



Norfolk County Council
at your service

Policy and Resources Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Monday 27 October 2014

10:00am Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich

Present:

Mr G Nobbs (Chair)

Mr T Adams

Mr M Baker

Mr M Castle

Mr A Dearnley

Mr J Dobson

Mr T FitzPatrick

Mr T Garrod

Mrs S Gurney

Mr D Harrison

Mrs J Leggett

Mr S Morphew

Mr A Proctor

Mr D Ramsbotham

Dr M Strong

Substitute Members Present:

Mr J Childs for Mr S Agnew

Mr C Jordan for Mrs A Thomas

Other Members Present:

Mrs M Somerville

Mr R Coke

Mr J Joyce

Mr P Smyth

Ms S Whitaker

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Agnew (Mr J Childs attended as substitute) and Mrs A Thomas (Mr C Jordan attended as substitute).

2 Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 September 2014 were confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.
- 2.2 Following on from comments that had been made at the previous meeting about the Digital Norfolk Ambition Programme, Mrs Leggett asked why the County Council was installing upgrades to the schools admission system at the busiest time of the year. The Interim Director of Environment, Transport and Development agreed to provide Mrs Leggett with a written answer (see Appendix A to these minutes).

3 **Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 Mr Garrod declared an “other interest “in “Sea Change”, an Arts Organisation operating in the Great Yarmouth area.

Mrs S Gurney declared an “other interest “in that her son was employed by Norse.

Mr Morpew declared an “other interest “in that his wife was Chair of “the Garage” in Norwich.

4 **Items of Urgent Business**

- 4.1 There were no matters of urgent business.

5 **Local Member Issues**

- 5.1 There were no local Member issues for which due notice had been given

6 **Workforce Profile 2013-14**

- 6.1 The annexed report (6) by the Acting Head of Human Resources was received.

- 6.2 In the course of discussion the following key points were made:

- The report provided the Committee with an annual overview of the NCC Workforce during 2013/14.
- The Committee noted the reasons set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report for staff voluntarily leaving or changing roles within the Council and the reasons for sickness absence that were set out in paragraph 13.5 of the report.
- The Acting Head of Human Resources agreed to let Mr Proctor know after the meeting what action the Council was taking to fill the skills shortages that were mentioned at paragraph 5.3 of the report (see Appendix A to these minutes).
- Mr Dobson said he would like to meet with the Acting Head of Human Resources to discuss some of the workforce challenges facing the Council, including the recent changes in NCC’s core workforce (both schools and non-schools), staff turnover and issues related to the employment of a more flexible workforce.
- In response to a comment by Mr Jordan, the Acting Head of Human Resources said that she would examine if it was possible for the impact on the workforce of improvements in ICT to be measured and monitored in some way in future reports, however, she added that it was important to keep in mind that ICT was only one of a range of factors that made service reductions possible (see Appendix A to these minutes).

6.3 **RESOLVED**

That the Committee note the trends relating to the current workforce, the work undertaken by the Council and the future skills and behaviours required across the organisation that were set out in the report.

7 **2014-15 Revenue Monitoring Report –Month 5**

7.1 The annexed report (7) by the Interim Head of Finance was received.

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

- Chief Officers had responsibility for managing their budgets within the amounts approved by the County Council.
- The latest budget monitoring position showed the Council's predicted revenue overspend to be at its lowest level since the start of the financial year.
- The Council had better budgetary data available to it this year than was the case in previous years. This data was being used to maintain and retain cost pressures within Children's Services and Adult Social Care within the current year's budget.
- The Council had factored into its budget planning processes the need to prioritise resources within departments and to support demand led services.
- In reply to a question, the Interim Director of Environment, Transport and Development said that it was hoped the final cost of terminating the Willows Energy from Waste Contract would be known by Christmas. However, it could take longer, he said.
- The Interim Head of Finance agreed to let Mrs Leggett know why the purchase order performance charts (on page 84 of the agenda) contained "blank columns" and why one of the "blank columns" contained a figure just short of 50%. See appendix A to these minutes.
- It was noted that there had been significant progress in respect of reducing retrospective purchase orders –orders raised after the invoice had been received –however the introduction of new and improved ordering processes and a cultural change in the approach that was being taken across the Council meant that there remained room for further improvement.

7.3 **RESOLVED-**

That the Committee note the following:

- Revenue expenditure was forecast to overspend by £0.025m on a net budget of £308.397m.
- General Balances were forecast to be £19.000m at 31 March 2015, before taking into account the forecast overspend.
- The improved income/debt reporting, at Appendix 11 to the report.
- The inclusion of the Corporate Risk Register, at Appendix 13 to the report.

8 **2014-15 Capital Monitoring Report –Month 5**

8.1 The annexed report (8) by the Interim Head of Finance was received.

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

- The Interim Head of Finance agreed to let Members have further information regarding the work that was being done to identify renewable energy projects suitable for loans from Norfolk Energy Futures Ltd. See Appendix A to these minutes.
- The Interim Head of Finance agreed to let Mr Proctor know the reasons for the delay in the sales of the properties at Royal Britannia Crescent, Great Yarmouth which had been sold or were in the process of being sold (pages 118-119 of the agenda referred). See Appendix A to these minutes
- Mr Proctor asked why the sales value of the Oaks site, Harvey Lane, Norwich had risen from £500K to £1m. In reply, the Interim Head of Finance said that this was based on professional advice from NPS which said the site was suitable for bespoke designs on large plots which appealed to the more lucrative “self build market”. He said the term “self build” was, however, misleading; each plot would have a site specific individual bespoke design, open to developers as well as individuals. There was no intention to restrict the sale of the site to a small number of purchasers. The sale of this site as recommended would help address housing demand in this attractive area of Norwich.
- It was noted that NPS had reviewed the Outline Business Plan for the Oaks site and had confirmed the valuations on which the business case was based.
- Mr Dobson asked if the suggested approach in relation to the Oaks site meant an increase in the Council’s budgetary spending and therefore required a decision of Full Council. In reply, the Head of Law advised that this revised “spend to save scheme” was a revision to the approved budget and therefore the decision to go ahead could be made by the Policy and Resources Committee.
- Mr Proctor asked if the requirement for £100k of prudential borrowing to fund the initial investment in the Oaks site remained necessary in view of the increased site value and the Committee agreed the scheme could proceed without this borrowing requirement.

8.3 **RESOLVED**

That the Committee:

- Note the revised expenditure and funding of the 2014-17 capital programme and the changes which had occurred following the position reported on 29 September 2014, as set out in Section 1 of Annex A to the report.
- Note the progress towards the achievement of the 2014-15 programme, as set out in Section 2 of Annex A to the report.
- Note 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 to the report.
- Note the impact of using borrowing to finance the programme on future revenue budgets, as identified in Appendix 2 to the report.
- Approve the revised spend to save scheme in relation to the Oaks site, Harvey Lane, Norwich, as set out in Appendix 6 to the report.

9 **Strategic and Financial Planning 2015-18: Shared Services**

9.1 The annexed report (9) by the Temporary Director of Strategy and Resources that was circulated with the supplementary agenda was received

9.3 **RESOLVED**

That the Committee:

- Endorse the schedule of additional savings set out in Appendix A to the report.
- Recommend the individual savings as set out in the schedule.
- Note the risks set out in section 2.5 of the report relating to savings already consulted and agreed upon.
- Note the arrangements that were set out in the report to ensure tight control on revenue budgets and to highlight any issues or risks to Policy and Resources Committee.

10 **Strategic and Financial Planning 2015-18**

10.1 The annexed report (10) by the by the Head of Business Intelligence and Performance Service & Corporate Planning and Partnerships Service and Interim Head of Finance that was circulated with the supplementary agenda was received.

10.2 The Committee received on the table written feedback from Chairs of service committees on proposals to meet the predicated budget shortfall for 2015/16, and contribute to the shortfall in the two subsequent years (2016/17 and 2017/18). Members also received an updated full list of savings proposals bringing together the outcome of all committee decisions.

10.3 The Committee also noted the arrangements for consultation that were set out in Section 8 of the report and the arrangements for assessing the impact of the savings that were set out in Section 5 of the report. The Committee took these matters into account in deciding on the course of action that they wished to take.

10.4 Mr FitzPatrick said that while he appreciated that there had been very tight deadlines for the production of feedback from service committees the feedback should have been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting.

10.5 The Committee Chairs gave verbal updates on the main issues from each of the service committees.

10.6 The following key points were made In relation to Adult Social Care:

- The proposed savings were based on a balanced budget being achieved for Adult Social Care for the current financial year.
- The Adult Social Care Committee had voted separately on each of the specific savings proposals that were listed in the paper that was laid on the table and agreed to ask the Policy and Resources Committee to take a corporate approach to the Council's budget. There had been a general concern at Adult Social Care Committee that the demand for services required a more radical whole council strategy.

- The proposal in relation to the procurement and commissioning of transport facilities would seek to enable and use existing community based transport solutions paid for from Personal Budgets by service users with reduced or no subsidy from the Council.
- There was an assumption that the costs associated with the Care Act would be funded by the Government.
- There had been some concern at Adult Social Care Committee about the proposal to reallocate the annual £1m rebate provided by Norse Care from the adult social care residential care reserve (capital) to the revenue budget. In reply, Mrs Gurney said that an alternative approach had been suggested (but not agreed by the Adult Social Care Committee) that involved the £1m being spend on an “invest to save scheme” with the savings being returned to the revenue budget.

10.7 The following key points were made in relation to Communities:

- The savings in the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service could be made without a significant impact on frontline services and would not therefore require consultation with the public.
- The proposals in relation to the Norfolk Museums Service included raising income from charging for car parking at Gressenhall Workhouse and Farm and charging for entry to the Ancient House Museum, Thetford in winter.
- The proposals in relation to the Norfolk Library Service included the one-off sale at auction of some antiquarian and collectable books. The books were specialist and had a monetary value but were not current library lending stock. These items did not relate to Norfolk or its history.
- It was proposed to review how the Council delivered support to the arts, including arts grants. This proposal would include speaking to stakeholders and partners to whom the Council provided arts grants. It was also considered important for this consultation to take into account the specific requirements of rural communities.
- A number of strategic reviews were either underway or being planned in respect of the services covered by the Communities Committee to ensure that services were sustainable in the long term.

10.8 The following key points were made In relation to Children’s Services:

- The proposed savings were based on a balanced budget being achieved for Children’s Services for the current financial year.
- In reply to Members’ questions it was pointed out that potential new ways of working in relation to school and college transport were continuing to be explored. However, the Children’s Services Committee remained concerned about the implementation of savings from Post 16 Transport which had been agreed by the Full Council in February 2014. If this saving did not go ahead then alternative savings would need to be found.

- 10.9 The following key points were made In relation to EDT:
- The EDT Committee had considered the risks associated with delivering the Committee's saving from highways maintenance and the implications that this could have on the condition of the highway.
 - Following the EDT meeting Ian Mackie, on behalf of the County Farms Board, had identified savings to the value of £385,000 that could be made from the county farms estate and it was proposed to use this to replace the saving from highway maintenance.
- 10.10 The following key points were made In relation to Policy and Resources Committee:
- The Policy and Resources Committee had received a report at item 9 on this agenda that highlighted the main issues for shared services.
 - The savings included the rationalisation of procurement functions.
 - Mr Proctor asked for Members to receive more information to explain the projected growth in business rates in Norfolk, which involved increasing the 20 % of distributed funding. The answer can be found at Appendix A to these minutes.
- 10.11 With regard to the second of the bullet points at paragraph 8.4 on page A21 of the supplementary agenda, it was pointed out that the assumption that there would be no increase in Council Tax for 2015/16 and the principle of hypothecation should appear in the public consultation as two separate issues.
- 10.12 The Chairman moved, seconded by Mr Baker:
- "The Committee welcomes the initiative of the County Farms Working Group in identifying and freeing up the additional sum of £385,000. The Committee notes the concerns expressed by Members of the EDT Committee concerning the cumulative impact of budget cuts on highways maintenance. We also note the concerns expressed by Members of the Children's Services Committee about the impact of the previously agreed changes to 16-19 Transport and the concerns expressed by Members of the Adult Social Care Committee in relation to the financial challenges facing our demand led services. The Committee agrees that, in the light of the significant challenges facing the Council, it would be premature at this stage to commit the monies released by the County Farms Working Group. We therefore agree to defer any recommendation on the use of these monies pending further discussions in each committee and feedback from the public consultation process."
- 10.13 A proposed amendment by Mr Dobson was declared invalid on the grounds that it would negate the words contained in the motion.
- 10.14 Mr FitzPatrick said that Members should have been given more time to carefully consider the wording of the motion which had been laid on the table without prior notice.
- 10.15 On being put to the vote there were 10 votes in favour of the motion and 6 votes against and 1 abstention, whereupon it was

RESOLVED-accordingly.

11 Internal and External Appointments

- 11.1 The annexed report (11) by the Temporary Director of Strategy and Resources was received.
- 11.2 The Committee noted the mechanisms for Member feedback from those external bodies on which they represented the Council that were set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report.
- 11.3 **RESOLVED-**
That the Committee make the following appointments to those external and internal bodies listed below:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION APPOINTMENTS

1. LGA General Assembly (4)

George Nobbs (4 votes)
Tom FitzPatrick (1 vote)
Alison Thomas (1 vote)
Mike Sands (1 vote)

2. County Council Network (4)

Tom FitzPatrick
Tom Garrod
George Nobbs
Marie Strong

3. East of England Local Government Association (1) and 1 substitute

George Nobbs
Tom FitzPatrick (sub)

It was noted that the appointments to all of the above three bodies were made at the June cycle of the Committee and that no action was required.

4. LGA Urban Commission and LGA Rural Commission

These two bodies had been disbanded therefore no appointment was required.

5. LGA Coastal Issues Special Interest Group (SIG) (1)

The names of Michael Baker and Hilary Cox were put forward to represent the Council on this Group.

On being put to the vote there were 9 votes on favour of Michael Baker and 7 votes in favour of Hilary Cox whereupon

Michael Baker was appointed to this Group.

The Committee noted that LGA Coastal SIG Champions took forward the coastal strategy and represented the collective interests of all maritime local authorities.

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE OUTSIDE BODIES

Greater Norwich Growth Board (1)

Steve Morpew

The Committee noted that the Greater Norwich Growth Board was the body through which the County Council, together with Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, worked together to manage the Government's housing and job growth targets. The growth targets for the Greater Norwich area were to deliver at least 37,000 new homes and 27,000 new jobs by 2026.

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEES/ BOARDS/PANELS/ GROUPS

1. Joint Consultative & Negotiating Committee (7)

Deputy Leader (David Harrison)

1 Labour (Bert Bremner)

3 Conservative (Andrew Proctor, Tom FitzPatrick, Tony Adams)

1 Lib Dem (John Timewell)

1 UKIP (Rex Parkinson Hare)

It was noted that these appointments were made at the June cycle of the Committee. This was a forum for discussion between staff trades unions and the County Council on employment related matters.

2. Member Support & Development Advisory Group (10)

4 Conservative – Colin Foulger, Judy Leggett, Tom Garrod, Tony White

2 Labour - David Collis, Julie Brociek-Coulton

1 Lib Dem – Eric Seward

2 UKIP - Stan Hebborn and Paul Smyth

1 Green – the Committee agreed that the Green Group should be invited to nominate a Member to serve on this Advisory Group.

This Group championed Member Development and Member Support

3. NORSE

The names of Roger Smith and Toby Coke and Colleen Walker were put forward to represent the Council on this body.

On being put to the vote there were 7 votes in favour of Roger Smith and 9 votes in favour of Toby Coke and Colleen Walker whereupon the following were appointed:

Shareholder Representative - Toby Coke
Member Director - Colleen Walker (serves on the Norse Group Board, NPS Board and NCS Board).

4.NORSE Member/Officer Shareholder Committee (6)

1 Lib Dem - John Timewell
3 Conservative - Roger Smith, Bill Borrett, Wyndham Northam
1 UKIP - Toby Coke (as current Shareholder Representative)
1 Labour – Mick Castle

This Committee supports the development of NORSE Group, ensures that the legal and commercial interests of the County Council are considered and protected and advises this Committee accordingly.

5.NORSE Care Liaison Board (2)

Member Director of the NORSE Board (Colleen Walker) and the Chairman of Adult Social Care Committee (Sue Whitaker).

6. Property Reference Panel (6)

3 Conservative - Nigel Dixon, Tony White, Cliff Jordan
1 UKIP - Colin Aldred
1 Lib Dem - John Timewell
1 Labour - Steve Morphew (served as Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Personnel and was the Chairman of the Panel)

This Panel was created to advise the Cabinet Member on Property matters. Under the Council's new governance structures, property matters are the responsibility of this Committee. It was agreed to reconsider the need for a Property Reference Panel after the seminar which has been arranged on property matters.

7. Strategic Equalities Group (6)

Deputy Leader - David Harrison
1 Lib Dem - Tim East
1 Conservative - John Dobson
1 Green - Elizabeth Morgan
1 UKIP – Jonathan Childs
1 Labour – TBA

The above appointments were made at the June cycle of the Committee. No action was required from the Committee. The committee noted that this body provided Member leadership on equality for Norfolk County Council, ensuring that the authority delivers its duties with respect to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

8. Treasury Management Panel (9)

2 Labour - Bert Bremner, Emma Corlett
4 Conservative - Ian Mackie, Brian Iles, Cliff Jordan & Andrew Proctor
2 UKIP - Toby Coke, Michael Baker
1 Lib Dem - Brian Watkins

9. ESCO (Energy Saving Company) (1)

Deputy Leader (David Harrison)

This appointment was made at the June cycle of the Committee. No action was required from the Committee.

10. Constitution Advisory Group (7)

3 Conservatives (Andrew Proctor, Alison Thomas, John Dobson)

1 Labour: TBA

1 Lib Dem: TBA

1 Green: Richard Bearman

1 UKIP: TBA

These appointments were made at the June cycle of the Committee. No action was required from the Committee.

The meeting concluded at 11.50 am

CHAIRMAN



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Tim Shaw on 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

Appendix A

Action:-To let Mrs Leggett know why the County Council was installing upgrades to the schools admission system at the busiest time of the year.

Answer:-

1. An update to the school admission system was required to deliver statutory changes for the current admission round.
2. The update had initially been scheduled for 7 September 2014 to avoid the busiest time of year. However, it proved more complex than anticipated. It was a significant update partly because of the technical database upgrade involved and partly because Children's & Families Act legislative changes also had to be applied to the system before the admissions update could be applied.
3. The implementation was delayed until 13 October as the latest date to minimise disruption to parents, anticipating the system would be available on 14 October, which would have minimised impact on parents seeking a secondary school place before the statutory closing date of 31 October. The date was achieved, but numerous problems were encountered which resulted in periods of system unavailability until 24 October.
4. The Admissions Service agreed to extend the deadline without penalising the applicant recognising the key time lost.

Workforce Profile 2013-14

Action:- To let Mr Proctor know what action the Council was taking to fill the skills shortages that were mentioned at paragraph 5.3 of the report.

Answer:-

At the Policy & Resources Committee on 27th October 2014, I agreed to write to you about the measures NCC had taken in response to Skills Shortages identified in the Workforce Profile. A range of measures have been used over the previous financial year. These include using different advertising media for example social media, internet search engines, train stations, direct contact through universities and colleges as well as greater targeting of localised media. In some areas, NCC has re-branded service areas to attract the quality of applicants we require. Other approaches have included increased use of flexible working and annualised contracts to attract skills that are hard to find. We have also included approaches to grow our own expertise like using secondments to gain experience of different agencies, developing training pathways and creative ways of enabling for example newly qualified social workers to gain high quality and supported experience.

Action:- The Acting Head of Human Resources said that she would examine if it was possible for the impact on the workforce of improvements in ICT to be measured and monitored in some way in future reports, however, she added that it was important to keep in mind that ICT was only one of a range of factors that made service reductions possible.

Answer:-

At the Policy & Resources Committee on 27th October 2014, in response to your comment on the impact of IT on NCC's Workforce Profile, I agreed to investigate whether it was possible to identify whether we could identify the contribution of IT to staff reduction. The impact of ICT is one factor among several. The range of factors that impact on the workforce numbers include new models of delivery (for example increased integration with the NHS), changing local authority functions coming into NCC (for example Public Health) and moving out of NCC (for example Academies), changing customer needs, financial reductions as well as use of commissioning which changes the knowledge and skill requirements we require an employer. As changes in the workforce often include more than one of these variables, we are not at present able to identify these factors individually. We are however, doing a piece of work to try to identify more clearly the benefits that accrue from better ways of working and I hope that the correlation with staff numbers will be more clearly identified.

Revenue Monitoring Report

Action:- To let Mrs Leggett know why the purchase order performance charts (on page 84 of the agenda) contained "blank columns" and why one of the "blank columns" contained a figure just short of 50%.

Answer:- Thank you for pointing out this error – it has been corrected for period 6 monitoring. The "blank" column contained data relating to Independence Matters, which is a separate company and should have been excluded from the chart.

Capital Monitoring Report

Action:- To let Mr Proctor know the reasons for the delay in the sales of the properties at Royal Britannia Crescent, Great Yarmouth which have now been sold or are in the process of being sold (pages 118-119 of the agenda refers).

Answer:- Construction at Royal Britannia Crescent took approximately 14 months, 2 months longer than the original feasibility plan. Necessary improvements in flood defences contributed to the delay. Sales were slow during winter and early spring 2013-14 however sales have picked up significantly, partly helped by a review of pricing which was designed to make the properties more attractive to buyers while ensuring that receipts will cover construction costs.

As at the 29th October, 12 of the 19 properties have been sold. The remaining 7 unsold properties, are all with solicitors and progressing towards sale, but not yet completed. All units are expected to be under new ownership by Christmas.

Action:- Mr Proctor asked for further information to show the projected growth in Council income from business rates. Mr Proctor also raised questions about the reasons for the increase in the sales value of the Oaks site from £500K to £1m. He asked if the requirement for £0.100m of prudential borrowing to fund the initial investment in the Oaks site was still necessary and the Committee agreed this spend to save scheme could proceed without this requirement.

Answer:- The nominal allocation of prudential borrowing to fund the £0.100m expenditure is simply to cover the period between the expenditure being incurred, and the receipt of income from the sale which may span a financial year end. When sold, the expenditure will effectively be funded from the sales proceeds.

Action:- To supply all Members of the Committee with further information regarding the work that is being done to identify renewable energy projects suitable for loans from Norfolk Energy Futures Ltd.

Answer:- Cabinet, at its meeting on 12 September 2011 agreed to the establishment of Norfolk Energy Futures Ltd (NEF) as a free-standing company, wholly owned by Norfolk County Council, with a focus on investing and leveraging funds into a portfolio of projects focused around renewable energy schemes, initially through taking advantage of the various government tariff schemes. Governance is through a Board of Directors consisting of Senior Officers, upwards to an Investment Panel comprising of Chief Officers and Members.

The initial focus had been in the areas of wind turbines, tapping into the favourable financial incentives at the time, resulting in 19 wind turbines installed on NCC's County Farms sites. Since then work has taken place to provide an attractive solar PV package (entitled 'Solar Gain') for commercial sites. Increased networking and business approaches over the last six months are now starting to reach fruition on finding the market for 'Solar Gain'.

NEF is involved in discussions with Breckland Council, and NCC, in a bid submitted into New Anglia Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) with a view to drawing down match funding to help install a £2M solar park at Snetterton Heath, part of the Breckland Council's Employment Area. This is currently hampered through the lack of local energy infrastructure. Within the Council itself, discussions are ongoing around the potential of fitting solar panels to buildings, with 5 sites considered as part of the Norfolk Fire Service portfolio considered the most promising. NEF will also aim to target 'Solar Gain' at a range of public and private sector partners in the coming months.

During the last few months there has been a significant change in the Directors and staffing of NEF, with a number of employees leaving the Council. This has provided an opportunity to consider again the way in which NEF is resourced and this is currently being addressed. Clearly, operating a 'thin' structure has limited the capacity to oversee projects in their entirety. Therefore, it is also exploring opportunities to take on an equity partnership role with other financial project financiers