



## FULL COUNCIL

Wednesday, 22 February 2023

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| <b>Subject</b>   | Cabinet Members' Report and Outside Bodies Representatives' Report to Council |
| <b>Report by</b> | Councillor Steve Gallant<br>Leader of the Council                             |

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| Is the report Open or Exempt? | OPEN |
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| Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.                       | Not applicable. |
| <b>Wards Affected:</b>  | All Wards       |
| <b>Purpose of Report:</b><br>To receive the Cabinet Members' Report and the Outside Bodies Representatives' Report to Council, for information. |                 |
| <b>Options:</b><br>Not applicable.  |                 |

## Cabinet Members' Reports to Council

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| <b>Cabinet Member:</b>  | Councillor Letitia Smith, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism           |
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### LEISURE

The leisure operators continue to perform strongly but face significant challenges, as does the leisure industry as a whole. Firstly, whilst recovery from the pandemic has continued, with swimming particularly performing strongly and being almost back to pre-pandemic numbers and even above for swimming lessons, the fitness memberships continue to sit in the region of 85% of pre-pandemic numbers. This has plateaued but with the current cost of living crisis hasn't dropped but isn't reaching previous membership numbers.

Both operators are performing slightly above the national average. However, whilst strongly performing the utility and energy costs are now having a substantial effect on operating costs, particularly with the heating of the swimming pools. The Government's energy support package doesn't cover the leisure industry from April. There are campaigns nationally for the Government to step in and support the leisure industry and both operators are mitigating costs as much as possible and ESC have supported with pool covers that can save energy and heating loss over the night-time period when closed. Whilst this is helping, the energy costs are substantial. This is being monitored and regular meetings are being held with operators to support where possible.

### Everyone Active

The project to remove the old heating units off the Waterlane Leisure Centre sports hall roof is now complete. Other smaller items of work have also been addressed during this project with some additional new covered cycle parking, new fencing, and landscape planting in the pedestrian entrance access from Princes Road that was previously overgrown and unattractive.

Everyone Active have engaged with the Communities team and sit on the relevant Community Partnership meetings. They have engaged with an array of partners to deliver many different Health & Wellbeing initiatives. These tend to fall in with our priorities, mainly as a result of the strong links between their Active Communities Manager and our Communities Team (Nicole Rickard).

Both the EA leisure centres deliver programmes on site – such as Active Seniors programmes (multi sports), Walking Football, Sporting Memories (a programme aimed at, but not solely dementia) SEN (Special Educational Needs) activities like swim galas (attended by Jordan Catchpole), multi-sport activities and events. Not only are programmes delivered on site, but they also reach out into the communities delivering similar programmes for example Active Seniors at the Pair Tree in Halesworth.

Everyone Active also provide free memberships to Cared for Children, people with Parkinson's disease, Ukrainian refugees, all of which have had some take up but still require spreading the word further in our communities. Both facilities are open as Warm Spaces to those looking to get out of home and into a warm place.

## **Places Leisure**

With the proposed new Felixstowe Leisure Centre unlikely to be complete for a few years, improvements in the existing leisure centre are being planned to improve the customer experience. These improvements will be programmed in from the new financial year and the areas to be improved are currently being finalised.

Places Leisure are launching their new healthy community's strategy which will go live in March and have also invested in their IT infrastructure to improve the customer journey from memberships, website and online etc. following customer feedback.

The key priorities in their Healthy Communities Strategy aligning with the East Suffolk Strategic Plan and themes from the Community Partnership groups are:

1. Long Term Health Conditions
2. COVID recovery
3. Inactivity in young people
4. Inactivity in older people
5. Mental Health
6. Exercise referral programme

Some of the projects that Places Leisure have been supporting as part of this include the 'Warm Spaces' scheme, providing hot drinks, biscuits and games, the launching of Sporting Memories (a programme aimed at dementia activities within the centres), Suffolk Family Carers Activities, GP Referral, Cancer Rehabilitation, COVID recovery programme and the Extra Time Partnership.

As with most operators in the leisure industry, there have also been challenges with recruitment and retention. The wider Places organisation have reviewed rates of pay due to the cost-of-living crisis and restructured to support staff through this. They have also launched a hardship fund with staff applying for up to £500 and in January every staff member received a cost-of-living payment of £250.

Both operators look to provide more than your conventional health and fitness offerings and reaching out to those where real impacts can be made in the communities. This will be developed further going forward and a new ESC position, Senior Health, Wellbeing and Leisure Officer will support this work.

## **Play**

The Outdoor Playing Space Fund has contributed £219,457 towards play and sport projects in the old Suffolk Coastal Area. Projects include installation of new adult gym equipment in Nacton, to basketball and football opportunities in Melton. The installation of seats in Bawdsey to the installation of floodlights in Felixstowe. Purdis Farm saw a large refurbishment at Murrills Park with wilding flower areas, hare sculptures and accessible

equipment. Redevelopment of play areas are due in Beccles, Carlton Colville and Felixstowe in the Spring.

We have been supporting the community of Leiston and Southwold in their effort to raise funds to update their skateparks.

### **Cycling**

The UCI Masters Cyclo-cross took place in December, ahead of the weekend of racing a school's day was held for the local schools in the Ipswich and South Suffolk School Sports Partnership. The young people in years 5 – 8 were given the opportunity to take part in science activities from Kinetic Science, bike safety talks from Suffolk Police, created a art mural with Rock Paper Scissors, got to experience part of the cyclo-cross track with British Cycling, Suffolk County Council's road safety team gave a taster in bike ability games and Loose Cannon delivered an action packed fitness glass.

A report was commissioned, and it would that the total net impact of the event on the local economy was £601,850, based on the expenditure of participants, spectators, event organisers, contractors and staff. Expenditure by participants and spectators, including on accommodation, food and drink, shopping, off-site entertainment, and transport, was £499,238. 64% of the respondents were visitors to Suffolk that stayed overnight in Suffolk

It featured more than 600 competitors from 20 different nations, riding laps of a 3km circuit of trails and obstacles. About 6,000 spectators are estimated to have attended.

### **Awards**

Following a delay due to Covid, the East Suffolk Awards will be returning later this month celebrating the best in local businesses, people, and community groups. The winners will be announced at a special event being held at Snape Maltings.

### **Operation Camouflage**

Operation Camouflage adapted to the opportunity of running an activity as part of the East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Holiday Activity Fund project (HAF). An application in 2019 to the Army Covenant Fund secured £9,500 towards Operation Camouflage and this was carried forward to allow 2022 to go ahead, £15,000 from the Holiday Activity Fund and £4,500 from the Army Welfare service. The activity expanded to take place over 16 days, every Tuesday to Friday from 26<sup>th</sup> July – 19<sup>th</sup> August 2022. It took place at MOD Woodbridge utilising the community buildings off base and the local primary school playing field. Every day there was an opportunity for 60 young people aged 8 – 16 years to attend from a mixture of backgrounds including those eligible for free school meals in the Ukrainian families, children in care, military families and the wider public.

Over the course of the four weeks, 106 individuals came from East Suffolk and 58 came from military families, this worked out to be 437 attendances from civilians and 304 military. We had 61 spaces that amounted to non-attendance over the four weeks. We provided transport to the young people that were eligible for free school meals, and we had 167 pick-ups over the course of the four weeks. Discussions are in place to look at how it could be delivered in 2024.

## Suffolk Community Games

ESC supported the development and delivery of the Suffolk Community Games, a day of activity for young people in Suffolk. Each local authority had an allocation of spaces for the young people in the district to attend a free event taking place in Bury St Edmunds. The activities included BMXing, Climbing, Dancing, Circus Skills, Paddleboarding and Skateboarding. Inspire Suffolk, Suffolk FA and Ipswich Town Community Trust were there offering come and try it activities. Transport was provided for both the participants and their family to come and support. The event also had the Queens Baton that was touring the Commonwealth ahead of the Commonwealth Games, this provided a unique opportunity for the young people to see this once in a lifetime experience.

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| <b>Cabinet Member:</b>  | Councillor James Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment                              |
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| <b>Cabinet Member:</b>  | Councillor Stephen Burroughes – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Experience, ICT and Commercial Partnerships |
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- **CUSTOMER SERVICES & EXPERIENCE TEAMS**

As we approach the end of the council's current 4 year term, it is worth reminding ourselves of how far we have travelled on our journey since 2019. During Covid, workstreams were changing the 'way' the service worked to reduce demand and free up capacity (focusing on Interactive Voice Response to inform customers of relevant service changes, and enabling greater demand and resource management, provided targeted communications) and divert resources to ensure resilience if staff became ill and to maintain customer services; services were able to flex to take on new services to support colleagues and customers; closing down F2F contact points to keep staff and customers safe.

The service receives on average over 175,000 phone calls and over 22,000 emails per year. Mostly around Council Tax, Garden Waste, and ESC tenant enquiries. During the pandemic over 2,000 vulnerable residents were assisted including 1,800 community referrals.

What are we doing now? work continues across all departments to gain buy-in and support for an 'experience' approach to all that the teams do – i.e. the need for end-to-end service delivery, utilise and learn from customer feedback and the value gained to improve public

confidence, increase satisfaction, minimise failure demand, reduce financial pressures, on resources.

What have been the Highlights? Implementing a brand-new Customer Service Delivery Model (known as our One Front Door) – designed be more flexible – to be both proactive and responsive to the needs of our customers.

Digital Champions - To encourage and inform residents about online services. Over 11 million people lacking digital skills, and 3.6 million are completely offline altogether.

Our redesigned customer access and digital coaching approach is proving successful. Historically, our CS public facing offer was only delivered at Marina CS Centre, and Felixstowe, Beccles and Woodbridge libraries 5 days a week. Since the pandemic, the analysis of the operational data has shown a significant shift in the ways public contact and use council services. We always said, we didn't want to 'sleepwalk back into the way things were' and as a result we now have a presence in more locations across the district than ever before. Together with our digital coaching approach, we now operate 2 days a week in at the Marina CS Centre in Lowestoft, but also now in Aldeburgh, Felixstowe, Halesworth, Leiston, Saxmundham & Woodbridge Libraries. This is based on demographic need but also allows us to be available for those who have specific needs and who need support in a face-to-face setting.

Where do we want to be in 23? Evolve the service offer and ensure a service delivery model is able to continue to deliver a flexible approach to service delivery, to adapt and continue to meet the changing needs and expectations of our customers and residents and offer quality channel choice. Maybe an Apple Store style experience themed building in Lowestoft could be developed to not only inform but to assist? Make sure the right skills are in place to drive this forward.

Lastly, our Marina Customer Service Centre has gone through an amazing refresh offering a remodelled setting for customers, well worth a visit if you have time.

- **COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Plans for the move over to the LATCo, East Suffolk Services, continue at pace, it is crucial that all measures, plans and operational elements are firmly in place for 1<sup>st</sup> July, and I know the various workstreams are coming together to ensure this is a smooth process. This council should be proud in the fact that it is our ambition to establish ESSL as a true flagship commercial business organisation, delivering a quality service throughout East Suffolk.

Our leisure partners, (Places Leisure and Everyone Active) continue to deliver a first-class leisure offer and have enjoyed a very successful 2022 with healthy numbers of customers taking up swimming sessions and engaging well across all our leisure centres. Clearly, there are pressures around the cost of energy and related elements and a paper is being brought to cabinet in March to explore the council's decarbonisation approach across our assets.

- **ICT & DIGITAL**

The success of the council's digital towns programme has reached a significant moment with all 12 market towns now enjoying free town centre public Wi-Fi together with the 'springboard' support package of help to digitally enable businesses. Footfall monitor installations have gone extremely well with the collection of interesting data to enable targeting of future investment and service delivery. When residents access the free Wi-Fi, they will be asked to create an account and provide some basic information, and they can also sign-up to receive marketing emails about the town. Once they sign-in to the Wi-Fi they will be directed to a landing page which will be set to the town's local website e.g. Visit Felixstowe, Framlingham, Lowestoft or Discover Woodbridge, Beccles, Halesworth etc with pages being added as things evolve, this provides greater visibility to the existing town promotional assets and direct visitors to relevant local information.

The final towns to be connected were Beccles, Bungay and Halesworth completing a challenging timetable and thanks must go to all our teams for making this possible. These new Wi-Fi zones have been created by installing equipment in each town that will give visitors access to the internet in the main pedestrian areas.

## Outside Bodies Representatives' Reports

| Suffolk Police and Crime Panel |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Representative:</b>         | Councillor Mark Jepson  |
| <b>Contact Details:</b>        | <a href="mailto:mark.jepson@easstsuffolk.gov.uk">mark.jepson@easstsuffolk.gov.uk</a><br>Tel: 01394 278622 |

Cllr Mark Jepson is the Chair of Suffolk's Police and Crime Panel. The following paper has been provided to update Councillors on the meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023. The Panel recognised the challenges the Police and Crime Commissioner faced in the forthcoming year to ensure Suffolk Constabulary continues to deliver a good service to the residents of Suffolk.

This report also provides background information on the structure and responsibilities of the Panel.

### Background

The Suffolk Police and Crime Panel is responsible for supporting and challenging the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in the delivery of his functions. It is a joint committee, established under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The Panel has statutory functions, as set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011:

- Reviewing the [Police and Crime Plan](#);
- Reviewing the PCC's [Annual Report](#);
- Carrying out confirmation hearings for certain senior appointments in the PCC's office;
- Carrying out confirmation hearings for the Chief Constable;
- Investigating complaints about non-criminal behaviour of the PCC; and
- Supporting and scrutinising the effective exercise of the functions of the PCC.

The Panel comprises elected members of local authorities across Suffolk working alongside two independent co-opted members. Together the Panel members should reflect the breadth of communities in Suffolk. The Police and Crime Panel has 13 members in total, comprising:

- Four County Councillors;
- Seven representatives from the District and Borough Councils in Suffolk; and
- Two independent co-opted members



The Panel is politically balanced, with the 11 local authority councillor representatives appointed to achieve political proportionality across Suffolk.

### **Meetings**

The Panel holds 4 formal meetings per year, in January, March, July and October, plus addition meetings as required, for example to consider the appointment of the Chief Constable or to carry out confirmation hearings for senior officers in the PCC's office.

The Panel has met 6 times during 2022/23 to date, with one meeting due to take place on 24 March 2023.

### **Latest Meeting**

The Panel met on 27 January 2023 to consider the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed Policing Precept for 2023/24. Following review of the PCC's detailed precept report and associated Medium Term Financial Plan, and a wide-ranging question session with the PCC, with input from the Chief Constable, the Panel supported the PCC's proposal to increase the policing precept by £14.94 (6.0%) per annum for a 'Band D' property for 2023/24.

The next meeting of the Panel will be on 24 March 2023, when the Panel will support the effective exercise of the PCC's functions by reviewing actions he has taken under Objectives 2 and 3 of his Police and Crime Plan 2022-25.

| <b>Beccles in Bloom</b> |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Representative:</b>  | Councillor Sarah Plummer  |
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Beccles in Bloom continue to be responsible for the management of the planting and maintenance of the numerous small garden areas and containers around Beccles.

The huge day-to-day task of keeping the containers watered last summer was undertaken by Michael (Mr Tidy) alongside his other roles around the town.

Beccles Community Gardeners consist of a number of enthusiastic volunteers. Some volunteers undertake the care of a specific area on an ongoing basis whilst others prefer to turn up at the group gardening sessions organised every few weeks during the growing season. The Community Gardeners as a whole are doing a great job of keeping the many growing areas within the town to an acceptable standard. They work under the capable guidance of Camilla, who organises the working parties, and Stephen who creates planting plans and supplies wholesale plants. An increase in the number of volunteers for 2023 would make this group even more productive and Beccles Town Council are looking at ways to encourage this.

Minutes of the latest meeting attached. Spring meeting had to be re-arranged and will take place on Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>.

| Suffolk Waste Partnership |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Representative:</b>    | Councillor James Mallinder  |
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I attended the recent Suffolk Waste Partnership meeting.

Much discussion took place over the recent announcement regarding the deposit return scheme and the impact this might have on our waste collections. It was asked if plastic bottles were in the blue bin collections, could we remove them and claim under the scheme? If so, would this scheme result in a financial impact to the business model?

We also noted how disappointing it was, that with climate concerns at breaking point, it had taken 6 years of consultation to have this discussion. It was felt that glass not being included in this scheme was a wasted opportunity.

Again, we wait for further statutory guidance on changes in waste collection for households.

## Appendices

| Appendices:       |  |
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| <b>Appendix A</b> | Minutes from the last Beccles in Bloom Meeting in October 2022 |

| Background reference papers: |  |
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| None.                        |  |