

Confirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Cabinet** held in the Conference Room, Riverside, Lowestoft, on **Tuesday, 2 January 2024 at 6.30pm.**

Members of the Cabinet present:

Councillor Paul Ashton, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Jan Candy, Councillor Tom Daly, Councillor Vince Langdon-Morris, Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Councillor Caroline Topping, Councillor Sarah Whitelock

Other Members present:

Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Alan Green, Councillor Lee Reeves, Councillor Craig Rivett

Officers present:

Chris Bing (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Kate Blakemore (Strategic Director), Kerry Blair (Head of Operations), Heather Fisk (Head of Housing), Lorraine Fitch (Democratic Services Manager), Naomi Goold (Energy Projects Manager), Nick Harding (Sea Link Project Lead), Phil Harris (Strategic Communications and Marketing Manager), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Amy Moye (Procurement Manager), Lorraine Rogers (Chief Finance Manager), Alli Stone (Democratic Services Officer (Governance)), Julian Sturman (Specialist Accountant – Capital and Treasury Management), Amber Welham (Finance Business Partner - Housing)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Yule and Councillor Hammond.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Announcements

Leader of the Council

There were no announcements from the Leader Councillor Caroline Topping.

Cabinet Members

Councillor Smith-Lyte announced that funding of £110,000 had been approved for the Green Light Trust for works on a learning centre at the Martlesham site.

4 Minutes

On the proposition of Councillor Candy seconded by Councillor Daly it was unanimously

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 Fees and Charges for the Financial Year 2024/25

Councillor Langdon Morris, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money introduced the report which related to the Fees and Charges for the Financial Year 2024/25.

Councillor Langdon-Morris outlined from the report that, income from fees and charges was an integral part of the financial planning process, to inform the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and acted as a key element of the annual budget setting process, forecasting the generation of essential funding for the Council to help minimise the impacts of Council Tax increases and/or service changes.

Considering financial demands on the Local Authority as well as the impact of the cost-of-living crisis it was vital to ensure that the annual fees and charges proposed considers local demand, along with reflecting changes in the cost of delivering the services that have either already occurred or are expected to occur over the next financial year.

Councillor Langdon-Morris highlighted that the fees and charges income was a key source of revenue to the Council, providing income in the region of approximately £24 million per annum to the General Fund, including Port Health. Appendix A of the report set out the proposed discretionary and statutory fees for 2024 / 2025.

Discretionary fees highlighted in area 2.5 of the report and included environmental health, parking services, beach huts and chalets, waste collections, recreation, outdoors sports, planning applications and planning related applications.

Concerning statutory fees Councillor Langdon-Morris highlighted that were outlined in the report and would, subject to approval would be published on the council's website.

There were no questions from Cabinet Members.

Councillor Rivett queried why the previous year's charges and percentage increases were not included in the documentation.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the report had been presented as it would be on the website. The covering report explained where there had been key areas of change.

Councillor Byatt queried where records of issued fixed penalty notices and fees could be reported on.

The Chief Finance officer stated that the query would need to go the relevant service areas.

There being no further questions, on the proposition of Councillor Langdon-Morris seconded by Councillor Whitelock it was unanimously

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the discretionary Fees and Charges for 2024/25, included within Appendix A to this report.
2. Notes the statutory Fees and Charges for 2024/25, included within Appendix A to the report.
3. Grants the Head of Environmental Services and Port Health delegated authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health, to determine the Port Health discretionary charges for 2024/25, once regulatory information is made available.

6 Southwold Harbour Management Committee – Fees and Charges 2024/25

Councillor Langdon Morris, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money introduced the report which related to the Southwold Harbour Management Committee – Fees and Charges 2024/25

Councillor Langdon Morris provided an outline from the published report, which stated the Terms of Reference of the Southwold Harbour Management Committee (SHMC) stated that the Committee would review and then recommend an annual schedule of charges and dues for the Harbour, and these would be determined by the Cabinet.

The Council would continue to encourage a commercial approach to setting fees and charges, subject to statutory restrictions. The harbour, caravan and camping site fee proposals for the next financial had taken into consideration the council principles when reviewing fees and charges.

Councillor Langdon-Morris highlighted that income from the harbour, caravan and camp site was ring fenced for the harbour.

The proposed increase of 6.7% increase was discussed at a committee meeting on 9 November 2023. The increase was in line with inflation for the consumer price index in September 2023. Members raised concerns regarding the proposed increase as it was felt the current standard of facilities did not align with the increase. After consideration it was agreed to apply a 3% increase for recommendation.

There were no questions from Cabinet Members

Councillor Byatt queried what discretionary services were being offered free of charge.

The Head of Operations advised that there were no discretionary charges at the present time.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Beavan added that there is an ambition to progress and improve the harbour area and caravan site and increases in fees and charges would be achieved in the future.

On the proposition of Councillor Langdon-Morris seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Beavan it was unanimously

RESOLVED

That the annual schedule of charges and dues for Southwold Harbour, Southwold Caravan Site and Campsite for 2024/25 at Appendix A be approved.

7 General Fund Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Councillor Langdon-Morris, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money introduced the report which related to the General Fund Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Councillor Langdon-Morris outlined from the published report a further update to the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), taking account of new and revised risks, and presents an initial draft of the Council's General Fund Budget for 2024/25.

Since the previous update mid-term financial statement update to Cabinet on 7 November 2023 the provisional local finance settlement was released on 18 December 2023. Details of the settlement and implications for the council were provided in appendix C of the report.

The most significant change from financial assumptions was the New Homes Bonus which would be continuing for another year. The allocation for East Suffolk Council was £651,000.

Other settlement grants have either decreased or increased but the overall funding position remained relatively unchanged.

Councillor Langdon-Morris drew attention to the funding guarantee funding stream and whether it would continue beyond 2024/2025. If the funding was to cease there would be a loss to the council in the region of £1.5 million each year.

The 2024 / 2025 provisional settlement confirmed a council tax referendum principle for shire district councils of up to 2.99% or £5, whichever is higher. Assuming an increase of up to the referendum principle for 2024/25, would equate to a District Band D Council Tax for East Suffolk of £186.57, an increase of £5.40 or 2.98%.

The estimates for 2023 / 2024 have been rolled forward through to 2027 / 2028. With the exception being a tapering of the Pooling Benefit. The NNDR1 was due to be completed later in January 2024 and would confirm the revised position on business rates income for next year and the budget position for the report to Cabinet on 6 February 2024.

For 2024 /2025 only Suffolk public sector leaders have agreed for their share of the pooling benefit to be distributed to the pool members using the same methodology as for the normal distribution.

The Council was due to receive a Pooling benefit budget of £3.9 million, in addition the pool holds a £2 million reserve which was to be redistributed to the pool members during 2024/2025.

Higher interests had benefited the council with a higher returned on investment income. The council was forecasting £1.4 million in additional income for 2024/2025.

The opening balance on ear marked reserves was £48 million. In addition the council holds a general fund of £6 million and no use was forecast of the general fund at the time. Consideration would be given to increasing the budget to around £8 million, which would be presented for approval as part of the budget setting process.

The Leader, Councillor Topping reiterated that the paper was in draft format.

There were no questions from Cabinet.

Councillor Rivett queried the future planning for the First Light festival when external funding comes to an end.

The Head of Operations responded to state that work continued with First Light CIC on their sustainability plan to increase commercial income. They were starting to make headway on sponsorship opportunities, ticket sales and camping. It was noted that First Light CIC had gained National Provider Organisation status which provided the opportunity to drive income from other voluntary sources. The Head of Operations stated that it was essential for the festival to be more economically sustainable and was a work in progress.

Councillor Byatt raised a point of accuracy on pg140 of the report, in paragraph 4.1, point e) stated 'the impact of the current pandemic', noting that it should be amended to reflect the historic impact of the pandemic.

The Chief Finance Officer advised they would make the amendment.

The Leader, Councillor Topping added her thanks to the officers for their work on preparing the financial reports being considered.

On the proposition of Councillor Langdon-Morris, seconded by Councillor Smith-Lyte it was unanimously

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy attached as Appendix A, including the draft 2024/25 General Fund Revenue Budget summarised in Appendix A5 for review and consideration by the Scrutiny Committee as part of the budget process.

2. Approve an initial proposed Band D Council Tax for East Suffolk Council of £186.57 for 2024/25, an increase of £5.40 or 2.98%.

8 Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28

Councillor Langdon-Morris, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money introduced the report which related to the Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28.

Councillor Langdon-Morris outlined from the published report that as part of the budget setting process, the Council was required to agree a programme of capital expenditure for the coming four years. The timeline for the process commenced at Cabinet, following approval it would go to Scrutiny Committee 18 January 2024, then back to Cabinet on 6 February 2024, to review any recommendations from Scrutiny. The report would then go to Full Council for approval on 21st February 2024.

Capital expenditure within the Council was split into two main components, the General Fund Capital programme, and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital programme which was set out with brief descriptions.

The capital programme had been compiled taking account of the following main principles, to:

- Maintain an affordable four-year rolling capital programme.
- Ensure capital resources are aligned with the Council's Strategic Plan.
- Maximise available resources by actively seeking external funding and disposal of Surplus assets; and not to anticipate receipts from disposals until they are realised
- Focus on deliverability on current project within the programme.

The General Fund capital programme for 2023/24 through to 2027/28 has a total financing requirement of £329.03m which will be financed through both internal and external resources.

The programme from 2023/24 to 2027/28 benefits from £211.08m (64%) of external grants and contributions, the use of £13.85m (4%) of reserves and internal/external borrowing of £104.10m (32%).

The HRA capital programme for 2023/24 through to 2027/28 has a total budget requirement £81.94m which will be financed through both internal and external resources.

The programme from 2023/24 to 2027/28 relies upon £8.74m (11%) of external grants and contributions, the use of £38.07m (46%) of capital reserves, direct revenue financing (HRA) of £19.35m (24%) and £15.79m (19%) of capital receipts.

The Capital Programme directly links to Capital Strategy Report and the Treasury Management report which was reviewed by the Audit and Governance Committee and approved by Full Council in January.

There were no questions from Cabinet Members.

Councillor Rivett queried the Towns fund showing an increase from £7.4 million to £15.6 million.

The Chief Finance Officer advised they would take the question back to the service area and report back.

Councillor Rivett noted on page 186 of the report there were number of boxes that had been shut off and did not contain the full text.

The Chief Finance Officer stated they would correct that ahead of Scrutiny.

On the proposition of Councillor Langdon-Morris seconded by Councillor Candy it was unanimously

RESOLVED

1. That the General Fund capital programme for 2023/24 to 2027/28 including revisions as shown in Appendix B be approved for review and consideration by the Scrutiny Committee as part of the budget process.

2. That the Housing Revenue Account capital programme for 2023/24 to 2027/28 including revisions as shown in Appendix G be approved for review and consideration by the Scrutiny Committee as part of the Budget process.

9 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Report 2024/25 to 2027/28

Cabinet received report ES/1793 of Councillor Langdon-Morris, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money and the Deputy Leader, Councillor David Beavan, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing. The purpose of the report was to ask Cabinet to review the Council's proposed 2024/25 to 2027/28 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget, before making recommendations to Council.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Beavan introduced the report and stated that when he had been appointed Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing there had been a £30million deficit, £9million of which was refunds which needed to be given due to tenants being overcharged. Projects to build new housing were also increasing in cost, and £2million was needed to demolish St Peters Court which was beyond economic repair. There would be a net loss of twenty four properties over the next three years

due to right to buy and the demolition of St Peters Court, and while new housing was being built and made available it was not at the rate which had been hoped for. Furthermore money would need to be allocated to retrofitting of existing stock to ensure it was in line with the Council's aims for net zero.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Beavan summarised that the annual income of £24million paid costs of £17million, leaving £2million to pay interests on government loans and £5million to replenish stock. This gave a replacement rate of two hundred years and a 1% return on capital. In contrast, private housing companies could build properties at a 3.7% return and could also charge affordable rents at the level of housing benefit rather than the social rent which the Council was restricted to.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Beavan stated that the Council could not be competitive and was severely restricted by the government. Grants either needed to be increased or the amount the Council could charge needed to change. As less stock was built income would fall, and less money would be available to maintain and retrofit older stock. This situation could lead to the end of Council housing. The Deputy Leader, Councillor Beavan stated that this was not an acceptable situation and the Council needed to consider new ideas and new ways of financing sustainable house building. He believed staff could rise to this challenge and asked Councillors to support this.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Beavan stated that the Housing Revenue Account was an honest assessment of the current situation and could be used to start the conversation on how the administration could to address the housing situation.

Councillor Byatt referred to comments in the report on stock condition surveys and when work could start on retrofitting and installing energy efficient measures.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Beavan stated that the stock condition survey would start shortly and work could not start until this was done. There was an issue with retrofitting as the benefit of these upgrades would only be seen by tenants. While this would help tenants by making their homes more affordable it did mean there was an issue with borrowing to carry out this work as there would be no additional income to fund the borrowing. New ways of funding this work were being looked at. The stock survey would hopefully be completed this year and provide a clearer direction for work. The Deputy Leader, Councillor Beavan confirmed that all properties had a carbon monoxide detector.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Beavan proposed the motion, and it was duly seconded by Councillor Langdon Morris.

By a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

1. That the following be approved for review and consideration by the Scrutiny Committee as part of the budget process:

a. The draft HRA budget for 2024/25, and the indicative figures for 2025/26 to 2027/28;

- b. Movements in HRA Reserves and Balances;
 - c. Proposed rent increase of up to 7.7%. In line with the Rent Standard September 2023 CPI + 1%.
 - d. Service charges and associated fees for 2024/25;
 - e. Rent and Service Charges to be charged over a 51-week period unless being used for Temporary Accommodation when a 53-week period will be applied, due to 2024/25 being a 53-week year.
2. That the following be noted:
- a. Projected outturn position for 2023/24;
 - b. Changes affecting public and private sector housing and welfare;
 - c. Effects of the cost-of-living crisis to the HRA.

10 People Strategy 2024–28

Councillor Ashton the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Corporate Services - Digital, Customer Services, HR and Assets introduced the report which related to the People Strategy 2024 - 2028.

Councillor Ashton thanked the team who worked on the strategy and highlighted the comprehensive and concise nature of the document. The strategy adopted two themes of People and Culture, with priority areas in each.

Councillor Ashton stated he was looking forward to delivering on the strategy over the next 4 years.

There were no questions from Cabinet Members.

Councillor Rivett wondered if there would be KPIs included to support the strategy.

The Strategic Director stated following Cabinet approval of the strategy an action plan would be produced containing measurable indicators.

Councillor Byatt noticed that there was reference to the appointment of a Health and Wellbeing Lead and queried if it was a new role or additional responsibilities for a current Officer.

Councillor Byatt stated he was pleased to see the strategy coming forward and welcomed anyway of retaining current staff with robust career development pathways in place.

The Strategic Director responded to state there was someone already picking up health and wellbeing work, a review of the relevant job description was underway.

The Leader echoed the importance of retaining staff and encouraging young people to work for local authorities and engage with local politics.

On the proposition of Councillor Ashton seconded by Councillor Smith-Lyte it was unanimously

RESOLVED

That Cabinet approves the People Strategy 2024-28 as set out in Appendix A of the report.

11 Sea Link Nationally Strategic Infrastructure Project – Statutory Consultation Response

Cabinet received report ES/1795 of Councillor Tom Daly, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Energy and Climate Change. The purpose of the report was to provide a response to the statutory consultation for the nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP) and to give the Head of Planning & Coastal Management delegated authority, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Members to undertake all further activities in relation to the Sea Link project during the pre-application, examination and post examination/consent phases including the signing of any legal agreements/memorandum of understandings.

Councillor Daly introduced the report and delivered a presentation summarising the Sea Link project proposals and the proposed response from the Council. Councillor Daly stated that the project had been thoroughly examined prior to a response being prepared. As a result of this, the Council's position was to object to the Sea Link project.

Councillor Daly summarised the reasons for this position, which were that there was insufficient coordination between all areas of the process, that it would result in unacceptable harm to the communities, environment and economy of East Suffolk, that further consideration should be given to alternative offshore solutions and that further consideration should be given to the timing of the need for the project.

Councillor Daly stated that this recommendation included the authority to delegate to the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, and this was essential for the Council to be able to respond quickly to any additional consultations as these often required a quick response.

The Leader invited questions.

Councillor Langdon Morris referred to the offshore options which had been mentioned and asked what this would entail. Councillor Daly stated that there had been various suggestions, they were not being addressed by applicants at the moment. However other projects in Essex had started to move in this direction. Councillor Daly stated offshore options should have been considered much earlier as it was more efficient

and allowed energy to be taken directly to those areas with the greatest need and avoided using greenfield sites for this sort of development.

Councillor Candy stated that she agreed that this should have been considered much earlier, and asked how much time there was before it was too late to move offshore. Councillor Daly stated that this depended on the will of the government and of companies to think seriously about what this could look like as a whole rather than the current piecemeal approach.

Councillor Smith-Lyte asked whether modular offshore grid was cheaper as there was conflicting information around this. Councillor Daly stated that reports had been produced on this. The initial cost would be more, but future costs were much less and would reduce the cost of other projects down the line. If social and environmental costs were taken into account then costs were also much less overall.

Councillor Rivett stated that a great deal of work had been put into the report. He referred to point 5.1 in the proposed response on 'need' which stated that 'the need for the project only arises once Sizewell C, LionLink and Nautilus are all operational'. However in the Strategic Options report produced by National Grid they had identified that there would be a 1800 MW deficit in the fault case scenario, considering that Nautilus only provided 1500 MW, Councillor Rivett considered that it was not correct to state that the project was only needed should all three sites be operational.

The Sea Link Project Lead stated that he had attended a briefing session on this project and had asked the project managers what stimulated the need for this project, and they had been clear that this was needed for the instance when all three projects were in place. Officers had pushed this to confirm that this was a correct response, and the Project Managers had confirmed this was correct. Councillor Rivett asked whether National Grid had been contacted to confirm this, and officers confirmed that they had subsequently discussed this over email, and had not been corrected. Councillor Ashton stated that he had also been told this on a different occasion.

Councillor Rivett again referred to point 5 in the Council's response, and stated that this was very brief compared to other parts of the document and invited some ambiguity. Councillor Rivett stated that as with the Sizewell C decision it could be considered that the project was an inseparable part of other schemes and if our response claimed that the need for the project only arose in one scenario, and that it should be conditional upon three other projects, this could invite unnecessary ambiguity.

Councillor Daly responded to state that with potential increased capacity required and through the district the grid would to be re-enforced. If the other applications were not successful or offshore work was diverted to other areas, then the Sea Link project should be resisted until the grid re-enforcement need was proven.

Councillor Rivett challenged the response and the viability of using the same argument used by Together Against Sizewell C (TASC), which failed in the Court of Appeal.

Councillor Topping added that at a County Council Officer GLI briefing there was information to support the argument that if other infrastructure projects were to not go ahead, Sea Link would not be needed.

Councillor Rivett questioned the rationale for the information in the response, highlighting a potential conflict in information provided, regarding the National Grid Strategic Options Document.

Councillor Daly responded that it was based on assumption of need not actuality.

Councillor Rivett queried how Councillor Daly felt the response would comply with the new National Policy Statement.

Councillor Daly sought clarification from the Head of Planning & Coastal Management who advised that EM1 was National Policy Statement, which provided the overarching energy statement. He added that Councillor Rivett was referring to the government's desire to deliver energy for the UK population sooner and faster.

The Head of Planning & Coastal Management clarified that the response being considered, was that decisions on the delivery of the Sea Link project could be deferred for a number of years until other projects had more certainty. In addition, technology improvements may provide deliverable alternatives not yet available and these could provide better outcomes for the local area, environment and communities in East Suffolk.

The Head of Planning & Coastal Management and Councillor Rivett agreed to pick up further matters relating to EM1 outside of the meeting.

Councillor Byatt recognised the response was comprehensive. The report stated that East Suffolk Council would be opposing the project, which at Cabinet would mean the 8 members present would be deciding on behalf of all 55 members. Councillor Byatt stated he would like it to be fully debated with all members and queried the timescales available to have further discussion at Full Council.

Councillor Daly responded to state that there was a long debate in Full Council in September 2023 regarding NSIPs which included Sea Link.

Councillor Byatt agreed there was the debate at a previous Full Council meeting. However, the Sea Link project was not specifically discussed. He stated it was a significant project which tied in with other energy projects.

Councillor Daly, responded to state that during the Full Council debate existing and proposed projects were listed. He highlighted that the response was representing communities the environment and that the motion discussed in September 2023 passed with significant majority.

The Deputy Leader Councillor Beavan added that there have been several debates. He felt that as the administration they could respond to the consultation. The Deputy Leader Councillor Beavan encouraged that members worked together on the issue.

Councillor Rivett revisited his earlier point and had found the relevant section of EM1 and pointed to paragraphs 4.2.22 and 4.2.27 which he read out. Councillor Rivett concluded to state he agreed with some of the points made, however had concerns that if the report was submitted as it stood the examination would be able to reject some of the examples and the rationale that had been used within the papers. Councillor Rivett highlighted that he wanted the paper to go forward backed by policy and legislation.

Councillor Daly responded to state he believed the response was detailed and all aspects had been worked through. The most important element was the case being made for local communities, the environment and district. He felt the response had been made within the remit of the Council.

Councillor Rivett questioned if one paragraph on need was that sufficient considering the overall size of the response document.

Councillor Daly responded to state the one paragraph in question was included in conjunction with all the other information which was being submitted.

Councillor Whitelock wondered if Councillor Rivett and Councillor Byatt were aware that all Northern European countries on the other side of the channel were using the offshore grid.

Councillor Byatt responded that he was aware of Councillor Whitelock's point and asked if the Cabinet were aware that Sea Link was mainly underwater, and the debate was about the convertor stations.

Councillor Byatt queried through the Chair a definition for the difference between the convertor stations being constructed underground verses over ground.

Councillor Daly responded that he believed the Saxmundham convertor station was going to be built at a proposed 26 metre height.

The Sea Link Project Lead added that the substation at Friston had been consented and that there had been concerns raised regarding the impact of the Saxmundham convertor station on the landscape.

He concluded to state if scheme were to come forward there would be consideration for a kinetic design to mitigate the visual impact the scale of building.

Councillor Whitelock made a declaration of interest regarding the area in question being her ward.

Councillor Whitelock felt the response was very thorough and covered areas which she felt the applicant had not previously taken seriously enough.

Councillor Whitelock drew attention to the economic threat presented to her district, in respect of tourism which attracts millions of people to visit the coastline. Attention

was drawn to the text outlining the negative impact the project along with wider energy projects could have on tourism for the district.

Councillor Whitelock complimented the offices for their on-going work.

Councillor Daly concluded that there had been comprehensive debate and thanked the officers for their comprehensive work on the response.

The Leader concluded the item to also offer thanks to the team for the time and effort put into bringing the item and for their ongoing work.

On the proposition of Councillor Daly seconded by Councillor Whitelock it was

RESOLVED

1. That the consultation response as set out in Appendix A be agreed.
2. That authority be delegated to the Head of Planning & Coastal Management, in Consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member(s), to act on behalf of the Council in all activities associated with the pre-Application, examination and post examination/consent phases of the project including the signing of any legal agreements/memorandum of understandings.

12 Housing Regulation – Quarterly Update

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Beavan the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing introduced the report which related to Housing Regulation – Quarterly Update. The Deputy Leader was pleased to present the report and update on the significant progress being made in the area. It had been complex and challenging work to move from non-compliance to compliance. There continues to be challenges to finding specialist contractors to carry out some of the specific work required, which had an impact on completion timescales.

The most recent performance data available related to the month ended November 2023.

The Deputy Leader outlined the following areas of compliance as highlighted in the report.

- Asbestos Safety - communal areas: 100%
- Electrical Safety -domestic: 99.11%
- Electrical Safety - communal: 100%
- Fire Risk Assessments in date: 100%
- Gas Safety: 99.98%
- Passenger Lift Safety: 100%
- Water Safety: 100%

The Deputy Leader updated on the rent refund work and reported 750 letters were sent out before Christmas. Further information was regarding the progression was included in section 2.22 of the report. It was intended that all tenants would be

contacted by the end of March. It was anticipated that it would take longer to make contact with tenants who are no longer in the area.

Meetings continued to take place with the regulator of social housing on a bimonthly basis to review progress. The meetings would continue until the regulator is satisfied compliance was reached and mitigation was in place to prevent any future issues arising. In addition, an audit would be commissioned in the next few months and there was an aspiration for the Regularity Notice to be withdrawn later in 2024.

There were no questions from Cabinet.

Councillor Rivett wished to pass his thanks on to the wider team for their hard work.

On the proposition of the Deputy Leader Councillor Beavan seconded by Councillor Daly it was

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet notes the information contained within this report and endorses the actions set out to ensure the Council is compliant with the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer 'Home Standard'.
2. That Cabinet notes the information contained within this report and endorses the actions set out to ensure the Council is compliant with the Regulator of Social Housing 'Rent Standard'.
3. That Cabinet note that the next quarterly update will be presented to April 2024's Cabinet Meeting.

13 Exempt/Confidential Items

On the proposition of Councillor Candy, seconded by Councillor Ashton, it was unanimously

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.

14 Exempt Minutes

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

15 East Point Pavilion (revised model of operation)

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

16 Provision of Procurement Services to Great Yarmouth Borough Council

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

The meeting concluded at 8.45pm.

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Chair