

## **COUNCIL**

Thursday 24 January 2019

### **CABINET MEMBERS' REPORT AND OUTSIDE BODIES REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT TO COUNCIL (CL 04/19)**

#### **Cabinet Members' Report to Council**

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Geoff Holdcroft, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development
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#### **Transport East**

A Transport East Stakeholder Summit was held on 17 December at Trinity Park.

It started with a panel discussion on What are the economic challenges and opportunities for the region that require a strategic transport infrastructure response and how might we deliver it?

There then followed a series roundtable discussions on

- Information Mapping: Collating the key features of the themes
- Partners, Frictions, Opportunities and Priorities
- The Desired Future: Looking to 2050

Following the Summit the Transport East Forum then met to further develop a Narrative for Transport East and to review the Strategy Work Programme.

We also discussed the Major Road Network and heard about the Lower Thames Crossing Consultation.

#### **East-West Rail Consortium**

The Eastern Section Prospectus was endorsed by the consortium on 11 December at a meeting in Bedford. I am grateful that Cllr Andy Smith attended in my place.

#### **Sizewell C**

I am sure you are all aware that EDF Energy commenced their Stage 3 public consultation on their proposals for a new nuclear power station at Sizewell. It runs from 4 January to 29 March 2019.

This Council, along with SCC, has been preparing for this for the last four years since they held their Stage 2 Consultation. We have stressed the need for everyone to take an active part in the consultation and have pledged to help and support town and parish councils to ensure they have their say during the 12-week public consultation.

This stage of the consultation process will seek views on the development needed to enable construction, and EDF Energy will reveal proposals and various options for road and rail improvements in the area that would be affected by the construction of such development. The two councils are key members of the Sizewell C Joint Local Authority Group (JLAG), which was established to facilitate a joint local authority approach to the challenges and opportunities that will result from the construction and operation of the proposed new nuclear power station.

We welcome the launch of this third round of consultation, as it gives the people most affected by the proposed Sizewell C development the opportunity to study EDF Energy's proposals and comment on how it plans to manage this massive construction project. Importantly, this is our first opportunity to see how these proposals have changed and how EDF Energy has responded to the views they received from us in the previous two rounds of public consultation. The proposed development will obviously bring benefits, create jobs and inject much-needed investment into the economy, but there will also be disruption to the transport network and local community life.

We are committed to holding EDF Energy to account, on behalf of Suffolk people, to make sure that we maximise the benefits to our communities, whilst minimising the adverse impact of the project. We will be taking an active role in this consultation, listening to our communities and would urge others to make sure they have their say. This gives people the opportunity to see the latest proposals for the new power station, which would be built to the north of Sizewell B. The plans include associated development needed to enable construction, such as park and ride sites and various options for road and rail improvements.

As well as formulating a common approach between Suffolk Coastal District Council and Suffolk County Council to the Sizewell C New Nuclear development, JLAG is also keen to provide practical help and support to the local town and parish councils.

Both councils wish to work together to safeguard the fragile, unique environment in east Suffolk, while meeting the understandable desire to maintain our vibrant local economy by creating new jobs and encouraging economic development. Through JLAG, we will be working to provide a co-ordinated response to EDF Energy's latest proposals for how it will manage this massive national infrastructure project in order to maximise the benefits for local people, while minimising the negative impact on our communities and environment.

As part of this, we will be actively working with town and parish councils to provide practical assistance to help them make sure they are in a position to also respond effectively to this consultation and make sure the voices of their communities are heard in this national conversation.

People can submit their views on the Stage 3 Sizewell C Consultation at [sizewell.edfenergyconsultation.info/szc-proposals/stage-3/](https://sizewell.edfenergyconsultation.info/szc-proposals/stage-3/)

We will be holding a Briefing for all Councillors on 29 January, a Sizewell C Task Group on 12 February and a Special Cabinet to finalise our response to the Consultation on 11 March. Councillors are welcome to attend all those meetings.

### **Scottish Power Renewables**

Both SCDC and SCC have responded with a great deal of frustration after hearing that Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) has announced plans to site a substation at Grove Wood, Friston, as part of their offshore windfarms projects. Both authorities had previously jointly stated that selecting one of the two proposed substation sites at Grove Wood or Broom Covert, was like choosing the lesser of two evils.

They feel that local needs are still being ignored and maintain their position that more should be done to co-ordinate these projects to minimise the impact on the local communities. Both authorities will continue working together, to express concerns to Scottish Power Renewables directly and through the next round of public consultations. We welcomed the ongoing interaction and consultation with Scottish Power Renewables during their pre-application process. However, we are concerned with their preference to site the onshore infrastructure at Grove Wood, Friston, as we consider this location to have significant adverse impacts on the landscape, heritage assets and the local community. We will continue discussions with SPR in advance of their next round of public consultation in seeking to maximise mitigation opportunities for this difficult site.

Details of the Scottish Power Renewables consultation and decision can be seen here: [https://www.scottishpowerrenewables.com/pages/ea\\_two\\_phase\\_3\\_5\\_consultation.aspx](https://www.scottishpowerrenewables.com/pages/ea_two_phase_3_5_consultation.aspx)

Information about the Councils' responses, including previous correspondence, can be found here: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/offshore-windfarms/>

We are expecting SPR to begin their Stage 4 consultation sometime in February.

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Tony Fryatt, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning
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### **Ipswich Strategic Planning Area Board**

Under the terms of the Localism Act (2011), local planning authorities are required to cooperate on strategic planning matters. To reflect the geographical extent of the Ipswich Housing Market Area and Ipswich Functional Economic Area, which cover the full local authority areas of Suffolk Coastal District along with Babergh District, Mid Suffolk District and Ipswich Borough, the former Ipswich Policy Area has been extended and has been renamed to Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (ISPA).

Within the (ISPA) these planning matters cover a range of issues, including housing need and distribution, provision of land to support economic growth, and delivery of green infrastructure.

The Ipswich Strategic Planning Area Board consists of one Member and one or more officers from each of the four local authorities and Suffolk County Council, and provides a forum for the authorities to work together on strategic planning matters and to co-operate on the production of local plans. The terms of reference for the ISPA Board were updated in March 2018. The key points are given below.

The Board has met on a number of occasions during 2018, to consider the strategic cross boundary planning matters related to the production of local plans and to inform the development of local plans in this respect including in relation to meeting housing needs, planning for employment needs and setting out strategic infrastructure priorities.

Consistent with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Board has developed a Statement of Common Ground which sets out how the authorities have worked together on strategic matters. Chapter 2 of the Suffolk Coastal Final Draft Local Plan (January 2019) reflects the outcomes of the work of the Board in considering strategic cross-boundary planning matters and the Statement of Common Ground is published alongside the Final Draft Local Plan.

The Terms of Reference and the minutes of the ISPA Board meetings are available online at [www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/ipswich-strategic-planning-area](http://www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/ipswich-strategic-planning-area).

Revised Terms of Reference, March 2018

- To provide a forum in which the five local authorities can work together to develop, promote and deliver their vision for the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area, recognising Ipswich and neighbouring communities as a major economic growth area within the Greater Ipswich sub region, County of Suffolk and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership area.
- To enable them to co-operate as local planning authorities on the preparation and monitoring of their Local Plans and share relevant evidence and intelligence.
- To provide a mechanism to ensure that all partners and stakeholders work together to deliver the housing and employment growth requirements for the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area and coordinate the delivery of the necessary infrastructure – including transport, education, skills, power, green infrastructure, flood and coastal defences.
- To produce and facilitate agreement, and keep under review as necessary, Statement(s) of Common Ground in relation to the above.
- The Ipswich Strategic Planning Area covers the geographic areas of Ipswich Borough Council, Babergh District Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council (the Ipswich Housing Market Area and Ipswich Functional Economic Area).

## Constitution

The Board will consist of one Councillor and one or more Officers (as necessary) from the following authorities:

- Ipswich Borough Council
- Suffolk Coastal District Council
- Mid Suffolk District Council
- Babergh District Council
- Suffolk County Council

Each authority will nominate its representatives to the Board.

## Report from the Cabinet Member for Planning

A short report given that the major activity this period was the Extraordinary Council meeting held to agree the soundness of the Final Draft Local Plan. As expected, a small number of the proposed sites have generated a considerable amount of comment, with little or nothing received on the 185 pages of policies that form the basis of the Plan.

The ramifications of not having a properly prepared and endorsed Local Plan cannot be overstressed. Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) clearly states that **we**

**should grant permission where there are no relevant plan policies or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date.**

Consent should, therefore, be granted unless it contravenes any protection provided by the terms of the NPPF. In other words - a development free-for-all.

The next steps in the adoption of this Plan, as reported at the Council meeting are:

- In the six weeks between 14 January and 25 February, representations can be made using the on-line Representation Form. The representations should be concentrated on questions of soundness or compliance with the legal requirements.
- Following this, the Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Carol Poulter, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Green Environment
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### **Solar Together Suffolk Update**

Solar Together Suffolk is a pioneering bulk-buying project, supported by all of the councils in Suffolk through the Greenest County and Suffolk Climate Change Partnership. The project aims to bring affordable solar power to Suffolk and boost the county's renewable energy.

After a turbulent few years in the solar market, the costs of installation and returns are again beginning to make solar PV an attractive investment for households interested in generating their own renewable energy. Despite the reduced Feed in Tariffs, rising retail electricity prices and lower prices for solar panels are making solar power a more attractive offer again for the UK domestic market. Typically, domestic users can expect their investment in solar panels to be repaid within 10 years.

The Suffolk Solar Together project has been launched at a time when many residents are interested in exploring solar energy but may have questions and would welcome advice and information from a trustworthy installer when making a decision on whether to invest. As well as reliable advice, experience elsewhere in the country has also shown that savings of 25-30% on the cost of solar panel installations can be achieved through a bulk-buying arrangement.

Over the summer of 2018 Suffolk residents, small businesses, eligible schools and community groups were invited to register their interest in the scheme by the deadline of 21 August 2018. Registration was free of charge and without obligation.

A mail out to over 150,000 households in Suffolk helped to promote the scheme widely and a number of promotional events were held around the county including roadshow events in Lowestoft and at East Suffolk House. The event in Melton proved particularly popular with a large number of residents from the district attending to find out more about the scheme.

On 22 August 2018 pre-vetted UK solar PV suppliers participated in an auction and contracts were awarded to deliver the installations. The benefit of the scheme being that a large bulk order for premises and businesses across the county has meant that they can pass on better savings to those who registered an interest.

From 10 September those that registered their interest received a personalised offer from the supplier who was awarded the contract, with a deadline of 19 October to make a decision on whether to go ahead with the installation. For those who accepted the offer technical surveys have been arranged and installation of the solar PV panels has been completed or is programmed over the coming months. Telephone and email support has been available throughout the whole process.

In its most recent progress report iChoosr, the company commissioned to coordinate the project across Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex, has confirmed that we are now entering the busiest period of the project with installations peaking at around 100 per week from mid January to mid February 2019. In total 1178 onsite surveys have been carried out and 278 solar PV systems have been installed to date. Of those, 30 installations have been subject to a quality control audit and have been assessed to be good overall. Action has been taken with installers if problems have been identified. A complaints process is in place and customer satisfaction surveys are being carried out.

The project is due to conclude by the end of March 2019 when the Feed in Tariff comes to an end. A further report will be provided for members detailing the outcomes from the project for residents and for reductions in carbon emissions.

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Steve Gallant, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health
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### **Norovirus Outbreaks**

Over the Christmas period and early into the New Year the Food and Safety Team dealt with a number of outbreaks of illness amongst groups who had attended events at premises in the district. Symptoms included the quick onset of vomiting and diarrhoea.

In the first of the cases investigated, a total of 44 people reported illness with three secondary contact cases. At the initial stage of investigation into this type of incident, officers keep an open mind as to whether the cause is food poisoning or the viral infection Norovirus and will gather information about the food history of those showing symptoms and those in the group who are asymptomatic. The investigation will also focus on the food handlers, the premises where food has been prepared and the food hygiene practices linked to any suspected outbreak.

In this case, officers liaised with Public Health England who may declare an incident an Outbreak and set up an Outbreak Control Team to manage the situation. Samples were submitted from a number of the symptomatic cases and those samples were tested at Addenbrooke's Hospital; two were confirmed positive for Norovirus genotype 2.

Norovirus, or Winter Vomiting Disease, as it is often referred to, is the most common cause of infectious gastroenteritis. It can easily spread from person to person, via the environment or food etc. Where people gather, particularly in an institutional setting, it can rapidly spread from person to person e.g. in a hospital or a residential care setting etc. Diarrhoea, abdominal pain and vomiting typically begin 12 to 48 hours after exposure and Norovirus symptoms last for one to three days; most people recover completely without treatment.

East Suffolk's Food and Safety Team has published guidance on the control of Norovirus illness in hospitality and leisure settings:

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Business/Food/ID-M-39-Control-of-Norovirus-illness-in-hospitality-and-leisure-settings.pdf> and this guidance has been promoted through the Council's communication team.

The guidance covers the exclusion of staff from food premises if they exhibit any symptoms of diarrhoea and vomiting; an important control measure in preventing the spread of the infection along with scrupulous personal hygiene, deep cleaning of all hard and soft surfaces in the premises using sodium hypochlorite e.g. household bleach solution or steam.

In the case of Norovirus, alcohol and sanitising gels cannot be relied upon for the control of the virus on hands. The use of soap and running water is the best method of control. Any environmental contamination arising from customers or staff who have been ill on the premises must be covered immediately to control the release of viral particles into the atmosphere and should be removed and the area cleaned with hypochlorite solution.

In the cases reported to officers of the Council's Food & Safety Team, visits were made to the premises implicated in the outbreak to check that appropriate control measures were being used and officers have reinforced the guidance on preventing the further spread of the infection.

## **Outside Bodies Representatives' Report to Council**

<b>East Suffolk Travellers' Association</b>	
<b>Representative:</b>	Councillor John Fisher

The East Suffolk Travellers' Association (ESTA) has been working on behalf of rail and bus users around the Ipswich to Lowestoft corridor since it was formed over 50 years ago to campaign against the proposed closure of the railway linking the two towns and membership has increased over the past year.

ESTA works closely with the Community Rail Partnership through its new officer Amy Wragg.

The issues which ESTA deals with are often small ones individually but combine to make a significant difference to the traveling public. They still carry out regular passenger surveys to find out what are the major concerns for transport users. They have successfully campaigned for a new bus shelter at Carlton Crown and are supporting Marlesford Parish Council in their efforts to improve the access to the bus stops there by making it easier to cross the A12.

As I reported to Council last year, anyone using the train to get to or from East Suffolk House may have noticed a larger gap in the service later in the afternoon. This is because the freight company have not relinquished the 15.54 path from Sizewell for the trains removing spent fuel, even though it is no longer used. Negotiations are still in hand to persuade them to forego this so that the hourly afternoon service which runs on Saturdays can also be run during the week and we may see an improvement with the new timetables proposed for this year. Hopefully we will also be getting new trains.

Negotiating changes to bus services is ongoing because bus companies are only required to give six weeks notice of changes to, or withdrawal of, services, but planning of new services generally takes much longer.

ESTA's next public meeting will be at 2pm on Saturday 9 February 2019 in Beccles Station House with Suffolk County Councillor Mary Evans, Cabinet member for Transport, as guest speaker. All are welcome.

Suffolk Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Sub-Committee	
Representatives	Councillor Christine Block

The Sub-Committee continues to implement a scrutiny programme which examines a limited number of key issues in depth. Over a series of meetings members have been looking at aspects of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, SuDS, concluding with consideration of the advantages and problems associated with who will adopt a scheme and how will long term maintenance be guaranteed.

In concluding this long piece of work the Sub-Committee recommended that the revised guidance on SuDS, drawn up in advance of a planned review of the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy, be circulated to district and borough officers and councillors for their information (attached at the end of this report).

Two other aspects of Scrutiny Sub-Committee work are of interest.

The members take an overview of the work of the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership – a body, with wide representation, which establishes the extent, risk and potential impact of flooding from all sources (tidal, river, surface water). A county-wide flood risk map ensures that all incidents of 'significant' flooding are investigated and that the responsibility for each incident is established. It is good to note that work to incorporate all records of predicted flood risk with observed flood incidents has been completed. This allows assessment of the whole of the county and provides the ability to rank risk areas based on severity of flooding – which means that work can be programmed to where it is most needed and spending on reactive works can be avoided.

The Management Partnership is also tasked to work with local communities to help them understand and, where possible, take suitable measures to manage minor instances of flooding. To this end a very interesting pilot project – "Our Water" – has been trialled with a limited number of communities. The project offers a mechanism to empower local community groups, such as a Parish Council or Flood Action Group, to follow a step by step survey process which improves understanding of drainage systems, records the condition of smaller watercourses and ditches, establishes the causes of local flooding and identifies appropriate mitigation measures.

In examining this project the Sub-Committee noted that instances of minor flooding in rural areas are often caused by poor maintenance of ordinary watercourses, which are not always the responsibility of the County Council. The success of the Our Water project demonstrates the value of empowering communities so that they have a greater understanding of the flood risk they face and a better chance of putting forward specific measures to reduce it.

It is hoped that the Our Water process can be developed as an online, self-help pack for the benefit of Parishes where volunteers are keen to take action to reduce flood risk.

The Sub-Committee will now turn its attention to reviewing an early pre-consultation draft of the revised Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy. This is a key document in ensuring that the risk of flooding in Suffolk is dealt with holistically.