



## Full Council

Members are invited to the **Annual Meeting of the Full Council** to be held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, Melton on **Wednesday, 24 May 2023 at 6.30pm.**

This meeting will be broadcast to the public via the East Suffolk YouTube Channel at <https://youtu.be/d4v7LMwj7MA>

### Members:

All Councillors

An Agenda is set out below.

### Part One – Open to the Public

Pages

- |           |  |                |
|-----------|--|----------------|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Apologies for Absence</b><br>To receive apologies for absence, if any.  |                |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Declarations of Interest</b><br>Members and Officers are invited to make any declarations of interests, and the nature of that interest, that they may have in relation to items on the Agenda and are also reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the Meeting if it becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered. |                |
| <b>3a</b> | <b>Minutes - 22 February 2023</b><br>To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 February 2023.   | <b>1 - 26</b>  |
| <b>3b</b> | <b>Minutes - 8 March 2023</b><br>To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 8 March 2023.   | <b>27 - 28</b> |
| <b>3c</b> | <b>Minutes - 15 March 2023</b><br>To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 March 2023.   | <b>29 - 54</b> |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Announcements</b><br>To receive any announcements from the retiring Chairman.   |                |

<b>Part One – Open to the Public</b>		<b>Pages</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Election of a Chairman</b> To elect a Chairman for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.	
<b>6</b>	<b>Election of a Vice-Chairman</b> To elect a Vice-Chairman for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.	
<b>7</b>	<b>Election of a Leader of the Council</b> To elect the Leader of the Council for the four-year term May 2023 to May 2027 (to include Cabinet appointments).	
<b>8</b>	<b>Announcements</b> To receive announcements from the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Leader of the Council, Members of the Cabinet, or the Chief Executive, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.1(e).	
<b>9</b>	<b>Political balance and allocation of seats on Committees 2023/24</b> Report of the Leader of the Council.	<b>55 - 63</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Appointments to Outside Bodies for 2023/24 (Non-Executive)</b> Report of the Leader of the Council.	<b>64 - 68</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Appointments to Working Groups 2023/24</b> Report of the Leader of the Council.	<b>69 - 73</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Appointment of Independent Persons</b> Report of the Leader of the Council.	<b>74 - 78</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24</b> Report of the Leader of the Council.	<b>79 - 86</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Date of next Annual Meeting</b> Wednesday, 22 May 2024 at 6.00pm in the Conference Room at Riverside, Lowestoft.	

<b>Part Two – Exempt/Confidential</b>	<b>Pages</b>
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**There are no Exempt or Confidential items for this Agenda.**

**Close**



Chris Bally, Chief Executive

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[www.local.gov.uk/Community-Leadership](http://www.local.gov.uk/Community-Leadership)

<b>Unconfirmed</b>
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Minutes of a Meeting of the **Full Council** held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, on **Wednesday, 22 February 2023 at 6:30 pm**

**Members present:**

Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Chris Blundell, Councillor Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw, Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Alison Cackett, Councillor Jenny Ceresa, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Tom Daly, Councillor John Fisher, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Tess Gandy, Councillor Andree Gee, Councillor Tony Goldson, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Ray Herring, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Stuart Lawson, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor Chris Mapey, Councillor Malcolm Pitchers, Councillor Sarah Plummer, Councillor Carol Poulter, Councillor Russ Rainger, Councillor Mick Richardson, 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:**

Chris Bally (Chief Executive), Kate Blakemore (Strategic Director), Lewis Boudville (Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer (Regulatory)), Sue Meeken (Labour Political Group Support Officer), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer), Agnes Ogundiran (Conservative Political Group Support Officer), Tom Potter (Press and Publicity Officer), Dickon Povey (Principal Planner (Policy and Delivery)), Lorraine Rogers (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Isabel Rolfe (GLI Political Group Support Officer), Julian Sturman (Specialist Accountant (Capital and Treasury Management)) and Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager).

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tony Cooper, Janet Craig, Mike Deacon, Richard Kerry, Frank Mortimer, Trish Mortimer, Mark Newton, Keith Patience and David Ritchie.

Apologies for absence were also received on behalf of Councillor Debbie McCallum, during the meeting.

## **2 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Andree Gee declared an Other Registerable Interest during the consideration of Item 13 - Halesworth and Oulton Neighbourhood Plans, as she was the Council's representative on the Broads Authority, which was responsible for part of the Oulton Ward.

## **3 Minutes**

Councillor Fisher stated that he had given apologies on behalf of several Members of the GLI Group, as they had needed to leave the meeting at around 8.30pm. However, this had not been included within the Minutes and he proposed that this be included and his proposal was duly seconded by Councillor Topping.

There followed some debate in this respect, during which Mr Bing, Monitoring Officer, advised that Minutes were not a verbatim record of a meeting. Members also noted that the time that the GLI Members had left the meeting, had been recorded later in the Minutes.

Upon being put to the vote, it was

### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the Meeting held on 25 January 2023 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **4 Announcements**

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

#### Full Council Meeting on 23 November 2022 – Motion about Water Quality Issues

The Chairman reminded Members that Councillor Byatt had submitted a Motion to the last Full Council meeting on 23 November 2022, regarding concerns about water quality issues and sewage leaks. The Motion had been amended at the meeting and Members had voted unanimously to support it.

The Chairman stated that she had now received a letter from Peter Simpson, Chief Executive of Anglian Water, which outlined their commitment to protect, restore and improve the region's environment. The letter had been circulated to all Members for information.

#### Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal

The Chairman reported that the death toll from last week's earthquake was in excess of 41,000, since the 7.8 magnitude quake had struck. In Turkey alone, it had been estimated that one million people lost their homes and 80,000 people were in

hospitals, many of which were badly damaged in the quakes, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Together, the Mayors and Chairs of Suffolk wished to help raise awareness of the need for aid and of the appeal being made by the Disasters Emergency Committee. The unbearable scenes from Turkey and Syria had affected everyone and it was almost impossible to imagine the devastation to life and communities on such an enormous scale.

The Chairman encouraged people to donate to the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal, which would help provide urgent aid to those in most need. Any donation, no matter how small, would help. To donate, please visit the Disasters Emergency Committee Website.

### Civic Events

Since the last meeting, the Chairman had attended the Lowestoft Holocaust Memorial Day Service at Lowestoft Railway Station on 27 January 2023.

## **Leader of the Council**

### Ukraine

Friday, 24 February 2023, was the anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Many lives had been lost and many more citizens had seen their lives, homes and opportunities destroyed. Residents of East Suffolk had been and will continue to do all they could to support those affected and displaced by this tragic conflict. The Leader invited Members to join him in condemning the ongoing actions of the Russian aggressors.

### New Strategic Director - Kate Blakemore

The Leader was delighted to welcome Kate Blakemore, newly appointed Strategic Director to East Suffolk. Kate brought with her a wealth of experience, having previously been a Strategic Director with Great Yarmouth Borough Council, a role she held for over five years and prior to that, she was Great Yarmouth's Head of Transformation.

The LGA Peer Review of the Council, which took place in 2022, had indicated that whilst East Suffolk was making excellent progress as an authority, it lacked sufficient capacity and resilience at a senior level. Members were very pleased to have appointed someone of Kate's calibre and track record of success into this key role. The Leader then invited Kate to say a few words.

Kate took the opportunity to thank everyone for her warm welcome, she had received a very good induction so far and she could see that everyone really cared about East Suffolk.

## **Cabinet Members**

Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, provided an update on the support that was available via the East the Squeeze project. It was noted that 592 referrals for help had been received so far. Members noted that grants of £4,500 were available to set up Community Pantries and the Field to Fork project provided free gardening and growing kits to help people grow their own food. Further information about these projects would be provided later in the year.

### **Chief Executive**

There was no announcement from the Chief Executive.

## **5 Questions from the Public**

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

## **6 Questions from Members**

The Chairman reported that seven questions from Members had been received, as provided by Council Procedure Rule 9. In accordance with the Constitution, there was 30 minutes in total, allocated for Member Questions. To ensure that there was sufficient time, the Chairman stated that all questions would be taken as read and she asked that any Supplementary Questions were brief and to the point.

She also took the opportunity to remind Members that they were welcome to speak to the relevant Cabinet Member, should they have any questions, and they did not need to wait for the next Full Council meeting.

### **a) Question submitted by Councillor Janet Craig to Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Experience, IT and Operational Partnerships**

‘100 car parking spaces in Sudbury and Stowmarket have been covered in solar panels to help power two Council owned Leisure Centres and provide Electric Vehicle charging points for Leisure Centre users, providing a useful income stream. This was achieved using part funding from two Government schemes.

This sounds like a positive move to support not only residents but also the visitor economy, so what is there to prevent this Council from following the example from colleagues in Babergh & Mid-Suffolk and applying to these two sources of grant funding (Getting Building Fund and Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme). We could then do something similar at our Leisure Centres, and also potentially expand the existing EV provision at other Council premises?’

Response from Councillor Burroughes, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Experience, IT and Operational Partnerships

As Councillor Craig had given apologies for the meeting, a written response would be provided to her question outside of the meeting.

b) Question submitted by Councillor David Beavan for Councillor Richard Kerry, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing

‘Your Housing Strategy 2017 to 2023 aimed to increase our council house stock from 4,479 to 5,200. How is that coming along?’

N.B. As Councillor Kerry had given his apologies for the meeting, this question was answered by Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, instead.

Response from Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council

The Council was committed to increasing the number of homes within its stock to enable more residents to access genuinely affordable housing.

Since the inception of the Housing Strategy, and despite two years of pandemic and financial crisis, East Suffolk Council had, from a standing start, built 105 properties, had a further 4 projects consisting of 83 properties that have Planning Permission, 3 projects consisting of 17 properties that have a Planning Application submitted and 3 projects consisting of 19 properties, which have had a Positive Pre-Application. A further 5 projects consisting of 32 properties have Cabinet approval and were awaiting a planning application.

There were also 11 ‘live’ projects which were on-going, and they were at an initial consideration stage. These included 2 Acquisition Projects (including S106) consisting of 16 properties, 2 Redevelopment Projects consisting of 10 properties and 7 New Build Projects consisting of 94 properties.

This was a total of 22 projects, which comprised 271 properties, which were currently being managed by the Council’s in-house Development Team.

On average, this Council sells 24 properties a year through the Right to Buy scheme.

There were competing demands for the funds and officer resources, within the Housing Revenue Account. These included important safety improvements as a result of the Building Safety Act and Fire Safety Act, ambitions to improve the energy efficiency of the Council’s stock to ensure all properties reached EPC C by 2030 and net zero by 2050, as well as also continuing to develop additional properties. Therefore, later in the year, the Council would be embarking on a review of its Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, which was essential to consider the long-term options available, how these could be afforded and how to continue to re-pay the HRA debt. This work would involve scenario testing to understand what was and was not affordable. The outcome of this work would be presented to Members for consideration, before a new Business Plan was written and presented to Full Council for approval.



### Supplementary Question from Councillor Beavan

In December 2022, there were 4,433 houses in the Council's housing stock. This is less than we had in 2017, as more houses had been sold via the Right to Buy scheme than were built. The GLI proposes that 500 new homes will be built under the next Administration. Can we have your vote?

### Response from Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council

No.

### c) Question submitted by Councillor David Beavan for Councillor Norman Brooks, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport

'Four years ago, you agreed to apply for a resident's parking scheme in Southwold. How is that coming along?'

### Response from Councillor Brooks, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport

The kerb-space management schemes for Framlingham, Lowestoft and Southwold that were to be funded from 'SCC's On-street Parking Account (OSPA)', were designed in Spring 2021, following preliminary engagement with district councillors and representatives of the town councils but not Lowestoft TC.

The scheme proposals were submitted to SCC in July 2021, requesting written consent to proceed with the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process. Following its technical evaluation, SCC has recently provided the necessary written consent.

The programme for engagement with district councillors, representatives of the town councils and relevant local disabled groups, business etc. was to be determined, therefore, relevant councillors and town councils have been invited to re-engage about the next steps of the process and to review their respective scheme's proposals. The reviews will lead to further iterations of the parking management scheme proposals to ensure road safety, obstruction issues and the balance for parking demand in each locality remain valid.

The statutory process for making a TRO will then start and it will be this stage at which full public consultation will happen. Feedback from the statutory consultation will inform the final designs for the kerb-space management schemes in each of the three areas. Following this consent, a schedule is being developed to create parking schemes for all the towns across the entire district and Ward Members will be advised as soon as they have been completed.

### Supplementary Question from Councillor Beavan

After 2 years of silence, I ask a question at Full Council and finally get an answer. This plan will not work, as you will stop tourists, shoppers and employees from parking on Southwold's Streets, for the benefit of second home-owners.

Response from Councillor Brooks, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport

The process is just starting, we need to let it progress.

d) Question submitted by Councillor David Beavan for Councillor Letitia Smith, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism

‘Community transport is great for the retired but working age people and the young need buses operating all day. Rural transport was the number one priority when Community Partnerships were set up three years ago. It was still number one at last month’s rural “Ease the Squeeze” workshop. How is that coming along?’

Response from Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism

-  
In September 2020 the Community Partnership Board agreed to establish a Transport and Travel Task Group with Members and officers from ESC, SCC, Transport East, SALC, CAS, EDF and a local community enterprise.

The Group had developed a twin track approach:

Short Term activities included:

- i) identify, develop and seed/match fund pilots to test ‘proof of concept’ and assess their viability to be scaled up across the area
- ii) Develop a 3-year work programme
- iii) Enlist a programme manager (provided by EDF)
- iv) Develop a programme delivery budget, focused on short-term deliverables

Medium – Long term activities included:

- i) Study transport and travel issues & gaps in East Suffolk to provide data and intelligence on which to base future work.
- ii) Work with strategic partners to redesign parts of the system, and collectively lobby to influence change.

Progress for the Short Term activities:

- In July, a new community transport pilot launched. Operated by BACT, “Buzzabout” was a bookable bus service for residents in Gunton, Somerleyton, Lound, Blundeston and St Olaves.
- SCC supported to pilot the KATCH Taxi bus between Framlingham, Wickham Market, Campsea Ashe Station. Funding used for fare subsidies and marketing. Launch affected by pandemic and lockdown and SCC stopped service at end of Pilot Stage.
- ESC currently developing a new demand responsive transport service with CATS, the local community transport operator, to serve residents living in the Wickham Market, Framlingham, Campsea Ash and Snape area.
- Relationship established with a local technology provider to explore the development of a mobile app which can help with booking transport. A workshop was held to scope out first version of the app to determine what features and functionality is required.
- Expressions of Interest in the “Tackling Loneliness with Transport Fund” (DfT) submitted for £140,000. Bid focussed on the Demand Responsive Digital Application

project and increasing transport accessibility for rural communities. The bid was endorsed by Transport East but was unsuccessful due to high demand.

Progress for the Medium - Long Term activities:

- Transport East were fully participating in the Task Group and referred to the work underway in East Suffolk in their evidence on Rural Mobility to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee on 25 January 2023.
- An on-demand community transport service in the Leiston area was being considered. The service would serve Leiston, Knodishall, Friston, Benhall, Saxmundham, Theberton and Kelsale and be developed once the transport app has been introduced.
- Intention to scale up any successful pilots, subject to finding a sustainable funding model.

#### Supplementary Question from Councillor Beavan

Two years ago, I had an oven ready project for an electric bus to support Southwold. It was an innovative scheme, with a full business plan, which would cost only £30,000 a year to run. Have we missed the bus?

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

The Transport and Travel Task and Finish Group have looked at all of the issues in detail and come up with some innovative solutions to providing additional demand led transport. I cannot agree with you that we have missed the bus.

#### e) Question submitted by Councillor Caroline Topping for Councillor Steve Gallant, Leader of the Council

'I am pleased to see that the government are now supplying the extra funding to cover the costs incurred by the new regulations around voters needing to supply photo ID at the next elections and onwards. What will be the new 'set up' of the polling stations bearing in mind this additional work? By set up I mean numbers of staff, how the actual environment will be arranged, how the information will be asked for and what will happen if the voter does not have the ID.'

#### Response from Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council

All funding will be covered by 'New Burdens Funding'. Staff numbers in polling stations will be increased where necessary and possible, using similar numbers to those used for elections during the pandemic. The physical set up of the polling stations will not change overall, as the need to request ID does not inherently change the flow of a polling station.

However, private rooms or private areas within the polling station will be available for those who request privacy to check ID. Mirrors will also be supplied for those who may need to replace full face coverings following the ID check.

Staff in the Polling Station will request the ID at the same time as asking for the voter's

name and address or taking their poll card. The elector will not be marked on the register until the photo ID has been checked and approved.

If a voter does not have one of the permissible types of photo ID, their details will be recorded on a new prescribed form and they will be asked to return with appropriate ID. A voter will not be allowed to vote without ID, there is no discretion for the polling staff on this point.

If and when the voter returns with ID, it will be recorded on the prescribed form and they will be able to cast their vote.

If the voter supplies photographic ID that does not demonstrate a good likeness or there are questions over the integrity of the ID, the Presiding Officer cannot accept that ID. The details will be recorded on a new prescribed form and the elector will be invited to come back with another piece of ID. They will not be able to vote unless the ID is accepted.

#### Supplementary Question from Councillor Topping

That was very illuminating, thank you. How will our polling station staff be trained and supported to deal with voters who may arrive without any ID, who then get angry when they cannot vote?

#### Response from Councillor Gallant Leader, Leader of the Council

Many things can aggravate people. However, our polling staff will be trained on how to deal with any issues that may arise at a polling station. They will also have back up, if necessary. The Police regularly visit polling stations on polling day and undertake patrols in the area. There has been lots of publicity about the need to have ID for this election.

This Council has already issued 120 forms for people who do not have the required photo ID. Also, if photo ID was out of date, it can still be accepted if the photograph was a good likeness of the elector.

#### f) Question submitted by Councillor Peter Byatt for Councillor Craig Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development

'A two-page advertisement from Nuclear Waste Services was published In the Lowestoft Journal of 3rd February 2023, seeking possible locations for a Geological Disposal Facility. What stance does this Administration intend to take on the possibility of Nuclear Waste being buried underground in our District?'

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

Thank you for this question. I hadn't seen the advert in the Lowestoft Journal until I reviewed it following receipt of your question.

The Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) siting process was centred on a consent based,

partnership approach. It was therefore up to individual interested parties and local authorities to decide whether to enter and then remain in the process. The development would only proceed if the community gave its consent through a test of support. East Suffolk Council has not made an expression of interest in relation to the siting of the GDF. There was no current intention to make such an express of interest.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Byatt

Other organisations in East Suffolk, such as Parish or Town Councils, may have considerable assets and they could make contact about this matter.

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

Communities can give an expression of interest. There were various steps to follow and there was support available when seeking to express an interest. However, there needs to be a well-informed debate about this matter.

N.B. Councillor Gandy arrived during the consideration of Question F, at approximately 7.02 pm.

g) Question submitted by Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte for Councillor David Ritchie, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management

‘Many local authorities in England are deciding to drop the questionable practice of allowing the submission of duplicate planning applications which, perhaps deliberately, confuses communities and obfuscates the consultation process. When will East Suffolk Council follow suit?’

N.B. As Councillor Ritchie had given apologies for this meeting, the Leader provided the answer to this question.

Response from Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council

The government’s Planning Practice Guidance sets out how the procedures for the determination of planning applications was undertaken.

Submitting duplicate applications was not common, including within East Suffolk, but the guidance refers to Section 70A(8) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which defines applications for planning permission as ‘similar’ if (and only if) the local planning authority thinks that the development and the land to which the applications relate were the same or substantially the same. The Council has received some criticism in the past that such duplicates create confusion for communities and there was a public perception that such submission give applicants an advantage in the planning process. This was not necessarily the case.

The guidance goes on to state “Where an authority considers that an application was similar, it was not automatically obliged to decline to determine the application. The purpose of these powers was to inhibit the use of ‘repeat’ applications that the local planning authority believes were submitted with the intention of, over time, wearing

down opposition to proposed developments. They were, however, designed to be flexible and to give local planning authorities the discretion to entertain 'repeat' planning applications where they were satisfied that a genuine attempt had been made to overcome the planning objections which led to rejection of the previous proposal or there had been a material change in circumstances."

As the guidance states it was at the discretion of the Council as to whether it should determine a duplicate application. The number of such applications was very low and had tended to be utilised by a small number of applicants and generally for major housing applications. If the duplicate was submitted on the same day as the first application then the fee for the planning application was 50% of the first application. However, in a number of recent cases the duplicate had been submitted at a later date, after the first application, so it attracted a 100% fee. Recent examples of income from such applications include a 70 dwelling pair of applications, generating two fees of £26,999. Another example was a development for 161 dwellings, generating two fees of £38,177.

In some circumstances the impact on officer time and resources to deal with a duplicate application, with two applications running together through the planning process, was far less than the impact of a later resubmission after a first decision. It should also be noted that when an applicant instead resubmits a new application within 1 year of a previous decision for the same site and development, there was no planning fee applicable to that, it was a completely free application. Resubmissions can therefore come at cost to the Council whereas duplicate submission generates a fee to cover the cost of officer time, which can be considerable in some cases.

#### Supplementary Question from Councillor Smith-Lyte

Since 6 April 2009, as part of Section 43 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, local authorities have had the option not to allow dual or twin applications and I would argue that it is not worth the extra officer time. My question is, is the prospect of additional fees, just too good?

#### Response from Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council

I have already provided an answer about money and officer time, I have nothing further to add.

## **7 Petitions**

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

## **8 Notices of Motion**

The Chairman reported that 1 Notice of Motion had been accepted for this meeting. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.4, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development and the Leaders of the Opposition Groups met to discuss the Motion and agree a way forward. The recommendation

from this meeting was that the Motion would be discussed this evening. The Chairman therefore proposed from the Chair that this Motion be discussed this evening, which was seconded by Councillor Cook. The Chairman invited Members to vote on the proposal to debate the Motion this evening and it was unanimously **CARRIED**.

The Chairman invited Councillor Beavan to read out his Motion:

*Saving our Coastal Communities*

*This Council Notes:*

- *Following the likely implementation of the Second Homes 100% premium, it is anticipated that the council tax income resulting from the 4,096 second homes in East Suffolk will increase East Suffolk Council revenue by well over £700k. We acknowledge that the exact figure will be dependent on customer behaviour.*
- *The Second Homes 100% premium is also anticipated to increase council tax income of £5.85m for the Suffolk County Council and £1m for the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner.*
- *That Norfolk County Council have previously given a portion of the council tax they collected on second homes back to the District Council to fund local regeneration and community projects. North Norfolk District Council's November Cabinet recommended that if this premium is introduced, 'the additional income would be ring-fenced for affordable housing'[1], using new council tax to protect their communities.*

*This Council resolves to:*

- *Explore the option of ringfencing this additional income to fund Community Land Trusts to provide local social housing for rent in the wards affected by second homes.*
- *As per the precedent set by Norfolk County Council, to reach out to Suffolk County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner to explore the possibility of working together to utilise the entire increase in council tax income to provide local social housing.*

*[1] Printed minutes: Agenda for Council on Wednesday 16th November 2022, 6pm.*

The Chairman invited Councillor Beavan to move his Motion and say a few words in support.

Councillor Beavan reported that people in his Ward were better off than most in East Suffolk and they contributed three times the average, per person, in council tax. Southwold residents have broad shoulders and do not complain about helping other less well-off Wards. However, there were some people in Southwold who were not so well off. There were few private rents, as landlords preferred to earn more as holiday lets, house prices were 21 times the average wage and old Southwold families were being squeezed out and had to commute into work. In 2020, comparethemarket.com advertised Southwold as the top destination in England and Wales for investment in a second home.

Councillor Beavan reported that, according to the 2011 census, Southwold was the

coastal community with the highest proportion of household spaces with no usual residents, 50%, in the whole of England and Wales. By the 2021 census, this had increased to 63% and nearly two out of three houses were not lived in. In contrast, the average rate in England and Wales as a whole, for household spaces with no usual residents, was just 4.4%.

In Southwold, there were now 500 second homes, 400 holiday lets and just 500 homes with residents. The second homes in Southwold alone would raise an extra £1 million a year in tax, from doubling second home taxes. That million would mean an extra £140,000 for the extra policing in Southwold, how can that be justified? It would also mean an extra £770,000 to Suffolk County Council for all the extra potholes caused and the social care, needed by these second homes. This would leave just £90,000 for East Suffolk, to mitigate the real damage caused to Southwold's disappearing community, through lack of affordable housing.

Councillor Beavan reported that second home-owners themselves agree that the extra tax should be used to save the community. Southwold's population had dropped by another third this century and there were now less than 1000 residents, most of whom were retired. Southwold really needs homes for young working families, to boost the community and economy. There are ten years left. If there was no community, will workers be bussed in from outside? There would be no need for the local school, no arts centre, no parades, no fishermen, no sport and no banter. Will tourists want to visit a soulless, toy town where no one lives anymore? If the tourism collapsed, this extra income would disappear and Southwold would not be able to contribute to the General Fund, as now. He urged Members to support this Motion so that Southwold could be saved for future generations.

Councillor Beavan then moved his Motion and this was seconded by Councillor Daly, who reserved his right to speak. The Chairman then invited Members to debate.

Councillor Cook stated that this was a pre-emptive Motion, as the required legislation had not yet been passed, therefore, the Council was only able to make a decision in principle about this matter. In respect of the figures quoted in the Motion, Councillor Cook explained they were only informative, as the funds would only be counted when the money had been received by the Council. It was noted that the Council was not bound by the decisions of other Councils and East Suffolk would need to act in the best interests of the district.

Councillor Cook then proposed an amendment to the Motion, which was also shown on screen. The proposed amendment was as follows:

*This Council resolves that:*

- a) *Subject and subsequent to the necessary legislation passing through Parliament*
- b) *Subject to this Council giving the appropriate notice to introduce the 100% Council Tax Premium on second and empty homes when such legislation is passed*

*This Council will recommend to the new administration that a significant and appropriate amount of funding will be invested in the Council's development and investment companies, at the current and appropriate rate of return, for the building*



*and / or acquisition of affordable and social housing.*

*This Council will further recommend to the new administration that Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner be invited to invest significant and appropriate amounts of funding in the Council's development and investment companies, at the current and appropriate rate of return, for the building and / or acquisition of affordable and social housing.*

Councillor Cook then moved the amendment, which was seconded by the Leader.

The Chairman invited Members to debate the amendment.

Councillor Beavan confirmed that he was content with the proposed amendment and would support it. There followed some discussion and it was noted that the amendment provided an opportunity for the County Council and Police and Crime Commissioner to invest in society.

The Chairman invited Members to vote on the amendment and it was unanimously **CARRIED**. The amendment then became the substantive Motion.

The Chairman then invited Members to debate the substantive Motion.

Councillor Daly stated that he welcomed the Motion and commented that social housing was desperately needed throughout the district.

Councillor Jepson reported that he was the Chairman of the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel and they had recently agreed an increase to the PCC precept of £14 which equated to 6%, to support Suffolk Police. It was noted that whilst social housing was important, the Police and Crime Commissioner would need to ensure that a good policing service was provided to all Suffolk residents too.

Councillor Lynch noted that funding would need to be looked at in more detail, once the final figures were known and the legislation was in place. Other matters, such as training and jobs, were crucial to the district and these should not be overlooked.

The Leader confirmed that many issues were important to the district - policing, jobs, education, health, transport and housing. All of these issues were competing for the limited amount of funding available. These matters would all need careful consideration in due course.

There being no further debate, the Chairman invited Members to vote on the Motion and it was unanimously **CARRIED**.

## **9 General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24**

Full Council received report **ES/1457** by Councillor Cook, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources. The report presented a General Fund Budget for 2023/24, the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as of February 2023 and the

## Council Tax Resolutions.

Councillor Cook reported that the MTFs and the proposed Budget had been the subject of extensive updating, scrutiny, and consultation over the course of this year's budget process, with the Final Local Government Finance Settlement announced on 6 February 2023. Overall, the Settlement was favourable to the Council, with a new Funding Guarantee Allocation which increased the funding to ESC by £1.1m for next year, plus another one-year allocation of New Homes Bonus of £0.447m.

Alongside the 2023/24 Local Government Finance Settlement the Government had announced £100m Council Tax Support Funding for local authorities to provide further support to households already receiving Council Tax Support. This report set out the Council's proposed approach for distributing these funds.

Members noted that the report also detailed the award of a range of Discretionary Rate Reliefs proposed for 2023/24, including a continuation of the Retail, Hospitality, and Leisure Rate Reliefs.

Councillor Cook reported that the 2023/24 referendum limit for Council Tax had been increased from 2% to 3%, but the £5 threshold for Shire Districts in two-tier areas remained. The report proposed a Band D Council Tax for East Suffolk of £181.17 for 2023/24, an increase of £4.95 or 2.81%. Appendix A presented the updated Budget and MTFs, which reflected the Final Local Government Finance Settlement and included more detail on the Budget and budget movements, and detail on reserves and balances. The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy in Appendix B needed to be approved annually, with planned use of the flexibility in 2023/24 of £1m for the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood project.

It was noted that Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 placed a personal duty on the Chief Finance Officer to make a report to Council about the robustness of the estimates made for the purpose of the Council Tax calculations and the adequacy of reserves and balances. The Report of the Chief Finance Officer was provided in Appendix C, and the Act required the Council to have regard to this report, before it made its budget and council tax decisions. The Chief Finance Officer's conclusion was that the estimates were robust, taking into account known risks and mitigating strategies, and the reserves were adequate for the 2023/24 Budget plans. The Council had a statutory requirement to produce a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year and the Statement to be approved for 2023/24 was provided in Appendix D.

It was noted that the formal Council Tax Resolutions for 2023/24 were set out in Appendix E. In addition to the Council's own Council Tax Requirement, this Appendix provided the Band D Council Tax for Suffolk County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk, and the Parish Precept requests by each individual Parish.

Councillor Cook stated he was pleased to confirm that the report presented a balanced position for the current year and 2023/24. To ultimately balance the budget in 2022/23, £1.098m had been used from the In-Year Savings Reserve. A key factor in balancing the budget for 2023/24 had been the deferral of Business Rates system changes until 2025/26 at the earliest, as East Suffolk was in an advantageous position under the current system. Due to the level of Business Rates income for 2023/24, use

of reserves to balance the budget had not been required, and the Council was actually in a position to make a contribution to reserves of £2.46m.

In the MTFS, considerable increased expenditure and income pressures were being dealt with by a combination of measures, including a thorough analysis of current and projected savings, and the release of a number of earmarked reserves into the General Fund. It should be noted that there were prospective activities not yet factored into the MTFS, which had the potential to make inroads into the budget gap towards the end of the MTFS period. These include Council Tax Premium on second homes and expected efficiencies from East Suffolk Services Ltd. However, despite these factors, and the uncertainty due to local government finance reforms, the range and scale of expenditure and income pressures, indicate that a combination of actions would be needed to ensure a longer-term sustainable position including a phased use of reserves, maximisation of income and the achievement of savings.

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Cook.

Councillor Herring sought reassurance that there would be no reduction in front line services for residents, whether the service be provided directly by the Council or via ESSL contractual arrangements, as a result of this budget. Councillor Cook confirmed that the budget had been prepared without any reductions to services or restrictions to the Capital Programme.

Councillor Pitchers drew Members' attention to page 58, paragraph 4.33 which referred to the uncertainty surrounding the New Homes Bonus (NHB) and he asked for some clarification. Mr Mew, Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer, reported that the NHB was subject to consultation last year, however, the government had not yet provided a response. It was anticipated that a response would be provided in the next financial year.

Councillor Gooch referred to the recruitment crisis in local government and the need to find and retain high quality, experienced staff in order to provide services to residents. She asked if the government understood the difficulties and costs involved in attracting and retaining staff? Councillor Cook reported that the Council had budgeted for a full complement of staff and would approach outside agencies, if appropriate.

Councillor Byatt queried pages 55 and 56 of the report and requested further information on the current level of arrears for both Council Tax and Business Rates. Mr Mew, Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer, confirmed that those figures were not included in the report under consideration, however, they were reviewed regularly by the Anglia Revenues Partnership. He confirmed that information on arrears would be circulated to Members outside of the meeting, for information.

Councillor Byatt then sought further information on the cost of the strike at Felixstowe Port, which was referenced on page 59. Mr Mew, Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer, advised that the total costs was referred to in paragraph 5.24 and that the cost was approximately £200,000 of lost income.

Councillor Byatt then queried the Customer Experience Strategic Plan and asked if the

Customer Services Centres would be extending their opening hours in the future? Councillor Burroughes, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Experience, ICT and Commercial Partnerships, stated that there were no plans to extend opening hours currently, however, working practices were under constant review. He confirmed that he could speak to Councillor Byatt outside of the meeting, if he so wished.

Councillor Byatt drew Members' attention to page 86 and the £20,000 allocated for Local Air Quality Management. He asked if the fumes coming from Pakefield High School could be assessed, as it had been a problem for around 6 months. Councillor Cook responded that he was sure that the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment had taken note of his request.

Councillor Cook then moved the recommendations within the report and was seconded by the Leader, who reserved his right to speak.

The Chairman invited Members to debate.

Councillor Bird, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, provided reassurance that the budget had been scrutinised in detail by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19 January 2023. He stated that the level of arrears had been robustly questioned and he had been satisfied with the answers provided by officers. The minutes from that meeting would provide the further detail, if required.

Councillor Beavan stated that he supported the budget and he confirmed it had been thoroughly scrutinised, as stated by Councillor Bird. Councillor Beavan felt that the Council was raising as much funding as it could via Council Tax, however, he was concerned about some service levels, especially within Planning. He also raised the issue of reserves, as the Council had inherited health reserves when it was created, however, the trend with reserves was always downwards and reserves would be used to support the budget over the next 3 years. He stated that the need to maintain healthy reserve levels, during these uncertain times, was something that Councillors ought to keep an eye on.

The Leader thanked Councillor Cook and his Financial Team for their ongoing hard work and for providing a balanced budget for 2023/24. He also wished to thank all Members, as they all played a part in the financial security of the Council, due to the decisions taken at Committee meetings, which impacted upon Council spending. He stated that Members should be proud of the budget, which was prudent and robust.

Councillor Cook took the opportunity to thank and congratulate Mr Mew, Chief Finance Officer, and Mrs Rogers, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, and the Finance Team, who all played a crucial role in setting the budget. In response to Councillor Beavan's comments regarding reserves, Councillor Cook stated he was certain that Councillor Beavan would have been pleased to hear that £2.5 million had been added to the reserves this year, which would contribute to closing the budget gap over the next 4 years, helping to ensure future Council Tax increases were less than 3%.

The Chairman invited Mr Bing, Monitoring Officer, to undertake the Recorded Vote for this item. The results of the Recorded Vote are shown below:

**For the recommendations:**

Councillors P Ashdown, E Back, D Beavan, S Bird, C Blundell, E Brambley-Crawshaw, N Brooks, S Burroughes, P Byatt, A Cackett, J Ceresa, J Cloke, M Cook, L Coulam, T Daly, J Fisher, S Gallant, T Gandy, A Gee, T Goldson, L Gooch, T Green, C Hedgley, R Herring, M Jepson, S Lawson, G Lynch, J Mallinder, C Mapey, M Pitchers, S Plummer, C Poulter, R Rainger, M Richardson, C Rivett, K Robinson, M Rudd, L Smith, R Smith-Lyte, E Thompson, C Topping, S Wiles and K Yule.

**Against the recommendations:**

None.

**Abstentions:**

None.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Chief Financial Officer's report attached at Appendix C be noted;
2. That the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022/23 to 2026/27, including the General Fund Revenue Budget revised for 2022/23; the proposed budget for 2023/24; and forecast budgets for 2024/25 to 2026/27 as set out in Appendix A5 be approved;
3. That the movements to and from Earmarked Reserves and the General Fund Balance for 2022/23 to 2026/27 as set out in Appendix A7 be approved;
4. That the items to be treated as special items in 2023/24 as set out in paragraph 3.20 – the precepts by Town/Parish Councils and parish meetings be approved;
5. That no further changes are made to Council Tax Discounts and Premiums for 2023/24;
6. That the distribution of Council Tax Support funding under s13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as outlined in paragraph 3.6 be approved;
7. That the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer be granted delegated authority to award any further council tax reliefs in 2023/24 arising from Government announcements under these powers;
8. That a Band D Council Tax for East Suffolk Council of £181.17 for 2023/24, an increase of £4.95 or 2.81% be approved;
9. That the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy attached as Appendix B be approved;
10. That the Pay Policy Statement set out in Appendix D be approved;
11. That the Council Tax Resolutions in Appendix E be approved;
12. That the award of 75% relief on rates bills up to £110,000 per business to eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties using its discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended be approved;
13. That the award of rate reliefs under the Supporting Small Business (SSB) scheme using its discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended be approved;
14. That, for 2023/24, awards of Discretionary Rate Relief to Charities, Non-Profit Making Organisations, (NPMOs) and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CAS) continue to disregard the value of Covid-19 Grant funding from the value of unrestricted reserves and operating surpluses be approved;
15. That the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer be granted delegated

authority to award any further rate reliefs in 2023/24 arising from Government announcements under these powers.

## **10 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Report 2023/24 to 2026/27**

Full Council received report **ES/1458** by Councillor Cook, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Councillor Kerry, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing. It was noted that as Councillor Kerry had given his apologies for the meeting, Councillor Cook would be presenting the report.

Councillor Cook stated that this report brought together the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for the period 2023/24 to 2026/27, with a forecasted position for 2022/23 and a summary of its reserves and balances. The HRA budgets were fully funded from existing funds to meet the Council's HRA spending plans, including the Capital Investment Programme and reserve balances as per the HRA Financial Business Plan. Under the 2020 Rent Standard, Local Authorities could increase rents by up to CPI +1%. The September CPI value must be used, which for 2022 was 10.1%. To protect current tenants the Government had applied a 7% rent increase cap for 2023/24, which struck a balance between the pressures social housing providers were faced with and affordability for tenants. East Suffolk Council was proposing a 6% rent increase for 2023/24. This rent increase was deemed necessary for the HRA to meet its ambitions within its Capital Programme, deliver required services to tenants and continue to repay the debt.

Councillor Cook reported that social rents were based on a formula rent set by government and affordable rents, although they could be up to 80% of market rent, were set based on the Local Housing Allowance. The Council continued to collect rent and service charges on a 50-week basis, unless being let as Temporary Accommodation. The proposed rent gave an average weekly rent of £96.28 for 2023/24, which was an increase of £3.89 compared to 2022/23. It was noted that service charges could only recuperate the cost of providing a service. The proposed average 50-week General Service Charge for Grouped Homes for 2023/24 was £16.10, which was an increase of £1.53 compared to 2022/23.

The budget proposals gave a forecast HRA working balance for 2023/24 of £2.903 million, maintaining it above the minimum acceptable limit of 10% of total income. It was noted that the HRA Budget had been considered and debated at the following Council Meetings:

- Cabinet on 3 January 2023
- Scrutiny Committee 19 January 2023
- Cabinet on 7 February 2023, following the review from the Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Cook.

Councillor Beavan sought clarification regarding the £8 million that would need to be repaid to tenants, due to incorrect rents being charged, and where the funding would come from? Councillor Cook invited Mr Mew, Chief Finance Officer and Section 151

Officer, to respond to this question. Mr Mew stated that approximately £8 million would need to be repaid to tenants and the DWP. This funding had been accounted for and had been factored into the available balances and reserves shown in the budget figures.

There being no further questions, Councillor Cook moved the recommendations and was seconded by the Leader, who reserved his right to speak.

There being no debate, the Leader thanked the Housing Team for their ongoing hard work during extremely challenging circumstances. The proposed HRA budget report was a good result for all involved.

Councillor Cook thanked Ms Fisk, Head of Housing, and her team, as well as Ms Wellham from Finance for all of their ongoing hard work.

Upon being put to the vote it was

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the draft HRA budget for 2023/24, and the indicative figures for 2024/25 to 2026/27 be approved;
2. That the Movements in HRA Reserves and Balances be approved;
3. That the proposed rent increase of up to 6%. 1% less than the Government 7% rent Cap for 2023/24 rent setting be approved.
4. That the service charges and associated fees for 2023/24 be approved;
5. That the Rent and Service Charges to be charged over a 50-week period unless being used for Temporary Accommodation when a 52-week period will be applied.
6. That a report be made to the Environment Task Group within 12 months setting out a detailed programme to deliver HRA Housing Stock retrofitting projects.
7. That the revised outturn position for 2022/23 be noted;
8. That the changes affecting public and private sector housing and welfare be noted;
9. That the effects of the cost-of-living crisis to the HRA to be noted.

#### **11 Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27**

Full Council received report **ES/1459** by Councillor Cook, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources. It was noted that as part of the annual budget setting process, the Council was required to agree a programme of capital expenditure for the coming four years. This report set out the East Suffolk Council General Fund Capital Programme at Appendix B and the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme at Appendix G for the financial year 2023/24 to 2026/27 and incorporated revisions to the 2022/23 financial year. Councillor Cook reported that Appendix H to the report were the pre-submitted Scrutiny Committee questions and responses.

It was noted that 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.

The Capital Programme had completed a thorough and rigorous Officer process and had also been considered at the following Council meetings:

- Cabinet on 3 January 2023
- Scrutiny Committee on 19 January 2023
- Cabinet on 7 February 2023, following the review by the Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Cook.

Councillor Gandy drew Members' attention to Appendix A, page 187, which referred to Long Term Debtors in the Capital Programme £1 million in 2023/24, £5 million in 2024/25 and then £0 debts in 2025/26. She sought further information about the debtors and how the debts would be cleared? Mr Mew, Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer, provided clarification that these related to the 'pump priming' of the Local Authority Trading Company (LATCO), to support the business whilst it was starting, but that these technically needed to be referred as long term debtors.

Councillor Byatt referred to page 193 and sought reassurance that there was sufficient funding to ensure the coastal protection works at Thorpe Ness and Pakefield would be completed. Councillor Cook reported that the budget was in place, however, if revisions were required, a further report would need to be taken back to Cabinet for approval.

Councillor Cook then moved the recommendations within the report, which was seconded by the Leader, who reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Byatt thanked Councillor Cook and his Finance Team for all of their ongoing hard work for the Council. He stated that it would be interesting to see how East Suffolk Services Ltd would dovetail into the Council from July 2023 and he thanked the Cabinet Members and officers for their hard work.

The Leader thanked Councillor Byatt for his compliments. He stated that Members should be proud of what had been achieved within this report. There were funded opportunities to deliver a wide range of exciting projects for the residents of East Suffolk. The new administration, following the elections in May, would then deliver those projects for local residents.

Councillor Cook paid tribute to Mr Sturman, who led the Capital Programme and Treasury Management, and his team for all of their hard work. This Capital Programme was essential to the ethos of the Council, to prioritise projects for the benefit of residents and also ease the financial burden on the Council Tax payers.

Upon being put to the vote it was

**RESOLVED**



1. That the General Fund capital programme for 2022/23 to 2026/27, including revisions as shown in Appendix B, be approved.
2. That the Housing Revenue Account capital programme for 2022/23 to 2026/27, including revisions as shown in Appendix G, be approved.

## **12 Appointment of Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer**

Full Council received report **ES/1445** by Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council. The Leader reported that the post of Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer role was a statutory requirement, in accordance with The Local Government Act 1972.

The Leader reported that the current post-holder, Brian Mew, had given notice of his intention to retire on 31 March 2023, following a wide and varied career across many local authorities and the private sector. Brian had worked in East Suffolk since 2017, initially as a Financial Consultant, and following the tragic and very sad circumstances surrounding the previous post-holder, Brian had joined the Council as Section 151 Officer in 2020.

During his time with East Suffolk, Brian had become a trusted and well-respected member of the Council's Corporate Management Team. He had overseen the last 3 budgets and, during a period of great uncertainty around local government finance had been pivotal to the leadership and good stewardship of the financial strategy and planning process. Members were very grateful for his work for the Council and wished him all the very best for the future.

In view of Brian's impending retirement, the Leader advised that arrangements must be made to cover the role until a permanent replacement could be found. Lorraine Rogers was the Council's Deputy Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Section 151 Officer and had worked for East Suffolk Council, and its predecessor councils, for 25 years. She currently worked closely with Brian and was well qualified, with extensive knowledge of the Council and its procedures, as well as being a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants. She was well respected within the organisation and a very capable senior financial manager. Since the Council was approaching its financial year end, it was proposed that the recruitment process would commence, once the busy year end procedures had calmed. It was therefore, envisaged that a new post-holder would be recruited within the next six months.

There being no questions, the Leader moved the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Cook.

Councillor Cook stated that he wished to personally thank and pay tribute to Brian Mew. Since being in post, Brian had dealt with the huge impact on the Council involving Covid and the Cost of Living Crisis. He had ensured that Covid business support grants were paid out swiftly and over £350 million of payments had been processed by the Council. This much needed support had ultimately led to an increase in business rates receipts once lockdown ceased, which was evidenced by £2.5 million additional funding going into Council reserves this year. He stated that he had enjoyed working with Brian and he wished him a very happy and long retirement.

Councillor Cook stated that he enjoyed working with Lorraine Rogers, the current Deputy Chief Finance Officer. She had worked her way up through the ranks, was very well qualified, knowledgeable and experienced. She also had the confidence and full support of the Finance Team, so the Council would be in safe hands with her temporary appointment.

N.B. Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw left the meeting at this point in the proceedings at 8.19 pm.

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

### **RESOLVED**

That the temporary appointment of Mrs Lorraine Rogers to the post of Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer until a permanent replacement is recruited be approved.

## **13 Halesworth and Oulton Neighbourhood Plans**

N.B. Councillor Andree Gee declared an Other Registerable Interest during the consideration of this item, as she was the Council's representative on the Broads Authority, which was responsible for part of the Oulton Ward.

Full Council received report **ES/1461** by Councillor Ritchie, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management. This report was presented by Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, as Councillor Ritchie had given apologies for the meeting.

It was noted that after several years of hard work from Halesworth Town Council, Oulton Parish Council and their respective communities, both Neighbourhood Plans had successfully passed their referendums on 2 February 2023. For Halesworth, 875 people voted (21.7% turnout) and 85% voted 'yes'. For Oulton, 535 people voted (13.7% turnout) and 85% also voted 'yes'.

Both Neighbourhood Plans had been built around wide engagement with the community and each had undergone several rounds of consultation. Each Neighbourhood Plan contained a distinctive shared vision for the Parish, which responded to the matters which were important to the community. Policies and actions were set out in each plan to help achieve their vision.

It was noted that Officers at East Suffolk Council and the Broads Authority had provided support and guidance to the Parish and Town Councils throughout the course of the development of the plans. The neighbourhood area for the Oulton neighbourhood plan covers part of the Broads Authority executive area. The Broads Authority would be making their own decision to 'make' the Oulton neighbourhood plan at the Broads Authority meeting on 7 March 2023.

The Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan addressed the matters of (amongst others):

- o Protecting green spaces and important views
- o Enhancing biodiversity
- o Supporting homes to meet local needs
- o Protecting heritage assets
- o Supporting tourism and employment
- o Delivering high quality design
- o Improving routes for pedestrians and cyclists
- o Enhancing the town centre

The Oulton Neighbourhood Plan addressed the matters of (amongst others):

- o Shaping delivery of homes to meet local needs
- o Securing high quality design
- o Safeguarding local green spaces and green corridors
- o Protecting important views and a special character area
- o Sustainable transport
- o Protecting heritage assets

The recommendation in the report was moved by the Leader and it was seconded by Councillor Rivett, who reserved his right to speak.

As there were no questions, the Chairman invited Members to debate.

Councillor Gooch commented that she was impressed by the scale and ambition within the Neighbourhood Plans, including the number of Green Principles. She took the opportunity to raise concerns about the viability of plans to building a swimming pool in Halesworth, due to the cost of energy.

Councillor Robinson took the opportunity to thank the public who had worked tirelessly over many years to produce these Neighbourhood Plans. Their dedication and hard work were very impressive.

Councillor Goldson referred to the swimming pool mentioned by Councillor Gooch and he confirmed that it would be designed with the local residents of Halesworth in mind, in particular older people and school children, as they would be using the facilities the most and an application would be submitted to the Planning Department shortly, for consideration. He then took the opportunity to thank officers for their support for the Neighbourhood Plans.

Councillor Mallinder commented he was pleased with the environmental aspects contained within the Neighbourhood Plans, which helped residents to have control over the destiny of their local area.

Councillor Gee endorsed the comments received in relation to the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan. It had been a labour of love and taken a significant amount of hard work to complete. She commented that the Broads Authority had discussed the matter and the Inspector had commented that it was one of the best Neighbourhood Plans that he had ever seen. During discussions, Councillor Gee also declared that she

had an Other Registerable Interest, as she was the Council's representative on the Broads Authority. Mr Bing, Monitoring Officer, confirmed that it was prudent to make such a declaration, as she had previously declared being the Council's representative on the Broads Authority as an Other Registerable Interest within her Declaration of Interests.

Councillor Byatt noted that electrical vehicle charging points were mentioned in both Plans and he wondered if the Council would look at economies of scale and engage with Town and Parish Councils to see if more charging points could be provided across the district? He also commended the thorough public consultations that had taken place in relation to both Plans.

Councillor Cackett wished to thank the residents of Halesworth and those involved in the creation of the Plan. She confirmed that the Plan was an important step towards getting much needed improvements undertaken in the Town. She also took the opportunity to thank Halesworth Councillor Joyce Moseley, for all of her hard work.

Councillor Rivett took the opportunity to commend the public involvement in the development of the Neighbourhood Plans. The public consultation process was extremely important and it was vital that local residents had the opportunity to feed in their views on their local areas. He commented that Supplementary Planning Documents would also greatly benefit from public input during the consultation process.

Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, took the opportunity to congratulate all those involved in the creation of these Neighbourhood Plan.

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

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Council make the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum version, February 2023) and the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version, December 2022) part of the statutory Development Plan for East Suffolk for the whole of the Halesworth Neighbourhood Area and the part of the Oulton Neighbourhood Area within East Suffolk.

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

Full Council received report **ES/1446**, which was presented by Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, and provided individual Cabinet Members' reports on their areas of responsibility, as well as reports from those Members appointed to represent East Suffolk Council on Outside Bodies. The Leader stated that the written reports could be taken as read and he invited relevant questions on their contents.

The Chairman invited questions to the Leader and the Cabinet.

Councillor Byatt took the opportunity to thank Councillor Mallinder, Cabinet Member

with responsibility for the Environment, for his support for a group involving Lowestoft Town Council, it had been much appreciated.

The meeting concluded at 8.33 pm

.....  
Chairman

<b>Unconfirmed</b>
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Minutes of a Meeting of the **Full Council** held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, on **Wednesday, 8 March 2023 at 2:00 pm**

**Members present:**

Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Chris Blundell, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Alison Cackett, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Janet Craig, Councillor Tom Daly, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor John Fisher, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Andree Gee, Councillor Ray Herring, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Richard Kerry, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor Debbie McCallum, Councillor Keith Patience, Councillor Carol Poulter, Councillor Russ Rainger, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Keith Robinson, Councillor Steve Wiles

**Officers present:** Chris Bally (Chief Executive), Chris Bing (Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer), Sarah Davis (Democratic Services Officer), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer), Lorraine Rogers (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Agnes Ogundiran (Political Group Support Officer) and Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager).

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Paul Ashdown, Ed Back, Stephen Burroughes, Jenny Ceresa, Judy Cloke, Tony Cooper, Tony Fryatt, Tess Gandy, Tony Goldson, Louise Gooch, Tracey Green, Colin Hedgley, James Mallinder, Frank Mortimer, Trish Mortimer, Mark Newton, Malcolm Pitchers, Sarah Plummer, Michael Richardson, Mary Rudd, Letitia Smith, Rachel Smith-Lyte, Ed Thompson, Caroline Topping and Kay Yule.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**3 Amended Council Tax Resolutions 2023/24**

Full Council received report **ES/1502** by Councillor Cook, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources. He stated that on 22 February 2023, Full Council had approved a balanced budget and set the Band D rate of Council Tax for 2023/24. The report considered at that meeting had set out the 2023/24 Council Tax Resolutions (Appendix E) which was unanimously agreed by Full Council.

After the report had been approved by Full Council, an administrative error was identified in the Council Tax Resolutions, which showed the incorrect aggregate Council Tax amounts by Parish for each category of dwelling (Council Tax Banding). This information was presented in Appendix E2 of the Budget Report. The remainder of Appendix E was correct.

Councillor Cook stated that this report **ES/1502**, required approval of the amended Council Tax Resolutions for 2023/24, ahead of the publication of the statutory notice for the amounts of Council Tax for 2023/24. He confirmed that the correction required was presentational only.

As there were no questions, Councillor Cook moved the recommendation within the report and this was seconded by Councillor Gallant, who reserved his right to speak.

There being no debate, Councillor Gallant thanked those Councillors for their attendance at this meeting. He commented that mistakes do happen, however, this matter had been dealt with swiftly, once it had been identified.

N.B. Councillor Tom Daly arrived at this point in the proceedings. As he had not been in attendance when the report was presented, he took no part in the voting thereon.

The Vice Chairman invited Mr Bing, Monitoring Officer, to undertake the Recorded Vote for this item. The results of the Recorded Vote are shown below:

**For the recommendation:**

Councillors David Beavan, Stuart Bird, Chris Blundell, Peter Byatt, Alison Cackett, Maurice Cook, Linda Coulam, Janet Craig, Mike Deacon, John Fisher, Steve Gallant, Andree Gee, Ray Herring, Mark Jepson, Richard Kerry, Geoff Lynch, Debbie McCallum, Keith Patience, Carol Poulter, Russ Rainger, Craig Rivett, Keith Robinson and Steve Wiles.

**Against the recommendation:**

None.

**Abstentions:**

None.

**RESOLVED**

That the amended information presented as 'Appendix E2' included at Appendix A to this report be approved.

The meeting concluded at 2.12 pm

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Chairman

<b>Unconfirmed</b>
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Minutes of a Meeting of the **Full Council** held in the Conference Room, Riverside, on **Wednesday, 15 March 2023 at 6.30 pm**

**Members present:**

Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Chris Blundell, Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Alison Cackett, Councillor Jenny Ceresa, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Janet Craig, Councillor Tom Daly, Councillor John Fisher, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Andree Gee, Councillor Tony Goldson, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor Keith Patience, Councillor Malcolm Pitchers, Councillor Sarah Plummer, Councillor Carol Poulter, Councillor Mick Richardson, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Keith Robinson, Councillor Mary Rudd, Councillor Letitia Smith, Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Councillor Ed Thompson, Councillor Caroline Topping, Councillor Steve Wiles, Councillor Kay Yule

**Officers present:**

Chris Bally (Chief Executive), Chris Bing (Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer), Kate Blakemore (Strategic Director), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Paul Mackie (Lead Officer for the Environment and Climate Change), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer, Regulatory), Siobhan Martin (Head of Internal Audit Services), Sue Meeken (Political Group Support Officer), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer), Agnes Ogundiran (Political Group Support Officer), Isabel Rolfe (Political Group Support Officer), Jon Stockwin (Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project Delivery Manager), Karen Thomas (Head of Coastal Partnership East) and Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager)

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Paul Ashdown, Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw, Tony Cooper, Mike Deacon, Tess Gandy, Ray Herring, Mark Jepson, Richard Kerry, Geoff Lynch, Frank Mortimer, Trish Mortimer, Mark Newton and Russ Rainger.

**2 Declarations of Interest**



Councillor Craig Rivett declared an Other Registerable Interest in Item 9 - Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project, as he was one of the Suffolk County Council Members on the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project Board.

### **3 Announcements**

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

##### Urgent Item of Business

The Chairman reported that in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972, she had agreed, as Chairman of the Council, to accept an urgent item of Exempt business for the meeting this evening.

The matter related to a Report on the Outcome of an Investigation of a Complaint, which was considered by the Audit and Governance Committee meeting on 13 March 2023.

The special circumstances for considering this item as a matter of urgency were that the Audit and Governance Committee, at its meeting on 13 March 2023, resolved that Full Council receive a report at the meeting on 15 March 2023. The report was exempt under Paragraph 1 – Information relating to any individual and Paragraph 2 – Information that was likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

The Chairman advised that, in order to consider this Exempt matter, the Council would need to vote to go into closed session and exclude the public at Item 13, the report would then be considered in closed session at Item 14 on the agenda. A copy of the report was published on the Council's website on 14 March 2023.

##### Civic Events:

Since the last meeting, the Chairman had attended:

- The Quality of Place Awards at East Suffolk House on 8 March 2023.
- The ESC Chairman's Reception, which took place at East Point Pavilion in Lowestoft last night. The Chairman thanked everyone who had attended and she was delighted to report that £365 had been raised for Lowestoft and Waveney Breastfeeding Support, to help them in their important work.

It was reported that the Vice Chairman had attended:

- The Memorial Service for Councillor Graham Newman in Felixstowe on 25 February 2023.
- The East Suffolk Awards at Snape Maltings on 28 February 2023.

#### **Leader of the Council**

Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, invited Members to reflect on what East Suffolk Council and the Conservative Administration had achieved over the last 4 years. He stated that it had been an eventful time, set against the backdrop of

external challenges - the pandemic, cost of living crisis and Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine.

Four years ago, at the first meeting of East Suffolk Council, the Leader had spoken of the many ambitions for this Administration and he was delighted to report that, despite the many challenges, this Council had not only met those ambitions, it had surpassed them, and following May's elections, those successes would be built upon further. He then provided a summary of those achievements:

### Housing

- 113 affordable homes had been built since 2019, with more to come including our ESC's development at Deben Fields in Felixstowe. This would provide a further 41 Council Houses and utilise green 'PassivHaus' technologies.
- A further 125 homes were in the development pipeline, with 29 due to be completed in this financial year.
- £2.3million spent on retrofitting energy efficiency measures for low-income households.
- £4.9 million worth of funding had been secured via bids for Housing Needs spend since 2019.
- 2,148 cases of homelessness had been relieved or prevented.

### Jobs and Economic development

- £24.9 million of external funding had been secured via the Town's Fund to deliver 5 transformative regeneration projects in Lowestoft.
- Over £700,000 secured for the High Street Heritage Action Zone in Lowestoft.
- £8.3 million seed funding for Freeport East.
- £150,000 secured for @Inc Coworking Space Felixstowe
- £995,000 to deliver the award-winning Felixstowe Seafront Café.

### Enabling communities to thrive

- The Council had invested heavily in the Community Partnerships initiative, with a total delivery budget of £1.73 million across all eight partnerships and the Community Partnership Board. This funding had been used to tackle priority issues that had been identified as important to people and places in East Suffolk.
- To date, the Board had allocated over £916,000 to fund 19 initiatives, and the eight partnerships, combined, had funded 196 projects including those funded through small grants totalling over half a million pounds.
- Despite the obvious challenges presented initially by COVID, and now by the cost-of-living crisis, the Community Partnerships had placed themselves at the heart of the action and delivered tangible benefits for their communities.

### Digital Transformation

- The Council had successfully delivered free Wi-Fi to 12 market towns across East Suffolk.
- The Council had established 'Digital Champions' across libraries in the district, to help get people online and access our services.

- There was still more to do, and we plan to provide full fibre in community spaces and village halls across the district.

### Leisure and culture

- The Council had invested £4 million into Waveney Valley Leisure Centre, as part of the leisure redevelopment programme. It was now a state of art facility for the community.
- The Council had also refurbished Waterlane Leisure Centre, which was completed in 2021.
- There were now two leisure operators - Everyone Active in the North and Places Leisure in the South, who were providing a superb offering across the district.
- Master Planning for the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood development was underway, which would include the new Felixstowe Leisure Centre. In the meantime, improvements to the customer experience at the seafront facility were planned for this year.
- Felixstowe hosted the last stage finish of the 2021 Women's Tour cycle race. Attached to this was a three-day "Felix Fest" which included open cinema and the town's first triathlon. These events were a phenomenal success for local businesses and our district.
- In Lowestoft, the First Light Festival, with funding from East Suffolk Council, had also been a huge success attracting thousands of people to East Suffolk – many for the first time – to enjoy a huge cultural celebration on the east coast.

### The Environment

- Caring for the environment was one of the key priorities of the Strategic Plan and it had been woven into everything that we have done as a Council – from our new-build housing stock to our vehicle fleets.
- In 2021, Cabinet unanimously agreed to stop using diesel and switch the fuel used in the 246 East Suffolk Norse vehicles to HVO. Once the entire fleet was migrated to HVO, the carbon emissions would be reduced by over 90%.
- The Council was taking a considered approach to the building of new housing stock by ensuring that they achieve 'passivhaus' certification where possible.

### Managing our coastline

- The Council was awarded £43 million from the Green Recovery Fund towards the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Scheme to protect Lowestoft from flooding. We have nearly completed the tidal flood walls, with work on the design of the tidal barrier continuing.
- The award of £8.4 million, from the Flood and Coast Innovation Programme, would help in developing a resilient coast all the way from North of Lowestoft down to Felixstowe.
- Southwold Harbour, which was a Local Authority Port, and with the help of the Town Council, we have established a Harbour Management Committee and a Stakeholder Advisory Group for the harbour. We have worked hard so that serious improvements can be made to both the campsite and the harbour itself, whilst retaining the unique qualities that make Southwold special – and the reason why the harbour was so loved by the town and by all its visitors.

## Finance and value for money

- The Council was, once again, delivering a balanced budget for this year and next, and this Council would always place the Council Taxpayer at the heart of its financial decisions.
- Since inception, East Suffolk Council had strived to keep its Council Tax increases to an absolute minimum, either freezing it or increasing it by less than 3%.
- Additionally, over £288 million had been raised from external grants and contributions towards the cost of our project programme.
- This administration had an aim to continue improving efficiency and reducing costs, which involves embracing new ways to become even more business-like in its approach. This has led to the creation of 'East Suffolk Services' a trading company that will deliver operational services with a commitment to provide the best possible value for money for residents and businesses.
- From July 2023, East Suffolk Services Ltd will manage waste collection and other operations currently undertaken by Norse, which will significantly benefit the Council and residents.
- In the 5 years up to and including 2026/27, ESC will spend £410m on major projects and an additional £83m on housing schemes.
- It was also likely that in 2024/25 the district will see valuable increases in Council Tax income from the introduction of a 100% Council Tax premium for second homes and a shorter time for which homes can be left empty without paying a 100% premium.
- This Council was making the best possible use of its assets - investing to develop schemes at Moor Business Park, the business hubs in Lowestoft and Leiston and investment in beach hut projects in Felixstowe and Lowestoft. These completed projects were contributing to the income of the Council.

The Leader stated that he could talk extensively about the successes of this Conservative administration, there were a lot of good news stories and achievements to share. The latest edition of the East Suffolk Magazine provided tangible examples of this Council's achievements for the people of East Suffolk. With that being said, there was still much to do, with an ambitious agenda and a robust Strategic Plan to navigate the way: this included Freeport East, Sizewell C, East Suffolk Services, Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Scheme, and the goal for carbon neutrality by 2030 were just a handful of the plans on the agenda.

The Leader wished to recognise and thank a range of people who have played such an important role in the first four years of East Suffolk Council. He thanked Councillor Ceresa and Councillor Blundell for the way in which they have carried out their respective roles as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council. The Leader then formally recognised the work and commitment of the officers of the Council, CMT and SMT. They had all worked hard to ensure the success of this Council's first cycle as the biggest district council in the country and embraced changes and had risen to the many challenges as part of the success of this organisation.

The Leader then thanked the opposition Group Members and Leaders. He appreciated and recognised the importance of strong opposition. Special thanks were given to Councillor Byatt, for his scrutiny, valuable contributions and attendance at Cabinet

meetings, the number of questions and comments delivered had certainly helped to focus minds.

His heartfelt thanks went to his fellow Conservative Colleagues and Cabinet Members for their support, hard work and diligence. The Leader also paid special tribute to colleagues who, after having served in the parent authorities previously, would be retiring as Councillors this year. Thank you for your commitment and your tireless work towards the success of East Suffolk Council.

The Leader stated that it had been a huge honour and privilege to be the first Leader of East Suffolk, and he would depart, knowing that Council had been set on the right course to deliver success and prosperity for the district. These were difficult times, however, without the achievements of the past four years, the picture would be far more worrying. Thank you.

### **Cabinet Members**

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

Councillor Burroughes reported that over the past year, sets of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) had been developed in association with the Council's Strategic Plan. Five dashboards had been developed for each theme within the Strategic Plan, which were regularly discussed at the Strategic Plan Delivery Board meetings.

The dashboards were created using 'Power BI' which used dynamic data, directly from the source of the Council's business systems and gave real-time insight into how the Council was performing against its corporate priorities.

The KPI's had now been published on the East Suffolk website.

#### Councillor Brooks, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport

Councillor Brooks reported that East Suffolk Council had assumed the responsibility for the management of parking service enforcement in 2019. Since then, the Council had focused on developing an effective civil parking enforcement service.

Residents and members of the public had been asked for feedback regarding where parking regulations needed to be changed to meet new patterns of use. The process would now be followed by a town-by-town review from April – September 2023.

People and Places had been commissioned to work with the Council to implement a series of face-to-face events to better understand where on-street parking regulations need to change. The planned face-to-face events would be held in each market town and would be accessible to the public, town and parish councils and business groups. People and Places know East Suffolk well, and they will be building on existing data. The planned sessions would aim to:

- a) understand local needs
- b) identify hotspot areas and
- c) review parking regulations that can help East Suffolk Council to address the issues

caused by changing parking patterns.

People and Places would commence its desktop research from April to May, followed by workshops from June to September 2023. Outcomes of this work were expected in November 2023. The overall aim was to complete a comprehensive strategic review of parking arrangements to ensure they were fit for the future.

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

Councillor Ritchie reported that the coast had taken a battering over recent months and the latest storm, Larissa, had caused particular damage to nearby Hemsby, leading to the loss of 20 metres of the cliffs. Coastal Partnership East (CPE) was a shared team across North Norfolk, Great Yarmouth Borough and East Suffolk and wherever there was a crisis, be it in Cromer or Pakefield, the team were able to provide support and advice.

For the last few days, the CPE team had been in Hemsby, overseeing the installation of rock protection, to protect base of the cliffs and the remaining chalets within the danger zone. CPE was led by Karen Thomas and her team of highly qualified and experienced officers were making a significant difference to those people affected by coastal erosion. Those Members present showed their appreciation of the work of the CPE team by giving them a round of applause.

#### Councillor Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development

Councillor Rivett reported that the Council had found out earlier today that it had been granted £4.3m to help regenerate Jubilee Parade on the seafront, next to the Eastern Edge beach huts, in Lowestoft. The funding would enable the Council to realise its vision for rejuvenating that part of the seafront, to drive the visitor economy and improve the quality of life for local people. The Jubilee Parade development would include a new two-storey building with a first-floor café, offering uninterrupted views of the sea and the award-winning South Beach, along with improved showers, toilets and facilities. Councillor Rivett took the opportunity to thank all those officers who were involved with the successful funding bid.

Significant investment had been received for the district, including grant funding, which led to the completion of a number of exciting projects. Planning was well underway for the First Light Festival 2023, which now received national recognition. Free wifi had been brought to the Market Towns in the district, as well as Felixstowe. ESC was the Lead Authority for Freeport East and significant work had been completed in this respect. A number of ESC assets had been successfully re-developed, whilst other assets had been divested, to regenerate local areas, and the Martello Café in Felixstowe was a good example of this work.

#### Councillor Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment

Councillor Mallinder stated that the Council was supporting biodiversity in the district, with 135 sites involved in the 'Pardon the weeds, we are feeding the bees'

initiative. Work was ongoing regarding waste and recycling and a pilot for the recycling of electrical equipment would be undertaken in parts of the district shortly. A number of litter picks had been arranged and he thanked all those who had taken part in them.

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

Councillor Smith reported that the high cost of energy was having a terrible impact upon the sustainability of leisure centres and in response, Councillor Smith had written to the Prime Minister to express her concerns. She thanked those MPs who had supported this cause and she was delighted that additional funding had been provided by the Government to support leisure centres during this difficult time.

The Community Partnerships had been very successful and had made a significant difference to the local communities. She thanked all those who had contributed to the meetings and their success, she was very proud of what had been achieved.

Councillor Rudd, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Safety

Councillor Rudd took the opportunity to thank all of the officers who worked within her Portfolio, which included Environmental Health, Port Health, Emergency Planning and Licensing. Those officers kept local residents and visitors to the district safe, in a variety of ways.

**Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive thanked Members for their warm welcome since he had joined the Council in January 2023 and for sharing knowledge about their casework, constituents and Wards. It was evident that all Members were extremely proud of the Wards that they represented. It was noted that the Community Partnerships and the Enabling Communities Budgets were supporting much needed projects in local areas, based upon the needs of local residents.

He wished all Members well for the future.

**4 Questions from the Public**

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

**5 Questions from Members**

a) Question submitted by Councillor Ed Thompson to Councillor Letitia Smith, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism

We have been made aware that between 1/4/2022 and 30/09/22 CAES dealt with 237 Ipswich clients using core funding, but that Ipswich CAB looked after 841 East Suffolk Residents over an annual period (16.8% of their overall service). Considering that even tripling the six-month figure does not even the playing field, the strain put upon the Ipswich CAB is increased by East Suffolk Residents. Taking these figures into

consideration, would the Cabinet Member for Communities review the possibility of providing funding to the Ipswich CAB for the services they provide to East Suffolk residents?

Response from Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism

As highlighted in the question, the figures provided are not comparable because the figures for Citizens Advice East Suffolk (CAES) are for 6 months from 1/4/22 to 30/9/22 and the figures for Citizens Advice Ipswich (CAI) are for a whole year.

It is important to note that the client figures for Ipswich include not just core funded clients, but also East Suffolk clients accessing CAI in relation to countywide projects such as Surviving Winter that CAI are funded separately to deliver across the County. It may be helpful, if Citizens Advice Ipswich is struggling to deal with demand generated by non-core funded clients from East Suffolk, for them to share the project funding (and thus demand) with Citizens Advice East Suffolk.

If figures are produced for the same period and include only 'core' funded clients, then for this financial year to date Ipswich has dealt with 559 East Suffolk clients and East Suffolk has dealt with 333 Ipswich clients. It is also relevant to note that 'looking after a client' may mean that CAI answer the phone to them and then signpost on to Citizens Advice East Suffolk – the headline figures do not provide a sense of the extent of the support that was provided.

Citizens Advice Ipswich received £5,000 funding through the Cost of Living grant for working with customers from the area adjacent to Ipswich this winter, so some funding has been provided to reflect additional demand on CAI. However, CAES recently opened a monthly outreach in Martlesham and are looking at further presence in the area. This should further reduce the flow of clients, given that a proportion of the clients that CAI previously looked after will live in this area (Kesgrave and Martlesham) which adjoins Ipswich, and therefore are likely to access the new, more local, provision.

There was no supplementary question on this occasion.

b) Question submitted by Councillor Caroline Topping for Councillor James Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for The Environment

On November 24th 2021, I submitted a motion to Full Council about reducing unnecessary car journeys, which was seconded by Councillor Mallinder; this was approved. Would it be possible to get an update as to the Council's progress on the outcome of this motion, particularly in relation to car-sharing and using public transport for work purposes?

Response from Councillor Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for The Environment

Thank you for your question. I want you to be reassured that East Suffolk Council continues to encourage alternatives to car travel for staff and Members and have not seen a return to pre-pandemic business miles. It is really important and we have



introduced different ways of working, eg by using Zoom, Teams and hybrid meetings. The days of working 9 to 5 in the office are gone and we now work differently, making sure that it fits the more rounded view of life and with a nod to the environment.

Since we have emerged from the Covid restrictions. and we have seen an increase in staff car mileage but car use during 2021/22 remained significantly lower than it was before the pandemic (a reduction of 61.3% from the baseline year of 2013/14). This is largely driven by flexible hybrid working now being fully embedded in our working practices.

Due to the proximity of our main offices to train stations in Melton and Lowestoft, we are seeing ongoing regular use of rail travel. The staff electric vehicle (EV) based at Melton is extremely well used and officers are checking the potential case for a similar vehicle at Riverside. Pool bikes continue to be available at both Melton and Lowestoft and are promoted on the staff intranet.

The majority of internal meetings are held via Teams / Zoom. Where larger meetings or conferences are organised, we promote sustainable travel options and the location is considered. An example is the recent East Suffolk Community Partnership Annual Forum, where car sharing was promoted and delegates were shuttled to train stations in an EV.

As a largely rural District, non-car options can often be challenging, so it is important to get the balance right. I know that in our Group meetings we discuss travel needs and offer lifts to each other. I would encourage the Opposition Groups to do the same, if they are not already.

Councillor Topping, we are encouraging and providing alternatives where we can. As you would expect from East Suffolk, we are emphasising caring for the environment and this is not political, it is the right thing to do.

#### Supplementary Question from Councillor Topping

Thank you for your response, I would expect nothing less. Why has it been so difficult for some in this Administration to be accommodating and inclusive for those Members that do not drive, either through health or socio economic reasons or by choice due to the climate emergency commitment and wish travel in a more sustainable and less damaging way? Deeds, not words.

#### Response from Councillor Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for The Environment

This is an inclusive Council. We will continue to schedule meetings at different times and where possible, hold meetings by Zoom and Teams, if allowed by the Constitution. We must be mindful of the environment but I personally, would not tell anyone else how to travel to Council meetings, we should not demonise those who choose to travel by car or be a hero for choosing to travel by train. The individual should do what is right for them. Within our Group, we offer lifts to those Members who do not drive, I know that other Groups do the same and it also works cross-

party. I would encourage anyone who wished to stand as a Councillor, if they meet the criteria, to represent their communities and we welcome diversity of Councillors to the Council and also the diversity in how we travel.

c) Question submitted by Councillor Janet Craig for Councillor Norman Brooks, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport

Great Yarmouth Borough Council has already provided at least 16 Electrical Vehicle charging points in its Town Centre car parks, as an incentive for tourists to stay longer locally.

How many EV charge points will be available in East Suffolk Council's car parks for visitors to our resort towns by this summer season?

Response from Councillor Brooks, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport

The council has two EV charge-points in its demand managed car parks, and a third at Bungay Leisure Centre, and this will remain the situation for this coming summer.

- Deben, Woodbridge: 1 x 22kW
- Martello North, Felixstowe: 1 x 50kW
- Bungay Leisure Centre: 1 x 22kW

There was no supplementary question on this occasion.

d) Question submitted by Councillor Tess Gandy to Councillor Steve Gallant, Leader of the Council

Are you able to provide me with the number of times external Counsel have been instructed by ESC in relation to housing and other issues, and at what cost, in the last 12 months?

As Councillor Gandy had given apologies for this meeting and in accordance with the Constitution, an answer was not provided at the meeting.

e) Question submitted by Councillor Peter Byatt to Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council

A Labour Motion to Full Council in January 2022 proposed that our suppliers declare responsible tax conduct as part of our new high-standard procurement process, but this was referred to Audit and Governance for in-depth consideration.

The Chair acknowledged that this was an urgent matter, and in March added it to the Work Programme for discussion in September 2022. However, this did not happen and the topic remains outstanding.

Will this be an Agenda item in March 2023, 14 months after the motion, and when will this Council fully embrace Social Value, including consideration of the ethics of our suppliers, and where they pay their tax?

### Response from Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council

The Audit and Governance Committee have the item as a topic for discussion, although to date the item has not been scheduled by the Chairman of the Committee. As Councillor Byatt knows, it is for the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee to schedule it's work programme.

As Councillor Byatt will be aware, having been a part of the working group on the Procurement Strategy, the focus of our activity in this area has been to work on increasing the social value of our procurement process, to ensure that every pound we spend delivers maximum value to our local economy.

The specific issue of requiring suppliers to sign up to an agreement on Tax Justice was not part of the procurement strategy that was approved in 2022.

All suppliers are required to demonstrate that they are compliant with taxation legislation and HMRC requirements before we will contract with them

Social value is considered in all procurements above the Public Procurement Threshold and in most procurements under the threshold where applicable.

If applicable, Social Value is included as a quality question in tender documents, typically weighted between 5-15%. Embracing Social Value is a key part of the Procurement Strategy 2022-2025 and we encourage all officers to consider the Social Value impact when planning their procurements.

### Supplementary Question from Councillor Byatt

Thank you for your answer. I know we cannot dictate to the new Council but can we leave a note and ask the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee in the next administration, to consider this matter for inclusion on their work programme?

### Response from Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council

This Council is on a journey to improve social value and practices, working with Suffolk County Council. A balance needs to be struck between supporting local suppliers to work with the Council easily and openly and potentially introducing criteria that prohibit them from winning contracts. I am sure there will be enough Members who will be re-elected, for them to take this message forward to the new Council.

## **6 Petitions**

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

## **7 Notices of Motion**

The Chairman reported that 1 Notice of Motion had been accepted for this meeting. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.4, the Leader of the Council and the Leaders of the Opposition Groups had met to discuss the Motion and agree a way forward. The recommendation from this meeting was that the Motion would be discussed this evening. The Chairman therefore proposed that the Motion be

discussed this evening, which was seconded by the Leader and upon being put to the vote the proposal was **CARRIED**.

The Chairman invited Councillor Beavan to read out his Motion and move it.

*Proportional Representation for the Electorate of East Suffolk*

*This Council Notes:*

- *That recent, peer-reviewed studies revealed that adopting proportional representation allows policy to respond strongly to changes in public opinion, whereas the current UK system can cause ‘policy [to] move in the opposite direction to public opinion for a considerable length of time’[1].*
- *As of January 18th 2023, 21 councils have passed motions for proportional representation at different levels including City, District and Town[2].*
- *That ‘the effectiveness of the party system... depends on the relationship between the Government and the Opposition parties [such as by] the creation of policy and legislation through constructive criticism’[3].*
- *There is innately a significant disparity in representation – e.g., the Conservative Party had 71% of the councillors with 38% of the vote[4].*

*This Council resolves to:*

- *Based on academic and political precedent, call a meeting between the party leaders to discuss how ESC can promote proportional representation and ensure that all voters across the district are fairly heard.*
- *To advise the council incumbent after May 4th 2023 to elect a member of the opposition as chair of the scrutiny committee, and that the committee itself should reflect the vote shares of the election.*

The Chairman invited Councillor Beavan to speak to this Motion.

Councillor Beavan reported that, the philosopher John Rawls argued in his “Justice as Fairness” theory, that “only under a “veil of ignorance” could human beings reach a fair and impartial agreement, as true equals not biased by their place in society. They would have to rely only on the human powers of reason to choose principles of social justice for their society.”

He reported that we stand on the eve of our elections in such a “veil of ignorance”. Nobody knows who would be running this council on 5 May 2023. Now was a perfect time to set some fair ground rules for the running of this Council, as nobody knew if they would be in the Administration or Opposition.

The Conservative party won the last election with 38% of the vote, but this gave them an overwhelming majority, with 71% of the councillors. We were not allowed to debate the unfair first past the post system but we could debate ways to mitigate it so that the silent majority of non-Conservative voters were represented.

Councillor Beavan stated that this administration had used its majority as a sledge hammer to close down debate in this Council and to pack every Committee and Outside Body with their own. He believed in a better way to run the Council, where all

Members of every party had an opportunity to work for East Suffolk. Where debate was open and considered, not predetermined by a party-political whip, where Opposition Members were given a fair chance to make their point in meetings and where officers were not dragged into petty party politics. Above all, there needed to be a Scrutiny Committee that was not directed by the Administration and having an Opposition Chair would ensure this independence.

In closing, Councillor Beavan stated that East Suffolk today faced big challenges. Members need to work together as a community and a Council. Party politics needed to be set aside after the election and Members must knuckle down to govern fairly for all of East Suffolk.

He urged Members to support this Motion but feared that many had already been ordered to oppose it.

Councillor Beavan then proposed the Motion which was seconded by Councillor Daly, who reserved his right to speak.

The Chairman invited Members to debate.

Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, stated that behind all the political rhetoric, there were 2 resolutions that this Council was being asked to consider. Firstly, Members were being asked to call a meeting between the party leaders to discuss how ESC could promote proportional representation and ensure that all voters across the district were fairly heard. The Leader stated that he assumed that the mover and seconder of the Motion do not really that because the party leaders, namely the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Kier Starmer, Ed Davey, Carla Denure and Adrian Ramsey, and it was highly unlikely that they were going to agree to sit round a table to discuss proportional representation, at the behest of Cllr Beavan. As the Council was about to move into the Pre-Election Period and May would see at least one new Political Group Leader and a new Leader of the Council itself, it seemed a pointless exercise to call such a meeting now. The new Leaders would be able to decide for themselves what they want to discuss, and when, at their regular meetings and it was not for Councillor Beavan or this Council to direct the agenda of those private meetings. Matters such as this needed to be taken through the correct route, such as the Scrutiny Committee or the Audit and Governance Committee.

Secondly, this Council was being asked to advise the new Council to elect a Member of the Opposition as the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee and that the Committee itself should reflect the vote shares of the election. The Leader stated that the appointments to committees was covered by Section 15 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989, which required that the overall political balance of the Council be reflected, where possible, in the appointment of Members to Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council. Fortunately, the Monitoring Officer would ensure that this happens. The appointment of Chairman of the Committees was covered in paragraph 5.2 of the Constitution and was responsibility of the Annual Full Council meeting. To do anything else that was not provided for in the Constitution or to hamper the wishes of the future Full Council was not something that should be undertaken.

The Leader reported that he also had evidence to support that Proportional

Representation (PR) was a flawed system. Neither resolution, as proposed, was within the gift of this council to deliver and he called for Members across the Council to vote against this Motion.

Councillor Bird stated that a referendum had taken place on Proportional Representation and the public gave their opinion on the matter at the ballot box and had soundly rejected it. Councillor Bird also stated that he was a Member of the Administration and as the current Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, he felt that the contents of the Motion implied that he had not been an independent Chairman. Whilst he accepted that he may have faults, he had always been effective, impartial or non-partisan whilst Chairman, as Members of the Scrutiny Committee could attest to. The Scrutiny Committee was not political and as such had undertaken many rigorous and detailed reviews of various topics. He stated that he worked well with Councillor Deacon, the current Vice Chairman, and whilst they did not agree on many political matters, they had developed an excellent working relationship, under the principles of independent scrutiny. He stated that the same would have been true if their roles had been reversed. Councillor Bird stated that the Motion cynically politicised the role of the Scrutiny Committee, by demanding that the Chairman was an Opposition Member and he sought reassurance that should Councillor Beavan become Leader of the Council, he would let Councillor Bird retain the role of Scrutiny Chairman?

Councillor Byatt supported the Leader's earlier comments and he then took the opportunity to list 8 Proportional Representation voting options, which could also be explored. These included: Single Transferable Vote, Additional Member System, Two Round System, Alternative Vote, Supplementary Vote, Borda Count, Party List Proportional Representation and Alternative Vote Plus System. He asked which version ought to be recommended to the next Council? He stated that there was merit in a full discussion on the matter by the newly-elected Council and any recommendations could then be taken forward to the relevant MPs. He commented that the current system in operation did marginalise some small groups, however, he could not support the Motion this evening.

Councillor Smith-Lyte asked if Councillor Byatt was aware that at the Labour Party Autumn Conference, around 80% of the delegation were in favour of Proportional Representation. Kier Starmer, rather undemocratically, had said 'No'. She then stated that if Proportional Representation was not within the gift of this Council in any way, it would not have been accepted as a Motion for Full Council, in accordance with the Constitution.

Councillor Ritchie stated that 35 years ago, he had been a member of the Social Democratic Party (SDP). At that time, he had promoted Proportional Representation but since then, he had learned the error of his ways. He gave then some examples to support his view that PR was not beneficial for the independence of Members.

Councillor Daly, as the seconder of the Motion, took the opportunity to speak. He stated that the behaviour in the Council meeting was typical by the parties; the Conservatives were in denial and Labour were mired in the detail. Councillor Daly stated that 71% of the Councillors in the Chamber were elected on 31% of the votes, which was a strange form of democracy, as the result should reflect the votes that

were cast. This Council was not a chattel of the West Minister Government, as 21 local authorities had realised how undemocratic PR was and had done something about it. All those present were supposed to be democrats and having twice the number of seats that people voted for and then not accepting Motions or reasonable concerns being raised, was not right. He suggested that ESC should follow the example of the 21 democratically minded councils and try to mitigate the issue in some way, to represent the unrepresented constituents in the district.

The Chairman invited Councillor Beavan to have his right of reply.

Councillor Beavan thanked Members for having the debate this evening. He stated that the first resolution in his Motion was asking the new Council to appoint an Opposition Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, it was not dictating. He agreed that Councillor Bird would make an excellent Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, if he was in Opposition. To Councillor Byatt, he stated that the Motion was not about debating PR, as this Council was not allowed to, in accordance with the Monitoring Officer's guidance. He then explained that like Councillor Ritchie, he had also been a Member of the SDP 35 years ago and had been the candidate for Waveney. At the time, they favoured the Single Transferrable Vote option, which removed the problem with party lists, and gave greater choice and flexibility. Although he felt he knew what the result would be, he hoped that this matter would be revisited by the new Council in due course

There being no further debate, the Motion was put to the vote and it was **NOT CARRIED**.

## **8 Climate Action Framework**

Full Council received a presentation from Councillor Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment, and Paul Mackie, Lead Officer for Environment and Climate Change. Councillor Mallinder introduced the presentation and stated that the Climate Action Framework was the culmination of all the actions and processes that had been put in place over the course of the Council. By introducing the Framework at the end of the Council this would help ensure that the focus and actions in the document were realistic and that changes were already being embedded into the Council's processes rather than merely an aspirational document.

Paul Mackie, Lead Officer for Environment and Climate Change, presented the Climate Action Framework. The Climate Action Framework detailed the actions that had been taken since declaring a climate change emergency in 2019, and in working toward net zero by 2030, and demonstrated how this area connected to the other priorities in the strategic plan. Mr Mackie explained that work so far had focussed on implementation, and the Climate Action Framework was the final stage in this process.

Mr Mackie summarised the four priority areas under the Environment Theme in the Council's Strategic Plan and updated Full Council on progress to reduce emissions across the Council's assets and operations. Since 2016 overall emissions had reduced by 35%, and work was now being done to look at how to reduce emissions from leisure centres and other buildings and assets.

Mr Mackie detailed areas within the Council's 'sphere of influence' where the Council was not directly responsible for emissions but could encourage change in areas such as transport and in domestic or industrial settings. The Council's own footprint was only 0.5% of this sphere of influence and so partnership working would be key to reducing emissions across the board.

Mr Mackie summarised how work was prioritised. Areas where the Council had powers or duties or where the Council delivered services were key, and this included services such as planning and coastal protection. As well as targets on emissions, the Climate Action Framework also included actions to restore nature and ensure the appropriate use of natural resources, which were both crucial to addressing the Climate Emergency.

Mr Mackie detailed the 116 projects in the Strategic Plan relating to the environment, 63 of which specifically related to climate change adaptation and mitigation. The Climate Action Framework provided a structure for these projects. Projects were split into areas where the Council led work, through its own powers, duties and services, and areas where the Council could enable wider actions through its sphere of influence.

With regards to measuring progress, the Environment Theme KPI dashboard was available online for all to monitor progress against agreed KPIs. A cross party Environment Task Group also met regularly to discuss work, as well as an officer led Environment Group. The Climate Action Framework document would be updated every 12 weeks for people to follow along with progress.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Mallinder and Mr Mackie for the presentation. She reminded Members that questions could be submitted regarding the presentation outside of the meeting.

## **9 Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project**

Full Council received report **ES/1504** of Councillor Ritchie, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management. Councillor Ritchie presented the report and summarised the current position of the Flood Risk Management Project. Over one hundred houses have had property level resilience installed and a flood wall had been installed along the Kirkley Stream, along with a pumping station. The next stage was the tidal element to protect the town from tidal flooding. The first stage of this was a major engineering project to install flood walls along the outer harbour and this would be completed by autumn 2023. The final step was a 40 metre wide tidal barrier which would require additional permissions due to its location in a working harbour, and the Transport Works Order (TWAO) detailed in this report would enable this final part of the project. Members were therefore asked to support the application to get the permission and powers to go ahead with this tidal barrier.

Karen Thomas, Head of Coastal Partnership East, gave a presentation summarising the design and function of the tidal barrier and how it would work with all the other flood protections in Lowestoft. The barrier offered a 1 in 200 year standard of protection and together with the tidal walls, would provide protection to 1500 homes and 850 businesses which were at risk from flooding. The barrier would also make Lowestoft's



position as a national and international green energy hub more resilient. Ms Thomas provided additional information on the powers and process for a TWAO, which was a statutory instrument, and reassured Full Council that all key stakeholders were on board with the process, and that the Council would not need to resort to using the more significant powers available, such as compulsory purchase. Ms Thomas confirmed that Full Council was being asked for permission to enter into the TWAO process and Members would be updated when the application had been made.

The Chairman invited questions.

Councillor Byatt referred to Appendix A, where some figures were still to be filled in and where other figures had been highlighted. Councillor Ritchie apologised that this was a typographical error from an earlier draft of the report and that it had since been updated.

Councillor Topping asked if the election process would affect this project or if it could continue in the meantime. She also took the opportunity to thank Councillor Ritchie and officers for their work on this project. Councillor Ritchie confirmed that the election would not affect the project, it was vital infrastructure which had cross party support and would continue.

Councillor Ritchie moved the recommendations in the report, which was seconded by Councillor Rivett, who reserved his right to speak.

The Chairman invited Members to debate.

Councillor Patience referred to the previous flooding events in Lowestoft and expressed his support for these measures on behalf of residents in the Harbour and Normanston Ward. Councillor Patience also thanked the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee members for their support.

Councillor Byatt expressed his support for this project and thanked the Coastal Partnership East team for their hard work on this project, and he mentioned some of the history of flooding in Lowestoft which showed the damage the sea could do in this District. Councillor Byatt emphasised the importance of the barrier in ensuring the continued development and protection of Lowestoft and surrounding areas.

Councillor Gooch commented that the project was a significant piece of work, and that she especially supported the links between this project and the engagement with young people in the town. It was important to culturally encode the new bridge into the local community. Councillor Gooch also emphasised the link between flooding and climate change, and the need for parties to work together on these issues.

Councillor Wiles stated that the impact of previous flood events needed to be remembered and that all future authorities should continue this work.

Councillor Rivett thanked Councillor Ritchie and Coastal Partnership East for their hard work on this project to ensure that flood defences were installed and that the work of the port could continue. Councillor Rivett supported other Members' comments to ensure good links between this project and young people, and the need to work across

parties to ensure Lowestoft and other areas were resilient in the future.

Councillor Ritchie thanked Members and officers for their support in this project.

There being no further debate, the recommendations were then put to a vote and it was unanimously

## **RESOLVED**

1. That Full Council promotes an application to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for an Order under the 10Transport and Works Act 1992 to authorise the proposed construction, operation and maintenance of a new tidal barrier with a moveable gate across the channel entrance to Lake Lothing on the seaward side of the Bascule Bridge in Lowestoft, East Suffolk. The Order (if made) would, amongst other things, confer powers on the Council to compulsorily acquire and temporarily use land and to carry out other works and include provisions necessary for the purposes of, or for purposes ancillary to, the construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed tidal barrier;
2. That subject to resolution 1 above, that the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, in consultation with a Cabinet Member who has responsibility of the coast, take all such steps as may be necessary or expedient to carry the above recommendations into effect, including the legal process required for the Council to apply for and thereafter to promote its application for the Orde, please see appendix E for the TWAO legal process/programme required; and
3. That the corporate seal of the Council is affixed to any documents required to be sealed in connection with the application for and subsequent promotion of the Order.
4. That the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, in consultation with a Cabinet Member who has responsibility of the coast Executive Board, comply and deal with any public local inquiry processes and procedures arising or resulting from the submission of the Application.

## **10 Review of Code of Corporate Governance**

Full Council received report **ES/1460** of Councillor Cook, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, and Councillor Back, Assistant Cabinet Member for Resources. Councillor Back introduced the report which provided details of the refreshed Code of Corporate Governance which had been considered by the Audit and Governance Committee. Councillor Back summarised the discussion of the Audit and Governance Committee on this report and noted that reference had been made to the Nolan Principles in the report following their feedback. Full Council was asked to adopt the refreshed Code of Corporate Governance.

The Leader thanked officers for work on this report and members for their input into the document.

Councillor Back moved the recommendations in the report and was seconded by Councillor Cook. Upon being put to the vote it was unanimously

## **RESOLVED**

That the refreshed Code of Corporate Governance attached at Appendix A of this report be adopted.

## **11 Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2022/23**

Full Council received report **ES/1503** of Councillor Stuart Bird, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Bird introduced the report which outlined the activities of the Scrutiny Committee in the last year. Councillor Bird explained the purpose of a Scrutiny Committee in acting as a 'critical friend' and providing accountability to the Council.

Councillor Bird took the opportunity to thank Councillor Deacon, Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee and Mr Bix, who had supported the Committee for several months. He particularly wished to thank Ms Davis, for all of her ongoing support, which had been invaluable to him. He then thanked all Members of the Scrutiny Committee and officers, for their involvement in the scrutiny process.

The Chairman invited debate.

Councillor Byatt thanked the Scrutiny Committee for their work, which undertook an essential function of the Council and he hoped that the good work would continue into the next administration.

Councillor Topping thanked the Scrutiny Committee for their work and commented on the success of the committee, particularly noting the comments by Peter Aldous MP on the recommendations made at one meeting.

Councillor Gooch also thanked the Scrutiny Committee, which had scrutinised a wide range of topics, and the Chairman and Vice Chairman for their hard work.

The Leader thanked the Scrutiny Committee for their work and complemented Councillor Bird on his hard work on this Committee in ensuring it performed its function.

Councillor Bird thanked Members for their comments and moved the recommendation in the report, which was seconded by Councillor Gallant. Upon being put to the vote it was unanimously

### **RESOLVED**

That Full Council the Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report be received.

## **12 Cabinet Members Report and Outside Bodies Representatives Reports to Council**

Full Council received report **ES/1508**, which was presented by Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, and provided individual Cabinet Members' reports on their areas of responsibility, as well as reports from those Members appointed to represent East Suffolk Council on Outside Bodies. The Leader stated that the written reports could be taken as read and there had also been lengthy updates from the Cabinet during the

Announcements, earlier in the meeting. He invited relevant questions on the contents of the report.

Councillor Gooch thanked Councillor Cackett for her update and ongoing work in relation to the East Suffolk Travel Association (ESTA). She stated that this was an excellent example of three Members working well together, cross-party.

Councillor Byatt stated that he had a comment for Councillor Brooks, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport. He stated that every time that he used RINGO to pay for parking, he appeared to be charged an additional 20p. However, apart from that, he felt that the public were getting used to the new system.

### **13 Exempt/Confidential Items**

The Chairman reminded those present that she had made an announcement earlier in the meeting about an urgent item of Exempt/Confidential business that needed to be considered, at this stage in the proceedings. The Chairman then read out the following proposal:

It was recommended 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 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act. Councillor Ceresa, Chairman, moved the proposal and it was seconded by Councillor Blundell, Vice Chairman.

The Leader stated that he would like to take the opportunity to discuss the proposal which had just been moved and seconded, to go into confidential session. He stated that the 7 Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan Principles, outlined the ethical standards that those working in the public sector should adhere to. They applied to all those who work in the public sector at all levels, including Ministers, Civil Servants, Councillors and local authority officers. 2 of the 7 principles were: Accountability and Openness. It was important, therefore, to consider the 7 categories of exemption in Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The Leader explained that, in this instance, the categories of exemption for the report were 1) Information relating to any individual and 2) Information which was likely to reveal the identity of an individual. The schedule made it clear that Members have a duty to consider not only the presence of such information but also the level of public interest in withholding or disclosing that information. Such information, as covered by the 7 categories of exemption, would remain exempt if it was considered that the public interest in not disclosing the exempt information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

The Leader stated that the urgent report to be considered this evening, related to a non-confidential email, which was sent both internally and externally and, as such, was already in the public domain. The email was sent by the individual whose identity Members were being asked to protect, as a result, they had already waived their right to protection. The Leader, therefore, asserted that the level of public interest in

disclosing the information outweighed the need for confidentiality. The Leader asked that Members across the Chamber vote against the proposal just made, to go into exempt session. He felt that the recommendations of the Audit and Governance Committee should be open for public scrutiny.

N.B. Councillor Beavan left the meeting at this point in the proceedings, at 8.37pm.

The Chairman invited Mr Bing, Monitoring Officer, to provide some legal advice to Members regarding this matter. Mr Bing stated that when considering a matter for closed session, Members needed to consider whether maintaining the exemptions outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information. This matter had been considered in a closed session by the Audit and Governance Committee and they had recommended that Full Council consider it as an exempt item, but it was for Members to decide how the item should be considered at this meeting.

The Chairman asked Members to consider whether they wished to hear this item in public.

Councillor Byatt commented that there were times when transparency was necessary and he felt that this was one of those times.

Councillor Daly stated that he felt very uncomfortable about this matter. The Audit and Governance Committee had recommended that the matter be held in exempt session and he believed that if the report were another Councillor, rather than Councillor Beavan, then the issue would be heard in private. He felt that if another Councillor had made those remarks, the matter would have been dealt with very differently.

Councillor Richardson, who would be presenting the urgent report on behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee, stated that he had argued for this matter to be held in an exempt session at this meeting, but as the Councillors name had now been disclosed in public, it was no longer necessary to hear the report in exempt session.

The Chairman stated that a proposal to discuss the matter in exempt session had been proposed and seconded earlier. Therefore, there needed to be a vote to formally decide if the report would be considered in exempt session. Upon being put to the vote, the proposal was **NOT CARRIED**.

The Chairman clarified that the report would now be heard in open session.

Councillor Patience stated that he had not had time to read the report and he asked if he should leave the meeting at this point. The Leader advised that the purpose of the urgent report was to receive a report from the Audit and Governance Committee, following their consideration of an investigation of a complaint, he did not need to leave the meeting.

#### **14 Urgent Item of Business - report on the outcome of an investigation of a complaint**

Full Council received report **ES/1515** of Councillor Geoff Lynch, Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee. In the absence of Councillor Lynch and Councillor Cooper, the

Vice Chairman, Councillor Richardson presented the report on behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee.

The Audit and Governance Committee had received a report from the Monitoring Officer on the outcome of an investigation into a complaint against Councillor Beavan. The complaint alleged that Councillor Beavan had breached the Code of Conduct by his email of 30 May 2022, which accused an officer in the Housing Team of 'fiddling the figures' in relation to the banding of an applicant in the Southwold and Reydon Ward, who was seeking accommodation.

The Monitoring Officer had consulted the Council's Independent Person and had determined that paragraphs 1.2 and 3.1 of the Code of Conduct had potentially been engaged and Councillor Beavan was asked to retract and/or apologise to the relevant officers. As the initial decision was not complied with, the Monitoring Officer had consulted the Independent Person and decided to have the complaint independently investigated by an external lawyer to determine whether the Code of Conduct had been breached. The investigation concluded that Councillor Beavan had failed to comply with three provisions of the Code of Conduct: Section 1 concerning respect, Section 3 concerning impartiality of officers of the council and Section 8 concerning complying with the Code of Conduct.

The Audit and Governance Committee, at its meeting on 13 March 2023, resolved by a majority vote that:

- i) the way the complaint had been handled and investigated had been fair and thorough;
- ii) the investigation findings of fact and the breaches of the Code of Conduct were agreed; and

At its meeting on 13 March 2023, Audit and Governance Committee resolved by a unanimous vote that:

- iiia) Councillor Beavan be required to provide a written apology to the Housing Needs Services Manager, the Housing Needs and Homelessness Advice Team Leader and the Housing Needs Monitoring Officer within two weeks of receipt of Audit and Governance Committee's decision of 13 March 2023.
- iiib) Councillor Beavan be required to undertake training on the new LGA Model Code of Conduct, if he is re-elected.
- iiic) Audit and Governance Committee's decision that Councillor Beavan be required to apologise to the three officers and undertake training be reported to Full Council on 15 March 2023 as an exempt matter but that if the Councillor does not comply with their decision in due course that the matter be reported in open session to a meeting of Full Council after the elections in May 2023.

Councillor Richardson stated that the report had been brought before Members, to comply with resolution iiic) of the Audit and Governance Committee.

The Chairman invited questions.

Councillor Thompson asked whether by asking for the report to be heard in open session, the Leader had ignored the proposals of the Audit and Governance Committee? Councillor Richardson stated that he had intended for this paper to be held in closed session, however, as the Councillors name had been mentioned in open session, this was no longer appropriate. A vote had been undertaken and the majority of Members had agreed that the matter should be considered in open session.

Councillor Byatt asked whether bringing the matter to Full Council was the right way to resolve this issue? Alternatively, could this matter have been brought to the next Full Council meeting in May 2023? Councillor Richardson responded that the matter could have been resolved much earlier by an apology at the outset. It was noted that the elections were taking place on 4 May 2023 and bringing the report to the May meeting may not be appropriate, as the results of the election could not be pre-empted.

Councillor Richardson moved the recommendations in the report and was seconded by Councillor Gallant.

The Chairman invited debate on the item.

Councillor Smith-Lyte stated that it was disappointing that the item had come to Full Council, and she had understood that the item would not go into the public domain, and she felt that by hearing this item in open session, it amounted to bullying.

Councillor Daly commented that this was a decision made by the Leader and Members had duly voted in support.

Councillor Byatt commented that the original email and comments had been received by a member of the public and therefore were already in the public domain. Councillor Byatt stated that Members should never attack a Council officer, they should always discuss issues with Cabinet Members. Mistakes did get made, but Councillors should always be willing to apologise. He added that there were processes in place and that mutual respect was key to the relationships between Councillors and officers. The accusation that officers fiddled the figures was serious and had been appropriately dealt with by an Independent Person. He concluded that Councillors should always be mindful of the Nolan Principles and behave with respect to one another and officers.

Councillor Rivett commented that the matter was not before Full Council for a 'public flogging' but was being presented in the open so that all current and prospective Councillors and members of staff could clearly see the seriousness with which such issues were dealt with. The matter could have easily been resolved at the outset by an apology, which would have avoided extra cost to the taxpayer.

Councillor Ritchie agreed that the matter should have been resolved at a much earlier stage by Councillor Beavan but as he had not done so, it had resulted in much more a drawn out process.

Councillor Thompson stated that Councillor Beavan would not make such a comment in a serious manner, but that this was a figure of speech. An apology was needed, but he

stated the original offence was not a serious accusation.

Councillor Cackett stated that as a former council officer, she would have been upset by such an email and would have expected a quick apology. She commented that the fact it had taken a year for an apology to be sent to officers was not appropriate, and more consideration should be given to the impact such a comment would have on the officers.

Councillor Bird commented that this was a regretful matter, but Full Council was in this situation due to the individuals actions. If this was a throwaway remark, there should not have been an issue in apologising at the outset, rather than having to go through a drawn out and costly process. Councillor Bird added that transparency was important, and the public should be aware of complaints against Councillors.

Councillor Topping asked why the investigation had taken such a long time and she commented that it was unfortunate that the complaint had come to the last Council meeting of the administration. She also asked why other Members of the GLI Group had not been asked to deal with this complaint and sort it out at an earlier stage. The Monitoring Officer confirmed the timeline for the complaint process and stated that decisions at each stage could only be made once all parties had been consulted, to ensure a balanced view of the issue. Councillor Beavan had been given several opportunities to comply with the initial decision but after months of not doing so, the decision was made in November by the Monitoring Officer and Independent Person to refer the complaint for external investigation, in order to maintain the integrity of the complaints process. The report on this investigation had been received in February 2023 and was taken to the following Audit and Governance Committee on 13 March.

Councillor Goldson commented that if Councillor Beavan did not intend the comment he should either be here to make an apology or have apologised in the first place, to avoid the drawn-out process. Councillor Gee added that these comments had justifiably upset officers.

Councillor Gooch agreed that this was an unfortunate end to the Councils final meeting, however, it was important to remember the good that had been done by Councillors in their communities, rather than focus on one mistake made by a Councillor.

The Leader commented that it was disappointing that this was the last matter the Council was considering, however, there would have been the same report and discussion, whether it was held in closed or public session. This was already a public matter and it needed to be made clear that Councillors stood behind officers. There had been many opportunities for an apology to be made regarding this matter. In response to comments that the matter should have been discussed with the GLI Group in order to be resolved, that would not be an appropriate way to deal with issues and was not a part of the process. The Leader concluded that he respected the decision of the Audit and Governance Committee to hear this matter in a closed decision at their meeting, however, it was not within their ability to determine how matters were heard at Full Council. The Leader concluded that this was an issue of a single Councillor making a comment which had required an apology.



Upon being put to the vote it was

**RESOLVED**

That the Audit and Governance Committee's decision on this matter be noted.

The meeting concluded at 9.20 pm

.....  
Chairman



**FULL COUNCIL**  
**Wednesday, 24 May 2023**

<b>Subject</b>	Political balance and allocation of seats on Committees 2023/24
<b>Report by</b>	Leader of the Council
<b>Supporting Officer</b>	Chris Bing Head of Legal and Democratic Services 07442 405007 <a href="mailto:chris.bing@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">chris.bing@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a>

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	NOT APPLICABLE
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards

## Purpose and high-level overview

### **Purpose of Report:**

Membership of the Committees of East Suffolk Council is determined under the terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

Those provisions require the Authority to review the representation of political groups and individuals on the Committees, Sub-Committees, and other appropriate bodies to ensure that the seats on Committees are allocated by Group Leaders in proportion to the political groups' membership of the Council.

This report contains recommendations on the allocation of seats on the Council's Committees and Sub-Committees, reviewed to reflect the Council's political balance. The number of Green Members on the Council is 16, there are 15 Conservative Members, 12 Labour Members, 11 Liberal Democrat Members and 1 Independent Member.

There are currently no vacancies on the Council.

### **Options:**

None. The Council needs to appoint to its Committees and Sub-Committees to carry out its business effectively. Appointment to these bodies gives Members an opportunity to carry out their community leadership role and enables cross party views to be given on specific issues which is healthy for democracy and good decision-making.

### **Recommendations:**

1. That, with effect from 24 May 2023, in order to meet statutory requirements, seats on Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council be allocated in accordance with the contents of this report and Appendix A.
2. That the Leader be granted Delegated Authority to make any necessary changes to the membership of the Committees for the remainder of the 2023/24 Municipal Year, in consultation with the other Group Leaders.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

### **Governance:**

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and regulations made under that Act, require that the overall political balance of the Council be reflected, where possible, in the appointment of Members to Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council (known informally as the political balance rules).

The appointment of Committees forms the democratic framework by which some Council decisions are made. Specific legislation applies to the regulatory committees that exercise quasi-judicial powers and separate legislation is in place for the Cabinet.

The appointment to Committees and Sub-Committees enables the work of the Council to be shared across all Council Members (where appropriate) and enables Councillors to undertake a range of duties that collectively underpin or deliver the democratic decision-making process within the Council.

### **ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

Decisions are implemented in accordance with the Council's Constitution and statutory legislation.

### **Environmental:**

Not applicable

### **Equalities and Diversity:**

Appointments to Committees enable Members to carry out their community leadership role and in considering the issues before them, help build a stronger, healthier, and just society.

The decision to constitute and appoint to Committees will not in itself lead to the tackling of inequality, disadvantage, and discrimination (particularly for the most vulnerable), but it will provide the framework for those issues to be addressed when making decisions or reviewing policies / services.

### **Financial:**

Councillors can claim expenses for attending Council meetings which will be met from within the Council's agreed Scheme of Members' Allowances. In addition, positions such as Chairmen of Committees are awarded a Special Responsibility Allowance recognising the additional responsibilities that these positions have.

### **Human Resources:**

Not applicable

### **ICT:**

Not applicable

### **Legal:**

Membership of the Committees and Sub-Committees of East Suffolk Council is determined under the terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government

(Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. Specific legislation applies to the regulatory committees that exercise quasi-judicial powers and separate legislation is in place for the Cabinet.

<b>External Consultees:</b>	<p>External consultation is not required. The Leaders of the Political Groups were asked to nominate the members of the Council whom they wish to see occupy certain seats.</p> <p>Appendix A to this report shows the list of nominations which were received from each Group Leader, setting out their allocation of Members to each Committee.</p>
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## Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XXX	<b>Governance</b>		
	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**How does this proposal support the priorities selected?**

Membership of Committees of East Suffolk Council is determined under the terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. The Regulations require that the total number of seats for each group equates to the number of places on each Committee to which political balance requirements apply.

Appointment to these bodies gives Members an opportunity to carry out their community leadership role and enables cross party views to be given on specific issues which is healthy for democracy and good decision-making.

## Background and Justification for Recommendations

1 Background facts	
1.1	<p>Membership of Committees of East Suffolk Council is determined under the terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.</p> <p>Those provisions require the Council to review the representation of political groups and individuals on Committees, Sub-Committees, and other appropriate bodies in order to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) No single political group has all seats on a Committee.</li> <li>(2) The majority of seats on a Committee is allocated to the majority political group.</li> <li>(3) The total number of seats on a Council’s Committee is allocated in proportion to political groups’ membership of the Council.</li> <li>(4) The seats on Committees are allocated in proportion to the political groups’ membership of the Council.</li> </ul>
1.2	This report contains recommendations on the allocation of seats on the Council’s Committees and Sub-Committees. There are 55 Council seats in total, on the Council.
1.3	The Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Councillors have formed a Group, which will be known as the GLI.

2 Current position	
2.1	<b>THE COUNCIL’S DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE</b>

### Cabinet

The Full Council appoints the Leader of the Council for a four year term of office and it then rests for the newly appointed Leader to appoint his / her Cabinet, including the Deputy Leader.

The Leader of the Council has been appointed earlier at this meeting.

The Cabinet (including the Deputy Leader) can be comprised of up to 10 Members and is exempt from the political proportionality rules under the Local Government Act 2000. It does not therefore form part of the Council's Committees. The Leader will determine the nature of the different portfolios that the Cabinet Members will be responsible for.

### Audit and Governance Committee

The Audit and Governance Committee is comprised of 9 Members and the political proportionality rules apply.

Members of the Cabinet are not able to sit on the Audit and Governance Committee.

### Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee is comprised of 13 Members and the political proportionality rules apply.

Scrutiny activity is undertaken by one Committee. The Committee will carry out detailed reviews, policy development and may call-in Cabinet decisions. It may appoint task and finish groups, which will be established for a specific purpose and be time bound. It may also undertake joint reviews or those involving the Council's partners.

Members of the Cabinet are not able to sit on the Scrutiny Committee.

### Planning Committee (North)

The Planning Committee has 9 seats, which are allocated on a politically proportionate basis. This Committee considers planning applications which relate to the North of the District.

All Members and Substitute Members are required to have undertaken recent and relevant training on planning matters before they are able to serve on this Committee or instigate the Call-in process for planning applications.

All Members of the Planning Committee (North) also sit on the Strategic Planning Committee, along with the Members of the Planning Committee (South) and they provide high level, strategic direction regarding planning matters.

### Planning Committee (South)

The Planning Committee has 9 seats, which are allocated on a politically proportionate basis. This Committee considers planning applications which relate to the South of the District.

All Members and Substitute Members are required to have undertaken recent and relevant training on planning matters before they are able to serve on this Committee or instigate the Call-in process for planning applications.

All Members of the Planning Committee (South) also sit on the Strategic Planning Committee, along with the Members of the Planning Committee (North) and they provide high level, strategic direction regarding planning matters.

### Strategic Planning Committee

As the Strategic Planning Committee is made up of the Members of the North and South Planning Committees and the Cabinet Member who is the Portfolio Holder for Planning, the seats on the Strategic Planning Committee have not been included in the total number of Committee seats, below.

### Licensing

The Licensing Committee is comprised of 15 seats.

The size of the Committee reflects both the statutory licensing responsibilities and the need to appoint Members to Licensing Sub-Committees (3 Members plus one Substitute) and to hear licensing appeals. All Members serving on the Licensing Committee are required to have received appropriate training before they undertake their role on the main Committee or serve on a Licensing Sub-Committee given their quasi-judicial nature.

### Appointments Committee

The Appointments Committee has three seats.

The Committee must comprise the Leader (or Deputy Leader in their absence).

The Appointments Committee is politically balanced.

The purpose of the Committee is to appoint the Heads of Service for the Council. The Committee can also consider the dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer.



2.2	<p>The Regulations require that the total number of seats for each group equates to the number of places on each Committee to which political balance requirements apply.</p> <p>Under the Council’s current structure, there are 58 seats available on Committees to which the Regulations will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit and Governance Committee: 9 seats</li> <li>• Licensing Committee: 15 seats</li> <li>• Planning Committee (North): 9 seats</li> <li>• Planning Committee (South): 9 seats</li> <li>• Scrutiny Committee: 13 seats</li> <li>• Appointments Committee: 3 seats</li> </ul>
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### 3 How to address current situation

3.1	The membership of the Council and the associated number and distribution of committee placings is as set out in the table at 3.2, below.				
3.2		<b>Seats</b>	<b>GLI</b>	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>
	Current (May 2023) number of Councillors - 55	55	28	15	12
	Distribution of the 58 committee placings	58	29	16	13
		<b>Number of places</b>	<b>GLI</b>	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>
	Audit and Gov	9	5	2	2
	Licensing	15	6	5	4
	Planning North	9	5	2	2
	Planning South	9	5	2	2
	Scrutiny	13	6	4	3
	Appointments	3	2	1	0
3.3	It is proposed that the allocation of Committee places to the different political groups be allocated, as above.				

## 4 Reason for recommendations

4.1	To ensure that Members are appointed to Committees for the 2023/24 Municipal Year in accordance with the political proportionality rules and that decision-making is undertaken in a democratic way.
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## Appendices

### Appendices:

<b>Appendix A</b>	The list of nominations which were received from each Group Leader, setting out their allocation of Members to each Committee.  <b>TO FOLLOW</b>
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### Background reference papers:

None



**FULL COUNCIL**  
**Wednesday, 24 May 2023**

<b>Subject</b>	Appointments to Outside Bodies for 2023/24 (Non-Executive)
<b>Report by</b>	Leader of the Council
<b>Supporting Officer</b>	Chris Bing Head of Legal and Democratic Services <a href="mailto:chris.bing@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">chris.bing@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a> 07442 405007

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards

## Purpose and high-level overview

### **Purpose of Report:**

Council is asked to consider Appointments to Outside Bodies (Non-Executive) for the 2023/24 Municipal Year, as outlined at Appendix A of this report.

### **Options:**

The Council needs and wishes to engage and work with external organisations, including the Outside Bodies listed in Appendix A, to continue to deliver the priorities identified in the East Suffolk Strategic Plan.

### **Recommendations:**

1. That Councillors be appointed to those Outside Bodies listed in Appendix A for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.
2. That the Leader of the Council be authorised to fill any outstanding vacancies left unfilled by Council.
3. That the Leader be granted delegated authority to make any necessary changes to the membership of the Outside Bodies for the remainder of the 2023/24 Municipal Year, in consultation with the other Group Leaders.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

### **Governance:**

Appointments to Outside Bodies may be made under the general power in Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 – to do anything which is likely to promote the economic, social, or environmental wellbeing of the area, unless specifically prohibited.

The process of Council approving appointments to Outside Bodies, where the role relates to a Non-Executive function of the Council, adheres to the requirements of the Council's Constitution.

Details of the Council's representation on Outside Bodies are included on the Council's website.

Members appointed to Outside Bodies will be asked to present a short report to Full Council, at least once per year, on the work of the Outside Body.

### **ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

None.

### **Environmental:**

None.

### **Equalities and Diversity:**

None.

**Financial:**

Those Councillors formally appointed to external organisations as the Council's representative are able to claim travel expenses in accordance with the Members' Allowance Scheme. These costs can be met from existing resources.

**Human Resources:**

None.

**ICT:**

None.

**Legal:**

None.

**Risk:**

Members must consider the implications and responsibilities of being involved with Outside Bodies as they must continue to comply with the District Council's Code of Conduct when they are acting as a representative of the Council; comply with the Code of Conduct of the Outside Body they are appointed to if one exists; and declare a personal interest in any business of the District Council as necessary.

<b>External Consultees:</b>	None.
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## Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		

P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>XXX</b>	<b>Governance</b>		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>How does this proposal support the priorities selected?</b>			
Councillors appointed to Outside Bodies are able to work to help address local issues and to achieve sustainable solutions. This will help to deliver a strong and sustainable local economy and help to improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in the District.			

## Background and Justification for Recommendation

<b>1 Background facts</b>	
1.1	The Council appoints annually to a wide range of diverse Outside Bodies. The Council considers member representation on Outside Bodies when the role relates to a Non-Executive function carried out by the local authority; the Executive (the Cabinet) considers representation on Outside Bodies where the role relates to an Executive function of the local authority; and the Scrutiny Committee considers representation on Outside Bodies where the role relates to a Scrutiny function of the local authority.
1.2	Some appointments to Outside Bodies are made because of a statutory requirement to appoint one or more members to them. Most appointments to Outside Bodies are discretionary, taking into consideration how representation on them adds value.
1.3	Appointment of members to Outside Bodies provides support to the organisation concerned and enables members to fulfil their community leadership roles.
1.4	Members appointed to Outside Bodies are able to work with and alongside local community groups, helping to empower them in terms of addressing local issues and delivering sustainable solutions.

2 Current position	
2.1	Members were last appointed to Outside Bodies (Non-Executive) 2022/23 by Full Council at its Annual meeting in May 2022.
2.2	A review of all the Outside Bodies appointments was undertaken in April 2023.
2.3	The following Outside Bodies (Non Executive) have been removed from the list, as they no longer meet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East Suffolk Travellers Association (ESTA) Management Committee</li> <li>• Leiston Town Athletic Sports Ground Executive Committee</li> </ul>

3 How to address current situation	
3.1	Outside Bodies can gain a number of benefits from having a Council representative on them, which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To represent the interests of the Council and to promote the strategic aims of its Strategic Plan;</li> <li>• To provide knowledge, skills and expertise which may not otherwise be available;</li> <li>• To provide local accountability or democratic legitimacy through the appointment of an elected representative;</li> <li>• To ensure that good relationships can be maintained with the body;</li> <li>• To deliver a partnership project that requires the input of other organisations or community groups;</li> <li>• To protect the Council’s investments or assets i.e., if the Council has provided grant funding or provides funding for service delivery;</li> <li>• To lever in external funding which is not available to the Council on its own.</li> </ul>
3.2	Taking account of all information provided within the report, Members are asked to consider the content of Appendix A.

4 Reason for recommendation	
4.1	To ensure that members are appointed to Outside Bodies (Non-Executive) for 2023/24.

## Appendices

Appendices:	
<b>Appendix A</b>	Proposed list of appointments to Outside Bodies (Non-Executive) for 2023/24. <b>TO FOLLOW</b>

Background reference papers:	
None.	



**FULL COUNCIL**  
**Wednesday, 24 May 2023**

<b>Subject</b>	Appointments to Working Groups 2023/24
<b>Report by</b>	Leader of the Council
<b>Supporting Officer</b>	Chris Bing Head of Legal and Democratic Services <a href="mailto:chris.bing@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">chris.bing@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a> 07442 405007

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards



## Purpose and high-level overview

### **Purpose of Report:**

To consider the continuation and membership of Working Groups for the 2023/24 Municipal Year. The Council has several Working Groups, to which Cabinet or Full Council appoint. This report concerns the two Working Groups to which Full Council makes appointments.

### **Options:**

1. Appointing Councillors to Working Groups. Working Groups are set up to examine specific issues in-depth prior to recommendations being put forward to the relevant decision-making body.
2. Not appointing Councillors to Working Groups. Should the Council decide not to appoint to the Working Groups, then the opportunity for more in-depth consideration of issues could be lost.

### **Recommendations:**

1. That the membership of Working Groups for the 2023/24 Municipal Year, as agreed by the Political Group Leaders and detailed at Appendix A, be appointed.
2. That the Leader of the Council be granted Delegated Authority to make any necessary changes to the membership of the Working Groups for the remainder of the 2023/24 Municipal Year, in consultation with the other Group Leaders.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

### **Governance:**

Appointment to Working Groups enables more in-depth consideration to be given to specific issues.

Reviewing Councillor representation on Working Groups ensures that they remain relevant and fit for purpose and allows back bench Councillors to concentrate on their community leadership roles within their own Wards.

### **ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

Not applicable.

### **Environmental:**

Not applicable.

### **Equalities and Diversity:**

Not applicable.

### **Financial:**

Members appointed to Working Groups are able to claim expenses in accordance with the Members' Allowance Scheme and these costs can be accommodated within existing resources.

<b>Human Resources:</b> Not applicable.
<b>ICT:</b> Not applicable.
<b>Legal:</b> Not applicable.
<b>Risk:</b> Not applicable.

<b>External Consultees:</b> Not applicable.
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## Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XXX	<b>Governance</b>		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**How does this proposal support the priorities selected?**

Councillors appointed to Working Groups are able to work to help address local issues and to achieve sustainable solutions. This will help to deliver a strong and sustainable local economy and help to improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in the District.

## Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	The Council appoints to Working Groups each year as part of its corporate governance framework and in support of the democratic process and decision-making arrangements.
1.2	The proposed Working Groups for 2023/24 are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Local Plan Working Group</li> <li>• Member Development Steering Group</li> </ul>

2 Current position	
2.1	Details of the proposed Working Groups for 2023/24, including their Terms of Reference, are outlined in Appendix A.
2.2	The Working Groups have clear terms of reference outlining their roles, responsibilities and reporting mechanisms, thereby increasing openness, transparency and making the best use of resources.
2.3	Where specific post holder nominations are required, these are outlined in the Appendix.
2.4	The Housing Benefits and Tenant Services Consultation Group was disbanded in 2022, therefore, this Working Group has been removed from the list and will no longer be appointed to.

3 How to address current situation	
3.1	Consultation will be undertaken with the relevant Political Group Leaders to seek nominations for the Working Group positions.

4 Reason for recommendation	
4.1	To ensure that Members are appointed to Working Groups for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

## Appendices

### Appendices:

<b>Appendix A</b>	Schedule of Working Groups Nominations for 2023/24 <b>TO FOLLOW</b>
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### Background reference papers:

None.



**FULL COUNCIL**  
**Wednesday, 24 May 2023**

<b>Subject</b>	Appointment of Independent Persons
<b>Report by</b>	Leader of the Council
<b>Supporting Officer</b>	Chris Bing Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer chris.bing@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable.
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards

## Purpose and high-level overview

**Purpose of Report:**

For East Suffolk Council to appoint Independent Persons for the next four years to be consulted on Code of Conduct complaints pursuant to the Localism Act 2011

**Options:**

1. To appoint Dr Andrew Peck and Mr Michael Urey as East Suffolk Council's Independent Persons
2. To not appoint Dr Andrew Peck and Mr Michael Urey as East Suffolk Council's Independent Persons.

**Recommendations:**

1. That the council appoints Dr Andrew Peck and Mr Michael Urey as East Suffolk Council's Independent Persons for a four-year term until East Suffolk Council's Annual Meeting in May 2027.
2. That the Council pays an annual allowance of £300 to each Independent Person, and agrees to pay a fee of £50 for each investigation report that the Independent Person considers on behalf of the Council.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

**Governance:**

Good governance is supported by promoting high standards, adopting a Code of Conduct and having arrangements in place for considering and determining Code of Conduct complaints which include consulting an Independent Person.

**ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

Annual Governance Statement

**Environmental:**

None

**Equalities and Diversity:**

None

**Financial:**

The annual allowance of £300 to the Independent Persons and a fee of £50 for each investigation report that the Independent Person considers on behalf of the Council can be met from existing budgets.

**Human Resources:**

None

**ICT:**

None

**Legal:**

Under Section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011, the Council must appoint at least one Independent Person.

The Independent Person must be appointed through a process of public advertisement, application and appointment by a positive vote of a majority of all members of the Council (not just of those present and voting).

There are statutory criteria in the Act which set out those who cannot be considered to be “independent”. For example, those who have been an elected or co-opted member or an officer of the District Council or of any of the Parish / Town Councils within this Council’s area, within the last five years, cannot be classed as “independent”.

**Risk:**

Loss of public confidence due to failure to adhere to member and officer code of conduct and promote and maintain ethical standards is a corporate risk. An Independent Person plays an integral role in the arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints and upholding high standards.

**External Consultees:**

Dr Peck and Mr Urey are willing and able to be reappointed as Independent Persons for East Suffolk Council.

## Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>XXX</b>	<b>Governance</b>		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>How does this proposal support the priorities selected?</b>			
The appointment of an Independent Person is a statutory requirement and an important role in the Council's arrangements for upholding high standards in public office.			

## Background and Justification for Recommendation

<b>1 Background facts</b>	
1.1	The revised provisions regarding the regulation of standards of conduct for elected under the Localism Act 2011 ('the Act') came into effect on 1 July 2012.
1.2	East Suffolk Council's Full Council adopted the Local Government Association's Model Code of Conduct on 23 March 2022.
1.3	East Suffolk Council is required under the Act 2011, and the local arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints made under that Act, to appoint at least one Independent Person to be consulted by the Monitoring Officer on Code of Conduct complaints brought against district and parish councillors in East Suffolk. The Council has appointed two Independent Persons, to provide resilience and enable the effective management of complaints, across East Suffolk.
1.4	<p>The functions of the Independent Person(s) are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) They must be consulted by the authority before it makes a finding as to whether a Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct or decides on action to be taken in respect of that Member; this means on a decision to take no action where the investigation finds no evidence of breach or, where the investigation finds evidence that there has been a breach, on any local resolution of the complaint, or on any finding of breach and on any decision on action as a result of that finding;</li> <li>(ii) They may be consulted by the authority in respect of a standards complaint at any other stage; and</li> <li>(iii) They may be consulted by a member or co-opted member of the District Council or of a Parish / Town Council against whom a complaint has been made.</li> </ul>



1.5	When the Act was first introduced, it was agreed that the remuneration for Independent Persons should be an annual allowance of £300, and a fee of £50 for each investigation report that an Independent Person considered.
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<b>2 Current position</b>	
2.1	Dr Andrew Peck and Mr Michael Urey were appointed as East Suffolk Council's Independent Persons at Annual Council in May 2019. Their term of office has expired.
2.2	Dr Peck and Mr Urey were also Independent Persons to East Suffolk Council's predecessor Councils, Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council. Following advertisements and a full recruitment process, Dr Peck was appointed an Independent Person in 2012, and Mr Urey in 2017.
2.3	An Independent Person is consulted on all Code of Conduct complaints made against any councillor in the 178 town and parish councils in East Suffolk, as well as any district councillor. In the last Municipal Year, the Monitoring Officer consulted Dr Peck and Mr Urey on 41 Code of Conduct complaints against town, parish and district councillors in East Suffolk.

<b>3 How to address current situation</b>	
3.1	It is recommended that Dr Peck and Mr Urey be reappointed as the Council's Independent Person for four years, until the Annual Meeting in May 2027.

<b>4 Reason/s for recommendation</b>	
4.1	There is a statutory requirement for the Council to appoint an Independent Person to be consulted on Code of Conduct complaints by the Monitoring Officer.
4.2	Dr Peck and Mr Urey are trained and experienced Independent Persons.
4.3	The appointment of Dr Peck and Mr Urey, as Independent Persons, will ensure that the Council, and its Councillors, comply with the requirements of the Act, and helps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct.

## Appendices

<b>Appendices:</b>
None.

<b>Background reference papers:</b>
None.



**FULL COUNCIL**  
**Wednesday, 24 May 2023**

<b>Subject</b>	Calendar of Meetings for 2023-24
<b>Report by</b>	Leader of the Council
<b>Supporting Officer</b>	Kate Blakemore Strategic Director <a href="mailto:kate.blakemore@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">kate.blakemore@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a>

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable.
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards

## Purpose and high-level overview

**Purpose of Report:**

To seek approval for changing the start times for Full Council and Cabinet meetings from 6.30pm to 6.00pm, for the 2023/24 municipal year.

**Options:**

None. The Calendar of Meetings provides the framework for the Council's democratic and decision-making processes and is a statutory requirement for dates and timings to be set by Council.

**Recommendation:**

That the changing of start times for Full Council and Cabinet meetings from 6.30pm from 6.00pm, for the 2023 /24 municipal year, be approved.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

**Governance:**

There are statutory and constitutional requirements to hold Council meetings to formulate decisions and to approve policies / strategies. The publication of Agendas and reports for meetings are undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements.

Publication of the Calendar of Meetings and timings allows the public to know in advance when Council and Committee meetings are being held.

**ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

Not applicable

**Environmental:**

Not applicable

**Equalities and Diversity:**

Our meetings will be convened in venues that meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, in terms of public accessibility, in order to ensure access to Council meetings for all. Both East Suffolk House and Riverside meeting the Equality Act 2010 requirements for public accessibility.

In addition, copies of the Agenda, reports or supporting documentation can be made available in large print, Braille or in a different language, on request.

<p><b>Financial:</b></p> <p>The cost of administering all the proposed meetings can be met from within existing budgets.</p>
<p><b>Human Resources:</b></p> <p>Not applicable.</p>
<p><b>ICT:</b></p> <p>The public can view Council meetings (including Committees and Sub-Committees) online, via YouTube, when 'open' items of business are being considered. The Agenda and accompanying 'open' reports for meetings are made available to view on the Council's website.</p>
<p><b>Legal:</b></p> <p>There are statutory and constitutional requirements to hold Council meetings to formulate decisions and to approve policies / strategies. The publication of Agendas and reports for meetings are undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements.</p> <p>Publication of the Calendar of Meetings and timings allows the public to know in advance when Council and Committee meetings are being held.</p>
<p><b>Risk:</b></p> <p>Not applicable.</p>

<b>External Consultees:</b>	External consultation is not necessary. However, due care has been taken not to hold meetings at the same time as other nearby local authorities such as Suffolk County Council.
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### Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>XXX</b>	<b>Governance</b>		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>How does this proposal support the priorities selected?</b>			
There are statutory and constitutional requirements to hold Council meetings to formulate decisions and to approve policies / strategies. The publication of Agendas and reports for meetings are undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements.			

## Background and Justification for Recommendation

<b>1 Background facts</b>	
1.1	The Calendar of Meetings provides the framework for the Council's democratic and decision-making processes and is a statutory requirement.
1.2	It also enables all Members of the Council to plan and insert proposed meeting dates in their diaries in advance and allows the public and press to view future meeting dates.
1.3	The publication of Agendas and reports for meetings must be undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements.
1.4	It is important that the Council's meetings are programmed to ensure that decision-making is undertaken in a timely way to help with the implementation of Council strategies, plans, priorities and in fulfilling statutory and constitutional obligations.

<b>2 Current position</b>	
2.1	The Council has a current Calendar of Meetings for 2023-24, which was approved by Full Council at its meeting in January 2023.
2.2	Previously, the start time of meetings has been standardised to give consistency and to accommodate the anticipated volume of business.
2.3	This paper seeks approval to change the timings of Full Council and Cabinet meetings from 6.30pm from 6.00pm.

<b>3 How to address current situation</b>	
3.1	The Calendar including the change to timings, once approved, will be publicised and will be available to view on the Council’s website: <a href="http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk">www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a>
3.2	The meeting papers for Full Council, Cabinet and the Committees are also available to view on the website.
3.3	The majority of the Council’s meetings are available to view on the Council’s YouTube channel, when ‘open’ items of business are being considered.

<b>4 Reason for recommendation</b>	
4.1	To enable the effective scheduling of Council business for 2023/24.

## Appendices

<b>Appendices:</b>	
<b>Appendix A</b>	The proposed Calendar of Meetings for 2023-24 showing the changing of time for Full Council and Cabinet meetings from 6.00pm from 6.30pm.

<b>Background reference papers:</b>	
None	

## EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL - CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2023/24

Committee	MEETING DATE												
	2023								2024				
	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
<b>CABINET</b> Tuesday at 6pm		6	11		5	3	7	5	2	6	5	2	7
<b>FULL COUNCIL</b> Wednesday at 6pm from 28 <sup>th</sup> June onwards	24	28~	26		27		22		24	21	27		22
<b>SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b> Thursday at 6.30pm			20		21	19	16	21	18	22	21	18	16
<b>AUDIT &amp; GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE</b> Monday at 6.30pm			10		11			11			11		
<b>STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE</b> Monday at 10.30am			3			2			8			8	
<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE NORTH</b> Tuesday at 2pm		13	11 <small>Venue TBC</small>	8	12	10	14	12	9	13	12	9	14
<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE SOUTH</b> Tuesday at 2pm		27	25	22	26	24	28	19	23	27	26	23	28
<b>LICENSING COMMITTEE</b> Monday at 6.30pm			17			16			15			15	
<b>LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE (Ad hoc)</b>	3												
<b>SOUTHWOLD HARBOUR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b> Thursday at 4pm			13		14		9		11		14		9
<b>SHAREHOLDER REFERENCE GROUP –</b> Tuesday at 2pm		6			5			5			5		
<b>ARP JOINT COMMITTEE</b> Tuesday at 11am		13			12			5			5		

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP BOARD

	2023										2024				
	DAY	TIME	MAY 2023	JUNE 2023	JULY 2023	AUG 2023	SEPT 2023	OCT 2023	NOV 2023	DEC 2023	JAN 2024	FEB 2024	MAR 2024	APRIL 2024	MAY 2024
Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham Community Partnership	Ad-hoc	3.30pm	31					6		15		17			
Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth & Villages Community Partnership	Mon	6pm	30						16		18		19		
Carlton Colville, Kessingland, Southwold & Villages Community Partnership	Weds	Ad-hoc		7					18		6		28		
Felixstowe Peninsula Community Partnership	Ad-hoc	2pm		12				4			4			4	
Framlingham, Wickham Market & Villages Community Partnership	Thurs	6pm			6				5			25		7	
Kesgrave, Rushmere, Martlesham, Carlford & Fynn Valley Community Partnership	Ad-hoc	Ad-hoc			10				2			8		11	
Lowestoft & Northern Parishes Community Partnership	Weds	6pm		21				20		29		31			
Melton, Woodbridge & Deben Peninsula Community Partnership	Ad-hoc	4.30pm	31					25			20			24	
Community Partnership Board	Ad hoc	daytime		27 10am				13 2pm			13 10am			7 2pm	

### Key to Symbols:

◆ Private meeting

\*\* Remote meeting

~ Extraordinary Meeting

- Meetings held at East Suffolk House, Melton, are indicated in **gold** (on Page 1)
- Meetings held at Riverside, Lowestoft are indicated in **blue** (on Page 1)
- Meetings held at the Meeting Room, Breckland House, St Nicholas Street, Thetford, IP24 1BT are indicated in **green**
- Meetings held at Stella Peskett Millenium Hall, Might's Road, Southwold, IP18 6BE are indicated in **grey** at 10am
- Meetings held at The Fromus Centre, Saxmundham, Street Farm Rd, Saxmundham IP17 1AL are indicated in **red**
- Meetings indicated in **pink** – venue TBC

### Bank & Public Holidays

2023- 29 May, 28 August, 25 and 25 December

2024 – 1 January, 29 March, 1 April, 6 May and 27 May

### Notable Dates

4 May 2023 – District & Parish Elections  
 31 May and 1 June 2023 – Suffolk Show  
 4 – 6 July 2023 – LGA Conference  
 20 – 23 July 2023 – Latitude Festival

Please check the Council's website for more details and the papers for each meeting

### Please refer to published agenda for confirmation of meeting arrangements

Please take notice that there are likely to be items at the aforementioned meetings that will be taken in private session. The most common reasons for the press and public being excluded are: information relating to any individual, information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual and information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).



