



## COUNCIL

Wednesday, 27 January 2021

### CABINET MEMBERS' REPORT AND OUTSIDE BODIES REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT TO COUNCIL

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To receive the Cabinet Members' Report and the Outside Bodies Representatives' Report to Council, for information.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards in the District
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Steve Gallant Leader of the Council

## CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS TO COUNCIL

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Mary Rudd, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health
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### Licensing Services

Licensing Services is continuing to support licensed premises and drivers during this third period of national lockdown. Licensed premises are currently closed, except for providing takeaway food and non-alcoholic drinks. Taxis (hackney carriage and private hire) are still operating to transport key workers to and from work, to transport key workers' children to school, and to transport people for essential shopping and to medical appointments.

In terms of numbers, in relation to alcohol and entertainment, in January 2020 there were 1071 licensed premises and clubs in East Suffolk and in January 2021 there has actually been a small increase in this number, against a decrease in the number of licensed premises nationally year on year (since 2012 in the case of drink led premises and since 2017 in the case of food led premises), to 1073 Premises and Club Premises Licences issued in East Suffolk. In relation to taxis, there has been a significant reduction in the number of licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles in East Suffolk over the last year but a small increase in the number of private hire operators. In January 2020, there were 136 licensed hackney carriage vehicles, 349 licensed private hire vehicles and 72 private hire operators in East Suffolk. In January 2021, there were 97 licensed hackney carriage vehicles, 289 licensed private hire vehicles and 75 private hire operators. In relation to gambling establishments in East Suffolk, in January 2020, there were 40 Gambling Premises Licences issued and by January 2021 there was a small reduction to 37 Gambling Premises Licences in East Suffolk.

Licensees in East Suffolk have had to be very resilient over the last year as Covid-19 has severely impacted their businesses with a significant drop in income through loss of custom coupled with an increase in expenditure to make their premises Covid secure during those periods when they have been able to be open and trade. East Suffolk Council has been able to provide some financial support to premises during this difficult time with grant funding of up to £25,000 per eligible business through the Additional Restrictions Grant.

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor James Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment
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Our physical environmental projects with residents are suspended during Covid but I continue to communicate expected behaviour and educate residents to make the right decisions.

Therefore, campaigns continue through press releases, zoom meetings and social media.

In early January, we encouraged residents to make environmentally friendly new year resolutions and to take advantage of additional time at home to think about the environment.

I continue leading the Suffolk Waste Partnership and at the end of this month, a new recycling leaflet will be sent to all householders. We need to recycle correctly and waste less. The partnership continues to focus on campaigns, largely through social media and is focusing on a response to various drafts of the environmental bill. I personally want to make sure emphasis is not placed only on the consumer but also the producers.

A new fly tipping leaflet has also been produced to give direction to local communities on how to prevent and how to report. Both have been circulated to all Ward Members to distribute. Recycling centres, at the moment, continue to be open, with online booking.

I attended the AONB Steering Committee in late December, with updates received on projects and direction. Many physical projects have been suspended due to covid. Discussions took place on the response to Sizewell C, especially about how to hold EDF to account and to make sure maximum mitigation is provided, not the minimum. A new sub-committee has been developed, which I am a member of, to focus the AONB message and to improve engagement with the public. The newspaper, which is much loved, will return in some form.

Earlier this month, the Environment Task Group met and we had a full and varied agenda.

We welcomed the Housing Development Manager from Norwich City Council, to explain the methodology and practicalities of delivering their Goldsmith Street development. We received a fascinating presentation and had an informative question and answer session. This was followed with an update on the Deben School project and it is clear East Suffolk has aspirations beyond Goldsmith Street, to create a multi-dimensional project that will focus on biodiversity, leisure and building a community for all age groups and types of families. A project that I know will reflect our values and the aspirations of East Suffolk.

As per the agreement of this Council, the Environment Task Group fully discussed the concept and application of the Energy Bill.

The report by officers comprehensively explained how such a bill would work and gave a number of case studies, where local councils had largely failed to provide a local energy supply. It was explained that we are prioritising education and practical support for better energy efficiencies. We concluded efforts, both financial and from officers, should focus to improve energy efficiencies and making sure we assist with specific fuel poverty concerns, through partnership working with local groups and county wide organisations.

A presentation was given by Andrew Reynolds on our firework policy and the Environment Task Group actioned a full analysis on the possibility of banning fireworks on East Suffolk land.

Councillor Smith-Lyte gave us an update on Environmental Policies from other Councils and we will study these to see what we can learn and adapt at East Suffolk. Councillor Gooch gave us an update on her project on reaching out to young adults and a larger project of our engagement with schools.

Councillor Burroughes mentioned concerns of Neonicotinoids (ie insecticides) and the Environment Task Group expressed our worry, post-Brexit, that they would be used more and cause huge harm to our insects in East Suffolk. It was agreed that further investigation would take place into how we could lobby the NFU and Westminster, to maintain controls over chemicals sprayed on farmland.

I was also happy to confirm this year, that we will try to focus on biodiversity and ecology, taking the interest of our residents in nature and focusing this on practical actions. This will be via the biodiversity Greenprint Forum Conference in early spring, the planting of a meadow at Melton offices and our spring aspiration of 100 sites for the ‘Pardon the weeds, we are feeding the bees’ campaign.

Environment protection continues as a front line service provided by the Council and we continue to monitor closely behaviour and any breach of statutory responsibility.

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Stephen Burroughes – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Services and Operational Partnerships
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- **Customer Services**

Service access points have now been closed since we moved on from the Tier 4 Covid restrictions and went into a further lock down and all staff are now working from home with support. All staff continue to support our residents during these challenging weeks under the further lockdown restrictions by taking calls via the ‘Home but not Alone’ service put in place during the first lockdown and now being used again. The teams are also providing outbound calls to CEV (clinically extremely vulnerable) to support communities throughout East Suffolk.

They have proved to be always resilient and professional whilst coping with the limitations of space, home learning for some, and the lack of ‘having a chat’ with colleagues at the coffee station. We are looking at putting in place a virtual ‘staff room’ where colleagues can escape to and let off steam and catch up with colleagues.

Managing resources – the team are working hard to have resources in the ‘right place’ to free up capacity, as well as improve service delivery. For example, the ‘mailbox’ has now moved from CE to CS team, who are better placed to deal with enquires and free up CE team to focus on their actual roles. This type of transition is also focussed on ‘customer satisfaction’ as now our mailbox responses are predominantly same day, which has never happened before (and something our customers expect in today’s consumerist world – as they do not differentiate the service which they receive from public sector organisations and private).

The ‘one front desk’ work continues apace on our quest to improve the customer journey and enhance the customer experience, as well as resolving issues at the first point of contact and reducing avoidable contacts. We have taken on several new workstreams (housing triage in the south, home choice, looking to take on repairs etc.) and this also helps free up resources in other teams to give them greater focus on the vulnerable and complex cases and better utilise their skills. We have a way to go on this

– culturally and in respect of the need for a more joined up recruitment process. This work is also important in respect of demand management and ensuring we develop services in line with our strategic plan and to meet the needs of our customers.

- **Operational Partnerships**

The journey to find a new operator for the ‘new look’ Waveney Valley Leisure Centre in Bungay and Water Lane in Lowestoft has been completed. The procurement process but had to be paused earlier in 2020 due to the impact of the Covid pandemic & the first lockdown following govt guidance which clearly put all leisure operators nationally into a very challenging period and thus were not in a position to respond to the invitation to tender. The process was subsequently restarted in September 2020 with a closing date in November. Due to the ‘gap’ between the ending of the previous contract in October and the appointment of a new operator due for February 2021, a temporary interim situation for maintaining these two assets was undertaken.

Following the closure of the tender process, we received very strong bids from very high level professional national operators. Following a full evaluation and scoring process by specialists covering Finance, Leisure, IT & digital project management, the criteria for which was very precise, a successful operator was identified and will be running these 2 sites from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 through to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2029 when all leisure facilities across East Suffolk will be put out to tender eventually resulting in high quality consistent services being delivered across the whole of East Suffolk. Clearly it has been a very challenging time with the closure and impact of the pandemic on our services, but we have managed to complete the process during this time which is a recognition of the skill and hard work of the officer team.

We have been, as we always do, working alongside our major partners during the challenges of 2020 and as it continues into 2021 dealing with the complexities and challenges of running the services, both with Places Leisure who operate of leisure facilities, and within the JV (joint venture) with have with East Suffolk Norse both of which do an amazing job.

It has been extremely vital that we have kept operatives and staff safe and continue to be able to deliver as full a service as possible and build in contingencies where appropriate. All the teams have responded well under some very difficult and challenging circumstances. The operational costs across our partners are closely monitored and the impact of changes undertaken to their working arrangements are continually monitored to ensure they are continually ‘Covid Safe’.

Clearly, in respect of leisure staff, many have been furloughed and redeployed under the current arrangements and this is reflected on their balance sheets. We long for the day when we can resume a normal and comprehensive service offer, and there is light at the end of the tunnel.

- **ICT & Digital Transformation**

It has been a major success story in how the team has delivered the service and provided the support so that the day-to-day business of the council has carried on smoothly during 2020 and continues to do so in 2021. A huge amount of work goes on behind the scenes to ensure that East Suffolk can provide smooth, effective and efficient services with much more online activity and a high level of customer ‘self-service’ through our online digital platforms. No doubt, we are all now experts at using Zoom and Teams to do the day job, but without the professionalism and back up East Suffolk would be struggling to function. Our digital evolution continues with the very popular GrandPad, supporting our most vulnerable, Smart Towns being rolled out across the district, and our digital offer has also enabled good public participation in our meetings.

Work with the customer services teams is looking at creating data mapping - working closely with managers to look at current factors limiting their ability to deliver data led / evidence-based decision making. So currently mapping all data sources and identifying gaps, as well as looking at key areas to report upon to better delivery service improvement.

Digital coaching – could we do this? East Suffolk Council provides a wide range of local services to customers (who include residents, service users, businesses and visitors to the district). For many, the customer service team is the first point of contact. The ‘single-point-of-contact’ (SPOC) approach continues to evolve, and teams are already supporting customers by guiding them through online solutions to support the ‘digital first’ strategy and support them to access services themselves. Given the customer services team have the most contact with our residents, they are well placed to support them on their digital journey. The service is constantly reviewing their operation and they always look for better and imaginative ways of working, never standing still.

## **Outside Bodies Representatives Reports**

There were no Outside Bodies Representatives Reports on this occasion.

**APPENDICES – None**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS – None**