



GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council

Minutes

Thursday, 27 July 2023 at 19:00

PRESENT:-

Her Worship, The Mayor, Councillor Penny Carpenter, Councillors Annison, Bensley, Bird, Borg, Boyd, Candon, Capewell, G Carpenter, Cordiner-Achenbach, Flaxman-Taylor, Freeman, Galer, Grant, Green, Hammond, Jeal, Lawn, Martin, McMullen, Mogford, Murray-Smith, Newcombe, Pilkington, Rundle, Smith, Stenhouse, Thompson, Upton, Wainwright, Waters-Bunn, A Wright and B Wright

Ms S Oxtoby (Chief Executive Officer), Ms C Whatling (Monitoring Officer – via Teams), Mrs P Boyce (Strategic Director – People), Mrs C Webb (Democratic Services Officer), Mr D Zimmerling (IT Support) & Mrs A Krout (Democratic Services Officer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Plant, Robinson-Payne, Sharp, Smith-Clare, Wells & Williamson.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bensley declared an interest in Item 7 as he was Ward and County Councillor for East Flegg.

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor declared an interest in Item 9 as she was a director of Great Yarmouth Norse Limited.

3 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Her Worship, The Mayor, asked the Leader of the Council to make his announcements.

The Leader of the Council advised that prior to his update on the County Deal, he would like to thank the amazing response from across the council, but particularly Paula Boyce, Julian Potter, Tanya Rayner, Kate Price and Sally Embalo, following a major fire in an HMO in Nelson Road at the weekend. A rest centre was set up which remained open, staffed 24 hours a day by the Council, for the next three nights, until everyone was found accommodation.

Councillor Wright echoed Councillor Smith's comments and thanked the emergency services from preventing the fire from spreading.

Councillor Wainwright asked if the Council could thank the emergency services and the Chief Executive Officer advised that she would do so.

The Leader of the Council reported that the Secretary of State for Levelling Up had responded to a letter from Councillor Mason Billig, stating that he, "was keen to see County and District Councils continue, and accelerate, the work to develop and implement a Norfolk Leadership Board, ahead of having a directly Elected Leader. He saw this as crucial to demonstrating that the deal, as a catalyst for a renewed shared vision for Norfolk, could be fully implemented, and advantage taken of the opportunities it brought. He also recognised the active role that Norfolk was playing in the national development of a Scrutiny Protocol, part of the English Devolution Accountability Framework."

4 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Her Worship, The Mayor, reported that she had not been made aware of any items of urgent business for consideration at Council this evening.

5 MINUTES

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 15 June 2023 be confirmed subject to the following amendment: -

That it be noted that Councillor Jeal had proposed that Councillor Robinson-Payne be wished a speedy recovery from her surgery.

Proposer: Councillor Smith
Secunder: Councillor Candon

CARRIED

6 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Council was advised that Ms Livingstone was unable to attend Council this evening to ask her question in person.

The Leader advised that he would respond in writing to Ms Livingstone and would circulate his response to Members for information.

7 ADOPTION OF HEMSBY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (URN-23-088)

Council received and considered the report from the Executive Director of Place.

Councillor Candon reported that the Hemsby Neighbourhood Plan had been prepared and submitted by Hemsby Parish Council. The plan contained planning policies to be used in determining planning applications within the parish. Following the Full Council decision to approve the Hemsby Neighbourhood Plan for referendum, the referendum took place in the local Village Hall on Thursday 22 June 2023 with an 80% majority of votes cast.

In accordance with the Regulations, the Borough Council must now adopt the plan unless it would breach any retained European Union obligations or Convention Rights. It was considered that the plan did not breach such obligations or rights and therefore the recommendation was for Full Council to adopt the Hemsby Neighbourhood Plan. This recommendation was endorsed to Full Council by the Local Plan Working Party on the 17th July 2023.

Upon adoption, the Neighbourhood Plan would become part of the Borough Council's Development Plan.

Proposer: Councillor Candon
Secunder: Councillor Annison

That Council adopt the Hemsby Neighbourhood Plan.

CARRIED

8 REVIEW OF MEMBER SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES FOLLOWING THE COUNCIL'S CHANGE TO AN EXECUTIVE MODEL OF GOVERNANCE

Council received and considered the report from the Independent Remuneration Panel.

A full Review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances was undertaken in 2021 and agreed by Full Council at its meeting on the 9 December 2021. As part of this review, the Independent Remuneration Panel informed Council that should a change in Governance take place, in line with Government Regulations, a further review would be triggered. Since the Council voted to move to Executive (Cabinet) Model of Governance in May 2023, the Panel was reconvened to review the Scheme of Allowances. The Independent Remuneration Panel only considered the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) during this review, a further review of the whole scheme of allowances was due to take place in 2025 in line with the statutory guidance

and acknowledged that the basic allowance was index linked to staff pay awards and had therefore increased in 2022. The Panel acknowledged that the Council were in the early stages of embedding the Executive System of Governance, therefore, it was recommended that a meeting be convened in one year's time to ensure the Special Responsibility Allowances were in line with the responsibilities and workloads of those Members receiving an SRA.

Proposed: Councillor Smith

Secunder: Councillor Wainwright

That Council:-

1. Agree the SRA for the Leader of the Council should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x2.25 of the Basic Allowance.
2. Agree the SRA for the Deputy Leader of the Council should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x1.5 of the Basic Allowance.
3. Agree the SRA for the Cabinet Members should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x1.3 of the Basic Allowance.
4. Agree the SRA for the Shadow Leader of the Council should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x1 of the Basic Allowance.
5. Agree the SRA for the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x1 of the Basic Allowance.
6. Agree the SRA for the Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Committee should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x0.25 of the Basic Allowance.
7. Agree the SRA for the Chair of the Audit, Risk and Standards Committee should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x1 of the Basic Allowance.
8. Agree the SRA for the Vice-Chair of the Audit, Risk and Standards Committee should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x0.25 of the Basic Allowance.
9. Agree the SRA for the Chair of the Licensing Committee should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x1 of the Basic Allowance.
10. Agree the SRA for the Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x0.25 of the Basic Allowance.
11. Agree the SRA for the Chair of the Development Management Committee should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x1.25 of the Basic Allowance.
12. Agree the SRA for the Vice-Chair of the Development Management Committee should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x0.33 of the Basic Allowance.
13. Agree the SRA for the Mayor (Chair of the Council) should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x0.5 of the Basic Allowance.
14. Agree the SRA for the Deputy Mayor should be calculated by way of a multiplier of x0.2 of the Basic Allowance.
15. Agree to a meeting being convened in one years' time to review Special Responsibility Allowances to ensure these are in line with the responsibilities and workloads of those Members receiving a SRA.

CARRIED

9 APPOINTMENT OF REPLACEMENT COMPANY DIRECTOR

That Nicola Turner replace Jane Beck as a Director for GYN.

Proposer: Councillor Smith
Seconder: Councillor Boyd

CARRIED

10 TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION – Purchase of additional properties (URN 23-101)

Council received and considered the report from the Housing Options Service Manager and the Housing Delivery Manager.

The Council together with 229 other local authorities in the UK 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 had assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan standing-up for the values of democracy, women'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 LGBTQ+).

There were 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 would be let on a temporary basis until such time as the families secured more permanent homes and would therefore not impact upon the wider Council efforts to provide housing to those who qualified.

Central Government had allocated £526,000 to Great Yarmouth to enable the Council to purchase 5 properties to meet this requirement. To match the Government's Local Authority Housing Grant, the Council was being asked to approve borrowing of £704,000 in order to finance the scheme.

The benefits of accepting the grant funding were 3-fold:

- (i) The Council had to provide homes for Afghans 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 ended, these homes could be retained by the Council as part of its wider temporary accommodation portfolio. Therefore, providing long term assets for those in need of emergency accommodation.
- (iii) The scheme was financially self-sufficient. Whilst there was an element of Council borrowing, the rental income generated from the homes would cover all

expenditure on repairs, management, interest payments on the borrowing and repay the capital invested.

Councillor Wainwright advised that he fully supported the report and asked how many Afghan families were resident in the Borough at the current time; and would Members be informed if Afghan families moved into their ward or houses were purchased in their wards.

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor advised that she was not aware of any families currently in the Borough and that ward members would be notified if any Afghan families moved into their wards or houses were purchased in their wards.

Councillor Wainwright queried whether, if there were no Afghan families currently in the Borough, would it be possible to use the accommodation to house other families.

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor responded that it would be possible to use the houses as council stock until such time as it was required for Afghan families.

Councillor Hammond commented that it would be beneficial for the houses to be near each other to create a sense of community.

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor agreed that would be beneficial, but it would depend on where the houses were purchased.

Proposer: Councillor Flaxman-Taylor
Secunder: Councillor G Carpenter

That Council approve the expenditure of up to £1,230,000 supported by up to £704,000 of Council borrowing to deliver this grant-aided Temporary Accommodation Scheme.

CARRIED

11 MOTION ON NOTICE

Councillor Wainwright presented the following Motion to Council:-

Council are asked to consider the following Motion on Notice from Councillors Wainwright, Williamson, T. Wright, B. Wright. Jeal and Martin:-

Council notes with concern the recent announcement that all 980 staffed ticket offices in England could be closed following discussions between the Department for Transport and the Rail Delivery Group, and changes to the Governments guidance relating to ticket office opening hours. Council believes that ticket offices provide a vital service to residents in Great Yarmouth. Having a clearly sign-posted place in the station for people with ticket enquiries provides certainty and confidence for customers who may struggle to otherwise contact station staff. Not all residents are able to use station ticket machines or have the means to book a ticket in advance. Complicated journeys involving connections are likely to require human assistance to ensure customers purchase the most appropriate and cheapest tickets, and do not incur penalties from mis-booked tickets. Council is concerned the closure of tickets offices will disproportionately affect elderly and disabled residents in Great Yarmouth as well as those with poor literacy and IT skills. Council also notes that possible implications

for current station staff and the concerns that have been raised over possible staff redundancies.

Council was asked to note the Leader's response to the consultation.

Council requested that the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Transport, and the Government Railways Minister, expressing the Council's opposition to the closure of staffed rail ticket offices and the ticket office at Great Yarmouth.

Council requested that the Leader to write to Greater Anglia expressing the Council's opposition to any plans to close the staffed ticket office at Great Yarmouth.

Council asked that the matter be referred to the Scrutiny Committee with the recommendation that representatives from Greater Anglia and other relevant bodies were invited to attend a Scrutiny Committee meeting at their earliest convenience to discuss future plans at Great Yarmouth.

Councillor Wainwright thanked the Leader for agreeing the amendments to the Motion but that it would carry more weight coming from the Chief Executive Officer.

Councillor Wright commented that he was pleased to see agreement from both sides of the Council and that he hoped it might persuade the Government and the Department of Transport to take the closing of ticket offices off the agenda.

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor requested that a copy of the response be sent to all Members.

Council agreed the following steps to address the motion:-

(i) That Council requested that the Chief Executive Officer to write to the Secretary of State for Transport, and the Government Railways Minister, expressing the Council's opposition to the closure of staffed rail ticket offices and, in particular, the office at Great Yarmouth.

(ii) Council requested that the Chief Executive Officer to write to Greater Anglia expressing the Council's opposition to any plans to close the staffed ticket office at Great Yarmouth.

(iii) Council asked that the matter be referred to the Scrutiny Committee with the recommendation that representatives from Greater Anglia were invited to attend a Scrutiny Committee meeting at their earliest convenience to discuss future plans at Great Yarmouth.

12 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present at the meeting to warrant the exclusion of the public.

13 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

That the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2022 be confirmed.

Proposed: Councillor Smith
Seconder: Councillor Candon

CARRIED

The meeting ended at: 19:36