

**Confirmed**



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Cabinet** held via Zoom, on **Tuesday, 06 April 2021** at **6:30 PM**

**Members of the Cabinet present:**

Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Richard Kerry, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Mary Rudd, Councillor Letitia Smith

**Other Members present:**

Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Alison Cackett, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Tony Cooper, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor John Fisher, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor TJ Haworth-Culf, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Caroline Topping, Councillor Steve Wiles

**Officers present:** Stephen Baker (Chief Executive), Liz Beighton (Planning Manager), Kerry Blair (Head of Operations), Emma Bloom (Head of Customer Services, Communications and Marketing), Karen Cook (Democratic Services Manager), Andrew Jarvis (Strategic Director), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer), Sue Meeken (Political Group Support Officer (Labour)), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer), Laura Mundy (Principal Planner (Policy and Delivery)), Agnes Ogundiran (Conservative Political Group Support Officer), Desi Reed (Planning Policy and Delivery Manager), Karen Staples (Regeneration and Growth Manager), Paul Wood (Head of Economic Development and Regeneration), Ben Wright (Planner (Policy and Delivery))

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**1 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3 Announcements**

The Leader referred to the next stage in the gradual easing of Covid restrictions due to take place on 12 April 2021, stating that the Prime Minister had confirmed on 5 April that England remained on track based on current data, and that the numbers of infections and hospitalisations were dropping considerably. This, the Leader stated, was thanks in no small part to the vaccination programme which continued to be a

success, not only nationally, but also locally, with Suffolk now one of the leading counties for roll out and take up. The Leader outlined the changes that would come into effect on 12 April and commented that this was particularly good news for East Suffolk given the investment East Suffolk Council (ESC) had made in its leisure facilities across the district, and the Leader stated he was pleased that a huge amount of effort had gone into re-opening them safely. The Economic Development and Environmental Health teams had also been working very closely with local businesses to ensure they would be ready to re-open safely.

The Leader stated that testing also remained a critical element of the national response and changes had been made to the way Suffolk continued to offer community testing. The County had conducted over 57,000 tests at 28 sites, however, the numbers of people using test centres (in Suffolk and across the country) had been lower than expected and the focus would now be given to targeted, vulnerable groups and promoting home testing. With this in mind, the East Suffolk sites at Aldeburgh, Southwold, Woodbridge and Bungay had now closed and those at Halesworth, Saxmundham and Debenham would close on 16 April. Sites would remain open at Lowestoft South, Lowestoft North, Felixstowe, Martlesham, Beccles and Framlingham. From 9 April, everyone in England was to be given access to two rapid coronavirus tests a week. The lateral flow kits, which could provide results in around 30 minutes, would be available for free at testing sites, pharmacies and through the post.

The Leader stated the importance of everyone remaining cautious as restrictions were eased and he referred to there still being very clear rules to follow about gatherings and of course the need to adhere to social distancing at all times, and continuing to wear a face mask and wash hands as often as possible. The data was certainly encouraging the Leader stated, however, it would not take much for the picture to worsen.

Turning to another subject, the Leader referred to the reports being considered by Cabinet having been produced on a new report template; this reformatting focussed more overtly on ESC's Strategic Plan and ambitions and the Leader hoped that members and the public would find this format clearer, more informative and easier to read. The Leader added that he would be happy to receive any feedback on the new report template and he thanked the Democratic Services Team for the work that had gone into the roll out of this new initiative.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Services, ICT and Commercial Partnerships reported that he was delighted to announce the appointment of Sandra Lewis as the Council's new Head of Digital and Programme Management. Councillor Burroughes, joined by Cabinet, wished Sandra all the very best in her new role.

#### **4 Minutes**

##### **RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 March 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **5 Adoption of Statement of Community Involvement**

Cabinet received report **ES/0720** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, who reported that the purpose of the report was to adopt a new Statement of Community Involvement which was required by Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act of 2004, as amended. The Statement of Community Involvement was a document that set out the measures and actions ESC would take to consult and engage with the community during the preparation of planning policy documents and when determining planning applications.

The Leader acknowledged the amount of work that had gone into the production of the Statement; he gave thanks for this and referred to it being easy to read and understand. The Leader referred to how ESC valued the involvement of the public in the Planning process.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment stated that he too welcomed the Statement; he particularly referred to Neighbourhood Plans and how they were an example of how residents could influence development and preservation of their towns and villages.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing stated that he welcomed the Statement; he referred to the time taken by officers to analyse and respond to all comments in respect of planning applications forwarded by members of the public.

Councillor Haworth-Culf gave thanks for the Statement and gave thanks to all who had participated in the consultation exercise. Councillor Haworth-Culf referred to emails and letters received by many councillors recently in respect of Scottish Power Renewables; she referred to a particular email and asked the Leader if he would be acknowledging receipt of correspondence received. In response, the Leader confirmed that he dealt with all correspondence that he received as expeditiously as possible.

Councillor Byatt gave thanks for what he said was an excellent document; Councillor Byatt referred to the consultees and asked why the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership was not included within the statutory list, but had been asked to co-operate only. Officers, in response, commented that the list of statutory consultees was set out within Government legislation.

Councillor Byatt referred to the number of respondents during the consultation period; he referenced the importance of on-line options, but also asked for the fullest possible use of village notice boards and takeaways etc. The Leader, in response, encouraged all ward members to make sure that they were engaging with the parish councils within their wards in respect of all consultation exercises and encouraging them to respond. Officers confirmed that, as well as digital methods, the more traditional methods would continue.

Councillor Byatt, in referring to the new report template and in particular the selection of the priorities of the Strategic Plan which were supported by the proposals within reports, suggested that perhaps, social values might be added going forward.

In response to a question by Councillor Topping regarding what was considered to be the correct length of any consultation exercise, officers advised that almost all of the consultation exercises for documents was prescribed by legislation, as a minimum of

four weeks. Officers confirmed that ESC would almost certainly extend that period to at least six weeks. Councillor Topping referred to how she used social media to publicise consultation exercises; she found this very effective.

Councillor Topping referred to what she thought was a discrepancy within the report in respect of the length of the consultation exercise for the Statement of Community Involvement. It was confirmed that there was an error within the report and the consultation had been open for seven weeks.

On the proposition of Councillor Ritchie, seconded by Councillor Mallinder, it was by unanimous vote

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the Statement of Community Involvement at Appendix A of the report be adopted.
2. That the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, be authorised to make any presentational or typographical amendments to the Statement of Community Involvement prior to it being published.

## **6 Exempt/Confidential Items**

The Leader stated that in exceptional circumstances the Council may, by law, exclude members of the public from all, or part of, an executive decision-making meeting. The Council should, unless there were urgent circumstances, give notice of its intention to do so via the Forward Plan, which was updated and published on its website 28 clear days prior to the meeting. There were various reasons, the Leader added, that the Council, on occasions, had to do this and examples were because a report contained information relating to an individual, information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person, or information relating to any consultations or negotiations.

Tonight, the Leader reported, the Cabinet would be considering two substantive exempt matters which were outlined in agenda items 8 and 9 on the published agenda. These were Lowestoft Post Office, Cultural Regeneration Project, which asked Cabinet to consider an alternative cultural regeneration project proposal and decide if it would like to pursue the further development of the project, and if so to give delegated authority to the Strategic Director and Head of Operations to agree Heads of Terms with the potential new operators. Secondly, Garden Waste Service, South of the District, asked Cabinet to approve the procurement of a new garden waste service in the south of the District.

On the proposition of Councillor Gallant, seconded by Councillor Rivett, it was by unanimous vote

## **RESOLVED**

That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public

be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**7 Exempt Minutes**

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

**8 Lowestoft Post Office - Cultural Regeneration Project**

- Information relating to any individual.
- Information that is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

**9 Garden Waste Service - South of the District**

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

The meeting concluded at TBC

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Chairman