



COUNCIL

Wednesday 23 September 2020

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS TO COUNCIL

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Mary Rudd, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health
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Brexit Transition Period

The Brexit transition period comes to an end on 31 December 2020 and work is now progressing at pace to understand the likely implications for imported food control across all of the UK's Border Control Points (BCP). Within the last two months Defra has provided all Port Health Authorities with some planning assumptions around the number of consignments of products of animal origin being imported into the UK, from the EU, on which to base future resource requirements. As EU trade has moved freely between member states in the past there are gaps in the data provided by Defra and uncertainties around the level of checks required in 2021 as negotiations on a trade deal continue. This has made planning for the change extremely challenging.

Defra has recently opened a bidding process for Port Health Authorities to apply for funding to help support the additional costs that will be incurred in resourcing the service to meet these new requirements in 2021. We understand that document checks will be required on organic certification and fish catch certificates accompanying EU imports from January next year but checks on products of animal origin (POAO) will be phased in from July 2021 to allow time for new border control facilities to be constructed at some of the ports, such as Dover, where large volumes of imported food arrive from the EU but don't currently require any form of check.

Members will be aware that we already deliver an imported food control service for Tendring District Council at Harwich and Defra have estimated that around 30,000 additional POAO consignments, coming from the EU, into Felixstowe and Harwich will require checks in the future. As many of these ferries arrive outside of our current operating hours, we will need to stand up a 24/7 Port Health service to cover ferries arriving at Felixstowe and Harwich.

The significant implications that this will have for the Council's Port Health service are reflected in the size of the funding bid to Defra and we await the outcome of that bid. If successful, this seed funding will be used to finance a major recruitment and training programme to ensure that we have the staff resources in place to undertake the new checks in 2021. The ongoing costs of the service will be met from import charges but Defra seed funding will be required to bridge the gap between recruitment of staff later this year and July 2021 when the bulk of the charges can be levied to fund the service.

Test & Trace

Although cases of Covid within Suffolk remain relatively low compared with other parts of the UK we are seeing a general increase in the number of positive cases and the government has recently introduced further restrictions in England to help control the spread of the virus.

The Council's Food & Safety team has been working hard to deal with complaints about businesses that are not exercising the necessary control measures to protect staff and customers from the virus. The team has also been involved in a programme of preventative interventions with complex work

settings in the district such as meat and fish processing premises, food manufacturers and agricultural settings which are the types of work settings that have been the focus of outbreaks in other areas of the country.

We have also been working with colleagues in Norfolk and the Suffolk Covid Co-ordinating Centre to interview employees from Banham poultry plant who have tested positive or have been in contact with a work colleague who has tested positive following the recent outbreak associated with the factory. A total of 16 of their staff live in the east Suffolk area and proved difficult to contact by telephone so an Environmental Health Officer was deployed over the Bank Holiday weekend to visit the home addresses of those employees to gather further information about their immediate family contacts and give advice about self-isolation. This follow up work reinforced the challenges we face around local contact tracing as many of those 16 members of staff were migrant workers, some with a limited understanding of English and some living in houses of multiple occupation and sharing transport to work. Despite the challenge the officer was able to contact the individuals and confirm the action to be taken. One of the learning points from this incident was the need for employers to keep accurate and up to date contact details for all their staff and this point has been fed back to businesses.

Capacity within the local system to respond to outbreaks and conduct local contact tracing has grown following a recent recruitment exercise run by the Suffolk Public Health Team.

Cabinet Member:	Councillor James Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment
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I attend the Suffolk Waste Partnership Steering Group and I am pleased to confirm I have am now Chair of the Steering Group.

This is important for East Suffolk, as we need to make that sure waste collection meets our environmental aspirations and contributes to my environmental vision. In particular, we need to consider how much waste we produce and how we dispose of it. This will increasingly be an important aspect of climate emergency solutions.

We discussed promotional campaigns for recycling and we received feedback over the Covid-19 months. All the general waste and recycling collections continued without issue, which is a credit to the good management from all operators. Garden waste collections have been resumed and we will be returning to normal collection dates shortly.

I attended the Greenprint Forum meeting, where we discussed general issues and looked at how to take our campaigning forward.

Plastic Champions have met through Zoom for a coffee morning networking and we are keen to encourage communities to engage with the national beach clean events.

We continue to promote our endeavours and encourage groups to engage with their local environment as much as possible, through Covid-19 restrictions.

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Richard Kerry, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing
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The Housing Service is one of the largest in the Council in terms of numbers of staff and size of budgets. It covers everything from the enforcement of housing standards in the private rented sector to the collection of rent from our own tenants, assisting homeless households and rough sleepers, and building new, energy efficient, Council homes.

Since my last report, we have seen a period of momentous change and challenge which has affected the whole Housing Service. However, despite the unprecedented pressures of the pandemic, there have been some outstanding successes and achievements within my portfolio, which I would like share.

East Suffolk Independent Living Agency

Following months of preparation, in May this year the Council left the county-wide home improvement agency run by Orbit Home Living. Despite the restrictions of the Covid 19 crisis, the new East Suffolk Independent Living Agency has launched. Early work to pilot a better, more focussed service for customers is underway. We continue to share our learning and development with all the Suffolk Council partners as the Orbit contract comes to a close.

A new discretionary policy was adopted in April 2020 in response to the need to support the NHS with their policy of minimising hospital admissions and lengths of stays. Between 26 March and 30 June 2020, staff, and more recently the new Independent Living Team, have dealt with 56 enquiries and approved 18 grants helping residents to return home from hospital promptly and keeping them safe when they are at home. We have been very grateful to local contractors for supporting us in continuing to work in a safe manner during these difficult times.

Digital Transformation

The Housing Service has embarked on a significant journey in digital transformation. The progress to mobile working capability for the Housing Maintenance Team is on track which will radically change and improve current working methods and the efficiency of our workforce. The work on the Tenant's Portal app is almost complete and will be launched in October. This is a mobile ready app that any of our tenants can sign-up for, giving them 24 hour a day access to their rent balance, ability to make a payment, set up direct debits, report repairs and send messages. There will be further developments of the portal to enable more functionality over the next couple of years as other technologies are brought online.

Energy efficiency and sustainability

We aspire to make our existing housing stock even more energy efficient, and to aid the Council on its journey towards carbon neutrality by looking at options to retrofit the stock. We have been working with an external specialist to agree a minimum energy efficiency standard for our housing and consider what is practical and affordable. These investigations are in the early stages but the work will be extremely challenging.

We have adopted three new strategies in this period that stress the importance of sustainable housing and we are also working on a 'green specification' for approval by Members that will guide future council housing development.

Housing Development

We will be completing our first shared ownership properties this month as part of our development programme. The site in Brampton contains 6 x 2 bedroom houses, all with private gardens and parking. After a brief site shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic the team worked tirelessly to get back on site as soon as possible whilst adhering to the government's guidelines. The properties are being marketed by Orwell on our behalf. With the completion of these units, the Development Team are focusing on further new build schemes in the pipeline to include shared ownership as an affordable tenure for the benefit of local people.

Over the next 3 years the housing development programme has a pipeline of 147 units to be delivered across the new build and redevelopment programme. Of these, 56 are post planning and therefore the percentage certainty of their delivery is significantly increased.

One significant scheme included within these figures is the redevelopment of the former Deben High School site which is being brought forward as part of a mixed use scheme to provide much needed leisure facilities and housing for Felixstowe. The proposed housing is being designed using Passive principles to ensure the homes are both sustainable and affordable for residents. The project provides an excellent opportunity to enhance the reputation of ESC for innovation, community and leisure investment alongside the development of good quality affordable housing.

Alongside the Council's housing development programme, officers are actively seeking solutions to reduce the Council's carbon emissions in line with the declaration of a climate emergency and commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030. Working with a specialist consultant team we are developing Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for both new build properties and existing HRA housing stock. These standards will be used to implement a rolling improvement programme to improve energy efficiency through a property focused retro fit programme.

Rough Sleeping

The Housing Needs Team has ensured that homeless people in the district are able to keep safe during the Covid-19 outbreak. In a response to the public health emergency and the government's 'Everyone In' instruction which was issued on 26 March 2020, we placed a total of 38 individuals who were rough sleeping, living in night shelter style accommodation, or at imminent risk of rough sleeping, into self-contained temporary accommodation. Most of these clients were placed within a 48 hour period, which was an incredible achievement.

As part of this work, the Service had to relocate the 8 clients who had been living in the Council's 'Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub' in Lowestoft into self-contained accommodation. Due to the amazing work of the Repairs and Maintenance Team, Housing Needs Team and our partners Lowestoft Rising and Access Community Trust, the Housing Service was able to bring a former sheltered scheme at

Avenue Mansions in Lowestoft back into use in record time for this purpose. The Hub will now continue to run from Avenue Mansions until the end of March 2021.

The Council is continuing to support 7 single people placed into emergency accommodation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This number has reduced significantly from 38 because the Housing Needs Team has worked closely with partners to make offers of longer-term accommodation to 31 of those clients. The Housing Needs Team has worked with each client to devise a Personal Housing Plan setting out suitable options for move on accommodation and support and is continuing to work with the remaining 7 clients to access suitable longer-term accommodation.

The team has also worked with MHCLG to reprofile the rough sleeping grant funding received for the current financial year to ensure that our costs at Avenue Mansions are fully covered, and to create three new fixed term posts dedicated to working with rough sleepers. We have successfully recruited to these posts, who will specifically support this client group. The Council has also submitted a bid to MHCLG's 'Next Steps Accommodation Programme' for further funding to support those rough sleepers housed as a result of the pandemic. The outcome of the bid is expected to be known in mid-late September.

Housing Enabling

The Council's new Housing Enabling Manager has continued working with community groups and Parish / Town Councils during this difficult time to identify opportunities to deliver affordable housing and assets that will benefit their communities. One example of this is supporting SouthGen, a community benefit society in Southwold working with Hastoe Housing Association. SouthGen have successfully used funding from the Council's Community Led Housing Fund to convert 5 open market homes to affordable homes, for rented and one shared ownership, for people with a strong connection to Southwold. Further funding has now been awarded by the Council to ensure that the rents of the properties are genuinely affordable to allow households on low incomes to access the homes in perpetuity, which will be owned and managed by Hastoe Housing Association.

St Peter's Court, Lowestoft

Members will recall the Grenfell tragedy in 2017 and the impressive proactive work that has taken place on St Peter's Court – the Council's only residential tower block. We have undertaken installation of a residential fire sprinkler system, replaced fire doors and linings, enhanced fire detection and made internal alterations of communal areas. All this has taken place with full consultation and, I would stress, the full support of the residents who have been reassured by our actions. In the past 12 months we have proactively undertaken investigations into the exterior cladding fitted to St Peter's Court to further reassure residents and ourselves on the safety of the building and have approved a new replacement cladding system be installed with new windows to further improve energy efficiency for our tenants and meet this Council's obligations to reduce carbon emissions.

Outside Bodies Representatives Reports

Felixstowe Landguard Partnership Committee	
Representative:	Councillor Stuart Bird
Contact Details:	stuart.bird@eastsoffolk.gov.uk Tel: 01394 275128

LANDGUARD PARTNERSHIP MEETING, FRIDAY 17 JULY 2020

This was a single agenda item meeting to discuss the future arrangements for the Partnership. An external Consultancy had been commissioned to produce a report. Their recommendation was to replace the existing loose arrangement of the stakeholders and organisations which currently make up the Partnership. The proposal is to create a Landguard Charitable Trust, which would have a board of trustees, with each partner organisation represented, plus 6 external trustees recruited for their relevant skills. This board would be independent of the trustee boards which run some of the constituent partners at present. It was stated that this Trust could promote and market Landguard as a visitor attraction more professionally, and also secure outside funding more successfully.

There was universal support for this proposal from those at the meeting. It was further agreed to move to the next phase of implementing these new arrangements. This will involve further consultancy work to formulate the structure and remit of the Trust, liaise with constituent organisations, set up an interim Shadow Board, and potentially recruit external Trustees.

Leiston Town Athletic Sports Ground Executive Committee	
Representatives:	Councillors J Bond and T Cooper
Contact Details:	jocelyn.bond@eastsoffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07825 720522 tony.cooper@eastsoffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07884 054882

There is not much to report, as the Sports Ground is now only just getting back to opening. The premises have been fully cleaned, decorated throughout and a new floor has been laid in the function hall.

Finances are very tight and it has been agreed to work with part time staff in future, rather than a full time Steward.

All the lawn bowls matches have been cancelled until next year.

The Football section have now started friendlies, without spectators, and a full Covid-19 Risk Assessment has been completed, with a Covid Officer, as requested by the FA.

The FA has provided further safety requirements, which need to be in place by 5th September. We have to have a further risk assessment undertaken for the inclusions of spectators, whilst ensuring the 1 metre distance rule in the ground and we are now limited to 30% of ground capacity.

Members were very sad that ESC would not be able to review the additional terms agreement and changes to the Constitution, after trying to get this sorted for some time.

Broads Authority	
Representative:	Councillor Andree Gee
Contact Details:	andree.gee@eastsoffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07825 272985

I was formally accepted onto the Broads Authority at its July meeting of the Board in 2019. Following this I took part in various training sessions.

Much of BA's activities concern the broads which lie within Norfolk but, despite only having one broad in Suffolk, its area covers all the rivers and marshlands in the Waveney valley.

Meetings of the full Board take place bi-monthly, and Planning Committee meetings, to which all members are invited, take place every four weeks.

The unique character of the Broads has led to it being designated as a National Park. The task of the Authority is to protect, preserve and promote all aspects of this beautiful and fascinating part of England. Apprenticeships have been set up to enable young people leaving school to learn the old crafts and trades which have been practised for centuries in the Broads area, such as reed cultivation and thatching, thus enabling these traditional crafts to continue and thrive in the future.

A Lottery funded project is in place whereby peat is cultivated and when mature is cut and dried and then sold as fuel, which is proving to be very popular. Historic England has identified the Broads as an "area of exceptional waterlogged heritage." It contains a record of past climate and environmental changes that can increase knowledge of the evolution of the landscape. The soils of the Broads wetland vegetation store 38.8 million tonnes of carbon². Peat soils release stored carbon if they are drained and allowed to dry out. The protection of peat soil is therefore critical to help address climate change.

Other projects include moss-growing, the restoration of pre-1940s water levels and a reed and sedge industry. One of the more ambitious schemes is entitled "Water mills and Marshes" where eight ancient watermills on the Halvergate marshes are to be fully restored to their former glory, complete with new sails. The first two are due to be started very soon and one of these will return to being a fully working mill.

The Broads rangers patrol the waterways and ensure that any unpaid tolls are collected from boat owners. They do a sterling job in maintaining the general upkeep of the Broads, as well as ensuring that the quality of the water is kept at the highest standard.

The development and improvements to the Carlton Marshes and its new visitors centre have had a great deal of support and involvement from the Broads Authority.

Several educational programmes have taken place (pre-Covid!) involving schools from Lowestoft and Beccles, and a number of pupils have collaborated on making a CD album of Broads songs.

Recently, the Authority appointed Hilary Slater as its Monitoring Officer, a decision with which I am delighted as it will enable the Broads Authority to have closer links with East Suffolk Council in the future.

Norfolk HOSC (Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee)	
Representative:	Councillor Judy Cloke
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Norfolk HOSC AGM 30 July 2020

Penny Carpenter was elected Chairman and Cllr Nigel Legg Vice Chairman.

There was an update on the effects of COVID 19 on staffing, but the committee has asked for more information on this, also plans for supporting staff. Also additional information was requested on the future capacity of services under COVID safe conditions with regard to Diagnostics capacity and Elective surgery capacity. They also asked for information regarding the effects of COVID 19 on people with learning and other disabilities, for example Comparative death rate figures. What plans are in train for care of patients with diabetes during the ongoing crisis, for example dietary advice. It was agreed the committee would aim to take 3 substantive items at each meeting, which should last a maximum of 3 hours with a break.

Prior to this meeting an email had been issued about the proposals to merge the 5 CCGs in Norfolk & Waveney into one CCG, feeling there are clear advantages to patient population and member practices. The intention is to become the NHS Norfolk & Waveney CCG by April. The chairman was appointed to the link role and vice chairman her deputy. Suffolk HOSC has asked for an ES Councillor to maintain an overview, but there is no official appointment.

The forward work programme will include Access to NHS dentistry, Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust – progress, Palliative and end of life care and Ambulance response and turnaround time, as well as cancer services and take up rates of childhood immunisation.

At the meeting of 3 September, it was agreed to ask for a report on the extent to which different categories of staff are equally trained in the techniques needed to avoid physical restraint or seclusion of patients and whether mental health support for schools provides the necessary capacity to support pupils needs on the return to school after the Covid 19 home-schooling period, also the accessibility of mental health services in the new Covid 19 environment; particularly access for those who cannot use communication technology.

The Norfolk & Waveney CCG is being asked to provide details of Consultant cover provided for the specialist palliative care beds in Beccles and data on the numbers of beds needed to meet the needs of the population of Norfolk & Waveney.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be received.

APPENDICES – None

BACKGROUND PAPERS – None