



GREAT YARMOUTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council

Minutes

Thursday, 15 December 2022 at 19:00

PRESENT:-

His Worship, The Mayor, Councillor Plant; Councillors Annison, Bird, Borg, Candon, Cameron, G Carpenter, P Carpenter, Fairhead, Flaxman- Taylor, Freeman, Galer, Grant, D Hammond, P Hammond, Jeal, Lawn, Martin, Mogford, Myers, Robinson-Payne, Smith-Clare, Stenhouse, Talbot, Thompson, Wainwright, Waters-Bunn, B Walker, C Walker, Wells, A Wright & B Wright.

Ms S Oxtoby (Chief Executive Officer), Ms C Whatling (Monitoring Officer), Ms K Sly (Finance Director), Mrs S Wintle (Corporate Services Manager), Ms C Whatling (Monitoring Officer), Mr S Hubbard (Strategic Planning Manager), Mr M Brett (IT Support), Ms C Ingram (Communications & Media Officer), Ms T Kooman (Senior Democratic Services Officer) & Mrs C Webb (Democratic Services Officer).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bensly, Cordiner-Achenbach, Hacon, Hanton, Price, Smith & Williamson.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Cameron & Myers declared a personal interest in item number 9 as they are both Ward Councillors for Lothingland.

3 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

His Worship, the Mayor, made the following announcements:-

- (i) A service to commemorate the Holocaust Memorial Day to be held on 29/01/2023
- (ii) A service to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the 1953 Floods.
- (iii) A Beetle Drive for the Mayor's Charity to be held on 10/02/2023
- (iv) A card had been received from HM King Charles III, thanking the Council for their kind wishes following the death of his beloved mother, Queen Elizabeth II.

4 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

His Worship, the Mayor, informed Council that there were no items of urgent business to report.

5 MINUTES

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 13 October 2022 were confirmed.

Proposer: Councillor P Carpenter.

Seconder: Councillor Candon.

CARRIED.

6 LEADER - COUNTY DEAL UPDATE

The Deputy Leader informed Council that the Leader was absent from tonight's meeting due to being unwell, and that this item had been tabled by him to provide an update on the County Deal for Norfolk. At this time, the Leader had no further information to pass on to Members.

The Leader emailed all Members on 8th December 2022 regarding the County Deal for Norfolk and as Members will be aware, a public consultation on the matter is due to be held in 2023, and Members will be kept informed as information is received.

7 SERVICE COMMITTEE DECISION LIST

Council received and considered the Service Committee Decision List which was presented by the Deputy Leader.

Proposer: Councillor P Carpenter

Secunder: Councillor Candon

CARRIED.

8 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBER FOR THE NORFOLK PARKING PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

That Councillor Candon be appointed as a substitute Member on the Norfolk Parking Partnership Committee.

Proposer: Councillor P Carpenter

Secunder: Councillor Flaxman-Taylor

CARRIED.

9 DESIGNATION OF BELTON WITH BROWSTON, BURGH CASTLE AND FRITTON WITH ST OLAVES NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

Councillor Annison reported that the designation of the Neighbourhood Area establishes the start of the Neighbourhood Plan making process, with the neighbourhood area setting out the area over which the plan will apply.

An application was received from Belton with Browston Parish Council to prepare a joint neighbourhood plan. The proposed area extends over the three parish areas of: Belton with Browston, Burgh Castle and Fritton with St Olaves. It is clear from the minutes of each the respective parish council meetings in September that the three parish councils have decided to prepare a joint neighbourhood plan. As the proposed area is larger than a single parish area the application must be consulted upon and determined by the local authority.

Consultation has taken place. Only two responses were received, one without comment and the other in support from Burgh Castle Parish Council.

It is important to note that the Broads Authority also has responsibility as a local authority, with part of the proposed neighbourhood area within The Broads Area. The areas covered by the proposed Neighbourhood Area are similar in character and have good linkages between them. Given there were no objections received at consultation, it is considered that the proposed Neighbourhood Area is appropriate. The Council's Local Plan Working Party has endorsed this designation.

Proposer: Councillor Annison

Secunder: Councillor Freeman

That Council designates Belton with Browston, Burgh Castle and Fritton with St Olaves Neighbourhood Area.

CARRIED.

10 GREEN FLEET STRATEGY (2022- 2032)

The Deputy Leader reported that SLR (Waste Management Consultant) were commissioned to carry an assessment on the fleet and the depot to establish what would be required to run a green fleet. A survey was also commissioned on the depot to understand what Electric charging infrastructure would be needed against our requirements; a “Nature of Supply” application was submitted to find out how much power the depot uses, there is a substation in the far corner of the depot, since the meeting in NOV the survey is now back and confirms we can get the supply we need.

The Council commissioned a Fleet specialist to help with our procurement who has access to frameworks and networks to get us the best deal, since the meeting in NOV this is now in progress and delivery of 1 x 7.5T RCV in Jan 2023 and 5 x 26T RCV's arrive July 2023.

The Council are attending various webinars and events on Electric and Hydrogen, currently part of the Norfolk Climate Change partnership officer working group who are looking at options for using Hydrogen across Norfolk. Officers visited Nottingham City Council in November who are well on their way to electrifying their fleet, they have been on this journey for 10 years who have 6 x eRCV's with 12 on order.

The Council secured a trial with Dennis Eagle in September using the eCollect which is a fully electric RCV, we it had for 3 full days using it on all 3 waste streams, each day the vehicle returned with 30-50% charge which alleviated the range anxiety with this type of vehicle, very good crew feedback, cost eRCV is £450k versus £206k for diesel.

Hydrogen trial; the system retrofitted to diesel engines using sophisticated electronics which are demand responsive to hydrogen flow to optimise engine performance, it is too early to say if the trail was a success or not because the data is still being analysed.

Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), the Council would only use sustainable HVO which is being used by several LA's now, earlier this year there were supply chain issues in Norfolk & Suffolk which have now been resolved.

Efficiencies; 90% in emissions, odourless, doesn't need any modifications to the vehicle or any infrastructure changes, it is delivered to the current diesel tank. Currently costs 18% more than diesel per litre, across the fleet this would cost £47k per annum.

Options appraisal is as follows:-

1. Do nothing, although its an option it shouldn't be one to take given the aging fleet.
2. Replace all RCV's with Euro 6 RCV's – how would this sit with the sustainability strategy.
3. Replace all RCV's with eRCV's – very expensive with vehicle and infrastructure costs
4. Mixed fleet using Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV) where possible, we can continue with trials, watch what is happening across the industry. Adapt the site as we move along with the industry giving manufacturers time to develop technology

and hope fully bring the prices of vehicles down.

Proposer: Councillor P Carpenter

Seconder: Councillor Wells

That Council:-

(i) Agree to the addition of an extra £106,000 (due to a cost increase since the budget was agreed last year) in 2022/23 and the allocation of a further capital spend of £1.7 million in 2023/24 for vehicle acquisitions; and

(ii) Agree to to lease all operational vehicles to the new company Great Yarmouth Services (GYS) Limited and delegates authority to the Deputy Section 151 Officer to agree the lease terms.

CARRIED.

11 RENEWAL OF PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER NO.2 - VEHICLE RELATED ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The Deputy Leader reported that Public Protection Order No.2 was introduced in 2017 to assist in addressing vehicle related anti-social behaviour along the seafront in Great Yarmouth. The Order was extended in 2020 and this extension is due to expire on 1 February 2023. This report seeks member approval to extend it by a further three years. Since 202, 97 warning letters and 13 FPNs have been issued by Police and Council officers. The police will have officers on site with CCTV regularly and will tackle any road offences using their primary legislation and passing evidence to Council officers for breaches of the PSPO.

There is always a staged approach to enforcement and the warning letters have been very effective in changing peoples behaviour with only the need to issue a smaller number of FPNs.

A public consultation was completed earlier in the year asking for comments from local residents and partners on the proposal to extend the PSPO. Overwhelming the response was to continue to have the PSPO in place to assist police and GYBC officers in tackling this issue. As part of this consultation the Police have also signified they would like an amendment to the PSPO to address unnecessary or excessive revving of engines by vehicle owners, which Council officers would also support.

Councillor Jeal reported that he supported the PSPO but was concerned that the warning letters which were issued did not lead to many prosecutions. Councillor Jeal welcomed any powers to help combat the Boy Racers along South Beach Parade who had a negative effect on the amenity of local residents. Councillor Jeal asked that the Council support local residents who were concerned regarding HGV's travelling along the seafront and then Kings Road to miss the traffic lights associated with the Third river Crossing works.

Proposer: Councillor P Carpenter
Secunder: Councillor Wells

That Council:-

- (i) Agree to the Order being extended by a further three years; and
- (ii) Agree to an amendment to the Order to help address unnecessary revving of engines.

CARRIED.

12 COUNCIL TAX BASE 2023-24

The Deputy Leader reported that the Council Tax base is a technical calculation that must be formally set each year. It is the first stage of the Council Tax setting process that will be finalised once the budgets have been agreed.

The normal non-collection rate used is 1.75%. However, for this year the non-collection rate has been estimated as higher than normal due to the national cost of living issues at 2.1%.

The calculation of the 2023/24 tax base totalling 29,851 shows a positive growth on prior year of 507.

Proposer: Councillor P Carpenter

Secunder: Councillor Candon

That Council approve the calculation of the 2023/24 tax base totalling 29,851, as shown in Appendix A, this is the total number of domestic properties in the Borough using band D as the average property band.

CARRIED.

13 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2023-24

The Deputy Leader reported that this report is asking for Council approval on the 2023 Local Council Tax Support Scheme to be in place from April 2023, following a consultation period based on retaining the existing scheme for 2023.

Proposer: Councillor P Carpenter

Secunder: Councillor Candon

That Council formally approves the Local Council Tax Scheme for 2023, which is to continue with the existing scheme for 2023/24, a maximum award of 91.5% of the Council Tax Liability for Working Age.

CARRIED.

14 COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS 2023-24

The Deputy Leader reported that Councils have discretion in setting the level of council tax charged in respect of unoccupied properties and second homes. Page 2 of the report shows the proposed discounts for 2023/. From April 2023 it is recommended that there is one change to these discounts. This is that the 100% discount for vacant Class C Properties (unoccupied and unfurnished) for one month or less is removed and no discount is applied.

Under the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill legislation currently going through Parliament the government is proposing further changes to take effect from 1 April 2024

In this legislation Councils can exercise their discretion to:-

- (i) commence the Empty Property Premium after 1 year of the property becoming empty (instead of after two years); and
- (ii) Introduce a premium on unoccupied and furnished properties (second homes) of up to 100%.

It is recommended that both of these are introduced from 1 April 2024 as the Council needs to make this decision at least 12 months in advance on implementing the new premium.

Proposer: Councillor P Carpenter

Secunder: Councillor Candon

- (i) That Council approve the council tax discounts as shown in Table 2 that will apply for 2023/24.
- (ii) That Council, pending the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill receiving Royal Assent, to approve the changes with effect from 1 April 2024 that:-
 - (a) The Empty Property premium of 100% for properties that have been empty for one year or more commences from 1 April 2024; and
 - (b) The Second Homes Premium of 100% for Class B properties commences from 1 April 2024.

CARRIED.

15 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023-24 TO 2025-26

The Deputy Leader reported that this report presents the medium-term financial strategy for 2023/24 to 2025/26.

The strategy is refreshed each year as part of the preparation for the following years budget and includes the latest high level financial forecasts which have been updated for known spending pressures and commitments.

Like all Local Authorities, the Council are faced with increasing cost pressures in response to the rising cost of living, rising inflation and increased demand on our services. The projections take into account these current spending pressures, most significantly the impact of the pay award from the current financial year, the increased cost of utilities and the impact of increases to interest rate. The continued uncertainty around local government funding does make the budgeting process somewhat challenging.

This week saw announcements on the Local Government Finance Policy Statement which outlined the principles that will be applied in the 2023/24 provisional local government finance settlement, most likely to be announced the middle of next week. The settlement principles cover both 2023/24 and 2024/25, with the overall funding envelope likely to be set at the levels announced in the Autumn statement.

Until the Council receive the figures, it could not confirm for certain, however with headline announcements of rises in core spending power for local authorities of 3%, we can expect grant funding announcements not to be too dissimilar to those included in the financial strategy forecasts with increases in revenue support grant mitigating reductions in grants that are due to be removed.

As always, the devil will be in the detail and we wait for the settlement to be published.

At these challenging financial times it is increasingly important that the Council continues to have a business strategy in place which provides a framework within which plans and work can progressed to reduce the future funding gap by delivering efficiencies and additional income to deliver a sustainable budget in the medium to long term.

The strategy priorities are detailed at section 8 of the strategy document and this is included from page 133 of the agenda. These include:-

- strategic asset management
- economic and housing growth
- technological investment
- and reviewing the operating model for the Council to ensure that Council is operating in the most efficient way.
- Identification of savings and additional savings.

The MTFS also provides an updated reserves statement, which provides details on the level of reserves held. The use of reserves provides only a short-term funding option as this is not sustainable in the longer term, although it is expected that there will be a requirement to use reserves in the short term to reduce the forecast gap.

Additional income to be delivered over the short to medium term, some of these are estimated to be delivered on the back of work that is currently in train. For example, where we have identified assets for disposal that will generate capital receipts that can be used to reduce the pressures on the revenue account from financing. The strategy (at section 8.19) has started to allocate indicative targets for savings the capital programme from borrowing.

In summary, before assuming the level of savings to be delivered there is a forecast gap for next year is £2.4m, this is ahead of the detailed budget work that is currently being undertaken by finance and services and before the consideration of savings and additional income opportunities that will be brought forward for approval as part of the budget reports.

Finally, Members will be aware that the Council has been a member of the Norfolk business rates pool in recent years and this report is recommending that it continues to be a member for 2023/24 subject to the finalisation of the forecasts for 2023/24 and

this decision is delegated to the Section 151 officer in consultation with the Leader. The recommendations are included on page 119 of the agenda.

Councillor Wainwright thanked the Finance Director and her team for all their hard work in the production of the MTFS. Councillor Wainwright informed Council of the bleak outlook for thousands of residents due to the current economic turmoil, cost-of-living crisis and strikes which added up to the worst case scenario for the last twelve years, which was a driving force in the reduction of the life expectancy of local residents in our poorest wards. Councillor Wainwright reported that although the Council had received an award from the LGA and had been highly commended from the recent Peer Review, these honours would not keep our most vulnerable residents warm and fed.

Proposer: Councillor P Carpenter

Seconder: Councillor Candon

That Council:-

- (i) Consider the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the key themes of the business strategy as outlined at Section 8;
- (ii) Consider the revised reserves statement as included at Appendix A to the MTFS; and
- (iii) Agree to continue with the business rates pool for 2023/24 subject to the finalisation of the forecasts for 2023/24 and the outcome local government finance settlement, to delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Leader to approve.

CARRIED.

16 MOTION ON NOTICE

Councillor Smith-Clare presented the following Motion to Council:-

Council are asked to consider the following Motion on Notice from Councillors Smith-Clare, Wainwright, Cordiner-Achenbach, Waters-Bunn, Robinson-Payne, Jeal.

Council recognises that recycling is good for the environment and saves public money being spent on sending waste to landfill.

Fly tipping is a crime.

Recycling rates in GY are too low and every effort should be made to encourage recycling and discourage fly-tipping.

The cost of clearing fly-tipping falls to the borough council tax payers or landowners when rubbish is tipped in private land.

Council welcomes county council investment with all party support in upgrading

recycling and reuse centres. Proposals to reduce the hours of recycling centres goes against the need to encourage recycling, sends out the wrong message about the importance of the environment and could lead to increased fly-tipping.

Motion on Notice:-

That this council resolves to write to Norfolk County Council to reconsider their proposals to reduce the hours at recycling and reuse centres, as this goes against the need to encourage recycling; sends out the wrong message about the importance of the environment, and could lead to increased fly tipping.

Councillor Smith-Clare proposed that a recorded vote be taken. This motion was seconded by Councillor Waters-Bunn. Following a vote, the required 16 votes for a recorded vote was not attained, so a recorded vote would not be taken.

Councillor Smith-Clare reported that parts of his ward were used as fly-tipping areas and that targeted work by the Council had been undertaken to reduce this in Churchill Road and Harley Road.

Councillor Smith-Clare reported that it was ludicrous and un-economical to propose a reduction in hours and/or opening days of the recycling centre as this would lead to more fly-tipping in the Borough and consequently, more cost to the Council and he urged Council to support this common-sense motion.

The Deputy Leader reported that 80% of fly-tipping could have been taken to the tip for free which demonstrated that fly-tippers had no intention of taking their waste to the tip in the first place. Four cases of fly-tipping had been taken to court this year with a further 5 cases pending. It was premature for the Council to make a decision on this matter until the public consultation finished and the data had been analysed.

Councillor Jeal spoke in favour of the motion and reported that he had witnessed builders dumping brick rubble in public bins.

Councillor Talbot reported the fly-tipping she encountered whilst taking her children to school on a daily basis. She asked for data regarding the number of fly-tipping incidents where the perpetrator could not be identified and court proceedings could not be undertaken.

Councillor Grant reencountered his experiences of fly-tipping when he worked at the Caister Recycling Centre and he informed Council that there was no link between changes in operating hours and an increase in fly-tipping. The public would get used to altered opening hours after a two week adjustment period. Councillor Grant declared a personal interest as he had a waste carrier licence and used the Recycling Centre.

Councillor Wells agreed that there were fly-tipping problems in certain wards but education of local residents was key.

Councillor Myers referred to a recent FOI submitted to the Council regarding fly-tipping and asked for clarification as to how many fixed-penalty notices had been issued.

Councillor Candon reiterated that this motion was premature and that Council should wait until the consultation had closed and the results examined.

Councillor Smith-Clare summed up.

Following a vote; the Motion was lost

Councillor A Wright asked for a point of order that his vote for the motion be recorded in the minutes as per the Council's Constitution. The Monitoring Officer agreed to his request. A number of other councillors requested that their votes be recorded in the minutes too as follows.

For the motion:- Councillor A Wright, Jeal, Wainwright, C Walker, B Walker, Smith-Clare, Martin, Waters-Bunn, Robinson-Payne, Fairhead, B Wright, Borg, Talbot, Myers & Thompson.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

His Worship, the Mayor, reported that there was no other business being of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the meeting.

His Worship, the Mayor, wished all those present at Council a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

The meeting ended at: TBC