

**Unconfirmed**



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Full Council** held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, Melton, on **Wednesday, 26 July 2023** at **6.30pm**.

**Members present:**

Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Paul Ashton, Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Seamus Bennett, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Jan Candy, Councillor Dan Clery, Councillor Janet Craig, Councillor Tom Daly, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor Deborah Dean, Councillor Julia Ewart, Councillor John Fisher, Councillor Amanda Folley, Councillor Andree Gee, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Katie Graham, Councillor Alan Green, Councillor Owen Grey, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Beth Keys-Holloway, Councillor George King, Councillor Vince Langdon-Morris, Councillor Stuart Lawson, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor Debbie McCallum, Councillor Stephen Molyneux, Councillor Mike Ninnmey, Councillor Sally Noble, Councillor Graham Parker, Councillor Keith Patience, Councillor Malcolm Pitchers, Councillor Sarah Plummer, Councillor Lee Reeves, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Keith Robinson, Councillor Sheryl Rumble, Councillor Myles Scrancher, Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Councillor Rosie Smithson, Councillor Anthony Specca, Councillor Ed Thompson, Councillor Caroline Topping, Councillor Geoff Wakeling, Councillor Sarah Whitelock, Councillor Kay Yule

**Officers present:**

Chris Bally (Chief Executive), Chris Bing (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Kate Blakemore (Strategic Director), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer (Regulatory)), Sue Meeken (Labour Political Group Support Officer), Laura Mundy (Principal Planner (Policy and Delivery)), Agnes Ogundiran (Conservative Political Group Officer) Tom Potter (Press and Publicity Officer), Philip Ridley (Head of Planning and Coastal Management), Isabel Rolfe (GLI Political Group Support Officer), Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager)

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**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jenny Ceresa, Councillor Tess Gandy, Councillor Toby Hammond, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor Mark Packard and Councillor Jamie Starling.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**3 Minutes - 24 May 2023**

Councillor Byatt stated that one section of the minutes was not a full account of what had occurred, and asked if there could be a transcript of the recording of the meeting to amend the minutes, or if approval of the minutes could be deferred to the next meeting to allow this section to be amended.

Councillor Byatt stated that on Item 13 of the minutes of the 24 May 2023 there was a reference to comments made by Councillor Ewart, but he did not think all of Councillor Ewart's comments had been minuted.

The Chair stated that the minutes of Council meetings were not a verbatim record, and asked Councillor Ewart whether she believed the minutes were an accurate record of the comments she had made. Councillor Ewart stated that she had spoken at this point to express frustration at the length of the discussion for that item.

Councillor Byatt stated that he believed some comments, which Councillors felt were derogatory, were still missing.

The Chair stated that either an amendment to the minutes needed to be proposed, or the minutes agreed and confirmed. The Councillor whose comments were in question believed that this was an accurate record. If there was something important that had not been recorded this needed to be made clear.

Councillor Byatt asked that the minutes be accepted, except for discussion on item 13, and a transcript of this discussion be prepared for approval at the next Council meeting. Councillor Byatt stated he did not wish to waste time on this discussion and asked that Councillors remember that discussion was being recorded and for care to be taken over any remarks made in the meeting.

Councillor Ewart stated that this was the first Full Council meeting she had attended, and stated that she did not recall her comments exactly but apologised if she had caused offence.

The Chair stated that as no amendments had been put forward, discussion needed to move on.

Councillor Folley stated that the comments that had not been included were that Councillors were unprofessional and catty, and asked that the minutes be amended to reflect these comments.

Councillor Byatt stated that Councillor Ewart had apologised he accepted this so that the meeting could move on.

The Chair stated that Councillors should not use the agenda item to confirm minutes to call out other Councillors over what they had or had not said. This was an opportunity to put forward amendments to the minutes only. If there were concerns about comments in meetings these could be raised with officers or the Chair.

The Chair asked for a seconder to discuss the amendment. There was no seconder.

The Chair stated that it was important that minutes were discussed, and asked Councillors recognise that they were not a verbatim record of discussion. If there was something substantial missing from the minutes then an amendment needed to be put forward and voted upon. The Chair stated that he appreciated offence had been caused by comments at a previous Full Council, but amending the minutes was not the only way to address this and there were other avenues to consider.

On the proposition of Councillor Topping, seconded by Councillor Daly, it was by

**RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 24 May 2023 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**4 Minutes - 28 June 2023**

On the proposition of Councillor Topping, seconded by Councillor Daly, it was

**RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 28 June 2023 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**5 Announcements**

Chair of the Council

The Chair stated that he had attended a number of civic events on behalf of East Suffolk including:

- Suffolk Pride Opening Event for Suffolk Pride Fringe – at The Cornhill, Ipswich on 30 June
- Bungay Pride – at Castle Bailey, Bungay on 15 July

The Chair joked about his pronunciation of the word 'seconder' in the recent Council meeting. Having checked the pronunciation, the Chair stated he had been mistaken.

Vice Chair of the Council

He had attended 2 events since the last Full Council meeting:

- 20th Anniversary of the Rural Coffee Caravan – at Old Buckenham Hall on 9 July
- Concert 'Fantasias, in Nomines and Consort Songs by CulphoMusic – at St Buttolphs Church in Culpho on 21 July.

Leader of the Council

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Changes to various Appointments

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The Leader reported that she had made a number of appointments, using her delegated authority as Leader of the Council and they were as follows:

- I have appointed Councillor David Beavan, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, as Chair of the Southwold Harbour Management Committee, with effect from 11 July 2023.
- I have appointed myself as the East Suffolk Council Heritage Champion, with effect from 15 July 2023, and I shall look forward to working with Historic England.
- We have been advised that we have now been given an additional seat on the East Suffolk Water Management Board. I have appointed Councillor Peter Byatt to this seat, with effect from 20 July 2023. (He was previously the named substitute for Councillor Smithson).
- I have appointed Cllr Ed Thompson as the second named Substitute Member for the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP), also with effect from 20 July 2023.
- Finally, I have appointed Cllr Mike Ninnmey as the Council's representative on the East Suffolk and North East Essex NHS Foundation Trust. Cllr Julia Ewart will be his named Substitute. These Executive Outside Body appointments take effect from 26 July 2023.

#### Sad passing of Suffolk County Councillor, for Woodbridge Division, Caroline Page

Caroline was a true force of nature, a tireless campaigner and a brilliant Councillor. From cleaning up rivers, to championing woman's equality, Caroline set the bar for what a Councillor should aspire to be - always putting her community first. For those that had the pleasure to work alongside her, we are proud to call her a friend.

#### Cabinet Members

##### Councillor Yule, Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management

Councillor Yule stated that the Council had just completed its first quarter under the new Administration and she had undertaken a large portfolio and there were many new Councillors following the election in May. Councillor Yule wished to thank all those involved with the first round of meetings for Planning Committee North, Planning Committee South, Strategic Planning Committee and Coastal Partnership East. Their professionalism and support was very much appreciated.

##### Councillor Clery, Assistant Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Transport on behalf of Councillor Hammond, the substantive Cabinet Member

Councillor Clery took the opportunity to read part of a letter received from Peter Aldous, MP for Waveney, to the Secretary of State for Transport in April 2023, extolling the virtue of active travel and in particular the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy. Last week, he had received a response commended the production of the Cycling and Walking Strategy and the high levels of engagement received by the

public. The strategy would provide a strong foundation with which to submit funding bids from. Active Travel England have recently announced funding allocations of £200 million to help fund active travel schemes and improving existing infrastructure. £7, 930, 216 had been allocated for capital schemes in Suffolk in addition to £545, 528 to improve local engagement and boost technical capability, through the Capability Fund. He then thanked officers for their hard work in producing the Cycling and Walking Strategy and commended the recognition they had received.

### Chief Executive

There was no announcement from the Chief Executive on this occasion.

## **6 Questions from the Public**

No questions had been submitted by the electorate.

## **7 Questions from Members**

The Chair advised that 1 Member Question had been accepted, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 and he invited Councillor Smithson to read out her question:

### Question submitted by Councillor Rosie Smithson to Councillor David Beavan, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing

After 13 years of Conservative Party economic mismanagement, we understandably want to look at and engage with the few opportunities given from central government for investment and support. However, there is good reason to be sceptical of freeports.

Versions of freeports elsewhere in the world have been areas where workers have had far less rights and unions have been forbidden from operating. We are concerned that the regulatory flexibility that would be permitted in freeports raises the risk that workers' rights will be reduced and union agreements will not be recognised here as well.

How will Freeport East ensure the highest standards of workers' rights and collective agreements will be respected?

### Response from Councillor Beavan

I initially shared Cllr Smithson's scepticism about Freeport East, that jobs would just be relocated to gain financial advantage, and that it could become a wild west of deregulation.

Joining the board however, I read the terms of reference and business plan with a careful and sceptical eye. It seems to me now a genuine attempt to catalyse Green Growth in our region, committed to fair employment practices and genuine innovative enterprises, observing all the normal rules of operation.

I am advised that “Freeports uphold the UK’s high standards on security, safety, workers’ rights, data protection, biosecurity, tax avoidance and evasion, and the environment and Freeport areas are subject to the same relevant legislation and regulations that protect these as the rest of the country. Freeport businesses will be subject to the same legislation and regulations, including in relation to workers’ rights, that protect the rest of the country.”

I was especially interested to attend the launch at Suffolk College’s Net zero skills centre last month as our young people must get a slice of this action.

My job as your representative on the board is to make sure these high ideals are upheld, and grasp with both hands any investment in Green Growth in our region.

#### Supplementary Question from Councillor Smithson

My query is around governance and monitoring and whether the unions will be involved in this. Although it states that workers rights will be fully protected, can we be sure that within the Freeport area this will be closely monitored, as the Labour Group were very concerned about workers rights?

#### Response from Councillor Beavan

Councillor Smithson has raised a good point, which was also close to my heart. I do not have the specific answer here. I will raise this with the Board at its upcoming meeting and I will report back outside of this meeting. It is important that the unions are on side with this. Thank you for raising this.

### **8 Petitions**

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

### **9 Notices of Motion**

No Notices of Motion had been made as provided by Council Procedure Rule 11.

### **10 Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan**

Full Council received report **ES/1608** by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management, which sought approval of the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Yule noted the significant work of Saxmundham Town Council to formulate the plan. Councillor Yule highlighted that of those who voted, 86.9% voted in favour of making the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Yule summarised the process of engagement and consultation that took place when formulating the Neighbourhood Plan and the various policies it set to influence development in the area. The Neighbourhood Plan area was designated in 2017 and aligned with the parish boundary as it was at that time. In April 2023, the recommendations from the Community Governance Review (CGR) were implemented, which adjusted the parish boundary to include land that was previously part of another parish. It was important to note that the CGR would not impact the Neighbourhood

Plan boundary and it remained as it was in 2017. The planning policies in the plan related to:

- Design principles
- Expansion of existing businesses
- New businesses
- New community facilities
- Improving connectivity
- Public rights of way
- Parking provision
- Windfall and infill development
- Tenure blind housing development
- Historic town centre and Conservation Area
- Non-designated Heritage Assets
- Gateways, views and landscape setting of Saxmundham
- Protection and enhancement of natural assets
- Community gardens and allotments
- Protection of existing Local Green Spaces
- Opportunity Zones

Councillor Yule thanked Council officers for supporting Saxmundham Town Council throughout the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Questions were invited to Councillor Yule.

Councillor Smithson stated that the Saxmundham Free School would be closed next year and she raised as a point of correction, as the Neighbourhood Plan stated that the school would have spare capacity next year, when in fact it would have no pupils. She noted that there was provision for early years and primary age children and asked where the secondary age children would go and about the transport required to get them to and from other schools. Councillor Yule confirmed that she was aware of this and that she would find out specific information outside of the meeting and report back to Councillor Smithson.

Councillor Byatt referred to the Transport Survey and asked if train users had been asked if they would like to have a through-train from Lowestoft to Liverpool Street? He also sought information about electric vehicle charging points being installed, as they would prove to be very useful. He then commended the Plan, in particular the monitoring of homes being built in back gardens and the use of the former Fromus site as an allotment, which increased the amount available. Councillor Yule responded that she was not aware of the specific questions asked of train users, however, she was confident that residents throughout East Suffolk were very keen to have through-trains to London re-established. She felt it was commendable that additional allotments would be provided in that space and she reported that colleagues were looking to find other spare pieces of land for allotment use, as well as for additional open spaces to help improve residents mental health and wellbeing. Councillor Yule invited Mr Ridley, Head of Planning and Coastal Management, to update Members regarding the question about electric vehicle charging. Mr Ridley reported that installation of electric vehicle charging points were covered under building regulations and local developers had recently been updated regarding the changes in legislation and a briefing session would be provided for Members in due course.

Councillor Gooch provided reassurance that she and Councillor Fisher had been appointed to the East Suffolk Travel Association (ESTA) by Full Council in May 2023 and they regularly attended meetings and raised the need for the through train to London to be reinstated.

There being no further questions, Councillor Yule proposed the recommendation contained within the report and this was seconded by Councillor Fisher.

Councillor Ewart took the opportunity to commend the work of Saxmundham Town Council and residents regarding the Neighbourhood Plan. It had taken 5 years to complete the Plan and she noted that her Ward, Kelsale and Yoxford shared several facilities with Saxmundham, she looked forward to collaborating to create a better future for local residents, by ensuring the Plan was delivered and implemented successfully.

Councillor Fisher thanked all those involved in the production of the Neighbourhood Plan, which had taken 5 years.

The proposal, having been moved and seconded earlier, was put to the vote and it was unanimously

## **RESOLVED**

That the Council make the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum version, June 2023) part of the statutory Development Plan for East Suffolk for the whole of the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Area.

### **11 Authorisation of Officers – Attendance at Magistrates Court**

Full Council received report **ES/1609** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money, which sought approval to appoint officers to represent the Council at Magistrates' Court. It was noted that Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972 allowed local authorities to authorise officers who do not necessarily have legal qualifications (as solicitors, barristers or legal executives) to represent the Council in the Magistrates' Court.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money advised that Section 223 power was used very widely by local authorities; in particular most district and unitary authorities had been using this power for many years, to authorise recovery officers to appear in the local Magistrates' Courts in Council Tax and Business Rate enforcement cases.

East Suffolk Council was one of five authorities which formed part of the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP). The Partnership operated under a Partnership Agreement approved by the Council. It was, therefore, important to ensure that the list of authorised officers was refreshed on a regular basis, as this would provide resilience and effective cover, thus improving the Council's ability to recover Council Tax. It was noted that the second recommendation asked for authorisation to be granted to the



Monitoring Officer, to allow them to make changes to the list of authorised officers, in future.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money moved the recommendations within the report, which was seconded by Councillor Thompson. There being no questions it was put to the vote and it was unanimously

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the following updated list of officers be authorised to represent East Suffolk Council, in accordance with Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972:

Mr Steven Oxborough, Recovery Manager  
Mrs Theresa Mann, NDR Manager  
Miss Lucy Talbot, Revenues Team Manager  
Mr Peter Seeley, Revenues Team Manager  
Ms Rachel Marsden, Revenues Team Manager  
Mr Michael Cartwright, Revenues Team Manager  
Mr Nigel Adams, Court and Appeals Officer  
Mrs Rebekah Denny, Senior Recovery Officer  
Mr Sean Palfrey, Resilience Officer

2. That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to hold the list of authorised officers and to make additions, removals and amendments to the list, as appropriate

## **12 Exempt/Confidential Items**

The Chair reported that in exceptional circumstances, the Council may, by law, exclude members of the public from all, or part of, an executive decision-making meeting. There were various reasons that the Council, on occasions, had to do this and examples were because a report contained information relating to an individual, information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person, or information relating to any consultations or negotiations.

This evening, there was one set of Exempt minutes for approval, which were from the Extraordinary Full Council meeting which took place on 28 June 2023, which contained commercially sensitive information.

On the proposition of Councillor Speca, Chair of the Council, seconded by Councillor Fisher, Vice Chair of the Council, 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 - 28 June 2023**

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

The meeting concluded at 7.30pm.

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Chair