

**Unconfirmed**



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Cabinet** held via Zoom, on **Tuesday, 04 January 2022 at 6:30 PM**

**Members of the Cabinet present:**

Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Richard Kerry, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Letitia Smith

**Other Members present:**

Councillor Edward Back, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Alison Cackett, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Carol Poulter, Councillor Steve Wiles

**Officers present:** Stephen Baker (Chief Executive), Kerry Blair (Head of Operations), Danny Clarke (Chartered Building Surveyor / Capital Projects Manager), Sarah Davis (Democratic Services Officer), Phil Harris (Communications Manager), Kathryn Hurlock (Asset and Investment Manager), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Liz Martin (Senior Design & Conservation Officer), Sue Meeken (Political Group Support Officer (Labour)), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer), Nicole Rickard (Head of Communities), Philip Ridley (Head of Planning and Coastal Management), Lorraine Rogers (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Julian Sturman (Senior Accountant), Rebecca Styles (High Street Heritage Action Zone Project Officer), Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager), Karolien Yperman (Design and Conservation Officer)

**Others present:** Adrian Mills (Head of Benefits and Council Tax Billing)

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**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mary Rudd, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3 Announcements**

*Councillor Steve Gallant - Leader of the Council*

Councillor Gallant referred to the continued challenges resulting from Covid-19 and highlighted the importance of booster jabs and testing. Despite these challenges, 2021 had been a productive year and 2022 would be busy with a number of projects moving

forward.

*Councillor James Mallinder - Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment*

Councillor Mallinder thanked Norse for their work over the Christmas period and reassured Members that Norse was fully operational, with no changes to routes or services as a result of Covid-19. East Suffolk Council was in daily contact with Norse to ensure service could be maintained and that Norse staff were able to work safely.

*Councillor Craig Rivett - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development*

Councillor Rivett confirmed that the reporting stage for Sizewell C NSIP was due to finish on the 14 January 2022, however the Planning Inspectorate had requested that the deadline be extended from the 14 January to the 25 February. As a result, this would push the date for the final decision back from the 14 April to the 25 May. The request had been granted, but the Secretary of State had made it clear that the Planning Inspectorate should ensure appropriate measures were in place to prevent the need for a further extension.

#### **4 Fees and Charges for the Financial Year 2022/23**

The Leader took the opportunity to say a few words, prior to Councillor Cook presenting his report. The Leader confirmed the process that led to the setting of fees or charges, which was for each Cabinet Member to liaise with officers in their portfolios before meeting as a whole Cabinet, to ensure that ambitions in respect of fees and charges would support a balanced budget. Any questions on particular fees or charges would therefore be directed to the relevant Cabinet Member.

Cabinet received report **ES/0995** of Councillor Maurice Cook, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, which sought approval of the discretionary Fees and Charges for 2022/23. Councillor Cook reported that income from fees and charges was an integral part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and generated essential funding for the Council to help minimise Council Tax increases or service reductions. Annual income from fees and charges was in the region of £13.5 million.

Councillor Cook drew Cabinet's attention to the following areas of discretionary fees in Appendix A where there had been noteworthy changes: beach huts and chalets, cemeteries, pre-application planning advice, garden waste collection, bulky waste collection, licensing fees and Southwold Harbour and caravan site.

The date for the implementation of discretionary fees was the 1 April 2022.

The Cabinet was advised that the Statutory Fees were set out in Appendix B and Councillor Cook noted that the fees in some areas had not changed for a number of years.

The Leader reported that the Cabinet aimed to keep fees as low as was reasonable to produce a balanced budget.

Councillor Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment, thanked Councillor Cook and officers for their work to ensure that the Council was in a strong financial position to deliver both services residents needed and enabled the Council to invest in environmental priorities.

Councillor Kerry, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, thanked housing officers for their work around fees, and reported that he was happy that the fee increases in his portfolio would enable officers to continue to carry out their duties.

Councillor Coulam asked why license fees had not been increased for businesses in recognition of the impact of Covid-19, when license fees for taxis had. Councillor Coulam felt that this was unfair as taxi drivers and companies had also been similarly impacted by Covid-19. The Assistant Cabinet Member for Community Health, Councillor Jepson, responded that the fee change was in line with RPI, and that taxi drivers and companies had been offered support in terms of Covid-19 grants.

Councillor Byatt questioned why parking charges were higher in some towns, as this would seem to draw people away from one town centre to another where it was cheaper to park and shop. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport, Councillor Brooks, reported that fees and charges had not been increased this year to encourage people to use their town centres. Parking charges were higher in the major towns of Felixstowe and Lowestoft, this had been consulted on and was not likely to change at present.

Councillor Byatt asked whether it would be appropriate to review electricity charges for the harbour and caravan site at Southwold in six months' time, in light of expected increases in the cost of electricity. Councillor Cook confirmed that discussions were taking place on fees and charges for both Southwold harbour and caravan site and that changes would be received by Cabinet in due course.

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

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the discretionary Fees and Charges for 2022/23, attached as Appendix A to this report, be approved.
2. That the statutory Fees and Charges for 2022/23, attached as Appendix B to this report, be noted.

## **5 Jubilee Beach Huts Marketing Strategy**

Cabinet received report **ES/0996** of Councillor Craig Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development, who explained that the report recommended a change to the previous Cabinet decision regarding the beach huts to be sold. At the Cabinet meeting of 6 October 2020, Cabinet had approved that "the proposed mixed tenure operating model to sell 38 beach huts on the upper deck and retain 34 beach huts along the promenade for short term hire", referred to as a horizontal split. Following feedback it was now proposed that the huts be split

vertically so that huts on both the lower and upper decks would be sold to ensure equality for all potential purchasers.

Councillor Rivett confirmed that there had been a great deal of interest in the purchase and hire of the new beach huts. The capital and revenue receipts from the beach huts would go toward recouping the costs of cliff stability works. Councillor Rivett took the opportunity to direct those interested in purchasing a hut to email: [assetmanagement@eastsoffolk.gov.uk](mailto:assetmanagement@eastsoffolk.gov.uk) and those interested in beach hut hire to the website: [hirebeachhuts.co.uk](http://hirebeachhuts.co.uk)

The Leader thanked the Waveney Disability Forum and others who had raised the issue of the beach hut sales, which had prompted this change.

Councillor Ritchie, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, reported that the beach huts were within South Lowestoft Conservation area, and he felt that despite divided opinions, the beach huts would enhance the area. The Leader agreed that the design of the beach huts would add variety to the area.

Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, added her support for the project and hoped that it could be repeated in other areas.

Councillor Byatt asked whether there would be disabled access to all the huts on the lower area and to the beach itself. Councillor Rivett confirmed that although access was not necessarily level due to the sea defences, the huts were accessible and had been designed to accommodate disabled individuals. Ten huts which had fully level access were retained for rental. The huts would be completed by the end of March 2022 and the boardwalk would be completed by the summer in time for the First Light Festival.

Councillor Gooch questioned whether a more integrated approach could be taken to the split of the huts, so that owners were not on one side and renters on the other. Councillor Rivett confirmed that officers had considered all options and feedback but had settled on this split as the best option.

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

#### **RESOLVED**

That the proposed mixed tenure operating model to sell 50% of the beach huts on the development situated on both the upper deck and lower promenade be approved.

#### **6 Acceptance of Funding from Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for the re-procurement of the Connect for Health Social Prescribing Programme**

The Cabinet received report **ES/0997** of Councillor Mary Rudd, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health, which sought acceptance of funding which would be used for the re-procurement of the Connect for Health Social Prescribing Programme.

In the absence of Councillor Rudd, the Assistant Cabinet Member for Community Health, Councillor Mark Jepson, introduced the report. The report proposed that the Council accept a grant of around £1.6million for the funding of the Connect for Health Social Prescribing Programme in the south of East Suffolk, Babergh, Mid Suffolk and Ipswich, and that the Council commence the re-procurement of the service in January 2022. This service had originally been procured by Suffolk Coastal District Council in 2019.

Councillor Jepson highlighted the importance of social prescribing, which both relieved demand on GPs and connected people with their communities and local support groups. The new Connect for Health programme would start in July 2022 and run for 21 months.

Councillor Jepson confirmed that there would be no financial impact on East Suffolk Council beyond staff time. The Head of Communities and the Integration and Partnerships Manager positions were part funded by the CCG and would lead the procurement process.

Councillor Jepson added that in the north of the district social prescribing was managed through the two Primary Care Networks, and the Head of Communities was liaising with others in that area to develop the scheme further.

The Leader clarified that the Council was split between two different CCGs (soon to become Integrated Care Bodies) and as a result projects and changes came forward at different times for different areas. However, the Council as a whole worked to ensure good practice was shared across the district and that no one area was left behind.

Councillor Byatt asked whether there were any comparison figures for the outcomes from these programmes for both the north and south of the district and whether the CCGs worked together on any particular issues. The Head of Communities confirmed that the CCG leads for social prescribing met regularly, and that each CCG had taken a different approach to social prescribing. Unfortunately, Norfolk and Waveney had traditionally received less funding. The Head of Communities would look into end of project reports, to provide further detail on what had been delivered, and project outcomes.

On the proposal of the Leader, seconded by Councillor Smith, it was by a unanimous vote

#### **RESOLVED**

That it be retrospectively agreed that the Council accepts a grant of a minimum of £1,626,000 from Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG, and that East Suffolk Council should lead the procurement process to secure providers to deliver Connect for Health in each of the eight Integrated Neighbourhood Team (INT) areas that make up the Ipswich and East Suffolk Alliance area. Should additional funding be secured for social prescribing this may be added into the contract.

## **Extensions to existing South Lowestoft Conservation Area and Proposed Adoption of the South Lowestoft and Kirkley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan**

The Cabinet received the report **ES/0998** of Councillor David Ritchie, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, and Councillor Craig Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development.

Councillor Ritchie introduced the report, which proposed the adoption of the South Lowestoft and Kirkley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, and the extension of the Conservation Area.

Councillor Ritchie stated that the extension to the Conservation Area had been identified as part of the Lowestoft High Street Heritage Action Zone project, and the updated appraisal would support the HSHAZ by ensuring there was up to date information on the conservation area for planners, architects and residents which would ensure that significant heritage in the area was protected.

A public consultation on the Area Appraisal, Management Plan, and proposed boundary changes had taken place in the summer of 2021, which had included public drop in sessions. Councillor Ritchie emphasised that this was not mandatory but that ESC did not wish to impose changes on communities without seeking their views, and that both the documents and proposed area extension had been amended to reflect comments received during the consultation.

The Leader commended the document to Cabinet, in particular for its excellent overview of the history of the area.

Councillor Smith added her support for the document, in particular for drawing attention to some of the houses within Lowestoft which were often overlooked.

Following a question from the Leader on how the Conservation Area and Heritage Action Zone worked together, Councillor Rivett confirmed that the Heritage Action Zone aimed to physically restore the heritage assets of the area, and the Conservation Area plans provided a clear summary of the vision for the area to act as a guide for the physical changes taking place. Councillor Ritchie added that Conservation Areas and Heritage Action Zones were national schemes which helped draw in funding and expertise to the area.

Councillor Kerry added his support for the document and expressed hope that the document would be promoted to the public and residents to highlight the heritage of the area.

Councillor Rivett drew Cabinet's attention to the areas of the document that detailed how the Council worked with businesses and individuals to encourage them to make the necessary changes to their properties. Lowestoft was also one of only seven towns nationally that had two heritage action zones.

Councillor Byatt thanked officers for their work on the document and stressed the importance of ensuring this document worked with other documents about the towns heritage and cultural value.

Councillor Gooch expressed her support for the document and commended the public engagement that had taken place.

Councillor Ritchie confirmed that an area of North Lowestoft had been included in the South Lowestoft Conservation Area, as this area was closer to the boundary of the South Conservation Area.

Rebecca Styles, ESC High Street Heritage Action Zone Project Officer, confirmed that the entirety of the Claremont Pier site had been included and that ownership was not a barrier to inclusion. With regards to the Toyota garage that had been excluded from the Conservation Area, this had been done due to the plot size and modern design which was incongruous with the rest of the area. It was still within the setting of an historic area, which did provide some security against further development. The CEFAS building had not been included, despite being highly commended for its design, as it was a particularly new building. However, reassurance was provided that it could be included in future.

On the proposal of Councillor Ritchie, seconded by Councillor Rivett, it was by a unanimous vote

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the South Lowestoft/Kirkley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan attached at Appendix C be adopted.
2. That the extension of the South Lowestoft/Kirkley Conservation Area as shown on the map attached at Appendix A and including those properties and land included in the schedule attached at Appendix D be agreed.
3. That the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, be authorised to make any presentational or typographical amendments to the South Lowestoft/Kirkley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan prior to it being published.

#### **8 Extensions to existing Bungay Conservation Area and proposed adoption of the Bungay Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan**

The Cabinet received report **ES/0999** of Councillor David Ritchie, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, the purpose of which was to seek the adoption of the Bungay Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and extensions to the Conservation Area.

Councillor Ritchie introduced the report and summarised the need for an updated Area Appraisal and Management Plan, to inform decision making within the planning process to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the heritage assets within Bungay. Councillor Ritchie added that as Ward Member for the town he was particularly pleased by the historical detail the document provided and that he looked forward to sharing it with others in the town.

The Leader commended the document to Cabinet, particularly for the historical context it provided for the town and its buildings.

Councillor Smith added her support for the document, in particular for drawing attention to the historic buildings which had been cared for by residents and which added to the charm of the town.

Following a question from Councillor Byatt on the copyright of the document and its sources, and whether the document could form the basis for a tourist trail around the town, it was confirmed that ESC did own the copyright to the document and photographs. Councillor Ritchie agreed that this and the previous Management Plan should be used as part of the town's tourism provision.

Councillor Smith agreed that the document could be used to provide tourist trails within towns and encouraged the Community Partnership for the area to use the Area Appraisal and Management Plan as part of its activities.

On the proposal of Councillor Ritchie, seconded by Councillor Kerry, it was by a unanimous vote

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the Bungay Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan attached at Appendix A be adopted.
2. That the extensions of the Bungay Conservation Area as shown on the map attached at Appendix B be agreed and include those properties included in the schedule attached at Appendix E.
3. That the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, be authorised to make any presentational or typographical amendments to the Bungay Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan prior to it being published.

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

The Cabinet received report **ES/1000** of Councillor James Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for The Environment, who provided a quarterly update on the work of the Environment Task Group (ETG). It was noted that the environment was a key principle of the Council's Strategic Plan and, in order to confirm this commitment to the environment, the Council declared a Climate Emergency, with the focus being both local residents and the environment alike.

The ETG was very much cross party, which Councillor Mallinder felt was an important principle, as ETG did not make decisions behind closed doors, it discussed environmental issues in detail and enabled the Council to make fundamental changes to its policies. Councillor Mallinder stated that it was important to take action, as time was running out. To date, there had been several developments including the Council's refuse vehicles had been migrated to run on Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil



(HVO), the 'Pardon the weeds, we are feeding the bees' campaign and the Platinum Jubilee trees for all the Parishes in East Suffolk were all discussed at the ETG and then delivered to our residents.

The ETG had also contributed to the Planning Team's Sustainable Construction Supplement and the Walking and Cycling Strategy. The ETG were closely watching the guidance issued from Westminster, to understand the Council's responsibility resulting from the Resource and Waste Strategy. Councillor Mallinder stated that these issues had been so important, he had made sure special meetings of the ETG had taken place, where all Ward Members were able to attend, to receive a presentation and ask questions. All Councillors were engaged with the Council's vision and Councillor Mallinder stated that he welcomed suggestions and comments from all.

Councillor Mallinder commented that it was very important to engage with the public and therefore he worked hard to attend various events around the district, discussing and articulating the Council's vision. He also made sure that the Council constantly updated its webpages, as he felt it was important to explain what the ETG were doing; which included various activities such as letter writing to try and influence our MPs, to a presentation at the Arts Lettering Trust at Snape Maltings. Councillor Mallinder then took the opportunity to thank the Environmental Sustainability Officer, for all his hard work for the ETG and Council generally.

The Leader stated that the ETG was working extremely well, was making a real difference and was not a talking shop. The Environment was an important strand of the Strategic Plan and the Leader stated he was very proud of what had been achieved.

Councillor Byatt stated that the Environment Act had just been published, which was 278 pages long. He commented that he had not yet seen the Council's Climate Action Plan and he queried if there was an estimated date of publication for it? He also asked if there could be any Nature First Grants made available in the North of the District too? He then commented on the proposed increase in recycling levels, which would have a significant impact on the Council and asked if the ETG was the best vehicle for dealing with environmental matters? Would an Environment Committee be more effective? The Leader reported that establishing a formal Environment Committee would slow down the environmental progress. The ETG was a Committee of the Cabinet and therefore the Cabinet Members had delegated authority to make decisions more quickly, if needed, rather than waiting for the next formal meeting to take place. Councillor Mallinder commented that he was pleased to work with Councillor Gooch on the ETG and it was noted that the Environment Act was the foundation for environmental matters for the Council. There would be significant changes as a result of the Act, which would require much discussion. Councillor Mallinder commented that the Nature First grants were district wide and it was important to raise awareness of them and how to apply widely across the district, therefore further publicity would be provided in due course. In relation to the Climate Action Plan, Councillor Mallinder stated that it was anticipated that it would be published later this year. The Leader also commented that all ESC Councillors had an Enabling Communities Grant of £7,500 each year and they could allocate some of their funding for environmental projects in their Ward, if they so wished.

Councillor Gooch commented that she felt the ETG worked very well, as there was free

and open discussion on a wide range of environmental matters. She stated that it was important to reach out and work with other environmental networks and organisations, such as the East Suffolk Travel Association (ESTA) which looked at sustainable travel across the district.

On the proposition of Councillor Mallinder, seconded by Councillor Burroughes, it was unanimously

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the report from the Environment Task Group be accepted and approved.
2. That it be confirmed that the Environment Task Group is to continue to deliver the task it was set to investigate ways to cut East Suffolk Council's carbon and investigate positive environmental policy.

### **10 East Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for 2022/23**

The Cabinet received report **ES/1001** of Councillor Maurice Cook, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources. The purpose of the report was to review the 2021/22 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) and consider options for the scheme for 2022/23.

Councillor Cook reported that each year, the Council was required to review its Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS). Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) carried out the annual review of the 2021 scheme and a range of options were considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 7 September 2021. Cabinet approved that a consultation be undertaken on the following proposed amendments to the East Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for 2022/23:

- Reducing the capital threshold from £16,000 to £10,000 and abolishing tariff income.
- Introducing a fixed rate reduction of £7.40 for non-dependants.
- Further streamlining the claim process.
- Increasing the tolerance for Universal Credit data re-assessments from £65 per month to £100 per month

It was reported that a short consultation exercise took place from 25 October to 26 November 2021 and the survey had elicited 104 responses. The consultation took the form of an online survey, which asked stakeholders for their views on the proposals and any unforeseen impacts. The link to the survey was sent to all Members; made available on the Council and ARP websites; and sent to stakeholders working with individuals who are likely to be affected by the proposals or who represent residents with a protected characteristic, for example, CAB, debt and money management services and local disability groups. Major preceptors were consulted on the proposals by letter. The results of the survey were referred to in the relevant sections of this report and were shown in summary in Appendix A to report ES-1001.

The Leader thanked officers and the ARP for their ongoing work in what was a very

complex and specialist field.

Members then offered their congratulations to the Head of Benefits and Council Tax Billing on his recent promotion within the ARP.

The Head of Benefits and Council Tax Billing thanked Members and commented that the updated scheme would streamline the whole process and make the journey much simpler for those who needed to use it.

There being no further questions or comments, Councillor Cook moved the recommendation within the report and this was seconded by Councillor Kerry. Upon being put to the vote it was unanimously

## **RESOLVED**

That the proposed East Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for 2022/23 attached as Appendix C to the report, incorporating the proposals outlined in the report, be recommended to Full Council.

### **11 Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2025/26**

The Leader took the opportunity to say a few words, prior to Councillor Cook introducing his report.

The Leader reminded Members that the Finance Team were not responsible for deciding on the allocations within the Capital Programme. The projects and initiatives that were listed represented the requests and ambitions of individual Portfolio Holders, the Cabinet or Full Council. The items in the included schedule represented the Council's ambitious vision as laid out in our Strategic Plan.

He reported that each and every project had been or would be considered by the appropriate decision makers, as per the levels of delegation outlined in our constitution. Members would always have an opportunity to question the spends as they arose and were presented as individual items. The Leader commented that spending money as an individual was easy, whilst spending money as a Committee was less straight forward. He gave an example of giving each Council Member one pound to spend, and it was noted that they would all do so with no qualms or problems. If, however the Leader were to give the same 55 pounds out in one sum and ask Members to agree what the Council would spend it on, the debate would be long and arduous. Therefore, the Leader advised that he would be directing questions relating to projects to the relevant Cabinet Members, not to the Finance Team. The Leader then invited Councillor Cook to present his report.

The Cabinet received report **ES/1002** of Councillor Maurice Cook, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources. It was noted 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 General Fund Capital Programme at Appendix B and the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme at Appendix G for the financial year 2022/23 to 2025/26 and incorporated revisions to the 2021/22 financial year.

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 Strategic 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 Cabinet was advised that the General Fund Capital Programme included £161 million of external contributions and grants towards financing the Council's £259 million of capital investment for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy period. This represented 62% of the whole General Fund Capital Programme. The Capital Programme had completed a thorough and rigorous process following initial input from project officers through to review and scrutiny by the Asset Management Group, Corporate Management Team and Strategic Management Team.

It was noted that the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme totalled £78 million for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy period and would benefit from £4 million of external grants and contributions, which was 5% of the programme.

Councillor Cook reported that all capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (Government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue, reserves, and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing and leasing). Debt was only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this was therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which was known as "Minimum Revenue Provision" (MRP). Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets (known as capital receipts) may be used to replace debt finance.

Councillor Cook stated that the Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance was measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP. The CFR was expected to increase by £72 million between 2021/22 and 2025/26 which was due to capital projects potentially being financed through borrowing. Statutory guidance was that debt should remain below the CFR. The Council expected to comply with this in the medium term, but the scale of the Capital Programme as currently drafted was such that the Council would begin to approach its borrowing limits over the life of the proposed programme, if other sources of finance were not available. The programme as presented did not pre-empt the realisation of capital receipts, although some significant receipts were currently expected, and the financing of the programme would be revised when these were received. In addition, external funding was expected to be secured in respect of other major projects in the Programme, assisting the overall position and the ability of the Council to deliver on its Strategic Plan.

The Leader thanked the Finance Team for their excellent work and commended their cautious approach, which stood the Council in good stead for the future.

Cllr Mallinder thanked Councillor Cook and his team for the report and commented on a project in his Ward at Bawdsey Quay which, although small, clearly illustrated that the smallest of projects could have a big impact on our residents. The project involved redesigning the parking, landscaping and drainage and was positively received by local

residents and confirmed the proactive active approach the Council was taking.

Councillor Rivett thanked Councillor Cook for the thorough report and commented that there was much to look forward to.

Councillor Byatt congratulated the Finance Team for their ongoing hard work and acknowledged that it was difficult to balance the budget.

There being no further comments, Councillor Cook moved the recommendations within the report and this was seconded by the Leader. Upon being put to the vote it was unanimously

**RESOLVED**

1. That the General Fund capital programme for 2021/22 to 2025/26 including revisions as shown in Appendix B to the report be recommended for approval by Full Council.
2. That the Housing Revenue Account capital programme for 2021/22 to 2025/26 including revisions as shown in Appendix G to the report be recommended for approval by Full Council.

The meeting concluded at 8.29 pm

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Chairman