

Norfolk County Council**Minutes of the Meeting Held on 16 September 2013**

Present:	Mr S Agnew	Mr J Joyce
	Mr C Aldred	Mr M Kiddle-Morris
	Mr S Askew	Mr J Law
	Mr R Bearman	Mrs J Leggett
	Mr R Bird	Mr B Long
	Mr B Borrett	Mr I Mackie
	Dr A Boswell	Mr I Monson
	Mr B Bremner	Mr J Mooney
	Mrs J Brociek-Coulton	Mrs E Morgan
	Mr A Byrne	Mr S Morphew
	Mr M Carttiss	Mr G Nobbs
	Mr M Castle	Mr W Northam
	Mrs J Chamberlin	Mr R Parkinson-Hare
	M Chenery of Horsbrugh	Mr J Perkins
	Mr J Childs	Mr A Proctor
	Mr S Clancy	Mr D Ramsbotham
	Mr R Coke	Mr W Richmond
	Mr D Collis	Mr D Roper
	Ms E Corlett	Mr M Sands
	Mrs H Cox	Mr N Shaw
	Mr A Dearnley	Mr M Smith
	Mrs M Dewsbury	Mr R Smith
	Mr N Dixon	Mr P Smyth
	Mr J Dobson	Mrs M Somerville
	Mr T East	Mr B Spratt
	Mr T FitzPatrick	Mr M Storey
	Mr C Foulger	Dr M Strong
	Mr T Garrod	Mrs A Thomas
	Ms D Gihawi	Mr D Thomas
	Mr P Gilmour	Mr J Timewell
	Mr A Grey	Miss J Virgo
	Mr A Gunson	Mrs C Walker
	Mrs S Gurney	Mr J Ward
	Mr P Hacon	Mr B Watkins
	Mr B Hannah	Ms S Whitaker
	Mr H Humphrey	Mr A White
	Mr B Iles	Mr M Wilby
	Mr T Jermy	Mrs M Wilkinson
	Mr C Jordan	

Total present: 77**Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies were received from Mr A Adams, Mr M Baker, Mr D Crawford, Mr D Harrison, Mr S Hebborn and Ms A Kemp.

The Chairman also announced that Leader had informed her he had a meeting with the Transport Minister, Stephen Hammond at 1pm and so would need to leave Council at 12 noon.

1 Minutes

- 1.1 The minutes from the Council meeting held on 29 July 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2 Chairman's Announcements

- 2.1 The Chairman welcomed Mr Terry Jermy, new member for Thetford West to the meeting. He had been elected following a recent by-election.
- 2.2 She then advised that a further by election would be held on 24 October, following the resignation of Edward Foss, county councillor for North Walsham.
- 2.3 The Chairman announced that two senior officers would shortly be leaving the Council – Paul Brittain, Head of Finance (not present at the meeting) and Mike Jackson, Director of Environment, Transport and Development. All Group Leaders praised the good work and diligence of the two chief officers and wished them well for the future; Paul in retirement and Mike as Chief Executive of North Somerset Council.
- 2.4 She further advised that Council would shortly receive a report and hear from members of the Norfolk In Care Council (NICC). Their presentation would form the 3rd annual presentation to full Council by the NICC and followed a similar format to previous years.

The overarching aim of the presentation was to:

- Heighten awareness amongst members of their statutory role as a corporate parent.
- Give a brief overview of what it is like to be a young person in care in Norfolk.
- Review the work undertaken by the NICC over the previous 12 months.
- Present an outline on how the NICC will be working with Children's Services on the recommendations set out in the Ofsted report.
- Update and explain to members why the current Norfolk pledge to children and young people is being redesigned and relaunched.
- And lastly, how and why elected members should be involved in the promotion and monitoring of the redesigned pledge.

The presentation was designed to highlight the positive changes that had occurred over the past year within corporate parenting. It also sought to support the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding, James Joyce's message to members that the role of corporate parent was a statutory function for all elected members and not just those with a Cabinet responsibility or who sat on a Committee or Panel relating to corporate parenting.

The NICC's key message would be to show elected members what they undertook on behalf of Norfolk County Council and why they felt they were 'value for the money' with regard to Norfolk's investment in them. They also sought, by attending this full Council, to demonstrate that corporate-parented young people were a group that elected members could engage with - with confidence - and that members could take pride in their role as a corporate parent.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 Mr P Hacon declared an interest in item 2 page 35 relating to the creation of a community interest company as a member of his family worked for the Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service.

4 **Corporate Parenting**

- 4.1 The Cabinet Member for Safeguarding addressed the Council to welcome young people from the Norfolk In Care Council. In doing so, he reminded members there were currently 1,113 young people in Norfolk's care and of what corporate parenting meant in Norfolk.

- 4.2 The Chairman then introduced:

Amadu Camara
Stevie Goodman
Jade Knowles
Megan Warnes
Ashlea Clark and
Stephanie Bullock

These young people, ranging from 14 to 22 years of age, represented the In Care Council.

- 4.3 Following the presentation, the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding concluded by referring to the report from OFSTED on Looked after Children Services and its findings. He cited the positive commentary given on the In Care Council and praised their work and the work of officers in supporting this group of young people. He then advised on the numbers of young people in Norfolk's care, 300 of whom are under 7 years of age. There were 94 living in the Breckland Council area, 49 in Broadland, Great Yarmouth had 239, King's Lynn 151, North Norfolk had 78, Norwich almost 300 and South Norfolk had 83 young people spread across the county.
- 4.4 He went on to emphasise that members were directly responsible for influencing the future of Norfolk's looked after children and in meeting their statutory corporate parenting duties. He urged members to keep themselves informed as a group, to challenge and to remember - would this be good enough for my child - and if not to act. He noted that only 15 County Council members had attended a recent training event and urged again, that active engagement by all was essential.

RESOLVED That the report be received.

5 **Questions to the Leader of the Council**

The Chairman explained that she had reviewed the practice in relation to the approach adopted to questions to the Leader at Council meetings and as part of this had looked at how it was done in a number of other councils. Her view was that it was appropriate that each political group should have the opportunity, through Group Leaders, to put a question to the Leader. Accordingly, the process she intended to adopt was as follows:

To invite each opposition Group Leader in turn to ask a question, which they may delegate to a member of their Group if they so wished and Group Leaders would be approached in the following order: Conservative, UKIP and Green.

She would then take a question from the Liberal Democrat Group Leader or delegate, followed by inviting a question from a Labour Non - Cabinet Member. After the first round of questions, if the allocated time of 15 minutes had not expired, she would invite all members to indicate whether they wished to ask a question and would follow her normal principle of selecting questioners as evenly as possible from across all political Groups, assisted in this by the Vice-Chairman. She would also make acknowledgement of the independent member, if he had a question, too.

The following questions and replies were noted:

Question from Mr B Borrett

Mr Borrett asked the Leader to outline the detailed timetable for the senior management review.

The Leader responded that the Acting Managing Director had been conducting a senior management review and it would be presented to the next Cabinet meeting on 7 October.

4.2

Question by Ms E Morgan

Could the Leader confirm that no staff are employed on zero hours contracts, unless they have expressly requested this, and that this policy is applied across the Norse Group and will he set a principle that this is also the case for any County Council staff employed from agencies.

The Leader responded to state that this should be the case but that he was unable to confirm this was the case. A decision had been taken at a recent Personnel Committee to not proceed with the living wage. As far as he was concerned the Council should not be employing anyone on zero hours contracts unless it was to the benefit of the employee, e.g. traffic censuses and the like. Zero hours contracts were only defensible if that job was not the person's only main source of income. This was his view but the matter itself was for the Personnel Committee to determine.

4.3

Question from Dr Strong

On 24 May the Council had resolved to change the governance of the Council to a committee form of governance. She noted there had been an amendment put forward to look at all possible systems, which was lost, but since the decision to change to a committee system she considered there had been efforts to subvert the will of the Council. She asked the Leader if he was indeed committed to moving towards the more open and transparent method of decision-making that a committee system provided.

The Leader was disappointed to hear that efforts may have been made to seek to subvert a motion which had been passed by the whole Council. He confirmed he was committed to a more open and transparent method of decision-making – it was essential and it was what the public expected and thought was how things were done. He gave an example regarding a unitary authority decision which had seemingly been taken by the previous Council but could find no member who recalled ever having voted on it.

4.4

Question from Mr Bremner

He noted that at Cabinet the Leader had made a very clear commitment about possible increases or no increases in the level of Council Tax. Certain members had seemingly not heard the Leader's view and he invited the Leader to restate his commitment.

The Leader responded that at a recent Cabinet Scrutiny Committee he had been asked whether he would increase the Council Tax in the coming year. He had taken his time to explain why neither he nor the Cabinet had any intention of doing so. He explained again that a rise in Council Tax was limited to 1.9%, the limit to be applied without the need to call a referendum but this was a futile exercise as it charged the public double what the Council would receive, due to the government clawing back 1%. An increase of more than 1.9%, firstly triggered a referendum at some considerable cost to Norfolk's Taxpayers, but secondly, anyone considering an increase of the Council Tax to address the deficit being faced over the next three years was deluding themselves. The Tax increase required would be 63% and to do so would require an annual referendum and annual public consent to the rise over three years and his view was that such consent would not be forthcoming. He reiterated that he had no intention of increasing Council Tax; however, as there was a full consultation being conducted with the public about proposals plugging the budget gap and if the public unanimously insisted that Council Tax be increased by 63%, he would give consideration to that view.

4.5

Question from Mrs Somerville

Does the Leader agree that Norfolk deserves strong leadership and if so, can he explain why, during the four months of his administration, all the directors who have left have been replaced by interim staff at huge extra cost and no long term strategy? Did this reflect indecision on the part of the Labour administration or was this a result of the Lib, Lab, UKIP, Green, independent pact's indecisiveness?

The Leader confirmed that the Council did get strong Leadership with him as Leader. He suggested the member had confused Leadership with staff and noted that various officers had left the Council; their moves had been planned during the time of the previous administration with one exception. He reminded members of the appalling state of children's services for many years with nothing done about it but now there was a new leader, and the best person Norfolk could get, in Sheila Lock. Sheila was only available as an interim but he did wish she was available to work at Norfolk permanently. It made perfect sense to appoint interims while time was taken to review the best person for the job and they had not been appointed at enormous expense. He then paid tribute to the Acting Managing Director who had done an excellent job in filling the gaps and confirmed that she was an extremely dynamic person who he was very proud of.

4.6

Question from Mr Watkins

The Leader was reminded that at the last Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 20 August a report had been called in by three Conservative members, entitled Service and Financial Planning 2014-17 detailing vision and priorities for the new administration. He noted that this had caused delays in the recruitment of social workers, designed to address OFSTED criticism, and could the Leader assure the Council that the process was now back on track and speculate on how many vulnerable children assessments had been delayed as a result?

The Leader replied that he had been surprised by this action. The call-in was extremely ill advised and he speculated that some of those who had called the report in

may have been those who had presided over the disastrous children's services over previous years. He confirmed that the delay had affected the appointment of interim social workers. He then invited the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding to confirm whether the process was now underway and whether any assessment delayed. The Cabinet Member commented that he hoped things would be happening this month but they would be in post by 7 October.

4.7 **Question from Mr Sands**

He noted that the Leader was certain of the ability of the Council to deliver the savings necessary for the current year. Was the Leader keeping members informed?

The Leader said, in regard to the public consultation on the budget deficit, plans were well advanced and he would be sharing these with all staff later today and later in the week with the people of Norfolk. He had shared the proposals with other parties and political Group Leaders two weeks ago. Finally, just last week he had given the detailed information to all portfolio holders. This was an open and transparent process and he paid tribute to all members for their recognition of the need for confidentiality at this time, until the implications for departments and staff had been communicated internally.

5 **Notice of Motions**

Motion by Mr Smith

- 5.1 The below motion was proposed by Mr Smith and seconded by Mr Grey, having been altered by the proposer, agreed by the seconder to read:

"We ask that Cabinet considers withdrawing the changes to be made across Norfolk for the provision of bus passes for the Children of Norfolk. We ask that Cabinet considers fully maintaining the level of support that it has done for many years and continue the provision of free travel for those geographical areas that have already been receiving it".

- 5.2 Mr Borrett proposed an amendment to the above motion, seconded by Mr Jordan, which added a new first paragraph to read:

"The Council notes with concern the possible impact on children affected by the recent review of school transport exemptions. This Council notes the traditionally-applied exemptions were introduced for legitimate reasons including fear for children's safety. For example, children from the villages of Belton and Burgh Castle are being expected to walk along a busy main road with no footpath. This Council deeply regrets the policy's poor implementation which resulted in parents' receiving, in the space of a few days; a bus pass followed by a letter informing them the provision had been rescinded. This is unacceptable. This council feels the limited savings resulting from this policy are insufficient to justify the ongoing reputational damage to the council of proceeding. We therefore ask....."

- 5.3 The amendment by Mr Borrett was put to the proposer of the substantive motion, Mr Smith, who confirmed his acceptance of this additional paragraph and this was seconded. The Council then proceeded to discuss the new substantive motion.

- 5.4 Following the debate a vote was taken and with 50 votes for, 14 against and 10 abstentions, the motion was **CARRIED**.

Motion by Mr Dobson

- 5.5 The Chairman said that she had been considering Councillor Dobson's motion and then read out the following statement. "The award of the contract is an executive power, not one that can be exercised by the full Council. This also applies to a revised project plan and consequently it is not possible for the full Council to decide whether or not it is to be accepted in the way that your motion proposes. A decision by the full Council on a matter which is an executive matter is challengeable. If Council was to seek to terminate the contract by taking a decision on the revised project plan without a Cabinet or delegated from Cabinet decision it would be acting outside its powers. Cllr Dobson, your motion also seeks to have the independent reports ordered by Cabinet available to inform the proposed debate. As you say these reports were commissioned by the Cabinet at the request of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee. Those reports have not yet been received. When they are Cabinet will need to consider and decide upon a process for dealing with them. So again I consider that your motion seeks to cover areas that are within the Executive remit. For these reasons and in accordance with paragraph 9.5 of Appendix 9 of the Constitution, I have concluded that the subject of your motion comes substantially within the remit of the Cabinet and will therefore be moved and seconded in formal terms only and thereupon stand referred without discussion to Cabinet for consideration and report." She concluded that, in accordance with the constitution the member had the right to attend and explain his motion at the Cabinet meeting at which the motion is considered. The Chairman then invited Councillor Dobson to formally move the motion.

- 5.6 Mr Dobson then said he was exercising his right under the Constitution at Appendix 9 9, paragraph 10 (p) and Appendix 9 paragraph 20 (1) to move a motion without notice to suspend for this meeting the council procedure rule at Appendix 9 paragraph 9.5. He suggested the Chairman should be consistent in advice to exercise her powers of discretion and allow the motion to be dealt with at the meeting and he invited the Chairman to review her ruling.

- 5.7 The Chairman, having done so, invited a seconder to the proposal by Mr Dobson to suspend the council procedure rule, who was confirmed as Mr East. The matter was then put to a vote and **LOST**.

At this point the Leader left for another meeting, as indicated at the start of the meeting.

Motion by Mr Borrett

- 5.8 The following motion, proposed by Mr B Borrett and seconded by Mr S Clancy was moved:

"With the development of the Council's budget by officers well underway, would the council support the Conservative manifesto commitment to freeze the Council Tax for the forthcoming year, as the previous Administration did for three years running.

Council Tax does not affect people proportionally to their means and any increase will

place an unwelcome burden on the council tax payers of Norfolk during this time of austerity. Therefore, Council **RESOLVES** to direct the Cabinet to urgently consider making a public commitment to freeze Council Tax for the financial year 2014/5”

- 5.9 Mr Roper proposed an amendment which removed the first paragraph of the motion to replace it with:

“Council recognises the considerable financial challenge faced by the administration in preparing a budget for 2014-15 and following years caused by reduction in government grant funding and rising costs. In this climate it is vital that in setting the budget Council takes into account the views of the public and encourages participation in the “Putting People First” consultation. Nevertheless there remains a strong case for freezing Council Tax for the coming year given the pressures on the finances of most households in Norfolk.” This motion was seconded by Mr Ramsbotham.

- 5.10 Following a debate the amendment was put to a vote and **LOST**.

- 5.11 With sufficient members requesting a recorded vote, voting was as follows:
47 in favour, 27 against with 2 abstentions and the motion was **CARRIED** (see voting sheet at Appendix 1).

- 5.12 The following motion, proposed by Mr T East and seconded by Mrs S Gurney was moved, with a variation to the wording contained within the Council papers, to read:

- 5.13 “The Secretary of State for Transportation recently highlighted the importance of the Norwich Northern Distributor Road and confirmed it as a nationally significant infrastructure project. His designation of this route as one of national importance recognises its linkage with the A47 trunk road, which has current TEN-T status. (TENS = Trans European Network Status).

Millions of pounds of public money has already been approved and granted to Norfolk County Council for the construction of the NDR from Postwick to Taverham and we believe that this planned road, as part of the Norwich Area Transport Strategy (NATS), will bring enormous economic benefits to Norfolk.

The long-term aspiration for the public bodies and the business community in Norfolk is to have a road network joining the A47 to the west of the city with the A47 to the east, both to the north and south of the city.

Therefore, Council **RESOLVES** to recommend to Cabinet that they:

1 subject to the outcome of the current consultation, submit an application for a Development Consent Order under the Planning Act 2008 in respect of the NDR as proposed, to allow the scheme to be implemented as soon as possible.

2. commission a report on the feasibility of providing a link across the Wensum Valley from A1067 to the A47 southern bypass.”

- 5.14 Following a debate the amendment was put to a vote and with the following votes, 58 in favour, 15 against and 2 abstentions, the motion was **CARRIED**.

There followed a 20 minute break for lunch with the Council reconvening at 1.30pm.

6 Cabinet Recommendations

- 6.1 The Chairman advised the meeting that the recommendation relating to the Waste Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document, as set out in the Council agenda, was the subject of a Call-In by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and therefore no debate would take place at Council until after that meeting had considered it. In the circumstances it was agreed that consideration of the Minerals Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document be deferred until the November Council meeting so that both documents could be dealt with together.

7 Reports:

Reports of Cabinet 5 August and 2 September 2013

7.1 Questions to the Cabinet Member for Schools

- 7.1.1 Dr Strong asked if the Cabinet Member could confirm the latest NEET figures. The Cabinet Member confirmed he would provide a written reply.
- 7.1.2 Mr Garrod noted that good quality crossings and local lollipop ladies and men are important for all pedestrians and particularly children on their way to and from school. Our local lollipop ladies and men provide an excellent service helping children across my area to cross the road safely supporting them to develop road safety and independence skills. They provide extra eyes and ears on the road to help children lead an active lifestyle.

Could the Cabinet Member reassure Council that he recognises the immeasurable amount in which they enhance the community and feeling of belonging in a school as well as the safety they provide to our communities and will fight for this service to remain, when discussing the budget with his cabinet colleagues?

In reply the Cabinet Member acknowledged the points made and added his support.

7.2 Questions to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Development and Waste

- 7.2.1 Dr Boswell said he had a question on the NDR NSIP pre-application consultation. The consultation has run from July 8th to September 20th. The consultation started with the NDR being NSIP status as road that would connect to the Strategic Road Network under the Planning Act 2008. However, on July 24th, a statutory instrument completed passage through Parliament which removed the legal basis for the designation of the NDR on this rationale. There then followed what might best be called an interregnum period in which the NDR had no legal basis for being designated an NSIP. This continued until the SoS decision of August 9th for designate the NDR an NSIP under s35 of the Planning Act 2008. However, the public were not told until August 19th, and most of the public would not understand anyway, although the given rationale for the road has changed very significantly by these events. Quite simply, the public have every reason to be very confused by these events, and they are disenfranchised by it - will the Cabinet member re-run the consultation to give the Public a genuine opportunity to consider the application for an NSIP?

In the absence of the relevant Cabinet Member, it was confirmed that a written reply

would be sent.

- 7.2.2 Mr Wilby asked if the Cabinet Member might explain the role of the newly-appointed Part Time Interim Assistant Director of Highways and confirm if he had replaced two full time posts with one on a part-time basis? He also asked if the member had now visited the Belvedere Energy From Waste site and if so would he now be supporting the Willows application in King's Lynn?

In the absence of the relevant Cabinet Member, it was confirmed that a written reply would be sent.

- 7.2.3 Mr Bird noted, in the light of the parking review in Hunstanton which had generated 50 emails and letter per day from constituents, could the Cabinet Member advise if there would be any sales and marketing ideas regarding public relations around such exercises in the future? The benefits of the review had not been sold to the public and it has led to a very divisive consultation exercise.

In the absence of the relevant Cabinet Member, it was confirmed that a written reply would be sent.

- 7.2.4 Mr Garrod commented that he had a resident of Salhouse contact him last month, as in the mist of his summer clearout he went down to his local recycling centre, Mayton Wood near Coltishall, to recycle his waste; only to find that he was told that he had "too much" waste for one deposit. In the end, he had to make several trips to the centre over the next few days to deposit what he could have in one go! This Council currently restricts the amount of DIY waste that residents can dispose of at its recycling centres to the equivalent of one 80 litre sack or one large item per week (for example one door, one kitchen unit, a toilet, a bath tub). DIY waste is classed as anything fixed or fitted to a property, something you wouldn't take with you if you moved house.

Under current government legislation DIY waste is classed as 'construction and demolition' waste which falls under the category of industrial waste and is therefore not something the council has to legally accept.

Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that the Council's policy of limiting the amount of DIY waste people can take to recycling centres needs reviewing, as Norfolk being a rural county is vulnerable to fly tipping and what action will he take?

In the absence of the relevant Cabinet Member, it was confirmed that a written reply would be sent.

7.3 **Questions to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Personnel**

- 7.3.1 Mrs Leggett asked about the Community Construction Fund which benefitted small organisations and local firms and whether the member had any plans for the sum of money which was left in the fund. In reply the Cabinet Member confirmed that some £473,000 was remaining in the fund. The maximum allocation in the last round had been a £100,000 grant and that there were a number of outstanding bids. If he were to continue with the current sums and criteria, expectations would be raised which could not be fulfilled and therefore, he was looking at how to get the best out of the money left in this fund and whether more could be put in.

- 7.3.2 Dr Strong wanted to put on record that that staff were very facing unsettling times and she asked the Cabinet Member on behalf of her group to convey her thanks to them for their efforts at this time. In reply, Mr Morphew endorsed her comments and noted that he had spoken to Unison. He was keen that all staff engaged with the public consultation as they were the citizens, employees and experts who could get the most out of proposals. He had attended a JCNC recently where he had congratulated the Trades Unions for their realistic approach to where the Council stood in terms of finances currently.
- 7.3.3 Mr East asked, through the Cabinet Member, a question of the Chairman of CROSP and the Constitution Advisory Group (CAG) - There have been a number of comments and rumours about the approach the Chairman of the Constitution Advisory Group is taking towards this Council's resolution in designing and recommending an alternative system of governance to a committee system. Will the Chairman of CAG now please state the approach his working group is taking and outline the reasons for taking that approach? In reply, the Cabinet Member confirmed he was happy to pass on that request. The Chairman said that Councillor Jordan would reply in writing.
- 7.3.4 Mrs Thomas referred back to the reply given to Mrs Leggett and noted that some parishes did not submit applications to the Community Construction Fund in the last round but held off until they were ready to present a fully worked up submission. Were any bids in the last round held over for reconsideration in a later round, and if so this would be unfair? The Cabinet Member confirmed that he would provide a written response. His understanding was there were some held over but he would clarify the situation. Mr Borrett added that he had chaired the Funding Allocation meeting that meeting and it was not the policy to hold over applications and none had been held over.
- 7.4 **Questions to the Cabinet Member for Public Protection**
- 7.4.1 Dr Boswell asked, in relation to the Community Interest Company, for a guarantee that no frontline fire and protection services would be privatised in the future. In reply, Mr Roper confirmed that there was no link between the Community Interest Company proposals and existing services. This proposal aimed to protect services already being supplied.
- 7.4.2 Mrs Thomas asked about the Fire Brigade planned strike action and whether Norfolk firefighters would be asked to take part in any industrial action. In reply, the Cabinet Member explained that it was premature to disclose any details at this stage but response scenarios were being worked on.
- 7.4.3 Dr Strong flagged that both Fire Services and Public Protection were equally important services but how would the Cabinet Member balance the financial needs of both areas? In reply, the Cabinet Member confirmed it would be difficult. He referred to the range of services which fell under his portfolio and noted that every £1 spent on public protection trading standards benefitted the local economy by £6.
- 7.4.4 Mr D Thomas asked about the highly valued trusted trader scheme and expressed his hope that this scheme would continue in the future. In reply, the Cabinet Member reminded the member that the consultation did not start until later in the week, when the whole range of proposals would be set out. There would be some impact on public protection but it would be wrong to prejudge what the consultation would say.

7.5 Questions to the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding

- 7.5.1 Mr Ward referred to the number of looked after children and asked whether this figure was rising or falling in comparison to other nearby counties. In reply, the Cabinet Member said it was high in comparison to nearby counties and above the national average. At the end of the last financial year there were 1077 looked after children and by June this year the figure was 1097. This was a significant number when compared against Suffolk who had around 700 looked after children and work had to begin to bring the number down. However, OFSTED did not say as part of its report that any of the children in care should not be there.
- 7.5.2 Mr Smith noted that in the latest CROSP Briefing, reference was made to the appointment of Don Evans, Looked After Children Commissioner appointed on an Interim basis. Could the Cabinet Member confirm where this appointment had come from and give some details of his background? The Cabinet member confirmed he would provide a written reply with more details about this appointment.
- 7.5.3 Mrs Thomas asked how the looked after figures compared to Norfolk's statistical neighbours, rather than bordering neighbours. In reply, the Cabinet Member explained that Norfolk was still above the national average. Looked after children were kept within the county area and he was proud of what was being done but work was needed to bring the figures down.

7.6 Questions to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services

- 7.6.1 Mrs Gurney mentioned publicity regarding Care UK and she was grateful for the briefing given by the Cabinet Member at a recent Panel meeting. She asked, was the member aware of the extent of the problem before it became public knowledge. Could she give an assurance that everything was being done to remedy the problems and were robust measures in place should the contract need to be terminated. In reply, the Cabinet Member confirmed that yes she aware, it was not a total shock, and yes she was aware steps were being taken behind the scenes by officers to act swiftly if this was needed. Since the Panel meeting, meetings had been held with Care UK and extra resources had been put in place and an additional office had been put in place in Hellesdon. Daily updates were being given on "missed calls". Around 270 people were receiving this service and Care UK had been issued with a notice to improve. Assurances were being received as to fixing problems and resourcing but she was keen to ensure that remedies were sustainable long term. She confirmed that there would continue to be daily monitoring and, if not up to scratch, there would be no compunction in terminating the contract. The main concern was that customers received the right service and everyone was being contacted over the coming weeks to obtain their views on the contract – it would not be a trial by radio.
- 7.6.2 Ms Corlett asked what would be looked into in all the other care providers, as many people were concerned to know about the standard of care provision by other agencies now. She asked for assurances about what would be done in case this was a wider issue than was known about. The Cabinet Member gave her assurance. She noted that issues had been raised about other care providers, prior to Care UK, and she would be looking across the piece at the contracts currently let, to review the way they operated. She noted that these services were very reliant on staff and she reiterated that good service provision was equally important for those cared for and the staff employed with them.

7.7 Questions to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development

7.7.1 Mr FitzPatrick noted that North Sea oil and gas and offshore wind projects were a vital asset to the security of the nation's energy. He noted that the County was instrumental in setting up the Norfolk and Suffolk Energy Alliance, Chaired by the Economic Development Portfolio Holder at the time. It was hugely important for the promotion of the east of England as an energy zone. Representation was now held by the Cabinet Member for Education and not the Cabinet Member for Economic Development. He suggested this involvement sent out the wrong message and asked the Cabinet Member for Economic Development to reconsider his involvement in this process. In reply, the Cabinet Member for Education and Schools confirmed that he had been asked to take on the role as he was member of Great Yarmouth Borough Council and past Chairman of the Great Yarmouth Port Authority and he understood the needs of this sector. He confirmed that he had the credentials to hold his own. Mr FitzPatrick invited an assurance that the whole of Norfolk would be taken into account, particularly the hinterland from Wells and Fakenham.

7.7.2 Mr Borrett asked for details of the Cabinet Member's attendance at the LEP, given the importance for channelling funding to NCC. He also sought an update on progress he had made on behalf of Norfolk with the LEP.

It was confirmed that a written reply would be provided.

7.7.3 Mr Law asked about cycling and noted the inadequate training at schools which had come to light in response to inadequate pathways, where children were expected to walk or cycle. Until adequate cycle paths existed, he requested that action be taken as a matter of urgency to introduce 20 mph signs outside schools.

It was confirmed that a written reply would be provided.

8 Reports

8.1 Reports of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee 20 August 2013

RESOLVED to note the report.

8.2 Report of the Personnel Committee Meeting 2 September 2013

8.2.1 Mr Bearman queried the report in relation to the Living Wage item as he recalled that Mrs Walker had abstained from the vote. In addition, he noted that, at the meeting, mention had been made that around 1000 employees of NCC were paid below the living wage, earning just above the minimum wage and to lift them up to this would cost the Council only £90,000. He asked the Leader and Personnel Committee to look at this relatively small sum again, to lift some of Norfolk's lowest paid workers to a level that they could afford to live. In reply, the Chairman, Mr Coke, noted that the knock on effect of such a move would be to incur even higher costs than the £90,000 identified in the report. This was not something to be implemented at this time but he was content to review this again in a year's time.

RESOLVED to note the report.

Joint Committees

8.4 Report of the Norwich Highways Agency Joint Committee on 18 July 2013

RESOLVED to note the report.

8.8 Proportional Allocation of Seats

RESOLVED that re-allocation of 2 committee places from UKIP to Labour and the re-allocation of the ESPO place from UKIP to Labour be agreed as set out in the report.

9 To Answer Questions on notice under rule 8.3 of the Council Procedure Rules

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 2.43pm.

Chairman



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**Norfolk County Council
16 September 2013**

Appendix 1

**Recorded Vote – Minute 5.11 – Mr Borrett Motion
Council Tax**

Name	For	Against	Name	For	Against
Adams Tony		ABSENT	Iles Brian	X	
Agnew Stephen	X		Jermey Terry		X
Aldred Colin	X		Jordan Cliff	X	
Askew Stephen	X		Joyce James		X
Baker Michael		ABSENT	Kemp Alexandra		ABSENT
Bearman Richard		X	Kiddle-Morris Mark	X	
Bird Richard		X	Law Jason	X	
Borrett Bill	X		Leggett Judy	X	
Boswell Andrew		X	Long Brian	X	
Bremmer Bert		X	Mackie Ian	X	
Brociek-Coulton Julie		X	Monson Ian	X	
Byrne Alec	X		Mooney Joe	X	
Carttiss Michael	X		Morgan Elizabeth		X
Castle Mick		X	Morphew Steve		X
Chamberlin Jenny	X		Nobbs George		ABSENT
Chenery of Horsbrugh Michael	X		Northam Wyndham	X	
Childs Jonathon	X		Parkinson-Hare Rex	X	
Clancy Stuart	X		Perkins Jim	X	
Coke Toby		ABSTAIN	Proctor Andrew	X	
Collis David		X	Ramsbotham David		ABSTAIN
Corlett Emma		X	Richmond William	X	
Cox Hilary	X		Roper Daniel		X
Crawford Denis		ABSENT	Sands Mike		X
Dearnley Adrian		X	Shaw Nigel	X	
Dewsbury Margaret	X		Smith Matthew	X	
Dixon Nigel	X		Smith Roger	X	
Dobson John	X		Smyth Paul		X
East Tim		X	Somerville Margaret	X	
FitzPatrick Tom	X		Spratt Bev	X	
Foulger Colin	X		Storey Martin	X	
Garrod Tom	X		Strong Marie		X
Gihawi Deborah		X	Thomas Alison	X	
Gilmour Paul	X		Thomas David		X
Grey Alan	X		Timewell John		X
Gunson Adrian	X		Virgo Judith	X	
Gurney Shalagh	X		Walker Colleen		X
Hacon Pat		X	Ward John	X	
Hannah Brian		X	Watkins Brian		X
Harrison David		ABSENT	Whitaker Sue		X
Hebborn Stan		ABSENT	White Tony	X	
Humphrey Harry	X		Wilby Martin	X	
			Wilkinson Margaret		X

For 47, 27 Against, 2 Abstentions – **CARRIED**

Council Meeting 16 September 2013

Action Note – Written Replies to Questions put to Cabinet Members

Report Title	Question Requiring Written Reply	Raised by:
Questions to Cabinet Member – Schools and Education – (Mick Castle)	<p>Reply by the Relevant Cabinet Member</p> <p>Can you confirm the latest NEET figures?</p> <p>REPLY:</p> <p>At the end of August, 1583 (6.5%) of all Norfolk resident 16-18 year olds were NEET. This is an increase on NEET at the same time last year (6% in August 2012) but represents a small reduction from 6.7% in July 2013 and compares favourably to national NEET at the end of July 2013 of 6.6%.</p> <p>The highest numbers of NEET are in Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn and the West. 38% of young people who were NEET at the end of August had one or more personal circumstance such as Looked After or SEN status, supervised by YOT or teenage parent.</p> <p>The expectation from this September is that all 16 year olds will continue to participate in education or training for a further year. In September 2014, the expectation is that 16 year olds will remain in education or training for a further two years.</p> <p>This year we have brought forward our annual tracking processes for young people leaving Year 11 and Year 12 earlier so that we have a more accurate picture of their actual situation. This identifies the young people in need of information and support to access appropriate provision.</p> <p>The 16/17 year old Youth Contract is a government programme aimed at supporting some of the harder to engage NEET young people into sustained education or employment opportunities. In 2013/14 Norfolk County Council will be directly delivering the Youth Contract to 150 young people. It is hoped that this together with our existing Raising Participation, NEET and Apprenticeships strategies will contribute to positive outcomes.</p>	Dr Marie Strong

<p>Questions to Cabinet Member – Schools and Education - (Mick Castle)</p>	<p>Good quality crossings and local lollipop ladies and men are important for all pedestrians and particularly children on their way to and from school. Our local lollipop ladies and men provide an excellent service helping children across my area to cross the road safely supporting them to develop road safety and independence skills. They provide extra eyes and ears on the road to help children lead an active lifestyle.</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member reassure Council that he recognises the immeasurable amount in which they enhance the community and feeling of belonging in a school as well as the safety they provide to our communities and will fight for this service to remain, when discussing the budget with his cabinet colleagues?</p> <p>REPLY:</p> <p>I know that School Crossing patrols are really important - and they are much loved and appreciated by Norfolk parents. Despite the harsh choices that we are being forced to make I am keen to see how we can make sure that this service can be retained even if it is delivered in a different way.</p>	<p>Mr Tom Garrod</p>
<p>Questions to Cabinet Member – for ETD - (David Harrison)</p>	<p>I have a question on the NSIP pre-application consultation. The consultation has run from July 8th to September 20th. The consultation started with the NDR being NSIP status as road that would connect to the Strategic Road Network under the Planning Act 2008. However, on July 24th, a statutory instrument completed passage through Parliament which removed the legal basis for the designation of the NDR on this rationale. There then followed what might best be called an interregnum period in which the NDR had no legal basis for being designated an NSIP. This continued until the SoS decision of August 9th for designate the NDR an NSIP under s35 of the Planning Act 2008. However, the public were not told until August 19th, and most of the public would not understand anyway, although the given rationale for the road has changed very significantly by these events. Quite simply, the public have every reason to be very confused by these events, and they are disenfranchised by it - will the Cabinet member re-run the consultation to give the Public a genuine opportunity to consider the application for the NDR as an NSIP before it is made?</p> <p>REPLY:</p> <p>The rationale for the road has not changed at all. All that has happened is that the Secretary of State has directed that the NDR is an infrastructure project of national significance, following an application by the County Council. The application included information about the NDR scheme in a national context. This</p>	<p>Dr Andrew Boswell</p>

	<p>information is entirely consistent with the case the Council has always made for the scheme and has been consistently well aired.</p> <p>The County Council's Cabinet decided in December 2012, before the consultation started, to use the NSIP legislation as the basis for taking forward the necessary statutory processes for the NDR project. This has not changed.</p> <p>A new consultation is not necessary as the case and evidence for the scheme has not changed, nor has the published consultation process. The scheme proposals, including connectivity of the NDR with the A47, have also not changed and neither has the basis of the consultation.</p>	
<p>Questions to Cabinet Member – ETD – (David Harrison)</p>	<p>Q1. Can you explain the role of the Part Time Assistant Director of Highways and confirm if he replaces two full time posts while being on a part time basis himself?</p> <p>REPLY:</p> <p>Tom McCabe has been appointed as Interim Assistant Director Highways on a part-time basis from September. This post has been left vacant since John Joyce retired, in anticipation of the senior management review. Tom has been appointed to ensure, in particular, effective leadership in mobilising the new highway contracts, and in taking forward the challenging budget targets for the service, pending the outcome of the senior management review. Tom is a very experienced senior manager in local government, having previously been a director at Shropshire and Cheshire, and in senior transport and highways roles before that. In consultation with Anne Gibson and Mike Jackson, I will keep the situation under review to ensure we have appropriate senior management capacity in ETD until permanent appointments are made.</p> <p>Q2. Has the Cabinet Member visited the Belvedere energy from waste site as he said he was going to at the last Council meeting? If so, has he now made his mind up to support the Willows application in King's Lynn?</p> <p>REPLY:</p> <p>I haven't taken the opportunity to visit that facility yet but I have certainly visited another waste treatment facility and seen waste being landfilled as well.</p>	<p>Mr Martin Wilby</p>

	Regarding the Willows application, that is now in the hands of the Secretary of State. Like everybody else, I have to await his decision. I understand the need for the project and merits of the proposal but I also appreciate the concerns that have been raised and know that the project has to be able to withstand this additional scrutiny before it could go ahead.	
Questions to Cabinet Member – ETD - (David Harrison)	<p>In the light of the parking review in Hunstanton which has generated 50 emails and letter per day from constituents, can the Cabinet Member advise if there will be any sales and marketing ideas regarding public relations around such exercises in the future? The benefits of the review had not been sold to the public and it has led to a very divisive consultation exercise.</p> <p>REPLY:</p> <p>I do not intend to spend money 'marketing' parking proposals. Managing traffic, in particular parking is often a matter that attracts a high degree of public comment. The review the Council undertook in Hunstanton was as a result of a local desire to address traffic issues in certain parts of the town and to support the developments that were planned for the town centre. The results of the initial discussions with the Borough and Town Councils and then the wider public show there is support for tackling the parking issues which local people themselves had identified. The fact that the public have rejected the detailed solutions proposed is of regret and there maybe lessons that can be learned. The Norfolk Parking Partnership Joint Committee were going to consider the work undertaken in Hunstanton, and the wider programme for developing Civil Parking Enforcement in Norfolk, at its meeting on 20 September. I expect to receive a report from officers on the Hunstanton scheme to decide what the Council's next steps are and very much hope that the views of the Joint Committee will help us take forward the management of on-street parking in Norfolk.</p>	Mr Richard Bird
Questions to Cabinet Member – ETD – (David Harrison)	<p>I had a resident of Salhouse contact me last month, as in the mist of his summer clearout he went down to his local recycling centre, Mayton Wood near Coltishall, to recycle his waste; only to find that he was told that he had "too much" waste for one deposit. In the end, he had to make several trips to the centre over the next few days to deposit what he could have in one go!</p> <p>This Council currently restricts the amount of DIY waste that residents can dispose of at its recycling centres to the equivalent of one 80 litre sack or one large item per week (for example one door, one kitchen unit, a toilet, a bath tub). DIY waste is classed as anything fixed or fitted to a property, something you wouldn't take with you if you moved house.</p>	Mr Tom Garrod

	<p>Under current government legislation DIY waste is classed as ‘construction and demolition’ waste which falls under the category of industrial waste and is therefore not something the council has to legally accept.</p> <p>Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that the councils policy of limiting the amount of DIY waste people can take to recycling centres needs reviewing, as Norfolk being a rural county is vulnerable to fly tipping and what action will he take?</p> <p>REPLY:</p> <p>At the eight Main Recycling Centre Plus sites that Norfolk County Council provides, residents can dispose of large amounts of DIY waste for a charge. This is in addition to the smaller amounts accepted free at all sites. We advise that when carrying out DIY work, residents take into consideration the cost of disposal. This may include re-use (e.g. through on-line facilities such as Freecycle or Freecycle) or by hiring a skip to remove the waste in one load.</p> <p>Flytipping is illegal and the Environment Agency and seven borough, city and district councils can, and do, prosecute offenders. The majority of waste fly-tipped is materials that can be accepted at our main recycling centres free of charge. Recent figures indicate that less than 5% of waste fly-tipped in Norfolk is construction and demolition waste.</p> <p>The Policy was recently reviewed by a cross-party member Board, as part of the Recycling Centre re-procurement. If we were to accept unlimited amounts of DIY waste at our main recycling centres the cost to Norfolk’s council taxpayers could be expected to increase in excess of £1 million. The Board concluded that the policy should not be changed. I do not intend to review this policy again. As part of the “Putting People First” budget consultation I am proposing that we charge for another non-household waste, tyres, for which there are alternative disposal routes (e.g. through garages), to further reduce the cost of the service to taxpayers.</p>	
<p>Questions to Cabinet Member – Finance, Performance and Corporate (Steve Morphew)</p>	<p>There have been a number of comments and rumours about the approach the Chairman of the Constitution Advisory Group is taking towards this Council’s resolution to designing and recommending an alternative system of governance to a committee system. Will the Chairman of CAG now please state the approach his working group is taking and outline the reasons for taking that approach?</p>	<p>Mr Tim East</p>

	<p>REPLY:</p> <p>Firstly I would like to make something clear. It has been suggested to me that the Conservative Group is against the committee system. This is absolutely not true. What the Constitution Advisory Group recommends to CROSP, and CROSP to Council, will be carefully considered by the Conservative Group when it comes to Council, whether it's a Cabinet system, Committee system, Mayoral system, or in Mr Pickles' words, "a choral system with the with various members of the council singing sea shanties". What matters is that we get the system that is going to work best for this Council.</p> <p>We must remember back at the beginning of this process, at the end of May, the Council resolved, in principle, to implement a change to a committee system of governance.</p> <p>The Constitution Advisory Group facilitated a session at the beginning of August run by INLOGOV to support this work, the feedback from which has been circulated with the papers for the last committee meeting.</p> <p>At the last meeting of CAG, we agreed to ask the Officers to consider changes to the existing system, and to how a committee system might operate. This follows directly from the feedback and comments made by both Members of this Council and the facilitators - that it is people that make systems work.</p> <p>What we all need to bear in mind, is that once we have changed our system of governance there is no changing again for 5 years. If we implement a different system of governance, it will outlast this Council and we must be content that we have done everything we can to design the best system with the facts in full view. It is imperative that in addition to considering a committee system we also look at improvements to our current arrangements. That way, if we do not implement a committee system, we do not go back to the current Cabinet system but could possibly have an improved one.</p>	
<p>Questions to Cabinet Member – (Steve Morpew)</p>	<p>Some parishes did not submit applications to the Community Construction Fund in the last round but held off until they were ready to present a fully worked up submission. Were any bids held over for reconsideration in a later round, and if so this would be unfair?</p> <p>REPLY:</p> <p>None of the unsuccessful applications from the second round of the NCC Community Construction Fund were 'held over' for consideration as part of any third round.</p>	<p>Mrs Alison Thomas</p>

	<p>Projects that were unsuccessful at the second round were made aware that there was likely to be a third round of the Community Construction Fund to which they would be able to apply, on the same terms as any other applicant, and that there were also funding opportunities available through the Norfolk Community Foundation.</p> <p>A number of speculative inquiries and applications have been made to the Norfolk Community Foundation, who administer the fund on our behalf, in anticipation of a third round. These will be treated the same as any other application, should a third round go ahead.</p>	
<p>Questions to Cabinet Member – Safeguarding (James Joyce)</p>	<p>In the latest CROSP Briefing, reference was made to the appointment of John Evans, Looked After Children Commissioner appointed on an Interim basis. Can you confirm where this appointment has come from and give some details of his background?</p> <p>REPLY:</p> <p>Don Evans has joined Children's Services on an interim basis as Corporate Parenting Strategy & Commissioning Manager, this is to cover the vacancy left by Justin Rolph while we recruit into the post permanently. His primary focus will be to lead on the development and implementation of a LAC reduction plan and to profile our service offer accordingly, in addition to his responsibilities for the Looked After Children Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Don has considerable experience within the children's social care field at both strategic and operational levels, having held senior posts in the private and voluntary sectors. In addition to his social care experience, he has lead successful change management programmes in social care and housing environments, which will be a key skill-set in delivering the degree of service transformation we will require.</p> <p>Don can be contacted on 01603 223909, mobile 07825 099447. Email – don.evans@norfolk.gov.uk</p>	<p>Mr Roger Smith</p>
<p>Questions to Cabinet Member –Economic Development (George Nobbs)</p>	<p>Mr Borrett asked for details of the Cabinet Member's attendance at the LEP, given the importance for channelling funding to NCC. He also sought an update on progress he had made on behalf of Norfolk with the LEP.</p>	<p>Mr Borrett</p>

	<p>REPLY:</p> <p>Since my election as Leader I have fully engaged with the LEP meeting with the Chair and other Board members as well as attending the formal Board in June and July plus the conference in July.</p> <p>Cllr Borrett is right to identify the LEPs role as a channel of funding. The local growth fund will come into place in 2015 to support the Strategic Economic plan, which I, along with all the public sector partners, will be focusing on between now and the end of the year.</p>	
<p>Questions to Cabinet Member for ETD (David Harrison)</p>	<p>Mr Law asked about cycling and noted the inadequate training at schools which had come to light in response to inadequate pathways, where children were expected to walk or cycle. Until adequate cycle paths existed, he requested that action be taken as a matter of urgency to introduce 20 mph signs outside schools.</p> <p>REPLY:</p> <p>NCC delivers a high quality cyclist training programme to 5,000 children in Norfolk every year. Details are available on the Road Safety Education pages of the NCC website, and Iain Temperton, (Team Manager, Casualty Reduction Education & Development) is more than happy to discuss cycle training and safety with you and all other councillors – Iain is on 07748 933 955 or iain.temperton@norfolk.gov.uk.</p> <p>£50k has been allocated in the County's capital improvements programme to spend on 20mph signed only restrictions outside schools. ETD OSP in September approved a list of priority schools for this funding, and it is expected that 5 or more of the highest priority schools will be treated this year. Beyond the current funding, Panel approved a recommendation to allocate funding for school 20mph restrictions on the basis of value for money in reducing casualties, looking at the full range of speed management measures available. We have a well-established process for monitoring road casualties and treating any sites where a pattern of incidents is occurring. Whilst we would always seek to do more to improve our infrastructure, I refute the assertion that existing pathways are inadequate. Where specific safety concerns have been identified we have made the necessary improvements as part of the Local Safety Schemes programme, and that programme continues.</p> <p>Thankfully, in general in Norfolk it is unusual for casualties to occur outside schools, but your question rightly raises the important issue of community concerns about speeding traffic.</p>	<p>Mr Law</p>

	<p>The updated Speed Management Strategy, which Cabinet will be asked to approve, includes widening the scope for consideration of 20mph schemes to include the encouragement of sustainable travel such as walking and cycling, where funding for such schemes can be identified. Officers therefore work with our partners and stakeholders to ensure that all opportunities for funding are explored, but you will be aware that these are difficult times and this is often dependent on us being able to secure external grants, as was the case with the Cycle City Ambition Grant.</p>	
<p>Question to Cabinet Member for Economic Development</p>	<p>Mr FitzPatrick said that North Sea Oil and Gas together with offshore wind projects are vital for the security of this nation's energy and there are also huge economic opportunities for Norfolk, indeed 30% of UK's gas comes through North Norfolk itself. The County Council was instrumental in setting up the Norfolk & Suffolk energy alliance, which was chaired by the economic development portfolio holder at the time; it's hugely important for the promotion of East of England as an energy zone and a place to do business, but the representation on this group is now held by the Cabinet Member for Education rather than the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and with all due respect to the Cabinet Member for Education, perhaps this level of involvement sent out the wrong message to players in the field, and he asked the Cabinet Member for Economic Development if he would reconsider his own level of involvement in this process.</p> <p>Mr Castle said that he had been asked to take on the role by the Leader, George Nobbs, but probably Mr FitzPatrick was not aware that not only was he a Great Yarmouth Member but he was also a past Chairman of the Great Yarmouth Port Authority and had a pretty good understanding of the sector. So whilst you might think it unusual to have a Schools Cabinet Member in that position he felt he had the right credentials.</p> <p>Mr FitzPatrick said the point he wanted to make was that the whole of Norfolk was taken into account, particularly the hinterland from Wells, Egmore and Fakenham.</p> <p>REPLY: The Norfolk and Suffolk Energy Alliance (NSEA) was established for the very reason Mr FitzPatrick identified – it recognised the County wide impact of the energy sector. Mr Castle's brief included representing the county on all matters relating to energy this was not limited to Great Yarmouth although much of the future development was anticipated to be focussed around Great Yarmouth. In this context, he also represented the County on the East of England Energy Group Board. He would continue to take a close interest in this critical sector for Norfolk, and liaise closely with Mr Castle.</p>	<p>Mr Tom FitzPatrick</p>