NORWICH City Council

Minutes

Cabinet

17:30 to 19:45 **11 March 2020**

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

Also present: Councillors Schmierer and Wright

1. Public Questions/Petitions

There were no public questions or petitions.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Public Questions/Petitions

There were no public questions. One petition was received from Emily Drew, a resident of Goldwell Road, who was accompanied by Councillor Stutely, ward Councillor for Town Close Ward.

Miss Emily Drew presented the following petition:

> "Please install secure entry door systems in Gordon Square and Goldwell Road.
>
> For ten years residents of Gordon Square and Goldwell Road have suffered the worst effects of cuts to local government budgets that has created extreme poverty in parts of Norwich. The prevalence of drug dealing and drug use is just one effect, but it is an intolerable issue in our community. Police say drug users and County Lines dealers target this area because there is easy access to covered space and multiple escape routes. People congregate day and night to use and deal drugs in stairwells and landings. Private CCTV has recorded extensive evidence of drug related activity in one block and local families are living in constant fear. The community in Gordon Square and Goldwell Road calls on Norwich City Council to prioritise our area for the immediate installation of secure entry door systems to properties and storage areas. The proposal has the support of the Safer Neighbourhood Police Team and all Ward Councillors."

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and the cabinet member for social housing gave the following response:

> "We are very aware of the high importance of the safety and security of our residents and in particular the contribution that the installation and existence

of door entry controls make. Indeed, the council are moving into year 4 (2020/21) of the current 5 year agreed programme approved by cabinet and delivered by our contractor Alphatrack. Over the 5 years all existing systems have been upgraded to the cloud based system – which is more easily managed, checked and reported on than the older style system the council installed. Within the 5 year contract, 2 new sites were identified by Housing for new installations – West Pottergate and Paragon Place.

The Council budget agreed in February has added additional resources to community safety initiatives which incorporates not only door entry systems but also estate improvement works, CCTV and other community safety measures. The budget increased from £1.5 million in 2019/20 to £1.9 million in 2020/21 with an additional £320,000 for Door entry systems.
The head of neighbourhood housing services will be working with officers, local members and NPS Norwich to develop new priorities and a new programme for the installation of door entry systems.

These priorities will be established according to the most need, evidenced by reports of antisocial behaviour and criminal activity where the installation of door entry systems would make a positive contribution to reducing crime and increasing safety.

That is why it is so important for residents to report issues of crime and disorder using the following:

- To report any anti-social behaviour to Norwich City Council – use the on line on the council's website or calling 0344 980 3333

- Any criminal activity (especially regarding drug related activity) to Norfolk Constabulary in the first instance by calling 101 if it is not an emergency, by completing an on line web form on the Norfolk Constabulary website or dialling 999 if the issue is an emergency.

When reviewing and prioritising the need for the installation of door entry systems these reports are looked at and taken into consideration. I advise all residents to report any anti-social behaviour or criminal activity as these reports help Norwich City Council and Norfolk Police identify any hot spot areas and make any necessary recommendations or give appropriate advice. I want to reassure you that I take this issue very seriously, and I will ask the council's safer neighbourhoods coordinator to contact you to visit the site."

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2020.

5. The Norwich private sector rented sector charter

Councillor Jones, cabinet member for safer, stronger, neighbourhoods presented the report. The charter built on the work of the private sector housing team, it was important to note that 20% of Norwich residents lived in the private rented sector.

The charter aimed to enable tenants to understand their rights and their landlord's obligations and to empower tenants to negotiate with landlords with an understanding of these rights. To support this work two extra posts had been agreed, a tenancy liaison officer and an intelligence officer. Councillor Jones emphasised the importance of enforcement action and noted that the new post of intelligence officer would provide extra capacity to pursue enforcement action when required.

She emphasised that the council were lobbying government regarding the private rented sector and greater protection for tenants and it was hoped that government would delegate licensing powers across the private rented sector to local authorities.

The head of people and neighbourhoods said the charter focussed on landlords whose properties did not meet minimum legal standards. He noted the increase in affordability issues across the sector due to changes in local housing allowance rates which were set nationally.

Councillor Wright welcomed the charter and the reference to lobbying government in relation to Section 21 notices and retaliatory evictions.

The public protection compliance team leader said that since the Deregulation Act 2015, certain measures to prevent retaliatory evictions had been put in place but that the process was particularly prescriptive. The aim of the new tenancy relations officer role would be to offer support to tenants pursuing this approach. In response to Councillor Schmierer's question she confirmed that the council took a firm enforcement line against rogue landlords. Councillor Jones referred to the council's pending prosecution action against a landlord at St. Faith's lane and said the city council was committed to taking enforcement action but that this would be coupled with empowering tenants to take action with the support of the tenancy liaison officer.

In response to a question from the chair, the public protection compliance team leader said that the register of rogue landlords which had been instituted in April 2018 currently had four landlords registered on it which highlighted what a complicated process it was to register a landlord.

RESOLVED to approve the Norwich private rented sector charter.

6. Reducing inequalities: review and priorities 2020-2022

Councillor Davis, cabinet member for social inclusion presented the report. This was a strategic document which highlighted the Norwich 2040 Vision theme of a fair city. The Reducing Inequalities Target Areas (RITAs) provided a locality based approach to target and reduce inequalities. Seven locations had been identified to build on work which had taken place in initial pilot areas.

In response to Councillor Schmierer's question the neighbourhood and community enabling manager said that the work aimed to build a conversation in a local area. A steering group would be set up to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, anchor organisations and institutions. She noted that it took time to build trust and networks of engagement. The aim was to develop different means to engage local members of the community, extending the idea of the 2040 City Vision and asking what their communities would look like in 2040.

RESOLVED to endorse the development of the approach and priorities for 2020-22 for the reducing inequalities action plan.

7. Towns Fund and Norwich Deals Board

Councillor Waters, leader of the council presented the report. One hundred and one towns had been invited to bid for up to £25m to drive forward economic development and productivity. The council had been successful in securing initial funding to prepare a bid. The Norwich's Town Deal Board had meet twice to date and the minutes were in the public domain. The developed plan would set out the investment priorities for the bid and would work in conjunction with existing strategies and policies.

RESOLVED to:

1) agree outline the timetable for production of a Town Investment Plan and note the proposed use of £173,029 revenue funding to support its development; and

2) endorse the membership of the Town Deal Board and its Terms of Reference.

8. Quarter 3 Corporate Performance Report for 2019-20

Councillor Waters, leader of the council presented the report. He highlighted paragraph two of the report and the difference between outcome and output measures. Noting that outcome measures set the performance of the council within the broader context on the wider city and indicated progress towards outcomes achieved in collaboration with partners.

Councillor Schmierer noted that a timeline of actions would be a useful inclusion into the report and the strategy manager agreed to consider how this could be included. The chief executive officer said performance monitoring was taken very seriously and was regularly discussed at Corporate Leadership Team meetings and a refresh in the approach to reporting performance was being considered. He noted that it would be helpful to see trends over time and that there was some commentary analysis missing from some areas.

RESOLVED to note progress against the corporate plan priorities for quarter 3 of 2019-20.

9. Audit committee recommendation

Councillor Waters, the leader said that audit committee has asked cabinet to consider the following recommendation at its meeting yesterday:

"to request that cabinet write to the Minister of State for housing, communities and local government to express concern over the inability of audit firms to deliver external audits to local authorities by 31 July and at the proposed increase in fees for these audits."

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources to presented the recommendation. He highlighted that due to national shortage of external auditors,

local authority audits which were due to be completed by the end of July had slipped to the end of October 2020. This put extra pressure upon staff and it was justified to draw it to the attention of the Minister of State.

RESOLVED to agree that the leader of the council write to the secretary of state for housing, communities and local government to express concern over the inability of audit firms to deliver external audits to local authorities by 31 July and at the proposed increase in fees for these audits.

10. Scrutiny committee recommendations

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources introduced the report and asked Councillor Wright, in his role as chair of scrutiny to present the report.

Councillor Wright said the report gave feedback from the scrutiny meeting of 11 February 2020 when the Police and Crime Commissioner attended committee. He reflected that it included a discussion on the topic of the petition received at the current meeting, secure entry doors on council owned blocks, and a range of other issues. Members discussed the recommendations from scrutiny committee.

The director of people and neighbourhoods said that there were two Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO), one covering the entire city centre which restricted dog fouling and the other the city centre and west side of the city requested by the police to restrict alcohol consumption in the area. He said PSPOs could be a useful tool if used correctly. There was guidance from government for example that it should not be used in response to rough sleeping. He noted they had been used successfully to treat complex individuals with a range of needs but were only effective if services to support individuals were provided in conjunction with the orders.

Councillor Davis, cabinet member for social inclusion, expressed concern that PSPOs had been used in other areas to criminalise people with severe issues and could be draconian. Councillor Waters, the leader noted that PSPOs would be an interesting topic for scrutiny committee to investigate and consider. The chief executive officer said that where PSPOs were used in a response to a certain issue, in a particular area and time limited they could be effective.

RESOLVED to note the scrutiny committee recommendations.

11. Pay Policy Statement 2020-21

Councillor Waters, leader of the council presented the report. He noted that the pay policy statement was a statutory requirement and was required to be agreed by full council. He highlighted that the policy noted that the council would pay no less than the Living Wage Foundation living wage rate and that lower pay multiples as noted in the report were good for the inclusivity of the organisation.

RESOLVED to recommend that the council approve the pay policy statement for 2220-21.

12. Investment in sheltered housing communal areas – Key Decision

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing presented the report. She said it highlighted the council's commitment to maintaining and

improving its housing stock. The focus of this report was the refurbishment of communal areas within the sheltered housing schemes identified and was part of an ongoing programme of improvements. The use of such areas by individuals reduced social isolation and it was important they were maintained to a high standard.

RESOLVED to authorise the investment to upgrade the communal areas at identified sheltered housing schemes, to ensure they remain 'fit for purpose'.

13. The award of contract for a decoration allowance scheme for new housing tenants – Key Decision

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing presented the report. Decoration vouchers enabled tenants to decorate and have pride in their new homes and were cost effective as they reduced void times on empty properties. 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 declare on their behalf.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to the director of people and neighbourhoods in consultation with the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing to award the contract for a decoration allowance scheme for new housing tenants.

14. The award of contracts to re-roof Seaman and Markham Towers – Key Decision

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing presented the report. It represented the council's ongoing commitment to the maintenance of the council's housing stock and had the additional effect of increasing energy efficiency to the benefit of tenants.

In response to Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth the housing operation manger (NPS Norwich) said the broadcasting equipment and the top of Markham Tower would not be affected by the works. In response to Councillor Schmierer question he said the works were part of an ongoing programme of works to re-roof a number of tower blocks and the most urgent were being completed first. Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing noted that a phased approach worked well on works of this nature.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to the director of people and neighbourhoods, in consultation with the deputy leader and portfolio holder for social housing, to award two contracts for the removal of existing flat roofs and the installation of new and fully insulated roof coverings to Seaman and Markham tower blocks.

15. The award of contract for the delivery of the Norwich Parks Tennis service – Key Decision

Councillor Packer cabinet member for health and wellbeing presented the report. He highlighted that Norwich Parks Tennis (NPT) had successfully increased the number of annual tennis coaching session it delivered. Resulting in increasing accessibility to tennis to the residents of Norwich. The director of people and neighbourhoods said that the contract had evolved and NPT would accept the 'Norwich Note' which

was the council's community currency and rewarded new volunteers for their volunteering.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to the director of people and neighbourhoods, in consultation with the portfolio holder for health and wellbeing, to award a contract for ten years for the delivery of the Norwich Parks Tennis service.

16. The award of contract for the printing and distribution of the Citizen magazine – Key Decision

Councillor Waters, leader of the council presented the report. He said the magazine provided excellent value for money and provided a vital link for some residents. He noted that councils which had reduced or ended the publication and distribution of their council magazines had had to reinstate them. Councillor Davis, cabinet member for social inclusion noted that due to new GDPR legislation the council could no longer send targeted letters offering services to vulnerable residents but this information could be communicated in the citizen.

The director of communications and culture said that cost on the contract had reduced from £1 per year per resident to 86p. The leader noted that due to procurement timescales there was an updated recommendation to the report which provided the detail of who the contract would be awarded to.

RESOLVED to award the contract(s) for the printing and distribution of Norwich City Council's Citizen Magazine for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2024 as follows:

1) for printing to GD Media Ltd value £106,030.00; and

2) for distributing to The Mailbird Organisation Ltd value £128,921.45

17. The award of contract for cash collections – Key Decision

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth presented the report. He noted whilst more cashless services such as on street parking were to be rolled out there was still a requirement for a cash collection service.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to the director of place in consultation with the portfolio holder for sustainable and inclusive growth to award a contract for cash collections for the period 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2024.

18. Compulsory purchase of the former Kings Arms pub site, 100 Mile Cross Road – Key Decision

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth presented the report. The site of the former Kings Arms pub was an eyesore which had blighted the area for too long, the building had been demolished but the plot experienced fly tipping and was overrun with rats. Negotiations with the landowner had been unsuccessful and the council were seeking approval to serve a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and, if successful, the council would develop the site to provide social housing.

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing said that the

property next to the site which had previously been purchased under the right to buy scheme had recently been bought back by the council. This improved the access to the site and it was hoped that five units of social housing would be provided. She noted that CPOs were a long and slow process but one the council was committed to.

The city growth and development manager said CPOs as discussed were a matter of last resort, negotiations would continue with the landowner to agree a purchase of the property in tandem with the CPO process.

RESOLVED to agree the next steps (as outlined in para 40 of the report) on all matters related to the compulsory purchase of the former Kings Arms site.

19. Norwich Norse (Environmental) Ltd Business Plan

Councillor Maguire, cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment presented the report. He noted that the contract was running in its final year and thanked the operations director at Norwich Norse Environmental (NNE) for all her hard work on the contract. He said that NNE values meshed well with those of the city council.

RESOLVED to approve the Norwich Norse (Environmental) Ltd business plan for 2020/21.

***20. Exclusion of the Public**

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of items *21 to *26 (below) on the grounds contained in the relevant paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

***21. Compulsory purchase of the former Kings Arms pub site, 100 Mile Cross Road – Exempt appendix – (para 3)**

RESOLVED to note the exempt appendix.

***22 Norwich Norse (Environmental) Ltd Business Plan - Exempt appendix – (para 3)**

In response to a question from Councillor Schmierer's the operations director NNE said that a project plan ran alongside the business plan which included greater detail. She agreed to include a reference, on agenda page 202, under the heading threats, to climate challenge and on page 199, under strategic objectives, a reference to protecting bio-diversity. She confirmed that bio-diversity was very much an aspect which featured in the company's plans, including looking at the use of new technologies and the reduction in the use of herbicides and pesticides.

RESOLVED to note the exempt appendix.

***23. Grant of right to buy one to one receipts – Key decision (para 3)**

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing presented the report. Cabinet had agreed the criteria for assessing schemes for grants to providers from right to buy receipts in October 2015. Over the time the scheme had

developed it was noted that the criterion 'value for money' was not proving effective and would benefit from being replaced with the criterion 'meeting housing need'.

This award would provide for the provision of 5 dwellings, 4 studios and a one bedroom flat and it was noted that there was a high demand for one bedroom properties in the area.

RESOLVED to:

1) approve the revised criteria for assessing any future schemes for grant of retained Right to Buy receipts for the provision of affordable housing; and

2) agree to the award of retained right to buy one for one replacement receipts to the Religious Society for Friends of Norwich (the Quakers) to support the development of five new affordable dwellings as described in the report.

***24. Managing assets (general) - Key decision (para 3)**

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources to presented the report.

RESOLVED to approve the disposal of the land parcels described in the report.

***25. Ninham's Court - Key decision (para 3)**

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources to presented the report.

RESOLVED to agree to seek the winding up of the Eliza Pym Trust at the Charities Commission and transfer of Ninhams Court to Norwich Preservation Trust in furtherance of cabinet's previous decision.

***26. Norwich Regeneration Ltd Business Plan - Key decision (para 3)**

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

RESOLVED to:

1) approve the 2020/21 Business Plan for Norwich Regeneration Limited for 20/21:

2) support the completion of the Rayne Park development and note the scale of development that is required for the company to return to making an annual profit within 5 years;

3) instruct the Director of Place to take forward a review of the Council's approach to the commissioning of housing development, to inform a report to Cabinet by July 2020, which includes:
    a) The development of a new approach to the commissioning of housing development taking full account of the Council's resources, priorities and identified housing needs;

    b) The identification of future pipeline of sites to be taken forward for development by NRL and by other means of delivery.

4) To instruct the Director of Place to work with the Managing Director of NRL to continue the work to strengthen the governance of NRL, building on actions taken over the past 12 months and completing actions identified in the 2019 audit of NRL.

CHAIR