



**East Suffolk House, Riduna Park, Station
Road, Melton, Woodbridge, IP12 1RT**

Cabinet

Members:

Councillor Steve Gallant (Leader)
Councillor Craig Rivett (Deputy Leader and
Economic Development)
Councillor Norman Brooks (Transport)
Councillor Stephen Burroughes (Customer
Services, ICT and Commercial Partnerships)
Councillor Maurice Cook (Resources)
Councillor Richard Kerry (Housing)
Councillor James Mallinder (The Environment)
Councillor David Ritchie (Planning & Coastal
Management)
Councillor Mary Rudd (Community Health)
Councillor Letitia Smith (Communities, Leisure
and Tourism)

Members are invited to a **Meeting of the Cabinet**
to be held on **Tuesday, 2 March 2021 at 6:30pm**

This meeting will be conducted remotely, pursuant to the Local Authorities and
Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police
and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

The meeting will be facilitated using the Zoom video conferencing system and
broadcast via the East Suffolk Council YouTube channel
at <https://youtu.be/20njfCHPtg>

An Agenda is set out below.

1 Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence, if any.

2 Declarations of Interest

Members and Officers are invited to make any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Local Non-Pecuniary Interests that they may have in relation to items on the Agenda and are also reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the Meeting if it becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered.

3 Announcements

To receive any announcements.

4 Minutes

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 February 2021

1 - 15**KEY DECISIONS****5 COVID Recovery Business Support Programme ES/0684**

Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development

16 - 26**NON-KEY DECISIONS****6 Parking Services: Recommendations from Scrutiny Committee ES/0685**

Report of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport, including the report of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee at Appendix A

27 - 59**7 Supporting the East Suffolk Visitor Economy ES/0686**

Report of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism

60 - 71**8 Exempt/Confidential Items**

It is recommended 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 involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

9 Exempt Minutes

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

KEY DECISIONS

10 Contract for Green Waste in the South of the District

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

Close



Stephen Baker, Chief Executive

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Unconfirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Cabinet** held via Remote Meeting via Zoom , on **Tuesday, 02 February 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 Paul Ashdown, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Alison Cackett, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Tony Cooper, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Councillor Caroline Topping, Councillor Steve Wiles

Officers present: Stephen Baker (Chief Executive), Kerry Blair (Head of Operations), John Brown (Building Maintenance Manager), Karen Cook (Democratic Services Manager), Vicky Cotterill (Environmental Health Officer), Laura Hack (Delivery Manager), Andrew Jarvis (Strategic Director), Bridget Law (Programme Manager), Fern Lincoln (Housing Needs Service Manager), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer), Sue Meeken (Political Group Support Officer (Labour)), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer), Agnes Ogundiran (Conservative Political Group Support Officer), Chris Phillips (Senior Estates Surveyor), Lorraine Rogers (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Amber Welham (Senior Accountant), Paul Wood (Head of Economic Development and Regeneration)

1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Rivett declared a local non pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 6, Civil Penalty Policy (Amendment), as a landlord.

3 Announcements

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism announced that the EAST Bags (Everyone Active, Supported Together) were now being distributed across the whole of East Suffolk; these were for older people who were

living alone or caring for someone who had been identified as being at risk of loneliness and / or social isolation by ESC Communities' Team and local organisations and groups working with the team. The EAST Bags were a very simple yet effective way for ESC to reach out to those who were struggling, particularly during the cold and dark winter months. It was hoped that this initiative would encourage people to stay active, mentally and physically, during this challenging time.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing announced that the Housing Revenue Account had launched its My Home Digital Portal for all ESC residents in social housing, which would allow them to use their digital devices to set up their own accounts, where they could manage their direct debits, rents, and report any problems etc. Councillor Kerry added that, for those who did not have access to digital devices, the telephone service remained in place.

4 Minutes RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 January 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 Building Materials Supply Contract

Cabinet received report **ES/0657** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, who reported that ESC had retained social housing stock of around 4,500 properties for rent, generating around £20m per annum income to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The HRA was ringfenced and could only be used for the provision of housing, new developments, maintenance and other services on behalf of tenants. ESC had various workstreams in place to undertake a wide range of maintenance, refurbishment and improvement programmes to its social housing stock. Many of these workstreams were undertaken by the Council's retained in-house workforce, keeping homes in good condition for tenants. In order to undertake necessary and ongoing repair and maintenance activities, Councillor Kerry reported, there was clearly a need to purchase a wide range of building materials and the current building material supplies contract would expire in 2021. The report before Cabinet sought permission to re-procure a new contract for the supply of general building materials, in accordance with contract procedure rules and procurement legislation.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing reported that the Council would of course look at the credentials of all companies that wanted to tender for the work, to ensure that they had their own green policies in place. However, he added that, in some cases, work had to be of a reactive nature and in those circumstances it would not always be possible to take full account of green policies / credentials. Councillor Kerry gave a recent example of where this had happened.

In conclusion, Councillor Kerry gave thanks to the Housing Maintenance Manager, John Brown, for all of his work over many years. Councillor Kerry reported that John would soon be retiring from ESC and he, joined by the Leader, gave thanks and paid tribute to John. The Leader referred to the quality of the maintenance of the Council house stock being of a high standard and he referred to the excellent work of the Housing Maintenance Manager and his team.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment referred to the strong environmental vision of ESC and the fact that it had declared a Climate Emergency in 2019; this, he said, reinforced the commitment of the Council. Councillor Mallinder stated that, in looking at the environmental concerns, it was not a binary relationship, and businesses and nature could work together. Councillor Mallinder stated that ESC could lead by example and ensure that the Council's partnerships enhanced its vision. Referring to procurement, Councillor Mallinder stated that ESC could ensure that it only worked with companies that understood its vision.

Councillor Topping referred to the example given by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, where the Council had had to act in a reactive way. Councillor Topping stated that she was aware of that case and she applauded the work of the Housing and Building Teams, referring to the compassionate and swift way in which they had acted; their work had been hugely appreciated by the family involved.

Councillor Topping hoped that the procurement could be undertaken as locally as possible, thereby helping local businesses, but she fully endorsed the need for green credentials to be taken account of.

In response to a question by Councillor Byatt, it was confirmed that the contract would expire in March 2021. Councillor Byatt referred to the work of the Procurement Task and Finish Group and asked if this contract would be looked at taking account of that work. The Leader, in response, stated that the remit of that Group was to look at the overall procurement processes that ESC had ambitions to move to going forward. The Leader added that there should not be a break in supply for the Building Maintenance Team; however, the aspirations that would be contained within the procurement could be expanded, along with ESC's aspirations going forward.

Councillor Byatt referred to the contract being to supply a range of building materials for maintenance; he also referred to the ambition of the Council to build 50 houses per year, or more, and asked if the contract could be expanded in respect of greater scale and purchasing power if the Council was to purchase other materials to build houses as well as maintaining them. The Leader, in response, stated that generally, ESC would not be purchasing the bricks; very often ESC would have a development, but it would not be the provider of the bricks and mortar; ESC would be the contractor.

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

RESOLVED

That the procurement of a new contract for the supply of general building supplies be approved and delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Section 151 Officer, to award a three year contract with an option to extend (1 year, plus 1 year) with an estimated contract value of £1,260m, in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (inclusive of EU procurement

legislation) and subject to terms that both protect the Council's interests and support the delivery of its Strategic Plan.

6 Civil Penalty Policy (Amendment)

Cabinet received report **ES/0658** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, who reported that ESC's Private Sector Housing Team had a duty to ensure that the housing stock within the district was of a decent standard, and to do so, had a range of tools at its disposal including the ability to issue civil penalties under the Housing and Planning Act 2016. The report before Cabinet sought to amend the existing policy applied to administer these penalties, and to introduce specific matrices for houses in multiple occupancy and new electrical safety regulations. The new policy would enable the Council to continue to effectively deal with breaches of housing legislation, as an alternative to prosecution, and it would enable the Council to consistently, and fairly, issue civil penalties for the Electrical Safety Standards (Private Rented Sector) Regulations 2020.

The Leader and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health welcomed the proposed amendment to the policy, referring to the need to ensure that residents' health and wellbeing was looked after.

Councillor Byatt welcomed the amendment to the policy; he referred to the financial penalties and alternatives to prosecution, particularly with regard to HMOs and asked if the Council would publish the names of people who breached the regulations, in order to deter others. The Leader, in response, stated that if people were taken to Court then it would be a matter for the Court to decide what information would be released; it would not be a matter for the Council. Officers added that any larger penalties that might be issued would assist in deterring other offences by landlords.

Councillor Byatt referred to agents, and asked if they were notified if any landlords were not fulfilling their obligations to tenants. Officers, in response, stated that if a landlord was subject to receiving a civil penalty on more than one occasion there was a banning list; this was a nationwide database, that was publicly available, and so this could be accessed by all agents.

On the proposition of Councillor Kerry, seconded by Councillor Rudd, it was by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That the revised Civil Penalty Policy and associated matrices be adopted.

7 Housing Development Strategy 2020/24

Cabinet received report **ES/0659** by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee which included, as an appendix, the response from the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee stated that the Committee was anxious to work with the Administration to explore every possible avenue in bringing forward as many council houses as possible for East Suffolk residents. Councillor Bird summarised the report, and particularly referred to the options for modular

housing, and stated that he welcomed the response by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, which fully embraced that concept and wished to proactively explore that option wherever possible. Councillor Bird provided an example of what results could be achieved by modern modular construction, referring to two new colleges that were being constructed that would provide 1480 student rooms in 18 residential blocks; a modular construction method was being employed; the first block consisting of four floors, containing 63 rooms, was built and fitted out in 26 days. Councillor Bird felt that this example would greatly assist ESC, wherever possible, in bringing forward as many council homes as possible where they were desperately needed.

The Leader, after thanking the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, asked the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing if he wished to make any comments. Councillor Kerry stated that he thoroughly endorsed the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader, in conclusion, stated that he welcomed the work of the Scrutiny Committee and the way that the Committee could assist Cabinet in its ambitions to deliver greater results for East Suffolk. The Leader asked Councillor Bird to thank the Committee for its work.

Councillor Byatt referred to the engagement event to be held at the end of October, with the aim of investigating possible models for greener housing developments, and asked if all members could be invited to attend this. Councillor Byatt also referred to the ambition of ESC to build 50 homes per annum; he commented that building more than 50 homes would be preferable. The Leader, in response, stated that ESC would continue to build as many houses as possible, in a sustainable way.

Again, the Leader thanked the Scrutiny Committee for its work, and he thanked the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee for presenting the report.

8 Freeport East Submission

Cabinet received report **ES/0660** by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development, who reported that in February 2020 Government launched the Freeports initiative aimed at boosting economic growth by creating special economic zones around ports which would provide an array of business incentives. This policy was designed to take advantage of the UK's new economic freedoms following Brexit, contribute to the 'levelling up' agenda and support the country's economic recovery from the Covid downturn. The recently launched Freeports Prospectus set out the bidding criteria and set 5 February 2021 as the deadline for submissions.

Freeport East, a partnership of Hutchison Ports (operators of Felixstowe and Harwich ports), the upper and lower tier councils covering Felixstowe and Harwich and the LEPs covering the same geography was established to develop a bid to secure Freeport status for a zone encompassing the ports of Felixstowe and Harwich. This bid focussed on this cluster's global trade connections, intermodal connections with the Midland and North, strong links to the net zero energy generation/ use, innovation via links to BT's Adastral Park and academia, regeneration to address coastal and urban deprivation and complementary programmes to promote inclusive growth.

The key areas of economic activity within freeports, Councillor Rivett reported, would be based at the Tax and Customs sites where tax, planning and business incentives applied. Each Freeport could propose up to three of these sites and for Freeport East the chosen sites included Felixstowe Port's Logistics Park, Bathside Bay within Harwich International Port's demise and Gateway 14 owned by Mid Suffolk District Council. These sites would be the main focus for economic growth; however Freeport status would induce further growth within the surrounding area inside and outside of the Freeport.

The report before Cabinet sought approval for the Freeport on the basis that it would directly contribute to the Council's Strategic Plan objectives of enabling economic growth and in light of the Covid downturn such growth was an even greater priority. Freeport status would also strengthen the current competitive advantage within the ports and logistics sector as well as strengthening existing and emerging sectors in low/zero carbon energy and not least ESC's ambitions around establishing a hydrogen economy within the district.

The Leader firstly acknowledged the amount of work that had taken place, which he commented had been heavily supported by ESC. He further commented that it would have a huge financial / economical benefit to the East Suffolk district, and to the district of Tendring of course.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing very much welcomed the report; he referenced the confidence in the industry but added that Freeport status would enhance that confidence.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment very much welcomed the report; he referred to the Port having a strong environmental record. He also referred to what he strongly believed in; when looking at the environment, it was not a binary relationship; businesses did not have to be chosen over trees, they could and should work together. This, Councillor Mallinder concluded, was another example of how the two could work together, with the strong policies of Felixstowe Port.

Councillor Smith-Lyte commented that she had read a report from the Wildlife and Countryside Link; she commented that in its summary it said that the Government consultation document did not seem to cover or consider evidence from freeports in other countries, which demonstrated that lax application processes and regulation, and poor enforcement, for opaque customs processes had led to serious environmental degradation, because of course environmental issues were not just about decarbonising, although that was important Councillor Smith-Lyte added, it was also about wildlife, ecology, and flora and fauna etc. The Deputy Leader, in response, drew members' attention to paragraph 3.19 and Appendix B of the report, that addressed some of the concerns raised.

Councillor Deacon commented that he was very excited by the proposals contained within the report; he did ask for an explanation in respect of the tax free area around the the port and officers, in response, confirmed that the tax and customs were combined; there were three across the whole of the Freeport zone: one at Felixstowe

Logistics Park; one at Bathside Bay; and one at Gateway 14. That was where the focus of the activity would be and where the tax, customs, business and planning benefits would apply. That accounted for approximately 120 hectares in terms of development land; however that would energise the wider sector too.

Commenting on the points made by Councillor Smith-Lyte, and to help put her mind at rest, Councillor Deacon said that when the Port extended some time ago there was a huge loss of very valuable mudflats; to compensate for that, the Port provided a new wetland that was and continued to be very successful. Councillor Deacon was very confident that mitigation would take place.

Councillor Wiles stated that a post-Brexit Britain needed innovative thinking and he added that the regional benefit of Freeport status in this area was one that should be strongly supported. The Freeport draft submission not only showed the Council's support and confidence, it also sent out a strong message of what a successful Freeport could and would deliver.

Councillor Byatt welcomed the report; he referred to the reference that the Freeport would have portside manufacturing hubs for offshore energy; he asked if some of the work from Lowestoft would be displaced towards the Freeport. Officers, referring to the offshore energy industry, commented that Harwich Port's focus had been on the most southerly developments in the north sea, and they already had an operations and maintenance base at Harwich. There was growth in the industry and there was enough growth for all ports, and more.

Councillor Byatt asked, if the bid was to be rejected at this time, would there be another opportunity to submit a further bid. The Leader, in response, commented that if the bid was not successful, then the work that had been undertaken would still have significant benefits to the Port and its allied logistics. Officers added that the Government had initially limited this to 10 freeports; however, it had said that if there was a compelling case, there may be more than 10. No mention had been made of further rounds of bidding.

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

RESOLVED

That the Freeport East submission be approved to achieve Freeport status recognising the significant economic growth opportunities this will provide to the District and the wider economic sub-region within which East Suffolk operates.

9 Felixstowe Forward Transition

Cabinet received report **ES/0661** by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development, who reported that Felixstowe Forward (FF) was established by the former Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) and Felixstowe Town Council in April 2015 as an enabling and time limited initiative to deliver joined-up local economic and community development. It was now coming to the end of its second three year funding agreement and both sponsoring partners, one now being ESC and not SCDC, agreed that the closure of FF by the end of March 2021 would be

detrimental in achieving the enabling objectives in economic and community development that the initiative was established to complete.

As a result, the Deputy Leader stated, his report proposed that the current funding agreement be extended until December 2021 resulting in budget growth of £83.5k (plus potential additional costs to cover redundancy and pension costs) for ESC. By this point FF would have fully transitioned its current responsibilities in relation to business engagement/ development, tourism promotion/ brand management, community enabling, the Landguard Partnership and events management to existing and new bodies. The extension would also bring FF's tenure in line with the Leiston Together place-based initiative and allow time for ESC to undertake a comprehensive review of its approach to place-based initiatives that would be implemented from the beginning of 2022.

The Leader, speaking as a ward councillor in Felixstowe, stated that he had nothing but admiration for the work of FF, as an enabling project, that had taken forward a number of initiatives across the peninsula as well as in Felixstowe itself. The Leader added that Helen Greengrass, the Change Director, had been invaluable in delivering to date.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customers, Communities and Leisure, after agreeing with the comments of the Leader, added that she fully supported the proposal before Cabinet. Councillor Smith referred to the fantastic work that had taken place, that ESC had contributed to.

The Assistant Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development stated that extending the funding for FF support until December would enable the team to fully develop its enabling target, sending out not only a clear signal of objectives closure, but leaving future stakeholders with a much stronger base for future success.

Councillor Green stated that the Change Director and her team had been a credit to the town, the residents, businesses and visitors. Councillor Green referred to paragraph 3.9 of the report, and the reference to the Council considering an online events management application system; Councillor Green hoped that the FF Change Co-ordinator would be at the forefront of the consultation to ensure there was a robust system for event organisers and planners. The Leader commented that the FF Change Co-ordinator had been instrumental in the work and her experience would be important. Officers confirmed that she would be involved in the work. It was also confirmed that officers would be available to speak to people in person too.

Councillor Jepson commented that he had worked with FF, as Mayor of Felixstowe; he added that the support that they had given to him, and to the town, was exceptional and that, he said, was the sort of work that would need to continue during the difficult months to come. Councillor Jepson wished to put on record his thanks for everything that FF had undertaken.

Councillor Deacon welcomed the proposals within the report and added his thanks, commenting that the work of FF, under the leadership of the Change Director, had

been immense during the last few years and had made such a difference to the town.

Councillor Byatt welcomed the proposals within the report and commented that he had been privileged to have received a briefing from the Change Director, some months ago, about the work in Felixstowe.

In conclusion, the Leader stated the importance of the extension and the need for a seamless transition to new and existing bodies.

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

RESOLVED

That the extension of the current funding agreement for Felixstowe Forward until the end of December 2021 at a cost of £134.8k be approved.

10 Housing Revenue Account Budget Report 2021/22

Cabinet received report **ES/0662** by the Cabinet Members with responsibility for Finance and Housing. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance introduced the report, stating that it brought together the Housing Revenue Account Budget for the period 2021/22 to 2024/25, with a forecasted position for 2020/21 and a summary of its reserves and balances. The HRA budgets were fully funded from existing funds to meet the Council's HRA spending plans, including the Capital Investment Programme and reserve balances as per the HRA Financial Business Plan.

Under the new 2020 Rent Standard, local authorities could increase rents by up to Consumer Prices Index plus 1% for five years. The September CPI value must be used, which was 0.5%, giving the Council the option to increase rents by up to 1.5%. Rents would be based on a formula rent set by the Government. The Council continued to collect rent and service charges on a 50-week basis and the proposed rent gave an average weekly rent of £89.30 for 2021/22, an increase of £0.65 compared to 2020/21. Service charges could only recuperate the cost of providing a service. The proposed average weekly General Service Charge for Grouped Homes for 2021/22 was £13.26, an increase of £0.41 compared to 2020/21.

The HRA Repairs and Maintenance (R&M) programme was split between capital and revenue Councillor Cook stated; the capital element would be funded by the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR) and the revenue element would be funded from the income derived from rents. The 2021/22 housing R&M revenue budget had been set at £4.292m and this was considered sufficient to allow the Council to carry out all necessary works to maintain the decent homes standard in all its properties.

The budget proposals gave a forecast HRA working balance for 2021/22 of £5.428m, maintaining it well above the minimum acceptable limit of 10% of total income.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing referred to the Scrutiny Committee meeting that had recently taken place, where the Committee had

considered the HRA Budget report; he gave thanks to the Committee for its constructive comments.

Councillor Byatt referred to paragraph 1.5 of the report, and the reference to the Government allowing social landlords to charge a full market rent where a social tenant had an annual household income of at least £60,000; Councillor Byatt asked how it was known that incomes were above £60,000 and he asked if there was a link to HMRC for clarification purposes. Officers, in response, confirmed that the Government allowed the Council to charge full market rent to households with more income than £60k; however, it had been found that there were so few tenants in this position that the implementation of a system would cost more than the amount that would be recovered by increasing the rents.

Councillor Byatt commented on the current level of rent arrears together with the fact that there had been no evictions; he asked what was being done in respect of collecting the arrears, over a period time. Officers, in response, stated that rent arrears had crept up since the introduction of Universal Credit; however, last year was the first year that the arrears had decreased; the levels were static at the moment and it was hoped that with the implementation of the new system (predictive analytics software), together with support in place for tenants, that rent arrears would continue to decrease over time. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance added that the enforcement was administered by Anglia Revenue Partnerships and, of course the pandemic had had a significant impact on that work; that, he said, explained the rise, which he hoped would be on a temporary basis. The Leader was pleased that ESC was now able to identify those who had difficulties, at an early stage, and offer support; ESC, he said, wanted to be a supportive and caring landlord. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, commenting on the new system in place, outlined how the new software worked and explained the many advantages, for the Council, and for the tenants. He concluded that ESC did not wish to evict tenants, unless it had to; its aim was to provide support.

Councillor Topping gave thanks to the Cabinet Members with responsibility for Finance and Housing, for their report to the Scrutiny Committee, and for answering the Committee's questions. Councillor Topping applauded the introduction of the new software system and how ESC was able to sympathetically reach out to tenants and assist them.

On the proposition of Councillor Cook, seconded by Councillor Kerry, it was by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That it be recommended to Full Council that it:

1. Approves the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2021/22, and the indicative figures for 2022/23 to 2024/25;
2. Notes the revised outturn position for 2020/21;
3. Approves the movements in Reserves and Balances as presented in Appendix D;
4. Approves the average weekly rent for 2021/22 of £89.30 over a 50-week collection year, an average weekly increase of £0.65 or 0.74%;
5. Notes the effects of COVID-19 on the service in 2020/21;

6. Approves the Service Charges and associated fees for 2021/22, Appendix B; and
7. Notes the changes affecting public and private sector housing and welfare.

11 Draft General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report 2021/22

Cabinet received report **ES/0663** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance relating to the draft General Fund Budget for 2021/22 and the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as at January 2021.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance reminded Cabinet that it considered the draft MTFS on 1 December 2020. Since then, it had been continually revised with updates.

The report presented a balanced position for the current year and for 2021/22; this was achieved by the use of reserves. For the current year £2.001m was being used from the In-Year Savings reserve; for 2021/22 the budget gap of £3.167m was being met from the In-Year Savings reserve (£2.269m) and from the Business Rates Equalisation reserve (£0.898m). This meant that all of the In-Year Saving reserve has been committed.

Councillor Cook drew members' attention to section 6 and Appendix A6 of Appendix A of the report and commented that it provided details on the Council's reserves position. From April 2022 to April 2025, the average total on the Council's Earmarked Reserves is £27m, plus a General Fund Balance being maintained at £6m.

At the end of the 2021/22 budget process, the Council was required to approve a balanced budget for the following financial year and set the Band D rate of Council Tax. Covid-19 had presented significant additional financial challenges to the Council and the outlook was very uncertain at this stage for both next year and the medium term. However, the Council's robust reserves position enabled it to meet these challenges; develop its response to the pandemic and the objective of maintaining financial sustainability; and freeze its element of the council tax for 2021/22.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance highlighted the appendix that had been added to the report, since the Scrutiny Committee meeting, relating to the consultation that had taken place with the public, town and parish councils and businesses. Councillor Cook commented that the responses supported the strategic thinking of ESC in producing the budget.

The Leader, after welcoming the report, commented on the challenges in respect of the pandemic, local authorities and council budgets. The Leader highlighted the uncertainty in respect of public finances going forward, but he stated that there were many members of the public who were feeling a similar level of uncertainty in respect of their own finances. The Leader stated that ESC needed to be realistic in that some people, who had been furloughed, may end up without a job at the end of the scheme. The Leader stated that the role of ESC was to continue to deliver against its strategic aims and to consider the financial position of residents. The Leader was pleased, therefore, to be able to recommend a zero percent rise in ESC's element of the Council Tax, but he emphasised that this would not stop ESC delivering. The Leader

emphasised that the proper use of reserves was being applied to enable this to happen.

In response to a question from the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Services and Operational Partnerships in respect of how ESC was able to deliver a zero percent increase in respect of its Council Tax, compared to many other authorities, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance stated that, in the first instance, there had to be the will to do it; and ESC had that will and aspiration. Councillor Cook emphasised that, back in the autumn of 2020, the conversations began, but at that time the decision was subject to so many different facets. However, the aim remained in place. Councillor Cook referred to the support from Government, stating that it had been good and had been used to its best. Also, due to the pandemic, some savings had been made from within and the use of reserves had been a contributing factor; with voluntary reserves playing a large part. Councillor Cook concluded by stating that the response from town and parish councils had been particularly pleasing, with many following the lead of ESC and putting a zero percent increase on their precepts. Overall Councillor Cook concluded, it was a massive team effort, and it also stemmed from prior to ESC as well, with good prudent conservative management of the finances by the predecessor authorities.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment stated that he very much supported the proposals before Cabinet; he welcomed the use of reserves and the wish to put the residents first. Going forward, Councillor Mallinder supported the wish to invest in the people of East Suffolk and to invest in environmental positive infrastructure.

Councillor Topping referred to the budget consultation that had taken place via the website between 4 and 22 January and commented that the responses, 190 respondents to two questions, were very disappointing; she wondered if that was due to the timing, with many businesses still being in lockdown and some parish councils only meetings bi-monthly. Councillor Topping suggested that ESC needed to be mindful of those factors and provide consultees with as much time as possible. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance acknowledged and understood all of those points but added that this was the first time, in recent years, that the Council had gone out to the public with a survey on its aspirations and strategies to seek their opinions. Councillor Cook commented that feedback had been received, which would be taken on board, and going forward surveying would take place more frequently, with longer being given for people to engage and the questions would be given careful consideration. The Leader added that all members of the Council would know the budget setting calendar going forward and he added that, as ward members, they could discuss budget issues with residents and with town and parish councils, and he knew that the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance would welcome all feedback.

Councillor Gooch commented on the pie chart that represented the demography of the respondents, and the fact that there had been low participation from younger people; Councillor Gooch suggested that, in future, ESC should look to increase the representation, perhaps reaching out through the colleges etc. Councillor Gooch was heartened by how honest and how pragmatic the responses were; people seemed to recognise the pressures faced by local government. The Leader, in response,

commented that some ward councillors, through their work, may spend time and engage with young people on a regular basis, and he suggested that those opportunities may be used to engage young people.

Councillor Byatt endorsed the comments of both Councillor Topping and Councillor Gooch; he noted that people disagreed with reducing the quality of services; they agreed with sharing with councils and they did not want any of ESC's services to be transferred to commercial companies. Councillor Byatt, in conclusion, commenting on the zero percent Council Tax rise by ESC, suggested that it would need to be explained that the bulk of Council Tax would not increase, but there were elements for others, ie the Police, SCC, and town and parish councils. Councillor Byatt very much supported the zero increase by ESC, commenting that it was wise and fair in the circumstances, to support residents in this time of crisis.

The Leader commented that it would be wrong of him to pass judgement on the finances of any other authority; the reality was that they needed to balance their budgets and take account of their pressures; all ESC could do was to support its residents while still maintaining the quality of services that was important to the residents.

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

RESOLVED

That it be recommended to Full Council that it:

1. Approves the General Fund Revenue Budget as set out in this report and summarised in Appendix A5 and notes the budget forecast for 2022/23 and beyond;
2. Approves the Reserves and Balances movements as presented in Appendix A6;
3. Approves that no further changes are made to Council Tax Discounts and Premiums for 2021/22;
4. Approves the Efficiency Strategy attached as Appendix B; and
5. Approves a Band D Council Tax for 2021/22 of £171.27, which is no increase on 2020/21.

12 Exempt/Confidential Items

The Leader of the Council reported 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 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 of ESC would be considering three substantive exempt matters which were outlined in agenda items 14 - 16 on the published agenda.

Firstly, item 14, Minor Disposal – Land off Simons Cross, Wickham Market, asked Cabinet to approve ESC entering into an option to sell a small area of land. The

disposal of the land, subject to a planning application, would support local housing growth. It would also improve a play area and would create a small capital receipt.

Item 15, Next Steps Accommodation Programme, asked Cabinet to give delegated authority to the Housing Service to receive any grant funding awarded from the capital element of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Next Steps Accommodation Programme and also to give delegated authority to one of the Council's Strategic Directors to negotiate, agree and enter into contracts for refurbishment works to be carried out in accordance with planning approval. The receipt of additional funding from Government would assist some of the most vulnerable to access and sustain accommodation which was suited to their needs. Assisting people with complex needs to access affordable and appropriate housing remained a challenge and this project would assist the Council to find housing solutions which were in line with the person's support and care needs and aspirations to live a relatively independent and normal life.

Finally, Item 16, East Suffolk Council's Cemeteries and Managed Closed Churchyard Services, asked Cabinet to approve a number of recommendations. ESC's Strategic Plan identified the health and wellbeing of East Suffolk's communities as a priority and this included in death and bereavement. Burial space should not only be local and accessible, but also appropriately maintained and managed. Burial grounds had a role in enabling people to come to terms with their loss. The landscape and management of cemeteries should be appropriate to the purpose first and foremost of serving the bereaved. However, the significance of cemeteries for local communities was far wider than this, embracing cultural, historical and environmental opportunities as well as education and recreational uses. In reviewing the service, the Council was seeking to remain financially sustainable. Through organisational design and streamlining services, it would ensure the organisation was able to deliver the right services to the right places. In making best use of and investing in assets, and those that it managed for others, the efficient use of our assets was essential.

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 Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

13 Exempt Minutes

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
- Information relating to any individual.
- Information that is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

14 Minor Disposal - Land off Simons Cross, Wickham Market

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

15 Next Steps Accommodation Programme

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

16 East Suffolk Council's Cemeteries and Managed Closed Churchyard Service

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

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Chairman



CABINET

Tuesday 2 March 2021

COVID RECOVERY BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The trading restrictions associated with the Covid pandemic have had a dramatic and significant impact on businesses locally, regionally, and nationally. In response to this the government have launched a range of business grant schemes aimed at small and medium sized businesses to mitigate the impacts of reduced trading and enforced closure. Local authorities have been at the forefront of allocating these vital funds to local businesses. East Suffolk Council has so far allocated £89.5m to over 6,000 businesses since the beginning of the pandemic.
2. In the most recent round of grant schemes the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) was launched. The ARG differed from previous grant schemes in that it was profiled over 2 financial years, to cover the November and any future lockdowns and crucially an element of the scheme can also be used for longer-term business support measures. The awarding of direct grants to business will remain the priority of the ARG, however modelling indicates a significant balance will be available to develop a recovery business recovery programme.
3. This paper sets out a number of proposed business support measures based on direct engagement with businesses and business support providers. The proposed schemes cover business start-up support, a general business recovery scheme, support for independent retail and a gigabit voucher scheme to enable businesses to access the new ultrafast broadband network in Lowestoft. The aim of this new programme is to support the wider economic recovery in the District during 2021 and complement the existing, long-term, and ambitious economic growth programmes.
4. The proposals in this paper are purposely provided at an outline level and if Cabinet supports the proposed approach they will be fully developed, costed and implemented during the spring and Summer of 2021.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	All Wards in East Suffolk
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Cabinet Member:	<p>Councillor Craig Rivett</p> <p>Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development</p>
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Supporting Officer:	<p>Paul Wood</p> <p>Head of Economic Development & Regeneration</p> <p>07798 797275</p> <p>paul.wood@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</p>
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The unprecedented trading restrictions imposed to control the spread of Covid 19 have had a huge negative impact on the national and local economy. In April 2020, the UK experienced a 25% contraction in GDP, the largest fall the country has ever experienced. Whilst the economy did partially recover during the second half of the year it is still 9% smaller than the pre-pandemic level and experienced a further fall in November following another tightening of restrictions.
- 1.2 This severe contraction in the economy has unsurprisingly led to a dramatic increase in unemployment at national and local levels. Within in East Suffolk jobless totals increased by 96% over the year with the number of people being unemployed increasing by over 3,400 to just over 7,000, however East Suffolk did perform better than the region and nationally where the increase was 120%.
- 1.3 As a result of the severe impact of Covid restrictions on businesses the government established a plethora of Covid business grant schemes. These schemes are being allocated to businesses via Local Authorities. Within East Suffolk, the Council has now distributed over £88m to more than 6,000 businesses.
- 1.4 One of the more recent Covid business grant schemes, the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) has seen an allocation of £7.2m awarded to ESC. The purpose of the ARG is to provide support to businesses that did not qualify for the Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSB), for example due to the applicant's premises not having a Rateable Value. The ARG differed from previous schemes in that it was profiled over 2 financial years, to cover the November and any future lockdowns and an element of the scheme can also be used for longer-term business support measures.
- 1.5 The primary aim of the ARG is to relieve the impact of trading restrictions at least partially and the priority is to allocate grants to businesses as quickly as possible. So far ESC has allocated £1.6m from the ARG scheme in the form of direct business grants and taking a very generous approach it is anticipated that approximately a further £4.25m will be allocated to cover any extensions to the current and any future lockdowns and to deliver additional assistance to the Hospitality sector which has been particularly hard hit by the pandemic. This will leave around £1.35m unallocated and it is proposed that part of this is used to put in place longer-term business support measures that will support the recovery of the local economy in line with the Councils' economic growth priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan and the East Suffolk Economic Growth Plan.
- 1.6 This paper sets out the proposed business support programmes for consideration and approval by Cabinet. At this point the schemes are still in development and approval is sought from Cabinet to provide delegated authority to the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Cabinet members for Economic Development and Resources to fully develop these measures if Cabinet agrees with the proposed approach.

2 EXISTING LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT

- 2.1 The business support landscape has been peppered with a plethora of Covid emergency support schemes. This has been developed quickly and the needs of businesses have changed rapidly with different needs in different sectors. This was done against an existing business support framework which was already very diverse and fragmented. Programmes have been developed and are being led by different organisations, e.g. local partners such as enterprise agencies (NWES and Menta), the LEP, national organisations and Government.
- 2.2 In terms of Business Support and funding, New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) is the main provider across Norfolk and Suffolk. NALEP works with businesses, local authority partners, business networks¹⁸ and education institutions to drive growth

and enterprise. The New Anglia Growth Hub is part of the Business Growth Programme delivered by NALEP in partnership with enterprise agencies, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce and Suffolk County Council and is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund. The Growth Hub is the main delivery vehicle for business support programmes across Norfolk and Suffolk.

2.3 Current programmes offered by the NALEP/Growth Hub include:

- Business resilience and recovery fund
- Visitor and wider economy grant scheme.
- Growth through innovation fund.
- Scale-up New Anglia
- Growing places fund
- Business start-up programme
- Small business grants scheme
- Growing business fund
- Eastern agri-tec grants
- New Anglia capital
- Community Challenge fund

2.4 ESC's Economic Development team also delivers local level business support in collaboration with local, sub-regional, regional and national partners. The team work closely with businesses and focus on the three main priorities of the East Suffolk Economic Growth Plan:

- Supporting entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in East Suffolk
- Encouraging established businesses to invest and grow.
- Attracting inward investment to East Suffolk, focused around existing and emerging sectors and supply chains.

2.5 To deliver these priorities the Economic Development team support businesses in the following ways:

- Support the appropriate provision of employment land and premises.
- Work to address key infrastructure constraints.
- Encourage appropriate forms of skills and workforce development.
- Facilitate access to finance and business support.
- Engage in marketing and promotion of East Suffolk to attract inward investment.
- The development of projects that support business growth.
- Offer a 'one stop shop' of local information for the district's business community through East Suffolk Means business website.
- Support and develop local business networks.
- Support businesses to navigate regulatory services within the council.
- Work with key sector groups and individual businesses to maximise the opportunities for East Suffolk's seven key sectors.

3 PROPOSED BUSINESS SUPPORT MEASURES

- 3.1 It is proposed that additional business support measures are put in place to support the local economy as it recovers from Covid. These additional measures will be funded from ESC's ARG allocation and alongside the priority of issuing direct business grants from this fund, will ensure that we maximise the use of this fund in supporting local business recovery. The proposed business support measures have been developed to complement and align with ESC's existing business support offer and our ambitious economic growth programmes. These long-term, strategic programmes were developed before the economic impacts of the Covid pandemic and provide a solid framework and foundation to enable the local economy to have a strong recovery. Examples of this activity include the Lowestoft Town Investment Plan, the east Suffolk wide Town Revitalisation Programmes (including the Smart Towns programme) and sector focussed activity such as the Sizewell C Economic Development programme and Freeport East initiative.
- 3.2 Discussions with government have indicated that any business support measures delivered using ARG funding must still involve direct grant funding to business. As a result of this the proposed business support measures set out below all involve this. The proposed areas of support fit under the following themes:
1. Business Recovery and Start-up support
 2. Digital Transformation
 3. Town Centre Recovery
- 3.3 **Business Start-up enhanced support and grant programme**
- 3.4 Existing business start-up support is delivered through NALEP's start up programme, part of the New Anglia Business Growth Programme. The programme focuses on entrepreneurs and micro-businesses at pre-launch and during early-stage development. The current programme offers free tailored advice and workshops covering topics such as business plans, management and operational systems, marketing, finance and legal, corporate social responsibility, and intellectual property rights.
- 3.5 The enterprise agencies, NWES and MENTA have been the key delivery partners since April 2014 and are responsible for the majority of intensive business support in the current programme, furthermore they are the only organisations that have delivered a consistent programme of business start-up support in Norfolk and Suffolk. Current business start-up funding ends in August 2021 and NALEP are currently applying for further ERDF funding for new a start-up programme that will run from September 2021 – March 2023. If successful, the LEP will have a fund of £710k for Norfolk and Suffolk over 2 years, so there will be limitations as to what it can achieve and importantly it will not include a grants element.
- 3.6 This comes at a time when enterprise agencies have seen an increase of over 50% in start-up and self-employment activity since March 2020. Through the Council's Economic Development team, we are also experiencing, firsthand an increased demand for business start-up support. An increase in this type of activity is a common trend during significant economic downturns.
- 3.7 It is proposed that ESC open discussions with the enterprise agencies to procure a start-up package that offers enhanced support to the existing start-up provision to August 2021 and for any new LEP wide programme from September 2021. It is proposed that a new element for the ESC start-up support package would be a start-up grant schemes that the Enterprise Agencies would be best placed to deliver as part of the existing and potential enhanced provision. The start-up grant scheme would be a new feature which is currently not or planned to be available across Norfolk and Suffolk and would be embedded into a

12-month pre-start and start-up support programme to ensure the start-up is viable, support the business to establish itself and mitigate risk.

3.8 Business Recovery grant

3.9 The proposed East Suffolk Recovery Grant scheme is aimed at supporting small and medium sized businesses to recover from the impact on their business of Covid restrictions. The scheme will use the existing business support mechanisms available through the Growth Hub and partners but provide a local grant scheme that is 100% funded to aid businesses with recovery and future resilience.

3.10 The types of activity that could be funded would through this scheme include:

- Costs of adapting operational models, premises and working practices in order to meet Covid-secure requirements.
- Support the development of a recovery plan.
- Adaptations to business models to attract new customers or visitors.
- Digital transformation (where this cannot be funded through other schemes such as Smart Towns)
- New product development or diversification.
- Marketing support or support with certification costs to enter a new market.
- Specialist external support to meet a defined need.
- Support the purchase of professional advice e.g., accountancy, HR, legal etc

3.11 It is envisaged that this grant scheme would provide support for the following areas as part of a longer-term credible recovery plan:

- Help the business to access new markets
- Provides and embeds new skills
- Makes it easier to build relationships with customers e.g. via sales processes or customer service
- Support the business to expand.
- Support the creation of new employment/ apprenticeships to help implement a key aspect of the recovery plan

3.12 It is proposed that grants could range from £500 up to £5,000 subject to the nature of the investment required.

3.13 Gigabit Voucher Scheme

3.14 With the launch of the new ultrafast broadband network in Lowestoft during 2021 (and to a lesser extent the southern part of the District), ESC are keen to encourage the take up, by businesses of this new digital infrastructure. The speed and capacity of the new full fibre network presents substantial business growth opportunities for existing businesses which will aid their and the wider economic recovery of the District and will also act as a significant inward investment incentive for new businesses. To encourage businesses to access the new network it is proposed that a district-wide Gigabit Voucher Scheme, aimed at small and medium sized businesses, principally directed to unlock the new infrastructure and connectivity opportunities in Lowestoft, is implemented to offset the cost of connecting to the new network.

3.15 It is proposed that the ESC voucher scheme is based on the UK wide Gigabit Broadband Voucher scheme launched in 2018. Small or medium-sized businesses were able to access a grant of up to £3,000 to help bring business broadband to a gigabit capable

connection. The Scheme closed for new applications in March 2020, however the Rural Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme is ongoing.

3.16 It is proposed that an ESC local Gigabit Voucher Scheme would include the following elements:

- Offer grants of up to £3,000.
- Grants only be available for small and medium sized enterprises (up to 250 employees)
- A web profile and web portal sitting alongside other digital activity and projects being delivered by ESC (such as Smart Towns).
- Sits under 'Digital East Suffolk' or similar umbrella brand, with Smart Towns, Springboard portal, City Fibre, digital housing/care projects/voucher schemes all being transparent and easily discoverable by ES businesses and communities.
- The national Rural Gigabit Voucher scheme should be co-promoted on the portal to add value.
- Any new voucher scheme should have a marketing and communications plan committed before launch.
- Brand assets – as with Smart Towns, developing key brand assets for the Gigabit Voucher scheme is essential so that there is uniform language, brand livery and visuals so that the scheme is easily marketed and communicated.
- Work closely with local business networks to promote the scheme to potential recipients.

3.17 **East Suffolk Independent Retail Recovery Support programme**

3.18 The independent retail sector has been badly impacted by the covid trading restrictions. This sector forms a key part of the offer within East Suffolk's town centres and is also major feature of the visitor economy. In light of the importance of this sector it is appropriate that a specific support programme for this sector is developed. This programme would be designed to provide specialist recovery support, business planning, finance, marketing guidance and networking opportunities for businesses in the independent retail sector. The support would be sector specific and include a mixture of workshops, one to one advice and networking/peer support opportunities.

3.19 It is proposed that a suitable provider would be appointed to deliver an appropriate package of interventions to support the recovery and resilience of local traders. This could be in the form of a number of 1-2-1 sessions with specialist retail advisors, one to many thematic workshops (e.g. customer care/ service, retail systems, merchandising, security/risk) or other innovative approaches with the aim of engaging traders and maximising impact. A clear focus will be placed on sign posting to the Digital Advice Service/Smart Towns programme to support the development of social media skills and online trading of businesses. This recovery programme would be embedded in and form part of the wider East Suffolk Town Revitalisation programme.

3.20 The programme would also provide expert guidance on the type of interventions that would be most appropriate for the independent retail sector and recommendations on potential funding opportunities, partnerships and networks that could extend the reach of the limited support that is currently available.

3.21 It is proposed that a small grants funding scheme (up to £1000 per business) could be made available to support costs associated with recovery and resilience. It is important to note that this programme would address a gap in the market since retail business

support and grants are exempt under the current business support schemes offered by NALEP and the Growth Hub.

3.22 Following discussions with Finance it has been estimated that these additional business support measures would result in a total allocation of c£800k from the ARG fund.

3.23 **Further potential Business Support measures**

3.24 As stated previously the current the feedback received from government indicates that any business support measures that use ARG funding must be in the form of direct grants to businesses and therefore all the schemes outlined above are of this nature. The ED team have. However, other business recovery schemes have been identified that don't provide this direct grant support but do align with ESC's current economic growth programmes. It is our intention to maintain a dialogue with government to determine if such schemes may be funded.

3.25 These additional schemes include the following:

Town Centre Recovery

- Additional local resources to provide capacity to support the delivery of actions plans being developed as part of the Town Revitalisation Programme.
- Boost the East Suffolk Towns Initiative (ESTI) funding to specifically focus on Covid recovery activities in town centres.
- Town centre enhancement schemes based on the People & Places research which the need to improve streetscape and public realm in many of our towns.
- Revenue funding to support the growth of key sectors in the Lowestoft Town Investment Plan, recognising that the Towns Fund only provides capital funding and revenue support for the clean energy, creative sectors and place marketing would help realise the ambitions of the investment plan.

Other potential support could take the form of the following:

- East Suffolk tourism marketing campaign to provide additional promotion of the ES visitor economy in addition to national and regional campaigns. This would reflect the particularly hard impact covid restrictions have had on this sector and its value to the wider East Suffolk Economy
- Inward Investment incentives schemes – ESC and partners develop an extensive package of support to assist businesses locating to East Suffolk with a strong focus on Enterprise Zones and other key developments areas within the District
- Fund to support purchase of strategic building or site to support the delivery of the Lowestoft town centre masterplan and Town Investment Plan

4 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK STRATEGIC PLAN?

4.1 The Business Support recovery measures proposed in this paper will contribute directly to the Strategic Plan themes of Growing our Economy, Enabling our Communities, Digital Transformation and Remaining Financially Sustainable. Within the Growing our Economy theme the proposed schemes will directly contribute to the following priorities:

- *Build the right environment for East Suffolk*: through the focus on town centre recovery and enhancement.
- *Attract and stimulate inward investment*: through providing incentives for businesses to connect to the new ultrafast broadband network in Lowestoft.
- *Maximise and grow the USPs of East Suffolk*: through additional business support for the District's key growth sectors.
- *Business partnerships*: through working in partnership with business and business networks to develop and deliver additional business support measures.

4.2 The measures proposed in the report will also contribute to the other Strategic Plan themes in the following ways:

- Communities
 - Reducing the economic impact of the covid downturn and supporting a strong recovery in East Suffolk will benefit communities across the District by maintaining employment opportunities.
- Digital
 - Through Direct support for businesses to access the new ultrafast broadband network.
- Financial Sustainability
 - The business support measures outlined will help maintain and grow the District's business and business rates base which will positively impact on Council finances.

4.3 The aim of the proposed additional business support measures in this report is to mitigate the impacts of the covid downturn and support a strong economic recovery. Such an approach will support the creation of employment opportunities for all communities within our district. This supports the health and wellbeing of our communities as there is a strong link between positive physical and mental health and employment.

4.4 The Council and its partners are engaged in inclusive growth programmes e.g. through skills and training development, that will ensure the growth opportunities created by these measures can benefit all sections of the East Suffolk community.

5 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The proposed business support measures set out in this report will be funded by the ARG fund. This fund has been created to provide immediate cash grants to businesses impacted by the Covid downturn but unlike other Covid business grants was also developed with a longer-term business support element. The fund has been profiled over

the current and next financial year i.e. 2021/22 and any spending from this fund should take place within this period.

- 5.2 Modelling of the anticipated funding to be allocated in immediate cash grants, taking a very generous view on likely expenditure, indicates there will be around £1.65m remaining in the ARG fund. The business support measures proposed will account for c£800k of these remaining monies to ensure there is flexibility within the scheme should additional direct grant funding be required.
- 5.3 Each of the proposed business support measures will involve the awarding of grants to businesses based on programme specific criteria. The Council's external funding team has experience of putting in place the processes to manage such awards and it is proposed, with support from the ED team they will manage the awarding of grants based on agreed criteria. It is envisaged that a grant awarding panel will be established to oversee the awarding of such grants.

6 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 6.1 This report has been prepared having taken into account the results of an Equality Impact Assessment Ref EQIA307237674 (see background paper below). The assessment indicated a neutral impact on all the protected characteristics. Overall, however the proposals outlined in this paper should provide employment and enterprise opportunities for all sections of the East Suffolk community as the overall aim of these measures is to promote economic recovery and growth.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The business support measures proposed in this paper have been developed based on feedback with businesses directly and consultation with local and regional business support agencies. The feedback from these groups identified current gaps in market and where existing schemes could be enhanced, this directly informed the scope of the proposed schemes set out in this paper. The measures have also been informed by a survey of businesses undertaken by the Finance team, which specifically asked what business support measures should be implemented through the business support element of the ARG fund. As these schemes are further developed and finalised further consultation with these groups will take place to ensure they meet current business needs.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The other option considered was not to develop a business support programme based on available ARG funding. This was discounted as it will not offer additional longer-term business recovery support which will be crucial as the local economy emerges from lockdown and other trading restrictions during 2021. Furthermore, without this business support programme it is likely that there would be a significant underspend on the ARG fund allocated to the District, with the potential that this funding would be required to be handed back to Government rather than supporting economic recovery in East Suffolk.

9 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 The trading restrictions imposed on businesses because of the Covid pandemic have been dramatic and significant. To support the District's businesses and the wider economy during the economic recovery phase, it is proposed that the Council takes advantage of the ability to use the ARG fund to support longer-term business support measures. These measures are focussed on supporting small and medium sized business

which make up the majority of the East Suffolk business stock and have been developed based on identified need through discussions with businesses directly and business support agencies. The measures set out in the report set out a high-level approach and if cabinet approves this approach the intention will be to fully develop the detail and costs of these schemes.

RECOMMENDATION

That the outline proposals for the partial use of the unallocated £1.65m of the Additional Restrictions Grant, to provide a package of longer-term business support measures to support economic recovery, post Covid, be approved and delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Members with responsibility for Economic Development and Resources, to fully develop and implement these measures.

APPENDICES – None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Please note that copies of background papers have not been published on the Council's website www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk but copies of the background papers listed below are available for public inspection free of charge by contacting the relevant Council Department.

Date	Type	Available From
12/02/21	Equality Impact Assessment Ref EQIA307237674	Paul Wood



CABINET

Tuesday, 2 March 2021

PARKING SERVICES: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. At its meeting on 16 November 2020, the Scrutiny Committee received a report to update it on East Suffolk Council's parking management and Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE). The report (ES/0556) was presented by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport, supported by the Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager and it provided information about CPE and car park charging in the East Suffolk District in response to a request by the Scrutiny Committee from its meeting of 15 October 2020.
2. Having considered and questioned the report, the Scrutiny Committee wished to submit constructive recommendations to Cabinet, and it is attached to this report at Appendix A.
3. The recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee, to Cabinet, are considered in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.10 of this report.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
Wards Affected:	All Wards in East Suffolk
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Norman Brooks Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport
Supporting Officer:	Lewis Boudville Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager 01394 444223 lewis.boudville@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 There have been numerous Cabinet reports about the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE), its administration in accordance with statutory legislation, and appropriate parking management approaches to support it. Resolutions were made by Waveney District Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council, and the East Suffolk Council that superseded them. The reports are listed in the BACKGROUND section of this report.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Committee discussed a report named 'Review of parking management and civil parking enforcement' at an Extraordinary meeting that took place 16 November 2020.
- 1.3 The Scrutiny Committee made recommendations to Cabinet in accordance with Scrutiny Procedure Rule 8.1 for Cabinet to consider. In making its recommendation to Cabinet, the Scrutiny Committee seeks to offer constructive suggestions to help the Council to achieve and work towards its desired outcomes.
- 1.4 Cabinet thanks the Scrutiny Committee for its recommendations and this report considers them and provides responses to each in turn.

2 THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That within six months of receipt of this report, the signage in use at payment machines within the Council's car parks be reviewed and improved:
 - to consult with all relevant disability groups to ensure it is easier to read because of its size of text and placed at a lower more accessible height
 - to clarify that coin payment remains an option

Response: As advised at x) within paragraph 2.1 of the report to Scrutiny Committee 16 November, a review of signing has already taken place and 1,134 new signs and posts have been installed. The two images at Appendix B illustrate before and after installations. The before image illustrates how signs used various text sizes with information that did not flow and/or was not relevant to parking management. It also illustrates how stickers had been placed over information that was once considered important to 'sign'. Some information was contradictory and some out of date. These signs were installed next to machines only, which is commonly only one location in each parking place.

The after image illustrates the simplified layout and how the most important information is most obvious i.e., the time-period fees apply and to pay for the parking session. The installation advises there is a digital payment solution, which is fully contactless and provides enhanced service capability. The top two signs are placed as repeaters around parking places, so drivers do not need to find the machine to know what to do and when to do it.

Regarding legibility of the signs, the smallest letters in use are on the white backed information sign at the bottom of the installation (the yellow sign is a health and safety sign for bad weather)), and these letters are at least 5mm tall, which is large enough for drivers to read.

Some of the information signs were installed too high by the contractor and will be lowered to a more accessible height following a snagging exercise.

With consideration to the clarifications and images provided, the Cabinet accepts the first part of the recommendation and the Waveney and Suffolk Coastal disability forums have already been invited to comment on the legibility of the information signs and the 'machine use instruction label'.

Regarding the second part of the recommendation, the installation of at least one pay-and-display machine in every parking place indicates coin payment remains an option. The instruction labels on the machines illustrate and state coin payments can be made, therefore it is not necessary to install additional signing clarifying coin payments remain an option. However, additional signs displaying the tariffs will be added to repeater sign installations away from the pay-and-display machines.

- 2.2 That within six months of receipt of this report, the Council explores, with Care Agencies, the possibility of a replacement for the current Covid-19 related national parking pass for domiciliary/visiting carers' use within time-limited bays; if this is feasible, that a replacement be implemented within one year of this report.

Response: Recommendation already completed. Due consideration has been given and the following summarises.

- Most of the streets in the district remain unregulated and all drivers, including those administering care in the community, may park alongside unregulated kerb-space with due regard to The Highway Code.
- 'No stopping', 'No waiting', and 'No loading' regulations are installed for road user safety and traffic movement reasons and it is not appropriate to provide for carers to break these highway laws (the HM Government parking pass does not provide exemption to such regulations). Exemptions might be considered for time limited waiting bays, but not all the 1,157 regulated streets have these installed in them, so it is highly probable a relatively small number of individuals receiving care will live in a street with time limited waiting bays.
- Where time limited waiting bays are installed, most provide parking sessions for 30 minutes, 1 hour or 2 hours, which is likely to provide adequate time for carers to administer care to an individual (HM Government parking pass states users "... must not stay in a parking place for any longer than is necessary."). Where it is not, the care provider may contact the Parking Services team to discuss specific issues and appropriate assistance will be provided.
- A digital solution is already in use for carers administering care within resident permit streets.

The probability of a care worker receiving a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) (parking fine) whilst administering care in the community is low and the situation will be monitored and managed appropriately.

- 2.3 That within six months of receipt of this report, the overall processes for permits be made simpler and easier for users with alternative options (such as easier access to application by telephone) to IT solutions also available. Permit holders to be advised by both direct communication and via the website that, in emergency circumstances, which meant a permit had not been applied for, an explanatory message to that effect left correctly on the Council's voicemail would mean a penalty could be revoked.

Response: Recommendation already completed with due consideration informed by the digital theme of the Strategic Plan – Delivering Digital Transformation. The following summarises.

- There is the dedicated 'Permits, exemptions and dispensations' web page available via www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/parking that provides relevant information and access to the self-serve permit administration portal. The page and processes have been reviewed by the ICT and Communications teams and the Council's corporate requirements have been satisfied. 24/7 services are provided via this channel.
- The same services are provided during the Council's opening times via telephone.

- The most likely service required by residents without internet access outside of the Council's opening times is the validating of Visitor Vouchers, and this affects a very small proportion of the district's 250,000 population because only about 3,500 households are within permit parking streets. However, paper-based Visitor Vouchers are available for residents without internet access and eligible households may purchase up to thirty in a thirty-day period which is the same as the self-serve digital service. A paper-based Visitor Voucher is validated by the entering of a vehicle registration number and the scratching out of the applicable date, month, and year – the validated voucher must then be displayed on the dashboard of the vehicle with the relevant details clearly visible through its windscreen.

The provision of the paper-based Visitor Voucher negates the need for the current interim solution i.e., to telephone out of hours and leave a message for the Parking Services team advising a visitor requires a Visitor Voucher.

- 2.4 That within one month of receipt of this report, the section of the Council's website relating to parking infringements be revised to make it clearer that the reporting of parking infringements via the portal could be done as a "guest" and that complete registration was not necessary; also, that a flowchart and explanation of to whom, and how, to correctly report matters be provided to Councillors and placed on the website (Council, DVLA, Police etc.)

Response: Recommendation already completed. The intermediate 'My East Suffolk account' web page is a corporate ICT requirement and wording has been changed to accommodate the recommendation. Reporting a suspected parking contravention is a simple step-by-step process which is:

1. Visit www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/parking.
2. Select the [Civil parking enforcement](#) page.
3. Read the content and click on the [Report a suspected parking contravention \(illegal parking\)](#) link highlighted at the bottom of the web page.
4. A Corporate intermediate 'My East Suffolk account' then displays, which is not necessary for parking services delivery. The intermediate page provides three options to proceed and all eventually link to the same reporting tool. Users should select '[Access this online form without registering/logging in](#)' for the quickest access to the reporting tool.
5. A Corporate GDPR and DPA privacy statement page then displays and users must [Accept and continue](#) to complete the form reporting the suspected illegal parking practice.

- 2.5 That within one month of receipt of this report, a comprehensive glossary of key terms and FAQs related to parking management and CPE matters be provided on the Council's website.

Response: Recommendation already completed and due consideration given. ICT has raised the prominence of FAQs within the web pages albeit to those of the 'British Parking Association (BPA)' and 'Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London (PATROL)'. Additionally:

- Appendix C of this report is a glossary of terms for potential publication on the website should political decision overall corporate practice. It is recommended the glossary not be published and the Corporate policy be sustained.

- As advised at A4. of Appendix B to the Scrutiny report, Suffolk is one of the last counties nationally to adopt CPE and the Council has benefitted from nearly 30-years of experience and technology in the implementation of its CPE administration service. Advantage is taken from linking the Council's web pages to those of the Department for Transport (DfT), the BPA, PATROL, and others. The Council's pages point to the BPA website for information and videos about the PCN process including FAQs and a glossary of terms; PATROL's website and its FAQs for CPE; and SCC's website which provides FAQs on its 'Parking enforcement and regulations' page..."

2.6 That the Scrutiny Committee, in noting and welcoming the increased promotion of the Council's car parks, including maps, directions and the RingGo app, especially in conjunction with large events and attractions by mentioning local businesses, on the Council website, recommended this continue and be expanded wherever possible.

Response: Recommendation noted.

2.7 That within six months of receipt of this report, the Council undertakes a review of the pricing structure for annual parking permits.

Response: The only 'annual parking permit' is the 'Resident Permit' which is only £30 per year. Therefore, it is assumed this recommendation refers to the Annual Ticket for off-street parking places. All fees will be reviewed as part of the budget setting round for 2022-23.

2.8 That within six months of receipt of this report, the Council reconsiders whether, or not, to reinstate certain extensions of time-limits within car parks for Blue Badge Scheme holders.

Response: Recommendation already completed and due consideration given. The following summarises.

- 'The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities in England' enables badge holders to park close to their destination, either as a passenger or driver; and the scheme operates for on-street regulations only. Off-street car parks, such as those provided by shopping centres, hospitals or supermarkets are covered by separate rules (DfT, 2021).
- The Disabled Parking Accreditation (DPA) is owned by Disabled Motoring UK and managed by the BPA. The Council has DPA for many of its car parks and is in the process of having the remaining assessed for DPA.
- The Council provides accessible spaces that are closer to preferred destinations within many of its car parks, and it patrols these to ensure they are kept available for, and used by, only Blue Badge holders.
- There are other drivers who may need more time for their trip purpose. Parents, grandparents and carers for babies and young children are obvious examples. The driver may need to prepare a pushchair and load it with essentials required for childcare before getting a child or children from car seats and securing them in the pushchair. The time taken is similar to that of a Blue Badge holder who may need to retrieve a wheelchair or mobility scooter. Typically, drivers prepare for their trip before starting their parking session.
- All drivers are afforded a 'grace period' by statutory guidance and therefore no driver will be issued a PCN for the exact time a parking session expires.

- The legislative process for PCNs provides three opportunities for ‘appealing’ its serving. Therefore, drivers who may not return to their vehicle prior to the purchase time expiring, may appeal citing the reasons, and this process is suitable for medical emergencies that might have occurred. The third and final opportunity to appeal is with the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT) which is the independent adjudication service for CPE administration. All drivers may choose to complete the whole process should they believe the PCN was served and/or administered incorrectly or unjustly.

The needs of motorists with disabilities are already recognised by the Council and measures put in place wherever possible to support them. Doubling time and/or providing pricing concessions are not criteria recognised as essential by Disability Motoring UK. Blue Badge holders can use the badge for on-street regulations, as it is designed for, should the cost of parking be their primary driver for choosing parking locations.

- 2.9 That within one year of receipt of this report, the Council undertakes a thorough review of the car parks’ ticket machines and hardware to ensure it is fully resilient, including to the weather.

Response: Recommendation already completed and due consideration given. The following summarises.

- The existing machines (Parkeon Strada) have been operational in the district since April 2016, and Waveney District Council used the earlier Parkeon model for some years.
- Parkeon was the world’s number one manufacturer of parking payment terminals, and Flowbird (formed by the merger of Parkeon and Cale (world number 2)) has 300,000 machines deployed worldwide with more than 35,000 of them in the UK.
- Flowbird has extensive experience of manufacturing terminals and invests \$25M/year in innovation.
- The Parkeon Strada was first available in 2003 and it is now the most used parking payment terminal in the world. They are tried and trusted and proven to be best in class.
- The Strada terminal fully meets the requirements of the disability discrimination act (1995), Equalities Act (2010), and all EU directives, with regards to equality of access for members of the community. The Strada terminal is designed to offer ease of use and to comply with accessibility standards (EN15291/ADA/DDA standards) which includes the location of all interfaces (controls, display...), and accessibility for wheelchair users which is possible either from front or side. Appendix D provides the ergonomic design of the Strada terminal.
- The terminal enclosure is water and dust proof in accordance with EN 60529 providing a protection index of IP 3.3. The external paint finishes provide oxidation/corrosion protection in accordance with standard NF ISO 9227 (salt spray fog resistance). The terminal housing is corrosion resistant in accordance with standard NFX 41-002 (salt spray resistance). The external protection process applied to the Strada terminal also meets standard SNCF STM N 812 (based on NF F 31 112 “Protection from graffiti”); NFT 30082 (paint and varnish wash ability test) and NF EN ISO 2812-1 and 2 (liquids resistance determination).
- The Parkeon Strada can be made ‘Smart City’ capable to help achieve the Council’s Smart Towns objectives and facilitate potential aspirations for mobility and transportation.

- The hardware used by the CEOs is the Samsung A20 smart phone used by many in the world, and it is fit for patrolling purposes. Some of the CEOs in the northern half of the district introduced moisture into the devices when sanitising them. Sanitising protocols have been amended and the issue addressed. The same issue is not experienced by the CEOs in the southern part of the district using the same devices for the same purposes.

- 2.10 That within six months of receipt of this report, the Council requires Officers to devise a timed programme to review, on a town-by-town basis, the existing regulated on street parking places and the need for new places, commencing with the three towns already identified for such a review (Southwold, Beccles, and Lowestoft).

Response: Recommendation noted. For confirmation, the first three towns being funded by Suffolk County Council's On-street Parking Account are Framlingham, Lowestoft, and Southwold. The funding is for specific regulations based on business cases submitted and work has started on scheme development and delivery for financial year 2021-22.

The [Parking management schemes](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/parking) web page available via www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/parking provides information about the responsibilities for considering new regulations or amendments to existing ones. The responsibilities are split between Suffolk County Council as the local Highway Authority, and district councils via delegated functions. Where individuals would like to request new regulations or existing ones when it is this council's responsibility, there is a link to [Request a new parking scheme or a change to an existing parking scheme](#) highlighted at the bottom of the web page. As with reporting suspected illegal parking, there are the Corporate intermediate and GDPR privacy statement pages.

The applications will be validated and analysed by officers and the results presented to a cross-party working group chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Transport. The group will make recommendations to Cabinet for the development and delivery of parking management schemes and regulations each financial year. Cabinet will consider and agree the allocation of human and financial resources to support each year's programme as part of the annual budget setting process.

3 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK STRATEGIC PLAN?

- 3.1 In making its recommendation to Cabinet, the Scrutiny Committee sought to offer constructive suggestions to help meet the Council's desired outcomes.
- 3.2 It was noted that the Council was working to coordinate and deliver against the following corporate aims within the Strategic Plan:
- ES29 – Encourage Suffolk County Council to devolve enforcement of on-street car parking to the District Councils.
 - ES17 - Increase visitor numbers to East Suffolk outside of the main tourist seasons.
 - ES21 - Provide an innovative, more customer friendly, transactional, and intuitive Council website.

4 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 Not applicable.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 Not applicable.

8 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

8.1 As set out within paragraphs 2.1 to 2.10 above.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Cabinet, having noted the discussion of the Scrutiny Committee outlined within its report and within the minutes of its meeting, approves the responses set out within paragraphs 2.1 to 2.10 of this report, as its response to the Scrutiny Committee.
2. That the glossary of terms at Appendix C discussed in paragraph 2.5 not be published on the Council's website and that Corporate ICT policy be sustained.

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Scrutiny Committee recommendations
Appendix B	Before and after images of sign installations
Appendix C	Glossary of terms for potential publication
Appendix D	Ergonomic design of the Strada terminal

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Please note that copies of background papers have not been published on the Council's website www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk but copies of the background papers listed below are available for public inspection free of charge by contacting the relevant Council Department.

Date	Type	Available From
6 November 2018	Suffolk Coastal: Result of the stakeholder consultation on the draft East Suffolk Area Parking Plan (CAB 39/18)	www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk
6 November 2018	Suffolk Coastal: Proposed simplification and alignment of the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District car park tariffs to enable the creation of a single East Suffolk tariff structure (CAB 41/18)	www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk
2 January 2019	Suffolk Coastal: Proposed new East Suffolk Off-street parking places Order (CAB 04/19)	www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk
4 February 2020	Parking Services: Parking Management and CPE (ES/0285)	www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk
16 November 2021	Scrutiny Committee: Review of parking management and Civil Parking Enforcement (ES/0556)	www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk

APPENDIX A: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS



CABINET

Tuesday, 2 March 2021

PARKING MANAGEMENT AND CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. At its meeting on 16 November 2020, the Scrutiny Committee received a report to update it on East Suffolk Council's parking management and Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE). The report (ES/0556), which was presented by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport, supported by the Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager, provided information about CPE and car park charging in the East Suffolk District in response to a request by the Scrutiny Committee from its meeting of 15 October 2020.
2. In requesting the report, the Scrutiny Committee sought to establish whether the introduction of effective CPE to improve on street parking had been properly consulted upon, whether the impact of a significant increase in charges to residents was considered acceptable, and whether, or not, the model for this introduction had perhaps been based on flawed assumptions
3. Having considered and questioned the report, the Scrutiny Committee wished to submit constructive recommendations to Cabinet.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	All
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Report of:	Councillor Stuart Bird: Chairman of the Council's Scrutiny Committee
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Supporting Officer:	Katherine Abbott Democratic Services Officer Katherine.abbott@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 East Suffolk Council, upon its formation in 2019, inherited a diverse range of parking tariffs and policies that reflected its history as two former sovereign Councils. There was a lack of consistency around fees and charges and a need to modernise and standardise administrative arrangements. East Suffolk Council embarked on a process of streamlining and modernising its parking services, culminating in a report (ES/0285) to Cabinet at its meeting on 4 February 2020. The report to Cabinet had recommended changes to achieve several outcomes, these being:
- To introduce effective Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) to improve on street parking.
 - To standardise parking charging across the district.
 - To support town centre shopping through the introduction of free parking periods in town centre car parks.
 - To digitise permits to improve access and reduce the potential for misuse.
- 1.2 At the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 November 2020, a report was received (report ES/0556) about CPE and car park charging in the East Suffolk District in response to the request by the Scrutiny Committee from its meeting of 15 October 2020.
- 1.3 The report to the Scrutiny Committee advised on the progress of improvements previously agreed by the Cabinet, namely:
- i) The Council's partnership work with the County Council, Suffolk Constabulary, Ipswich Borough Council and West Suffolk Council in the establishment of CPE.
 - ii) The employment, training and deployment of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) and Supervisors.
 - iii) The employment, training and deployment of one Assistant Parking Services Manager and four Notice Processing Officers (NPOs).
 - iv) The configuration of the Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) processing system with a customer portal. The system is configured with 1,157 streets in the district comprising 7,280 regulations for patrol and 75 demand managed off-street parking places. The system enables the efficient and effective patrolling of on street and off-street regulations. The system automated many of the functions that Civil Enforcement Officers had previously carried out manually and minimised paperwork.

- v) The introduction of a customer portal through which drivers served with a PCN might view the evidence proving a contravention had taken place, pay the penalty charge or 'appeal' its serving. This had resulted in a simpler and efficient process.
 - vi) The introduction of a new portal through which permits and exemptions (which can be issued in an area where there is limited off street parking available) were administered. In the longer term, the online permit portal offered a simpler way for people to buy and manage permits and allowed East Suffolk Council to enforce permit parking in a way that had not been possible previously.
 - vii) The procurement of six electric vehicles for use by the CEOs thereby benefitting the environment by reducing noise and air pollution.
 - viii) The procurement and employment of 100% recyclable PCN tickets.
 - ix) The configuration of the RingGo parking service, including an app for smartphone users, through which drivers could pay for their parking session and extend it should they wish (where permitted).
 - x) The procurement and installation of 1,134 new signs and posts in off-street parking places providing customers with clear and accurate information.
 - xi) The upgrading of ninety-six pay-and-display machines with alpha-numeric keypads for configuration and deployment of the new parking fees,
- 1.4 At the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 16 November 2020, in addition to the written questions and answers included within the report received, the Committee further questioned and discussed several issues including: the standardisation of prices and the increased price of season ticket prices; the user-friendliness of the online permit application portal and the alternative option to apply by telephone; residents' parking and exemptions; concessions for disabled drivers; the effectiveness of signage within car parks; the need for additional information on the Council's website and the 30minutes free parking concession. The minutes of this meeting are attached at Appendix A to this report and provide additional detail on the Committee's discussion, its debate and why the recommendations below were formed.
- 1.5 The Scrutiny Committee received and noted a presentation and a demonstration of the application process for permits.
- 1.6 The Scrutiny Committee noted and welcomed the increased promotion of the Council's car parks, including maps, directions and the RingGo app, especially in conjunction with large events and attractions by mentioning local businesses.
- 1.7 The Scrutiny Committee, as a "constructive critical friend", wished to make recommendations to Cabinet formed with the benefit of a review of the processes introduced in Spring 2020 and in order to add value to the Council's ambition to improve, streamline and modernise its parking services.

2 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK STRATEGIC PLAN?

- 2.1 In making its recommendation to Cabinet, the Scrutiny Committee seeks to offer constructive suggestions to help meet the Council's desired outcomes (paragraphs 1.1.1 to 1.1.4 above refer).

- 2.2 It was noted that the Council was working to coordinate and deliver against the following corporate aims within the Strategic Plan:

ES29 – Encourage Suffolk County Council to devolve enforcement of on-street car parking to the District Councils

ES17 - Increase visitor numbers to East Suffolk outside of the main tourist seasons

ES21 - Provide an innovative, more customer friendly, transactional, and intuitive Council website

3 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 These were provided in paragraph 6 of the Cabinet report as:
- 3.2 *The set-up costs for CPE administration are funded by SCC. Both SCC and ESCs officers are determining options to ensure systems have the required functionality for CPE and permit administration, and interfaces with third party systems are configured and work successfully in order to deliver effective and efficient CPE administration.*
- 3.3 *There is statutory guidance for reporting on Parking Services and officers are liaising to set-up accounts enabling financial reporting in the required way.*
- 3.4 *There are numerous legal documents that must be in place including the DFT's approval (SI), TROs and the Off-street parking places Order. Additionally, delegation and partnership agreements must be in place prior to CPE administration delivered by the Council's new Parking Services team. Appropriate advice and ratification are being secured from ESCs Legal team and others.*
- 3.5 The Secretary of State's *Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on enforcing parking restrictions* applied to all enforcement authorities, such as East Suffolk Council, exercising civil parking powers conferred by the Transport Management Act 2004
- 3.6 The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Committee set out that it "*may make reports or recommendations to the Council or Cabinet.... in connection with the discharge of any functions*".
- 3.7 Further, paragraph 8.1 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (SPRs) says that where the Scrutiny Committee makes a report or recommendation to the Cabinet, it may publish that report or recommendation, and must by notice in writing require the Cabinet to consider the report or recommendation. Also, for the Cabinet to respond to the Scrutiny Committee indicating what (if any) action the Cabinet proposes to take. The Scrutiny Committee hereby respectfully gives notice that it would like the Cabinet to consider its recommendations, below, and to respond, indicating what action, if any, the Cabinet intends to take. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet should respond within two months of receiving the report or recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee.

4 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIAs) has not been completed for this report as it is in response to two previous formal reports (one to Cabinet and one to Scrutiny Committee) the former of which had included an EIA. The Scrutiny Committee noted that the original EIA (February 2020) had identified no issues for reporting at that early stage, but further assessments would take place at appropriate stages of the project.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 None. The Scrutiny Committee noted that, for the original Cabinet report, the requirements of Section 5 of *The Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions* had applied on consultation. The Traffic Management Act 2004 (s87) stated that enforcement authorities needed to have regard to Statutory Guidance.

6 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 None.

7 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Scrutiny Committee has made recommendations to Cabinet in accordance with Scrutiny Procedure Rule 8.1 and wishes the Cabinet to consider these. In making its recommendation to Cabinet, the Scrutiny Committee seeks to offer constructive suggestions to help the Council to achieve and work towards its desired outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Scrutiny Committee, having received and considered the report on Civil Parking Enforcement, Permits and Parking Charges, recommends to Cabinet that it notes the discussion of the Scrutiny Committee outlined within this report and within the minutes at Appendix A and considers the following recommendations:

1. That within six months of receipt of this report, the signage in use at payment machines within the Council's car parks be reviewed and improved:
 - to consult with all relevant disability groups and fora to ensure it is easier to read because of its size of text and placed at a lower more accessible height
 - to clarify that coin payment remains an option
2. That within six months of receipt of this report, the Council explores, with Care Agencies, the possibility of a replacement for the current Covid-19 related national parking pass for domiciliary/visiting carers' use within time-limited bays; if this is feasible, that a replacement be implemented within one year of this report.
3. That within six months of receipt of this report, the overall processes for permits be made simpler and easier for users with alternative options (such as easier access to application by telephone) to IT solutions also available. Permit holders to be advised by both direct communication and via the website that, in emergency circumstances, which meant a permit had not been applied for, an explanatory message to that effect left correctly on the Council's voicemail would mean a penalty could be revoked.
4. That within one month of receipt of this report, the section of the Council's website relating to parking infringements be revised to make it clearer that the reporting of parking infringements via the portal could be done as a "guest" and that complete registration was not necessary; also, that a flowchart and explanation of to whom, and how, to correctly report matters be provided to Councillors and placed on the website (Council, DVLA, Police etc.)
5. That within one month of receipt of this report, a comprehensive glossary of key terms and FAQs related to parking management and CPE matters be provided on the Council's website.
6. That the Scrutiny Committee, in noting and welcoming the increased promotion of the Council's car parks, including maps, directions and the RingGo app, especially in conjunction with large events and attractions by mentioning local businesses, on the Council website, recommended this continue and be expanded wherever possible
7. That within six months of receipt of this report, the Council undertakes a review of the pricing structure for annual parking permits.
8. That within six months of receipt of this report, the Council reconsiders whether, or not, to reinstate certain extensions of time-limits within car parks for Blue Badge Scheme holders
9. That within one year of receipt of this report, the Council undertakes a thorough review of the car parks' ticket machines and hardware to ensure it is fully resilient, including to the weather
10. That within six months of receipt of this report, the Council requires Officers to devise a timed programme to review, on a town-by-town basis, the existing regulated on street parking places and the need for new places, commencing with the three towns already identified for such a review (Southwold, Framlingham and Lowestoft).

BACKGROUND PAPERS Please note that copies of background papers have not been published on the Council's website www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk but copies of the background papers listed below are available for public inspection free of charge by contacting the relevant Council Department.

Date	Type	Available From
	None, save those referenced within this report	www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Annex A	Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 16 November 2020
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Confirmed



Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held via Zoom on **Monday 16 November 2020 at 6:30pm**

Members of the Committee present:

Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Mark Newton, Councillor Keith Robinson, Councillor Caroline Topping

Other Members present:

Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Tony Cooper, Councillor Janet Craig, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Tony Goldson, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor Keith Patience, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Ed Thompson, Councillor Steve Wiles, Councillor Kay Yule

Officers present:

Katherine Abbott (Democratic Services Officer), Lewis Boudville (Transport, Infrastructure & Parking Services Manager), Andrew Jarvis (Strategic Director), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer), Sue Meeken (Political Group Support Officer (Labour))

1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Gee and Councillor Lynch. Councillor Cooper acted as Substitute for Councillor Lynch.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3 Review of Parking Management and Civil Parking Enforcement

The Scrutiny Committee received report **ES/0566** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport. The Cabinet Member gave a brief introduction to the report and referred to the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement and an on/off road parking management system earlier in the year. He wished to record his personal thanks to the Officers of the Council for their work which, he said, had achieved a phenomenal amount in a short period of time.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager gave a brief presentation which outlined the problems which had been identified as needing to be resolved and the four objectives identified to achieve this - Standardise pricing and signage; increase the digital offer; introduce civil parking enforcement; and, implement digital enforcement system. In addition, the Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager gave a brief demonstration of the digital permit system via the online portal.

The Chairman invited questions

Councillor Deacon, with reference to paragraph 2.1(iv) of the report, asked about the process that had been applied in the selection of the Taranto platform for the Penalty Charge Notice processing system. He asked why this platform had been considered superior to others on the market. In addition, and with regard to the demonstration of the digital permit application system, Councillor Deacon said it was important to remember that not all applicants were sufficiently IT literate to be able to use the system with ease. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager said that an Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) framework had been utilised (*Clerk's note: ESPO is a public sector owned professional buying organisation, specialising in providing a wide range of goods and services to the public sector. It offers over 27,000 catalogue products, 120 frameworks and bespoke procurement services, all with free support and advice available*) and an open-invitation issued to all appropriate providers in the market to demonstrate their product. The demonstrations had been graded and scored and a decision taken based on key factors such as best technical solution, user-friendliness, operation and support facilities and overall integrity of the system. He stressed that the ease of use of the system by those with less IT knowledge had been considered in the process, but the system selected was typical of those in use for parking management. The Scrutiny Committee was informed that those who had no IT access or experienced difficulty accessing the system were able to telephone and seek assistance with their application.

Councillor Deacon referred to the significant increase in season ticket prices and asked how many formal complaints had been received as a result of that increase. Councillor Deacon also raised a query about a change to weekend parking at Oulton Broad which, he had been told, necessitated the purchase of an annual ticket to be able to park for whole weekends. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager replied that there had been very few formal complaints received. With reference to parking at Oulton Broad, he stated that weekend parking did not require the purchase of an annual ticket as a day ticket would suffice. However, if the user wished to park regularly at the site it might be that an annual ticket would offer a saving overall. Councillor Deacon said he was surprised few formal complaints had been received as he had received several from residents.

The Chairman asked how the standardisation in pricing had been arrived at. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager referred to the report which, he said, described how the pricing values had been arrived at and the reasons why this was felt to be necessary. He added that the prior ticket options had varied immensely with significant differences in pricing across the district; there had, he said, also been

special arrangements at some locations and, therefore, rationalisation of the pricing structure had been sought to provide standardisation of charges across the district.

Councillor Gooch said she had tried to follow the process which had been demonstrated to the Committee, however, she had found it required registration, a password and email verification and queried if this was the case. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager said that it was possible to apply as a guest on the portal.

Councillor Topping asked why an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) had not been completed. She added that she had been informed one was not required. Councillor Topping questioned why, as part of an EIA, permit holders had not been asked for their comments on the proposed scheme. Councillor Topping provided examples of the impact which residents in her ward had experienced with the changes to residents' permits. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager referred to the EIA which had been completed and referenced at paragraph 8.4 of the report. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager said that the previous paper-based system of residents' permits had, at times, be subject to anecdotal evidence of misuse. The new system was more flexible as temporary permits were issued as required. He noted comments about limited residents parking in one location in Beccles and said that supply and demand would be reviewed. Councillor Topping also gave the example of an elderly resident who was unable to go online to book a permit and so had been advised to do so by telephone. The telephone service operated within the Council's opening hours, but calls to the permit scheme could be made between 8am and 8pm weekdays and so weekend visitors were unable to book a permit on the day. Councillor Topping also referred to carer's permits which could be used 20 days out of 30 and queried the effectiveness of this approach.

The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager experienced technical issues. The meeting adjourned between 7.15pm and 7.18pm to enable him to re-join the meeting by telephone. The meeting reconvened at 7.18pm.

The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager responded that visitors planning to visit at weekends meant residents could apply for a permit online or by telephone in advance. Similarly, at weekends, a resident who was unable to use the online portal could call the telephone line and leave a voicemail with all the relevant details; a permit could then be issued retrospectively. If a Penalty Charge Notice was issued but the request had been registered in a telephone message, the Notice would be cancelled and no fine would be payable.

Councillor Cloke referred to the increase in parking charges at the car park at Sizewell beach and suggested that this had been excessive. Councillor Cloke said that she understood the merit of a standardised approach but questioned why this had not been approached in a phased way rather than one large increase. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager replied that the Sizewell Beach annual ticket had been £25 and so any increase might perhaps be seen as unreasonable. He added that parking sessions for more than an hour were £1.20, therefore, drivers to date had paid the equivalent of twenty-one days and received the equivalent of free parking for the rest of the year. Sizewell Beach was not a location where all day parking was in high demand and a two-hour visit was more likely – therefore, the new £1 ticket

would, he said, provide best value for parking sessions of this length. It would be cheaper than the £1.20 ticket a two-hour session had previously cost. The demand for annual tickets at Sizewell Beach was not significant, he said, when considered against the three million parking sessions typically seen each year. He added that drivers had the option to pay monthly for their parking sessions should they not wish to commit to the annual ticket fee in one transaction.

Councillor Beavan asked about residents' parking and if exemptions were limited to certain areas. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager said that exemptions were considered on a street-by-street basis but that these had been implemented where residents' needs had not been fully considered previously. Councillor Beavan asked if the Council was able to assist carers who were not paid for the time they were parked and as the national pass for time limited parking bays during the pandemic was gradually phased out. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager said that possible schemes to manage parking would be considered in Framlingham, Lowestoft and Southwold first. Councillor Beavan urged every effort be made to avoid a gap between the end of one scheme and the start of a new one.

Councillor Coulam said that, previously, disabled users of car parks had been allowed a concession whereby two hours parking had been permitted for a one hour ticket. She explained that this had been to allow additional time in exiting vehicles, getting aids out, obtaining a ticket etc. Councillor Coulam said that the new charges did not allow and questioned if this might be discriminatory. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager replied that the blue badge scheme allowed a driver to park in more places and for more time than other drivers. This was because the scheme was there to help people who either had trouble getting about or had medical conditions that made having a car nearby vital. The exemptions provided by the blue badge were for on-street parking regulations. The criteria for exemptions, concessions and alternative methods had been applied in accordance with the Disabled Parking Accreditation (an initiative provided by Disability Motoring UK and managed by the British Parking Association) which was primarily aimed at improving parking for disabled people and reducing abuse of disabled spaces. He added that the Council would look at the possibility of discretionary disabled parking exemptions across its car parks. It was noted that the RingGo app would aid disabled drivers as it was possible to pay for parking from the car.

Councillor Topping referred to past delays in the implementation of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and Off-Street Parking Places Order; these set out the provision for on-street parking restrictions, including residents' parking zones and permit schemes as well as stipulating the rules for permit holder schemes. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager said the Council was now administering permits in accordance with the provisions of the County Council's TRO; he stressed that the TRO had not been amended and that the change experienced by some was in the administration processes linked to the new permit management system. The delays in implementation of the new scheme had been the result of a delay in obtaining the statutory instrument and the initial transition period, moving forward, further delays were not anticipated.

The Chairman asked if there were sufficient staffing resources to undertake the administration of all the various aspects of parking management. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport said the implementation of the new processes had been both technically demanding and labour intensive; unavoidable delays had been experienced with the obtaining of the statutory instrument and the impact of the pandemic. There had been initial teething issues during the transition but Officers had worked hard to resolve these. The Cabinet Member said that although there was a phenomenal amount of work to be undertaken he had been advised that staffing levels were adequate. These remained under constant review and if more resource was considered necessary a case would be made to increase establishment. In response to a question from Councillor Topping, the Cabinet Member confirmed that no further delays were anticipated and responses required by SCC would be provided on time.

Councillor Topping referred to the four car parks in Halesworth and advised that residents had informed her they had been told they could only use one car park in any one day and could not return to any of the four car parks in the same day; she asked if that was accurate. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager said that people could return to the same or another car park in the same day as many times as they wished. However, the 30 minutes of free parking was a concession that was only available once a day.

Councillor Gooch said she had tried to load the RingGo app but it had failed to install and that this was possibly because it utilised significant storage space on a mobile telephone. Councillor Gooch said that if digital solutions were to be introduced they must be simple and easy to use. She added that the signage in car parks was not easy to read because of the size of the text, there was no indication on signs of the storage capacity of the app, there was no instruction to say that users could use coinage if they preferred and that, generally, the signage was more of a barrier to use than designed to make matters easier. Councillor Gooch asked that the signage be reviewed and improved and added that she was surprised there had not been complaints based on the digital infrastructure.

The Cabinet Member for Transport referred to the handling of coins as being expensive and having an impact on the environment and that, therefore, digital alternatives offered benefits. He confirmed that coins could still be used at the machines and that perhaps this could be made clearer.

Councillor Deacon asked if the pay machines were at a height which was accessible to someone in a wheelchair and also suggested that the signs were sited too high to be easily read if so seated. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager said that the main signage in car parks was being addressed but had not been set at a different height to the previous signs. He said that all the signs in the car parks had been replaced, but some of the information boards which utilised smaller text had been installed too high. All were being checked and lowered where necessary. He added that the manufacturer of the pay machines met disabled user requirements and some had included access ramps to the machine.

Councillor Beavan referred to the Council's online survey of parking schemes and asked if there was sufficient Officer resource to review the results, prioritise and facilitate said schemes. The Cabinet Member for Transport repeated that he had discussed

staffing levels with senior Officers and added that back-office functions were being rationalised to create some additional capacity. Councillor Beavan asked when the schemes identified via the survey would be reviewed and prioritised. The Cabinet Member for Transport said no date for this had yet been set.

Councillor Cloke said she had tried to apply for a TRO on the website for a particular street within her ward on behalf of residents. This had proven to be problematic as it required the entry of multiple addresses and, as she was not a resident in the street concerned, the system had not allowed the application. It was agreed that the Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager would contact Councillor Cloke, outside of the meeting, to resolve this problem.

The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager, with reference to the earlier discussion of the Blue Badge Scheme, said that the Scheme already allowed parking on the street all day. The Scheme was not, however, an off-street or car park scheme.

Councillor Green said that overall parking in Felixstowe had been improved by the introduction of civil parking enforcement. She also said that she regularly used the RingGo app which she found to be very useful. Councillor Green said that she had previously sought a glossary of terms on this complex subject which she said would be helpful to Councillors and residents alike. The Cabinet Member for Transport welcomed Councillor Green's positive remarks on improved parking as a result of the introduction of CPE. With regard to a glossary of terms, he said he was working with Officers to produce this together with simple guides; he anticipated these being available shortly. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager added that infographics would also be available in the next few weeks and that the current information on the website, together with the requested glossary, would be revisited. He said that he was keen to ensure that information available elsewhere was not duplicated to avoid confusion but agreed to a review.

Councillor Patience asked how many pay machines were typically within a car park and if this varied significantly. The Chairman asked about the reliability rate of the pay machines, the average repair times when a machine would be out of order, etc. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager replied that the number of machines might be dependent on the geometry of the car park, the number of parking spaces, but generally there were one or two machines in a car park with the exception of Southwold which had seven. He added that in order to reduce the number of cash collections necessary, 96 of the pay machines had been upgraded - those which had not been upgraded were on the whole used less often. The upgraded machines would be monitored and the remaining machines brought up to the same standard in time, if required. He added that, at the moment, pay machines could accommodate cash payments particularly as the revised tariffs made this much simpler when using coins. The Committee was informed that the machines were deep cleaned and checked once per week; in addition, each time a Civil Parking Enforcement Officer patrolled s/he would check the machine too. If a machine was found to be faulty, no penalty fines would be served.

Councillor Yule said the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement in Woodbridge had, generally, been well received and she congratulated the Council in that regard.

However, she also had concerns about any impact on disabled users. Councillor Yule referred to one machine in Woodbridge which had been assumed to be out of order because the information on it had not been easy to understand, that disabled users had then tried to find an alternative machine to take coins and suggested this could have been more accessible with clearer signage and the aim to make car parks more accessible to disabled people. The Leader of the Council suggested that the earlier discussion of the Blue Badge Scheme had raised some issues and he wished to highlight that disabled users were, perhaps, not the only group of people who might wish to have additional time - for example mothers with young children in push-chairs. Those who held Blue Badges could utilise the on-street parking concession which, he said, was not necessarily an option to other users such as the mother with children and pushchairs. He suggested that the issues needed to be kept in perspective. The Leader of the Council also said that it was right to encourage people to use the RingGo app for the environmental benefits it offered; there would always be some reluctance to any change but it was important to be clear the Council had no ulterior motive beyond trying to reduce carbon emissions. In conclusion, the Leader of the Council said that some 80% of the population owned and used a smart phone and so the use of an app should not be an issue. He also referred to the digital systems in place at the Dartford Crossing.

In response to a query, the Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager confirmed that four new electric vehicles were in use by Enforcement Officers.

In response to a further comment about the clarity of the messaging on the current signage, the Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager said the information board contained the legal wording associated with contravention laws. He added that the clear and important message was sited at the very top of the sign. In the event that a user's mobile telephone had no signal to enable use of the app, then coins could be used to purchase a ticket. He added that if there was no signal generally, the pay machines may not work either and so no fines would be served.

Councillor Wiles welcomed the proposed extension of additional car parking as supportive to the local economy and its recovery; he asked if there was a target date for this to happen. The Transport, Infrastructure and Parking Services Manager said it was hoped to do this in early December to allow for the 21 day notice period.

Councillor Deacon said that although issues had been highlighted during the discussion he was sure that these were resolvable.

There being no further questions or matters raised for debate, it was proposed by Councillor Bird and seconded by Councillor Deacon and by unanimous vote

RESOLVED

1. That the draft recommendations arising from the contents of the report and the questions raised in relation to it at the meeting be considered and agreed at the next Scrutiny Committee meeting on 26 November 2020

The Scrutiny Committee received a draft remit for the establishment of a proposed Task and Finish Group on aspects of Integrated Care. In considering this draft remit, the Scrutiny Committee was referred to the protocol for Task and Finish Groups. At the request of the Chairman, the Clerk précised the protocol which had also been provided to the Committee in advance of the meeting.

The proposed remit was agreed and a Task and Finish Group established.

Councillor Deacon nominated Councillor Beavan to chair the Task and Finish Group; this was seconded by Councillor Topping. Councillor Robinson nominated Councillor Back to chair the Task and Finish Group; Councillor Back withdrew from the nomination.

It having been proposed and seconded, it was agreed by majority vote

RESOLVED:

1. That Councillor Beavan be chair of the Task and Finish Group which would also comprise Councillor Back, Councillor Green and Councillor Robinson.

2 In accordance with the protocol, written update reports from the Task and Finish Group would be received at the scheduled meetings of the Scrutiny Committee in December 2020 and January 2021. The final report, with draft recommendations, would be received at an Extraordinary meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to be arranged in February 2021.

The Meeting concluded at 9:45pm

.....
Chairman

APPENDIX B: BEFORE AND AFTER IMAGES OF SIGN INSTALLATIONS

Before



After



APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOR POTENTIAL PUBLICATION

"CPE"	means Civil Parking Enforcement
"CEO"	means Civil Enforcement Officer (more commonly known as 'traffic Warden', which is a redundant term)
"PCN"	means Penalty Charge Notice (more commonly known as 'parking fine')
"NPO"	means Notice Processing Officer
"RTRA"	means the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
"TMA"	means the Traffic Management Act 2004
"TRO"	means a Traffic Regulation Order (for kerb-space management regulations such as yellow lines and bays)
"TSM"	means the Traffic Signs Manual
"TSRGD"	means the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016
"Annual Ticket"	means an annual ticket for a designated off-street parking place issued by the District Council
"Annual Ticket holder"	means a person to whom an annual ticket has been issued
"authorised representative"	includes "Civil Enforcement Officer", "CEO" and "Parking Attendant" which have the same meanings as in section 63A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and by virtue of Section 76 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, where a parking attendant appointed under section 63A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 is a Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) in relation to parking contraventions
"bus" and "coach"	has the same meaning as in Schedule 1 of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (and subsequent legislation), and "buses" shall be construed accordingly; and includes vehicles used for local and scheduled services, as well as those used for leisure and tourism purposes; with Vehicle Certification Agency type approval M2 and M3

"caravan"	means any structure designed or adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another (whether by being towed or by being transported on a motor vehicle or trailer)
"cashless parking"	means a method of payment whereby the charge levied under the District Council's Tariff of Charges (and any appropriate administration charge) is collected by a District Council appointed third party, via an arranged account, with payment being made over the telephone or by other electronic system (including via the internet) by credit or debit card or other means of secure authorised payment
"charge certificate"	means a certificate issued by the District Council stating that payment has not been received or an appeal or a representation lodged following the serving of a Penalty Charge Notice
"charged parking place"	means a parking place to which a charge for parking applies in accordance with the Tariff of Charges
"chargeable hours"	means the times of regulation relating to charged parking places
"Civil Enforcement Area"	means an area where Civil Enforcement of highway regulations can be carried out, as defined in the TMA 2004, and provided by Statutory Instrument '2020 No. 14 - The Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions Designation Order 2020'
"commercial vehicle"	means any mechanically propelled vehicle which is constructed or adapted for the carriage of goods; with Vehicle Certification Agency type approval N1, N2 and N3
"contravention"	means any breach of regulations provided by a TRO or off-street parking places Order
"current"	in relation to a vehicle licence, Blue Badge, or permit, or exemption, or parking place suspension, means valid on the relevant date

"disabled person" and "disabled person's badge"	have the same meaning as in the Disabled Persons' (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (England) Regulations 2000
"disabled person's vehicle"	means a vehicle lawfully displaying a disabled person's badge and which is a vehicle which, immediately before or after any period of waiting allowed by virtue of a provision of a kind required by the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Exemptions for Disabled Persons) (England) Regulations 2000 to be included in an Order under the RTRA 1984, has been or is to be driven by a disabled person or has been or is to be used for carrying disabled persons as passengers
"District Council"	means East Suffolk Council
"driver" (in relation to a vehicle waiting in a parking place)	means the person driving the vehicle at the time it was left in the parking place
"Enforcement Authority"	means the authority responsible for administering CPE (this is Suffolk County Council for on-street regulations, and it has delegated this function to the District Council; and the District Council is the Enforcement Authority for its off-street parking places)
"heavy commercial vehicle"	has the same meaning as in Section 138 of the RTRA 1984 and relating provisions
"heavy motor car"	has the same meaning as in Section 136 of the RTRA 1984 and relating provisions
"Highway Authority"	means the authority designated with the responsibility of highway management and its maintenance (this will be either Suffolk County Council or Highways England for the network in East Suffolk)
"invalid carriage"	has the same meaning as in Section 136 of the RTRA 1984 and relating provisions and which is specially designed and constructed, and not merely adapted, for the use of a person suffering from some physical defect or disability and is used solely by such a person
"minibus"	means a small passenger carrying motor vehicle not exceeding 5.5m in length capable of carrying more than 8

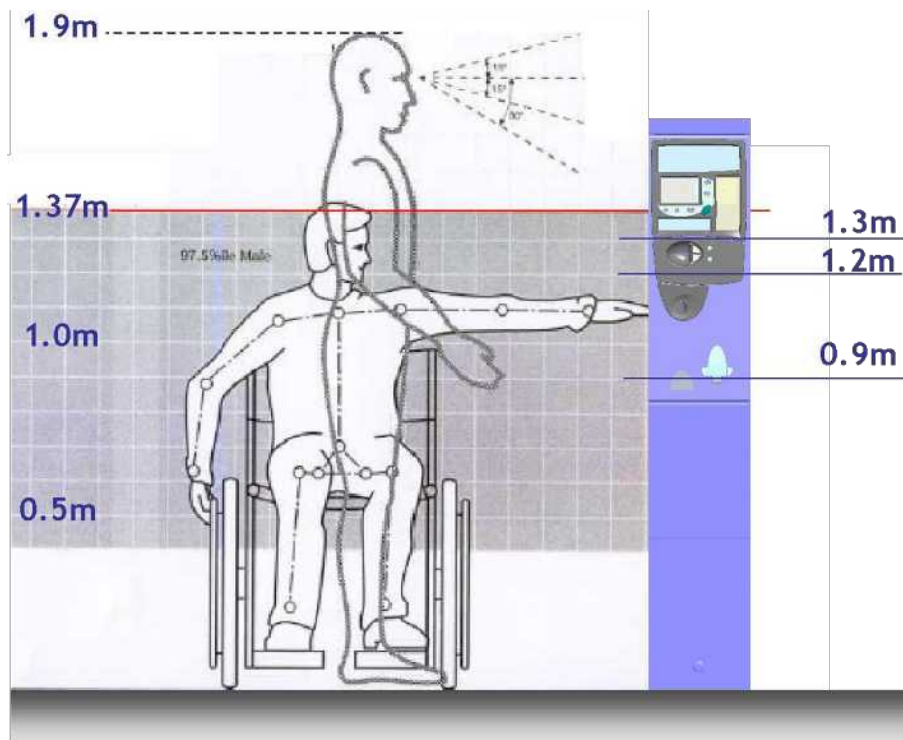
	but not more than 16 passengers whether or not the same is either a motor car or a heavy motor as the case may be
"Monthly Ticket"	means a monthly ticket for a designated off-street parking place issued by the District Council
"Monthly Ticket holder"	means a person to whom a monthly ticket has been issued
"motor car"	has the same meaning as in Section 136 of the RTRA 1984 and relating provisions
"motor caravan"	means a motor vehicle not exceeding 5.5m in length which provides fixed sleeping arrangements whether or not the same is either a motor car or a heavy motor car and with Vehicle Certification Agency type approval M1
"motorcycle"	has the same meaning as in Section 136 of the RTRA 1984 and relating provisions
"motorcycle bay"	means a parking bay designated for the parking of solo motorcycles only
"owner" (in relation to a vehicle)	means the person by whom such vehicle is kept and used, and/or registered as such with the DVLA
"parking adjudicator"	has the same meaning as in Section 81 of the Act of 2004
"Civil Enforcement Officer"	has the same meaning as in section 63A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and by virtue of Section 76 Traffic Management Act 2004, where a parking attendant appointed under section 63A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 is a Civil Enforcement Officer in relation to parking contraventions
"parking bay"	means any part of a parking place marked out, by means of white or yellow lines or different coloured blocks where the surface is block-paved, for the leaving of a vehicle, which may be signed for use by specific users
"parking charge"	for a vehicle left in a charged parking place shall be determined by reference to the Tariff of Charges

"parking disc" or "parking clock" or "blue badge clock"	means a device which- (a) is 125 millimetres square and coloured blue, if issued on or after 1st April 2000 or orange, if issued before that date; (b) has been issued by a local authority and has not ceased to be valid; and (c) is capable of showing the quarter hour period during which a period of waiting has begun.
"parking event" or "parking session" or "parking period"	means the practice of parking a vehicle for a period of time
"permit"	means a parking permit of the types described within TROs and off-street parking Orders for specific users for which the payment of the appropriate charge is made
"parking place"	means an area off a highway designated or authorised and described as a parking place by any of the various Articles or Schedules an off-street parking places Order, the extents and effects of which are indicated via appropriate signing, markings, and boundary
"parking service"	means the service established by the District Council to carry out parking activities under the Suffolk Highways partnership agreement between Suffolk County Council, as traffic authority, and East Suffolk Council; and provided by Statutory Instrument '2020 No. 14 - The Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions Designation Order 2020'
"parking bay" or "parking space"	means a space which is provided for the leaving of a motor car or motorcycle, and where so signed, may be designated for a specific user type
"parking ticket"	means a ticket issued by a ticket machine operated by the District Council and relating to a parking place obtained for the purpose of showing proof of payment (according to the published tariff of charges) for parking, showing information including: (i) the time of purchase (ii) the amount paid (iii) the date of purchase (iv) the time of expiry

	(v) a reference to the issuing machine
"pay and display" or "P&D"	means to purchase a P&D ticket from a pay and display machine run by the District Council for payment of parking charges and to display the ticket within the vehicle, with time and date information clearly visible always whilst in a parking place
"penalty charge"	means an amount of money payable in circumstances when a parking contravention is detected
"Penalty Charge Notice"	means a Notice indicating a penalty charge has been incurred and served by either attaching it to the vehicle or by first class post to the DVLA registered keeper of the motor car or motorcycle observed in contravention of the regulations
"road"	means the full width - including any footway or verge - of any length of highway or of any other road to which the public has access, and includes bridges over which a road passes
"ticket machine"	means apparatus operated by the District Council designed to indicate the time and to issue parking tickets indicating the payment of a charge and the period in respect of which it has been paid
"trailer"	has the same meaning as in Section 136 of the RTRA 1984 and relating provisions
"vehicle of the permitted class"	means a motor car, a motorcycle, or an invalid carriage
"relevant position" (in the case of a disabled person's badge)	<p>A vehicle displays a disabled person's badge in the relevant position if: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) in the case of a vehicle fitted with a dashboard or fascia panel, the badge is exhibited thereon so that Part 1 of the badge is legible from outside the vehicle; or (ii) in the case of a vehicle not fitted with a dashboard or fascia panel, the badge is exhibited in a conspicuous position on the vehicle so that Part 1 of the badge is legible from outside the vehicle.

"relevant position" (in the case of a parking disc)	<p>A vehicle displays a parking disc in the relevant position if: -</p> <p>(i) in the case of a vehicle fitted with a dashboard or fascia panel, the disc is exhibited thereon so that the quarter-hour period during which the period of waiting began is legible from outside the vehicle; or</p> <p>(ii) in the case of a vehicle not so fitted, the disc is exhibited in a conspicuous position on the vehicle so that the quarter-hour period during which the period of waiting began is legible from outside the vehicle</p>
"relevant position" (in the case of any other badge or permit)	<p>A vehicle displays any other badge or permit in the relevant position if: -</p> <p>(i) in the case of a vehicle fitted with a front windscreen, the item is exhibited thereon with the obverse side facing forwards on the near side of and immediately behind the windscreen; or</p> <p>(ii) in the case of a vehicle not fitted with a front windscreen, the item is exhibited in a conspicuous position on the front or near side of the vehicle with the obverse side legible</p>
"relevant position" (in the case of a parking ticket)	<p>A vehicle displays a parking ticket in the relevant position if the item is exhibited in a conspicuous position viewable from the front or front side windows of the vehicle with the obverse side legible.</p>
"sign"	<p>means a sign of any size, colour and type prescribed by regulations or authorised and installed by the District Council</p>

APPENDIX D: ERGONOMIC DESIGN OF THE STRADA TERMINAL



Example of a wheelchair user accessing the machine





CABINET

Tuesday 2 March 2021

SUPPORTING THE EAST SUFFOLK VISITOR ECONOMY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. East Suffolk Council has ensured the continuing growth and success of the visitor economy in East Suffolk through its support of The Suffolk Coast (TSC) Destination Management Organisation (The current three-year funding agreement with the TSC expires at the end of March 2021).
2. TSC has provided brand and destination marketing services, performed well delivering excellent visitor information website services, a growing membership base, energy projects consultation responses, and highly effective individual and joint marketing campaigns. It has performed particularly well in addressing local tourism business needs during the ongoing major external shock that COVID-19 has brought to the tourism sector locally, regionally and nationally.
3. This report sets out the demand and rationale for renewing TSC funding and operational agreement for a further three years from April 2021 to March 2024.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	All Wards in East Suffolk
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Cabinet Member:	Councillor Letitia Smith Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism
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Supporting Officers:	<p>Paul Wood</p> <p>Head of Economic Development and Regeneration</p> <p>01394 444249</p> <p>paul.wood@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Neil Cockshaw</p> <p>Programmes and Partnerships Manager</p> <p>01394 444451</p> <p>Neil.cockshaw@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</p>
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1 INTRODUCTION

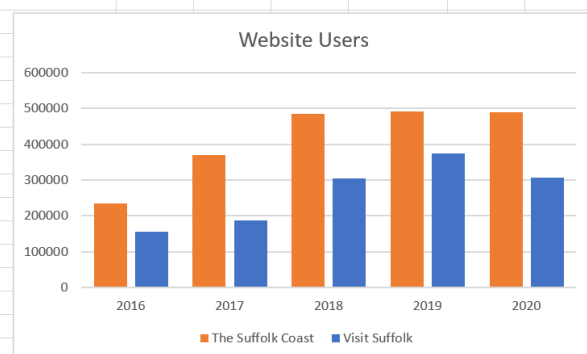
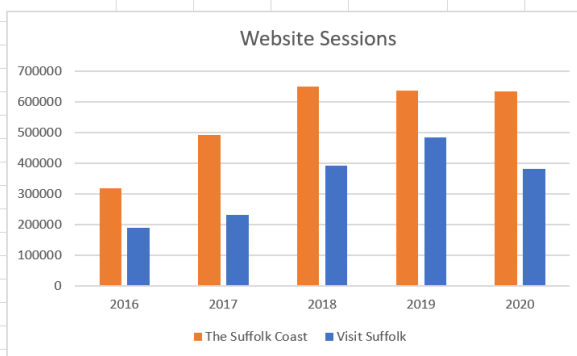
- 1.1 East Suffolk Council has contributed substantially to the continued growth and success of the visitor economy in East Suffolk through their support of our key destination marketing partner:- The Suffolk Coast Ltd Destination Management Organisation (TSC). The value of the tourism visitor economy in East Suffolk is estimated at £695m (2019 Volume and Value Study by Destination Research), and it supports approx. 11,000 FTE jobs (15% of employment) in East Suffolk. There has been steady incremental growth in this overall tourism economic value since TSC became the destination marketing services partner of ESC (formally SCDC) in 2012. TSC's work underpins this hugely important sector by supporting key elements of the ESC Strategic Plan (Growing our economy, Enabling our communities, Remaining financially stable), and a key driver within the East Suffolk Tourism Strategy, namely 'Provide excellent destination marketing services' through developing relationships with key partner organisations.
- 1.2 ESC (and its predecessors) has provided direct financial support to TSC annually since 2012 and has had three-year agreements in place since 2015. The current funding agreement with TSC delivers business plan outcomes that support the growth and development of the visitor economy in East Suffolk. In addition, ESC also provides officer time to help the development of supporting funding bids, advising on major decisions, and overseeing/ monitoring performance etc. The current funding agreement expires in March 2021.
- 1.3 TSC is led by a board of professional business leaders who all provide their time free of charge and is supported by a marketing and membership management team it employs directly. Board members include representatives from Adnams, Snape Maltings / Britten Pears Arts, The Hotel Folk, The Yeo Group, The National Trust, Attain Solutions Ltd and AHP Consulting. The four annual board meetings are attended by officers from East Suffolk Council and Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.
- 1.4 ESC has provided £55k of funding annually to TSC over the last three years (separately as WDC and SCDC during 2018/19). TSC delivers excellent destination marketing services for the area, provides a strong and effective web presence, works effectively on joint campaigns with other Suffolk and Norfolk DMOs and Visit Suffolk, and has grown its membership base with 233 members signed up in August 2020 in spite of the impact of the COVID pandemic. TSC has worked hard to increase its self-sustainability with 2019/20 (pre-COVID) membership income totalling £27,000 and a further £18,000 earned through website advertising during that year.
- 1.5 Ideally TSC would be financially self-sustaining and is starting to consider other possible funding models that may support this goal. The availability of major energy development related tourism mitigation fund resources may also allow this to happen in the future but, at the present time, it still depends on ESC for approximately 50% of its annual operating costs.
- 1.6 TSC membership comes from a mix of towns, resorts and rural areas with a number of members now coming from businesses from non-traditional DMO areas such as Felixstowe, Lowestoft, Leiston, Halesworth etc. TSC has also provided financial support and consulting expertise to new festivals and events throughout East Suffolk that local businesses or groups want to deliver. TSC ran business networking events in pre COVID times as well as an annual conference. It has also delivered joint networking events with Visit Suffolk and is currently working on specific marketing campaigns in collaboration with other Suffolk DMOs, Visit Suffolk and regional tourism groups across East Anglia including the £0.5m 'Unexplored England' campaign (COVID recovery initiative). It

continues to provide regular promotional output for all of East Suffolk via its social media channels.

- 1.7 Before the pandemic struck TSC had been steadily building its membership and earned income from advertising, whilst engaging in and working on consultations relating to the major energy developments proposed on the Suffolk coast. Since COVID TSC has focused primarily on survival and providing business support and collaborative recovery campaign work with other regional and national tourism groups. It has acted as a conduit for information, guidance and support for both members and non-members alike.
- 1.8 Through the pandemic the TSC website was one of the only websites across Suffolk and Norfolk that matched year on year audience engagement despite a reduction in above the line advertising. Over the summer of 2020 website users increased by 43%. The table and graphs below compare the Visit Suffolk and TSC website performance over a full calendar year and shows that TSC has performed well against a tourism group covering a much wider geographic area and reach.

The Suffolk Coast	sessions	YoY	users	YoY
2016	317321		233941	
2017	493180	55%	369008	58%
2018	650739	32%	485711	32%
2019	637858	-2%	491667	1%
2020	634190	-1%	489542	0%

Visit Suffolk	sessions		users	
2016	190568		155944	
2017	230182	21%	186469	20%
2018	392231	70%	303573	63%
2019	485455	24%	375686	24%
2020	382225	-21%	306052	-19%



2 THE PROPOSAL

2.1 It is proposed that ESC commit to supporting TSC for a further three-year period (April 2021 to March 2024) by continuing the financial contribution of £55k p.a. in each of the next three financial years. A new three year business plan (included at Appendix A) has been produced by TSC which sets out a number of key deliverables:

- Help tourism businesses recover after the challenges of 2020
 - Continue to provide COVID advice and guidance
 - Continue to direct tourism businesses to available financial support
 - Continue to provide excellent destination marketing services across East Suffolk as COVID allows
 - Work with other DMOs, Visit Suffolk etc to secure longer-term tourism support for the county and the region
- Regrow advertising and membership income.
- Work closely with strategic partner ESC to secure stable support to contribute to core costs, allowing the small team to actively seek funding for impactful campaigns.
- Stay deeply involved in discussions with ESC and the energy project developers, ready to play the major role in protecting the reputation of the area as a serene and tranquil place to visit, and to conceive new products and assets to mitigate the impacts of the projects.
- Engage with regional tourism colleagues, other Suffolk DMOs, Visit Suffolk, Visit East of England and supporting the mission to make East Anglia a Tourism Zone.
- Work with Suffolk Growth Partnership in shaping the Visitor Economy, this is linked to the recently created post - Strategic lead for the visitor economy – Suffolk Growth Partnership. Retain the strong team and provide them with additional support.
Refresh the board, with a new chair and a more diverse membership.

It is recognised by the board of TSC that this proposed funding agreement will be reviewed if significant tourism mitigation funding linked to major energy developments is made available to TSC during the next three years.

3 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK STRATEGIC PLAN?

- 3.1 This proposal supports the strategic plan by addressing the key themes of (i) Growing our economy, (ii) Enabling our communities, and (iii) Remaining financially stable.
- 3.2 Continuing support for TSC means that they can continue to focus on providing excellent destination marketing services for East Suffolk and help to support further growth in employment, business investment and visitor spend in the visitor economy. This also

helps to promote the plan's priorities focusing on developing business partnerships and the unique selling points of East Suffolk.

- 3.3 TSC destination marketing work helps to showcase the positive natural environment in east Suffolk and highlights how people's health, wellbeing & community pride are enhanced by excellent tourism and visitor economy services and facilities in the area.

4 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Support for TSC also helps the Council to remain financially stable by ensuring we have the best partner on board providing key destination marketing services and by promoting the area and its unique tourism assets that ESC and others are able to invest in to deliver future benefits.
- 4.2 Service standards, risk and performance management will be developed in-line with usual partnership arrangements. The three-year agreement with TSC includes appropriate performance measures designed, agreed and monitored to ensure that the current level of service is maintained and over time enhanced.

KPI	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Memberships	176	200	220
Advertising Revenue	£5,000	£16,000	£18,000
Events Supported	Tbc (COVID)	6	10

- 4.3 The proposed agreement with TSC will cost the Council £55k p.a. leading to a total commitment of £165k over the three years. A tender process will not be undertaken as TSC is the only viable and suitable organisation identified as able to deliver the required service. This funding proposal is budgeted for within ESC's Economic Development budget.
- 4.4 Risks – As with any service that the Council considers providing through a partner organisation there will be a number of risks to consider and mitigate. These will be monitored and managed by the ED&R team

5 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 This report has been prepared having considered the results of an Equality Impact Assessment Ref EQIA306086126. The EIA shows a positive impact overall on all potential visitors to, and within East Suffolk as marketed to by TSC.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Discussions have also been held with the board of TSC concerning the three-year agreement and with the recently appointed Strategic lead for the visitor economy – Suffolk Growth Partnership, and other tourism group representatives.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 TSC is seen as the only viable partner able to continue to provide the brand and destination marketing services that we need in East Suffolk in a cost-effective way.

8 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 Destination marketing services are critical in ensuring the continuing development of a successful visitor economy. This sector is worth almost £700m pa to the east Suffolk economy and employs 15% of the district's total workforce, this combined with the particularly hard impact Covid has had on the sector demonstrates the need/ value in providing continued support. Whilst there is always room for improvement, TSC has delivered these services consistently well across East Suffolk and requires a continuing financial commitment from ESC to continue to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS

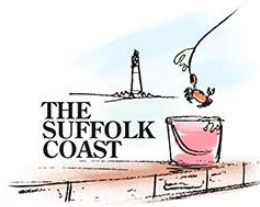
1. That it be approved that East Suffolk Council enter into a further three-year agreement with The Suffolk Coast Limited Destination Management Organisation to provide destination marketing and brand management services across the District at a cost of £55,000 per annum making a total commitment of £165,000 over the life of the agreement.
2. That authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, to review the agreement should section 106 tourism mitigation funding, linked to major energy projects, become available during the lifetime of this agreement.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

The Suffolk Coast DMO Business Plan 2021-24

BACKGROUND PAPERS – None



The Suffolk Coast DMO - Three-year funding proposal 2021 to 2024

To deliver the important work identified in this document, TSC requires the security of £61K funding each year from East Suffolk Council as laid out in the 3-year financial model attached. (Core and festival grant funding). Please note that the DMO is unable to give an accurate forecast of the income it will be able to generate at this current time due to the pandemic. Anecdotal evidence from our membership currently highlights there may not be an appetite to invest in paid advertising which could affect both our membership and advertising income lines.

1. Mission & purpose

The Suffolk Coast DMO (TSC) was initially established in 2012 with the aim of serving its membership by providing them with new routes to markets through marketing services covering the previous Suffolk Coastal District. The remit was widened to cover the previous Waveney district in 2015 and the TSC now provides district wide marketing to the whole of East Suffolk as well as acting as a conduit for ESC (and others) to engage with the industry. The goal has always been to grow the visitor economy sustainably, by boosting tourism in the “shoulder” seasons.

However, since 2018, when the last funding agreement was put in place, TSC has grown its role exponentially despite its modest resources. Not only has TSC increased its membership and advertising income in the last three years, but the organisation has become a vital support and information channel to businesses in the visitor economy, on major issues such as national-scale construction projects and the ongoing Covid-19 crisis. TSC is a trusted authority, and has willingly taken on this additional responsibility whilst continuing with its core marketing function. TSC is also working hard to build regional tourism collaborations, to amplify our messaging and access crucial funding.

2. Context

Until the pandemic crisis struck, TSC had been building its membership and advertising income impressively, whilst engaging with the issues related to the major energy developments proposed on the Suffolk coast.

Businesses in the visitor economy have been deeply affected by Covid-19, initially through months of lost trade, then by a surge of demand whilst concurrently having to adapt to the new safety guidelines and then once again finding themselves in a lockdown situation.

TSC has acted as a conduit for information, guidance and support. Initially members were unable to afford membership fees as they protected their cash, and then, paradoxically, did not require marketing effort in the summer as demand was high. Nonetheless TSC was on hand to offer support and has deepened its relationship with its members as a result.

3. Team

TSC has an experienced volunteer board and a small but hugely skilled executive team.

The board contains representatives from Adnams, Snape Maltings / Britten Pears Arts, The Hotel Folk, The Yeo Group, The National Trust, Attain Solutions Ltd and AHP Consulting. The four annual board meetings are attended by officers from East Suffolk Council and Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.

The executive team comprises Annie Willey (Brand Manager, 0.6) mainly focused on attracting and retaining paying members, Julian Evans (Marketing Director, 0.2), Beccie Amer (Marketing Manager, 0.6) responsible for all social media and overall PR, and an administrator (0.6). This totals 2.0 FTE roles.

4. Membership

Annual membership fees are £110 + VAT. Whilst there is price sensitivity, we believe that prices can be increased to £115 +VAT from 22/23.

In August 2020, TSC's membership was 233, though this contained a number of businesses who had been offered subsidised membership. The cautious forecast is that membership will drop to c. 176 in 2021, before recovering to pre-Covid levels by 2023. It may be possible to improve on this, but it is a challenge to predict how the visitor economy will perform in 2021 and 2022.

5. Regional networking

TSC has also devoted time and energy into fostering strong links with other neighbouring DMOs in Suffolk and Norfolk. TSC has been a powerful advocate for collaboration, which has become much more productive in recent times, in large part due to TSC's leadership. Building these relationships requires skill, patience and diplomacy.

6. Sources of income

The team needs to be sure of having core costs covered (c. £110K) to free it up to search for funds for impactful marketing campaigns. This is a particular challenge for TSC, as many other DMOs benefit from income from Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

The core costs should be covered in the following ways, as outlined in the financial attachment.

- East Suffolk Council's core grant funding is crucial to the viability of TSC, accounting for 53% of income in 2021/22 dropping to 49% for 2023/24.
- Membership fees, which require significant effort to manage, provides c. 20% of TSC's annual income.
- The team has worked hard to raise additional sums through advertising revenues, but this stream has been significantly affected by the pandemic.
- ESC has provided other funding for conferences, and the highly successful 'Festival and Events Fund' which allows TSC to support local activities with high quality marketing services.
- TSC has plans for a new "joint campaign" model, where the DMO looks for match funding from key members.
- In the last financial year TSC was supported by a £22.8k grant from VisitEngland we are not aware of further support being available and have not incorporated it in the budgets moving forwards.

If TSC's team has robust and reliable support from ESC, it can focus on devising and running high quality, high impact campaigns (mainly digital).

7. Marketing Activity

A core strength of TSC is the knowledge and skills available to support marketing activity. With DMO team members that run their own businesses specialising in print and digital advertising, social media, SEO, PR, website development and content delivery. TSC is able to deliver results without engaging expensive advertising agencies.

The primary marketing focus in the three-year plan is to continue to work on TSC website and audience engagement, this is covered in the core DMO costs.

Through the pandemic TSC website was one of the only websites across Suffolk and Norfolk that matched year on year audience engagement despite a reduction in above the line advertising. Over the summer period the website users increased by 43%. We will continue to engage with and increase audiences on social media platforms and subscribers.

In addition to this work we will again be the conduit to deliver the Festival and Event funding support for East Suffolk Council, this has proven to be an incredibly successful method of supporting local

events that attracts new visitors to the region. **The support for this is covered within the core costs of TSC.** During 2020 no festivals or events took place due to COVID-10 and the proposed financial accounts for 2021-24 similarly assumes no festival and events funding during 2021-22 because of COVID.

In 2020/2021 we saw the DMO's from across Suffolk and Norfolk combine their experience and marketing knowledge to support activity co-ordinated by Visit East of England. Each Council provides funding that previously was given to Visit Suffolk, East Suffolk Council have the joint largest contribution of £14k per annum.

In 2020/2021 this fund was given to Visit East of England by all Suffolk and Norfolk DMOs which provided a very significant budget for a campaign for the East of England. TSC provided marketing insights with weekly meetings, assets in the form of video and photography and content creation to support the Visit East of England campaign. **The support for this is covered within the core costs of TSC and will continue through in the three-year plan.**

Working together as wider regions, such as the DMO's across Suffolk and Norfolk, is a model that Visit East of England has been encouraging. This combined activity enabled Visit East of England to bid for marketing funding for VEE from Visit England. Bids have been successful and TSC along with the other DMOs has provided resource to help develop the bids, develop the campaign concepts, organise the marketing assets so that the campaign could be delivered for VEE. **Again, this support is covered within TSC core costs.**

Over the next three years we expect the visitor economy to be influenced by a number of large projects, these could provide joint marketing opportunities but cannot be incorporated firmly into a business plan:

- £24.9 million Lowestoft Town Investment Plan – TSC have engaged with East Suffolk Council to discuss the importance of a marketing proposal within the business plan.
- Felixstowe BID – approved in November 2020 they have allocated £422k per year over the next 5 years for “local visitor marketing and promotion of the town” TSC are in early discussions with the Felixstowe BID about marketing activity.
- Sizewell Cycle Path (working title) – a £1.5 million cycle project led by David Falk at SCC to form part of the SZC Tourism Mitigation Fund which has £150k planned for a three-year marketing plan.
- Introduction of “Tourism Zones”. This was an initial driver for Suffolk and Norfolk DMOs to work together. New Tourism Zones will benefit from additional funding. There is an expectation that the East of England may not be included because as a region we performed relatively well compared to other areas through the pandemic.
- Scottish Power Renewables – see below
- EDF Energy – see below

8. Energy Projects

TSC, in partnership with ESC, continues to engage in conversations with EDF Energy and to a lesser extent ScottishPower Renewables. If either or both of the projects are to go ahead, 'Tourism Funds' are likely to be provided to mitigate the impacts on the visitor economy, which would be substantial. In this scenario, TSC and ESC should review the three-year funding agreement.

9. Summary of 3-year strategy

TSC will focus on the following strategy in the following three years;

- Help tourism businesses recover after the challenges of 2020
 - Continue to provide COVID advice and guidance
 - Continue to direct tourism businesses to available financial support
 - Continue to provide excellent destination marketing services across East Suffolk
 - Work with other DMOs, Visit Suffolk etc to secure longer-term tourism support for the county and the region
- Regrow advertising and membership income.
- Work closely with strategic partner ESC to secure stable support to contribute to core costs, allowing the small team to actively seek funding for impactful campaigns.
- Stay deeply involved in discussions with ESC and the energy project developers, ready to play the major role in protecting the reputation of the area as a serene and tranquil place to visit, and to conceive new products and assets to mitigate the impacts of the projects.
- Engage with regional tourism colleagues, other Suffolk DMOs, Visit Suffolk, Visit East of England and supporting the mission to make East Anglia a Tourism Zone.
- Work with Suffolk Growth Partnership in shaping the Visitor Economy, this is linked to the recently created post - Strategic lead for the visitor economy – Suffolk Growth Partnership. Retain the strong team and provide them with additional support. Refresh the board, with a new chair and a more diverse membership.

In order to deliver this strategy, TSC requires the security of funding, as laid out in the 3-year financial model.