

Unconfirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Full Council** held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, Riduna Park, Melton on **Wednesday, 22 May 2019 at 6:30pm**

Members of the Committee present:

Councillor Melissa Allen, Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Chris Blundell, Councillor Jocelyn Bond, Councillor Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw, Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Alison Cackett, Councillor Jenny Ceresa, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Tony Cooper, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Janet Craig, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor Graham Elliott, Councillor John Fisher, Councillor Tony Fryatt, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Tess Gandy, Councillor Andrée Gee, Councillor Tony Goldson, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor TJ Haworth-Culf, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Ray Herring, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Richard Kerry, Councillor Stuart Lawson, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor Chris Mapey, Councillor Debbie McCallum, Councillor Frank Mortimer, Councillor Trish Mortimer, Councillor Mark Newton, Councillor Keith Patience, Councillor Malcolm Pitchers, Councillor Carol Poulter, 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, Councillor Steve Wiles, Councillor Kay Yule

Officers present:

Stephen Baker (Chief Executive), Karen Cook (Democratic Services & Cabinet Business Manager), Andrew Jarvis (Strategic Director), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Siobhan Martin (Head of Internal Audit), Hilary Slater (Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer), Simon Taylor (Chief Finance Officer & S151 Officer), Nicola Wotton (Democratic Services Manager).

1 Election of a Chairman

The Chief Executive sought nominations for the first Chairman of East Suffolk Council. Councillor Burroughes nominated Councillor Colin Hedgley for Chairman of the Council. He reported that Councillor Hedgley had left school at 16 and had spent 34 years in the Navy, with 8 years spent on the Royal Yacht Britannia. After that he had spent 5 years in industry, working with radio and radar equipment and he then went into magazine publishing, where he doubled circulation levels in 4 years. Councillor Hedgley then moved to Suffolk, where he met Councillor Fryatt and was encouraged to stand for election for Suffolk Coastal District Council. He became the Vice Chairman, regularly standing in for the Chairman, who was unwell. Councillor Burroughes stated that Councillor Hedgley would be an excellent ambassador for the East Suffolk District and he had no hesitation in proposing him for the position of Chairman of the Council.

Councillor Herring seconded the nomination and in so doing, concurred with everything that Councillor Burroughes had said. Councillor Hedgley was very experienced, confident and treated everyone with respect and would be an excellent Chairman of the Council.

As there were no other nominations, it was therefore

RESOLVED

That Councillor Colin Hedgley be appointed Chairman of the Council to hold office until the Annual Meeting in May 2020.

Councillor Hedgley made a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and received the Chain of Office. He thanked those present for his appointment, in particular those who had proposed and seconded his nomination and Councillor Fryatt for encouraging him to stand for election. He stated that although this was a new Council, he was following in the footsteps of previous successful Chairmen and he wished the former Suffolk Coastal District Council Chairman, Nicky Yeo, all the best for the future. He thanked Councillors for their confidence and trust in appointing him as Chairman and he was proud to be the first Chairman of this outstanding council, which was the largest in the UK by size. East Suffolk Council was a first class organisation with hard working officers. The Chairman stated he was looking forward to working alongside the Vice Chairman and representing the Council to the best of his ability.

2 Election of a Vice-Chairman

The Chairman sought nominations for the Vice Chairman of the Council.

Councillor Back nominated Councillor Keith Robinson. He reported that Councillor Robinson was friendly, approachable, fair and inclusive, which were excellent attributes for a Vice Chairman.

Councillor Gee seconded the nomination. She stated that Councillor Robinson was a splendid Councillor, was very hard working and she was confident in his ability to fulfil the role to an excellent standard.

As there were no other nominations, it was therefore

RESOLVED

That Councillor Keith Robinson be appointed Vice Chairman of the Council, to hold office until the Annual Meeting in May 2020.

Councillor Robinson then made a Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Vice Chairman and received the Chain of Office.

3 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies received for this meeting.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

5 Announcements

i) Chairman

The Chairman reported that the Licensing Training had been moved to Thursday, 30 May 2019 at 6.00pm at East Suffolk House. All Members were invited to attend the training from 6.00pm – 7.00pm, whilst Members of the Licensing Committee were also requested to attend additional training from 7.00 pm – 8.00 pm, in order to be able to sit on the Licensing Sub-Committees. Members were asked to book a place on this training by contacting the Democratic Services team.

The Chairman reported that there were two MyHR training sessions on Friday, 24 May 2019 at 11.00am and 2.00pm at Riverside. It was recommended that all newly elected Councillors should attend the training, so that they could update their personal details and make expenses claims for mileage etc. This training was also suitable for those re-elected Councillors, who may not have claimed mileage in the past. Members were asked to book a place on this training by contacting the Democratic Services team.

ii) Chief Executive

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive on this occasion.

6 Report of the Returning Officer

The Chief Executive presented the report, which listed the results of the recent elections which had taken place on 2 May 2019.

RESOLVED

That the results of the election held on 2 May 2019 be noted.

7 Election of a Leader of the Council

The Chairman sought nominations for the Leader of the Council.

Councillor C Rivett congratulated the newly appointed Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council. He said that it was time to move forward, with a new Chairman, Vice Chairman and Leader of the Council. It was important to ensure that the new Council had a strong identity which was underpinned with a respectful culture, integrity and a desire to do the very best for the constituents in the District. He reported that there was a particular Councillor who was objective, visionary and had the determination to ensure that the newly created East Suffolk Council reached its potential and that was Councillor Steve Gallant, who he wished to nominate as Leader of the Council without reservation.

Councillor J Mallinder seconded that nomination and confirmed that Councillor Gallant had the energy, drive, vision and ideas to take East Suffolk Council forwards.

There being no other nominations, the Chairman declared Councillor Steve Gallant to be appointed Leader of the Council for the four year term 2019 – 2023. Councillor Gallant signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took the opportunity to address the Council with the following speech:

Before I set out my plan for the road ahead, I just want to pause and pay tribute to the Leaders of our parent authorities. This Council has been over a decade in the making. It required vision, commitment and tenacity to get us to this point. Ray Herring, Mark Bee and of course, the late Colin Law, worked tirelessly to make sure that we have in place all we need to succeed. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

I also want to recognise the work and commitment of the officers. Without doubt one of our strongest assets is our workforce. Every one of them from the Chief Executive down has worked hard to get us to this point. They have risen to the many challenges and embraced many changes. I know that they are as excited as we are to be part of this great new Council and keen to make it a success – I thank them all for their ongoing support.

It is a huge honour to be voted in as the first leader of East Suffolk Council – the biggest district council in the country – a council that stretches from Lowestoft in the north to Felixstowe in the south, from Framlingham in the west to Aldeburgh in the east. A mosaic of different communities, large and small, which together create a strong, powerful, single entity. Together, we can be ambitious, and ensure that the voice of East Suffolk is heard loud and clear at all levels of government.

Our main reason for creating this super district is to ensure that East Suffolk is in the best possible position to respond to, and take advantage of, the emerging opportunities and challenges facing local government, which are:

- Creating jobs.
- Meeting the growing housing needs.
- Supporting and enabling communities to thrive.

East Suffolk is already leading in many areas; we have created and sold the PHILIS system, we established the highly successful Universal Credit Partnership, we have developed highly innovative work with Zurich on Coastal Management and we are the only district to share a senior officer post with the Clinical Commissioning Groups.

We need to maintain this progression, not because we want to be first, that's not the point, but because it's the right thing to do, and it makes us better. We need to do this whilst ensuring we provide value for money for our council taxpayers, financial savings and future resilience in all aspects of service delivery is critical.

We fought the elections on an ambitious manifesto – Towards a Thriving East Suffolk – ambitious for homes, ambitious for jobs, ambitious for our communities. We now need to deliver on that ambition. Therefore, we will be drawing up a 30-year vision for East Suffolk – mapping out what East Suffolk could look like in 2050, setting clear aspirations for what we must achieve in order to get there.

We are in a unique position – the start of a new era. The possibilities for East Suffolk are without limit, and I want to help build a future for East Suffolk that captures that limitless potential. I will talk more about this long term vision in the coming months. Within that vision, the council's Business Plan will be the document that will set out in detail what we will be doing in the next four years – setting out a pathway that leads to success. Success for our Council, Success for our Communities and Success for our Economy. The current business plan covers three main themes; Economic Growth, Enabling Communities, Financial Sustainability.

Economic Growth: The importance of East Suffolk to the county and regional economy cannot be overstated, it remains a key area of focus for us; from Enterprise Zones to Screen Suffolk, from the Local Enterprise Partnership to Business Improvement Districts, from apprenticeships to Higher Education places, from supporting the continued growth of our established employers, to offering practical incentives for new start-ups. We have a major part to play in the continuing growth of our economy.

Enabling Communities: We have seen the benefits that can be reaped by supporting and encouraging local communities to identify issues and develop solutions – by empowering our residents to problem solve they become more resilient and able to make a real difference for themselves, their neighbours and their environment. With the allocation to all ward members of a substantial Enabling Community Budget and the formation of Community Partnerships this will continue. Ward members are key players in this process as duly elected Community leaders.

We want all our residents to be able to fulfil their potential, We want our towns and communities to remain safe, we want our elderly and young to be protected and supported, we want to reach out and provide for the most vulnerable in our communities. We want our residents to be healthy and able to enjoy our coast and countryside; our history, our art and culture – we need to provide resources and support for them to allow them to introduce local initiatives that are both appropriate and sustainable.

The housing market at a national level has undergone a significant shift over the last decade, the same is true both regionally and locally. There has been an increasing shortage of housing across all tenures with housing provision rising on the political agenda and becoming a priority for the current Government.

In addition to continuing to invest in our existing homes, this council has ambitious plans for the redevelopment of properties and the provision of new housing right across the new District area, this investment will deliver a range of lasting benefits for the residents of East Suffolk. Significant planned investment will support this council in achieving these ambitions, we will continue with the regeneration of Lowestoft and continue to deliver new homes to meet the rising housing needs. The current 30-year Housing Plan projections demonstrate that these investment proposals are achievable, and that the Housing Revenue Account remains a sustainable and viable entity over the thirty-year period.

Total planned capital investment in the Housing Revenue Account totals £368m over 30 years. This includes major works on the existing housing stock, redevelopment of properties, and brand-new developments. The new homes programme will deliver 257

new affordable homes by 2022/23 and an estimated additional 1500 homes by 2047/48.

Financial Sustainability: East Suffolk has a highly successful track record of achieving year on year savings through improved efficiency in the delivery of its services. Simply continuing to improve efficiency and reducing costs will not be enough to enable our Council to deliver all that we want for East Suffolk. We will embrace new ways to become even more business-like in our approach.

Our Medium-Term Financial Strategy sets out our financial priorities for ensuring that our aims and aspirations are translated into our future achievements: We will ensure that the Council sets a balanced, sustainable budget year by year, ensuring that our spending does not exceed the resources available to us. We will plan for a level of Council Tax that the Council, its residents and the Government see as appropriate, acceptable and affordable which will ensure that we have the financial capacity to deliver the Council's policies and objectives. We will redirect expenditure over time to adequately support and resource the priorities of both the Council and the wider community, and we will maintain sufficient reserves and balances to ensure that the Council's long-term financial health remains sound.

These three themes, Economic Growth, Enabling Communities and Financial Sustainability must and will continue to be at the heart of all that we do. But there are two further areas that need greater emphasis and should be headlined in our new Business plan, these are: Digital Transformation and The Environment.

Digital transformation: we have started along this path, but there is huge potential here to become more agile, to modernise internally, be more efficient, and support communities better. Meeting the higher expectations of residents, communities and businesses means radically rethinking how services are delivered. This requires new approaches to change that meet the specific requirements of each service user. In order to deliver the change that is needed, our people need to have the best tools possible made available to them, whether hardware or software. This means looking at the whole suite of technology, from productivity tools to online business applications, together with the devices they run on. People need to feel confident in using them, we need to adopt a customer-focused, commercial, flexible culture.

It's vital that the services that many people rely on remain easily accessible to them. For some, using the internet will never meet their needs and so other forms of access will be required. For others, there is much that we can do to help them get the most from online services. Our Council should have the best understanding of the people, communities and businesses in their area. Often, however, this understanding is limited by the inability to make the best use of the data held in siloed systems that do not share information easily or in usable formats. This needs to change but we must be mindful of keeping up with obligations around data protection and information security. In order to protect and grow the local economy in the future, we must do all we can to ensure local businesses can thrive in the digital age. Doing so will also attract new enterprises to base themselves locally.

This means ensuring businesses have access to high speed broadband; the equipment, systems and skills to make use of it; and easy, simple access to the council services they

need. True digital transformation in local public services involves not just putting existing services online, but radically rewiring the local system to take advantage of shared, common digital components. The Council should take a lead in stewarding this work, collaborating with all organisations that meet local people's needs, whether central government, the health sector or community and voluntary groups on a digital platform which genuinely delivers joined up services.

The Environment: David Attenborough in his recent television documentary said, "While Earth has survived radical climactic changes and regenerated following mass extinctions, it's not the destruction of Earth that we are facing, it's the destruction of our familiar, natural world and our uniquely rich human culture." This council needs to consider its role on environmental initiatives, else it will be left behind, and will lose touch with the citizens of the future. The seven main threats we face going forward can be headlined as:

- Climate Change
- Species Extinction and Biodiversity Loss
- Air and Water Pollution
- Water Crisis
- The Natural Resources Drain
- De-forestation
- Soil Degradation

The Government paper - A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment – sets out the National strategy but it must be appreciated that every worldwide environmental issue is also a local environmental issue. Local authorities regardless of any legal obligation have a responsibility to help the community to adapt to the effects of climate change.

We need to understand that the potential impacts of climate change on the frequency of adverse events, water security, coastal communities and natural ecosystems are so serious that shutting our eyes to the effects would represent poor stewardship on our part. We recognise the role that our natural environment plays in our prosperity now and in the future. We recognise that the development of sustainable local economies is essential, which is why we strive to achieve a workable balance between peoples' needs and wants and the natural environment that underpins our society.

We must also be resource efficient; this requires us to be responsible with our use of natural resources; concerning anything from fuel consumption during service delivery to improving the energy efficiency ratings of buildings owned by the council. It is essential that we work with communities to future proof assets and work towards sustainability to reduce future calls on our services. The area's wealth of plant and animal life provides our district with some of its greatest financial and health advantages it is therefore vital that we work with others to secure the future of East Suffolk's biodiversity.

If there is indeed a 'climate change emergency' then we must acknowledge that, and be part of the response, and part of the solution, not bury our collective heads in the sand. I would welcome an opportunity to discuss this with all Councillors to develop a way forward and develop a new policy on this for East Suffolk Council. So, a 30-year

vision, underpinned by a clear business plan focusing on our five priorities. To achieve this will not be easy. Over the last week, I have put together a team of fellow Councillors that I believe can help deliver on these priorities – my Cabinet.

- Cllr Craig Rivett (Deputy Leader & Economic Development)
- Cllr Letitia Smith (Communities, Leisure and Tourism)
- Cllr Richard Kerry (Housing)
- Cllr Mary Rudd (Community Health)
- Cllr Norman Brooks (Transport)
- Cllr Stephen Burroughes (Customer Services and Operational Partnerships)
- Cllr James Mallinder (The Environment)
- Cllr David Ritchie (Planning & Coastal Management)

Now, the observant among you will have spotted that I have chosen not to allocate the Finance Portfolio. We are fortunate that, in setting up a new Council, we find ourselves with as robust a set of finances as we could hope for, given the challenging financial climate we face. The over-riding focus now, is to ensure there is a clear strategy in place for how the council oversees and manages tax-payers' money. Given how fundamental this financial strategy is, and how tightly it runs alongside the council's overall strategy, I have decided to include finance within my own role as Leader. I don't see this as being a permanent move, but for the next few months, I will work closely with the Chief Executive and Head of Finance to ensure that we are set on the most secure and sustainable course, and will then review the situation.

You have now met my Cabinet. I am confident that this team has the mix of knowledge, skills and experience, together with the determination to work hard on behalf of our residents, and to deliver on the ambitious agenda I have set out this evening.

So, East Suffolk now has a Council, a Leader and a Cabinet. I'm very aware it also has an Opposition – something I welcome as an important part of the democratic process. I look forward to working with all of you in this chamber and that very much includes those opposite. We may have our political differences, but I recognise that we are all here to look after the interests of East Suffolk and when there is an opportunity for us to work together to achieve something, I will not be afraid to grasp it.

Mr Chairman, the road ahead is challenging yet exciting. We at East Suffolk District Council are well placed to deliver ambitious yet achievable growth and while we do, so we will continue to deliver value for money in front line services;

- We will continue to invest in our communities
- maintain financial sustainability

- generate greater capacity
- improve resilience
- and give local communities a stronger voice.

In short, we will work towards a thriving East Suffolk, and I encourage and urge all of you here today to join me in making that a reality.

8 Adoption of a Member Development Charter for East Suffolk Council

The Leader of the Council presented the report, which sought approval for the Council to adopt the Charter Plus Award for Member Development for East Suffolk Council and for the Council to undertake a re-assessment for the Charter Plus Award for Member Development in mid 2020.

It was noted that the former Waveney District Council was first accredited with the 'Charter Mark' for Member Development in 2009 and was subsequently awarded 'Charter Plus' status later that year. It had had successful re-assessments in 2011, 2014 and 2017.

Clarification was provided that the Charter Plus award for Member Development demonstrated that Councillors were offered the necessary support, guidance and training to enable them to carry out their roles effectively, in accordance with good governance, which benefits the community. Waveney District Council was last inspected during 2017 and there were a number of recommendations made for the Council, the majority of which had been successfully completed.

In June 2018, the Member Programme Board, which was formed as part of the One Council Programme, to oversee the creation of East Suffolk Council, confirmed that it would like East Suffolk Council to retain the Charter Plus Award for Member Development.

Therefore, Councillors needed to confirm that they wished to adopt the Member Development Charter for East Suffolk Council and, subject to that agreement, the Charter Plus status would transfer to East Suffolk Council and would be valid for one year. A further re-assessment for the Charter Plus Award for Member Development would be required for East Suffolk Council in mid 2020. The Leader of the Council moved the recommendations listed within the report and they were duly seconded by Councillor Byatt.

Councillor Elliott supported the Member Development work that had been undertaken previously by Waveney District Council. He urged the Council to retain the Award and to continue with the re-assessment, as proposed.

Councillor Fryatt commented that in terms of the two Planning Committees, it was important to have clarity as to which Councillors were able to attend those meetings as substitutes, should substitutes be required.

There being no further questions it was

RESOLVED

That the East Suffolk Council:

A) adopts the Charter Plus Award for Member Development and will undertake the outstanding recommendations made by SEEMP during the last re-assessment in 2017.

B) will undertake a re-assessment for the Charter Plus Award for Member Development in mid 2020.

C) will appoint a Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) to oversee the Member Development training programme and the Charter Plus re-assessment. The Membership of the MDSG will consist of representation from the different political parties on the Council and they will meet on a regular basis.

9 Political Balance and Allocation of Seats on Committees 2019/20

The Leader of the Council presented the report on the Council's political balance and the allocation of seats on Committees for 2019/20. It was noted that the membership of Committees and Sub-Committees was determined under the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. These regulations ensured that the seats on the Committees and Sub-Committees were allocated on a politically proportionate basis, to reflect the political balance of the Council.

There were currently 61 seats on the Council's Committees, which could be broken down as follows:

Audit and Governance Committee – 9 seats

Licensing Committee – 15 seats

Planning Committee North – 9 seats

Planning Committee South – 9 seats

Scrutiny Committee – 13 seats

Appointments Committee – 6 seats

The Leader advised that since the papers for this meeting had been published, the Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Councillors had formed a group, known as the 'GLI Group'. This development had slightly altered the allocation of seats on the Council's Committees. Therefore, an amended table with all of the nominations for the Committees had been tabled for all Councillors to refer to.

The Leader of the Council proposed that all of the uncontested seats should be voted for en bloc and this was seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council.

It was noted that there had been two nominations received for the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee – Councillor S Bird and Councillor D Beavan.

Councillor Elliott and Councillor Beavan both stated that they felt it was good practice for Councils to have the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee from the opposition parties.

It was noted that there had been two nominations received for the Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee – Councillor M Deacon and Councillor C Topping.

The contested positions were duly proposed and seconded and then both contested positions were put the vote individually and it was therefore

RESOLVED

1. That with effect from 22 May 2019, in order to meet the statutory requirements, the uncontested seats on the Council's Committees and Sub-Committees be allocated in accordance with the tabled information.
2. That Councillor S Bird be appointed Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee.
3. That Councillor M Deacon be appointed Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee.

10 Appointments to Outside Bodies for 2019/20 (Non-Executive)

The Leader of the Council presented the report which sought to appoint representatives to the various Outside Bodies, with a Non-Executive Function, in accordance with Part 2 (Section B) of the Council's Constitution. It was noted that the Cabinet, at its meeting on 4 June 2019, would consider representation on Outside Bodies, where the role related to an Executive Function.

The appointment of Councillors to Outside Bodies was important, as it provided support to the organisation concerned, enabled Councillors to fulfil their community leadership roles and enabled the appropriate monitoring of performance and budgets, in line with best practice. It was noted that appointments made to Outside Bodies should be sensitive to the need to represent, as far as possible, the diverse nature of the local community.

A list of the Council's Non-Executive Outside Bodies had been circulated to all of the Group Leaders prior to the meeting and a number of nominations had been made. A table containing the nominations had been tabled for all Councillors to refer to, which included information, where known, such as how many representatives were required, how often the Outside Body met and the location of its meetings.

Councillor Byatt stated that he felt that some Outside Bodies had been omitted from the list and he queried whether a report could be brought to a future meeting to clarify the situation. The Leader reported that all of the Outside Bodies had been contacted to provide information about their requirements, however, some had not responded and were not included in the list. He confirmed that the appointments to Outside Bodies was an ongoing process and further reports could be brought to Council, as required.

Councillor Patience commented that East Suffolk Council now covered a very large area and, therefore, the Council should be allocated additional places on the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board.

Councillor Topping reported that there were some inaccuracies within the list and the Leader reported that these could be discussed in due course. He then proposed that all of the uncontested seats should be voted for en bloc and this was seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council.

The Leader invited Councillor Topping to provide clarification regarding the Outside Bodies. Councillor Topping reported that the Fauconberge Educational Trust met 2 or 3 times each year. In respect of Pride in Beccles, the meetings took place on a monthly basis, rather than annually. Members were also advised by Councillor Goldson that the Disability Information Advice Line (DIAL) was no longer in existence and should be removed from the list. Councillor Fisher advised that the East Suffolk (Rail) Travellers Association appointments also required additional clarification and it was confirmed that this would be brought back to a future Full Council meeting, for consideration.

The Leader proposed that a separate vote be taken on each contested appointment and this was seconded by Councillor Rivett. A list of the contested positions is shown below:

1. Association of Suffolk Museums – Two nominations received for one appointment. Separate vote undertaken for Councillor T Cooper and Councillor J Craig.
2. Broads Authority – Two nominations received for one appointment. Separate vote undertaken for Councillor A Gee and K Patience.
3. Disability Advice Service Management Committee North East Suffolk – Two nominations received for one appointment. Separate vote undertaken for Councillor T Gandy and Councillor F Mortimer.
4. Disability Advice Service Management Committee South – Two nominations received for one appointment. Separate vote undertaken for Councillor E Thompson and Councillor S Wiles.
5. East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board – Seven nominations received for six appointments. Separate vote undertaken for Councillor P Ashdown, Councillor D Beavan, Councillor S Bird, Councillor J Cloke, Councillor R Herring, Councillor K Patience and Councillor W Taylor.
6. Greenways Countryside Project Joint Advisory Committee – Three nominations received for two appointments. Separate vote undertaken for Councillor J Mallinder, Councillor M Newton and Councillor R Smith-Lyte.
7. Kyson (River Deben) Fairways Committee – Two nominations received for one appointment. Separate vote undertaken for Councillor C Mapey and Councillor K Yule.
8. Southwold Harbour and River Blyth Users Association – Two nominations received for one appointment. Separate vote undertaken for Councillor D Beavan and Councillor N Brooks.
9. Sparsity Partnership for Authorities Delivering Rural Services (SPARSE) – Two nominations received for one appointment. Separate vote undertaken for Councillor S Burroughes and Councillor R Smith-Lyte

RESOLVED

1. That Members be appointed to serve on the Outside Bodies for 2019/20 as outlined in Appendix B to these Minutes.
2. That, unless otherwise stated, the Leader of the Council be authorised to fill any outstanding vacancies left unfilled by the Council.

11 Appointment of Independent Persons

The Leader of the Council presented the report, which sought to appoint Independent Persons, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, to deal with complaints made under the Suffolk Code of Conduct. It was noted that the Suffolk Code of Conduct came into force on 1 July 2012 and had been adopted previously by the former Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council. In order to provide resilience and enable the effective management of complaints across the two Councils, it had been agreed that two Independent Persons would be appointed.

Dr Peck was appointed as an Independent Person in 2012 following a recruitment process, together with a Mr Keys and they were appointed for two yearly terms. Mr Keys then retired in 2016 and Mr Urey was appointed to replace him, following a recruitment process. Both Dr Peck and Mr Urey's terms of office were extended from July 2018 and they were then appointed to the Shadow Authority for East Suffolk.

Dr Peck and Mr Urey had confirmed that they were willing to undertake this role for a further two year period. In order to comply with the Localism Act 2011 and the Suffolk Code of Conduct, the Leader proposed that Dr Peck and Mr Urey's appointments should be continued and that they be the Independent Persons for East Suffolk Council, to deal with complaints made under the Suffolk Code of Conduct, for a two year period, until the end of May 2021. These proposals were duly seconded by Councillor Lynch.

There being no questions it was therefore

RESOLVED

1. That the terms of office of Dr Peck and Mr Urey be extended for a further 2 years, until the end of May 2021.
2. That the Council pays an annual allowance of £300 to the Independent Persons, and agrees to pay a fee of £50 for each investigation report that the Independent Person considers on behalf of the Council.

12 Appointment of Political Assistants

The Leader of the Council presented the report regarding the appointment of Political Assistants. It was noted that the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 governed the appointment of Political Assistants, who provide assistance to political groups represented on the Council. In order to qualify for a Political Assistant, a political group must have at least 10% of the total number of seats on the Council. In the case of East Suffolk Council, 10% of 55 Councillors was 5.5, which then needed to be rounded up to 6.

Following the elections on 2 May 2019, the Conservative Group had 39 Members and the Labour Group had 7 Members, therefore, both groups would meet the qualifying criteria for the allocation of a Political Assistant.

Since the papers for this meeting had been published, the Greens, Liberal Democrats and Independent Councillors had formed the 'GLI Group', with 9 Members. Therefore, the GLI Group was also entitled to a Political Assistant.

It was confirmed that each Group Leader must advise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services that their Group wished to appoint a Political Assistant. The Leader of the Council advised that due to the formation of the GLI Group, the first recommendation in the report had to be amended to reflect this change. Therefore, he moved the recommendations, including the change to recommendation one, and this was duly seconded by Councillor Yule.

Councillor Byatt asked whether the working hours of a Political Assistant could be increased in the future, if requested by a political group. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services reported that the Group Leader would need to submit a formal request, justifying the reasons for requesting an increase, which would then be considered.

RESOLVED

1. That the posts of Political Assistants be established under the terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 with effect from this Annual Council until the next Annual Council meeting following full council election in 2023, and are allocated to the Conservative Group, the Labour Group and the GLI Group.
2. That the Leaders of the Conservative Group, the Labour Group and the GLI Group be requested to advise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services of their wishes about the filling of those posts.
3. That the Chief Finance Officer be given delegated authority to vire additional budget from identified savings to fund this, if the allocated budget is insufficient.

13 Adoption of the Member Allowances Scheme approved by the Shadow Council on 28.02.2019

The Leader of the Council presented the report, which sought approval of the adoption of the Members' Allowances Scheme for East Suffolk Council. It was noted that the East Suffolk Shadow Council was established under the East Suffolk (Local Government Changes) Order 2018. The Shadow Council was responsible for the implementation of the East Suffolk Council, which came into existence on 1 April 2019, on the abolition of Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council.

The Shadow Council was required under Article 10 of the Order to formulate proposals for a Members' Allowances Scheme for the new Council to adopt. At its meeting on 28 February 2019, the Shadow Council formulated proposals for a Members' Allowances Scheme and approved the recommendations made by an Independent Remuneration Panel for a scheme for the East Suffolk Council to adopt. This would enable East Suffolk Council to have an Allowances Scheme in place on 6 May 2019, when the newly elected Members came into office and could be paid their allowances from that date. It was noted that the Scheme was set out in Appendix A to the report.

When the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) had carried out their 'light touch' review, they had noted that both the Suffolk Coastal and the Waveney Schemes were similar. The purpose of their review was to remove any small differences between the two Schemes and the Shadow Council agreed all of the IRP's proposed payments, as set out in paragraph 4.5 of the report. However, it was noted that the proposals agreed by the Shadow Council were subject to two points of clarification which the Monitoring Officer had been asked to check and confirm, with the IRP.

The first point was regarding the payments to co-opted Members. There was a line in the Panel's report to the Shadow Council about the proposed payment being the Basic Allowance plus 0.1% - 0.4%. The Monitoring Officer clarified this with the IRP and they confirmed that they had intended the payment to be between 1 – 4% of the Basic Allowance, per meeting. The amount was to be determined at the discretion of the Chairman of the Committee on which the co-opted Member might sit. This clarification had been included within paragraph 5 of the scheme on page 34 of the agenda papers.

The second point was regarding the payments to the Planning Committee Members. Previously, at Suffolk Coastal District Council, all Members of the Planning Committee had received a Special Responsibility Allowance which was 25% of the Basic Allowance. At Waveney District Council, the Planning Committee Members did not receive a Special Responsibility Allowance. It was noted that when the IRP formulated their proposals to equalise the two schemes, it was on the proviso that 'where there were differences between the Suffolk Coastal Scheme and the Waveney Scheme, in terms of which offices attracted an allowance and which did not, all offices which attracted an allowance would continue to receive one under the equalised scheme.' The Chairman of the IRP confirmed, at the meeting of the Shadow Council, that the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance for the Planning Committee Members had been omitted from their proposals and that, for clarification, the IRP confirmed to the Monitoring Officer that their intention was 'that the Planning Committee Members of the East Suffolk Council could claim to be entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance, as part of their membership of the Planning Committee, North or South, because such an allowance was paid previously.'

The Leader advised that the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance to the Members of the Planning Committee, North and South, of £1,220.85 for the 18 Members, would add £21,975.30 to the total costs of the Members' Allowances, which would give an overall total of £146,668.02.

Members noted that the budget for the payment of Basic Allowances from Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils was £517,000 and this amount had been maintained within the first East Suffolk Council budget. The proposals from the IRP were that all 55 Members would receive a Basic Allowance of £4,883.40, which would cost a total of £268,587 per year, which represented an annual saving of £248,413. The Leader reported that the budget for Basic Allowances would be revised as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process, following the further review of Members Allowances, which was programmed to take place during the second part of the 2019/20 financial year.

The Leader reported that the budget for the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) from Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils was £228,200 and this had also been maintained within the first East Suffolk Council budget. The proposals from the IRP equated to SRAs totalling £146,668.02, which represented a saving of £81,531.98.

The Leader confirmed that it was his responsibility to determine the exact number of Members in the Cabinet and whether Assistant Cabinet Members would be appointed.

There were also SRAs for Leaders of the Opposition Parties / Groups and this was based on the Leader's Allowance divided by 55, which provided an allowance of £266.40 per Member. To receive this allowance, there needed to be at least three Opposition Members in the same Political Group and if this was the case, the Opposition Leader would receive an allowance of £799.20. The allowance would then increase by £266.40 for each extra Member in that Opposition Group.

The Leader proposed that the Members' Allowance Scheme that had been put forward by the Shadow Council be approved and this was duly seconded by Councillor Rivett.

Councillor Fryatt commented that it was possible for some Councillors to be eligible for more than one Special Responsibility Allowance. Clarification was provided that in accordance with the Members' Allowances Scheme, a Councillor could only be in receipt of one SRA at a time, whichever was the greater that they were entitled to.

Councillor Blundell queried the date that the Basic Allowance and SRAs would be paid from. Confirmation was provided that the Basic Allowance would be paid to all East Suffolk Councillors from 6 May 2019, which was the date from which they took office. Any Special Responsibility Allowances would be paid from the date of the Annual Meeting, where the appointments were made, which was 22 May 2019. Should any further SRAs be granted in the future, the payments would commence from the date the Councillor was appointed to the role.

Councillor Byatt offered the services of the opposition parties, should the Leader of the Council wish to increase his Cabinet to the maximum size of 10. The Leader of the Council thanked Councillor Byatt for his kind offer, which he chose to decline on this occasion.

On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED

That the East Suffolk Council adopts the Scheme of Members' Allowances approved by the Shadow Council at its meeting on 28 February 2019, which was attached as Appendix A to the report, in accordance with Article 10 of the East Suffolk (Local Government Changes) Order 2018.

14 Date of the next Annual Council

The Leader of the Council advised that he would like to make a slight change to the date of the next Annual Council meeting. The date had provisionally been booked for Wednesday, 27 May 2020, however, this date clashed with the Suffolk Show and half

term. Therefore, he proposed that the meeting be held on Wednesday, 20 May 2020 instead, as the Annual Meeting had to take place before the end of May. This proposal was duly seconded by Councillor Rivett. Upon being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED

That the next Annual Meeting of the Council be held on 20 May 2020.

The meeting concluded at 8.20 pm.

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Chairman