

Confirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Cabinet** held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, on **Tuesday, 11 July 2023 at 6.30 pm**

Members of the Cabinet present:

Councillor Paul Ashton, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Tom Daly, Councillor Katie Graham, Councillor Toby Hammond, Councillor Vince Langdon-Morris, Councillor Mike Ninnmey, Councillor Caroline Topping, Councillor Kay Yule

Other Members present:

Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Rosie Smithson, Councillor Ed Thompson

Officers present:

Trazar Astley-Reid (Resilient Coasts Programme Manager (FCRIP)), Chris Bing (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Kerry Blair (Head of Operations), Kate Blakemore (Strategic Director), Sarah Davis (Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny and Member Development)), Heather Fisk (Head of Housing), Martin Hone (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Tom Potter (Press and Publicity Officer), Sarah Shinnie (Corporate Events and Commercial Projects Officer), Tim Snook (Leisure Development Partnership Manager), Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager)

1 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment.

2 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Ninnmey, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health, declared an Other Registerable Interest during the discussions of Item 15 - East Suffolk Play Action Plan 2023-27, during the discussions on this item, as he was a member of the Felixstowe and District Sports Council.

3 Announcements

There were no announcements made.

4 Minutes

On the proposition of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, seconded by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money, it was by a unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2023 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 RingGo: Contract renewal

Cabinet received report **ES/1564** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Corporate Services - Digital, Customer Services, HR and Assets and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development and Transport. The report sought approval for the renewal of the RingGo contract, which would enable visitors choosing to drive to East Suffolk's towns and attractions to continue to use the cashless parking application for navigation, payments and parking sessions extensions, and the telephone (interactive voice recognition (IVR)) service for payments only.

Cabinet was advised that, whilst it would be a popular if all of the Council's car parks were made free to use, it would not be appropriate for the tax-payer to subsidise the motorist. It was important to strike a balance and it was felt that Ringo would help to achieve that. Ringo remained fit for purpose and met the Council's business needs, whilst contributing to decarbonising service delivery and provided a service for approximately 100,000 regular users each month. Cabinet noted that over 50% of transactions were by Ringo, which removed a large number of coins from the parking system, however, users could still use cash at all car parks, if they so wished.

Cabinet was advised that an exemption from the Contract Procedure Rules was not permitted due to the size of the contract, however, a direct award using a procurement framework was permitted and the contract extension would be awarded on that basis.

Councillor Ninnmey stated that he was interested in continuing with the free 30 minutes parking, as he felt that since Marks and Spencer had closed in Felixstowe, more was needed to attract people to Felixstowe for their shopping. The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Transport reported that a parking review would take place across the whole of the District in due course and local communities views would be sought on parking matters and a further report would be brought to Cabinet for consideration.

Councillor Langdon-Morris asked about parking charges when visiting the Accident and Emergency departments at hospital and it was noted that the Council did not own any hospital car parks. The Ringo contract under discussion would only affect Council-owned car parks in the district.

The recommendations were then moved by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development & Transport and seconded by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Corporate Services - Digital, Customer Services, HR and Assets. Upon being put to the vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED

1. That Option 3, to renew the contract with RingGo, be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Head of Operations, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development and Transport, to award the contract for the cashless parking service, after undertaking a procurement exercise pursuant to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations 2015.

6 Draft Outturn 2022/23 and 2023/24 Quarter 1 Budget Outlook

Cabinet received report **ES/1579** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value For Money. The report provided Cabinet with an overview of the Council's unaudited financial performance for 2022/23 in respect of the General Fund, Reserves, Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the Capital Programme and the Collection Fund.

Cabinet noted that for 2022/23, the Council's General Fund realised a surplus year end position of £0.768m. The report sought approval for the surplus to be transferred to earmarked reserves as outlined in the recommendations. The report also sought approval of the year end movements to and from the Council's other Earmarked Reserves as shown in Appendix F. The report also provided Cabinet with an initial budget outlook for the year ahead, as at Quarter 1 of 2023/24.

Councillor Rivett requested clarification regarding the Indoor Leisure Debt write off of £325k, as referenced on page 34 of the report. The Cabinet Member for Resources and Value for Money invited Mr Blair, Head of Operations to respond to the question. Mr Blair stated that the write off was related to exiting a former leisure contract and was a contingent liability. However, the funding had not been required and the money had been duly returned to the General Fund, in accordance to the financial regulations.

Councillor Rivett queried the minimum energy efficiency standards and the £113,000 highlighted for that purpose. He asked if that money had been used for a member of staff or whether it was for training? The Cabinet Member for Resources and Value for Money invited Mr Hone, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, to respond to that question. Mr Hone reported that the funding had been used for a variety of consultancy and training. Mr Hone stated that he would provide further detailed information in this respect, outside of the meeting, for all Members.

The recommendations were then moved by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money and were seconded by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development and Transport. Upon being put to the vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED

1. That the Council's draft outturn position for 2022/23 together with reserves and balances as of 31 March 2023 be noted.

2. That the transfers to and from reserves shown in Appendix F be approved, including the transfer of the General Fund outturn surplus as follows:

- £0.200m to the Transformation Reserve – Environment Theme
- £0.100m to the Transformation Reserve – Digital Theme
- £0.200m to the Revenues & Benefits Admin Reserve
- £0.268m to the In-Year Savings Reserve

3. That the budget carry forward requests above £0.03m set out in paragraph 2.4 be approved.

4. That the key financial considerations for 2023/24 be noted.

7 Appointments to the Environment Task Group

Cabinet received report **ES/1566** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment, which was presented by the Leader of the Council. The report sought approval to appoint Members to the Environment Task Group and to make an amendment to the Terms of Reference.

Cabinet noted that, following the elections in May 2023, 9 Members needed to be appointed to the Environment Task Group (ETG), which was politically balanced. Therefore, the GLI Group had 5 places, Conservatives had 2 places and Labour also had 2 places.

The report also proposed a minor amendment to the Terms of Reference of the ETG, to clarify the requirement of the Group to be politically balanced.

There being no questions or debate, the recommendations were moved by the Leader and were seconded by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Energy and Climate Change. Upon being put to the vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED

1. That the appointment of Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Councillor Katie Graham, Councillor Janet Candy, Councillor Sarah Plummer, Councillor Stephen Molyneux, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Rosie Smithson and Councillor Edward Back to the Environment Task Group be approved.

2. That the amended Terms of Reference for the Environment Task Group be approved.

8 Resilient Coasts Project Board Governance Structure

Cabinet received report **ES/1567** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management. The report sought approval to alter the Governance structure of Resilient Coasts to amalgamate the Joint Coastal Project Board (JCPB Suffolk) onto the Resilient Coasts Project Board. It was noted that the New

Resilient Coasts Project Board was yet to be initiated due to the recent elections in May 2023.

Cabinet noted that drawing in the knowledge from the JCPB Suffolk into the Project Board for Resilient Coasts would enable the project to build on the established knowledge of this group and to increase local knowledge and buy-in for the Resilient Coasts Project.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management stated that establishing a full, clear open, honest and transparent governance structure was crucial to decision making. Best practice for other projects, such as the Gorleston to Lowestoft Coastal Strategy, had ensured that decisions made about future coastal management were open to scrutiny, which gave confidence to communities and statutory partners, such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and Defra.

The JCPB Suffolk were already committed to attend four meetings per year. If the Governance Structure was not amended the officers and partners would need to attend 4-8 more meetings per year.

Councillor Rivett took the opportunity to thank, also on behalf of Councillor Byatt, Coastal Partnership East for all of their hard work and interventions in Pakefield, which had experienced a great deal of coastal loss very quickly. He then drew Members' attention to the outline business case, which mentioned procurement and other authorities. He stated that East Suffolk Council's procurement policies and procedures had recently been reviewed and he asked whether other Councils' procurement procedures would maintain the high standards achieved at ESC? The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management stated that the purpose of bringing all of the knowledge and expertise together would be to ensure that best practice was achieved at all times for the best interests of local residents.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management moved the recommendation within the report, which was seconded by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism. Upon being put to the vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED

That the amalgamation of the Joint Coastal Project Board (Suffolk) onto the Resilient Coasts Project Board be approved.

9 Appointments to Southwold Harbour Management Committee (SHMC)

Cabinet received report **ES/1565** by the Leader of the Council, which sought approval to appoint 5 Councillors to the Southwold Harbour Management Committee (HMC), following the elections in May 2023. It was noted that the HMC must have 5 Councillors appointed to it, in accordance with its Terms of Reference. A skills audit had been undertaken of the 5 Councillors it was proposed sit on the HMC. The audit demonstrated that the Councillors collectively had the knowledge, skills and experience required. The skills matrix was attached as Appendix A to this report.

Cabinet noted that the purpose of the HMC was to make recommendations to the Leader of the Council or Cabinet, whose consent to the Committee's recommendations would not be unreasonably withheld or delayed.

Councillor Rivett referred to the skills audit and the section on the Management and Development of Property or Facilities and, in particular, Caravan Site Operation and Tourism, which appeared to be the section where there was the least collective knowledge and experience. He asked how that area of knowledge and expertise would be covered, given the nominated Councillors did not appear to have skills in those areas. The Leader invited Mr Blair, Head of Operations, to respond to this question. Mr Blair stated that there would inevitably be some gaps in the Councillor's knowledge and experience, however, there were 4 Co-opted Members on the HMC, who would have the required knowledge and experienced to fill any gaps. The HMC would also be working closely with the Asset Management Team, to ensure there were strong commercial skills available. It was noted that the Asset Management Team was currently being restructured in order to provide a dedicated Estate Manager to support Southwold Harbour and to provide more strength with regards to the caravan site. Mr Blair stated that, taken as a whole, the skills set should be met.

The Leader moved the recommendation within the report, which was seconded by Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing. Upon being put to the vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED

That the appointment of Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Paul Ashton, Councillor Jan Candy, Councillor Toby Hammond and Councillor Lee Reeves to the Southwold Harbour Management Committee be approved.

10 Quarterly Southwold Harbour Update

Cabinet received report **ES/1568** by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, which provided the quarterly update on the activity and work relating to the management of Southwold Harbour. It was reported that Cabinet were the Duty Holder for Southwold Harbour and were required to receive regular updates on the Harbour.

Cabinet noted that priority had been given to matters of marine compliance and the application of a Harbour Revision Order. The report set out the actions that had been taken to ensure that the harbour operation was compliant with the Port Marine Safety Code and other regulations.

There being no questions or debate, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing moved the recommendation within the report, which was seconded by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money. Upon being put to the vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report at Appendix A be noted.

11 Housing Regulation Quarterly Update

Cabinet received report **ES/1582** by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing. The report provided an update to Members on the Housing Regulation Matters, which had led to a Regulatory Notice being issued to East Suffolk Council (ESC) by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) for a breach of the Home and Rent Standards.

Cabinet was advised that this report followed paper ES/1432, which was presented to Full Council on 25 January 2023. At that meeting, recommendation 6 stated: “Members note that quarterly updates will be presented to Cabinet, detailing the progress against the Compliance and Rent Improvement Plans.” Due to the pre-election period and Cabinet Meetings not taking place during April, this had been the first report to the Cabinet, following the Annual Full Council meeting in May. Quarterly updates would be provided until the Regulatory Notice was withdrawn.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing stated that the Housing Regulations were very complex and were regularly updated. The report stated that the Council continued to make significant progress on compliance matters and was in a much better position than it was 18 months ago. The forensic rents audit had also been completed, which had been very technical and the refunds project would shortly be initiated.

An external review of housing governance had been requested by Full Council in January 2023 and this had recently been completed and considered by the Audit and Governance Committee on 10 July. The review had provided 10 recommendations, which officers had accepted in full and were now implementing. The review had also found that all of the steps taken to identify and address the housing management issues, as endorsed by Full Council, were considered to be sufficient.

Councillor Rivett and other Members took the opportunity to thank Mrs Fisk, Head of Housing, and her Housing Teams for all of their hard work and progress made in addressing the issues which had been identified.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing then moved the recommendations within the report and this was seconded by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Energy and Climate Change.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health took the opportunity to ask about the costs involved in bringing the Council’s housing stock up to the good homes standard and if there was any government assistance available? Mrs Fisk reported that there was no government funding for this area of work, instead rental income had been used. The last Administration had approved in November 2022, a budget of £2 million to spend on fire safety works on Council properties and that work was currently underway. Mrs Fisk was pleased to report that the Council was now almost 100% compliant with the legislative requirements. The only properties that were not complaint were where the tenants had refused access for the works to be completed. As a result, action was being taken to try to gain access to those properties. In relation to the Decent Homes Standard, the government was currently

consulting on having a new standard that would apply to all tenures of dwelling. When the new Standard was implemented by the government, the Council's housing stock would need to be assessed against the new standard, which may lead to additional works being required. Stock condition surveys were also being undertaken on all ESC flatted blocks and houses by Council officers. It was planned to undertake surveys of 20% of dwellings each year, in order that they would all be assessed on a five yearly cycle.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Energy and Climate Change stated that he was pleased to second the recommendations and was very encouraged by the way the Council was taking forward the improvements and helping those local residents who needed it the most. Upon being put to the vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED

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

12 Exempt/Confidential Items

On the proposition of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development and Transport, seconded by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, it was by a unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

13 Exempt Minutes

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

14 Improving Access to the Private Rented Sector

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

15 East Suffolk Play Action Plan 2023 - 2027

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

The meeting concluded at 7.31 pm

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Chair