

Council

Minutes

Thursday, 03 November 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, Flaxman-Taylor, Grant, A Grey, K Grey, Hacon, Hammond, Jeal, Lawn, Mavroudis, Myers, Plant, Pratt, Reynolds, Robinson- Payne, Rodwell, Smith, Stenhouse, Thirtle, Wainwright, Walch, Walker, Waters-Bunn, Weymouth, Williamson and Wright.

Also in attendance were :

Mrs S Oxtoby (Chief Executive Officer), Ms K Sly (Section 151 Officer), Mrs J Beck (Director of Customer Services), Ms J Cooke (Head of HR/Organisational Development), Mr D Johnson (Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Mr R Hodds (Corporate Governance Manager).

1 FORMER COUNCILLOR TONY BLYTH

His Worship the Mayor advised Members of the recent death of former Councillor Tony Blyth and Members stood in one minutes silence as tribute to former Councillor Blyth.

2 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

His Worship the Mayor welcomed to the Borough Council Sheila Oxtoby as the Council's newly appointed Chief Executive Officer, Karen Sly as the Section 151 Officer and Julie Cooke as the Head of HR/Organisational Development. His Worship also recorded the Council's thanks to Jane Beck and Donna Summers who had acted as the Council's interim Head of Paid Service and Section 151 Officer respectively over the past couple of months.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hanton and Jones.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Andrews, Bird, A Grey, K Grey, Hacon, Hammond, Jeal, Lawn, Mavroudis, Reynolds, Waters-Bunn and Weymouth declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the items relating to the Council Tax Discretionary Discount Charges and to the item relating to the motions on notice relating to Universal Credit.

Councillor Thirtle declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the items relating to Council Tax Discretionary Discount Charges, Safe at Home and Better Care Fund - Schedule of Fees and to the item relating to the motions on notice relating to the issue of Universal Credit.

The above members having declared their disclosable pecuniary interest left the meeting on motions of interest relating to Universal Credit and took no part in the voting or discussion there on.

5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

(a) Question from Mr P Davis :-

"Is the Leader of the Council aware of the adverse impact that the introduction of the full service of Universal Credit is having on tenants and landlords, social and private, in the Borough?"

In response, the Leader of the Council reported that he was fully aware of the impact of universal credit on tenants and landlords in the Borough and that he and officers of the Council had sought guidance from the Department of Works and Pensions on the likely impact that this would have on tenants and landlords in Great Yarmouth. The Leader also confirmed that the issue of Universal Credit was currently under review by the Borough Council on its impact to tenants and landlords.

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

"So what will you do as Leader of the Council to re-house those evicted in the Borough especially those where the Council has no obligation to re-house those evicted through rent arrears caused by Universal Credit, and those who have been in the Borough for less than two years?"

In response, the Leader reported that as far as he was aware no one in the Borough had been evicted from their property as yet because of Universal

Credit . He reported that in the event of a potential evictions taking place, the Borough Council had already arranged for measures and actions to be taken to mitigate any possible evictions. The Leader reminded Council that Great Yarmouth is a pilot area and that any problems associated with Universal Credit was being dealt with and any action where necessary would be expedited as far as possible.

(b) Question from Mr L Sutton:-

"Norfolk and Waveney's Sustainable Transformation Plan is discussed at Norfolk's Health and Wellbeing Board. Great Yarmouth Borough Council has a representative on this board. The Board has a general duty to promote the integration of health and social care, a key element of underpinning the Sustainable Transformation Plan.

Given the importance of the NHS plan for health and social care provision in the Borough of Great Yarmouth what engagement has Great Yarmouth Borough Council had with residents, elected representatives and others in forming its position on the sustainable transformation plan, what representations had been made by GYBC into the plan and does the plan provide better or worse healthcare for the people of Great Yarmouth?"

In response, Councillor Carpenter reported that Sustainability and Transformation Plans are a new approach introduced by the NHS in an attempt to ensure that health and care services are built around the needs of local populations. They are place-based, system-wide plans, in our case covering Norfolk and Waveney and cover integration with local authority services including, but not limited to, prevention and social care, reflecting locally agreed health and wellbeing strategies.

The approach for sustainable transformation plans is on planning at an area level, rather than organisationally, and the focus is on addressing three national challenges or 'gaps'

- Health and wellbeing gap - inequalities in health
- Care and quality gap - ensuring quality and performance of health and social services
- Finance and efficiency gap - ensuring a financially sustainable health and social care system

The Norfolk & Waveney sustainable transformation plan focuses on three key priorities

- Prevention and Wellbeing
- Primary Community and Social Care and
- Acute Care

It is recognised that the size of geographical footprint of our Sustainable Transformation Plan represents a considerable challenge to ensure full involvement across the whole system, particularly at the early stages of

developing plans. The Sustainable Transformation Plan Executive is made up of the following bodies:-

The five NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups, three hospital trusts, Norfolk Community Health and Care, Norfolk and Suffolk FT (mental health), East Coast Community Healthcare, East of England Ambulance Service, Norfolk County Council (including Public Health), the Norfolk and Waveney Local Medical Committee and Norfolk Independent Care. It is this Executive Board who are responsible for developing the STP. Each of the Clinical Commissioning Groups have been engaging directly with residents since the draft plans were prepared in July and as the independent body representing the views and concerns of people who live and work in Norfolk, Healthwatch Norfolk is also working with all the other organisations involved to understand what local people think about health and social care services.

The Council will continue to help shape the proposals locally through the Great Yarmouth Systems Leadership Partnership at Director level and through the Health and Wellbeing Board. We are also working closely with other Norfolk Councils as well as Waveney to ensure that the vital role played by a number of district services is recognised and maximised by closer working.

A key element of activity for the Sustainable Transport Plan Executive Board over the coming months will be engaging with the people and organisations of Norfolk and Waveney to help shape plans. Locally the Clinical Commissioning Group has appointed a new interim chief officer, with a view to a full appointment by Easter. We will work closely with the new appointees to ensure that there is a wider communication as possible with elected Members and with residents of the Borough about proposals for future changes to health and care services that affect them.

The Sustainable Transformation Plan is intended to take a whole systems approach, remove inefficiency in the system and place more emphasis on preventative services. It is too early to comment on whether this provides better or worse healthcare as it is a 5 year plan which has yet to be implemented. This Council will monitor through the mechanisms I have described the implementation of the plan but I personally welcome an approach which seeks to place more emphasis on preventative services and support for our residents. We are uniquely placed to support such an agenda through our own services such as housing and leisure.

In accordance with the constitution Councillor Sutton was then entitled to ask as supplementary question as follows:-

"Is it the Borough Council's intention to debate the sustainable transformation plan when this is published or will the Council not debate the plan?"

In response Councillor Carpenter reported that she would formally write to Councillor Sutton on this matter.

6 COUNCIL MINUTES

The Mayor presented the Council minutes of the 6 September 2016.

Proposer: Councillor Plant

Seconded: Councillor B Coleman

That the Council Minutes of the 6 September 2016 be approved.

CARRIED

7 SERVICE COMMITTEE MINUTES - SEPTEMBER 2016

Service Committee Minutes - September 2016

Proposer: Councillor Wainwright

Seconded: Councillor Plant

That the minutes of the September 2016 meetings of the Policy and Resources, Economic Development, Environment and Housing and Neighbourhoods Committees be received.

CARRIED

8 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2017

Council considered the Group Manager Customer Services report on the 2017 Local Council Tax Support / Reduction Scheme.

Council was recommended to agree that the 2017 scheme should be based on option 1 - current scheme which has been running for four years and limits the maximum amount of award for working age customers to 91.5% of the Council Tax Liability and that this should include any necessary alignment to the requirements under the Governments recent welfare reform proposals.

Proposer: Councillor Plant

Seconded: Councillor Carpenter

That the 2017 scheme be based on option 1 - current scheme as outlined above and that this should include any necessary alignment to the requirements under the Governments recent Welfare reform proposals.

CARRIED

9 COUNCIL TAX DISCRETIONARY DISCOUNT CHANGES

Council considered the Group Manager Customer Services report which sought agreement to the amendment of Council Tax discounts in accordance

with current legislation.

Proposer: Councillor Plant

Seconded: Councillor Grant

That approval be given to the following:-

- To proceed with the reduction in discount to Class A to 10%
- To proceed with the removal of discount for Class B
- To proceed with the reduction in awarding the discount of 100% from 3 months to 1 month for Class C
- To proceed with the removal of discount for Class D

CARRIED

10 SAFE AT HOME AND BETTER CARE FUND - SCHEDULE OF FEES

Council considered the Group Manager Housing, Health and Wellbeing's report which sought approval to increase the fees applied to adaptation and renewal works undertaken by "Safe at Home and Private Sector Housing Services".

Proposer: Councillor Carpenter

Seconded: Councillor Hacon

That approval be given to the approval of fees in respect of the Safe at Home and Better Care Fund as detailed in the Group Manager's report, and that the increase be applied from the 1 December 2016.

CARRIED

11 PSAA NATIONAL COLLECTIVE SCHEME

On reference from the Audit and Risk Committee of the 26 September 2016, Council was asked to agree to join the National Collective Scheme, led by the Public Sector Audit Appointment (PSAA), and that delegated authority be given to the Section 151 Officer (or Deputy) to communicate the willingness of the Council to join the scheme to PSAA and to enter into the scheme after a satisfactory examination/negotiation of the proposed terms and conditions is concluded .

Proposer: Councillor A Grey

Seconded: Councillor Wainwright

That approval be given to the Council agreeing to join the National Collective Scheme, led by the PSAA, and that delegated authority be given to the Section 151 officer (or deputy) to communicate the willingness of the Council to join the scheme to PSAA and to enter into the scheme after satisfactory examination/negotiation of the proposed terms and conditions is concluded.

CARRIED

12 APPOINTMENT OF MAYOR FOR 2017-18

Council was asked to agree that Councillor Kerry Robinson-Payne be appointed as Mayor of the Borough of Great Yarmouth for the Municipal Year 2017-18.

Proposer: Councillor Jeal
Councillor Wainwright

Seconded:

That Councillor Kerry Robinson-Payne be appointed as the Mayor of the Borough of Great Yarmouth for the Municipal Year 2017-18.

CARRIED

13 APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2016-17

Appointment to Outside Bodies 2016-17.

Proposer: Councillor Plant

Seconded: Councillor Carpenter

That Councillors B Coleman, Stenhouse and Williamson be appointed as the Councils nominated representatives on the Great Yarmouth Cultural Heritage Partnership.

CARRIED

14 YARMOUTH AREA COMMITTEE - CYCLE OF MEETINGS

On reference from the Policy and Resources Committee of the 18 October 2016, Council is asked to agree that the Yarmouth Area Committee meetings should now take place on a bi-monthly cycle.

The Chairman of the Yarmouth Area Committee, Councillor Walch, reported that this request from the Yarmouth Area Committee to increase the number of meetings was a proposal to engage further with the public on Yarmouth issues and would hopefully generate more interest from the residents of Great Yarmouth in the issues being dealt with by the Yarmouth Area Committee. Councillor Wainwright stated that he was not in favour of increasing the number of meetings and stated that there would be extra costs involved if Council were minded to agree to this increase. He did state however that if Council did agree to increase the number of meetings of the Yarmouth Area Committee then this should also apply to the number of meetings held by the Gorleston Area Committee.

Councillor Jeal stated that he was in favour of extra meetings to encourage the residents of Great Yarmouth to come along to these meetings.

Councillor Thirtle stated there was no evidence to support this request to increase the number of meetings and that the analysis of the Yarmouth Area Committee over last three years had shown that the average time of meetings was less than 1 1/2 hours and he felt that there was in fact a case to reduce the number of Yarmouth Area Committee meetings to two per annum.

Councillor Thirtle suggested that in the first instance this matter should be referred to the Constitutional Working Party as part of the overall review currently taking place into the new committee system.

Councillor K Grey stated that she was in favour of increasing the number of meetings of the Yarmouth Area Committee. Councillor Walker stated that his view was the evidence showed that there was a lack of public interest currently in meetings of the Yarmouth Area Committee and that by increasing the number of meetings would not necessarily encourage further people to attend. Councillor B Coleman endorsed the views of Councillor Walker on this matter. Councillor A Grey made the point that both the Chairman and Members of the Yarmouth Area Committee had requested and wished for an increase to the number of meetings.

Proposer: Councillor Thirtle
Councillor Plant

Seconder:

That the issue of the cycle of meetings of the Yarmouth Area Committee be referred for consideration to the Constitutional Working Party.

LOST

Proposer: Councillor Walsh
Councillor Grey

Seconder:

That the Yarmouth Area Committee meetings take place on a bi-monthly cycle.

LOST

(As stated under the Declarations of Interest Councillors Andrews , Bird, A Grey, K Grey, Hacon, Hammond, Jeal, Lawn, Mavouridis, Reynolds, Thirtle, Waters-Bunn and Weymouth left the meeting for the following item of business)

15 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Members were advised that as the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had declared an interest in the following item it would therefore be necessary to elect a Chairman from the body of the meeting for the discussion of the following item. It was therefore proposed by Councillor Walker and Seconded by Councillor Wainwright that Councillor Plant should Chair the meeting for the following item. This was agreed by Council.

Proposer: Councillor Myers Seconder: Councillor Connell

That Standing Order 26.13.4 be waived to allow the Group Leaders to speak in excess of 5 minutes on this item.

LOST

In accordance with paragraph 26.11 (Motion on Notice) Council was asked to consider the following motions:-

(a) Notice on Motion from Councillors Connell, Myers, Stenhouse, Annison and Wainwright :-

"We the Council of Great Yarmouth call upon the Secretary of State for the DWP, Damion Green, MP to launch an urgent and immediate enquiry into all the negative and detrimental consequences that the roll out of Universal Credit is having in Great Yarmouth. We further call upon Neil Couling, Civil Service Head of Universal Credit, to immediately suspend the housing benefit element of Universal Credit to allow those who are subject to this transfer to do so without the threat of them being evicted from their homes."

(b) Notice on Motion from Councillors Wainwright, Williamson, Wright, Fairhead and Walker:-

"We call upon this Council to write to Damion Green MP Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and Brandon Lewis MP, to ask why the Borough of Great Yarmouth was chosen as a pilot area for a full digital roll out of Universal Credit when it was quite clear that there was not capacity within the system to deal with this, especially in a place like Great Yarmouth which has high levels of deprivation.

With this full digital roll out we now have over 2000 residents applying for Universal Credit, many of these residents in private rented accommodation who are in receipt of a housing benefit facing eviction, and a huge increase in the number of people visiting our food banks which are struggling to meet demand because of the delay in receiving benefits."

Councillor Myers and Councillor Wainwright spoke in support of their motions as detailed in (a) and (b) above respectively. Council were advised of issues relating to the length of time Universal Credit applications were being dealt with : the need for food banks in the Borough and on the general problem of disability benefits and their associated issues.

Other issues discussed by Members related to :-

- The difficulty in filling in the Universal Credit forms
- The way in which Great Yarmouth had been identified as a pilot area.
- The difficulty for people to ask questions and to get advice on Universal Credit
- Issues of Children that cannot be fed or housed appropriately
- The effect of the delay in which Universal Credit applications are being processed
- Disability benefits problems

Proposer: Councillor Wainwright
Councillor Smith

Seconder:

That the issues raised by the two motions and the discussions at this meeting be acknowledged, and that the four Group Leaders be requested to agree the content of a submission to be sent to the Secretary of State of Works and Pensions Damion Green, MP and to the Local MP Brandon Lewis.

CARRIED

16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Independent Group

Councillor Myers reported that this group no longer existed and that with

immediate effect the Independent Group should now be known as the Tribune Group. The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised Councillor Myers that he should formally write to the Corporate Governance Manager advising him formally of the change to the Independent Group's status and the formation of the new Tribune Group on the Council.

The meeting ended at: 20:50