

**Unconfirmed**



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Full Council** held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, on **Wednesday, 22 September 2021 at 6:30 PM**

**Members present:**

Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Chris Blundell, Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Tony Cooper, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Janet Craig, Councillor Tom Daly, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor John Fisher, Councillor Lydia Freeman, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Tess Gandy, Councillor Andree Gee, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Stuart Lawson, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor Chris Mapey, Councillor Keith Patience, Councillor Malcolm Pitchers, Councillor Russ Rainger, Councillor Mick Richardson, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Keith Robinson, Councillor Mary Rudd, Councillor Letitia Smith, Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Councillor Ed Thompson, Councillor Caroline Topping

**Officers present:** Stephen Baker (Chief Executive), Chris Bing (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), 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), Tamzen Pope (Coastal Engineering and Operations Manager, CPE), Dickon Povey (Principal Planner (Policy and Delivery)), Julian Sturman (Senior Accountant), Karen Thomas (Head of Coastal Partnership East), Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager)

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**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors E Brambley-Crawshaw, A Cackett, J Ceresa, J Cloke, T Fryatt, T Goldson, T Green, C Hedgley, R Kerry, D McCallum, F Mortimer, T Mortimer, M Newton, C Poulter, D Ritchie, S Wiles and K Yule.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor A Gee declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest during the discussions relating to item 10, Beccles Neighbourhood Plan, as she was currently the Council's representative on the Broads Authority.

Councillor C Rivett declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest in Item 13, Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project - Tidal Barrier, as he was a representative on the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Board.

Councillor C Topping declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest in Item 10, Beccles Neighbourhood Plan, as she was a former Beccles Town Councillor.

### **3 Announcements**

The Chairman of the Council invited the Chief Executive to commence the announcements on this occasion.

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Chief Executive

The Chief Executive stated that he was sad to report the sudden passing of Steve Rock, a Senior Environmental Health Officer, within the Council's Environmental Health Team. Steve had been a valued, respected, dedicated and professional member of the team. He had enjoyed a long career in local government and had worked at several Councils in the region, prior to joining the former Waveney District Council in 2018. He had been involved in training and advising many Environmental Health Officers over the years and he was hugely respected by colleagues, businesses and communities. He was a truly dedicated public servant, who had helped many others to excel in the field of Environmental Health. Our thoughts are with his wife, sons, family and friends.

The Chief Executive then invited Councillor Mary Rudd, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health, to say a few words.

Councillor Rudd, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health

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Steve Rock had great energy, wisdom, over 40 years experience in his role and was a key member of the Food Safety Team. We can all take comfort from knowing that there are people, like Steve, with all his knowledge and experience, who are working hard every day to keep everyone safe. Councillor Rudd stated she was proud to announce the start of the public consultation on the new statutory Food and Safety Plan, which Steve had played a vital role in creating and we will be dedicating the Plan to his memory.

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The Chairman of the Council

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The Chairman advised that he had attended some Civic Engagements on behalf of the Council which included:

- \* Norfolk County Council's Annual Summer Reception
- \* The 999 Flag Day
- \* Freedom of the Town of Lowestoft Event, for the vessel Excelsior and the owner John Wilson
- \* Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, the Chairman had been unable to attend a royal visit at Sutton Hoo and the Chief Executive had attended on behalf of the Council instead.
- \* The Beccles and Southwold Royal Air Force Association Battle of Britain Service

The Leader of the Council

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The Leader of the Council took the opportunity to expand on the tributes from the Chief Executive and Councillor Rudd, regarding the passing of Steve Rock. The Leader

stated that he had known Steve, via a local walking group 'Walking for Pleasure' which met regularly in the south of the district. He paid tribute to Steve and his thoughts were with his friends and family.

The Leader then welcomed Councillor Mick Richardson and Councillor Lydia Freeman to their first Full Council meetings, following their recent by-elections. He invited all Members join him in wishing them well at their first Full Council meeting.

The Leader reported that Councillor Maurice Cook, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, carried out his duties diligently and enthusiastically, and that his input into a number of key projects had been invaluable to the smooth and efficient running of the Council. In order to assist Councillor Cook with his increasing workload, the Leader announced that, with effect from 1 October 2021, he would be appointing Councillor Ed Back to the post of Assistant Cabinet Member, to provide him with some additional support.

The Leader stated that Councillor Back was currently the Vice Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, and to prevent any conflict of interest, it was therefore necessary for him to relinquish his membership of this committee to take up this new post. The Leader stated that he was pleased to announce that Councillor Mick Richardson was to be appointed to the Audit and Governance Committee, in place of Councillor Back, also with effect from 1 October 2021. Councillor Cooper, a current serving Member of the Audit and Governance Committee, would take on the role of Vice Chairman, which would be vacated by Councillor Back, also on 1 October 2021.

As part of his new role, the Leader confirmed that Councillor Back was to be appointed as the East Suffolk Executive Member of the Anglia Revenue Partnership, in place of Councillor Cook. Councillor Cook would remain as one of the two substitute members of ARP, together with the Leader. The Leader asked all Members to join him in wishing Councillor Back and Councillor Richardson well in their new roles.

The Leader advised that he had made one change regarding the Appointments to Working Groups. Using the delegations given to him by Full Council and Cabinet, respectively, and with immediate effect, Councillor Fryatt would be standing down from the Local Plan Working Group and Councillor Stuart Bird would be his replacement.

Finally, at the last Full Council meeting, the Leader had reported that Councillor Jenny Ceresa had requested to step down as Chairman of the Carlton Colville, Kessingland, Southwold and villages Community Partnership and that Councillor Norman Brooks would take over as Chairman from 1 November 2021. For various reasons, the Leader needed to revise that date and Councillor Brooks would now take over as Chairman of that Community Partnership with effect from 1 December 2021.

#### Members of the Cabinet

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development reported that, earlier this month, the Regeneration Team were awarded the Bronze Award in the category of Asset Management and Regeneration at the 2021 AIESE Public Sector Transformation Awards. The award was in recognition of the

collaborative approach in the creation of the Town Investment Plan for Lowestoft. This innovative approach used place-making working with the communities to create a significant programme of regeneration which had already generated £30 million of public sector investment. The Lowestoft Place Board was formed and was made up of a mix of public and private sector partners, to oversee the Town Investment Plan. An Ambassadors Network was also created with key lead ambassadors to help promote the Town Investment Plan and the projects that all stakeholders were carrying out to make Lowestoft a better place to live. The total amount of investment in Lowestoft was over £300 million. Those present took the opportunity to thank and congratulate to the Regeneration Team for their Award and ongoing hard work.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development stated that, whilst the government offered numerous consultations throughout the year, in Councillor Ritchie's absence and in relation to his own Portfolio responsibilities, he announced the Consultation on the Energy National Policy Statements. It was noted that East Suffolk Council was now on its third nationally significant infrastructure energy examination of the year and, at one stage, all three examinations were overlapping. He then thanked all officers involved, particularly the Energy Team, for rising to the challenge to get the best deal for East Suffolk. This consultation would be another opportunity for the Council to influence the government, as these policy statements set out the policy for the delivery of energy infrastructure and the framework for NSIP planning decisions.

#### The Chief Executive

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There were no further announcements on this occasion.

#### **4 Questions from the Public**

No questions have been submitted by the electorate as provided by Council Procedure Rule 8.

#### **5 Questions from Members**

##### a) Question from Councillor David Beavan to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources

How many "holiday let businesses" in Southwold Ward were refused a Covid grant application in 2020 and 2021, and are there any outstanding investigations? Further are they still allowed to escape council tax and rates by pretending to be a genuine business? I only need headline figures and do not require any personal information that may identify them.

##### Response from Councillor Maurice Cook:

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To date, no applications from businesses for Covid grants in Southwold have been refused, because all applicants were initially assessed as meeting the eligibility criteria. At this time, I cannot confirm or deny whether there are any outstanding Council investigations into potential fraud in relation to Covid grants. It would not be appropriate for me to release this information. However, I can reassure you, Councillor

Beavan, that East Suffolk Council has zero tolerance of fraud and the appropriate enforcement action was always taken to recover public funds and bring perpetrators to justice when fraud was identified.

The total number of self-catering holiday units in East Suffolk as at 1st September 2020 was 1422 and was currently 1523, an increase of 101 throughout the whole of the district.

Cllr Beavan did suggest to me, in separate correspondence, that holiday lets in his ward had doubled to 573 in the last year. However, in replicating his search it was found that this figure included all types of holiday opportunities and any property, in surrounding parishes, which included Southwold in an address line.

The correct figure for Southwold, Walberswick and Reydon parishes last year was 361 self-catering holiday units. (281 + 45 + 35). This year there are currently 378 (294 + 45 + 39) which represented an increase of 17 over the year.

It would be fair to say, therefore, that holiday lets have been on the rise for some time, due to low RV's on the properties and the ability to claim Small Business Rate Relief as a result, and that this had increased, as more people become aware of the opportunity to reduce their liabilities.

Members will be aware that in March 2021, I announced that, in response to our lobbying, HM Treasury were to introduce plans to legislate to change the law to strengthen the self-catering accommodation criteria for business rates, to account for actual days the property was rented. This would ensure that owners of properties cannot reduce their tax liability by declaring that a property was available for let, while making little or no actual effort to do so.

Upon recent enquiry of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, we have now been advised that the regulations that will be necessary to deliver the requisite changes, will be taken forward over the autumn period. I'm sure Members across the Chamber will welcome the imminent closing of this apparent loophole, which was something that East Suffolk Council has actively sought for some time.

#### Supplementary Question from Councillor David Beavan

To be clear, there were no investigations and no grants were refused? I find it strange that you are not able to say if there are any investigations underway or outstanding.

#### Response from Councillor Cook

I cannot confirm or deny if there are any ongoing investigations, it would not be appropriate for me to release any information on this matter.

#### b) Question from Councillor Janet Craig to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health

The LGA is currently calling for a change to the Licensing Act to require operators to take public health into account in running their premises, alongside wider safety and

crime issues. Councils can only currently consider four issues when deciding whether to grant licences – the prevention of crime and disorder; public safety; prevention of public nuisance; and protection of children from harm.

The LGA maintains that giving councils the powers to consider the public health impact of licensing decisions is vital to protect communities from harm, reduce NHS costs and save lives.

It wants to see the Licensing Act updated to include a public health objective and allow for action where premises fail to protect the health of their communities, Councils also need greater access to NHS data, including hospital admissions and ambulance call-out details to assist decision making.

Excessive alcohol consumption is estimated to cost the NHS £3.2 billion a year, with additional costs falling to Social Services, Police and businesses.

The proposed change to the Licensing Act would place a legal requirement on businesses to think about public health issues and give councils long-term tools to act on public health risks. We are aware that this Council has twin duties, both to support local businesses with a vibrant economy and to protect our communities from harm, so what strategy is this Council implementing to monitor the impact on public health of the night-time economy in particular, as it re-opens post Covid?

#### Response from Councillor Rudd:

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East Suffolk Council, as the local licensing authority, regulates the sale of alcohol, the supply of alcohol, the provision of various forms of entertainment and the provision of late night refreshment in the district pursuant to the Licensing Act 2003.

Whilst public health was not currently a licensing objective, it was important to note that since 2013, Directors of Public Health in England have been included in the list of responsible authorities to be consulted by licensing authorities on licensing applications. Therefore, Directors of Public Health, like all Responsible Authorities, are entitled to object to and make representations on individual licensing applications and to trigger reviews of existing Premises Licences. Objections to applications for new premises licences and applications for reviews of existing premises licences from responsible authorities are determined by East Suffolk Council's Licensing Sub-Committees.

East Suffolk Council's Licensing Services and Suffolk Constabulary regulate and enforce the responsible sale and supply of alcohol by licensed premises. The sale of alcohol to a person who is drunk, or to a child, or proxy sales are criminal offences which would also be considered serious breaches of a Premises Licence and in such cases appropriate enforcement action would be taken by the licensing authority and/or the police against the Premises Licence, the Designated Premises Supervisor and/or the Premises Licence Holder.

Licensing Services has a welfare page on its website where it signposts persons seeking support with alcohol addiction to NHS and specialist support organisations.

East Suffolk Council also works closely with our public sector and Clinical Commissioning Group colleagues to address the wider determinants of health and their impact on individual health and wellbeing. For example, we are working on a project with Norfolk and Waveney CCG and partners around health inequalities in the north of the District, which includes a focus on preventable health conditions. Alcohol was one factor that contributes to the prevalence of preventable health conditions (along with smoking, poor diet and lack of activity) and we work (and will continue to work) with colleagues in public health to support those with substance abuse issues and support various tools, including social marketing, to encourage people to drink in moderation and understand the impact of alcohol on their body/health.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Janet Craig

- If the local statistics from the NHS and ambulance service were to indicate that consideration of the impact on public health would be beneficial in our consideration of licencing decisions, would this Council support this change to the Licensing Act?

Response from Councillor Mary Rudd

- Yes, I think the Council would. You may wish to suggest this as a matter to be referred to the Licensing Committee, in order that they can fully consider the matter and make recommendations in due course. It must also be noted that any changes to the Licensing Objectives would require the Licensing Act 2003 to be amended by Parliament.

c) Question from Councillor Tess Gandy to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources

Given the significant number of recipients of Universal Credit across East Suffolk, what impact assessments have been undertaken, as a result of the planned cut to Universal Credit across our communities, to take into account the reduced ability of individuals and families to pay housing costs, including rent, Council Tax and increasing utility bills?

Response from Councillor Cook:

- There will be no cut, as such, to Universal Credit as this extra support was announced by the Chancellor as a temporary measure in March 2020 to support those likely to be facing the most financial disruption as a result of the public health emergency. Alongside the temporary increase to Universal Credit and Tax Credits, the Government has invested over £352bn in measures to create, support and protect jobs and businesses – as well as introduced measures such as mortgage holidays and additional support for renters, and has worked with energy suppliers to protect those struggling with energy bills.

On top of the planned uprating, it was very welcome that the Government extended the temporary £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance until the end of September 2021, meaning that the additional support has remained in place well beyond the end of economic restrictions.

At a local level, the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) will continue to receive the same level of support towards their Council Tax when the UC uplift ceases, and there was consequently no need to complete an impact assessment in respect of this. More generally, the Council carried out Equality Impact Assessments each year when considering rent, council tax, and fee and charge levels. In carrying out these assessments, the Council takes into account the range of measures that exist to mitigate the impact of any increases.

In this respect, a number of measures have been introduced by the Council and Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) in the last two years, to both directly support customers in respect of the impact of the pandemic, and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of dealing with all benefits.

In 2020/21 the Council administered a Council Tax Hardship Fund allocation of £1.917m, which was used to reduce the council tax liability of working age LCTRS customers. The Hardship Fund covered the amount of the council tax that LCTRS claimants were required to pay, typically 8.5% under the Council's scheme, up to a maximum of £150.

The Council obtained approval from MHCLG to utilise the remaining funding from this allocation the COVID Hardship Support Grant for working age LCTRS customers throughout the 2021/22 year, enabling a flat rate relief of £30 to be applied to their bills.

In addition to freezing its own element of the Council Tax for 2021/22, the Council also passed on £110,000 of Local Council Tax Support Grant to town and parish councils to enable them to also keep increases down this year.

Initiatives have been introduced to streamline customer experience and claiming requirements by utilising data share with DWP & HMRC. This means that customers are not required to make a separate claims to the Council to ask for help with their Council Tax and the burden of reporting changes in their circumstances has been reduced. In September, the Cabinet approved proposals to consult the public on further improvements to streamline the customer experience, from April 2022.

To help residents during the early part of last year the Council issued informal, soft reminders to residents who had not paid their Council Tax. The Council seeks every opportunity to engage with and help customers to pay their Council Tax, often spreading arrangements over an agreed and affordable period of time. ARP is about to launch smart use of technology to contact customers to remind them to pay before a formal reminder is issued.

Finally, LCTRS customers can also apply to the Council on the following link to request Exceptional Hardship help with their Council Tax. DHP and EHP Application - ([www.financialassessments.co.uk](http://www.financialassessments.co.uk))

Supplementary Question from Councillor Tess Gandy

- Since my question was submitted, the situation has deteriorated rapidly and there has been a wholesale increase in the cost of gas and electricity, which will disproportionately affect those on lower incomes. Last week in Parliament, our MP, Peter Aldous, was one of only 4 Conservative MPs to speak against the removal of the Universal Credit uplift. He stated that UC had been frozen for 4 years and that there was a responsibility to protect those on the lowest incomes and the most vulnerable, from falling into poverty and despair. I ask that letters be written to the 3 MPs whose constituencies fall within our district. The first, to Peter Aldous to thank him for supporting this cause so passionately, and two further letters to be sent to Dan Poulter and Therese Coffey asking why they were not able to demonstrate the same humanity as Peter Aldous.

#### Response from Councillor Maurice Cook

- The Labour Group are most welcome to contact the 3 MPs regarding this matter should they wish. This Council will not be writing to them on this occasion.

## **6 Petitions**

No petitions have been received as provided by Council Procedure Rule 10.

## **7 Notices of Motion**

No Notices of Motion have been made as provided by Council Procedure Rule 11.

## **8 Political balance and allocation of seats on Committees 2021/22**

Full Council received report **ES/0891** by the Leader of the Council. It was noted that the membership of the Committees and Sub-Committees of East Suffolk Council was determined under the terms of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. Those provisions require the Authority to review the representation of political groups and individuals on the Committees, Sub-Committees, and other appropriate bodies to ensure that the seats on Committees are allocated by Group Leaders in proportion to the political groups' membership of the Council. The Leader stated that Councillor Melissa Allen (Orwell and Villages Ward) had resigned from East Suffolk Council with effect from 18 June 2021. A by-election for the vacant seat in this Ward was held on 12 August 2021 and Councillor Mick Richardson was elected.

The Leader drew Members' attention to Appendix A to the report, where it was proposed that Councillor Beavan would replace Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw on Planning Committee North.

The Leader had already updated Full Council during his Announcements, that Councillor Back would be replaced on the Audit and Governance Committee by Councillor Richardson on 1 October 2021. Councillor Tony Cooper would become Vice Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee on 1 October 2021, replacing Councillor Edward Back.

The Leader advised that before an any councillor was to sit on a regulatory committee, ie Planning and Licensing, they must have undertaken the required training, and arrangements were in place for all newly elected members to receive this training. Councillor Bird offered his congratulations to Councillor Back on his new appointment and he queried how an Assistant Cabinet Member - Councillor Cooper - was able to hold the position of Vice Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, as advice from the previous Monitoring Officer had prohibited this. The Leader reported that there was no reason why an Assistant Cabinet Member could not sit on the Scrutiny Committee or the Audit and Governance Committee, as they were not statutory roles. The Monitoring Officer concurred with the Leader's statement.

There being no further questions or discussion it was moved and seconded and

## **RESOLVED**

1) That, with effect from 22 September 2021 seats on Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council be allocated in accordance with the nominations by Group Leaders indicated within Appendix A to this report.

2) That Councillor Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw be replaced on Planning Committee North by Councillor David Beavan, with immediate effect.

3) That Councillor Edward Back be replaced on the Audit and Governance Committee by Councillor Mick Richardson, from 1 October 2021. Councillor Tony Cooper will take on the position of Vice Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee from 1 October 2021, which was previously held by Councillor Edward Back.

## **9 Treasury Management Outturn 2020/21 and Mid-Year 2021/22 Report**

Full Council received report **ES/0892**, by the Cabinet Member for Resources, who stated that the Treasury Management Policy Statement required an annual report and mid-year report to be produced and noted by the Audit & Governance Committee and Full Council.

The report reviewed the performance of the Treasury Management Function of East Suffolk Council for the financial year 2020/21 and then looked at the first half of the financial year 2021/22.

Summary for 2020/21:

- Investments totalled £119.86m as at 31 March 2021, which was made up of £71m of short-term investments, £33.86m of long-term investments and £15m of liquidity investments.
- Interest received during the year totalled £1.15m, which exceeded the planned budget of £800k due to increased return on the Property and Multi Asset Fund Investments.
- Borrowing totalled £77.25m as at 31 March 2021, of which £71.17m related to the Housing Revenue Account and £6.08m related to the General Fund.

Summary for 2021/22 to date:

- Investments totalled £149.92m as at 31 August 2021, which was made up of £68m of short-term investments, £33.92m of long-term investments and £48m of liquidity investments.
- Interest received to 31 August 2021 totalled £257k.

The Cabinet Member for Resources concluded that the Council has operated its Treasury Management function within the prescribed Treasury Management Policy and Prudential Indicators for 2020/21 and for the first half of 2021/22. The Council continued to ensure security over liquidity when managing the Council's investments. It was encouraging that the long-term investments placed in the property and multi asset fund had held up well during the pandemic, which had ensured that the Council had achieved its anticipated investment income. Members noted that the Council continued to monitor the desire for ethical investments and ensure, where possible, the investments met this criteria.

Councillor Byatt commented that he had attended the Audit and Governance Committee meeting earlier in the week, which had also considered this report. He thanked the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and the Chief Finance Officer for their hard work over the past year and in particular, for working to find ethical investments.

There being no further questions or debate, it was moved and seconded and

#### **RESOLVED**

- a) That the Annual Report on the Council's Treasury Management activity for 2020/21 incorporating the Mid-Year review for 2021/22 be noted.
- b) That the Prudential Indicators Outturn position for 2020/21 in Appendix B be noted.

## **10 Beccles Neighbourhood Plan**

N.B. During the discussions on this item, Councillor Andree Gee declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest in this item, as she was a Member of the Broads Authority.

Full Council received report **ES/0882** which was presented by the Assistant Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management. He reported that Neighbourhood Plans gave communities a voice on how they would like to see development take place in their parishes, towns, and villages. Neighbourhood Plans were an opportunity to set out a positive vision, with aims and objectives, and to write the planning policies for how development in their areas would help to achieve them. East Suffolk Council provided support for our communities on their neighbourhood planning journey, which included helping develop their plan; arranging an Examination; holding a referendum; and finally 'making' the plan. Once made, a neighbourhood plan was part of the development plan and was a statutory consideration in determining planning applications in the neighbourhood area.

Beccles Neighbourhood Plan had been produced as a result of a huge amount of hard work and commitment from local people working with Beccles Town Council. The neighbourhood plan identified and responded to a range of matters that have been

raised through engagement with the community. Some of these include:

- supporting new community facilities
- supporting tourism development and new hotels
- conserving or enhancing heritage assets
- supporting key movement routes to promote walking and cycling, including for people with mobility, sight or hearing impairments
- Greater flexibility for uses in Beccles town centre
- High quality design for new development including streets and public spaces

Members noted that the neighbourhood plan also included a number of 'Community Actions' to address matters which can not be tackled through planning policies. The plan had been built on engagement with the community and it had undergone formal stages of consultation. The Neighbourhood Plan went through Examination by an independent examiner earlier this year, resulting in a recommendation to proceed to referendum. The plan successfully passed the referendum, which took place on 16 September 2021. The neighbourhood planning legislation states that East Suffolk Council must now 'make' the Beccles Neighbourhood Plan.

The Assistant Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management reported that part of the Beccles Neighbourhood Area falls within the Broads Authority area. It was noted that the Broads Authority would also be taking the decision to make the Neighbourhood Plan at their meeting on 24 September 2021.

Councillor Topping stated that as a former Beccles Town Councillor, she was aware of the hard work and dedication required in producing the Neighbourhood Plan. She took the opportunity to thank officers for their support and encouraged other areas within the district to consider creating their own Plans too.

Councillor Gooch queried how the Council could support adjacent Neighbourhood Plans, eg in Beccles and Worlingham, and encourage engagement between the two areas, as referred to in paragraph 1.9 of Appendix A. The Principal Planner for Policy and Delivery reported that the Council would facilitate co-working, whereby the content of each plan would be addressed by both groups. The aim was to achieve a positive outcome for both groups.

Councillor Byatt queried whether the Southern Relief Road had provided the efficiencies and reduction in traffic travelling through Beccles, as originally hoped? The Principal Planner for Policy and Development reported that Suffolk County Council would have the relevant traffic information, as they were the responsible authority. Councillor Back commented that sav navs needed to be updated to ensure that drivers were directed via the Southern Relief Road, rather than through the centre of Beccles.

There being no further questions or debate, it was moved, seconded and

## **RESOLVED**

That the Council "make" the Beccles Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum version) part of the statutory Development Plan for the part of the Beccles Neighbourhood Area within East Suffolk following a positive Referendum result.

## Cabinet Members' Report and Outside Bodies Representatives' Reports to Council

The Leader of the Council presented report **ES/0883**, which provided individual Cabinet Members' reports, as well as reports by Outside Bodies' representatives. The Leader stated that the written reports would be taken as read and he invited questions on their contents.

Councillor Patience asked Councillor Mallinder, Cabinet Member for the Environment, if he could keep raising the issue of 7 day opening for the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) in Lowestoft. He also stated that North Lowestoft also needed a waste recycling centre, as there were many new housing developments underway and increased demand in the North of Lowestoft, as well as some difficulties in accessing the current facilities in South Lowestoft, particularly as they were not open every day. Councillor Mallinder confirmed that he supported this and would continue to press the Suffolk Waste Partnership for improved opening hours for the HWRC in South Lowestoft and the creation of an additional service in North Lowestoft.

The Leader of the Council took the opportunity to remind Members that questions could be put to Cabinet Members at any time, Members did not have to wait until the next available Full Council meeting.

Councillor Topping commented that Covid had changed the way that the Council worked and she queried when officers would be out and meeting with the public again? Councillor Burroughes, Cabinet Member for Customer Services, ICT and Operational Partnerships reported that he would be providing Members with a written update on when and how face to face contact would take place again. There would be an overarching update on Customer Experience, which would be opening up in a gradual way, whilst still ensuring safety for all.

Councillor Deacon queried the wording in the update on the Internal Drainage Board by Councillor Cloke. The first sentence stated that the Board consisted of elected members 'who were mainly landowners'. He sought clarification regarding the stated landownership. As Councillor Cloke was not in attendance at the meeting, it was agreed that an answer would be provided and circulated outside of the meeting.

Councillor Byatt stated that Councillor Mallinder had referred to footpaths in his report, which he acknowledged was a Suffolk County Council responsibility. He asked how the Council was engaging with SCC to ensure that they were fulfilling their obligations, particularly for new developments? Councillor Mallinder confirmed that there was significant engagement with SCC during the planning process by Planning Officers.

Councillor Gooch referred to the Leader's report on the LGA General Assembly meeting. She commented that Members may be contacted by their constituents regarding the Food Strategy and the Plant Based Treaty. The Leader raised a point of order and stated that Members should only be asking questions relating to the report, at this point in the meeting. The Chairman stated that if Councillor Gooch wished to leave some leaflets for Members to read, outside of the meeting, she could do so.

Councillor Fisher asked Councillor Mallinder if the Environment Task Group had considered the Friends of the Earth 50 point Climate Action Plan for Local Councils? Councillor Mallinder confirmed that the Environment Task Group looked at all such action plans and strategies from different pressure groups.

The report was received for information.

## **12 Exempt/Confidential Items**

It was moved by the Chairman and seconded by the Leader and it was

### **RESOLVED**

That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the Meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

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

## **13 Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project - Tidal Barrier**

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

The meeting concluded at 7.45 pm.

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Chairman