

Environment, Development and Transport Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday 16 January 2015 at
10:00 at County Hall.**

Present:

Mr R Coke (Chair)

Mr R Bird	Mr J Mooney
Dr A Boswell	Mr W Richmond
Mr B Bremner	Mr M Sands
Mr S Clancy	Mr B Spratt
Mr T East	Mr J Timewell (Vice Chair)
Mr S Hebborn	Mrs C Walker
Mr B Iles	Mr A White
Mr I Mackie	Mr M Wilby

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr T Jermy (substituted by Mr M Sands).

2 To Agree the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 18th November 2014.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18 November were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

4 Urgent Business

None

5 Local Member Issues / Member Questions

- 5.1 Mr B Spratt informed the Committee that the Winter Gritting scheme working with the parish councils in Tacolneston and Ashwellthorpe was going very well and the contract had been passed to the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services.
- 5.2 Mr B Spratt asked the Chair whether the staff car parking issue had been resolved and was informed that it was still being considered as there was still a need to find

over £400k and there were few other options but that there would be changes to what was originally proposed.

- 5.3 Mr M Wilby proposed and was seconded by Mr B Spratt that the EDT Committee put forward that they were opposed to the proposed car parking charges for staff at Count Hall.
The motion **failed** with 8 For and 8 Against, with the Chairman casting his deciding vote against.
- 5.4 The Chairman advised that he thought there would be member involvement in the decision making and that the issue was currently with the Chief Officer Group.

6. Finance Monitoring Report

- 6.1 The Committee received the report from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services. The report provided the Committee with information on the forecast outturn for the relevant services from the newly formed Community and Environmental Services department, for 2014-15. It provided information on variances from the original budget, emerging issues and the position on the expected use of reserves for those services.
- 6.2 The Committee were assured that the planning fees were where they usually were for this time of year and therefore the Committee could be confident that the predicted £107k underspend would be received.
- 6.3 The Committee queried the £75k reserve on the Hethel site and were assured by officers that this money was there as a contingency in case of non-payment of rent by tenants.
- 6.4 The Committee asked if a further breakdown could be provided for the additional income part of the report to provide greater clarity.
- 6.5 The Committee **noted** the forecast out-turn position for Environment Transport and Development and the management action in place to reduce the forecast overspend.

7. Service and Financial planning 2015-18

- 7.1 The Committee received a report that set out proposals to contribute towards the County Council setting a legal budget for 2015/16 which would see its total resources of £1.4billion focused on meeting the needs of residents.

The report set out the latest information on the Local Government Finance Settlement and the financial and planning context for the County Council for 2015-18. It summarised the Committee's savings proposals for 2015-16 and the proposed revenue budget based on all current proposals and identified pressures and the proposed capital programme. It also reported on the findings of rural and equality assessments.

- 7.2 The following points were made during the discussion:-

- Information had been received from the District Councils which had helped give an accurate reflection of income based on an increased Council Tax base.
- The increased allocation for waste disposal costs is based on current predictions which may still leave the service facing cost pressures.
- The increased revenue from County Farms had been pooled into the budget for the County Council.

The Committee received a presentation outlining the Budget Consultation Findings.

7.3

The following points were made during the discussion:-

7.4

- There were 1655 respondents to the consultation. 380 responded to the proposal set out for the highways. Of these 380 respondents, 205 (54%) agreed with the proposal. 149 (39%) disagreed.
- Members discussed how much weight should be given to the consultation findings due the low number of respondents.
- With the decrease in reserves, there needed to be strategic ways of dealing with procurement, income generation and office estate management.

Mr I Mackie proposed, seconded by Mr S Clancy that the Committee recommend Policy and Resources Committee to delete the proposed £385k budget saving on highway maintenance, to be funded by the additional revenue earmarked from the County Farms Estate (see 6.2 above).

The motion was **carried** with 11 votes in favour and 7 against.

7.5 The Committee **RESOLVED**:

7.6

- To **note** and **agree** the findings of public consultation.
- To **note** and **agree** the findings of equality and rural assessment, and in doing so, note the Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- To **agree** and **recommend** a budget as set out in Appendix A of the report or any appropriate amendments and any associated risks or issues to Policy &

Resources Committee for consideration on 26 January 2015, to enable Policy & Resources Committee to recommend a sound, whole-Council budget to Full Council on 16 February 2015.

This was **carried** with 9 votes For and 8 Against.

8. Highway capital programme and Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP)

8.1 The Committee received the report from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services.

The report summarised:

1. The final Local Transport Plan (LTP) Settlement for 2015/16, and proposed two options for allocating the additional budget.
2. DfT proposals for allocation of future funding.

8.2 Mr A Boswell proposed and was seconded by Mrs C Walker a 3rd option which would allocate a further £250k to integrated transport bringing the funding to £750K for local safety schemes.

The motion **failed** with 7 votes for and 9 against.

The Committee were advised that the rationale behind the allocated £500k was that this was what could realistically be done with resources available.

8.3 The Committee was advised that the Hethersett to Wymondham cycle link would be high up on the list of priorities for future cycle funding.

8.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** with 15 votes For and 1 Against and 1 Abstention to recommend to Full Council that Option 2: the allocation for the additional £1.797m DfT funding be as follows:

- £0.585m to Structural Maintenance (Surfacing)
- £0.862m to Structural Maintenance (Machine Laid Patching)
- £0.25m to Improvements (Local Safety schemes)
- £0.1m to Parish Partnerships (if required)

The Committee **noted** the DfT proposals for allocation of future funding, and the review of the maintenance codes of practice.

9. Road Casualty Reduction Partnership

9.1 The Committee received a presentation from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services. The presentation outlined the work undertaken by the newly formed Road Casualty Reduction Partnership Board.

9.2 During the discussion the following points were made:

- The Committee congratulated the road safety group on the work done so far and agreed that the sub groups put forward were a positive approach.

- All money raised from safety cameras courses would go back into road safety schemes.
- The dropping fuel prices could encourage the amount of car users on the roads and therefore increase the pressure on road safety.
- More involvement from other departments, such as Public Health, would mean that more key groups would be targeted.

9.3 The Committee **noted** the presentation.

10. Improvements to A47

10.1 The Committee received the report by Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which considered how the county council could be most effective in bringing forward improvements on stretches not included in the A47 Feasibility Study trunk road programme, it summarised the main issues on schemes included in the latest announcements.

10.2 During the discussion the following points were made:

- The Department for Transport's feasibility study would be published at the end of February which would give a greater idea of timescales involved.
- The Committee welcomed Mr M Castle councillor for Yarmouth North and Central. Mr M Castle raised the point that the Acle straight needed to be a priority; that the Damgate Marshes needed to be looked into and that the on line road widening could not be considered as an option as would put Great Yarmouth out of business for the duration.
- The Committee discussed that it was important to make clear that the Acle straight and areas around Kings Lynn were priorities.
- The Committee were informed that it would be close to 5 years before work on the proposed A47 changes would begin. Also that it could be close to 15 years before the entire A47 was dualled.
- Members discussed how they were duty bound to push the highways agency to get work started as soon as possible.
- Members raised concern that other junctions along the A47 were being missed out and sought assurance that all junctions would be looked at.
- The Chairman informed the Committee that they should hear from central government regarding the public enquiry on the Northern Distributor Road at beginning of May 2015.

10.3 Mr R Coke proposed and was seconded by Mr J Timewell that the Committee change the recommendations to read:

Members agree to:

1. Continued working with government and the highways Agency on the development and timely delivery of these proposed schemes.
2. The county council continuing to lead work with the A47 Alliance to bring forward the case for the remaining schemes not included in the trunk road programme and to include the A47 Acle Straight dualling and A47 Tilney to East Winch dualling as our number 1 and 2 priorities respectively.
3. Changing signs on the local road network to reflect the proposed renumbering of the A12 trunk road to the A47, with funding coming from existing budgets.
4. Committee to ask officers to engage with the HA and the Broads Authority in the detailed development of their plans with Natural England for the mitigation of environmental concerns along the Acle Straight, with a view to implementation of such plans by March 2017.

10.4 Mr I Mackie proposed seconded by Mrs C Walker that the below was added to the above recommendations:

The Committee recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee that the council allocate £1 million from the imminent sale of the Acle development land (part of the county farms estate) to support the council's objectives to dual the Acle Straight

The motion for the 5 new recommendations was **carried** with 16 votes For and 1 Against.

10.5 The Committee **AGREED** the following recommendations.

1. Continued working with government and the highways Agency on the development and timely delivery of these proposed schemes.
2. The county council continuing to lead work with the A47 Alliance to bring forward the case for the remaining schemes not included in the trunk road programme and to include the A47 Acle Straight dualling and A47 Tilney to East Winch dualling as our number 1 and 2 priorities respectively.
3. Changing signs on the local road network to reflect the proposed renumbering of the A12 trunk road to the A47, with funding coming from existing budgets.
4. Committee to ask officers to engage with the HA and the Broads Authority in the detailed development of their plans with Natural England for the mitigation of environmental concerns along the Acle Straight, with a view to implementation of such plans by March 2017.
5. The Committee recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee that the council allocate £1 million from the imminent sale of the Acle development

land (part of the county farms estate) to support the council's objectives to dual the Acle Straight.

11. The Planning System in Norfolk

11.1 The Committee received a presentation from the Principal Planner outlining planning processes and initiatives.

11.2 The following responses were given to questions from the Committee:-

- Norfolk County Council is only the planning authority for minerals and waste but does have interest in other areas. The county council can be a consultee on local plan, neighbourhood plans and planning applications.
- Norfolk Member Forum have agreed to have a non-statutory framework for districts and boroughs to work within to encourage co-operation.
- In regards to S106/CIL and health care provisions in new developments the committee were informed that there was nervousness around giving funding to private businesses such as GP practices.
- Major developments employ consultants to produce a traffic impact assessment which the council considers and can then give advice to the districts on highways consideration.
- Norfolk County Council planning officers could consider the wider picture and effects on cross boundaries but cannot guarantee that the planning authorities would take the advice provided.
- County and district authorities must work together with the developers for effective planning to go ahead.

11.3 Officers were asked to provide details on what the cost to Norfolk County Council is on maintenance on existing and new roads with housing developments.

11.4 Mr T East proposed seconded by Mr J Timewell that officers write to central government to gain clarification and raise concern around the health care provision in new development.

The motion was **carried** unanimously.

12. Wash East Coast Strategy

12.1 The Committee received the report from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which outlined the Wash East Coastal Management Strategy which had been developed jointly by the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk and the Environment Agency to meet their statutory requirements.

12.2 The Committee welcomed Mr J Dobson who explained that it was not a statutory duty of Norfolk County Council to approve the strategy but as a stakeholder could assist the Borough Council & Environment Agency approval with an endorsement.

However, Mr J Dobson raised concerns regarding the placement of the Community Interest Company to manage the funds and tabled an alternative motion which suggested the County Council underwrites the strategy to ensure its success.

- 12.3 The Committee discussed at length the possibility of endorsing the strategy plan and underwriting it with concerns being raised around setting precedents and where the funding for this would come from.
- 12.4 Mr R Bird proposed and was seconded by Mrs C Walker that the Committee refuse to endorse the Wash East Coastal Management Strategy.
The motion was **carried** unanimously.
- 12.5 The Committee **RESOLVED** to refuse to provide an endorsement in support of the document or to approve the motion put forward by John Dobson.

13. Update from the previous Economic Development Sub Committee

- 13.1 The Committee received the report from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which gave an update from the November meeting of the Economic Development Sub Committee.
- 13.2 The Committee **noted** the update and actions from the November 2014 Economic Development Sub-Committee.

14. Coastal Flooding - Member Working Group

- 14.1 The Committee received the report from Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which gave the Terms of Reference and Membership for the Coastal Flooding Member Working Group.
- 14.2 The Committee **agreed** the Terms of Reference and Membership for the Coastal Flooding Member Working Group.

15. Silica Sand Review of the Minerals Site Specific Allocations Plan

- 15.1 The Committee received the report from Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which outlined the Silica Sand Review of the Plan to be completed by 2016. The report set out the process to be carried out and contained the proposed Initial Consultation document and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.
- 15.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:
- 1) Note the process for the Silica Sand Review of the adopted Minerals Site Specific Allocations Plan detailed in the report
 - 2) Agree to the publication of the Initial Consultation document and the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for a six week consultation period, as the first stage in the process of the Silica Sand Review;

3) Following the end of the consultation period, authorise officers to undertake a Call for Sites for potential silica sand extraction sites and carry out consultation internally and with the Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk and the Highways Authority on any specific sites submitted, as part of the assessment to inform the next stage of public consultation

4) Authorise the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of EDT committee to make minor corrections and non-material changes that are identified prior to the issue of the Silica Sand Review consultation document in February 2015.

16. Consultation on the draft Environment Agency Flood Risk Management Plan

16.1 The Committee received the report from Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which set out the proposed measures for the management of flood risk in the Anglian River Basin from 2015 to 2021.

16.2 The Committee **agreed** to endorse the approach and responses to the consultation on the draft Flood Risk Management Plan.

17 Decisions taken under delegated authority – update

17.1 The Committee received the report from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which provided an update on decisions taken under delegated powers by the Director in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman between 8 November 2014 and 30 December 2014.

17.2 The Committee **noted** the report.

18. Forward Plan for Environment, Development and Transport Committee

18.1 The Committee received the report from the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services which set out the Forward Plan for the Environment, Development and Transport Committee for the next 12 months.

18.2 The Committee **agreed** the Forward Plan.

The meeting closed 16:00pm.

Chairman



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Appendix A

“Officers were asked to provide details on what the cost to Norfolk County Council is on maintenance on existing and new roads with housing developments.”

It has not been possible to provide a definitive, quantitative answer to this question, to a large degree because it is affected by a range of interacting and counterbalancing factors. For example, the impact of development on the wider network will be affected by location and demographic factors.

A commuted sum is secured from developers to fund future increased maintenance on new highway infrastructure directly associated with development, such as traffic signals, footways and roundabouts, in accordance with nationally recognised guidance published by ADEPT (Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport) .

The Highways Maintenance Block funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) is derived from the total length of road within Norfolk. Therefore adopted new road length provided by development is taken into account when the Highways Maintenance Block funding is distributed between the highway authorities within the country.

However, Maintenance Block funding does not take account of additional traffic, either generated by new housing, employment development or other reasons.

The national DfT pot is currently fixed and is not getting any bigger so it will need to stretch to fund the maintenance requirement for the whole country, and like us, other authorities’ road networks and populations are growing.

It is therefore unlikely that our percentage of the national DfT structural maintenance grant will increase.

In view of this, without an increase in the national highways budget, the overall maintenance funding per mile for Norfolk is likely to diminish in real terms.