

# Infrastructure and Development Select Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 11 September 2019**  
**10am, Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

**Present:**

Cllr Barry Stone – Chairman

Cllr Jess Barnard

Cllr Claire Bowes

Cllr Tim East

Cllr Simon Eyre

Cllr Brian Iles

Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris

Cllr Graham Middleton

Cllr Beverley Spratt

Cllr Colleen Walker

Cllr Brian Watkins

Cllr Tony White

Cllr Margaret Dewsbury

Cllr Andrew Jamieson

Cllr Martin Wilby

Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships

Cabinet Member for Finance

Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure

**Officers Present:**

Tom McCabe

Dominic Allen

James Belcher

Grahame Bygrave

David Cumming

Joel Hull

Sarah Rhoden

Stuart Ruff

Executive Director, Community and Environmental  
Services, CES

Sustainability Manager

Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Norfolk Fire and Rescue  
Service

Assistant Director – Highways and Waste

Strategic Transport Team Manager

Head of Waste

Head of Support and Development, CES

Chief Fire Officer, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service

Also Present:

Representatives from the Kings Lynn to Hunstanton  
Railway Campaign.

**1. Apologies and substitutions**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Vic Thomson and Cllr Stuart Clancy, substituted by Cllr Simon Eyre.

**2. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2019**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2019 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest declared.

### **4. Items of Urgent Business**

- 4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

### **5. Public Question Time**

- 5.1 There was one public question submitted which is attached at Appendix A.

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

- 6.1 There were two member questions submitted which are attached at Appendix A.
- 6.2 Cllr Bev Spratt added to his question that the Mildenhall roundabout was one of the main gateways to Norfolk and was continually congested. He wanted to see as many tourists visit this part of the Country as possible but situations like this were not helpful. He suggested that a working party was set up to see Highways England to inform them what we would like to see happen.
- 6.3 The Executive Director explained that he met with the Regional Director of Highways England 3 or 4 times per year, and they had also met Norfolk Members of Parliament who had expressed their discontentment. The Mildenhall and the Thetford roundabouts both needed moving into the next stage of improvement.
- 6.4 Members commented that the Local Transport Plan task and finish group which had already been created could look into this alongside the appropriate Cabinet member and Executive Director and report back to the Select Committee.
- 6.5 The Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure agreed with the above comment but emphasised that infrastructure was key and it was essential that the County pushed for more infrastructure.
- 6.6 It was agreed that the task and finish group tasked with looking at the Local Transport Plan would include this in their remit.

Following agreement of the Committee, the agenda was taken in the following order.

### **7. Railway Campaign**

- 7.1 The Select Committee received the presentation from the King's Lynn - Hunstanton Railway Campaign which made the case for reconnecting Hunstanton to King's Lynn via a new rail line, utilising the previous alignment where appropriate. The presentation is attached at Appendix B.
- 7.2 Some Members, although supportive of the initiatives proposed, suggested that the proposals should have been taken to the Norfolk Rail Group first, as other heritage railways have done. It was also asked at what status the application was at over the other railways as they had asked for their proposals to be included in the transport plan. Officers explained that they were aware of other proposals from other railways but nothing had been heard recently. As the report suggested there was a sum of money available for the feasibility study, and members might like to consider whether other lines are considered as well.
- 7.3 Members commented that the revival of such schemes were long overdue and it was particularly significant considering the economic link to Cambridge. It would also enable young people to access more public transport. It was hoped that this could extend to the revival of other routes.
- 7.4 Cllr Middleton proposed an amendment recommendation 2 of the report as follows;
- To replace;
- Note that officers will be commissioning technical work to assess the likely viability of reopening the railway*
- With;
- Endorsed Officers to commission technical work to assess the likely viability of reopening the railway and to report back to this Committee for recommendations and comment.*
- 7.5 With 7 votes for, and 4 abstentions, the amendment was **CARRIED**.
- 7.6 The Committee;
- **RECEIVED** the presentation from the King's Lynn – Hunstanton Railway Campaign.
  - **ENDORSED** Officers to commission technical work to assess the likely viability of reopening the railway and to report back to this Committee for recommendations and comment.

## **8. Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan**

- 8.1 The Select Committee received the annexed report (8) which set out the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan for 2020-23 and the five areas of development and change to form the basis of a public consultation.
- 8.2 Officers confirmed that as per the graph on page 55 of the report, the majority of fire injuries resulted from fires in properties where people lived alone.

- 8.3 Members were concerned that there was no mention of a push for legislation to make sprinklers mandatory. Officers explained that the National Fire Chiefs Council, which includes Norfolk's Chief Fire Officer, continued to lobby Government on this matter.
- 8.4 Members were reassured to see there were no proposals relating to reducing fire stations, reducing vehicle fleet or reducing crewing levels on vehicles. The Chief Fire Officer explained that Norfolk undertook an evidence-based approach to the changes, if any, that were needed. This was the right response for the activity of Norfolk but that it was not to say that Norfolk Fire and Rescue Services were not open to change established through evidence and opportunity to improve services to the communities of Norfolk.
- 8.5 Members commented that since there had been cross party unanimous opposition to the Fire and Rescue takeover from the Police and Crime Commissioner, this could be referenced in the report. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships added that collaboration had progressed significantly, and the PCC had given no indication of an intent to submit his business case for change.
- 8.6 The Executive Director added that Cabinet had recently approved additional resources to implement requirements identified by the Integrated Risk and Management Plan, as per section 6 of the report on page 17. This was further investment to help address the risks within the community. The Service did not want a 'requires improvement' rating in the future so this would put it in as best place as possible to improve.
- 8.7 The Chief Fire Officer explained that wildfires and such other events would continue to occur, but the Service would follow evidence to put them in a good position to continue to provide the best possible service for the County. The introduction of 4x4 vehicles placed the service in a better position to better tackle a wider variety of incidences.
- 8.8 The Committee **REVIEWED** and **COMMENTED** on the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan set out in Appendix B of the report, in particular the five areas for development and change that will form the basis of public consultation.

## **9. Environment Policy for Norfolk**

- 9.1 The Select Committee received the annexed report (9) which set out the progress to date of the Task and Finish Group in advance of presenting its final conclusions and findings, including a new Environmental Policy, to Full Council in November.
- 9.2 It was clarified that as the work was commissioned by Full Council, the recommendations would be brought to the Select Committee before being approved by Full Council.
- 9.3 Some Members expressed concern that the task and finish groups were being held in private. Officers explained that it was written in the constitution that this was the case and had been so for a number of years and was not a recent change. The final

report would be discussed in the Committee and points could be added to the report then. Individual group's representatives should be reporting back to their group.

- 9.4 The Committee **NOTED** the progress to date and that the Task and Finish Group was on track to report its conclusions and findings to Full Council at the meeting on 25 November 2019.

## **10. Residual Waste Procurement Strategy**

- 10.1 The Select Committee received the annexed report (10) which set out the proposed approach to securing new services for County's residual waste from 1 April 2021.
- 10.2 Members were concerned that when assessing tenders the report doesn't demonstrate that cost had been balanced against the carbon footprint and therefore it was suggested that the weighting for the carbon should be increased or made pass fail. Officers explained that the environmental well-being consideration underlined the need for arrangements to deal with waste and the benefit of flexibility, allowing for an increase in recycling and a change in the composition and volumes of waste.
- 10.3 Members were concerned that existing contracts included landfill but as Officers had explained in the report a very small amount of waste was currently ending up in landfill and Norfolk compared well against other County Councils.
- 10.4 The argument for waste collection and disposal being arranged by one authority was raised. However, it was explained that in legislation the District Councils were the waste collecting authorities and the County Council were the waste disposal authority and the two services were not amalgamated at this present time.
- 10.5 The Select Committee **CONSIDERED** the proposed waste procurement strategy, including the evaluation model at Appendix A of the report and commented that the weighting for carbon footprint should be increased or made pass fail.

## **11. Forward Work Programme**

- 11.1 The Select Committee received the annexed report (11) which set out the Forward Work Programme for the Committee.
- 11.2 The Committee asked if a track changes version of the Transport Asset Management Plan being brought to November meeting could be possible to avoid having to compare two documents.
- 11.3 It was suggested that the appropriate Cabinet Member from King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council was invited to the November meeting specifically for the King's Lynn Transport Strategy report.

- 11.4 A Member informed the Committee that school children were marching on 20<sup>th</sup> September for Climate Change.
- 11.5 The Committee;
1. **REVIEWED** and **AGREED** the Forward Work Programme for the Select Committee.
  2. **AGREED** the Terms of Reference for the Local Transport Plan Member Task and Finish Group, as set out in Appendix B of the report.

The meeting closed at 11.50pm.

**Chairman**



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**5. Public Question Time**

**Question from Mr Frank Readhead.**

WHY DO YOU ENCOURAGE ABUSE OF GREY BINS AND FLY-TIPPING?

I took a bin of old plaster to Hempton where I was offered the use only of a wide snow shovel to put the plaster through a narrow slot at high level, with a fee of £9.00. The shovel would not fit into the wide bin and I will NOT attempt the action required to lift dusty plaster above my head as I am 77 years old and far too sensible. Photographs are available for those unfamiliar with recycling.

**Response by the Chairman:**

*After investigating with our contractor, we understand that you were asked to deposit plaster in a container designed for plasterboard. This was an error and we are working to retrain staff. You are right in pointing out that the bin you were directed to is not designed to accept this type of waste. We expect staff to be able to help customers with manageable loads, although there may be a short wait at busy times. It doesn't sound like you had the experience we would expect on our sites on this occasion and we would like to apologise and reassure you that your feedback has been taken on board. If you visit the site again with this material, as described you will be directed to rubble container for a charge of £3.*

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

**Question from Cllr Bev Spratt**

Would the Chairman agree with me that the current traffic management systems on the Mildenhall Junction of the A11 are leading to excessive congestion and would the Chairman therefore raise these concerns with the Cabinet Member for Highways as it is having a detrimental effect on traffic travelling south out of Norfolk.

**Response by the Chairman:**

*Clearly, it is important to Norfolk that traffic on the A11 runs smoothly to benefit our residents, businesses and visitors. Although we were successful in our campaign to get the A11 fully dualled, the campaign was not able to persuade government of the case to provide grade-separation at the A11 Mildenhall 'Fiveways' junction.*

*I am aware that concern about these signals has been raised with Highways England, who maintain and manage the road on behalf of government, by officers of both Norfolk and Suffolk County Council.*

*I am sure that the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure would be prepared to support these concerns on behalf of Norfolk County Council. I am more than happy to raise it with him, with a view to sending a formal letter from the Council to request that Highways England bring forward a better solution to manage the traffic at this busy junction to reduce congestion.*

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**Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp:**

What consideration will be given to environmentally-friendly models of waste disposal, that do not cause air pollution or the permanent loss of resources, in the new procurement for residual waste treatment for 2021? Council has a No-Incineration in Norfolk Policy and hosted the Waste Matters Conference at the John Innes Centre in 2015 to consider residual waste disposal further up the waste hierarchy. However, the current four waste contracts treat and burn 199,000 residual tonnes of waste as refused-derived fuel. This is nearly all municipal residual waste. A considerable waste of resources leading to air pollution.

**Response by the Chairman:**

*The procurement process is an opportunity for any waste management company to propose waste management technology provided it does not involve incineration in Norfolk.*

*A recent soft market testing exercise was open to all interested companies and a range of existing and new technologies were represented.*

*The carbon footprint of all proposals will be assessed as part of the evaluation of tenders, as required by the Council's waste management policies.*

*Waste treatment processes must have permission to operate from the appropriate regulatory authority, such as the Environment Agency, which imposes strict conditions to ensure that they do not pose a threat to the environment or human health.*

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