



**Cabinet**

**17:30 to 18:15**

**18 January 2022**

Present: Councillors Waters (chair), Harris (vice chair), Giles, Hampton, Jones, Kendrick, Oliver and Stonard

Also present: Councillors Galvin, Green Group Leader

**1. Declarations of interest**

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth, declared an interest in relation to item 3 (below) in that he was a director of Norwich Regeneration Limited and would not take part in the vote on this item.

**2. Public questions/ petitions**

There were no public questions or petitions.

**3. Minutes**

Councillor Waters proposed an amendment to item 16 of the minutes, Norwich Regeneration Ltd Business Plan 2023-2030, recommendation 6 to amend to read the following:

To both grow, deliver and to mitigate overexposure to commercial risk from one sector, cabinet will support more detailed work on the part of NRL to spread risk and build resilience further into the business, by committing to its scoping in detail the business case for projects like energy saving pilots and skills building for young people.

With no members indicating that they wished to discuss the exempt minutes it was:-

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2022 subject to the above amendment

**4. Greater Norwich Local Plan consideration of consultation regarding possible gypsy and traveller sites for inclusion within the plan**

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth, presented the report. He noted that cabinet gave approval for a focussed consultation in July 2022 which was due to be conducted over the summer. However, as the consultation was not agreed by South Norfolk District Council (SNDC) it could not

take place. The Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) Inspectors required Gypsy and Traveller provision to be considered as part of the GNLP.

There had been engagement with the Gypsy and Traveller community and he highlighted that the accommodation needs of the community had increased as detailed in the report. Following the consultation on site allocations, a report would be presented to cabinet to agree the proposed sites.

The Executive Director of development and city services provided a verbal update to the report. He noted that for the consultation to take place there had to be unanimity on the contents of the consultation across the three local authorities of SNDC, Broadland District Council (BDC) and Norwich City Council. As detailed in paragraph 6 of the report SNDC decided to omit one contingency site at Costessey from the proposals. BDC's cabinet mirrored SNDC's decision to omit the site. Therefore, if the consultation were to progress the recommendation to the report would require amending to omit the contingency site at Costessey in line with the other local authorities. He advised that he considered that there was still a comfortable number of sites included within the proposal to meet the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

Councillor Waters advised that the proposals had been agreed by the three councils at the Greater Norwich Growth Board which had taken a substantial amount of negotiation to achieve. It was unfortunate that SNDC had reneged on this agreement and exercised its right of veto. However, it was important to move forward with the consultation to meet the needs of the community which had a right to have their accommodation needs met.

In response to Councillor Galvin's question on whether to remove the site at North Burlingham from the consultation, the Executive Director of development and city services advised to make a robust decision it would be best to include the site which following consultation might be edited from the list. Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth, added that if cabinet omitted the site there would not be unanimity across the three authorities and the consultation would not be able to progress.

**RESOLVED to:**

- 1) approve the focused consultation on the Greater Norwich Local Plan proposed allocations for Gypsy and Traveller sites with reference to the contingency site for Gypsy and Traveller pitches at Costessey being deleted; and
- 2) delegate authority to the Executive director of development and city services, in consultation with the Cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth, to agree consultation documentation and materials prior to the public consultation.

## **5. Local Development Scheme Update**

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth, presented the report. He noted that the report had been to a meeting of the Sustainable Development Panel and agreed. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) was a work programme to develop key planning documents and was required to be produced as

part of a statutory process. The last LDS was adopted in 2021 and covered the period to 2023, with the new LDS superseding this one.

Councillor Stonard provided a verbal update to the report. The main change related to nutrient neutrality and a report on the issue was due to come to this meeting of cabinet but would be presented at a later date. Further, there was an update in relation to paragraph 6a), as at the time of publishing the report there was a lack of clarity in relation to the planning reforms contained within the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. The government published a consultation on proposals which closes on 2 March 2023. Officers were in the process of reviewing the consultation and the LDS would be updated with any changes to the planning system reported to cabinet as necessary.

The last update related to paragraph 6h) as the Article 4 direction removing permitted developments rights for some offices to residential conversions had now been submitted to the Secretary of State. The planning policy team leader noted that depending on the reforms a revised LDS may come back to cabinet earlier than anticipated.

In response to Councillor Galvin's question, Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth noted the capacity of officers to begin engagement to establish broad areas for review in relation to development management policies was limited. The planning policy team leader highlighted that there were several additional consultations on proposed national development management policies that would determine what work the council could do on its own policies.

**RESOLVED** to consider the draft revised Local Development Scheme. This is the work programme for producing key planning documents, which will form part of the local plan for Norwich. The scheme is attached at Appendix 1 and covers a two-year period to 2025.

## **6. Scrutiny Committee Recommendations**

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

The monitoring officer noted that the first two recommendations would be subject to the approval of the council's budget in February 2023. Councillor Waters, leader of the council, thanked scrutiny committee for its work and the useful recommendations provided.

In response to Councillor Galvin's question on how to make the current cost of living crisis real to local MP's, the leader of the council concurred that all councillors were coming across terrible stories of deprivation. He referred to the work of the 2040 City Vision partnership responding to the cost of living crisis and advised that this work was made known to local MP's.

Councillor Jones, the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods confirmed that there were no plans to remove the 100% Council Tax reduction scheme.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the council maintains a 100% Council Tax reduction scheme, subject to approval of the council's budget in February 2023;
- 2) That the council maintain its financial support of the Financial Inclusion Consortium, subject to approval of the council's budget in February 2023;
- 3) That cabinet lobbies against the punitive elements of the benefit system such as the recovery of overpayments and the Spare Room Subsidy;
- 4) That the council campaigns to encourage everyone to claim what benefits they are entitled to;
- 5) That officers circulate a list to councillors of any additional subsidiary advice agencies that could assist residents;
- 6) That council tax and housing benefit letters when revised are brought to scrutiny committee to be reviewed and that partners such as the tenant improvement panel, leaseholder group, Citizens Advice Bureau and Norfolk Community Law Service are consulted on changes;
- 7) If collected, that information as to why households fall into debt is provided; and
- 8) To illustrate how many people access debt information and by what means; in person, online or by telephone.

**7. An update on Health, Safety and Compliance in Council Homes and Buildings**

Councillor Waters, leader of the council referred to the supplementary agenda which had been circulated and included the item.

The deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing, presented the report. She noted that steady progress was being made and that this was the fourth update to cabinet since the council self-reported to the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH). The Health and Safety Compliance Board continued to meet monthly, and the council had entered a new voluntary arrangement with the Regulator for Social Housing.

The compliance improvement plan was separated into housing and non-housing areas. The General Fund had been prioritised to ensure that resource was focussed on high risk, high liability assets. Real progress had been made in council owned properties, in relation to electrical safety and water hygiene remediation with gas safety and lifts remaining compliant. The asbestos and fire programmes were within targets set by the RSH. There were a small number of properties where access remained an issue and the housing team worked with tenants to provide support. Failing this legal action could be taken to gain access.

Fire risk assessments for all high-risk residential buildings and specialist housing had been completed. As part of this process concerns were identified with the installation and materials used for fire doors which may not perform as required. Fire risk assessments had been updated to reflect this and the RSH notified. Residents

within affected tower blocks had been written to in December to advise that all affected doors would be replaced and extra heat alarms installed to mitigate the risk in the meantime.

The deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing highlighted that whilst considerable work had been conducted there was a lag in invoices being received and asked officers to provide a verbal update to the meeting.

The interim head of building safety and compliance advised that the programme to install heat detectors in properties was on track. The interim head of asset management advised that in terms of finances a process was ongoing to review monies spent which had been coded incorrectly and a further update would be provided next month.

In response to a question from Councillor Galvin, the interim head of building safety and compliance advised that all non-housing assets had been categorised as high, medium and low risk based on the use of the building and property type. Councillor Waters agreed with Councillor Galvin that it would be useful to have an update on a timeline for works in due course.

**RESOLVED** to note the update on Health, Safety and Compliance in Council Homes and Buildings.

## **8. Managing Assets (Non-Housing)**

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources presented the report. He noted that it was a small parcel of land being considered for disposal and that he was supporting the recommendation without prejudice to the broader issue in relation to the bypass. He noted that no monies would be received for the transfer but conversely there would be no maintenance costs to bear.

**RESOLVED** to approve the transfer of land identified in the report.

## **\*9. Minutes – Exempt (para 3)**

This item was noted under item 3 above.

CHAIR