

Confirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Cabinet** held via Zoom, on **Tuesday, 5 January 2021** at **6:30 pm**

Members of the Cabinet present:

Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Richard Kerry, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Mary Rudd, Councillor Letitia Smith

Other Members present:

Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Tony Cooper, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor John Fisher, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Keith Robinson, Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Councillor Ed Thompson, Councillor Caroline Topping, Councillor Steve Wiles

Officers present: Stephen Baker (Chief Executive), Damilola Bastos (Finance Planning Manager), Kerry Blair (Head of Operations), Karen Cook (Democratic Services Manager), Neil Cockshaw (Programmes and Partnership Manager), Mark Fisher (Procurement Manager), Cairistine Foster-Cannan (Head of Housing), Naomi Goold (Senior Energy Projects Officer), Laura Hack (Delivery Manager), Andrew Jarvis (Strategic Director), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Fern Lincoln (Housing Needs Service Manager), Paul Mackie (Strategic Funding Manager), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer), Sue Meeken (Political Group Support Officer (Labour)), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer), Tamzen Pope (Coastal Engineering and Operations Manager), Nicole Rickard (Head of Communities), Philip Ridley (Head of Planning and Coastal Management), Lorraine Rogers (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Deborah Sage (Political Group Support Officer (GLI)), Tim Snook (Commercial Contracts Manager (Leisure)), Karen Thomas (Head of Coastal Partnership East)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cackett.

2 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Rivett declared a local non pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 14, as he sat on the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project Board, as a Suffolk County Councillor.

Councillor Jepson declared a local non pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 7, as he sat on the Felixstowe Citizens' Advice Board.

Councillor Mallinder declared a local non pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 6, as he was Vice Chairman of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Advisory Committee.

Councillor Cooper declared a local non pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 7, as he sat on the Leiston and Aldeburgh Citizens' Advice Board.

3 Announcements

The Leader of the Council referred to Covid-19 and the further period of lockdown restrictions that had recently been announced; he stated that he fully supported the measures introduced by the Government, particularly in light of the new variants which were in circulation, and which were dramatically increasing the transmissibility of the virus. Additionally, the virus was spreading quickly in the East of England and far more East Suffolk residents and communities were being affected by this latest wave. The Leader stated that he knew there was light at the end of the tunnel and that vaccinations would make a huge difference in the months to come. However, for now, East Suffolk must follow the guidance laid down and do its bit to help slow the spread of the virus. The residents and communities of East Suffolk had shown an incredible resolve during the past nine months and the Leader stated that he knew this had been an incredibly difficult time for many people. Naturally, ESC would continue to provide support and would work with businesses to ensure they received the funding payments they needed and ESC would work in its local communities to make sure residents were supported, particularly through the ongoing Home But Not Alone Scheme. And of course, ESC would continue to deliver vital services and the workforce would once again step up to the plate to ensure this happened as smoothly as possible.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing stated that this would be Cairistine Foster-Cannan's last Cabinet meeting before leaving ESC to start a new position with Orwell Housing. Councillor Kerry gave thanks to Cairistine and wished her well in her new post. He also stated that due to the current lockdown the interviews to appoint a new Head of Housing had had to be postponed; however, referring to the excellent Housing Team, Councillor Kerry was confident that work would continue to be delivered as planned. The Leader echoed the words of Councillor Kerry.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources stated that, due the current lockdown, he was pleased to announce that there would be additional support for businesses, as recently announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, totalling across the country, £4.6m. Councillor Cook outlined the details of the grants and clarified that they would be in addition to the monthly grants currently being paid out under Tier 4 regulations.

4 Minutes RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 December 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 **New Beach Hut Site - Felixstowe**

Cabinet received report **ES/0609** by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development, and the Assistant Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development, who introduced the report.

Councillor Wiles stated that the proposals within the report signalled confidence and ambition for the Felixstowe seafront offer; with the ever-increasing popularity in staycations and day trips it had never been more important to offer inclusive facilities and popular amenities for residents and visitors alike. The proposal was, Councillor Wiles stated, for a new development at the south seafront, providing a key economic development. Development of the South Seafront area was ongoing, with the refurbishment of the Victorian shelters, the building of a cafe at Martello Park, and now a new beach hut site.

Councillor Wiles summarised the contents of the report, stating that it outlined the proposed development of the trim trail site on the South Seafront into a new beach hut village, with five accessible, purpose-built pods, 25 traditional huts and a new toilet block, with Changing Places facilities. The existing trim trail would be moved to the current volleyball site, which would be re-landscaped and made into a more comprehensive activity park.

The report sought Cabinet approval for the proposed design; further, to work up the detailed designs for the proposal and seek planning consent for them. Then, to procure and award a contract for the works, and oversee the construction of the projects at both sites. The report also sought approval for the necessary form of operating model for the proposed development, with Felixstowe Town Council being asked to manage the five pods for hire, with the 25 traditional huts being sold to bring in a capital receipt.

The Leader, commenting also as a Felixstowe Ward Councillor, stated that he very much welcomed this initiative, he thought the work that had gone into the design was excellent and he said that the accessible hut site was much welcomed, as was the provision of the Changing Places facility within the toilet block and the enhancements at the activity site. The Leader gave thanks for the hard work by officers.

Councillor Jepson commented that the project would very much enhance the area, he commented that the current issue with the beach huts on the promenade could not be sustained and he also acknowledged that the project would not be popular with all because some people want to remain in their current locations.

The Cabinet Members with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, Community Health, Housing, and Transport very much welcomed the project, commenting particularly on the enhanced beach hut offer across the whole district, the increase in revenue, providing what the public wanted, the accessible hut site, and the investment into Felixstowe.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism very much supported the proposal, commenting that it would be great for tourism; inviting

people to the area; and she welcomed how the modules could open up into a bigger open space, meaning that the facilities could be used for larger events.

Councillor Deacon stated that, as a Felixstowe Ward Councillor, he was delighted with the project; however he did comment that he was a little disappointed that the traditional beach huts would all be for private sale and he would have liked to have seen two or three of them available for short term lets. Councillor Deacon asked what the ground rents of those huts would be per annum. Councillor Deacon also commented that he had seen in Germany, in a large urban park, two outdoor kitchens, which were very rugged, they had running water and a barbecue point built into them. Councillor Deacon commented that he noticed that there would be provision for picnic tables etc in the amenity block and he wondered whether something similar to what he had seen in Germany could be considered; this he said would make it unique in this area. Councillor Deacon also asked if the electricity supplies would be solar driven. In conclusion, Councillor Deacon stated that he wholeheartedly welcomed this development which he said would make an enormous difference to the seafront offer.

The Leader, in response to the comments and questions raised by Councillor Deacon, responded that many discussions had taken place in respect of the tenure of the more traditional beach huts. He commented too in respect of places that he had visited, mainly warmer / sunny locations, where he had seen outdoor kitchens / barbecue spaces; he commented that they could be great for those using the areas, but not so good for those people who were close by.

Officers, commenting in respect of the traditional huts, stated that it was expected that the licence fees would be the same as the current 900 huts already in existence in Felixstowe; there was a two tier approach dependent on whether there was a clear sea view, or not. Also, in respect of traditional huts, it was not proposed to have any other facilities available other than what was within the huts themselves, normally a gas cooking facility. In respect of the pods, green credentials were currently being explored. Commenting on a barbecue site, officers stated that they were looking to make the amenity park as amenable as possible; this would be given consideration.

Councillor Gooch, commenting on the outdoor facilities, suggested that perhaps an outdoor shower could be considered. Councillor Gooch also suggested that perhaps better advertising opportunities should be explored, she commented on the website page for the beach hut offer and suggested that illustrations could be added. The Leader, in response, commented that ESC would be, after the current pandemic, promoting everything that it had to offer.

Councillor Byatt referred to the reference within the report to keeping the beach huts in good order; he asked what the frequency of inspections would be. Councillor Byatt referred to the sale of some of the beach huts and the purchase of beach huts soon for Jubilee Terrace; he asked if there were opportunities for economies of scale. Councillor Byatt, referring to outside amenities, asked if an outside gym for adults could be explored. Finally, Councillor Byatt asked if solar lighting and CCTV cameras could be explored too.

The Leader, in response, stated that there was CCTV in place close by, and so a more direct viewing of the site could be explored. In respect of lighting, there was a current very early stage project looking at lighting all along the promenade at Felixstowe. In respect of the adult gym, that was already in place, that would move one bay along and would be enhanced as part of the activity centre. Officers, in respect of the maintenance of the huts, added that each licence holder would sign an agreement with ESC; this would include the colour of the huts and the condition that they should be kept in. Also, inspections did, and would continue, to take place on a regular basis. Officers, in respect of new beach huts and procurement, responded that they would look to achieve the best deal possible. In respect of the market value of huts, it was confirmed that approximately one year ago, beach huts with a sea view, were worth approximately £20k; those same huts were currently worth at least £30k.

On the proposition of Councillor Rivett, seconded by Councillor Gallant, it was by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

1. That the concept and plans for the project be approved and that it be agreed that what is set out in the report forms the basis for the delivery of the beach hut village and new activity park.
2. That the use of the Capital Budget of £875K and £100K from the 100% Pooled Rates funding be approved, to take the project from the current concept design stage through to detailed design, and an application for all necessary consents for the proposed development, including planning permission, inclusive of all associated fees and charges.
3. That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director, acting in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, to procure all of the necessary contracts and agreement to enable to the construction of the development to be carried out, and to award the same on terms that best protect the Council's interests.
4. That Option 1 be approved as the proposed operating model, that is, to sell the 25 traditional beach huts and to hire the 5 pods and approves Option A for the management of the hire facilities, that is, a 50/50 income split with Felixstowe Town Council, to be reviewed in 18 months from commencement.
5. That a regular update on the project be given to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Asset Management.

6 East Suffolk Council Engagement and Position during the Examination and Post Examination Process for ScottishPower Renewables East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two Offshore Windfarm Proposals

Cabinet received report **ES/0610** by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development who reported that since his last report to Cabinet regarding ESC's position on Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) much had transpired. ESC continued to support the principle of offshore wind energy and had worked with SPR to address its concerns as was set out last year. The Deputy Leader stated that before continuing, he would set out the wider context for which members

must be cognisant; he reminded members that he had previously had meetings with the Energy Minister to express ESC's concerns regarding the cumulative impacts of energy projects. In February OFGEM in its Decarbonising Action Plan rightly recognised that individual radial offshore transmission links, it did not consider, were likely to be economical, sensible or acceptable for consumer and local communities as the offshore wind capacity ambition was set out. In March last year the Leader and the Deputy Leader were part of a delegation that met with BEIS to discuss the cumulative impacts of the energy projects potentially coming to the East Suffolk district. In July BEIS launched the Offshore Transmission Network Review, for which ESC submitted evidence. In September the Prime Minister stated, at the UN, that he wished the UK to become the Saudi Arabia of Wind.

The Deputy Leader stated that examination of EA1N and EA2 commenced in October 2020 following Covid delays, during which time further detail, deadlines and responses had been and would be required. Indeed, Councillor Rivett added, another deadline would be next week for which ESC would be responding.

The Deputy Leader thanked Cabinet for its approval of the recommendations previously that had enabled ESC to respond to such tight deadlines. The examination would run until 6th April 2020, at which point a recommendation would be made to the Secretary of State by the examining authority, for the Secretary of State to ultimately decide if these projects should proceed.

In November, Councillor Rivett reminded members, the Government launched its Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, which included advancing offshore wind, 40GW by 2030, enough to power every home. It also mentioned the Offshore Transmission Network Review.

In December the Government released its much anticipated Energy White Paper, with Wind getting no fewer than 90 mentions, restating the ambition to quadruple by 2030 wind energy production and to bring jobs and growth to ports and coastal regions. East Suffolk had already seen a snapshot of such investment that energy projects could bring to the district: SPR invested £25m into their Operations and Maintenance base in Lowestoft in 2019, furthermore EA1 saw a skills and education memorandum of understanding that brought scholarships and STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Maths) events and promotion; furthermore £45m to the supply chain.

BEIS published, the Deputy Leader stated, the ONTR findings just before Christmas. To summarise, he said, it could be said that they sought to achieve further coordination without jeopardising existing projects. Nonetheless, it rightly identified that early co-ordination could save consumers £6 billion and critically reduce the amount of infrastructure required.

Councillor Rivett stated that ESC's responses needed to be proportionate and evidenced, he thanked officers for the hard work they had undertaken in presenting such information for members to consider. Councillor Rivett added that he always kept an eye on planning metrics as external assessments of decisions gave he thought a good indicator. Locally made decisions challenged at appeal were backed up at appeal over and above the national thresholds. Furthermore, last year, ESC's planning

decisions were subject to four judicial reviews and all four applications were defeated and regrettably the vindications came at a financial cost to the Council.

Councillor Rivett highlighted that the report before members set out the changes from the original proposal to those currently presented. For example, he said, at 7.4 to 7.6 it set out the original position regarding offshore elements and between 7.7 to 7.9 it detailed the new mitigation/compensation. Furthermore, onshore original proposals were set out at 7.10 to 7.31 and new mitigation/compensation at 7.32 to 7.46. Table 1 at 7.84 set out a summary of the original mitigation and table 2 at 7.87 the enhanced mitigation and compensation currently on offer.

The report sought Cabinet's support to move to a neutral position, that of neither fully objecting nor fully supporting the NSIPs. To be clear, Councillor Rivett added, it did not infer that for the remainder of the examination ESC would sit mute. As detailed within the report ESC still had concerns, for example on noise and cumulative impacts, along with issues identified in the LIR. ESC would continue to make the case that where it had serious concerns and sought these to be addressed, seeking to achieve the best outcome possible for the district. Likewise, it would continue to press Government to support ESC recognising the large expectations for cumulative impacts energy projects being placed in and near the district would have. Nonetheless, members must consider and recognise the improvements made to the application, for example, the substations had reduced in size and height and were lower into the ground. This had enabled the retention of a wooded area that was originally going to be felled. Tree planting had both been increased and management thereof strengthened. As Councillor Rivett remarked earlier, he stated, during his evidence submission during examination on the lack of commitment to simultaneous construction of ducting for both projects, this had now been secured; in addition to that an increase in the scope and scale of the section 111. Tourism and environmental exemplar projects were much welcomed. Lastly, Councillor Rivett stated, Friday Street junction would have a traffic light solution.

The Leader referred to the negotiations that the Council had been in, and the asks that it had made, and the fact that the Council was achieving some movement to where it ultimately wanted to be, and this was important to him. There was still work to do, he stated, but this was an opportunity for ESC both to acknowledge what had happened and to look to the future and to continue the negotiation. ESC wanted to continue to attempt to get the best that it could for the residents of East Suffolk, albeit recognising the huge environmental benefits that wind energy generation brought to the UK.

Following a question by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, the Deputy Leader and officers gave a reassurance that they would keep pressing to obtain the best deal possible, in respect of noise and local impacts in and around Friston, for local people. The Deputy Leader referred to other projects in the rest of the eastern region; he referred to Norfolk Vanguard, commenting that the examining authority had recommended refusal, but the Secretary of State overrode that decision. The Deputy Leader stated that not only must the Council challenge, but it must have a productive and constructive relationship with the applicant to ensure that ESC could secure benefits where possible.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment stated that he totally agreed with the Deputy Leader, as ESC was not the decision making body it should be prepared to deal with the consequences of the decision made by Westminster. It was not an easy decision to be made, Councillor Mallinder stated, balancing the concerns of local residents, the environmental impact in particular on the AONB and how to obtain a diverse energy portfolio across the UK. Care was needed, however, as a society to balance the target of carbon neutrality in energy sources with alterations to the environment and biodiversity. It would not be helpful to solve one problem and create another. Councillor Mallinder stated that this Administration was taking a mature attitude to its policies and by talking with SPR it had already seen improvements. In particular, SPR had clearly listened to concerns over the impact of the AONB landscape and the mitigation fund had increased from £240,000 to £400,000. Such improvements had been made as direct response from ESC's involvement. However, Councillor Mallinder added, it was important to highlight as this more neutral position was potentially taken, it did not mean that ESC was not representing its residents and ignoring its environment vision; to the contrary, should this project go ahead, it would be representing residents in further consultations and decisions.

Councillor Smith-Lyte, after commenting that she was pro-wind power generation, stated that she did not entirely accept the comments in respect of mitigation and the fact that the Council was not the decision maker; Councillor Smith-Lyte commented that ESC was an important stakeholder and, as such, it should be ambitious; she was somewhat reassured that the Council was being ambitious, however, she had undertaken her own research and was not convinced that it had to be done as proposed, via huge football pitch size sub-stations on the edge of a village and within an AONB, when she believed that it could be done via a ring main, which was currently happening in the Netherlands.

The Leader, in response, commented that there had been many debates in respect of ring mains; he added that what was on the table was what was on the table, and that was what the Council needed to consider; he emphasised that the Council could negotiate hard with the applicant and it would continue to do that. He emphasised that the Council was a consultee and not the decision maker. The Deputy Leader added that the Council had been and would continue to be as ambitious as it could be. The Deputy Leader, in response to the comments made by Councillor Smith-Lyte in respect of the off-shore ring main, drew members' attention to the BEIS offshore network transmission review, the document that looked into co-ordination about reducing the landfalls; he outlined the contents of the document and upon request, agreed to share this with Councillor Smith-Lyte.

Councillor Byatt sought clarification that EA1N would not have any impact on the AONB. The Deputy Leader, in his response, stated that the Council had challenged hard and, as a result, the funds had increased.

Councillor Byatt referred to the channels, which were to be 32 metres wide, and had reduced to 16.1 metres, and looking ahead, he suggested that future proofing should take place in case more cables were to come ashore.

Community Byatt referred to the community benefits fund and to the master scholarships and asked if the fund would be ring-fenced for East Suffolk communities. The Deputy Leader, in his response, said that he would be as rigorous as possible in protecting the fund.

In response to a question from Councillor Byatt related to noise, the Deputy Leader stated that he would continue to press this point; he referred to the quiet and beautiful countryside that needed to be protected as far as possible and he said that he would continue to challenge to ensure that any noise was as low as it could be.

On the proposition of Councillor Rivett, seconded by Councillor Cook, it was by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

1. That in negotiation with the Applicants on statements of common ground and in responses to the Planning Inspectorate/Examining Authority that East Suffolk Council continues to support the principle of offshore wind as a significant contributor to the reduction in carbon emissions and for the economic opportunities that they may bring to ports in the NALEP geography that could support the construction and maintenance of the windfarms.

Notwithstanding this, the Council:

- a) Is neutral in relation to EA2 and the predicted offshore effects of the proposal on seascape, coastal landscapes, character and qualities of the AONB and cumulatively with EA1N due to the amendments made to the offshore wind turbine heights and provision of compensation.
- b) Is moving towards a predominantly neutral position in relation to the overall impact of the onshore substations on EA1N and EA2 individually and cumulatively on the village and environs of Friston. The Council acknowledges that the onshore infrastructure is out of character with the village but recognises that the Applicants are seeking to provide embedded mitigation as part of their project which coupled with the mitigation and compensation packages proposed will enable the Council working with partners to provide additional improvements in addition to the embedded project mitigation.
- c) Maintains significant concerns with regards to the impact of operational noise levels at the onshore substations site which will have an adverse impact on residential amenity and the character of the area until such time that appropriate and suitable mitigation or compensation is secured.
- d) Maintains significant concerns with regards to the lack of cumulative assessment of the National Grid substation in its extended form, until such a time as this is considered to be adequately and appropriately addressed.
- e) Maintains concerns with regards to the design of the onshore substations until such time that the Council's concerns are adequately and appropriately addressed.
- f) Accepts the additional provision pledged with regards to: revisions to the A1094 junction with the A12 which will significantly improve road safety at this junction which is welcomed; a contribution to air quality monitoring/mitigation of the Stratford St Andrew AQMA; a contribution to a Tourism Fund to provide additional marketing of East Suffolk in conjunction with the Suffolk Coast Destination Management

Organisation and the commitment to lay ducting for the second project at the same time as the cabling for the first if they are constructed sequentially.

g) Accepts the Section 111 funds which will enable the provision of compensatory measures to help offset the impacts of the projects.

h) Accepts an environmental exemplar fund to support ambitious aims to improve biodiversity and drive the decarbonisation of energy used in homes and travel.

i) Will continue to engage with the Applicants to seek to address the matters of concern raised in the Relevant Representation and Local Impact Report and will raise these matters of concern during the examination as appropriate.

2. That authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development to revise the Council's position on the projects if the matters of concern are adequately and appropriately addressed.

3. Should the Development Consent Orders (DCOs) for EA1N and/or EA2 be granted by the Secretary of State for BEIS, authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development to:

- Discharge requirements of granted DCOs.
- Facilitate the Council's responsibilities under any Section 111/Memorandum of Understanding/agreement.
- Consider and respond to any minor revisions to the DCOs proposed.

7 East Suffolk Citizens Advice Review

Cabinet received report **ES/0611** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism who reminded members that at its meeting in March 2020 Cabinet agreed to make funding of up to £7,500 available to enable the three East Suffolk Citizens Advice to secure independent support to explore the opportunities for the transformation of Citizens Advice services in East Suffolk. Touchstone Renard Management Consultants were commissioned jointly by the Council and the three Citizens Advice to undertake a review, evaluate options for change and recommend a preferred option. Their comprehensive report was attached as Appendix A to the report and was summarised in paragraphs 4.1 to 5.8. An Executive Summary was attached as Appendix B to the report. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism advised that the report was presented to the Chairs and Chief Officers of the three Citizens Advice at a meeting on 19 November 2020 when an initial joint response to the report was presented on behalf of the three Citizens Advice Chairs. The report before Cabinet sought approval for the next steps in the transformation process, including the allocation of funding, already available within the Council's budgets, to support further transformation work and additional, one off, funding, also from within existing budgets, for Citizens Advice North East Suffolk. It was emphasised that the report was very positive about the job that Citizens Advice did and recognised the excellent work that was being undertaken. It was also emphasised that the driver for the transformation within East Suffolk was not about resources and saving money; it was about looking at ways that services could be delivered even more effectively, and ESC wanted to free up the capacity to work with Citizens Advice on more preventative activity.

The Leader referred to the current pandemic, the current climate and the challenges that were being faced by the public and stated that they were being 100% supported by the Citizens Advice; ESC was, he said, committed to continuing to support Citizens Advice to deliver the vital services. It was ESC's wish to make the service even more efficient and to have a delivery model in place, that would be sustainable, and that would be more efficient going forward, thus allowing Citizens Advice to use their limited resources to deliver a better standard of service.

Cabinet very much supported the proposals, referring to the excellent work undertaken by Citizens Advice, providing assistance to the Anglia Revenues Partnership with regard to discretionary housing benefit and universal credit applications.

The Assistant Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health stated that he welcomed the proposals, but he did comment that it was important that the transformation service did not disrupt the service to the customers; he added that it was perhaps key that the people who were delivering the service were not disrupted; he referred to the need to look after the people who were delivering this valuable service. The Leader reiterated that ESC was supporting the Citizens Advice ambition to change; it had no wish to impose anything and the Leader was sure that the Citizens Advice would be mindful of the many volunteers who gave up their time.

Councillor Deacon stated that he agreed with the comments made by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health; he then drew Cabinet's attention to paragraph 6.2 of the report, and the words "the pressure to find a solution will not determine the pace of negotiations"; Councillor Deacon hoped that Cabinet would take this into consideration in making its decision. Councillor Deacon stated how much he appreciated the work undertaken by the Citizens Advice in Felixstowe and he felt that ESC should support Citizens Advice as much as it could.

Councillor Topping thanked the Leader for his reassuring words; Councillor Topping referred to the acknowledgements within the report and congratulated everybody on including all of the stakeholders. Councillor Topping referred to the reference within the report to the four merged CABs that had been interviewed and the lessons that had been learnt; she welcomed the fact that engagement had taken place with others who had already gone through this experience and the lessons that could be learnt. Councillor Topping referred to the location of the new headquarters, which she said would be important, particularly given the size of the district, and also the potential need for outreach locations. Councillor Topping, in conclusion, welcomed the proposals within the report.

Councillor Byatt welcomed the proposals within the report; he referred to it being crucial, in respect of funding, to ensure that the voice of a friend did not run short of funding because that would be crucial, particularly during the current pandemic.

On the proposition of Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Kerry, it was by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

1. That the findings of the Touchstone Renard Review of Citizens Advice in East Suffolk be noted.

2. That an additional sum of £5,700 from within existing budgets be made available to enable Touchstone Renard to continue to work with the three Citizens Advice on the next phase of transformation – specifically to prepare a phased implementation plan and a fuller business case for merger. The Council expects that additional funding, if required, should be provided by the three Citizens Advice.

3. That East Suffolk Council continues to support Touchstone Renard in working with the three Citizens Advice to define the scope of the next phase of transformation review.

4. That an additional one-off payment of £16,000 be made to North East Suffolk Citizens Advice for the financial year 2021/22, on condition that they also explore other avenues of funding (including the Ropes Trust).

8 Temporary Accommodation Procurement and Placement Strategy 2021-23

Cabinet received report **ES/0612** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing who stated that the report outlined the Temporary Accommodation Procurement and Placement Strategy 2021-23 to be used by the Council in connection with the provision of temporary accommodation for homeless households in the district. It considered the procurement of accommodation along with how households would be allocated properties. The Strategy would ensure that the Council could meet its legal duties and deliver the housing needs service in a transparent way that partners and service users could access.

Cabinet welcomed the proposed Strategy, commenting how it would positively impact on a number of people's lives, both immediately and in the future.

Councillor Topping referred to paragraph 8.3 of the report and the reference to occasions when demand for temporary accommodation could exceed the temporary accommodation placements; Councillor Topping asked how often that happened. Councillor Topping also referred to the reference within the report to bed and breakfast accommodation being used, for a maximum of six weeks for pregnant women and households with dependant children. Councillor Topping asked, if anybody was in the unfortunate position where six weeks had been reached and there was no other accommodation, where the people would be moved to. Councillor Topping asked a third question, referring to East Suffolk being a long geographical area, if for example a family was displaced in the northern part of the district, and it was closer for an out of district placement across the river in Norfolk, would that be considered before potentially moving the family to the southern end of the district. Councillor Topping referred perhaps to children being involved and the need for their schooling and social networks to be taken into account.

Officers, in response to the questions, stated that sometimes there were occasions where demand for temporary accommodation exceeded self contained units; in those circumstances, the Council could, potentially as a last resort, use accommodation with shared facilities which was referred to as bed and breakfast accommodation. Officers explained that in the past there had been a small number of families with dependant

children in bed and breakfast accommodation; they had all been moved out and within the last 18 months not one household, with either pregnant women or children, had been placed within bed and breakfast accommodation or any accommodation with shared facilities. That had and would continue, in accordance with the Government's requirements and best practice, to be a priority for the Council.

Referring to out of district placements, officers referred to caselaw, which had led to legislation mandating local authorities to take into account in every placement the needs of children and all members of households. In short, whilst in-district placements were always seen as preferable in the eyes of the law, it was also mandatory for councils to consider all of the needs of a household, and if the household preferred to go into a placement out of district, the Council would seek to achieve that.

On the proposition of Councillor Kerry, seconded by Councillor Rivett, it was by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That the Temporary Accommodation Procurement and Placement Strategy 2021-2023 be adopted.

9 Fees and Charges for 2021/22

Cabinet received report **ES/0613** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources who reported that income from fees and charges was an integral part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, generating essential funding for the Council to help minimise Council Tax increases and/or service reductions.

Appendix A of the report, Councillor Cook stated, set out the proposed Discretionary Fees and Charges for 2021/22. Areas to highlight were set out in paragraphs 2.7 to 2.10 of the covering report; this included further details on Parking Services, Beach Huts and Chalets, and Cemeteries and Pre-Application Planning Advice. The date for implementation of the Discretionary fees at ESC was 1 April 2021, unless otherwise stated.

The Statutory Charges were for noting and were set out in Appendix B. These were set by Government statute and councils usually had no control over service pricing. For some statutory fees there was no set review dates and some areas, such as licences, had not been increased for a number of years. Where review dates were known these were provided.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment stated that the environment would continue to be a key focus of ESC and would always be a consideration of policy formation and implementation; ESC had a strong vision and was delivering for its residents. Part of his vision, Councillor Mallinder stated, was to encourage residents to make the right decisions and so it was important to note that waste disposal fees had minimum increases, in particular the green waste service, and by subscribing to this service not only was excessive garden waste composted, people did not need to drive to the recycling centre, thereby saving money on petrol and

reducing carbon footprints. Although composting was always the best way to deal with garden waste, the amount of waste a garden could produce, this might not be practical so Councillor Mallinder encouraged any household who had not signed up for this service to do so. Councillor Mallinder stated that ESC had made it easy for residents to dispose of large items and by using the service, items were either recycled or broken down into component parts, and ultimately, disposed of correctly. Councillor Mallinder referred to fly tipping and stated that this was unacceptable and with these waste disposal services provided by ESC there were no excuses. ESC was committed to a strong environmental vision and part of that was to empower residents to make the right decision Councillor Mallinder concluded.

Councillor Topping sought clarification in respect of charges for stray dogs, which was provided. Councillor Topping also asked why the Council was not increasing the amount of money charged to people who wished to have street naming and numbering changes. It was agreed that officers would answer this question following the meeting.

Following a question from Councillor Byatt, it was confirmed that there were no sex establishments within the East Suffolk district.

Councillor Byatt referred to penalties for landlords and commented that there was nothing within the report about failing to supply carbon dioxide alarms within rented accommodation. Councillor Byatt also, with regard to boilers and boiler inspections, asked about penalties for landlords if their boilers were not as they should be. The Leader commented that enforcement issues related to unsafe premises / equipment should not be confused with fees and charges. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, in response to the points raised by Councillor Byatt, stated that he would speak with officers and clarify for Councillor Byatt separately.

Councillor Byatt referred to burials and felt that the proposed increase in fees was a large jump over one year; he suggested that it might be staggered over a period of time. In response, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources stated that he was mindful of this; however it was a policy of ESC to standardise fees and charges as far as possible but at the same time being mindful of the fees and charges in place surrounding East Suffolk. Councillor Cook reminded members that the Council had postponed making a decision on this in April 2020 and so it was felt appropriate to continue with the standardisation, particularly taking into account that a high percentage of people chose the cremation route, which had been standardised and which was significantly lower and was competitive with surrounding districts.

Councillor Smith-Lyte, referring to the need to support the climate change commitment and energy efficiency standards, wondered if the Council should increase fees for sub-standard rental properties. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources referred to one of the new Housing Strategies and commented that this would be covered within that; it did not relate to fees and charges. A balanced approach was required taking into account education of people as well as fees.

On the proposition of Councillor Cook, seconded by Councillor Burroughes, it was by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

1. That the discretionary fees and charges set out in Appendix A of report ES/0613 be approved for implementation from 1 April 2021.
2. That the fees and charges set by statute and the timing of any increase in these as set out in Appendix B of report ES/0613 be noted.

10

Council Tax Base 2021/22

Cabinet received report **ES/0614** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, who stated that the report sought approval of the Council Tax Base for tax setting purposes for next year and approval for allocation of Local Council Tax Support grants to town and parish councils. The report outlined the process for estimating the tax base and the elements that needed to be taken into account.

Starting with the total number of dwellings in the district Councillor Cook reported, adjustments were made for reliefs, discounts, growth, and an estimated collection rate to arrive at a tax base expressed as a number of Band D equivalents. In normal circumstances, the tax base resulting from these calculations would be expected to increase by around 1% from year to year. However, this year, the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic had resulted in an increase in the number and value of Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) reliefs reducing the tax base. The level of these reliefs had also had to be forecast for 2021/22. In addition, collection rates had been reviewed, and the collection rate used in the calculation had been reduced from 99% to 98.75%. Overall, Councillor Cook reported, a reduction of just under 550 Band D properties, or around 0.6%, was estimated compared with the 2020/21 base. Although this was significant, as more data and analysis on trends had become available, this was a lower impact than had been previously forecast in both Covid-19 impact and MTFS reports.

In the the one-year Spending Review announced on 25th November 2020, £670m additional grant funding was announced to provide support to authorities in respect of the impact on council tax bases arising from increased LCTRS reliefs. This funding had subsequently been confirmed in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. Major precepting authorities would receive a Local Council Tax Support Grant allocation proportionate to their share of the council tax bill in the district, based on the increase in the value of LCTRS reliefs in the year between the October 2019 CTB1 and October 2020 CTB1 returns, together with an allowance for forecast increases at a national level.

As a billing authority, Councillor Cook advised members, the ESC grant of £370,000 included an element of £110,00 relating to the reduction in tax bases experienced at town and parish level. Councillor Cook's report recommended that this element be allocated to town and parish councils. The allocation of this grant to individual councils had been calculated in proportion to the reductions in the calculated tax base for the parish resulting from increased LCTRS reliefs and the use of a reduced collection rate.

The Leader, after giving thanks for the production of the report, stated that he was pleased to see that ESC would be passing on the required amounts to town and parish councils where that was appropriate. He encouraged all councils that could, to

consider the financial impact that the pandemic had had on their residents and to do all that they could to keep any Council Tax rises, if there had to be any, to a minimum. The Leader concluded by stating that he had been impressed with the generosity of the Government in supporting local councils through the pandemic.

Councillor Topping very much welcomed the proposals within the report and stated that, once the decision had been taken by Cabinet, the decision for town and parish councils should be communicated via every avenue possible, including social media. Officers confirmed that they would be writing to town and parish councils the next day.

Councillor Ashdown commented that many town and parish councils were struggling with decisions on their budgets and precepts; this, he said, would be very good news for them.

In response to a question from Councillor Byatt, it was confirmed that ESC did not charge town and parish councils for the service that it provided, collecting precepts on their behalf was part of the function of the billing authority.

On the proposition of Councillor Cook, seconded by Councillor Gallant, it was by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

1. That 87,339.43 Band D equivalent properties be approved as the council tax base for 2021/22 for the East Suffolk district.
2. That the council tax bases for 2021/22 for individual town and parish areas as shown in Appendix A of report ES/0614 be approved.
3. That the Local Council Tax Support Grant allocations to Town and Parish Councils detailed in Appendix B of report ES/0614 be approved.

11 Capital Programme for 2021/22 to 2024/25 including Revisions to 2020/21

Cabinet received report **ES/0616** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources who reported that as part of the annual budget setting process, the Council was required to agree a programme of capital expenditure for the coming four years. The report before Cabinet set out ESC's General Fund Capital Programme and the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme for the financial year 2020/21 to 2024/25, this incorporated revisions to 2020/21.

The capital programme, Councillor Cook stated, had been compiled taking account of the main principles to maintain an affordable four-year rolling capital programme; to ensure capital resources were aligned with the Council's Strategic Plan; to maximise available resources by actively seeking external funding and disposal of surplus assets; and to not anticipate receipts from disposals until they were realised.

Councillor Cook stated that the general fund capital programme included £103.65m of external contributions and grants towards financing the Council's £189.44m of capital investment for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy period. This represented 55% of

the whole general fund capital programme. Key investments for the general fund were the Felixstowe Regeneration (Leisure Centre and Infrastructure), Lowestoft Beach Hut Replacements, Commercial Investment, Flood Alleviation, specifically the Lowestoft Tidal Barrier project and finally the loan to the LATCO.

The Housing Revenue Account capital programme totalled £64.95m for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy period and did not require any additional external borrowing to finance it. The Housing Revenue Account capital programme would benefit from £13.31m of external grants and contributions, which was 21% of the programme. Key investments for the Housing Revenue Account were the housing redevelopment programme and the housing new build programme.

The report also detailed the revenue implications arising from the capital programme, showing the capital charges for each year of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy period, split between general fund and Housing Revenue Account.

Councillor Cook concluded by stating that it was an extremely exciting capital programme over the next four years, particularly as many of the projects would bring additional revenue streams which would again in the coming years help ESC to limit the amount of burden that would have to be passed on to Council Tax and Business Rates payers.

The Leader echoed the comments of Councillor Cook and added that the report highlighted the ambitions of ESC and the fact that it would continue to deliver against those ambitions regardless of the current situation in respect of the virus. This he said was down to the prudent management of finances and the generosity of the Government in supporting councils through the crisis.

Cabinet Members very much supported the proposals within the report.

Councillor Byatt gave thanks for what he said was a bold Capital Programme; he referred to the Procurement Task and Finish Group that was in place and the need to ensure that the projects would acknowledge the things that ESC had pledged to do, particularly related to reducing the carbon imprint. Councillor Byatt hoped that the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment would agree that the Council should always have at the forefront of its mind how it could make the environment cleaner through all projects. Both the Cabinet Members with responsibility for Resources and the Environment confirmed that that would be the case, and the Leader added that everything that the Council did would be driven by the overarching Strategic Plan, which set out the aims and aspirations of the Council. The Leader gave an undertaking that ESC would work to deliver against that Plan.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, referring to the Capital Programme, highlighted that the Council did not have to raise all of the money; a lot of the funding was drawn in from other sources he said. Councillor Ritchie highlighted the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project as an example.

On the proposition of Councillor Cook, seconded by Councillor Brooks, it was by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That the capital programme for 2021/22 to 2024/25 and revisions to 2020/21 be recommended for approval by Full Council.

12 Exempt/Confidential Items

The Leader stated that in exceptional circumstances, the Council may, by law, exclude members of the public from all, or part of, an executive decision-making meeting. The Council should, unless there were urgent circumstances, give notice of its intention to do so via the Forward Plan, which was updated and published on its website 28 clear days prior to the meeting. There were various reasons that the Council, on occasions, had to do this and examples were because a report contained information relating to an individual, information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person, or information relating to any consultations or negotiations. Tonight, the Leader stated, ESC would be considering three substantive exempt matters which were outlined in agenda items 14 - 16 on the published agenda.

The Leader reported that, firstly, item 14, Approval to Enter into Legal Agreements with Landowners Related to the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project, asked Cabinet to give authority for one of the Council's Strategic Director's, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, and others, to negotiate terms and enter into the necessary agreements with the relevant landowners. The Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project was now fully funded and ready to proceed with the next stage of phase 1, which was the construction of the tidal flood defence walls. However, certain agreements to allow for access to land needed to be put in place, first, with the various landowners. As the UK's most easterly town, Lowestoft's unique geographical position had enabled it to become a nationally significant offshore energy hub, serving some of the world's largest offshore wind farms. With billions of pounds of investment due to take place over the next decade in this type of energy generation, the town's resilience to tidal flooding and sea level rise was of paramount importance, not only to its residents to ensure their safety, but also for the economic viability of the area. Therefore, the Council viewed the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project construction of tidal flood defences as one with major economic significance, providing a crucial component to the country's energy security, and for its transition to a low carbon economy. The project would, the Leader stated, enable jobs, remove a key barrier to growth and increase productivity, significantly reduce the risk of flooding to key infrastructure, and reduce the risk of flooding to over 1085 families and 825 businesses for generations. The project would also support and compliment other major infrastructure investments in the town, such as the Gull Wing Bridge, as well as providing significant economic regeneration and jobs.

Turning to item 15, Leisure Operator – Contract Award, the Leader advised that this report asked Cabinet to approve the awarding of the leisure operator contract for the Waterlane and Waveney Valley Leisure Centres and to agree to various delegated decisions being taken.

Finally, Item 16, Temporary Staff Framework Procurement, asked Cabinet to agree to permission being granted to procure the framework for temporary staff. By centralising agreements into a single supplier, the Council would be able to lever better pricing, whilst the multi-tier solution ensured continuity of supply of the staff needed. It would also make recruiting temporary staff a simpler and more efficient process as it would set out how ESC engaged and what was required of both ESC as the client and the supplier appointed. This should reduce time in recruiting and also in managing temporary staff and ensure a higher quality of appointee.

In conclusion, the Leader stated that, shortly, ESC would have to end the YouTube link that was currently running.

On the proposition of Councillor Gallant, seconded by Councillor Rivett, it was by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

13 Exempt Minutes

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

14 Approval to enter into Legal Agreements with Landowners related to the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project

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

15 Leisure Operator - Contract Award

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

16 Temporary Staff Framework Procurement

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

The meeting concluded at 10:00 pm

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Chairman