



## Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 24 November 2021  
at 10 am at County Hall Norwich

### Present:

Cllr Steve Morpew (Chair)

Cllr Lana Hemsall (Vice Chair)

Cllr Lesley Bambridge

Cllr Nick Daubney

Cllr Barry Duffin

Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris

Cllr Keith Kiddie

Cllr Jamie Osborn

Cllr Richard Price

Cllr Alison Thomas (substitute for Cllr Carl

Annison)

Cllr Brian Watkins

### Also present (who took a part in the meeting):

Cllr Martin Wilby

Cllr Andy Grant

Cllr Jamieson

Cllr Alexandra Kemp

Tom McCabe

Simon George

James Bullion

Grahame Bygrave

Karl Rands

Alex Cliff

Mark Ogden

Steve Miller

Al Collier

Geoff Connell

Peter Randall

Kat Hulatt

Tim Shaw

Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport.

Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste

Cabinet Member for Finance

Cllr for call in of delegated Cabinet Member decision 211105:

A10 Setchey Safety Camera

Head of Paid Service and Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services

Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services

Executive Director of Adult Social Services

Director of Highways and Waste

Highway Services Manager

Highway Network and Digital Innovation Manager

Flood and Water Manager

Director of Culture and Heritage

Director of Procurement

Director of Information Management Technology

Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager

Head of Legal Services

Committee Officer

### 1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Carl Annison, Cllr Graham Carpenter, Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris, Cllr Ed Maxfield, Mr Giles Hankinson (Parent Governor)

representative), Mrs Julie O' Connor (Church Representative) and Mr Paul Dunning (Church Representative)

## 2 **Minutes**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

## 3. **Declarations of Interest**

3.1 Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris and Cllr Alison Thomas declared an "other interest" in item 9 because they were both personally impacted by the flooding event that took place in December 2020.

## 4 **Urgent Business**

4.1 No urgent business was discussed.

## 5. **Public Question Time**

5.1 There were no public questions.

## 6. **Local Member Issues/Questions**

6.1 There were no local member issues/questions.

## 7 **Call In**

7.1 The Committee noted that there was one call in to be taken at item 8 of today's agenda.

## 8 **Call In: delegated Cabinet Member decision 211105: A10 Setchey Safety Camera**

8.1 The annexed report (8) related to the call-in of the delegated Cabinet Member decision 211105: A10 Setchey Safety Camera.

8.2 The Chair explained the way in which he would handle this item to best ensure a fair and balanced scrutiny process and to decide what (if any) issues the Committee would refer to the Cabinet.

8.3 The Head of Legal Services explained the options that were available to the Committee that were set out in the report.

8.4 The Chair welcomed to the meeting Cllr Alexandra Kemp, the Councillor who had called in the item, who, with the aid of photographs shown on monitors in the Committee room, explained the reasons for having done so. Cllr Kemp asked questions of Cllr Martin Wilby (Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport) and of the officers that were present for the consideration of this item.

8.5 The issues that were considered by the Committee included the following:

- Cllr Kemp said that as the County Councillor representing Setchey she wished to raise with the Committee concerns of local residents, the local Borough Councillor and the Parish Council about how the siting of a Speed

Safety Camera on Garage Lane Junction in an area of 40 mph without at the same time reducing the speed on the A10 to 30mph could cause increased risk of collisions due to the increased risk of driver distraction.

- Cllr Kemp said that drivers turning into Garage Lane Industrial Estate on the A10 were confused by the slip-road road parallel to the A10 with the long line of cars for sale and regularly missed the proper turning.
- Cllr Kemp added that the whole of Setchey was an accident cluster which required Traffic-calming of the A10 to 30 mph.
- In reply to questions from Cllr Kemp, Cllr Martin Wilby (Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport) and officers present for the consideration of this item said that the introduction of a fixed safety camera at the staggered junction on the A10 with Garage Lane and Setch Road in Setchey was a priority site.
- The County Council's Highways teams and the Safety Camera Partnership both supported the safety camera being located towards the back of the highway verge to alleviate visibility concerns previously raised about drivers emerging from Garage Lane. Reinstating the safety camera further back would not incur any additional costs, as these would be covered by the camera contractor.
- Alternative locations that had been suggested by the County Councillor, the Bough Councillor and Parish Council were discounted after investigation because they were not at locations within the injury accident cluster site.
- Officers said that the introduction of a safety camera would positively reduce the number of killed and injured road users. Safety cameras installed in the vicinity of junctions elsewhere on Norfolk's road network had resulted in a reduction of up to 44% of road users being injured.
- The Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport said that he would ask officers to re-examine with partner organisations what changes could be made at the staggered junction on the A10 with Garage Lane and Setch Road in Setchey to improve driver visibility and road signage and take on board the concerns of Cllr Kemp.

## **RESOLVED (with 2 abstentions)**

**That the Committee notes the call in but takes no further action.**

### **9 Update on Norfolk County Council's Response to the December 2020 Flooding Event**

9.1 The Committee received the attached report (9).

9.2 During discussion of the report with Cllr Andy Grant (Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste) and the officers who were present for the consideration of this item the following key points were noted:

- The previous report to the Scrutiny Committee had covered the emergency response to the flooding event in December 2020: the report to today's meeting covered what had happened since January 2021 including the establishment of the Council's Flood Reserve Fund and the creation of the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance and the work with the 36 organisations in Norfolk that had legal responsibilities for dealing with flooding issues.
- It was noted that the next preliminary flood risk assessment was due in 2023.
- Cllrs raised concerns about the ability of the Council to secure adequate external capital funding to deal with flooding mitigation issues.
- The delivery of many of the solutions was expected to require successful funding bids to be secured from a variety of external sources.
- The Council had set up a flood reserve fund that included £1.5 m to complement the existing funds that the Council had for tackling flooding issues that focused on the work of the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance and was being used as matched funding for external bids.
- Most external funding for flooding issues came through DEFRA (at a ballpark figure of £30,000 per property) which was totally inadequate to cover the true costs of the mitigation work, which could include expensive sewage improvements.
- The main issue that was identified at Long Stratton, which was also experienced elsewhere in the county, was a poorly maintained riparian ditch which required urgent routine maintenance work.
- It was pointed out that NCC statutory enforcement powers were applied when necessary, however, discussions with landowners in the first instance to resolve issues could be lengthy and the taking of legal action could be very costly.
- The Council required greater enforcement powers against riparian owners of ditches and for the Government to go back to the original legislation and the findings of the Pit Review to see what could be done to reduce the number of organisations that had legal responsibilities for flooding issues.
- Through the Flood Alliance the County Council needed overarching authority to deal with flooding matters generally.
- It was suggested that Norfolk MPs should be asked to take up with the Government the need to review the inadequacies in the Flood and Water Management Act which had not taken on all the recommendations of the Pit Review.
- Without joined up action the situation would only get worse because Norfolk remained at serious risk from global warming.
- Complex issues about the maintenance of highway gullies in Norwich would be taken up with Cllr Osborn outside of the meeting.

### 9.3 **RESOLVED**

- **That Scrutiny Committee receive an update report in the next few months. The Scrutiny Committee wanted to find out what action was required to turn the whole complex system into something more workable.**
- **The update report to include details about the work that remains to be done by the Strategic Flood Alliance to resolve the issue of flooding,**

**suggestions on ways to improve enforcement powers and issues on flooding to take up with the Government through the Norfolk MPs.**

- **That the Committee place on record thanks to the officers who attended the meeting for this item for their helpful and informative answers to Councillors questions.**

## 10 **Review of the Environmental Policy**

10.1 The annexed report (10) was received.

10.2 During discussion of the report with Cllr Andy Grant (Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste), Cllr Jamieson (Cabinet Member for Finance) and the officers who were present for the consideration of this item the following key points were noted:

- The Committee discussed the delivery of the Environmental Policy, including work to promote nature recovery; reduction of Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions; and the development of green travel across the county.
- The Committee also discussed ideas on how the Natural Norfolk concept could be taken forward and developed as a vehicle for visible leadership on nature recovery and the environment including as a communication platform for the promotion of demonstrator projects and outreach initiatives such as an Environmental Hub at Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse. Partnership working would deliver wider net zero ambitions.
- In terms of next steps, officers explained how they were working towards producing a dashboard that would enable easier monitoring and measurement of all emissions (Scope 1, 2 & 3 as set out in the appended report) and better focus efforts effectively with clearer reporting and tracking of progress.

10.4 After further discussion it was:

### **RESOLVED**

**That the Committee:**

- **Note the report discussed at Cabinet on progress towards delivering the Norfolk County Council Environmental Policy and associated recommendations and commitments, with a particular focus on areas where Scrutiny could add value moving forward.**
- **Welcome progress to producing a dashboard that would enable easier monitoring and measurement of all emissions and invite officers to provide an update on progress against agreed environmental targets and milestones to the Committee as early in 2022 as could be arranged.**

## 11 **NCC Savings Proposals**

- 11.1 The annexed report (11) was received.
- 11.2 The Committee discussed with Cllr Jamieson (Cabinet Member for Finance) and Simon George the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services the key points that were included in the NCC savings proposals for 2022/23.
- 11.3 The Cabinet Member for Finance said that the Administration was using savings from technology to transform the way in which the Council met its savings targets. The scale of the budget gap to be closed remained subject to considerable uncertainty and Covid-19 and the percentage of Council tax increase for 2022/23 were only some of the significant costs in the next financial year that would have long term implications for the Council's budget and the level of funding that would have to be met by Norfolk citizens. It was because of reasons of financial hardship for Norfolk citizens due to the pandemic that the Cabinet had decided not to follow the recommendation of the Executive Director regarding the proposed level of increase in Council Tax.
- 11.4 A minority of Councillors said that they would have liked to have seen the Council explain the budget setting process more clearly and to have provided evidence to show the means by which it would meet its budget targets. They questioned whether the Administration was being challenging enough of senior officers in its approach to finding savings.
- 11.5 The Chair questioned the "Budget Challenge Process" that would lead to savings being presented to the County Council. The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services considered that these meetings were policy development meetings and as such was of the view that the said information was not appropriate for a Scrutiny report.
- 11.6 The Executive Director of Adult Social Services said that the outcomes to be delivered as part of the budget setting process would support service users independence at the most efficient cost that such services could be provided.
- 11.7 After further detailed discussion it was:

## **RESOLVED**

### **That the Committee**

- **Note the Strategic and Financial Planning 2022-23 report to Cabinet on the 8 November 2021, including:**
  - a. **Savings proposals developed to date to support the setting of a balanced budget for 2022-23;**
  - b. **Proposed next steps in the budget setting process for 2022-23, including the planned approach for public consultation and development of further savings proposals;**
  - c. **Key areas of risk and uncertainty related to development of the 2022-23 budget.**

- **Note the implications for scrutiny of the overall NCC budget setting process.**

**12 Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme**

12.1 The annexed report (12) was received.

12.2 The Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager drew Cllrs attention to changes in the work programme previously reported to the Committee which were highlighted in the appendices to the report.

**12.3 RESOLVED**

**That the Committee note the revised forward work programme as set out in the appendix to the report.**

The meeting concluded at 2.00 pm

**Chair**