

**Confirmed**



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Strategic Planning Committee** held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, Riduna Park, Melton on **Monday, 10 June 2019** at **10:30am**

**Members of the Committee present:**

Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Chris Blundell, Councillor Jocelyn Bond, Councillor Tony Cooper, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor Graham Elliott, Councillor Tony Fryatt, Councillor Debbie McCallum, Councillor Malcolm Pitchers, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Kay Yule

**Officers present:**

Liz Beighton (Planning Development Manager), Mark Edgerley (Principal Planner - Planning Policy), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer), Andrea McMillan (Principal Planner - Planning Policy), Philip Ridley (Head of Planning & Coastal Management)

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**1 Election of a Chairman**

On the proposition of Councillor McCallum, seconded by Councillor Ritchie it was

**RESOLVED**

That Councillor Paul Ashdown be elected Chairman for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

**2 Election of a Vice-Chairman**

On the proposition of Councillor Ashdown, seconded by Councillor Ritchie it was

**RESOLVED**

That Councillor Debbie McCullum be elected Vice-Chairman for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

**3 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Brooks, Councillor Ceresa, Councillor Hedgley, and Councillor Rivett.

**4 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

## 5 The Role of the Strategic Planning Committee

The Committee received report **ES/0030** of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management. When presenting his report, Councillor Ritchie highlighted the work that had been undertaken to create the East Suffolk Council Constitution and the Strategic Planning Committee, considering that it was important for the Committee to review its terms of reference. He invited the Head of Planning and Coastal Management to address the Committee on the report's contents.

The Head of Planning and Coastal Management stated that it was important to set out the role and remit of the Strategic Planning Committee and the two area Planning Committees. He was of the opinion that the Strategic Planning Committee would be a "shop window" for planning matters at the Council.

The functions of the Committee were set out in Appendix A of the report and it was noted that the Committee would consider matters of wider importance and receive updates on planning information as required, so that Members had a better understanding of planning issues in East Suffolk. The report proposed standing items of business for the Committee; the Head of Planning and Coastal Management acknowledged that the Committee would receive annual and bespoke reports regarding items such as monitoring information and Ombudsman outcomes and that the meetings corporate requirements would be identified going forward.

All Members of the Committee present were furnished with key planning documents to assist them in operating as effective Planning Committee members. These documents detailed local and national planning policies.

The Head of Planning and Coastal Management suggested that training opportunities for Members could take place following meetings of the Strategic Planning Committee so that there was a forum where all Members could become familiar with specific matters. It was noted that the Committee would also consider strategic planning applications, as identified by the Referral Panel process. The Head of Planning and Coastal Management considered that the creation of a Strategic Planning Committee had been a positive step.

The Chairman invited questions to the Head of Planning and Coastal Management.

It was confirmed that it was intended to bring an application to relocate facilities at Sizewell B before the Committee at its meeting in September 2019.

In response to a question from the Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management, the Committee was advised that the whilst the Referral Panel determined the route of planning applications, the Council's Scheme of Delegation allowed the Head of Planning and Coastal Management to bring applications to the Committee. He expected that Referral Panel meetings would determine whether a major application was considered by the Strategic Planning Committee or one of the two area committees. The Vice-Chairman reminded Members that they had the ability to refer applications to the Referral Panel.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management stated that any application regarding Sizewell C would be considered nationally significant; it

would be heard by the Strategic Planning Committee as part of any consultation process but a decision on planning permission would be taken at a national level.

A member of the Committee asked if an internal indicative list of planning applications likely to come before the Committee could be produced and shared with Members. The Head of Planning and Coastal Management said that this could be achieved and that he would discuss it with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee; he noted that a list of major applications was currently being compiled. In response to a follow up question from the Member asking if a similar list of applications due to come before the area committees could be established, the Head of Planning and Coastal Management advised that this was restricted by a tighter timescale but that he would consider and reflect upon the suggestion.

The Head of Planning and Coastal Management confirmed that there would be flexibility in the frequency of the Committee's meetings and that a Special meeting of the Committee could be convened if required. The Committee was reminded by the Vice-Chairman that its quorum was seven.

It was noted that there would be regular review of the processes of the two area committees, to ensure a consistent approach across them both. The Chairman suggested that members of both Committees should be familiar with the whole District, to be able to substitute at both Committees. The Vice-Chairman said it was very important that members of the Committee saw themselves as East Suffolk, and not by area, and wanted to encourage all Members of the Council to be trained in planning.

In response to question from a member of the Committee regarding any difficulties that might arise from the current Planning Committee arrangements, the Vice-Chairman said that it was important to maintain a consistent approach, noting the high national profile of the Council.

On the proposition of Councillor Ritchie, seconded by Councillor Ashdown it was unanimously

## **RESOLVED**

That the contents of the report be noted.

## **6 Local Validation Lists**

The Committee received report **ES/0032** of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management. He invited the Planning Development Manager to present the report to the Committee.

The Planning Development Manager advised the Committee that the report sought to establish a single validation list for East Suffolk, which would set out the information required for a planning application to be considered a valid submission. She explained that the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils had relied on the national validation list, which did not have the same level of detail as the validation list proposed in the report.

The Committee was advised that the consultation period for the validation list would expire on 11 June 2019 and that the report recommended that the Committee requested delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, to adopt the Local Validation Requirements upon the expiry of the consultation process unless any significant and substantial matters are raised.

The Planning Development Manager informed the Committee that the list had been reviewed by key departments and amended as required, and that the final consultation responses would be analysed once the period had ended. It was intended that the validation list would be formally adopted in July/August 2019.

The Chairman invited questions to the Planning Development Manager. There being no questions, the Chairman invited the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management to move the recommendation detailed on page 12 of the report.

On the proposition of Councillor Ritchie, seconded by Councillor Deacon it was unanimously

## **RESOLVED**

That the contents of the report be noted and that delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, to adopt the Local Validation Requirements upon the expiry of the consultation process unless any significant and substantial matters are raised.

## **7 Planning Policy and Delivery Update**

The Committee received report **ES/0031** of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management, which provided an update on Local Plan coverage for the District, progress on Neighbourhood Plans, and key elements of the forward work programme. He highlighted the important work of Members in developing and maintaining Local Plans and invited the Principal Planners to present the report to the Committee.

The main points of the report were outlined to the Committee, which updated Members on the current work of Planning Policy and Delivery. It was advised that the new Waveney Local Plan, which covered the area of East Suffolk formerly covered by Waveney District Council, had been adopted by that council in March 2019, replacing the documents that had made up the former local plan with a single document.

Reference was made to the Broads Local Plan, which covered a small area of East Suffolk; the Committee was informed that the Broads Authority was its own Local Planning Authority and had adopted a new Local Plan in May 2019.

The Committee was informed that the creation of the new Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, which would cover the area of East Suffolk formerly covered by Suffolk Coastal District Council, was well underway and the Final Draft Local Plan had been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination at the end of March 2019. An Inspector had

been appointed and it was expected that hearings would take place in the late summer of 2019, with an anticipation that the new plan would be formally adopted at the end of 2019 or in early 2020. It was noted that the new plan would be a single document that would replace the documents that currently made up the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan.

It was highlighted that some of the Suffolk Coastal area was within the wider Ipswich Strategic Planning Area and that work was underway with Ipswich Borough Council and Babergh District Council to create a statement of common ground.

The Council continued to work with Town and Parish Councils to assist in their development of Neighbourhood Plans. It was noted that the policies in these plans were given weight when considering applications within their areas. The report detailed the Neighbourhood Plans in development, which were all at different stages of production.

Work relating to reviewing supporting planning documents, and a housing action plan, was also highlighted.

The Chairman invited questions to the officers.

A member of the Committee noted that the Local Plan Working Group would continue and asked what its function would be. He also enquired for further information on the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management invited the Principal Planner to answer the Member's question; she advised that although the Local Plan Working Group had a significant focus on local plan development, it also provided a forum for other planning policy related matters and considered that the group would play a key part in this. She noted that the geography of the strategic area covered housing market areas which shared similar issues with Ipswich Borough Council areas. The Principal Planner advised that the Council had a duty to co-operate with other Local Planning Authorities where strategic planning matters existed.

Reference was made to paragraph 2.5 of the report, which noted hearings being re-opened. A member of the Committee asked if this meant that hearings had already taken place. In response, the Head of Planning and Coastal Management explained that this referred to a possible situation where modifications to the Local Plan were required, after the public hearing had been opened. He confirmed that no public hearings had taken place regarding this Local Plan.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management advised that there would be a single Local Plan Working Group for East Suffolk and that it would be a cross-party working group. He also advised that a single cycling strategy was required for the District.

A member of the Committee noted the Town and Parish engagement in earlier stages of producing the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and asked if this would be repeated in the upcoming stages. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management advised that the next stage was for the draft Local Plan to be tested for planning soundness; the Head of Planning and Coastal Management considered that

the Local Plan Working Group would offer opportunities for Towns and Parishes to talk about policy issues, as had been the case at Suffolk Coastal District Council.

There being no further questions, the Chairman invited the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management to move the recommendation detailed on page 47 of the report.

On the proposition of Councillor Ritchie, seconded by Councillor Pitchers it was unanimously

**RESOLVED**

That the contents of the report be noted.

**8 Appeals Report**

The Committee received report **ES/0033** of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, which provided an update on all appeal decisions received from the Planning Inspectorate between 1 April 2019 and 26 May 2019. He invited the Planning Development Manager to present the report to the Committee.

The Planning Development Manager advised the Committee that the report now contained a synopsis of each decision received, which provided a more succinct and user-friendly way of communicating key information to Members. She highlighted the significant amount of decisions upheld by the Planning Inspectorate.

The Chairman invited questions to the Officer.

In the absence of any questions, a member of the Committee congratulated officers for the current situation and considered that it was very important that all members of the Committee read and understood the decisions received.

There being no questions, the Chairman invited the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management to move the recommendation detailed on page 50 of the report.

On the proposition of Councillor Ritchie, seconded by Councillor Yule it was unanimously

**RESOLVED**

That the contents of the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 11:24 am

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Chairman