



Corporate Select Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on 13 September 2021 at
10am in Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane Norwich NR1 2DL**

Present:

Cllr E Colman (Chair)
Cllr A Birmingham
Cllr B Duffin
Cllr L Hemsall

Cllr T Jermy
Cllr B Price
Cllr V Thomson

Substitute Members Present:

Cllr Philip Duigan for Cllr Jane James
Cllr Tony White for Cllr Nick Daubney

Also Present:

Cllr Andrew Jamieson
Cllr Greg Peck

Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick

Cabinet Member for Finance
Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset
Management
Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and
Performance

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Sharon Blundell, Cllr Stuart Clancy, Cllr Nick Daubney (Substituted by Cllr Tony White), Cllr Jane James (Substituted by Cllr Phillip Duigan), Cllr Kay Mason Billig and Cllr Karen Vincent.

2 Minutes

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4 Items of Urgent Business

4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

The Chair took the opportunity to explain why the agenda had been curtailed for this meeting. It was thought that some items planned for the agenda would be premature to bring back at this stage and in particular the Digital Inclusion item. Cllr Fitzpatrick, Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance added that the Myoracle software implementation whilst progressing well, had not been fully tested yet and the go live date in November would now pass with a new date to set shortly. It is anticipated that when the item returns to the committee the report will provide details of a successful launch and implementation.

5 Public Question Time

5.1 There were no public questions.

6 Local Member Issues/Questions

6.1 There were no local Member questions.

7 Strategic Property Asset Management Framework 2021/22 – 2026/27

7.1 The annexed report (7) by the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial services was received, and introduced by the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management.

7.2 The report followed on from the small task and finish member working group which was set up at the Corporate Select Committee in January 2020 to assist officers in developing a new Strategic Property Asset Management Framework for the council. A draft framework had been produced to guide the council in the use, management and exploitation of its property portfolio and will demonstrate how the public assets held will be used to best effect to deliver the priorities and services required in a transparent way.

7.3 The following points were discussed and noted:

- The new framework and arising annual action plan would deliver and improve the performance management of the Council's assets for the benefit of service users in a timely manner.
- Assets continued to be managed for the provision of the Council's services and that when property was no longer required by a service department, early signalling of that intention had helped reduce ongoing maintenance costs and underuse before either being acquired by another service user, other public sector use or disposal.
- When assets become available, options were discussed with service departments, and the local member is informed. Careful consideration is given for its future uses by partner organisations such as District, City, Town and Parish councils or the ability for the Council to generate income from the asset. A recent example of this had seen the sale of Carrow House to Norwich City Council for their East Norwich regeneration scheme programme. Disposal of property is at best consideration, however where there are tangible economic, social well-being or environmental benefits a disposal at least than best consideration is possible.

- Work was already underway to meet the Council's net zero carbon target by 2030 and as an example of the commitment to the target, a grant of £50,000 had been obtained from Salix to increase energy efficiency of six council buildings.
- The recent building work at County Hall had included a number of energy efficient improvements through installation of retro fit insulation and LED lighting.
- The Head of Estates committed to producing a briefing pack for members on the issues and work to date concerning energy production, storage and efficiency from the Council's land and property portfolio.
- Discussions had taken place with local bus companies to increase accessibility and connectivity and new service stops at County Hall will start on 4th October 2021, as well as connections for the Park and Ride service.
- Parking at County Hall for essential car users was included with the policy framework and the new decked car park will increase resilience for both essential users and visitors.
- Departments such as Children's Services work very closely with the property team to ensure current and future needs are met, understood and planned in advance to maximise service delivery and asset usage.
- Zero carbon target initiatives did not always sit comfortably with rural communities and issues for rural residents, particularly with buses, for example is that through ticketing is not usually available to County Hall. The Director of Property said he would raise the issue with the bus companies in his discussion with them.
- It is preferable to produce an income from an asset rather than consider disposal as the first option. A balanced approach to the portfolio was adopted to ensure both capital revenue targets and income generation were met.
- The guiding principal of the council is to establish and maintain a property portfolio for service delivery and not to consider an investment programme of commercial assets for income generation. However, the council had invested heavily in the Operations and Maintenance campus scheme in Great Yarmouth to underpin the renewables support industry in the North Sea as well as acquisitions within the County Farms portfolio where constant updating, renewing and improving had been undertaken to achieve benefits.
- It was acknowledged that the County Farms teams and tenants are embracing new technologies to help meet the council's zero carbon target and that members were encouraged to investigate these initiatives further.
- Both Hethel Innovation Limited and Scottow Enterprise Park were encouraging as many new green businesses as possible to join them on their sites to help develop the capabilities of Norfolk's residents and businesses to achieve higher environmental outcomes through green technologies.
- Small parcels of ad hoc land owned by the council are regularly reviewed for disposal and over £1m of capital has been raised through sales in the last two years.

7.4 The committee **RESOLVED** to

- Endorse the draft Strategic Property Asset Management Framework (Appendix A)
- Recommend the draft Strategic Property Asset Management Framework (Appendix A) is developed into a final draft and submitted to Cabinet.

8. **Corporate Select Committee Forward Work Plan**

8.1 The annexed note (8) by the Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation was received and the committee noted the structure of meetings to take place.

Meeting Ended 10.56am