

Unconfirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Cabinet** held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, on **Tuesday, 7 March 2023 at 6:30 pm**

Members of the Cabinet present:

Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Letitia Smith

Other Members present:

Councillor Edward Back, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Alison Cackett, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Frank Mortimer, Councillor Trish Mortimer, Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Councillor Steve Wiles

Officers present:

Chris Bally (Chief Executive), Richard Best (Collaboration and Connecting Programme Manager), Chris Bing (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Kate Blakemore (Strategic Director), Duncan Colman (Interim Asset and Investment Manager), Karen Cook (Democratic Services Manager), Stephanie Duff (Strategic Lead - Housing Repairs and Maintenance), Heather Fisk (Head of Housing), Gabriella Fox (Regeneration Project Officer), Jeanette Hollingsworth (Environmental Protection Manager), Ben Hunter (Senior Environmental Protection Officer), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Bridget Law (Strategic Lead - Housing Investment), Paul Mackie (Lead Officer - Environment and Climate Change), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer (Regulatory)), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer), Darren Newman (Economic Regeneration Manager), Agnes Ogundiran (Conservative Political Group Support Officer), Fiona Quinn (Head of Environmental Services and Port Health), Lorraine Rogers (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Samantha Shimon (Strategic Lead - Housing Services), Tim Snook (Leisure Development Partnership Manager), Ryan Taylor (Housing Development Officer), Paul Wood (Head of Economic Development and Regeneration)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from the following Cabinet Members: Councillor Kerry, Councillor Mallinder and Councillor Rudd, and from the following Assistant Cabinet Member: Councillor Cooper.

2 Declarations of Interest

Mr A Jarvis, Strategic Director, declared a non-financial interest in agenda item 20, Provision of Loan Finance to East Suffolk Property Investments Limited, as a Director of East Suffolk Property Investments Limited.

Mr A Jarvis, Strategic Director, declared a non-financial interest in agenda item 21, East Suffolk Business Plan, as a Director of East Suffolk Services Limited.

3 Announcements

The Leader announced that this was the final Cabinet meeting of the current Administration, he gave sincere thanks to all Cabinet and Assistant Cabinet Members for all of their work, and he also thanked all officers who supported the Cabinet and Assistant Cabinet Members.

4 Minutes - January 2023

It was by consensus

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 January 2023 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 Minutes - February 2023

It was by consensus

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 February 2023 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 Leisure Centre Decarbonisation Programme

Cabinet received report **ES/1476** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, which outlined the proposed leisure centre decarbonisation programme and applications for the Government Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme known as 'Salix' grant funding to support the proposed programme. It was reported that East Suffolk Council (ESC) leisure centres currently formed almost 30% of the Council's overall annual carbon footprint and the report set out proposals on how the leisure centres could significantly reduce their carbon footprint, mitigate additional operation costs, and seek Government funding to deliver the plans.

Cabinet was advised that the proposed decarbonisation plans would significantly reduce the annual leisure centre annual carbon footprint, supporting the Council's environmental and carbon neutral aims of its Strategic Plan 2020-2024. It was expected that the project, by including as much PV as possible, would help mitigate and even

reduce the current operational costs, delivering longer-term operational efficiencies and enable plant that was nearing the end of life to be replaced. Whilst some capital funding would be required, by applying for GPSDS 'Salix', if successful, this would save ESC significant costs of funding the schemes fully itself from the Capital Budget and allow other projects to be delivered. Applying for grant funding now and delivering any projects within two years of successful applications would give ESC time to add further measures if necessary to reduce its target of Carbon Neutral by 2030.

Cabinet welcomed the proposals within the report, referring to the ambitions around the environmental agenda being key and how part of the de-carbonisation would add a lot of value to that particular ambition. Cabinet also welcomed ESC taking advantage of the assistance from the Government with funding.

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

RESOLVED

1. That the direction of the proposed current leisure centre decarbonisation schemes for the four leisure centres be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, to accept if successful, the Government Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme 'Salix' grant funding for the proposed schemes.
3. That the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, be authorised to agree final proposals and implement the programme of works through the leisure development partner, Pulse Design and Build.

7 Renewal of Dog Related Public Space Protection Orders

Cabinet received report **ES/1477** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment which, in his absence, was presented by the Leader. The purpose of the report was to renew or amend the 13 Dog Control Public Space Protection Orders due for renewal.

Cabinet was advised that without these orders in place ESC had no authority to legally enforce in the areas. All the areas specified in the report were fundamental to the protection and enjoyment of the district's public spaces. The four Exclusion of Dogs from Beaches PSPOs were instrumental in maintaining the recognised quality of the district's bathing areas, this included supporting any Blue Flag designations. The criteria for awarding a Blue Flag stated that "Dogs must be excluded from the award area of the beach during bathing season". For Carlton Marsh Nature Reserve the proposal was to reduce the control for part of the site from a ban on dogs to allowing them on leads as it was considered to be a more proportionate control measure.

There being no questions or debate, the Leader moved to the recommendations with the report.

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

RESOLVED

1. That the renewal of Public Space Protection Orders covering the control of dogs as detailed in Appendices C-M of the report be approved.
2. That the existing Carlton Marshes Nature Reserve Dogs on Lead Public Space Protection Order be extended to include the area indicated as detailed in Appendix N of the report.
3. That the Dog Exclusion Public Space Protection Order at Carlton Marshes Nature Reserve be allowed to expire.

8 Rent and Service Charges Policy

Cabinet received report **ES/1478** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing which, in his absence, was introduced by the Leader.

The Leader reported that the policy had been developed to set out the way that ESC's Landlord Services would set their rents and service charges in Housing Revenue Account (HRA) owned and managed properties. It had been written in accordance with best practice, legislation, and regulation to set out clearly and transparently to ESC tenants how their rent and service charges had been set.

There being no questions or debate, the Leader moved to the recommendations within the report.

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

RESOLVED

1. That the Rent and Service Charge Policy be approved, which will be implemented by officers immediately.
2. That authority be delegated to the Head of Housing and the Housing Programme Board, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, to update the Policy as required.
3. That authority be delegated to the Head of Housing, Strategic Lead – Housing Services and Housing Programme Board, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, to develop all the relevant procedures to support the implementation of this Rent and Service Charge Policy.

Cabinet received report **ES/1479** by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism.

It was reported that the cultural sector was recognised as increasingly important in driving resilient and inclusive economic growth, contributing to health and wellbeing and enabling communities. These were all key elements of ESC's Strategic Plan priorities and, in addition, a number of ESC service areas had been engaged in cultural development activity in recent years to deliver these objectives.

It was reported that activity had advanced in Lowestoft in particular, as part of the wider regeneration programme for the town, and joint working with Great Yarmouth Borough Council had led to the creation of the Lowestoft Cultural Strategy and Cultural Leadership Group. However, it was recognised that a rich and diverse cultural sector existed across the whole district and if ESC and its partners were to better enable its development in contributing to the Strategic Plan priorities, a more co-ordinated approach was required. This has resulted in the creation of ESC's first Cultural Strategy.

The report before Cabinet set out the background, rationale and key objectives of the Strategy and provided a framework for a more collaborative approach to enabling cultural development for the benefit of the economy, residents and visitors.

With regard to recommendation 2 of the report, ie the appointment of a Cultural lead to co-ordinate the delivery of the Strategy and associated delivery plan, Cabinet was advised that there was evidence that if there was a dedicated resource in place, to focus on work, then ESC would be much better placed to deliver the objectives within the Strategy.

Cabinet welcomed the Strategy, commenting positively on the approach to work with all cultural festivals across the district to help shape the future of the Strategy. Cabinet welcomed that the Strategy would drive the generation of more interest in the cultural offer across the district.

Councillor Byatt, after applauding the introduction of the Strategy, referred to the Cultural Steering Group, and suggested that ward councillors should be involved. The Leader stated that the involvement of councillors was key and there needed to be engagement to ensure that they could promote and help to steer any actions that the Council may be taking in support of any particular function within the various wards. However, the Leader emphasised that involving councillors from the outset would mean involving all 55 of them because the breadth of events taking place across the district was huge; that, he said, was not practical.

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

RESOLVED

1. That the East Suffolk Cultural Strategy be approved.
2. That the appointment of a Cultural lead to co-ordinate the delivery of the strategy and associated delivery plan be approved.
3. That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development, to make any necessary future changes to the Strategy.

10 Transfer Agreement for Landguard Trust

Cabinet received report **ES/1480** by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development, which set out the proposed agreement between the Landguard and Felixstowe Conservation Trust and ESC in relation to the management of the Council's interests at Landguard and enabling the development of the peninsula to become a nationally significant tourist attraction.

The report set out the proposed transfer of management responsibilities of the Landguard nature reserve to the Trust as well an agreement on the ringfencing of car parking revenue to support the Trust's activities. In addition, the report considered how the existing ESC staff who supported the Landguard initiative would be deployed within the new Trust structure; however, since human resource matters would not be resolved in time, delegated authority was being sought to finalise these decisions.

The Leader, referring to Landguard, including the history and the wildlife, stated what a great place it was, he encouraged everybody to visit if they had not already done so.

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

RESOLVED

1. That the principles of the agreement and lease Heads of Terms between the Council and the Trust be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Development & Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development, to finalise staffing arrangements in how they pertain to existing East Suffolk Council employees supporting the Landguard initiative.
3. That it be approved that East Suffolk Council enter into an agreement with Landguard Trust on terms which best protect the Council.

11 Leiston Town Centre Masterplan Framework

Cabinet received report **ES/1481** by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development, the purpose of which was to consider the Leiston Town Centre Masterplan framework document and the high-level conceptual designs contained within, as the basis to guide the future development of Leiston town centre that would attract future private and public sector investment.

It was reported that Leiston has a strong and proud history of industry, however, the decline of the Garrett long shop engineering works had only been partially offset by the Sizewell nuclear developments. More recently, Leiston Town Council and the local community had developed a Neighbourhood Plan for the town including a vision and policies to inform and chart future land use, leisure and amenity plans for Leiston to 2029.

It was proposed that this Masterplan Framework document would provide a basis to inform a review of the current Neighbourhood Plan. The Leiston Community Land Trust (LCLT) had also developed a positive business plan for the town, which proposed the opportunities for regeneration of three key sites – Post Office Square, Church square and Market square. The LCLT had already raised the necessary funding to design and deliver the extensive public realm improvements to Church square, which were formerly opened June 2022.

The Masterplan Framework would provide Leiston with the opportunity to consider the positive work already completed within the town, the existing plans and proposals that had been prepared for three key sites by the LCLT and to develop these further within a wider town centre plan. The Masterplan Framework aimed to address some of the fragmentation that existed across the town, improve the connectivity between the identified character areas, develop Leiston's unique selling point further and provide short to long-term aspirational high level concept design options for the town. Once completed and delivered, this approach would drive sustainable economic viability of the wider town centre, attracting further public and private sector investment, to ensure long term vitality and recovery of the town, and with links to the potential construction of Sizewell C.

The Leader reported that he had visited Leiston soon after becoming ESC's Leader in May 2019; he highlighted the huge aspiration, but limited direction; he welcomed the Masterplan Framework, led by ESC officers, and hugely importantly, the local people too. The Leader referred to strong ambition within the document and, importantly, the fact that it was all deliverable.

Councillor Byatt, after applauding the Masterplan Framework, hoped that Sizewell C might bring in the funds and support Leiston's development; it was confirmed that the Town Council, the CLT, residents and businesses had been heavily involved in the development of the Framework and that was key. The Deputy Leader, referring to Sizewell, stated that within the Development Consent Order (DSO) there were explicit projects that had been agreed with the Town Council and so there would be a joined up approach. Also, within the DCO, there were pots of money for other projects and these could be used. Councillor Byatt welcomed the commitment and enthusiasm of the Town Council.

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

RESOLVED

1. That the Leiston Town Centre Masterplan Framework document be approved to inform the future development of development projects within the town.
2. That the subsequent development of projects be approved, to include feasibility and business case development based on the outcomes of the masterplan, including working with other landowners
3. That future funding bid opportunities be approved to draw down external funding support to deliver projects once developed.

12 Environment Task Group - Quarterly Update

Cabinet received report **ES/1481** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment which, in his absence, was presented by the Leader.

The Leader reported that, since 2017, ESC's emissions had reduced by 35%, with significant reductions around fleet and attention was now moving to the leisure centre decarbonisation programme, other buildings and assets would follow. The Leader reported that ESC led both internally and where it had the powers and duties to do so and, more importantly, enabled others to take action by working in partnership with organisations across East Suffolk.

The Leader emphasised that the Environment was embedded across ESC's services plans and procurement policy, and was always considered as part of Cabinet and Full Council decisions.

Referring to the current Administration of ESC, the Leader reported on the ambitious programme with over 100 projects related to climate change and the environment and the incoming climate action plan would ensure that the projects were delivered.

In conclusion, the Leader stated that ESC's priorities remained net zero and reducing its footprint, energy, delivery of low carbon energy projects, low energy homes, reducing energy use, increasing use of renewables, nature, biodiversity loss, habitat restoration and a circular economy.

Cabinet welcomed the report, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources particularly welcomed so many aspects with every one of the projects being important to the complete picture. He also commented on the importance of energy related projects, particularly at this time and looking to the future, and how East Suffolk would secure its own energy and making sure that it was renewable energy was so important for every aspect of the Council's work.

Councillor Byatt, after congratulating the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment and the Task Group on its tremendous work, referred to paragraph 3.3 of the report and the issues with water problems related to Sizewell C. The Deputy Leader referred to ESC having recently agreed its responses to the strategies being set up for the Eastern Region for Water; he agreed with Councillor Byatt that it was a concern and that had been commented on within the response. Councillor Rivett reported that Sizewell C had commented that they would not impact the water demand for residents as they would need to have their own bespoke approach.

Councillor Byatt, in conclusion, stated that, under the next Administration, he would welcome an Environment Committee.

Councillor Smith-Lyte, referring to Sizewell C, questioned the fact that the "destruction" had already started on the site, within the bird nesting season, despite the fact that at least 60% of the overall budget was still missing. Councillor Smith-Lyte also expressed concern regarding the water issues.

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

RESOLVED

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

13 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; he added that the Council should, unless there were urgent circumstances, give notice of its intention to do so via the Forward Plan, which was updated and published on its website 28 clear days prior to the meeting.

There were various reasons, the Leader commented, 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 reported, Cabinet had eight substantive exempt matters to consider as outlined on the published agenda – items 14 to 21.

Item 14 related to the acceptance of funding to deliver a Strength and Balance programme for a five-year period. The delivery of the programme would provide opportunities to build on national ambitions for leisure centres to become 'health and wellbeing hubs' and also to deliver accessible activities in the district. The proposal had synergies with other programmes that may be devolved to district and borough councils by Suffolk Public Health and the two Integrated Care Bodies.

Item 15 related to the Cultural Quarter project in Lowestoft. The proposals within the report were aligned to the wider aspirations of the project.

Item 16 related to entering into a lease agreement related to the Annex building at East Suffolk House here in Melton. Letting of the building would provide a useful income stream to the Council and make best use of a currently underused asset and would help to build partnerships by working with others bodies/local businesses.

Item 17 related to a Hastoe Housing Association development in Southwold, on the former hospital site. The proposals related to the conversion of two shared ownership properties (that remained unsold despite being actively marketed since May 2021) to social rent properties and would provide affordable housing for local residents.

Item 18 related to the development of the former Deben High School site in Felixstowe, known as “Deben Fields”, providing an update on all works progressed since the purchase of the site and sought the necessary funding to proceed with plans to deliver the proposed housing scheme, which would provide much needed services and housing accommodation that would maximise health and well-being for residents and would reduce the reliance on external energy sources compared to the vast majority of homes within the district.

Item 19 related to the procurement of the required contracts for the supply of goods, services and works for the successful delivery of the Council’s Housing Revenue Account maintenance programme.

Item 20 sought the approval of a Memorandum of Understanding, without obligation, for the Council’s participation in the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme and to approve that in principle the Council participates in the programme using East Suffolk Property Investments Limited, and that appropriate loan finance be provided to ESPIL subject to a detailed business case being approved by Cabinet and the Audit and Governance Committee. As well as participating in a national scheme which constituted doing the right thing in enabling communities, this would sit within the Council’s wider strategic objectives in relation to housing supply and potentially supporting its financial sustainability aspirations.

And lastly, item 21 related to the approval of a business plan for the first year of East Suffolk Services Limited (ESSL), which would set out how ESSL would operate during its first contract year. The contract with ESSL would ensure the Council had the best possible strategic control of service delivery.

On the proposition of Councillor Gallant, seconded by Councillor Rivett, it was by 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 3, 4 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

14 Exempt Minutes - January 2023

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

15 Exempt Minutes - February 2023

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

16 Delivery of Strength and Balance Programme

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

17 Cultural Quarter - Sea View House

- 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.

18 ESC Building Lease

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

19 Funding Bid for Tenure Conversion - Southwold Hospital Site - Hastoe HA

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

20 Deben Fields - Project Progress and Financial Update

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

21 Housing Maintenance Procurement

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

22 Provision of Loan Finance to East Suffolk Property Investments Limited

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

23 East Suffolk Services Business Plan

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

The meeting concluded at 8.45 pm

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Chairman