

**Confirmed**



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Full Council** held in the Conference Room, Riverside, on **Wednesday, 23 November 2022 at 6:30 pm**

**Members present:**

Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Chris Blundell, Councillor Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw, Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Jenny Ceresa, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Tony Cooper, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Janet Craig, Councillor Tom Daly, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor John Fisher, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Tess Gandy, Councillor Andree Gee, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Richard Kerry, Councillor Stuart Lawson, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor Keith Patience, Councillor Malcolm Pitchers, Councillor Sarah Plummer, Councillor Carol Poulter, Councillor Mick Richardson, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Keith Robinson, Councillor Mary Rudd, Councillor Letitia Smith, Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Councillor Ed Thompson, Councillor Caroline Topping

**Officers present:** Stephen Baker (Chief Executive), Jason Beck (Principal Planner (Policy and Delivery)), Chris Bing (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer (Regulatory)), Andrea McMillan (Planning Manager - Policy, Delivery and Specialist Services), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer), Agnes Ogundiran (Conservative Political Group Support Officer), Tamzen Pope (Coastal Engineering Manager), Dickon Povey (Principal Planner (Policy and Delivery)), Fiona Quinn (Head of Environmental Services and Port Health), Philip Ridley (Head of Planning and Coastal Management), Jon Stockwin (LFRMP Project Delivery Manager), Anthony Taylor (Senior Planner (Policy and Delivery)), Karen Thomas (Head of Coastal Partnership East), Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager)

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**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tony Fryatt, Tony Goldson, Tracey Green, Frank Mortimer, Trish Mortimer, Debbie McCallum, Mark Newton, Russ Rainger, Steve Wiles and Kay Yule.

Councillors David Beavan, John Fisher, Sarah Plummer, Rachel Smith-Lyte, Ed Thompson and Caroline Topping all gave apologies as they would need to leave the meeting at around 8.30 pm.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Chris Blundell declared an Other Registerable Interest in Item 8b - Notice of Motion regarding Insulating Homes, during the debate on this item, as he was a residential landlord.

Councillor Janet Craig declared an Other Registerable Interest in Item 17 - Contract for East Suffolk Services Limited, as she was a Member of Lowestoft Town Council, which would be affected by the contract.

Councillor Keith Patience declared an Other Registerable Interest in Item 17 - Contract for East Suffolk Services Limited, as he was a Member of Lowestoft Town Council, which would be affected by the contract. He stated that he would leave the meeting for that item and would take no part in the discussions or voting.

### **3a Minutes - September 2022**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the Meeting held on 28 September 2022 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **3b Minutes - November 2022**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 2 November 2022 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **4 Announcements**

### **The Chairman of the Council**

The Chairman reported that since the last Full Council meeting, she had attended a number of civic engagements which included:

- Sunday 30 October 2022 - Mayor of Beccles - Civic Service at St Michael's, Beccles
- Tuesday 1 November 2022 - East Suffolk Awards - Launch Photoshoot at Snape Maltings, Snape
- Sunday 13 November 2022 - Lowestoft Remembrance Parade & Service at Claremont Pier/Royal Plain
- Sunday 13 November 2022 - Wreath Laying & Service of Remembrance at War Memorial, St Mary's Road/St Michael's Church Beccles

The Vice Chairman had also attended a number of engagements, which included

- Sunday 2 October 2022 - The Suffolk Harvest Festival at Trinity Park, Ipswich
- Thursday 13 October 2022 - Disability Advice Service - Opening of New Offices

at 14 The Square, Martlesham Heath

- Saturday 12 November 2022 - Remembrance Services - West Suffolk Chair at Abbey Gardens Rose Garden, Bury St Edmunds
- Thursday 17 November 2022 - Building Better Opportunities - Celebration Event at Kesgrave Community Centre, Twelve Acre Approach

The Chairman took the opportunity to remind Members that her Civic Carol Service would take place at Our Lady, Star of the Sea Church, Gordon Road, Lowestoft on Sunday, 11 December 2022 at 3.00 pm. She asked Members to confirm their attendance with the Civic Secretary by 5 December 2022. Light refreshments would be served after the Carol Service, in the Stella Maris Hall, which adjoined the Church.

### **Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council**

#### Executive Decisions Exempt from Call-In

The Leader reported that in accordance with the Council's Constitution, he was required to report all executive decisions which were exempt from call in to the next meeting of Council. This evening, he had one such decision to update Members on, which related to the formation of Freeport East.

On 14 October 2022, Councillor Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development, had taken a Portfolio Holder decision, to approve that Freeport East Limited be incorporated on the finalised version of the Articles of Association and Members Agreement, circulated to the Freeport East Supervisory Board members on 12 October, subject to any minor amendments which were made to these incorporation documents at the Board meeting on 17 October 2022.

At the time the decision was taken, it was exempt from call in due to urgency, as the decision needed to be made before the meeting of Freeport East Supervisory Board, which took place on 17 October 2022. It was noted that the Chairman of the Council had agreed to this request.

#### County Deal for Suffolk

The Leader stated that last week, the Chancellor of the Exchequer confirmed, in his Autumn Statement, that there would be a 'County Deal' for Suffolk. The full details of the proposed deal had not yet been published and this was expected to happen in the coming weeks.

This would be the first county deal of its kind in the country and a model was being pursued which would see the Leader of the County Council directly elected by the people of Suffolk.

The proposed change would not add any new levels of bureaucracy, nor would it create any new offices. The Leader took the opportunity to clarify that a model which would see a directly elected Mayor for Suffolk was not on the table.

In keeping with Suffolk's collaborative way of working, this deal had been developed in

partnership with the county's district and borough councils, as well as the Police and Crime Commissioner and MPs. Once the full details were announced, it would be taken forward to public consultation with Suffolk's communities and businesses.

### Be a Councillor Events

The Leader updated Members that two 'Be a Councillor' Events had been held this month, which were designed to provide further information to those people who were considering standing for Election to this Council next year. There was a session at East Suffolk House and at Riverside and the sessions provided information on what it was really like to be an East Suffolk Councillor, what the Council does and the support available for Councillors.

The Leader thanked the Member Development Steering Group, the Opposition Group Leaders and Councillor Caroline Topping for their contributions to the evenings. Some very positive feedback had been received from some of the attendees so it was hoped that they would consider standing for election in May next year.

### Appointment of a Strategic Director for Growth

The Leader stated that Members would be aware that the Council commissioned the Local Government Association to carry out a full corporate peer challenge in February 2022. One of the resultant recommendations was in relation to a lack of capacity at senior level and they recommended the appointment of a third Strategic Director, to support strategic decision-making with a particular focus on corporate governance, providing a line of sight across a range of work programmes. This would further strengthen accountability and alignment to the Strategic Plan.

The peer challenge process was invaluable and the Cabinet debated and approved the creation of a third Director post and associated funding at its meeting on 5 July 2022 and the Council engaged the services of Tile Hill, an executive recruitment company, who had recently assisted with the recruitment of a Managing Director for East Suffolk Services Limited.

The Director recruitment ran in tandem to the recruitment of a new Chief Executive and the Leader summarised the recruitment process. It was noted that Tile Hill had focussed their search on approaching and speaking with potential candidates with significant corporate experience. The advert closed on 23 September and 35 applications were received. Longlisting took place on 30 September and following further, more forensic, conversations with the longlisted candidates, a shortlist of 4 was agreed on 17 October. The shortlisted candidates were offered an opportunity to meet individually with the Leader and also with Stephen Baker.

The Leader reported that the interviews took place on 3 and 4 November with day 1 involving a Stakeholder Panel of representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors and they also appeared before a panel of members of the Corporate Management Team. Day 2 took the form of a more traditional interview Panel of Members and officers. The Leader was very pleased that the incoming Chief Executive, Chris Bally, was able to take part in this interview process.

The Leader explained that following the interviews, a formal Appointments Committee met and unanimously agreed that Kate Blakemore should be appointed. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Cabinet Members were given an opportunity to raise any material or well-founded objections to this recommendation and none were received.

The Leader updated Members about Kate's professional background and areas of expertise. Kate had demonstrated that she was a highly competent officer with significant experience in public service and there was no doubt that she would be an asset to the Council, and she was due to start in early February 2023.

The Leader explained that, as with the appointment of the new Chief Executive, he had made a point of including the other two Group Leaders in the process. Before the growth paper was taken to Cabinet, he had sought the views of both Councillor Byatt and Councillor Beavan, at one of the regular Group Leader get togethers. He was pleased that both of the other Group Leaders acknowledged the necessity for this growth post, with Councillor Beavan being particularly keen to ensure that it led to a top-down review of capacity within the officer structure.

The Leader expressed his disappointment and surprise that Councillor Beavan had later declared that the GLI Group would play no part in the recruitment process. The Leader was only able to assume that his Group had changed his mind as to the value of the post and felt that that the Members of his Group could offer no value to the process. The Leader stated that he found it difficult to believe that any Group Leader would unilaterally disengage from such an important matter, without seeking the wider views of the group first.

The Leader confirmed his gratitude to Councillor Byatt for his engagement and the role he played in both the selection process and the appointments committee.

#### Retirement of Stephen Baker, Chief Executive

The Leader confirmed that the Chief Executive, Stephen Baker, would be retiring at the end of the year, after more than 17 years in the role at East Suffolk Council and the predecessor Councils Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council. Therefore, this would be the last Full Council meeting which he would be attending.

Although there would be events taking place in December to pay tribute to Stephen Baker, the Leader reported that he could not let this evening pass without paying tribute to a man who had served Suffolk with huge distinction, for a number of decades.

He became one of the first joint Chief Executives in the country, when he combined his role at Suffolk Coastal with duties at Waveney and, throughout the journey of the creation of East Suffolk Council, his calm authority, his diligence and his drive helped ensure the success of the process. Stephen had served Members with distinction and he had also been the Head of Paid Service for literally thousands of employees over the decades and it would be almost impossible to find anyone who would have a bad word to say about him.

The Leader stated that when he spoke with officers, he had heard repeatedly that Stephen Baker was a proper leader who wanted the very best from those he worked with but who also cared about every one of them and who spearheaded a collaborative, supportive culture that achieved results for local communities.

The Leader confirmed that Stephen would be missed by all. However, whilst he was delighted to have secured the services of Chris Bally, who would take up his role at the start of next year, he knew that Stephen would leave a huge hole. He had set the highest standards for East Suffolk Council and he had created a legacy which would outlast us all. He deserved his long-awaited retirement, and he would depart East Suffolk Council with gratitude and respect for 40 years of service to local government, which left a wonderful legacy for East Suffolk.

### **Cabinet Members**

#### Councillor Burroughes - Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Experience, ICT and Operational Partnerships

Councillor Burroughes confirmed he was pleased to provide an update on the ongoing pay negotiations with Unison, on behalf of the East Suffolk Waste collection crews. Following the recent settlement of the national pay award, which resulted in a £1,925 per year pay increase for each member of staff, negotiations on the additional local uplift element of the 2022 pay claim had continued.

Councillor Burroughes reported that last week at a meeting facilitated by ACAS, the Council and Norse put a further pay offer to the union. This offer recognised the increasingly challenging financial situation nationally, concerns about pay parity with the local haulage and waste collection sector and the important service the teams provide. The pay offer met the unions request for an additional £1.25 per hour for both HGV drivers and loaders and included a significant improvement in the local arrangements for sick pay. The pay uplift was accepted, the offer on sick pay was received positively and was taken to a ballot of the waste collection staff. The ballot closed at 5.30 pm today and the result of the ballot was that it had been overwhelmingly accepted.

Throughout this process, the Council's priority had been to ensure that a solution was reached in the very best interests of all parties. Despite considerable publicity around this issue, including interventions which had not always been helpful, the Council had conducted negotiations diligently and respectfully throughout. He stated that personally he was very pleased that this matter was now approaching a satisfactory conclusion.

#### Councillor Kerry - Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing

Councillor Kerry expressed his shock and sadness, to learn of the tragic death of 2 year old Awaab Ishak from Rochdale, which last week saw a coroner determine that the damp and mould within his home had been a contributing factor to his death.

The condition of council properties was extremely important to the Council and its

tenants, and the Council was committed to working together to resolve problems quickly and efficiently. There was also a dedicated repairs team to provide professional repairs, when needed.

Councillor Kerry reported that as soon as the coroners findings were known, the Council had initiated an in depth review of how it currently managed reports from tenants of condensation, damp and mould in their homes. A project team had been set up, to update the policy and procedure, and to ensure that communication was provided, in writing, to each tenant following an inspection.

Councillor Kerry confirmed that unfortunately, with the cost of living crisis and people across the country struggling to afford increasing energy bills, it was anticipated that there may be an increase in reports of damp and mould. Therefore, the Housing Team were developing new processes, to ensure the service could manage the potential increase in inspections required.

As condensation, damp and mould was an issue which affected a wide variety of homes, the Council offered all residents advice and guidance on how to limit the conditions where condensation causes problems. This information was available on the Council's website and Democratic Services would share the links to the correct pages with Members, outside of this meeting.

#### Councillor Ritchie - Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management

Councillor Ritchie reported that he was delighted to announce that the vacancy for a Co-opted Member on the Southwold Harbour Management Committee had been filled, following a rigorous interview process, which took place yesterday. The position had been offered to Mr John Ogden and Councillor Ritchie was very pleased to confirm that he had accepted.

John had spent 34 years in the Armed Forces, giving him a great understanding of public sector working and commercial interface. He had also been a consultant for the Department for International Trade and Advisor for ibd Business Advice Group, UK Business Advisors and Business Growth Solutions UK. As a result of his working background, John had a wealth of strategic planning and management, organisational development, budgetary, and personnel management experience.

It was noted that John was also a Commercial Skipper for Rivers Cruise Restaurants and Suffolk River Trips, as well as being a qualified RYA Yachtmaster Offshore, with over 40 years cruising and racing experience in the UK and abroad. Since 2019 he had been a Class Captain at Waldringfield Sailing Club.

Councillor Ritchie confirmed that John would be an excellent addition to the Harbour Management Committee and he looked forward to working with him.

#### Councillor Smith - Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism

Councillor Smith reported that since the Council had launched its Ease the Squeeze

programme at the end of August, almost 300 residents had been helped to manage their money, with rising energy costs, access food and a range of other things. Seventeen 'Help with Money' roadshows had taken place in towns across the District in partnership with organisations such as Citizens Advice East Suffolk, Anglia Water, Police, Fire Service, Housing Associations, Suffolk Family Carers and Christians Against Poverty. It was noted that 31 Warm Rooms had been established around the District and 13 café's had signed up as Comfort Food venues – offering a free hot meal and drink. The Family Cooking on a Budget classes started this month and the Field to Fork Community Growing Spaces grants launched on Monday.

The Warm Homes Team had developed Winter Warmth packs, with a range of items to keep people warm at home and a stock of cooking equipment, including microwaves and slow cookers, for those who do not have access to a cooker or cannot afford to buy one.

With funding through Suffolk County Council, a grant scheme had been established to enable voluntary organisations and community groups to keep residents warm and fed this winter to try and reduce levels of respiratory conditions. There had been lots of interest and the first grants had been awarded this week.

### **Chief Executive**

Stephen Baker confirmed that this was indeed his last Full Council meeting as Chief Executive of East Suffolk Council and he thanked the Leader for his kind words earlier. However, as there were several weeks to go until he retired, he did not wish to dwell on it this evening.

Stephen wished to record his own thanks. He stated that being a Chief Executive of a Local Authority was one of the most extraordinary, unique, demanding yet fulfilling, maddening and yet compelling, but also incredibly rewarding roles to have.

He took the opportunity to thank all those present for making it such an amazing experience and thanked the team of colleagues who had enabled Members and officers to achieve so much. Stephen confirmed that being the Chief Executive for East Suffolk Council and for the two predecessor Councils, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney, had been without a doubt been the utmost honour and privilege.

## **5 Questions from the Public**

No questions were submitted by the electorate as provided by Council Procedure Rule 8.

## **6 Questions from Members**

a) Question submitted by Councillor Keith Patience to Councillor Mary Rudd, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health

In a few months, Lowestoft will see the addition of another crossing over Lake Lothing.

As the Gull Wing will be the third 'opening' bridge for Lowestoft, this will, as with the



other two bridges, create issues with queueing traffic, and the extra engine emissions this will cause.

It is a known fact that idling engines can double harmful emissions and leave fumes lingering nearby.

Given that the Gull Wing Bridge is close to properties in Denmark Road, as well as a Children's Play Area, what is this Council prepared to do to encourage vehicle users to turn off their engines whilst traffic is queueing there, and wherever else there are queues across Lowestoft, as a result of bridges opening.

Response from Councillor Mary Rudd, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health

Thank you for your question, Councillor Patience.

- The Gull Wing Bridge is positioned further up the estuary than the Bascule Bridge and will be taller so that smaller vessels can get under it. As such it will open less frequently than the Bascule Bridge and the impact on traffic queues will be smaller.
- By having three routes across the estuary, it should generally improve traffic flows and reduce congestion.
- Air Quality was considered during the bridge planning stage and extensive air quality modelling was carried out which included assessing the impact from changes to traffic flows. Nitrogen Dioxide and particulates were both modelled. As would be expected when diverting and changing traffic flows, there were predicted areas of both improved and worsening air quality due to the building of the bridge – however all areas were predicted to be considerably below the health based national objective levels.
- If queuing does occur onto Denmark Road and beyond, this is unlikely to be significant to users of the play area in terms of the national health-based objectives. However, regardless of the significance of any impact on air quality, it would seem sensible to encourage drivers to switch off their engines when queuing, if possible.
- Any signage on the highway, or relating to the highway, would be the responsibility of SCC highways department. East Suffolk Council will liaise with SCC to consider signage aimed at encouraging drivers to turn off engines while queuing.

The Chairman asked Councillor Patience if he wished to ask a Supplementary Question and he confirmed that he did not. He stated that he wished to reflect upon the answer he had received to his question.

b) Question submitted by Councillor David Beavan to Councillor Craig Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development

Will you finally, after four months and four emails, correct the erroneous annexation on our GIS map of Southwold's North Field, Havenbeach Marsh which we use for a commercial camping field? Can you tell me when we will start paying the people of Southwold rent for this land which was bequeathed to them by William Godyll in 1509, suggested at £27,000 pa by the District Auditor in 2007 and, as charitable trust land, is legally excluded from adverse possession?

Response from Councillor Craig Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development

Despite a request to do so, Councillor Beavan has not provided any authoritative documentation to support his question. This being the case, I can only conclude that there isn't an issue.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Beavan

I did reply to the Strategic Director. I feel that you have evaded my question.

Response from Councillor Rivett

Three quarters of a page of a word document does not constitute evidence, we need more than that to investigate further. This is just an attempt to delay progress. Any income from the camping field is ring-fenced and goes to the Harbour funds, which is managed by the Harbour Management Committee and yet you keep bringing up historical matters.

This Council had recently spent £1 million on the Southwold Business Hub, which was supported by Southwold Town Council and all Members, except for you, Councillor Beavan.

Southwold Town Council have thanked this Council for making these projects a reality, and despite these many attempts to try and scupper progress, this Council wishes to support Southwold Town Council and its aims.

**7 Petitions**

No petitions have been received as provided by Council Procedure Rule 10.

**8 Notices of Motion**

The Chairman announced that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.4, the Leader of the Council and the Leaders of the Opposition Groups had met to discuss the 2 Motions and agreed a way forward. The recommendation from this meeting was that both Motions would be discussed by Full Council this evening. She therefore proposed from the Chair that both Motions be discussed this evening and it was seconded by the Leader of the Council. The Chairman invited Members to vote on the proposal to debate both Motions this evening and it was unanimously **CARRIED**.

a) Motion submitted by Councillor Peter Byatt

The Chairman invited Councillor Byatt to read out his Motion.

Councillor Byatt proposed the Motion, which was seconded by Councillor Deacon, who reserved his right to speak, and Councillor Byatt read out the following:

*This Council notes that sewage pollution continues to be allowed to flow untreated into our local waterways and coastal waters.*

*It is imperative for our residents health, the environment and our economy that water quality issues are addressed.*

*This Motion calls upon this Council to write a letter to Anglian Water to demand that it*

- *Improves water quality checks in a bid to protect our rivers and coastline from pollution*
- *Takes action to address all recent sewage discharges as a matter of urgency*
- *Ensures that all its outfalls are equipped with operationally functioning Event Monitors or other sensors that are checked and maintained regularly*
- *Ensures that all of its communication with Council Environmental Officers is prompt and informative*
- *Reduces surface water run-off overwhelming the Combined Sewer System*

The Chairman invited Members to debate.

Councillor Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment, stated that local waterways and the sea were the barometers of the health of the local area. Rubbish and pollution would find its way into the waterways to the detriment of wildlife and the local population. He stated that he wished to propose an amendment to the Motion, to expand its scope. He proposed the following amendment:

*This Council notes that sewage pollution continues to be allowed to flow untreated into our local waterways and coastal waters.*

*It is imperative for our residents health, the environment and our economy that water quality issues are addressed.*

*This Motion calls upon this Council to write a letter to Anglian Water to ask that it –*

- *Improves water quality checks in a bid to protect our rivers and coastline from pollution*
- *Takes action to address all recent sewage discharges as a matter of urgency*
- *Ensures that all its outfalls are equipped with operationally functioning Event Monitors or other sensors that are checked and maintained regularly*
- *Ensures that all of its communication with Council Environmental Officers is prompt and informative*
- *Reduces surface water run-off overwhelming the Combined Sewer System*

*And to also write to the secretary of state for the environment to*

- *To acknowledge and act to protect our water systems*
- *Engage with all stake holder to work together to improve water quality throughout East Suffolk.*

Councillor Mallinder stated that language was important, therefore he had changed the word 'demand' to 'ask' and he had included writing to the Secretary of State for the Environment, who was Therese Coffey, an MP for part of the East Suffolk District, to try and gain support for this crucial matter and he called for a seconder.

Councillor Gallant seconded the amendment to the Motion and he reserved his right to

peak.

Councillor Byatt stated that he was happy to support the amendment to his Motion, which he felt, strengthened it further.

Councillor Daly raised concerns regarding significant future housing developments, in areas that did not have sufficient capacity within the sewage network to cope with additional properties. He stated that this should be given greater prominence and consideration in Planning Applications. Councillor Gallant clarified that only the amendment was under discussion at this time, not the merit of the Motion in its entirety.

As the amendment had been moved and seconded, the Chairman invited Members to vote and the amendment was **CARRIED**. She then invited Members to debate the substantive motion.

Councillor Daly stated that there needed to be more information about water treatment plants and whether they had the capacity to deal with the extra sewage from additional homes. Local communities and their environments were badly affected by sewage discharges into waterways and the number of discharges would increase, if water treatment plans were put under greater pressure all the time, with additional housing developments being built. He felt that information about capacity in the sewage processing system should be a consideration and included within the Neighbourhood Plan. It was in the interests of everyone to minimise the number of sewage discharges.

Councillor Byatt stated that there was national duty to sort out the water crisis, which he felt was due to poor planning and neglect. There was not one river in England that was in good condition. East Suffolk attracted many tourists due to the countryside and the waterways should be clean. There was currently an alert regarding poor water cleanliness for the sea and beach in Lowestoft. Anglian Water provided statistics regarding discharges and between 2018 to 2021 there had been 50,351 discharges, which had lasted for 51,950 hours, which equated to 34 discharges a day. This was clearly unacceptable and Anglian Water needed to improve. Councillor Byatt explained that he wished the Council to work alongside Anglian Water, the Environment Agency, the Internal Drainage Boards, the 3 MPs and the Secretary of State for the Environment to improve the local environment. Action was needed now, to make vital improvements for the environment.

Councillor Ritchie, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, stated that water quality had actually improved over recent years. He explained that during heavy rains, storm drains would open, which would release 99% rain and only 1% sewage, therefore the proportion of waste being released was actually low. He stated that Anglian Water was one of the better water companies and was always within the top quartile in the league tables. Anglian Water were making improvements, however, they did not have unlimited resources. He noted that the Environment Bill was discussed in Parliament last year, which would compel water companies to do more to protect the environment.

Councillor Gallant confirmed that Anglian Water were one of the better companies,

nationally, and it was important for everyone to do what they could to support the environment.

There being no further debate, the Motion was put to the vote and it was unanimously **CARRIED**.

b) Motion Submitted by Councillor Caroline Topping

The Chairman had been advised that Councillor Beavan would be submitting the Motion this evening and therefore, the Chairman invited Councillor Beavan to read out the Motion.

*This Council notes:*

1. *A study from Warwick University has found that the average household in East Suffolk may see increases in energy bills of £1160 per year, even with government support from the EPG. Without it, average energy bills would increase by as much as £2063.*
2. *It is estimated that all households in East Suffolk combined could save up to 31% of its primary energy consumption per year (£46-76 million in energy bills or 120000 tons of CO2) if buildings were properly insulated.*
3. *East Suffolk has an estimated 22081 properties that would benefit from solid/cavity wall insulation, 13782 properties that would benefit from roof/loft insulation, 34791 properties that would benefit from floor insulation, and 18238 properties that would benefit from condensing boiler upgrades.*
4. *Warwick University have offered to assist in a pilot programme for scalable community investment in home insulation, at no cost to ESC. Warwick University will identify 100 to 200 'clusters' where work is scaleable, e.g. terraced houses where the workmen can move rapidly from one house to another. ESC would then organise community meetings in a few selected pilot areas – a community session with contractors, information about financial support and existing government schemes, evidence on the cost-benefit calculation. Residents can sign up for reduced costs. This model could be used as a blueprint for other locations with ESC leading the way.*

*This Council resolves:*

1. *To explore the offer from Warwick University's economics team to collaborate on a pilot and engage if appropriate.*

Councillor Beavan stated that this motion simultaneously addressed the two biggest issues of the day – the cost of living and the climate crisis. Residents faced an average increase in energy bills of £1,000 this winter, which may rise to £2,000 after April 2023. This would cost residents, in total, £170 million this year alone. Councillor Beavan explained that this cost could be reduced by £60 million, at a capital cost of £300 million, with a five year payback period, especially for the 11,000 properties that were rated EPC E or lower. It was noted that an academic survey stated that 43% of buildings would benefit.

Councillor Beavan reported that there were 120,000 residential properties in East Suffolk and a survey found that 80% could be raised an EPC grade through insulation

and boiler replacements. There were significant fixed costs of time and money for one household to organise this on their own, however, this could all be done together as a community group, which would save time and money. Warwick University would organise community meetings in coherent neighbourhoods, which needed similar work so that a contractor could work down the street, which would then be checked by East Suffolk's building inspectors. The pilot scheme would then produce a blueprint to deploy across the country, with East Suffolk leading the way.

Councillor Beavan clarified that Warwick University would supply their time for free, as long as best practice was followed at all times. The Council would need to provide meeting rooms and some officer time to coordinate with them. He commented that an FT article last week had stated that the UK had the oldest housing stock in the world, according to the Building Research Establishment, with 38% being pre-1946. The insulation of homes collapsed in 2013 by 96% and had not recovered since. The spending review announced last month £6 billion more for insulation from 2025, which was good news but was two years too late. If the government could afford £30 billion to reduce bills until April 2023, surely it could afford £10 billion to reduce bills forever? Councillor Beavan stated that there needed to be a national mission to insulate homes and it needed to start immediately in East Suffolk. If we do not act soon, could lose our residents' money, our country's energy security and, ultimately, the planet.

Councillor Beavan moved the Motion and it was seconded by Councillor Smith Lyte.

The Chairman invited Members to debate.

Councillor Kerry, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, reported that many projects were already underway across East Suffolk to improve homes. The Council had recently bid for £12 million funding and further bids for additional fund would be submitted in due course. It was noted that 1,000 households had already benefitted from projects which provided cavity wall and loft insulation, as well as solar panels. He did not think it prudent to add in another project, from an unknown element. He reported that East Suffolk had won several awards for its work in relation to insulation and home improvements, however, they had not received enough publicity. The projects currently underway were successful, therefore, he would not be supporting the motion this evening.

The Leader stated that he would not support the Motion. The projects the Council was working on were successful and it was important for the Council to have control over projects. He queried why Warwick University did not wish to work in nearby Coventry, which had similar housing issues. The Leader reminded Members that a large insulation project had previously been undertaken in the Harbour Ward, which had been poorly completed and had caused ongoing problems for those living in the properties. Those problems had needed to be rectified by the Council's Building Control Team. The Council's current projects were working well and there would be no value in taking part in the pilot scheme.

Councillor Byatt stated that the Council should explore Warwick University's offer. The pilot would only take up a small amount of officer time and it was important to improve resident's homes, improve insulation and find solutions to the problems in old

houses. This would also help householders, as they would not need to undertake research into the various options available and seek quotes, they would be assisted throughout the project. Councillor Byatt acknowledged the difficulties with the project undertaken in the Harbour Ward and he had been pleased when the Scrutiny Committee had examined the problems with the implementation of the project and standard of work in the Harbour Ward. However, it was important to help residents with energy costs and help those houses affected by mould. Warwick University's offer ought to be explored at the very least, to see how it could potentially help residents.

Councillor Topping stated that she lived in a 1950's ex local authority house, which was of good construction but would benefit from some energy efficiency measures and insulation. She had looked into additional insulation which would cost around £8,000 and would take 13 years to pay for itself, and, like many other home owners, this was unaffordable. There needed to be more support for people who owned their own homes, who needed some help to have improved insulation. She noted that whilst Waveney District Council, had supported the pilot scheme in the Harbour Ward, it had not been completed well and some properties had been made virtually uninhabitable. It was therefore imperative that any works undertaken to improve homes were done to the highest standard.

Councillor Blundell took the opportunity to declare an Other Registerable Interest at this point during the meeting, as he was a residential landlord. He reported that it was not straightforward to insulate a home, the insulation required would depend upon the age and construction of the building and there could be issues with modern homes too. There were many different styles and construction of homes across the district, therefore, it would be a complex matter to determine which types of insulation should be used for each property.

Councillor Gooch stated that she was baffled by the response of some Councillors this evening. Warwick University was one of the best universities in the UK, with a long history of analysis and were experts in their field. She felt that this pilot scheme would be a fantastic opportunity for the District and had the potential to benefit many residents.

Councillor Daly stated that Members should not be complacent. It was important to get involved with this project, as there was expertise and additional resources available. He felt very strongly that the Motion should be supported.

Councillor Jepson stated that it would be helpful to get some more information from Warwick University regarding costs and more detail about the pilot scheme generally, before making any decisions.

Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw expressed her support for the Motion and explained that further information would be provided by Warwick University, if the Council were interested in joining the pilot scheme.

Councillor Smith-Lyte stated that there was a climate emergency and action was required. All households were affected by the huge increases in gas and electricity prices, even with the support from the government and many people were struggling. If insulation was installed into homes on a large scale, those residents

would save significant amounts of money and also reduce their carbon emissions. Warwick University had offered help and support and this needed to be explored further. She felt that the Council should jump at this opportunity.

Councillor Beavan stated that Warwick University had made a very good offer. They would provide all of the research and support at the meetings, Council officers would only be required to co-ordinate the meetings. It would not hurt for the Council to express an interest in the pilot scheme and find out more about what it entailed. The current Warm Homes scheme was not available to those people who earned over £30,000 and therefore many people were ineligible for any support. Local residents were being badly affected by the cost of living crisis and there was also a climate crisis. This pilot scheme would address both of those issues. Councillor Beavan stated that he was just asking for the Council to explore this opportunity with Warwick University and find out more about it. He asked for Members to support the Motion.

The Chairman invited Members to vote upon the Motion and upon being put to the vote, it was **NOT CARRIED**.

## **9 East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy**

The Chairman invited Jason Beck, Principal Planner, to give a presentation to Members on the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy.

Jason Beck explained to Members that the purpose of the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy was to create safe, coherent, direct, comfortable, and attractive cycling, walking and wheeling environments that would lead to improvements in health and wellbeing, facilitate greater social interaction and play, encourage more environmentally sustainable lifestyles, reduce road congestion, and support economic growth.

It was noted that the Initial Consultation took place between October 2020 to December 2020 and this stage allowed the public to map issues and to make recommendations. There were approximately 800 comments received. The Consultation on the Draft Strategy took place between November 2021 to January 2022 and over 1,000 comments were received. The Draft Strategy was also considered by the Steering Group and the Local Plan Working Group, before it was adopted by the Cabinet at its meeting on 4 October 2022.

Members noted that the Strategy was a live and interactive document, which used colour coding and overlays to illustrate the various cycling and walking routes. The Strategy had several sections which included: Recommendations Map, Key Corridors, Site Allocations, Leisure Routes, Community Recommendations, Policy Context and Funding Mechanisms.

The next steps for the Strategy were:

- The Infrastructure Development Framework (IDF) would provide estimates on funding options
- The prioritisation table would be considered and reviewed
- Monitoring would be undertaken over time



There were also potential implementation opportunities which included:

- Planning applications
- Neighbourhood Plans
- Other funding opportunities e.g. SCC or CIL

It was noted that there would be ongoing Communications to raise the profile of the Strategy and increase public engagement. Jason invited Members to send any queries relating to the Strategy to him via email, outside of the meeting.

The Chairman thanked Jason for his interesting and informative presentation.

## **10 Bungay and Worlingham Neighbourhood Plans**

Council received report **ES/1341** from Councillor Ritchie, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management. The report sought approval to 'make' the Neighbourhood Plans for Bungay and Worlingham.

Councillor Ritchie reported that after a number years of hard from Bungay Town Council, Worlingham Parish Council and their respective communities, both neighbourhood plans successfully passed their referendums on the 17th November. For Bungay, 522 people voted (13.3% turnout) and 85% voted 'yes'. For Worlingham, 730 people voted (25.3% turnout) and also 85% voted 'yes'.

It was noted that both neighbourhood plans had been built around wide engagement with the community and the plans had undergone several rounds of consultation. The neighbourhood areas for both plans cover part of the Broads Authority executive area. The Broads Authority will be making their own decision to 'make' the neighbourhood plans at the Broads Authority meeting on 2nd December.

Councillor Ritchie stated that officers at East Suffolk Council and the Broads Authority have provided support and guidance to the Parish and Town Councils throughout the course of the development of the plans. Both neighbourhood plans have been shaped by their communities and include a number of policies which respond to important local issues.

For the Bungay neighbourhood plan the policies address (amongst other matters):

- o Allocation of land for the development of approximately 70 homes plus open space, landscaping and biodiversity enhancement
- o design principles for new residential development, supported by a design guide;
- o provision of Affordable Housing including allowing First Homes exception sites on the edge of the town
- o Support for a new community hub and an expanded medical centre
- o New sports and education facilities
- o Heritage in Bungay
- o Supporting vitality in the town centre
- o Creation of a new green corridor to the south of the town
- o Safeguarding landscape and ecological character
- o Support for Biodiversity improvements

For the Worlingham Neighbourhood Plan the policies address (amongst other matters):

- o Guiding new development to respect the identity of Worlingham, particularly in development on the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood
- o A mix of housing to help meet local needs
- o Housing design and character, including heights of dwellings and security
- o Providing accessible and adaptable dwellings in Worlingham
- o Provision of new sports facilities on the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood
- o Protection and enhancement of pedestrian and cycle routes
- o Design of landscaping schemes on new development
- o Securing community input into the design and management of the new country park on the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood
- o Providing Biodiversity Net Gain and supporting wildlife corridors
- o Protection for three Local Green Spaces
- o Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Ritchie.

Councillor Plummer commented that she was a resident of Worlingham and she thanked all those who had been involved in the creation of the Neighbourhood Plan, as she felt it was an excellent document.

The recommendation was then moved by Councillor Ritchie and was seconded by Councillor Rudd.

The Chairman invited Members to debate.

Councillor Ritchie stated that the Neighbourhood Plans would benefit both areas significantly, as communities received 15% of Community Infrastructure Levy funding and that increased to 25% if a Neighbourhood Plan was in place.

There being no further debate, the recommendation was put to the vote and it was unanimously

## **RESOLVED**

That the Council make the Bungay Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum version, September 2022) and the Worlingham Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version, July 2022) part of the statutory Development Plan for the parts of the Bungay and Worlingham Neighbourhood Areas within East Suffolk following positive Referendum results.

## **11 Continuation of East Suffolk Community Partnerships and Enabling Communities Budget**

Council received report **ES/1342** from Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, which sought support for the continuation of the East Suffolk Community Partnerships and Enabling Communities Budgets until the end of March 2027.

Community Partnerships were set up in late 2019, with the aim of ensuring that the new Council remained close to its communities. The eight Community Partnerships identified their priorities at a workshop in each area in late 2019. Priorities were agreed on the basis of data about the area and local insight about local needs. The £25,000 budget that each Community Partnership had each year had enabled the support of a wide range of projects to tackle the identified needs. Each £1 that the Council had invested in Community Partnerships had attracted £2.60 of match funding, which was quite remarkable. Councillor Smith took the opportunity to thank the eight Chairmen and their Vice Chairmen for their commitment to leading the Partnerships.

Councillor Smith reported that the Community Partnership Board provided an opportunity for the eight Community Partnership Chairs to work with a range of strategic partners from the voluntary, public and business sectors to make a real difference across the District. The Board focussed on four priorities - Isolation and Loneliness, Transport and Travel, Mental Wellbeing and Inequalities and, in 2020 and 2021, on the Covid response and recovery.

The Peer Review 'deep dive' of Community Partnerships identified multiple benefits and was hugely positive but also provided a useful roadmap for the next stage of evolution of the Community Partnerships.

It was noted that the Community Partnerships had provided an ideal structure around which to build the Council's Covid-19 response, getting food, medicine and other support to the most vulnerable in local communities. They were the framework for the far-reaching Ease the Squeeze cost of living programme, of which the Council could be very proud.

Members were advised that earlier this month, the Cabinet recognised the impact of the Community Partnerships and Board and recommended that Full Council endorsed the continuation of the Community Partnerships for the next four years from April 2023, with funding from the New Homes Bonus, for the first two years of that period. Cabinet also recommended the continuation of the Enabling Communities Budgets of £7,500 per Councillor, to support grassroots community projects in each ward across the District.

Councillor Smith commented that the Community Partnerships and Enabling Communities Budgets demonstrated the Council's commitment to its local communities and the intention to invest in the things that local communities felt were important, as Members and the Council face the challenges ahead. Councillor Smith thanked Nicole Rickard, Head of Communities, the Communities Team and all those involved with the Community Partnership meetings for their ongoing hard work. Members then gave a short round of applause.

Councillor Smith moved the recommendations contained within the report and was duly seconded by Councillor Gallant, who reserved his right to speak.

N.B. Councillor Janet Craig left the meeting at this point in the proceedings at 8.12 pm.

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Smith. There being no questions, the

Chairman invited Members to debate.

Councillor Byatt commented that the Community Partnerships were a tremendous asset and he hoped that any decisions taken to extend their funding would not be reneged upon at a later date. He also wondered if the £7,500 Enabling Communities Budget was sufficient for each Councillor, as there was significant work that needed to be done in the community. Finally, he asked Members to consider if there needed to be a change to the Lowestoft and Northern Parishes Community Partnership, as it currently served a population of 66,000 and other Community Partnerships had much smaller populations to support. He commended the work of Councillor Ashdown, Chairman of the Lowestoft and Northern Parishes Community Partnership, and suggested that the Community Partnership may benefit from being separated into two, at some point in the future.

Councillor Jepson, Chairman of the Felixstowe Peninsula Community Partnership, stated that the Community Partnerships had provided continuity and sustainability for projects, making a tangible difference to many people. He hoped that the good work would continue.

Councillor Topping commented that when East Suffolk Council had been created, there had been fears that Councillors would lose touch with local people, however, she felt that the Community Partnerships had been amazing. She commended the work of Councillor Cloke, Chairman of the Beccles, Bungay and Halesworth Community Partnership and thanked all officers involved in the delivery of the Community Partnerships.

Councillor Mallinder, Chairman of the Melton, Woodbridge and Deben Peninsula Community Partnership, stated that he supported the Community Partnerships wholeheartedly and he was keen to embed their legacy for future years. He also took the opportunity to thank all the officers involved.

Councillor Gooch reported that she was very impressed by the Community Partnerships and their political neutrality. She felt that everyone could share ideas and that the meetings were very inclusive. She also thanked officers for their excellent support.

Councillor Gallant stated that Members should be proud of the Community Partnerships, as they had all worked together to make them a success. However, there had been a challenging time with Covid and there would be further difficult times ahead, with the cost of living crisis. The Community Partnerships and the Enabling Communities Budgets were an important way of supporting local residents. He was very pleased that all those present were supportive of the recommendations within the report and he thanked all those involved.

It was therefore put to the vote and it was unanimously

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the recommendation of Cabinet to continue to support and enable the Community Partnership Board and the eight Community Partnerships (one for each of

the areas shown on the map at Appendix 1 to this report) until the end of March 2027 be agreed.

2. That the continuation of support for the Enabling Communities Budgets at the current level (£7,500 per Councillor) until the end of March 2027 be agreed.

3. That the £1,064,000 funding per annum for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years from New Homes Bonus, and to fund at a similar level for the following two years, subject to the funding being available, be agreed.

4. That the purpose, remit, governance and structure of Community Partnerships in East Suffolk, as set out in this report and continue to review the impact of the Community Partnerships annually, through an annual monitoring report, be endorsed.

## **12 Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2021/22**

Council received report **ES/1343** from Councillor Bird, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, which contained a formal summary of the activities and achievements of the Scrutiny Committee during the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

Councillor Bird reported that it was an honour to be the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee and he was supported by a very experienced and enthusiastic Vice Chairman, Councillor Deacon. The Scrutiny Committee was currently restructuring to ensure that it was as effective and impactful as it could be. It was noted that the Scrutiny Committee had an away day, to consider its Forward Work Programme for the municipal year.

Councillor Bird reported that the Scrutiny Committee performed a vital statutory function for the Council. He paid tribute to the Members of the Scrutiny Committee and he thanked Sarah Davis and latterly, Ben Bix, for the support they had provided to him in relation to this committee.

Councillor Bird then moved the recommendation within the report and this was seconded by Councillor Deacon.

Councillor Deacon stated that he appreciated being the Vice Chairman of the Committee and commended the good work that had been undertaken.

There being no questions, the Chairman invited Members to debate.

Councillor Gooch stated that she had enjoyed serving upon the Scrutiny Committee until her appointment onto the Audit and Governance Committee in May 2022. She stated that she had requested the review into dental provision within the district, which was particularly poor in the Lowestoft area. She had been heartened by the political neutrality of Members and how they had all worked together to raise the issue of the lack of dental provision, which had then been taken forward by Peter Aldous MP. She felt this was also testimony to the open mindedness of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, who worked for the benefit of residents.

There being no further comments, the recommendation was put to the vote and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED**

That the Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report be noted.

### **13 Cabinet Members' Report and Outside Bodies Representatives' Report to Council**

Full Council received report **ES/1344**, which was presented by Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, and provided individual Cabinet Members' reports on their areas of responsibility, as well as reports from those Members appointed to represent East Suffolk Council on Outside Bodies. The Leader stated that the written reports could be taken as read and he invited relevant questions on their contents.

Councillor Byatt stated that he had provided Outside Body Updates in relation to the Internal Drainage Boards. He reported that he had been asking questions about sewage and foul water pollution at the meetings he attended and he had been advised that thorough monitoring was being undertaken in this respect. He took the opportunity to thank the Leader for appointing him to the Internal Drainage Board Outside Bodies.

### **14 Exempt/Confidential Items**

The Chairman reported that in exceptional circumstances, the Council may, by law, exclude members of the public from all, or part of, a decision-making 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.

This evening, there was one set of Exempt Minutes and two Exempt reports to be considered.

The Exempt Minutes were from the Full Council meeting which took place on 28 September 2022.

Item 16, a report on the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project provided an update on the progress of the project, which will manage the flood risk to Lowestoft from all sources, including pluvial, fluvial, and tidal and seeks approval for further progress with the project. When completed, the project will protect residential and commercial properties, as well as infrastructure such as road and rail networks.

Item 17, a report on the Contract for East Suffolk Services Limited sought approval for the contract which will replace the existing services arrangements between the Council and its two joint ventures with Norse Commercial Services Limited (Waveney Norse Limited and Suffolk Coastal Norse Limited) – which would come to an end on 30 June 2023.

On the proposition of Councillor Ceresa, seconded by Councillor Gallant, 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 involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The meeting was then adjourned from 8.30 pm to 8.38 pm for a comfort break.

N.B. During this time, Councillors David Beavan, John Fisher, Sarah Plummer, Rachel Smith-Lyte, Ed Thompson and Caroline Topping left the meeting.

**15 Exempt Minutes**

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

**16 Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project**

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

**17 Contract for East Suffolk Services Limited**

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

The meeting concluded at 9.39 pm.

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Chairman