

# Infrastructure and Development Select Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 16 November 2022**

**10.00am, held at County Hall, Norwich**

**Present:**

Cllr James Bensly – Chair

Cllr Brian Watkins  
Cllr Chris Dawson  
Cllr Jim Moriarty  
Cllr William Richmond

Cllr Brenda Jones  
Cllr Barry Stone  
Cllr Brian Long  
Cllr Maxine Webb  
Cllr Tony White

**Also Present:**

Titus Adam	Head of Strategic Finance, Finance and Commercial Services
Grahame Bygrave	Director of Highways, Transport and Waste, Community and Environmental Services (CES)
Ian Gregory	Better Parking Strategy Manager, CES
Matt Hayward	Lead Project Manager, CES
Joel Hull	Assistant Director, Waste and Water Management, CES
John Jones	Head of Environment, CES
Nicola Ledain	Committee Officer, Democratic Services
Tom McCabe	Executive Director, CES
Kate Murrell	Waste Reduction and Recycling Manager, CES
Philip Payne	Norfolk Constabulary
Karl Rands	Assistant Director, Highway Services, CES
Sarah Rhoden	Director of Community Learning and Information CES

## **1. Apologies and substitutions**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Steffan Aquarone, Cllr Vic Thomson and Cllr Chrissie Rumsby, substituted by Cllr Brian Watkins, Cllr Brian Long and Cllr Brenda Jones respectively. Apologies were also received from Cllr David Bills and Cllr Claire Bowes.
- 1.2 Cabinet Members Cllr Andrew Jamieson, Cllr Martin Wilby and Cllr Eric Vardy had also sent their apologies.
- 1.3 Following apologies from the Vice Chair, Cllr Vic Thomson, the Committee elected Cllr Tony White as Vice Chair for the meeting,

## **2. Minutes**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2022 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 Cllr Maxine Webb declared an 'other' interest as she was a Norfolk County Council representative on Norfolk Local Access Forum which was being discussed at item 10.

### **4. Items of Urgent Business**

- 4.1 There were no items of urgent business.
- 4.2 The Chairman took the opportunity at this point in the meeting to thank the Leader of the Council, Andrew Proctor for allowing the collaborative working that had been ongoing regarding scrutiny that had referred to at the last meeting. He also thanked the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Steve Morphew and informed the Committee that there had been some productive work going on which also included Cllr Steffan Aquerone and Cllr Jamie Osbourn. He added that Scrutiny Committee would be looking at water management at their next meeting and encouraged fellow members of the Committee to have a look at the agenda and attend the meeting. The Executive Director added that the report would be titled 'Flood and Water Management' where the Committee would be reviewing the work of the Norfolk Flood Alliance, and it was hoped that the Chairman of the Norfolk Flood Alliance would be present at the meeting. Members were invited to attend with the opportunity of asking questions in advance. It was a pertinent subject as winter approached.

### **5. Public Question Time**

- 5.1 There were no public questions received.

### **6. Local Member Issues / Questions**

- 6.1 There were no local Member issues or questions received.

### **7. Strategic and Financial Planning 2023-24**

- 7.1 The Committee received the annexed report which provided details of the saving proposals identified to date for 2023-24 Budget setting. This was intended to support the Select Committee's discussion of the specific proposals and enabled the Committee to provide its feedback and input to a future meeting of Cabinet and thereby to inform budget decisions. The report formed an important part of the process of developing the 2023-24 Budget, representing a key opportunity for the Select Committee to provide its views on priorities and the budget proposals for the services within its remit.
- 7.2 In introducing the report, the Head of Strategic Finance highlighted that this was the opportunity for Committee members to engage in the budget process either by commenting on the proposals that were outlined in the report, or by suggesting proposals that could be worked through. He also added that the Government's Autumn Statement was due the day after the Committee meeting and then due later in December the provisional Local Government Settlement, both of which would reveal the levels of funding for the council for the next year and would have material impact on the proposals.
- 7.3 The following points were noted in response to questions by the Committee;

- 7.3.1 The Head of Strategic Finance explained the process of the budget consultation and how it was being advertised and publicised to the general public. It was predominantly being advertised through the website, but also libraries and other outlets. With regards to particular saving proposals regarding recycling centres, this would be advertised within the recycling centres as well as the generic other places.
- 7.3.2 The Committee heard that the Department for Transport were evaluating all Transport for Cities projects around the country including those Transport for Norwich projects themselves. With regards to timescales of when they would report and where the report could be found, more information would be shared with members when it was known.
- 7.3.3 Members expressed concern at the savings proposal regarding the removal of subsidy for the library service and how this would significantly have implications for the learning experience of the county's children. Officers explained that this was the balance that Full Council would have to make and there were similar challenges across the spectrum of the council. The Strategic Review would hopefully provide savings but as part of the overall savings and the budget as a whole. If it wasn't found in that, it would have to be found elsewhere in the budget.
- 7.2.4 The Government's Autumn Statement, released tomorrow could indicate that council's would be able to increase their share of council tax by 5% and this would be useful to offset some of those proposed savings, but there still had not been a long term formula found for the health and social care which members felt was widely accepted to be underfunded.
- 7.2.5 It was suggested that a standing item of commercialisation within the remit of the Committee could be considered at regular meetings. Income received from any commercial opportunity would mean that in future less savings would have to be realised.
- 7.2.6 The savings proposals figure of £270k relating to the recycling centres had been based on the reduction of hours available in the service and those hours across the service. There was currently a mix of agency staff and directly employed staff so it was uncertain how this would affect the staff until the outcome of the consultation.
- 7.2.7 The £157k proposed saving for the Museum Service seemed quite a high amount yet considering it wouldn't affect the service as outlined in the report. Members were concerned that this service and the library service were both widely used by the more disadvantaged and vulnerable members of the community, both being a generally free service. The Museum Service was funded by a third from the council, one third arts council, and one third from income such as admission fees where applicable. Officers explained that it was about balancing the thin line between the services and that hard decisions would have to be made in order to provide a balanced budget.
- 7.2.8 The Director for Highways, Transport and Waste reassured the Committee that there were no changes planned for the grass cutting routines throughout the year ensuring the visibility was there at junctions. The item mentioned in the report was regarding weedkilling treatments on the network which would be reducing from two treatments to one per year. This provided a better outcome for the environment but still ensured that the treatment was carried out.

7.2.9 The Chairman highlighted the hardship support fund. The Director of Community Learning and Information reported that £7.9 million had been ringfenced from October to March to specifically support some hardship interventions. This money was made from some funding from Government and some additional funding from NCC. This was the third six-month period in a row that a support package had been put together. In summary, the fund supported cost of living for those families on low income through food vouchers, which equated to £3.6 million and had supported 33k children. It had continued to fund the Norfolk Assistant Scheme which helped via a number of ways and it provided additional funding to District Councils for emergency support. NCC were also working with Norfolk Community Foundation to provide help for harder to reach groups and libraries were continuing with the 'Warm Spaces' initiative and continued to provide hygiene and warm and well packs. They were also working with the voluntary sector to establish and maintain more food banks.

7.3.1 The Select Committee;

1. Having considered the latest Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy position, **NOTED** in particular the emerging risks and uncertainties within the Council's planning position.
2. Considered and commented on the savings proposals for 2023-24 as set out in appendix 1 of the report, which fell within the Committee's remit.
3. **NOTED** the significant budget gap which remained to be closed for 2023-24 and in this context commented on any areas they would recommend exploring for savings development in relation to the services within the Select Committee's remit, in order to provide further input to the 2023-24 budget process and inform the final package of savings proposals put forward to Cabinet later in the year. The Committee **CONSIDERED** savings opportunities under the following headings:
  - a. New initiatives which would deliver savings
  - b. Activities which could be ceased in order to deliver a saving
  - c. Activities which the Council should seek to maintain at the current level as far as possible
  - d. Commercialisation opportunities.

## 8. Review of Speed Management Strategy

8.1 The Select Committee received the report which included the latest version of The Norfolk Speed Management Strategy (NSMS). The NSMS was an important policy document that provided a local, countywide strategic direction and guidance on how speed was safely managed on Norfolk's roads. It was based on central government guidance and aligned to other local policies and strategies. Recently there had been a marked increase in local, community-based involvement, resulting in the expansion or introduction of several NCC initiatives. For these reasons, a review had been necessary to capture these changes and latest approaches.

8.2 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Committee:

8.2.1 The Speed Management Strategy would be communicated to the wider public and Parish Councils once it had been approved by Cabinet. The comments made by members of the Infrastructure and Development Committee would be taken into consideration before the report was considered by Cabinet.

- 8.2.2 The Norfolk School Street initiative started with several schools in September 2022 so was still in the early stages. A report would be brought to Committee in March 2023 containing details of that trial. Data and information were still being collated. Once that report had been considered, proposals for the future of the initiative could be considered.
- 8.2.3 The Committee heard that the Road Safety Community Fund which was launched last year in West Norfolk had been successful and had received many bids. North Norfolk, Great Yarmouth and Broadland were the next areas for bids to be submitted for, followed by Breckland and South Norfolk, followed by the city centre areas in the final year. These were for projects up to £10k and members were encouraged to discuss any projects now with highways engineers and their parish councils.
- 8.2.4 The Committee heard that the camera vans had been increased in capacity by two which were on the road to predominantly target traffic behaviour on minor parish roads. The Constabulary had an overarching priority to keep the road network free from congestion, and to keep them flowing safely.
- 8.2.5 The priorities mentioned in the introduction from the Cabinet Member were suggested that they were in the wrong order and could be re-considered.
- 8.2.6 The definition relating to the locations of 20mph speed limits referred to on page 80 was concerning for some members of the Committee. It referred to 20mph speed limits being considered in larger villages or those with heavy usage rather than smaller villages. The Executive Director explained that speed limits were set appropriately so the driver behaved accordingly. If too many 20mph speed limits were put into place it questioned if these and higher speed limit would be ignored, especially as 1400 people had been killed in the UK up to June 2021. The onus was always on the driver to drive and behave on the road sensibly.
- 8.2.7 Where the effectiveness of the road signage needed to be boosted, painted road marking roundell's had been carried out where appropriate and necessary. Officers could look at further locations and would consider these on a case by case basis.
- 8.2.8 It wasn't just rural locations that speeding traffic occurred and there had been various instances of speeding observed within the city areas.
- 8.2.9 Officers agreed to consider if the budget reserves could be used for other road safety projects.
- 8.2.10 It was a fairly easy process to get involved in local Community Speedwatch Team's or to set one up. There was also a process in place where speeding offenders would receive a letter from the Speedwatch team. The Committee heard that enforcement from the police would always happen if there was significant non-compliance with speed limits. However, there was a problem with evidencing that non-compliance and this was where Speedwatch teams could assist.
- 8.2.11 The Committee asked if reference to the 'Stockholm Declaration', could be made in the report. The declaration stated that 20mph limits should be used where vulnerable road users and vehicles mixed except where higher speed limits were deemed safe. This will be considered,

- 8.2.12 Members asked if on page 89, the emphasis of the sentence relating to taking the needs of the communities into consideration when changing a speed limit, could be changed to make sure that it took local needs as a high priority.
- 8.3 Having **REVIEWED** the revised Norfolk Speed Management Strategy, the Select Committee **COMMENTED** accordingly as detailed above.

## 9. Waste Services Review

- 9.1 The Select Committee received the report which provided an overview and update on the services delivered by the County Council in its role as the Waste Disposal Authority for Norfolk. This role included the provision of recycling centres, the disposal of residual waste, and making payments to the District, City and Borough Councils to help support the costs of the recycling services that they delivered.
- 9.2 Further to the report, the Assistant Director, Waste and Water Management highlighted that waste levels had begun to reduce towards pre-covid levels which equated to approximately 15,000k tonnes less residual waste this year than allowed for. Payments made to District, Borough and City Councils for the recycling they carried out had also reduced due to the volume they had been collecting reducing, particularly the reduced garden waste due to the dry, hot summer that had occurred earlier in the year. With reference to new recycling centres, a new proposed centre at Wymondham was planned and the public engagement process went live earlier this year to inform the final planning application process.
- 9.3 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Committee:
- 9.3.1 Following an analysis undertaken earlier in the year on the composite of residual waste and recycling, there appeared to be higher levels of rigid plastics, paper and glass in residual waste in different areas. As a result, there would be targeted and focused messages being distributed in these areas to try and reduce those levels.
- 9.3.2 Commercial businesses were offered usage of the recycling centre Monday to Friday with charges set to cover the costs and provide a local convenient and competitive option.
- 9.3.3 Although recycling rates were returning to pre-covid levels, members noted that they still appeared to be below the rates of 2016/17. Officers explained that recycling rates include garden waste and that 2017 weather patterns generated exceptionally high garden waste levels which then reduced in following years. However, there were still actions being taken to further increase the recycling levels, such as an additional 30,000 households receiving food waste collections in Broadland, targeted messaging regarding recycling in the residual waste, and the initiatives being carried out directly by the County Council to reduce overall the amount of waste.
- 9.3.4 Members noted that the average family wasted over £700 per year by throwing away food waste which was a worrying figure and welcomed the Food Savvy initiatives highlighted in the report. The waste composition analysis undertaken was able to reveal how much food waste was going into residual waste which in turn gave a benchmark figure to aim for. National research and Norfolk research was carried out to understand who was throwing away the most food. Food Savvy could measure how much engagement and interest there was in initiatives such as the food cooking workshops, and the interaction in community events that were happening. Food

Savvy was continuing and continually being built upon. There would shortly be a report published on the website regarding the progression of the initiative over the past year.

- 9.3.5 There was a set charge for the disposal of DIY type construction and demolition waste at the recycling centres, but operatives were not able to weigh the material and therefore had to assess the charge visually. The charges had been made as simple as possible and were there to recover costs not to make a profit.
- 9.3.6 Legislation allowed payments to community groups that collect waste from having a recycling bank on their premises and also gain income from selling that recycling on. The County Council makes these payments as recycling credits in lieu of the saved costs that it would have had to pick up from disposing of that material as wastes.
- 9.3.7 When the County Council entered into the most recent waste contracts in 2021, there was an arrangement with Suffolk County Council that it would incinerate some of Norfolk's waste. This was an update to a long-standing arrangement. There had also been a new contract arrangement with a new company Veolia which would incinerate waste in Bedfordshire.
- 9.3.8 Fly-tipping on private land was included in the fly-tipping rates in the report as long as it had been reported. Officers were currently working with Country Land and Business Association to encourage landowners to report fly-tipping.
- 9.3.8 The budget savings proposed currently being consulted on included recycling centres closing on a Wednesday and Officers explained that this approach had been working in Suffolk for a while. With regards to the arrangement with commercial businesses, they would still have a clear offering of being able to use the centres which could be factored into their routine. The arrangement had been set up for those small, local businesses which offered them a competitive and convenient way to dispose of waste. If the pricing arrangement were to go too high for the commercial and it was the same type of waste that a household could dispose of, there would then be an increase in household waste and a decrease of commercial waste. It was noted that getting the optimum pricing point was key and it was a matter that was being intensely scrutinised currently by Officers.
- 9.3.9 Officers reported that there would be some changes nationally on waste policy and it was advised that local waste policies should be revised once those national changes were known.
- 9.3.10 The Chair highlighted that the public consultation regarding the Wymondham recycling centre was live on the County Council website as well as at Meadowhall Community Centre in the vicinity of Wymondham.
- 9.3 The Select Committee;
  - 1. **NOTED** and **COMMENTED** on the review including the County Council's current waste policies.
  - 2. In accordance with the County Council's second Waste Policy **REVIEWED** the arrangements outside Norfolk for the '*incineration of waste or fuel derived from waste*' set out in section 6.4.2 of the report.

## 10. Progress with delivering Norfolk Access Improvement Plan (NAIP)

- 10.1 The Select Committee received the report which provided an update on progress with delivering the NAIP. The report also covered advice offered by the Norfolk Local Access Forum ([www.norfolk.gov.uk/nlaf](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/nlaf)) to the Council on key issues to ensure delivery of the NAIP. The Norfolk Local Access Forum was an independent forum which advises Norfolk County Council and other organisations on ways to improve public access to Norfolk's countryside.
- 10.2 Members noted the request from the Norfolk Local Access Forum for increased resources to be considered for public rights of way maintenance and the processing of Definitive Map Modification Order claims. Officers agreed that they could work through this request to see if it was viable and could feed into the budget discussions.
- 10.3 The decrease in public satisfaction levels regarding public rights of way had been because of usage for those with disabilities and overgrown routes. There had been significant improvements made to the rights of way for those with disabilities with various projects having been completed with external funding applied for. The 'Monument' project was enabling those with dementia and their carers to access the public rights of way through a number of events and initiatives and the team were currently working with Gressenhall Museum to be able to access their ground via a type of 4x4 mobility scooter. The team were also working with contractor to ensure that the overgrowth was being dealt with. Lockdown had caused a large amount of overgrowth on the network but this had been rectified over a couple of seasons.
- 10.4 A part of the North Norfolk Coastal Paths had recently been closed temporarily for urgent repairs. This had been done as a precautionary measure due to health and safety risk. As it was also a protected environment, NCC were working closely with Natural England regarding the repairs. Closures were kept to a minimum and only when there was a public safety risk.
- 10.5 The Norfolk Trails website advertised and highlighted those trails which had been access tested and were more suitable for those with mobility difficulties. The trails team were also working with Active Norfolk on their Every Move Scheme which would also identify suitable routes on their interactive map.
- 10.6 Members acknowledged that in experience they have had in their divisions, any improvements made to any public rights of way had always been carried out with disability access in mind. It was also acknowledged that the team did amazing work with a limited budget to maintain some great assets that Norfolk had and they should be congratulated.
- 10.7 Officers explained that Pathmakers was a charity that sat alongside the Norfolk Local Access Forum which were able to apply for funding which neither NCC as a Local Authority or the Norfolk Local Access Forum were able to do.
- 10.8 The Committee heard sponsorship of trails were being looked at, and following the Platinum Jubilee in the summer, some trails now had business sponsorship which would help maintain and develop those trails.
- 10.9 The Select Committee **CONSIDERED**;  
1. Officers' ongoing work to deliver the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan (NAIP) which was presented in two monitoring reports (March 2022 (Appendix 1 of the report) and September 2022 (Appendix 2 of the report) and processes which were in place to monitor the plan.



2. Advice from the Norfolk Local Access Forum (NLAF) regarding the need for increased resources for public rights of way maintenance and processing of Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) claims, detailed in Appendix 3 of the report.

## **11. Forward Work Programme**

- 11.1 The Select Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which set out the Forward Work Programme for the Committee to enable the Committee to review and shape.
- 11.2 It was suggested that an initial report would be brought to Committee setting out how consultations with local planning authorities were dealt with. This would then lead the Committee if they wanted to further examine the matter.
- 11.3 It was suggested that commercialisation opportunities within the remit of the Committee could be regularly looked into. This would be considered by the officers.
- 11.4 Having reviewed the report, the Select Committee **AGREED** the Forward Work Programme set out in Appendix A and **AGREED** the suggested items for the programme as discussed.

The meeting closed at 1.10pm

**Chair**



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