



Corporate Select Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 14 March 2022 at
2pm in Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane Norwich NR1 2DL

Present:

Cllr E Colman (Chair)
Cllr A Birmingham
Cllr S Blundell
Cllr N Daubney
Cllr B Duffin
Cllr L Hemsall

Cllr J James
Cllr K Mason Billig
Cllr S Morphew
Cllr B Price
Cllr V Thomson
Cllr K Vincent

Substitute Members Present:

Cllr Steve Morphew for Cllr T Jermy

Also Present:

Cllr Tom FitzPatrick

Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance.

Cllr Greg Peck

Cabinet Member for Commercial Services & Asset Management

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Terry Jermy (Substituted by Cllr Steve Morphew) and Cllr Stuart Clancy.

2 Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair, subject to an alteration that Cllr Daubney was listed as being present at the meeting.

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.

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 Smarter Working Programme update

7.1 The annexed report (7) by the Executive Director for Strategy & Transformation was received and introduced by Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance. Members were advised by the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance that the report updates the committee concerning the Smarter Working programme that introduces savings, adopts better working practices, and focus on how technology can be used to enhance and improve service delivery. The programme was being reassessed particularly as staff return to offices following the lifting of Covid 19 restrictions which included focusing on hybrid working.

7.2 The Director for Transformation gave a presentation on the report ([available from the committee's website pages](#)) highlighted the process to date and progress made.

7.3 In response to questions asked the committee discussed and noted the following:

- Car parking restrictions at County Hall had been lifted so that data concerning usage could be collated to reshape the future programme for better engagement.
- More detailed analysis of building occupation, days worked and requirements for car parking and other services would be made available for future committee meetings. This data is currently being collated and reviewed. The current position was that 12% of staff based at County Hall were coming in to the building to work although it was anticipated this figure will rise as Covid restrictions are lifted.
- The spacing of work areas was still being implemented but was currently under review following the relaxation of Covid 19 restrictions by central government.
- A framework of governance was in the process of being produced to help aid an internal focus as to how the programme filters down to every level to ensure the strategic plans and objectives are being achieved.
- The documentation detailing the governance will be made available for committee members and discussed at future meetings.
- Whilst measures were in place to provide alternative arrangements to car usage for staff it was acknowledged that there was some individual responsibility to help reduce carbon emissions. Barriers to alternatives would be grouped together so that greater numbers of staff could be helped. The Council was very engaged in listening to staff to provide solutions for the best outcomes.
- The wellbeing of staff was a top priority and regular checks through line management was carried out. There was also a number of initiatives to help staff who were hybrid working and these would be developed as the programme advanced and staff returned more frequently to offices.

7.4 The select committee **agreed** to :

1. Provide feedback on the approach outlined and identify any areas they feel need to be considered further.
2. Confirmed that a standing update on progress at each future committee is appropriate.
3. Note the immediate Hybrid Working needs and issues, as well as longer

term Smarter Working aims, in anticipation of upcoming engagement with the Programme.

8. MyOracle Programme update

The committee received a verbal update from the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance. Despite a long term staff absence within the project team, the live date was still in place and the switch to the new software will happen in April 2022. The Cabinet Member thanked the project team for their hard work in keeping matters on track. The system had undergone vigorous testing and any issues had been identified and resolved. The first major test of the system would take place on 19 April 2022 which would see the first live pay roll take place, although several parallel payrolls had already been undertaken in advance of the live date. Whilst they were some inherent risks in switching to a new major software system these risks were being managed and mitigated against and would not prevent a successful launch. The Cabinet Member said he would return to the committee at a future meeting to report on the live date and roll out. The Committee **noted** the progress to date.

9 Digital Connectivity in Norfolk

- 9.1 The annexed report (9) by the Executive Directors for Finance and Commercial Services and Community and Environmental Services was received and introduced by Cabinet Member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance. Members were advised by the cabinet member for Innovation, Transformation and Performance that the report update the committee on the progress being made in the county in terms of broadband, mobile phone network and sensor networks. The pandemic had highlighted the importance of these digital platforms to ensure all residents of Norfolk could access information and services.
- 9.2 The Director for IMT gave a presentation on the report ([available from the committee's website pages](#)) which highlighted the substantial progress made to date.
- 9.3 In response to questions asked the committee discussed and noted the following:
- The report was well received and members noted the significant progress made and thanked the IMT team for all their hard work in their achievements.
 - Whilst improvements to broadband was an area that could be managed by the Council, the mobile network was essentially provided by private companies and influencing the direction of travel and business decisions was more difficult.
 - It was thought it would be more appropriate for areas of no mobile phone coverage to be considered before enhancing partial 'not spots'.
 - The 85% coverage figure was established by testing all parts of the county using the road and rail network.
 - The Council's property estate was being offered extensively across the county to provide mobile phone mask installation. Details of the locations and the services provided for an area can be found on the council's website www.norfolk.gov.uk/digital
 - It was acknowledged that there were lots of initiatives taking place at the same time although these were being well coordinated by the council.
 - A communications officer role would shortly be introduced to the IMT team to help provide information and guidance to residents as to what was available in the area and details of any updates and enhancements to services.
 - Government funding was being made available to provide broadband and

mobile services to areas and locations considered to be unviable and commercially non attractive.

- Members expressed an interest to receive further information and details regarding the sensor network and how this is being used to monitor such items as road gritting and helping with assisted living.
- It was agreed that this item should return to the committee on a six monthly basis.

9.4 The committee **agreed** to:

- **Note the progress made and prospects for further improvement.**
- **Advise on any alterations or additions to the current plans.**

The Chair advised the committee that due to officer availability item 12 on the agenda would be taken next.

12 Corporate Property Policies

The annexed report (12) by the Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services was received and introduced by Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management. The report outlines existing policies and obligations as directed by the constitution and describes the current procedures and principles for delivering the declaration of premises surplus to requirements for disposing and leasing, and places these in to one document for ease of reference.

12.1 The Select Committee **agreed** to:

1. Note the current procedures for declaring property surplus, acquiring property, disposing of property and the leasing in and out of property.
2. Recommend Cabinet reaffirm the current procedures for:
 - Declaring NCC property surplus.
 - Disposal, overage and clawback for the disposal of property assets (land and buildings) owned by Norfolk County Council.
 - Third party occupation of Norfolk County Council property assets (land and buildings).
 - Acquisition - Leased in/licensed in property assets (land and buildings), acquisition of freehold property assets (land and buildings).

10 Contract Standing Orders Update

The annexed report (10) by the Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services was received and introduced by the Procurement Policy Officer. The report outlined proposed amendments to contract standing orders following the request from the cabinet meeting on 8 November 2021. Further changes in legislation arising from the exiting of the UK from the EU will mean contract standing orders will require redrafting next year. The changes proposed have been realigned with policies and relevant strategy documents particularly in relation to section 18 on social value. Some technical amendments were also required following Brexit.

10.1 In response to questions asked the committee discussed and noted the following:

- The Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services was in the process of producing guidance on carbon pricing to help aid the carbon net zero target by 2030. The guidance would be considered by the committee in due course.
- Department of Transport evaluation tools would continue to be used to consider transport investment by the council. The decision to continue to use these tools had been approved by the Cabinet.
- The Cabinet also had resolved that in respect of non-transport investments there will not be a maximum payback period for carbon reduction projects where the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services agrees that the net present value of the project is positive, after allowing a reasonable

contingency for risk. This has the effect of making previously unviable projects viable. This helps meet the commitment to the net zero policy by 2030.

10.2 The committee **agreed** to

- Note the proposed amendments to the Contract Standing Orders and recommend these to Full Council.

11 Constitution Update

11.1 The annexed report (11) by the Director for Governance was received. The committee has a responsibility to consider any changes to the constitution before making recommendations to Full Council. The report did not include any content changes to the constitution but instead concentrated on a rewrite to the layout. The layout change was required to help referencing as similar items were mentioned in different places within the document previously. The format of the document looked different but the content was the same.

11.2 The new layout of the document was warmly welcomed by the committee. It was hoped search facilities and cross referencing to similar items would be made available once the new document was uploaded to the Council's website.

11.3 It was acknowledged that changes to the content would be proposed but these would be discussed by group leaders before coming back to the committee to consider and agree. It was thought that a task and finish group might be able help to assist with the process.

11.4 The committee agreed to:

- Note the proposed amendments to the Constitution and **recommend** these to Full Council.

13 Forward Work Programme 2022/23

10.1 The annexed report (13) by the Executive Director for Strategy and Transformation was received.

10.2 The committee **resolved** to agree the forward work programme.

Meeting concluded at 3.44pm