



Minutes of the **Cabinet Meeting** held in the **Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, Riduna Park, Melton** on **Tuesday 5 March 2019** at **6.30 pm**

Members of Cabinet present:

R Herring (Leader), G Holdcroft (Deputy Leader), A Fryatt, S Gallant, T-J Haworth-Culf, R Kerry, C Poulter, A Smith.

Other Members present:

C Block.

Officers present:

S Baker (Chief Executive), L Beighton (Planning Development Manager), C Buck (Senior Planning and Enforcement Officer), K Cook (Democratic Services and Cabinet Business Manager), P Goodrick (Housing Development Manager), T Howarth (Principal Environmental Health Officer), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), N Khan (Strategic Director), S Shinnie (Active Communities Officer), Paul Wood (Head of Economic Development & Regeneration).

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lawson.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Holdcroft declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest in respect of agenda item 6, East Suffolk MYGO Youth Employment Service, as a Governor of the Seckford Foundation and Chairman of the Community Benefits Committee. Councillor Holdcroft added that the Committee had responsibility for grant funding and care of apprentices. At a recent Committee meeting in January 2019 it was reported that the Seckford Foundation was receiving an increasing number of referrals for its services since the demise of the Suffolk County Council MYGO service and would be looking to work with them in the community voluntary sector as to how best support these disadvantaged young people.

Councillor Holdcroft declared that, in respect of agenda item 9, Local Planning Enforcement Plan, at a recent Planning Committee meeting, the Committee reviewed the proposed Plan, and recommended its adoption by the Cabinet as the Policy for the new East Suffolk Council.

Councillor Smith declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest in respect of agenda item 5, Asset Divestment / Disposal – Two Play Areas, Felixstowe, as a member of Felixstowe Town Council.

3. Minutes

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 5 February 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Announcements

There were no announcements.

5. Asset Divestment / Disposal – Two Play Areas, Felixstowe

Cabinet received report **CAB 14/19** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customers, Communities and Leisure. The report sought approval for the transfer of two parcels of land (recreational parks/play areas) to Felixstowe Town Council. The two subject parks were Allenby Park and Ferry Road / Gosford Way Park.

Cabinet was advised that the parks were historically acquired by the Council through Section 106 Agreements. The current Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) book value on the basis of the existing recreational use was nil in the case of Allenby Road and £53,000 excluding VAT in the case of Ferry Road/Gosford Way. The two parks currently cost the Council (via the Suffolk Coastal Norse Partnership Agreement) a combined revenue cost of £3,390.16 per annum in grounds maintenance. The play equipment in the play areas would require a capital expenditure of circa £57,000 to maintain over the next three years, after which they would require complete replacement. The proposal was to transfer the freehold of two parks to the Town Council, subject to the imposition of a covenant restricting their use to the current recreational use. As a condition of the transfers, SCDC would contribute £63,000 excluding VAT to the estimated £218,000 excluding VAT cost of replacement of dilapidated play equipment. The remaining £155,000 excluding VAT would come from a combination of the Town Council, the Outdoor Playing Space Fund and the Enabling Communities Budget. Under the terms of the leases the Town Council would be responsible for all future grounds maintenance and play equipment maintenance costs. The transfer of these parcels of land met the Council's Business Plan objective to "Empower local town and parish councils by continuing to transfer amenity and community assets to them with their agreement".

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customers, Communities and Leisure gave her thanks to the Active Communities Officer for all of her hard work.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health stated that he welcomed the proposals before Cabinet; he referred to the partnership working between the two councils and particularly welcomed this.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Coastal Management stated that he could not support the proposals before Cabinet; he referred to the District Council having not maintained the equipment and he felt that this was wrong.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development referenced divestments / disposals that had taken place in other areas within the District, particularly Woodbridge; he stated that it was the right thing to do.

The Leader referred to section 4 of the report and drew Cabinet's attention to the fact that Felixstowe Town Council had requested the transfer of the land; Councillor Herring also referred to the Council's policy of transferring assets, where appropriate. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health added that he wished to see the best possible equipment in place for the young people of Felixstowe; Councillor Gallant added that he hoped and thought that there would be further collaboration between the two councils.

It was proposed, seconded, and with one abstention

RESOLVED

1. That the freehold of land known as Allenby Park (outlined in red at Appendix C) be transferred to Felixstowe Town Council at nil value. The Town Council will be responsible for all management and maintenance costs on confirmation of the transfer.
2. That the freehold of land known as Gosford Way/Ferry Road (outlined in red at Appendix D) be transferred to Felixstowe Town Council at nil value. The Town Council will be responsible for all management and maintenance costs on confirmation of the transfer.
3. That the budget of £63,000 excluding VAT identified in the 2018/2019 capital plan can be allocated to the cost of replacing the dilapidated play equipment, as a condition of the transfer. That the book value of £53,000 excluding VAT currently attributable to the Ferry Road/Gosford Way park be written down in the Suffolk Coastal District Council accounts, post completion.

6. East Suffolk MYGO Youth Employment Service

Cabinet received report **CAB 15/19** by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customers, Communities and Leisure. It was reported that young people not engaged in employment, education or training (NEET) continued to be a challenge within Suffolk generally and East Suffolk in particular relative to the country as a whole. As part of East Suffolk's twin objectives of supporting economic growth and enabling communities it was imperative that East Suffolk continued to address this problem by supporting young people to access employment, education and training opportunities. This was of benefit to the individual, local employers and the families and communities within which these young people lived. The report before Cabinet set out the current issues and proposed an initiative to tackle these.

Cabinet, in debating the proposal, recognised the importance of the proposed service and wished to provide as much support as possible for the young people of East Suffolk.

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously

RESOLVED

That the procurement of a contractor to deliver the East Suffolk MYGO Youth Employment Service, currently up to the value of £120k per year for two years, be approved.

7. Adoption of the Private Sector Housing Strategy and Associated Policies

Cabinet received report **CAB 16/19** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing who stated that in 2017 the Council adopted the East Suffolk Housing Strategy which set out joint ambitions for Housing, across Suffolk Coastal and Waveney. This high level strategy provided the overarching framework for all housing services. The Private Sector Housing Strategy was the more detailed review and plan for this service area. It identified the challenges facing the sector, identified achievements to date, and specific actions detailing how solutions would be delivered to the most pressing issues between now and 2023.

The Strategy also aligned policies relating to enforcement, empty homes and renovation grants in preparation for East Suffolk.

Cabinet was advised that, currently, there were no renovation grants available across Waveney but Suffolk Coastal had an established policy which delivered financial assistance to qualifying owner occupiers who could not afford to carry out essential works, first time buyers who took on renovation projects but had used all resources to purchase a property and landlords who were prepared to let at an affordable rent after works were completed. The new Policy built on this model and made several key changes.

Cabinet was advised that a new Enforcement Policy for Private Sector Housing had been written which clarified for stakeholders how the service would balance education and enforcement to ensure actions to protect residents without penalising responsible landlords.

Cabinet was further advised that the issue of long term empty homes was addressed in the policy and recognition given to the need for additional resources to tackle this problem more comprehensively. In the meantime the officer team was producing a series of costed case studies to build up a better picture of the options available and recommended an approach most likely to deliver a long term empty home back into use.

Cabinet gave its thanks to officers for the work that had been undertaken and supported the Strategy.

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously

RESOLVED

That the Private Sector Housing Strategy and associated policies be adopted.

8. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government External Funding to Prevent Homelessness

Cabinet received report **CAB 17/19** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing who reported that the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 required Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) to develop and provide enhanced and tailored housing pathways for groups of people that may be more vulnerable to homelessness than others (ie people with mental health issues, victims of domestic abuse, former prisoner and care leavers). The Government was particularly committed to assisting households that previously were not owed a main statutory homeless duty even if they were homeless through no fault of their own for example, childless single people, and childless couples who were not classed as vulnerable. The Government had acknowledged that these extra duties would require additional resources if local authorities were to fulfil them. Therefore the

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had invited local authorities to apply for grant funding to address some of the gaps in homelessness service provision.

Cabinet noted that at the last rough sleeper estimate exercise conducted on 14 November 2018, 14 entrenched rough sleepers were identified in Suffolk Coastal. A further 54 individuals had used the project Thin Ice Enhanced Severe Weather provision which ran from 1 November 2018 to 28 February 2019. The 2019/20 RSI funding was intended to support interventions that could be set up and delivered at pace, and would have an impact on rough sleeping and hidden homelessness numbers next year.

Cabinet wished to ensure that every effort was made to engage with rough sleepers and provide support as required. The Strategic Director advised that the Council worked alongside charities which had the appropriate mechanisms of engagement. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health added that the rough sleeper initiative did not give up on people; he referred to rough sleepers in coastal towns and said that they were all contacted on a regular basis.

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously

RESOLVED

1. That the application to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for funding for the following service expansion/initiatives:

- a) MHCLG Domestic Abuse Funding County wide up to £270,000.00
- b) MHCLG Private Rented Access Fund up to £340,000.00
- c) MHCLG Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding up to £220,000

be approved.

2. That an exemption from the Contract Procedure Rules and authority to officers to enter into Contracts with current Service Providers for the following services:

- a) MHCLG Domestic Abuse Funding County wide up to £270,000.00
- b) MHCLG Private Rented Access Fund up to £340,000.00
- c) MHCLG Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding – Up to £220,000

be approved.

9. Local Planning Enforcement Plan

Cabinet received report **CAB 18/19** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning. This report was presented to Cabinet for formal adoption of the Council's new Local Planning Enforcement Plan; it highlighted the information and legislation available to members of the public on enforcement service functions. However, it was confirmed that taking enforcement action was a discretionary function for local planning authorities to undertake but the Council, as local planning authority, had a duty to investigate breaches of planning control that occurred within its area. Furthermore, if the Council failed to take action against breaches of planning control that were harmful it undermined the public's confidence in the planning system.

Cabinet welcomed the enforcement investigation flowchart that was included within the Plan; however, it was suggested that perhaps this could be separately placed on the website, for members of the public, and include the lengths of time that some of the steps took.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning gave his thanks to the Senior Planning and Enforcement Officer for the work that she had undertaken.

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously

RESOLVED

That the new Local Planning Enforcement Plan be agreed for formal adoption.

10. Exempt / Confidential Items

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously

RESOLVED

That, under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the Meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

11. The use of the Government's Community Housing Fund in SCDC – Proposed Scheme with Peninsula Villages Community Land Trust at School Lane, Bawdsey

Cabinet received report **CAB 19/19** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing. This item is recorded as a separate exempt minute.

The Meeting concluded at 7.40 pm.