

Unconfirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Full Council** held in the High Lodge, Haw Wood, Hinton, nr Saxmundham, IP17 3QT, on **Wednesday, 28 July 2021 at 6:30 PM**

Members present:

Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Chris Blundell, Councillor Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw, Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Jenny Ceresa, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Janet Craig, Councillor Tom Daly, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor John Fisher, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Andree Gee, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Ray Herring, Councillor Stuart Lawson, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor Chris Mapey, Councillor Debbie McCallum, Councillor Mark Newton, Councillor Malcolm Pitchers, Councillor Sarah Plummer, Councillor Carol Poulter, Councillor Russ Rainger, Councillor Keith Robinson, Councillor Mary Rudd, Councillor Letitia Smith, Councillor Ed Thompson, Councillor Caroline Topping, Councillor Steve Wiles, Councillor Kay Yule

Officers present: Stephen Baker (Chief Executive), Chris Bing (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Helen Buckingham (Regulatory Consultant – Environmental Services & Port Health), Karen Cook (Democratic Services Manager), Shannon English (Political Group Support Officer (GLI)), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer), Siobhan Martin (Head of Internal Audit Services), Sue Meeken (Political Group Support Officer (Labour)), Agnes Ogundiran (Conservative Political Group Support Officer), Tim Snook (Leisure Development Partnership Manager)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ashdown, Burroughes, Byatt, Cackett, Cooper, Freeman, Fryatt, Gandy, Goldson, Jepson, Kerry, F Mortimer, T Mortimer, Patience, Ritchie, Rivett and Smith-Lyte.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Announcements

The Chairman of the Council referred to recent by-elections and welcomed all newly elected members to East Suffolk Council.

The Chairman announced that, since the last Full Council meeting, he had attended two events, and he gave details of both, firstly Suffolk Day 2021 celebrations at Clare, and secondly the opening of the new Community Centre in Bungay.

The Chairman then announced the recent very sad passing of Len Jacklin, a Councillor of many years. The Chairman referred to himself and Mr Jacklin having stood against each other on two occasions but, despite that, they had had great respect for each other and had also formed a friendship. The Chairman then invited Councillor Deacon to speak. Councillor Deacon, speaking on behalf of the East Suffolk Labour Group, expressed the Group's appreciation of Mr Jacklin's commitment when he was a Waveney District Councillor; Councillor Deacon referred to Mr Jacklin being dedicated to his community and being approachable at all times. Councillor Deacon also referred to Mr Jacklin's wise words, common sense and support for the Labour Group, which was always welcomed. In conclusion, Councillor Deacon stated that Mr Jacklin would be missed by all who knew him.

The Leader of the Council stated that the Covid pandemic remained a significant risk for East Suffolk residents and, as such, the Council must continue to do all that it could to minimise the risk of spreading infection whilst balancing this with the need to get the Country back up and running. The Leader referred to staff continuing to work with residents, community groups and employers to offer support and guidance and he emphasised the need to continue to encourage the take up of the vaccines, regular testing and self-isolation when required to do so.

The Leader then reminded members that, along with colleagues at Great Yarmouth Borough Council, ESC had entered a joint bid for UK City of Culture 2025; a decision on whether the long list had been reached would be known in September 2021. Between times, a programme of communication and community engagement work would take place throughout the summer to encourage support for the bid from residents, businesses and creative organisations. The bid to become UK City of Culture 2025 gave the opportunity to showcase a hugely important part of the East Suffolk community, the cultural and creative sector. Following changes to the entry criteria, the Leader reported, groups of towns could now join together and apply for the title to be awarded to their local area. Previous holders of City of Culture status had attracted significant investment and growth, whilst highlighting the diversity of culture available to their communities. The City of Culture scheme would enable areas outside of London to put culture at the heart of their plans for post-Covid recovery. The East Suffolk and Great Yarmouth bid had, the Leader stated, the potential to be transformational for the area, strengthening communities, building a sense of pride, celebrating and boosting local arts and culture sector, and attracting new investment and tourism with all the benefits this economic uplift would bring.

The bid demonstrated how culture would be used to drive future growth, bring communities together and celebrate local heritage. Working with the cultural and creative sector, it was hoped to create a groundswell of enthusiastic support and engagement which would play a key role in the efforts to overcome the challenges faced in communities, helping them to recover from the effects of the pandemic and opening up yet more opportunities, especially for young people.

The bid, regardless of the outcome, the Leader stated, would enable the rich culture and heritage to be showcased to the rest of the UK, highlighting the creativity of people and the beauty of landscapes, enabling the district to be enjoyed by all and creating a cultural legacy for future generations.

The Leader reported that he had a number of changes to advise members of in respect of Appointments to Outside Bodies; using the delegations given to him by Full Council and Cabinet, respectively, and with immediate effect, the following changes were reported:

- Alde and Ore Community Partnership (one vacancy following former Cllr Haworth-Culf's resignation) - replacement - Councillor Russ Rainger.
- Leiston Town Athletic Sports Ground Executive Committee (one vacancy following former Councillor Bond's resignation) - replacement - Councillor Russ Rainger.
- Leiston Together (one vacancy following former Councillor Haworth-Culf's resignation) – replacement - Councillor Russ Rainger.
- Suffolk Police and Crime Panel (one vacancy following Councillor Debbie McCallum's request to step down) - replacement – Councillor Tracey Green.
- Suffolk Coast Forum (one vacancy following former Councillor Allen's resignation) – replacement - Councillor Russ Rainger.

In concluding his announcements, and turning to Community Partnerships and in particular the chairmanship of the Carlton Colville, Kessingland, Southwold and Villages Community Partnership, the Leader stated that following Councillor Jenny Ceresa's request to step down as Chair, Councillor Norman Brooks would take over as Chair from 1 November 2021.

In the unavoidable absence of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development, the Assistant Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development made an announcement on his behalf, advising that a public consultation had been launched related to the South Lowestoft and Kirkley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan; there would be a six week period of public consultation running from 15 July 2021. Two drop-in sessions would also be held, on 5 August 2021, and the Assistant Cabinet Member provided details.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment gave an environmentally friendly welcome to the newly elected councillors, stating that he looked forward to working with them, particularly on environmental matters. Councillor Mallinder also reminded councillors that maps were available that illustrated the land within all wards that might be available for tree planting and he suggested that they may wish to discuss this with their respective town/parish councils and communities to see if they wished to engage with tree planting projects.

The Chief Executive, after referring to agenda item 9, Appointment of Monitoring Officer, welcomed Christopher Bing as ESC's new Monitoring Officer. The Chief Executive also advised members that a new Head of Housing, Heather Tucker, had recently been appointed.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 Minutes - May 2021

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 May 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 Questions from the Public

No questions had been submitted by the electorate as provided by Council Procedure Rule 8.

7 Questions from Members

a) Question from Councillor Caroline Topping to the Leader of the Council

"Does this Council support the proposal that voter photo ID will be made compulsory to be able to vote? For those with no drivers licence, passport or suitable ID, what measures can we as a District Council take to support and enable them to exercise their right to vote as this policy is introduced?"

Response from the Leader of the Council

"I am sure that all members in this Chamber believe that ensuring that all those that are eligible to vote can do so and that we as a society are as satisfied as we can be that the system is free from fraud and abuse. The Elections Bill 2021 is currently being considered in Parliament, and this Bill includes new legislation requiring voters to show an approved form of photographic ID in a polling station before collecting their ballot paper. If agreed by Parliament, all returning officers will have to comply with this new legislative requirement. A broad range of documents will be accepted as a photographic form of ID, including passports, driving licences, concessionary travel passes and photocard parking permits issued as part of the Blue Badge scheme. Any voter who does not have an approved form of identification will be able to apply for a free, local Voter Card from their local authority; this is something that the Electoral Services Team will be expected to provide, on request. Every effort will be made to make this process as accessible and straightforward as possible. The details of this proposed new requirement, such as around the funding of this new burden, and application deadlines within the electoral timetable, are yet to be published but the Electoral Commission has committed to ensuring that it is introduced within manageable timescales and supported by proper funding. It is worth noting that electors in Northern Ireland have been required to produce personal identification in polling stations since 1985, with photographic identification being required since 2003."

Councillor Topping stated that Government research had showed that those with disabilities, the unemployed, people without qualifications, and those that had never voted before, were unlikely to hold any form of photo ID, and the elderly and those on low incomes were less likely to drive or go on holidays abroad, meaning that they were also less likely to have photo ID. Councillor Topping stated that, at the recent Aldeburgh and Leiston by-election there had only been a 26% turnout; Councillor Topping also stated the need for people to engage and to increase the voting population, not disenfranchise and reduce those voting. Councillor Topping also referred to information that she had received from an officer, who had worked within the Elections Team for five years, who advised that, in those five years, there had never been a reported case of voter ID fraud. Councillor Topping asked if the Leader would commit to writing to Government, registering ESC's serious concerns about the implementation of this new law before the Bill's second reading, as well as exploring what frameworks could be put in place to help East Suffolk residents easily secure a form of photo ID if the law was brought into place.

In response, the Leader stated that he would not commit to that; he added that he had faith in the processes in place in Central Government to establish a process that would ensure that there was no voter fraud happening. The Leader acknowledged that there was probably not voter fraud connected to the recent by-election, but he added that he could not say that, with any confidence, for the rest of the UK. The Leader stated that there could not be a position where there were different rules in place for different areas and he stated that he felt unqualified to make an assessment as to what was the likely level of voter fraud in the UK; he trusted the fact that this was being looked at and he did not believe that Central Government would be wasting parliamentary time on something that it did not think needed to be addressed. The Leader stated that the Electoral Services Team would work closely with everybody to ensure that they had good access to photo ID. In conclusion, the Leader referred to the 26% turnout at the recent by-election and he stated that he would like to see a much higher turnout at local elections.

b) Question from Councillor Caroline Topping to the Leader of the Council

"Fairs still use fish as prizes, however it is not an activity that is generally licensed, as they aren't "sold" as such rather won. ESC's land hire terms and conditions do not allow the giving away of live animals as prizes on our land. However, how is this policy enforced, is there a suitable reporting mechanism to report this activity and what are the consequences we impose on those found to be breaking our policy?"

Response from the Leader of the Council

"Just before I turn to the subject matter, I just want to make sure that members understand where this question has come from. The RSPCA is a well-known and respected charity that seeks to improve the welfare and treatment of animals both here in the UK and overseas. Many of us are I suspect supporters and indeed potentially financial contributors to their activities. I am sure that this Council will continue to support its overall aims of the improved treatment and protection of domesticated animals, wildlife and animals destined for the food chain. However, it has over the last few years become normal practice for this charity and many others to

promote their aims and causes using self-generating emails which just require one click to submit. Just entering your name, email address and postcode generates a pre worded message which is automatically addressed and sent to their local Council or Member of Parliament. This practice can generate a large number of emails all worded exactly the same and all requiring, for the sake of politeness, an individual response. No check is carried out by the system as to what is and what is not already being done locally to address the subject matter, thus many of the responses we send simply say we already do that, or we already prohibit it. There are currently 20 such campaigns on the RSPCA website.

I ask you members, is this a good use of the time of both members and officers of this Council?

When you go on to multiply this across the whole of the UK you will start to see the impact to the system as a whole. If the RSPCA had posed the same question to this Council directly it would have had the same impact and response, as a reputable and professional organisation we would have taken their correspondence seriously, considered the evidence and the implications of their ask and responded accordingly. So why do the RSPCA and many many other charities now choose this method of engaging, well the cynic in me says it is because it drives membership numbers and retention. Making people feel involved adds to their coffers. Not a bad thing you may say, but the cost to the system in servicing this process should in my opinion also be a consideration for us all. They could of course change the system to allow people to report their support directly back to them, but this of course shifts the administrative burden from us to them. They could also target their efforts to local authorities that are failing to address the subject matter, again this would require more work and research on their part. I shall leave members to ponder the pros and cons of this process, I just wanted to highlight my concern around this process to you all.

Let me now turn to the subject of this question. It is many years since I personally have seen goldfish being offered as prizes at fetes and fairs, but that doesn't mean it has completely ceased. My busy schedule and full inbox precludes me from visiting them all.

All events on this Council's owned land require consent from the Council in its capacity as landlord for the area the event is being held. Once an event has been approved, the Council will issue a Condition of Hire agreement, which the hirer will be bound to adhere to. The Events Team monitors the large events to ensure compliance with the policy and the location hire agreement. This includes fairs and carnivals. Should a member of the public or indeed the RSPCA or similar animal welfare body wish to report a complaint, such as live fish being given away, this should be through the normal complaints system, which is then directed to the relevant department, in this case Economic Development. Such a breach of the Hire Agreement would mean that any further application to hold an event by a person or group would be rejected unless adequate reasons can be shown as to why the event should be approved. Approval will only be given at Director level. The standard conditions of our Hire Agreement include 22 conditions number eight states "The giving of goldfish or other live creatures as prizes is banned." And just to head off any similar questions Condition 9 States "No circuses with performing animals of any kind are permitted at any event."

So, although I thank Councillor Topping for the question a quick visit to our website would have provided the answer that she sought and saved members having to listen to my somewhat protracted response."

Councillor Topping did not have a supplementary question.

c) Question from Councillor Janet Craig to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism

"We recognise that our Strategic Plan sets out ambitions for our communities that include a place based approach to tackling deprivation and an aim to help people reach their full potential so we welcome the advertised positions for twelve Apprentices this September. However, is there a reason why we do not offer degree level Higher Apprenticeship opportunities that would help root our brightest young people in their home towns?"

Response from the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism

"Since July 2018 ESC has recruited 37 new start apprentices, 25 of whom are still with the Council. 46 existing staff have also commenced apprenticeship qualifications during that period. These qualifications are in Business Admin; Team leading; Operational Management; Building Control; Procurement; Housing, at all levels; Finance – CIPFA; Public Management and Leadership; Building Trades – plumbing, construction, electrical; Planning.

Our Apprenticeship Strategy can be found at HR - East Suffolk Apprenticeship Strategy 2018 - 2022.pdf - All Documents (sharepoint.com)

ESC currently has one young person undertaking a degree level apprenticeship in Housing who will complete his qualification in early 2022. Other degree level apprenticeships are relatively new - e.g. in Planning and Environmental Services and we are working with managers to identify where opportunities may exist through their workforce plans. Higher level apprenticeships offer a great opportunity to "grow our own" and to give our local young people chances to upskill without having to go to university full time. As an example, there are plans for two or three Environmental Health Apprentices at Grade 7 (Masters level) from this September.

ESC is delighted to be working with the Leaving Care Team at Suffolk County Council (SCC) to offer two care leaver apprenticeships in the the Communities Team from September 2021, focussing on Covid support and Health and Wellbeing. The Council is also working with high schools and colleges across the district to promote apprenticeships in addition to the more traditional higher education pathways. Primarily these higher level apprenticeships are on a day release basis which, depending on the subject, can mean apprentices travelling to universities in London and beyond which can be both a logistical and a financial challenge. However apprenticeship qualifications at this level are relatively new and we expect additional opportunities to open up over the coming months and years.

In addition, the Council in partnership with SCC, New Anglia LEP and Suffolk Chamber of Commerce work directly with employers, sector groups and business representative organisations to promote the creation of more apprenticeship opportunities. There is a particular focus on encouraging apprenticeship roles in STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Maths) related occupations as this supports a number of our key growth sectors. An example of our approach is the joint work we undertake with SCC and EDF Energy to maximise the number of local apprenticeships that will be created during the construction of the proposed Sizewell C development.

The Council's internal and external approach to supporting the creation of apprenticeships directly supports two Strategic Plan priorities – Growing our Economy and Enabling our Communities. Furthermore, it directly contributes to the inclusive growth approach we have adopted which seeks to ensure all members of the East Suffolk community benefit from the economic growth."

Councillor Craig, in her supplementary question, after referring to the Communities theme within the Strategic Plan, and also the selection process for staff, asked how much weight ESC gave to factors such as whether candidates had an education, health or care plan, or if they came from a diverse or under-represented background, or if they lived in a deprived ward.

In response, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism stated that ESC would follow the procedures that it had in place, to ensure that it treated everybody the same, and fairly, when they applied for any positions.

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d) Question from Councillor Louise Gooch to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for The Environment

"Following the Motion at Full Council in September 2020 in support of the Peter Aldous MP sponsored Local Electricity Bill, the Environmental Task Group examined community energy generation but recommended that the council should focus on encouraging energy efficiency.

However since that Report in June this year the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan has been published and approved by Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders including Councillor Gallant. Amongst over a hundred actions that address our commitment to net zero carbon emissions the plan contains two from the list of twenty-five Priorities that relate to community energy, these being to:

- Host renewables installations on public buildings, as well as public land holdings and brownfield land. Establish a collaborative relationship and work with community energy groups to co- develop the schemes where possible.
- Deliver opportunities for on-site or near-site renewable schemes to serve large energy users, like hospitals, universities, and transport infrastructure. Work with community energy groups where possible.

Given that Suffolk County Council is already carrying out detailed feasibility studies of

its land for suitable sites for energy generation opportunities can we more than match the SCC Energy Opportunity Assessment by engaging the local government backed Energy Hub ourselves or other supportive community organisations and revisit this topic of community energy generation that can bring carbon savings, revenue generation for the council or our communities and improved network resilience?"
Response from the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment

"I want to reassure Councillor Gooch and all ward members that it is always important to make sure all stakeholders work together when we focus on the environment.

I absolutely welcome the principles of the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan and it really does echo the priorities we have at East Suffolk.

I will of course be working closely with SCC to make sure we work together to support our communities and residents in the many suggestions the Plan makes.

And I would also encourage our neighbouring districts and SCC to look at adopting a number of our campaigns and it is proven working together we can really achieve a change and make sure the environment is a top priority for all of us. Here at East Suffolk, under the leadership of Councillor Gallant, we are building environmentally sustainable communities and by working together we can make sure that this is embedded across the whole of Suffolk."

Councillor Gooch referred to the report issued in May 2021 by Ricardo Energy and the Environment in relation to the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, and geared towards SCC and its working relationship with the district councils, which she added included lots of useful comments. Councillor Gooch referred to the suggestion on page 34, in respect of a possible Suffolk Climate Emergency Fund. Councillor Gooch asked if ESC might consider establishing such a thing to lever community groups via an organisation like Community Energy East to explore solar and on-shore wind farms, the figures for the potential gains for these truly environmental and clean and green energies were splendid Councillor Gooch stated.

In response, Councillor Mallinder reported that he would be very happy to consider this, particularly through the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders' Group.

8 Petitions

No petitions had been received as provided by Council Procedure Rule 10.

9 Notices of Motion

The Chairman advised that two Motions had been received for this meeting and that each Motion would be considered individually; he moved to the first Motion and in accordance with the Council's Constitution it was proposed and seconded "That the Motion be discussed immediately". On it being put to the vote the Motion was carried and the Motion was therefore duly discussed.

Councillor Beavan stated that Southwold Harbour had been a war zone ever since Waveney District Council had taken it over in 1974; he thanked the Head of Operations

for the work that he had undertaken and then referred to the newly formed Harbour Management Committee which he said had accepted the Port's Good Governance Guidance but added that the Board and its Committees needed to have the appropriate balance of skills, experience, independence and knowledge. Councillor Beavan stated that he had persuaded local stakeholders to bury their hatchets and trust the Council. Councillor Beavan stated that he had offered his services as one of the five Council representatives; he did not feel that it was appropriate to take an Independent's place as he was a councillor. Councillor Beavan then referred to the ESC Cabinet Members who had been appointed to the Committee, and questioned their skills, suggesting that they had been appointed for their Cabinet positions and not their skills. Councillor Beavan stated that there was no room for anyone who knew about caravan sites, which was where the revenue came from, and no room for himself, the local ward member, who had maritime skills.

Councillor Beavan commented that it would have been so much better if everyone could have worked together, without party politics; he referred to Committees and the Community Partnership Board with Conservative members; Councillor Patience no longer being appointed to the Flood Board after 10 years, and the Scrutiny Committee which he said only appointed Conservative members.

Councillor Beavan quoted from the first speech of the Leader of the Council, to ESC, where he said "I recognise that we are all here to look after the interests of East Suffolk and when there is an opportunity for us to work together to achieve something I will not be afraid to grasp it." Councillor Beavan suggested that the Leader was not grasping opportunities for East Suffolk.

The Leader, in raising a point of order, commented that the Motion had not been formally proposed by Councillor Beavan.

Councillor Beavan formally proposed the Motion, which was seconded by Councillor Deacon - "We call on the Administration to use all the talents, enthusiasm and experience available from councillors across all political parties to effect the best governance for all the people of East Suffolk."

The Chairman invited the Council to debate the proposed Motion.

The Leader, at this point, submitted an amendment to the Motion, as follows - "Membership of the formal Committees and Sub Committees of East Suffolk Council is determined under the terms of the Local Government Committees and Political Groups Regulations 1990. For appointments where this does not apply East Suffolk Council will continue to be cognisant of and use all the talents, enthusiasm and experience available from all councillors to deliver against our Strategic Plan, thus realising the best outcomes for all residents of East Suffolk."

The amendment to the Motion was seconded by Councillor Cook.

It was suggested by Councillor Beavan that the amendment to the Motion negated his original Motion. The Monitoring Officer, after considering the amendment, stated that in his view it did not negate the original Motion.

The Council moved to the vote on the proposed amendment, which was by a majority vote carried. The proposed amendment therefore became the Substantive Motion.

The Chairman invited the Leader to speak to his Motion.

The Leader stated he was pleased to hear that Councillor Bevan had such confidence in his own skills and abilities and he hoped that his belief was shared by the ward members that he represented. It was however disappointing, the Leader added, to hear that Councillor Bevan had no such faith in the rest of the elected members being also able to use their skills and experience to good effect. The Leader reported that the members that had been allocated to the Southwold Harbour Management Committee were all cabinet members who were selected by himself to serve on Cabinet because they had the skills and experience necessary to understand and influence the various challenges in their individual portfolios. They sat on the management Committee as cabinet members, not Conservatives, and they were subjected to a rigorous skills audit and application process a process.

The Leader added that the Cabinet was of course formed by the controlling party and he added that in the 2019 local elections the Conservative Party was supported by over 52,000 electors; in comparison Councillor Bevan's own party received only 15,500 votes. The Conservatives returned 40 of the 55 seats whereas his party returned three. This, the Leader stated, indicated to him that the vast majority of the electorate had put their faith in this Administration and its ability to deliver outcomes that were both measured and sustainable. The cabinet members that sat on the Southwold Harbour Management Committee were not only cognisant of the work and ambitions of the Committee but were also well placed to fully understand and influence the wider work of the Council. They were ably supported by a group of independently appointed members who brought industry specialisms and local knowledge to the table. The Leader stated that Councillor Bevan was encouraged on more than one occasion to seek appointment to one of those positions but he had not done that.

At this point, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources outlined the long and detailed process with regard to the formation of the HMC; he advised that work had been ongoing for many years and during that time there had been multiple joint meetings, negotiations and public consultations. In addition legal advice had been sought from experts in the field. Councillor Cook highlighted the skills assessment for the HMC, saying that it was both constructed and conducted with reference to Ashfords Solicitors and following public consultation on the skills audit and terms of reference for the Stakeholders' Advisory Group; all applicants for the co-opted member appointments were interviewed by a panel consisting of the Leader, Ian Bradbury of Southwold Town Council and an independent person recommended by Ashfords Solicitors, and Councillor Cook advised of the appointments made and their CVs/ experience. Councillor Cook advised that Councillor Bevan was not a member of the Cabinet and therefore did not qualify. In conclusion, it was confirmed that the Committee would continue to be cognisant of and use all of the extensive talents, enthusiasm and experience available in the many challenges that laid ahead.

Councillor Deacon referred to the speech made by the Leader, at ESC's first Full Council meeting, where he had spoken about his plans for the road ahead, saying that he

looked forward to working with all members and that he would not be afraid to grasp the opportunity to work together to achieve something. Councillor Deacon quoted from an email from the Leader, dated 13 June 2019, in which he said that he was determined to tap into the skills, experience and interests of all councillors and to maximise the impact that all members could make together as a Council. The Leader had also said that he would be welcoming input and contributions from all councillors irrespective of party alignment. Councillor Deacon referred to the skills audit form, which had been sent to all councillors, with just under 30 responses, which had been sent to the Member Development Steering Group. Councillor Deacon questioned the point of submitting those forms. Councillor Deacon acknowledged that committees had to be politically balanced, and that outside body places were the gift of the ruling party, but he suggested that the Council should be using the skills of all members. Councillor Deacon referred to his own many years of experience working at the Port of Felixstowe and added that he was pleased to represent ESC on the Local Authority Port of Felixstowe Liaison Group which he commented was a prime example of a member's skill being well used, and he hoped put to good use. On the other hand, Councillor Deacon commented, his Group Leader, who had combined experience of some 20 years as a Coastguard and a Special Constable, had not been asked to provide any informal input on public safety issues. Councillor Deacon suggested that now was the time to look at the ESC Constitution, and general practices, so that the current Administration could tap into all member skills for the benefit of the whole community, as hoped for by the Leader. Councillor Deacon also suggested that the Environmental Task Group should be expanded to include additional and informed opposition members; Councillor Deacon suggested that this should be the forum to exemplify cross-party co-operation on the most significant issue that affected everybody. In conclusion, Councillor Deacon suggested that this would be the perfect opportunity to lay down a benchmark to use the hidden skills of members.

In response, the Leader confirmed that he stood by everything that Councillor Deacon had relayed; he stated the importance of the skills of all members being used in the best way possible. The Leader, referring to the Environment Task Group, stated that it was a really good and efficient cross-party group that fed back into the Cabinet and provided a steer as to what was going on. The Leader referenced the legislation relating to the political balance of committees and commented that that was applied but it did not stop any member attending any committee and speaking to cabinet members who were always available.

The Leader, referring back to comments made earlier by Councillor Beavan, in respect of Councillor Patience no longer sitting on the Suffolk County Council Joint Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Panel, stated that he wished to clarify that the Appointments to Outside Bodies were set out in the ESC Constitution, and were generally carried out by Full Council for non Executive functions and by Cabinet for Executive functions. There were, the Leader stated, presently two exceptions to this, one being the Suffolk County Council Joint Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Panel and the other being the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee. The appointments of these two outside bodies were carried out by the Scrutiny Committee, with the rationale for that being that members who sat on the Scrutiny Committee were given a great deal of training on how to effectively carry out the scrutiny function. The appointment to these outside bodies being decided by the Scrutiny Committee was therefore predicated with the expectation that it would be members of that Committee that

would be appointed. For clarity, the Leader added, Councillor Patience was not a member of the Scrutiny Committee.

Referring back to the comments made by Councillor Deacon, the Leader asked that if there were any members that thought that they had something to offer, that was not being used to good effect, could they contact the relevant Cabinet Member and offer their services.

Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw, after referring back to earlier comments by the Leader, stated that in the last East Suffolk election, the majority of people did not vote Conservative, it was, she added, a quirk of the electoral system that put the Conservative Group at the helm. Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw added that political proportionality on committees and other decision making groups was an important safeguard from dictatorship or even one party rule.

Councillor Gooch stated that she wished to make some comments, in support of the spirit of the original Motion and to echo the comments of Councillor Deacon, who spoke on behalf of the Labour Group. Councillor Gooch advised that she had served on the East Suffolk Travellers' Association, having been voted on by the former Waveney District Council; Councillor Gooch added that she continued to attend, when possible, even though she no longer sought nominations through ESC, because it seemed pointless. Councillor Gooch then referred to the City of Culture bid, and highlighted that she had several degrees which she considered to be relevant, and she would have happily contributed to the bid and substance, had she been given the opportunity. Referring back to the original Motion, Councillor Gooch commented that the substance of it was for it to be a more inclusive Council, so that the residents' needs could be served.

Councillor Bird, after endorsing the comments of the Leader in respect of the Scrutiny Committee and outside body representatives, and in referring to the amended Motion and using the talents of all councillors, commented that the Scrutiny Committee was a perfect example of that and he highlighted a recent training course for non members of the Scrutiny Committee and the two members who Councillor Bird asked to join him, in presenting, were Councillor Deacon, his Vice-Chairman, who he valued, and also Councillor Gooch, who he selected because she was a teacher. Councillor Bird referred to the one Task and Finish Group which had so far been set up by the Scrutiny Committee, and commented that the Chairman of that Group was Councillor Beavan. Councillor Bird also referred to a scoping form in respect of a full review of the Council's response to the Covid-19 crisis, which would be considered by the Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting, the author of which was Councillor Beavan. In conclusion, Councillor Bird was of the view, and he hoped that members agreed, that the Scrutiny Committee worked cross-party and, as Chairman, he valued all of the talents that the members brought.

The Leader, in his only closing remarks, commented on the points made by Councillor Gooch in respect of the City of Culture bid; he confirmed that, at this point, a bid had not been submitted, it was an expression of interest that had been submitted. The Leader stated that he was grateful for the information that Councillor Gooch had provided to officers, and the Leader gave a guarantee that he would be looking for all

members to input to the bid; their skills gained externally, and as ward members, would he said be vital.

There being no further debate it was by a majority vote

RESOLVED

"Membership of the formal Committees and Sub Committees of East Suffolk Council is determined under the terms of the Local Government Committees and Political Groups Regulations of 1990. For appointments where this does not apply East Suffolk Council will continue to be cognisant of and use all the talents, enthusiasm and experience available from all councillors to deliver against our Strategic Plan, thus realising the best outcomes for all residents of East Suffolk."

The Chairman moved to the section Motion "East Suffolk District Council recognises the importance of reducing its carbon emissions both to mitigate the worst effects of climate change and to build a strong low carbon economy to ensure a stable future for East Suffolk. Reducing our carbon emissions is in line with our own environmental policy, the UK government's Climate Change Act 2008 and the Paris Agreement. Without local government introducing carbon budgets and targets, the national government is unlikely to meet its targets to reduce overall carbon emissions. This Council recognises that having an open and transparent carbon budget will help us stay on target to reduce our carbon emissions. Therefore, this Council will include an annual carbon budget, setting out our target for reduced carbon emissions, alongside the council's revenue and capital budgets. The first carbon budget should be included within the final 2022/23 budget and be approved by full council at the same time as the financial budget."

In accordance with the Council's Constitution it was proposed by Councillor Topping and seconded by Councillor Gooch "That the Motion be discussed immediately". On it being put to the vote the Motion was lost.

The Leader, after referring to the vote being lost and the constitutional need for the Motion to now be referred to the Cabinet or the most relevant Committee, firstly commented that the members sitting opposite had failed to do their research; this Council was, he said, fully committed to its environmental agenda through its well respected and ambitious cross-party Environment Task Group, which continued to monitor and address carbon emissions; he added that the Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor Mallinder, was better placed to explain the intricacies of the monitoring process. The Leader added that he doubted many members, himself included, fully understood how a carbon budget was set and monitored, and that was why there was a well informed Task Group to act on the Council's behalf. The Leader concluded that, at this meeting, there was not the time or expertise to deal with this Motion, to fully understand what a carbon budget setting process would look like, what it would cost in terms of resources and officer time. The Leader added that the Motion did not provide any tangible benefit to ESC's stated aims and, as such, the Motion would be referred to the Cabinet which would then ask the Environment Task Group to continue to address these matters on the Council's behalf.

After Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw and Councillor Beavan asking if there was a right to reply after the Leader's speech, the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer advised that the matter was now closed. The Chief Executive advised that the the opportunity for debate on this subject would be at the Environment Task Group.

10 Appointment of Monitoring Officer

Full Council received report **ES/0842** by the Leader of the Council, who stated that the Monitoring Officer was a statutory appointment under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as amended by paragraph 24 of Schedule 5 of the Local Government Act 2000. The Monitoring Officer was one of three statutory Officers the Council was required to have in place, the others being the Head of Paid Service and the Section 151 Officer. These roles had specific statutory duties assigned to them and essentially the role of the Monitoring Officer was to report on matters they believed were, or were likely to be, illegal or amount to maladministration, to be responsible for matters relating to the conduct of members and officers and to be responsible for the operation of the Council's Constitution.

Council would, the Leader reported, recall receiving a report at its meeting on 5 May 2021 regarding the temporary appointment of Mr Christopher Bing as the Council's Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal and Democratic Services, following the retirement of Mrs Hilary Slater and pending formal recruitment to the post. The recruitment process was now complete and culminated in a meeting of the Appointments Committee on 22 June 2021 following which the Committee unanimously agreed to offer the post to Mr Christopher Bing on a permanent basis. Mr Bing has accepted the appointment.

Councillor Deacon, speaking on behalf of the Labour Group, and stating how much he looked forward to working with Mr Christopher Bing, congratulated him on his appointment.

There being no questions or further debate, the Chairman moved to a vote on the recommendation, as proposed by Councillor Gallant, and seconded by Councillor Blundell, it was

RESOLVED

That the appointment of Mr Christopher Bing as the Council's permanent Monitoring Officer be approved.

11 Political Balance and Allocations of Seats on Committees 2021/22

Full Council received report **ES/0840** by the Leader of the Council, who reported that membership of the Committees and Sub-Committees of ESC was determined under the terms of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. Those provisions required the Authority to review the representation of political groups and individuals on the Committees, Sub-Committees, and other appropriate bodies to ensure that the seats on Committees were allocated by Group Leaders in proportion to the political groups' membership of the Council.

Since the political balance and allocation of seats on Committees for 2021/22 were agreed at the Annual Meeting of ESC on 5 May 2021, the Leader reported, the vacant seat in the Framlingham Ward and the vacant seat in the Beccles and Worlingham Ward had been filled by the respective by-elections held on 6 May 2021 with the results of those by-elections declared on 10 May 2021. Similarly, following the resignation of Councillor Jocelyn Bond (Aldeburgh and Leiston Ward) and Councillor T-J Haworth-Culf (Aldeburgh and Leiston Ward) from ESC with effect from 10 May 2021, a by-election for the two vacant seats in this ward was held on 8 July 2021 and the two vacant seats had been filled. The results of these by-elections had been considered in the report which contained a recommendation about the allocation of seats on the Council's Committees and Sub-Committees for the 2021/22 Municipal Year, that was until May 2022.

Members would have read, the Leader reported, within Appendix A to the report, that it was proposed that Councillor Tom Daly replace Councillor Fryatt on Planning Committee South and that Councillor Bird would be the Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee South. Appendix A also referenced a nomination being sought for the vacant Conservative seat on the Licensing Committee. The Leader's proposal was that Councillor Russ Rainger take this vacant seat.

Councillor Deacon, after referring back to earlier debate, suggested that perhaps now could be the time to extend the size of the Environment Task Group, to include an additional member from each of the opposition groups. Councillor Deacon suggested that this change would bring additional experience to support ESC's ambition to be zero carbon in nine year's time.

There being no further questions or debate, the Chairman moved to the recommendations, as proposed by Councillor Gallant, and seconded by Councillor Cook, it was

RESOLVED

- 1) That, with effect from 28 July 2021, seats on Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council be allocated in accordance with the nominations by Group Leaders indicated within Appendix A to the report.
- 2) That Councillor Russ Rainger be appointed to the Licensing Committee.

12 Code of Corporate Governance

Full Council received report **ES/0841** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, who reported that the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) recommended an annual review of the Code of Corporate Governance, as directed in the CIPFA/SOLACE 2016 publication "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government". The Code of Corporate Governance was last reviewed in July 2018. The revised Code was reviewed by the Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting on 14 December 2020, in accordance with best practice and the Committee's responsibility, within its terms of reference. The Code was now before Full Council for approval.

Councillor Gooch, after referring to the possible creation by ESC of a carbon budget, asked if this was the kind of document that ESC could incorporate this fiscal responsibility into. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, in response, commented that carbon was not a financial aspect; however, he suggested, if such a budget was put in place in the future, it may well be subject to internal audit, alongside other operations of ESC.

There being no further questions or debate, the Chairman moved to a vote on the recommendation, as proposed by Councillor Cook, and seconded by Councillor Wiles, it was

RESOLVED

That the revised Code of Corporate Governance at Appendix A to the report be adopted.

13 Cabinet Members' Report and Outside Bodies Representatives' Report to Council

Full Council received report **ES/0843**, which was presented by the Leader of the Council, who stated that the report contained updates from cabinet members on their areas of responsibility, as well as updates from those members appointed to represent ESC on outside bodies. The report was for information purposes and the Leader invited questions to individual members.

Councillor Daly, after thanking the Chairman and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment for welcoming him to ESC, referred to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism's report, and the reference to energy development mitigation proposals; Councillor Daly referred to new works, outside of the SSSI, and the call for the works to be stopped until the end of September and the breeding season for endangered species. Councillor Daly asked for ESC to support this call. The Leader, in response, stated that questions to individual members should be related to the content of the report.

Councillor Deacon, referring to the Deputy Leader's report, and related to Freeport East, asked what revenue per annum was expected by ESC from the Freeport; how much was received now from the Port in respect of Business Rates and when would the outline business case be available so that a better understanding could be gained of benefits to East Suffolk. Councillor Deacon also referred to the forthcoming Hydrogen Forum and asked if all councillors would be able to access the Forum to hear the plans for the economic benefits for ESC. In the unavoidable absence of the Deputy Leader, it was agreed that Councillor Deacon would forward his questions to him by email.

Councillor Deacon, referring to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resource's report, in respect of the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP), which covered the whole ARP area, asked how much of the activity was within East Suffolk. Councillor Deacon also asked for clarification in respect of the reference to the team having identified £2.3m in fraud and error; Councillor Deacon asked if this should be prevented. Councillor Deacon also referred to the comments within the report in respect of being on target to achieve similar values, and asked if this related to prevention, or

identification, or both. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources responded that he did have a breakdown of the information and he would provide that; referring to the figure of £2.3m in fraud and error, Councillor Cook reported that unfortunately he did not have that information to hand; however, he would provide it following the meeting.

Councillor Deacon, referring to Councillor Bird's report in respect of the Landguard Partnership, asked if there were any links being established between the Landguard Fort and other historic sites across the district to encourage historical tourism across the whole of East Suffolk. In response, Councillor Bird asked that the question be put in writing to him and, following that, he would try to find the answer.

Following a question from Councillor Gooch regarding the signage for towns, as referred to in the Deputy Leader's report, regarding whether they would be legible, reader friendly, whether they would be screened for residents that might have dyslexia etc, and whether there might be multi lingual signs, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism responded that she would liaise with the Deputy Leader and provide confirmation.

Councillor Pitchers referred to the report by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport, and in particular the Gull Wing project, and the table on page 70 of the report. Councillor Pitchers also referred to the report considered by Cabinet at its meeting in July 2021, which would ensure that ESC would shortly be embarking on a similar journey to that of SCC to ensure that it gave due consideration to the wider impact, social, economic and environmental, of the goods and services commissioned by ESC. Councillor Pitchers also referred to the table on page 70 of the report, and enquired about monitoring of activity in relation to the capital spend from the Towns Fund. The Leader, in response, referred to the cross-party task and finish group that had been set up by Cabinet to look at the procurement processes and he confirmed that a process would be in place to not only consider value for money, but also social value.

Councillor Craig referred to the report by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport and stated that she was disappointed to read about the verbal and physical assault on CPE Officers; however, she was pleased to see that they wore body cameras. Councillor Craig asked if the officers wore any other protective equipment such as stab proof vests, and Councillor Brooks confirmed that they did wear stab vests and they also carried mobile devices for emergency use etc.

Councillor Craig referred to the low usage numbers in respect of the RingGo system in some areas and asked if this was due to difficulties with phone signals in rural areas or just that some people still preferred to pay cash. In response, Councillor Brooks stated that the use of RingGo was variable across the district; all sites had been checked and had adequate signals for most mobile phone users; however, cash alternatives were available and that would be continued.

Councillor Topping applauded the work of the CPE officers; she did question whether or not they wore stab proof vests as referenced by Councillor Brooks; Councillor Topping referred to the 146 cases of verbal abuse and 10 physical assaults, of which 19 had been investigated by the Police, and asked why only 19 cases had been

investigated. Councillor Topping also referred to repeat offenders and asked if ESC had the ability to escalate sentences to them. In response, Councillor Brooks confirmed that he would doublecheck the issue regarding stab proof vests, he confirmed that he was of the view that officers should wear the vests. Councillor Brooks, referring firstly to the 19 only cases that had been investigated, confirmed that he would look into this and report back to Councillor Topping. Referring to the escalation of fines and sanctions etc, that was a matter for the Police and the Courts Councillor Brooks stated.

14 Exempt/Confidential Items

The Chairman reported that in exceptional circumstances, the Council may, by law, exclude members of the public from all, or part, of a decision-making meeting. There were various reasons that the Council, on occasions, had to do that 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 Chairman reported, Full Council would be considering one exempt matter which was outlined in agenda item 14 on the published agenda. This related to Waterlane Leisure Centre roof replacement and asked Full Council to consider approval for funding from the Capital Programme to undertake refurbishment work to replace one of the roof areas and repairs to a second section at the Waterlane Leisure Centre; both areas were leaking and had reached end of life. If approved, the investment would continue to provide a welcoming environment to the Council's leisure centres to provide the opportunity for everyone to lead a healthy and active life. By continuing to invest in its buildings, ESC was making the best use of its assets, ensuring that they continued to provide quality facilities across the district, were efficient and maximised the benefits for East Suffolk's communities. ESC was delivering a redevelopment programme for its leisure assets to ensure they provided quality facilities for the community, that they were well maintained and would become more financially sustainable.

The Chairman moved to a vote on the recommendation, as proposed by himself, and seconded by Councillor Gallant, it was

RESOLVED

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

15 Waterlane Leisure Centre Roof Replacement

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

The meeting concluded at 8.28 pm.

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Chairman