

Infrastructure and Development Select Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 25 May 2022
10.00am, held at County Hall, Norwich

Present:

Cllr Penny Carpenter – Chair

Cllr Sharon Blundell
Cllr Emma Corlett
Cllr Chris Dawson
Cllr Ed Maxfield
Cllr David Bills

Cllr Lana Hemsall
Cllr Andy Grant
Cllr Claire Bowes
Cllr Robert Savage
Cllr Tony White

Also Present:

David Cumming	Strategic Transport Team Manager, CES
Carolyn Reid	Assistant Director, Growth and Development, CES
Matt Tracey	Growth and Infrastructure Group Manager, CES
John Shaw	Developer Services Manager, CES
Nicola Ledain	Committee Officer, Democratic Services
Tom McCabe	Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
Vince Muspratt	Director, Growth and Development, CES
Sarah Rhoden	Assistant Director, Performance and Governance, CES
Claire Dollman	Transport Planner, CES
Richard Drake	Senior Planner, Minerals and Waste Policy, CES
Caroline Jeffery	Principal Planner, Minerals and Waste Policy, CES
Nick Johnson	Head of Planning, CES

1. Apologies and substitutions

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr James Bensly, Cllr Vic Thomson, Cllr William Richmond, Cllr Steffan Aquerone, Cllr Maxine Webb and Cllr Jim Moriarty (substituted by Cllr Penny Carpenter, Cllr Andy Grant, Cllr Lana Hemsall, Cllr Sharon Blundell, Cllr Emma Corlett and Cllr Ed Maxfield respectively). Apologies were also received from Cllr Barry Stone and Cllr Chrissie Rumsby.
- 1.2 In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, Cllr Penny Carpenter was elected as Chair for the meeting.

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2022 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 There were no interests declared.

4. Items of Urgent Business

4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

5. Public Question Time

5.1 There were two public questions received, and responses had been given.

A supplementary question was asked one member of the public and a written response would be given.

6. Local Member Issues / Questions

6.1 There were no local Member issues or questions received.

The Chair agreed that item 11 on the agenda could be moved to this point of the meeting.

7. Strategic and Financial Planning 2023-24

7.1 The Committee received the report along with the Cabinet report, which provided the latest information about the context for 2023-2024 budget setting to support the Select Committee discussion and to enable them to provide input to future meetings of Cabinet to inform budget decisions.

7.2 Cabinet Member Cllr Andrew Jamieson introduced the report and invited the Executive Director to add comments.

7.3 During discussion, the following points were noted:

7.3.1 Although there would be benefits for a digital first approach, there would need close scrutiny of the Equality Impact Assessment of any changes that emerged especially as it seemed that digitally excluded residents were already disadvantaged

7.3.2 The Executive Director explained that the net revenue budget was over£130 million and therefore the savings outlined in the report represented approximately 10%. It would be a significant challenge. The strategic review would look at staffing levels and there was the acknowledgement that a large part of the NCC budget was staffing. It was inevitable that in the next few years, people would leave the organisation. Due to massive transformation in certain areas, some areas could see more reduction than others.

7.3.3 There were currently different levels of inflation of different elements within the construction industry. Members noted the risk aspect especially with the narrowing gap between the cost of projects and the amount of funding received from Government. It was noted that some Local Authorities had paused major road networks in the last few weeks.

7.4 The Select Committee;

1. Considered the Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy position as reported to Cabinet in April 2022 (Appendix 1 of the report), noting in particular the

following elements as set out in the appended report, which form the context for 2023-24 budget setting:

- a. the budget gap for 2023-24 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) period.
 - b. The Departmental saving targets.
 - c. The outline timetable and approach to developing the 2023-24 Budget.
2. Considered and commented on the overall service strategies as set out within the 2022-23 Budget Book.
3. Considered and commented on the key issues for 2023-24 budget setting and the broad areas the Select Committee would recommend exploring for savings development as they pertain to the services within the Select Committee's remit, in order to provide input to the 2023-24 budget process and inform the saving proposals put forward to Cabinet later in the year. In particular the Committee is asked to consider savings opportunities under the following headings:
- a. New initiatives which would deliver savings;
 - b. Activities which could be ceased in order to deliver a saving;
 - c. Activities which the Council should seek to maintain at the current level as far as possible (i.e. areas where the Committee considers there is limited scope for savings);
 - d. Commercialisation opportunities.

8. Norfolk Investment Framework

- 8.1 The Committee received the report which outlines the evidence base and proposed Investment Framework which Cabinet agreed to commission in August 2021 to address the step change in pay, productivity, and skills that were required to drive the local economy to a more equal footing and converge on the regional and national position.
- 8.2 The following points were noted:
- 8.2.1 As part of the challenges, there would be interventions that would come forward to address those challenges and they would be developed in collaboration via a workshop initially with voluntary sectors and community groups. This would enable ways to be suggested of how those barriers could be addressed. This was an high level framework identifying the challenges, but the solutions that would achieve the long term vision would be achieved collaboratively.
- 8.2.2 On page 159, with regards to the retrofitting commercial buildings, Members questioned if that could expand to residential which would have an impact and feed into the social justice issues.
- 8.2.3 In terms of upskilling and producing people fit for jobs within the County, it was important to remember that NCC had one of the best adult provider centres in the country. Officers explained that Adult Learning were the driver of one initiative that had just been announced and were working alongside officers from growth and development. This framework was the starting place of working collaboratively with other partners such as colleges and this was an opportunity to do that and start to focus funding.

- 8.2.4 The steering group had met on four occasions. There had also been workshops on each numeric which had been reported back to the steering group.
- 8.2.5 It's disappointing that excellent schemes were thought of and then they were abolished not long after. Lots of people want to re-train, and so it would be worth re-diversifying as there are shortages across the board in all sectors of workforce, and there was more need to think long term.
- 8.3 The Select Committee
1. Endorsed the draft Investment Framework, prioritise the four areas for county investment, and encourage partners to invest in these shared objectives.
 2. After considering the draft Investment Framework, the Select Committee agreed that there was no more information to be included, before the Framework would go Cabinet for endorsement on 6 June.

9. Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- 9.1 The Select Committee received the annexed report which provided information about the Publication version of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan which includes the proposed planning policies for minerals and waste management development and the proposed mineral extraction sites. The report also included a revised Local Development Scheme, which sets out the remaining stages for the production of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan, and a revised Statement of Community Involvement, which sets out how the authority engages with communities in the production of the Local Plan and in the determination of planning applications.
- 9.2 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Committee:
- 9.2.1 The Bus Service Enhanced Partnership Improvement Board could be included in the Statement of Community Involvement on the list of consultees for relevant planning applications.
- 9.2.2 The officer recommendation to committee is not to include site MIN 212 at Mundham in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. There would be a public consultation on the Minerals and Waste Local Plan, and then there will be an examination in public where an inspector will listen to representations from those who agreed or disagreed with the contents of the Plan.
- 9.2.3 A Committee Member felt that the process was sound, and the policy does not exclude current gravel pits from extracting for a further period of time. It was important to include as many existing sites as possible, and officers should encourage as much as possible the depletion of existing sites.
- 9.3 The Committee **RESOLVED to**
1. Comment on the revised Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (Appendix A of the report) and recommend Cabinet resolve that the MWDS shall have effect from 11 July 2022.
 2. Comment on the Publication version of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and recommend Cabinet agreement to publish the Publication document for representations to be made over a six-week period during September and October 2022 and if no fundamental weaknesses are identified in the representations made,

submission of the NM&WLP (and supporting/background information) for independent examination

3. Comment on the 2022 Norfolk Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and advise Cabinet to recommend Full Council resolve to formally adopt the SCI (Appendix B of the report)

10. Local Transport Plan (LTP4)

- 10.1 The Select Committee received the report by the Director of Growth and Development which set out the results of the consultation on the draft of the LTP4 Implementation Plan including a full report of the results of the public and stakeholder consultation. A draft of the LTP was also included.
- 10.2 Officers confirmed that the LTP was due to be discussed at Scrutiny Committee on 23 June 2022.
- 10.3 Officers explained that ultimately the decision over which priorities and projects are carried out would be one for Members, with officers considering the range of options. There were a whole range of things that could be considered, and officers would balance out the competing priorities based on individuals' needs, the role of the county and the geography of the county. In the past, Norfolk had been successful in receiving funding to bring forward projects.
- 10.4 With reference to point 1.3 of the report, there was concern expressed that grass verges were not being cut as frequently, making areas and junctions dangerous where they were used for walking and cycling to work and school. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure responded that it was essential that verges were cut where there were dangerous junctions and areas of high usage. The verge cutting team had started around the county this week, and the priorities were where the dangerous areas were.
- 10.5 Officers explained that there had been discussions with UK Power Networks and others such as National Grid to look at how power that was being created around Norfolk could be grounded to help make the switch from carbon fuels. Infrastructure wasn't just transport related, but this was also about supplying the needs in relation to heating and the delivery of sustainable growth across the county. Work had been carried out and was captured in the Local Energy Plan.
- 10.6 Officers were aware of correspondence received from members of the public and their legal representatives about the process that the service had been going through to produce and deliver the strategy and the implementation plan. There had been letters that had suggested a Judicial Review might be an outcome, however Officers reassured the Committee that they had taken legal advice at every step and were comfortable that the work produced, and timescales set, were compliant with everything that should be done, and therefore had taken away the risk of a successful Judicial Review.
- 10.7 The Norwich Western Link continued to be a priority for the council, and the delivery plan was currently being worked through. The outline business case had been submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) with an expected start date of 2024.
- 10.8 Officers confirmed that there hadn't been any changes made to the LTP because of the recently published toolkit produced by Government. The toolkit gave best

practice guidance about delivery and Officers would be following the advice in the toolkit, but it was a matter for individual schemes rather than the LTP.

- 10.9 As detailed in the plan, the adopted carbon target was in line with the Government target, and the plan included a range of measures which would support delivery of those targets. The LTP set out a range of actions that were being proposed to help achieve the carbon target such as the way people travel to cleaning up the emissions of vehicles. These targets would be monitored as the plan was delivered and implemented.
- 10.10 Although the plan did not mention specifically using hydrogen as a way of powering vehicles, the wider umbrella of cleaner vehicles would include hydrogen. Some Members were not convinced that electric vehicles were the best option for all vehicles as the electricity to charge the cars was often generated using fossil fuels.
- 10.11 The plan mentioned active travel with actions around extending the disused rail networks in market towns so people could use them for recreational usage and it recognised that they were not suitable for longer journeys. In terms of reinstating railways, previous railway lines had been submitted for funding to reinstate but had been unsuccessful. Members suggested that the old railway lines were used as a greenway before they disappeared so they could be used as corridors for other modes of transport, such as walking and cycling. This would help link villages as they once were to give local support to the communities.
- 10.12 With regards to the 'Beryl Bike Scheme' that had been rolled out across Greater Norwich, Officers explained that they were not aware of any further extension to the roll out of electric bikes now but like all projects was dependent on funding and other factors. Officers would investigate the matter and respond further in writing.
- 10.13 An amendment to recommendation 3 (to the Select Committee) was moved by Cllr Corlett, and seconded by Cllr Blundell;
- Delete recommendation 3 and replace with;
- "Recommend that Cabinet take a short pause on decision on LTP4 until Quantifiable Carbon Reduction guidance is published by the government in Autumn 2022, so that it can be properly considered. During that pause to work on a Plan B for residents blighted by rat-running, to mitigate the risk of the Western Link Road not proceeding (for reasons of Outline Business Case not approved, planning failure or unacceptable financial risk to proceed due to prohibitive cost increases)."
- 10.14 With 3 votes for and 7 against, the amendment was **LOST**.
- 10.15 Having reviewed and considered the results of the LTP4 Implementation Plan consultation and the updated LTP4 Implementation Plan and Strategy, the Select Committee **RESOLVED** to:
1. **Recommend to Cabinet** that it approve and recommend to full Council adoption of the LTP4 Implementation Plan and Strategy.
 2. **Recommend to Cabinet** that the council look to protect old and disused railway lines for transport use so they can be used as greenways and active travel and, if future circumstances allow, other uses such as rail to be brought forward.

The Committee took a 5-minute comfort break at this point.

11. Safe, Sustainable Development Aims and Guidance Notes for Local Highway Authority requirements in Development Management, Parking Guidelines and Pre-application charging

11.1 The Select Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which sets out general guidance for use by local authorities, developers, designers, councillors and the community what would be likely to be acceptable to the Local Highway Authority in terms of new developments and their effects on the transport network.

11.2 There was agreement with the pre-application charging advice however there was some concern over the scale of fees would be calculated and some not reflective of the scale of the proposal. Several charging mechanisms had been reviewed, most of the proposal would require a transport assessment so it had taken into account that input. Best practice had been researched and the best aspects of other Highway Authority policies had been used. There would be planned opportunities to review it in the future.

11.4 Standards state that garages had to be of a certain width if developers were going to include them in their plans. There was agreement that visitor parking on new residential developments there should be enhanced in areas such as bus routes, close to amenities, near schools and near high density residential/flats.

11.5 The charges would be introduced from September 2022.

11.6 The Select Committee:

1. **REVIEWED** and **CONSIDERED** the updated Safe, Sustainable Development 2022 document and Parking Guidelines 2022.
2. **REVIEWED** and **CONSIDERED** the new proposed pre-app charges.
3. **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet approve and adopt the updated Safe, Sustainable Development and Parking Guidelines documents with enhancements to visitor parking requirements on new development and agree that any necessary minor future changes be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport.
4. **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet approve and adopt the pre-app charges and agree that any necessary minor future changes be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport.

12. Policy and Strategy Framework – Annual Review

12.1 The Committee received the report which set out information on the policies and strategies aligned to the work of this Select Committee, in the form of a policy and strategy framework. The framework was scheduled to be reviewed by the Committee annually.

12.2 Having reviewed the policy and strategy framework, the Select Committee identified no further appropriate items for inclusion on the Forward Work Programme.

13. Forward Work Programme

13.1 The Select Committee received the report by the Executive Director of Community

and Environmental Services which set out the Forward Work Programme for the Committee to enable the Committee to review and shape.

- 13.2 The Select Committee reviewed the report and **RESOLVED** to
1. Agree the Forward Work Programme for the Select Committee set out in Appendix A.

The meeting closed at 12.25pm

Chair



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