



Cabinet

16:30 to 18:10

13 November 2019

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

Apologies: Councillors Davis, Jones and Packer

Also present: Councillors Schmierer and Wright.

1. Public Questions/Petitions

One member question had been received.

Councillor Denise Carlo, asked the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth the following question:

“At council on 25 June, I asked the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth to support the need for zero carbon public transport (electric or hydrogen) along corridors selected for improvement in the Transforming Cities bid. Councillor Stonard said that national bus companies may be able to meet demands but the local operators could not afford to do so and that privatisation and deregulation of bus services made it more difficult to work with bus companies.

However, the Bus Services Act 2017 includes franchising powers which the Secretary of State for Transport and Prime Minister have both said they want to see used widely. Franchising allows local transport authorities to determine the details of services and standards to be provided on a route-by-route basis such as a requirement to run zero carbon buses. The accompanying Department for Transport guidance (The Bus Services Act 2017: New Powers and Opportunities, Nov 2017) makes clear that franchising plans must take account of the needs of small and medium sized operators and so they wouldn't be excluded as feared.

Will the cabinet member encourage the Transforming Cities Joint Committee to commit to specifying zero carbon buses on routes selected for improvement, (zero carbon buses would cut both carbon and toxic air pollution emissions, unlike Euro 6 standard diesel buses) and to investigating franchising powers in its final application? There is no point spending millions on new bus infrastructure if buses don't turn up or services are withdrawn or re-routed which is sometimes the case at present.”

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth replied:

“The Transforming Cities fund was first announced on 20 November 2017, almost exactly two years ago and the greater Norwich region has known since 27 September 2018 that it was successful in being shortlisted for a share of £1.2 billion funding. Over a year later and with two weeks to go to the deadline for submission of the business case that will determine exactly what funding Norwich receives I think it is rather late in the day for Councillor Carlo to be asking me to ensure that things like bus franchising powers are included in the final bid.

As Councillor Carlo knows, as she was at the meeting, on the 16 October the Transforming Cities Joint Committee agreed the broad concepts of the application which focused on providing high quality bus infrastructure in the city centre and on six key corridors leading from the areas of jobs and growth into the city centre. There is also a strong supporting package of walking and cycling improvements and the introduction of a network of mobility hubs. What isn't specified in the business case is exactly how these will be achieved and at this stage such detail is not required. Using the Bus Services Act 2017 powers may be one way of going about it, but given the strong, very positive relationship the councils have with the local operators that may not be necessary. Time will tell.

Reducing carbon and improving air quality are two of the key outputs that the Department for Transport are looking for cities to deliver through the Transforming Cities fund, and that will of course be the focus of the Greater Norwich application.”

In response to Councillor Carlo's supplementary question, Councillor Stonard said there would be cleaner buses in the city delivered as part of the Transforming Cities bid. In order to consider using the Bus Services Act the whole Transforming Cities partnership would have to agree Norfolk County Council, Broadland and South Norfolk district councils but it was important to emphasise that a good relationship with bus companies already existed.

2. Declarations of interest

Councillors Waters, Harris and Kendrick declared an other interest in item 4 below, Norwich council housing strategy 2020-2026, as council tenants.

Councillors Kendrick and Stonard declared an other interest in item *13 below as directors of Norwich Regeneration Limited.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2019.

4. Norwich council housing strategy 2020 - 2026

(Councillors Waters, Harris and Kendrick had declared an other interest in this item).

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing, introduced the report. There had been some amendments made to the strategy and an updated copies had been circulated with a list of the detailed amendments.

The strategy restated the council's commitment to social housing and highlighted the challenges ahead. The government's reduction in public sector spending on services such as mental health provision impacted on the council's resources. Tenants no longer received the support they previously had and the council had to step in to provide this or the risk was that tenancies would fail. The government imposition of a 1% rent reduction to all social housing tenants had impacted the council's finances and the continuation of the Right to Buy (RTB) scheme resulted in a loss to the city council of approximately 140 properties per year. There were restrictions made on the receipts from these RTB sales too. In terms of the delivery of new social housing this would be impacted by the recent government decision to increase the interest rate by 1% from the Public Works Loan Board.

The strategy represented a holistic approach to the management of social housing in the city to ensure that the stock was fit for the future. It incorporated an annual programme of works and the delivery of high quality social housing with partners such as the development at Goldsmith Street.

In response to Councillor Schmierer's question the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing said that work on climate change underpinned all the council's work. The director of people and neighbourhoods said the housing strategy similar to other strategies had a number of themes running through it including the environment, climate change, safeguarding etc. The leader said that the environment was at the heart of the council's approach, considerable investment had been made into the council's housing stock increasing its energy efficiency.

RESOLVED to approve the Norwich council housing strategy 2020 - 2026.

5. Regulation 10A review of Norwich's Development Management policies and site allocations plans

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth presented the report. The development management policies were assessed using a traffic light system, 18 policies were green and 15 amber there was therefore no need for a review at present. The sustainable development panel had considered the report at its meeting on 13 November 2019 and endorsed the recommendations with a number of suggested amendments.

In response to Councillor Schmierer's question the planning policy team leader said that it was recognised that there had been changes to the use of the late night activity zone and a review of the boundary of the area was considered desirable. The current policy was however fit of purpose and such a review could be considered as part of the wider review.

RESOLVED to endorse the Regulation 10A review of local plan policies and the proposal to commence review of the DM policies plan following the Regulation 19 stage of the Greater Norwich Local Plan, likely to be in spring 2021, subject to:

- 1) Further consideration as part of the 2021-22 budget process;
- 2) Moving policy DM4 providing for renewable and low carbon energy into the amber category as a further review is considered desirable to address issues such as renewable energy; and

- 3) Note that the sustainable development panel asked for a report comprising a 'roadmap' to outline the process for addressing a number of policy issues as part of the forthcoming review of the DM Policies Plan.

6. Temporary accommodation policy

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing, introduced the report. The policy set out the obligations of the council and homeless households regarding the provision of temporary accommodation and provided clarity regarding the criteria used to assess the placement of homeless households.

The housing options manager confirmed in response to Councillor Wright's question that households could be refused accommodation by temporary accommodation providers because they were considered too high risk.

RESOLVED to adopt the Temporary Accommodation Policy.

7. Purpose-built student accommodation in Norwich: evidence and best practice advice note

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth presented the report. He emphasised the importance of universities, the University of East Anglia generated £0.5billion for the local economy. Student numbers at both the city's universities were set to increase and those students would require accommodation. The current local plan contained no specific policy regarding student accommodation and the purpose of the advice note was to provide guidance on best practice for applicants and decision makers to ensure the delivery of purpose built student accommodation which was appropriate to Norwich.

RESOLVED to adopt the Purpose-built student accommodation in Norwich: Evidence and best practice advice note.

8. Scrutiny committee recommendations

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources, introduced the report and thanked the scrutiny committee for their work on a number of very important issues. He invited Councillor Wright as the chair of scrutiny to present the report. Councillor Wright highlighted recommendations from the committee such as a suggestion to work with Norfolk County Council to explore the idea of incorporating standard clauses into S106 agreements to fund school travel plan work and to consider options on how to reduce single occupancy vehicles travelling into the city.

The cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth said the Transforming Cities application included proposals on car sharing schemes.

The leader of the council thanked the scrutiny committee for its contribution to shaping policy and the 2040 city vision.

RESOLVED

- 1) With regards to air quality to ask cabinet to consider:

- a) Recommending the extension of the monitoring zone from Castle Meadow to include St Stephen's Street and initially make this a minimum Euro 5 standard compliant,
- b) Extending the preferential rate enjoyed by the council to members of staff who may wish to purchase an electric vehicle or bike,
- c) Ways of reducing background levels of air pollution across the network area; including ensuring that pollution is not displaced to areas outside of the city centre and increasing monitoring in areas not identified as 'hotspots' once appropriate resources have been secured; and
- d) Exploring options on how to reduce single occupancy vehicles travelling into the city

2) With regards to the call in of the Airport Master Plan, to consider:

- a) When the airport masterplan is review to request that a carbon reduction plan is incorporated; and
- b) Including as part of the 2040 City Vision work, an analysis of the wider impact of jobs on the economy when these are in sectors which impact adversely on climate change.

9. Constitution review

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources presented the report. He highlighted the amendment to the deadlines for motions to council and said it provided time to enable the smooth running of council meetings and safeguards to allow for flexibility.

Members discussed the change to the rules for the election of the Lord Mayor and Sherriff and noted that the old process had fallen out of use and been replaced by an informal arrangement and the changes consolidated that practice.

RESOLVED to recommend that council adopts the following changes to the constitution:

- (1) to amend Appendix 1, Council rules and procedures by:
 - (a) inserting after rule 63, the following new rule 64:
 64. Amendments to recommendations or motions set out in the council agenda shall only be considered if they have been delivered in writing to the director of resources by 17:00 on the day preceding the meeting.
 65. The exceptions to the above rule are:
 - (a) technical amendments may be moved to correct factual errors;

- (b) the director of resources will have discretion to permit amendments from members if the director of resources is satisfied that the need for the amendment could not have been anticipated before the 17:00 deadline and that advance notice of such amendments was given as soon as reasonably practical.”
- (b) inserting additional wording to current rule no 16:
“If there is opposed business to take after two hours have elapsed since the beginning of the meeting, a short break of up to ten minutes will be taken before continuing with the business of the meeting.”
- (2) to insert the Planning Applications Committee Procedures and Delegations at Appendix 11 of the constitution;
- (3) to amend Article 5 – Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and Sheriff by deleting the text in 5.1.2 and replacing it with “Any sitting councillor can be nominated for the position of Lord Mayor”.
- (4) to agree in principle to amending the structure of the constitution to make it more user friendly by placing the relevant articles and appendices together rather than having a section for all articles and all appendices; and making a single pdf version of the constitution available on the council’s website;
- (5) to note recent changes made to the constitution under Article 15 or by resolution of full council as set out in Appendix A to this report.

10. The award of contract for works at Bradecroft Sheltered Housing – communal heating upgrade – key decision

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

RESOLVED to delegate approval to the director of people and neighbourhoods, in consultation with the deputy leader and portfolio holder for social housing, to award a contract for communal heating upgrading works at Bradecroft sheltered housing scheme.

11. The award of contract for a tenancy and estate management system – key decision

(The chair referred to the supplementary agenda which had been circulated prior to the meeting)

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources, presented the report and explained that delegation was requested due to procurement timescales and that once a decision was taken a key decision notice would be issued which was subject to normal call in rules.

RESOLVED to delegate approval to the director of people and neighbourhoods, in consultation with the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing and the cabinet member for resources, to award the contract for a tenancy and estate management system.

12. Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of items *13 to *14 (below) on the grounds contained in the relevant paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

***13 Housing development at Rayne Park – key decision (paragraph 3)**

(A copy of legal counsel opinion was to circulated to members at the meeting)

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

RESOLVED to agree the recommendations as set out in the report.

***14 Organisational change (paragraph 4)**

Councillor Waters, leader of the council presented the report.

RESOLVED to approve the proposals contained in the report.

CHAIR