



**Cabinet**

**17.30 – 19:00**

**9 March 2022**

**Present** Councillors Waters (chair), Harris (vice chair), Hampton, Jones, Kendrick, Oliver, Packer and Stonard.

**Apologies** Councillor Davis

**Also present** Councillors Galvin and Councillor Wright

**1. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. Public Questions/Petitions**

There were no public question or petitions.

**3. Minutes**

It was noted that the figures in the resolution of item 7, 'The award of contract for loft and cavity wall insulation to council owned homes' should read '£2.5m' and '£500,000' making the correct resolution:

'to approve the award for loft and cavity wall insulation work to 1st Choice Insulations Ltd, from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2027 at an estimated value of £2,500,000 excluding VAT, over, five years (£500,000 per annum). The final award value will be within the existing allocated budget.'

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings held on 9 February 2022 and 23 February 2022.

**4. 2020 Refresh – Norwich Economic Strategy 2019-2024**

Councillor Waters, leader of the council presented the report. There had been much change since the last refresh of the strategy with Covid-19, Brexit and climate change all being key issues. The strategy was aligned with the new Corporate Plan and related to the work of the Good Economy Commission around inclusive growth and was central to the work of the Covid-19 Recovery Plan.

There had been extensive consultation on the strategy through workshops with local businesses and key institutions to understand the local economy. The report described the strengths and challenges faced in uncertain time and highlighted the priorities in shaping the economy to meet those challenges.

There was a need for secure and well paid employment and a green economy and ensuring that there was the right infrastructure in place using funding from the Towns Deal and Transforming Cities funds.

The economic development officer (policy and project) commented that the report showed where changes due to those key factors such as Covid-19 and Brexit had exacerbated existing challenges. Going forward, these needed to be reviewed to improve those situations.

Councillor Galvin referred to page 49 of the agenda and asked whether the section on infrastructure and environment should reflect the want to actively reduce car parking rather than looking to enable travel by car. Councillor Waters responded that there was a need to realise that there are people who needed to be able to travel into the city by car for various reasons but it was about looking at how roads were to be used by vehicles that did not emit carbon, such as electric cars and also to push for improvements in bus services.

Councillor Wright commented that with regards to jobs and skills, there were 8,000 businesses in the city with 50% of the jobs being based in larger companies and this posed a risk to the city. There had been a government review of skills in 2004 and the conclusions of that review had still not been achieved. He asked if there should be a call on central government to put those into action and whether there could be some action locally to review skills. The economic development officer (policy and project) replied that Norwich City Council did not have responsibility for education and skills. The council did lobby the LEP and Norfolk County Council around this

Members commended officers for their work on an accessible and well written strategy.

**RESOLVED** to approve the adoption of the 2022 refresh of the Norwich Economic Strategy 2019-2024.

## **5. Procurement Strategy**

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources, presented the report. Since the report was written, funding had been secured to allow members of staff to attend a procurement college course on contract management. The business relationship and procurement manager commented that it was satisfying to document the achievements of the team.

Councillor Wright referred to the ICT case study on page 75 of the agenda and asked for clarification on the outcome referring to reducing cost by only pursuing genuine software installations. The head of legal and procurement replied that there were a number of applications that NPS had which were not being used anymore so the language related to consolidating what the service needed.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin, the business relationship and procurement manager said that sustainability criteria were key within the strategy. There was recognition that a robust measure for these was needed and officers were working with other anchor institutions to develop these.

**RESOVLED** to note the progress made in delivering the Procurement Strategy and the further actions identified within the report.

## **6. Strategic Asset Management Framework**

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources, presented the report. The council had an extensive asset portfolio ranging from heritage to operational assets alongside a large housing stock. There was a need for a framework for managing these the ensure that the city was getting the most out of the assets and that they continued to maintain a line of income for the council in order to continue to provide services.

In response to a question from Councillor Wright around risk to property investments by the council, the executive director of city development services said that there were risks as buildings deteriorated over time. The framework was an important document to ensure that procedures were followed and that the most up to date data was held to minimise that risk. The council was constrained by the changes to the Public Works Loan Board but regeneration could still be driven though existing assets.

Councillor Galvin asked whether the asset review would extend to include retrofitting, with a view to developing a retrofitting strategy. The leader of the council replied that this issue would be debated at full council when a motion on that topic would be taken.

**RESOLVED** to approve the adoption of the Strategic Asset Management Framework.

## **7. Adoption of Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Avoidance and Mitigations Strategy (GIRAMS)**

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive development, presented the report. The council had a legal duty to comply with the regulations which assessed features of particular sites which were protected under those regulations. This was a cross boundary issue across Norfolk. He highlighted the tariff which would be collected from March 2022 and the calculations within the report on how that tariff amount was arrived at. The tariff would be subject to annual adjustments.

Councillor Galvin commented that the tariff seemed very low but wondered if it could be used to develop a visitor transport plan for those sites. Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive development, replied that the strategy related to specific habitat sites and the pressure from development of those sites. Many of these were only accessible by car and parking was necessary to ensure that visitors did not park inappropriately and damage the sites.

In response to a question from Councillor Wright regarding increasing the tariff after 18 months, Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive development said that in theory, the tariff could increase to increase the budget but this would need multi-authority agreement.

**RESOLVED to:**

- 1) adopt the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS) and approves the requirement for contributions from applicable planning applications for residential development and other relevant development proposals received from 31 March 2022, in line with the requirements of Policy 3 of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP)
- 2) set the level of contribution for 2022/23 at £185.93 and agrees that the level in future years can be set by the independent board
- 3) appoint the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth and head of planning and regulatory services to represent the City Council on the independent board, and
- 4) agree in principle the broad governance arrangements set out in paragraph 14, and delegates powers to the executive director of development and city services, in consultation with the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth, to agree the detailed governance arrangements.

**8. Pay Policy Statement 2022-23**

(This report was contained within the supplementary agenda).

Councillor Waters, leader of the council, presented the report. The Pay Policy Statement was a legal requirement under the Localism Act and related to a number of issues, including remuneration levels across the council. The pay increase for 2021-22 had been included in the figures but the 2022-23 pay claim had not yet been received.

An important indicator was the pay differentials and pay multiples which were outlined at paragraph 5.2 of the report. These were 1:1.49 and 1:7.5 respectively and were stable in relation to previous years.

There was no performance related pay but the council was keen for staff to belong to professional organisations and reimbursed staff for those subscriptions. The need for enhancements and honoraria was recognised and these were paid against agreed criteria. Consultants' and agency workers were not covered by the statement but under the terms of the agency workers directive, they were paid at the same rate as council employees.

With regard to the gender pay gap, the head of organisational development and HR confirmed that there was no gender pay gap using the median to calculate and using the mean, women were paid 4.9% less. This was positive in comparison to other companies but the council was not complacent about reducing this.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin regarding NCSL and NRL publishing the same figures, the leader of the council replied that these were separate companies which had seen significant improvements in their terms and conditions.

**RESOLVED** to recommend that full council adopts the Pay Policy Statement 2022-23.

## **9. Adjustment to the 2021-22 and 2022-23 HRA capital programmes**

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing, presented the report. The home improvement team had taken on the disabled adaptation work in 2021 and had been very successful in reducing the backlog of work. The increased level of works mean that a higher budget was needed and as there was an underspend in the windows upgrade budget, a virement was sought to the adaptations budget.

The social housing decarbonisation budget had been awarded £0.855m of funding and combined with the existing budget of £1.25m, this would allow for 45 homes to benefit from solid wall insulation. This would make a significant difference to those tenants. There were challenging timescales with all works having to be completed by April 2023 so there was a need to start these as soon as possible.

The fuel poverty and energy officer added that there was a robust project plan for completion of the works which had been submitted as part of the funding bid.

**RESOLVED** to approve:

- 1) the virement within the 2021/22 HRA capital programme as set out in paragraph 6; and
- 2) an increase of £0.855m to the 2022/23 HRA capital programme to incorporate the BEIS social housing decarbonisation grant.

## **10. The award of Home Improvement framework of contractors**

Councillor Jones, cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods presented the report. Disabled adaptations grants allowed people to live safely in their own homes, prevented hospital admissions and facilitated hospital discharges. This reached into the mental health sector as well as those with physical health needs.

The report sought to expand the pool of contractors available to meet the growing demand on the services with contract allocated on a rota basis. The contractors would be living wage employers as well as having evidence of high quality work.

**RESOLVED** to:

- 1) Enter into a framework agreement for the provision of home improvement works; and
- 2) Delegate the Executive Director for Community Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Safer, Stronger Neighbourhoods to award the contracts to the most economically advantageous suppliers

#### **11. Award to Domestic gas heating upgrading provision to council properties for year 3 only**

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing, presented the report. The award was for the third year only of the contract. As part of the improvement plan of council dwellings, the contract was split across two suppliers. PH Jones had experienced challenges with the works and there had been a mutual agreement with the council to end the contract. The Dodd Group had completed works to a high standard and due to this, the proposal was to award the full value of the works to the Dodd Group for the final year of the contract. It was important that residents had reliable heating systems and she assured members that officers were working on reducing carbon emissions with a whole house approach to these systems.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin, the interim head of asset management confirmed that the use of heat pumps and ground water source systems was being investigated, but these systems were not suitable for all properties.

**RESOLVED** to award the contract for year 3 of the domestic gas heating upgrading programme to Dodd Group Limited for an estimated minimum value of £2.27m as detailed in paragraphs 11 to 14 of the report.

#### **12. Award of contract for drains and water mains repairs**

(This item would be taken to a subsequent meeting of cabinet).

CHAIR