NORWICH City Council

Minutes

Cabinet

16:30 to 19:05 **10 June 2020**

Present: Councillors Waters (chair), Harris (vice chair), Davis, Jones, Kendrick, Maguire, Packer and Stonard.

Also present: Councillors Bogelein and Wright

1. Public Questions/Petitions

There were no public questions or petitions.

2. Declarations of interest

Councillor Harris declared an other interest in item 6 below, East Norwich Partnership, as she would sit on the Broads Authority as of 17 June 2020.

Councillors Kendrick and Stonard declared a pecuniary interest in item 7 below, adjustment to the capital programme Norwich Regeneration Ltd options and lending, as directors of Norwich Regeneration Ltd and would not take part in the discussion or vote on the item.

3. Minutes

Subject to noting that at page 12 of the agenda, item 13, the final sentence should read ' The scheme included the provision to use a local supplier and cash payments were available to assist those who were less able to pay someone to **decorate** on their behalf', it was:-

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2020.

4. Covid-19:- The council's response and a blueprint for recovery

Councillor Waters, leader of the council introduced the report. The report described how the council had adapted its services to support residents, including the most vulnerable and this work involved a wide range of partners. The pandemic had been a significant event. It was recognised that change was needed to move forwards and that local government would be vital to this.

The chief executive said that the blueprint was intended to be a live document and would evolve as work took place. The council would continue to consult with residents and partners on this. A more detailed action plan would be developed

under each of the themes and relevant reports and strategies would be brought to committee for consideration.

In terms of the impact on the city, the number of cases of Covid-19 and deaths from the virus had been relatively low compared to other parts of the country which was likely due to the geography and demographic of the city as well as the behaviour of residents, the work of the NHS and emergency services and the work of the council.

The council had focussed on keeping vital services running and helping vulnerable residents. The community hub had been set up within a week and to date had made 600 welfare calls, dropped off 600 food parcels and made 500 medicine collections. Norwich City Council had been the best performing council in Norfolk for paying out small business grants, the hardship fund from central government had been used to reduce 4000 council tax bills to £0 and everyone that was sleeping rough had been offered accommodation.

The recovery focussed on changing the way the council worked and delivered services.

Cabinet members and group leaders thanked officers for working up the blueprint so quickly and for the quality of the report.

Councillor Bogelein commented that although it was encouraging to see the framework being put together so quickly, the council should revisit the Commercial Property Investment Strategy in light of the pandemic and should commit to producing a clearer action plan to achieve a 13% reduction in carbon emissions without relying on central government.

Councillor Wright said that the scrutiny committee had considered the blueprint at a meeting that morning and had agreed the following recommendations for cabinet to consider:

(1) Amending bullet point 2 under section 7, Climate change and the green economy' in the recovery themes and key actions summary on p31 of the report to reflect the recommendation of the Tyndall centre to reduce carbon emissions of Norwich by 13 % annually

(2) Amending bullet point 4, under section 4 'business and the local economy' section, in the recovery themes and key actions summary on p30 of the report, from 'consider the opportunities to further promote sustainable travel in the city, building on the already well-advanced measures already in place' to 'consider the opportunities to further promote sustainable travel *on whole route approaches*, building on the already well-advanced measures already in place'

(3) Lobbying the LGA and central government for all district councils to be given some of the powers and financial resources that the Health and Safety Executive has, to allow the city council to enforce social distancing if employers are not complying.

(4) At section 8.4, include trade unions to the list of groups to be consulted on this document.

(5) Redoubling efforts with Norfolk County Council to ensure social distancing measures around the city centre are in place as soon as possible.

(6) Including further references to the impact of Covid-19 on the insurance industry regarding aviation, and families and young people, particularly in reference to education, including local universities.

(7) Revising the Commercial Property Investment Strategy to reflect the changes in the economy due to Covid-19 and how this could drive a green economy.

(8) Investigating the use of purchasing powers to undertake a retrofit programme on housing as a key part of driving the economic recovery.

(9) Looking at alternative sources of income to carparks in the city.

(10) Looking at the experience of other local authorities which are pursuing a circular economy to take advantage of the fact that Norwich has two recycling centres in development.

Councillor Waters, leader of the council, thanked the scrutiny committee for its recommendations and said that they would be noted by cabinet and would form part of the thinking around future revisions to the blueprint as it evolved.

RESOLVED to recommend that council approves the blueprint and action plan.

5. Mile Cross depot site – options for redevelopment – Key decision

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth presented the report and outlined the history of the site. Some work had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic but it was anticipated that the work could be completed within the civic year.

Cabinet had considered a report on the site previously and had agreed to pursue option 3, with option 2 as a fall back. The leisure facility options had been assessed but all required cross investment from the residential sector and there would not be enough surplus to be able to do this so other options had been explored.

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing said that this was an integral part of the recovery plan in terms of providing much needed homes and an economic boost for the city. The report gave the foundation for the next steps of the project with the movement of the land from the General Fund to the HRA and would build on the success of the Goldsmith Street development.

Councillor Bogelein said that although it was good to see the site progressing, she was disappointed to see a move away from the Passivhaus standard and asked how the percentage of Passivhaus had been arrived at in comparison to the council development at Goldsmith Street. The interim housing development manager said that work was being undertaken with a different surveyor to that used at Goldsmith Street but options would continue to be assessed.

RESOLVED to approve:

(1) The appropriation of land at Mile Cross from the General Fund to the HRA under part ii, Schedule 19(1) of the Housing Act 1985 to enable a social housing led development by the council

(2) A virement of £180,000 from the approved Opportunities Fund to the Mile Cross depot project to provide match funding for the business rates pooling bid for 2020 to allow the scheme to progress to a planning application (RIBA stage 3)

(3) That officers further explore the opportunities and costs for designing and delivering the homes to achieve enhanced environmental standards to help reduce fuel poverty for the residents.

6. East Norwich Partnership

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth presented the report. He highlighted the progress to date and the masterplan brief which included the funding that had already been identified.

The director of the place said that following discussions with landowners, the council had reached a place in the project whereby it was confident that there would be funds to proceed with phase one of the project.

Councillor Davis, cabinet member for social inclusion, commented that she would like to see the Norwich Access Group listed as one of the partners approached.

Councillor Bogelein said that she supported the principle of development and partnership but felt that the local community should be involved and asked if the terms of reference could be changed to include opportunities for community engagements with ward councillors and local groups. Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth, said that initial arrangements had been set up to drive progress and the project would soon be at a point to involve more partners under the terms of reference. There would need to be an assessment of the most appropriate place to involve members and the community and this would be taken forward.

Councillor Wright asked that Trowse Primary School be made part of any discussions around development of the site. Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth said that Norfolk County Council was already one of the key partners.

RESOLVED to:

1) approve the terms of reference for the East Norwich Partnership and the City Council's participation in it; and

2) endorse the position statement on Trowse Rail Bridge.

7. Adjustment to the capital programme: Norwich Regeneration Ltd options and lending

(Councillors Kendrick and Stonard, having declared a conflict on interest in this item withdrew from the meeting for the discussion and vote)

Councillor Waters, leader of the council, presented the report. The options outlined in the report acknowledged that the Covid-19 pandemic had presented a challenge and that this was a commercial decision to mitigate the impact of the pandemic within the wider property market.

The managing director of Norwich Regeneration Limited (NRL) said that there had been improvements made to NRL since 2019 and he was building on lessons that had been learnt. The company had worked hard to stabilise its position and to ensure greater transparency to the council and remained committed to the council and the delivery of a product to the Housing Revenue Account. He highlighted improvements such as the revision of standards for the remaining 31 properties of phase one and such that these had subsequently been sold.

A new sales agent had been installed to take the rebranding forward and a new mix of housing and housing design meant that NRL could deliver a more appropriately priced product which would be better placed in the market.

The chief finance officer outlined the costings of each of the options and said that the loans and equity levels had been set to allow the company to continue to build out subsequent phases without a time limit on sales.

Councillor Wright asked whether given the wide range of prices for the houses, whether there would be any scope to make rental income until the market improved and wondered if there would be any opportunities to change the governance arrangements for NRL. The managing director of NRL said that the company was looking to place some of the assets into the private rented sector, however, it had to be mindful that finances were underpinned by maximising sales revenues.

The chief executive said that he was keen to improve the governance and the council was in the process of recruiting non-executive directors of NRL. These positions would bring some independence to the board along with expertise.

RESOLVED to**:**

1) approve that the council, as shareholder, supports Norwich Regeneration Ltd to continue the build out of Sections 2-4 at Rayne Park

2) recommend to council, as lender and shareholder, an increase in the loan facility for Norwich Regeneration Ltd up to a maximum of £21m (currently £11.4m).

3) recommend to council an adjustment to the capital programme to increase the equity investment in Norwich Regeneration Ltd up to a maximum of £6.2m (currently £2.724m) by acquiring up to 3.5m of £1 ordinary shares.

4) Approve the issuing of new shares by Norwich Regeneration Ltd; and

5) request Norwich Regeneration Ltd work alongside council officers to investigate and appraise options for the housing assets as further information becomes available on the wider impacts of Covid-19 on the housing market.

Audit committee recommendation

(Councillors Kendrick and Stonard re-joined the meeting)

8. Local development scheme 2020-2022

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth presented the report.

The planning policy team leader said that there had been some minor factual changes to the report since it had been considered by the sustainable development panel.

RESOLVED to approve the Local Development Scheme for publication under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by section 111 of the Localism Act 2011).

9. Civil parking enforcement agreement

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth presented the report. He said that after the termination of the Highways Agreement on 31 March 2020, the county council asked Norwich City Council to continue with civil parking enforcement on a temporary basis before being fully integrated into the Norfolk Parking Partnership.

Councillor Bogelein asked whether Councillor Stonard would raise the issue of creating a slot for public questions to the Parking Partnership as Norwich City Council's representative on the board, and he agreed to take this forward.

RESOLVED to enter into an agreement with Norfolk County Council for the provision of on street civil parking enforcement services

10. Constitution review

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources presented the report.

RESOLVED to:

(1) note the table of changes made by the director of resources under article 15 attached at appendix A; and,

(2) recommend that council adopts the following changes to the constitution:

a) the inclusion of a gifts and hospitality appendix to the member's code of conduct as set out at appendix B to the report.

b) the inclusion of the following on authority to prosecute:

Add the following sentence to the end of Article 14 at paragraph 14.4.1:

Where legal proceedings are for the prosecution of an offence, the director with the field of responsibility as detailed in

Appendix 8 of this constitution or any person authorised by them will sign any documents necessary for those proceedings.

Add the following sub paragraph to paragraph 1 of Appendix 8:

(vii) the instigation of legal proceedings for prosecution of offences for the functions for which they are responsible..

11. Write-off of irrecoverable national non-domestic rate debt – Key Decision

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources presented the report.

RESOLVED to approve the write offs of £342,951.00 of NNDR debt which is now believed to be irrecoverable and is 100% covered within the bad debt provision for 2020/21.

12. IT contract renewal – Multifunctional devices (MFD) and bulk printers – Key Decision

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources presented the report.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to the director of strategy and culture in consultation with the cabinet member for resources to award a contract for the provision of Multifunctional devices and bulk printer options.

13. IT contract renewal – Civil enforcement solutions– Key Decision

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources presented the report.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to the director of strategy and culture in consultation with the cabinet member for resources to award a contract for the purchase of Parking 3Sixty software and associated items.

14. Award of contract for concrete repairs to stairs and communal walkways at St Leonards Road, Providence Place, Orchard Street, Lothian Street, Goldwell Road, Victoria Street and Gilman Road – Key Decision

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing presented the report.

Councillor Bogelein asked how works were checked to ensure value for money for Norwich residents. The major works and service manager (NPS) said that regular inspections of works were carried out and warranties covered both materials and workmanship. The interim operations manager (NPS) said that retention payments would be withheld from the contractor if the work was not satisfactory.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to award the contract for structural repairs to the director of people and neighbourhoods in consultation with the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing.

15. Award of contract for concrete repairs to stairs and communal walkways at Kensington Place, Vauxhall Street, Wessex Street, Cranworth Gardens and Percival Close – Key Decision

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing presented the report.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to award the contract for structural repairs to the director of people and neighbourhoods in consultation with the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing.

16. The award of contract for whole home improvements on housing properties – Key Decision

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing presented the report.

RESOLVED to award contracts for whole home improvements for the complete refurbishment of 20 various properties within the housing portfolio to Foster Property Maintenance Ltd and Breyer Group Ltd

17. Award of contract for Canterbury Place internal heating upgrades – Key decision

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing presented the report.

RESOLVED To award the contract to deliver new internal heating systems to 96 dwellings (contract Ref: NRW/HSG/9994) to Gasway Services Limited for the sum of £348,344.64

18. Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of items *19 to *21 (below) on the grounds contained in the relevant paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

***19. Mile Cross depot site – options for redevelopment – Exempt appendix – Key Decision (para 3)**

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing presented the report.

RESOLVED to note the exempt appendix.

***20**. **Grant of Right to Buy one for one receipts– Key decision (para 3)**

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing presented the report.

RESOLVED to approve the award of retained right to buy one for one replacement receipts to Norwich Housing Society to support the development of seventeen new affordable dwellings as described in the report.

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***21. Managing assets (housing) – Key decision (para 3)**

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing presented the report.

RESOLVED to approve the disposal of the freehold interest in the asset on the open market.

CHAIR