

Infrastructure and Development Select Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 15 July 2020
10.00am, as a Virtual Teams meeting**

Present:

Cllr Barry Stone – Chairman

Cllr Stuart Clancy

Cllr Claire Bowes

Cllr Tim East

Cllr Brian Illes

Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris

Cllr Beverley Spratt

Cllr Vic Thomson

Cllr Tony White

Cllr Brian Watkins

Cllr Colleen Walker

Substitute Members Present:

Cllr Terry Jermy for Cllr Jess Barnard

Cllr Penny Carpenter for Cllr Graham Middleton

Also Present:

Martin Wilby

Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure

Officers Present:

Tom McCabe

Muspratt, Vincent

Grahame Bygrave

Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services

Director Growth and Development

Director of Highways & Transport

Karl Rands

Sarah Rhoden

Ceri Sumner

Matt Tracey

David Cumming

Tim Shaw

Highway Services Manager

Assistant Director, Performance and Governance

Director of Community, Information and Learning

Growth and Infrastructure Group Manager

Strategic Transport Team Manager

Committee Officer

1A. Apologies and substitutions

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Jess Barnard (Cllr Terry Jermy substituting) and Cllr Graham Middleton (Cllr Penny Carpenter substituting).

1B Election of A Vice-Chair For The Day

1B The Committee RESOLVED

That, in the absence of Cllr Graham Middleton (who had given his apologies for the meeting), the Committee elect Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris as Vice-Chairman for the day, to deal with any issues that might arise in this meeting, should the Chairman experience connectivity issues as a result of being unable to maintain an internet connection.

2 To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2020

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2.2 In reply to questions, the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services reported on the following:

- There was a continued reduction in the backlog of reported potholes.
- A full list of sites where haunching was reported to Cabinet would be forwarded to Cllr Spratt after the meeting.
- The Council expected to know in the Autumn if a bid to Government for a free port at Great Yarmouth had been successful.
- School transport was currently provided by coaches with accessibility issues, which meant that the Council might not be in a position in September 2020 to offer spare seats on certain school routes. A note that explained the current position would be sent to Councillors after the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 No interests were declared

4. Items of Urgent Business

4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

5. Public Question Time

5.1 No public questions were received

6. Local Member Issues / Questions

6.1 There were no Local Member Issues / Questions.

7. Infrastructure and Development Response to Covid-19

7.1 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services which provided a summary of how the County Council services reporting to this Committee had responded to the Covid-19 crisis. The report summarised the work that Norfolk County Council was undertaking in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

7.2 The following points were discussed and noted

- The Committee's thanks were placed on record to the staff, contractors, volunteers and communities who had worked as part of a huge community and partnership effort to help keep Norfolk people safe and protected throughout the pandemic.
- A Councillor suggested that at the end of the pandemic an independent local enquiry should be held into how all the agencies that had provided a response to Covid-19 in Norfolk had handled the situation and that this should allow the

public an opportunity to express their views. In reply the Executive Director said that it was likely that a public enquiry would be held at the national level.

- In response to questions, the Chairman suggested that should Town and Parish Councils raise concerns with Councillors about how the County Council and its partner organisations engaged with local communities about the pandemic then they might wish to take them up with the Councillor Resources Support Officer.
- The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services said that the numbers of cases of Covid-19 in Norfolk remained at the lower end of the expected range. Last week there were known to be 15 cases of Covid-19 in Norfolk, a relatively low figure and one that could be managed.
- The Chairman added that a detailed breakdown of the number of recorded cases of Covid-19 in any Electoral Division was available from the Director of Public Health on request. It was also pointed out that the local outbreak control plan provided a great deal of useful information about how the Council was responding to the pandemic.
- Specific lessons continued to be learnt about how to best support voluntary organisations in Norfolk to respond to a possible second wave of the pandemic. At Councillors request, organisations working together through existing partnership arrangements would be supported in obtaining DBS checks where they became necessary.
- It was recognised that the monitoring of the food supply chain was something that needed to be done at the national level as part of the Government's planning for a possible second wave of cases in the winter months.
- At the request of Councillors, it was agreed that officers would examine what level of support could be provided to those individuals who were in financial difficulties because of their volunteering activities where their support had not originated through the formal route of Voluntary Norfolk.
- The Council was working through its existing contracts with partner organisations and the voluntary sector to find new ways to support the most vulnerable in society after the shielding scheme for the vulnerable ended at the end of July.
- Councillors were pleased to hear that the digital offer provided by libraries continued to increase and that there were plans to have mobile libraries back on the streets shortly.
- It was pointed out that no decisions had yet been made at the national level about whether the county elections due in 2021 would take place.
- At Councillors request, details regarding the increase in the number of claimants in receipt of universal credit as a result of the pandemic would be shared with Councillors after the meeting (this would be done via Members Insight).

7.3 The Committee RESOLVED

1.To formally thank all staff involved in the significant effort to keep people safe and protected.

2. To acknowledge the work that has been carried out by NCC, contractors, partners and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the voluntary sector.

3. To note the priority areas for policies and strategies and the work being done to ensure they continued to be shaped effectively and to add them to the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

8 Policy and Strategy Framework – Annual Review

8.1 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which provided details of the relevant policy and strategy framework to enable Councillors to have oversight of policy and strategy development work across relevant services and to inform development of the Forward Work Programme.

8.2 Councillors drew attention to the following issues that were mentioned in the policy and strategy framework:

- NCC environmental policy.
- The update on waste disposal policy (that was due to be reported to the Committee in September 2020).
- The education training courses that were provided by both the Libraries Service and the Adult Education Service.
- The Local Transport Plan (work being overseen by a Member Working Group).
- Plans for a Fornsett Railway Station and how to move these forward.
- The timing of changes in road traffic movements near the Longwater Estate where there were road capacity issues.

8.3 In response to questions, officers agreed to look at new ways to present the extensive range of information contained in the policy and strategic framework and to separate out the strategic issues from the more local issues.

8.4 **The Committee RESOLVED to note the policy and strategy framework at Appendix A.**

9 Forward Plan

9.1 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which reported on the Forward Work Programme.

9.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- Norfolk County Council worked very closely with Suffolk County Council in taking a joint strategic lead on economic strategies that would drive forward economic recovery in the LEP New Anglia Area.
- Norfolk County Council contributed to £41M of the £71m of projects for the New Anglia Area.
- Norfolk County Council did not require its own separate economic strategy.
- Councillors noted that there would be an opportunity at a future meeting to examine the work that was being done to promote walking and cycling in Norfolk as part of the development of the Local Transport Plan.

- Councillors also asked that when there were large reports to be presented to the Committee that they should be sent to Councillors in advance of the formal agenda.

9.3 The Committee **RESOLVED**

To agree the Forward Work Programme for the Select Committee as set out in the report.

10 Performance of Key Highways Contracts

10.1 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which identified that key highways contracts were all performing well, and that existing robust contract management arrangements would ensure this level of performance was maintained. To illustrate this fact, the contract with Tarmac had been extended to the full 12-year term (to 2026), which reflected their consistent performance in the delivery of highway works. In summary, the key contracts were all performing well and offered good value to the residents of Norfolk.

10.2 The following points were discussed and noted;

- At the request of the Committee, officers agreed to explore whether Highways England would be prepared to enter into contract(s) with the County Council for weed killing and grass cutting on Norfolk's major trunk roads. Officers agreed to speak with Cllr Colleen Walker (who had raised this issue) after the meeting to ascertain her concerns about weed killing and grass cutting on roads in the Great Yarmouth area.
- It was noted that the County Council had a regular maintenance programme of gulley cleaning and further works could be added at Councillors request.
- Officers agreed to take up with contractors the need to ensure potholes were repaired before the application of surface dressing and to speak after the meeting to Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris who had some concerns in his division.
- There were also signage issues when roads were closed in Cllr Tony White's division that would be taken up after the meeting.
- Councillors noted that the 3rd River crossing at Great Yarmouth was programmed to start on site in January 2021.
- It was pointed out that the County Council was in discussions with Natural England about the next phase of the bats survey in advance of work starting on the Western Link road.

10.3 The Committee **NOTED** the key contract performance and arrangements that were set out in the report.

11 Update from Local Transport Plan Member Task and Finish Group

11.1 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services that welcomed the Select Committee's comments on the work of the Local Transport Plan Member Task and Finish Group.

11.2 The following points were discussed and noted;

- Councillors discussed the consultation responses and identified issues that should be considered in the final stages of the plan's development, particularly following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- It was suggested that the responses were somewhat urban centric and that the task and finish group should give further consideration to rural transport issues, particularly in relation what more could be done to innovate in a rural county, given the current state of rural bus travel where many transport services were on a knife edge.
- Councillors drew attention to the work that was being done to enhance the environmental performance of the local transport plan, issues of public access to the countryside and issues of disability and suggested that the plan should take on board more views from those people who did not have access to a car who had not responded to the consultation exercise in any great number.
- Some councillors said that they were disappointed at the overall level of public response to the consultation exercise and asked for more to be done on this matter at the local level but recognised that the consultation had generated a greater response than that about the Council budget.

11.3 The Committee **NOTED** the programme and consultation responses and the views contained in the report and about how the consultation might be used to help shape the LTP strategy.

12 **Wymondham Market Town Transport Network Improvement Strategy**

12.1 The Committee received a report by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services that summarised the Wymondham transport network improvement study prior to it being reported to Cabinet in August for agreement and adoption.

12.2 The Committee noted that the main objective of the study, agreed with the stakeholders, was to improve walking, cycling, public transport and parking in Wymondham town. The following issues were identified in the study:

- Traffic calming on the Harts Farm estate
- Cycling and walking routes around the town
- Public transport in the town
- Walking, cycling, bus and parking arrangements in the Market Cross area.

12.3 **The Committee NOTED the completed Wymondham market town transport network improvement study prior to it being reported to Cabinet in August for agreement and adoption.**

Chairman