



**Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk,  
NR33 0EQ**

# Scrutiny Committee

**Members:**

Councillor Stuart Bird (Chairman)  
Councillor Mike Deacon (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Edward Back  
Councillor David Beavan  
Councillor Judy Cloke  
Councillor Linda Coulam  
Councillor Andree Gee  
Councillor Louise Gooch  
Councillor Tracey Green  
Councillor Colin Hedgley  
Councillor Geoff Lynch  
Councillor Keith Robinson  
Councillor Caroline Topping

Members are invited to a **Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee**  
to be held in the Conference Room, Riverside, Lowestoft  
on **Thursday 15 July 2021 at 6:30 pm**

This Meeting is being held in person in order to comply with the Local Government Act 1972. In order to comply with coronavirus regulations and guidance, the number of people at this Meeting will be restricted to only those whose attendance is reasonably necessary.

Ordinarily, East Suffolk Council encourages members of the public to attend its Meetings, but on this occasion it would encourage the public to watch the livestream, via the East Suffolk Council YouTube channel, instead at <https://youtu.be/UD0jhm5j1Pg>

If you do believe it is necessary for you to be in attendance we encourage you to notify Democratic Services, by email, [democraticservices@eastsoffolk.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@eastsoffolk.gov.uk), of your intention to do so no later than 12 noon on the working day before the

Meeting so that it can be managed in a COVID secure way and the Team can endeavour to accommodate you and advise of the necessary health and safety precautions.

However, we are not able to guarantee you a space/seat and you are advised that it may be that, regrettably, we are not able to admit you to the Conference room.

An Agenda is set out below.

## **Part One – Open to the Public**

### **Pages**

#### **1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

To receive apologies for absence, if any.

#### **2 Declarations of Interest**

Members and Officers are invited to make any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Local Non-Pecuniary Interests 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.

#### **3 Minutes**

To confirm as a correct record

**(a) Unconfirmed minutes of the Meeting held on 25 March 2021** 1 - 7

**(b) Unconfirmed Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 May 2021** 8 - 15

#### **4 Cabinet Members' updates**

(i) To receive an update from Councillor Burroughes' on the strategic priorities for his portfolio which include customer services, customer access, channel shift, complaints, commercial partnerships, IT and digital transformation.

(ii) To receive an update from Councillor Gallant, as Leader of the Council, on the key deliverables for the next six months. This update is the commencement of a second round of Cabinet Member updates and so the focus has altered from (i) above.

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

To consider the Committee's Forward Work Programme

## **Part Two – Exempt/Confidential**

### **Pages**

**Close**



Stephen Baker, Chief Executive

### **Filming, Videoing, Photography and Audio Recording at Council Meetings**

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**Unconfirmed**



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held remotely via Zoom on **Thursday 25 March 2021**  
at **6:30 pm**

**Members of the Committee present:**

Councillor Edward Back, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor Andree Gee, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor Mark Newton, Councillor Keith Robinson, Councillor Caroline Topping

**Other Members present:**

Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Janet Craig, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor Keith Patience, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Ed Thompson

**Officers present:**

Katherine Abbott (Democratic Services Officer), Kerry Blair (Head of Operations), Sarah Carter (Democratic Services Officer), Andrew Jarvis (Strategic Director), Sue Meeken (Political Group Support Officer (Labour)), Andrew Reynolds (Environment Protection Manager), Daniel Wareing (Environmental Sustainability Officer)

**Others present:**

Ben Ablett (Waste Management Officer - Norse), Ben Hunter (Waste Management Officer - Norse), Stuart Mortimer (Operations Manager - Norse), Nicky Noodles (Waste Management Officer - Norse)

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**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Beavan.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**3 Unconfirmed Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 January 2021**

By consensus it was

## RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 January 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 4 Review of waste management (Part 1)

The Scrutiny Committee report **ES/0712** which provided information on fly tipping, enforcement and the reporting of environmental crimes. The report was part one of a comprehensive review of aspects of waste management. The second part of the report would be received in June with reference to contamination, collection issues, littering and public realm.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment was invited to briefly introduce the report. He thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address it and welcomed the chance to have a constructive conversation into where improvement was possible and to identify where things were being done correctly. The Cabinet Member said that although he very much wanted to listen to the Committee's concerns and thoughts - he hoped to approach the review as a think tank in order to have scrutiny help him to improve some of the on-going issues. The Cabinet Member said that from reviewing the written questions submitted in advance it seemed that a briefing for Councillors would be useful and so this was being arranged and would cover reporting, statutory responsibilities, Council powers, and definitions. The Cabinet Member asked the Committee to remember that waste/ items on a piece of land, no matter how anti social, was not fly-tipping if permission had been given - although environmental protections would be a concern in such an instance. He added that fly-tipping was classed as 'the illegal deposit of any waste onto land that does not have a licence or give permission'. Under that classification, the dumping of leaves in woodland was as illegal as more obvious items such as a mattress or builder's rubble. The Cabinet Member stated that, such was the extent of fly tipping, major organised crime gangs were often involved. In conclusion, he said that, according to Keep Britain Tidy - 'Uncontrolled illegal waste disposal can be hazardous to the public, especially if it contains toxic material or asbestos. There could be a risk of damage to watercourses and soil quality from the dumped waste.'

The Head of Operations briefly highlighted the key points in the report, including operational partnerships and environmental agencies.

The Chairman invited questions.

Councillor Topping asked if the Pakefield recycling site would continue to operate an appointment system. It was acknowledged that this site was the responsibility of the county council, but the Cabinet Member advised that the Suffolk Waste Partnership had reviewed and improved the booking system. Councillor Topping also referred to large quantities of bags left in the doorways of charity shops and asked if there was anything the Council could do in this regard. The Head of Operations said that bags left on private land should be cleared by the land-owner, in this example the charity shop, bags left on public land could be removed by the Council. A similar situation existed with the location of clothing banks, if on public land items not placed in the bank could be cleared by the Council, but if the bank was on private land it was only possible for

the Council to investigate and, if sufficient evidence could be obtained, issue a fixed penalty notice.

Councillor Lynch asked why bins could not have QR codes (a two-dimensional barcode which was readable by smartphones) on them so that members of the public could report them as full and to be more efficient in collections. The Head of Operations said that trial of bins which omitted an electronic signal when full had been undertaken, however, the results were inconclusive and the technology had not been completely reliable. The Council continued to investigate other options and their benefits. The Waste Management Officer (Norse) also referred to similar trials and said these were more beneficial in rural locations and did enable the collection service to be more efficient.

Councillor Deacon thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers for a very comprehensive report. He referred to an article about the approach of Northamptonshire to fly-tipping where the county's police, fire and crime commissioner was covering the cost of having fly-tipping cleared from private land in two areas of the county on a trial basis. He asked if a similar scheme was possible in Suffolk. The Environmental Protection Manager said that many criminal offences were the responsibility of the local authority to investigate and enforce and that, in his opinion, fly-tipping was not a police matter. Councillor Deacon stated that it would be helpful to be willing to explore a partnership approach, as Northamptonshire had, and that if their approach worked it was reasonable to assume it might in Suffolk. He added that fly-tipping was a costly problem and a blight on the district, therefore, to ask if a partnership approach or special initiative was possible should not be so quickly dismissed.

Councillor Newton referred to personal experience of using the on-line reporting form which had been responded to quickly. However, his experience of the 'My East Suffolk' portal had been less responsive and the option to use the system without registering had not been easily visible, he said. Councillor Newton added that the system also did not indicate if an issue had already been reported. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customers, ICT and Commercial Partnerships, present as a visiting member, confirmed that it was not necessary to register for an account to use the portal but he noted the comments and said he would see if there was a way to make this more explicit and clear. He also said he would look into the suggestion of a QR code with the digital team.

Councillor Gooch thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers for an excellent report. She said this review had originally been sought by the Waveney Overview and Scrutiny Committee in autumn 2018 but it had been delayed and deferred for various reasons; she welcomed the review now taking place. Councillor Gooch stated that, without in any way wishing to sound critical of the Council, the problems associated with fly-tipping were extensive and, with reference to the Cabinet Member's wish to have a think tank approach, said she welcomed the opportunity to identify solutions together. Councillor Gooch said she had raised the special initiatives on trial in Northamptonshire with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and he had mentioned a wider initiative; she asked if there was more information on this available. The Environmental Protection Officer said that, to date, the PCC had not indicated anything further on this initiative. He added that he represented the Council on the pan-Suffolk Fly-tipping Action Group which met to discuss waste enforcement, the Constabulary had

previously attended the group but had advised it could no longer commit resources to its meetings. The Cabinet Member for the Environment said that there was scope to do collective work and that he would raise this proposal at the Suffolk Waste Partnership. Councillor Gooch referred to the elections to the County Council in May and suggested that it might be a prime opportunity to explore a pan-Suffolk approach. Councillor Gooch also suggested that the Council might introduce a public education campaign on litter and fly-tipping including the increased use of fixed penalty notices. The Waste Management Officer (Norse) confirmed that whilst no education material was sent to those who received a fine nor information on the adverse impact of their action on the environment, the accompanying letter did explain the reason for the fine and included an ashtray. Councillor Gooch referred to the extent of littering along the highways and asked if there was a more proactive approach that could be taken within the district. The Operations Manager (Norse) said the removal of litter from verges required a rolling road-block to be put in place in liaison with SCC Highways Department, these were scheduled events but had been impacted by the pandemic and also the snow earlier in the year, therefore the programme of work was a little behind schedule. The Strategic Director said that the removal of litter from highways was, unfortunately, almost an endless task but he praised the effective high-level dialogue between local authorities in this regard. Councillor Gooch asked if there had been any monitoring of when the majority of littering occurred. The Operations Manager (Norse) said that this was largely dependant on the people who made the litter and no real monitoring was undertaken.

Councillor Back referred to a recent *Panorama* documentary which had highlighted several cases where people employed a contractor to dispose of their waste but said contractor did so illegally by fly-tipping; he asked what documentation a legal, registered contractor should provide to give customers reassurance that their rubbish would be disposed of legally and appropriately. The Environmental Protection Officer said contractors required a licence from the Environment Agency and that without that licence the removal of waste was an offence. He briefly explained the system of tracking in place but said that funding, investment and the gathering of evidence was an issue. It was suggested by the Committee that the public needed to be better educated on how to find a legitimate licensed waste contractor and of the requirement to seek a waste transfer note.

Councillor Green asked if recycling centres had CCTV cameras to monitor those people who left items at the gates. The Cabinet Member said automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology had been put in place to capture the registration details of people illegally dumping items. Councillor Green asked if as a ward member she should approach a housing association or the Council to assist residents in social housing with the removal of bulky items of furniture. The Environmental Protection Officer said that this should be reported to the Council and, if necessary, it would speak with the landowner, in the case of social housing this being the housing association. Councillor Green asked if there was a schedule for the emptying of bins in laybys and, if so, when this was last reviewed, including the sufficiency of bins in lay-bys. The Operations Manager (Norse) said the schedule for the emptying of bins in laybys had just been reviewed and it was felt the numbers were sufficient. It was agreed that the schedule would be shared with the Committee after the meeting. Councillor Green referred to the laybys close to the Port of Felixstowe and asked if there was anything that could be done to address the amount of rubbish left in these sites, including

bottles of urine etc. The Operations Manager (Norse) said that there was dialogue with the Port and the use of electronic signs on gantries to encourage responsible waste disposal were being considered. The Cabinet Member welcomed that suggestion and he also wondered if the Port could be encouraged to look at the facilities for drivers etc. Councillor Robinson said that there were already facilities for drivers at the Port. It was suggested that a possible recommendation arising from the review might be that bins be branded and feature clear contact information, that facilities for lorry drivers be sited outside the Port to minimise use of laybys and that the schedule for the emptying of bins in lay-bys be further reviewed.

Councillor Gooch asked if litter bins in seaside locations were fit for purpose because of coastal winds and seagulls etc. The Cabinet Member said the Council worked with its seaside towns to make containers wind and seagull proof.

Councillor Coulam suggested there were insufficient bins for the collection of dog excrement and also that litter was often located outside of schools which might, she said, necessitate the education of children in this regard to be addressed. Councillor Mallinder said town and parish councils were encouraged to purchase additional dog bins and also reminded members that they could use their individual Enabling Communities Budget for this purpose. The Cabinet Member said there were education programmes in place using the plastic champions. However, he did agree that more could be done in this regard. It was noted that discussions were underway with SCC on a review of current resources for such education, to identify any gaps and future resource needs. The Committee was also informed that plastic pollution resources were available online to teachers and home educators.

Councillor Cloke referred to an initiative in Devon and Cornwall where no litter bins were provided to encourage people to take their waste home. The Head of Operations reminded the Committee that the second report, in June, would focus on littering.

The Chairman referred to the report which stated that 525 incidents of fly-tipping had been investigated, ten fixed penalty notices had been issued and no prosecutions had been pursued. He added that, having researched the success rate of prosecutions nationally, these were generally successful and asked whether the Council was being proactive enough in this regard. The Waste Management Officer said the issue was finding sufficient evidence to proceed to prosecution. He added that last year five interviews under caution (Police and Criminal Evidence Act) had been delayed by the pandemic but were now rescheduled for May and June 2021.

Councillor Gooch said other methods needed to be considered - for example, requiring the registration number of purchasers of fast food to be stamped on packaging so that they can be identified if it is not disposed of properly. She asked if this could, perhaps, be included as a condition at the point of approving planning applications for such restaurants. The Environmental Protection Manager said environmental health was consulted on planning applications but were not asked to comment on the provision of litter bins. He suggested that the registration number on packaging would not identify the littering offender who might claim it blew out of the bin, for example, and therefore an illegal act could not be proven to the required standards of evidence to enable prosecution. Councillor Gooch asked if 'free' windows for the collection of large and bulky items could be available to encourage people to use this facility rather than



fly-tip. The Head of Operations replied that 'amnesties' had been used in the past, but they had proven to be difficult to apply fairly and could have perverse reactions in that people from far afield, outside of the district, abused the facility meant for local people. The Cabinet Member said that people needed to be encouraged to take responsibility for their items and their appropriate disposal.

Councillor Coulam referred to the current charge for the collection and removal of three bulky items (she quoted £45) and said that this was too high. The Cabinet Member said that other means of disposal were available including donation to charity organisations, selling the items etc. but did require some effort on behalf of the resident to research and arrange.

There being no matters raised for debate, the Chairman concluded the item by reminding the Committee that it would receive the second part of the review at its meeting in June 2021 and at that point it would be asked to formulate its recommendations to Cabinet, as considered necessary.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their contribution to the meeting.

## **5 Cabinet Member's update**

The Chairman invited Councillor Mallinder to provide his portfolio update in his role as the Cabinet Member for The Environment. In summary, Councillor Mallinder updated the Committee on the Council's work on the conservation of open spaces; the meeting of climate ambitions; the transformation of waste collection; the increasing of recycling; the reduction of carbon emissions; and, environmental protection.

The Chairman invited questions.

Councillor Topping commented positively on Councillor Mallinder's enthusiasm, energy and passion for the work of his portfolio. She asked if there was a specific reason he had been appointed to his portfolio and if there was some past experience he brought to the role. Councillor Mallinder thanked Councillor Topping for her kind words - he said he put so much energy into the role because it was so obviously the right thing to do. He said he endeavoured to engage and work collaboratively in what he described as a fantastic role that he genuinely enjoyed doing.

Councillor Deacon also praised Councillor Mallinder's passion and enthusiasm for his portfolio; he asked what Councillor Mallinder hoped would be in his greatest achievement in the role. Councillor Mallinder replied that the *Pardon the Weeds, We are Feeding the Bees* initiative had real traction and had positively engaged and educated people.

Councillor Gooch welcomed Councillor Mallinder's collaborative approach and praised his inclusion of her, as Shadow Cabinet Member, on new initiatives. She also referred to the work of the cross-party Environment Task Group which she said was a tribute to Councillor Mallinder's steer to the work of the portfolio. Councillor Gooch asked if the produce served in the café at the Council's Riverside offices was monitored for its carbon footprint. Councillor Mallinder said that the Council did try to monitor the source and to show a local lead on this matter. He referred to the need for a national

campaign on the carbon footprint of food and its production.

Councillor Lynch asked about the cutting back of hedges and the impact on natural habitats. Councillor Mallinder said the Council worked with local communities to explain and educate about the impact on biodiversity.

The Chairman asked if the Council was lobbying about the proposed changes to building regulations related to glazing and source heat pumps. Councillor Mallinder said the Environmental Planning Guide was used by the Planning Officers in discussions with agents, developers and residents on their planning applications. He hoped that the new regulations would be implemented on a phased basis with possible tax incentives. He also said that Council needed to educate local developers on its vision in this regard. Councillor Mallinder said he would be happy to discuss possible lobbying with Councillor Ritchie.

There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked Councillor Mallinder for his update and responses to the Committee.

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

The Scrutiny Committee received and reviewed its current forward work programme.

The Committee received a draft scoping form from Councillor Green on social prescribing and which she briefly summarised. There was some reticence about whether, or not, this was a suitable topic for the Scrutiny Committee to review. It was agreed that the advice of the Head of Communities would be sought by the Clerk and her response provided to the next meeting at which time a decision to proceed with the review, or not, would be taken.

There are no Exempt or Confidential items for this Agenda.

The meeting concluded at 21.29pm.

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Chairman

**Unconfirmed**



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in the Conference Room, Riverside, Lowestoft on **Thursday 20 May 2021 at 6:30 pm**

**Members of the Committee present:**

Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor Keith Robinson, Councillor Caroline Topping

**Other Members present:**

Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Letitia Smith, Councillor Ed Thompson

**Officers present:**

Katherine Abbott (Democratic Services Officer) Sarah Carter (Democratic Services Officer), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer), Sue Meeken (Political Group Support Officer (Labour)), Nicole Rickard (Head of Communities)

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**1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gee.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Cloke declared a vested interest in item 3, Review of Community Partnerships, in that she was the Chairman of one of the eight Community Partnerships. It was clarified that this did not prohibit Councillor Cloke from participating in the review.

**3 Review of the Community Partnerships**

The Scrutiny Committee received the written report submitted by the responsible Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, Councillor Smith, in response to the Committee's agreed remit.

The Chairman invited questions.

Councillor Deacon referred to one of the responses in appendix B to the report and the which had referred to work underway to boost Town and Parish Council and Voluntary and Community Sector membership respectively, he asked how this would be achieved. The Head of Communities said this was more about ensuring a good range of representatives on the Community Partnerships, including youth and voluntary bodies,

to facilitate different voices. Councillor Deacon welcomed the ambition to widen the range of voices but said he had found the reference to the reduced participation of Councillors to be offensive. The Leader of the Council said the comments had been provided by one of the Chairmen of one of the Community Partnerships as part of the Committee's consultation; he wished to assure the Committee that there was no intention or wish to reduce the involvement of Councillors in any of the Partnerships rather ESC Councillors would be core members of their respective Partnership. Councillor Smith said the aim was to retain Councillor involvement but use it to encourage other participants.

Councillor Beavan referred to question one of appendix A to the report and said that district Councillors bore the responsibility to ensure public monies were well spent and, therefore, he considered that Councillors should be informed on spend in their wards; he asked if such a notification could be considered. Councillor Smith said she would consider this suggestion and make it happen if at all possible.

Councillor Topping said that the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) had indicated that some small parishes did not wish to engage with the Community Partnerships because they had felt dominated by the Town and District Councils and asked if this was being addressed to engage and reassure parishes that their participation was of equal importance. The Head of Communities reiterated that the Council worked closely with SALC which had worked to encourage every parish to participate, in addition, information had been shared on the projects the Partnerships had supported to indicate the possible benefits of participation. Councillor Smith also referred to the recently introduced rural proofing toolkit, developed in conjunction with Community Action Suffolk, and which aimed to increase engagement over the next twelve months or so. Councillor Cloke said that within the Community Partnership she chaired the three market towns had multiple representatives which did mean that some representatives from small parishes felt 'outnumbered'. Councillor Smith added that the continued success of the Partnerships and their positive impacts would encourage participation.

Councillor Hedgley said he had, initially, had reservations about the Community Partnerships but that these had largely dissipated; he added that his constituents did not speak to him about isolation or mental health, but did raise traffic and road safety issues which, he suggested, sometimes mattered greatly to small rural villages. Councillor Coulam added that transport in towns also needed to be considered. Councillor Smith replied that the Community Partnership Board would be looking at this as a priority for 2021/22 and that a Transport Delivery Plan was in development with £80,000 already allocated for projects. It was also possible for Partnerships to change their priorities if they so chose. The Chairman asked if a Partnership could return to one of its original priorities if this had altered as a result of Covid. The Head of Communities said that if emerging needs indicated this would be helpful then a return to a previous priority was acceptable.

Councillor Gooch thanked the Cabinet Member and Head of Communities for the report and for the hard work which had gone into establishing the Community Partnerships so successfully. She asked how much monitoring was done of good practice in other local authorities and for some additional details on the planned peer review. The Head of Communities said the peer review was scheduled to be

undertaken over three days in mid-October; it would focus on Community Partnerships as a new, innovative and successful initiative. The Review would be undertaken by the Leader of another local authority, a CEO of another local authority - both with experience of community-related initiatives - have officer support and include someone from the Local Government Association who would prepare the resulting report. The review would provide an external and independent assessment. The Leader of the Council said that officers and the Council's leadership team looked outside of the organisation for good practice examples.

Councillor Gooch asked if anything in the replies submitted by the Chairs of the Partnerships had been a surprise. Councillor Smith replied that she intended to discuss the replies with the Chairs and to ask them to elaborate further. The Head of Communities wished to reassure the Committee that extensive research had been undertaken before the establishment of the Community Partnerships and, she added, the Chairs replies had been insightful and clearly proud of the achievements to date. However, there were some specifics in the replies which needed to be discussed a little further.

Councillor Bird asked about perceptions of the current funding allocation to all Partnerships of the same amount, no matter their make-up. The Leader of the Council said this had been raised and revisited previously. He stressed the need to make sure the allocation was fair and equitable; he outlined the costs of a project undertaken in an urban areas and the logistical challenges and costs of doing the same in a rural location. The Head of Communities said it was important not to look at the allocation in isolation but within the context of other initiatives underway and funding available, for example, in Lowestoft, Leiston and Felixstowe.

Councillor Green asked if there was a perception that some groups, with older volunteers, might struggle to seek funding and, if so, was there something the Council could do to assist them to identify funding opportunities and to complete applications. The Head of Communities said the Council was working with Community Action Suffolk on a number of projects and that the Community Partnership Board had created the 'bounce back' fund but, sometimes, in the instance Councillor Green referred to, it was more about having additional volunteers than about funding.

Councillor Topping asked how Community Partnerships would meet in the future; she suggested that a more inclusive remote approach would perhaps be more welcoming to smaller parishes but, equally, exclusive if they did not have the correct technology. Councillor Smith said this depended on the Partnership and that whilst she encouraged face to face meetings the difficulties of doing so were recognised.

In response to a question from Councillor Byatt, the Head of Communities said Partnerships were encouraged to review their priorities annually to decide if they needed to continue or if other matters should take greater priority in changing circumstances. The Leader of the Council said the identification, monitoring, review and changing of priorities was in the power of the Partnerships and added that sometimes it was not a question of funding, but joint working, that offered the solution.

Councillor Smith thanked the Committee for its questions and for an enjoyable debate.

She said she had noted the questions and comments which had been very useful.

Councillor Lynch said the Committee had been negative in its review and instead should have been praising the Partnerships and the Communities team for their work and to have pride in their achievements. The Chairman stated that the review had not been negative, but the Committee's remit was to examine constructively and to ask probing questions. He agreed that achievements were praiseworthy but the Committee was required to examine matters thoroughly. Councillor Deacon and Councillor Gooch agreed with the Chairman and also referred to the need for the Committee to fulfil its role and to add value where possible.

#### **RESOLVED**

That, having received the written report and questioned its contents, the Committee agreed to formally thank the Cabinet Member, all Officers within the Communities team and the Chairs of the eight Community Partnerships for their excellent work and achievements to date

#### **4 Cabinet Member's update**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Smith, the Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, and invited her to make her update on her strategic aims and priorities for her portfolio.

Councillor Smith referred to her key strategic roles and responsibilities with the portfolio. With regard to Tourism, Councillor Smith said the Council's role was both strategic and delivery focussed. Strategically, the Council promoted the various resorts, market towns and natural attractions via the DMO - this was, she said, a partnership with the tourism industry which the Council jointly funded with tourism businesses. These businesses also promoted east Suffolk as a tourist destination through the Visit Suffolk Coast website and targeted promotional/ marketing campaigns. Councillor Smith added that with the DMO the Council also worked strategically and collaboratively with Visit East of England to promote the region as a destination of choice. The Council had established Visitor Information Points across the District at which tourism related businesses were able to provide print and digital visitor information; this had benefitted visitors and businesses alike and increased footfall. Councillor Smith stated that the Council had invested directly in tourism assets such as the East Point Pavilion, Jubilee Terrace beach chalets, Martello café, Felixstowe Seafront Gardens etc.

Councillor Smith referred to the Council's Covid response and said that a specific grant support fund of £1.9m for the district's hospitality sector had been established. In addition, local campaigns such as the Shop local/Stay safe campaign had been running since the first lockdown. Councillor Smith also referred to the twelve town videos produced with on-going social media campaigns which had been adapted as restrictions had altered. The Welcome back to East Suffolk campaign had commenced to promote the district's towns to residents and visitors. Councillor Smith said the Council had worked collaboratively with partners across the region to survey the needs of the tourism sector and implemented a joint promotional campaign to welcome visitors back safely. The campaign 'Unexplored England' was supported by a coalition of 14 DMOs and Councils. Some £150,000 regional investment funding had been put in

place with a further £425,000 secured from the Government and Visit England. The campaign targeted a younger demographic of pre-school families and 'pre-nesters', which linked to the Council's new Consumer Sentiment survey. Councillor Smith explained that an older demographic would return to places they knew, but younger people were willing to try a new location. The campaign had commenced in April/May and would be underway over the summer; it would feature bookable experiences such as theatres and the arts. Councillor Smith said that whilst the Council did not have a specific remit for this sector, it had recognised its wider and economic value. The Council had established the first Cultural Strategy for Lowestoft in 2019 to support the cultural regeneration element of the wider Lowestoft Town Investment Plan. This had developed into a major capital project - The Cultural Quarter - which had built on the strengths of the Marina Theatre to provide a fully externally funded (Town's Fund) public realm and leisure redevelopment in the heart of the High Street. Councillor Smith added that an East Suffolk Arts and Performance Forum had been established to better understand the common issues affecting the sector and to provide tangible support which had included access to funding, promotional and marketing advice, the use of digital technology, advice and support on the implementation of Covid safety measures and testing, and business support programmes.

With regard to leisure centre redevelopment. Councillor Smith advised that over the last six months the Council's leisure team had overseen the redevelopment of the Waveney Valley Leisure Centre (formerly Bungay) which had re-opened in October 2020, before lockdown three, and was not open again to the public. The Waterlane Leisure Centre had also undergone a refurbishment which had addressed some long standing issues such as the teaching pool moveable floor, mechanical and lighting, and decoration. Following further investigation into a continuing roof leak, a temporary fix had been made but the only option was replace the roof and a report would be coming to Cabinet and Full Council with more detail and to seek approval of the funding later in 2021.

Councillor Smith referred to the production of a new Leisure Strategy. She advised that consultants had been appointed in 2020 to undertake the necessary work including strategies for the Built Facility, Playing Pitch, Open Space and Play Equipment strategies to help inform the production of a new East Suffolk Leisure Strategy. The new Leisure Strategy would set the key tasks to be undertaken over the next five years and it was anticipated would be complete during the summer.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Smith for her comprehensive and interesting update and invited questions.

Councillor Deacon asked Councillor Smith to elaborate on how the views of young people on social isolation and loneliness were being gleaned. Councillor Smith referred to one of the projects which young people had chosen to do as part of the Youth Take Over Day 2020, which had focused on isolation and loneliness being an opportunity to write to elderly people or their lonely friends.

Councillor Bird asked if the Council was confident the district was sufficiently prepared for the numbers of tourists which were likely to visit the area this Summer. Councillor Smith replied that it was anticipated that many would have stay-cations this Summer

and this would be a welcome opportunity for local businesses to recover from the impact of the pandemic.

Councillor Gooch referred to social distancing measures on the promenades and suggested these were not being observed nor monitored; she asked if the Council had a strategy for this. Councillor Smith said clear and visible signs had been put in place and that people needed to use common sense and personal responsibility. Councillor Gooch also referred to the previous 'passport to leisure' membership which had been, she said, both transferable and flexible; she asked if, as this no longer existed, if access to leisure facilities could be standardised. Councillor Smith said that she was happy to raise the possibility of a passport approach with the providers. Councillor Gooch asked if showers in leisure facilities remained out of use. Councillor Smith said that currently facilities were not available and that this would alter as the roadmap out of the pandemic proceeded. Councillor Gooch referred to a recent article in *The Lowestoft Journal* and asked how the Council was addressing the inaccurate perception which might be in place based on the article's ranking of facilities. Councillor Smith said that so many positive achievements were taking place that any perception would soon be altered.

Councillor Smith was asked why she had wished to be responsible for her portfolio and what achievement she felt most proud of. Councillor Smith said the portfolio took her out of her comfort zone and offered an opportunity to be challenged and learn. In terms of achievements, Councillor Smith said she aimed to have all the roles within her portfolio to be provided to the best possible standard, to set an excellent example.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Councillor Smith for her responses to questions.

## **5 Appointments to Outside Bodies 2021-22 (Scrutiny functions)**

The Committee received a report by the Leader of the Council. The report sought the Scrutiny Committee's consideration of its Appointments to Outside Bodies (with scrutiny functions) for the 2021/22 Municipal Year. The current appointments and designated substitutes were outlined at Appendix A to the report.

The Vice Chairman referred to the Annual Meeting of Full Council earlier in May and at which, he said, Councillor Patience had been re-appointed to the Joint Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Panel; he asked why it was necessary to therefore appoint to that Panel at this meeting. The Leader of the Council said that an appointment had not been made at the Annual Meeting and that appointments to outside bodies should be made by the Scrutiny Committee from amongst its membership. Councillor Beavan said this was disappointing.

The Chairman sought nominations for the appointment of the Committee's representative and designated substitute to the Joint Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Panel:

Councillor Deacon nominated Councillor Keith Patience as the representative, this was seconded by Councillor Gooch. Councillor Back nominated Councillor Coulam as the representative, this was seconded by Councillor Lynch. Councillor Patience received



four votes and Councillor Coulam received eight votes. Councillor Coulam was appointed as the Committee's representative on this Panel. Councillor Robinson was nominated and seconded for the position of the designated substitute. There being no other nominees, Councillor Robinson was appointed as designated substitute to Councillor Coulam on the Panel.

The Chairman sought nominations for the appointment of the Committee's representative and designated substitute to the Health Scrutiny Committee:

Councillor Hedgley was nominated and seconded as the representative; there being no other nominations he was appointed as the Committee's representative on the Health Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Back was nominated and seconded as the designated substitute. There being no other nominations, he was so appointed.

It was proposed by Councillor Cloke, seconded by Councillor Robinson and by majority vote

### **RESOLVED**

1. That Councillors had been appointed to those Outside Bodies listed in Appendix A for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.
2. That designated substitutes had also been appointed to attend the Outside Bodies listed at Appendix A for the 2021/22 Municipal Year in the event the primary appointee is unavailable.
3. That the Leader of the Council be authorised to fill any outstanding vacancies left unfilled by the Scrutiny Committee.
4. That the Leader be granted delegated authority to make any necessary changes to the membership of the Outside Bodies for the remainder of the 2021/22 Municipal Year, in consultation with the other Group Leaders.

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

The Scrutiny Committee received and reviewed its current forward work programme.

The draft scoping form for a proposed review of Long Term Empty Properties submitted jointly by Councillors Gooch, Green and Topping was approved and added to the schedule for the September 2021 meeting.

It was agreed that Councillor Gooch would provide a draft scoping form to propose a review of NHS dental provision in the district. It was acknowledged that this was not a matter the Committee nor the Council could directly influence, however, subject to the scoping form being agreed and the outcome of the review, it was suggested that the Committee's findings could perhaps be shared with the pan-Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee through Councillor Hedgley as East Suffolk's appointee.

It was further agreed that the previously submitted draft scoping form on social prescribing not be approved for a review due to the oversight and funding of social prescribing lying with the CCG and Primary Care Network. It was agreed that it would be difficult to make and implement recommendations, particularly given the proposed

changes to health systems through the introduction of Integrated Care Systems and which, it was suggested, were likely to cover different geographical boundaries.

It was agreed that for the crime and disorder item at the November 2021 meeting, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable both be invited to attend to brief the Committee on key areas of enquiry. It was agreed the Clerk would ask the Committee for questions to be submitted in advance and also for an indication of the areas the Committee wished to be briefed on.

The meeting concluded at 9.01pm

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Chairman