

**Unconfirmed**



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Cabinet** held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, on **Tuesday, 05 April 2022 at 6:30 pm**

**Members of the Cabinet present:**

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

**Other Members present:**

Councillor Edward Back, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Tony Cooper, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Frank Mortimer, Councillor Steve Wiles

**Officers present:**

Stephen Baker (Chief Executive), Ruth Bishop (Senior Planner (Policy and Delivery)), Duncan Colman (Interim Asset & Investment Manager), Karen Cook (Democratic Services Manager), Phil Harris (Strategic Communications and Marketing Manager), Teresa Howarth (Principal Environmental Health Officer), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer), Andrea McMillan (Principal Planner (Policy and Delivery)), Sue Meeken (Political Group Support Officer (Labour)), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer), Joss Mullett (Health Projects Officer), Agnes Ogundiran (Conservative Political Group Support Officer), Nicole Rickard (Head of Communities), Samantha Shimmon (Tenant Services Manager), Heather Tucker (Head of Housing), Paul Wood (Head of Economic Development & Regeneration)

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**1 Apologies for Absence**

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

**2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3 Announcements**

The Leader reiterated the announcement that he had made at the last Full Council meeting; the appointment of Councillor Cloke as the Assistant Cabinet Member -

Refugee Support. The Leader emphasised the importance of this position for East Suffolk Council (ESC), stating that it wanted to do all that it could to support refugees, both in Ukraine and indeed in respect of Afghanistan. The Leader welcome the wealth of experience that Councillor Cloke brought to this new role. Councillor Cloke, after thanking the Leader, referenced the work that she was already undertaking to ensure that she was fully briefed and ready to start work and provide assistance where she could. Councillor Cloke referred to the importance of following Government guidelines at all times and she stated that she would provide updates as more information became available.

The Deputy Leader provided clarification and reassurance regarding the recent reporting of ESC's relationship with the company 'Click it Local'. He referred to ESC's contract for services with a national company which had contracts with other local authorities to provide similar services; ESC did not invest in 'Click it Local', as reported. ESC, like others, was trying to establish the current status of 'Click it Local' and legally must be cautious to only state what it knew to be factually accurate. At this time 'Click it Local' was showing to be active on Company's House. The Economic Development Team had been reaching out to businesses affected. The Deputy Leader stated that he was grateful to those reporters who had amended their articles accordingly.

The Deputy Leader referenced offshore wind and stated that the previous week the Secretary of State had issued a decision on two wind farms off the East Suffolk coast, EA1N and EA2, with proposed landfall in the East Suffolk district; he stated that they would contribute up to 1.7 gigawatts of renewable energy and contribute towards the Government's target of 40 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030. The Deputy Leader added that officers were reviewing the documentation and they would continue to work with the developer to ensure that the projects would be developed in accordance with the Development Consent Order.

Lastly, the Deputy Leader announced the sale of the former Council Offices site at Melton Hill, with 'completion' having taken place on 4 April 2022. The Deputy Leader was pleased to report that the sale had taken place to a local family run developer; he was keen to see that the development would forge a close working relationship with the local community and that any plans would include the provision for at least 33% affordable housing.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health provided a reminder in respect of Covid-19; she referred to restrictions having been lifted but the current high number of infections. Councillor Rudd reiterated the importance of hand washing etc and also the importance of everybody receiving vaccinations and boosters etc.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport announced that he had received a number of requests for parking dispensations related to the forthcoming Jubilee weekend; he was pleased to state that these would be provided if they were connected to official events and he welcomed further requests from towns / parishes etc.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment announced two new projects, Clean for the Queen and, in its third year, Pardon the Weeds We Are Feeding the Bees. Councillor Mallinder provided information in respect of the projects and was

pleased to confirm that all details were available on the ESC website and via social medial.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, after referring to the earlier announcement by the Deputy Leader, expressed his pleasure at the sale of the former Councillor offices in Melton.

#### **4 Minutes**

##### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2022 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to one amendment - page 3 - second paragraph - "£20" be deleted and replaced with "£20m".

#### **5 Tackling Long Term Empty Homes**

Cabinet received report **ES/1106** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, the purpose of which was to set out the business case for additional resources to tackle the problem of long term empty homes and to seek Cabinet approval for the revenue resources required to deliver a three-year trial programme.

Following the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing's presentation of the report, the Leader emphasised that the homes in question were not owned, or within the direct control, of ESC; they were private sector homes; however, he stated empty homes caused a number of issues, ie apart from there being a shortage of homes, often they caused a great deal of consternation and concern for neighbours in that they could be unkept and they could bring anti-social behaviour issues; as such, it was an important initiative for ESC.

Cabinet gave its full support for the initiative, noting that a dedicated officer would enable ESC to offer a suite of solutions for people, depending on their circumstances.

Councillor Byatt gave his full support for the initiative and following that the Leader emphasised that it had come forward as a recommendation from the Scrutiny Committee for which he gave thanks and expressed how he valued its work.

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

##### **RESOLVED**

That the revenue funding to deliver a three year long term empty homes programme be approved.

#### **6 Acceptance of funding from Suffolk County Council for management of the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme for 2022/23 and the following two years**

Cabinet received report **ES/1108** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, the purpose of which was to seek approval to accept funding of just over £520,000 from Suffolk County Council (via the Department

of Education) for the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme in East Suffolk for the financial year 2022/23 and similar amounts in the following two years.

The Leader commented on the importance of the project and he stated that it was right and proper that it was delivered by ESC; he welcomed the many activities that would lead to a healthy lifestyle, better living and making sure that the money would be used and invested in the health and wellbeing of young people.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism highlighted the fantastic opportunity for the community partnerships to make sure that they were involved in the project.

Cabinet was in total support of the project, welcoming the seven priorities; officers confirmed that the events would take place at various venues, including schools, leisure centres, sports centres, open green spaces etc.

Debate took place regarding the percentage of free school meals within the East Suffolk area and officers confirmed that there were almost 7000 children in East Suffolk currently receiving free school meals. Cabinet acknowledged the importance of good nutrition to children's learning and stated that ESC should do all that it could to assist in that area.

Councillor Byatt welcomed the initiative and had a number of queries and observations relating to rural areas and fuel costs, and free school meals and poverty, which were responded to by officers. Councillor Byatt asked if the Project Officer could provide an update report to the Council at the end of the year. The Leader emphasised that the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism would monitor the programme going forward and she would provide updates to Full Council as part of her Cabinet Member report.

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

## **RESOLVED**

That it be agreed that the Council accept funding of £522,562 (£486,562 for delivery and £36,000 for staffing) from Suffolk County Council to administer the Holiday Activity and Food programme for East Suffolk for 2022/23 and the following two years (the funding amount in 2023/4 and 2024/5 may vary slightly).

## **7 Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document**

Cabinet received report **ES/1104** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, the purpose of which was to recommend the adoption of the Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD supported the implementation of policies relating to sustainable construction in the ESC – Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and East Suffolk Council – Waveney Local Plan. The SPD provided guidance on a range of topics including energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation, and use of materials.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management highlighted the consultation that had taken place and the importance that ESC placed on this; he also gave thanks to the Local Plan Working Group, and officers, for their input into the SPD.

Cabinet gave its support for the document, welcoming the consultation responses and the guidance provided. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment highlighted how ESC put the environment at the heart of everything that it did.

Councillor Byatt gave his full support for the document and he stated that he was particularly pleased to read "The Council is seeking to improve its own buildings and ensure new build housing stock contributes to the Council's aim to become carbon neutral by 2030."

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

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document be adopted.
2. 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 Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document prior to it being published.

### **8 Changes to the Financial Procedure Rules**

Cabinet received report **ES/1111** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, the purpose of which was to enable the Cabinet to review and comment on proposed changes to the Financial Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, during his presentation of the report, reported that the Audit and Governance Committee, at its recent meeting, recommended the changes to Full Council for approval.

There being no questions or debate, on the proposition of Councillor Gallant, seconded by Councillor Brooks, it was by unanimous vote

#### **RESOLVED**

That the proposed changes to the Financial Procedure Rules be recommended to Full Council for approval.

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

Cabinet received report **ES/1107** by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment, the purpose of which was to advise Cabinet on the work of the cross-party Environment Task Group, since its last report on 4 January 2022. Confirmation

was also sought that the Task Group was continuing to deliver on the task it was set to investigate ways to cut ESC's carbon and other harmful emissions.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment, in presenting his report, emphasised the importance of not just talking about the environment, but taking positive actions and focussing on carbon neutrality for 2030. He highlighted what he saw as two very important points from the report, ie ESC was monitoring its carbon footprint through the greenhouse gas report and that the climate action plan would be one of the top priorities for the new Environmental Lead Officer. Secondly, he referred to the motion that was discussed at a recent Full Council meeting related to ESC Councillors thinking about transport issues; this he said was now a year long educational programme to assist ward members in understanding all issues.

In conclusion, Councillor Mallinder emphasised the importance of ESC's environmental policy and the importance of councillors coming together and empowering communities, building environmentally sustainable communities, for new and for future generations.

The Leader, joined by Cabinet, gave thanks to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment, the Task Group, and officers, for their work and dedication. The Leader highlighted that this was a cross-party initiative and all members acknowledged the importance of delivery for this environmental challenge.

Councillor Byatt referred to the walking and cycling strategy, and the consultation responses, and asked if the number of responses had been broken down into rural / urban areas etc. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment responded that he would look into this.

Councillor Byatt referred to the home energy audit pilot and enquired about home energy assessments. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment provided examples of how assessments could be undertaken, ie with thermal cameras and through surveys etc.

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

## **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 Exempt/Confidential Items**

The Leader stated that in exceptional circumstances the Council may, by law, exclude members of the public from all, or part of, an executive decision-making meeting. The Council should, unless there were urgent circumstances, give notice of its intention to do so via the Forward Plan, which was updated and published on its website 28 clear days prior to the meeting. There were various reasons, the Leader added, that the

Council, on occasions, had to do this and examples were because a report contained information relating to an individual, information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person, or information relating to any consultations or negotiations.

Tonight, the Leader stated, Cabinet had three substantive exempt matters to consider and they were as outlined on the published agenda – items 12, 13 and 14.

Firstly, agenda item 12 related to Oulton Broad Yacht Station and The Boulevard, The Crescent and part of The Nicholas Everitt Trust Car Parks. The purpose of this report was to seek Cabinet approval to enter into a lease and management agreements, for the continued operational management of the sites.

Secondly, agenda item 13 related to the Freeport East Full Business Case. The purpose of this report, the Leader advised, was to seek Cabinet approval for the submission of the Freeport East Full Business Case to Government. This was an important part of the process as, should the Government approve the Full Business Case, it would be the penultimate step in the Freeport East set up phase and would result in the release of the seed capital funding which had been allocated to Freeport East. For those of you who may not be aware, the Leader added, Freeport East was an exciting development, which would attract inward international investment and drive domestic growth, propelling the country's economy forward. It covered Britain's busiest container port, two major ferry ports and was located close to the East Coast green energy cluster, Freeport East offered a unique combination of advantages to benefit traders, manufacturers and clean energy suppliers. It would create 13,500 new jobs and generate a Gross Value Added (GVA) of £5.5 billion over 10 years.

Finally, the Leader stated, agenda item 14 related to the sale of land between 2 and 3 Glebe Cottages in Homersfield. The purpose of this report was to seek Cabinet approval for the sale of this small strip of land, which would provide a small capital receipt to the Council and reduce its management and maintenance responsibility.

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

## **RESOLVED**

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

## **11 Exempt Minutes**

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

**12 Oulton Broad Yacht Station and The Boulevard, The Crescent and part of The Nicholas Everitt Trust Car Parks**

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

**13 Freeport East Full Business Case**

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

**14 Sale of Land between 2 - 3 Glebe Cottages, Homersfield**

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

The meeting concluded at 8.15 pm

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Chairman