



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Members are invited to a **Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee** to be held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, Melton on **Thursday, 21 March 2024 at 6.30pm**

This meeting will be broadcast to the public via the East Suffolk YouTube Channel at <https://youtube.com/live/ZHVgafi7DU4?feature=share>

## Members:

Councillor Mike Deacon (Chair), Councillor Dan Clery (Vice-Chair), Councillor Edward Back, Councillor Seamus Bennett, Councillor Amanda Folley, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Owen Grey, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor Stephen Molyneux, Councillor Sally Noble, Councillor Sarah Plummer, Councillor Ed Thompson.

An Agenda is set out below.

	<b>Pages</b>
<b>Part One – Open to the Public</b>	
<b>1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions</b>	
<b>2 Declarations of Interest</b> 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>3 Minutes</b> To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 January 2024 as a correct record.	<b>1 - 12</b>
<b>4 Review of Partnership Working To Tackle Environmental Issues ES/1895</b> Report of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment.	<b>13 - 25</b>
<b>5 Cabinet Member Scrutiny Session</b> To receive an update from the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Corporate Services on the direction of travel for the services within his portfolio.	
<b>6 Scrutiny Committee's Forward Work Programme</b> To receive any updates in relation to the Committee's Work Programme.	

There are no Exempt or Confidential items for this Agenda.

Close



Chris Bally, Chief Executive

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<b>Unconfirmed</b>
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Minutes of a Meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, on **Thursday, 18 January 2024 at 6.30pm**

**Members of the Committee present:**

Councillor Edward Back, Councillor Seamus Bennett, Councillor Dan Clery, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor Amanda Folley, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor Stephen Molyneux, Councillor Sally Noble, Councillor Sarah Plummer, Councillor Ed Thompson

**Other Members present:**

Councillor Paul Ashton, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Vince Langdon-Morris

**Officers present:** Chris Bally (Chief Executive), Chris Bing (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Kate Blakemore (Strategic Director), Sarah Davis (Democratic Services Officer), Heather Fisk (Head of Housing), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Siobhan Martin (Head of Internal Audit), Agnes Ogundiran (Conservative Political Group Support Officer), Lorraine Rogers (Chief Finance Officer), Julian Sturman (Specialist Accountant – Capital and Treasury Management), Amber Welham (Finance Business Partner - Housing)

**1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Grey.

An apology was also received from Councillor Wilson, Assistant Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3 Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28**

The Committee considered report ES/1819 from Councillor Langdon-Morris, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money, who gave a brief presentation relating to his report. He explained the reporting timescales for agreeing the capital programme and that it had been compiled taking account of the following main principles, to:

- maintain an affordable four-year rolling capital programme;
- ensure capital resources were aligned with the Council's Strategic Plan;
- maximise available resources by actively seeking external funding and disposal of surplus assets;
- not to anticipate receipts from disposals until they are realised; and
- to focus on the deliverability of the current projects within the programme.

The Chair reported that Chris Bing, Monitoring Officer was also present at the meeting.

The Cabinet Member reported that the General fund capital programme for 2023/24 to 2027/28 totalled £329m and the HRA capital programme totalled £81.94m.

He concluded that the capital programme linked to the overall budget position, directly linked to the Capital Strategy and Treasury Management and Investment reports and was also reviewed by the Audit and Governance Committee.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for his presentation and invited questions from members of the Committee. In response to the queries raised, it was explained that:

- The capital programme had been constructed from the Strategic Plan agreed in 2019 but had recently been reviewed line by line with each project having a business case.
- Some projects had more spend in one year than another because there were peaks and troughs for when the spend was made for each project.
- There was currently only a small amount of money allocated for coastal maintenance because bids would be made for funding, however, one of the principles of the programme was not to anticipate funding before the Council had it or had even applied for it.
- The leisure and tourism budget line was driven by specific projects and would move up and down but until funding was received it would not be included in the capital programme.
- Each year money was set aside into specific capital Reserves and, at the moment, the programme until 2027/28 would use them all up, however, come 2028/29 there would be further reserves because it was on a renewal basis so the Council could continue to fund capital programmes with the reserves available.
- The programme had been reviewed line by line and the projects would fit under the four themes of the new Strategic Plan which had an underlying narrative.
- The idea for having a resilience reserve for flooding was so that the Council could distribute help quickly whilst going through the Government grant process.
- Some projects that had external funding seemed to be in limbo, possibly due to the conditions attached to them, and they needed to be reviewed. In relation to the Local Authority Housing funding, the Council needed to decide if the project should go ahead, subject to a business plan, but if not then the money would need to be go back to DLUHC.
- CCTV equipment across the district was aging so was being reviewed and ideally new cameras with better resolution would be sourced. CCTV was monitored but the arrangements were being reviewed to ensure it was effective as possible. Discussions were being held with Felixstowe Town Council and Councillor Ashton, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services agreed to liaise with relevant Councillors regarding CCTV in Felixstowe.

- The funding for the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood was the same amount overall but had been reprofiled.
- In relation to the Felixstowe sports hub, the Council had committed to working with the clubs to move to individual pitches and the project was nearing conclusion.
- £50K in the next financial year for Port Health related to just the IT equipment - no further capital funding was required after that.
- In relation to the Lowestoft Towns Fund, the Business case for each project would be scrutinised to ensure it remained viable. Some of the money was going towards the arts with £3m allocated to redevelop the Marina Theatre.

In response to queries relating to the HRA capital programme, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing explained that:

- There was a lot of new legislation coming forward requiring improvements to the Council's stock and a work programme would be developed around compliance and standardising the service. Priorities would be reviewed and the Council would also look at how it could deliver as much affordable housing as possible.
- 977 homes were being targeted initially to have solar panels but that would depend on whether they were south facing, the pitch of the roof and capacity but even if only 500 had panels, that would help achieve the net zero target and help tenants save money. A review of properties less than 20 years old was being carried out and it was hoped to access funding to subsidise the works. If a tenant did not have a due south roof then the Council would still try to help them. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money added that funding was allocated to improve windows and doors and provide cavity wall insulation which would help mitigate towards tenants' energy costs.
- The contract to complete Stock Condition Surveys for all blocks had already been awarded and work had been underway for about five months. A contract for all the houses was expected by the summertime next year when the Council would then have stock condition data for all of its 4,500 properties and would look to apply for grants to carry out the works.

Councillor Gooch queried that, if the four themes within the new Strategic Plan were unclear in terms of strategy, direction and priorities, how was it possible to measure the effectiveness of the budget in delivering the new Plan, although she acknowledged that perhaps it might just be clarity on the language being used.

Councillor Lynch referred to the budget for Planning and Coastal Management and stated that the figures identified were unrealistic so needed to be reviewed.

Councillor Bennett acknowledged the point made by Councillor Gooch but reminded Members that Our Direction had been discussed at Full Council and perhaps it would be better to consider Councillor Gooch's point after all the budget documents had been considered.

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Value for Money reassured Members that, having gone through the capital programme line by line, he was confident that it was realistic and whilst there might be a little adjustment required, each project was

underpinned by a business case with a rationale but they did need to be placed under each of the Strategic Plan themes and the projects were very wide ranging.

The Capital Accountant referred to the minor capital works set out on page 16 and explained that the Coastal Management projects spanned the life of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and most were subject to external funding. He added that currently Coastal Management had not identified any new projects to be added to the Programme but obviously they could do so at any point. He reassured Members that the current programme had been reviewed and were accurate at this point, however, it was obviously subject to change as projects evolved.

Having scrutinised the report, the Committee decided that it did not wish to make any formal recommendations to Cabinet in relation to the capital programme.

#### **4 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2024/25 to 2027/28**

The Committee received the joint report ES/1820 of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing. The latter explained that the report brought together the Housing Revenue Account Budget for the period 2024/25 to 2027/28, with a projected outturn for 2023/24 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.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing explained that, under the 2020 Rent Standard, Local Authorities could increase rents by up to CPI +1%. The September CPI value must be used, which for 2023 was 6.7%. East Suffolk Council was proposing a 7.7% rent increase in line with Government guidance for 2024/25. This rent increase was deemed necessary for the HRA to meet its required investment in its housing stock and to deliver required services to tenants. He added 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. Government had announced that the Local Housing Allowance would increase for 2024-25, however the values had yet to be released. If the increases were more than 7.7%, this would be the maximum increase applied to current tenants. It was noted that, every five/six years there was a 53-week rent year. This was where there were 53 Mondays in the financial year. 2024/25 was one of these years. It was proposed to continue to collect rents over this week as normal, but still provide two rent free weeks over the Christmas period. The rent was increased over the remaining charged weeks in the year to cover these 'rent-free' weeks. The proposed rent increase would give an average weekly social rent of £96.78 for 2024/25 - an increase of £6.92 compared to 2023/24. Service charges could only recuperate the cost of providing a service. The proposed average weekly General Service Charge for Grouped Homes for 2024/25 was £19.31 - an increase of £3.21 compared to 2023/24. The Cabinet Member concluded that the budget proposals gave a forecast HRA working balance for 2024/25 of £2.389 million, maintaining it at the minimum acceptable limit of 10% of total income.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and invited questions from Members.

Councillor Jepson expressed disappointment that the Committee had been sent an email from the Cabinet Member which included jibes about the opposition parties given that the Scrutiny Committee was cross party and neutral. The Cabinet Member explained that the email had contained the comments he made at Cabinet which he had hoped would help the Committee as he needed to be frank about the position the Council was in.

In response to Members' queries, it was noted that:

- The £30m deficit the Cabinet Member had referred to in his comments to Cabinet had been a broad figure and whilst most of it was confidential it did cover £9m for the overcharged rent and St Peter's Court including rehousing tenants.
- The information in the email regarding Right to Buy sales was written at the time the report went to Cabinet, however, there had been two further sales since then so the figure had now been updated.
- Emergency and temporary accommodation was dealt with under the General Fund not the HRA.
- Different options had been looked at instead of demolishing St Peter's Court, however, the building required long term investment which was costly and the Council wanted to provide tenants with high quality housing.
- There was a need to make sure that the staff structure met the needs of the Social Housing Act so there could be a small number of staff moving teams. The Empty Homes Officer who had been appointed following a Scrutiny Committee recommendation was a time limited General Fund project rather than HRA so the value of the post would be reviewed over the next 18 months before any further money was committed, however, it was hoped that the excellent work already undertaken would be built upon.
- Rent arrears had increased but the refund process should clear about £1m of it and they would hopefully be able to be kept at a much lower level in the future. The Council had employed Financial Inclusion Officers to help people struggling with their rents and the Ease the Squeeze campaign helped a huge number of residents. It was noted that an increase in rent arrears had been seen across the whole sector because of inflation etc.
- The Government specified that rents were increased by CPI plus 1% and although 7% was the maximum that could be charged, they had capped it at 6% last year which over 30 years added up. This was the last year of rent settlement and it was hoped there would be more clarity in future years because otherwise it made it more difficult to use the rent receipts to build houses.
- Paragraph 3.37 related to under utilised reserves originally being used to top up DHA but was currently being used for the temporary project worker posts at St Peter's Court.
- There was a risk that if rents did not increase then that would impact on the business case and that would need to be addressed. Whilst stock compliance was the priority, the team wanted to be more ambitious in future to provide as much housing as possible even if that included sensible and prudent borrowing.
- Money was allocated for projects in the capital programme which might not be delivered in the same year such as the building of the new accommodation project that would start by the end of the calendar year but could take several years to complete.

- The Council looked at properties being sold off by housing associations, however, one challenge was the number of properties being sold given that the Council's funding was already committed and the other was because they were selling them due to the retrofit costs which on average was approximately £30K per property, therefore, in many cases it was more cost effective for the Council to build than to buy existing properties and retrofit. The Council was working with Flagship who had built 666 affordable homes at social rent level in East Suffolk.
- The Council hosted the Safe Suffolk Renters Scheme which worked with landlords and tenants to provide safe homes. Enforcement was always used as a last resort. A recent impact day had been held in a particular road in Lowestoft where there were a lot of rented properties.

There being no further questions, the Chair opened debate by expressing his disappointment that this Council was not able to provide truly affordable housing given neighbouring authorities managed it and he added that he hoped that using an arms length company would help. The Cabinet Member stated that other authorities had the same issue trying to make a business case because the rents were too low and reiterated his commitment to providing 500 new homes at affordable rent over four years even if some were provided by housing associations. He added that he welcomed the involvement of all Councillors in reviewing the business plan.

Councillor Jepson thanked the Cabinet Member and Head of Housing for their candid responses but expressed concern that some of the comments had been vague and he requested that there was more clarity to ensure the Council was not over stretched and knew how the money we had was going to be spent. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that perhaps some of the wording he had used relating to borrowing had been vague but reassured Members that, before this happened, a robust business case would be undertaken. In relation to the existing budget, he stressed that he had confidence that the Head of Housing knew what she was talking about and would continue to scrutinise the budget.

Councillor Bennett stated that getting people off the streets was a priority and queried if the savings being made by housing them could justify the case to provide more affordable housing. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that savings could be made for different services but the Council could not use those savings when creating a business case for a loan to increase temporary accommodation on the basis that it would save money as that would not pay the interest. The Head of Housing explained that savings could be measured and she referred to the Housing First project where someone who had a long history of rough sleeping was given their own home with intensive support to live independently. She added that there was a huge cost benefit to prevention rather than not doing anything, not just for the Council but also for the Police and NHS.

Councillors Lynch and Folley suggested that the funding for the solar panel project for example might save some people money but it would be better used to buy houses or provide emergency housing.

Councillor Gooch referred to page 31 which gave details of the under-occupation charge and stated that it would be useful to understand how many residents this affected given some might not be able to move on because of their finances.



There being no further debate, the Chair requested the Cabinet Member and Officers to bear in mind all the comments made during this item and then proposed the following which was seconded by Councillor Lynch:

## **RESOLVED**

That, having reviewed the Housing Revenue Account Budget, the Scrutiny Committee endorse borrowing to invest in housing as interest rates come down and the use of an arms length company, and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing investigate new ways to finance sustainable housing potentially using borrowing both new builds and retrofitting.

### **5 Draft General Fund Budget and Council Tax 2024-25**

The Committee received report ES/1818 of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money who gave a brief presentation. He explained that this was the initial draft of the Council's General Fund Budget for 2024/25, presented to Cabinet on 2 January 2024. The Mid Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) provided a baseline forecast of income and expenditure and looked at the overall financial climate, including public finances and the local government financial environment. It was noted that the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024/25 had been released on 18 December 2023 and the most significant change was the New Homes Bonus (NHB) which would continue for another year (the 2024/25 allocation for ESC was £0.651m). Other settlement grants had either increased or decreased, but the overall funding position for the Council remained relatively unchanged, only an additional £16,800 of funds compared to last year.

The Cabinet Member stated that the proposal to increase council tax for 2024/25 up to the referendum limit of 2.99% or £5, whichever was higher, would equate to a District Band D Council Tax for East Suffolk of £186.57, an increase of £5.40 or 2.98%. He explained that the provisional settlement calculation assumed that the maximum council tax increase would be applied.

The Committee was informed that higher interest rates had benefited the Council with a greater return on treasury management (£1.4 to £3.15m). The Council was forecasting £1.04m of additional interest income next year (£1.4 to £2.45m).

The Cabinet Member explained that, due to the uncertainty of the timing and reform of the Business Rates (BR) system, the approach taken to the current MTFS had been to roll forward the estimates for 2023/24 through to 2027/28, with the exception being a tapering of the Pooling Benefit. This was to reflect a cautious approach to the overall Business Rates income position in the latter years of the MTFS. The BR -NNDR1 Return for 2024/25 would be completed later this month and would confirm the revised position on BR income for next year and the budget position for the report to Cabinet on 6 February 2024. The total estimated value for Pooling Benefit to Council was £4.6m which was £3.6m above original budget. The additional income from the Pooling Benefit and treasury management income had helped to mitigate some of the pressure on the budget for 2024/25. The most significant areas were pay and inflation and additional revenue funding of the capital programme. Until the BR - NNDR1 return

was completed this report presented a budget gap of £3.2m for 2024/25, which had reduced by £0.4m from the February 2023 position. The budget would be updated following completion of the BR - NNDR1. If a gap remained this would be funded from reserves to present a balanced budget to Full Council in February 2024. The opening balance on earmarked reserves was £48m. In addition to earmarked reserves, the Council held a general fund balance of £6m and no use of this was forecast currently. A risk assessment of the General Fund Balances informed the Chief Finance Officer's view of the adequacy of reserves to provide assurance to the budget. Having regard to the financial risks surrounding the budget planning process; the Council had maintained (for a number of years) the level of General Fund reserve balances at around 3%-5% of its budgeted gross expenditure (this equates to between £4m and £6m). Given the pressures on council finances and the uncertainty of government funding going forward, it might be prudent to increase this general fund balance to £8m. This would be further considered by the Chief Finance Officer in reporting at the end of the budget process and presented as part of the 2024/25 budget report to Full Council in February 2024.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for his introduction and in response to Councillors' queries, it was noted that:

- The Council had held a reserve of £6m for several years due to uncertainties, however, given the current economic climate, it was prudent to review the amount again and perhaps increase it before completing the budget process.
- The NHB supported a number of community initiatives, including the Enabling Communities Budgets, but these would need to be reviewed once the funding ended in 2026/27. It was hoped that the Government would replace the NHB by another funding stream.
- There was uncertainty over the Council's funding position and the shortfall was increasing year by year so expenditure and value for money needed to be looked at across all service areas as well as opportunities to generate income eg ESSL provided services for the Council but could also generate commercial returns that could be used to build houses for example in the future.
- ESSL started in July 2023 and the focus of the first year had been to understand what the core services were, spending commitments etc and that had shown a number of issues eg the need to invest in new equipment. A three year Business Plan was currently being drafted and the focus would be sorting out the quality of service of the contract and growing external contracts. If there were examples where staff had not performed or did not have the right equipment, these would be looked at.
- 3% had been allowed for the annual pay award but as it had been higher than that for the last few years, a corporate contingency had also been built in to the budget.

There being no further questions, the Chair invited Members to debate any recommendations.

Councillor Jepson stated that he recognised the difficulties this administration had and the uncertainty of the general election, but he had been encouraged to hear the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services' view that there was a need to look ahead at any risks.

Councillor Gooch stated that the Committee had looked at the budget in great detail and she agreed that some of the figures were vague, although she felt that the answers received at the meeting in respect of the uncertainties had justified that vagueness at the moment especially given the dire local and national circumstances.

On the proposition of Councillor Deacon, seconded by Councillor Jepson, it was:

**RESOLVED**

That the Scrutiny Committee endorse Cabinet's recommendations to Full Council as follows:

1. Approves the draft 2024/25 General Fund Revenue Budget as set out in this report and summarised in Appendix A5 and notes the budget forecast for 2025/26 and beyond.
2. Approves a proposed Band D Council Tax for East Suffolk Council of £186.57 for 2024/25, an increase of £5.40 or 2.98%.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Members and officers as well as the Committee for their work in scrutinising the budget papers.

**The meeting adjourned from 8.50 to 8.57pm.**

## **6 Cabinet Member Scrutiny Session**

The Chair invited Councillor Langdon-Morris, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money, to give details of the direction of travel for the services within his portfolio. The Cabinet Member began by thanking the Chief Finance Officer, her team, the housing team and Anglia Revenue Partnership (ARP) staff. He stated he had enjoyed working with officers since his appointment in May 2023 and, apart from having provided him with timely financial reporting, he felt their efforts had gone above and beyond, managing the remaining Covid grants and coping with the additional workload caused by the recent flooding events in East Suffolk.

In relation to Storm Babet flood funding support, the Cabinet Member explained that the Council's Finance and other teams, as well as ARP, continued to work closely with Suffolk County Council to distribute flood relief funds in accordance with set Government criteria to affected residents and businesses. As of 8 January 2024, letters / emails had been distributed to 366 directly and indirectly impacted residential properties in East Suffolk. 250 applications for the £500 grant had been received to date, 235 had been either paid or were being processed, totalling £117,500. In terms of Council Tax discounts, 216 discounts had been applied totalling £121,940 to date.

In relation to the business support grant of £2,500, 80 businesses had been written to, identified as potentially being eligible for support by the County Council. The application process confirmed whether a business was eligible, alongside additional fraud checks and visits by ARP officers. 40 applications had been submitted to date, 20 had been approved for funding, four rejected (due to non-eligibility on insurance) and the remainder were being processed.

Given East Suffolk had experienced two major emergencies in the past three years (Covid and flooding), the Cabinet Member stated that he had proposed that the Council maintain a Resilience Reserve. The amount and modality were still to be discussed, but its purpose would be to allow the Council to respond far more quickly and effectively in the event of future emergencies, and well in advance of central government support.

With regard to earmarked reserves, the Cabinet Member explained that for 2022/23, the Council's General Fund realised a surplus year end position of £0.76m which was placed in earmarked reserves as follows:

- £300K to Transformation Reserve
- £268K to In-Year Savings Reserve
- £200K to Revenue and Benefits Reserves

By the end of the 4th quarter 2024, a further surplus would be realised of approximately £800m which would also be transferred to earmarked reserves. The total transferred in 2023/24 to earmarked reserves would be £1.568m.

Interest payable was as budgeted and made against borrowings negotiated several years ago with very low, fixed interest rates. In terms of interest receivable, the Council's investment portfolio had benefitted from recent higher savings rates - currently averaging at 4.5 to 5.8%. Projections from the Bank of England indicated that interest rates on investments were likely to remain high for the rest of 2024 which would benefit the Council.

The Cabinet Member stated that the Council's Internal Audit capability was invaluable, given that the external audit by Ernst & Young (EY) was two years behind for all Councils. The reports generated by this team were reviewed and risks noted and acted upon. In relation to External Audit, the Council's 2020/21 Statement of Accounts had been concluded on 18 December 2023 and the audited accounts were now published on the Council's website. Following the ministerial statement in July 23 and continuing expectation of a 31 March 2024 backstop date for the completion of all outstanding audits to 2022/23, the external auditors EY had taken a number of steps to prepare for implementation of proposals. These included:

- Maximising the completion of historic audits.
- Planning for 2023/24 audits: Where capacity allowed, EY would seek to commence planning for 2023/24; focusing on the most recent set of financial statements.

It was noted that the Local Government Association had stated that Councils had experienced, in real terms, a 27% cut in core spending power since 2011.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill had received Royal Assent in October 2023 and this gave billing authorities discretion to charge 100% premises on second homes (or empty dwellings). At Full Council in January 2023 it was agreed to approve this in principle, however, it required a full financial year's notice before a second home premium could be charged. More details about the categories of homes were still required. It was projected that this could generate £8m in future revenue with East Suffolk Council receiving a share of approximately £0.7m and the rest split between the

County Council and Police. The current MTFs and projected budgets did not consider this potential revenue stream.

The Cabinet Member stated that the Council would achieve, in accordance with Government criteria, a balanced budget for 2024/25. The current estimated budget deficit was £3.2m, or 4.2% of the 2024/25 total General Fund Budget, which would have to be taken from reserves, although, once known, the Business Rates revenues might reduce this deficit.

The Cabinet Member explained that a significant component of this projected budget deficit was due to investment in equipment for ESSL (previously Norse), however, it was anticipated that some revenue might be recouped from a share of Norse's last year's financial profits.

It was noted that there was £104m worth of borrowing over the MTFs and the Cabinet Member explained that all of the borrowing plans had been reviewed, however, he was concerned that some projects included under capitalisations that should underpin the business case but in fact undermined it. As these progressed into the final planning or delivery stages, Cabinet Members would be interrogating each business case and ensure that they aligned with the Council's strategic goals set out in Our Direction 2028. As part of finalising the last elements of the budget, funds would be set aside to support the delivery of these themes and this would be covered in the report to Cabinet on 6 February and before going to Full Council.

He concluded that he had been reassured by the Chief Finance Officer that the budgeting process was exactly the same as the one followed in previous years, to the same level of detail and to the same timeframes and with the same process of council wide sharing and scrutiny.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and invited questions from Committee Members.

Councillor Lynch pointed out that circumstances had changed and urged the Cabinet Member not to be afraid to review and change things as necessary. He referred to money allocated for bin replacements and queried if residents would be charged for brown bins. The Cabinet Member responded that he was aware that a lot of bins had been lost due to flooding and that bins were part of the ESSL budget. He added that he and Officers were reviewing the proposal for composting using brown bins. In response to Councillor Folley, the Cabinet Member stated that he would discuss rental charges for bins at largescale events such as First Light and Felixstowe Carnival. The Cabinet Member agreed with Councillor Bennett that there should be a charge for brown bins.

In response to Councillors Clery and Jepson, the Cabinet Member acknowledged it had been a steep learning curve since May 2023 to understand how the budget was put together and how the strategic plan was financed through the budgets. He stressed that he was reviewing everything to assure it aligned with the new Strategic Plan and that if the Council decided to build houses then there would be a robust Business Plan with a return on investment.

Councillor Gooch stated that she received many emails from residents regarding County Council services and queried how much influence the district had with County eg to repair potholes etc. The Cabinet Member stated that all Councillors received similar emails and he would be looking to see where East Suffolk could take more control of services within the district.

In response to queries from Councillors Lynch and Bennett, the Cabinet Member acknowledged that a large amount of capital money was spent in urban areas such as Felixstowe and Lowestoft and he quoted the Rural Services Network that rural residents paid 20% more in Council Tax than urban residents.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for his attendance.

## **7 Scrutiny Committee's Forward Work Programme**

The Chairman reminded Members that the review at the next meeting on 22 February was the Review of the Environmental Strategy. In addition, there would be the Cabinet Member Scrutiny Session with Councillor Smith-Lyte, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment.

In relation to the Review of the Approach Taken to Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in East Suffolk postponed from the 21 December 2023 meeting after it was cancelled, the Chair suggested that an informal TEAMS meeting be held for the Committee to agree how it wished to proceed with this review as there was an opportunity to do something a little different eg form a Task and Finish Group on a specific element of the report, if Members were so minded. Councillor Jepson referred to the recent Scrutiny training the Committee had received in November and agreed that it would be beneficial to look at possibly taking a different approach.

Councillor Plummer referred to the Budget Scrutiny trainer's comments that the Committee should pick up on things as they were discussed and suggested that, given the discussions at tonight's meeting, it might be beneficial for the Committee to scrutinise ESSL. The Chair reminded Members that topics for next year's Work Programme would be considered at the Work Programme Workshop to be held in the next few months.

The meeting concluded at 9.25pm.

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Chair



<b>Committee</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date</b>	21/03/2024
<b>Subject</b>	Review of Partnership Working to Tackle Environmental Issues
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Rachel Smith-Lyte, Environment Portfolio Holder
<b>Report Author(s)</b>	<p>Paul Mackie Lead Officer, Climate Change &amp; Environment <a href="mailto:paul.mackie@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">paul.mackie@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Laura Hack Public Realm Contracts Manager <a href="mailto:laura.hack@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">laura.hack@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Jeannette Hollingsworth Environmental Protection Manager <a href="mailto:Jeannette.hollingsworth@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">Jeannette.hollingsworth@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a></p>
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Key Decision?	No
Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN

### Purpose/Summary

The purpose of this report is to:

Provide information to assist the Committee to understand and review how the Council and its partners work together to tackle environmental issues such as fly tipping or cleansing operatives ignoring rubbish etc to ensure that anything raised by Members or residents will be dealt with quickly and effectively.

Provide information to assist the Committee to ensure whether or not effective partnership working exists to tackle environmental issues across the district irrespective of which agency has responsibility and identify potential areas of weakness for improvement.

### Recommendation(s)

That Scrutiny:

1. Having considered the report, makes any recommendation as required.

### Strategic plan

How does this proposal support Our Direction 2028?

<b>Environmental Impact</b>	Preserve and maintain the district's beauty and heritage. Restoring ecosystems and biodiversity
<b>Sustainable Housing</b>	Promote community pride in homes and neighbourhoods.
<b>Tackling Inequalities</b>	Work with partners to better understand need. Use local data to design and deliver services.
<b>Thriving Economy</b>	
<b>Our Foundations / governance of the organisation</b>	A solution focused approach.



## Justification for recommendations

### 1. Background

#### Relevant Legislation/National policies

- 1.1. For the purpose of this report, the term 'environmental' has been taken in the context of public realm, such as litter, weeds, fly tips, pollution (water, smoke, noise and dust).
- 1.2. This is a complex area as there are several pieces of Government legislation and policy in place to support the tackling of environmental issues, which are delivered by a range of agencies. The most relevant legislations are listed below:
  - 1.2.1. Waste Management: Environmental Protection Act 1990, Controlled Waste Regulations 2012, Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive, Hazardous Waste Directive (HWD)
  - 1.2.2. Fly tipping: Environmental Protection Act 1990
  - 1.2.3. Litter: Environmental Protection Act 1990
  - 1.2.4. Water Pollution: Numerous water related legislation
  - 1.2.5. Bathing water pollution: Bathing Water Regulations
  - 1.2.6. Waste on Land: Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
  - 1.2.7. Smoke: Environmental Protection Act 1990, Clean Air Act
  - 1.2.8. Dust: Environmental Protection Act 1990
  - 1.2.9. Noise: Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
  - 1.2.10. Local Air Quality: Environment Act 1995
  - 1.2.11. Antisocial Behaviour: Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

#### Collaborations and partnerships with other organisations

- 1.3. Green issues:
  - 1.3.1. There are a range of groups working across the district and County addressing the climate change and nature emergencies. This was reported at the last scrutiny committee.
- 1.4. Enabling community action:
  - 1.4.1. The Greenprint Forum is a non-statutory voluntary network of individuals, community groups and organisations taking or aspiring towards positive environmental action. It is facilitated by East Suffolk Council as part of the council's agendas on enabling community and environmental action. Its overall focus and activities are steered by a Steering Group comprised of external community leaders and key personnel from East Suffolk Council including the Portfolio Holder. It is chaired by a volunteer representative of the community sector. The purpose of the Greenprint Forum is to connect

and support community, organisational and youth champions and elected representatives to enable them to help the people of east Suffolk work together to improve our quality of life and living standards, whilst reducing our environmental impact. It does this by sharing knowledge and inspiration, facilitating discussions, organising events and linking research to need and where need is identified helping to (for example) draw in resources or arrange training to enable action.

1.4.2. The important work of the Greenprint Forum also helps support the delivery of our environment core programme, plus the wider Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan in addition to the independent work of its member groups and organisations. The Council proactively showcases examples of actions and initiatives delivered by independent members of the Greenprint Forum on an ongoing basis through newsletters, arranging site visits and Forum events and activities on behalf of the network to ensure that knowledge share opportunities are presented to encourage inspiration and replication of good practice through networking between its members. This work is complemented by the county-wide Community Network under the auspices of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership of which ESC is a key member.

1.4.3. In addition, the work of the East Suffolk's Amazing group – following a motion made to Council in 2023 concerning taking action to improve the standard of cleanliness in the public realm – has identified an opportunity to provide better coordination of and communication with volunteering groups as part of a plan to improve environmental and street scene standards.

## 1.5. Biodiversity

1.5.1. East Suffolk has been part of a joint application to the Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF), led by Suffolk County Council, along with other district and boroughs, through the Forestry Commission. This has seen the planting of 60 standard trees and 600 whips in two locations within East Suffolk since 2023. This work is an integral part of the development of the Council's Tree Policy.

1.5.2. East Suffolk Council is also part of developing and delivering the SCC-led Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which will involve multiple public, private and third sector organisations working in partnership to create the strategy by the end of 2025 and then deliver its actions. Biodiversity Net Gain delivery is also linked to the strategy.

## 1.6. What resources are available?

1.6.1. The Strategic Waste Contracts Team have 5.5 FTE. This comprises of:

- 1 x Partnerships Manager
- 2 x Contracts Managers – Waste Public Realm

- 2 x Street Scene Monitoring Officers
- 1 x PT Customer Experience Officer

1.6.2. The Team currently has no direct operational budget, but does have an important role in monitoring and directing the budget of East Suffolk Services Ltd.

1.6.3. Environmental Protection have a team within Environmental Health, comprising of:

- 1 Senior Environmental Protection Officer
- 3 x Environmental Enforcement Officers
- 1 x Environmental Health Technical Support Officer

1.6.4. The Climate & Environmental Sustainability Team have 3 FTE equivalent and provide strategic support and advice towards the development of relevant policies and projects across the various service areas of the council, internal monitoring of environmental performance and facilitation, on behalf of the council, to the Greenprint Forum.

- 1 x Lead Officer – Climate Change & Environment
- 1 x Environmental Sustainability Officer
- 1 x Apprentice for Climate & Environment (0.5 FTE)
- 1 x Graduate Project Officer (0.5 FTE)

## 1.7. What are other LA's are doing?

1.7.1. Other local authorities in Suffolk have both Environmental Health teams and departments that deal with strategic waste issues. These come together in a range of partnerships, such as under the umbrella of the Suffolk Waste Partnership, or fly tipping forum. Ideas and solutions are shared within these partnership meetings.

1.7.2. Other authorities have also harnessed volunteers to help support litter picking and street cleansing that is outside of the scope of their own direct service delivery. This includes Suffolk County Council – who have a programme to support Parish Councils to carry out litter picks, and the cleansing and maintenance of local signage. ESC has met with SCC to discuss this programme and to see whether there are lessons to be learned to support our own local activity. This has been done by the East Suffolk's Amazing working group.

## 2. Answers to Scrutiny Committee questions.

2.1. **Committee question 1: What processes and reporting mechanisms are in place between the Council and its partners such as neighbouring Authorities, East Suffolk Services Ltd (ESSL), the Environment Agency (EA), Highways England, parishes etc to tackle any environmental issues?**

- 2.1.1. Council officers and councillors attend and have representation on a number of cross-council meetings. Some examples are set out below:
- 2.1.1.1. Suffolk fly-tipping Action Group (STAG) – this is chaired by Babergh and Mid Suffolk Council and includes representatives from the Environment Agency and Environmental Protection teams. It seeks to share information on fly tipping,
- 2.1.1.2. County Biodiversity Meeting – this is a cross county meeting chaired by Highways representatives from Suffolk County Council to discuss issues such as grass cutting, weed management, tree works etc. It meets on an infrequent basis.
- 2.1.1.3. The Suffolk Waste Partnership is a strategic partnership of Suffolk’s five District and Borough Councils and the County Council, working together to continuously improve waste management services throughout the county. It houses the [Suffolk Recycling website](#) and co-ordinates work packages and procurement of key waste management services.
- 2.1.2. The Strategic Waste Team has regular contact with town and parish councils as part of its work; for example, in setting up the team, a welcome email was sent and in consulting on the Litter and Fido bin policy all parish councils were written to. Parish Councils have been provided information on the best routes to report issues to the Council for waste, fly tips, grounds work etc.
- 2.1.3. The Council has set up a cross-party task and finish group to tackle key issues within the district around the public realm and public perception. This has identified key areas of work and will be the subject of a separate briefing.
- 2.1.4. The Council meets with Managers from ESSL on a regular basis to discuss contractual and operational issues. The Council provides direction for the work of ESSL through service specifications, which are under constant review. The Strategic Waste Team has daily contact with ESSL staff at all levels to pick up and deal with live issues.
- 2.1.5. East Suffolk Council holds a service level agreement (SLA) with Suffolk County Council for works on highways verges around grounds cutting, tree works and hedge cutting. This is renewed on a three yearly basis and has agreed locations in which ESSL operate. Both ESSL and the Council hold annual review meetings with County on the SLA and any subsequent issues arising from it.
- 2.1.6. The Environment Agency contacts East Suffolk Council where there is an instance of potential pollution of Bathing Waters during the bathing water season, April 15 to 30 September. Where there is an instance of potential pollution in such sites, the Council has a role through ESSL in putting up

advisory signs to warn the public. ESSL also open and close EA floodgates in resort areas.

- 2.1.7. The Council's Customer Services Team are trained and have procedures and processes in place to pass on service requests or enquiries via calls to the appropriate teams both internally and to partner agencies. Customer Services houses the main database on customer contacts and will track enquiries and complaints via their online processes.
- 2.1.8. The Council's website is a first port of call for information to residents and through this, the 'Contact Us' section allows the public to raise issues and complaints.
- 2.1.9. The Council is part of the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit, hosted by Suffolk County Council. This deals with major incidents, co-ordinating local authority responses. Through ESSL, the Council provides on-the-ground operatives to support issues, such as erecting the flood barrier in Lowestoft, pumping out flood water and dealing with stranded marine animals etc.
- 2.1.10. The Council has a data-sharing policy with ESSL, which means that customer data can be passed through for specific reasons. However, should enquiries come via other means, such as other local authorities, data protection rules govern how contact information can be shared. This may mean customers are not updated on their request, if this is passed along.

**2.2. Committee question 2: Are there any areas where there have been challenges with working in partnership to tackle particular environmental issues?**

- 2.2.1. Incorrect report of fly tips - there has been two recent cases where a fly tip has been reported but does not meet the criteria of such. Both instances could pose a danger to life or property but does not fit into a particular team to deal with, as related to private land. In both cases, there was not clear direction on which team/ agency should lead and what the priorities were.
- 2.2.2. Glyphosate usage - changes to the County policy on spraying meant that there was an unprecedented impact on the District's ability to deliver on street cleansing in 2023. Complaints rose and part of the outcome of this was the formation of the East Suffolk's Amazing cross-party group to tackle public perception. While the County has now changed its policy for 2024, it highlighted how one organisation's policy has a knock-on effect on another's service delivery.
- 2.2.3. Fly tip clearance issues – there have been instances where fly tips were not cleared by ESSL for some time. From a thorough review of the process from start to finish there are simplified reporting mechanisms, a move to digital rather than paper trails, more investigation of land ownership from the start and much clearer guidance on removal procedures.

2.2.4. Large Commercial site – Noise and dust complaints from local residents from a site that has multiagency regulation. This is being moved forward through the creation of multiagency group that includes local residents and Councillors.

2.2.5. Fly tip prosecutions - better liaison with the Police is a priority as fly tipping is not an issue that they will normally have an involvement with, but the Council sometimes need their assistance. However, Environmental Health do work closely with the police on their Protective Services Command Day of Action where various agencies join forces for the day to disrupt criminal activities. This is achieved by agencies meeting at a specific point within a district and look for those who may be in breach of the various bits of law that can then be enforced. Environmental Enforcement Officers look for unregistered scrap metal dealers and vehicles illegally carrying waste without waste carrier licenses or without waste transfer notes.

**2.3. Committee question 3: How are Members and residents made aware of what they can report and which agency has responsibility for a particular environmental issue?**

2.3.1. The Council's website is the first port of call for reporting issues. This has a plethora of information on services and links to external agencies, as appropriate. The website is reviewed on a regular basis and coupled with the call centre, provides a central source of information and signposting for customers. The website has reporting forms for many environmental Issues. It is important that these forms are used to ensure that the issues reported are directed through to the correct teams.

2.3.2. Members were written to with an introductory email when the Strategic Waste Team formed in 2023. They were provided with a range of information and links on key aspects of litter, waste, fly tips and grounds reporting mechanisms. The Team are planning to send regular updated via this route.

2.3.3. Environmental Protection and Strategic Waste are working on the process of reporting and clearing fly tips and gave a briefing session to Members in December to set out the issues, what the Council can and cannot do and where to report.

2.3.4. The Comms team have had campaigns where they have highlighted fly tipping issues and asked through social media for any information on who may have carried out the tips. They have included contact information and reporting routes and have included this information in articles in press releases and residents' magazines.

2.3.5. The Council provides a regular magazine twice a year to residents which is sent to each household. Back issues are available here: [East Suffolk](#)

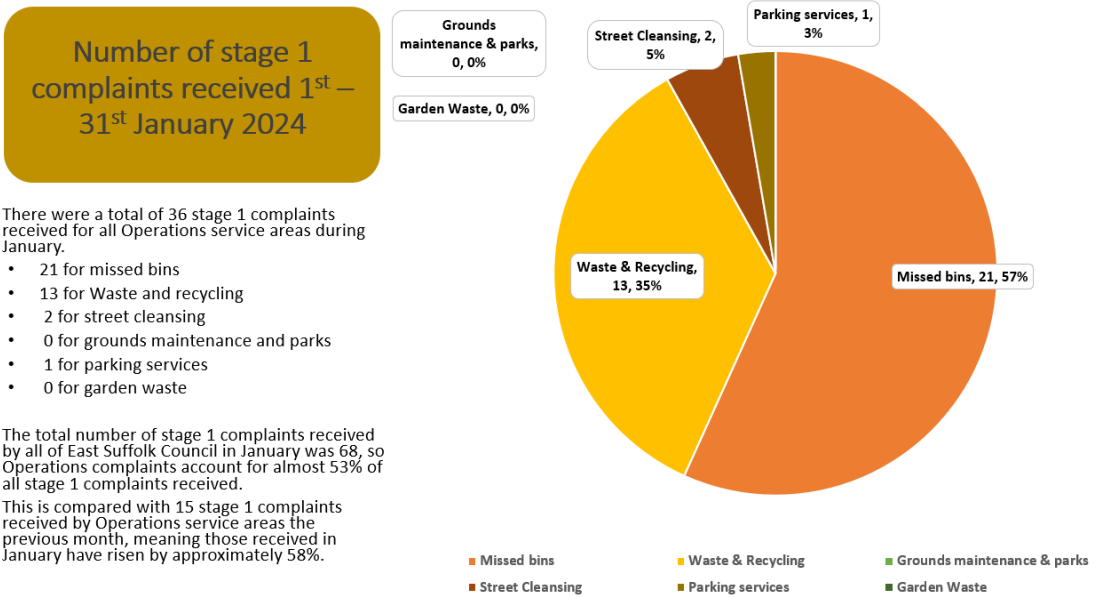
[Magazine » East Suffolk Council](#). This provides targeted information, but also 'contact us' details.

**2.4. Committee question 4: How should Members and residents report issues and how can this be made as easy as possible?**

- 2.4.1. The Council's website and call centre is the first port of call for all reporting.
- 2.4.2. Using online methods, all reporting tools are easily found using any search engine, which will take residents directly to the reporting pages of our website. Every matter that can be reported online can also be reported over the telephone or in person at our customer contact centres. All reporting channels feed into the same process.
- 2.4.3. Members can encourage residents to use these tools, use the same tools themselves or use reporting tools available internally on Sharepoint (Dash forms).

**2.5. Committee Question 5: How is it ensured that cases are tracked (particularly if they are the responsibility of a partner organisation) to ensure they are being dealt with in a timely and efficient manner and that whoever reported the issue is kept informed of progress?**

- 2.5.1. The Council's Customer Services department and website is the first port of call for public complaints and comments and those relating to street scene, environmental and grounds maintenance are triaged to the correct department. The responses are collated and regular reports given by the Customer Experience Team:



- 2.5.2. For issues such as fly-tipping, a cross-organisational spreadsheet has now been developed to keep track of tips and clearances, so all the teams involved have immediate information. The Council can use this tool for tracking issues and the status of clearance. This is used for Key Performance Indicator reporting both for ESSL's service delivery and also by Environmental Health for national reporting statistics.
- 2.5.3. The Council have to report on a monthly basis to Waste Data Flow (held nationally) on waste clearance from fly tips and waste (all types). This allows the Government to collect statistics and share this data via regular updates to map trends.
- 2.5.4. Many teams, such as Environmental Health, use Uniform to track cases, however this is not across the whole Council. The Strategic Waste Team does not use Uniform, so the only way cases are tracked is through reports via the Customer Service Dash Case Loads.
- 2.5.5. Environmental Health are actively working with ICT to map the location of fly tips on an internal system for councillors to view these (updated on a monthly basis).
- 2.5.6. ESC is working with ESSL on the implementation of a software system that will provide, it is hoped, higher levels of transparency on the current operation – for example, providing real time updates on when bins are collected and litter picking carried out – and offers the potential for people to 'self serve' and access up to date information. This programme is being managed by the Digital team.

**2.6. Committee Question 6: How does the Council and partner agencies encourage residents and town/parish councils to have civic pride and work with them to tackle environmental issues in their communities eg litter picks etc?**

- 2.6.1. The Council's approach to Community Litter Picks is under development. Groups can book online through the Council's website to register a pick and request equipment. The Strategic Waste team have recently purchased more litter pickers for both north and south. The next stage is the development of risk assessments and registration of community litter pick volunteers through a platform, to ensure that groups are covered by the relevant insurance.
- 2.6.2. As an outcome of the Pilot work for Lowestoft and Felixstowe in terms of Street Cleansing, the Council is setting up a quarterly drop-in session with Felixstowe Town Councillors to discuss key issues in the town in terms of litter and grounds maintenance. Through the work of the Street Scene Officers, there is a great deal of support given to town and parish councils and other organisations, such as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to listen to and aid with key issues they want to address.



- 2.6.3. Led by the Communities Team, there is a cross-departmental and organisational series of Impact Days planned across the district. One took place in Felixstowe in 2023 and will be repeated in Lowestoft, Beccles and Leiston in 2024. These include representatives from the Police, Suffolk Fire and Rescue, ESSL, ESC (licencing, environmental protection, strategic waste, communities). The premise is to be visible within a location and provide information and advice to members of the public on key areas, such as safeguarding, waste management, grounds clearance, licensing etc. A separate Civic Pride Day was organised in Beccles in 2023 by the leader of the Council.
- 2.6.4. As part of its work contributing towards the Greenprint Forum’s goal of a “Pollution Free Environment” and ongoing campaign of Plastic Action since 2018, the Council has, for many years, arranged Beachwatch activities on behalf of the Greenprint Forum typically with two activities per year to coincide with Great British Beach Clean, contributing towards data capture about marine pollution on the national scale by the Marine Conservation Society, whilst simultaneously cleaning the beaches. In recent years, the Greenprint Forum has partnered with a number of local community groups on these Beachwatch activities, including Litter Free Felixstowe, Blyth Litter Angels, and The Kirkley Centre.
- 2.6.5. In addition, a working group has been established to promote community pride and improve environmental standards. The East Suffolk’s Amazing programme is organised around four main themes:
- Better coordination with Suffolk County Council to ensure that the areas in their area of responsibility are carried out
  - Working with East Suffolk Services to ensure that we get the most out of the existing contract
  - Supporting volunteering – in particular, groups who are engaged in community litter picking – through the provision of equipment and guidance
  - A district wide community pride campaign under the banner ‘East Suffolk’s Amazing – Let’s Keep it That Way’

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1. There are no direct financial implications of the issues set out in this paper. The current focus is on making sure that ESC can achieve the best outcome for the current level of spend on street cleansing and grounds maintenance. A change of expectation around the level of cleansing, however, could lead to an increase in the staffing levels or equipment needed to deliver more frequent cleansing. This paper does not cover resource requirements, as these have not been calculated, but we are working with ESSL to cost potential service changes in this area of the contract.

### **4. Legal Implications**

- 4.1. The Council has legal obligations for the collection of litter from any area of public land within the district and should work to take preventative measures, investigate incidents and the causes of littering, maintain collection facilities and clean up or remove waste.
- 4.2. All services around the collection of litter should be carried out to the specification defined in the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse issued April 2006 modified in September 2019 issued under section 89(7) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and any subsequent modifications and any other relevant legislation, which includes, but is not limited to:
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
  - Controlled Waste Regulations 2012
  - Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive
  - Hazardous Waste Directive (HWD)
- 4.3. The Council, through ESSL, will assume full compliance with the provisions of all statutes, regulations, orders, statutory instruments, the Code, ACOPS, bylaws in force or coming into force relevant to:
- the provisions of service,
  - the vehicles, plant and machinery employed in connection with the provision of service,
  - the keeping of records or data in connection with the services,
  - the employment of staff in connection with the services

## **5. Risk Implications**

- 5.1. There are no risk implications as a result of this report.

## **6. Options**

- 6.1. Not applicable.

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1. That Scrutiny consider the report.

## **8. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 8.1. This report has been provided to allow Scrutiny Committee to review the partnership working to tackle environment issues and make any recommendations as felt necessary.

### **Areas of consideration comments**

#### **Section 151 Officer comments:**

There is no financial impact as a direct result of this report, subject to any follow on recommendations made by the Committee.

**Monitoring Officer comments:**

Not applicable.

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion/EQIA:**

Not applicable.

**Safeguarding:**

Not applicable.

**Crime and Disorder:**

In relation to fly tips and anti-social behaviour.

**Corporate Services implications:**

Not applicable at this stage.

**Residents and Businesses consultation/consideration:**

Not applicable at this stage.