

**Unconfirmed**



Minutes of a Meeting of **Full Council** held remotely via Zoom on **Wednesday 24 March 2021** at **6.30pm**

**Members present:**

Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Chris Blundell, Councillor Jocelyn Bond, Councillor Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw, Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Alison Cackett, Councillor Jenny Ceresa, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Janet Craig, Councillor Mike Deacon, 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 Richard Kerry, Councillor Stuart Lawson, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor James Mallinder, 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

**Officers present:**

Katherine Abbott (Democratic Services Officer), Stephen Baker (Chief Executive), Helen Buckingham (Regulatory Consultant – Environmental Services & Port Health), Sarah Davis (Democratic Services Officer), Shannon English (Political Group Support Officer (GLI)), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer), Paul Mackie (Strategic Funding Manager), Sue Meeken (Political Group Support Officer (Labour)), Agnes Ogundiran (Conservative Political Group Support Officer), Mark Purvis (ICT Service Desk Team Leader), Hilary Slater (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Karen Staples (Regeneration and Growth Manager), Paul Wood (Head of Economic Development & Regeneration)

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**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Melissa Allen, Chris Mapey, Frank Mortimer, Trish Mortimer and Kay Yule.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

**3 Announcements**

**The Chairman of the Council**

The Chairman announced, with sadness, that Nicky Yeo and Cyril Webb, former members of Suffolk Coastal District Council who had also both served as Chairman, had recently passed away. The Chairman invited Councillor Hedgley to pay tribute to Nicky Yeo and Councillor Deacon to pay tribute to Cyril Webb.

The Chairman asked Council to observe a short silence to pay respect to former colleagues and their work for local residents.

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### **The Leader of the Council**

Councillor Gallant said he wished to reflect on the anniversary of the first lockdown, the events of the past year and the impact there had been on communities. Councillor Gallant said his thoughts were with those who had lost loved ones in the pandemic, those who had suffered considerable illness, and those who had worked extremely hard to support everyone during unprecedented and difficult times. Councillor Gallant recognised that it had been an obviously difficult year for everyone and he wished to formally thank everyone in East Suffolk for their efforts and sacrifices in the last year and adhering to the guidance in order to keep one another safe. Councillor Gallant paid tribute to the Council's Officers and the volunteers who had delivered the services the district's businesses and communities had relied upon. However, he said it was of equal importance to look to the future. Councillor Gallant referred to the anticipated and welcomed easing of Covid restrictions but wished to remind everyone that there remained the need to adhere to the guidelines so that the virus did not take control once more and to minimise risk. Councillor Gallant referred to the need to utilise the data to decide the safe time to end lockdown, not the dates. Councillor Gallant said that we would be living with the virus for many months, if not years, and that we all needed to 'do our bit' by following the guidelines. There was, he said, nevertheless a genuine sense of hope, renewal and optimism for better times and in summing up he thanked everyone again for everything they had done during the last year.

### **Cabinet Member for Economic Development**

Councillor Rivett referred to the successful bid for Freeport East which would offer a unique opportunity to build a global trade hub that, in time, would accelerate opportunities for the green energy agenda and help to level up the economy.

### **Cabinet Member for Resources**

Councillor Cook referred to a question at Full Council in January 2021 regarding the possibility of some second home owners registering that home as holiday let businesses and paying business rates rather than Council Tax. This, he said, could potentially result in those homeowners claiming business rate relief and therefore not paying business rates, nor Council Tax nor renting their second homes out for income. In January, Councillor Cook had explained to Council that he was aware of the problem and that the Council, following a media article in March 2020, had made representations to the LGA and MHCLG to see if this could be investigated. He was delighted to report those representations had been successful and HM Treasury had announced that the Government would legislate to change the criteria to determine

whether a holiday let was valued for business rates. Further details of the change and implementation would be provided shortly in the MHCLG in their response to the consultation on business rates treatment of self-catering accommodation.

### **Cabinet Member for Community Health**

Councillor Rudd wished to remind all those aged 50 years and above to get their first Covid vaccines.

### **Cabinet Member for Transport**

Councillor Brooks advised that work on the Gull Wing Bridge had commenced on 22 March 2021. It was expected to take two years to complete. Councillor Brooks wished to formally thank Councillor Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council, for the substantial financial support given to the scheme.

### **Chief Executive Officer**

Mr Baker, the Chief Executive, announced that the Head of Environmental Services and Port Health, Phil Gore, would retire in April due to unforeseen circumstances. The Chief Executive referred to Mr Gore's years of service with the Council, and its predecessor Councils, and of the vast amount of experience he had brought to a role of incredible breadth in that time. He said Mr Gore had approached a challenging and varied role with calmness and tenacity, a quiet yet determined demeanour, and had gained the respect of all those he had worked with. The CEO said Mr Gore was a terrific public servant and consummate professional. He read out a text message from Mr Gore in response who was unable to be present. In addition, Councillor Rudd, as a Cabinet Member who had worked with Mr Gore, wished to fully endorse the Chief Executive's comments and, on behalf of all the Council, thanked Mr Gore for his excellent work always and wished him all the very best on his retirement

Graham Elliott, who had recently resigned as an East Suffolk Councillor for Beccles and Worlingham, made a short statement. He referred to his fourteen years as a Councillor, to the community projects he had helped, and hoped the model of community ownership would remain a vital and key aspect. He welcomed the collaborative style of working at the Council which Councillor Gallant had encouraged.

## **4 Questions from the Public**

The Chairman introduced two Questions which had been received from members of the public pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 8. Both members of the public were present and were invited by the Chairman to read their questions.

### **(a) Question from Ms T Smith to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for The Environment**

*East Suffolk Council has declared a climate emergency, and as part of that pledge has committed to work with Government to a) deliver its 25 year Environmental Plan and b) increase the powers and resources available to local authorities in order to make the 2030 target easier to achieve. Does the Council agree that the Climate and Ecological*

*Emergency Bill provides a suitable framework to achieve both the Council's and the government's aims with the required urgency and scale of response?*

**Response from Councillor Mallinder**

Councillor Mallinder thanked Ms Smith for her question and engagement with an important issue. East Suffolk had, he said, a strong environmental vision, not only being developed but delivered, and he suggested that the environment was at the heart of all the Council did and a key principle of the Strategic Plan. The declaration of a climate emergency had, he said, reinforced the Council's commitment and this message and, through the Council's Environment Task Group, the Council had lobbied Government to articulate the concerns of its residents and our vision. Councillor Mallinder agreed with Ms Smith that there was a need to have stronger legislation to give powers to local authorities so that they had resources to support their environmental vision and, ultimately, residents. The Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill highlighted mutual concerns and, he said, the suggested actions were incorrect for dealing with them - he did not consider there to be a need for Citizens' Assemblies which would be an extra layer of bureaucracy. Instead, as a society, he suggested more ambition to make business, politics and the environment work together to best effect, to act and not talk, to implement meaningful environmental policies.

**(b) Question from Mr J Valentine to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for The Environment**

*The Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill provides the opportunity to assess and account for all Climate and Ecological costs now and into the future, and invites us to start the work of repairing the damage that's been done, and preventing further damage. Does the Council consider that the proposals and innovations contained within the CEE Bill will contribute towards improving the quality of life for current and future generations of East Suffolk residents, or does the Council think they would prefer for us to delay starting work on this necessary and inevitable task, in case something better comes along?*

**Response from Councillor Mallinder**

Councillor Mallinder thanked Mr Valentine for his question and said that, again, it was very welcome to see a member of the public engaging with the democratic process; he made reference to the earlier answer. He said that East Suffolk had already had successes in repairing its environment. The Council was, he said, making sure that frontline services were fit for today and tomorrow. He repeated that he did not agree with the suggested methods of dealing with these concerns as referenced in the Bill which he considered to by-pass democracy and public scrutiny altogether. He added that Citizens' Assemblies, in his opinion, would add another layer of egos and a lack of accountability so rather than being part of the decision-making process, the local authority would become an external force. He said that obstacles and bureaucracy needed to be removed, not added, so that action could be taken to make a real and lasting change.

The Chairman thanked the two members of the public for their questions.

## 5 Questions from Members

The Chairman advised that two questions had been submitted by Members pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 9.

### **(a) Question from Councillor Janet Craig to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development**

The Chairman confirmed with Councillor Craig that she was content that her question, as set out in the published agenda, be taken as read.

#### **Response from Councillor Rivett**

The Town Investment Plan sets out ambitious plans for development and investment in Lowestoft over the next 10 years. It covers the wider area of Lowestoft and has been created locally with partners and stakeholders to ensure it focuses on the priorities that will drive real change through long term economic productivity and growth. The Towns Fund grant and the 5 project areas that have been identified are capital projects, investing in land use and economic assets. These projects will be developed to maximise opportunities to ensure inclusive growth. The methodology that was used to prioritise these projects assessed how each of the capital projects could create social value, as well as economic value, in respect of increasing skills and education opportunities, providing mentoring opportunities and apprenticeships and engaging and improving the wellbeing all members of the community.

The economic and social value will be measured throughout the development of the business case and project delivery. The Regeneration team are currently working with officials in central Government to create a monitoring plan for the Towns Fund projects to ensure that their contribution to delivering economic and social is monitored and achieved.

A key part of delivering the Town Investment Plan through the Lowestoft Place Board is to ensure that we are linking with key public and private sector organisations to ensure that the plan links to all of the other work that is taking place to support all members of the community. This includes Lowestoft Rising, Lowestoft Community Partnership, DWP, SCC, East Coast College, the LEP, Access Community Trust etc.

Councillor Craig thanked Councillor Rivett for his response and asked how improvements to people's lives in the area would be measured. Councillor Rivett referred to outputs required by the Heads of Terms and the ambitions that the projects must deliver and noted that the government had added very few conditions to the bid. Councillor Rivett said that the number of stakeholders involved would ensure the benefits of the projects would be measured to demonstrate their outcomes had been achieved.

### **(b) Question from Councillor Louise Gooch to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development**

The Chairman confirmed with Councillor Gooch that she was content that her question, as set out in the published agenda, be taken as read.

### **Response from Councillor Rivett**

A key requirement of the Towns Fund grant and the Town Investment Plan from central Government is that engaging stakeholders and community is at the core of our plans. A key part of the assessment process of the bid was how we engaged and how we plan to engage moving forward. As a minimum this requires a stakeholder engagement plan and communications plan for the projects within the Towns Fund. However, I am pleased to say that these requirements have been exceeded as we have been developing our Lowestoft Placemaking work alongside the creation of the TIP and we are in the position where we can be confident that we will ensure we maximise our engagement opportunities.

The Lowestoft Placemaking work is a key part of the TIP, it started before our bid to the Towns Fund and originated from the “Making Waves Together” cultural project. The aim was to engage the community to tell a story of the Place and what it is about the place that the community members identified with. Our ambition to have a Place Board rather than a “Towns Fund Board” is part of this placemaking approach and this direction was taken to ensure our engagement was as inclusive as possible.

The Place Making work also includes our Ambassador events programme, which will involve holding events throughout the business case development and delivery phases, providing information on the projects as they are developed and providing the opportunity for people to feedback and influence the nature of the project. Alongside the Place Board we have also created a group of 11 Lead Ambassadors representing different parts of the community (Access Community Trust, Lowestoft Rising, Faith Groups, Schools & Colleges, business (tourism, retail, ports, energy), environmental charity, young people). The role of these Lead Ambassadors is to help promote messages and information into the areas in which they work. They have all risen to that challenge and supported us in ambassador events and in helping to shape projects. We are also supporting our young people’s ambassador who has recently launched the “Life of Lowestoft Podcast – voices from the community”, which we see as a great tool to reach younger generations.

We are also in the final stages of designing the “Lowestoft” place website, all the town’s regeneration projects will be available on this site as well as further information about other developments taking place. There will also be film and social media content on the site to provide the local community with as much information as possible. We are also exploring interactive online tools connected to the site to provide a further route for community feedback.

We believe this placemaking work is a key tool for ensuring comprehensive and inclusive engagement in the TIP and the Towns Fund projects. I am pleased to confirm that this has been recognised at a national level with the team have been nominated as finalists in the IESE Public Sector Transformation Awards for the innovative approach to engagement we have taken.

We are also acutely aware of the need to continue traditional and more formal routes of engagement. We have identified the use of the Post Office as a space for engagement, once Covid restrictions have been lifted. This is an ideal space for engaging on the Towns Fund projects but also the other projects within the Town Investment Plan (Gullwing, LFRMP, Full Fibre) including the Heritage Action Zones projects, since the Post Office is a key building within the HAZ initiative.

Within the stakeholder engagement plan we identify engagement of local ward councillors and parish councillors as key to helping us inform and engage the community. They are invited to all of the ambassador events and they are represented on the Place Board, however the team will also be arranging sessions to specifically engage with councillors.

As part of the Town Fund monitoring process we will also be providing a regular updates on the progress of the development of the Towns Fund projects to Full Council.

Councillor Gooch thanked Councillor Rivett for his response and asked how town and parish councils from the wider Lowestoft area would be engaged. Councillor Rivett explained that there was a parishes representative on the Place Board who acted as a conduit between the Place Board and the parishes in the area. Councillor Rivett highlighted the significant engagement with a variety of stakeholders during the formulation of the masterplan.

## **6 Petitions**

The Chairman announced that no petitions had been received as provided for by Council Procedure Rule 10.

## **7 Notices of Motion**

The Chairman advised that one Motion had been submitted by Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 11. In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules set out in the East Suffolk Council Constitution, the Chairman sought a proposer and seconder on discussing the Motion immediately.

On the proposition of Councillor Gallant, seconded by Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw it was by a unanimous vote

### **RESOLVED**

That the Motion be discussed immediately.

The Chairman invited Councillor Smith-Lyte to propose her Motion.

When introducing her motion, Councillor Smith-Lyte highlighted that the global temperature had already risen by 1% from pre-industrial levels and that without more significant action the world would exceed a 1.5% increase in contravention of the Paris Climate Change Agreement, and that the harm from a 2% rise would be

significant. Councillor Smith-Lyte considered the government's target to achieve net zero by 2050 was too late.

Councillor Smith-Lyte said that the overexploitation of resources and poor land management risked a mass extinction of species and loss of habitat, and that ambitious action was needed to limit global temperature rise to 1.5%. Councillor Smith-Lyte stated that the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill (referred to hereafter as the Bill) was a Private Members' Bill formed by cross-party support of 12 Members of Parliament (MPs) and was co-sponsored by several different organisations.

The Bill had received its first reading on 22 September 2020 and was awaiting its second reading, and Councillor Smith-Lyte advised that it was supported by 103 MPs and 20 county, district and town/parish councils. Councillor Smith-Lyte highlighted that several town and parish councils in East Suffolk had pledged to support the Bill and had written to Dr Therese Coffey MP to seek her support for the bill.

Councillor Smith-Lyte referred to the declaration of a climate change emergency made by the Council in 2019 and highlighted the work undertaken since then to tackle this issue, but considered the Council needed to go even further to address climate change.

Councillor Smith-Lyte proposed that

*Council notes that*

- i. This council has declared a climate and ecological emergency;*
- ii. Many local authorities have established Citizens' Assemblies that are playing an important role in assisting them in their plans to achieve net zero by 2030 or before; and that*
- iii. There is a Bill before Parliament - the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill (published as the "Climate and Ecology Bill") - according to which the Government must develop an emergency strategy that:*
  - a. requires that the UK plays its fair and proper role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions consistent with limiting global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees C above pre-industrial temperatures;*
  - b. ensures that all the UK's consumption emissions are accounted for;*
  - c. includes emissions from aviation and shipping;*
  - d. protects and restores biodiverse habitats along overseas supply chains;*
  - e. restores and regenerates the UK's depleted soils, wildlife habitats and species populations to healthy and robust states, maximising their capacity to absorb CO2 and their resistance to climate heating;*
  - f. sets up an independent Citizens' Assembly, representative of the UK's population, to engage with Parliament and Government and help develop the emergency strategy.*

*Council therefore resolves to:*

- i. Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill*
- ii. Inform the local media of this decision;*



*iii. Write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill; and*

*iv. Write to the CEE Bill Alliance, the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, expressing its support (campaign@ceebill.uk).*

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw, who reserved her right to speak.

The Chairman invited the Council to debate the proposed Motion.

Councillor Mallinder opened debate and proposed that the Motion be amended to read as follows:

*This Council accordingly resolves to:*

*Refer this matter to the Environmental Task Group for it to investigate the aims of the Bill and to in turn action the Council's response.*

Councillor Mallinder expressed his great respect for his Green Party colleagues but was disappointed with the original Motion, as it should be specifically relevant to the Council and its residents. Councillor Mallinder acknowledged that some aspects of the Motion were important but considered it to be a wasted opportunity to encourage collaborative working; he stated that his proposed amendment was to allow for cross-party support in responding to the Bill.

Councillor Mallinder considered that the Administration was leading the way on environmental policy in Suffolk through actions, due to the commitment of the entire Cabinet who understand the importance of the environment. Councillor Mallinder highlighted that the environment was a key point of the Council's Strategic Plan and that key changes had already been made to how the Council delivered its services.

Councillor Mallinder agreed that the urgency of addressing climate change was undisputed and was of the view that the Council was taking action on this week by week, and as it moved towards the goals of reducing emissions and increasing biodiversity it was protecting skilled jobs, developing the economy supporting residents and digitally transforming communities.

Councillor Mallinder acknowledged that the Bill highlighted the importance of the climate change emergency but did not agree with its proposed implementations needed further consideration, as the environment should not be an external issue to be dealt with separately and considered the Environment Task Group the best place for this to happen.

At this point, Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw raised a point of order; she considered that Councillor Mallinder's proposed amendment was so significant it constituted a new Motion and negated the original Motion, and sought the advice of the Council's Monitoring Officer. Mrs Slater, the Monitoring Officer, considered that the amendment was taking words out of the original Motion and replacing them with new ones, and was a valid amendment.

Councillor Mallinder continued his speech and said that the Environment Task Group was a cross-party group and the centre of the Council's environmental discussion and was a key part of formulating environmental policy.

Councillor Mallinder's proposed amendment was seconded by Councillor Cloke, who reserved her right to speak.

The Chairman invited the Council to debate the proposed amendment to the Motion.

Councillor Topping was disappointed with the proposed amendment. She expressed her respect for the Environment Task Group but was concerned that as it only met once a quarter, it would not be able to address the Bill in sufficient time. Councillor Topping asked that the Council take the original matter seriously and do not refer it on to the Environment Task Group. Councillor Topping took the opportunity to thank the expert contributors who had helped draft the Bill and cited the importance of the Citizen Assemblies it proposed.

Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw objected to some of the language that had been used by Councillor Mallinder in respect of the original Motion; she reminded Members that the opposition was entitled to submit a Motion to Council and it was an important part of the democratic process. Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw considered that the Bill should be discussed by the Council in the public domain.

It was acknowledged by Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw that Councillor Mallinder had been consulted on the original Motion before its submission, and had asked for the matter to be referred to the Environment Task Group, but the GLI Group had been of the view that it was more appropriate for the matter to be debated by the Council.

Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw said there was nothing to fear from Citizen Assemblies and considered them to be an incredible way to work through complex issues, as seen in Ireland with issues such as abortion.

Councillor Gallant considered that the Environment Task Group was the best forum to consider the Bill as it was already embedded in delivering the Council's environmental agenda. Councillor Gallant said that Councillor Mallinder was not following a political agenda with his amendment but an environmental one. Councillor Gallant said it was important to look at whether the Bill provided what was best for residents, which he considered to be actions and not words. Councillor Gallant said he was not afraid of engagement and cited the establishment of the Community Partnerships as an example of this.

Councillor Gooch stated that she was in support of the Bill and considered it right that the Council be seen as a forum to discuss issues that affect both a local and national level. Councillor Gooch said she trusted the judgement of those who had drafted the Bill as a lot of research had gone into it. Councillor Gooch admitted that she had some reservations about Citizen Assemblies but remained of an open mind on the subject, concluding that if the matter was referred to the Environment Task Group, she would work with her colleagues on that Task Group to ascertain how to take the best sentiments of the Bill forward.

Councillor Byatt concurred with Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw's earlier comments about the amendment constituting a new Motion; he wanted to debate the original Motion given the sense of urgency on the issue and said it was important that any representations were made as soon as possible, before the Bill's second reading.

Councillor Blundell highlighted that significant work to address environmental issues had been completed by volunteers throughout East Suffolk, funded by Community Partnerships. Councillor Blundell considered that the Council should not wait on words as action was taking place.

Councillor Wiles considered that the Council was renowned for its environmental aspirations and efforts and supported the amendment made by Councillor Mallinder, stating that change only happened when everyone worked together. Councillor Mallinder said he supported the work of the Environment Task Group and supported the proposed amendment.

Councillor Smith-Lyte stated that her original Motion did not imply action was not already taking place; she asked Members not to become too focussed on Citizen Assemblies as it was only one part of the Motion. Councillor Smith-Lyte reminded the Council that the Bill had been put together by experts as well as a cross-party group of MPs and makes the point that more speed on the issue is needed. Councillor Smith-Lyte said she did not accept Councillor Mallinder's amendment.

Councillor Cloke concluded the debate on the proposed amendment by stating that she did not see the need for Citizen Assemblies, as there was already elected representatives to represent the views of residents. Councillor Cloke noted that she had recently attended the Greenprint Forum and from this and other experiences knew how much Councillor Mallinder was committed to tackling environmental issues and making real and sustainable differences.

There being no further debate the Chairman 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 Council to debate the substantive Motion.

Councillor Mallinder considered that the Environment Task Group was the most appropriate place to discuss the matter and drill down to see how it can support residents' goals and the ambitions of the Council.

Councillor Byatt reiterated that the Environment Task Group needed to review the Bill as soon as possible to ensure that representations were made within its parliamentary timetable and suggested that it prioritise the issue and meets more frequently. Councillor Byatt expressed some reservations about Citizen Assemblies and considered if another layer of democracy was needed.

Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw acknowledged the concerns raised about Citizen Assemblies and noted that researching the concept had shown her how effective they could be, as they would enable the Council to bring the community with it when

addressing such issues, rather than imposing a solution. Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw sought clarity on when the Environment Task Group would hear the issue.

Councillor Gallant was of the view that had the original Motion remained, the Council would not have been able to fully understand the implications of what it was being asked to debate. Councillor Gallant considered that the Environment Task Group was best placed to debate the merits of the Bill and suggested that its prioritisation needed to be in line with the current parliamentary timetable for the Bill.

Councillor Bird was pleased the original Motion had been amended and said he could support it in this form. Councillor Bird enforced the earlier comments made stating that actions speak louder than words and highlighted work undertaken by Suffolk County Council to plant 200,000 trees in Suffolk, funded by the Suffolk Fund, with 100,000 trees having been planted in the first five months of the project.

Councillor Kerry supported the amended motion and highlighted the steps already been taking by the Council's Housing service to tackle environmental issues, including developing housing with the latest energy saving devices and air or ground source heat pumps.

Councillor Haworth-Culf was of the view that East Suffolk Council led the way on various matters and said this was evident with the establishment of the Environment Task Group and the actions the Council had taken to address climate change such as the grass roof at East Suffolk House, changing to electric vehicles, installing electric vehicle charging points and working to reduce the use of single-use plastic. Councillor Haworth-Culf highlighted that a school in her Ward was having the environment as its theme in April 2021 and this was a result of influence of Leiston Together and the net zero project for the town.

Councillor Brooks outlined the launch of quiet lanes in Suffolk last week and highlighted that a significant number of these lanes were located within East Suffolk. Councillor Brooks said that the Council was one of the leading districts in the region, and possibly the country, on environmental issues.

Councillor Topping said she was delighted to hear of so many positive actions across the district and detailed her own personal actions for a number of years, stating that everyone had to contribute to addressing climate change. Councillor Topping directed Members to the website for the Bill, where they could find an executive summary of changes and a list of the recent environmental disasters to have occurred. Councillor Topping suggested that the Bill be included on the Environment Task Group's agenda for its meeting on 14 April 2021.

Councillor Gooch considered that words and actions were not separate and said she would have been happy to support the original Motion. Councillor Gooch said that a co-operative approach was needed to address climate change in a comprehensive way.

Councillor Byatt raised a point of order, suggesting that the debate was returning to the original Motion, and asked that the Council move to the vote on the substantive Motion.

There being no further debate it was by a majority vote

## **RESOLVED**

This Council accordingly resolves to:

Refer this matter to the Environmental Task Group for it to investigate the aims of the Bill and to in turn action the Council's response.

*Following the conclusion of this item, the Chairman adjourned the meeting for a short break. The meeting was adjourned at 8.12pm and was reconvened at 8.20pm. During this adjournment, Councillor T-J Haworth-Culf left the meeting and Councillor Ray Herring joined the meeting.*

## **8 Appointment of Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer**

The Council received report **ES/0702** of Councillor Maurice Cook, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources.

Councillor Cook introduced the report and referred to the ill health retirement of the Council's Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer, Mr Simon Taylor-Buglione, in October 2020 and to the temporary appointment of Mr Brian Mew to the position pending a formal recruitment process.

Councillor Cook stated that local authorities were required to in place certain statutory officers, one of which was the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer, to undertake a range of specific statutory duties and key financial responsibilities. In the case of the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer this included the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Council, ensuring the lawfulness and financial prudence of the Council's decision-making, a contribution to the corporate management of the Council and, the provision of financial information and advice.

Councillor Cook confirmed that a formal recruitment process had begun in January 2021 with an Appointments Committee being held on 1 March 2021; that Committee had unanimously recommended the appointment of Mr Brian Mew on a permanent basis. Councillor Cook advised that Mr Mew had accepted the appointment to take effect from 1 April 2021. Councillor Cook referred to Mr Mew's qualifications and impressive record of work experience and achievements.

Councillor Cook proposed that the formal appointment of Mr Brian Mew as the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer for East Suffolk Council from 1 April 2021 be noted. This was seconded by Councillor Lynch, as Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, who spoke of his positive experience of working with Mr Mew during his time as the Interim Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer.

The Chairman invited the Committee to debate the proposed recommendation.

Councillor Gallant commended Mr Mew for his work and the attributes he would bring to the role. These sentiments were echoed by Councillor Byatt.

*Councillor David Beavan left the meeting at this point (8.24pm).*

There being no further debate, it was by a unanimous vote

## **RESOLVED**

That the formal appointment of Mr Brian Mew as the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer for East Suffolk Council from 1 April 2021 be noted.

## **9 Towns Fund - Lowestoft**

The Council received report **ES/0703** of Councillor Craig Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development.

Councillor Rivett introduced the report and set out that Full Council was asked to accept £24.9m from the Towns Fund subject to the successful completion of project business cases and to revise the Capital Programme to incorporate these projects.

Councillor Rivett said that he was proud of the hard work and collaboration of all involved to put together the successful bid document, detailing the input from many areas of Lowestoft to manifest the town's aspirations. Councillor Rivett outlined the various projects already taking place in Lowestoft such as the construction of the Gull Wing Bridge, work on the Lowestoft Flood Barrier and work on upgrading the town's broadband infrastructure. Councillor Rivett considered that the funding would progress the Town Investment Plan.

Councillor Rivett confirmed that the Place Board would be responsible for the development and delivery of the Town Investment Plan and the Council would be the responsible authority as per the Heads of Terms. Five projects had been given priority, following work by the Place Board to design and agree a scoring matrix that was applied to the plethora of projects considered.

Business cases for these projects now needed to be worked up and submitted in the next 12 months and Councillor Rivett said it was important that the Place Board be supported to achieve this by strengthening staffing levels, to take what was a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Councillor Rivett proposed the recommendations as set out in the report. Councillor Rivett also highlighted to Members a typographical error in the second recommendation of the report, which should read "business cases" and not "businesses cases" as published.

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Rivett.

Councillor Byatt asked if boosting the resources of the Council's procurement team had been considered, to ensure that social value is embedded during the procurement process; he added that he would like to see the Council use its own resources and not consultants. Councillor Rivett stated that consultants would only be used where necessary and appropriate and gave an example of this happening during the

formulation of the masterplan. Councillor Rivett said that the proposed resourcing was considered to meet what would be required.

There being no further questions to Councillor Rivett, the Chairman sought a seconder to the proposal. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Gallant, who reserved his right to speak.

The Chairman invited the Council to debate the proposal.

Councillor Rudd said this was an exciting opportunity for Lowestoft and looked forward to how the town centre could be improved and people encouraged to start using it again.

Councillor Ashdown highlighted that Appendix C of the report did not list the Lowestoft and northern parishes Community Partnership seat on the Place Board but noted he had been assured this was an inadvertent omission. Councillor Ashdown, as Chair of that Community Partnership, said that the Community Partnership supported the work of the Place Board and the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Gallant thanked both Councillor Rivett and the officer team for their hard work to reach this stage. Councillor Gooch echoed this thanks and asked that this opportunity be used to make Lowestoft an all year round destination.

Councillor Wiles considered that public engagement was key to this project and noted the national interest it had received, showing how active engagement can be used to move projects forward.

*Councillor Tess Gandy left the meeting at this point (8.42pm).*

There being no further debate, it was by a unanimous vote

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That it be agreed to accept the Towns Fund grant of the £24.9m external funding from Government asset out in the Heads of Terms attached as Appendix A.
2. That delegated authority be provided to the Cabinet to oversee and approve the development of business cases for each of the Towns Fund projects.
3. That the growth in the Council's General Fund budget shown in paragraph 6.1 be approved.
4. That the revised Economic Development and Regeneration Capital Programme attached as Appendix B, including a net addition to the Capital Programme of £500k, be approved.

## **10 Proposed Changes to the East Suffolk Council Constitution**

Full Council received report **ES/0711** of Councillor Steve Gallant, the Leader of the Council.

Councillor Gallant introduced the report and summarised the first of the two proposed changes to the East Suffolk Council Constitution (referred to hereafter as the Constitution), this being a reduction in the number of Members to sit on the Appointments Committee from six to three. Councillor Gallant detailed these being the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for the service area concerned, or another Cabinet Member in their absence, and one member of the Opposition. The second proposed change being a correction to the inaccurate naming of an Appointments Panel to refer instead to an Appointments Committee. The full details of both proposed changes were provided in full in Appendices A and B to the report.

Councillor Gallant highlighted that the current composition of the Appointments Committee reflected the arrangements for the appointment of shared Heads of Service to the former Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils; he noted that it was considered that having six Members, plus CMT and HR representatives, meant that the panel could be daunting or oppressive for candidates. In formulating the proposed changes, Councillor Gallant said that an Appointments Committee of four had been considered but was disregarded as this would increase the need for a Chairman's casting vote.

Councillor Gallant concluded that the proposed changes would make the Constitution more suitable for good recruitment. The proposed changes had been considered by the Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting on 15 March 2021; that Committee had supported the proposed changes unanimously with no particular comments or queries being raised. Councillor Gallant proposed the recommendations as set out in the report.

Councillor Lynch, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, seconded the proposal; he stated that the Audit and Governance Committee had looked at the proposed changes in detail and had considered the reduced size of the Appointments Committee to be more appropriate going forward.

There being no questions, the Chairman invited the Council to debate the proposal.

Councillor Topping referred to the reduction in numbers sitting on the Appointments Committee and suggested that for an appointment as a Head of Service and above, a panel of six people or more should not be overly daunting for the candidates. Councillor Topping also suggested that it would be appropriate if those sitting on the Appointments Committee could be as diverse as possible, for example, some female members.

Councillor Herring supported the proposed changes and asked if Councillor Gallant would agree with him that additional support from Members should be put in place when recruiting to the Head of Paid Service and Strategic Director positions. Councillor Gallant concurred with this suggestion and said that a wider pool of Members should be able to meet candidates for those senior positions and give their thoughts to the Appointments Committee.

There being no further debate, it was by a majority vote



**RESOLVED**

That the proposed changes to the Constitution as set out in Appendix A and Appendix B to report ES/0711 be approved.

*Following the conclusion of this item, Councillor Keith Patience left the meeting.*

**11 Cabinet Members' Report and Outside Bodies Representatives' Report to Council**

The Council received report **ES/0701** of Councillor Steve Gallant, the Leader of the Council.

Councillor Gallant introduced the report, which provided brief reports by Cabinet Members and representatives on various Outside Bodies for the information of all members. It was agreed that the report's contents would be taken as read and not summarised further.

The Chairman invited questions.

Councillor Topping referred to the Cabinet Member for the Environment's report and his chairmanship of the Suffolk Waste Partnership; she said that the Partnership's Joint Municipal Waste Strategy stated that it had been "recently reviewed in 2013" and had ended in 2020 and asked if there was a more up-to-date version now available. Councillor Mallinder said he would look into this and respond outside the meeting.

The report was received for information.

The meeting concluded at 8.57pm

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Chairman