

Confirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Cabinet** held in the Conference Room, Riverside, on **Tuesday, 06 December 2022 at 6:30 PM**

Members of the Cabinet present:

Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Richard Kerry, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Mary Rudd, Councillor Letitia Smith

Other Members present:

Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Alison Cackett, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Steve Wiles

Officers present: Stephen Baker (Chief Executive), Neil Cockshaw (Programmes and Partnerships Manager), Karen Cook (Democratic Services Manager), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Fern Lincoln (Housing Needs Service Manager), Paul Mackie (Lead Officer - Environment and Climate Change), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer (Regulatory)), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer), Agnes Ogundiran (Conservative Political Group Support Officer), Tom Potter (Press and Publicity Officer), Lorraine Rogers (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Robert Scrimgeour (Principal Design and Conservation Officer), Heather Tucker (Head of Housing)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Burroughes and from Councillor Cooper.

2 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Gallant declared a Non-Registerable Interest in agenda item 13, Asset Acquisition, as the vendor of the asset was a close associate. Councillor Gallant left the meeting room for the duration of the item and took no part in the decision.
Councillor Jepson declared a Non-Registerable Interest in agenda item 13, Asset Acquisition, as the vendor of the asset was a close associate. Councillor Jepson left the meeting room for the duration of the item.

3 Announcements

The Leader gave thanks to all Cabinet Members for their work throughout 2022 and he asked Cabinet Members to thank the respective officers that they worked with, on behalf of the whole of Cabinet, that had delivered the many fantastic outcomes and projects during the last 12 months.

The Leader reported that today was an historic day for East Suffolk; it saw the incorporation of Freeport East; that, he said, was a major step forward for the economic development in respect of East Suffolk Council's (ESC's) Freeport ambitions.

The Leader reported that this would be the Chief Executive's last Cabinet meeting before his retirement; he acknowledged the work undertaken by the Chief Executive, both to support Cabinet and the officers that supported Cabinet, and he gave thanks for that. The Chief Executive gave thanks for the appreciation given by Cabinet and all Members.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development stated that he was delighted to announce that he had just been informed that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had approved ESC's UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan that was submitted in August 2022. The improved Investment Plan would provide £2.75m and would be used to support high streets, local businesses, workforce and community skills development, as well as support for those struggling with the cost of living crisis.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health reminded everybody, where possible, to have their Covid and flu vaccinations.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health gave a reminder that it was White Ribbon Week; she reported on an event that she had attended and she stated that violence against women was not appropriate.

4 Minutes

It was by consensus

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 November 2022 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 Council Tax Base 2023/24

Cabinet received report **ES/1362** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources which sought approval of the Council Tax Base for tax setting purposes for next year. The report outlined the process for estimating the tax base and the elements that needed to be taken into account.

Starting with the total number of dwellings in the district, Councillor Cook reported, adjustments were made for reliefs, discounts, growth, and an estimated collection rate to arrive at a tax base expressed as a number of Band D equivalents. An increase in the

council tax base had financial implications for precepting authorities as their income from a given level of Band D council tax was increased. Potential growth in the property base was based on assumed completions from sites within the local plan that were under construction. Post-pandemic, Councillor Cook stated, growth now currently appeared to return to near-normal levels, after significant swings in recent years.

Cabinet was advised that in 2022/23 the value of LCTRS reliefs had continued to decline compared with the forecasts used this time last year. This appeared to be largely due to the fact that employment levels had remained high despite the cost of living crisis. At this stage, it had not been assumed in calculating the 2023/24 tax base that there would be significant movements from the current position.

Monitoring of the collection position in 2022/23 indicated that the 99% collection rate used in the calculation could be maintained for 2023/24.

Appendix A showed the estimated 2023/24 council tax base for the district of £90,340.92 Band D equivalents by parish, an overall increase of £1,317.49, or around 1.48%, on the tax base for the current year of £89,023.43 Band D equivalents. In conclusion, this appendix also showed the increase or decrease in the tax base by parish compared with 2022/23.

Councillor Byatt referred to Appendix A of the report and the tax base by parish, he asked how the Martlesham rate had lowered. Officers advised that this was due to the parish boundary change that came out of the Community Governance Review where approximately 160 properties had transferred from Martlesham to Woodbridge.

On the proposition of Councillor Cook, seconded by Councillor Gallant, it was by a unanimous vote

RESOLVED

1. That it be approved that the council tax base for 2023/24 for the East Suffolk district is 90,340.92 Band D equivalent properties.
2. That the council tax bases for 2023/24 for individual town and parish areas, as shown in Appendix A to the report, be approved.

6 Addition of five Historic Parks and Gardens to East Suffolk Council's Local List of Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest

Cabinet received report **ES/1363** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, the purpose of which was to seek the addition of five Historic Parks and Gardens to ESC's existing Local List of Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest.

Cabinet was advised that the consultants' report highlighted that the Local List continued to be developed and designed landscapes added, so the identification and careful consideration of sites was an ongoing and important process undertaken in conformance with local policy. Local Lists could identify heritage assets which were valued by the local community as distinctive elements of the local historic environment and may certainly include parks and gardens. The inclusion of parks and gardens in a

Local List raised their profile and also brought the benefits of applied national and local planning policy.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management reported that the proposal, if adopted, would assist in delivery of the Strategic Plan 2020-2024, by supporting delivery of T01 Growing Our Economy of the Strategic Plan, priority of P03. "Protection and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment." It would also support the delivery of priority P01 Build the right Environment for East Suffolk, as it served to support the policies in the "Up to date local plans proving a strategy for growth and place making."

Officers judged that the public consultation exercise undertaken had demonstrated that, amongst those who responded, there was support of the proposal. Officers judged that the proposal confirmed the merit of the five proposed additions to the Local List of Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest; and that their inclusion would now provide the recognition and protection of these characteristic landscape features across the entire East Suffolk District.

Cabinet welcomed the proposals within the report, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment in particular welcomed the added protection, not only for the social history, but also for the environment and the enhancement of wildlife.

Councillor Byatt, after welcoming the proposals within the report, commented on paragraph 3.10 which stated "If the proposed five additions are approved, they will not be protected by Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Policy SCLP11.8, as they are in the Waveney Local Plan area" he asked if there would be protection under the Waveney Local Plan; officers confirmed that there was protection under the Waveney Local Plan policy on non-designated heritage assets, because they had been so identified.

Onn the proposition of Councillor Ritchie, seconded by Councillor Mallinder, it was by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That the five parks and gardens of historic or landscape interest at Benacre Park, North Cove Hall, Redisham Hall, Sotterley Park and Worlingham Hall, as mapped within the report included at Appendix A of the report and illustrated at Appendix B of the report, be added to the East Suffolk Council Local List of Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest.

7

Southwold Harbour Management Committee – Mid-Year Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23

Cabinet received report **ES/1364** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, who reported that in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Southwold Harbour Management Committee, this report provided Cabinet with a mid-year report on performance against budget. The report attached at Appendix A was reviewed by the Committee at its meeting on 20 October.

Southwold Harbour had performed in line with the budget for the first six months. After taking into account income received in advance of the second half of the year, the Harbour was ahead on income by £19k. This was offset by expenditure being ahead of the profile budget which was forecast to catch up by the end of the year. As at 30 September the Harbour was in a net surplus position of £3k against the budget.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources reported that income for the Caravan and Camping sites was underbudget at mid-year. The income budget for static sites excluded known vacant sites at the time, but additional sites had become vacant during the year. Despite the good weather over the summer, touring income was down on this time last year by £30k and underbudget for this year to date by £15k.

Appendix A of the report presented a forecast position for the end of the year, based on performance so far. The combined position on the Harbour, and the Caravan and Camping sites was expected to be a net surplus position of £243k, compared to the budget of £223k for direct income and expenditure. This consisted of an underspend on costs, primarily premises costs, which more than compensated for income being underbudget. The figures included known commitments such as the current year pay award and costs for the Estuary studies and the Harbour Revision Order. After taking into account an estimate for internal support recharges, the overall net position was forecast to be £137k, £4k less than budgeted.

On the proposition of Councillor Cook, seconded by Councillor Ritchie, it was by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That the mid-year budget monitoring position for 2022/23 as reviewed by the Southwold Harbour Management Committee be noted.

8 Environment Task Group - Quarterly Update

Cabinet received report **ES/1365** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment, the purpose of which was to advise Cabinet on the work of the cross-party Environment Task Group, chaired by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment, since its last report on 6 September 2022. Confirmation was also sought that the Task Group was continuing to deliver on the task it was set to investigate ways to cut ESC's carbon and other harmful emissions.

The report contained updates in respect of environment related activity related to the following areas, which were summarised by Councillor Mallinder - Hydrogen Strategy; Procurement Strategy; Leisure Centre decarbonisation programme; delivering a sustainable housing portfolio; Deben redevelopment PassivHaus project; the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy; Air Quality, Greenprint Forum; Quiet Lanes; and Beach Watch.

Councillor Mallinder emphasised that the principal goal was to look at carbon neutrality by 2030 but he stated that it was interlinked with other things and everything needed to be considered. Councillor Mallinder advised that ESC could be carbon neutral the next day, by not providing any services at all, but ESC did not wish

to do that; in fact, he added, in the next couple of months the carbon footprint might increase as ESC helped its residents through the cost of living crisis.

Councillor Mallinder stated that, sometimes, new development could be positive, having a smaller carbon footprint and using less resources.

Councillor Mallinder gave thanks to all Members who sat on the Environment Task Group for their work, to Cabinet Members for their work, and to the officers who worked incredibly hard. Councillor Mallinder also gave thanks to East Suffolk communities for everything that they did.

The Leader, with Christmas approaching, asked what more could be done to lessen the impact on the environment during the festive period. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment referred to banning / reducing festive lights on the outside of properties, although he acknowledged that some lights now used less energy and he suggested that natural things could be used to enhance homes such as holly, ivy and pine cones, instead of crackers. The Leader acknowledged that there was clearly a balance to be struck and he referred to solar power and LED lighting.

Following a question by the Leader related to the Motion considered by Full Council at its November 2022 meeting relating to sewage pollution, Councillor Mallinder confirmed that the letters related to Anglian Water were being drafted and they would be sent as soon as possible. It was confirmed that the Chairman of the Council would sign the letters.

Cabinet fully supported the work being undertaken by the Task Group and the Leader emphasised that initiatives and good ideas came from all Members of ESC and they should be embraced and taken forward where possible.

Councillor Gooch reported that she, together with the Labour Group, fully supported the work that was being undertaken by the Task Group; Councillor Gooch was looking forward to exploring further the retro fitting of the ESC housing stock.

Councillor Byatt, after giving his support for the work of the Environment Task Group, asked if ESC was on target to obtain carbon neutrality by 2030. Councillor Mallinder referred to the big picture and it being necessary to take account of the changing environment, not just the natural environment, but the way that we live going forward and the fact that East Suffolk residents must be supported. Everything would be done to obtain carbon neutrality but other matters must be taken into account.

Councillor Byatt also referred to neighbouring districts, to the north and to the south, and stressed the importance of everybody focussing on carbon neutrality. Councillor Mallinder stressed that discussions were ongoing with neighbouring districts to improve the wider area; looking and learning was vitally important Councillor Mallinder stressed. Councillor Byatt paid tribute to the work of Peter Aldous MP.

On the proposition of Councillor Mallinder, seconded by Councillor Smith, it was by a unanimous vote

RESOLVED

1. That this report from the Environment Task Group be accepted and approved.
2. That it be confirmed that the Environment Task Group is to continue to deliver the task it was set to investigate ways to cut East Suffolk Council's carbon and other harmful emissions.

9 Exempt/Confidential Items

The Leader reported that, in exceptional circumstances, the Council may, by law, exclude members of the public from all, or part of, an executive decision-making meeting. The Council should, unless there were urgent circumstances, give notice of its intention to do so via the Forward Plan, which he reported was updated and published on its website 28 clear days prior to the meeting. There were various reasons that the Council, on occasions, had to do this and examples were because a report contained information relating to an individual, information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person, or information relating to any consultations or negotiations.

Tonight, the Leader advised, Cabinet had three substantive exempt matters to consider as outlined on the published agenda – items 11 to 13.

Item 11 related to East Suffolk Property Investments Business Case and summarised the trading objectives of the company. The Business Case set out the strategic, legal, commercial, financial and management/operational case for the company and it highlighted the Council's strategic ambition to address the under-supply of affordable housing which was indicated in the Council's Housing Strategy.

Item 12 related to the Housing Team restructure and the Leader advised that the report considered the capabilities and capacity of the Housing Service to ensure that it would meet the needs of residents and regulators and in doing so deliver the strategic objectives of ESC. The report outlined the proposed new roles, their financial implications and the benefits that they would bring.

Item 13 related to an asset acquisition within East Suffolk. The proposal within the report supported the Council's Strategic Plan priority of building the right environment for East Suffolk.

On the proposition of Councillor Gallant, seconded by Councillor Rivett, it was by a unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

10 Exempt Minutes

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

11 East Suffolk Property Investments Business Case

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

12 Housing Team Restructure

- Information relating to any individual.
- Information that is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

13 Asset Acquisition

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The meeting concluded at 8.02 pm

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Chairman