

## **BROADLAND COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a meeting of the Broadland Council of Broadland District Council, held on Thursday, 27 July 2023 at 7.00 pm.**

**Committee Members Present:** Councillors: C Karimi-Ghovanlou (Chair), , P Auber, B Baby, S Beadle, M Booth, F Bowe, N Brennan, P Bulman, S Catchpole, S Clancy, J Coppelstone, A Crotch, J Davis, L Douglass, C Eden, J Emsell, M Goodman, S Gurney, N Harpley, J Harvey, L Hemsall, S Holland, E Laming, K Leggett, T Mancini-Boyle, A Miah, M Murrell, P Newstead, G Nurden, S Riley, D Roper, J Royal, L Starling, N Starling, D Thomas, E Tovell, K Vincent, S Ward, F Whymark and T Yousefian

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors: A Tipple (Vice-Chair), J Bailey, B Johnson, S Jones, K Kelly and R Potter

**Officers in Attendance:** T Holden (Managing Director), P Courtier (Director of Place), E Hodds (Chief of Staff), R Fincham (Assistant Director of Finance) and C White (Democratic Services Manager)

**Also in Attendance:** Two members of the public.

### **23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J Bailey, B Johnson, S Jones, K Kelly, R Potter and A Tipple.

### **25. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

## **26. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairwoman drew members' attention to her civic engagements for the period 26 May to 27 July 2023. She advised Council that a particular highlight had been the Coronation Reception for Community Champions at the Norfolk Showground on 28 June 2023, which had been attended by a huge number of volunteers from across the County.

The Leader advised the meeting that she had attended a meeting of the Norfolk Leaders which had considered the Norfolk Devolution Deal. The meeting had discussed governance matters, as well as concerns about funding and the possible dilution of the powers of district councils under the current Deal. It had, therefore, been agreed that district council leaders would write to the Secretary of State setting out these concerns. It was also hoped that a meeting with the Secretary of State could also be arranged for leaders to talk through these concerns further.

The plans by the National Grid for the Norwich to Tilbury pylons were also discussed at the meeting. The route did not affect Broadland but would go through parts of South Norfolk, which would have a detrimental effect on areas of countryside. There were also concerns that none of the power being carried via the pylons would be used in Norfolk, despite the need for additional energy provision in the County. The Norfolk Leaders' Group had agreed to write to the Government expressing these concerns.

The Leader also advised the meeting that work on the budget and the new four-year Delivery Plan were ongoing and that all members would have an opportunity to contribute to their formation as they were developed and brought forward, prior to being taken to the 22 February 2024 Council meeting.

In respect of the disposal of the Council's former office, Thorpe Lodge, the Leader advised members that the site was coming to the end of its 12-month planning restriction period when it could only be sold for office use. Officers were currently preparing a paper on future options for the site and this would come forward to members in due course.

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development wished to record his thanks to elected members and particularly the members of the public who participated in the recently held customer experience workshops, which had generated a lot of very good ideas for how to make the customer experience better in Broadland. He looked forward to a report coming forward as a result of this work in due course.

## **27. QUESTIONS**

No questions had been received from members of the public.

## **28. PUBLIC SPEAKING**

There had been no requests from members of the public to speak.

## 29. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET

Members considered the recommendations from the Cabinet arising from the meetings held 13 June and 18 July 2023

### a) Strategic Performance Risk and Finance Report for Quarter 4 2022/23

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the recommendations from Cabinet regarding the proposed increase in the member ward budget and the establishment of a Community Grant Fund Panel.

He advised Council that the proposals would be welcomed by residents and communities in the District. He emphasised that it had been a long-standing aspiration by some members to provide greater funding of community projects by increasing the member ward budget from £500 to £1,000 per member, and to establish a budget of £50,000 for a newly formed Community Grant Fund Panel.

He proposed the recommendations from Cabinet, which were then duly seconded by the Leader.

Cllr M Murrell noted the current position in respect of temporary accommodation, which had faced an overspend of £238,000 the previous year and a projected increase in demand over the next few years. In the light of this he suggested that the underspend could be better spent and he proposed the following amendment to the recommendations:

*That the overrun of £435,000 is added to the Temporary Accommodation Reserve, and the Reserve is used to offset either revenue or capital spend to alleviate future exceptional costs. The spend to be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Housing in a consultation with the Assistant Director for Individuals and Families.*

The proposed amendment was seconded by Cllr J Copplestone. Cllr Copplestone spoke in support of the points raised by Cllr Murrell and stressed the importance of addressing the increasing need for temporary accommodation and the associated budgets.

Some members spoke in support of the amendment and emphasised the duty of the Council to provide temporary accommodation for those in urgent need. It was suggested that this was a one-off saving and should be spent as such.

Some members queried whether this was a change in policy and how the increase in the member ward budget and the funding for the Community Grant Fund Panel would be financed in following years, should there be no budget underspend.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning reminded the meeting that the recommendations from Cabinet made no reference to temporary accommodation and the proposed amendment would simply move money from one budget to another. He acknowledged that temporary accommodation was vitally important, but this issue was being addressed by other means and he confirmed that he

would oppose the amendment.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance agreed that there was a huge need for temporary accommodation, due to issues such as tax and financial pressures on private sector landlords and the inability of affordable homes to be built quickly enough for social housing providers. He added that the projected overspend on bed and breakfast accommodation, as referred to by Cllr Murrell, was approximately £129,000 and when the properties that had been recently acquired came on stream in October the overspend would come down to only a few thousand pounds over budget. Therefore, whilst he supported the principle, he considered the proposed amendment unnecessary to meet the temporary accommodation need and he would oppose it. He added that the Council's policy on housing and homelessness would be brought back to members to scope and develop as part of the new four-year Delivery Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Housing advised Council that she would also oppose the amendment. She emphasised that the Council had a significant commitment to housing and addressing homelessness, as demonstrated by the recent investment it had made in temporary accommodation. The Council would also be taking a more holistic approach to housing that would include measures to keep people safe and secure in their homes, as well as protecting victims of domestic abuse. This would be brought forward as part of a whole package of new initiatives in the near future.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cllr N Starling, emphasised that the aim of the recommendation was to return money to communities for local projects and encourage members to engage closely with residents in their wards and make spending decisions based on the need within their communities. He also made the point that the proposed amendment had already been discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the proposal had been lost.

Cllr Murrell reiterated the importance of addressing the need for temporary accommodation and expressed his disappointment that the Council was not planning to utilise the underspend to meet this need.

Members then voted on the amendment and a recorded vote was conducted as follows:

Cllrs Bowe, Brennan, Bulman, Clancy, Copplestone, Crotch, Douglass, Emsell, Gurney, Hemsall, Leggett, Mancini-Boyle, Murrell, Newstead, Nurden, Vincent and Whymark voted in favour of the amendment.

Cllrs Auber, Baby, Beadle, Booth, Catchpole, Davis, Eden, Goodman, Harpley, Harvey, Holland, Karimi-Ghovanlou, Laming, Miah, Riley, Roper, Royal, L Starling, N Starling, Thomas, Tovell, Ward and Yousefian voted against the amendment.

With 17 votes in favour and 23 against, the amendment was lost.

Members of the opposition group advised the meeting that they were disappointed that the Portfolio Holder for Finance had appeared not to have

considered the gap in the Medium-Term Financial Plan and the cost of temporary accommodation that was contributing to it. There had also been no mention of the Community at Heart Lottery, which was fulfilling much of the need for local project funding already and was added to from any unused member grant. Moreover, to allocate unused member grant to the Community Grant Fund Panel would be a change of policy, which required due process. It has also been noted that the Pride of Place Community Grant Scheme was just about to open for applications, and this was another existing source of funding for community projects.

A member pointed to the fact that member grants fell within the Economic Development Portfolio and concerns were expressed that this was a change of policy that should have gone through the Economic Success Policy Development Panel. Disappointment was also expressed that at the 13 June Cabinet meeting non-Cabinet members had not been allowed the opportunity to comment on the recommendations as they had already spoken at the start of the meeting.

The Leader reminded the meeting that the suggestion to use the underspend for temporary accommodation had been discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She also noted that the Policy Development Panels were advisory bodies that worked to support the Portfolio Holders and there was no requirement in the Constitution for changes in policy to go through them. She added that it had already been confirmed that the Council would be reviewing its Housing Policy and that the additional support for community groups would benefit the mental health and wellbeing of residents and was a great opportunity to do something which helped whole communities and she urged members to vote for it.

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development confirmed that the ongoing funding for the Member Ward Grant and Panel would be confirmed when the budget was agreed in February 2024 and that prior to this members would have ample opportunity to contribute to the budget setting process. He suggested that the attitude expressed by those who opposed the recommendation suggested that members thought that they had spent enough on their local communities.

In response to this, Cllr F Whymark stressed that members supported their communities on a daily basis and that the Council already had a comprehensive grant system in place to assist with this. His Group objected to suggestions that it was not supporting its community; there were other funding pots available to support community projects and concerns had been raised due to the need to prioritise Council budgets.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance suggested that the new administration was perfectly entitled to return money to their communities, as had been set out in the manifestos they had been elected on and that the proposal would be fully funded in a balanced budget.

The Chairman then advised the meeting that a vote would be taken on recommendation 1 only, as the recommendation regarding the introduction of a Community Grant Fund Panel and its associated terms of reference would be considered as part of the Monitoring Officer report (minute 29)

Members then voted on the amendment and a recorded vote was conducted as follows:

Cllrs Auber, Baby, Beadle, Booth, Catchpole, Davis, Eden, Goodman, Harpley, Harvey, Holland, Karimi-Ghovanlou, Laming, Miah, Riley, Roper, Royal, L Starling, N Starling, Thomas, Tovell, Ward and Yousefian voted in favour of the recommendation.

Cllrs Bowe, Brennan, Bulman, Clancy, Copplestone, Crotch, Douglass, Emsell, Gurney, Hemsall, Leggett, Mancini-Boyle, Murrell, Newstead, Nurden, Vincent and Whymark voted against of the recommendation.

With 23 votes in favour and 17 votes against, the recommendation was carried.

## **RESOLVED**

To agree the re-purposing of part of the underspend to establish an increased member ward budget of £1,000 per member, and to establish a budget of £50,000 for a newly formed Community Grant Fund Panel.

### **b) Licensing Fees and Charges Review**

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence introduced the item which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 18 July 2023. He reminded members that the Council was a statutory licensing authority that levied fees and charges for a wide range of services and activities.

Members were informed that the service had seen an increased demand during and following the pandemic. Therefore, a full review of the Licensing Services had been carried out to inform a robust and transparent fee setting process and to take account of recent significant changes to certain areas of activity such as animal licensing. The review identified that the current schedule of fees and charges did not recover the full costs, which meant that some licensing activities were being subsidised by the Council Taxpayers.

He proposed the recommendations from Cabinet, which were then duly seconded by the Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development.

During discussion, members voiced their agreement with the principle of residents not subsidising services that they did not use and one member reminded Council that the review had been initiated by the previous administration.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cllr N Starling informed the meeting that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had enjoyed a good debate on the subject and had been in full agreement that the report was an excellent piece of work which was supported unanimously.

Cllr S Catchpole confirmed that, as Chair of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee, she was pleased that the increased funding would allow for enough staff time to monitor licensable activities, and that she would support the

recommendations.

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development commended officers for their excellent work and emphasised the importance of having sufficient funds to undertake the regulatory activity required around licensing activity.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence added that the review had established a baseline that could be developed and monitored in detail as it was taken forward.

Following a show of hands, it was unanimously:

### **RESOLVED**

1. To adopt the proposed fees and charges in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, subject to RPI.
2. To agree the reviewed Licensing fees and charges being applied to all new licence and renewal applications with effect from 1st April 2024, with a phased introduction (one-third of the increase applied in Year 1 from 1st April 2024 and remaining two-thirds increase applied in Year 2 from 1st April 2025).
3. To agree the fees and charges relating to Scrap Metal at Appendix 1.
4. To authorise the Food, Safety and Licensing Manager to publish the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing fees in accordance with the relevant legislative provisions, together with delegated authority to consider any objections received and only refer matters back to Cabinet if substantial comments, material to the implementation of the revised fees and charges, are received.

## **30. MONITORING OFFICER REPORT**

Members considered the report of the Monitoring Officer.

The Leader advised the meeting that the main proposals contained in the report were in respect of the formation of the Community Grant Fund Panel. The report also included the appointment of members to committee seats appointments to outside bodies and the appointment of Member Champions.

A member asked that given the Leader's previous remark about the Policy Development Panels, why it was felt to be necessary to have a Community Grant Fund Panel.

In response, the Leader reiterated her point that the Policy Development Panels were advisory bodies intended to support Portfolio Holders. The Community Grant Fund Panel terms of reference were clear; the Panel would determine grant applications and would be politically balanced. She also stressed that at no time

had she said that the Panels were inconsequential.

Cllr Whymark advised Council that he wished to nominate Cllrs Lacey Douglass and Shelagh Gurney to sit the Community Grant Fund Panel, representing the Conservative Group.

He also confirmed that Cllr Grant Nurden would replace Cllr J Bailey on the Norfolk Records Committee.

Following a show of hands, it was unanimously

## **RESOLVED**

To approve:

1. The formation of the Community Grant Fund Panel and its associated Terms of Reference at Appendix A to the report.
2. The appointment of members to committee seats, as set out in section 3 of the report, and as detailed above
3. The appointment to outside bodies as set out in section 4 of the report and as detailed above.

## **31. OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

There were no reports from outside organisations

## **32. QUESTION FROM CLLR S CLANCY**

**Could the Leader inform the Council is it the intention of the new administration to continue the work of the Members Peer Review Group by way of a follow up of the previous work carried out by the Broadland Collaborative Members Working Group?**

The Leader advised the meeting that much of the work by all Groups would be taken into account by the Council going forward, but she noted that many of the issues raised in the Peer Review had now been resolved.

She advised the meeting that the Peer Review Team would be returning in October 2023 and officers had been looking at the points raised and how they had been addressed. Therefore, in the last few months of the 2023/24 Delivery Plan the administration would be focused on a policy review and any strategic planning, which would inform the Council going forward. However, much that had been learned from the Peer Review would be taken into account in developing the new Plan.

Cllr Clancy thanked the Leader for her assurance that the valuable work carried out by both Working Groups would be put to good use.



**33. QUESTION FROM CLLR S GURNEY**

**Given the fact that we have new Cabinet Members for Environmental Excellence and Economic Development, please could our residents be advised (in some detail) the exact reasons as to why it was deemed appropriate to cancel both recent committee meetings?**

**The previous Conservative administration was proactively pursuing many environmental policies, including decarbonisation of our estate, further improvement to waste collection and many others to achieve Net Zero by 2030. These important issues, including a Public Spaces Protection Order in Broadland (as introduced by Norwich City Council) all build upon the proactive legacy of the previous administration. Where are they now and what is planned for Broadland?**

**Likewise with Economic Development, the plans for Broadland Country Park and new initiatives to promote further the Food Innovation Centre, the Parking Strategy, promotion of SME's and updates on recovery post Covid in Broadland?**

**The very fact that these meeting have been cancelled due to a 'lack of Business' must surely demonstrate to our residents that Broadland under the Rainbow Alliance is not leading the way. Conversely, it is already suffering from a lack of proactive leadership. How are we planning to address the environmental and economic wellbeing of our District?**

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development advised Council that the meetings in question were Panels, not Committees and, therefore, advisory bodies to assist the work of the Portfolio Holder.

He advised the meeting that the previous administration cancelled nine Economic Success Panel meetings between 2020 and 2023 and rescheduled only four of them. Moreover, over the same period, 33 Panels of all types had been cancelled, which demonstrated that this practice was not unusual.

In the case of the Economic Success Panel, the reason for the cancellation was that the report from the consultants on the Broadland Country Park had not yet been received and this was the main business for the Panel to consider. A meeting would be rescheduled when the report became available.

Members were reminded that the Council was coming to the end of the current Delivery Plan and that the new administration was working on a future Plan. Members could be reassured that there would be much work for the Policy Development Panels once that Plan was in place in a few months' time.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence added that Cabinet was in the process of reviewing the existing Delivery Plan, in order to maintain continuity and a smooth transition. He was in regular contact with the Assistant Directors in his portfolio to ensure that he was kept informed about operational matters and ensure efficient service delivery, whilst reviewing opportunities to decarbonise the Council's estate and improve recycling rates. As had already been stated, it was

not unusual for Panel meetings to be cancelled. In respect of the Environmental Excellence Panel meeting, it was considered to be too early in the policy development process to bring items forward for discussion. However, when there were important matters to consider all-member briefings would be arranged and he referred to the briefing on vehicle related anti-social behaviour that took place earlier that week (this included the Public Spaces Protection Order in Broadland).

As a supplementary question, Cllr Gurney asked why it was felt appropriate for a public consultation on the Public Spaces Protection Order to be held following the briefing, rather than after being taken to the Policy Development Panel?

In response the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence advised Council that this matter concerned all members and therefore it was considered appropriate that all members would have an opportunity to comment on this important issue. He added that the Panel's function was to undertake work allocated to it by Cabinet for the purpose of advising the Portfolio Holder. In this particular case it was considered advantageous that all members should receive the briefing and be advised of the consultation.

#### **34. QUESTION FROM CLLR T MANCINI-BOYLE**

**Decarbonisation: Broadland Council's path to net ZERO by 2030 led by the Conservatives Broadland District Council has already reduced its carbon footprint by over 85% and has 193 tonnes of carbon (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) to remove or off-set to achieve net ZERO by 2030. Having been successful last year under the previous administration in winning the PSDS decarbonisation funding to replace the gas boilers here at the Horizon Centre with Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) please can the Portfolio Holder for the Environment confirm:-**

- 1. All the gas boilers at the Horizon Centre (including the Annex) are being replace with ASHPs?**
- 2. How much funding is being contributed by each Council?**
- 3. How much carbon (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) will be removed from the Broadland carbon footprint by replacing all the gas boilers with ASHPs?**
- 4. Reconfirm the Conservative commitment to achieve carbon ZERO by 2030.**

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence confirmed that:

1. All the gas boilers were to be replaced with ASHPs.
2. The contribution from each Council for the ASHPS would be £71,750, plus £45,000 contingency from the Environmental Reserve, plus £20,000 from the revenue budget for project management.
3. The estimated carbon saving would be 50.15 tonnes per year. Half of

this would be attributed to Broadland and half to South Norfolk (the carbon footprint for Broadland in 2021-22 was 1,092 tonnes).

4. The new administration would reaffirm the Council's continued commitment to achieve carbon Zero by 2030.

As a supplementary question Cllr Mancini-Boyle asked if the installation of the ASHP was on track.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence advised the meeting that he had been assured that the project was on schedule. Officers were aware that the external funding for the project was time critical and to a tight schedule.

### 35. MOTION: CLLRS T MANCINI-BOYLE AND F WHYMARK

Cllr T Mancini-Boyle proposed the following motion, which was duly seconded by Cllr F Whymark:

**“This Council notes that the current administration whilst in opposition proposed to use the funding set aside for Broadland Growth to be reduced to divert funds to retro-fitting, for example. With this approach the money can only be used once rather than being reinvested and providing further opportunities for the residents of Broadland.**

**The Conservative Group are keen to see that the £7m currently allocated to Broadland Growth is used as was initially intended. There is already a history of building quality homes for our residents whilst turning a profit that can be reinvested back into the Council. With the funds returned to the public purse this will help to address the gap in the Medium Term Financial Plan. This is residents money and the Conservative Group call for the Council to do what is best for all of our residents so as to not increased the risk of escalating council tax.**

**This Council resolves to:**

- 1. Confirm the £7m continued investment in Broadland Growth**
- 2. Ensure that a pipeline of projects, with full business cases, are developed to ensure that this council continues with its prime objective of delivering for all residents and businesses.”**

The Leader informed the meeting that officers were working on a number of viability appraisals for the delivery of housing, which could potentially bring a return to the Council. Currently these were in the early stages but would be brought to members for consideration in due course.

She also confirmed that there was no intention to change the budget allocation for Broadland Growth at this stage. However, the Council might consider other vehicles for the delivery of housing, for example, a wholly owned property company, rather than a 50/50 partnership.

For the reasons above, the Leader confirmed that she would not support the motion, as it would not change any of the housing delivery ambitions that the new administration already had.

Cllr S Clancy was reassured that Broadland Growth would continue and that the Council was considering a number of delivery options and housing tenures. He was also reassured that the Council would seek to generate a profit from these ventures that would provide both homes and a return to the public purse that could be reinvested for the benefit of all residents.

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development advised the meeting that he would not support the motion because he disagreed with the style and substance of it. In respect of the style, he did not think that what a political group felt should be included in a motion to Council, which made the first paragraph irrelevant. With regard to substance, he noted that resolution 1 was in the budget and could not be changed unless there was a resolution otherwise, so the motion was effectively meaningless. Resolution 2, was also meaningless as this was the existing policy and until this was changed it would continue to be the policy.

He noted that Broadland Growth Ltd had delivered two projects over the past ten years and he would like to know why more development had not taken place and if the Council needed to explore alternative models or additional mechanisms as the new administration had ambitions for the development of housing going forward.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised the meeting that he would not support the motion and noted that the model for the delivery of housing needed to be re-examined against the current needs and requirements for housing in Broadland.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Housing informed the meeting that she was looking at a wide range of housing delivery models and she would also not support the motion as she wanted all options to remain available.

Cllr E Laming felt it pleasing that the Council was making housing a priority and she noted that Broadland Growth had delivered two very good projects, but as the last one was in 2020 she had concerns that it was not making best use of the budget allocated to it.

Cllr Gurney explained that the new administration had talked about a number of actions, policies, examinations and options going forward, but she was disappointed that it had not set out any substantive recommendations that could be debated. She wanted to see a timeline for the actions being proposed.

Cllr F Whymark was disappointed that the administration had indicated that they would not support the motion, as when in opposition they had wanted to take funding away from the Broadland Growth budget to spend on temporary accommodation or retrofitting yet had rejected using the £435,000 budget surplus for that purpose earlier in the meeting. He emphasised that the motion was aimed at reinforcing the Council's commitment to delivering good quality affordable housing and he advised that Broadland Growth had a very good Development Manager who would be driving forward development opportunities.

Cllr Mancini Boyle advised the meeting that the reason she had put the motion forward was due to concerns that the funding for Broadland Growth would be spent on retrofitting, as had been proposed by the Green members during the last administration. She also informed the meeting that the Council could undertake projects on its own through Broadland Growth Ltd. She added that difficulty in finding appropriate land, as well as the nutrient neutrality issues were the reasons why new development had stalled.

With 17 votes for and 23 against, the motion was then lost.

**36. MOTION: CLLRS L HEMPSALL AND J COPPLESTONE**

Cllr L Hempsall proposed the following motion, seconded by Cllr J Coplestone

**Following the dismissed judicial review (JR) of the Development Consent Order to dual the A47 between Blofield and North Burlingham, North Tuddenham and Easton and the redevelopment of the Thickthorn junction (where the A11 meets the A47) Broadland District Council resolves to fully support this important infrastructure project and will write to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Roads Minister to ensure National Highways deliver the improvements.**

**In addition, as the JR brought by the climate change spokesperson Andrew Boswell has caused unnecessary delay to the project, Broadland District Council urges National Highways to approve the Designated Funds bids submitted by Norfolk County Council to create a direct walking / cycling connection between Lingwood and North Burlingham and an East / West walking / cycling connection between North Burlingham and Acle. Additionally, I would ask you highlight the importance of these schemes to the ongoing success of the Broadland Food Innovation Centre. These improvements will support local residents, businesses and visitors to Broadland and the wider area, giving greater choice about the way in which they go about their daily activities.**

Cllr Hempsall advised the meeting that she was putting forward the above motion because she was disappointed that this valuable infrastructure project for Norfolk had been delayed unnecessarily. The section of road was one of the UK's worst accident hot spots and by making the improvements it could prevent many accidents over the next few years. The delay also meant that the Norfolk County Council bids to the National Highways infrastructure projects could be lost. Moreover, the works would save journey times, reduce congestion and keep the County moving. She therefore urged the Council to support the motion.

Cllr N Starling expressed disappointment in the motion, as it named a member of the public and suggested that he had caused unnecessary delay to the scheme by bringing forward a Judicial Review, whereas it appeared that it was not the Judicial Review but in fact a Minister not signing the scheme off that had caused the delay. He urged members to refrain from naming people who had no right to reply, in Council motions. Furthermore, he resented the suggestion that a Judicial Review was an affront to democracy, as it undermined the trust in law and implied

that questions should never be asked of those in power.

Cllr S Clancy asked for unanimous support for the motion. He noted that it had been discussed for 30 years and had been subject to numerous delays, due to Governments of all persuasions abdicating their responsibilities to unelected quangos. He noted that there was widespread support in Norfolk for the improvements from business and residents and the environmental benefits would be significant. Moreover, it would bring benefits to the Broadland Food Innovation Centre.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence suggested that the motion was very confused and included lots of issues that made it hard to discern what was being asked for. However, he agreed that there were safety issues and the road had been neglected for too long. He confirmed that he had met with National Highways earlier today and they were clear that the project was going ahead, so writing to the Secretary of State would not change the scheduled works.

The Leader informed the meeting that she did not think that this was part of Broadland's remit and was instead a matter for the County Council. Broadland had in the past voiced its support for the scheme and nothing had changed so it was not for the Council to put the motion forward and she would not support it.

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development noted that the Council had supported the improvements to the A47 for a number of years, so whether the motion was supported or not did not make any difference to the policy of the Council. He also found the motion confused and felt that he could not support it in its current form. In respect of the designated bids by the County Council he understood from discussions with the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence that they were additional designated fund bids that were not connected to the project itself but were additional projects that supported the local area and community, so this part of the motion was incorrect.

He added that he might be minded to support the motion should it be amended in to a more coherent form, but if this was not the case, he felt it should be withdrawn.

Cllr P Bulman stated that the motion was quite clear and at the heart of it was the question, do we or do we not support the A47 improvements? He was pleased to hear that the Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Organisational Development did support the improvements to the A47. After some debate he proposed that the wording of the original motion be deleted and replaced with

**“This Council endorses the duelling of the A47 between Blofield and North Burlingham and North Tuddenham and Easton, and wishes to write to the Secretary of State to ensure that this matter is speedily expediated.”**

The amendment was seconded by Cllr S Clancy and accepted by the original proposer and seconder, Cllrs Hemsall and Coplestone.

A couple of members confirmed that they had spoken to Highways and it was clear that the improvements would be going ahead and they therefore felt it a

waste of time to write to the Secretary of State.

The Leader confirmed that she could still not support the motion as the Council had already given its support to the scheme and it was, therefore, a waste of Council time. This view was supported by a number of members, with a suggestion that the motion was just “gesture politics”.

Cllr Copplestone expressed disappointment that some members had said they would not support the motion, which she considered hugely important for the growth and the economy of the whole of Greater Norwich.

Cllr Hemsall, in response to Cllr N Starling’s assertion that the person that was referred to in the original motion had no right to reply, reminded members that the agenda for the meeting included items for public speaking and questions from the public, and was published five clear days in advance of the meeting. She added that she had put forward this motion because she wanted to be able to reassure the residents in her ward that the Council continued to support the dualling of the A47, which was very important to them.

A recorded vote was then conducted as follows:

Cllrs Bowe, Brennan, Bulman, Clancy, Copplestone, Crotch, Douglass, Emsell, Gurney, Hemsall, Leggett, Mancini-Boyle, Murrell, Newstead, Nurden, Vincent and Whymark voted in favour of the amended motion.

Cllrs Auber, Baby, Booth, Catchpole, Davis, Eden, Harpley, Harvey, Holland, Karimi-Ghovanlou, Laming, Miah, Riley, Royal, L Starling, N Starling, Thomas, Tovell, Ward and Yousefian voted against the amended motion.

Cllr Roper abstained from the vote.

With 17 votes in favour, 20 against and one abstention, the motion was lost.  
*Council adjourned at 9.30pm and reconvened at 9.35pm.*

### **37. MOTION: CLLRS J DAVIS AND S HOLLAND**

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence introduced the following motion:

**“This Council notes**

**That the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees C (IPCC, October 2018) describes the enormous harm that a 2 degree C rise in global temperatures is likely to cause compared with a 1.5 degree C rise, and that limiting Global Warming to 1.5 degree C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, and the private sector.**

**The rate of climate change is increasing and lack of rapid action to address it is causing alarm in the scientific community (IPCC Progress Report to**

Parliament 28 June 2023, IPCC Sixth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis). Norfolk's councils are cutting carbon emissions in their areas, but not as fast as the science demands. BDC adopted an organisational 2030 target for achieving net-zero carbon emissions on 13 October 2022, but this does not address wider district carbon emissions.

The UK Parliament and approximately 300 Local Authorities (75%) have declared a climate emergency (LGA,2022) Biodiversity is essential both to humans, through the provision of ecosystem services such as food, fuel, flood prevention and enjoyment, and in its own right as part of the natural world. Biodiversity is under severe threat. Nearly 500 species have become extinct in England in the last 200 years, 40% of the UK's reedbeds have disappeared since 1945, 75% of England's lowland heaths have been lost in the last 200 years, nearly 50% of England and Wales' ancient woodland has been destroyed and current rates of extinction may be 1,000 times greater than global natural background levels. (Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership).

The Environment Act 2021 set out the importance of biodiversity net gain, an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a better state than it was beforehand, together with a stronger legal duty for public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Actions to restore nature and biodiversity are vital for their own sake, and increase storage of carbon, helping to address climate change. Climate change and the loss of biodiversity will change the future for humanity and should be considered in conjunction with each other.

### **Motion**

- 1. Council recognises the dangerous and accelerating effects of unmitigated climate change and ecological destruction for Broadland, Norfolk, and globally.**
- 2. Council resolves to declare a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency to highlight the importance and significance of climate change and biodiversity in all we do.**
- 3. Council resolves to act accordingly within the limits of its resources and powers and report back regularly on progress.**

The Leader seconded the above motion.

Cllr F Whymark proposed the following amendment, seconded by Cllr S Gurney:

**“To delete resolution 3 and to replace with**

- 3) Council will develop strategies during 2023-24 and ongoing at the Economic Success Policy Development Panel with measurable targets to support Broadland businesses to reduce their carbon footprint.**



- 4) Council will develop strategies during 2023-24 and ongoing at the Environmental Excellence Policy Development Panel with measurable targets to identify areas where the impact of the Council's work can be improved i.e. increasing recycling rates to 60 percent by 2025.**
- 5) Council resolves to build upon the success of the previous administration recognising the significant contribution the move to the Horizon Centre has made in reducing the overall carbon footprint of the Council by over 85 percent with a target of Net ZERO for the whole estate by 2025.**
- 6) Council resolves to act within the limits of its resources and powers and report to Council on progress at least every six months, so that members can evaluate progress towards a target of Net ZERO by 2030.**

A number of members, in supporting the amendment, noted the importance of having measurable targets when seeking to achieve Net ZERO.

The Leader informed the meeting that it was already Council policy to support businesses in achieving Net ZERO. What the original motion was setting out to do was to expand from not just looking at the Council's own estate, but to work across the District. She confirmed that measures were a good way forward, but it would have to be ensured that the right measures were put in place, which would require going through them in detail with officers to set achievable targets, rather than agreeing to them at this stage. She added that the original motion was a very good baseline that could be developed as work progressed towards achieving Net ZERO and she would, therefore, not support the amendment.

Cllr Gurney informed the meeting that she had seconded the amendment, as she felt that the original motion did not go far enough in recording or being accountable to the residents of Broadland. She added that she would want to see more statistical analysis and an audit trail and noted that the Leader seemed to indicate that this would also be desirable. She therefore, suggested that the motion be withdrawn so that members of the administration and the opposition had the opportunity to re-draft, point 3 of the original motion to provide a better explanation of how the Council would act accordingly within the limits of its resources and powers and provide a timeline for reporting to committees.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence noted the recognition from members that the world was in a climate and biodiversity emergency and that members needed to work together as a Council and with their communities and residents to address this issue. He emphasised the importance of making a statement that recognised the situation and that the Council would endeavour, as best it could within the limits of resources and powers, to work with residents and businesses.

He noted the reference some members had made to supporting businesses meet environmental targets, and that his own proposals for this had been voted down by the previous administration as being over burdensome. He agreed that targets were needed to measure progress, but that these needed to be developed with partners. Much of this could be done through the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership, which now had a Programme Manager to drive forward this work. He commended the original motion to the Council.

Cllr F Whymark suggested that the original motion could be seen as virtue signalling, because it did not include anything meaningful or measurable. He reiterated his point that achievable environmental targets could be developed through the Policy Development Panels.

Members then voted on the amended motion and a recorded vote was conducted as follows:

Cllrs Bowe, Clancy, Coppleson, Crotch, Douglass, Emsell, Gurney, Hemsall, Mancini-Boyle, Murrell, Newstead, Nurden, Vincent and Whymark voted in favour of the amended motion.

Cllrs Auber, Baby, Beadle, Booth, Catchpole, Davis, Eden, Goodman, Harpley, Harvey, Holland, Karimi-Ghovanlou, Laming, Miah, Riley, Roper, Royal, L Starling, N Starling, Thomas, Tovell, Ward and Yousefian voted against the amended motion.

With 14 votes in favour and 23 against the amended motion was lost.

Discussion then turned to the substantive motion.

Cllr L Hemsall said she was disappointed with the wording of the motion because it demonstrated a lack of awareness of what achieving Net ZERO actually meant for the Council, residents and for business. Having clear metrics with measurable outcomes was essential if the Council was going to make any difference. She would, therefore, be voting against it.

Cllr E Laming reminded the meeting that the Council had an Environmental Strategy and had undertaken a carbon audit and moved to a carbon neutral building. These were very positive steps in terms of reducing carbon emissions from the Council's estate, but there was always more that could be done. She was concerned that Broadland had been in the minority of local authorities that had not declared a climate and biodiversity emergency and by making this statement the Council would be showing the leadership expected of it. She did not think that targets were necessary at this stage as this was a new administration that needed to consider what was feasible and achievable. She, therefore, commended the motion.

Cllr D Thomas noted that over the last four years declaring a climate and biodiversity emergency had been put forward as a motion a number of times and rejected by the previous administration and that if it had been supported the Council would have made a lot more progress towards Net ZERO.

Cllr S Catchpole informed the meeting that she was a founder member of a local Climate Emergency Group set up approximately two years ago because her residents did not believe that the Government or the Council were doing enough. The new administration had listened to its residents, but consultation and research was needed before measures were introduced. She saw this as a starting point on what she hoped would be a much more rapid journey over the next four years.

Cllr M Murrell stated that recognising the dangerous and accelerating effects of unmitigated climate change and ecological destruction for Broadland, Norfolk, and globally as set out in motion 1 was meaningless without actions, and he therefore, could not support it.

The Leader noted that all members recognised the dangers that the world faced and by declaring a climate and biodiversity emergency the Council was acknowledging what was happening and that it was going to do something about it.

The measures would be brought forward in due course, when a significant amount of new data generated from moving into the Horizon Centre became available but many new measures such as the air source heat pumps were not yet in place. In the meantime, the Delivery Plan already had many policies in place for reporting on environmental issues. She reiterated that the motion was important to make a statement that the Council was aware of the significance of the emergency and would make tackling it central to everything it did.

Members then voted on the motion and a recorded vote was conducted as follows:

Cllrs Auber, Baby, Beadle, Booth, Catchpole, Davis, Eden, Goodman, Harpley, Harvey, Holland, Karimi-Ghovanlou, Laming, Miah, Riley, Roper, Royal, L Starling, N Starling, Thomas, Tovell, Ward and Yousefian voted for motion.

Cllrs Bowe, Clancy, Copplestone, Crotch, Douglass, Emsell, Gurney, Hemsall, Mancini-Boyle, Murrell, Newstead, Nurden, Vincent and Whymark voted against of the motion.

With 23 votes in favour and 14 against the motion was carried.

(The meeting concluded at 10.26 pm)

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Chairman