

Environment Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 12 January 2011

Present:

Mr A Byrne (Chairman)

Mr R Bearman

Dr A P Boswell

Mrs M Chapman-Allen

Mr N D Dixon

Mr T East

Mr T Garrod

Baron Chenery of Horsbrugh

Mr B Iles

Mr J M Joyce

Mr B W C Long

Dr M Strong

Mrs H Thompson

Mr J M Ward

Mr A M White

Mr R J Wright (Vice-Chairman)

Non-Voting Cabinet Member:

Mr G Plant

Mrs A Steward

Travel and Transport

Sustainable Development

Non-Voting Deputy Cabinet Members:

Mr B H A Spratt

Mr J Mooney

Travel and Transport

Sustainable Development

1. Apologies and Substitutions

Apologies were received from Mr A Adams - Mr T Garrod substituted; Mr P Duigan - Baron Chenery of Horsbrugh substituted; Mr M Hemsley - Mr R Bearman substituted; Mr G Cook; and Mr M Langwade - Mrs H Thompson substituted.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the Environment Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 2 November 2010 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The minutes of the Environment Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 17 November 2010 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interests

3.1 The following declarations of interests were received:

Mr Long declared a personal interest in item 7 (Waste PFI Contract Award) as he was a member on the Waste PFI Project Board and was the Environment portfolio holder at the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

Mr A Boswell declared a personal interest in item 7 (Waste PFI Contract Award) as he was a member of the Waste PFI Project Board.

Mr J Joyce declared a personal interest in item 7 (Waste PFI Contract Award) as he was a member of the Waste PFI Project Board.

Mrs A Steward declared a personal interest in item 8 (Service Planning and Budget Consultation 2011-2014) as her husband was a farmer.

Mr B Spratt declared a personal interest in item 8 (Service Planning and budget Consultation 2011-2014) as his father was a farmer.

4. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

5. Public Question Time

Appendix A to these minutes sets out the questions and responses to the public questions.

6. Local Member Issues/Member Questions

There were no Local Member Issues/Member questions.

7. Waste PFI - Award of Contract

7.1 The annexed joint report (7) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development (ETD) was received and introduced by the Project Director - Residual Waste Services.

7.2 The Panel was asked to endorse to Cabinet the recommendations within the report.

7.3 The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development made the following statement:

"The discussion today is for councillors to revisit the information on Cory Wheelabrator's bid prior to Cabinet making a decision on 24 January. Radio Norfolk implied this morning that the Energy from Waste plant was a 'done deal', although they did correct the statement later. I would like to reiterate that I do not want anyone here to be under the misapprehension that the deal is already done. The planning application process still needs to be followed and as part of that process Norfolk County Council will need to be satisfied that the application

meets all the planning requirements and that the plant will operate safely without any harm to human health”.

- 7.4 During the presentation, the following points were noted:
 - 7.4.1 The report contained no changes to the key commercial information which the Panel had received at its meeting on 2 November 2010.
 - 7.4.2 Members were informed that a petition, containing approximately 2500 signatories opposing the plant at Saddlebow, King's Lynn had been received. The petition would be presented to Cabinet prior to a final decision being made.
 - 7.4.3 Defra approved the pre-preferred bidder final business case confirming Cory Wheelabrator as the preferred bidder.
 - 7.4.4 The Waste PFI Project Board had agreed to award the contract to Cory Wheelabrator at its meeting on 4 January 2011.
- 7.5 The following points were noted in response to questions from Members:
 - 7.5.1 The majority of the 794 objections received were not about the procurement process but about the concerns relating to emissions and health impacts of an Energy from Waste plant.
 - 7.5.2 The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development was asked if the plans for an incinerator would be scrapped if the public referendum showed overwhelming opposition. The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development said she had not yet seen the details of the question and therefore could not answer the question.
 - 7.5.3 Members were reassured that it was not unusual for Councils to include caveats detailing financial penalties and breakage costs when dealing with the procurement of large contracts. Different councils across the country had different approaches and Norfolk was one of the first councils to achieve a cap on liability meaning that some of the risk was with the contractor.
 - 7.5.4 The Wrate analysis model endorsed by the Environment Agency had been used to establish the carbon footprint of the proposal and it made valid assumptions on the carbon benefits of electricity from an Energy from Waste facility. The precise assumptions would be researched and provided separately.
 - 7.5.5 Industrial waste had a high rate of recycling as the construction sector was generally good at separating out waste products. Commercial and industrial waste in Norfolk currently amounted to approximately 500,000 tonnes per annum. Large volumes of wood were not expected to be processed through this facility as there were other ways of dealing with waste wood.
 - 7.5.6 The County Council's recycling centres had achieved high recycling rates. To increase recycling rates further in Norfolk we remained reliant on the District Councils increasing kerb-side collections with the County Council providing incentives to support recycling services and enhanced financial incentives for kitchen waste collections which had only been taken up in Norwich and an existing trial in part of Broadland.

7.5.7 When the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee considered the Waste PFI in November 2010 it was identified that any delay in the opening of the plant could cost approximately £200k per week in landfill costs, taxes and fines. The PFI credits also devalued several thousand pounds per day if the contract award was delayed.

7.5.8 It was identified that whilst there was no direct link between this proposal and cheaper electricity for local householders the localism bill was looking at how local communities could benefit directly from infrastructure developments and one company had considered using vouchers to do this.

8 Big Conversation - Service Planning and Budget Consultation 2011-2014

8.1 The annexed report by the Director of ETD was received. Additional comments which had been received since the Big Conversation papers had been published were also circulated (attached to these minutes at Appendix B).

8.2 The Director of ETD introduced the report and informed Members that the report set out the proposals for service and budget planning for the department and gave detailed information which included comments from the Big Conversation consultation. Some of the proposals within the Big Conversation were reflective of the work carried out by the ETD Strategic Review Project. This had been reviewed by the Project Board which included cross party Member representation. Section 6 of the main report provided the context of the overall implications of the budget proposals, and gave an overview of how the proposals impacted on services within the department.

8.3 The Director of ETD thanked those Members who had been involved in the Strategic Review Project Board and their significant input into the review.

8.4 The Panel were asked to consider and comment on the proposed core role and strategy for the County Council, as set out in section 5 and the specific revenue budget proposals and capital programme for the Environment, Transport and Development Service as set out in sections 6 and 7.

8.5 During the discussion, the following points were noted:

8.5.1 The Panel were reassured that there were no plans at present to close any of the waste recycling centres in Norfolk.

8.5.2 The Director of ETD advised the Panel that the officers view was that none of the budget proposals within the report compromised the County Council's statutory responsibilities, although that might be challenged by others.

8.5.3 Discussions were taking place with parish and town councils to encourage them to undertake jobs such as grass verge management, grit bin management, gritting footways and footpath management. A working group had visited some parish councils and had looked at the work they undertook and what support would be needed from Norfolk County Council to facilitate this. The results of these discussions were still being analysed.

8.5.4 The proposal to remove or reduce the subsidy for Park and Ride sites could be a

further discouragement to potential users because of the pricing structure in city centre car parks. Officers were working to try to find ways that services could be maintained when the subsidies were reduced. Members said that they did not wish to see the park and ride service close as it was considered an excellent service.

- 8.5.5 A suggestion was made about the possibility of increasing charges for dealing with retrospective planning applications as they could be deemed as not having followed the proper procedures and therefore should be penalised. The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development confirmed further consideration would be given to this proposal.
- 8.5.6 Norfolk County Council had already announced they would continue to spend up to £50k per year funding signage and housing for safety cameras. Discussions were taking place with the Police Authority who were developing a scheme to continue with the Safety Camera Partnership. It was noted that the average speed camera on the A149 was now operational.
- 8.5.7 Members were reassured that all the budget proposals had been subject to Equality Impact Assessments and copies of these assessments would be available in the Member's room prior to the Cabinet Meeting on 24 January. If Members had specific issues with the dial-a-ride service they could take these up with the department.
- 8.5.8 Concern was expressed about the proposal to redesign access to the countryside around a core network with a reduction in path cutting as it may encourage some land-owners to divert footpaths which run across their fields. Members asked whether Norfolk County Council would take enforcement action if footpaths were diverted. Members were reassured that the proposals were considered to be consistent with statutory duties.
- 8.5.9 Members asked if the Overview and Scrutiny Panel could monitor the impact of the proposed removal of funding from the Wherry and Bittern Line Community Rail Partnership. The Cabinet Member for Travel and Transport reminded the meeting that no decision had been made as yet and there was a possibility of some money being available although it would be limited.
- 8.5.10 The Director of ETD reassured the Panel that once the decisions had been made the agreed proposals would form part of the ETD Service Plan and would be regularly reported to future Panel meetings. This would give Members an opportunity to comment on progress. It was also the Panel's responsibility to ensure the department were clear on what they wished to be included in the monitoring report.
- 8.5.11 The proposal to reshape and reduce trading standards work on farming issues raised concern with Members asking about the possibility of diseases getting into the food chain if services were cut. The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development responded that no decisions had yet been taken and discussions with Defra would be taking place to ensure that this did not happen.
- 8.5.12 Discussions were taking place to try to find ways of keeping the Norwich bus station information desk and travel centre open. Further information on the reduction of security would be included within the feedback to Cabinet.

The Panel **noted** the report.

9. Highways Capital Programme 2011/12/13 and Transport Asset Management Plan.

- 9.1 The annexed report by the Director of ETD was received and introduced by Grahame Bygrave, Capital Programme Manager and John Joyce, Assistant Director Highways, ETD.
- 9.2 Members were asked to comment on the report, in particular the reallocation of integrated transport funding to structural maintenance to partially address the deterioration in highways condition and recommend it to Cabinet for approval. They were also asked to comment on the proposed changes to the Transport Asset Management Plan and recommend to Cabinet the use of Chief Officer delegated powers, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to manage the two-year programme, including the possible increase in the Integrated Transport Programme to £3m to deal with any major scheme cost pressures if they arose.
- 9.3 The following points were noted in response to Member questions:
- 9.3.1 With regard to the Norwich Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF), an expression of interest (EoI) had been submitted to the Department for Transport for funding for the Norwich Northern Distributor Route, including the new junction with the A47 at Postwick. A response from the Department for Transport to the EoI was expected in February/March, with the best and final offer being made in the autumn after which a decision on funding for the NDR is expected by December 2011.
- 9.3.2 The figure of £750,000 quoted in the report for the development of the Northern Distributor Road (NDR) was an estimate of the amount required while Norfolk County Council was waiting for the Department for Transport to confirm its response to the expression of interest. In 2010/11 the County Council is spending the minimum required to carry out essential work.
- 9.3.3 A list of all the schemes which had been deferred due to in-year budget reductions and provisionally programmed for 2011/12 but now deferred, would be circulated to all ETD Overview and Scrutiny Panel Members by the Capital Programme Manager, ETD.
- 9.3.4 Members were reassured that every effort would be made to ensure all the schemes listed in the proposed programme of works 2011/12/13 would be completed subject to approval of budgets, approval of the programme and also subject to the satisfactory completion of consultation and legal processes for individual schemes.

The Panel **noted** the report.

10 Environment, Transport and Development Strategic Review

- 10.1 The annexed report was received and introduced by the Director of ETD and David Allfrey, Major Projects Manager ETD.
- 10.2 The Director of ETD drew Members' attention to the fact that the report would be

presented to Cabinet on 24 January 2011 and that this was the last chance they would have to comment on the report before that meeting.

- 10.3 Members were asked to note and comment on the conclusions of the Strategic Review set out in the report, in particular the proposed way forward for a future service delivery method set out in the draft Cabinet report at Appendix A. The Strategic Review Board would be recommending to Cabinet that the contracts with Mott MacDonald and May Gurney should be allowed to continue until their expiration in 2014 under re-negotiated arrangements, which would provide savings of around £1.5m each year from April 2011 onwards.
- 10.4 The following points were noted in response to member questions:
 - 10.4.1 The Director of ETD confirmed that the work completed had been shared with the Strategic Review Project Board and was based on significant benchmarking data. Benchmarking had shown that the suggested prices were competitive with the current market rate and the best way forward was to renegotiate contracts now which would allow Norfolk County Council to complete negotiations in a structured way.
 - 10.4.2 Some Members of the Panel confirmed their support for the recommendation to renegotiate contracts with May Gurney and Mott Macdonald rather than reprocur contracts.
 - 10.4.3 It was confirmed that, as part of the renegotiating process, performance indicators would be developed to ensure quality of service was maintained.
 - 10.4.4 It was acknowledged that sometimes work was unavoidably carried out in unsuitable conditions which had caused some problems, although it was impossible to solve some issues totally. The Panel was reassured that the department regularly carried out checks on completed work and if substandard work was identified, the contractor would be asked to put the faults right.
 - 10.4.5 It was the intention of the ETD department to set up a further cross-party Project Board to prepare for the procurement of a new contract during 2011.
 - 10.4.6 Members could report any highways problems to the Highways team to ensure they were dealt with quickly.

11. Exclusion of the Public

The Director of ETD presented the following reasoning for exclusion of the public and conclusion in respect of the public interest test:

Item 12: The annex set out some detailed commercial information relating to fees and costs associated with current contracts. The public interest in disclosing this information was outweighed by the public interest in non-disclosure. Disclosing this type of commercial information may impact on the Authority's ability to obtain best value in any future procurement exercises. Disclosure could also have a detrimental impact on Mott MacDonald and May Gurney's ability to participate in the procurement process for any contracts of a similar nature, either with the County Council or other organisations, as it would essentially make commercially sensitive

information available to their competitors.

The Project Director - Residual Waste Services presented the following reasoning for exclusion of the public and conclusion in respect of the public interest test:

Items 13 and 14: Financial and bid issues were outlined in detail for Members to consider. This information was considered to be exempt under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended 1 March 2006) ('information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)').

The public interest test in disclosing these issues was outweighed by the public interest in non-disclosure. Disclosing sensitive business and financial information may impact on the Authority attaining best value in future negotiations.

RESOLVED:

That the public be excluded from the meeting under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

12. ETD Strategic Review

The Panel considered and **noted** the exempt information relating to the Strategic Review.

13. Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 November 2010

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2010 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

Summary of Minute excluded from public deposit:

14. Waste PFI Contract Award.

The Panel considered the exempt information relating to the Waste PFI Contract Award.

15 Return to public session

Waste PFI Contract Award

In relation to item 14 (Waste PFI Contract Award), the Panel voted on the recommendations within the report and with 9 votes in favour, 4 against and 2 abstentions, it was

RESOLVED:

To recommend to Cabinet that it makes the following decisions:

1. To approve the award of the Waste PFI contract to Cory Wheelabrator on the basis set out in the final tender and subject to confirmation by Defra that the

bid remained in line with its requirements for the PFI process and therefore secured PFI credits.

2. That the Director of Environment, Transport and Development, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, be delegated to conduct final clarification, confirmation of commitments and due diligence with Cory Wheelabrator in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations provided that no changes or significant modifications to the bid were made that would distort competition or have a discriminatory effect.
3. That the Director of Environment, Transport and Development, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, be delegated to approve terms for the private finance initiative contract with Cory Wheelabrator and all associated documents together with any additional acts and instruments required to give effect to the project including, without limitation, direct agreements with funders.
4. To authorise provision of an indemnity to the Head of Law or Head of Finance or other appropriate officer who would sign the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 certificate as to the County Council's vires to enter into the contract.
5. That the site at Willows Business Park be leased to Cory Wheelabrator for the duration of the contract on terms to be approved by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development.
6. To confirm affordability with suitable allowance for fluctuations in the cost such that when the contract is entered into the overall cost to the County Council is no greater than the equivalent of a 1% increase in interest rates for a 10% worsening of relevant exchange rates from those assumed in the final tenders.
7. To make provision in the County Council's Financial Plan for the funding of the PFI contract and the resources required to manage the contract.
8. That the Director of Environment, Transport and Development in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development be authorised to pursue the possibility of further enhancing the environmental benefits by pursuing the possibility of making combined heat and power part of the Energy from Waste facility.

The meeting ended at 12.30pm

CHAIRMAN



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5 Public Questions

5.1 Question 1 from Mr John Martin:

What is the actual or estimated cost (in money or other consideration) of securing a release of the land at Saddlebow, King's Lynn intended by the Council as the site for a waste to power facility from the restrictive covenant prohibiting the use of the land for the commercial production of electricity?

Reply by the Cabinet member for Sustainable Development

The relaxation of the restrictive covenant is a commercial matter that is not yet concluded so this information cannot be provided at this time.

5.2 Question 2 from Mr John Martin:

Will the Council follow central government advice contained in PPS: 23 - Planning and Pollution Control (2004) and urge Cory Wheelabrator to submit in parallel its application for planning permission and its application for an environmental permit so that their consideration by the Council and the Environment Agency respectively can be co-ordinated?

Reply by the Cabinet member for Sustainable Development

The County Council's assumption and expectation has always been that the processes would be managed in parallel but ultimately this is a decision for Cory Wheelabrator as the developer.

5.3 Question 3 from Mr Mike Knights

On October 27th 2010 I submitted a Freedom of Information act for background information leading up to the NCC Waste PFI Contract award. I particularly wanted to see the site selection criteria. After being kept waiting for the maximum time period my entire request was denied. If a site selection criteria ever existed and was properly applied can I now see the evidence of this for myself without further delay?

Reply by the Cabinet member for Sustainable Development

In response to this question the site selection criteria applied to 260 sites as a part of the process of selecting one site included assessments of:

- Access to the strategic road network.
- Proximity to residential properties.
- Flood risk.
- Environmental constraints.

The key aspect of site selection was the suitability of the site for waste management activities from a planning perspective. The King's Lynn site was chosen primarily due to its strategic location adjacent to existing and proposed infrastructure (notably a gas fired

power station that was expected to expand and a paper mill that was planned for development). This juxtaposition would encourage the exploitation of synergies with any waste treatment facility developed, particularly where electricity, heat, gas or materials are generated by the waste treatment process.

Supplementary question from Mr Knights

Would the Councillors present indicate through a show of hands if they still believe the proposed incinerator would be providing constant monitoring of dioxin and heavy metal emissions during its operation?

The Chairman responded that it was not appropriate for Panel Members to individually confirm whether or not they believed that regular monitoring of dioxin levels would take place.

5.4 Question 4 from Mr Richard Burton

On 8th November I submitted a question to Cabinet asking whether I could give a presentation to County Councillors about the proposed Saddlebow mass burn incinerator. I have given the same presentation to West Norfolk Borough Council and approximately 900 residents. Councillor Steward's written response denied Councillors this opportunity on the grounds that she considered my evidence had been "strongly rebutted" by NCC officers. To put Councillor's Steward's assessment in context, of the approximately 900 people who have attended events and heard both myself and NCC officers speak, their votes show they agree with me at ratio of 899:1 (the 1 who disagreed being Councillor Ian Monson). In light of this, is this group willing to accept my offer of a presentation, and if not will it agree to inform all Councillors that it, along with Cabinet, has denied my offer of a presentation? This is particularly important as most Councillors are unaware that Cabinet has actively sought to stop them hearing the evidence that an independent environmental management consultant can provide."

Reply by the Cabinet member for Sustainable Development

The answer remains similar to that given in response to your similar question in November. This committee will be considering whether to make a recommendation relating to the procurement process.

It is the Planning Committee which will consider all the issues connected with the proposals being made by Cory Wheelabrator. Therefore you may wish to contact the Chairman of that committee with your suggestion at the time when they will be discussing a planning application.

Supplementary Question from Mr Burton

I have audited many of the statements made by Council Directors with regard to the proposed waste incinerator and found that many of them may be incorrect and some are misleading. Cory Wheelabrator has confirmed that the additional HGV movements to be generated will be 164/day. This corresponds exactly with my estimate, yet Council Directors told the Borough Council last year that they would be 25-30/day. A Freedom of Information Act request response shows that at the time Council Directors had information that contradicted this. They have since made other estimates, but all have been inconsistent and wildly inaccurate. Much other information distributed by officers has also proven incorrect. Given that the information that Councillors have before them today was prepared by the same Directors, Councillors cannot rely upon it

being correct. In any private sector company this process would already have been suspended and an investigation launched. Will Councillors therefore agree to suspend the process and investigate their Directors' claims.

The **Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development** responded that detailed work to understand vehicle movements would form part of the planning application process, information provided by officers was given out very early before this and was dependent on the size of plant put forward. The Director of ETD confirmed that earlier information provided clearly only related to the number of refuse collection vehicles delivering municipal waste and that the recent information provided by Cory Wheelabrator related to all the vehicle movements meaning there was no inconsistency. He added that HGV vehicle movements to the plant needed to be kept in context with the total vehicle movements along that stretch of road of between 32,000 and 35,000 vehicles per day.

5.5 Question 5 from Mr Michael de Whalley.

In the event that Wheelabrator are found guilty by the Massachusetts Attorney General's investigation into environmental violations at their Saugus waste incineration plant, as reported in the Boston Globe on 4th January 2011, will Norfolk County Council be willing and able to reconsider the proposed preferred bidder's fitness to manage Norfolk's waste?

http://wap.boston.com/art/35/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2011/01/04/ag_investigating_waste_incinerator/?single=1&p=2

Reply by the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development:

The County Council is aware of the issues being raised in the Boston Globe and is monitoring the situation very closely and remains confident in its selection of Cory Wheelabrator to deliver a sustainable solution for managing Norfolk's residual waste.

Supplementary question from Mr de Whalley

The site at the Willows Business Park has a covenant restricting the production of electricity. When will the covenant be removed and at what cost?

The **Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development** responded that that information was commercially sensitive at the moment and would become available in the future.

5.6 Question 6 from Judi Knights

There is an established pattern of local Governments in America and here in the UK where Incinerator companies have sold their technology as an economic solution for waste only to have it become an economic disaster for the authorities tied into expensive long-term contracts. The incinerator company's interests usually being well protected. In Claremont USA 29 towns were forced to file for bankruptcy when their incinerator contract failed to deliver the promised benefits, May 2010 the New York times reported Harrisburg's incinerator as their money pit, the Wall Street journal reported the same trend across the country. Some of the companies involved are those now offering the same services here. A spokesman for Kent County Council has already acknowledged their recently opened incinerator was an expensive mistake. There are many examples of incineration not delivering the promised financial benefits compared to the alternatives with local Government being the loser. If

Councillors have taken the trouble to look at other's experience what makes them think Norfolk's proposed incinerator will buck the trend of financial disappointment?

Reply by the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development:

Incineration is a proven and reliable way of treating left over rubbish. This is evidenced by the fact that many local authorities in this country already have waste services provided to them by companies with incinerators as there are more than twenty across the country treating municipal waste and more are planned like those in Suffolk and Lincolnshire.

Additional information received on the Big Conversation after 31st December 2010

1.0 Introduction

The proposals for the Environment and Development service have received 211 additional responses and the Travel and Transport service 179 additional responses since 31st December 2010. We have also received an additional 100 feedback cards from the bus station. In addition, three responses have been received which do not fit under the existing proposal but make wider comment about the services delivered.

2.0 The following proposals have the largest numbers of responses:

- H13 - Reduce subsidy for Park and Ride in Norwich (46 additional responses)
- E11 - Re-focused, more targeted Public Rights of Way service (33 additional responses)
- E18 - Review historic building work and end some grant funding (33 additional responses)
- H15 - Close the travel information desk at Norwich Bus Station and reduce opening hours of the travel centre (39 additional responses)

3.0 New suggestions, or variations on themes, not already reflected in Section E, (Environment and Development) include:

- Concern in maintaining public protection service to the food industry
- A farmer's concern over crop damage resulting from people not being able to use the Public Rights of Way) PROWS that may become overgrown.
- Consistent practices would need to be maintained across parishes to ensure that full lengths of footpaths that enter several parish boundaries are accessible
- North Norfolk Community Woodland Trust made reference to a consultation being held by DEFRA on Green Spaces which in their opinion our proposal did not 'join up with'
- Suffolk County Council responded on the proposal for the Brecks Partnership, stating that they were proposing not to withdraw funding.
- Introduce a 6 day week for Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) so each closed one day a week but neighbouring centres should be closed on different days.
- Open HWRCs in the afternoon & early evening or close some week days & open all weekend
- One suggestion to work with local supermarkets to offer more recycling points.
- A response from the Chairman of Shaping Norfolk's Future (SNF) suggests that rather than the proposed reduction over three years of core funding that a single

lump sum be received in 2011/12 to include funding which otherwise would not have received until 2012/13.

- A response from County Cllr. Brian Iles about maintaining support to the Norfolk Churches Trust.
- Produce publications in association with District Councils, entitled 'Working Together'.
- There has been feedback to support increased income from Trading Standards metrology calibration services and to reduce trading standards activities for consumers and businesses.
- North Norfolk District Council "fully endorse" our Waste Strategy.

3.1 Gypsies and Travellers

Officers have visited Gypsy and Traveller sites in Costessey, Frenze Beck, Diss, Smallburgh and Boyland Common to discuss the proposal in the Big Conversation. The following feedback has been received from residents:

- If Registered Social Landlord's are put in charge of NCC sites the rents will increase leading to more roadside encampments
- There are not enough people helping us now without cuts to services
- Who will fill the gap?
- We can't go back to the bad old days of just moving us on all the time without liaison
- Life on the road is hard enough without removing services.
- Traveller liaison has a wealth of knowledge on how to access services e.g. health and education and a better understanding than most about Gypsy & Traveller culture

North Norfolk District Council responded to say that the proposal had the potential of undermining recent initiatives to promote the development of inclusive and cohesive communities.

3.2 Environment Service

The Forestry Commission have responded to suggest that work provided by this service cannot be replaced by the Big Society. They refer to the proposal to withdraw funding from the Brecks Partnership as 'regrettable'. It does support the interest and ownership of land by active communities. Support for the Brecks partnership has also come from a St. Edmundsbury Councillor.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust have expressed an interest in managing some of the nature reserve sites. Also, they have registered concerns regarding the impact of withdrawal of funding from the Wash Estuary Management Group the Norwich Fringe and the Brecks Project

We have received official representation from the Ramblers expression their concern about the ability to meet the Countryside Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2026 and stating that cuts were disproportionate to this service.

Environment staff have commented to say that the cuts will no longer enable them to deliver a proactive service which will be a retrograde step in their opinion, leaving the

authority open to increased legal action. Our ability to meet the Public Health White Paper (2010), Dept of Health White Paper (2004) and Government Rural White Paper (2000) are also questioned.

We have received responses from Wrenningham, Hempnall, Costessey, Swardeston, Burstn and Shimpling PCs. Some stated that they would be unable to help with the provision services and requested further information on how this service will work.

Middleton PC were supportive of greater use of electronic NCC publications and were concerned about increased asbestos fly-tipping.

Responses have been received on behalf of the Norfolk Churches Trust including six members of the Advisory Council, a Trustee / Hon Treasurer, Director / Trustee, one Church Warden, one member of the Trust, one Honourable Chaplain to the Churches Trust and the Chairman, the Norfolk Historic Buildings Trust. The President of the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society is concerned whether other organisations will see this as an opportunity to withdraw funding and that this may damage the local economy.

3.3 Economic Development

There has been correspondence received about the importance of continued development of the LEP and the fear that reduced funding may affect this work:

- Norman Lamb MP
- FIG (Financial Industry Group) Chairman

Melton Constable, Saham Toney PCs, The Executive Director Creative Arts East and Norfolk Playing Fields Association do not support the proposal to reduce contributions to economic development projects.

The Chief Executive Norfolk Rural Community Council (NRCC) stated that if NCC were looking to expand into Community Development & Neighbourhood planning, they recommend linking community based approach to higher level strategies (via NRCC).

Deepdale Farms Diversification Partner, Norfolk Tourism's Chairman, Swaffham Tourism Chair, the Operations Director from Norfolk Cottages and Greenbanks Hotel, Wendling responded with concerns in respect of cutting funds that may affect the tourist industry.

3.4 General Responses

Norfolk Police Authority responded to specific proposals and commented upon the impacts that the proposals would have on illegal activity and enforcement and public fear around safety and security. Also, it endorsed existing community partnerships and suggested joint working arrangements with District based Operational Partnership Teams.

4.0 **New suggestions, or variations on themes, not already reflected in Section H, (Travel and Transport) include:**

- The Head of Corporate Affairs Bus & Coach National Express proposed specific ways in which National Express could assist in maintaining the information desk including taking over its operation.
- Middleton Parish Council suggested that two of the lesser used Park and Rides sites should be 'disposed of'.

- We have received feedback regarding the perceived inefficiency of contractors working within the Partnership, details of which have been passed to the appropriate service manager.

4.1 General Responses

Responses were received from:

NNDC, North Walsham Town Council, Broads Cycle Hire, Cromer Town Council the Chairman of the Wherry Lines Community Rail Partnership, Head of Community Rail Network Rail, former Chairman of Bittern Line Community Rail Partnership / former administrator for North East Norfolk Travellers Association and Vice Chairman of the Wherry Lines Partnership were all concerned about the reduction in funding for transport partnerships.

East Norfolk Transport User Association (ENTUA) has responded to register its concern about the proposals for the Community Rail Partnership, Park and Ride sites and bus information desk at the Bus Station.

Wymondham Bridewell Women's Institute and Visit Norwich were concerned about the effect of the closure of the travel information desk and reducing the subsidy for the Park and Rides.

North Norfolk District Council states that it understands that local government is facing unprecedented difficulties as a result of government grant cuts, and have commented upon proposals which they believe will impact most on the wellbeing of the district. In this instance, proposals for the Park and Ride and Bittern Line funding. Also, it doesn't wish to see rural areas disadvantaged by the reduction in public transport.

The UK Director of Property & Facilities at Aviva has written to say that the Park and Ride is an important facility in helping employees to get to work and that if the service is reduced they would be keen to work with NCC to explore locally defined parking policies.

Norfolk Rural Community Council commented upon the rural bus strategy proposals which included:

- Broadly welcome move to demand responsive transport.
- Please that NCC has protected budgets associated with community transport and recognised the key future role it will play.

Responses from District Councils

In addition to those council's whose responses have already been incorporated into the consultation feedback – responses have also been received from:

- Norwich City Council
- Broadland District Council
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council
- Kings Lynn Borough Council

We also received a 40 page response from Diss Town Council, the comments from which are also incorporated here.

The following comments provide a summary of the key points made in their responses. The full responses will be available for inspection in the members' room.

Key themes:

Consultation process

- Councils felt that more information on the specific budget proposals should have been provided to aid a better understanding of what was being proposed and therefore a better response
- Councils would have liked earlier engagement with them and their members in the Big Conversation

Transfer of costs

- Councils were concerned that reductions in or withdrawal of services would mean that the people they currently support would be left without any services and the costs of helping them would be transferred to district councils and other public sector partners.
- Examples given were: increased pressures on housing provision due to reduced spending on prevention services; increased anti-social behaviour due to lack of Youth Service provision; increased 999 calls due to people with substantial needs not getting the services they need; pressure on Disabled Facilities Grant due to reduced Supporting People budget.

Impact on the most vulnerable

- Councils were concerned that the cumulative impact of the budget proposals had not been fully explored, particularly the impact on the most vulnerable people.
- Norwich City Council were particularly concerned that the proposed change in eligibility criteria for Adult Social care would mean that 1,500 Norwich residents would not receive a service in the future, and that the rate of mental illness in adults was 40% higher in the city than elsewhere in the county and would therefore be disproportionately affected by proposed service reductions.

Preventative services

- Councils felt that proposals to reduce the funding for preventative services was a false economy, that costs would be transferred to other agencies (see above), and people's needs would deteriorate more quickly and therefore require critical services sooner.