

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held at Riverside, 4 Canning Road,
Lowestoft on **Wednesday, 13 March 2019 at 6.30pm**

Cabinet Members present:

Councillors M Bee (Chairman), G Catchpole, B Provan and D Ritchie

Assistant Cabinet Members present:

Councillor P Ashdown, N Brooks and J Ceresa.

Also in attendance:

Councillors P Byatt, A Cackett and L Coulam.

Officers present:

K Blair (Head of Operations), C Buck (Senior Planning and Enforcement Officer), T Howarth (Principal Environmental Health Officer), N Khan (Strategic Director), B Law (Housing Programme Manager), D Povey (Principal Planner for Policy and Delivery), T Rudd (Valuer), S Shimmon (Housing Tenancy Manager), C Willis (Economic Regeneration and Development Officer) and N Wotton (Democratic Services Manager).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Ladd, C Punt, C Rivett and M Rudd.

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor S Woods, Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M Bee declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest in Item 13 – Land Issues Relating to the Third Crossing, during the discussions on that item, as he was a Member of the Third Crossing Working Group.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED

(a) That the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 16 January 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(b) That the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 13 February 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 ISSUES ARISING FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OR THE AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

(a) The Overview & Scrutiny Committee

There were no matters to report on this occasion.

(b) The Audit & Governance Committee

There were no matters to report on this occasion.

5 EAST SUFFOLK PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY

The Assistant Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report, which sought approval of the East Suffolk Private Sector Housing Strategy, which would align the Council's policies for enforcement, empty homes and Renovation Grants, in preparation for the new East Suffolk Council. The Strategy also identified the various challenges affecting the sector and specific actions, detailing how solutions would be delivered to mitigate the most pressing issues between now and 2023.

In respect of the Renovation Grant Policy, it was noted that a minor works grant had been introduced to support works costing between £1,000 and £5,000 to help patients return home from hospital, support warm homes initiatives and for flood defence works. Members were advised that there were conditions attached to the grant, which would require repayment if they were breached. It was noted that conditions were enforced for 5 years for minor works and 15 years for renovation grants, which allowed for the recycling of funds to help future applications.

The recommendation within the report was moved by the Leader of the Council and duly seconded by the Cabinet Member for Resources. There being no further questions it was

RESOLVED

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

6 MINISTRY OF HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXTERNAL FUNDING TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

The Assistant Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which sought approval to apply for grant funding, in relation to the prevention of Homelessness. Should the applications be successful, approval was also sought to spend the funding to prevent homelessness in the District and to have an exemption from the Council's own Contract Procedure Rules (CPR), in order to minimise any disruption to the current service providers. The recommendations within the report were moved by the Leader of the Council and duly seconded by the Cabinet Member for Planning & Coastal Management.

A Member commented that they regularly attended the meetings of the Health and Wellbeing Board and that the work to reduce homelessness was extremely important. She felt that it was extremely important for the Council to apply for this funding and to continue the good work, after the creation of the new East Suffolk Council.

A Member took the opportunity to commend those involved in the Thin Ice Project, which provided additional support to the homeless during particularly cold weather. He queried whether, should the funding be received, it would need to be spread across the whole East Suffolk District or whether the funding was for the Waveney area specifically. The

Assistant Cabinet Member for Housing confirmed that the funding was for the Waveney area only, which was particularly in need.

RESOLVED

1. To approve 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 Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding up to £220,000.00
2. For the reasons given in Paragraph 1.22 of this report, to exempt from the Contract Procedure Rules and in particular rule 8.1.1 and give 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 Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding – Up to £220,000.00

7 LOCAL PLANNING ENFORCEMENT PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Planning & Coastal Management presented the report, which sought approval of the Local Planning Enforcement Plan. It was noted that the National Planning Policy Framework guidance suggested that local planning authorities should consider publishing a local enforcement plan, which would help to maintain public confidence in the Planning Service across East Suffolk. Members were advised that there were now 3 Enforcement Officers for the two Councils, who would be able to monitor situation closely and take action as appropriate. There were currently approximately 500 enforcement issues under consideration across the 2 districts. It was confirmed that any concerns regarding developments needed to be emailed to the Planning Department, verbal reporting would not suffice.

The Senior Planning & Enforcement Officer advised that Enforcement was not a statutory service for the local authority to provide, however it was important for the public to have confidence in the work of the Planning Department. The Enforcement Plan would provide clear information on the processes, procedures and timescales involved in enforcement.

The Assistant Cabinet Member for Planning & Coastal Management confirmed that the Planning Department were working hard to reduce the number of enforcement cases, which was supported and endorsed by the Planning Committee. The number of outstanding enforcement cases had reduced significantly over time and thanks were given to all the Planning Officers involved, for their hard work and support.

A Member sought clarification on the Right To Review (RTR). It was confirmed that in many cases planning permission would be granted for matters such as the erection of a garden shed, even if there were objections from a neighbour. However, should the application affect the amenity of a nearby property, such as the noise created by a new dog kennelling business, planning permission may not be granted. It was noted that each application would be reviewed on its individual merits. Clarification was also provided that nobody had a right to a view, however a reduction in outlook or an overbearing development may be treated differently.

RESOLVED

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

8 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY SPENDING FOR PLAY AREA EXTENSION AT ROYAL GREEN, LOWESTOFT

The Cabinet Member for Planning & Coastal Management presented the report which sought approval to use £123,500 of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, as recommended by the Council's Local Plan Working Group, to deliver the extension to the play area at Royal Green, Lowestoft. The proposals would provide important new facilities at a strategic location on the seafront, which would support the Council's plans for the seafront and the upcoming First Light Festival. Should approval be granted, it would allow for the work to commence quickly, in time for the summer season. The Cabinet Member updated the meeting that the Council will be contributing £20,000 towards the delivery of the project. Also, the Council's Funding Manager and Economic Development and Regeneration team have met with Lowestoft Tourism Group who are in support of the scheme and have pledged £10,000 from their funds to support its delivery.

The play area extension would provide purpose built, self contained, play facilities for toddlers and younger children, with inclusive play provision for disabled users. It was noted that the proposals were in accordance with the Sentinel Leisure Trust's Play Space Evaluation Report 2015, which had recommended improvements for toddlers and juniors in the area. Reassurance was provided that the proposals had developed over time and no longer included a car park extension, which had resulted in the costs of the development falling significantly. The number of concerns regarding the development had also reduced, once the car parking element had been removed from the proposals. During discussions, Councillor Ceresa advised that as a Suffolk County Councillor, she had access to locality funding, which could assist with the development.

A Member reported that they had been lobbied significantly by some members of the Lowestoft Tourist Group, who had many concerns regarding the proposed development. These concerns were duly addressed in turn.

Confirmation was provided that the land in question was not covered by any covenants. However, the site was in a conservation area and the proposals had been discussed with the Conservation Officer. Less than 12% of the grassed area would be used for the development, which would enhance the area. There was still plenty of public space and the overall amenity of the area would be increased. Reassurance was provided that the grassed area would still be able to accommodate the visiting circus and host other events, as required.

In relation to disabled access, it was reported that the vast majority of the play equipment would be accessible for all people and the proposed development would also have inclusive play provision specifically for the disabled, which was extremely positive.

Following a query regarding an Adult Gym, it was confirmed that there was a need to provide facilities for older people and trim trails had proved popular in other parts of the

district. It was hoped that this could be explored in the future. A Member commented that there were Adult Gym facilities in Worlingham which were extremely popular and well used.

Regarding the Crazy Golf Course, it was confirmed that there were no plans to move the facility and the lease for the site was currently ongoing.

RESOLVED

That £123,500 of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding be made available for the play area extension at Royal Green.

9 ENTERPRISE ZONES RATE RELIEF

The Assistant Cabinet Member for Tourism & Economic Development presented the report which sought approval to extend the existing rate relief scheme on Enterprise Zones beyond the current deadline for 31 March 2019. It was noted that a limited extension to the business rate discount scheme was important, as it would assist with the delivery of the Enterprise Zones and the Council's economic growth objectives, as set out in the East Suffolk Business Plan and the East Suffolk Economic Growth Plan.

It was reported that Phase 1 of the Phoenix Enterprise Park was now open and any increase to the proposed extension would offer a further incentive for companies to move to the site, which agents could use to assist with marketing of the site. There was the potential to generate a significant number of jobs for the local area.

Members were pleased to note that to date, £1.2 million had been generated in business rates income via the Enterprise Zone project, which would rise to £1.7 million once the 2018/19 NNDR3 figures had been confirmed. The recommendations in the report were moved by the Leader of the Council and seconded by the Cabinet Member for Planning & Coastal Management and it was

RESOLVED

That the continuing the existing business rate relief scheme within Waveney's Enterprise Zone areas be approved, whereby qualifying businesses receive up to 100% rate relief within state aid limits. This incentive will be available for a 3 year period, for qualifying businesses, on condition that they occupy an Enterprise Zone site by April 2020.

10 EAST SUFFOLK YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICE – MYGO EAST SUFFOLK

The Assistant Cabinet Member for Tourism & Economic Development presented the report which sought approval to procure a service, in partnership with Suffolk County Council, that would proactively support young people to become positively engaged within the local community.

It was noted 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. It was noted that 12% of 16-24 year olds were unemployed in Waveney and it was proven that youth worklessness had a significant impact upon a person's future in terms of lower pay, high unemployment, fewer life chances, reduced social mobility and poor mental and physical health.

As part of East Suffolk's twin objectives of supporting economic growth and enabling communities, it was imperative to continue to address the problem by supporting young people to access employment, education and training opportunities. This would be of benefit to the individual, local employers and the families and communities within which these young people live.

In order to help address the NEET issue, Suffolk County Council and the East Suffolk Council were intending to procure a youth employment service which would build on the previous Lowestoft MyGo model and to extend provision across the whole of East Suffolk, with particular focus on those areas of greatest need, such as Lowestoft, Leiston, Saxmundham and Felixstowe. It was noted that the service would provide a combination of preventative and remedial measures to tackle youth unemployment, with a clear focus on providing both intensive support to young people to enable them to engage in education or work, challenge them to increase their aspirations and encourage them to realise their potential.

The recommendation in the report was moved by the Leader of the Council and seconded by the Cabinet Member for Operational Partnerships. Members considered the matter and agreed that it was an appropriate use of funds and was an important area of work. Members noted that the MyGo service in Lowestoft had been particularly successful and the extension of the service would be a lasting legacy for the future.

A Member queried whether the service was available to youngsters who lived in the rural areas, rather than the larger towns. It was confirmed that an outreach service would also be provided, to ensure that all young people could take advantage of the support on offer.

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.

11 EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

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 items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

12 REGENERATION OF AVENUE MANSIONS SITE

The Assistant Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report, which sought approval to consider a proposal to address the decline in the quality of Avenue Mansions.

RESOLVED

That Option 5, as set out in the report, be approved, on terms that best protect the Council's interest.

Those present then took the opportunity to wish the Housing Programme Manager all the best for the future, as she was about to go on maternity leave. Members thanked her for her help and support over the past few years.

13 LAND ISSUES RELATING TO THE THIRD CROSSING, LOWESTOFT

N.B. Councillor M Bee, Leader of the Council, declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest in this item during the discussions, as he was a Member of the Third Crossing Working Group.

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented the report, which sought to clarify the impact of the Third Crossing on a number of sites and buildings which were currently owned by Waveney District Council, or in which the Council had a relevant legal interest.

RESOLVED

1. That the proposals made by Suffolk County Council, in relation to land and property interests of Waveney District Council impacted by the proposed Third Crossing of Lake Lothing be accepted, subject to any restrictions on disposal or the like, which may exist.
2. That the land and property interests identified in the report shall be Waveney District Council's contribution to the Third Crossing project.
3. That Delegated Authority be granted to the relevant Strategic Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources, to agree the terms that best protect the interests of Waveney District Council, in relation to any disposal of land, or grant of rights over land, either permanently or temporarily, required for the proposed Third Crossing of Lake Lothing, and made between Waveney District Council and Suffolk County Council.

14 REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE PROCUREMENT TEAM

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented the report, which sought approval for the request for additional resources for the Procurement Team.

RESOLVED

That the request for additional resources for the Procurement Team, as outlined within the report, be approved.

15 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Exempt Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 16 January 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
- (b) That the Exempt Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 13 February 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Leader of the Council took the opportunity to thank all Members for their participation over the years and their contributions had been invaluable. It was noted that there had been many significant developments over the years and some difficult decisions had been made.

The Conservatives had taken over control of the Council when it was in an extremely poor state, having been condemned by the Auditors, with poor finances and services. Following a lot of hard work, the Council was now in an excellent position and the new East Suffolk Council would be the largest district council in the UK.

He took the opportunity to thank the Chairmen of the Overview & Scrutiny and Audit & Governance Committees for their ongoing support. He also reflected upon those Members who had made a significant contribution, who were no longer with us, such as Councillors Sue Allen and Colin Law.

Although this was the last Cabinet meeting, there would be a Simultaneous WDC Cabinet and Southwold Town Council meeting on 15 March 2019, which would hopefully resolve the long term issue of the future of the Southwold Harbour Lands, which would be a very fitting legacy for all.

The meeting concluded at 7.35 pm.

Chairman