

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7 June 2010 at the Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer at 10.00 am.

Members present:

Mrs P Bevan Jones	Mrs H T Nelson
Ms V R Gay (Chairman)	Mr E Seward
Mr G Jones	Mr C Stockton

Also attending:

Mrs L Brettle	Mr W Northam
Mrs H Eales	Mr N Ripley
Mrs A Fitch-Tillett	Mr B Smith
Mr P W High	Mrs C Wilkins

Officers in attendance:

The Chief Executive, The Deputy Chief Executive, the Strategic Director – Community, the Strategic Director – Information, the Financial Services Manager and the Technical Accountant.

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr P Moore.

12. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4 May 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Questions had been received from Mr Freer of Lambert Smith Hampton on behalf of the Ministry of Justice, and from Mr J Hughes of CETAG (Coltishall Eco-Town Action Group) on Agenda Item 7 – Former RAF Coltishall Site – Masterplan Proposals and Proposed Designation of Site as a Conservation Area.

14. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

16. MEMBERS' TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT GROUP

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Members' Training, Development and Support Group held on 30 April 2010 be received.

17. FORMER RAF COLTISHALL SITE – MASTERPLAN PROPOSALS AND PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF SITE AS A CONSERVATION AREA

Public Speakers: Mr Freer of Lambert Smith Hampton on behalf of the Ministry of Justice; Mr J Hughes of CETAG (Coltishall Eco-Town Action Group).

The report invited comment upon the masterplanning documents prepared on behalf of the Ministry of Justice by planning consultants Lambert Smith Hampton to support the proposed disposal of the balance of the former RAF Coltishall site. The report was asking Cabinet to approve for the purposes of consultation with the local community and interested parties the draft Conservation Area appraisal document prepared by the Council's Conservation, Design and Landscape Team.

It was suggested that anyone with concerns over the proposals could report these to the Development Control Committee when the planning application was made.

Mrs C Wilkins, the Member for the adjoining ward, gave apologies for the local Member, Mr S Whalley, and informed the meeting that they both supported the recommendations. She considered that the status of a conservation area would be a gift to the community and did not believe that this would stop development within it.

Cabinet Members also supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED that

- a) Cabinet indicates its general support for the masterplanning documents prepared in support of the future disposal of the balance of the former RAF Coltishall site by the Ministry of Justice as they broadly reflect established land-use policies and the former Position Paper prepared by the Council.
- b) Cabinet approves for the purposes of formal consultation the appraisal document prepared proposing designation of the former RAF Coltishall base as a Conservation Area.

18. 2009/10 FINAL ACCOUNTS

The report presented the outturn position for 2009/10 for both the general fund revenue account and capital programme. The report included details of where contributions had been made to earmarked reserves for future spending commitments.

A statement by Mr P Moore was referred to and is attached to these minutes.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that there had been slippages in some service areas. There were some underspends which had been rolled forward into the next year. There were, however, a number of instances reflecting efficiencies being driven through the budget. Provision had been made for outstanding consultancy fees. The shortfall in income from pay and display ticket sales was believed to be due to the effects of the recession. There was an underspend on private sector renewal grants and disabled facilities grants but the number of grants issued in the year had increased.

Where a question raised by a Member could not be answered at the meeting, it was requested that the written response made later be communicated to all Members.

It was noted that the Council had received grants over and above that expected and these had been put into reserves. The Council was in a good position and had tight financial control.

Members agreed that the following be

RECOMMENDED to Full Council:

- a) The final accounts position for the general fund revenue account for 2009/10;
- b) The transfers to and from reserves as detailed in the report;
- c) The financing of the capital programme as detailed within the report;
- d) The revised forecast balance on the general reserve of £951,023 at 31 March 2011;
- e) The updated capital programme for 2010/11 to 2012/13 and the associated financing of the schemes including an additional £15,000 for the asset management system to be funded from the asset management reserve;
- f) That subject to approval of recommendation e) and a business case being approved by the portfolio holder for Resources and Corporate Management Team the capital funding earmarked for the asset management system be released and the project commence.

19. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR 2009/10

The report set out the Treasury Management activities actually undertaken during 2009/10 compared with the Treasury Management Strategy for the year.

RECOMMENDED to Full Council to

approve the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2009/10.

20. DEBT RECOVERY 2009/10

This was an annual report detailing the council's collection performance and debt management arrangements for 2009/10. The report included a summary of debts written off in each debt area showing the reasons for write-off and values, collection performance for Council Tax and Non- Domestic Rates, level of arrears outstanding and level of provision for bad and doubtful debts.

RESOLVED to

approve the annual report giving details of the Council's write-offs in accordance with the Council's Debt Write-Off Policy and performance in relation to revenues collection.

21. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10 AND PERFORMANCE PLAN 2010/11

The report presented the draft Annual Report 2009/10 and Performance Plan 2010/11 for discussion and eventual approval.

It was noted that North Norfolk had the lowest recorded crime in Norfolk and probably in the country. Sickness absence had reduced by 28% over three years, which had saved the authority money and was the result of implementing a new policy. The tourism industry had been supported and numbers to tourist information centres and Cromer Visitor Centre had improved enormously.

The level of unemployment had doubled during July 2008 to February 2009 and it was suggested that this be looked into. Many of the jobs lost could be from industries which were outside the control of this Council.

It was also noted it was no longer a statutory requirement to publish a Best Value Performance Plan, thus removing a layer of bureaucracy. It was likely that there would be further deregulation and less bureaucracy with the announcement over the last week that Comprehensive Area Assessment had been abolished. Any work already carried out on that would form part of the annual audit letter. Current performance indicators relating to crime were to be replaced with a suite of more meaningful crime statistics. This was the last year of the current performance plan and work would soon commence towards creating a new one. One more annual plan was to be produced which could perhaps be more user-friendly as it was still necessary to monitor performance.

The Policy and Performance Management Officer was thanked for producing the report and plan.

RESOLVED that

- a) the Leader and Deputy Leader be given delegated authority to approve the Annual Report 2009/10 and Performance Plan 2010/11 for publication.
- b) the amendments to Corporate Plan targets as outlined in the draft document.

22. NNDC/NCC PARTNERSHIP

On 1 October 1999 the Council entered into a partnership agreement, under s101 Local Government Act 1972, with Norfolk County Council (NCC) for 10 ½ years ending on 31 March 2010. This report outlined the current position with regard to the termination of this agreement.

RESOLVED to

note the report.

23. CROMER COAST PROTECTION STRATEGY

The Review of the Cromer Coast Protection Strategy confirmed earlier studies that a major capital scheme was necessary to ensure the integrity of the Cromer sea defences.

It was pointed out that under the new layer of decision making, the outcome measure for a coast protection strategy at Cromer was nowhere near that needed to qualify. It was, however, important that all the defences in Cromer should be renewed in order to protect £84m of amenities in Cromer.

RESOLVED to

- a) approve the Cromer Coast Protection Strategy
- b) authorise the Head of Coastal Strategy to obtain all necessary consents to implement the strategy.
- c) initiate the procurement of the design consultants and contractors, subject always to compliance with the relevant Standing Orders and to funding.

24. CROMER PIER STRUCTURAL REFURBISHMENT

Cromer Pier was presently safe for public use. The recent structural survey had found no defects that threatened its immediate safety or that of the public. It did however identify urgent works to be undertaken within the next two years as well as other less urgent work, but which nevertheless must be given high priority. The overall works programme was estimated to be £3.27 million. It is strongly recommended that an annual inspection regime be implemented.

Members considered that it was important to recognise the value of Cromer Pier and there was a need to spend money on it in order to secure its long term future. There was also a need to start looking into making it a charitable trust to attract funding for this national treasure.

RESOLVED that

- a) the Council
 - i) promotes a phased programme of work within current capital budgets
 - ii) investigates options for additional funding
 - iii) investigates options for ownership
 - iv) instructs design consultants

- v) procures works contractors
- vi) obtains all necessary consents.
- b) an allocation is made within the revenue budgets for annual inspections and maintenance.

25. COASTAL PATHFINDER PROGRAMME

The report updated members on the many projects that were being delivered under the auspices of the Coastal Change Pathfinder Programme. Specific authorities were being sought to implement the diversion of the cliff top footpath at The Marrams, Cromer.

RESOLVED that

- a) the report is noted.
- b) the decisions taken under delegated authorities are approved.
- c) the principles of a land exchange to facilitate the diversion of the Marrams footpath, Cromer are agreed.
- d) delegated authority is given to the Strategic Director (Community) and the Corporate Asset Manager together to agree the land transfers in respect of the Marrams footpath diversion.
- e) the Council's Solicitor is instructed to commence and complete the statutory procedures involved in the footpath diversion.

26. DUTY TO RESPOND TO PETITIONS

The report set out the responsibilities of the Council to establish a petitions scheme, under sections 10-22 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

It was suggested that for a single ward there should be a signature threshold of 10% instead of 300 signatures as suggested in the model scheme.

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that

- a) the new statutory duty to respond to petitions be noted;
- b) the petitions scheme be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 June 2010 before being submitted to Full Council on 29 June 2010;
- c) a further report on the implementation of e-petitions by 15 December 2010 be brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet.
- d) where the petition relates to a single ward, there should be a signature threshold of 10% of the ward population and not 300 signatures as suggested in the model scheme.

The meeting closed at 11.26am.

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Chairman, 5 July 2010