Minutes of the Council meeting held at the Town Hall, Lowestoft on Wednesday, 19 November 2014 at 6.30 pm.

Members present:


Officers present:

A Charvonia (Strategic Director & Monitoring Officer), S Hubbard (Principal Planning Officer), H Javadi (Chief Finance Officer), D Lee (Democratic Services Manager), P Rowson (Building Control Manager), S Taylor (Finance Manager), C Winnett (Planning Policy Officer) and N Wotton (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

At the start of the Meeting, Members held a Minutes Silence as a mark of respect for Councillor Roger Bellham, who had sadly passed away recently.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Bamonde, N Brooks, P Byatt, G Catchpole and J Groom.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M Barnard declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest in Item 7a – a Member Question regarding Nicholas Everitt Park, as his wife was a volunteer at the Park and he had also awarded funds to the Park from his Suffolk County Council Locality Budget.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Tributes to Councillor R Bellham

Tributes were paid to Councillor Roger Bellham by the Group Leaders for the Conservatives and Labour, the sentiments of which were endorsed by the whole of the Council. It was noted that he had been a valuable Member of the Council, who served his constituents to the best of his ability and would be sadly missed by all. He had also been a dedicated Mayor of Lowestoft, a role which he had enjoyed enormously during the last 6 months. Members sent their condolences and best wishes to his wife and family.

Former Waveney District Councillor Derek Gower

Members were sad to note that former Councillor Derek Gower had recently passed away. Further details would be circulated to Members in due course.
Councillor P Byatt

Members were updated that Councillor Byatt was still in Addenbrokes Hospital and had undergone 2 further operations since October 2014. Members sent their best wishes to Councillor Byatt for a speedy recovery.

Carol Service

The Joint Chairman of Waveney District Council and Mayor of Lowestoft Carol Service would be taking place on Friday, 19 December 2014 at 7.00pm at St Marks Church, Oulton Broad. All were welcome to attend.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE / LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

a) Leader of the Council

Banking Contract

Members were advised that after a successful procurement process, Lloyds Bank had been awarded the Banking contract for the next three years, with an option to extend by an additional 12 months. The new contract would provide a saving of approximately 50% each year for the Council, when compared to the previous contract with the Co-operative Bank. It was noted that the new Contract would commence on 1 April 2015 and work would begin in February 2015 to ensure a smooth transition to Lloyds Bank.

Annual Audit Letter

It was reported that on 21 October 2014, the Council’s Chief Finance Officer had received the External Auditor’s formal Annual Audit Letter, which confirmed that the Council had achieved an unqualified audit opinion. The letter stated that the Council had the ‘proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience; for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness’. The letter also confirmed that the Council had achieved an unqualified Statement of Accounts, which made specific references to the quality of the processes and supporting documentation. Those present commended the Chief Finance Officer and her Finance Team for their ongoing hard work and success.

b) Chief Executive

No announcements were made on this occasion.

6. NOTICES OF MOTION

No Notices of Motion had been received.

7. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

(a) Question from Councillor P Light to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Operational Partnerships and Lowestoft Rising

Would the Council join in congratulating its Officers and Volunteers of Nicholas Everitt Park in achieving such a prestigious award?

Response from Councillor S Ardley

Thank you Councillor Light, I welcome this opportunity. This is the third year running that the Nicholas Everitt Park has received this award. I think the whole Council should be proud of the work of the Friends Group and the efforts of our partners at Waveney Norse, Officers and Members of this Council, for the continued efforts to provide a quality park and year on year improvement.
There was no Supplementary Question on this occasion.

(b) **Question from Councillor P Light to the Leader of the Council**

As a resident and WDC Councillor I am constantly impressed by the hard work of our employees. Would it be possible for those who deal face to face with members of the public to wear an easily readable badge with their first names on. In this way they will be easier to identify and will potentially encourage positive feedback.

**Response from Councillor C Law**

All Customer Services staff have had magnetic names badges as you have described since April of this year. The badge has the partnership logo, the staff’s first name and their job title or ‘Customer Services’. They wear these in place of the corporate photo ID badges when they are working on the front desk at the Marina, Town Hall and our area offices, as well as our Customer Services operation at Suffolk Coastal District Council.

However, it would not be appropriate for all officers to wear such name badges, it ultimately depends on their role. For example, it would not be appropriate for an Enforcement Officer to wear such a name badge, as it could put them at risk and make them a potential target.

**Supplementary Question from Councillor P Light**

I have often spoken to members of the public about their experiences in dealing with the Council and although they mention that they were well treated, they also state that they did not know the name of the person they were speaking to. Are these name badges large enough?

**Response from Councillor C Law**

The name badges are of a standard size – 76 mm x 32 mm, with a clear font.

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

Large retail outlets, whilst bringing certain benefits to the local area, can also negatively affect the local economy – for example, whilst 50p of every pound spent at a small retailer remains in the local economy, only 5p of every pound spent at a large supermarket does so.

The Federation of Small Businesses’ estimate that business rates are five times more expensive for small businesses as a proportion of turnover than they are for large ones.

Twenty councils of all political colours have jointly submitted a proposal to the government under the Sustainable Communities Act, for local authorities to be given the power to raise a levy on the largest retail outlets, to help redress this imbalance.

Will the Leader of the Council write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government requesting that local authorities be given the power to introduce a levy of up to 8.5% of the rateable value on supermarkets or large retail outlets in their area with a rateable annual value not less that £500,000 and for the revenue to be retained by local authorities in order to be used to help improve their local communities?

In Waveney there are six superstores with a rateable value of 500,000 or more. An 8.5% levy on the rateable value would raise £555,475, although this Council could choose to set a levy lower than 8.5%, and a qualifying rateable value higher than £500,000.
Response from Councillor C Law

The Council is aware that a number of local authorities, led by Derby City Council, have submitted this proposal to the Secretary of State, and also that he has recently rejected it.

With regard to the position of small retailers, both the Government and the Council have implemented a number of measures to assist them with their business rate costs. Small businesses, who only occupy one property, with a rateable value under £6000 receive full relief on their business rates, and those with values below £12,000 receive reliefs on a sliding scale. In 2014/15 and 2015/16, the Government is also funding up to £1000 off the rates bill of retail premises with a rateable value below £50,000, and 439 premises in Waveney will benefit from this. Also, the Council itself can award discretionary reliefs to retailers in rural areas.

In contrast to this, it should be noted that larger retail outlets, with rateable values of £18,000 or more, already pay business rates at a higher rate of pence in the pound. It is also worth noting that the Council can obtain infrastructure funding from imposing the Community Infrastructure Levy on larger developments.

Turning to the proposal, yes there are 6 superstores in Waveney with a rateable value over £500,000, with a total rateable value of £6.5 million, which would result in gross rates payable of £3.1 million (after the multiplier). An 8.5% levy on this would raise approximately £268,000 for Waveney.

I am concerned though, that a supermarket levy could adversely affect jobs and inward investment in the district, and indeed the business rates income of the authority, without necessarily benefitting small retailers. This could particularly be the case, for example, if large retailers chose to locate on the basis of differential levy rates in adjoining areas. There is obviously also the potential for there to be impacts on the costs of living for households if levy costs were passed on to consumers in higher prices.

The most basic problem with Councillor Elliott’s suggestion that we seek to impose an extra half million pound tax on supermarkets in Waveney is its naivety. Does he seriously expect that any extra tax on supermarkets would not immediately be passed on to customers? In practice the most likely result of his proposal is that people in Waveney would have to pay an extra half a million pounds for their shopping. With approximately 56,000 households in Waveney, that would mean each household paying an extra £9.00 on their shopping bill. The elderly, the low earners and the vulnerable will be affected badly if this proposal was introduced. No wonder the Secretary of State threw it out.

Supplementary Question from Councillor G Elliott

I have some issues with your response: I feel that the levy would raise £500,000 not £260,000 as you stated, the Community Infrastructure Levy is also applied to any future development which adds to the costs of development and the Conservatives VAT rise in 2011 was 35 times greater than this proposed levy. My proposal is an insignificant amount for the supermarkets and the money would be used to support the discretionary rate relief. My question is, are you happy with the current system of business rates that favours large businesses but does not support small and medium businesses?

Response from Councillor C Law

I have already explained how Waveney would be affected by this proposal. The Council is already doing a great deal to support rural areas, which are able to claim discretionary rate relief. Whilst there are some concerns about how some large supermarkets operate, particularly the low prices they pay to farmers, simply adding an extra tax will solve nothing except make people’s shopping bills more expensive. The problem with this idea is the same as with most of the Green Party’s ideas – they put up the cost of living for ordinary people. As a Conservative, I believe in keeping down the cost of living for ordinary people, low taxes and low prices, that is what we have done as a Council. We are not about to put up people’s shopping bills just because the Green Party wants to score points at the expense of the supermarkets. It is worth mentioning that since 1846 when Sir Robert Peel abolished the Corn Laws, the Conservative Party has quite literally
pursued a policy of trying to keep down the cost of bread. It seems that the Green Party wants to put the cost up.

(d) **Question from Councillor T Sullivan to the Leader of the Council**

Can the Leader of the Council confirm the number of Parish and Town Council seats for which there were elections and by elections in Waveney since May 2010 and how many of those seats were contested? Could he confirm the average turnout in those elections and the number of current vacancies on Town and Parish Councils in Waveney?

**Response from Councillor C Law**

23 September 2010 – Bungay Town Council by-election – 1 seat – contested election – turnout = 19.51%
5 May 2011 – all-out scheduled Parish/Town Council elections – 339 seats – 5 contested elections (covering 37 seats) – turnout = 53.31% (avg)
12 April 2012 – Bungay Town Council by-election – 1 seat – uncontested
7 June 2013 – Carlton Colville Town Council by-election – 1 seat – uncontested
8 August 2013 – Halesworth Town Council by-election – 5 seats – contested election – turnout = 18.95%
2 September 2013 – Beccles Common Parish Ward – 1 seat – contested election – turnout = 21.88%
27 March 2014 – Bungay Town Council by-election – 1 seat – contested election – turnout = 21.34%
22 May 2014 – Halesworth Town Council by-election – 1 seat – uncontested

There are currently 18 vacant seats on Parish / Town Councils out of the 339 seats in the District Area, as far as the District Council are aware.

There was no Supplementary Question on this occasion.

(e) **Question from Councillor S Barker to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Rural Affairs**

The initial storm damage to the Lowestoft sea wall occurred in November 2013, swiftly followed by tidal surge damage in December 2013. By April 2014, Members on all sides agreed to the ‘urgent’ works being initiated. Residents were promised the work would start in September and then October 2014. When will the work actually start?

**Response from Councillor D Ritchie**

I would like to start by commending the work of the Senior Coastal Engineer in arranging all of the necessary permissions to be in place for the repair works to begin, which was a huge amount of complex work.

Preparation works have been under way for some time but the major constraint on progress has been the availability of rock armour. This has been delayed due to both the availability of suitable shipping but also the weather.

The delivery of rock is also dependent on the weather. The good news is that the Orinoco Pearl, the ship carrying the rock from Norway, is off Hopton as planned, as is the Charlie Rock, the barge to bring the rock from the transport ship to the beach. It is anticipated that, weather permitting, the rock should arrive at the weekend.

**Supplementary Question from Councillor S Barker**

Have these delays led to an increase in costs for the Council and are there any contingency plans in place, in case there is a sudden storm?
Response from Councillor D Ritchie

I am not aware that the delays have caused any increase in costs. The Environment Agency has provided us with £0.9 million to help pay for the works to the seafront. We hope to have the works completed before the winter really sets in. The underpinning which took place along the seafront last year prevented even more damage taking place during the tidal surge.

(f) Question from Councillor S Barker to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Rural Affairs

Has Councillor David Ritchie visited Lowestoft seafront recently to check the information signs that were put up in September (following requests from Councillor Barker from May 2014 onwards) and in particular, has he checked the sign just south of Claremont Pier?

Response from Councillor D Ritchie

Yes, I have seen the signs.

Supplementary Question from Councillor S Barker

The information signs appeared towards the end of the season, when most of the tourists had left. The signs also mention lifeguard facilities, summer 2014 and the word ‘Waveney’ is misspelled! Is there any quality control taking place?

Response from Councillor D Ritchie

For clarification, the lifeguard station facilities are still in place on the beach, however there are no lifeguards working there out of season and the public need to be made aware of that. Waveney Norse were responsible for the signs and they will be made aware of the spelling error.

(g) Question from Councillor S Barker to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Rural Affairs

Can Councillor Ritchie explain to Councillors how many buildings either side of the existing two lane Bascule Bridge will have to be demolished to make way for a four lane replacement bridge?

Response from Councillor D Ritchie

The Bascule Bridge is actually a three lane bridge, with pavements. Until such time as the studies to determine options for the location and design of any new crossing over Lake Lothing are complete it is impossible to state how many buildings will need to be demolished. From initial considerations it appears that there will be very little need for demolition to facilitate a bridge in any of the three location zones. Obviously the need for demolition will be a factor taken into account when selecting the final design and location.

Supplementary Question from Councillor S Barker

The Bascule Bridge was originally designed to have only 2 lanes but it was increased to 3 lanes some time ago. Why has the £5 million pedestrian bridge not been built yet?

Response from Councillor D Ritchie

£6 million was awarded to Lowestoft for Sustainable Transport, £5 million of which was allocated for the pedestrian bridge. Works have not yet started on the bridge, as we need to make sure that it will be in the right location. Whilst the studies are ongoing regarding the potential location of a new bridge, it would not be appropriate to build a pedestrian bridge, which may have to be moved at a later date.
8. **PETITIONS**

No Petitions had been received.

9. **QUESTIONS FROM THE ELECTORATE**

No Questions from the Electorate had been received.

10. **FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES**

The Cabinet Member for Resources & Welfare Reforms presented the report which advised Members that Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 required the Council to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs, and to appoint a Chief Finance Officer (CFO) to have responsibility for those arrangements. The Council’s Financial Procedure Rules (FPRs) set out those arrangements.

The existing FPRs for Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils had not been reviewed since the adoption by each Council of their respective Constitutions in 2001, with the introduction of the Cabinet system of governance. The two Councils had been working in partnership and with shared services since 2010. In May 2014, this was extended to having a shared Chief Finance Officer.

Each Council currently had its own FPRs. As part of the alignment of working practices between the two Councils, the FPRs required amendment to reflect the joint management structure, new ways of working and the extended levels of responsibilities placed upon the CFO with regard to financial decision making, capital decisions and human resources related issues as set out by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA).

The proposed new FPRs, as set out in Appendix A to the report, were based on CIPFA’s best practice model and had been tailored to reflect both Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Council’s situations. The key changes between the current and proposed new FPRs were set out in the report at paragraph 2.2.

Members commended the work of the Finance Team in updating the Financial Procedure Rules.

**RESOLVED**

That the proposed Financial Procedure Rules, as attached as Appendix A to the report, be approved.

11. **SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX AND BUSINESS RATES TAXBASES FOR 2013/14**

The Cabinet Member for Resources & Welfare Reforms presented the report, which updated Members on an administrative error in the Council Minutes from the meeting held on 30 January 2013. It was noted that on 30 January 2013, Full Council received a report relating to ‘Setting the Council Tax and Business Rates Taxbases for 2013/14’. The report contained a typing error on Page 31, relating to the description of the tables for exempt dwellings: Class A was described as ‘Empty unfurnished properties with no repairs’, whilst Class C was described as ‘Empty unfurnished properties undergoing major repairs’. The two descriptions should have been reversed.

Although the Cabinet Member for Resources & Welfare Reforms had informed Members of the error during his presentation at the 30 January 2013 meeting, that information was not included within the Minutes of the meeting and therefore the official Minutes on the Council’s website do not record this amendment. This omission could potentially leave
the Council’s new Council Tax Technical Reforms open to challenge, unless the omission was corrected at Full Council.

RESOLVED

That the omission from the official Minutes of the Council Meeting dated 30 January 2013 be noted and agreed.

12. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY: PROCEDURAL AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Cabinet Member for Planning & Rural Affairs presented a report, which sought approval of the proposed process and governance arrangements for the spending of income derived from the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Community Infrastructure levy (CIL) was introduced on 1 August 2013 and was the main way in which the Council collected contributions from developers for infrastructure provision, to support development planned in the Council’s Local Development Framework (the Local Plan). It largely replaced the old system of Section 106 planning obligations, however Section 106 would still be used for some site specific infrastructure and affordable housing.

To date, approximately £43,000 of CIL had been collected across the District. The relatively low figure was due to the fact that CIL was only paid once development had commenced and once commenced, it was paid in instalments over a period of 18 months to 2 years. Therefore, it would take a couple of years before the Council started to receive more significant sums of money from the levy.

The CIL Regulations allowed Councils to retain up to 5% of total CIL receipts in a given year, to cover the costs of administration and the costs of introducing a CIL. The Regulations also required the District Council to pass on a ‘meaningful proportion’ of the CIL receipts received in a particular Parish to the Parish or Town Council, which was also known as ‘Neighbourhood Funding’. The meaningful proportion was defined as 15% in Parishes where there was no Neighbourhood Plan and 25% in Parishes where a Neighbourhood Plan was in place. The Neighbourhood Funds could be spent on anything which addressed the demands that development placed on areas.

For areas which do not have a Parish or Town Council, the District Council must retain all of the CIL receipts. However, the statutory CIL guidance required the Council to engage with the communities where the development had taken place and agree with them how to spend the proportion of CIL that would have gone to a Parish or Town Council, had one existed.

A Member queried whether there was any Section 106 monies that was left over and whether it could be combined with the future CIL monies. It was reported that Section 106 money would continue to be distributed as normal and any unspent funds would have to be returned to the developer. With the CIL Levy, any unspent money would not need to be returned to the developer.

A Member commented that the CIL Levy applied to any new supermarkets which were built in the district and stated that food bills may need to be increased correspondingly, to cover the costs of the levy.

There followed some discussion about the CIL Levy collected for the un-parished areas in the District and concern was raised that only the Councillors responsible for the un-parished areas should decide where the funding should be spent, as they would be best placed to understand the needs of their constituents. Reassurance was provided that the CIL guidance stated that there needed to be consultation with the local community prior to funds being used, this would take place with the Ward Councillors for those areas. Minor amendments to recommendation 4 were discussed, however it was reported that if the Lowestoft area remained un-parished, then the decisions on funding would be referred back to Council automatically. Clarification was provided that the process to create a Town or Parish Council was called a Community Governance Review (CGR). Once a CGR had been triggered, the Council had 12 months in which to undertake a full review to decide whether it was feasible or not to create a Town or Parish
Council. The possibility for Parishing Lowestoft had been referred to the Council’s Overview & Scrutiny Committee for consideration and they would undertake a significant amount of the preliminary work in this respect.

A Member commented that money could potentially be held in the bank for several years prior to it being spent, when it could be used to improve local communities. There followed some discussion in this respect and a Motion was proposed that a threshold be introduced, so that if a significant amount of money was received, the matter was automatically referred to the Lowestoft Councillors for consideration. It was therefore proposed and seconded that

‘That in the event that the Community Infrastructure Levy generated for the un-parished areas of Lowestoft exceeded £10,000, that the process as described in paragraph 4.10 of the report be adopted and the matter be referred to the Lowestoft Ward Councillors for consideration, until/unless the un-parished parts of Lowestoft become parished.’

On being put to a vote, the Motion was CARRIED.

It was therefore

**RESOLVED**

1. That the governance and procedural proposals for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) spend set out in Section 2 of the report be approved and implemented.

2. That 5% of the annual Community Infrastructure Levy receipts will be retained to cover administration costs associated with spending, collecting, setting and monitoring CIL.

3. That the Council consults and agrees with the Parish Meetings of Benacre, Covehithe, Ilketshall St John, Ilketshall St Margaret, Redisham, Rushmere and St James South Elmham on an annual basis to determine how the Neighbourhood Funding proportion of CIL raised in these areas is spent.

4. That the Council banks the Neighbourhood Funding element of CIL collected in the un-parished area of Lowestoft until such a time as a final decision is made on whether Town and/or Parish Council(s) are set up.

5. That in the event that the Community Infrastructure Levy generated for the un-parished areas of Lowestoft exceeded £10,000, that the process as described in paragraph 4.10 of the report be adopted and the matter be referred to the Lowestoft Ward Councillors for consideration, until/unless the un-parished parts of Lowestoft become parished.

13. **PLANNING APPLICATION VALIDATION – LOCAL LIST REVIEW**

The Cabinet Member for Planning & Rural Affairs presented a report, the purpose of which was to provide information on the consultation undertaken in relation to the review of the local list for planning application validation and to seek Members’ views as to any amendment, deletion or addition to the proposed local list.

The Local Validation List set out the information that applicants had to provide when submitting a planning application. The Local Planning Authority had a statutory responsibility to review and amend the requirements as a means to enable submissions and decisions to be supported by relevant guidance. The list was last reviewed in 2011 and needed to be updated.

Members were advised that public consultation on the list had run from 3 to 24 October and the comments received were contained in paragraph 5 of the report. It was noted that the Development Control Committee had considered this report at their meeting on 11 November 2014 and the Committee had recommended that the Local Validation List be adopted without change.
RESOLVED

That the Local Validation List be adopted.

14. FULL ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP MEMBERSHIP

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Welfare Reforms presented a report which sought approval to appoint 2 Members to the Anglia Revenues Partnership Joint Committee. The Council and Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) had been working together for over 2 years and it was noted that working with the APR had already generated savings of over £49,000 for the Council.

The partners have been operating throughout from an agreed, mutually beneficial basis. To date however, Waveney District Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council have not been full partners in the sense that they had not become members of the Joint Committee which operates as the Strategic Board for the partnership. Therefore, Officers have been attending the Operational Improvement Board but there had been no Councillor representation or voting at the ARP Joint Committee meetings. The ARP Joint Committee had formally agreed to admit Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils to the Joint Committee. If the Full Council agreed to become a full member of a Joint Committee, then Officers would be tasked to negotiate an appropriate Agreement across the seven authorities and any formal membership would be subject to those terms.

A Member queried whether the former Waveney Officers who had joined the Anglia Revenues Partnership had been transferred under TUPE legislation or through an agreement made under Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972, which authorised staff to work across the organisations. Clarification was provided that the positions at the Anglia Revenues Partnership were new posts which the Officers had applied for and been successful. Therefore there had been no transfer under any legislation, they had effectively left the employment of Waveney District Council.

Nominations were then sought for the two Councillors to be appointed to the Joint Committee:

Position 1 – Councillor M Barnard was duly proposed and seconded. There being no further nominations it was agreed that Councillor Barnard be appointed uncontested.

Position 2 – Councillor S Allen was duly proposed and seconded. A further nomination was submitted and Councillor S Barker was duly proposed and seconded.

On being put to a vote, Councillor S Allen was appointed to Position 2.

RESOLVED

1. That Council agree in principle to the formation of a Joint Committee with the other Anglia Revenues Partnership partners, subject to terms that best protect the Council’s interests.

2. That the Strategic Director and Head of Legal & Democratic Services, in consultation with Councillor Barnard, Cabinet Member for Resources & Welfare Reforms, and Councillor Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing, be given delegated authority to negotiate the terms of an agreement for the appointment of a Joint Committee.

3. That Councillor Barnard, Cabinet Member for Resources & Welfare Reforms, and Councillor Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing, be appointed to the Joint Committee.
15  COUNCILLOR REQUEST FOR EXTENDED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Leader of the Council presented a report which sought approval for an extended leave of absence for Councillor Peter Byatt. The law states that if a Member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months, from the date of his/her last attendance at any meeting of the authority, s/he shall, unless the failure was due to a reason approved by the authority, before the expiry of that period, cease to be a Member of that authority.

Councillor Byatt had not been able to attend any Council or Committee meetings since he attended the Full Council meeting on Wednesday, 23 July 2014. Councillor Byatt had attended hospital for a routine operation during the summer of 2014 and was still in hospital.

On behalf of Councillor Byatt, a formal request had been made to the Council for approval of an extended leave of absence in order that he was not disqualified by virtue of non-attendance within a six month period.

RESOLVED

That on the basis of Councillor Byatt’s ill health, approval be given to extending his period of permitted absence until the expiry of his current term of office in May 2015.

N.B. At 7.55 pm Councillor Wheatley left the meeting at this point in the proceedings.

16  REVIEW OF POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION

The Leader of the Council presented the report which outlined the revised overall political balance of Waveney District Council and sought approval for revised representation on Council Committees. Member appointments to Committees were made annually as part of the Council’s corporate governance arrangements in support of the democratic process. Appointments to Committees for the 2014/15 Municipal Year were agreed at the Annual Council meeting on 28 May 2014.

Councillor Bamonde, one of three Ward Councillors for the Carlton Colville Ward, had resigned from the Waveney District Council Labour Group to become an Independent Member with effect from 13 October 2014. In addition, since the report was written, Councillor Bellham had sadly passed away. As a consequence, a further review of the overall political balance of the Council had been undertaken and the number of Committee seats that needed to be allocated remains unchanged.

RESOLVED

1. That the results of the review and verbal update given into the political proportionality of the Council and allocation of Committee seats on a politically proportionate basis be noted.

2. That Councillor Bamonde be appointed to the Audit & Governance Committee as an Independent Member for the remainder of his current term of office.

3. That Councillor Pitchers be appointed to the Appeals & Disciplinary Committee as the Labour Member for the remainder of this current term of office.

4. That the Substitution arrangements for the two Independent Members and the Green Party Member as an informal ‘Minority Opposition Group’ be approved.

5. That Councillor Graham be appointed to fill the Labour Group vacancy on the Development Control Committee for the remainder of his current term of office.

6. That Councillor Craig be appointed to fill the Labour Group vacancy on the Licensing Committee for the remained of her current term of office.
The meeting was concluded at 8.00 pm

Chairman