



CABINET

5:30 pm to 6:55 pm

5 FEBRUARY 2014

Present: Councillors Arthur (chair), Waters, Bremner, Kendrick, Sands (M) and Stonard

Also present: Councillors Boswell and Wright

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. PUBLIC QUESTIONS / PETITIONS

One petition was received in relation to reinstating the city's tree budget. The petition was introduced by Amy Stammers who explained that given that the petition regarded the future of tree planting, it had not been printed out but was available online. The petition was worded as follows:

"City trees provide benefits in terms of biodiversity, wellbeing, health, carbon reduction, air quality, flooding risk, landscape, history, tourism and economics. Trees are a long term natural asset and should be safe from the political cycle. At present the replanting budget has been slashed to nil.

We the undersigned call on Norwich city council to find funding and/or reinstate a budget for planting so that the number of trees outside of conservation areas is not reduced"

A response to the petition was given by Councillor Kendrick, portfolio holder for neighbourhoods and safer community:

"Norwich City council is committed to ensuring the biodiversity and the tree canopy of the city is sustained for years to come. To this end we work hard to protect the health of the tree maintaining the existing stock for as long as possible whilst keeping them safe.

I would remind everybody that the tree budget has not been slashed to nil. This year we will be spending £35,000 on the replanting of trees. It is worth

noting that over the last three years we have planted over 350 trees on our streets and are currently replacing 100 trees in Mile Cross.

Although the council's budget currently restricts planting of trees to replacing to those lost in conservation areas we do seek other opportunities to plant trees. For example:

Highway improvement schemes, such as Dereham Road where 18 trees were planted

Pilling Park landscape scheme included the planting of 23 trees

Friends of Eaton Park securing funding for a community orchard in Eaton Park

A Grant from the Woodland Trust has enabled 2,300 trees and shrubs to be planted on Bowthorpe Southern Park

The government's high level stewardship scheme will enable us to plant 10 black poplars which are a rare native species and is due to take place this spring

Other sources of funding such as Section 106 monies and the new CIL arrangements will be investigated to ensure maximum benefit towards maintaining the biodiversity of the city is obtained.

I would also like to announce that the council is currently investigating a tree sponsorship scheme aiming to enable everyone to be actively involved in improving the city by sponsoring a new tree. We will be launching this in spring this year.

With all of the above in mind and the current funding available to local government it is difficult to reinstate the tree planting budget to its former level. The decision at the time was to suspend the planting and I can promise that this will be reviewed when funds become available.

Councillor Stammers should be aware of the substantial cuts in funding to local government which has meant that all local councils are having to make difficult decisions, which they would not have made if it were not for our cuts in funding.

This year's government revenue grant has been cut by a further 8% and this comes upon the cuts of previous years. If the government goes on to make further cuts in future years as planned, then all local authorities will have to make further cuts in what we do. We will have to make further cuts of £9.5M pounds over the next five years. The scale of loss of government grants upon the services we provide will be huge but we can only spend the money we have. Of course if the government were to restore the previous level of grant funding then we would gladly review this budget, amongst others.

The budget was suspended over two years ago to that required for replanting in conservation areas. Please note the word suspended since it was always the intention to reinstate the budget if and when funds became available. We do actively seek out other funding as suggested above and are currently finalising a tree sponsorship scheme.

With regard to trees that are removed and not replaced these go on a holding list so as and when funding becomes available we do not forget them. We do prioritise replacements which is very much dependent on the amount of trees left in an area, the impact of what we have removed and the amount of funding we can get."

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2014.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED to agree to reschedule the meeting due to be held on 12 March 2014 and hold the next meeting on Wednesday 26 March 2014 at 5.30pm.

6. CONSTITUTION REVIEW

Councillor Waters, deputy leader of the council and portfolio holder for resources, presented the report.

The executive head of strategy, people and democracy explained that instead of referring to the monitoring officer/head of law and governance, the third sentence in paragraph 7 should instead read:

"... It has to be a matter that either only relates to Norwich or the executive head of strategy, people and democracy is satisfied..."

RESOLVED to recommend council to:-

- (1) adopt the revised article 17 of the constitution – audit committee (as set out in appendix A)
- (2) amend appendix 1, council and procedure rules to widen the definition used for allowable motions to full council as follows:

“A motion must relate to a council function or, if not, it must affect the city or one of the council’s key partners”

7. INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES : 2013-2020

Councillor Stonard, portfolio holder for environment, development and transport, presented the report.

RESOLVED to approve:-

- (1) the new set of strategic objectives, providing a greater emphasis on waste prevention alongside the continued development of recycling services; and
- (2) the headline themes for the new *Service action plan*.

8. CARBON MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME - KEY DECISION

Councillor Stonard, portfolio holder for environment, development and transport, presented the report.

In response to a member’s question, the portfolio holder for environment, development and transport explained that an annual review of performance took place to identify if other schemes could come forward as a result of technological developments etc. This had the potential to allow the council to look to take the programme beyond the stated targets.

RESOLVED to agree the new carbon management programme subject to the agreement of the necessary capital funding and revised corporate plan target for 2014-15.

9. MENTAL HEALTH

Councillor Arthur, leader of the council, presented the report

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) sign the Local Authorities’ Mental Health Challenge and the Time to Change pledge;
- (2) designate the Leader as the council’s mental health champion and the Executive head of strategy, people and democracy as the council’s lead officer for mental health;
- (3) agree that where it is achievable within the policy and budget framework and relevant to local need that the council will:
 - i) follow the implementation framework for the mental health strategy;

- ii) reduce inequalities in mental health services in our community;
 - iii) work with the NHS to integrate health and social care support and request that the Norwich Clinical Commissioning Group re-commission some of its mental health services to those with a community and local element;
 - iv) promote wellbeing and initiate and support action on public mental health;
 - v) tackle discrimination on the grounds of mental health in our community;
 - vi) proactively engage and listen to people of all ages and backgrounds about what they need for better mental health; and,
- (4) write a letter of support to the newly established staff-led campaign to save mental health services in Norfolk and Suffolk.

10. CORPORATE PLAN 2012-2015

Councillor Arthur, leader of the council, presented the report

RESOLVED to recommend that council approve the amendments to the *Corporate plan 2012-2015*, as set out in the report, and that the *Corporate plan 2012-2015*, as amended, is agreed as the council's overarching policy framework for 2014-15.

11. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET AND NON-HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2014-15

Councillor Waters, deputy leader of the council and portfolio holder for resources, presented the report.

The portfolio holder for resources explained that an additional recommendation was being made alongside those already contained in the report. This recommendation was worded as follows:

"Delegate responsibility for agreeing any further alterations to the budget to be recommended to council to the chief finance officer in consultation with the deputy leader and portfolio holder for resources"

In response to a member's question, the chief finance officer said that her team could look into having one reflection of inflation (either CPI or RPI) in future reports; however, the portfolio holder for customer services recalled that reasons for this use of both CPI and RPI have been given in the previous year when a similar question arose.

RESOLVED to recommend to council for the 2014/15 financial year:

- (1) the council's budgetary requirement be set to £19,087m;
- (2) the proposed general fund budgets be approved, taking into account the savings, income and other budget movements set out in the report;
- (3) the council's council tax requirement be set at £7.775m and that council tax be set at £234.76 for Band D, which is an increase of 1.95%;
- (4) the precept on the council tax collection fund for 2014/15 be set at £7.731m calculated in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011;
- (5) the prudent level of reserves for the council be set at £4.496m in accordance with the recommendation of the chief finance officer;
- (6) the proposed non-housing capital plan 2014/15 to 2018/19 and the non-housing capital programme 2014/15 be approved;
- (7) cabinet delegates to the deputy chief executive (operations), in consultation with the deputy leader and resource portfolio holder, the authority to agree the asset maintenance programme and the final scheme details, including any adjustment to the financial allocations of the section 106 works, provided that this investment is contained within the total budgetary provision; and,
- (8) cabinet delegates responsibility for agreeing any further alterations to the budget to be recommended to council to the chief finance officer in consultation with the deputy leader and portfolio holder for resources

12. HOUSING RENTS AND BUDGETS 2014-15 – KEY DECISION

Councillor Bremner, portfolio holder for housing, presented the report.

The portfolio holder for resources explained that an additional recommendation was being made alongside those already contained in the report. This recommendation was worded as follows:

"Delegate responsibility for agreeing any further alterations to the budget to be recommended to council to the chief finance officer in consultation with the deputy leader and portfolio holder for resources with the portfolio holder for housing"

RESOLVED to recommend to council for the 2014/15 financial year, to:-

- (1) approve the proposed council housing rent increase;
- (2) approve the proposed housing revenue account budgets;

- (3) approve the prudent minimum level of housing reserves;
- (4) approve the housing capital plan 2014/15-2018/19, and the housing capital programme 2014/15; and,
- (5) delegate responsibility for agreeing any further alterations to the budget to be recommended to council to the chief finance officer in consultation with the deputy leader and portfolio holder for resources with the portfolio holder for housing.

13. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2014-15

Councillor Waters, deputy leader of the council and portfolio holder for resources, presented the report.

RESOLVED to recommend that council approve the:-

- (1) capital prudential indicators and limits for 2014/15 to 2016/17;
- (2) *Borrowing strategy 2014/15 to 2016/17;*
- (3) treasury prudential indicators, including the authorised limit;
- (4) minimum revenue provision policy statement; and
- (5) Investment strategy 2014/15.

14. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2013-14 – PERIOD 9

Councillor Waters, deputy leader of the council and portfolio holder for resources, presented the report

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) note the financial position as at 31 December 2013 and the forecast outturn 2013/14; and
- (2) approve the housing revenue account virements set out in paragraph 13.

15. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2013-14

Councillor Waters, deputy leader of the council and portfolio holder for resources, presented the report

RESOLVED to note the:-

- (1) financial position of the housing and non-housing capital programmes as at 31 December 2013;
- (2) forecast outturns for 2013-14; and,
- (3) estimated carry-forwards to 2014-15.

16. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) - PROCESS FOR ENGAGING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES ON THE EXPENDITURE OF THE COMMUNITY ELEMENT OF CIL

Councillor Arthur, leader of the council, presented the report

The city growth and development manager explained that the report was not proposing to split the community element of the CIL funding by four neighbourhood areas. The aim would be to distribute the funds across the city within infrastructure projects that could well run through many neighbourhood boundaries thus avoiding competition for funding between neighbourhoods.

RESOLVED to approve the process for engaging with the local community on how the community element of CIL is spent.

17. AWARD OF CONTRACTS FOR HOUSING AND STRUCTURAL REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS – KEY DECISION

Councillor Bremner, portfolio holder for housing, presented the report.

Paragraph 3 (two) should read as follows;

"Contract B consists of maintenance and repair works which are required to a range of structural issues. This includes concrete repairs to all exposed reinforced concrete surfaces including surface preparation, survey, break out, repair, selective use of corrosion inhibitors, surface treatment and protective coatings. In addition works include preparation, repair and overcoating access decks and balcony membranes, renewing movement joints in decks and link bridges, replacing existing deck and balcony railings with new galvanised steel railings and repairing cracks in brickwork at ends of the blocks. A total of 35 properties will benefit from this work"

RESOLVED to delegate to the deputy chief executive (operations), in consultation with the portfolio holder for housing, authority to award the following contracts:

- (1) contract A structural repairs - Peterkin Road and Derby Street area stairs and landings;
- (2) contract B structural repairs - Heathgate Estate Phase 1;
- (3) contract C expansion joint contract phase 4; and
- (4) contract D expansion joint contract phase 5.

18. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the 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. BOWTHORPE PHASE 2 – KEY DECISION**

Councillor Arthur, leader of the council, presented the report

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) blocks 2, 6 and 7 and the western part of block 4 be taken forward as the next phase of development at Bowthorpe Threescore;
- (2) this phase should be taken forward by the council as developer for a mix of private homes for sale and rent plus social housing (with the precise mix to be determined)
- (3) a recommendation is made to council to include a total of £13.2m in the capital plan and capital programme to finance designing and constructing this development;
- (4) the city council commission detailed design work, market testing, and financial modelling for the development; and
- (5) a full business case is presented to cabinet in due course before moving to the next stage of work.

***20. FUTURE OPTIONS FOR TWO REDUNDANT HOUSING ASSETS**

Councillor Bremner, portfolio holder for housing, presented the report.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) Lakenfields ex-sheltered housing scheme is let on a 15 year full repairing lease to St. Martins Housing Trust to provide a mix of housing with care for their elderly frail clients and self-contained flats for their clients who are

ready to move into independent accommodation in either the social or privately-rented sectors;

- (2) Lakenfields is held for income generation and/or capital appreciation, and consequently to agree its appropriation from the HRA to the General Fund
- (3) Britannia Court ex-sheltered housing scheme is modernised to provide general needs council accommodation; and
- (4) all subsequent decisions relating to any lease, refurbishment costs and other matters relating to the delivery of these options are delegated to the deputy chief executive (operations).

***21. DISPOSAL OF ELECTRICAL SUB-STATION**

Councillor Stonard, portfolio holder for environment, development and transport, presented the report.

RESOLVED to dispose of the electrical sub-station at Bowers Avenue to the UK Power Network, to enable the site to be brought forward by Orwell housing association for new, affordable housing.

CHAIR