

Policy and Resources Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Monday 23 March 2015

10:00am Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich

Present:

Mr G Nobbs (Chairman)

Mr T Adams

Mr S Agnew

Mr M Baker

Mr M Castle

Mr A Dearnley

Mr J Dobson

Mr T FitzPatrick

Mr T Garrod

Mr D Harrison (Vice-Chair)

Mr C Jordan

Mrs J Leggett

Mr S Morphew

Mr A Proctor

Mr D Ramsbotham

Dr M Strong

Mrs A Thomas

Substitute Members Present:

None

Other Members Present:

Mr A White

Mr J Joyce

Mr R Bearman

Mrs M Somerville

Mrs C Walker

1. Apologies

- 1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2 Chairman's Announcements

- 2.1 The Chairman congratulated Mr C Jordan on his recent election to Leader of the Conservative Group at Norfolk County Council.
- 2.2 The Committee was reminded about the Strategic and Financial Planning 2016-19 workshops which had been arranged for 25 March and 17 April and the Chairman urged all members to attend.
- 2.3 The Committee was also reminded that a special meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee had been convened for 20 April to consider the governance review and recommendations to full Council.

3 Minutes

- 3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 January 2015 were confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman, subject to the word “reimaging” on page 4 of the minutes being amended to read “reimagining”.

4 Declarations of Interest

- 4.1 Mr J Dobson declared an other interest in item 16 – Review of the Residential and Non-Residential Charging Policy Associated with War Veterans as he was a member of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme.

5 Item of Urgent Business:

- 5.1 There were no items of urgent business.

6 Local Member Issues

- 6.1 No Local Member questions were received.

7 The Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk Partnership with the Jiangsu Province.

- 7.1 The Committee received and **noted** a presentation from Mrs Colleen Walker and Mr Peter Manning (Essex County Council), outlining the work of the Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex Partnership with Jiangsu Province, China.

- 7.2 Some examples of some of the high profile benefits that this partnership will generate for Norfolk are noted below:

- The partnership had been working with a Chinese medical company, who manufactured a pill with a camera inside it which could be swallowed in order to examine the gut. The pill would remove the need for more invasive examinations, such as colonoscopy. The Chinese medical company had identified the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital (NNUH) as a good location to carry out medical trials, as the hospital specialised in gastroenterology. The trial had taken place in November and had proved very successful and the Chinese medical company was now considering setting up an office within the Norwich Research Park.
- The possibility of an exchange of artefacts between the Norwich Castle Museum and the museum in Nanjing, which was home to the terracotta soldiers, was being explored.
- Due to the links already established by the partnership, a six month pilot had been planned to take place at the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital to bring six Jiangsu doctors to the region for six months to observe doctors in the region. The NNUH was very keen on this project and the partnership was working with the Director of Research and Development to ensure that the Jiangsu doctors come from university hospitals that had a corresponding interest in research in the fields of cardiovascular, diabetes, gastroenterology and orthopaedics and the planned outcome for the pilot would be links established for NNUH with research facilities in Jiangsu.

7.3 In response to a question from the Committee, it was confirmed that the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) were aware of, and supported, the project.

8 **Sharing Information Effectively for the purposes of Public Protection in Norfolk.**

8.1 The Managing Director introduced the item and explained its importance to all of the Council's safeguarding responsibilities, children and adults. Government's expectations in regard to data-sharing were clearly expressed in its response to failures in Rotherham. The Secretaries of State for Health, Communities and Local Government, Education, Home Office and Justice had jointly written to all local authorities asking that they ensure the appropriate arrangements were in place. In this context and on behalf of the whole council, the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services submitted the report.

8.2 The annexed report (7) by the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services was received. The report set out the arrangements for the Council to effectively share information with its partner organisations and proposed a shift in the organisational culture to one that operated in a high trust climate with partners and that started from a premise that if it was in the interests of public protection, information would be shared.

8.3 In the course of the discussion the following key points were made:

- In order that a uniform approach to both adults and children's services could be provided, new government guidance was expected in the near future. This would provide a uniform approach and a continuity of services rather than having separate public interest tests for each service.
- The new framework set out the Norfolk County Council procedure for sharing information and this would be the procedure to follow when requests for information that might be of a safeguarding or public protection nature were received. It included the development of operational procedures which included Directors signing off release of information for the purposes of public protection.

8.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to endorse and agree the policy framework to be adopted by Norfolk County Council for information sharing in the interests of public protection.

9 **Delivering DNA (Digital Norfolk Ambition)**

9.1 The annexed report (8) by the Executive Director of Resources was received, together with the exempt annex (18).

9.2 In the course of discussion the following key points were made:

- The Executive Director of Resources apologised to Members for the recent problems experienced with Outlook and emails. The problems had been

caused by a glitch at the Microsoft Exchange which had affected a number of users. The issue had been fixed on 20 March and the system had been restored without any loss of data. Unfortunately, due to the additional work carried out over the weekend by Microsoft, the networks had needed rebooting and this had caused additional problems until the reboot had completed. As Norfolk County Council had not been notified of the weekend work, they had been unable to put contingency arrangements in place. Members were reassured that contingency arrangements would be put in place to mitigate problems in the future.

- The Executive Director of Resources advised that future reports would include value for money information and also more non-technical information.
- In the first instance, the DNA equipment roll-out had concentrated on the larger buildings owned by the County Council. Once this had been completed, roll-out would take place at the smaller sites. The libraries had recently received the new software systems and would be receiving the new computer equipment as part of the DNA programme.
- The Hewlett Packard Management Service had been the successful bidder and had been awarded the contract as they provided pre-defined security arrangements which had been tested by a branch of GCHQ and the Cabinet office. The improved security offered by this management service provided Norfolk County Council with better data security back-up than if it stood alone. Other partners, including the Police were also using the system and this allowed for secure information sharing to take place when necessary.
- Security breaches occurred very infrequently, although when they did happen they tended to have a high impact. The actual percentages would be difficult to ascertain, but Members were reassured that the security centre, headed up by Mark Crannage, Information Management Service Manager, dealt with any incidents as soon as they occurred.
- The Strategic Objectives of the DNA project had not altered during the course of the roll-out of the new equipment. The new computers included software which provided opportunities to have face to face discussions and allowed staff to work remotely while maintaining access to email and electronically stored files.
- The roll-out programme for laptops had been aligned to the refurbishment of County Hall.

9.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to

- Note that after initial delays, good progress was being made on the more routine aspects of the programme – device rollout and server migration.
- Note that DNA was essential to resolving a number of critical issues for the council – in particular better information sharing and better targeting of resources – and that good progress was being made in these areas.

- Agree to receive an updated programme and a further financial update on 1 June 2015.

10 Reprourement of telephony and data network services.

10.1 The annexed report (9) by the Executive Director of Resources was received.

10.2 In the course of discussion the following key points were made:

- It was acknowledged that Councillors should have been included in the list of internal customers who had taken part in the stakeholder consultation.
- Norfolk County Council would not be receiving any brokerage from promoting the telephony and data network services to schools. Procuring a service for all schools would avoid them having to procure individual services and was more cost-effective.
- Other partner organisations who decided to participate in the contract would pay for their share of the costs and for their usage.
- Members asked that a mechanism be found for Council to obtain financial benefit from procuring this service on behalf of schools and other third parties.
- The Committee requested that the word “reasonable” be removed from Section D Critical Success Factors.

10.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- approve the proposed new contractual arrangements set out at section 1B of the report.
- Note the list of stakeholders and stakeholder engagement to date as set out in section 1C of the report.
- Approve the proposed critical success factors at section 1D of the report.
- Approve the proposed evaluation weightings at section 1E of the report.

11 Exemption to Contract Standing orders for Homecare in the East of the County

11.1 The annexed report (10) by the Executive Director of Adult Social Services was received. The report provided notification that an exemption to Contract Standing Orders had been approved to allow the Homecare arrangements in two areas of the east of the county to be extended until mid-April 2016.

11.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- note the exemption to Contract Standing Orders, which had been approved by the Head of Procurement and Head of Law.

12 Monitoring of Financial Savings 2015-16

12.1 The annexed report (11) by the Executive Director of Finance (Interim) was received. The report provided an overview of the progress in delivering the savings agreed by the County Council at its meeting on 16 February 2015.

12.2 In the course of discussion the following key points were made:

- The fourth priority which had been agreed by full Council in February 2015 had not been included in the report as it included only the savings which had been agreed by Policy & Resources Committee before the additional priority had been agreed. Monitoring of the fourth priority would be included in reports from the new financial year.
- Although the report referred to “critical” amber, the Committee was advised that there was only one amber rating.
- With regard to the library books which had been sold, the Executive Director of Finance (Interim) would provide members with the details and whether the money had yet been received.

Note: The Executive Director of Finance (Interim) has since provided the following response to Members on 23 March 2015 - *The books were due to be valued a few days ago, but the valuer postponed, due to being ill. He is due to visit in the next couple of weeks and we will take appropriate action based on his views and advice. (source Jennifer Holland).*

The RAG rating of this item – see page 46 of the P&R agenda – is Amber

- The Executive Director of Finance (Interim) explained that use of the word “lean” was a business concept and used to ensure that the processes were as efficient as possible and were delivering the best possible services.
- The Executive Director of Finance (Interim) agreed to amend the term “reducing standards” to read “reducing standards, including eligibility” which more clearly explained the aims.
- The Executive Director of Finance (Interim) agreed to include a glossary of terms in future reports.
- The additional £500,000 savings which had been identified would be included in future reports from the new financial year.

12.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- approve the format for the regular reporting of savings tracking in 2015-16; and
- confirm that this report provided members with the necessary information to fulfil their scrutiny role and ensure that effective action was being undertaken by Chief Officers to deliver the agreed level of savings.

13 Performance and Risk Monitoring Report

- 13.1 The annexed report (12) by the Head of Business Intelligence and Performance Service and Corporate Planning and Partnerships Service was received. The report proposed changes to the way in which performance information and analysis was reported to the Committee and the other service committees.
- 13.2 The Managing Director advised Members that oversight of the Council's performance was the responsibility of Policy & Resources Committee and that they should receive the information required to satisfy this role.
- 13.3 In the course of discussion the following key points were made:
- Members requested a workshop session be organised to give them an opportunity to commission the performance information which they wished to receive and gain understanding of the meanings of the pictorial representations included in the report.
 - The Committee **agreed** that more in-depth analysis of the council's business mileage should be undertaken to reduce expenditure.
 - Members requested that the Children's Services element of the report should be formatted in the same way as the reports from the other service departments.
- 13.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:
- Agree the revised approach to performance management, including a strengthened role for the Policy and Resources Committee in overseeing and assuring performance across the council, as outlined in Section 3 of the report.
 - Review and comment on the performance information in Section 4 of the report.
 - Review and comment on the new, trial format of the performance dashboard in Appendix A of the report.
 - Carry out a more in-depth analysis of corporate business mileage to try to reduce business miles further.

14 A. 2014-15 Revenue monitoring report month 9 (December 2014)

B. 2014-15 Revenue monitoring report month 10 (January 2015).

- 14.1 The annexed reports (13a and 13b) by the Executive Director of Finance (Interim) were received.
- 14.2 In respect of month 9 (December 2014) the Committee **RESOLVED** to note
- Revenue expenditure is forecast to underspend by £0.919m (previous month £0.328m) on a net budget of £308.397m.
 - General balances were forecast to be £19.00m at 31 March 2015 before

taking into account the forecast underspend.

14.3 In respect of month 10 (January 2015) the Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Note that Revenue expenditure was forecast to underspend by £1.043m on a net budget of £308.397m;
- Note that General Balances are forecast to be £19.000m at 31 March 2015, before taking into account the forecast underspend;
- Approve the creation of a new Scottow Enterprise Park trading account reserve as set out in paragraph 3 and paragraph 7.7 of the report.
- Recommend to County Council the removal of the Lowest Common Denominator assessment from the 2015-16 Annual Investment and Treasury Strategy, as explained in paragraph 3 and section 8 of the report.
- Approve three debt write-offs over £10,000 totalling £64,423.05 as set out in paragraph 3 of the report and paragraph 9.5 of the report.
- Recommend that Chief Officers identify and address areas of expenditure where the raising of orders after the invoice date was prevalent, in particular high value and high-volume commitments in Children's Services, Resources and Finance, and to report progress to this committee.

15 **A. 2014-15 Capital Finance monitoring report month 9 (December 2014)**

B. 2014-15 Capital Finance monitoring report month 10 (January 2015).

15.1 The annexed reports (14a and 14b) by the Executive Director of Finance (Interim) were received.

15.2 In respect of month 9 (December 2014) the Committee **RESOLVED** to note

- the revised expenditure and funding of the 2014-17 capital programme and the changes which had occurred following the position reported elsewhere on this agenda, as set out in Section 1 of Annex A of the report.
- the progress towards the achievement of the 2014-15 programme, as set out in section 2 of Annex A of the report.
- the proposed changes to the disposals schedule and the impact on the capital receipts reserve, summarised in Section 4 of Annex A and further detailed in Appendix 5 of the report.
- the impact of using borrowing to finance the programme on future revenue budgets, as identified in Appendix 2 of the report.

15.3 In respect of month 10 (January 2015) the Committee **RESOLVED** to note:

- the revised expenditure and funding of the 2014-17 capital programme and the changes which had occurred following the position reported elsewhere on this agenda, as set out in Section 1 of Annex A of the report.

- The progress towards the achievement of the 2014-15 programme, as set out in Section 2 of Annex A of the report.
- The proposed changes to the disposals schedule and the impact on the capital receipts reserve, summarised in Section 4 of Annex A and further detailed in Appendix 5 of the report.
- The impact of using borrowing to finance the programme on future revenue budgets, as identified in Appendix 2 of the report.

16 Annual report on the Norfolk Infrastructure Fund

- 16.1 The annexed report (15) by the Executive Director Community and Environmental Services was received. The report provided the Committee with a progress update of the activity and spend in 2014/15 and outlined commitments already scheduled after this financial year. The report had been considered by the Economic Development Sub-Committee at its meeting on 19 March 2015.
- 16.2 In response to a question, the Committee was informed that the Economic Development Sub-Committee had requested a scoping paper be brought to its next meeting about Mobile Phone coverage, taking into account the work already carried out by the working group.

- 16.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the report:

17 Review of the Residential and Non-Residential Charging Policy Associated with War Veterans.

- 17.1 The annexed report (16) by the Executive Director Adult Social Services was received. The report provided the Committee with a review of the charging policy for Residential and Non-Residential care that was associated with War Veterans, and considered the issues made by the Royal British Legion as part of the national campaign
- 17.2 Mr G Nobbs proposed, seconded by Mr M Baker, the following motion:
- After the final Accounts have closed for the year, officers are asked to prepare considered funding options to be brought to the next available Council meeting after the Annual General Meeting.
- 17.3 Mr M Baker made a comment to the Committee about the fact that the government were sending soldiers to war, who were laying down their lives for their country in the course of their duties and receiving no financial support when they returned, often with serious injuries, to civilian life.
- 17.4 On being put to the vote, with 9 votes in favour and 8 votes against, the motion was **CARRIED** and the Committee so **RESOLVED**.

The meeting concluded at 12.05pm

CHAIRMAN



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