones, Lawn, Mavroudis, Myers, Plant, Pratt, Reynolds, Robinson-Payne, Smith, Stenhouse, Thirtle, Wainwright, Walch, Walker, Waters-Bunn, Weymouth, 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), Mrs K Watts (Transformation Programme Manager), Ms K Sly (Section 151 Officer), Mr R Hodds (Corporate Governance Manager), and Mr C Rowland (Corporate Policy and Performance Officer).

Mrs S Cox, Mrs K Forster and Mr S Rimmer (Independent Remuneration Panel Members) also attended.

1 FORMER MP JO COX

Council stood in one minute silence as a tribute following the recent death of former MP Jo Cox.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hacon and Rodwell.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

(a) Question from Mr L Sutton :-

"What is Great Yarmouth Borough Council doing to promote community cohesion and tackle racism and xenophobia in Great Yarmouth ?"

In response Councillor Carpenter, Chair of the Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee reported that the Council is committed to tackling all forms of crime and building stronger and more prosperous communities. All of Great Yarmouth Borough Council's public offices act as reporting centres for hate crime and hate crime incidents. This includes incidents of racism and xenophobia.

Staff awareness sessions were held in 2014. Information is available for staff on the intranet and recirculated to front line staff this week.

The Council has supported Hate Free Norfolk campaigns over the past 3 years and continues to be part of community tension monitoring work across the county. This work is ongoing and reviewed as a corporate risk by the Council.

Hate Free Norfolk ran week long campaigns in 2013,14,15 and 16. The Council has promoted this through local networks and through foyer exhibitions in the Town Hall and community venues.

The Police lead "Community Tension Monitoring" work across the county. A GYBC officer sits on the Community Relations & Equality Board.

From a community safety perspective, the Council is also working ever closer with partners in the Police and other public and voluntary sector bodies to monitor emerging issues within our communities. The establishment of an Early Help Hub in Greyfriars House, with regular Police presence has enabled a daily meeting of front-line practitioners to identify early interventions for local people in need to prevent issues from escalating into higher cost interventions as the issues escalate.

For example, when a front-line officer from any agency identifies that a vulnerable person is in need, the case will be discussed and an appropriate intervention agreed. Being a perpetrator or victim of, may be one of the issues surrounding the case.

This is also reflected in the Council's commitment to neighbourhood working to address very localised issues and drive solutions. For example, we undertake targeted work to address neighbour nuisance on a particular street.

The Council teams are working with the DWP and other partners to monitor the impact of changes to welfare benefits such as the recent launch of Universal Credit. In fact, the Council maintains a weekly meeting with the DWP to monitor the immediate impacts of Universal Credit. This allows particular issues to be addressed and trends to be monitored, for example, such as those accessing food banks.

The Council is driving a number of economic projects to deliver job creation opportunities for local residents. Securing Big Lottery funding to deliver the Neighbourhoods that Work programme has ensured there is support available within the voluntary sector to help those with complex needs and those furthest away from the labour market to develop their skills and access sustainable employment.

The specific funding supports grass roots community development work to address community issues. It provides support through the voluntary sector for people with complex needs. It has also been successful in securing employment for over 50 local residents furthest away from the labour market in its first 6 months.

This will continue to be built upon with further regeneration programmes such as the Waterways and Winter Gardens, where the regeneration of Council assets will be used to train and create longer-term employment opportunities for local people. You will be aware of the example of the Cemeteries Project which trained volunteers and created direct employment opportunities.

The Council also continues to promote opportunities for local residents, regardless of background, to come together to improve the quality of life for everyone in the Borough, through the arts, sporting and community events. The Council recently allocated £90,000 to celebrate local communities through the Queen's 90th Birthday Awards. We were pleased that the 95 successful applications reflected the rich mix of diversity across the Borough and very much hope their activities continue to build the positive contribution all of our local communities are making to the Borough.

The Council also continues to award sports coaching grants and invest in arts development to build community cohesion through participation in sport and culture, and I say again that all of this work is ongoing.

A note on the Community Relations and Equality Report, published in 2014:-

- This was commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner in 2014
- It was aimed to capture anecdotal issues for people from protected characteristic groups and issues of cohesion. It was not a conclusive report with a series of recommendations.
- The Community Relations and Equality Board intended to build a similar profile across Norfolk, but resources were not forthcoming to enable this.
- The report highlights positive activities to aid cohesion, including neighbourhoods working to address issues and building cohesion through positive events and activities within neighbourhoods. We are continuing to do

this and play a leadership role with other partners around this.

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

" Councillor Carpenter in your opinion has the situation in Great Yarmouth got better or worse since April 2014?"

In response Councillor Carpenter stated that this was ongoing work and was being kept under constant review.

5 MEMBERS SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES

Mrs S Cox, Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel, presented the Panel's report on the Members Scheme of Allowances - June 2016.

Mrs Cox reported that the purpose of the report was to recommend to Council the allowances and expenses to be paid to Members to take effect from May 2016. She reminded Members that in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) Regulations 2003, the Council had set up an Independent Remuneration Panel as agreed at the meeting of Council held on the 26 January 2016. Mrs Cox drew the Council's attention to the requirement of the regulations which states that an IRP should take place at least every 4 years. The Panel at it's first meeting had been advised that a full panel had not been convened since 2009 which was that last time an increase had been made to members allowances at Great Yarmouth.

Mrs Cox stated that the Panel had attempted to make everything as open and transparent as possible and hoped the Council would be able to accept the Panel's reasoning and therefore their recommendations in respect of the Members Scheme of Allowances.

The Leader stated that he wished to record the Council's thanks and appreciation to the Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel for the production of their very comprehensive report. With regard to the panel's recommendations the Leader proposed that the recommendation in respect of the Broadband allowance to be incorporated into the basic allowance should not be agreed and that this sum should be paid to those Members on request as a separate budget item, and that the special responsibility allowance for Group Leader will only be paid where individual groups have at least 10% of the number of elected Councillors and where it is the case a multiplier of one should be applied to the basic allowance for Group Leaders.

Councillor Wainwright commented on the proposed increases recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel and felt that these were now justifiable increases to Members allowances.

Councillor Robinson-Payne stated that she could not support any extra allowance being paid to Members and that if the increases were approved she would use the additional sum from her allowance to be used to fund food

banks in the Borough. Councillor Jeal also stated that he felt it would be morally wrong to support an increase to Members allowances.

PROPOSER : Councillor Plant

SECONDER : Councillor Carpenter

That the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel as detailed under (a), (b), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k), (l), (m), (o), (p), (q), (r) and (s), be approved and that the recommendation in respect of the broadband allowance being incorporated into the basic allowance be not agreed but that this allowance should be paid to those Members on request from a separate budget item, and that approval be given to the special responsibility allowances for Group Leaders to be only paid where individual groups have at least 10% of the number of elected Councillors and where it is the case a multiplier of one should be applied to the basic allowance.

CARRIED

6 THE NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT

Council considered the report on the Norfolk and Suffolk Devolution Agreement. The Interim Chief Executive Officer reported that the report sets out Norfolk and Suffolk's ambition for an approach to Devolution based on the East Anglia Devolution Deal announced by the Chancellor in the budget on the 16 March 2016. It builds on Governments commitment to enhance local autonomy through devolution, reflected in the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act. It also provided an opportunity to access funding for the two Countys now and in the near future in an era of diminishing core funding for local authorities. Those areas entering into devolution agreements are being given further opportunities to secure funds for economic growth who are on their fourth devolution agreement with the government.

The Interim Chief Executive Officer reported that in the light of the opportunity outlined above the report asks full Council to endorse the Norfolk and Suffolk Devolution Agreement, support the governance review and agree to publish a scheme of governance for public consultation.

The Leader reported that negotiations had been difficult on this matter. He stated that the Council was being asked at this stage to go out to public consultation and that a final decision would be made in October. The Leader explained the details of the financial issues associated with the proposals for devolution.

PROPOSER : Councillor Jeal

SECONDER : Councillor B Coleman

That approval be given to the suspension of standing order 13.4 to allow the main speakers to speak more than five minutes.

CARRIED

Councillor K Grey commented that there would be no opportunity for the Borough Council to make any amendments to the agreement after the public consultation process had been undertaken. She referred to the ever increasing powers to an elected mayor and stated that she would not be supporting the recommendations contained in the report.

Councillor Wainwright commented that the document cannot be changed at all and that no amendments can be made. He felt that most people did not understand what the devolution proposals were and stated that in his opinion this would create another tier of government. He commented that he felt that monies should be allocated direct to local authorities and that he would not be supporting the proposals as he felt the proposals were deeply flawed.

The Monitoring Officer reported that if the proposals were agreed then this would go out to public consultation and the Council would have a further opportunity to comment. He also advised that the Government would be taking all relevant comments into account before making the final decision on what the devolution proposals would be in the final analysis.

Councillor Myers stated that he supported the comments of Councillor Wainwright and that he would be opposing the devolution proposals.

Councillor Reynolds commented that this would be creating and establishing another tier of bureaucracy and that decision making would be likely to be distant.

Councillor A Grey stated that there was nothing earmarked for Great Yarmouth Borough Council and that he was against the elected Mayor proposal.

Councillor Walker stated that in his opinion the document promises everything but that the Borough Council would receive nothing in return. He felt that the process was flawed from the start and he stated that he agreed with all those Members who had indicated that they were against the devolution proposals.

Councillor B Coleman also confirmed that he agreed with the comments of Councillor Wainwright and felt that the whole process was not democratic there was no transparency and felt that there was no need for another layer of democracy.

Councillor Williamson stated that he felt this would provide a further layer of Governance and that he was against the proposals.

PROPOSER : Councillor Hammond

SECONDER : Councillor K Grey

That a recorded vote be taken on this issue

CARRIED

PROPOSER : Councillor Plant

SECONDER : Councillor Carpenter

(1) That the Authority endorses the signing of the Norfolk and Suffolk Devolution Agreement by the Leader.

(2) That, on the basis of the Governance Review, and having regard to any impact on equalities explored in the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA), the Authority concludes that the establishment of a Mayoral Combined Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk is the option which most fully permits the effective discharge of the functions that Government is prepared to devolve to this area.

(3) That the Authority endorses and supports the publication of the draft Scheme for a Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoral Combined Authority, for consultation purposes, subject to such final revisions as may be approved by the Interim Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, and prior to the commencement of the formal consultation exercise. Such formal consultation, on the Scheme, to commence once all Norfolk and Suffolk Councils have considered the matters in this report and, in any event, no later than the 4 July 2016. In the event that a Constituent Authority named in the attached Scheme does not agree to endorse the Deal Agreement and/or the Scheme, the Authority authorises, through its Interim Chief Executive the relevant/any necessary changes to be made to the Deal Agreement, the Scheme and the Governance Review to reflect that Authority's non-participation.

(4) That the outcome of the consultation exercise is submitted to the Secretary of the State by the Interim Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, by early September.

(5) That Council meets no later than 28 October 2016 to consider giving consent to an Order establishing a Mayoral Combined Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk.

(6) Insofar as any of the matters referred to in the report concern the discharge of functions related to the endorsing and signing of the Norfolk and Suffolk Devolution Agreement and the publication of the Scheme, authority is delegated to the Interim Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, to take all necessary steps and actions to progress the recommendations detailed in the report.

(7) In the event that any technical changes are required to reflect legislative requirements and the contents of the Deal Agreement, authority is delegated to the Interim Chief Executive, in agreement with the other Chief Executives/Managing Directors across Norfolk and Suffolk to make the

necessary changes to the Scheme.

(8) That further reports are presented to the Authority, as appropriate, as the Devolution process develops.

For the Motion - Councillors Andrews, Bensly, Carpenter and Plant

Against the Motion - Councillors Annison, Bird, Borg, B Coleman, M Coleman, Connell, Cutting, Davis, Fairhead, Flaxman-Taylor, Grant, A Grey, K Grey, Hammond, Hanton, Jeal, Jones, Lawn, Mavroudis, Myers, Pratt, Reynolds, Robinson-Payne, Smith, Stenhouse, Thirtle, Wainwright, Walch, Walker, Waters-Bunn, Weymouth, Williamson and Wright.

Abstentions - None

LOST

7 MOTION ON NOTICE

Council considered the following Motion submitted by Councillors Walch, Wainwright, Smith, Andrews, Williamson and Plant.

" That This Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Health Jeremy Hunt, Brandon Lewis MP, the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group expressing the following:-

That this Council opposes the closure of the Greyfriars Walk-in Centre.

The Council opposes the closure because of the following reasons:

- That the centre was opened in one of the most deprived wards in Great Yarmouth to meet identified needs as demonstrated by NHS health metrics/data
- That the original finance for this facility when opened was over £800k which has been assimilated in the core funding for the CCG and should be retained to provide the service
- That the lack of a comprehensive strategic health business plan/case for Great Yarmouth approved and consulted on by the CCG.
- That the Council opposes piecemeal changes and cuts to the local health service.
- That this closure is a real cut to health provision in Great Yarmouth and does not give equity of provision across the CCG. (Beccles still retains a

minor injury unit)

- That this location serves both Great Yarmouth and the Northern Villages, as far as Martham and Thurne, reducing the pressure and cost on the JPH.

Councillor Wainwright commented that the CCG are imposing cuts every year deeper and deeper cuts are being made with regard to the NHS.

Councillor Williamson commented that the money that is being saved was being reinvested in Lowestoft and not in Great Yarmouth and he felt that Great Yarmouth was not being treated equally.

Members agreed that the Motion should be amended by the addition of the words "retention of a Walk-in centre on the Great Yarmouth side of the river next to the Lighthouse practice".

PROPOSER : Councillor Williamson

SECONDER : Councillor Jeal

That the Motion in respect of the Greyfriars Walk-in centre as detailed above and to include the amendment in relation to the retention of a walk-in centre on the Great Yarmouth side of the river next to the Lighthouse practice be agreed.

CARRIED

8 APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES

PROPOSER : Councillor B Coleman

SECONDER : Councillor Hanton

That Councillor Fairhead replace Councillor M Coleman on the Great Yarmouth Rambouillet Twinning Association.

CARRIED

9 SPORTS AND LEISURE

The Leader asked Council to consider an amendment to the Constitution to move Sport and Leisure from the Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee to the Environment Committee.

The Monitoring Officer suggested that a report on this matter be should be considered at the next Council meeting.

Council agreed to defer consideration of this matter to the next meeting.

The meeting ended at: 20:55