



COUNCIL

Wednesday, 22 July 2020

CABINET MEMBERS' REPORT AND OUTSIDE BODIES REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To receive the Cabinet Members' Report and the Outside Bodies Representatives' Report to Council, for information.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
Wards Affected:	All Wards in the District
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Steve Gallant Leader of the Council

CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS TO COUNCIL

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Craig Rivett – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development
Contact Details:	craig.rivett@eastsoffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07831 370806

Covid19 response

Since early March the ED team's work has been dominated by the response to businesses and supporting them during lockdown and subsequent economic downturn. The most tangible example of this is the allocation of grants of up to £25k to for small businesses and those in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors with a rateable value up to £51k. To date 5,244 East Suffolk business have received grants equating to £60.1m of grant funding.

The team have also been instrumental in developing the more recent Discretionary Grant Scheme which is aimed at those businesses not eligible for the first round of grants. This is a much smaller grants scheme with an overall value of only 5% of the original scheme. We have ensured that the criteria for this scheme is as flexible as possible to ensure as many businesses as possible can access this much needed funding. To date 97 businesses have received support totalling £1.3m.

The ED team have also been leading on the implementation of the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund. We have been working closely with each of east Suffolk's 12 Town Councils to help them determine what measures they need to put in place to reopen their town safely as more of the high street reopens. This has included measures to promote social distancing including signage and public realm changes such as changes to high streets to reduce vehicular use. Unfortunately, due to the restrictive nature of the EDRF funding it has taken longer to implement these measures than either the Town and District councils envisaged. In order to expedite matters ESC have also taken the decision to directly fund some these measures where the ERDF fund would not. In addition Norse have engaged in more intensive cleansing to ensure Town Centres are as attractive as possible as people return to the high street.

Sector support

With the closure of restaurants, the local fishing sector was badly impacted by plummeting sales. In response to this ESC in partnership with SCC, NCC and the LEP have funded the Call4Fish initiative which has created an online platform for suppliers to sell their produce directly to domestic customers. There are now 10 suppliers on this site and the initiative is seeking to implement further business support measures to ensure the sustainability and growth of these businesses in the longer term.

We have also recognised that the tourism sector has been particularly badly affected by the lockdown. As a result we have jointly commissioned research with Visit East of England to understand the scale of the impact to inform measures that can be implemented both regionally and locally to support this vitally important sector for the East Suffolk economy.

Recovery Plans

The ED team have also worked closely with colleagues across the region to develop the 'Restart Plan' which is a short-term response to support the regional economy coming out of lockdown. As one of the major economic centres within the region we are also centrally involved in the delivery of initiatives within the plan. This will be followed up with a longer term Renew Plan published by the end of the year.

We are also heavily involved in adapting the current Suffolk Growth Framework, so it is fit for purpose in responding to the current economic climate. In particular this will focus on the infrastructure and sector based investment required to support the recovery. At the local level we are adapting our existing ED programme again to reflect the challenges and opportunities of the recovery phase.

Ongoing initiatives such as Lowestoft's Town Investment Plan, the development of the Felixstowe BID and the Smart Towns initiative all form part of our response to the recovery phase. Although there are many challenges ahead there is also significant investment such as the Third Crossing, Sizewell C, offshore energy development which create strong grounds for optimism in the ability of the East Suffolk economy to bounce back.

Cabinet Member:	Councillor James Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment
Contact Details:	james.mallinder@eastsuffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07810 815879

Suffolk Waste Partnership

As East Suffolk representative on the Suffolk Waste Partnership, I have attended a virtual meeting and I am constantly updated on performance.

Throughout COVID 19 general residual and recycling waste collections performed well. Increases in quantity of waste have been absorbed into the system and households experienced no difference in our services.

Green waste collection was paused and now reinstated.

Recycling centres are working well – the booking system is effective, and popular with customers. I am lobbying hard for SCC to make the booking system permanent. Vans and larger vehicles are now permitted to use the centres.

We continue to engage with Food Savvy especially through social media to reduce our food waste and educate as much possible on cooking healthy, nutritious rich food.

And through the period of suspension of Green waste collections, I emphasised the importance of composting and hope any interest will continued.

We work closely with national government to follow any new initiatives and wait further announcements on collections for glass / food waste / green waste / deposit return scheme etc.

Discussion are on-going with changes in fuel for waste trucks and has been recently discussed at the Environmental Task Group.

Through the Suffolk Waste Partnership and direct through East Suffolk we continue educating and encourage circular economy and to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Greenprint Forum

As East Suffolk representative on the Greenprint Forum Steering Group we held our first zoom meeting, which proved very successful.

We are an active organisation and continue to be community responsive dealing with many stakeholders of East Suffolk.

The active travel project is mostly on hold, due to Covid-19 restrictions. But we are encouraging all members of the Greenprint form to engage with our partners in the discussion of more environmentally friendly ways of travel. We are expecting a decision from SCC on additional funding to support and enhance the scope of the Quiet Lanes and hope this will add to the cycle lane maps across East Suffolk. Plastic Action champions are still very much alive and we encourage them to engage with the local community as much as possible, especially focusing on litter picks and assisting local business to reduce their waste. Part of the training pack of Plastic Champions was used to form part of the online classes initiative alongside clean air education.

Many of the Greenprint Forum projects are people focused so work has been put on hold until we can resume our campaigning.

Coastal Partnership East

As East Suffolk representative on Coastal Partnership East Board we have meet and discussed the ongoing concerns of our changing coastline, particularly in East Suffolk.

Beach levels have noticeably dropped and in places there is substantial cliff erosion. Inspections and full engagement with all stakeholders continues.

Updates given on various projects, in particular, the Lowestoft initiatives. Cllr Ritchie, as principle representative, will provide a full update.

Suffolk Local Access Forum

As East Suffolk representative I am always keen to see how other stakeholders engage with our green assets. We feel it's a constant battle to maintain and keep our footpaths. Always remember use it or lose it.

Private land owners can be a root of problems, due to a lack of upkeep and housing developments should always engage and enhance local walking access.

Environment Task Group update:

- The Annual Greenhouse Gas Report for 2019/20 is in progress and headline data has been shared with the Environment Task Group (ETG). It will account for the energy use of all the council estates and operations including electricity and gas use in our offices, Norse depots,

leisure centres, housing stock, street lighting, and all other built assets; operational fleet including refuse collection and housing maintenance; and staff mileage on council business. And act as a clear measurement and road map to enable us to reach our road map of carbon neutrality by 2030.

- The Environmental Guidance Note produced by the Planning team has been considered by the ETG and covers a range of topics including water conservation, energy efficiency, renewable energy, nature and wildlife, siting and orientation, sustainable travel, surface water run-off, and materials and waste. Whilst not a statutory document, the Council will be promoting the measures contained in the Guidance Note and will encourage developers to use it in delivering sustainable new homes, alongside meeting the requirements of the planning policies. This is at final draft stage and will be launched soon after the adoption of the local plan.
- Mind the weeds we are feeding the bees: 40 biodiversity conservation areas have been established on land maintained by the council where the normal cutting regime was reduced due to Covid-19. ESC is currently taking the opportunity to re-evaluate its maintenance of these spaces going forward, with anecdotal evidence indicating benefits to biodiversity. ESC has a target to establish 100 of these conservation areas by next year with corridors between them to ensure connectivity and communities are invited to make proposals and ESC also intends to invite communities to become involved in gathering evidence on their impact.
- Norse are investigating alternative fuels for the refuse collection vehicles to investigate the potential for reductions in carbon emissions resulting from refuse, recycling and garden waste collections which are currently a significant proportion of the Councils overall emissions.
- ESC's response to Covid-19 has resulted in the rapid and seamless enablement of home working across all otherwise office-based teams including customer services. Staff have been engaged through surveys to determine the impacts on them of home working which are currently being analysed. The vision is to embed home working as the norm, where possible, for individual members of staff where this is in alignment with the needs of the business, and for using digital meeting platforms as the default for all meetings, with potential for carbon savings resulting from reduced need for travel.
- The Greenprint Forum have produced a letter to lobby the government for more commitment and assistance to local councils on the green agenda, to be co-signed by the ESC ETG and the Chair of the Greenprint Forum.
- The ETG considered the draft Climate Action Plan at its meeting on 15 July. Including proposals for investigation of further deployment of solar PV, energy efficiency and electric vehicle charging on our estates.

Outside Bodies Representatives Reports

Felixstowe Citizens Advice Bureau	
Representative:	Councillor Mark Jepson – Assistant Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health
Contact Details:	mark.jepson@eastsoffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07825 720601

I have attended two Board meetings since becoming elected in May, during the last year the Felixstowe branch has seen 1715 individual cases with 6522 different issues an increase in demand of 4%, slightly lower than the previous year which had been 6.5%. The number of different issues that clients present with has increased by 13%. Case workers have commented that cases are becoming more complex.

They have introduced a drop-in centre with Flagship Housing which has proved popular. Their relationship with DWP continues to strengthen, helped that each premises is so closely located, this is particularly useful when dealing with Universal Credit queries.

The Social Prescribing project delivered in partnership with Action community Trust is working well, the Community Connector post has developed strong liaisons with the different surgeries in the town.

The Felixstowe Manager has been trying to work closely with Leiston CAB particularly following the departure of their manager, aware of the need to reform services as indicated at both District and County, it was perhaps disappointing that Leiston are now trying to recruit another manager. Felixstowe will continue to work with Leiston to identify efficiencies.

The commitment and knowledge of the volunteers is highly commendable, it is however recognised by the Board that it would be beneficial to try and attract some younger volunteers for resilience and forward planning.

East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board	
Representative:	Councillor Judy Cloke
Contact Details:	judy.cloke@eastsoffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07825 386561

A report was received from the Alde & Ore Works Committee – Snape is the only Internationally reputed concert hall which is situated in a flood plain. The IDB might need to apply for planning permission to undertake work on the estuary.

Discussions relating to Sizewell and Minsmere marshes are ongoing. The water level management plan is being reviewed, having been created in the 1990s.

A pumping station may be needed at Minsmere, the hope is EDF will pay for the majority of it, with a potential contribution from the IDB.

The routine lifting of pumps has not taken place during lockdown, though staff have continued to work, whilst observing social distancing and they are repairing pumps as necessary. Business resilience is good and there are reconditioned pumps available.

Though groundwater tables have improved, they are still recovering from last year's drought. Staff are looking at a pumping station in Kent, with a view to installing something similar at Benacre. It will be more efficient to run.

Managers would like to establish a closer working relationship with ES planners, as they have with other districts.

The decision was ratified to change the name of the Board to East Suffolk Water Management Board, with the board members reduced from 23 to 21 (there have been a couple of resignations) and the meetings to remain at 3 per annum. This has been under discussion for some months.

The Waveney, Lower Yare and Lothingland Board have joined the Water Management Alliance, which covers all of East Norfolk and Suffolk, and there are now 4 IDBs in that area, whereas in 1955 there were 54.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be received.

APPENDICES – None

BACKGROUND PAPERS – None