

Unconfirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Cabinet** held in the Conference Room, Riverside Lowestoft, on **Tuesday, 07 November 2023 at 6:30 PM**

Members of the Cabinet present:

Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Jan Candy, Councillor Tom Daly, Councillor Toby Hammond, Councillor Vince Langdon-Morris, Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Councillor Caroline Topping, Councillor Sarah Whitelock, Councillor Kay Yule

Other Members present:

Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Dan Clery, Councillor Julia Ewart, Councillor Craig Rivett

Officers present: Chris Bally (Chief Executive), Chris Bing (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Kate Blakemore (Strategic Director), Katy Cassidy (Democratic Services Officer), Lorraine Fitch (Democratic Services Manager), Phil Harris (Strategic Communications and Marketing Manager), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), V Johnson (Health and Safety Manager), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Marie McKissock (Finance Manager Compliance), Amy Moye (Procurement Manager), Fiona Quinn (Head of Environmental Services and Port Health), Tim Snook (Leisure Development Partnership Manager), Alli Stone (Democratic Services Officer), Christine Walker (Food and Safety Manager)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Ashton.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Announcements

Leader of the Council

There were no announcements from the Leader of the Council

Cabinet Members

Councillor Yule announced that the Cycling and Walking Strategy (SPB) supplementary planning document had been shortlisted at the Royal Town Planning Institute 2023 awards. This was for 'Planning Excellence' in the Digital Planning category, Councillor Yule wished the team best of luck at the awards ceremony.

Councillor Langdon-Morris offered his thanks to the Chief Executive, East Suffolk Services and everyone involved in providing assistance and support during the recent adverse weather and flooding experienced in his ward.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive had no announcements

4 Minutes

On the proposition of Councillor Hammond, seconded by Councillor Yule it was unanimously

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2023 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 Our Direction 2028

Councillor Topping, Leader of the Council introduced report ES1718 which related to East Suffolk Council's proposed strategic plan, 'Our Direction 2028'.

Following the elections in May 2023 work commenced on the new Strategic Plan. There was consideration of the previous plan and the wider values of the GLI group. Consultation took place which included drop-in sessions for staff from across all sites, Chief Executive Briefings and an 'all member' briefing. There was also an online consultation opportunity for residents and stakeholders. In addition stakeholders were written to inform them about the consultation.

Feedback was collated and fed into final version of the plan which reflected the priorities and the political ambitions of the new administration for the next four years.

The Strategic Plan would work with and empower communities to protect what was loved about the district, improve services where required and adapt to the changing environment.

The four themes were outlined as: Environment Impact, Sustainable Housing, Tackling Inequalities and a Thriving Economy.

An overview of the Council's finances was included in 'Our Direction'. A clear and transparent action plan would be developed to manage and monitor progress and achievements.

There were no questions from Cabinet Members.

Councillor Byatt was pleased to see there had been movement from previous shortened versions of what the plan was. He stated he was disappointed at the number of responses received and posed how engagement could be increased in future to ensure as much local grass roots democracy as possible. Councillor Byatt referenced the issue of digital assumption and future options to include a physical note in with information routinely sent out to households.

Councillor Topping responded to state that communication is digital and that there was work completed to try and engage more people in having their say by being contacted through other means and social media was used to convey messages and information.

The Strategic Director added that there was a press release and wider stakeholder survey conducted. Hard copies of the plan were available on request. In terms of the survey 380 responses were received, there was an opportunity for free text and they survey was open for a month. A summary of these were included in Appendix C of the documents provided for the meeting.

Councillor Topping thanked everyone who took part in the process and reflected that it was good to be out in the community working with other officers on this project.

On the proposition of Councillor Topping, seconded by Councillor Hammond it was unanimously

RESOLVED

That it be recommended to Full Council that it approves the Strategic Plan, Our Direction 2028, as set out in Appendix A to the report.

6 East Suffolk Council's Food and Health & Safety Service Plan 2023-2024

Councillor Candy, Cabinet Member with the responsibility of Community Health introduced Report ES1719 which related to the East Suffolk Council's Food and Health and Safety Service plan 2023 - 2024.

The first Food and Health and Safety Plan was approved in November 2021 and came to end on 31 March 2023. The plan covered the vital work carried out by the Environmental Services and Port Health area.

The Food and Health and Safety Team deliver a wide range of statutory functions, both regulatory and advisory. Councillor Candy outlined a number of these, which included the regulation of health and safety standards in workplaces, food health export certificates, health and safety inspections, ship sanitation certificates, inspection of vessels at the port of Lowestoft along with raising awareness among food business operators, employers and the public.

Councillor Candy highlighted the function of the Corporate Health and Safety Team and Suffolk Coastal being the leading port health authority in the UK.

There were no questions asked from Cabinet Members.

Councillor Rivett posed a question regarding the wording of the recommendations being quite broad.

The Monitoring Officer and Chief Executive confirmed that the recommendation's wording aimed to provide the opportunity to amend the service plan by members in attendance, and that a similar recommendation would then go ahead to Full Council for approval.

Councillor Byatt questioned the plan to continue to drive recruitment so reliance on temporary contractors could reduce.

Councillor Candy advised there were people working on apprenticeships within East Suffolk.

The Food and Safety Manager advised that there was one temporary contract at present and 4 Environmental Health Apprentices who would hopefully go on to take up internal roles in the future.

Councillor Byatt highlighted PG45 of the report it stated that there could be an increase on the number and frequency of checks and asked what the provision was for managing the increased pressure on staff capacity to manage these potential changes.

The Strategic Director advised that provision had been made to recruit for more staff if required. There was potential for a significant increase in checks and East Suffolk Council were awaiting further detail to understand the charging mechanisms that would go alongside the requirements. Lobbying to Central Government would also continue regarding funding additional resources required to manage the increases expected.

Councillor Daly queried that his understanding was DEFRA would cover any additional costs.

The Strategic Director confirmed this and invited through the Chair the Head of Environmental Services and Port Health Strategic Management to comment further. They stated that a letter from DEFRA was expected which would provide more information and an invite to apply for a bid for additional funding. The proposed fees and charging regime document for the EU checks had been received and the team were working through the implications of it. Lobbying for further information and support would continue.

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

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. Notes performance against the service plan for 2021/23, and
2. considers and comments on the service plan for 2023/24, and
3. recommends that Full Council approves the service plan for 2023/24, with or without amendment.

7 Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy and Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring for 2023/24

Councillor Langdon-Morris the Cabinet Member for Resources and Value for Money introduced report ES1720 which related to the Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy and Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring for 2023/24.

It was outlined that the purpose of the report was to approve an updated draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), taking account of new and revised risks in order for the Council to set a balanced budget that delivers its priorities for the period under review 2024/25 to 2027/28.

The report also provided Cabinet with an overview of the Council's projected financial performance for the financial year 2023/24 in respect of the General Fund, Reserves, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the Capital Programme.

Councillor Topping thanked the Chief Finance Officer for including additional data in the strategy following feedback from an Informal Cabinet meeting.

Councillor Byatt queried how the wider funding programme worked in the context of Lowestoft Town Council making a bid to the Public Works Fund for the Town Hall regeneration project. The project had recently been granted partial funding from East Suffolk Council.

The Chief Executive stated that the business case was always predicated on application to heritage lottery fund which was successful and then an application to the Public Works Loan Board from Lowestoft Town Council. The funds provided by East Suffolk Council reduced the amount of money being requested via the Public Works Loans Board. The business case talked about the payback of the loan and usage of the Town Hall and further proposals.

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

RESOLVED

1. That the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy attached as Appendix A be approved.
2. That it be approved that members and officers develop proposals to set a balanced budget for 2024/25 and beyond.

3. That the Council's financial position in Appendix B for the period April to September 2023 together with projections of the full year outturn and reserve balances be noted.

8 East Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) 2024/25

Councillor Langdon-Morris the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money introduced report **ES1721** which related to East Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) 2024/25.

It was outlined that purpose of the report was to review the 2023/24 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) and consider options for the scheme for 2024/25.

There were no questions put to Councillor Langdon-Morris.

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

RESOLVED

That it be approved that no change is made to the East Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for 2024/25.

9 Insurance Contract Renewal

Councillor Langdon-Morris the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money introduced report ES/1722 which related to an insurance contract renewal.

Councillor Langdon-Morris outlined the purpose of the report sought approval from Cabinet to go out to tender and enter into a new three-year contract with the option to extend for a further two years for Insurance services for East Suffolk Council and East Suffolk Services Limited.

There were no questions put to Councillor Langdon-Morris.

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

RESOLVED

That Cabinet approves for authority to be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money, and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, to tender and award the contract for insurance services, on terms that best protect the Council's interests and after undertaking a procurement exercise pursuant to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Leiston Leisure Centre/Alde Valley Academy Third Generation (3G) and Multi-Purpose Games Area (MUGA) Sport Facility Legacy from Sizewell C

Councillor Whitelock the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, introduced report ES/1723 which related to Leiston Leisure Centre/Alde Valley Academy Third Generation (3G) and Multi-Purpose Games Area (MUGA) Sport Facility Legacy from Sizewell C.

Councillor Whitelock outlined the purpose of the report, which was to seek Cabinet approval to enter into negotiations with Alde Valley Academy to deliver the building of a 3G pitch and MUGA (fully funded through Sizewell C Holding Company) through the Leisure Partnership Agreement with Rock Merchanting, known as Pulse Design and Build.

Furthermore, to enter into a management agreement to operate the pitch with Alde Valley Academy through ESC's leisure operator, Places Leisure, subject to terms that are in the best interest of ESC.

The following options were outlined

1(a) To enter into arrangements to build and deliver the third-generation pitch on the Alde Valley Academy land at no cost to the council, as outlined in the report.

1 (b) To enter into a management agreement that sets out the proposed hours of use for Alde Valley School, the construction workforce, and the local community for the use of the 3G pitch and MUGA as outlined in the report.

2(a) To not agree to deliver the 3G and MUGA through the leisure development partnership and for the Alde Valley Academy to arrange the building works and delivery directly.

2(b) To not enter into a management agreement to manage the 3G and MUGA through ESC's leisure operators and for the Alde Valley Academy to manage the facilities directly.

Councillor Byatt queried if there was a start date and if Sizewell C did not go ahead - at all, would there be a requirement to pay the money back.

The Leisure Development and Partnership Manager advised that the team were seeking delegated authority enter in to those agreements. It was due to be built July 2024 ready for January 2025. A contract would not be accepted if there was a requirement to repay funds in such circumstances as Councillor Byatt queried.

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

RESOLVED

1. That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director in liaison with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism in the best interests of East Suffolk Council to enter into arrangements with Alde Valley Academy and Sizewell C Holding Company (Sizewell C Co) for ESC's Leisure Development partner, Pulse Design and Build, to build and deliver the third-generation pitch on the Alde Valley Academy land at no cost to the council.

2. That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director in liaison with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism to enter a management agreement that sets out the proposed hours of use for Alde Valley School, the construction workforce, and the local community for the use of the 3G pitch and multi games use area in liaison with the Strategic Director and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism

As a point of note, Councillor Smith-Lyte shared a concern regarding 3G pitches and the materials used in constructing them.

Councillor Whitelock advised that she had considered the issues and environmental impact, but felt that the community benefit was great and significant to the local area. It was flagged up that there was a shortfall in MUGA facilities in the local area.

The Leisure Development and Partnership Manager advised that there was research being conducted by Sport England and in Europe regarding use of materials and wider environmental impacts. If any new information was to become available prior to build commencement changes can be made. In addition, the rubber crumbs could be removed once in use, if a better alternative was found.

There was a discussion about the detrimental impact of artificial sport pitches. Councillor Whitelock concluded to state that sometimes politics requires difficult decisions and on balance she felt it was the right thing to do.

Councillor Ewart raised a concern that Leiston residents would end up paying for the pitch and was there a 'Plan B'.

Councillor Whitelock responded that regarding electricity and running costs, the taxpayer would to some extent be paying. However, referred to the previous discussion around wider benefit to the community and the benefit of having the expertise of the Leisure Team being involved the process.

The Leisure Development and Partnership Manager added that the build was not going to be on Council land and would likely go ahead. If the Council move forward with the preferred recommendation, there would be more environmental control to the build and an opportunity to ensure wider benefit to the local community.

Councillor Daly highlighted the importance of the Council being involved and having the ability to influence decisions and outcomes of the project for community and environmental benefit, for example ensuring the floodlights are only on when in use.

Councillor Whitelock added that the skills and experience of the Leisure Team were key to being involved in the project.

Councillor Byatt commented that MUGA pitched are designed to be 'how you want them' and be set not to be lit up at certain times and some environmental factors can be mitigated and managed via such mechanisms.

The Leisure Development and Partnership Manager stated that comments made during the meeting were taken on board and as part of negotiations lighting would be discussed.

11 Exempt/Confidential Items

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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

12 Exempt Minutes

On the proposition of Councillor Beavan, seconded by Councillor Yule it was unanimously

RESOLVED

That the Exempt minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2023 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The meeting concluded at 7:35pm

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Chair