



Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Tuesday 18 March 2014**

Time: **10:00 am**

Venue: **Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Persons attending the meeting are requested to turn off mobile phones.

Membership

Mr B Borrett (Chairman)

Mr R Bearman (Vice-Chairman

Mr T Coke

Mr D Collis

Ms E Corlett

Mrs S Gurney

Mr S Hebborn

Mr H Humphrey

Mr T Jermy

Mr C Jordan

Mrs J Leggett

Mrs E Morgan

Mr R Smith

Dr M Strong

Mrs A Thomas

Mr B Watkins

Mr M Wilby

Parent Governor Representatives

Mrs K Byrne

Mrs S Vertigan

Church Representatives

Ms H Bates

Mr A Mash

**For further details and general enquiries about this Agenda
please contact the Committee Officer:
Julie Mortimer on 01603 223055 or email committees@norfolk.gov.uk**

A g e n d a

1. To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

2. Members to Declare any Interests

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** in a matter to be considered at the meeting and that interest is on your Register of Interests you must not speak or vote on the matter.

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** in a matter to be considered at the meeting and that interest is not on your Register of Interests you must declare that interest at the meeting and not speak or vote on the matter.

In either case you may remain in the room where the meeting is taking place. If you consider that it would be inappropriate in the circumstances to remain in the room, you may leave the room while the matter is dealt with.

If you do not have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest you may nevertheless have an **Other Interest** in a matter to be discussed if it affects:

- your well being or financial position
- that of your family or close friends
- that of a club or society in which you have a management role
- that of another public body of which you are a member to a greater extent than others in your ward.

If that is the case then you must declare such an interest but can speak and vote on the matter.

3. Minutes

(Page 5)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee held on 11 February 2014.

4. To receive any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency

5. Call-in Item(s)

The deadline for calling-in any matters for consideration by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee meeting on Tuesday 18 March from the Cabinet meeting on Monday 3 March is **4.00pm on Monday 10 March 2014**. If any call-ins are received by the deadline, then a report will follow.

6. Graduate Recruitment and support

Suggested approach by the Scrutiny Support manager **(Page 18)**

Report by the Interim Head of HR and OD. **(Page 19)**

7. Cabinet Scrutiny Committee: Forward Work Programme (Page 25)

Suggested approach by the Scrutiny Support Manager

Group Meetings

Conservative	9:00am	Colman Room
Liberal Democrats	9:00am	Room 530
UKIP	9:00am	Room 504
Labour Group	9:00am	Room 513

Chris Walton
Head of Democratic Services
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
NR1 2DH

Date Agenda Published: 10 March 2014



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Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Tuesday 11 February 2014 at 10am in the
Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Committee Members Present:

Mr B Borrett (Chairman)

Mr R Bearman
Dr A Boswell
Mr B Bremner
Mr R Coke
Mr D Collis
Mr T East
Mrs S Gurney
Mr S Hebborn

Mr H Humphrey
Mr C Jordan
Mrs J Leggett
Mr M Sands
Mr R Smith
Mrs A Thomas
Mr B Watkins
Mr M Wilby

County Councillors also present as witnesses:

Mr S Morphew Cabinet Member – Finance Corporate and Personnel

County Councillors also present in support of the call-in:

Mr J Dobson
Ms A Kemp
Mr R Bird

Officers Present:

Peter Timmins Interim Head of Finance
Chris Walton Head of Democratic Services
Harvey Bullen Head of Budgeting and Financial Management

1 Apologies and substitutions.

1.1 Apologies were received from Mrs E Morgan (Dr A Boswell substituted);
Dr M Strong (Mr T East substituted); Mr T Jermy (Mr M Sands substituted);
and Mrs S Vertigan, Parent Governor Representative.

2 Declarations of Interests

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2014 were confirmed as a
correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 Items of Urgent Business

4.1 The Chairman drew the Committee's attention to a letter which had been

received from the Leader of Norfolk County Council in response to the request to attend the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee meeting as a witness, and tendering his apologies. The Chairman circulated a copy of the letter to the Committee and asked for Members' views and to agree the actions, if any, the Committee wished to take.

- 4.2 Following discussion, the Committee asked the Chairman to write to the Leader of the Council, expressing disquiet at his refusal to attend the meeting and stressing that scrutiny had an important role to play in the running of the council and provided an important check on the Executive for Backbenchers. Members also felt that the Leader had not provided the necessary respect for the scrutiny process. A copy of the letter to Mr Nobbs from the Chairman is attached to these minutes at Appendix A.

Call-in item

5 Revenue Budget 2014-17

- 5.1 Cabinet, at its meeting on 6 January 2014, had considered a report entitled 'Revenue Budget 2014-17' which recommended that Cabinet:

1. Note the revised position which sees the availability of £10.9m for 2014-15.
2. Agree the response to the consultation, by restoring £7.1m funding in 2014-15 for
 - Children's revised budget savings, better data, robust budget - £3.1m.
 - Children's 16-19 transport re-phased - £1.0m.
 - Adults – personal care savings re-phased, plus less risk - £3.0m.
3. Note the delayed planning decision on the Willows, which will emerge after the budget meeting;
4. Agree, that as a consequence, the prudent approach is to assume a possible planning failure, and gather £8m funds, towards the £26m that could be required, making a total of £19m [04.73%] assembled;
5. Note that the remaining £7m was to be defrayed by a £4.2m one-off contribution from the 2014-15 revenue budget for interest payments on capital, which can be deferred for a year;
6. Agree that in the light of the deferral above, the £4.2m is employed to help fund the Willows assembly, as set out below, accepting the increased degree of risk if the whole £26m becomes due.

	Resources £m	One-off costs £m
Availability	10.9	
Consultation		7.1
Willows		8.0
Interest Payments	4.2	
Total	15.1	15.1

7. Note that, a delay in the Willows decision beyond 1 May, exposes the Council to a potential increase in termination costs of £5m, to £31m, resulting in an unfunded risk of £12m [£31m less £19m], which in the short term would be covered by the General Reserve, whilst urgent savings were then assembled to restore the General Reserve to its

£19m minimum.

Cabinet is asked to agree to recommend to County Council

- a) An overall County Council Net Revenue Budget of £308.397m for 2014-15, including budget increases of £113.301m and budget reductions of £107.491m as set out in Table 5 of this report and the actions required to deliver the proposed savings.
- b) A freeze in Council Tax for 2014-15
- c) The budget proposals set out for 2015-16 and 2016-17, including authorising Chief Officers to take the action required to deliver budget savings for 2015-16 and 2016-17 as appropriate.
- d) As the current proposals are not adequate to deliver a balance budget in future years that further plans, to meet the shortfall, are brought back to Members before June 2014, as part of the 2015-16 budget planning process timetable set out in Appendix F.
- e) The Council Tax calculations in Appendix D and the precept to be collected from the District Councils.
- f) That the Head of Finance be authorised to transfer from the County Fund to the Salaries and General Accounts all sums necessary in respect of revenue and capital expenditure provided in the 2014-15 Budget, to make payments, to raise and repay loans and to invest funds.

A copy of the report considered by Cabinet can be found on the County Council's website at:

http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Council_and_democracy/Your_Council/Committees/DisplayResultsSection/Papers/index.htm?Committee=Cabinet

The minute extract from Cabinet's meeting is as follows:

10.3. Revenue Budget 2014-17

The Cabinet received a report (item 10.3), which set out the detailed revenue budget proposals covering 2014-15 and the proposed level of Council Tax/Precept for 2014-15.

The Interim Head of Finance reported that at the start of the consultation the County Council had faced a budget gap of £49m over three years. Options had been created so that the budget could be best shaped to suit residents. The deficit had been reduced to £22m and so the budget was in a slightly better position. If planning permission was not gained for the energy from waste plant the risk had been covered in the short term. In all, the proposed revenue budget covered the competing demands of responding to residents needs whilst not endangering the County Council.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Personnel advised they there was still uncertainty around the amount of the final funding gap due to factors such as the impact of the general election, economy growth, the

outcome of the planning decision for the energy to waste plant, and integrated health funds. The recent decision made by full Council regarding suspending changes to the senior management structure would also cause an effect, though the full impact had not yet been assessed.

The Cabinet Member continued that the will of the Council currently was that council tax be frozen for three years, which was currently possible. However public responses had indicated that residents would actually be prepared to see an increase. Regarding the council tax freeze grant, a slightly clearer view of the proposal had been received however it was unclear as yet whether the boundaries would change. A decision would need to be made on whether the County Council controlled its own council tax in the future or joined with the Government.

Finally, the Cabinet Member Finance, Corporate and Personnel noted that it would not be helpful to argue over minor matters at full Council and instead the aim should be to focus on priorities and concerns. All Group Leaders had agreed that there should be a cut off time to amendments.

The Cabinet Member for Schools stated that £7.1m had been restored into the budget to address the key concerns of Norfolk residents in 2014-15. This would delay the initiation of the decisions for one year whilst awaiting the outcome of the planning enquiry. However if planning permission for the energy from waste plant was not granted, the County Council would be faced with huge financial problems.

Decision

RESOLVED that:-

- 1) The revised position be noted, which showed the availability of £10.9m for 2014-15.
- 2) The response to the consultation be agreed, by restoring £7.1m funding in 2014-15 for:
 - Children's revised budget savings, better data, robust budget - £3.1m
 - Children's 16-19 transport re-phased - £1.0m
 - Adults – personal care savings re-phased, plus less risk - £3.0m
- 3) The delayed planning decision on the Willows be noted;
- 4) The prudent approach was to assume a possible planning failure and gather £8m funds towards the £26m that could be required, making a total of £19m [or 73%] assembled;
- 5) The remaining £7m be defrayed by a £4.2m one-off contribution from the 2014-15 revenue budget for interest payments on capital, which can be deferred for a year;
- 6) In the light of the deferral above, the £4.2m be employed to help fund the Willows assembly, as set out below, accepting the increased degree of risk if the whole £26m became due:-

Resources
£m

One-off costs
£m

Availability 10.9	Consultation 7.1
Interest payments 4.2	Willows 8.0
Total 15.1	Total 15.1

- 7) A possible delay in the Willows decision beyond May 1st be noted. This would expose the Council to a potential increase in termination costs of £5m, to £31m, resulting in an unfunded risk of £12m [£31m less £19m], which in the short term would be covered by the General Reserve, whilst urgent savings were then assembled to restore the General Reserve to its £19m minimum.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:-

- 1) An overall County Council Net Revenue Budget of £308.397m for 2014-15, including budget increases of £113.301m and budget reductions of £107.491m as set out in Table 5 of the Cabinet report and the actions required to deliver the proposed savings.
 - 2) A freeze in Council Tax for 2014-15.
 - 3) The budget proposals set out for 2015-16 and 2016-17, including authorising Chief Officers to take the action required to deliver budget savings for 2015-16 and 2016-17 as appropriate.
 - 4) That further plans to meet the shortfall, be brought back to Members before June 2014, as part of the 2015-16 budget planning process timetable set out in Appendix F of the Cabinet report, as the current proposals are not adequate to deliver a balance budget in future years.
 - 5) The Council Tax calculations in Appendix D of the Cabinet report and the precept be collected from the District Councils.
 - 6) The Head of Finance be authorised to transfer from the County Fund to the Salaries and General Accounts all sums necessary in respect of revenue and capital expenditure provided in the 2014-15 Budget, to make payments, to raise and repay loans and to invest funds.
- 5.2 Cllrs Dobson, Boswell, Bird and Cllrs Kemp, Coke and East had called in the decision at Paragraph 10.3, sub paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of the minutes, and their call-in letters can be found with the agenda papers at http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Council_and_democracy/Your_Council/Committees/DisplayResultsSection/Papers/index.htm?Committee=Cabinet_Scrutiny
- 5.3 The Chairman welcomed Mr Morphew, Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Personnel, who attended the meeting as a witness.
- 5.4 The Chairman also welcomed John Dobson, Richard Bird and Alexandra Kemp, who had called in the item.
- Mr Dobson circulated a note to support his call-in, which is reproduced below:

Introduction.

This more detailed report is submitted for formal incorporation into the meeting agenda papers as advised in para 4 of my call-in request. It is in the name of the principal caller-in (Cllr Dobson) and the two supporters (Cllrs Boswell and Bird). It seeks to clarify the main thrust of the reason for the request for Cabinet to reconsider its decision to follow officers' recommendations for a narrow, limited and entirely irresponsible approach in the event of planning failure for the incinerator proposal. It suggests further considerations which Cabinet needs to incorporate in its overall budget proposal to Council, particularly a costed Plan B in the case of planning failure. It makes a suggestion as to how the questioning of witnesses might be most beneficially undertaken and condemns the decision by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Chairman to limit the witnesses to be called.

We refer below the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 27 January 2014, specifically para 10.3 sub paras 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Key Points

The Cabinet has completely ignored far better additional options in their budget proposal to Council in the event of planning failure for the incinerator. These not only offer a clear way forward for the Council to substitute cheaper, greener methodologies in the event of planning failure, they suggest that their adoption now as a Plan B (the non-existence of which represents a critical and wholly irresponsible deficiency on the part of the Council's management given the present circumstances) would offer huge financial advantage to the Council and the taxpayer, amounting to many millions of pounds, dwarfing and rendering insignificant the penalty to £26m.

Alternative, Cheaper Methodologies. (As promulgated to colleague MPs by Henry Bellingham MP and Elizabeth Truss MP earlier this month and based on Council officer figures)

Last week we released estimates of the cost of going ahead with the proposed Waste to Energy Plant at Saddlebow.

This is an estimate as the County Council has not released the costs or the details of the 23 year contract to which Norfolk taxpayers have been committed.

The delay in the Secretary of State's planning decision provides NCC with an opportunity to make this information public, and we again urge them to do so.

Based on discussions with officers at the county council, it appears that the contract would result in Norfolk's waste costing approximately £105/tonne in gate fees. This amounts to £411m over the course of the 23-year contract.

DEFRA figures show that the average gate fee for an incinerator with a capacity between 200kt and 300kt, like that proposed at Saddlebow, is just £78/tonne. In other words, it appears that the contract has been signed at a very high rate. If the average fee were applied to the Norfolk contract it would cost £305m over the same period – a reduction of over £100m (see spreadsheet).

There are alternative options which are more cost effective:

- *There will also be spare capacity at the new incinerator in Suffolk, which is nearing completion.*
- *Waste could be shipped to Amsterdam for £75-85/tonne, or to Peterborough's Green Energy Parks for £75/tonne.*
- *The Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk have signed a conditional contract for a recycling plant by Material Works, which recently received £100m funding, and would cost £55/tonne.*

The proposal also comes at a time when our waste habits are changing dramatically. The incinerator was intended to replace landfill, but the amount of waste West Norfolk sends to landfill is falling by 4% each year. This is occurring as recycling rates increase by 10% annually. The impact of these trends should not be underestimated – they were what spurred Defra to withdraw the £169m that it had originally pledged in financial support.

The long term cost of continuing with the contract which is likely to run into the hundreds of millions is very large in comparison to the costs of exiting now (estimated £26m).

It is vital that the full cost of the 23 year contract is published by NCC and that it is properly examined in public whilst it is still possible to change course.

Chairman's Proposed Process for Conduct of Meeting

We welcome the proposal to deal with the two call-ins as one. The fact of there being two call-ins demonstrates that the extent of disquiet felt by back-bench members on this matter is cross-party and substantial.

It need not skew the process or make it repetitive.

We are concerned however that the process as far as questioning of witnesses is concerned should follow the example given by Parliamentary Select Committees (the equivalent of Scrutiny Committees at national level), that is it should allow follow-up questions within reason. Unless it is possible to follow a line of questioning, it may not be possible for proper conclusions to be teased out and this would undermine the integrity of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee's work. In similar vein we would not wish, within reason, for time constraints to be imposed on our formal discussion of such an important issue. Such an intention, if given out in his opening remarks by the Chairman, would we hope tend to discourage members who might wish to bring procedural motions to curtail debate. We are frankly dismayed that the Chairman has not allowed any of the officer witnesses asked for to be called. This is anti-democratic and indicates, in our view, material bias.

5.5 During Mr Dobson's presentation, the following points were noted:

- Due to the scheduling of meetings and the short timescale between the Cabinet meeting and the full Council budget meeting, there was insufficient time for Cabinet Scrutiny Committee to ask Cabinet to review

its decision before the Council budget meeting on 17 February.

- Mr Dobson referred to his call-in statement in which he recommended that the decision be reconsidered by Cabinet. It was Mr Dobson's opinion that alternative ways of funding the financial penalties which could be paid to Cory Wheelabrator in the event of planning failure and different approaches that could have been taken to ascertain alternative ways to dispose of Norfolk's waste, had been ignored.
- Mr Dobson also felt that although the Leader of the Council and Cabinet had requested the Secretary of State to make an urgent decision on the planning application, it would take a number of years before the plant was built and working. He urged the Committee to consider how long it had taken the Bexley Health incinerator to obtain planning permission and to understand that even if planning permission was awarded in the near future, it would take a number of years before the plant was built and operational.
- Mr Dobson criticised the Audit Committee for endorsing the 'clean bill of health' on the accounts by the External Auditors, after which Members had received a report from the Interim Head of Finance stating that the Council was in danger of bankruptcy if an immediate payment of £26m in compensation payments was required due to the failure in obtaining planning permission.
- At the last Audit Committee meeting, Mr Dobson had asked for clarification from the Chief Officer Group, who owned the risks relating to the Willows, about how the risks relating to compensation in the event of planning failure had been considered and why obvious discrepancies had been ignored.
- Mr Dobson said that now was the time for Norfolk County Council to consider a Plan B approach to the Willows.
- Mr Dobson also said that he hoped an Extraordinary General Meeting could take place in April 2014 when Members would have another opportunity to consider cheaper and better alternatives of disposing of Norfolk's waste.

5.6 Ms Kemp, as a caller-in, addressed the Committee during which the following points were noted:

- Ms Kemp said she had been elected to represent the division in King's Lynn where the Willows plant was proposed and would do all she could on behalf of her constituents to prevent the plant being built.
- Ms Kemp referred to the report produced by Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) on termination sums which had not included any other options. When asked, PWC had said it had not been part of their remit to provide alternative options.
- As she considered she had not been in receipt of some of the material facts about the proposed £5m uplift, Ms Kemp said she felt she had been misled. She also considered that all the relevant information should have been made available to all Members before the Council

meeting on 28 October 2013, and as far as she was concerned Members had been denied some very pertinent information.

5.7 Mr Coke, addressed the Committee as a supporter of the call-in, during which the following points were noted:

- The Plant would not provide value for money as the average gate price per tonne had reduced and was therefore less than the figures included within the report.
- The decision of the Secretary of State was unlikely to be received until after May.
- It was hoped that Members would have an opportunity to reconsider the issue at an EGM where all information would need to be made available to all members to allow a properly informed decision to be made.

5.8 The Vice-Chairman reminded Members that the Norfolk County Council programme of meetings had been published in May 2013, therefore the schedule of meetings and the tight timescale between Cabinet and the full Council budget meeting in February had been well publicised. He also pointed out that the minutes of a Cabinet meeting did not need to be published for Members to be able to call-in a Cabinet decision. He added that in this instance the Chairman of the Committee had extended the call-in deadline by 48 hours due to the ICT data failure at County Hall delaying the publication of the minutes.

5.9 The Chairman reminded the Committee that the call-in should focus on the information contained in the call-in letter and no other issues.

5.10 In response to general questions from the Committee, the following points were noted:

- Members had been invited to attend a briefing on 25 October, prior to the full Council meeting on 28 October. The briefing had advised Members about the financial implications the Council faced if the Willows project was delayed and that the sum may need to be revised depending on the outcome of the Public Inquiry. The estimated sum of £5m had been included as a contingency sum in the event that the Secretary of State did not make a decision until after May 2014.
- At its meeting on 27 January, Cabinet had not revisited the waste strategy, but had dealt with the associated risks surrounding the budget only. The intention of Cabinet had been to ensure that the budget had sufficient money in place to provide services and that a contingency plan was in place to deal with any problems which may be experienced during the financial year.
- The Cabinet Member agreed to look into the allegations that had been made by several Members about information being withheld, although he stated that he had not seen any officer reports which had not included all available options.
- Mr Dobson again raised a concern about the role of the Audit Committee around the risks to Norfolk County Council associated with the Willows.

He said that the budget report referred to the incinerator although it appeared to ignore the risks now faced by the Council. The Interim Head of Finance confirmed that risks were presented to the Audit Committee at its quarterly meetings and that there was a possibility that an issue could arise at the beginning of a quarter and be dealt with before the next meeting, so there would be no need for the issue to be recorded on the risk register. The Interim Head of Finance also confirmed that the Audit Committee had considered the risk register in detail at its meeting on 30 January. Mr Dobson was not satisfied with this response and again asked how the External Auditors could issue a 'clean bill of health' and then Members be told that the Council could go bankrupt in the event that compensation needed to be paid.

- The Cabinet Member said it was his understanding that all Members who had attended the briefing on 25 October, prior to the Council meeting on 28 October, had been made aware of the financial consequences of a delay in receiving the planning decision by the Secretary of State and that the compensation payable would be increased if a decision was not received before Spring 2014.
- It was confirmed that the confidential briefing for Members on 25 October 2013 had included information about the financial implications in the event of planning failure, although consideration of this issue had been proportionate due to the decision of the Secretary of State being expected by 14 January 2014.
- The Cabinet Member reiterated that he could find no evidence that Councillors had not been fully briefed before the Council meeting in October 2013. He also confirmed that the Cabinet report had included details of the rise in compensation should liabilities change.
- Members were reminded that the call-in related to the budget recommendations only and that the full Council meeting on 17 February would consider if the budget recommended by Cabinet covered all the associated risks.
- The Cabinet Member confirmed that Group Leaders and Scrutiny Group Leads had attended a briefing on 25 October where the sum of £5m had been included as the estimated uplift which would be required in the event of planning failure, although the actual amount would depend on when the decision by the Secretary of State was available. The agenda and papers for the Council meeting on 28 October had included all liabilities, and it had also been made clear that the quoted figures would need revising if a quick decision was not received from the Secretary of State.
- Following a query about why the Leader of the Council had not attended the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee meeting, the Cabinet Member said that this was because the call-in related to a budget issue discussed on 27 January and the Leader had not attended that Cabinet meeting. He confirmed that as the Portfolio Holder he was happy to attend the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee meeting to deal with the issues raised in the call-in.
- In response to a question about which of the recommendations made by

Cabinet Mr Dobson did not agree with, he said that it was a possibility that Plan A may never happen, therefore other options needed to be discussed. With the PFI credits being withdrawn and the possibility the Secretary of State may turn down the planning application he felt that other options for disposal of waste had not been fully explored. He also said that the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk had recently signed a contract for a recycling plant and two of Norfolk's MPs had pointed out that the incineration option was the most expensive option for disposing of waste. He also said there may not be enough waste in the future to make it cost effective to run the plant.

- Mr Boswell thanked the Cabinet Member for agreeing to look into the allegations of information being withheld from Members. He also asked if a communications plan existed setting out how financial information was reported and presented.
- The Cabinet Member reiterated that Cabinet had attempted to produce a budget on behalf of the whole Council. He also said it was unfortunate that the Secretary of State had not yet made his decision regarding the planning application and that the PFI credits had been withdrawn, but the budget had been prudently prepared on the information that was known.

5.11 The Chairman asked Mr Dobson and Ms Kemp to sum up the call-in, during which the following points were noted:

5.11.1 Mr Dobson said that it was hoped to hold an EGM in March 2014 where the Waste Strategy could be debated again. He felt that information had not been included in the budget papers, or in the Audit Committee reports or risk assessments, which allowed Members to consider the matter in sufficient detail to make an informed decision on whether to continue with the project.

Mr Dobson reiterated that he had visited the plant at Bexley Heath which had taken 18 years to gain planning permission and become operational. He said that Norfolk was in year 4 of the process and therefore the Executive needed to ensure contingency planning for all eventualities was put in place.

5.11.2 In her summing up, Ms Kemp said that the political landscape was continually shifting and an urgent review was needed to plan for the future. She felt that shipping waste across Norfolk to King's Lynn would be shocking for her division and urged Members to devise a Plan B. She also urged engagement with the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk to put Norfolk first as this was a wider issue than party politics. She felt her concerns were not being properly addressed.

5.12 Members thanked the Cabinet Member for his open and honest responses to the questions raised and asked if there was a mechanism in place to allow Cabinet Scrutiny Committee to refer the matter back to Cabinet without delaying the process.

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that the call-in related to a budget decision made by Cabinet at its meeting on 27 January and that there was no time for the decision to go back to Cabinet for reconsideration

before the Council's budget meeting on 17 February 2014.

- 5.13 Mr Jordan proposed, seconded by Mr Wilby that Cabinet Scrutiny Committee agree not to refer the decisions from the January 2014 Cabinet meeting back to Cabinet for reconsideration, but, in the light of Member concerns raised at the meeting, to request the Leader and Acting Managing Director review the decisions and for the Leader to feedback his conclusions to Members before the Council meeting on 17 February 2014.

With 13 votes for, 0 votes against and 4 abstentions the motion was **carried**.

- 5.14 Mr Boswell proposed, seconded by Mr East to recommend to Cabinet that they instigate an investigation into the communication to all Councillors for the 28 October Council meeting and the result is a communication plan on how financial information is communicated to all Councillors.

With 9 votes for, 0 votes against and 8 abstentions, the motion was **carried**.

- 5.15 Mr Coke proposed, seconded by Mr East, that Cabinet Scrutiny Committee register deep concern that a motion passed at Full Council on 17 June 2013 that recognised that Cabinet would be drawing up contingency arrangements, involving officers in the case that the contract does not go ahead has apparently been ignored by Cabinet. Cabinet Scrutiny note that the recent Price Waterhouse Cooper / AMEC report to Cabinet in January was superficial and did not comprise the officer driven contingency arrangements agreed necessary by Council. Cabinet Scrutiny recommend to Cabinet that at their 3 March meeting, they urgently discuss a Plan of Action for developing a Plan B contingency plan, which would evaluate alternative options to the Willows plant in depth.


With 4 votes for, 12 votes against and 1 abstention, the motion was **lost**.

6 Cabinet Scrutiny Committee: Forward Work Programme

- 6.1 The Committee received and **noted** the Forward work Programme.

The meeting ended at 11.45am.

CHAIRMAN

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Appendix A

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DX: 135926 NORWICH 13
Email: bill.borrett@norfolk.gov.uk

Your Ref:

My Ref: Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

11 February 2014

Dear George,

Thank you for your letter addressed to Julie Mortimer for the attention of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

I have been asked to write to you by the Committee to express their disquiet at your refusal to attend the meeting today and saddened that you chose to do so using the language that you did.

It was felt by the Committee that scrutiny has a very important part to play in the running of the Council and that it provides an important check on the Executive for the Backbenchers. They felt this morning that you did not provide the necessary respect of the process or the Committee and would respectfully request that it not happen again in the future.

Best wishes



Bill Borrett
Chairman
Cabinet Scrutiny Committee
Norfolk County Council

To: Mr G Nobbs, Leader of Norfolk County Council.

Graduate recruitment and support

Suggested Approach by the Scrutiny Support Manager

1. Background

- 1.1 On 21st January 2014 Cabinet Scrutiny Committee received a report outlining the progress and outcomes of the Norfolk County Council Internal Apprenticeships Scheme. The scheme aimed to improve the employability and skills of 30 young people by providing paid workplace experience and access to apprenticeship qualifications.
- 1.2 As part of the scrutiny Cabinet Scrutiny Committee considered what support the County Council provides for graduates in the County. It was agreed that a report be brought to the March meeting of Cabinet Scrutiny Committee to update members on what the County Council is doing to recruit permanent graduates, other than through work experience placements. The Committee noted that graduates could not currently be appointed onto the County Council's apprenticeships scheme and it was suggested that a similar scheme could be set up for graduates.

2. Suggested Approach

The attached report by the Acting Head of Human Resources provides further information to the Committee on the areas for scrutiny identified above.

It is suggested that the Committee considers the attached report and agrees whether it has completed scrutiny of this issue or if there are further issues that it wishes to scrutinise.

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Graduate recruitment and support

Report by Acting Head of HR and OD

Graduate unemployment, for those who left education in the last five years, is now running at around 9%. This is lower than the level for non-graduates, at 14%, but is still significant, particularly as nearly half of those employed are working in non-graduate roles.

The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee has asked for an update on Norfolk County Council (NCC) graduate recruitment. This report outlines NCC's overarching strategy to support graduates. This takes the form of workplacements, traineeships and recruiting to targeted graduate roles ie:

Recruitment

- Social Workers
- Teachers

Workplacements/traineeships

- Get Britain Working
- Museum trainee scheme
- Communications
- nplaw trainee scheme

In addition NCC supports the development of **graduate level** work related skills through:

- UEA 'Year In Industry' students
- Social Work student placements
- Schools' support for UEA undergraduates/postgraduates
- nplaw/UEA Legal Internship scheme

1. Background

- 1.1. Norfolk County Council is committed to supporting young graduates into employment and providing relevant workplace experience.
- 1.2. The picture of graduate employment is complex as the percentage of graduates in the population has risen from 17% in 1992 to 38% in 2013.
- 1.3. In 2013, graduates were more likely to be employed, less likely to be searching for work and less likely to be out of the labour force (inactive) than those people with lower qualifications or no qualifications. Appendix 1 shows unemployment rates per population sector.
- 1.4. However, the percentage of graduates working in non-graduate roles has risen to nearly 50%. This suggests the increasing supply of graduates and the possible decrease in demand for them has had an effect on the type of job they are doing. (Data points 2-4 from Office for National Statistics June 2013).
- 1.5. There are positive signs in the economy as:
 - the number of vacancies for university graduates is set to rise by 10.2% overall - according to a survey published by the Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR) January 2014

- the overall unemployment rate came down to 7.1% in January 2014 (Labour Force Survey).

1.6. There is no available graduate unemployment data for Norfolk.

2. Recruitment

2.1. Newly Qualified Social Worker recruitment and development

2.1.1 NCC has a good track record of employing newly qualified graduate social workers and providing high quality development and guidance through their statutory Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

2.1.2 In 2013 we recruited 44 newly qualified Social Worker graduates in Children's Services and 10 in Adult Social Care (2 of these were on temporary contracts which have since ended).

2.1.3 The NCC ASYE scheme has been used as a good practice example in the Skills for Care national evaluation.

2.1.4 Children's Services is now planning to take this work further and will be targeting recruitment at new graduate social workers. The intention is for them to join a specific team of NQSWs, with work allocated to aid their development and learning events/mentors in place to provide on-going support.

2.2. Newly Qualified Teacher recruitment and development

2.2.1 Most Newly Qualified Teachers are graduates and as such their appointment contributes significantly to graduate employment in Norfolk.

2.2.2 The Norfolk Integrated Education Advisory Service promote teaching and increase the supply of quality applicants to Norfolk by:

- attending graduate recruitment fairs/careers events across the country.
- working collaboratively with Initial Teacher Training providers, Higher Education Institutions, teaching schools and recruitment agencies to promote the supply and quality of applicants.
- promoting teaching in Norfolk nationally.
- collaborating with schools on cohesive recruitment strategies.
- running secondary Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) recruitment events.
- providing Norfolk Schools with access to the NQT register.
- providing email job alerts to NQTs registered with Norfolk.

2.2.3 For April 2012-March 2013 the data shows:

- Graduate fairs attended - 15
- Number of graduate NQTs registered from recruitment fairs 797 Primary / 438 Secondary
- Number of job alerts sent – 147

2.2.4 NQT Induction provision includes;

- support, advice and guidance for schools and NQTs.
- monitoring progress of NQTs
- arranging additional support for vulnerable NQTs
- quality assurance
- Continuous Professional Development (CPD), including; induction training for NQTs and Induction Tutors; organising, delivering and promoting a full menu of CPD training courses mapped against the teacher standards.

2.2.5 The number of NQTs registered with Norfolk in the 2012/13 academic year was 264 (includes LA maintained schools and academies).

2.2.6 The work of the Norfolk Integrated Education Advisory Service will be scaled down in 2014-15 due to budget cuts.

3. Workplacements/Traineeships

3.1. Get Britain Working scheme for unemployed graduates

3.1.1 NCC has committed to offering and managing 30 to 50 placements (from Feb 2012 to March 2014) in support of the Government's 'Get Britain Working' initiative. The scheme is aimed at unemployed graduates aged between 21 and 25. Participants are offered 6-8 weeks' work experience and are generally expected to commit to work between 25 and 30 hours a week. Participants are not paid but continue to receive benefits and the Department of Work and Pensions covers costs of travel to work and childcare if required.

3.1.2 Progress Feb 2012 to End 2013

	No. of Requests	No. of Placements Offered	Placed Candidate Outcomes			
			Joined Temp Register	Gained Employment at NCC	Gained Employment Elsewhere	% Known Positive Outcome
2011/12	7	3	0	2	0	66.7%
2012/13	58	14	4	4	3	78.6%
Total	65	17	4	6	3	76.5%

For graduates placed on the scheme the outcomes have been good. Not all requests were translated into placements because (in 12/13):

- 22 of the 44 candidates withdrew their request as they found employment
- for 6 the scheme was not appropriate.

In December 2013 the scheme was re-advertised and has generated a further 5 managers offering placements from across all Services.

3.2. Museum Trainee Scheme

3.2.1 This scheme has created starter posts, which are 12 month, paid, fixed-term contracts, designed to act as stepping stones into the museum profession.

3.2.2 The scheme has been made possible through funding from Arts Council England which chose Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service to be one of only 16 Major Partner Museums in the country.

3.2.3 This scheme, although not aimed specifically at graduates, has appointed candidates with degrees, from a variety of disciplines and with a mixed age range.

3.2.4 Eight trainees started in January 2013, 6 of whom have secured related employment, two with NCC. A further eight started in January 2014.

3.3. Communications Team Graduate Trainees

3.3.1 We are now in the third year of offering temporary graduate trainee posts within our media and marketing teams.

3.3.2 Previous graduates have gone on to gain external employment, the current graduates are due to end their 6 month contract in March 2014.

3.3.3 This scheme comes to an end in 2014 as it was funded from team income that will in the future be used to fund budget savings.

3.4. **nplaw Trainee Scheme**

3.4.1 nplaw run a traineeship scheme for solicitors. Candidates are required to have a degree and have passed the Legal Practice Course (LPC) before applying for a two year training contract which is overseen by the Solicitors' Regulation Authority. Currently one trainee per year is recruited on this basis and there are a large number of applicants on each occasion.

3.4.2 Two trainees have been appointed to permanent solicitor roles in the past. The most recent trainees completed their contracts and obtained roles elsewhere.

4. **Graduate level support**

4.1. **UEA 'Year In Industry' – School of Environmental Sciences**

4.1.1 NCC is very supportive in offering placements to students on their 'Year In Industry' during their degree in the School of Environmental Sciences.

4.1.2 We provide extended work experience for 2 students each year within the Environment and Waste Team.

4.2. **Social Work student support**

4.2.1 We provide Social Work placements for students at local universities, including UEA, City College Norwich, University College Suffolk and Anglia Ruskin University. We also provide some placements for students studying at other universities, who reside in Norfolk.

4.2.2 Practice placements form part of all Social Work degree courses. They are a key part in helping students to integrate their knowledge, skills and values. All our placements are supported by qualified Practice Educators and On Site Supervisors who complete a Quality Assurance Questionnaire at the end of each placement.

4.2.3 In 2013 we arranged 8 day Observation placements, for 24 students.

4.2.4 We provided longer term placements for 36 students in Adult Social Care (19 mental health) and 48 students in Children's Services.

4.2.5 Our experienced Social Workers also assist with the interviewing of potential Social Work students and some occasionally contribute on degree programmes (e.g. by participating in practice based workshops for students).

4.3. **Schools support for UEA undergraduates/postgraduates (academic year 2012-13)**

4.3.1 34 secondary and 139 primary schools in Norfolk provided placements for Post Graduate Certificate in Education trainee teacher students.

4.3.2 15 Schools were used for placements in relation to the BA in Education.

4.3.3 17 Norfolk Schools provided placements for Speech & Language Therapy students.

4.4. nplaw/UEA Legal Internship scheme

4.4.1 nplaw work in partnership with the UEA to provide 2 internships per year for law undergraduates.

5. Summary

5.1 NCC's strategy for graduate recruitment and support is targeted on specific areas where we have expertise and where we need to fill graduate level vacancies arising from employee turnover and strategic change.

5.2. Graduate recruitment to posts in 2013 included:

Role	Numbers
Newly Qualified Social Workers	56
Newly Qualified teachers (academic year-including academies)	264
Museum graduates	2
Get Britain Working graduates	4
Total	326

6. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken as this report is for information only.

7. Any Other implications

7.1 Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. There are no implications to take into account.

8. Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act

8.1 There are no implications.

9. Recommendation

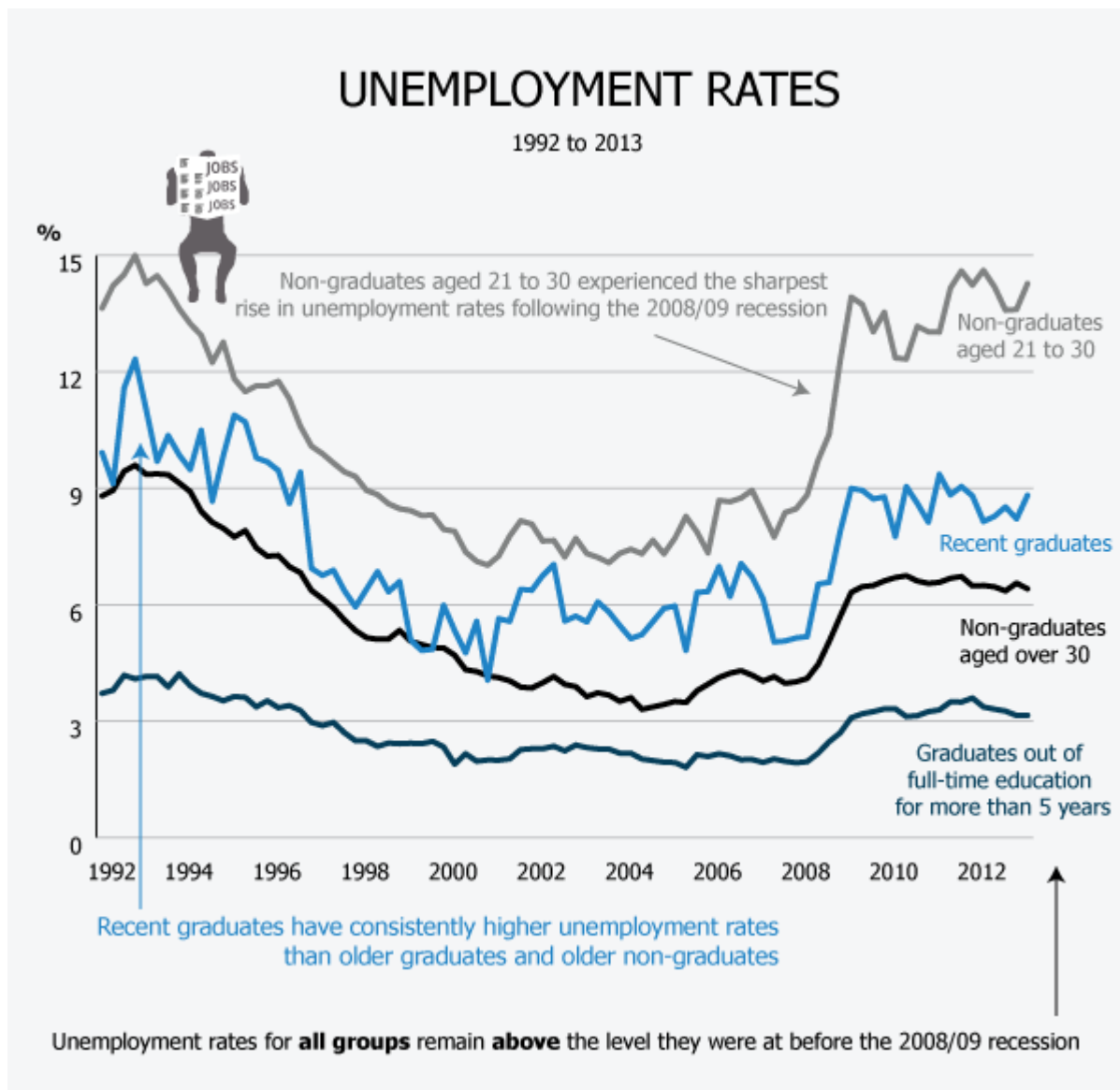
9.1 Members of Cabinet Scrutiny are asked to note the contents of this report and ask any questions in relation to this topic.

10. Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with: Jane Hanrahan Tel No; 01603 224121 email address; jane.hanrahan@norfolk.gov.uk

Appendix 1 Unemployment rates

The unemployment rates for recent graduates, non-recent graduates, non-graduates aged 21 to 30 and non-graduates aged over 30, April to June 1992 to April to June 2013.



NB: A recent graduate is one who graduated in the last five years
Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

Cabinet Scrutiny Committee: Forward Work programme

Suggested Approach by the Scrutiny Support Manager

1. Forward Work Programme

- 1.1 On 25th November 2013 the County Council agreed to cease operating an executive/scrutiny model and to implement a committee system of governance with effect from the Council's AGM in May 2014. In light of this the Overview and Scrutiny Strategy Group have agreed that any outstanding scrutiny work will need to be completed by April 2014.
- 1.2 The current forward work programme, as agreed at Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 11th February 2014, is attached at Appendix A. The Committee is asked to consider the work programme and suggest any scrutiny topics for consideration before the final meeting of the Committee on 29th April 2014.

2. Recruitment of Norfolk County Council Managing Director

- 2.1 At the last meeting of Cabinet Scrutiny Committee members agreed that they wished to receive an update at this meeting regarding the plans to permanently recruit a Managing Director and Senior Management team. Since this meeting members have been briefed on the recruitment process by the Acting Head of HR and it is expected that the new Managing Director will be announced by the 14th March 2014, subject to Full Council approval on 24th March. In light of the timing of the appointment of the new Managing Director so close to this meeting, the Chairman considers that there is no longer a need for this Committee to receive an update as Members have been briefed on the recruitment process on an ongoing basis since the February meeting.

3. Suggested Approach

It is suggested that the Committee considers the attached work programme and suggests any topics for consideration before the final meeting on 29th April 2014.

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