

Norfolk County Council**Minutes of the Meeting Held on 17 June 2013**

Present:

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| Agnew Stephen | Iles Brian |
| Aldred Colin | Jordan Cliff |
| Askew Stephen | Joyce James |
| Baker Michael | Kemp Alexandra |
| Bearman Richard | Kiddle-Morris Mark |
| Bird Richard | Law Jason |
| Borrett Bill | Leggett Judy |
| Boswell Andrew | Long Brian |
| Bremmer Bert | Mackie Ian |
| Brociek-Coulton Julie | Monson Ian |
| Byrne Alec | Morgan Elizabeth |
| Carttiss Michael | Morphew Steve |
| Chenery of Horsbrugh Michael | Nobbs George |
| Childs Jonathon | Northam Wyndham |
| Clancy Stuart | Parkinson-Hare Rex |
| Coke Toby | Perkins Jim |
| Collis David | Proctor Andrew |
| Corlett Emma | Ramsbotham David |
| Cox Hilary | Richmond William |
| Crawford Denis | Roper Daniel |
| Dearnley Adrian | Sands Mike |
| Dewsbury Margaret | Shaw Nigel |
| Dixon Nigel | Smith Matthew |
| Dobson John | Smith Roger |
| East Tim | Somerville Margaret |
| FitzPatrick Tom | Spratt Bev |
| Foss Edward | Storey Martin |
| Foulger Colin | Strong Marie |
| Gilmour Paul | Thomas Alison |
| Grey Alan | Thomas David |
| Gunson Adrian | Timewell John |
| Gurney Shalagh | Virgo Judith |
| Hacon Pat | Ward John |
| Hannah, Brian | Watkins Brian |
| Harrison David | Whitaker Sue |
| Hebborn Stan | White Tony |
| Humphrey Harry | Wilby Martin |

Total present: 74

Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received from Mr T Adams, Mr M Castle, Mrs J Chamberlin, Mr T Garrod, Ms D Gihawi, Mr J Mooney, Mr P Smyth, Mrs C Walker and Mrs M Wilkinson.

1 Chairman's Announcements

- 1.1 The Chairman reminded Members that she would like the meeting to be conducted in a respectful fashion.

2 Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 No declarations were made.

3 Questions to the Leader of the Council

The following questions and replies were noted:

3.1 Question from Mr Borrett

Could the Leader confirm that the Highways Procurement Project would proceed at its original figure of £40m?

The Leader advised that he would take advice from officers and write to Mr Borrett with a response.

3.2 Question from Mr Bearman

In January this year the personnel committee received a letter from Unison to request the council to implement a living wage of £7.45 per hour, by reviewing the pay rates for jobs currently paid at less than this rate by Norfolk County Council. Would the leader support Unisons proposals to move this Council to a 'living wage' council?

The Leader responded that he had spoken with Unison and assured them that there were very few staff, if any, who did not receive the living wage. The problem mainly affected staff employed within schools who were not directly employed by the County Council. It was an aspiration of Mr Nobbs that every resident of Norfolk should receive a living wage.

3.3 Question from Dr Strong

Would the Leader please convey to all Officers the confidence of the Liberal Democrat Group in the standard and professionalism of their work?

The Leader advised that he deplored the recent attacks in social media on some officers. He noted that officers had never given advice for malicious or dishonest reasons. It was the job of councillors to challenge advice from officers but this was done with the intention of doing what was best for Norfolk.

3.4 Question from Mr R Smith

The Leader should be congratulated on his strong rebuttal of several Norfolk MP's unhelpful allegations that there is currently a lack of leadership in the Children's Services department. Would the Leader commend his public response to Council and confirm that Members and officers would continue to work solidly together to resolve the issues raised in recent OFSTED reports

both in regard to schools, LA support and safeguarding?

The Leader advised that he had a clear commitment to Children's Services which was evidenced by the fact he had appointed two Cabinet Members to the department, for Safeguarding and Education & Schools. His last act as the Chair of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee had been to request that safeguarding be looked into. The MP intervention was extremely unhelpful and party leaders across the county had not been aware of it in advance. It was hoped that MP's would help in other areas such as cuts to Government funding.

3.5 Question from Ms Corlett

Local head teachers were dismayed at the statement by Norfolk MP's. They have stated that they felt well supported by Children's Services and have confirmed this to OFSTED. Could Members be assured that no knee-jerk reactions would take place in response to the MP concerns?

The Leader noted that there would be no knee jerk reactions made, although there was concern that Children's Services had not performed as well as in neighbouring counties. He was working closely with the Managing Director in order to proceed with improvements.

3.6 Question from Dr Boswell

Would the Leader ensure that the draft programme for the new Local Transport Board prioritised additional road construction on the basis of improving road safety by localised and cost effective improvements that focused specifically on reducing accident black spots?

The Leader responded that road safety was vitally important and would be a priority for officers.

3.7 Question from Mrs Leggett

Does the Leader reaffirm paragraph 47 of the OFSTED safeguarding report which stated that the Director of Children's Services shows a strong commitment to the protection of children. Can the Leader offer assurances that actions which had to be taken immediately and those which had to be actioned within three months had been taken and that there was evidence to support this?

The Leader confirmed that the actions had been completed and that he did endorse paragraph 47.

3.8 Question from Mr Watkins

With an increasingly competitive jobs market, young people need more skills, qualifications and training than ever before. For a variety of reasons some parents find it difficult to support their children in terms of education provision and support at home. Can the Leader or lead Cabinet Member confirm whether the issue would be addressed through the current improvement plan?

The Cabinet Member for Safeguarding confirmed that this was a core part of the improvement strategy.

3.9 Question from Mr Dobson

Has the Leader read the additional specific pledge contained in the Norfolk

Labour Party manifesto which stated that Labour would use all legal means to suspend plans for building the incinerator so that a detailed study of current methods of waste disposal could be undertaken, and had he understood this pledge?

Mr Nobbs replied that he remembered and had written the pledge. All legal means meant not walking away from a contract which would bankrupt the County Council and also not building the incinerator immediately. A planning inquiry was underway and the minister had indicated that he would not report on this until January 2014, by which time the investigation which had been carried out by the County Council would also have been completed.

- 3.10 The following motion, put forward by Mr Nobbs, and seconded by Mr Spratt was agreed:

“That the meeting be adjourned in order for Group Leaders to discuss a joint, agreed motion”.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.25am and reconvened at 11.35am.

4 Notice of Motions

- 4.1 The following motion, proposed by Mr Dobson, was withdrawn.

“This Council resolves to withdraw from the contract with Cory Wheelabrator for the construction of an incinerator at the Willows, King's Lynn, but to delay implementation of this resolution until the day following the announcement by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government or his Minister of their decision on the Inspector's recommendation from her report on the Public Inquiry into the planning consent given by the County Council's Planning Committee for the construction of that incinerator. In the interim this Council directs the Cabinet, as a matter of urgency, to research and commence commissioning of alternative, greener, cheaper means of reducing and dealing with arisings of residual domestic waste in Norfolk, in ways not involving gratuitous incineration, and to do so in close cooperation with other Norfolk Waste Partnership colleagues. The Council further directs the Cabinet to seek legal means to mitigate any costs incurred by the decision to withdraw from the contract, in the event that planning consent is upheld, as well as the lesser costs anticipated if planning consent is denied, and to review the Council's procurement processes, to include levels of decision making and scrutiny by members, to ensure that such an imprudent course is not embarked upon in the case of similar major contracts in the future”.

- 4.2 The following amended motion, proposed by Mr Bird and seconded by Mr Coke was moved:

“Under Norfolk County Councils previous administration a contract was signed with Cory Wheelabrator for a waste incinerator. This full council notes that the planning process may not be concluded until January 2014.

Full Council welcomes the decision of Cabinet to implement the recommendation of Cabinet Scrutiny to seek independent verification of the process of awarding the contract and the costs of terminating that contract.

Full Council recognises that Cabinet will be drawing up contingency arrangements, involving officers, including looking at alternatives to Energy from Waste, in case the contract does not go ahead (including exploring funding options from Central Government).

This Council recognises that it would be premature to discuss the issues further until we can debate the outcomes referred to above”.

- 4.2.1 Following a debate a vote was taken and with 72 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 2 abstentions the amended motion was **CARRIED**.

5 **Residual Waste Treatment Contract**

- 5.1 The report was received.

- 5.2 **RESOLVED** to note the report.

6 **To Answer Questions on notice under rule 8.3 of the Council Procedure Rules**

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 12.50pm.

Chairman



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