



GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Policy and Resources Committee

Minutes

Tuesday, 23 March 2021 at 18:00

PRESENT:-

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

Ms S Oxtoby (Chief Executive Officer), Ms C Whatling (Monitoring Officer), Ms K Sly (Finance Director), Ms P Boyce (Strategic Director), Ms K Watts (Strategic Director), Mr S Hubbard (Strategic Planning Manager), Mrs S Tate (Head of OD), Ms L Snow (Financial Services manager), Mrs M Lee (Head of Customer Services), Mr S Brabben (Revenue & Benefits Service Manager), Mr S Best (Funding & Regeneration Manager), Sammy Wintle (Corporate Services Manager) & Christina Webb (Executive Services Officer).

Mr M Severn (IT Support).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest declared at the meeting.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021 were confirmed by assent.

4 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received and considered the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the Forward Plan.

5 ENDORSEMENT OF THE JOINT NORFOLK STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK (VERSION 3)

The Committee received and considered the report from the Strategic Planning Manager.

The Strategic Planning Manager reported that the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework represented a Statement of Common Ground on potential strategic cross-boundary planning matters and helped to enable the Council to comply with the statutory 'Duty to Cooperate'.

Councillor A Wright referred to pages 25 & 26 of the agenda report and asked for clarification regarding the mining of marine aggregates off of the East Coast. Councillor A Wright then referred to page 32 and asked for clarification regarding the figures given for growth areas in Norfolk. Councillor A Wright referred to page 49 and asked for clarification regarding the figures given for

the Borough's housing projection and finally, to page 66 regarding the Enterprise Zone. The Strategic Planning Manager responded to all of Councillor A Wright's queries and the Chief Executive Officer reported that as part of the Town Deal Masterplan, the Board was looking at the Enterprise Zone at South Denes, and that a report had been presented to the Economic Development Committee.

Councillors P Carpenter & Plant thanked the Strategic Planning Manager for his excellent, informative report. Councillor Wainwright reported that he was looking forward to moving forwards with the joint Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee endorse the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework and accompanying guidance on Climate Change and 4G and 5G infrastructure.

6 FLEXTIME POLICY

The Committee received and considered the report from the Head of Organisational Development.

The Head of Organisational Development reported the salient areas of the report to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee agree the new Flexitime Policy.

7 FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

The Committee received and considered the report from the Head of Organisational Development.

The Head of Organisational Development reported the salient areas of the report to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee agree the updated Flexible Working Policy.

8 REVENUES WRITE OFF REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report from the Revenue &

Benefits Service Manager.

The Revenue & Benefits Service Manager reported that he was seeking approval from the Committee to authorise of a schedule of individual Business Rate and Sundry Debt accounts where the debt was recommended for write-off.

Councillor Myers referred to page 184 & 195 of the report and asked for clarification regarding write off code W08 as to why a legal claim for debt older than 6 years could not be made in this case.

Councillor A Wright referred to page 197 of the report and asked for clarification of write off code W01 and asked why no further action had been taken. The Leader of the Council reported that new 6 day market leases had been drawn up for the new market and, as a result, this issue would no longer arise.

Councillor B Walker suggested that Government should be lobbied to ensure that the person who owned a property should be held responsible for the business rates. The Revenue & Benefits Service Manager reported that the Government was undertaking a fundamental review of business rates.

RESOLVED:

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

9 SEAFRONT MASTERPLAN FOR GREAT YARMOUTH AND GORLESTON

The Committee received and considered the report from the Strategic Director.

The Strategic Director reported that the report presented a proposal for the development of a Seafront Masterplan for Great Yarmouth & Gorleston, and in doing so, requested that a Member Working Group, consisting of seven Members, was established to oversee the process.

Councillor Plant reported that he did not agree with the formation of a single Member Working Group to oversee both Great Yarmouth & Gorleston and proposed that two separate Member Working Groups, consisting of five Members each, be established. Councillors Flaxman-Taylor & Wells reported that they agreed with the proposal from Councillor Plant as both areas were distinct from each other.

Councillor A Wright reported that he opposed the formation of two separate Member Working Groups as this would be divisive for the Borough. The Tourist Authority and the GYTABIA Bid did not split themselves to cover Great Yarmouth & Gorleston and neither should the Council as both Great Yarmouth

& Gorleston were part of the same Borough and Councillors represented the whole of the Borough from Winterton to Hopton.

Councillor Wainwright agreed with the sentiments of Councillor A Wright as the proposal would be divisive and pit town against town rather than work for the Borough as a whole.

Councillor Wells reported that the proposal for two Member Working Groups would not be divisive but would create a strategy for the two towns which were distinct from one another and were looking for different outcomes.

The Chief Executive Officer reported that the Town Deal encompassed both Great Yarmouth & Gorleston and the Seafront Masterplan Member Working Group would be formed as a narrative to access the 'Levelling Up Fund' and sit within the Town Investment Plan, which covered the urban areas of both Great Yarmouth & Gorleston.

Councillor Williamson agreed with the Chief Executive Officer that one coherent strategy was required to encompass Great Yarmouth & Gorleston and respectfully asked Councillor Plant to withdraw his proposal.

Councillor Plant reported that his proposal was not divisive and should be viewed as simply looking at the needs of Gorleston in a strategic way moving forwards.

The Chief Executive Officer reported that if two Member Working Groups were formed, it would not be divisive as the Working Groups, who would not have the power to make decisions, would report to the Policy & Resources Committee to ensure a cohesive approach.

RESOLVED:

(i) That two Member Working Groups, consisting of five Members and being politically balanced be established, one to represent Great Yarmouth and one to represent Gorleston to work with officers to develop the Seafront Masterplan for Great Yarmouth and Gorleston.

(ii) That no Member to sit on both Member Working Groups.

10 TOWN DEAL PROCESS UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report from the Regeneration & Funding Manager.

The Regeneration & Funding Manager reported that on the 3 March 2021, MHCLG offered Great Yarmouth Heads of Terms for a Town Deal of up to £20.1 million to deliver the ten Immediate Investment Priorities as set out in the Town Investment Plan.

The Plan comprised a £24.8m programme of interventions and these would need to be refreshed and prioritised to progress delivery within the funding £20.1m envelope. The report set out how the Town Board would prioritise interventions and realise the overall ambition, in line with the value of the funding award and advise MHCLG, accordingly, within two months of accepting the offered Heads of Terms (i.e. 24 May 2021 at the latest).

Councillor A Wright thanked the Regeneration & Funding Manager for an excellent report and asked for clarification as to whether the Ice House would be without flood defences as a result of the new flood defence works being undertaken by the Environment Agency. The Chief Executive Officer reported that this work could be considered as part of the Council's bid to the Levelling Up fund and factored into the capital build costs.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Committee agree & accept the Heads of Terms for a Town Deal of up to £20.1 million.

(ii) That the Committee note the deadlines for responses; signed Heads of Terms by 24 March 2021 at the latest and details of interventions being taken forward and a plan for addressing key conditions by 24 May at the latest.

11 2021-22 PERIOD 10 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report from the Financial Services Manager.

The Financial Services Manager apologised that the title referred to 2122 but clarified that the report covered 2021. The budget report covered the actual position until the end of period 10 but also provided the forecast position anticipated for the full year.

The Financial Services Manager reported that paragraph 4.1 on page 210 of the report, included a summary table of the variances against the budget for the forecast split between those attributed to COVID & non-COVID. It recognised COVID funding received to support service costs and the amount to be used to offset non-service costs of the pandemic. It also highlighted non-COVID related underspend on services, which was largely due to staff vacancies from turnover and delays in recruiting staff to vacant posts.

The Financial Services Manager reported that it should be recognised that the current surplus position forecast did not capture decisions to be taken as part of the outturn preparation. This included where requests to carry forward underspends were considered as part of the year-end processes when finalising the outturn position. This did not reflect any decisions to carry

forward unutilised COVID funding, where permitted, to support the Council's response, service delivery and the impact on the financial position in the following financial year.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the content of the report and the revised forecast for 2020/21.

12 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2021-22

The Committee received and considered the report from the Financial Services Manager.

The Financial Services Manager reported that this report presented the Council's Capital Strategy for approval. As a Council we were required to set a capital strategy each year to provide an overview of capital expenditure and how it was to be financed, recognising how capital spend contributed to local service provision. It covered General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and commercial capital spend & financing.

The Financial Services Manager reported that the capital strategy was intrinsically linked to a number of strategies, namely Treasury Management, Investment, Asset Management and also the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The last of these recognised the ongoing impact of capital financial decisions taken now, on future budgets. In light of this, the capital strategy also considered the risks around the capital spend and how these were mitigated, as well as the sustainability of the planned spend.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee recommend to Full Council the 2021/22 Capital Strategy.

13 INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2021-22

The Committee received and considered the report from the Financial Services Manager.

The Financial Services Manager reported that the report covered some of the areas contained within the Council's other strategies, such as the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy, but it focussed on commercial & service investments. It recognised the ongoing implications of decisions taken on commercial & service investments now, and in the past, and their effect on future revenue budgets. This provided the framework for specific investment decisions that might be presented as part of a business case in the coming financial year.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee recommend to Full Council the 2021/22 Investment Strategy.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman reported that there was no other business being of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the meeting.

15 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.

16 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

The meeting ended at: 20:00