

Policy and Resources Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on 25 September 2017
10:00am Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

Present:

Mr C Jordan (Chairman)

Mr B Borrett
Mrs P Carpenter
Mrs M Dewsbury
Mr T Garrod
Mr K Kiddie
Mr S Morpew

Mr R Oliver
Mr D Roper
Mr E Seward
Mrs A Thomas
Mrs C Walker
Mr M Wilby

Also Present:

Mr J Mooney

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2. Minutes

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 July 2017 were confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 Mr D Roper declared an "other interest" in Item 13 because of his work on National Probation Service contracts.

4. Items of Urgent Business

4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

5. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

6. Local Member Issues

6.1 There were no local Member questions.

Section A – Items for Discussion and Decision/Action

7 Strategic and Financial Planning 2018/19-2021/22

7.1 The annexed report (7) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.

7.2 The Committee received a report from the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that provided an update on the Council's budget setting process, and the actions required to enable the Council to set a balanced budget for 2018-19. It also set out details of the allocation of budgets to the newly established Service Committees.

7.3 In reply to questions, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services said that since the previous meeting the County Council and all the Norfolk districts had continued to explore the possibility of participating in a one year 100% business rates retention pilot in 2018-19. There was a potential benefit from a Norfolk pilot of approximately £10m to be shared between Norfolk's eight local authorities. The Government's unwillingness to offer a "no detriment" protection clause for 2018-19 pilots meant that the worst case scenario for Norfolk as a whole was a potential unfunded risk of £7.371m.

7.4 In reply to further questions, the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services said that in order to pursue becoming part of a pilot for 2018-19 a joint Norfolk application that met with the approval of all eight local authorities would need to be made to the DCLG by 27 October 2017 at the latest. The County Council would proceed with this matter only on the basis that all the districts were willing to participate. The outcome of the pilot would be carefully analysed before any decisions were taken about how to proceed beyond 2018-19.

7.5 **RESOLVED**

That the Policy and Resources Committee:

- 1. Note the continuing uncertainty around the Council's overall funding, and the Government's Autumn Budget as detailed in section 2 of the report;**
- 2. Note the latest information regarding the opportunity to apply for a Business Rates Pilot in 2018-19 as set out in section 2 of the report, and:**
 - a. note that an application will only be progressed in the event that all Norfolk Districts confirm their interest in participating;**
 - b. note the potential unfunded risk of approximately £7.371m for Norfolk as a whole if the Government does not offer a "no detriment" protection to new pilots;**
 - c. note that the Norfolk Business Rates Pool will be discontinued in the event of a successful pilot**

- application;
 - d. note that in the event that a pilot application is not progressed, it is anticipated that the current Norfolk Business Rates Pool membership will be extended to include Great Yarmouth Borough Council (subject to agreement by the other members of the Pool); and
 - e. confirm the in principle decision to pursue a business rates pilot, delegating authority to agree the final details of a pilot bid to the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services in consultation with the Leader and other Norfolk authorities.
3. Agree the allocation of budgets and associated savings to the new Committee structure as set out in section 3 of the report;
 4. Note the budget planning issues which have been identified by Service Committees as detailed in section 5 of the report, including the recommendation to Policy and Resources Committee from the Adults Committee as set out in paragraph 5.9 of the report;
 5. Agree the service-specific budgeting issues for 2018-19 in respect of Policy and Resources Committee's own budgets, as set out in section 6 of the report,
 6. Note the next steps in the budget-setting process for 2018-19 as set out in section 7 of the report.

8 Finance monitoring report P4: July 2017

- 8.1 The annexed report (8) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.
- 8.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that summarise the Period 4 (July 2017) forecast financial outturn position for 2017-18, to assist members to maintain an overview of the overall financial position of the Council.

8.3 RESOLVED

That the Policy and Resources Committee:

1. Note the period 4 forecast Revenue overspend of £2.293m;
2. Note the forecast General Balances at 31 March 2018 of £19.301m, before taking into account any over/under spends;
3. Agree the use of additional social care funding as agreed by 10 July 2017 Adult Social Care Committee, and the creation of a reserve to be used in line with the agreed plan over the planned three year period, as set out in Appendix 1 paragraph 2.10 of the report;
4. Approve the write-off of two Residential Care debts totalling £27,512.13, due to the exhaustion of estates, as set out in Appendix 1 paragraph 5.8 of the report;
5. Note the revised expenditure and funding of the current 2017-20 capital programme as set out in Appendix 3 of the report;
6. Note the addition of £3.130m to the capital programme relating to a

completed purchase of a 390.79 acre farm at Marshland St James, plus 48.93 acres of associated farmland;

- 7. Agree to the re-allocation of library book capital funding towards library property capital maintenance as described in Appendix 3 paragraph 4 of the report.**

9 Delivering Financial Savings 2017-18

- 9.1 The annexed report (9) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.
- 9.2 The Committee discussed what (if any) changes should be made in how Members monitored the Council's budget. It was suggested that Committee Members should be encouraged to email technical questions about the Council's budget to the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services in advance of Committee meetings and as soon after the publication of the agenda as possible. A list of such questions and answers could then be prepared by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and circulated to Members in time for the start of the meeting. This approach could save committee time, it could also provide the means for a more detailed analysis of the budget.

9.3 RESOLVED

That the Policy and Resources Committee note:

- 1. The forecast shortfall of savings delivery of £4.768m, which amounts to 10% of total savings for 2017-18;**
- 2. The budgeted value of 2017-18 savings projects rated as RED of £6.378m, of which £2.526m are forecast to be delivered;**
- 3. The budgeted value of 2017-18 savings projects rated as AMBER of £2.464m, of which £1.547m are forecast to be delivered;**
- 4. The budgeted value of 2017-18 savings projects rated as GREEN or BLUE of £38.932m, of which £38.932m are forecast to be delivered; and**
- 5. The forecast position of savings delivery for 2018-19 (£2.728m shortfall) and 2019-20 (£0.535m shortfall).**

10 New Anglia Economic Strategy

- 10.1 The annexed report (10) by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services was received.
- 10.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services Council that explained the Council's role as a key partner in the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) and how the Council had worked with the partnership to shape its new economic strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk.
- 10.3 In reply to questions the Assistant Director Planning and Economy pointed out that the New Anglia Economic Strategy had been developed in partnership with and

endorsed by a wide range of stakeholders. It was not a Norfolk County Council strategy and it could not be delivered by one partner alone or by one strand of investment or actions. The Norfolk District Councils and City Council were amongst the many organisations consulted on the strategy.

10.3 In reply to further questions, it was pointed out that the ambitions and priorities set out in the strategy were high level, and helped partners to develop their own plans and interventions that contributed to achieving shared ambitions. Implementation would be delivered and driven through a series of action plans that covered each element of the strategy. A Norfolk investment plan would be developed to incorporate specific issues for our geography, and brought back to this Committee in January. The deadlines set by the Local Enterprise Partnership meant that it had not been possible for this matter to go before the Business and Property Committee before it came to Policy and Resources Committee.

10.3 **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND (with 9 votes in favour, 2 votes against and 2 abstentions)**

That the Policy and Resources Committee:

- 1. Recommend the New Anglia Economic Strategy to Council for endorsement at its 16 October 2017 meeting, as part of the Council's policy framework.**
- 2. Note that a Norfolk investment plan will be developed.**

11 **Re-thinking Access to Services**

11.1 The annexed report (11) by the Executive Directors of Adult Social Services and Children's Services was received.

11.2 The Committee received a report that outlined some of the options for a reduction in transport costs and a re-shaping of transport services as part of a longer term strategy for where Adult Social Services and Children's Services provided transport for clients.

11.3 Members were informed that this matter was being taken forward as part of a transformational change programme and the impact would take time to come to fruition. Adult Social Services and Children's Services Committees would be kept informed of developments and a further report would be brought back to Policy and Resources Committee early in the new year.

11.4 **RESOLVED**

That the Policy and Resources Committee:

Agree to the proposal set out in the report that the Director Children's Services and Director Adult Services with the Managing Director create the appropriate specification to pull together a cross departmental approach of current and future demand: to analyse, scrutinise and write businesses cases to examine the proportionality of spend and what options may be

viable for future service delivery and design.

12 Demand Management & Prevention Strategy: Children's Services

- 12.1 The annexed report (12) by the Executive Director of Children's Services was received.
- 12.2 The Committee received a report that outlined the scale of the challenge facing Children's Services and recommended an evidence based approach to investment, service transformation and subsequent cost avoidance, to achieve financial sustainability at the end of four years. The full detail was contained in the Outline Business Case (OBC) which was appended to the report.
- 12.3 The Interim Executive Director of Children's Services said that the Demand Management and Prevention Strategy set out in the report would strengthen Norfolk's early help and make for earlier intervention work with children on the edge of care. The strategy would deliver services to children and families in a way that reduced numbers of referrals, assessments, CP plans and LAC, whilst also focussing on improving outcomes for those children who needed formal social care intervention.
- 12.4 It was pointed out that the strategy would enable families to receive help as soon as it was required, working to enhance their strengths and overcome issues so they could remain together. The rate of Looked-After Children in Norfolk was in line with rates in other similar local authorities within England (and recent trends had shown that LAC rates among similar authorities were rising). The strategy set out in the report had been acclaimed nationally as a success after it had been introduced by the Interim Director in East Sussex when he worked for that local authority.
- 12.5 In reply to questions the Interim Director said that a report had yet to be taken to the Children's Services Committee that would be able to consider the means to be used to monitor and evaluate the new strategy. Because this was a four year strategy it was not possible at this stage to be more specific about the level of one-off investment that would be required. The Policy and Resources Committee could expect to receive an annual progress report on this transformation programme.
- 12.6 The Committee was informed that the new Executive Director of Children's Services had expressed her full support to the Managing Director of the approach set out in the report.
- 12.7 **RESOLVED**

That the Policy and Resources Committee agree:

- 1. The Demand Management and Prevention Strategy as one of the 7 council priorities.**
- 2. The allocation of a one-off investment of £12-15m into children's services over the four years, 2018-2022.**
- 3. That the money be held centrally, overseen by the Director of Finance,**

and drawn down only in line with the pre-agreed milestones.

4. That the Committee receive an annual report on the progress of the transformation programme.

13 Restorative Approaches Strategic Board

13.1 The annexed report (13) by the Executive Director of Children's Services was received.

13.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Children's Services that made Members aware of the Restorative Approaches Strategic Board's (RASB) Terms of Reference. The Committee was asked to formally agree the governance requirement to report annually to this Committee.

13.3 The Vice-Chairman of the Committee, who was appointed Chairman of the RASB in July 2017, explained the restorative approaches that were used to build healthy relationships and prevent challenging behaviour and conflicts as well as address conflict or wrongdoing and repair relationships. She paid tribute to the work of the previous Chairman of the RASB, former County Councillor Mr Brian Hannah, and drew Members attention to the benefits of restorative approaches in reducing the challenges facing Looked After Children (LAC).

13.4 RESOLVED

That the Policy and Resources Committee formally agree the RASB Terms of Reference (appendix 1 of the report).

14 Consents for the appointment of company directors – Repton Property Developments

14.1 The annexed report (14) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.

14.2 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services that set out details of proposed appointments to Repton Property Developments for member consideration.

14.3 RESOLVED to RECOMMEND

That Policy and Resources Committee recommend to Council: the appointment of nominated directors to Repton Property Developments as set out in the report.

15 Preparing for the re-introduction of a Cabinet system

15.1 The annexed report (15) by the Managing Director was received.

15.2 The Chairman moved, duly seconded:

That the task and finish group proposed in the report consist of 7 Members and be

subject to the Widdecombe principles on political proportionality.

15.3 During discussion, the Chairman said that the Group would be expected to report regularly to this Committee (and ultimately through this Committee to Council) to ensure maximum Member involvement.

15.4 **On being put to the vote it was**

RESOLVED

By 9 votes in favour, 2 votes against and 2 abstentions

That Policy and Resources Committee:

- 1. Establish a task and finish group to consider and make recommendations to this Committee on the re-introduction of a Cabinet system of governance;**
- 2. The Group consist of 7 Members and be subject to the Widdecombe principles on political proportionality.**

It was then further RESOLVED

- 3. That in order to prevent duplication and delay, recommendations in relation to the proposed re-introduction are brought to the Group in place of the Constitution Advisory Group. Once this proposed Group concludes its work the Constitution Advisory Group will review the changes required to the Constitution to effect any agreed change to the governance system.**

16 **Petition Scheme- Trigger Points**

16.1 The annexed report (16) by the Managing Director was received.

16.2 The Committee received a report by the Managing Director that recommended that the Committee consider whether or not to recommend Council to agree an amendment to the current petition scheme to lower the threshold of the number of signatures that are required for a Council debate. The report also proposed that the provision for a petition to require a senior officer to attend a service committee meeting and give evidence/answer questions was deleted.

16.3 **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND**

That the Policy and Resources Committee recommend to Council:

- 1. The petition scheme is amended to reduce the number of signatures on a petition for a Council debate to 0.5% of the population to the nearest 100;**
- 2. The provision for a petition to require a senior officer to attend a service committee meeting and give evidence/answer questions is deleted.**

Section B – Items for Report

17 Notifications of Exemptions Under Contract Standing Orders

17.1 The annexed report (17) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was received.

17.2 RESOLVED

That the Policy and Resources Committee:

As required by paragraph 9.12 of the Council's Contract Standing Orders, Policy and Resources Committee note the exemptions that have been granted under paragraph 9.11 of Contract Standing Orders by the Head of Procurement and Head of Law in consultation with the Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee that are over £250,000.

18 Feedback from Members serving on Outside Bodies

18.1 No verbal update reports were received.

The meeting concluded at 12.10 pm

Chairman