

Environment, Development and Transport Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, 07 September 2018
at 10am in the Edwards Room, County Hall**

Present:

Mr M Wilby - Chair

Mr M Castle

Mr S Clancy (Vice-Chairman)

Ms E Corlett

Mr P Duigan

Mr F Eagle

Mr T East

Mr C Foulger

Mr A Grant

Mr T Jermy

Mr B Spratt

Mr A White

1. Apologies and Substitutions

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mrs C Walker (Ms E Corlett substituting) and Mrs J Oliver (Mr F Eagle substituting).

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 06 July 2018 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Members to Declare any Interests

- 3.1 No interests were declared

4. Urgent Business

- 4.1 No urgent business was discussed.

5. Public Questions

- 5.1 One public question was received and the answer circulated; see Appendix A.

6. Member Questions

- 6.1 No Member questions were received in advance of the meeting; the following questions were asked in the meeting.

- 6.2 Mr B Spratt asked if Officers would consider providing toilet facilities for lorry drivers on some roads, following a discussion at Bressingham Parish Council meeting, where lorry drivers had discussed the lack of toilet facilities on some routes. The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services replied to Mr Spratt that Highways England worked with motorway station providers on the network to provide facilities at some cafes, restaurants and petrol stations. Norfolk County Council did not operate toilet facilities on roads, and he suggested that lorry drivers

could plan their routes based on the location of facilities.

- 6.3 Mr T Jermy raised issues about Nun's Bridge in Thetford; repair work had been completed to poor quality and with the wrong colour bricks. The Assistant Director of Highways and Waste accepted that the wrong bricks were used through error and confirmed the correct bricks would be put back in the structure

7. Update from Members of the Committee about Member Working Groups or bodies that they sit on.

- 7.1 An update from the Norwich Western Link working group was circulated; Appendix B.

8. Fly Tip Campaign

- 8.1.1 The Committee received the report providing an update on fly tipping and proposing a co-ordinated campaign to bring together stakeholders and the Norfolk Waste Partnership to deliver interventions based on best practice elsewhere in the Country.
- 8.1.2 The Head of Waste reported that the cost to local authorities in Norfolk was over £1m a year and £400k per year to the Council.
- 8.2.1 A Member felt the campaign did not tackle the core issues and that an action plan and change of legislation through lobbying would be more effective. The Head of Waste reported that the first stage of the campaign was to get authorities and partners to agree to work together; the next stage was intended to involve prosecution logs, identifying successes & effective legal teams, working with the judicial system and lobbying for legislation change.
- 8.2.2 It was noted that there was some confusion about charges for some waste items.
- 8.2.3 A Member was concerned about the number of incidents in Norfolk and the capacity of Councils in dealing with it. The Head of Waste reported that the Norfolk Waste Enforcement Group would bring together Local Authority Enforcement Officers dealing with fly tipping and Environment Officers to address this.
- 8.2.4 The Head of Waste confirmed that the future campaign would include authorities working together to publicise prosecution successes and scale of fines issued. A Member noted that the "Don't Be a Tosser" campaign in Braintree was successful. A Broadland District Council event on fly tipping was due to be held the following week and Officers were attending.
- 8.2.5 The Vice-Chairman noted that the model in Great Yarmouth had been effective, with more prosecutions than other districts, and this was an opportunity for learning.
- 8.2.6 The Head of Waste agreed that public confidence over what was free to dispose of needed to increase. An explanation was given that fly tipping was defined differently across the country which could distort data and that because Great Yarmouth Borough Council had recently changed its definition some of its data was not included in comparisons in the report; a need for a single definition was identified.
- 8.2.7 The Head of Waste confirmed that the Environment Agency was the lead organisation for incidents involving large scale criminal activity or hazardous waste.
- 8.2.8 The Chairman thanked staff at recycling centres for their hard work and for their work to get the centre at Mile Cross back up and running after the recent fire.
- 8.2.9 At paragraph 1.2, various organisations were mentioned. It was suggested that the

CLA (Country Land and Business Association Limited) should also be included.

- 8.3 The Committee **SUPPORTED** the delivery of a co-ordinated campaign to address the illegal dumping of waste delivered by working with stakeholders and as part of the Norfolk Waste Partnership.

9. Norwich River Wensum Strategy - Adoption

- 9.1 The Committee considered the report outlining the proposed final version of the River Wensum Strategy
- 9.2.1 A Member felt the report was focussed on economic development and wondered whether it gave equal weight give to enhancing and preserving environmental aspects of the river. The Environment Manager (Green Infrastructure Strategy & Advice) felt there was equal emphasis on environmental concerns within the report.
- 9.2.2 A Member asked how the Council would encourage active participation of local communities & stakeholders in project delivery. Officers agreed that involving the local community and businesses was important; a public launch of the strategy was planned.
- 9.2.3 A Member was concerned that there was not protection of the Wensum built into the strategy or discussion of the tributaries. The Head of Waste referred to the section on environment in the report, which covered protection of the river. The strategy was focussed on the Norwich City area and only extended as far as the City Council border, meaning the tributaries were not covered.
- 9.2.4 The Vice-Chairman was happy that environmental benefits were adequately discussed in the report and was happy that consultation would occur.
- 9.3 The Committee **AGREED** to adopt the River Wensum Strategy on behalf of Norfolk County Council.

10. Finance Monitoring

- 10.1 The Committee received the report detailing financial monitoring information for the services reporting to the Committee for the financial year 2018-19.
- 10.2.1 The current forecast underspend relating to support and development were queried; the Head of Support and Development for Community and Environmental Services confirmed that the underspend was achieved through vacancy management; there was a relatively high turnover caused by staff moving on to other roles within the Council. This meant the service and processes could be regularly reviewed and changed to enable posts to be left vacant, which could provide a future saving.
- 10.2.2 A small variance for household waste recycling was seen on the forward plan however paragraph 2.5 showed a significant variance and extra information; the Finance Business Partner for Community and Environmental Services clarified that an accurate forecast could not be based on data at this early stage of the year. An over-delivery had been seen so far but, to be accurate, more data was needed so it could not be reflected in the forecast.
- 10.2.3 The Vice-Chairman congratulated the Head of Support and Development for Community and Environmental Services on the use of professional vacancy management to enable savings to put into frontline service delivery; he hoped this could be shared across the Council to deliver more savings.

- 10.2.4 The collapse in recycling markets was suggested as a risk. The Head of Waste replied that this was always a potential risk however this was being addressed by the good work of district councils, the Council and the public to provide materials that were suitable for the market.
- 10.2.5 A member asked how staff redundancies through the vacancy management process would be recorded, and what the impact was on existing staff of not recruiting to vacant posts; the Head of Support and Development for Community and Environmental Services clarified that no redundancies were made as only vacant posts were deleted; staff had the opportunity to comment through a consultation before any decision to delete vacant posts was made and that this approach had been in place for 4-5 years. Staff sickness levels had fallen over the same period and metrics had not identified that the approach is causing any problems.
- 10.3 The Committee **NOTED**:
- a) The 2018-19 revenue budget the Environment, Development and Transport Committee and the current forecast outturn position
 - b) The Capital programme for this Committee
 - c) The balance of reserves brought forward to 2018-19.

11. Strategic and Financial Planning 2019-20 to 2021-22

- 11.1 The committee received the report with an update on the Council's overall budget planning position, the forecast budget gap for 2019-20 to 2021-22, and details of the strategic and financial planning framework for Service Committees agreed by Policy and Resources Committee.
- 11.2.1 It was queried whether failure of local bus routes would be included as a risk. The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services confirmed this would not be added as there were no proposals to remove bus subsidy at that time.
- 11.2.2 A Member was concerned that cuts to services were being reported as savings.
- 11.2.3 The large, one-off saving in 2021-22 was queried; the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services confirmed this was required due to the £39m loss of the Revenue Support Grant. If this could be spread over a number of years it would be more achievable.
- 11.2.4 Mr B Spratt was shocked by the amount of concessionary fare subsidisation by the Council. He **PROPOSED** that the Chairman write to Government or discuss with MPs.
- 11.2.5 The Chairman **PROPOSED** that the matter was brought back to Committee to decide how to move forward this. The Committee **AGREED** the Chairman's proposal.
- 11.3 The Committee:
- 1) **NOTED** the Council's budget assumptions and the budget planning principles for 2019-20 which had been approved by Policy and Resources Committee
 - 2) **NOTED** the forecast budget gap of £94.696m which reflects the changes from the 2018-22 Medium Term Financial Strategy, and the resulting indicative savings targets for the Committee over the period 2019-20 to 2021-22
 - 3) **CONSIDERED** key areas of risk in relation to 2019-22 budget planning for the Committee's budgets, including any extra/more pressures and the robustness of existing planned savings as set out in section 5 of the report, noting that any changes may impact on the overall budget gap and would require extra/more offsetting savings to be found
 - 4) **AGREED** the proposed approach and key themes to focus on in developing

savings proposals for 2019-20 to 2021-22, including how the principles of the Council's Strategy, Norfolk Futures, would inform and shape budget planning activity set out in section 5, having regard to the existing savings for 2019-20 and beyond which were agreed as part of the 2018-19 budget round

- 5) **AGREED** to **COMMISSION** officers to develop detailed savings proposals to be presented to the Committee for consideration at the October meeting in order to help close the forecast 2019-20 to 2021-22 budget gap; and
- 6) **NOTED** the budget planning timetable
- 7) **AGREED** that a report would be brought back to committee on subsidisation of concessionary fares by the Council for the Committee to decide a way forward

12. Norfolk Vanguard Offshore Windfarm Consultation

- 12.1.1 The Committee received the report detailing the formal Development Consent Order (DCO) consultation by the Planning Inspectorate on a proposal by Vattenfall (Swedish Energy Company) for an offshore wind farm 47 km off the Norfolk coast comprising up to 200 turbines and onshore supporting infrastructure.
- 12.1.2 The Principal Planner updated the Committee that authorities had raised a number of issues with the applicant, mainly in respect of favouring the use of high voltage direct current (HVDC) technology, which would remove the need for Cable Relay Stations near the coast. The applicant had taken on board these comments and those of other stakeholders and put in an HVDC solution as part of the DCO application.
- 12.1.3 The Principal Planner and County Council officers had been working with the applicant on economic development matters and a memorandum of understanding had been signed with regard to the use of the Port facilities at Great Yarmouth. Regarding potential disruption to businesses and community, discussions would be held with the local community; the HVDC solution would take away much of the disruption by removing a lot of infrastructure near the coast; the applicant would also compensate local businesses and the fishing community.
- 2.1.4 There were still issues related to highway matters which would be brought about by construction, including at Oulton Airfield but discussions were underway; temporary access arrangements may be possible here.
- 12.2.1 Councillor E Seward contacted the Principal Planner and Committee in advance of the meeting in respect of compensation for local communities and mitigation of coastal erosion.
- 12.2.2 Councillor M Kiddle-Morris also contacted the Principal Planner in support of the information laid out in the report.
- 12.2.3 Councillor R Price spoke on the matter as Local Member; his division included East Ruston which was a proposed site for a relay station. He asked for the following issues to be raised with the applicant:
 - That Vattenfall **confirm** their commitment to HVDC and would they in line with this remove mention of and drawings of the relay stations from their papers
 - That Vattenfall were **committed** to helping with sea defences at Happisburgh
 - That Vattenfall would **ensure** that the maximum possible replanting of hedgerows after work was undertaken
 - That Traffic Management plans were **agreed** with County and District councils with the **establishment** of a road safety committee made up of Vattenfall, contractors and local councillors to enable traffic issues during construction

raised by the public to be discussed and resolved. Such a Committee had worked very well with the Bacton Gas terminal

- 12.3.1 The investment this would bring into the Yarmouth area was noted.
- 12.3.2 The Vice-Chairman was **supportive** of local liaison groups being set up to discuss and raise traffic issues; he felt they should be professionally managed by the planning department at Norfolk County Council.
- 12.3.3 The Principal Planner confirmed that issues related to sea defences at Happisburgh would be covered by the Environment Agency and North Norfolk District Council. He **AGREED** to include in the response to Vattenfall confirmation that mitigation would be put in place where offshore cables made landfall. Cllr Price reported that at the previous meeting with Vattenfall, erosion at Happisburgh and need for sea defences was raised.
- 13.3.4 Vattenfall had agreed to put down fibre cables to support East Ruston residents with Better Broadband for Norfolk (BBfN).
- 13.4 The Committee:
- (a) **SUPPORTED** the principle of this offshore renewable energy proposal, which was consistent with national renewable energy targets and objectives subject to:
1. The holding highway objection set out in the report being satisfactorily resolved
 2. The implementation of appropriate highway; historic environment; and surface water conditions / requirements being resolved through the DCO and
 3. The detailed comments set out in the report and Appendix 1 being addressed through the DCO process.
- (b) **SUPPORTED** the use of HVDC technology which removes the need for an extra/more HVAC Booster / Cable Relay Station near Happisburgh.

From discussion in the meeting, the Committee **AGREED** to:

- **ASK** Vattenfall to ensure maximum possible replanting / mitigation of hedgerows after works were undertaken
- **ASK** Vattenfall that sea defence safeguards and mitigation measures were put in place where the offshore cable route makes landfall to the south of Happisburgh (as a planning requirement), to ensure work did not exacerbate existing coastal erosion in the area
- **NOTE** that the County Council would address all local highway issues arising from construction by seeking suitable planning requirements (conditions), in particular with regard to updating the outline Construction Traffic Management Plans. In addition, the County Council would **EXPECT** the developer to:
 - (A) enter into a legal agreement with the Highway Authority to make sure any damage was rectified;
 - (B) set up local stakeholder involvement group/s to enable any traffic issues arising during the construction phase to be discussed and resolved.

14. **Forward Plan**

- 14.1 The Committee reviewed the forward plan and delegated decisions taken by Officers.
- 14.2.1 As agreed at paragraph 11.2.5, a report on concessionary fares would be brought to the next meeting; it was noted that it was important to record that this was not about removing concessionary fares.
- 14.2.2 The item on fracking on the Forward Plan was discussed; the Head of Support and Development for Community and Environmental Services (CES) confirmed that consultation responses would be brought to Committee to agree before being sent.

15. Commercialisation of highways

15.1 Mr S Clancy in the Chair

15.2.1 The Committee had previously considered a report detailing eight alternative service models offering the potential to create opportunities to expand to other markets on a commercial basis and reduce the net cost of delivering the Highways Service.

15.2.2 The Assistant Director of Highways and Waste reported to Members that the paper was about commercialising highway works, such as road workers who undertook highway maintenance and gritting, Fastlane training, and the-highways laboratory; it would not include highway technicians and managers, or teams who managed budgets, liaised with the public and ordered works.

15.3 In response to a query, the Assistant Director of Highways and Waste replied that he did not think any model would give a change in response speed as a Service Level Agreement would be in place and client staff would order works in the same way as at present. There would be no change to the Local member protocol.

15.4 Mr M Wilby in the chair.

15.5.1 The Group Director for Norse Commercial Services reported that 1000 hours of modelling had been undertaken; there was a proposal to save £0.5m a year through savings that would not impact on service delivery but would give better mobile working, and commercialise the operation.

15.5.2 He confirmed that, since 2016, costing work had been carried out by employees of NCC & Norse, and staff costs absorbed by both parties; the Assistant Director of Highways and Waste confirmed in response to a question that the laboratory was successful but after the changes there would be greater scope to do external trading.

15.5.3 There was concern that, after transfer, services may perform more poorly; the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services reported that, having learned from the experiences of other authorities who had externalised their client function, Norfolk County Council had chosen to keep the client function in-house and have other services on contract with Norse. This meant if services did not perform as expected, they could be bought back in-house. The Assistant Director of Highways and Waste added that this would help maintain a culture of the workforce of being pro-Norfolk.

15.5.4 The Assistant Director of Highways and Waste reported that under the new structure, use of sub-contractors could be made more efficient.

15.5.5 A Member felt that arms lengths services could be helpful for companies and the Council to offset loss of funding from government. The Assistant Director of Highways and Waste agreed that the Council was currently limited in how much external work could be taken on due to restrictions under law; under the Norse model there would be less constraints to bring back more profit.

15.5.6 The Assistant Director of Highways and Waste confirmed that staff would transfer over on the same terms and conditions but new employees would have different, more flexible terms and conditions. The Group Director for Norse Commercial Services noted that there may be a reduction in Local Government Pension Scheme however an increase in some rates of pay would be seen; changes to staffing would mostly be better use of staff hours through better use of technology and IT.

15.5.7 The Assistant Director of Highways and Waste clarified that the winter service arrangements decision making process would remain with the internal client service

at Norfolk County Council and the works team would carry out the work.

- 15.5.8 The budget for replacement of gritter vehicles remained with Norfolk County Council.
- 15.5.9 The Vice-Chairman felt that extra reports should be brought back to the Committee with more information on proposals for the service as the plan moved forward. Mr Jermy felt a small group should review the proposals.
- 15.5.10 The Chairman, seconded by the Vice-Chairman, **PROPOSED** that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman would meet with the Assistant Director of Highways and Waste, the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services and Norse to find out detail on the proposals and report back to Committee when they were satisfied the proposals were ready. Committee Members could feed in questions to the Assistant Director of Highways and Waste.
- 15.6 The Committee:
- **CONSIDERED** the opportunities, benefits and risks outlined in this paper and agreed above proposal
 - **AGREED** that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman would meet with the Assistant Director of Highways and Waste, the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services and Norse to find out detail about the proposals and report back to Environment, Development and Transport Committee when they were satisfied the proposals were ready to come back to Committee.

16. Exclusion of the public.

- 16.1 The Committee **AGREED** to exclude the public.

17. Commercialisation of Highway Services – Business Case

- 17.1 The Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services.
- 17.2 The Committee **REVIEWED** the business case.

The meeting closed at 11.41

**Mr Martin Wilby, Chairman,
Environment Development and Transport Committee**



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MEMBER/PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: FRIDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2018

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

5.1 Question from Ms Suzy Levy

As a resident of Heacham in Norfolk I am extremely concerned about coastal kiosks and seafront businesses still being allowed to use plastic straws, cups and polystyrene cartons . Many seafront kiosks still use these environmentally unsafe and unjust materials. Is there anything that can be done to ban coastal seafront business from using environmentally damaging plastics and foams? It's not enough to encourage recycling as recycling only works if the products are placed in a recycling bin clean. On most beach litter picks we find plastic straws, plastic cups and styrofoam. Maybe businesses can be encouraged to ditch the plastic for a reduction in rates?

Response by Chairman of EDT Committee

Unfortunately, single use plastics are still widely available in the UK and neither the County or District Councils can ban their commercial use. Working together as the Norfolk Waste Partnership, the County and District Councils encourage recycling of many materials including plastics and discourage littering.

At a national level, the Department for the Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) are due to release a new 'Resources Strategy' in late 2018. Information on this to date suggests financial measures to reduce single use plastics (along similar lines to the charge for single use carrier bags).

Norwich Western Link Project - Update for EDT Committee from Working Group**(for 7 September 2018)**

Further to previous meetings of the Norwich Western Link (NWL) project Member Working Group, the following provides a brief summary of the most recent meeting of the Group held on 29 August 2018:

1. The Group received a general progress update for the project. The delivery team provided more details of the options assessment work being undertaken, using the Department for Transport's sifting tool. This process will include a review of ecology and environmental details to inform the options assessment process. A significant range and number of options are currently being assessed and the process will reduce these down in number.
2. The team set out proposals to bring reports to EDT Committee in October and November, which will include details of the options assessment process, the shortlisted options to consider and the planned consultation. The team confirmed the project remains on programme and, subject to agreement by Committee, would like to start the next consultation on preferred solutions in late-November 2018. Allowing for the Christmas and New Year period, the consultation would extend through to late January 2019. Exhibitions and events would be planned accordingly.
3. The Group received further details from the delivery team on the previous consultation for the project. The mapping option enabled individual comments to be added and was well used with around 750 comments received. All of the responses are being reviewed and details will be used to inform the ongoing options assessment work.
4. The Local Plan Review process and programme was briefly discussed and the broad timescales for that process were set out.
5. Funding options were also considered and the Group provided their views on this. The project team also discussed funding options for the fees required for the project during 2019. The Group requested to see details of any funding bids.

For more details, please contact David Allfrey (Infrastructure Delivery Manager).
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