

**Confirmed**



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Cabinet** held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, on **Tuesday, 5 October 2021 at 6:30 pm**

**Members of the Cabinet present:**

Councillor Norman Brooks, 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 Edward Back, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Alison Cackett, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Frank Mortimer, Councillor Trish Mortimer, Councillor Caroline Topping

**Officers present:** Stephen Baker (Chief Executive), Kerry Blair (Head of Operations), Karen Cook (Democratic Services Manager), Sarah Davis (Democratic Services Officer), Kathryn Hurlock (Asset and Investment Manager), Andrew Jarvis (Strategic Director), Helen Johnson (Culture and Heritage Programme Manager), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Sue Meeken (Political Group Support Officer (Labour)), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer), Agnes Ogundiran (Conservative Political Group Support Officer), Nicole Rickard (Head of Communities), Daniel Waring (Environmental Sustainability Officer), Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager)

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**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Burroughes and from Councillor Cook.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3 Announcements**

There were no announcements.

**4 East Suffolk Council Funding for Disability Information, Advice and Support Services in East Suffolk**

Cabinet received report **ES/0904** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, the purpose of which was to seek growth funding to ensure equitable access to information, advice and support services for people with disabilities across East Suffolk. Councillor Smith reported that the proposal within the report would ensure that support could be provided to people with a wide range of disabilities across the whole of the District Council area. This would help provide greater certainty that the health, wellbeing and safety of those with disabilities was maximised. Funding to support two organisations covering the whole of the District would maximise the opportunity to enable/support people with disabilities to participate in the eight community partnerships and enable both organisations in the area to work with East Suffolk Council (ESC) to take positive action on the issues identified by the target group.

Councillor Smith highlighted, as referenced within the report that, currently, 20.4% of the East Suffolk population said that their lives were limited a little, or a lot, by a disability or long term health conditions, compared to nationally, which was 17.6%. Councillor Smith reiterated that ESC currently funded one disability information group for advice and support in the north of the district and the proposal was to fund a group in the south of the District so that the same independent advice could be provided.

Following a question from the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing in respect of the higher than national level percentage figures provided by Councillor Smith, it was confirmed that this was for a number of reasons, ie related to the demographics and the ageing population within East Suffolk, which was higher than the national average, and because in some parts of the District there were particular disabilities and long term health conditions that were linked to employment that people had held in the past. The Leader referred to the importance of ESC reaching out and doing all that it could in support.

Councillor Frank Mortimer, after giving his thanks to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, and officers, for their work, gave his support for the proposals within the report. Councillor Frank Mortimer felt that bringing both forums and both charities together was an important step. Councillor Frank Mortimer also applauded the work of Disability Advice North East Suffolk (DANES).

Councillor Green, after welcoming the proposals within the report, asked for clarification in respect of the Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum and any interaction between the Forum and the group that would be funded in the south of the District. Officers confirmed that there was a simple Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place with DANES and something similar would be developed with Disability Advice Suffolk (DAS); there was already a connection but it would be written in as part of the SLA that they would work with the Disability Forum that covered the Suffolk Coastal area.

Councillor Gooch, referring to the SLAs, and the activities that were currently supported by DANES, and the newly developed SLA for DAS, enquired in respect of standardising communications that would go out from both organisations, ie plain English etc. It was confirmed that one of the aims of the Disability Forums was to ensure that plain English and simple terminology were used and the forums were used

as a point of reference to assist ESC in those ambitions. Officers added that they were working with both Forums in respect of projects and activities where equality impact assessments had identified an impact on people with disabilities. Officers advised that the point raised by Councillor Gooch could be built into the review of the SLAs.

Speaking again, regarding the two Forums, Councillor Frank Mortimer reported that they worked closely together and they also held joint meetings; he applauded their excellent work. The Leader added his thanks to the two Forums, referring to the work that they did to help ESC to understand the issues and fund solutions for members of the community.

Following a question from Councillor Topping in respect of DAS and 85% of clients living in East Suffolk and the remainder being from Ipswich, and the need to avoid duplication, it was confirmed that the 15% balance of clients, generally, lived within the east side of Ipswich, close to Kesgrave / Martlesham. It was confirmed that there was not any duplication with other services in Ipswich.

Councillor Byatt felt that the number of those with disabilities, within the East Suffolk area, would increase over time; he asked if a yearly review of support would be put in place. The Leader, referring to budgets going forward, stated that he was reliant on the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, and officers to provide him with information, to ensure that the service continued at the level that was suitable for ESC; if that required more money in the future, then that would be considered at the right time.

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

## **RESOLVED**

That an additional £12,000 per annum to fund the Disability Advice Service to provide information, advice and support on all aspects of living with a disability to disabled people in the former Suffolk Coastal area, and a small increase in grant funding of £1,000 per year for Disability Advice North East Suffolk which provides services in the former Waveney area be approved.

## **5 Environment Task Group - Quarterly Update**

Cabinet received report **ES/0905** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment, the purpose of which was to advise Cabinet on the work of the Environment Task Group, since the last report on 1 June 2021. Confirmation was sought that the Task Group was continuing to deliver on the task it was set by Cabinet to investigate ways to cut ESC's carbon and other harmful emissions.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment reminded members that the Environment was a key principle of the Council's Strategic Plan; also ESC had declared a Climate Emergency to reinforce that commitment. The Task Group, Councillor Mallinder reported, focussed on more than carbon neutrality by 2030 and it looked at all things environmental. There was a breakdown, Councillor Mallinder

advised, in society, where the Environment was considered in that reduction of carbon was important but so too was preserving the nature of biodiversity that removed the carbon from the Environment, ie planting more trees, and also protecting the trees in place. Referring to Waste, Councillor Mallinder stated that there needed to be more recycling, but also there needed to be better recycling and less waste produced and less consumption.

Councillor Mallinder highlighted a recent report considered by Cabinet, ie the move to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), which would reduce the carbon footprint for the fleet of ESC vehicles by 94% and for the Council as a whole by over 32%. Councillor Mallinder also highlighted the Pardon the Weeds campaign, which he said had been highly successful this year, with over 100 locations across East Suffolk; next year, Councillor Mallinder reported, the campaign would be bigger and better than before.

Councillor Mallinder thanked the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing for his work related to the housing stock, making sure that ESC's houses were run as efficiently as possible.

Councillor Mallinder also referred to a recent decision taken by the Council's Strategic Planning Committee, for a new Solar Farm, and he said that it would be one of the biggest in Suffolk, and the UK, contributing to the reduction in carbon.

Councillor Mallinder thanked Cabinet for its support, referring to Cabinet, in its decision making, considering the environmental impact of all decisions that were taken. Councillor Mallinder thanked all officers of ESC, referring to how engaged they were in the Environment, ensuring that ESC delivered environmentally sustainable communities. Councillor Mallinder gave thanks to Councillor Gooch and Councillor Smith-Lyte, referring to their work and enormous contributions in respect of the Environment Task Group.

In conclusion, Councillor Mallinder referred to COP26, stating that he hoped the national leaders would make some big changes as to how society functioned; however, he stated that small changes that everybody could make would make a big difference over time.

The Leader, after giving his thanks to all involved in ESC's environmental agenda, stated the importance of "actions and not words" and he stated that ESC would continue to deliver positive actions.

Cabinet gave its thanks to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment for his commitment, enthusiasm and hard work.

Councillor Byatt, Councillor Topping and Councillor Gooch all gave their thanks to Councillor Mallinder for his work, welcoming the cross-party Task Group, its productive work, and collaboration.

Councillor Gooch, referring to the HVO work that had taken place, and any transportation issues, asked if the current difficulties in respect of HGV drivers, could have any impact on the supply of this. The Leader stated that there were regular meetings between officers of all councils to consider the impact of the potential issues

around the supply of fuel across the whole of Suffolk; there were no issues at this time and no anticipated issues going forward he stated.

In response to a question from Councillor Topping regarding when the East Suffolk Climate Change Action Plan would be shared with members, Councillor Mallinder reported that it was being developed; work had been delayed due to the Covid pandemic with officers have to rightly work in other areas, but it would be presented to members shortly he advised.

In response to questions from Councillor Byatt in respect of how the Council was plotting its route to net zero and if it would be identified within the annual report if any targets were missed, and also if ESC possessed any figures in respect of its housing stock and insulation, the Leader highlighted that ESC's housing stock was where it ought to be in respect of insulation; more generally, and in respect of private houses, there were some really good charities across the District that did provide support for more vulnerable people in respect of loft insulation etc. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, referring to the refurbishment of ESC's housing stock, highlighted work that had been undertaken by ESC related to window insulation etc; most of the stock was, Councillor Kerry reported, in the C bracket. ESC would, Councillor Kerry advised, be driven by data and he stated that data described the fabric of a building and its components.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment, referring to ESC's ambitions, stated that part of his role was to articulate to communities how they could make a difference; Councillor Mallinder encouraged all ward members to assist him with this, by highlighting campaigns and grants that were available, by encouraging people to think about their own carbon footprints and how they could make a difference.

Officers, referring to the questions posed by Councillor Byatt in respect of how ESC tracked and measured its carbon emissions, advised that they tracked continually the energy consumption figures from all of ESC's built assets, ie those that were under its direct control, but they did not measure the energy consumption for the general housing stock. All figures were analysed on an annual basis to generate ESC's own carbon emissions and they could be divided up by category of source of emissions.

The Leader, in conclusion, stated that ESC's environmental agenda would not necessary save money; potentially, it would cost money; the work that ESC was doing in respect of its environmental agenda had an impact on the finances of the Council but that did not mean that ESC should not do it; it was the right thing to do, the Leader and Cabinet believed; to save the planet and the future of East Suffolk for future generations.

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

## **RESOLVED**

That an additional £12,000 per annum to fund the Disability Advice Service to provide information, advice and support on all aspects of living with a disability to disabled people in the former Suffolk Coastal area, and a small increase in grant funding of

£1,000 per year for Disability Advice North East Suffolk which provides services in the former Waveney area be approved.

## **6 Exempt/Confidential Items**

The Leader 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, Cabinet would be considering two substantive exempt matters which were outlined in agenda items 7 and 8 on the published agenda; firstly, Cultural Development Fund, which asked Cabinet to consider giving approval to apply to the Cultural Development Fund for resources and if successful accept the funding. ESC had recently submitted a joint Expression of Interest with Great Yarmouth Borough Council to become the UK City of Culture 2025. If successful, this would create a step change in investment in the local cultural and creative sector and put East Suffolk on the map at a national and international level. The Towns Fund cultural projects were expected to be completed by 2025 which aligned with the start of the City of Culture in 2025. Obtaining additional grant funding through the Cultural Development Fund would not only meet an existing funding gap but would also scale up ambition, achieving more for the local creative sector, business more generally and the local community.

Secondly, Operating Agreement for East Point Pavilion (EPP), the Leader advised that this report set out the recommendation for First Light Festival Community Interest Company (CIC) to operate EPP. The venture sought to create a new and exciting food hub and events space that aimed to attract food traders to occupy the kiosks within the Pavilion as well as artists, entertainers, comedians, DJs, and bands to feature as part of the events programme. The venture aimed to not only employ local people but also to attract visitors from a wide catchment. The regeneration of the seafront was a key regeneration objective for Lowestoft and as outlined within the Town Investment Plan, the Pavilion was central to the work to provide a tourist destination for all ages, 365 days of the year. The building formed part of the Seafront Vision, developed by Hemmingway Design, and was a key regeneration project for East Suffolk.

On the proposition of Councillor Gallant, and 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.

**7 Cultural Development Fund**

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

**8 Operating Agreement for East Point Pavilion**

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

The meeting concluded at 8:00 pm.

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Chairman