

Confirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Full Council** held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, Melton on **Wednesday, 22 January 2020 at 6:30pm**

Members of the Committee present:

Councillor Melissa Allen, Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Chris Blundell, Councillor Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw, Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Jenny Ceresa, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Tony Cooper, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Janet Craig, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor Graham Elliott, Councillor John Fisher, Councillor Tony Fryatt, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Tess Gandy, Councillor Andree Gee, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor TJ Haworth-Culf, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Ray Herring, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Richard Kerry, Councillor Stuart Lawson, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor Chris Mapey, Councillor Debbie McCallum, Councillor Mark Newton, Councillor Keith Patience, Councillor Malcolm Pitchers, Councillor Carol Poulter, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Keith Robinson, Councillor Mary Rudd, Councillor Letitia Smith, Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Councillor Ed Thompson, Councillor Caroline Topping, Councillor Steve Wiles, Councillor Kay Yule

Officers present:

Stephen Baker (Chief Executive), Sarah Davis (Democratic Services Officer), Phil Harris (Communications Manager), Andrew Jarvis (Strategic Director), Brian Mew (Interim Finance Manager), Hilary Slater (Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Simon Taylor (Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer) and Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager).

Others present:

Ivor Holden (Member of the Independent Remuneration Panel), Karen Forster (Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel), Sandra Graffham (Head of Communications and Engagement for the Office of the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner) and Tim Passmore (The Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner).

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors P Ashdown, J Bond, A Cackett, T Goldson, T Green, F Mortimer and T Mortimer.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest made on this occasion.

Councillor Elliott sought reassurance that Members did not need to declare any Interests in Item 10 - Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, as Members would be affected by any recommended changes to the Members Allowance Scheme. The Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that Members did not need to declare any interests in this item of business.

3a Minutes - 25 September 2019

That the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 25 September 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3b Minutes - 16 December 2019

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting held on 16 December 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 Announcements

Chairman of the Council

The Chairman reported that he and the Vice Chairman had attended a number of Civic Engagement, since the last Full Council meeting, which had been very enjoyable.

The Chairman then reported that he would change the order of the agenda, to enable external visitors to have their items heard first.

Leader of the Council

The Leader reported that, using his Delegated Authority as Leader of the Council, had had made the following appointments to Outside Bodies:

- * Alde and Ore Community Partnership (AOCP) which was a Non Executive Function - Councillors TJ Haworth-Culf and R Herring had been appointed.

- * East Suffolk Travel Association (ESTA) which was a Non Executive Function - Councillor A Cackett had been appointed.

- * East Suffolk Travel Association (ESTA) Management Committee which was a Non Executive Function - Councillor A Cackett had been appointed.

- * Felixstowe Travel Watch which was a Non Executive Function - Councillor S Wiles had been appointed.

Members of the Cabinet

There were no announcements on this occasion.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive advised that the Council would be taking part in a Peer Review, which was a Local Government Association initiative, in September 2020. This would be an excellent opportunity to establish how the Council was meeting its aims and objectives. It was noted that the Chief Executive would be involved in undertaking a Peer Review involving a Council in Devon later in the year.

5 Questions from the Public

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

6 Questions from Members

The following questions from Members had been submitted in pursuance of Council Procedure Rule 9:

- (a) Question from Councillor C Topping to the Leader of the Council

- I would like to know what consultants we have engaged within the last 4 years and who we are currently engaged with? What they have/are engaged in, how much this has cost and the outcomes of the work they have done for us?

Response from Councillor Gallant

- Since April 2015 to date, the former Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils, and East Suffolk Council since April 2019, have engaged with over 300 different organisations providing consultancy services to the Council/s in circumstances where the Council does not have the required skills within its workforce due to the specialist nature of the work required to be undertaken. This has taken the form of specialist surveys, master planning and design, formulating strategies and providing specialist skills. The total spend for this period has been £4.22m, across a variety of Council services, to support the delivery of projects, initiatives and service transformation.

Given the number of different consultancy services engaged it is not possible to go through each one of them individually, but to provide an overview of what consultancy services have been engaged with and the outcomes, here are some examples:

- The Council received specialist advice on the creation of East Suffolk Council including Electoral Administration, IT and its constitution;
- Specialist surveys required, master planning and design work for asset development and acquisition projects which support the Council's capital programme;
- Studies and design work for the Leisure Redevelopment Programme at Felixstowe and Bungay leisure centres;
- Specialist planning support for the Local Plan, planning appeals and major developments;
- Master planning, studies and design work for Regeneration and Economic Development projects, for example Felixstowe seafront gardens, Lowestoft seafront, Ness Point regeneration project, the Inward Investment Strategy and the East Anglian Maritime & Fisheries Strategy;
- ICT specialism for project development work, upgrades, etc. of various Council systems - corporate and service specific systems;
- Supporting Customer Services digital transformation work, for example, customer studies;
- Climate Change work, e.g. Plastic Action; and
- Tree Preservation Order Review.

The full list of consultants that have been used, which service area engaged the consultant and how much has been paid to the consultant can be provided to Councillor Topping after this meeting. It will require each service area to review the list and respond individually to identify why each consultant was engaged and what the outcome of the work was. It is also likely that we have used the same consultants for different pieces of work and therefore the total payments made to them will need to be broken down by the service areas. It is envisaged that this work will take some time for the service areas to completed due to the number of consultants used.

Clearly to achieve this level of detail will require a significant number of officer hours – Hours that they can't use to carry out their normal duties.

Each significant spend on consultants or outside advice is considered and authorised on its merits. Significant spends above the delegated authority levels are outlined in the respective paper or business case – so I would urge members including Councillor Topping to refer to these papers if they have specific questions about a particular project or initiative.

A scatter gun approach to asking questions serves to neither provide a useful response nor results in an efficient use of officer time. Therefore, I would be pleased to hear from Councillor Topping as to what further information she would like to receive.

Supplementary Question

There was no Supplementary Question from Councillor Topping, on this occasion.

(b) Question from Councillor G Elliott to the Leader of the Council

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This Council endorsed a policy supporting Fairtrade on 24 July 2019. The motion was somewhat watered down but still contained a commitment to the procurement and promotion of Fairtrade.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

- *Support food-based initiatives, including Fairtrade, that demonstrate a commitment to improving living standards and raising people out of poverty, while supporting our local economy.*
- *Promote Fairtrade as part of this wider ethical approach, including through support for local groups, in the media including social media, and events, including during Fairtrade Fortnight.*
- *Review its procurement policy, including its catering offer, to ensure that Fairtrade produce is included where possible, and that Fair Trade and other ethical considerations are given appropriate weighting when drawing up any contracts going out to tender.*

In view of this commitment will the Leader of the Council ensure that the East Suffolk House tea and coffee provision matches the Fairtrade provision of Riverside?

Response from Councillor Gallant

I am pleased to confirm that by the end of February, all tea and coffee supply at both East Suffolk House and the Port Health office in Felixstowe, will be Fairtrade. We will be running down the remaining stock on non Fairtrade items. Notices similar to those at Riverside will be displayed so that members, staff and visitors are aware.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Elliott

There was no Supplementary Question from Councillor Elliott on this occasion. However, he took the opportunity to confirm that he chose to purchase locally made produce, whenever possible.

7 Petitions

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

8 Notices of Motion

N.B. Councillor TJ Haworth-Culf left the meeting during the discussions on this item, at 7.40 pm.

The Chairman advised that three Notices of Motion had been received for this meeting, as set out on the Agenda. Members were then advised that Notice of Motion C, regarding tree planting, from Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw, had been withdrawn and would not now be discussed. The remaining two Notices of Motion would be considered individually.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, a Motion could only be discussed with the consent of the Council, otherwise the Notices of Motion would be referred to the Cabinet or the most relevant Committee. The Chairman then handed over to the Leader of the Council to invite the Councillors who had proposed the Motions to speak to them.

a) Councillor D Beavan has submitted the following Notice of Motion:

This Council calls on the Southwold Harbour Joint Committee to respect the unanimous motion passed at the last meeting of Waveney District Council on 20/03/2019 which called for "a new inclusive, independent and effective management committee subject to an agreed budget" by appointing two Cabinet members, the ward member, a representative of Southwold Town Council and four independent members to an eight person Harbour Management Committee.

The Leader of the Council reported that he proposed that the Notice of Motion was not debated this evening and was, instead, referred to the Cabinet for further consideration.

Councillor Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development, reported that the Southwold Harbour Lands Joint Committee came under his portfolio and that he was a Member of the Joint Committee. He also agreed that the Notice of Motion was not discussed this evening and should indeed be referred to Cabinet. He thanked Councillor Beavan for raising the important issue of

the Southwold Harbour Lands. Councillor Rivett reported that the Joint Committee was created in 2013, with representatives from Southwold Town Council and the former Waveney District Council's Cabinet. The aim was to focus on the future of the Harbour Lands due to various complex historical and current issues, which included disputed claims of ownership and how best to manage it.

During this time, professional legal advice, work with the Department for Transport (DfT) and more recently consideration of the 2018, DfT issued, new Port of Good Governance Guidance and public engagement have been referred to and considered. The Joint Committee had decided to hold further public consultation, which took place between September and December 2019, to gauge feedback on the professional legal advice on a proposed Constitution for the proposed Southwold Harbour Management Committee, to enable governance improvements, in line with the key principles set out in a consultation document from June 2014 and the Ports Good Governance Guidance.

The next meeting of the Joint Committee was under two weeks away and would take place on 3 February 2020, where the consultation results would be considered and the next steps recommended. As such, Councillor Rivett believed it would be premature and inappropriate for Full Council to discuss this Motion tonight.

Councillor Beavan took the opportunity to respond. He felt that raising this Notice of Motion was the only opportunity that he had to raise the concerns of local residents in Southwold, and those Councillors who did not have a seat on the Joint Committee. He felt that there should be some discussion, particularly around some discrepancies within the consultation documentation and proposed Terms of Reference etc.

The Leader proposed that the matter was not considered or debated this evening and would be referred to the Cabinet for further consideration, for the reasons already discussed this evening. This was duly seconded by Councillor Rivett and upon being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED

That the Notice of Motion not be discussed at this meeting and would be referred to a future meeting of the Cabinet for further consideration.

(b) Councillor L Gooch has submitted the following Notice of Motion:

In the context of this Council passing the Motion to acknowledge the Declaration of Climate Change in July 2019 and the fact that we are addressing Item 5 The Housing Development Strategy 2020 to 2024 in today's meeting, it is essential that we marry these two directions.

To this end, I propose:

1. That all new council houses will be built carbon-neutral, for example by future-proofing with low carbon heating and the highest standards of energy efficiency.
2. That all developers of new affordable housing should be encouraged to meet these

same high standards.

3. That all other developers of new housing should be encouraged to meet these same high standards.

4. That all existing council stock, and properties purchased for such use, should be retro-fitted to the highest standards as economically as possible.

The Leader of the Council proposed that this Notice of Motion was not considered this evening and was instead referred to the Cabinet for further consideration. This was duly seconded by Councillor Kerry, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing. The reasons for this were that the Housing Development Strategy was a Cabinet responsibility and the matter of sustainability and carbon neutrality of the Council's new and existing housing stock required further detailed examination and evaluation. This area of work was quite technical and could not be rushed, as it would be feasible to take one approach, given the diversity of housing and age of the Council's housing stock. The Council would be visiting other local authorities, to seek good practice regarding improving the future proofing of housing, which could be replicated in the District.

Councillor Gooch took the opportunity to respond. She stated that her motivation in submitting the Notice of Motion was to raise awareness and start debate regarding improvements to the Council's housing stock. She was pleased that further research would be undertaken in this respect and she was reassured that the Council would be working with other local authorities to share good practice and experience. Councillor Gooch reported that matters such as this could be discussed in more detail by the Environmental Task Group. Councillor Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment confirmed that when the Council was retro fitting items such as solar panels and heat pumps, it was crucial to ensure that the Council received value for money. He commented that there were 1200 people currently on the housing waiting list and it was important that the Council received the best value for its investments.

The Leader of the Council had proposed that the Notice of Motion be referred to Cabinet, which had been seconded and upon being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED

That the Notice of Motion would not be discussed this evening and would be referred to the Cabinet for further consideration.

(c) Councillor E Brambley-Crawshaw has submitted the following Notice of Motion

As part of its efforts to combat climate change, will The Council commit to a doubling of tree cover in the District by 2045, in line with the Friends of the Earth ambition.

This to include:

- An action to increase tree* planting on its own land by 100% of its January 2020 level

in the next 25 years

- Using the planning process to encourage larger-scale planting to be incorporate into new housing and business development schemes across East Suffolk
- Encouraging Parish and Town Councils to adopt its ambition on their own land within the District
- Launching and funding a 'Tree for Life' campaign to encourage the planting of new trees* by East Suffolk families to commemorate new births and adoptions, and provide memorial trees for parents

nb * Trees should be appropriate for the geology and landscape, be native and wildlife-rich species

The Chairman had already advised that this Notice of Motion had been withdrawn and that there would be no comment or discussion on this matter at this meeting.

9 Update on Policing Matters

A verbal update on Policing Matters was received from Mr Tim Passmore, Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner. Mr Passmore reported that he welcomed the opportunity to come and speak to Councillors this evening and he would welcome questions at the end of his presentation. He was also accompanied by Ms Graffham, Head of Communications and Engagement from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

It was noted that Suffolk was one of the safest counties in the country, however the Constabulary was not well funded when compared to other Forces and it was important for the Constabulary to rise to the challenge and meet the needs of the County. Suffolk Constabulary currently had a budget of £133.7 million and it would be increasing its precept for 2020/21 by £24 for a Band D property. The funding raised would be used to pay for an additional 29 officers, many of whom who be deployed to deal with serious crime, provide additional capacity on the front line and digital crime. It was noted that there was currently an online public consultation about the proposed precept increase and he encouraged all those present to complete the survey to share their views on policing in Suffolk. Mr Passmore then reported that he was also trying to get the funding formula reviewed, as there were significant disparities in funding levels received across the country, and he felt it was important that there was more consistency and a level playing field for all Constabularies and their local residents.

One of the main areas of focus for the police would be County Lines - dealing with violent and organised crime. It was noted that the coastline and rural areas were vulnerable and therefore a joined up approach, with partner organisations, was underway and good progress was being made.

The Constabulary was also working collaboratively with the Fire Service and a joint facility in Beccles had recently been developed. In relation to surplus property owned by the Constabulary, Mr Passmore confirmed that he was not able to sell any assets

cheaply to partner organisations, for a worthy cause, he was bound to seek the red book valuation and gain the best monetary value for the asset. However, Mr Passmore was keen to work with local communities wherever possible and he would be happy to undertake various negotiations in this respect, as appropriate.

Mr Passmore reported that Suffolk Constabulary had been working closely with colleagues at Norfolk Constabulary for many years and their collaborative working had led to annual savings of £19 million a year, which could then be reinvested in policing. He was proud to advise that this collaboration was the best in the country and colleagues from around the UK had sought their guidance on best practice regularly in this respect. It was confirmed that Mr Passmore was keen to work with a variety of partner organisations and the public sector to bring about savings and efficiencies wherever possible.

In relation to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE), the delegated functions would be transferred over to District Councils in Suffolk in due course. This was important, as the District Councils would have more capacity to deal with parking enforcement, which would release police time to focus upon more serious crime.

Another focus of the Constabulary was Domestic Abuse and Mr Passmore stated that he had engaged 3 charities to work together in this respect, providing much needed help to victims. It was noted that three-year contracts had been awarded for this important work, which provided certainty for the charity workers, as well as those people receiving their support. The charities had very good track records for providing this support and it was hoped that new initiatives would be forthcoming over the next year.

The Constabulary were also providing grant funding, an example of which was for Access Community Trust (ACT) to work in Leiston, providing support to local young people. In July 2020, the Youth Intervention Fund would receive £50,000 and it was hoped over £100,000 would be raised to supplement it. The money would be used to help and support those young people from particularly difficult backgrounds, as if they received help at an early stage, it would improve their life chances for the future, benefiting everyone overall. Mr Passmore felt very strongly that young people were the future and it was important to redress the balance for those who had received a poor start in life and to give them every opportunity to thrive.

The Constabulary had a wide ranging role to perform, needing to deal with drugs, violence and serious crime strongly, whilst providing compassion and support in other circumstances that required a police presence. Police Officers and staff were highly trained and were required to deal with a huge range of issues, often in challenging circumstances. Overall, the Force used a co-operative and collaborative approach to meet the needs of the County, however it would never be enough at all times. Mr Passmore then invited Members questions at this point in proceedings.

Councillor McCallum raised concerns about drugs, which often included gangs and violent crime. She felt that County Lines was a growing issue in the District, as she had heard that people from Ipswich, London and other areas were travelling to the District, often on operator-only trains, to sell drugs to young people. She queried what could be done, particularly by schools, to help stop this issue? Mr Passmore reported that

the Public Sector Leaders Group (PSLG) had made £12 million available to help deal with this problem. It was crucial that schools were engaged and involved in this matter and that teachers knew the signs to look for, should a pupil become involved in selling or taking drugs. However, he felt that it wasn't just schools who should be working against this, it should also be parents, the care system and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), as they were all involved in the safeguarding of young people. He felt that it was important to take a holistic approach and while progress was being made, more could be done to focus on this difficult issue.

Councillor Jepson queried the amount of violent crime, as a percentage of the total amount of recorded crime for the County? He noted that the perception of crime was often greater than the reality and he queried what the Constabulary could do to increase public confidence in the Police? Mr Passmore reported that he was concerned by the lack of confidence, which related to the recent National Crime Survey results, as he had attended many public meetings across the County, where the public had been positive and supportive of the work of the Police. He acknowledged that more needed to be done to improve public confidence and further analysis and work would be undertaken in due course. He also confirmed that the Police needed to raise more publicity about the things that had gone well and the positive achievements that had been made. With regards to sentencing, it was noted that the Police were not able to influence that, however there needed to be a balance between prosecutions and sentencing and further discussions were needed in this respect.

Councillor Topping commented that a Police Officer had recently attended a Beccles Town Council meeting for the first time in 2 years, which was very positive. She also stated that the 101 number for reporting non-urgent matters had ongoing issues and the public were still struggling to report crime, often being kept on the phone for long periods of time. Although people were also being directed to the police website in order to access various information, a lot of the crime figures were out of date, and the figures for Beccles had not been updated since November 2019. Mr Passmore reported that he was very concerned that the crime figures were not being updated on the website and he would raise this matter tomorrow. He acknowledged that work was ongoing regarding 101 and an additional £200,000 had been allocated to try to improve performance, including training and new technology. He commented that it was important for the public to be able to use a variety of methods to report crime and he would raise this with the Chief Constable, as it was an operational matter. It was also important for Community Police Officers to attend Town and Parish Council meetings when possible, as it was useful to share information about emerging problems.

Councillor Brooks, Cabinet Member for Transport, sought reassurance that the Police would still deal with instances of dangerous parking? Mr Passmore confirmed that they would be and that £190,000 had been allocated to support this important work and that Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) would have a positive effect across the County for residents.

There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked Mr Passmore for his informative presentation and he left the meeting, with Ms Graffham, at this point in the proceedings.

Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, presented report **ES-0273** which was the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, containing the proposed amendments to the Members Allowances Scheme. The Leader took the opportunity to thank the Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), some of whom were present at the meeting, for their hard work in undertaking such a detailed review. He also thanked the Members, who had engaged wholeheartedly with the process. It was noted that the IRP was comprised of community representatives and was independent of the Council, therefore the public could have confidence that their report was impartial. Any recommendations from the IRP were referred to Full Council for consideration, in order that the process was open and transparent.

The IRP was commissioned in September 2019 to carry out an in-depth review of the East Suffolk Council (ESC) Members Allowances Scheme, following an agreement that it would only sit once the new Council had been 'up and running' for a few months. This would allow the IRP to work with detailed information about Councillor workloads and meeting attendance, which would help to inform their review. Councillor Gallant advised that the cost to the East Suffolk tax payer was currently the lowest in Norfolk and Suffolk by some distance, with all the Councillors costing the individual tax payer £1.12 per year. Even with the proposed increase in Members Allowances, the individual cost to each East Suffolk taxpayer would still be lower than eight of the other eleven councils in the area.

It was noted that there had been an overall reduction in the number of Councillors since the creation of East Suffolk, from 90 Councillors to 55 Councillors, which meant that the total cost for Members Allowances would still be far lower than the overall payments which were made to the Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council Councillors. Should the proposed changes to the Members Allowances Scheme be approved, the total cost of the new allowances still amounted to an overall saving of over £112,000 per year, or a 15% reduction, when compared to the total payments made to Members of our predecessor councils. These savings would equate to £448,000 over the four-year term.

During the review, the IRP recognised that all councillors now have greater responsibility representing considerably more residents, businesses and community groups, as well as a far larger geographical area. The IRP also found that the workload for Members had increased significantly and had actually doubled in most cases. The role had changed significantly and could not be viewed as part time. Reassurance was provided that the overall cost of Member Allowances represented a tiny fraction of the Council's overall budget. The overall cost of Members Allowances was around £600,000, compared to a total net spend of £30 million on Council Services, which equated to 2% of the Council's net outgoings.

Councillor Gallant reported that all Councils must seek to attract more and different people to the role, who may otherwise have considered the role un-viable because of financial concerns. It was noted that there was a lack of diversity within the Council, which could be attributed to the small allowances currently available. The IRP also

recognised that people who were self-employed could not afford to become a Councillor. Likewise, employed people might find it difficult to get the time off work required to fulfil their role effectively. As a result, the IRP had also recommended that the Council investigate ways to attract different people from different backgrounds and with a range of skills, by inspiring companies to encourage their workforce to consider becoming a Councillor, or to enable the self-employed to be adequately recompensed for lost work.

Councillor Gallant then invited Mrs Forster, Chairman of the IRP, to say a few words.

Mrs Forster reported that the Councillors had been elected to the newly created East Suffolk Council without knowing the workload of being a Councillor or the allowances that were to be paid. It had been agreed previously that a full review of Members Allowances would be undertaken approximately 6 months after the elections, as more information about the Councillors workloads and responsibilities were available.

The IRP had asked Members to complete a survey about their role and over 54% had responded. There were also a number of interviews which were conducted and it was clear that the basic allowance was too low for the amount of work that Councillors were undertaking. Their overall workload had doubled, Councillors were serving Wards with double the number of constituents and there was considerable preparation required for meetings. There was also additional travel to attend meetings which were held at both sites, in Lowestoft and Melton, and many Wards were spread over a large geographical area, necessitating increased travel to visit constituents.

It was noted that it was important for Councillors to balance their Council work with their home/family life, as well as any other outside work they may have. There were considerable savings which had been generated by the creation of a new Council, and the increase in Members Allowances would not erode the savings. Mrs Forster then took the opportunity to thank all the Members and officers who had supported the IRPs review.

Councillor Gallant thanked the IRP for their thorough review of the Members Allowance Scheme.

There being no questions regarding the Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, the Council then went into debate.

Councillor Byatt reported that he had taken part in the review process and he had found the IRP to be very thorough and independent. He stated that there had been many comments on social media regarding the proposals within the report, however, he queried whether people had read the whole report, to see the evidence supporting the proposed increase. Councillor Byatt reported that his Ward had doubled in size and he was now representing 11,000 constituents. He then stated that the recent Cabinet papers for the meeting on 7 January 2020 had been over 400 pages long, which Members needed to read to keep informed of latest developments. He felt that the workload had increased significantly and that there should be some recompense for Councillors in this respect.

It was also important to attract younger people and those with different backgrounds to become Councillors, and it was crucial that Members were compensated for having to take unpaid leave or use up annual leave in order to attend meetings. He reported that it was not possible to fully review the Members Allowance Scheme any earlier, as it was important for the review to be evidence-led and Councillors were able to demonstrate evidence that their workloads had increased and he supported the recommendations contained within the report.

Councillor Elliott reported that he agreed with the reasons for reviewing the Members Allowance Scheme and it was important to attract a diverse range of Councillors who reflected the population of the District. He reported that he supported the proposals in principle, however he did not feel that now was the correct time to undertake the review. Councillor Elliott reported that it would have been more appropriate to have undertaken a review prior to the election, as the increased Allowances may have attracted or enabled a greater number of people, from different backgrounds, to become Councillors. He felt that the timing of the review was crucial and it had been a missed opportunity to attract different people to the role, as it was apparent that workloads would double given the reduction in the number of Councillors. He sought assurance that any future IRP reviews would be completed prior to an election, in order to attract a greater variety of candidates to stand for election.

Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw felt that there were negatives and positives with the proposed scheme. Councillors did work hard, however, the public may not fully understand the role of a Councillor and all of the things that they do. Therefore transparency was important and she encouraged the public to look online to see Councillors' attendance at meetings.

Councillor Deacon reported that he endorsed the recommendations contained within the report and he felt it was important that the public be informed about the work and role of a Councillors, as part of the Communications process regarding the Members Allowance Scheme.

Councillor Patience reported that it was a cross party team of Councillors who had been interviewed as part of the review, so that it was a fair and transparent process. He felt that it was very important to attract a diverse range of people to become Councillors in the future, in order to reflect the population that they served. He thought it was important to look at the various barriers which stopped people from becoming Councillors and he suggested that Councillors and officers work together, prior to the next election, to see if any barriers could be addressed or mitigated.

Councillor Topping reported that she had been working since she was 18 years old and she was now able to reduce her hours to a 4 day working week, as a result of the increase in the Members Allowance, as there was a significant amount of work in being a Councillor.

Councillor Kerry reported that he had a full-time job and he relished working to support the local community. He was fortunate in being able to work flexibly, as required, and the increase in the Members Allowances would assist him, and many

other Councillors, in undertaking his Council work. He confirmed that he fully supported the recommendations contained within the report.

Councillor Gallant reported that it was important for the Council to look at encouraging a diverse range of people to become Councillors and the Member Development Steering Group would be looking at this in detail, in due course, ready for the next round of elections. He stated that he valued the independence and professionalism of the IRP and it would have been inappropriate for Councillors to have conducted a review of their own allowances. Councillor Gallant was heartened by the comments received at this meeting in relation to the Members Allowance Scheme and he appreciated the ongoing hard work of the Councillors and noted that all workloads had increased significantly. Therefore, he moved the recommendation contained within the report, which was seconded by Councillor Blundell. Upon being put to the vote, it was unanimously

RESOLVED

That the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for a new Members' Allowances Scheme for East Suffolk Council, as set out in paragraph 4 of the report, be approved.

11 Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2018/19 and Mid Year Report 2019/20

N.B. Councillor McCallum left during the consideration of this item, at 7.50pm.

Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, introduced the report **ES/0149**, on the Treasury Management Outturn for 2018/19 and the Mid Year Report for 2019/20, which was duly presented by Councillor Cook, Assistant Cabinet Member for Resources. It was noted that the Treasury Management Policy Statement required an annual report and mid-year report to be produced and noted by Full Council.

The report reviews the performance of the Treasury Management Function of both Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council, for the financial year 2018/19 and a review of the first half of the year for 2019/20, as East Suffolk Council.

The 2018/19 Summary was as follows:

- Investments totalled £66.89m for Suffolk Coastal District Council as at 31st March 2019, which was made up of £50.5m of short term investments, £7.39m of long term investments and £9m of cash at bank.
- Investments totalled £46.39m for Waveney District Council as at 31st March 2019, which was made up of £31m of short term investments, £2.39m of long term investments and £13m of cash at bank.
- Interest received during the year for Suffolk Coastal District Council totalled £550k.
- Interest received during the year for Waveney District Council totalled £410k.
- For Waveney District Council borrowing totalled £87.57m as at 31st March 2019 of which £77.4m relates to the Housing Revenue Account and £10.17m relates to the General Fund. £68.3m of the £77.4m HRA borrowing was taken out in 2011/12 for the self-financing loans.
- Suffolk Coastal District Council remained loan free during 2018/19.

The 2019/20 Summary to date was as follows:

- Investments totalled £109.36m as at 31st August 2019.
- Interest received to 31st August 2019 totalled £340k.

In conclusion, the Councils have operated its Treasury Management function within the prescribed Treasury Management Policy and Prudential Indicators for 2018/19 and for the first half of 2019/20. The Councils have maintained a healthy cash balance during 2018/19 and to date and also ensures that the best interest rate return was being achieved, without putting the Council's money at risk. It was noted that the Audit and Governance Committee had considered this report previously, at their meeting on 18 November 2019.

Councillor Elliott sought reassurance that the Council did not invest in the fossil fuel industry. There was some discussion in this respect and the Chief Finance Officer report that the Council was part of the CCLA Property Fund, which was a multi-asset investment fund. Whilst he could not be 100% certain, there was no investment in fossil fuels that he was aware of. It was important for the Council to make investments that had negligible risk and sufficient returns for its investment, currently 3 or 4%.

There being no further questions or debate, Councillor Gallant moved the recommendations within the report, which were seconded by Councillor Lynch and upon being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED

1. That the Annual Report on the Council's Treasury Management activity for 2018/19 incorporating the Mid-Year review for 2019/20 be noted.
2. That the Prudential Indicators Outturn position for 2018/19 in Appendix A and B be noted.

12 Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2020/21 and Treasury Management Investment Strategy for 2020/21

Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, introduced report **ES/0271**, which set out the Councils' Treasury Management Strategy Statement, and he then invited Councillor Cook, Assistant Cabinet Member for resources to present the report.

Councillor Cook advised that the report set out the East Suffolk Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2020/21 (Appendix A) and the Investment Strategy for 2020/21 (Appendix B), which covered in detail:

- the current treasury position;
- treasury indicators which limit the treasury risk and activities of the Council;
- prospects for interest rates;
- the borrowing strategy; and
- the investment strategy.

It was noted that the Treasury Management Strategy Statement at Appendix A provided Members with details of the economic background that the Council has been operating in, the credit outlook and interest rate forecast. The Treasury Management Indicators help the Council to measure and manage its exposure to treasury management risks. The indicators cover:

- security;
- liquidity;
- interest rate exposure;
- maturity structure of borrowing;
- principal sums invested for periods longer than one year;
- operational boundary for external debt; and
- authorised limit for external debt.

Members were informed that Annex A of Appendix A, provided Members with Arlingclose's economic and interest rate forecast, as at November 2019. It was confirmed that as at 30 November 2019, the Council held £77.41m of borrowing and £120.82m of investments. Annex B of Appendix A provides a further breakdown.

The Investment Strategy at Appendix B provided Members with detail on Treasury Management Investments and Commercial Investments. It also provided detail on the capacity, skills and culture that operate within the Council and details the investment indicators that operate:

- total risk exposure;
- how investment is funded; and
- rate of return received.

Councillor Cook reported that this report had previously been considered by the Audit & Governance Committee, at their meeting on 6 January 2020. He took the opportunity to thank the Finance Team for their ongoing hard work and support for the Council and their detailed report. There being no questions or further debate, the recommendation within the report was moved by Councillor Gallant and seconded by Councillor Lynch. Upon being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED

That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Treasury Management Investment Strategy for 2020/21 be approved.

13 Capital Strategy 2020/21 to 2023/24

N.B. Councillor TJ Haworth-Culf left the meeting during the discussions on this item.

Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, introduced report **ES/0268** on the Capital Strategy, and he then invited Councillor Cook, Assistant Cabinet Member for Resources, to present the report.

Councillor Cook reported that following the large amount of commercial investment undertaken by Local Authorities using 100% borrowing to finance their investments,

the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) had issued a new Prudential Code in February 2018, which required all Councils to produce an annual Capital Strategy that provides a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributes to the provision of local public services, along with how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

The East Suffolk Capital Strategy for 2020/21 through to 2023/24 was at Appendix A to the report. It was noted that the strategy pulled together all the various policies and strategies that the Council has in relation to capital, and provides the key elements from them, such as:

- capital expenditure and financing, which relates to the Council's capital programme;
- asset management strategy, which is still under development and is being led by the Asset Management Team;
- treasury management, covering borrowing and investments;
- investment for service purposes, where there is a strategic case to do so, such as entering into joint ventures with Norse;
- commercial investments, which links to the East Suffolk Commercial Investments Strategy;
- other liabilities, such as pension fund deficits and business rates appeals;
- revenue implications of the capital programme;
- knowledge and skills of officers, external advisors and councillors; and
- the Chief Finance Officer's statement on the affordability and risk of the Capital Strategy.

Councillor Cook confirmed that this report had previously been considered by the Audit and Governance Committee, at the meeting on 6 January 2020.

Councillor Byatt thanked Councillor Cook for the clear and concise report. He then took the opportunity to query where a list of the Council's assets could be obtained, as he felt it was important that all Councillors were able to check the Council's assets within their Wards. Councillor Gallant reported that the list was currently available for all Councillors to view on FRED, the Council's intranet. There being no further questions or debate, the recommendation within the report was moved by Councillor Gallant and seconded by Councillor Lynch. It was therefore

RESOLVED

That the Capital Strategy 2020/21 to 2023/24 be approved.

14

Capital Programme for 2020/21 to 2023/24 including Revisions to 2019/20

Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, introduced report **ES/0270** and invited Councillor Cook, Assistant Cabinet Member for Resources, to present the report.

Councillor Cook advised that as part of the annual budget setting process, the Council was required to agree a programme of capital expenditure for the coming four years. This report set out the East Suffolk Council's General Fund Capital Programme at

Appendix A and the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme at Appendix B, for the financial year 2020/21 to 2023/24 and also the revisions to 2019/20.

The Capital Programme had been compiled taking account of the following main principles, to:

- maintain an affordable four-year rolling Capital Programme;
- ensure capital resources are aligned with the Council's Business Plan;
- maximise available resources by actively seeking external funding and disposal of surplus assets; and
- not to anticipate receipts from disposals until they are realised.

The General Fund Capital Programme included £94.55 million of external contributions and grants towards financing the Council's £152.61 million of Capital Investment for the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) period. This represented 62% of the whole General Fund Capital Programme.

It was noted that the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme totalled £59.08 million for the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) period and did not require any additional external borrowing to finance it. The Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme would benefit from £8.98 million of external grants and contributions, which was 15% of the programme.

Councillor Cook reported that Section Six of the report detailed the revenue implications arising from the Capital Programme, showing the Capital Charges for each year of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) period, split between the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. The approval of the Capital Programme for 2020/21 to 2023/24 was required as part of the overall setting of the Budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Members were advised that this report had previously been considered by the Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 16 December 2019.

Councillor Elliott commented that there had been a significant sum on money spent on Webcasting at the 2 Council sites in Melton and Lowestoft and he queried when Webcasting was due to implemented? Councillor Gallant reported that it was the Council's ambition to use new technology as much as possible, in order for the Council to become more efficient and transparent in its workings. However there had been some IT issues to overcome and reassurance was provided that work was continuing to address the issues.

Councillor Byatt sought confirmation that the Council was bidding for grants and external funding wherever possible, in relation to Lowestoft. Mr Jarvis, Strategic Director, reported that the Council was currently in discussions with English Heritage and would be submitting a bid to the Towns Fund in due course. Reassurance was also provided that the Council's Economic Development Team were proactive in submitting bids for funding, where possible. There being no further questions or debate, the recommendation within the report was moved by Councillor Gallant and seconded by Councillor Bird. It was therefore

RESOLVED

That the Capital Programme for 2020/21 to 2023/24 and revisions to 2019/20 be approved.

15 **Housing Revenue Account Budget Report 2020/21**

Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, introduced report **ES/0269** and invited Councillor Cook, Assistant Cabinet Member for Resources, to present the report.

Councillor Cook explained that this report brought together the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for the period 2020/21 to 2023/24, with a forecasted position for 2019/20 and a summary of its reserves and balances. The HRA budgets are 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.

Councillor Cook reported that in February 2019, the Government set out a new Policy Statement for Social Housing Rents. The Policy Statement would take effect from 1 April 2020 and would be implemented through the 2020 Rent Standard of the Regulator of Social Housing. This would be the first time Local Authorities would be governed by the Regulator of Social Housing.

Under the new 2020 Rent Standard, Local Authorities can increase rents by up to CPI +1% for 5 years. The September CPI value must be used, which was 1.7% in 2019, which gave the Council the option to increase rents by up to 2.7%. Rents would be based on a formula rent set by government. The Council continued to collect rent and service charges on a 50-week basis. The proposed rent gave an average weekly rent of £84.95 for 2020/21, which was an increase of £1.90 compared to 2019/20.

It was reported that Service Charges can only recuperate the cost of providing a service. Therefore, the proposed average weekly General Service Charge for Grouped Homes in 2020/21 was £12.85, which was a decrease of £1.02, compared to 2019/20.

It was noted that the HRA Repairs & Maintenance (R&M) Programme was split between Capital and Revenue; the capital element was to be funded by the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR) and the revenue element was to be funded from the income derived from rents. The 2020/21 Housing R&M Revenue Budget has been set at £4.318 million. This was considered sufficient to allow the Council to carry out all necessary works to maintain the decent homes standard in all its properties.

Councillor Cook advised that the budget proposals gave a forecast HRA working balance for 2020/21 of £4.958 million, maintaining it well above the minimum acceptable limit of 10% of total income.

It was noted that this report had previously been considered by the Scrutiny Committee on 16 December 2019 and the Cabinet on 7 January 2020.

Councillor Patience queried how many Council garages were currently unoccupied? Councillor Gallant responded that this information was not immediately

available and could be provided outside of the meeting. Councillor Kerry, Cabinet Member for Housing, reported that the Housing Team were currently undertaking a survey on the Council's garage stock and further information would be provided in this respect, in due course.

Councillor Byatt reported that the former Waveney District Council had lost a proportion of its housing stock due to the Right to Buy (RTB) for tenants. He queried whether this was continuing, as it was important for the Council not to lose any more of its housing stock, as there was still a significant demand for housing across the District. Councillor Gallant reported that some housing stock would continue be lost due the Right to Buy initiative, however he would not wish to discourage anyone from purchasing their home in this way, as they were investing in their own future. He then provided reassurance that the numbers of homes being lost to Right to Buy were small and any monies received from the sale of these properties would be reinvested in purchasing additional properties to replenish the Council's housing stock. Councillor Kerry, Cabinet Member for Housing, provided clarification that the Accountant who oversaw the Housing Revenue Account, made sure that any monies received from the sale of Right to Buy properties were ring-fenced and reinvested in the Council's housing stock.

Councillor Gooch drew Members' attention to the information on page 123 of the report, regarding the costs of repairs and maintenance. She queried whether it would be possible to have the information in a tabulated format, with the costs for any works to make properties carbon neutral recorded separately, for ease of reference? Councillor Gallant commented that this was a reasonable request and it was noted that the Council's new Strategic Plan would have a strong focus upon the environmental agenda.

There being no further questions or debate, the recommendations within the report were duly moved by Councillor Gallant and seconded by Councillor Bird. Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED

1. That the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2020/21, and the indicative figures for 2021/22 to 2023/24;
2. That the forecast outturn position for 2019/20 be noted;
3. That the movements in Reserves and Balances as presented in Appendix D be approved;
4. That the average weekly rent for 2020/21 of £84.95 over a 50-week collection year, an average weekly increase of £1.90 or 2.3% be approved;
5. That the new Rent Policy Statement and Rent Standard for 2020 with effective from 1st April 2020 be noted;
6. That the Service Charges and associated fees for 2020/21, Appendix B be approved; and

7. That the changes affecting public and private sector housing and welfare be noted.

16 Review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21

N.B. Councillor Gandy left during the consideration of this item of business, at approximately 8.30 pm.

Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, introduced report **ES/0274** and invited Councillor Cook, Assistant Cabinet Member for Resources, to present the report.

Councillor Cook announced that this report to Full Council advised Members about the findings of the 2019 annual review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS); the consultation on these findings; and the resultant proposals for changes to the LCTRS scheme, to take effect from April 2020, to introduce a tolerance level of £15.00 per week (or £65 per month) before the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) would action any council tax adjustment to an individual's account.

It was noted that since the introduction of Universal Credit (UC), the ARP have experienced a 72% increase in revised Universal Credit awards, which was causing customers to become confused as to what amount they were supposed to be paying the Council, as the amount of benefit award was continuously changing. It was reported that this also had a knock-on impact with regards to the Council's collection rates, with the amount of money collected from Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme claimants reducing.

Councillor Cook drew Members' attention to the table in paragraph 3.7 of the report, which showed the reduction on the number of reassessments for tolerance limits between £5.00 and £25.00. The recommended limit of £15.00 would result in a 32% reduction of reassessments needing to be undertaken. Table 3.12 showed the impact of a £15 tolerance limit on a sample of cases. It was noted that for a typical claimant currently having 12 monthly reassessments and 12 amended Council Tax bills, a tolerance limit of £15.00 would reduce this to four monthly reassessments and the weekly difference in support would be £0.27p per week.

Councillor Byatt queried why there had been no claimants for the Hardship Fund that was available to assist Universal Credit claimants in some circumstances and he sought assurances that the Fund was being sufficiently advertised. Councillor Gallant reported that the Council was working closely with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to provide advice to claimants and they were aware that this source of funding was available. Councillors could also make their constituents aware of the Hardship Fund, and share the information widely. Councillor Burroughes, Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Operational Partnerships, confirmed that the Council's Customer Services Team were working hard to provide help and support to customers with their Universal Credit queries and they were directing them to the correct people to get the help that they needed.

Councillor Gooch commented that she was aware of several cases in her Ward that had ongoing problems with claiming Universal Credit, therefore she welcomed the proposals contained within the report, which would provide some additional much needed help.

There being no further questions or debate, the recommendations contained within the report were moved by Councillor Gallant and seconded by Councillor Bird. It was then

RESOLVED

1. That the Council retains the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21 as the 8.5% benefit scheme, i.e. the maximum benefit to working age claimants is 91.5%.
2. That the Council introduces a tolerance to the treatment of Universal Credit income in the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, as detailed in this report.

17 Update of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Agreement

Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, introduced report **ES/0154** and invited Councillor Cook, Assistant Cabinet Member for Resources, to present the report.

Councillor Cook advised that the ARP delivered the revenues and benefits service on behalf of the five partner authorities and the proper functioning of the ARP enabled the continued delivery of cost-effective services to the residents and businesses of East Suffolk, improve their quality of life and help deliver a strong and sustainable economy. He reported that the purpose of the report was to consider the updated Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) Agreement, following the change in ARP Membership, pursuant to the abolition of four member authorities and the creation of two new member authorities in their place on 1 April 2019 and to update other approved changes in the Partnership Agreement. It was noted that on 1 April 2019, East Suffolk Council had replaced Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council and West Suffolk Council had replaced Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council. As a result, the ARP had taken the opportunity to update the APR agreement to reflect the new Councils, some changes which had been approved since the 2015 agreement was signed and to ensure that the agreement remained fit for purpose.

It was noted that the revised agreement at Appendix A to the report, had been reviewed and approved by the ARP Joint Committee at its meeting on 17 December 2019 and now needed to be considered by each individual partner authority, to allow the agreement to be signed and sealed by the 5 partners.

Councillor Gallant took the opportunity to thank all those involved with the ARP and, in particular, the Council's Chief Finance Officer. There being no questions or debate, the recommendation within the report was moved by Councillor Gallant and seconded by Councillor Brooks. It was then

RESOLVED

That the revised ARP Partnership agreement at Appendix A be approved to have effect from 1 April 2019.

18 Proposed Changes to the East Suffolk Council Constitution

Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, presented report **ES/0272**, which sought approval for minor changes to the Council's Constitution. It was noted that East Suffolk Council must have a written Constitution which has to include its standing orders, Code of Conduct and such other documents, as the Council considers to be appropriate, in accordance with Section 37 of the Local Government Act 2000. The Council had drafted a new Constitution when East Suffolk Council was created, on 1 April 2019. The Constitution had been approved by the Shadow Council for East Suffolk on Monday 28 January 2019 – report reference REP 29(SH) refers. It was recognised by the Shadow Authority that the Constitution would need to be reviewed, to fit the working practices of the newly formed East Suffolk Council and this report proposed some changes to the Constitution.

It was noted that Part 2 of the ESC Constitution outlined the Council's functions and responsibilities. Paragraph 2.1 of Section B of this part of the Constitution detailed specific functions that were reserved for Council and stated that one of those functions was changing the Constitution. In addition, Paragraph 10.3 of Part 1 of the Constitution, stated that the Audit and Governance Committee (AGC) has responsibility to advise the Council on substantive changes to the Constitution. Any substantive changes to the Council's decision-making arrangements and committee structure have to be considered by the AGC which will then recommend changes to the Full Council. In addition, the Monitoring Officer has authority to make minor amendments and corrections to the Constitution, whilst the Leader may change the Cabinet Portfolios and delegations.

This report proposed changes to the Constitution which the Monitoring Officer does not consider to be "minor amendments". These proposed changes have been considered by the AGC, at its meeting on 6 January 2020. The AGC agreed the proposed changes, as drafted, and recommended them to Full Council for approval. The proposed changes were as follows:

Change 1 - Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee

It was proposed that the election of the Chairman and Vice Chairman take place by Full Council, at its Annual meeting, rather than at the first meeting of the Scrutiny Committee

Change 2 - Appointment of a Deputy Chief Finance Officer

It was proposed that a Deputy Chief Finance Officer be appointed, who will be kept briefed on emerging issues. The Deputy will act in place of the Chief Finance Officer if the Chief Finance Officer is absent or unable to act due to conflict or other relevant issues.

Change 3 - Audit & Governance Committee to review the Budgetary Policy Framework (BPF) Documents

In accordance with the CIPFA guidance, the Audit and Governance Committee should review the BPF Documents, such as the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy, rather than the Scrutiny Committee.

Change 4 - Changes to the wording relating to the Code of Good Practice/Guidance for Members-Planning and Rights of Way, in relation to Planning Site Visits

The wording had been amended to reflect that site visits were purely factual meetings, provided to give Members a better understanding of a site, prior to the consideration by either of the Planning Committees of any application in relation to it. The original wording suggested that the site visits were conducted as full meetings of the Committee, where the public had rights to address the Committee whilst on site. What was in the Code did not reflect accurately with how site visits were conducted, in reality.

Councillor Byatt queried that site visits could be filmed, as the aim was for Council meetings to be broadcast in the future? The Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal and Democratic Services clarified that site visits were minuted and the minutes were available on the Council's website to view. She raised concern that there would be several issues in relation to the filming of external locations, including relevant permissions being required. Councillor Mapey confirmed that he was a keen photographer and the landowner's permission was required prior to taking any photographs, which could be a complicated process. It would also leave the Council potentially exposed to various problems in relation to permissions, over time.

There being no further questions or debate, Councillor Gallant moved the recommendation within the report, which was seconded by Councillor Lynch. Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED

That the proposed changes to the Constitution, as set out in this report, be approved.

19 Summary of Urgent Executive Decisions

Councillor Gallant presented report **ES/0053**, which provided a summary of Urgent Executive Decisions, made between June 2019 and December 2019. It was noted that details of key decisions made by the Executive must be given at least 28 days' notice of, in a prescribed form, on the Council's Forward Plan. If it was not possible to give the requisite notice, Regulations 9, 10 and 11 say that those decisions can still be made, if the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee agrees that they are urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred. If key decisions were to be made at "private meetings" of the Cabinet, from which the public will be excluded, Regulation 5(6) provides that 28 days' notice must be given of that private meeting. If it was not possible to give 28 days' notice of a private meeting, it could still be held, if the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee agreed that the meeting was urgent and could not reasonably be deferred.

It was reported that Section 19 of the Regulations required that the Executive Leader must submit a report to Full Council, periodically, which contained details of the urgent executive decisions which have been made. A report submitted for the purposes of Regulation 19 must include particulars of each decision made and a summary of the matters in respect of which each decision was made. The Leader must submit at least one report under Regulation 19 annually to the relevant local authority. This requirement was reflected in paragraph 22.1 of the Access to Information Procedure

Rules which were set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution. This states that 'the Leader of the Council shall submit to the Council at quarterly intervals a report containing details of each executive decision taken during the preceding three months where the making of the decision was agreed as urgent. The report will include details of each decision made and a summary of the matters in respect of which each decision was made.'

Members noted that there had been two Urgent Executive Decisions which had needed to be taken between June 2019 and December 2019. They were in relation to:

- * Unit 1, 112 London Road North, Lowestoft
- * Lowestoft Full Fibre Project

Councillor Bird, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee provided reassurance that he was provided with detailed justifications about why the decision(s) could not be deferred to a later meeting and he ensured that there was thorough discussion about the matter, involving all of the facts. He provided reassurance that being consulted as Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee was not just a 'tick box' exercise and he took the responsibility very seriously.

There being no further questions or debate, the recommendation within the report was moved by Councillor Gallant and seconded by Councillor Bird. It was then

RESOLVED

That the report detailing urgent Executive decisions made from June 2019 to December 2019 be noted.

20

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

Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, presented report **ES/0267**, 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 invited questions on their contents.

Councillor Byatt commented that he welcomed this report and the updates that it contained. It was important for all Members to keep updated on developments within the District.

Councillor Ritchie commented upon the Quality of Place Awards, which had been organised annually by the Design and Conservation Team, to recognise and encourage an interest in the quality of the built and natural environment of the District and to promote an awareness of the need for high standards in all forms of design. The quality of the designs had been especially high this year. There followed some discussion in this respect and it was noted that it was important for Councillors to ask questions at an early stage of the development and planning process, in order to get the best possible developments for the District.

The recommendation within the report was moved by Councillor Gallant and seconded by Councillor Rudd. It was then

RESOLVED

That the report be received.

The meeting concluded at 8.45 pm

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Chairman