



## **Protocol for the Simultaneous East Suffolk Cabinet and Southwold Town Council Meeting**

### **Background**

Simultaneous meetings are not the same as joint meetings of two authorities.

The basis for holding a Simultaneous meeting for East Suffolk Council's (ESC) Cabinet and Southwold Town Council (STC) is:

- Two meetings in one room
- Two local authorities
- One agenda
- One debate
- Two sets of decisions / Minutes
- One common purpose

The two local authorities will be considering the same report and undertaking a common debate but can each reach separate / different decisions.

### **Purpose**

Simultaneous meetings held with the East Suffolk Council's Cabinet will primarily be held to consider reports that are pertinent to another authority and / or which concern matters for progressing partnership working between two different authorities and / or for making decisions that affect both local authorities.

### **Chairmanship**

The common debate at simultaneous meetings will be chaired by the Chairman elected for that meeting. The Leader of East Suffolk Council (as Chairman of the ESC Cabinet) and the Chairman (Mayor) of Southwold Town Council will lead in respect of their own authorities.

For each individual local authority, for the purposes of agreeing recommendations and

taking decisions, Southwold Town Council will be chaired by their Chairman (Mayor) and likewise the Leader of East Suffolk Council will chair in respect of East Suffolk Council's discussions.

### **Location of Meetings**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this meeting will be conducted remotely, pursuant to the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. The meeting will take place via Zoom and there will be a link to YouTube, should members of the public wish to view the meeting as it takes place, or at their leisure after the meeting has concluded.

In accordance with Southwold Town Council's Protocol for Public Speaking, there will be a Public Forum, for 10 minutes, during which time, electors can put questions to the Chairman, regarding matters on the agenda. An elector must not speak for more than 3 minutes. Where possible, a response will be given. This part of the agenda will be managed by the Clerk of Southwold Town Council and facilitated by East Suffolk Council officers.

### **Governance Arrangements**

The requirements of the Local Government Act 1972, the Access to Information Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 and other associated legislation will be adhered to in relation to the publication of the Agenda / reports and production of Decision Notices / Minutes for East Suffolk Council.

The requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 will be adhered to in relation to the publication of the Agenda / reports and production of Minutes for Southwold Town Council.

The Constitutional requirements for each respective authority will also apply.

There will be one Agenda for both authorities, which will be available on both authorities websites.

East Suffolk Council is statutorily required to publish a formal Decision Notice(s) (in addition to the production of Minutes) - which may be subject to call-in.

One set of Minutes will be produced for both authorities. These Minutes will need to be referred separately to each local authority for approval as a correct record.

Each local authority will vote separately and each Member shall be entitled to one vote (except for those occasions when the Chairman may need to exercise a casting vote).

Quorum – The current rules will apply with regard to a quorum for each authority – ie for Southwold Town Council the quorum is 4, whilst for East Suffolk Council the quorum is 5.

Declarations of Interest – Should any Councillor be a twin-hatter on both Southwold Town Council and East Suffolk Council then this would need to be declared at the appropriate place on the Agenda (ie the Member would need to declare a Local Non-Pecuniary Interest as s/he is an elected representative for both Southwold Town Council and East Suffolk Council).

Voting – As the Simultaneous Meeting is in effect two formal meetings of two separate local authority bodies considering a single item of specific interest to both parties at the same time, all Members on both local authorities have the right to speak and vote (and subject to an equality of votes the Chairman of either / both authorities would have a casting vote). This means that any dual-hatters who are Elected Members on both authorities would be able to vote twice (once for East Suffolk Council and once for Southwold Town Council).

Where the ESC Cabinet does not have decision-making powers, it must refer recommendations to a Full Council meeting but it is envisaged that for the purpose of this Simultaneous Meeting no such decisions will arise in this case.

Southwold Town Council, meeting as a local council, would have the full necessary decision-making powers and so referral of any decision to another body is not required.

Each local authority will include details of the Simultaneous Meeting arrangements on their respective websites.

## **PROCEDURE**

1. The Chief Executive of East Suffolk Council will open the meeting and ask both ESC and STC Members present to elect a Chairman to lead the debate at the Simultaneous Meeting (Ordinarily this would be the Chairman of the lead authority – in this case, the ESC Cabinet).
2. The elected Chairman for the meeting will be responsible for management of the Agenda and the meeting, as per normal meeting arrangements and will deal with the preliminary Agenda items (Apologies / Declarations of Interest etc).
3. For each report under consideration, both local authorities will undertake a common debate, chaired by the appointed Chairman for the meeting.
4. Following the common debate, the Chairman of the ESC Cabinet will seek a 'Mover' and 'Seconder' and take a vote to agree the recommendation(s) / make a decision on the item(s) under consideration.
5. The Chairman of Southwold Town Council will then seek a 'Mover' and 'Seconder' and take a vote to agree the recommendation(s) / make a decision on the item(s) under consideration.
6. At the conclusion of business, the appointed Chairman will close the meeting.