

Environment, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 November 2012

Present:

Mr R Wright (Vice-Chairman)

Mr A Adams	Mr M Langwade
Dr A Boswell	Mr P Rice
Mr B Bremner	Mrs H Thompson
Mr M Brindle	Mr J Ward
Mrs M Chapman-Allen	Mr A White
Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh	
Mr P Duigan	
Mr T East	

Cabinet Members present:

Mr N Dixon	Community Protection
Mr G Plant	Planning and Transportation
Mrs A Steward	Economic Development

Deputy Cabinet Member present:

Mr J Mooney	Environment and Waste
Mr B H A Spratt	Planning and Transportation

Also Present:

Mrs J Murphy

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr A Byrne, Mr B Borrett , Mr I Mackie, Dr M Strong (Mr M Brindle substituted) and Mr T Tomkinson.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2012

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2012 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.
- 2.2 The Director for Environment, Transport and Development updated the Panel on the Councillor Call for Action brought to the 17 October 2012 meeting by Cllr John Dobson. He informed the Panel that Natural England (one of the key stakeholders) had indicated that they could not attend a panel meeting at

this time and they felt that they may not have anything to add to the views they have previously expressed. John Dobson had been made aware of Natural England's position and had expressed his view that the meeting should proceed with Natural England being invited.

- 2.3 The Director of ETD invited the Panel to consider how to proceed, and highlighted the following three options:
- a) Attempt to continue with the panel decision as proposed
 - b) Let the Modification Order run its course and then take action once the status of the right of way had been made clear
 - c) The Panel could nominate a small working group to meet with the local parties so they could understand the issues and then decide how to proceed following that meeting.
- 2.4 Following a proposal by Mr White which was seconded by Mr Duigan it was **RESOLVED** that a small working group should be set up to progress this issue and the topic would be added to the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

5 Public Question Time

No public questions were received.

6 Local Member Issues/Member Questions

No Local Member issues/questions were received.

7 Cabinet Member Feedback on previous Overview and Scrutiny Panel comments.

The Panel received the annexed report (7) by the Cabinet Members for Planning and Transportation, Economic Development, Environment and Waste, and Community Protection, providing feedback on items discussed at Cabinet which had previously been discussed at an Environment, Transport & Development (ETD) Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

8 Forward Work Programme: Scrutiny

- 8.1 The annexed report (8) by the Director of Environment, Transport and

Development was received by the Panel. The report set out the forward work programme for scrutiny and Members were asked to consider the Outline programme at Appendix A of the report and consider new topics for inclusion on the scrutiny programme.

- 8.2 The Vice-Chairman notified the Panel that a request had been made by Mr John Martin to add "Waste PFI Contract, the 'second bite' provision" to the ETD O&S Panel Scrutiny Forward Work Programme. He added that Cabinet Scrutiny Committee had discussed the same request at their meeting on 23 October and had decided that the questions raised by Mr Martin were hypothetical and that they did not wish to pursue them at this stage. However, Cabinet Scrutiny Committee had agreed that if the Secretary of State refused the planning application, the Committee would then consider the issues raised by Mr Martin.

The Panel **AGREED** that the questions raised were hypothetical and did not wish to pursue them. As Cabinet Scrutiny Committee had already indicated that they would consider the topic in the event that the Secretary of State refused the application, ETD O&S should not progress the issue further.

The Director of ETD would arrange for Mr Martin to be informed of the Panel's decision.

- 8.3 Sarah Rhoden, Senior Business Support Manager (Development and Processes) agreed to update the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme to include the Councillor Call for Action regarding the signs erected at Snettisham Beach by local property owners and the ensuing dispute (as agreed at 2.4)

The Panel agreed that the following Members would form the working group:

Mr A White
Mr B Spratt
Mrs H Thompson
Dr M Strong

Mr J Dobson would also be invited to attend.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

9 ETD Procurement of Highway and Related Services

- 9.1 The Panel received the annexed report (9) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development and the Head of Procurement, setting out the Outline Business Case (OBC) for consideration by Members, the proposed approach to the new highway and related services contracts which need to be in place by April 2014.
- 9.2 During the presentation of the report by the Assistant Director, Highways and the Head of Procurement, the following points were noted:

- The Panel were asked to agree the evaluation criteria as set out on pages 72, 73 and 74 of the agenda papers as this evaluation criteria would be used to evaluate the bids and ultimately decide the award of the contracts.
- It was the intention that the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) notice for the Works Contract would be published during December 2012, with the Professional Services OJEU notice being published in February 2013.
- Three contracts were proposed:
 - Contract A – Works.
 - Contract B – Professional Services.
 - Contract C – Traffic Signals. This contract would be considered by Cabinet in early 2013.
- The Panel were asked to agree that the report recommending the award of the Works Contract would be reported directly to Cabinet, without being presented to the ETD O&S Panel.
- The date contained within the key milestones section of the report should read December 2012 and not as published within the agenda papers.

9.3 The Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation reassured the Panel that the Cross-Party Member Board was overseeing this procurement project and that the Panel would receive regular updates on the progress.

9.4 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Panel:

- The Director of ETD reassured the Panel that the decision to take the award of contract directly to Cabinet would not preclude the Panel from being able to scrutinise the procurement as it was very important that the evaluation criteria be approved by the Panel as it was this criteria that would ultimately determine who would win the contracts.
- Members were very pleased to note that the promotion of apprenticeships and investment in the local community had been included within the evaluation criteria.
- The Membership of the cross-party member board include:
 - Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation (Chairman)
 - Cabinet Member for Efficiency
 - Cabinet Member for Finance
 - Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning & Transportation
 - Representative from the Liberal Democrat Group (James Joyce)
 - Representative from the Green Group (Richard Bearman)
- Although no discussions had taken place with regard to the payment of a living wage within the evaluation criteria, as this was an aspiration rather than a given criteria, specific mention had been included

regarding the payment of a minimum wage.

- The costs incurred in employing outside consultants on this proposal amounted to less than £50,000.

9.5 RESOLVED

- i) That the Outline Business Case for the procurement of the Works and Professional Services providers be noted.
- ii) To recommend that Cabinet approved the evaluation criteria set out in the Outline Business Case.
- iii) To recommend that Cabinet approved the approach outlined and endorsed three separate contracts.
- iv) To note that the report recommending the award of the Works Contract would be reported directly to Cabinet, without going via the ETD O&S Panel.
- v) To recommend that Cabinet approved the publication of the OJEU for the works contract and for the Professional Services contract in December 2012 .
- vi) To recommend that Cabinet approved the procurement programme phasing as set out in section C4.3 of the Outline Business Case.
- vii) To recommend that Cabinet delegate the award of the Professional Services and Traffic Signals Contracts to the Director of Environment, Transport and Development in consultation with the Head of Procurement and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation.

10 Service and Budget Planning 2013/15 for Environment, Transport and Development

- 10.1 The Panel received the annexed report (10) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development setting out the financial and planning context for the authority and gave specific service information from Environment, Transport and Development for the next financial year.
- 10.2 Members were asked to consider the revised service and financial planning context and assumptions and the revised spending pressures and savings for ETD.
- 10.3 The following points were noted during questions from the Panel:
 - ETD had a number of examples of how they had generated income for the County Council, one of which was the traffic permitting scheme which would raise £400k in 2013/14. The Director of ETD reassured the Panel that it would continue to be creative and to explore opportunities for further income generation.
 - The Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation reiterated that, following the Big Conversation consultation, approximately £17m savings would have been made by 2013. He asked the Panel to appreciate how the service had been transformed following the Big

Conversation and the challenges which still needed to be faced to make further savings over the next few years.

- Members were pleased to note that significant progress had been made in reducing road traffic casualties on Norfolk's roads over the last ten years and this figure had now dropped to less than 300 per year.
- The scheme to introduce a Permit Scheme for Norfolk under the Traffic Management Act 2004 was likely to lower highways service costs by approximately £400,000 in 2013/14 and £800,000 per annum thereafter. This scheme would assist local highway authorities to reduce the congestion and disruption caused by utility companies undertaking works on the highway. It was intended that this Permit Scheme for Norfolk would go live on 1 October 2013.
- The savings from the Public Rights of Way (PROW) identified within the Big Conversation were likely to be removed by Cabinet as savings from other areas had been identified in the strategic review.
- ETD was developing a scheme to progress the enforcement of parking restrictions. This would help to provide a sustainable scheme of operation which in turn would ensure that in areas where parking was restricted, the restrictions were enforced. The District Councils were discharging this function under delegated agreements to the County Council.
- The Cabinet Member for Economic Development thanked officers for the excellent report. She said the growth strategy had achieved so much with less money being available and this was all down the dedication and creativity of the officers involved.
- In order to ensure that all roads remained in good condition for travellers, affordable, tested materials and procedures had been sourced and were used during the continuous cycle of highway maintenance.
- It would be the responsibility of each County Councillor to ensure that their Parish Councils and other contacts knew how to report problems with potholes and other highway problems. Problems on the highway can be reported by using the following link:
<https://online.norfolk.gov.uk/HighwayProblemReport/>
- The links between the economy and health were an important part of the health and wellbeing agenda and would need some further work to ensure consistent levels of improvements could be maintained. Initiatives such as road safety campaigns, planting trees to help raise the health and wellbeing for the people of Norfolk and developing healthy lifestyles were being investigated and developed.

10.4 **RESOLVED** to note the report.

11 Environment, Transport and Development Department Integrated Performance and Finance Monitoring Report 2012/13.

11.1 The Panel received the annexed report (11) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development, updating the Panel on progress made against the 2012/15 service plan actions.

11.2 During the presentation of the report, the following points were noted:

- ETD Energy (fossil fuels) consumption (Carbon dioxide emissions) had moved from red to amber.
- The cumulative sickness absence per full time employee (FTE) was currently 5.5. The Norfolk County Council target was 6.6 days per FTE and if the current trend continued the end of year position for ETD was likely to be 6.05 days per FTE which was less than the NCC target but slightly higher than the ETD departmental target of 5.5 per FTE.
- Data for the period July-September 2012 has been released indicating an additional 870 dwellings were built in Norfolk in quarter 2. This is a considerable improvement on quarter 1, when the figures suggested only 470 dwellings were built. However, despite being much closer to the 981 target, the performance is still noted as being red.
- Good progress was being made against all the targets within the plan.

11.3 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Panel:

- The main concerns raised by the public regarding part night lighting were around the perception of safety and possible vandalism. There was no evidence to show that there had been a rise in anti-social behaviour as a result of the part-night lighting, although the Police would continue to monitor the situation where part-night lighting had been implemented.
- Considerable savings had been made in areas where part-night street lighting had been implemented and Members were reassured that no instances of criminal activity had been reported as a result of part-night lighting.
- Members requested that the actual timings of the switching off of the street lights be monitored as it had been reported that some lights had been switched off 20 minutes earlier than the planned and published time.
- The Tour of Britain had been well received when it had visited Norfolk earlier in the year and it was hoped that it could be brought back to Norfolk next year.

- The Community Construction Fund had been launched in September 2012 and the first round of bidding had closed in October 2012. The scheme had proved very popular with a number of bids being received. A cross-party panel would meet in December to discuss the bids and decide which of these were successful and would receive funding. A range of schemes had been bid for, from extensions to community facilities such as kitchens and toilets, to bus shelters. To be eligible for funding any community submitting a bid needed to have the endorsement of their County Councillor.

11.4 **RESOLVED** to note the report.

12 The County Council's Economic Growth Strategy Half Year Progress Report.

12.1 The Panel received the annexed report (12) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development, updating the Panel on the delivery of the Council's Economic Growth Strategy which was approved by Cabinet in April 2012.

12.2 During the presentation of the report, Members' attention was drawn to the following:

- Enterprise Norfolk, a new business start up programme, had been launched. The scheme would provide advice and support to anyone who wished to start up their own business. The Cabinet Member wished to thank the District Councils for tailoring delivery to local needs and for aligning their funding to the County Council funding.
- The next phase of the World Class Norfolk campaign was being explored. Following the Cabinet Member for Economic Development's visit to China earlier in the year, delegations from a number of large overseas companies had visited Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex to see what benefits the counties could bring to their businesses. It was hoped that this initiative would bring some benefits to Norfolk by opening up different ways of working and raising the profile of Norfolk.
- The Apprenticeships scheme had been launched in September and had proved very popular, receiving positive feedback.
- The Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation would be visiting Westminster in December to present a Business Case for improving the A47 from Great Yarmouth to Peterborough.
- A draft Rail Prospectus for Norfolk had been launched at a Rail Conference held in October 2012. The prospectus had been very well received. Four MPs had attended the conference and provided feedback on the prospectus, after which they had lobbied Ministers individually about improving the services.

12.3 In response to questions from the Panel, the following points were noted:

- All libraries had access to 'COBRA' (Complete Business Reference Advisor) which was an online encyclopaedia and reference resource giving business facts and detailed guides to help people wanting to start their own business. This was a free service in all libraries which was available to everyone including the disabled community. Individuals could click on an area they were interested in and it would give them the information they required. Mentors were also available by telephone to give advice and assistance on producing a business plan.
- The District Councils were working closely with the County Council to progress apprenticeships schemes. In an effort to raise ambitions and aspirations amongst residents, the Cabinet Member for Economic Development would circulate a briefing which could be handed out at Parish Council meetings to help raise awareness of the scheme.
- Members congratulated the officers for progressing all the initiatives included in the report whilst facing the County Council's current financial pressures.
- The Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation confirmed that the work of the Heritage Railways had been included within the Norfolk Rail prospectus which had been launched in October 2012. The Rail Prospectus was now subject to consultation and it was expected that Cabinet would sign off the Prospectus in early 2013.
- The Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation agreed to let Mr East have further information regarding the improvement schemes to the Longwater junction after the meeting.
- In an attempt to reduce delays caused by trains waiting at the Bow junction, and to reduce journey times and increase capacity, to London Liverpool Street station, East Anglian local authorities had requested Network Rail consider making improvements. The full cost of these improvements would be approximately £300m.
- The High Level Output Specification (HLOS) for rail was currently being considered. MPs had been involved in the drafting of the HLOS and supported the case for improvements to the railways across East Anglia to improve reliability, journey times, better quality carriage stock and better infrastructure.
- The Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation was very pleased that the County Council had recently let 7 fully equipped County Farms and 11 bare parcels of land. He added that this was a good news story and it was important that the County Council retain their farm land.

12.4 **RESOLVED** to note the report

13 Traffic Management Act – Norfolk Permit Scheme for Street Works

13.1 The Panel received the annexed report (13) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development, setting out the options for the delivery of a permit scheme for Norfolk.

13.2 In introducing the report the Highways Network Manager informed the Panel that the current practice was that the utility companies informed Norfolk County Council of their intention to work within the highway on a particular date. Under the new permit scheme they would need to give more certainty so that the County Council could make the necessary arrangements to publicise the works and where necessary inform bus companies, so they could make arrangements to divert buses, alter timetables, etc to try to reduce congestion and disruption to road users.

13.3 Norfolk County Council would also comply with the scheme and would also require a permit if they wished to carry out any of its own improvement or maintenance works within the highway.

13.4 The scheme would give the County Council stricter control of street works and also the scope to recover some of the costs when works had not been undertaken appropriately, for instance completed within the specified permit dates.

13.5 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Panel:

- Any person wanting to open the highway for any reason would require a permit from Norfolk County Council.
- The income, which should only cover the Council's costs in dealing with such matters, from the scheme would depend on the actual work undertaken and the fees levied.
- A meeting was to be held on 29 November to look at the issues faced by disabled people when street works were carried out, as priority in many cases appears to be given to traffic rather than pedestrians. Guidance would also be provided to the utility companies and the Council's own workforce about balancing pedestrian requirements with the need to keep traffic flowing.
- The loss of income from reduced parking when streetworks were carried out was not included within the permit scheme, although it was noted that the utility companies (Statutory Undertakers) had provision within the legislation that gave them powers for paying compensation to those unreasonably affected by such street works.
- If utility companies needed to carry out emergency opening of a

highway, the work could be carried out without the need to secure a permit in advance with the paperwork being completed at a later date. It could cause problems if the emergency was on a route already being used as a diversion, but such incidents would need to be resolved as they happened.

13.6 RESOLVED to

- i) Support the development of a Full Permit Scheme (as set out in Appendix 1, Option 4 of the report) for use as the basis for developing a Permit Scheme for Norfolk.
- ii) Note that a Project Team would be set up to develop and implement a Permit Scheme using funding drawn down from Highways reserves on the basis that such funding would be recovered through the scale of Permit fees charged during the initial operation of any scheme introduced.

14 The Economic Benefits of the Norse Group Ltd to Norfolk – Executive Summary

- 14.1 The Panel received the annexed report (14) by the Chair of the Norse Shareholder Committee and the Managing Director of the Norse Group Ltd, which gave a brief overview of the Economic Impacts of the Norse Group, final report to the Norse Group. The report explained how the Norse Group Ltd impacted on the wider economy of Norfolk, in addition to its direct financial contribution to Norfolk County Council. The report was introduced by the Deputy Cabinet Member for Efficiency and the Managing Director of the Norse Group Ltd.
- 14.2 The figures within the report were based on 2011/12 financial year and since then the group had grown by 15%.
- 14.3 Members thanked Norse Group Ltd for their contribution to Norfolk's economy and the fantastic job they were doing in employing local people.
- 14.4 The Cabinet Member for Economic Development congratulated Norse Group Ltd on their enthusiasm for the apprenticeships scheme and noted it was going well.
- 14.5 **RESOLVED** to note the report

(The meeting closed at 12.40 pm)

Chairman