

Confirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Full Council** held via Zoom, on **Wednesday, 25 November 2020** at **6:30 pm**

Members present:

Councillor Melissa Allen, Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Chris Blundell, Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Jenny Ceresa, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Janet Craig, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor Graham Elliott, Councillor John Fisher, Councillor Tony Fryatt, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Tess Gandy, Councillor Andree Gee, Councillor Tony Goldson, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor TJ Haworth-Culf, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Ray Herring, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Stuart Lawson, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor Chris Mapey, Councillor Debbie McCallum, Councillor Mark Newton, Councillor Keith Patience, Councillor Malcolm Pitchers, Councillor Carol Poulter, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Keith Robinson, Councillor Mary Rudd, Councillor Letitia Smith, Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Councillor Ed Thompson, Councillor Caroline Topping, Councillor Steve Wiles, Councillor Kay Yule

Officers present: Stephen Baker (Chief Executive), Ruth Bishop (Senior Planner (Policy and Delivery)), Karen Cook (Democratic Services Manager), Richard Jacobs (Port Health Manager), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer), Andrea McMillan (Principal Planner (Policy and Delivery)), Brian Mew (Interim Finance Manager), Hilary Slater (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Bond, E Brambley-Crawshaw, A Cackett, R Kerry, F Mortimer and T Mortimer.

Ms Wotton then read through the list of those Councillors who were present at the meeting, for the benefit of the public watching the meeting via YouTube.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3 Announcements

Chairman of the Council

The Chairman of the Council took the opportunity to thank officers for their hard work

during the last, long Full Council meeting. He then reported that he had attended a tree planting event and 2 Remembrance Day events, one in Lowestoft and another in Beccles, all of which had been socially distanced.

The Chairman then advised Members of the sad passing of former SCDC Councillor, John Richardson, and he invited Councillor Herring to say a few words in memory of him.

Councillor Herring stated that John Garrett Richardson OBE had led a very full life and was a former Suffolk Coastal District Councillor, who was first elected in May 1991. He was Chairman of the Council in 2002/03 and retired from the Council in May 2003. He had been very active within the Council, particularly with the Development Control Sub Committee, for which he was Vice Chairman for some time. He had passed away aged 87 years on 12 October 2020. He was known for his sense of humour, his authority, he gave good advice and took an interest in people.

He was also the great grandson of Richard Garrett, who owned Richard Garrett Works in Leiston, an engineering factory which produced steam engines and later trains, and he had been very proud of the history and heritage associated with that. He had attended Orwell Park School and later Oxford University, where he represented Suffolk in both tennis and squash. He was commissioned into the Suffolk Regiment, where he completed his national service and he serviced with the Kings African Rifles, in Kenya. He then joined Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Servants and held several important positions overseas. He returned to England in 1982 and was an important part of the Aldeburgh community and many people would be very sad to learning of his passing.

Councillor Herring was sad that, due to the Covid-19 restrictions, there were restrictions on the numbers allowed to attend funerals and memorial services, as many people would have wished to pay their respects.

Vice Chairman of the Council

There were no announcements from Councillor Ceresa, Vice Chairman of the Council.

Leader of the Council

Councillor Gallant started his announcements by thanking Members and officers for all their continued hard work and dedication as the Council continued to support our communities through the pandemic. He reported that when taking the opportunity to thank our officers, he was usually reluctant to highlight any individual person, however, this evening he was going to make an exception.

Councillor Gallant took the opportunity to thank the Council's Chief Executive, Stephen Baker. He stated that he was sure that Stephen would say in any response, that everything that went on was a team effort, but behind every good team was a great manager, they are the one that keeps the game moving forward and the defence in position. They are watching out for both the opportunities and the pitfalls – Stephen had worked tirelessly over these past months and the Leader knew that he intended to continue to do so. He then gave Stephen his sincere thanks.

Councillor Gallant then stated that, once again, during this particular Lockdown, the great East Suffolk Public had been seen to comply with the advice and guidance that had been put in place to drive down the spread of the virus. The very few instances of noncompliance that had been brought to the Council's attention had been dealt with swiftly and decisively by Council officers or by the police. As the easing of the National Lockdown approached, it was hoped that the R rate would continue to fall in the district and to be held below the National Average and, most importantly, below that critical level of 1. This would not happen by chance – it would happen because of the way that all residents behaved and interacted with each other. As the Festive period approached, Councillor Gallant asked that all Members continued to support and encourage the Council's communities to "Stick with It" and remember the important part that they can play in protecting the most vulnerable in society.

He reported that the Council can be justly proud of the way that the Suffolk System has pulled together to deliver support for:

- * Residents
- * Businesses
- * And for the wider Economy of the District

Councillor Gallant warned that now was not the time to ease off or to throw caution to the wind. The end was in sight, but had not arrived just yet. Encouragement could be taken from the development of a number of vaccines and Councillor Gallant reported that the Council was working hard to ensure that when the call came, we were ready to play our part in the logistical challenges of the roll out. He stated that he knew he could count on Members to assist the Council in its endeavours. He then thanked Members and especially officers and volunteers who had stepped up to the mark.

Councillor Gallant then reported that he would like to announce a minor change to the list of appointments to Outside Bodies (Non Executive Functions). He stated that with immediate effect, Councillor Trish Mortimer would replace Councillor Frank Mortimer, as the East Suffolk Council's Representative on the North East Suffolk Disability Advice Service.

Members of the Cabinet

Councillor Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, stated that Members would recall that a presentation on the Lowestoft Master Plan had been received by Full Council earlier in the year. He was delighted to announce that the documentation in this respect had been submitted recently to the Government, for consideration. He was also pleased to announce that the full business case had been approved recently by Government for the Gull Wing Bridge in Lowestoft, which was wonderful news. Archaeological surveys had already commenced at the site and building works would commence in the New Year.

Chief Executive

Stephen Baker took the opportunity to thank the Leader of the Council for his kind words earlier in the meeting.

Mr Baker reported that he was sad to announce that the Council's Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer, Simon Taylor-Buglione, had taken early retirement, due to ill health. He stated that Simon had been an amazing member of the Corporate Management Team and that he had been dedicated to his role and working for the Council. It was noted that Simon had been extremely disappointed to leave the Council, as finally, he had found his dream job. Two months ago, he had married his long-term partner, Natalie, and he had recently changed his name to reflect this happy occasion. Mr Baker, and all those present at the meeting, wished Simon all the best for his ongoing treatment and thanked him for his tireless work for the Council.

Mr Baker then announced that the Council's Head of Housing, Cairistine Foster-Cannan, would be leaving the Council shortly for pastures new, after Christmas. He thanked Cairistine for all her hard work for the Council and it was noted that she had enjoyed a challenge and had made things happen, particularly during the pandemic. All those present wished her well in her new role with Orwell Housing and Mr Baker stated he was pleased that she would continue to work for the benefit of the residents of Suffolk.

4a Minutes of meeting 22 July 2020

The Chairman updated Members that there was a formatting error on the Minutes for the Full Council meeting held on 22 July 2020. The error was in Item 8 regarding the Notice of Motion, which started on page 8 of the document pack. He then proposed the change of font and the removal of the words 'CHECK THIS AGAINST SLIDE', as they were only minor administrative errors and were not material changes. Members then agreed by consensus and it was

RESOLVED

That, subject to the formatting errors being resolved for item 8 within the Minutes, that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 July 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4b Minutes of meeting 3 September 2020

The Chairman presented Members with the Minutes from the Extraordinary Full Council meeting which was held on 3 September 2020. Members agreed by consensus and it was

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 3 September 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 Questions from the Public

The Chairman advised that no Questions had been submitted by the electorate as provided for under Council Procedure Rule 8.

6 Questions from Members

The following question from a Member has been submitted in pursuance of Council Procedure Rule 9:

Question from Councillor Keith Patience to the Cabinet Member for Transport:

How many Residents in Lowestoft Zones 1, 2 and 3 have sent in e-mails, letters or telephoned East Suffolk Council supporting the new Residents Parking Arrangements?

Response from Councillor Norman Brooks:

I can report that 1,314 households have been issued with permits via the new portal since August 2020. There have been seven complaints and one positive comment received by the Customer Experience team.

There have been quite a few positive comments received during contact with the new Notice Processing Officers (NPOs), with the main ones being "it is good we've gone paperless because residents do not have to wait for a paper permit to be sent" and "it will be easier should they need to change vehicles". There have been some negative comments too because residents now need to provide proof of residency and vehicle ownership. The old process enabled residents to fill in a form or call Customer Services, and Customer Service Agents then reviewed applications and sent out permits and replacements in the post for residents to display in vehicles. The Customer Services team confirmed to Norse the most recent list of valid permits, but the administration of permits in that way led to duplicate the issuing of paper permits, time lags in updating, and there was not a robust data source to enable efficient and effective enforcement.

The requirements of CPE administration are such that the Council has now improved its permit management system, and linked it to its enforcement system; permit administration is now in accordance with the TRO and, more importantly, with best practice, and it is operated in a similar way by many local authorities across the country.

Supplementary Question by Councillor K Patience:

Councillor Patience asked Councillor Brooks to tell him how many incidents were reported of abuse of the previous system, in fraudulent behaviour, in Zones 1, 2 and 3, please?

Response from Councillor Brooks:

Councillor Brooks thanked Councillor Patience for his question and replied that, no, he did not have that information this evening. He commented that there were many areas in the District that have these systems in place. However, he stated that he would find out and send the information to Councillor Patience by email, at a later date, and he hoped that was acceptable.

Councillor Patience confirmed that he accepted that response and stated that he looked forward to receiving a response.

7 Petitions

The Chairman advised that no petitions had been received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.

8 Notices of Motion

The following 2 Motions had been submitted in pursuance of Council Procedure Rule 11:

a) Motion submitted by Councillor Janet Craig

Councillor Craig had submitted the following Notice of Motion in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11 and this had been published on the Council's agenda for this meeting:

'This Council notes:

- That the Law Commission is currently reviewing all current hate crime legislation to consider whether any additional characteristics, including misogyny, should be granted legal protection, and is due to report back to Parliament in 2020. Misogyny is not currently recorded as a hate crime by the vast majority of police forces in the UK, outside of a handful of trial areas.

- That this review was thanks to the work of Stella Creasy M.P. and her campaign to have misogyny classified as a hate Crime - which her amendment to the Voyeurism (Offences) (No.2) Bill, or Up-skirting Bill would have secured – alongside groups such as Citizens UK, Hope Not Hate, Southall Black Sisters, Tell MAMA UK, and the Fawcett Society.

- That like women and girls across the country, many of our residents suffer harassment and abuse every single day. A YouGov national survey in 2016 showed that 85% of women aged 18-24 were subjected to sexual harassment in public.

- The adoption of misogyny as a hate crime was successfully implemented in Nottingham, where analysis showed an increase in reporting, as well as an increase in the use of wider services. It also showed the vast majority of local people wanted the scheme to continue.

- Studies have shown that the intersectional nature of discrimination means that women with additional protected characteristics, such as those who are BAME, disabled or LGBT+, are even more likely to experience harassment, discrimination and abuse.

The Council resolves:

- To make a submission to the Law Commission's Consultation at the earliest opportunity in favour of strengthening hate crime legislation and making misogyny a hate crime.

- To call on the Government to listen to the lived experience of women and girls across our country and to urgently act on any recommendations the commission makes to strengthen the law on hate crime, and to reform legislation around harassment to recognise as an offence a 'course of conduct' which targets women and girls in their community.

- To call on the Government to provide the resource and funding for police forces across the UK to effectively tackle harassment, misogyny and domestic abuse.

- To call on Suffolk Constabulary to record harassment of women as a hate crime, following successful trials in Nottingham and elsewhere.'

The Chairman reported that in accordance with the Council's Constitution, a Motion could only be discussed this evening, with the consent of the Council. Otherwise, the Notice of Motion would be referred to the Cabinet or relevant Committee. He therefore sought the view of the Council, as to whether the matter would be discussed this evening and if so, a proposer and seconder would be required. He confirmed that each Notice of Motion would be dealt with separately. He then invited the Leader to speak on this item.

The Leader reported that Members would be aware that the Council's Constitution sets out, in Section 11 of the Council Procedure Rules, the process for the laying of Motions before Full Council. This section includes the following extracts:

In 11.3, it states Motions must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility, or which affect the East Suffolk District.

And it states in 11.4 that prior to consideration of the motion at Council, the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the appropriate Opposition Groups of the Council and the Chairman of the Council would discuss the motion and aim to agree on a preferred way forward.

The requirements under 11.3 were, of course, open to interpretation and were intentionally wide which ensured that Members could raise the things that were important to them and important to residents.

11.4 was more prescriptive and was designed to ensure that the time and effort of this Council was not spent on matters which could be dealt with in a more efficient and effective manner.

The Leader reported that as required in respect of both of the Motions, the required discussions have not taken place.

However, as both the matters raised were important issues which would benefit from the Council's consideration, the Leader considered that it would be right and

proper, on this occasion, put aside the requirements of the Constitution. However, in doing so, Councillor Gallant asked all Members to please ensure that all future potential Motions were dealt with as laid out in the Council's Constitution.

Councillor Byatt then raised a Point of Order. He reported that he had contacted the Leader and had offered to meet and discuss both the Motions that had been submitted. Councillor Byatt accepted that the Council was not directly responsible for either of the matters raised in the Motions, however, he felt that they were important enough to bring before Full Council, as he, and many others, felt so strongly about them.

The Chairman then sought a proposer and seconder for the Motion to be discussed by Full Council this evening. Councillor Gallant proposed that the Motion be discussed and this was seconded by Councillor Thompson.

An electronic vote was undertaken on whether to discuss the Notice of Motion this evening and the Motion was **CARRIED**.

Councillor Craig, as the proposer of the Motion, was invited to speak first. She reported that it was very appropriate that this Motion was being discussed by Full Council on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. It was noted that misogyny could take many forms, some of which, sadly, included violence. None-the-less, non-violent cases were equally unacceptable.

Councillor Craig stated that charity organisations such as Citizens UK, Plan UK and Hope Not Hate had found that over a third of existing hate crimes were also motivated by gender, that two thirds of young women have experienced unwanted sexual or physical contact in a public place, and that a rise in Men's Rights Activism was encouraging young men to commit extremist misogynistic and racist crimes.

Sadly, women could also be victims of misogyny in their own homes, and campaigners hoped that by classifying misogyny as a hate crime, it would provide critical data on the link between hostility against women and the domestic abuse they experience. Councillor Craig stated that the recording of misogynistic hate crime would allow charities supporting women to identify patterns and perpetrators, and it would support women to be able to name the experiences they have, and to know they will be believed when they do so.

Councillor Craig stated that many men and women appeared to not fully understand what misogyny was, and the serious effects that it could have on women. It was also noted that men can be victims of misandry. Therefore, Councillor Craig encouraged Full Council to consider arranging a misogyny and misandry awareness raising session for all Members. This would help Members to identify when this is happening in our communities and to be able to support victims in coming forward.

Councillor Gooch, as seconder of the Motion, was invited to make a speech and she stated that she wished to reserve her right to speak.

Councillor Jepson, Assistant Cabinet Member for Community Safety, was invited to speak on the Motion. He thanked Councillors Craig and Gooch for raising this issue,

however, he would be voting against the Motion and wanted to take the opportunity to explain why. He stressed that any crime or behaviour which appeared to be committed based on a prejudice was wrong and should be challenged. It was also appropriate to be discussing this matter today, as it was White Ribbon Day and he commended the Chairman for wearing a white ribbon this evening.

Councillor Jepson reported that he welcomed the review and East Suffolk District Council supported any changes to legislation that protects any individual or sections of our community. It was noted that the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Action Plan specifically included categories of Domestic Abuse and Hate Crime, and within those categories, violence against women, girls, men and boys was concentrated on. Campaigns were planned during the year to promote such categories, to raise awareness of the crimes and the impact it had on the victims, as well as to encourage the reporting of such crimes. He stressed Councillors would be welcome to attend the quarterly meetings of the CSP, so they could be involved and updated on developments.

He reported that the Law Commission had launched a consultation paper on Hate Crime. The main document exceeded 500 pages and was extremely comprehensive, however, the main issues the Consultation Paper had been asked to consider were;

- Who would be protected by hate crime laws? This related to consistency across the existing characteristics and should further characteristics be included?
- How should hate crime laws work? Were existing offences and sentence enhancements working well?

Clarification was provided that the Review had not been asked to review matters relating to the police and prosecution training and practices, services for hate crime and hate crime prevention. It was noted that the main document consisted of 21 chapters and included a thorough examination of existing laws, determining how characteristics should be identified and what other characteristics should be considered.

Many organisations had already been consulted about the inclusion of certain characteristics, such as misogyny, however, numerous other categories had also been raised which included age, the homeless and street workers. He reported that a question had been raised as to whether the law should focus on the most serious forms of hatred, rather than trying to capture every form of hatred? This raised the issue of dealing with emerging trends, which would have not been identified subsequent to this review.

Therefore, Councillor Jepson suggested that it would appear to be inappropriate to consider just one potential category within the Motion, when other categories should receive equal support.

He reported that he had attended the Police and Crime Panel Conference this week, which had included a presentation from Yvette Cooper, Labour MP and the PCC from Nottinghamshire, both of whom touched on the topic as to whether misogyny should be included as a protected characteristic, and their observations were:

- the PCC stated the majority of incidents occurred in the pubs and clubs;
- there have been very few convictions under this specific category;
- they both felt it was more about setting the right tone and challenging culture, rather than criminalising, unless there were persistent and aggravated circumstances.

Superintendent Cutler, who was the Lead for Hate Crime in Suffolk, had also made some observations:

- There has been a lot of activity and traction, nationally, about misogyny however most Police Forces are still not recording this as a Hate Crime. At this time, further guidance was awaited from either the College of Policing or the National Police Lead for Hate Crime.
 - She was also keen to understand how the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) would interpret the law in relation to Misogyny, so as to understand what we would need to prove to demonstrate that Misogyny was the motive.
 - She would rather wait for the finalised legislation and then adjust our processes to reflect the legal requirements, as a result of the changes.

Councillor Jepson reported that he was now the Chair of the Police and Crime Panel, a panel which consisted of Elected Members from across Suffolk, whose role was to support and challenge the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The panel met with the PCC four times a year, each meeting followed a workshop where the areas of policing they intend to question the PCC on were discussed. Domestic Abuse and Hate Crime were always included on that agenda, together with victim satisfaction, as standing items.

Having witnessed this scrutiny of the PCC over the last year, Councillor Jepson believed that Suffolk Constabulary were already committed to trying to achieve point 4 of the Motion and he was sceptical that by writing to the Constabulary, it would achieve its intention.

Members noted that the Accountability and Performance meeting was chaired by the PCC, and this was his opportunity to examine the performance of Suffolk Constabulary with Chief Officers. At the meeting last Friday, attendees heard how the Police examined a range of crime categories on a monthly basis, which included Domestic Abuse and aggravated harassment type offences. The Constabulary had also recently launched Operation Investigate, which aimed to improve the level of investigations and file submission. In considering point 3 of the Motion, the PCC had referred to his ongoing challenge with the Home Office to improve the funding allocation for Suffolk. It was noted that the Home Office had already made £750m available for the recruitment of an additional 20,000 officers and Suffolk had received an allocation of circa 54 of those officers. However, it was not just about the new officers, it was the additional demand it placed on Constabularies, in terms of equipment and associated costs, not covered by the Home Office. In reality, residents paid the price for being a very safe county. They were fortunate not to experience the demands and threat of other counties and metropolitan areas, however, because of that, precious funds would go to those areas.

In voting against the Motion, Councillor Jepson reported that he would be very willing to strengthen the various priorities within the Community Safety Partnership, to

broaden Hate Crime, to take into consideration the wider hate crime categories. Whether the term misogyny was used was open to debate with the panel and he queried how many people would understand that term? He queried whether it would be better to try to educate and challenge negative behaviours towards women and girls, and also extend that to other groups, like the homeless, for instance? Councillor Jepson reported that he could explore whether members of the Community Team could incorporate something on this into their work with schools or into the Crucial Crew weeks.

Councillor Gallant reported that he was fully aware of the impact that Hate Crimes had on people. He noted that we lived in an ever-changing society, however, he had been disappointed when "Transgender" had been added to the list of protected characteristics. He clarified that he was not against Transgender people, however, he felt that term Transgender was very specific. He felt that it would have been preferable if 'Gender' had been a protected characteristic instead, as this would have covered a greater range of discrimination and Hate Crimes. As such, he suggested that it would be preferable to await the results of the review into Hate Crimes, to see the outcomes. Then a further discussion could take place, as he was concerned about being too prescriptive and having a narrow view. He would prefer if it was a Hate Crime to behave wrongly to anyone, regardless of their individual characteristics.

Councillor Thompson felt that the Motion was extremely important and reported that he had been a victim of misandry. It was vital that these issues were not ignored, that there was greater public awareness that these things were happening and that any sort of domestic violence was eradicated. He felt deeply about this and wanted to take this matter forward.

Councillor McCallum stated that she agreed with the earlier statements from Councillors Gallant and Jepson. She reported that she had attended Community Safety Partnership meetings and had also been a victim of domestic violence herself, on numerous occasions. She felt that the Council needed to look at the bigger picture and help to ensure that the right help was available for those people who needed it.

Councillor Topping stated that she fully supported the Motion. She stated that since becoming a Councillor, she had herself experienced harassment and, therefore, she would support the Motion wholeheartedly and would welcome training on the matter in future.

Councillor Green reported that she regularly attended the CSP meetings and she encouraged all Councillors to attend and participate. She sought to reassure Councillor Thompson that all cases of hate crimes were treated very seriously and independent advisors would offer support to the victims. The Police also worked with various charities and voluntary sector organisations to provide support.

Councillor Jepson reported that he had been a Chief Inspector 10 years ago and he confirmed that the Police always treated Hate Crimes seriously. However, he acknowledged that the Police may not always get things right, however, they tried hard to do so.

Councillor Thompson clarified that his earlier comments had been an observation,

based upon what had happened to a family member, in the past. There was also historical information which proved that Hate Crimes were not always treated in the manner that they should be.

Councillor Byatt reported that he used to be a Special Constable and he had dealt with instances of domestic violence. He felt that misogyny would potentially affect 50% of the population and it was important to raise awareness of it, by undertaking training etc. He then accepted that it was important for the Law Commission's review to take place and he wondered if the matter of Hate Crimes could be considered again, once the results of the review were known?

Councillor Gallant reported that the CSP was best placed to deal the matter of Hate Crime and they would feed into the review. He felt that the Council would be better to wait for the review to take place and then review the results in due course. If the Council needed to raise awareness or host additional training, that could be considered when the results of the review were known.

Councillor Smith-Lyte stated that she was keeping an open mind about the discussions this evening. She felt that the people had more in common to unite them, than divide them. However, she found it hard to understand why Members would object to the opportunity to have some awareness training on Hate Crimes.

Councillor Gooch, seconder of the Motion, indicated that she wished to speak at this point in the proceedings. She stated that the debate this evening had been interesting and honest, and that Full Council was the best place to have these discussions. She thanked Councillor Jepson for his update and informed those present that an easy read guide was also available; it was not compulsory to read the 500-page report. It was noted that Stella Creasy MP had raised the original Motion for Parliament and Councillor Gooch was happy to support Councillor Craig's Motion this evening.

Councillor Gooch stated that the coverage on this matter in the national press, over recent months, had been impressive. The Sun had reported on the Law Commission's consultation on 23 September 2020 and had clarified that "misogyny was the dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women". It went on to say that: "most dictionaries gave the definition of "hatred" towards women, but modern uses of the word also incorporate prejudice against women". The article cited sociologist Allan G. Johnson who defined misogyny as, "a cultural attitude of hatred for females because they are female".

Councillor Gooch reported that interestingly, the wider context of this article also included the historic case of one former Labour Party MP in Sheffield whose parliamentary career came to an end as a direct result of his treatment of women. However, the recent high-profile cases of accusations of sexual assault on women by MPs of both the Conservative and Labour Party show that misogyny could find a home anywhere. As such, this was not a party-political matter but an issue within society that is an expression of the values of some of its members.

In addition to such predatory acts, and the earlier mention of cases of rape and domestic violence in Suffolk, Councillor Gooch also raised the prevalence, in some parts of our country, of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and so-called 'Honour'

killings. FGM was a cultural practice masquerading as a religious or faith-based act, which she felt was undeniably driven by a desire to control and dominate women. She felt it showed a hatred of any autonomy or self-determination these women might have in their sexual choices and lives. The FGM Enhanced Dataset was opened five years ago. Since the collection began in April 2015, and up to March 2020, information had been reported by NHS trusts and GP practices. Sadly, the dataset recorded 24,420 individual women and girls who had been victims of this practice. It was noted that funding to tackle FGM, an issue championed by former prime minister Theresa May, had been reduced by 84% since 2015.

It was noted that 'Honour' killings were almost exclusively targeted at teenage girls and young women. The recent dramatization by the BBC followed the police investigation and the revelations about police failings in the run-up to the 'honour killing' in 2006 of Banaz Mahmod, a 20-year-old Iraqi Kurdish woman. Tragically, it was estimated that 12 women and young girls were murdered in the UK every year in this way. British charity Karma Nirvana, which receives around 800 messages a month from concerned people, believes the true scale of abuse in Britain could be far greater.

Councillor Gooch stated that the deadline for submissions to the Law Commission was 24 December 2020. In addition to seconding the Motion this evening, Councillor Gooch urged individual Councillors to read the details on the website and make individual submissions. She stated that The Equality Act (2010), amongst others, should offer full legal protection, however, these aforementioned crimes suggested that we were a long way from ensuring that women of all ages could enjoy absolute equality with men. She felt that recognizing that sex and gender could be a characteristic that spurs acts of hatred would go some way to acknowledging the structural and societal work that still needs to be undertaken to help keep us safe.

The Leader made a point of order. He requested some clarification, as he felt that the speech made by Councillor Gooch did not reflect the wording of the Motion that had been submitted. There was no further reply from Councillors Craig or Gooch.

Upon being put to the electronic vote, the Motion, as submitted by Councillor Craig, was **NOT CARRIED**.

b) Motion submitted by Councillor Mike Deacon

Councillor Deacon had submitted the following Notice of Motion in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11 and this had been published on the Council's agenda for this meeting:

'We call upon this council to make their Armed Forces Champions and Lead Officers aware of the difficulties experienced by Commonwealth Veterans and ensure that those who are currently experiencing problems, whether financial or immigration difficulties, are not disadvantaged whilst their applications are ongoing.

We also call upon the Leader of the Council to write to the Prime Minister, Kevin Forster (Minister of State for Immigration), and Johnny Mercer (Minister of State for Veterans Affairs) outlining this Council's support for all Commonwealth Veterans, who have served a minimum of 4 years in Her Majesty's Armed Forces being granted

automatic and free of charge right to remain in the UK, and that any Veteran who completes 12 years of service to be automatically given British Citizenship.

Further, we call upon the Leader of the Council to write to Peter Aldous, Therese Coffey and Dan Poulter as MPs with Constituencies in East Suffolk, on behalf of this council, to ask that they press the Government for a change in the legislation that affects those that have served diligently and honourably for this Country.'

The Chairman invited the Leader of the Council to say a few words.

Councillor Gallant proposed that the Motion be discussed this evening and this was seconded by Councillor Fryatt.

An electronic vote was undertaken on whether to discuss the Notice of Motion this evening and the Motion was **CARRIED**.

The Chairman then invited Councillor Deacon to speak to his Motion.

Councillor Deacon reported that the UK relied on its armed forces personnel, who came from all over the world. They were highly valued and important members of society, however, he felt that all of that changed when the time came for those people to leave the armed forces. Should a member of the armed forces, who came from overseas, wish to remain in the UK after leaving the armed forces, then they would be charged thousands in fees. It was not uncommon for the charges to cost £10,000 for a serving armed forces officer, and their family, to gain permission to stay in the UK after leaving the armed forces. These charges also applied to those people joining our armed forces, from the Commonwealth. Those who did not gain the required permissions to stay in the UK would be repatriated.

Councillor Deacon felt that this was particularly unfair, given the service and dedication provided by those people, when working for the UK's armed forces. He also noted that armed forces personnel were not earning very high wages, therefore the fees charged to be able to remain in the UK were exorbitant. Also, those people were ineligible to use the NHS etc whilst making their claim to remain in the UK, if they had already left the armed forces. He was concerned about the hostile and unfair environment for our former armed forces personnel, who joined from overseas.

Councillor Deacon then proposed his Motion and this was seconded by Councillor Byatt.

The Chairman then invited the Leader of the Council to say a few words.

The Leader thanked Councillor Deacon for raising this issue. He was sure that Councillor Deacon was aware that the Leader was also the East Suffolk Council's Armed Forces Champion.

The Leader also commented that in his role as Armed Forces Champion, and as Leader of the Council, he made himself available at any time, to any Member, regardless of political affiliation, should they wish to discuss matters which concerned them. He commented that Councillor Deacon had availed himself of this offer on numerous

occasions, therefore, he was somewhat surprised to see this Motion being submitted by him, without any prior discussion.

The Leader reported that as an ex-serviceman, having spent 12 years in the RAF, the treatment of veterans was very close to his heart. He reported that the UK recruited military personnel from across the Commonwealth to serve in its Armed Forces. Many of these people left behind family and friends to move across the world to serve, becoming valuable assets to our defence capability. There were currently over 6,000 personnel serving in the UK Armed Forces, from foreign and Commonwealth countries, with more being recruited each year to fill technical and specialist roles.

Members noted that from late 2018, Her Majesty's Armed Forces announced its intention to increase its reliance on Commonwealth personnel, with an aim to recruit 1,350 personnel a year. Unlike their UK national colleagues, these personnel and their families could only continue to live in the country they had served at significant personal financial cost. The Leader reported that he, and many others, believed that this was unfair and should end.

He confirmed that Commonwealth citizens serving in the Armed Forces have the right to apply for indefinite leave to remain in the UK after four years in uniform, however, a service leaver with a partner and two children could face a bill of almost £10,000 to obtain a visa. If they could not afford to pay those fees, they faced deportation.

The Leader noted in Councillor Deacon's Motion, that he had asked that Commonwealth Veterans be given Automatic Rights to remain in the UK, following 4 years' service and to become British Citizens after 12 years' service. The Leader felt that this was fraught with danger. He asked Members to consider the case, where a member of the Services had been given a Dishonourable Discharge, had committed a Criminal Offence, or was otherwise considered to be an undesirable. He felt that in those circumstances, the Automatic Rights suggested would not be in the best interests of the Country or its citizens. Therefore, the Leader took the opportunity to propose the following amendment to the Motion:

'Council agree to fully support its Armed Forces Champion in their continued efforts to support all Armed Forces veterans, including those that hail from Commonwealth countries. Council encourage the Champion to write to:

- Kevin Foster MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Future Borders and Immigration); and
- Johnny Mercer MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Defence People and Veterans)

outlining this Council's general support for Commonwealth veterans. We specifically ask that Commonwealth veterans who wish to apply for the right to remain in the UK following four years' minimum service have their applications processed free of charge.

As with all letters to Ministers from this Council, we ask that the local Members of Parliament are copied in and asked to consider supporting this Council's ambitions.'

The Leader asked Councillor Deacon if he was content to accept the proposed changes to his Motion and Councillor Deacon confirmed that he was. The Chairman confirmed that the amended Motion was now the substantive Motion and he invited Members to debate this matter.

Councillor Hedgley thanked Councillor Deacon for raising this important matter. Councillor Hedgley stated that he had served in the Navy for 34 years and he had sailed with colleagues of all colours, creeds and nationalities and would vouch for their professionalism. He commented that the public were not aware how many people from the Commonwealth served in our armed forces and he supported the Leader's amended Motion. He felt that the door allowing armed forces personnel from overseas to stay in the UK was partially open, it just needed a last push.

Councillor Byatt stated that he would like to reserve his right to speak later in the meeting.

Councillor Goldson reported that he had served in the Territorial Army and had several tours, where the Gurkhas had been involved. They had proved to be extremely brave and loyal and he would support ex armed forces personnel to stay in the UK after their service. However, he felt that serious misbehaviour should prevent them from staying in the UK.

Councillor Byatt stated that this was a cross-party matter and he acknowledged the concerns raised about dishonourable discharges, which was a serious issue and needed to be dealt with sensitively and robustly. He felt that the large number of service people from abroad and the increasing numbers from the Commonwealth meant that the unfairness of the right to remain in the UK needed to be addressed shortly. This would also show that the UK was a fair country that could be relied upon to do the right thing. He reported that his late father had served in Africa with his Commonwealth colleagues and he supported the amended Motion unreservedly.

Councillor Deacon apologised to the Leader, as he believed that he had seen the Motion in advance, and he felt that there had been a breakdown in communications on this occasion.

The Leader proposed the Motion and this was seconded by Councillor Deacon.

The Chairman then invited those present to vote upon the Motion and upon being put to the electric vote, the Motion regarding Veterans was **CARRIED**.

The Chairman then informed those present that there would be a 5-minute break and the meeting was adjourned from 8.03pm to 8.08pm.

9 Endorsement of the Environmental Guidance Note

Council received report **ES/0554** from Councillor Mallinder, Cabinet Member for the Environment. He reported that, under the leadership of Councillor Gallant, the Council had placed the environment at the centre of everything that it does. It was a key

principle of the East Suffolk Strategic Plan and was a core value of this Council. He stated that the environment was not a binary relationship between business and nature, it could and should work together. Members noted that the Council had recently declared a Climate Emergency and was focusing on the target of carbon neutrality by 2030.

Councillor Mallinder reported that he worked closely with the Leader to develop and deliver a strong Environment vision across east Suffolk, to make sure that the front line services the Council delivered today were fit for tomorrow, implementing new initiatives and having discussions with community groups about what they expect from their District Council. It was important that the Council was truly responsive and meeting the needs our residents.

It was noted that, unlike some other institutions, when East Suffolk Council launched new policies or direction, the Council made sure that it could follow through and deliver. Councillor Mallinder reported that all Members should be proud of what we were achieving, it was a new dawn for local politics and by working cross party, big changes could be made. He felt that it was important to remember that environmental improvements were not political, they were the right thing to do. The Council needed to work with our environments and protect them, and not just mitigate and compensate.

Councillor Mallinder stated that while he was proud of the implementation of the Council's Environmental Vision, there were areas where the Council had limited statutory powers and there were restrictions on what the Council could do. An example of this was house building, which had a significant impact on our environment, on our biodiversity and, of course, on carbon neutrality. He felt that although some of the laws from Westminster did not go far enough, but East Suffolk Council would not just accept the status quo. Therefore, last year Councillor Mallinder had commissioned a project, to see how we could give clear direction to residents and developers in how they can work with the Council to meet our environmental vision.

Councillor Mallinder then presented to Council the new Environmental Guidance Note. It was stated that the Guidance Note would cover concise information on key environmental issues relating to the building industry, to not only mitigate and compensate, but also protect our natural environments.

The topics addressed within the Environmental Guidance Note were:

- Energy Efficiency
- Renewable Energy
- Biodiversity
- Sustainable Travel
- Water Conservation
- Recycling

Councillor Mallinder hoped that the Environmental Guidance Note would give direction to builders, become a focus for our planning department and assist Town and Parish Councils when they comment on planning applications. The reference document

would also assist the Council, as it builds and refurbishes its housing stock.

Councillor Mallinder took the opportunity to thank the Planning Team and, in particular, Ruth Bishop, for their hard work in developing and making his vision a reality. He then proposed the recommendations, as contained within the report.

Councillor Ritchie, Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management, welcomed the Environmental Guidance Note, which had recently been warmly received at a meeting of the Local Plan Working Group. He felt that the Guidance Note complemented the Local Plans, which had been adopted for the former Suffolk Coastal and Waveney areas. He stated that this document was a positive step forward and would be used by developers across the district.

Councillor Gooch thanked officers for their hard work on creating the Guidance Note and the various discussions which had been undertaken by the Environment Task Group. It was positive that the Council would be leading by example.

Councillor Byatt congratulated the Planning Team on their hard work in creating a substantive and informative document. It was noted that the Council had ambitious plans for the environment and was committed to reducing its carbon emissions to zero by 2030, so there was a significant amount of work to be done in this respect. It was good to lead by example and challenge central government to be more proactive in future.

Councillor Back reported that reducing carbon emissions was only part of the problem. He felt that there needed to be a focus on planting more trees, as the loss of trees was a contributing factor to global warming.

Councillor Topping welcomed the document and stated that it was an excellent piece of work. She stated that it was crucial to ensure that the information was publicised and communicated widely, so that everyone who was involved in house building, was aware of the Guidance Note.

Councillor Fryatt commented that there was an ongoing debate with the local Parish Councils about RAMS (Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy) and its importance in relation to planning. He queried whether it links in with this, given it had a major impact on what Members had just been talking about?

Councillor Burroughes reported that he supported the Guidance Note, which was an excellent foundation for the Council to build upon going forwards. The information was useful and should be shared as widely as possible.

Councillor Blundell stated that the Guidance Note was an excellent document and it was important to circulate it to all developers. He then noted that, with building developments, costs would always come first in terms of priorities. However, overall and in the longer term, he was very supportive of the Guidance Note.

Councillor Deacon took the opportunity to thank Councillors Mallinder and Ritchie, as well as officers, as he felt that the document was very worthwhile. He referred to page 57 of the agenda pack and he queried whether the Council was looking into the possibility of installing solar panels on the roof of East Suffolk House and

Riverside? Councillor Mallinder reported that the matter of solar panel installation was being investigated and there would be further information available in due course.

Councillor Mallinder stated that he would like Members to share the Environmental Guidance Note widely with their Town and Parish Councils, on social media and anywhere else that was appropriate. He hoped that it would lead to improved development and, therefore, an improved environment for the future. It was important to champion the environment wherever possible. He then proposed the recommendations contained within the report and he was seconded by Councillor Ritchie.

After being put to the electronic vote it was

RESOLVED

1. That the Environmental Guidance Note be endorsed.
2. That, the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Environment, be authorised to make any factual or typographical amendments to the Environmental Guidance Note.

10 Review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22

Council received report **ES/0555** from Councillor Cook, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources. It was noted that each year the Council was required to consider whether to review its Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS). The report advised Members of the 2020 annual review and noted that the Universal Credit fluctuating earnings rule, which was introduced in April 2020, was meeting the modelling forecasts, by reducing customer reassessments by a third. It was also noted that the report outlined the position, during the current year, regarding the Council Tax Hardship Fund, under which the Fund has been covering the amount of council tax that LCTRS claimants are required to pay. Following the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, seemed certain that those arrangements would be maintained next year and that a maximum of £150 relief would be granted to LCTRS claimants.

Councillor Cook reported that, subject to confirmation of the contents of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, and in any event, it was not proposed that there be any changes to LCTRS for 2021/22. It was proposed that a full review, taking into account COVID-19 learning, was undertaken early next year.

Councillor Lynch, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee thanked Councillor Cook and officers, for a recent training session on this matter for the Audit and Governance Committee.

There being no questions or further debate, Councillor Cook proposed the recommendation contained in the report and this was seconded by Councillor Lynch.

Upon being put to the electronic vote it was

RESOLVED

That the Council retains the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21 as the 8.5% benefit scheme, i.e. the maximum benefit to working age claimants is 91.5%.

11 **Appointment of S151 Officer**

Council received report **ES/0569** from Councillor Cook, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, who reported that Local Authorities were required to have in place certain statutory officers. One of those was the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer), who undertook a range of key financial responsibilities. Members noted that the Council's S151 Officer was Mr Simon Taylor-Buglione. Unfortunately, due to serious ill-health, Mr Taylor-Buglione had been absent from work. Sadly, due to his continuing ill-health, Mr Taylor-Buglione had decided to leave the Council's employment on 31 October 2020.

As the Council was required to have a S151 Officer, Members were recommended to appoint, with immediate effect, Mr Brian Mew, as the Interim Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer, on a fixed term, temporary basis, until such a time as the role could be filled on a permanent basis. It was noted that recruitment would proceed as soon as was practically possible and would take account of any Covid-19 restraints that apply at the time. Members were advised that Mrs Lorraine Rogers, the Deputy Chief Finance Officer, would remain in this role, to support Mr Mew, and deputise for the S151 Officer, as required.

Councillor Cook then took the opportunity to add to the comments of the Chief Executive earlier in the meeting, in expressing his appreciation of the opportunity to work with Simon. Upon first being appointed as the Assistant Cabinet Member, Simon quickly brought Councillor Cook up to speed with the intricacies of Local Government Finance, as opposed to that in the conventional corporate world. On behalf of all Members, Councillor Cook extended their very best wishes, as Simon continued his treatment.

Councillor Gallant reported that the Council was very fortunate that Mr Mew was available to step in and assist the Council on a temporary basis, during what was for all Councils, a very difficult time.

Councillor Topping thanked Mr Taylor-Buglione for this hard work and noted that S151 officers were difficult to replace. She noted that Mr Mew was being appointed for a temporary period only and she queried what would happen should a permanent appointment not be made during the recruitment process early next year. Councillor Cook reported that it was a requirement for the Council to have a S151 Officer, therefore, should an appointment not be made, Full Council would be updated on the situation. It was noted that the Council would be prepared for any eventualities.

Councillor Byatt also thanked Mr Taylor-Buglione and noted the range of knowledge and skills required for those posts. He stated that the Finance Team was very strong and Mr Mew would be supported by them to undertake this role.

The Chief Executive commented that he needed to thank and recognise Lorraine Rogers, who was doing a fantastic job as the Deputy S151 officer for Mr Taylor Buglione. All those present thanked Mrs Rogers for her ongoing hard work for the Council.

Councillor Cook proposed the recommendations contained within the report and he was seconded by Councillor Gallant. Upon being put to the electronic vote it was

RESOLVED

1. That the Council thanks Mr Simon Taylor-Buglione for his service to the Council and extends its very best wishes to him and his family.
2. That Mr Brian Mew be designated as the Interim Chief Finance Officer and s151 Officer, with immediate effect, on a fixed term, temporary basis until 28 April 2021.
3. That Mrs Lorraine Rogers continues as the Deputy s151 Officer to Mr Mew.

- 12 Cabinet Members' Report and Outside Bodies Representatives' Report to Council**
- Council received report **ES/0553**, which was presented by the Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council. It was noted that the report provided brief written reports from the Cabinet Members and also from the Council's representatives to various Outside Bodies. The Leader then drew Members' attention to an update from Councillor Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, which had not been included with the papers for the meeting this evening, however, the update had been published on CMIS as a Meeting Document.

The Chairman invited questions on the written reports.

Councillor Byatt queried the take up of the Local Restrictions Support Grants, of up to £3,000, which were available for local businesses to apply for, if they were negatively impacted by Lockdown 2. He also queried the take up of the Kick Start Scheme and whether the briefing was available on Small Modular Reactors. Councillor Rivett stated that he would provide the information, however, Councillor Cook may have more up to date information available, so he would be asked to contribute shortly. Councillor Rivett confirmed that the various grant application forms were available on the Council's website and he encouraged anyone who thought they may be eligible to apply and there was guidance and FAQs available to assist with the application process.

Councillor Rivett stated that in respect of the Kick Start Scheme, the Council was working closely with Suffolk County Council and both were looking to enhance the scheme, to include a wraparound service, and both Councils were currently working with the DWP in that regard. Currently in the East Suffolk district, 26 businesses had signed up and they were offering a total of 42 placements. It was stated that a further launch and promotion was planned for January 2021 for this scheme. It was noted that East Coast College had already registered as a gateway and Suffolk Libraries were also

involved.

With regard to Small Modular Reactors, Councillor Rivett stated that he would investigate and ensure that the briefing was circulated to Members in the near future.

Councillor Cook then advised that in respect of the Local Restrictions Support Grant, which had been updated for Lockdown 2, applications had opened on Monday afternoon and 32 applications were received within the first 24 hours and the payments for those would be made by the end of this week. Since the start of the scheme, there had been 1,430 applications, 843 of which had been paid so far, totalling £1.241 million.

Councillor Byatt asked how the contract negotiations were going with Norse and Councillor Burroughes responded that the work was going very well and it was hoped that some initial findings could be shared with Members before Christmas.

Councillor Byatt asked about digital technology and whether there had been any concerns raised regarding the installation of Fibre Broadband in Lowestoft. Councillor Burroughes reported that in respect of the Full Fibre Project in Lowestoft, everything was currently on track. He reported that he would check with Councillor Rivett and his colleagues in Economic Development about this matter further. However, he felt that the installation of Fast Fibre Broadband would bring a real boost to Lowestoft and along with the news about the Gullwing Bridge business case being approved earlier today, the future was looking much brighter for Lowestoft.

Councillor Byatt then asked for an update on the redevelopment of the Jubilee Terrace beach huts in Lowestoft and also if there was any further information on the First Light Festival, including if there had been any developments regarding disabled access to the beach.

Councillor Rivett advised that the Jubilee Terrace project was continuing and it was approaching the second phase. It was noted that a report had recently been considered by the Cabinet regarding Jubilee Terrace and it was hoped that announcements would be released in the next few weeks, to keep the public updated on developments.

Councillor Rivett commented that there needed to be a publicity campaign when the Full Fibre Broadband had been installed in Lowestoft, to encourage uptake and remind people of the benefits, as it would make a significant difference to businesses and residents.

In respect of the First Light Festival, Members noted that £750,000 of funding had been received from the Towns Fund and this was being used for remodelling and renovations for the East Point Pavilion. This would assist with the festival and also extend the overall tourist offer, providing cultural events across the season.

Councillor Byatt stated that he was pleased to see that Councillor Mallinder had mentioned the environmental impact of fireworks in his update and he was sure that many Councillors had received an email from the RSPCA about fireworks. He queried

whether the Council would be able to take any action to reduce the use of fireworks or restrict them in any way.

Councillor Byatt also sought further information about the recycling bins in Aldeburgh, as he wondered why they were so different. He then took the opportunity to thank Councillor Mallinder for the letter that was written to Peter Aldous MP, regarding local electricity generation.

Councillor Mallinder reported that fireworks cause problems for pets and wildlife, therefore, he was pleased to inform Members that the matter would be on the agenda for a future Environmental Task Group meeting, to consider this in more depth. It was noted that this would focus upon helping the public to make the right choices with regard to fireworks, as the Council was bound by statutory legislation.

Clarification was provided that the bins in Aldeburgh were dual bins, with one for waste and the other for recycling, with clear signage, which encouraged the public to think about their recycling. It was hoped that the dual bins would be installed in areas with high levels of tourism, over the coming year.

Councillor Topping said that she was excited by the new style bins being provided in Aldeburgh, which encouraged recycling, however she was not happy about the amount of fly tipping that was taking place. She queried if there were any hot spots in the District? Councillor Mallinder reported that there were no real hotspots of fly tipping, however, there were instances of fly tipping across the district. A new campaign would be launched in the new year, with leaflets, to get the message out to the public that 99.9% of waste could be successfully recycled or disposed of safely. Fly tipping was unsightly, unsafe and Councillor Mallinder was committed to reducing the amount of being waste dumped across the district.

Councillor Topping then took the opportunity to compliment Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, for her Communities Team. They were all working incredibly hard to support their local communities and in particular the disengaged youth, during the pandemic. Councillor Topping received regular updates from Stuart Halsey, of the Communities Team, who worked for the Beccles area and he worked tirelessly in that part of the District. Councillor Smith thanked Councillor Topping for her kind words and commented that the work they were doing was very valuable, she then stated that she would feed back those comments to the Communities Team, outside of the meeting.

Councillor Gooch stated that she welcomed the responses from Councillor Mallinder this evening, as the majority of her email correspondence for the past year had been about either fireworks or Sizewell C. She was very pleased that the Environmental Task Group would be considering fireworks at a future meeting and that Peter Aldous MP had been written to regarding the local electricity bill that he was sponsoring, as this could potentially help to eliminate fuel poverty and enable smaller electricity generation companies to operate on a smaller scale.

She then took the opportunity to commend Councillor Smith on the work that had been undertaken within her Portfolio in recent months. She then queried whether Councillor Smith could work with Councillor Rudd to look into the way that swimming

pools were run and the scientific reasoning behind shower facilities being banned during lockdown in order to keep people safe, as this did not seem to be logical. Councillor Smith confirmed that she and Councillor Rudd would look into this outside of the meeting and would report back in due course.

Councillor Blundell stated that he had concerns about fireworks and asked if the Council could look into who was selling them and the size of the fireworks involved, as he had concerns that local residents were able to set off very large fireworks that were only suitable for organised events. The Chairman reported that the Environmental Task Group would be looking into fireworks and their use, on behalf of the Council, in the near future.

Councillor Smith-Lyte stated that she had originally wanted to speak about fireworks, however, that had been covered extensively already. With regards to fly tipping, she stated that more was needed than just education. The individual instances of fly tipping ought to be examined, as she felt that some may be building waste, which was dumped as builders did not wish to pay to dispose of it properly. In such instances, she felt that there ought to be proper enforcement, which would act as a deterrent in future.

Councillor Ashdown stated that there had been a recent legal challenge to a decision made by the Strategic Planning Committee and he queried how much the legal fees had been for the Council. Councillor Rivett reported that the cost to the Council was a minimum of £75,000 however, this did not include officers' time. He stated that Mr Justice Holgate's judgement had commended the work of officers and their highly detailed reports and Councillor Rivett took the opportunity to thank Lisa Chandler and her team for their hard work. It was regrettable for the case to be taken to court, however, the verdict proved that the Strategic Planning Committee's decision had been sound.

Councillor Mallinder agreed with Councillor Smith-Lyte's earlier comments about fly tipping and he reported that the Council would also be engaging with local businesses and this would take a slightly different form to the engagement that would be undertaken with householders. It was noted that Norse also engage with landowners and helped them to dispose of any fly tipped waste safely, and Norse also provided advice on securing land in order to reduce the likelihood of fly tipping. Members were updated that Norse was proactively working with landowners in many ways to improve the reporting and the overall reduction of fly tipping.

The Chairman then invited Councillor Patience to speak at this point in the meeting. It was noted that Councillor Patience experienced difficulties in raising his hand virtually in meetings and therefore did not appear in the list of Councillors wishing to speak. Councillor Patience reported that he looked forward to the Cabinet Members' Reports at each Full Council meeting and he queried why there had been no update from Councillor Brooks, Cabinet Member for Transport, on this occasion? The Leader of the Council reported that Cabinet Members gave a report to Full Council when they had something to report from their Portfolio. Councillor Brook's portfolio had been busy, however, he had recently attended a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee and had answered a wide range of questions at that meeting. An update on the developments within the Transport Portfolio would be brought to a Full Council meeting in due

course.

Councillor Patience responded that he had asked Councillor Brooks some questions at the Scrutiny meeting, however, he had not received any answers. He had been the last person to speak at the meeting and time was running out and the Chairman quite rightly closed the meeting. The Leader of the Council advised Councillor Patience to take the matter up with Councillor Bird, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, and he would be able to assist.

The Leader of the Council then moved the recommendation within the report and this was seconded by Councillor Rivett. The Leader stated that whilst the Chairman had been indulgent in dealing with Members' queries this evening, Members were reminded that the report was to be used for questions only and not for debate in future. However, Cabinet Members were always available to answer Members questions or discuss matters, as they arose.

On being put to the vote, it was agreed by consensus and

RESOLVED

That the report be received.

13 Exempt/Confidential Items (LGA)

It was proposed by Councillor Rivett and seconded by Councillor Bird and after taking an electronic vote 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.

The Chairman announced that the public part of the Meeting would now be closed and asked the Democratic Services Officer to end the broadcast on to YouTube.

14 Acceptance of DEFRA Grant Funding and Implementing End of Transition Port Health Arrangements

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

The meeting concluded at 9:35 PM

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Chairman