



GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Policy and Resources Committee

Minutes

Tuesday, 14 March 2023 at 18:00

PRESENT:-

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

Councillor Annison attended as a substitute for Councillor Candon.

Councillor Hanton attended as a substitute for Councillor P Carpenter.

Ms S Oxtoby (Chief Executive Officer), Ms C Whatling (Monitoring Officer), Mrs S Wintle (Corporate Services Manager), Mrs M Lee (Head of Customer Services), Mrs N Turner (Director of Housing Services), Mr L Webster (Equinox Executive Officer), Mrs P Boyce (Strategic Director), Ms L Snow (Finance Manager), Ms K Sly (Finance Director), Mr J Wedon (Information Governance Lead & Data protection Officer), Mr D Zimmerling (IT Support) & Mrs C Webb (Democratic Services Officer).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Candon & P Carpenter.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hanton declared a personal interest in item number 8 as he was Chair of the Community Safety Great Yarmouth Partnership which received funding from the Council.

Councillor Wells declared a personal interest in item number 8 as he was a Director of GYBS.

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

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed.

4 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received and considered the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the Forward Plan.

5 REVENUES WRITE OFF REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report from the Head of Customer Services.

The Head of Customer Services reported that the report sought the approval and authorisation of a schedule of individual Business Rate and Sundry Debt accounts where the debt is recommended for write-off.

The Chairman assured the Committee that all avenues for collection had been exhausted.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee approve and authorise individual write offs as detailed within the Schedule 1 (Business Rates) and Schedule 2 (Sundry Debt).

6 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23

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

The following presents an update on performance for the third quarter of 2022/23 (Oct– Dec) where progress is assessed against targets which were 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.

The Information Governance Lead & Data Protection Officer gave an update in regard to the 5 amber projects. In regard to The Conge, the required vacant possession had now been secured and if the Committee were in agreement, he would update the status to green. In regard to the Operations & Maintenance Base, the outstanding licence from the MMO had been received and if the Committee were in agreement, he would update the status to green.

Councillor B Walker referred to paragraph 15.6 of the report and queried why the project had been given a green status when an end user had not been secured. The Chief Executive Officer explained that not having secured an end user at this stage of the project, did not put it at risk as we had until October 2026 to rectify this.

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.

7 STRATEGIC PARTNER PROCUREMENT AND DISPOSAL OF LAND AT THE CONGE

The Committee received and considered the report from the Director of Housing.

The Director of Housing provided an update on the procurement of a Strategic Partner to work with the Council to support and accelerate housing delivery across the borough with a focus on stalled and brownfield sites. The procurement is now in the final stages, with a preferred tenderer identified who has demonstrated they understand the Council's requirements, have a track record of providing quality homes and of place making. The legal process is expected to complete in early April.

In procuring the Strategic Partner, the Council made it clear that it would require the Strategic Partner to redevelop The Conge, with the land provided for nil consideration reflecting the significant viability issues associated with any redevelopment. The report makes it clear that whilst the Council has an aspiration for the whole of the Conge to be redeveloped, due to the long leases on the north side of The Conge, the focus has been on the south side. All buildings bar one on the south side are now vacant and tenders have been sought to demolish these buildings.

The report seeks authority to dispose of The Conge to the Strategic Partner for nil consideration and section 6 explains the basis for this disposal and the wider, social,

economic and environmental benefits of disposal. The disposal will be in one or more transfers to reflect the fact that currently only the south side of The Conge will be able to be redeveloped. As noted in the report, the Council has successfully bid for both Future High Street and Brownfield Land Remediate Fund to support the costs of lease extinguishment and demolition on the South side of The Conge.

Councillor P Hammond asked if the land could be leased to enable the Council to raise a capital receipt as opposed to give the land as a freehold and whether equinox Enterprises Ltd could have been asked to develop the scheme. The Director of Housing explained why these two suggestions were not possible to take forward.
RESOLVED:-

That the Committee:-

(i) Note the updates regarding the appointment of the Strategic Partner and ongoing collaborative work to re-develop The Conge; and

(ii) Delegate the disposal of the Council's land at The Conge as set out at paragraph 3 to the Strategic Partner for nil consideration to an Executive Director and Section 151 Officer.

8 2022-23 PERIOD 10 GENERAL FUND BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

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

The Finance Manager reported that originally the 2223 budget was set at deficit £208k.

The General Fund Summary at Appendix A shows the high-level budget monitoring position at 31 January 2023 of a deficit position of £338k although this is before the earmarking of service income which will need to be carried forward at the end of the financial year for ongoing commitments in 2023/24, after allowing for these, the expected overspend for the year is £503k (a deficit of £275k against the budget of £228k).

The position reflects the impact of the pay award for 2022/23 which was finally agreed before Christmas and now processed. The full impact of this has been mitigated by vacant posts and turnover savings in the year.

Actual expenditure to the end of January 2023 totals £9.9m for the capital programme. The forecast capital expenditure for 2022/23 at the end of month 10 is £23.1m. Any balance on the capital programme will be carried forward for delivery in future years.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the content of the report and the revised forecast for the General Fund for 2022/23.

9 APPOINTMENT OF REPLACEMENT COMPANY DIRECTOR & APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS - GREAT YARMOUTH SERVICES LTD

The Committee received and considered the report from the Monitoring Officer.

The Monitoring Officer reported that following Kate Blakemore's resignation as Director, the appointment of a replacement Director for Great Yarmouth Services Limited and appointment of Chair of the Board of Directors needed to be ratified by Council.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee appoint Paula Boyce, the Council's Strategic Director, as a company Director of Great Yarmouth Services Limited and as Chair of the Board of Directors.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) The Chief Executive Officer informed the Committee that she had used the emergency powers available to her under paragraphs 30.61 and 30.62 of the Council's Constitution. The Chief Executive Officer reported that under these powers she had conferred with the Leader of the Council, the Section 151 Officer and taken the relevant legal advice and then agreed a payment of £735k to Balfour & Beatty to remove rock from the old airfield at Hopton and move it to the car park owned by Whatlings at Hemsby in preparation for it to be moved by road onto the beach at the weekend to provide a temporary rock berm scheme. The rock was surplus to requirement from a local holiday camp. The Council was using £235k from its own funding towards this but had received a letter of comfort from the Environment Agency to recover the remaining £500k funding which was at risk but would be recovered after the event.

The Council could also apply to the Government's Bellwin Scheme to recover any additional spend above £26k. Equinox High Tides were forecast for next week and the Council would therefore spend above this excess. The rock berm would protect the access road which would prevent a further 26 properties from losing their access and utilities. Several Section 78 Notices had been served and several properties had been demolished or were at risk of imminent demolition.

Councillor Wainwright was concerned that the Whatling Trust who owned this land were not contributing financially to this rescue package. Councillor Wells endorsed the concerns of Councillor Wainwright and gave an update as to the current position with Geoffrey Whatling Norwich Ltd which was a hugely complicated issue.

The Chief Executive Officer clarified that the Council could not have undertaken this work without evoking these emergency powers as it did not have planning permission. The Chairman reported that the situation had escalated unbelievably quickly over the high tides and winds experienced in the

last two weeks, one of the demolished properties had had 35 ft of garden between it and the cliffs this time last week and now it had been lost to the sea.

Councillor Williamson was concerned in regard to the long term plans to defend Hemsby. The Chairman reported that the only plan was a managed retreat and praised all the work of officers, residents, members, the lifeboat crew and the emergency services.

(ii) The Chairman thanked all Members and officers, especially Sammy Wintle, Corporate Services Manager, for all their hard work in relation to the successful running of this committee. Councillor Myers reported that since sitting on this committee, he has a greater understanding of how the Council operates and this committee was an invaluable resource to all Members.

11 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.

12 EQUINOX ENTERPRISES LIMITED - BUSINESS PLAN (5TH EDITION)

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

13 EQUINOX PROPERTY HOLDINGS - BUSINESS PLAN (3RD EDITION)

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

14 CONFIDENTIAL - EXTENSION OF NPLAW STAKEHOLDER AGREEMENT FROM 1 APRIL 2023

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

The meeting ended at: 20:00