



Norfolk County Council
Minutes of the Meeting Held on 27 April 2009

Present: Mr W Northam in the Chair

Mr A Adams	Mr B Iles
Mr C Armes	Mr C Jordan
Mr J Baskerville	Mr C Joyce
Mr D Baxter	Mr J Joyce
Mr S Bett	Mrs B Lashley
Mr R Blower	Mr C Lloyd Owen
Mrs H Bolt	Mrs S Matthews
Dr A Boswell	Mrs R Monbiot
Mrs J Brown	Mr I Monson
Mr A Byrne	Mr C Mowle
Mr D Callaby	Mr S Murphy
Mr M Carttiss	Mr G Nobbs
Mr B Collins	Mrs T Paines
Miss E Collishaw	Mrs H Panting
Mr J Collop	Mr J Pitt-Pladdy
Mr D Cox	Mr A Pond
Mr S Dunn	Mr R Rockcliffe
Mr T East	Mr J Rogers
Mrs I Floering-Blackman	Mr M Scutter
Mr R Goreham	Mr N Shaw
Mr J Gretton	Mr J Shrimplin
Mr A Gunson	Mr B Spratt
Mrs S Gurney	Mr M Taylor
Mrs B Hacker	Mr A Tomkinson
Mrs G Harris	Miss J Virgo
Mr D Harrison	Mr T Wainwright
Mr P Harwood	Mr B Walker
Mr G Hemming	Mrs C Walker
Mr J Holmes	Mrs C Ward
Mr C How	Ms S Whitaker
Mrs J Howe	Mr A White
Mr C Hull	Mr A Williams
Mr H Humphrey	Mr A Wright
Mrs S Hutson	Mr M Wright

Total present: 68

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from, Mrs J Chamberlin, Mr S Dorrington, Mrs J Eells, Mr P Hacon, Ms I Macdonald, Mr I Mackie, Ms M McKay and Mr P Morse.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman represented the Council at the funeral of Bryan Smith, former Chief Fire Officer. Also in attendance were Mr Richard Rockcliffe and Mr Roy Blower.

The Chairman congratulated Eve Collishaw who was due to be inaugurated as the 100th Lord Mayor of Norwich on the 19th May.

The Chairman said that he had hosted two School Councils from the Alderman Peel High School and Hellesdon High School. Once again all the students acquitted themselves very well.

The Chairman said he had attended the following events since the last Council meeting:

- A reception at RAF Lakenheath to meet the proposed new Vice Commander USAF, Major General Zamzaw.
- The official opening of the Pulham Market Roundabout.
- The Fire and Rescue HQ, Hethersett and the Urban Search and Rescue Unit at Hethersett. The Chairman was very impressed with the commitment of all the fire fighters and their obvious pride in the specialist work they do.
- The Anzac Day Service at Wymondham Abbey.
- The Chairman said that during his term of office he had attended many events at Great Yarmouth and he thanked the Great Yarmouth area members for their unfailing warm welcome which he very much appreciated. Recently he had attended a Civic Dinner for Canon Michael Woods on his retirement, the opening of the Easter Fayre and the placing of the endstone to mark the completion of Wherrymans Walk.

The Chairman announced that at the end of June, as part of the National Armed Forces Day celebrations, the then Chairman of the Council together with the Lord Lieutenant would be hosting an Armed Forces Day reception to present 50 Armed Services veterans with the Armed Forces Badge. Any Member who served in the Armed Forces who had not yet had their Armed Forces Veterans Badge and who wished to receive the badge were asked to contact Democratic Services Support Office.

The Chairman announced that this Council meeting would be the last for twenty-three members who were retiring and he wished them all long and

happy retirements. The Chairman thanked all members for their support and hard work, and he especially thanked Mr Shaun Murphy for his support as Vice Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were noted against Item 7, Planning (Regulatory) Committee meeting held on 20 March 2009, paragraph 1
Marsham: Wood Farm: Green and Kitchen/Food Waste Composting Operation

- Mr T Williams declared a prejudicial interest as a Director of NORSE.

The following declared personal interests as members of Broadland District Council:

- Mr A Adams
- Mr S Dunn
- Mrs S Gurney
- Mr J Joyce

4. County Council elections 2009 – Terms of Office of Independent Members of the Standards Committee

Mr Cox moved the report which was seconded by Mr Humphrey.

Mr Scutter asked why it was proposed to extend the Standards Committee elections by six months when the County Council elections were being postponed by only one month and he was advised that this related to the difficulty of recruiting members over the summer and the reasons set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report.

Ms Whitaker asked how it would be decided which members of the Standards Committee would be elected for terms of office of 3 or 4 years. The Director of Corporate Resources and Cultural Services said that the Head of Law would provide a written response.

RESOLVED:

To authorise:

- (i) the extension of the terms of office of all existing independent members of the Standards Committee from 31 June 2009 to 31 December 2009;
- (ii) the Monitoring Officer, in preparing recruitment packs for new independent members, to invite applications for terms of office of 3 and 4 years respectively, expiring on 31 December of the relevant year, to ensure there is overlap between trained, experienced members of the Standards Committee at all times, including immediately after a County Council election.

5. Scheme of Members' Allowances

Mr Cox moved the report which was seconded by Mr Humphrey.

Mr East said that whilst he had no hesitation in accepting the recommendation not to increase the scheme of members' allowances in line with the local authority employee pay award for 2009/2010, he felt that those councillors who needed financial help should be able to claim the full allowance. In response, Mr Cox advised members that if they were concerned about the voluntary discretion element they could make representation to the Independent Remuneration Panel when it reviewed the scheme later in the year.

Mrs Lashley said that this proposal should be deferred until such time as the local authority pay award was known.

In response, Mr Cox said that although the Local Authority pay award had not yet been settled, a pay award increase of 0.5% would remain on the table until June. However, Mr Cox said that he believed councillors should not accept a pay increase this year and that this report referred only to councillor allowances.

Mr Nobbs moved an amendment that a decision be postponed until the Chief Executive and Deputy confirm whether they would also forego any increase in their pay. This amendment was seconded by Mr Jordan.

Following debate and vote the amendment was LOST.

Council then voted on the original motion and it was:

RESOLVED: that the Council does not increase the scheme of members' allowances in line with the local authority employee pay award for 2009/2010.

6. Cabinet Recommendations – 6 April 2009

Mr Cox moved the recommendations from the Cabinet.

Local Transport Plan Settlement and Highways Programme 2009/2010/2011, paragraph 1

RESOLVED:

- (i) To approve the suggested Transport Plan programme for 2009/10 and 2010/11 as detailed in the Overview and Scrutiny Panel report, attached to the Cabinet Report.
- (ii) To approve action by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development under Chief Officer Powers to bring forward schemes from the 2010/11 Transport Plan programme into the 2009/10 programme if slippage occurs.

Norfolk Youth Offending Team Service Plan 12009/12, paragraph 2

RESOLVED: To approve the Norfolk Youth Offending Team Service Plan 2009/2012.

Trading Standards Service Plan 2009/2010, paragraph 3

RESOLVED: To approve the adoption of the Trading Standards Service Plan 2009/10.

7. Report of the Cabinet Meeting held on 6 April 2009

In moving the report, Mr Cox drew Members' attention to key items and invited questions.

Member Questions, paragraph 1.1

Mr Scutter asked how many additional work placements had been made or promised.

In response, Mr Humphrey, Cabinet Member for Human Resources, Finance, Property and Corporate Affairs, said that 152 requests for placements had been received and 72 people had been placed but that he would provide a written update.

Mrs Howe said that the response received from Mr Humphrey to the supplementary question had taken 16 days to arrive rather than the 7 days required under the Constitution. Mr Humphrey apologised for the delay.

Member Questions, paragraph 1.2

Mr Callaby voiced concern about the abandoned tyre stacks at Tattersett Park, which he said the Environment Agency had made no attempt to remove. In response, Mr Cox confirmed that the authority would continue to liaise with the Environment Agency to seek the removal of the tyres.

Overview and Scrutiny Panel Issues, paragraph 2

Mr Scutter said that the Budget had said there would be new money to replace that which had been lost from post-16 funding. He asked what the current position was.

In response, Mrs Monbiot, Cabinet Member for Children's Services praised the local LSC but said that the LSC nationally had created a huge disturbance regarding funding as the figures were wrong but that as far as she was aware, the LSC had now restored this funding and therefore students would be able to access courses.

Mr East said he was delighted that the Council's bid for £91m PFI credits had been approved but he hoped that technologies other than incinerators would be adopted for Contract B.

In response, Mr Monson, Cabinet Member for Waste Management and the Environment, said that the authority was technology neutral and would aim to remain so. Bids received would be judged on merit and evaluated to strict criteria and the technology would be chosen only when the preferred bidder had been selected.

2008-09 Finance Monitoring Report, paragraph 4

Mrs Lashley asked how much of the proposed savings had been lost because of the delays to the Park & Ride proposals. She asked how the

loss of income over the last 3 months of the financial year had been covered and how the losses from the further delays would be covered.

In response, Mr Gunson, Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation, said that he was disappointed by the delays to the Park & Ride proposals. Any financial losses would need to be accounted for in the public transport budget, and so far as concessionary passes were concerned, senior citizens would be disadvantaged for a longer period than expected.

State of the Economy – Update, paragraph 6

Mr James Joyce said that he had received a response to his question on payment performance, raised at the last Council meeting, but he reiterated that the Council should be setting an example by paying all invoices within twenty days.

In response, Mr Humphrey said that the authority recognised that small and medium enterprises would benefit from early payment within twenty days but that there were difficulties in identifying them. There was a need for benefits to be directed to where they could do most good.

Payment Levels for Independent Sector in 2009/10, paragraph 7

Mrs Howe said that care services should be linked to quality as well as cost and an ongoing comparison should be included in care service reports.

In response, Mr Mowle, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services said that all members were interested in the quality of care which would now be monitored by the Council for Quality and Care (CQC) and the idea of rewarding annual financial increases to the quality of care would help to drive up the quality of care. Comparative costs and comparative improvements should be reported to the Overview & Scrutiny Panel annually.

School Organisation Proposals, paragraph 8

Ms Whitaker asked about the Pay and Conditions Policy for schools and whether those schools who become Foundation Trusts would be bound to implement the outcome of the Modern Reward Strategy. Mrs Monbiot said she would request a response from the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development and circulate this to members.

Mr Tomkinson expressed support for the agreed proposals for Earsham and Gillingham VA First Schools to extend their age-ranges to become 5 – 11 primary schools. Mrs Monbiot thanked Mr Tomkinson for his support and confirmed that the authority was putting a lot of funding into the Earsham and Gillingham VA First Schools to allow them to become 5 – 11 primary schools.

Mrs Brown asked whether the Expression of Interest for an academy in King's Lynn would be delayed due to a lack of funding. In response, Mrs Monbiot said that the delay was very unfortunate but that the authority would be moving ahead with plans to develop an academy in King's Lynn and that suitable land was currently being sought.

Review of the Primary Strategy for Change (Primary Capital Programme), paragraph 9

Mrs Howe said that capital slippage monies should be reallocated and spent as a matter of urgency. In response, Mr Humphrey said that there could sometimes be delays to items in Capital Programmes and it would not always be practicable to use monies set aside on other projects as there would then be no funding left for the original project.

Admission Arrangements for September 2010, paragraph 11

Mr Scutter asked whether cluster and academy schools would have their own admissions/transfer procedures - he said that he hoped that the current excellent admissions procedures could be maintained. In response, Mrs Monbiot advised that the Council was fully funding all the work on admission arrangements as the Government have insisted that local authorities take on admissions procedures where students transfer out of school term.

Delays Occurring on County and Trunk Roads as a Result of Roadworks and Incidents – Scrutiny Working Group Proposed Final Report, paragraph 14

Mr Pitt-Pladdy said that the condition of 'B' and 'C' roads in the County was a disgrace with surfaces degrading and numerous potholes and he suggested that there should be a serious examination by engineers as to the sub-contractors they use.

In response, Mr Gunson said that the large number of potholes had been caused by a very hard winter but recent good weather had allowed the engineers to catch up on this work to a large extent.

8. Report of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 24 March 2009

Items of urgent business, paragraph 1.1

Mrs Howe challenged the wording that the Department for Transport (DfT) would 'deliver continuing improvements' because she said there had been no improvements to rail services, instead there had been a deterioration of services. Ms Whitaker confirmed that this was a direct quote taken from the DfT letter.

Community Cohesion, paragraph 2

Ms Whitaker paid tribute to the Head of Youth Justice, Sue Massey and the County Community Cohesion Officer, Claire Bailey, for their contribution to community cohesion.

In response to a question, members were advised that the Community Cohesion Strategy was for the whole of Norfolk.

Mr Humphrey confirmed that Jo Richardson, the Corporate Equalities & Diversity Manager, was a member of the Equality Strategy Group and it was largely thanks to her work that the authority had received 3 stars. Mr Humphrey advised that Jo Richardson also worked closely with Sue Massey and Claire Bailey on the work of community cohesion.

In response to a question from Mrs Brown, Ms Whitaker confirmed that schools do have a Community Cohesion Strategy and there were a lot of seminars available to schools on the subject of community cohesion and information was also available via Esinet.

In response to a question from Mr East, Ms Whitaker confirmed that the Community Cohesion Strategy included disability, deprivation, discrimination, disadvantage and diversity.

Ms Whitaker said that she understood that the Community Cohesion presentation would be included as part of the member induction programme.

Supporting people in difficult economic times, paragraph 4

Ms Whitaker advised that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee had agreed to continue to receive updates until the first meeting of the Committee following the Council elections and at that time the new Cabinet Scrutiny Committee members could decide whether they wished to receive further updates. Ms Whitaker thanked Mr Rockcliffe for providing regular updates to the Committee. She noted that the Council had only spent £236,000 on projects and suggested that this would not keep people in business for very long as this amount represented less than 1% of the £27.5m Capital Programme slippage. Ms Whitaker said that the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee were unconvinced that there was nothing further the Council could do and she asked that initiatives from other Councils be considered.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

9. Report of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 21 April 2009

Final Report of the Child Poverty Working Group, paragraph 1

Ms Whitaker said that the Committee had agreed that two of the report's recommendations (i) to approach the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) concerning a pilot scheme to offer bridging loans for the period between benefits and work and (ii) to offer free meals for those children already entitled to free school meals attending play schemes during the holidays, could be implemented in the short term.

Mrs Panting suggested there was a strong link between Child Poverty and the wish to make Norfolk a strong and prosperous community for young and old alike. She said that children born into poverty have the capacity to be as enterprising as the rest of us but for too many this capacity is stifled even before they go to school. She asked members to remember to cherish the poorest children as they would their own, as they may bring unexpected gifts.

Mr How said that in order to understand the root cause of Child Poverty the authority must get back to tackling underlying deprivation in the County and he hoped that work would continue following the County Council elections.

Mr Lloyd Owen thanked members of the Child Poverty Working Group for the excellent report. He said that the report gave no indication of the costs involved in implementing the pilot scheme to offer bridging loans for the period between benefits and work or the free meals, as he had requested. However, Mr Lloyd Owen said that he believed the costs of offering bridging loans would be minimal and he hoped that the Cabinet would be contacting the relevant Government department about instigating this pilot scheme.

In response, Ms Whitaker said that the costs of implementing the pilot scheme with the DWP would not be known until after the Authority had met with the DWP. If time permitted, costings for free meals would be included as an addendum to the report. However, the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee had agreed that this report should be progressed.

Ms Whitaker paid tribute to the Working Group members and said that this had been a very worthwhile piece of work.

Supporting people in difficult economic times, paragraph 3.2

Mr Pitt-Pladdy suggested that all roundabouts, including the Pulham St Mary roundabout, should be lit at night and a Capital programme project such as this would help support people in difficult economic circumstances.

10. Report of the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 29 January 2009

RESOLVED: to note the report.

11. Report of the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 16 April 2009

The Effects of Housing on Physical and Mental Health, paragraph 1

Mrs Howe said that she had chaired the Impact of Housing on Physical and Mental Health Working Group and that the response received from the Local Area Agreement (LAA) Improving Housing Outcome Champion had been both disappointing and regrettable. Mr Baxter supported Mrs Howe's comment.

Primary Angioplasty Services, paragraph 4

Mr Tomkinson said that the primary Angioplasty Unit was now up and working having been supported to a very large extent by the local charity 'Balloons for Hearts'. Mr Tomkinson said that this is an excellent service for our County and he congratulated the Charity on its work.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

12. Report of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 1 April 2009

RESOLVED: to note the report.

13. Report of the Planning (Regulatory) Committee Meeting held on 20 March 2009

Mr T Williams declared a prejudicial interest and withdrew from the discussion during this item.

Mr Harrison said he was concerned that the protocol of the Planning (Regulatory) Committee was not been met in this instance. He said that as NEWS is a subsidiary of NORSE the Chairman of the Committee, Mr Baxter, should have declared a conflict of interest because of his involvement with NORSE. Neither the applicant nor NEWS had given 48 hours notice that they wished to speak, nor had they been included on the speaker list and by allowing them to speak this had deprived Mr Harrison of the right to speak last as local member. Whilst the County Council's Head of Law and Monitoring Officer had confirmed that the meeting was conducted appropriately, Mr Harrison felt that the meeting had been neither fair nor within the framework of the protocol.

In response, Mr Baxter advised that he had withdrawn from the discussion for this item and that Mr Rogers, as Chairman, had exercised his discretion and allowed the applicant and NEWS to speak before the decision was taken. The Chairman derived his authority from Appendix 10 Rule 19 of the Constitution, which allows those chairing meetings wide discretion in the handling of committee meetings. The Head of Law and Monitoring Officer had stated that she was satisfied that the decision taken in relation to the application had been taken properly.

Mrs Howe said that the question concerning Mr Baxter's possible conflict of interest had not been answered and she requested a written response.

In response, Mr Baxter said that it was unclear what conflict of interest Mrs Howe was referring to as he was not a director of NORSE.

Mr C Joyce said that he had not supported the application but he did support the Chairman, Mr Rogers, in his handling of this item.

Mr Rogers said that he had chaired the Planning (Regulatory) Committee for this item which had been conducted in the correct manner.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

14. Report of the Joint Highways Agency Committee Meeting Held on 22 January 2009

Highway Performance Monitoring of the Highways Agency Agreement, paragraph 12

Mr Pond said that he was very pleased with the standards of pothole repair in South Norfolk.

Major Roadworks – Regular Monitoring, paragraph 14

Mr How said that the dualling of the A11 should now come to fruition.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

15. Report of the Joint Museums Committee Meeting Held on 13 March 2009

Mr Gretton paid tribute to all members of the Joint Museums Committee for their commitment to the Committee over the last four years and he said that over the last ten years Norfolk Museums had been through a golden age.

Members paid tribute to Mr Gretton for his guidance and leadership as Chairman of the Joint Museums Committee. Mr Nobbs also wished Mr Gretton well in his retirement.

Mr Collins said that the Time and Tide Museum in Great Yarmouth would shortly have a new £0.5m attraction, a submersible submarine called the Mantis, and he thanked Mr Gretton, in his role of Chairman of the Joint Museums, for his guidance and initiative.

Mr Pitt-Pladdy was pleased that schools could gain free entry to museums and hoped this would continue. He also hoped that this could be extended to offer schools free travel to museums.

Mr Lloyd Owen requested the continuation of joint agreements as museums and archives in Norfolk had been subject to joint agreements since 1974 and this had allowed Norfolk to outshine many of the other shire counties.

Mr Taylor paid tribute to Mr Lloyd Owen for his chairmanship of the Norfolk Records Committee and for his involvement as a member of the Norfolk Windmills Trust.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

16. Appointments to Committees etc (Standing Item)

There were no appointments to Committee.

The meeting concluded at 12.10pm.

CHAIRMAN



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