



CABINET

5.30pm to 6.35pm

17 October 2012

Present: Councillors Arthur (chair), Waters (vice chair), Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, Driver, Gihawi and MacDonald

Also present: Councillors Stephenson and Wright

1. PUBLIC QUESTIONS / PETITIONS

Mr Dennis Thompson addressed the cabinet and explained that many older people in the neighbourhood relied on a local shop as their lifeline. He then presented the following petition on behalf of 300 local residents:

“Petition against the closure of the Wilberforce Road Mini Market – We the undersigned request that plans to demolish the above shop cease.”

Councillor MacDonald, cabinet member for housing, replied:

“Thank you for presenting the petition Mr Thompson.

Norwich is a thriving city with a growing need for housing and in particular affordable housing. As a local authority, we have a role to play in meeting this need and part of our responsibility lies in finding sites with development potential.

There is obviously a lot of local support for the mini market and following the recent consultation event the council, with Cotman Housing Association, is exploring the feasibility of providing a shop unit within the development of the site.

The final design will be subject to a consultation as part of the planning process and ultimately the council’s planning applications committee will take the decision on the proposal.”

In response to a supplementary question, the deputy chief executive (operations) confirmed that Mr Thompson would be notified of the date of the planning applications committee at which the application for the site at Wilberforce Road would be considered.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2012.

3. LIVING WAGE ACCREDITATION

Councillor Waters, deputy leader and cabinet member for resources, presented the report and said that he looked forward to the city council being one of the first councils to receive living wage accreditation in November.

In reply to a question from Councillor Stephenson, Councillor Waters said that to keep its accreditation, the council would be required to ensure that the living wage for its directly employed and contracted employees kept pace with inflation. He referred to the report and confirmed that the council would be working with three of its contractors where the highest number of employees would be affected and then progressively with other contractors as other contracts came up for renewal.

Councillor Stephenson said that she welcomed the proposals and agreed that it was “the beginning of a journey”. Councillor Wright considered that the proposal was excellent and that it would be particularly beneficial to women who worked part-time and the local economy.

Councillor Waters expressed his gratitude to the work of the officers, including a former employee, Sabine Verani, who had worked on the early stages of this proposal.

RESOLVED that the council seeks living wage accreditation from the Living Wage Foundation.

4. ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE

Councillor Waters, deputy leader and cabinet member for resources, presented the report. The scrutiny committee had considered the proposals at its meeting on 11 October 2012 and he accepted these amendments to the decision making and governance arrangements as set out in appendix A.

Councillor Stephenson, as chair of scrutiny committee, confirmed the amendments proposed and suggested that “ward” be deleted so that “all” members of the council were notified of nominations and appeals.

RESOLVED, having considered the amendments proposed by the scrutiny committee, to approve the proposals to implement decision making and governance arrangements relating to community rights to bid for assets of community value, with immediate effect, as set out in the report and amended as follows:

Member input

All members of the council to be notified of all nominations and appeals against decisions. Material comments received from ward members to be taken into consideration when determining nominations.

Determine nominations

Decision making

(To sit as required)

(This must make provision for a higher council officer to review any decision to list)

Head of planning in consultation with the head of local neighbourhood services

Or, other officers designated by the deputy chief executive (operations)

Advising Officers

Professional officers as required including:
Head of law and governance
NPS Norwich property officer
Nplaw solicitor

Appeal review

(To sit as required)

Decision making

Following consultation with all members, material comments received from members to be considered by the deputy chief executive or the executive member of CLT, nominated by the deputy chief executive.

Advising officers

Specialist officers as required.

Review and approve relevant compensation payments

Head of law and governance in consultation with the chief finance officer (section 151 officer), using existing delegated authority; or;

Cabinet where amount exceeds £20,000

External review of appeal decisions

First tier tribunal, HM courts and justice service

External review of compensation decisions

First tier tribunal, HM courts and justice service

Reporting of decisions

Assets of community value decisions to form standing items on scrutiny committee and cabinet forward agendas.

5. TENANCY STRATEGY

Councillor MacDonald, cabinet member for housing, presented the report.

The chair expressed the cabinet's gratitude to the tenants and officers who had contributed to the development of the draft strategy for consultation.

RESOLVED to approve the draft tenancy strategy for public consultation.

6. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

Councillor Waters, deputy leader and cabinet member for resources, presented the report.

The executive head of business relationship management replied to questions from Councillors Stephenson and Wright on the report. He explained that the “neutral” impact assessment attached to the report was on the development of the strategy rather than its implementation. He also outlined the council’s proactive approach to assist small businesses in understanding the council’s tender process, which included meeting with the Federation of Small Businesses and providing training sessions for its members, and publishing information on the council’s website.

RESOLVED to approve the updated procurement strategy.

7. REVIEW OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2012

Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and development, presented the report.

In response to a question from Councillor Stephenson, the head of planning said that the council could develop its own local policies provided there was a strong evidence base and that it did not conflict with policies contained within the Joint Core Strategy or the National Planning Policy Framework.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) approve the revised Local Development Scheme as set out at Annex 1 (incorporating the changes noted in paragraphs 10 and 11 below) for publication under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by section 111 of the Localism Act 2011; the scheme to have effect from 18 October 2012; and,
- (2) give delegated authority to the deputy chief executive (operations) in consultation with the cabinet member for environment and development to make minor changes to the Local Development Scheme and arrange for it to be published on the council’s website as soon as reasonably practicable, alongside any supporting material deemed necessary to explain its purpose to the public.

8. EXTENSIONS TO HOUSES – ADVICE NOTE

Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and development, presented the report and said that it contained helpful advice for householders.

The head of planning referred to government changes to building regulations and pointed out that one of the purposes of the advice note was to promote good practice and consideration between neighbours.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) approve the 'Extensions to houses – Advice Note' as a development management guidance document; and
- (2) delegate authority to the deputy chief executive (operations) in consultation with the portfolio holder for environment and development to make minor changes to the Advice Note and arrange for it to be published on the council's website as soon as reasonably practicable.

9. FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE OPERATION OF NORWICH ENTERPRISE CENTRE

Councillor Arthur, leader of the council, introduced, the report, which was presented by the economic development manager. Members were advised that the continued operation of the Norwich Enterprise Centre was an important source of free advice to small businesses in the current economic climate particularly since the demise of Business Link.

RESOLVED to approve the extension of the existing operational agreement for Norwich Enterprise Centre and its continued operation as a hub for enterprise and business support centre in Norwich by Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services Limited (NWES).

10. PROPOSED CAR PARK FEES AND CHARGES

Councillor Waters, deputy leader and cabinet member for resources and Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and development, presented the report.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) approve the revised fees and charges as set out in Appendix C and Appendix D of the report, to take effect from 19 November 2012;
- (2) authorise head of law and governance to undertake the necessary statutory procedures to introduce the new fees and charges, by means of a Variation under Section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

11. CAPITAL COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAMME

Councillor Driver, cabinet member for environment and neighbourhoods, introduced the report.

Councillor Stephenson said that for many people it was difficult to differentiate between capital and revenue expenditure. The head of local neighbourhoods said officers would meet with community groups or provide telephone advice on the criteria. There was a role for both members and officers to publicise and promote the capital community grants scheme.

RESOLVED to approve the criteria for the council's new capital community grants programme.

12. GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Councillor Waters, deputy leader and cabinet member for resources, presented the report. He pointed out that the grant allocation would be ring fenced to provide support for Norwich residents.

RESOLVED to approve the following grant allocation for the period October 2012 to March 2014:

Norfolk Citizens' Advice Bureau - £81,000 for a free debt advice service.

13. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2012-13 – PERIOD 5

Councillor Waters, deputy leader and cabinet member for resources, introduced the report.

Councillor Arthur said that it was important that the cabinet received reports on the council's financial position on a monthly basis.

RESOLVED to note the financial position as at 31 August 2012 and forecast outturn 2012-13.

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the items *16 and *17 below on the grounds contained in the relevant paragraphs of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

***16. ACCESS AND FUNDING AGREEMENTS – DEAL GROUND AND UTILITIES SITES (PARAGRAPH 3)**

Councillor Arthur, leader of the council, presented the report.

The head of city development services answered members' questions.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) agree to enter into an access agreement and a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) (in line with the draft Heads of Terms attached in Appendix 1) with the landowners and prospective developers of the sites as detailed in the report.
- (2) delegate the detailed negotiation of the legal agreement and MOU to the deputy chief executive (operations) in consultation with the head of law and governance and the cabinet member for environment and development.

***17. MANAGING ASSETS (HOUSING) (PARAGRAPH 3)**

Councillor MacDonald, cabinet member for housing, presented the report and advised members that the purpose of the report referred to “two dwellings” in error and should be amended to “one dwelling”.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) approve the disposal of one void property detailed in this report;
- (2) approve the capital receipt from the disposal to be used for investment in the housing capital programme;
- (3) approve the purchase of the dwelling highlighted in this report under the mortgage rescue scheme
- (4) delegate to the deputy chief executive (operations) to take all necessary and ancillary steps to achieve the above including the method of disposal and the funding to be used in the purchase of the mortgage rescue property.

CHAIR