

Confirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of **Council** held in the Council Chamber, Melton Hill,
Woodbridge on **Thursday, 19 March 2015 at 7.00pm**

Members present:

D Ball, P Batho, J Bidwell, L Binns, S Bird, C Block, C Blundell, M Bond, S Burroughes, P Coleman, M Deacon, P Dunnett, T Eastman, V Falconer, M Fellowes, A Fryatt, J Garfield, R M Grimwood, B Hall, G Harding, S Harvey, T Hawkins, R Herring, G Holdcroft, S Hudson, J Kelso, R Kerry, G Lynch, D McCallum, M Morris, A Nunn, D Savage, J Sennington, M Sharman, C Slemmings, A Smith, R Snell (Chairman), R Whiting, K Williams, J Withey.

Officers present:

S Baker (Chief Executive), H Javadi (Chief Finance Officer), A Osmanski (Strategic Director), P Ridley (Head of Planning and Coastal Management), C Roberts (Democratic Services Business Manager), H Slater (Head of Legal and Democratic Services).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Andrews, A Cooper, T-J Haworth-Culf, C Hudson, J Marson, J B Slater, C Walker.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

It was noted that Councillor Williams' apologies had been omitted from the Minutes of 26 February 2015.

RESOLVED

That, subject to the above amendment, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 February 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that an informal reception for those Members who would not be standing for re-election as District Councillors in May 2015 would be held on the evening of Friday 10 April 2015 in the Council Chamber. The Chairman also announced that this would be his last Full Council as he would not be able to attend the Annual Council meeting on 28 May due to a prior invitation to a garden party at Buckingham Palace. The Chairman thanked Members for their diligence and support during the past year.

The Leader referred to the Suffolk Coastal Business and Community Awards which had been held the previous week with 250 people in attendance and was an opportunity for businesses and community groups which had carried out exceptional work across the district in terms of employment etc. over the past few years. The Chairman's Award had been awarded to Brafe Engineering which was well deserved.

The Leader announced the retirement from the Council and local government of Tony Osmanski, Strategic Director, who joined the Council in 1987 as Head of Leisure and Tourism. Following the Council's considerable investment and Tony's drive and enthusiasm, Suffolk Coastal changed its low key approach to leisure and now delivered so much more to its residents and visitors. He was also key in developing the Suffolk Coastal Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and outsourcing contractual arrangements. The Leader thanked him for his work around the LSP, ESP and Partnership Working and for his major part in leading the Council's accommodation project. The Leader thanked him for his contribution and support over the years.

Councillor Deacon referred to always finding Mr Osmanski to be hard working, sincere, and honest with a sharp sense of humour. Councillor Deacon referred to working with him on the Felixstowe Garden Festival and thanked him for his work on the delivery of the Brackenbury Sports Centre and gave him his best wishes for the future.

Councillor Block referred to Mr Osmanski always being clear in his views and to the many occasions when his good advice had taken Members down the right path. Councillor Block had been asked what he intended to do in his retirement by several people in her Ward and she was sure that if he had an idle moment it would be filled with activities.

The Chief Executive referred to Mr Osmanski's excellent reputation in a previous role as Manager of the Oasis Centre before joining the Council and how, when he had been appointed Chief Executive, the fact that Mr Osmanski would be a member of his management team had given him great comfort. The Chief Executive wished to put on record the Council's appreciation of everything he had done and how he was valued as a colleague. His sense of humour, leadership and management of relationships would be greatly missed. Partners were also of the same view as he always delivered and was all that a 21st Century public service officer should be, having changed and adapted throughout the years. He thanked him for his support and guidance and for being an excellent member of his management team and wished him a happy retirement.

In response, Mr Osmanski thanked the Leader, Councillor Deacon, Councillor Block and the Chief Executive for their kind words. He remarked that, when offered the job, the one thing he had been asked to do was to attract more visitors to Suffolk Coastal. He referred to the storm of 1987 and the Chairman announcing the birth of his son at Full Council which was recorded in the minutes. He thanked Councillor Smith for all he had achieved both locally and nationally for Coastal Protection and Councillor Block and Ward Councillors for their work in relation to Estuary Management. His final memory would be working with like minded officers, Members and Partners who were all committed to enhancing the quality of life, work and play on the Suffolk Coast. He announced that he would be a non-executive director of East Coast Community Healthcare and a member of the board of Suffolk Sport.

The Chief Executive referred to a number of Councillors who would be leaving at the end of the term. He acknowledged that being a Councillor was not an easy task and thanked them for the last four years and wished them good luck for the future.

5. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8(2), Councillor Ball asked a question of the Leader of the Council. The written answer had been circulated to Council and would be available on the Council's website.

"Do officers employed by Suffolk Coastal District Council and partner organisations have a duty to reply to emails and other communications from elected Councillors?"

Councillor Ball thanked the Leader for his useful and clear answer and agreed that it may have been better if asked at the start of the administration. She suggested that both her question and

the Leader's answer should be included in the welcome pack for new Members following the election.

The Leader confirmed that information regarding a contact point for any enquiries for Members, and particularly new Members, would be part of the induction process. The Leader referred to a paper on Member Training and Induction which would be presented at the next Policy Development Task Group meeting and invited a contribution from Members prior to finalising arrangements for post 7 May.

6. NOTICES OF MOTION RECEIVED UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 7(3)

There were no Notices of Motion.

7. MAKING RENDLESHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Council received report **CL 05/15** of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and IT which recommended Council 'make' the Rendlesham Neighbourhood Plan (as modified) part of the statutory development plan for the Rendlesham Neighbourhood Area. The Cabinet Member referred to Rendlesham being the first to take up the opportunity to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for their community. They had been granted Front Runner status in 2012 and acted as a pioneer for other communities across the district. Rendlesham Parish Council had submitted their Plan and supporting evidence to the District Council in August 2014. The Plan had then been subject to independent examination with the Examiner's report recommending the Plan proceed to referendum, subject to modifications, which had taken place on 5 March 2015. There had been 1,045 votes cast of which 1,012 voted in favour of the Plan and 33 voted against. Council was being asked to 'make' the Plan which would then form part of a portfolio of planning documents to be taken cognisance of when Development Management decided planning applications. The Cabinet Member thanked all those involved in the production of the Neighbourhood Plan and the residents of Rendlesham for their consultation work and proposed the recommendation as set out on page 10 of the papers.

Councillor Bond referred to the generally well known fact that Rendlesham, by Suffolk standards, was a new community which had grown and spread out with a population which included a large number of young people. Councillor Bond then referred to the energetic residents of Rendlesham coming together to form a new look Parish Council and a highly motivated and skilled Parish Clerk taking on the administration. Public opinion had been mobilised and Rendlesham had produced an attractive and well written Neighbourhood Plan which would make an effective contribution to planning procedures. Councillor Bond referred to 97% of those voting in the referendum supporting the Plan which would be used by the District Council when deciding planning applications in the neighbourhood. Councillor Bond supported the recommendation and asked Council to do the same.

Councillor Eastman supported the recommendation and thanked officers of the Council, particularly the Monitoring Officer, who had found time in her busy schedule to assist them and Heather Heelis, Clerk to Rendlesham Parish Council, for her support. It was Councillor Eastman's view that the Plan had brought a new community together.

The Cabinet Member informed Council that officers were now guiding other Towns and Parishes through the same process and Heather Heelis was making herself available to assist with their Plans.

Councillor Block referred to the importance and value to other communities of sharing experience and expertise.

Councillor Dunnett fully supported the recommendation and thanked the community for being the first to produce such a Plan.

RESOLVED

That Suffolk Coastal District Council 'make' the Rendlesham Neighbourhood Plan (as modified) as part of the statutory development plan for the Rendlesham Neighbourhood Area.

8. SUFFOLK COASTAL (ELECTORAL CHANGES) ORDER 2014

Council received report **CL 06/15** by the Leader of the Council which formally reported the changes since the last report to Council (CL 07/14) received on 27 March 2014. Referring to the terminology of paragraph 4 in the Executive Summary, the Leader clarified that the Council was currently working on existing Wards as the new Wards would not be effective until 7 May 2015.

Councillor Blundell asked to see a definitive plan showing his wards and what changes had been made.

The Chairman asked the Monitoring Officer to supply this information to all Councillors outside of the meeting.

Councillor Deacon referred to the confusion of the residents of Allenby Ward in Felixstowe and asked what the District Council could do to resolve this problem. The Leader clarified that the District Council had submitted its proposals to the Boundary Commission which had not seemed to comply with its own rules. However, for those Members involved in elections, every effort would be made to make it as clear as possible to reduce any confusion.

Councillor Smith informed Council that he had prepared a document for local colleagues and would forward a set to Councillor Deacon and to the Chief Executive for publication on the website.

Councillor Deacon then referred to one particular street in a ward where two houses out of fifteen were in one ward and the rest in another ward and asked whether the District Council could place an advertisement in the newspaper clarifying the situation.

Councillor Williams welcomed clarification for Members but stated that it was equally as important for the electorate and asked whether a map could be published in Coastline or the newspapers showing the correct ward boundaries.

The Chief Executive advised that this information was on the Council's website and would also be on poll cards. Town Clerks had also been requested to feed back any issues but there had been none forthcoming, however the Chief Executive agreed to look at any additional measures which could be taken in this regard.

Referring to paragraph 4 of the Executive Summary, Councillor Morris commented that it had been her understanding that the boundary changes had been agreed in Parliament. The Leader responded that they had been agreed but would not come into effect until 7 May 2015.

Councillor Garfield referred to candidates being unable to receive copies of their electoral rolls for the new wards despite nomination forms requiring electoral roll numbers.

The Chief Executive explained that this was the electoral process and asked Members to petition their MP for a change in legislation. He advised that they could receive this information through their constituency party.

Councillor Williams queried the word 'making' in the recommendation and sought clarification from the Monitoring Officer regarding whether the word 'making' was in legislation as it was her view this should be 'enabling' or 'enacting'.

The Monitoring Officer drew Council's attention to Appendix A (Statutory Instrument) on page 15 of the papers which was legislation 'made' in Parliament and became law on 16 December 2014 and would come into effect on 7 May 2015. Therefore, it was correct to say 'making'.

RESOLVED

That the making of the Suffolk Coastal (Electoral Changes) Order 2014 and the consequent changes to ward boundaries in the Suffolk Coastal District was noted.

9. CABINET MEMBERS' REPORT AND OUTSIDE BODIES REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT TO COUNCIL AND QUESTIONS

Council received report **CL07/15** which provided a summary by Cabinet Members of key issues within their portfolios and reports by representatives of outside bodies to Council.

Councillor Holdcroft (Cabinet Member for Planning and IT)

Councillor Holdcroft added his congratulations to Mr Osmanski on his retirement.

Councillor Holdcroft reported that the Council was still awaiting a date when the Yoxford appeal would come before the Appeal Court and expressed his disappointment that NANT had decided to take their legal challenge to the Supreme Court as this would cause further delays in the Council's endeavours with regard to planning. There was no timetable regarding when the appeal would come forward to be decided.

Council was informed that that examination of the draft charging schedule for CIL had taken place that morning and it was anticipated that the schedule would be considered at the Annual Council meeting in May for implementation in early July.

The Issues and Options consultation period had closed on 27 February 2015 and officers now faced a challenging timetable of work over the next couple of months.

Referring to the making of the Rendlesham Neighbourhood Plan, Councillor Holdcroft informed Council that there were many others coming along, including Framlingham, Great Bealings, Leiston, Melton, Martlesham and Woodbridge. Referring to the disputed area in Martlesham, Councillor Holdcroft had made it clear to all involved that he would act solely on the advice of officers.

Councillor Block asked whether Councillor Holdcroft could provide a rough timescale regarding the NANT legal action. Councillor Holdcroft responded that the Council would be pressing hard to get a panel of Supreme Court judges together.

Referring to the Spa Pavilion, Councillor Deacon questioned why no announcement had been made at Council as he had heard from the media that the Pavilion had been sold.

Councillor Holdcroft apologised for not reporting on the Spa Pavilion and informed Council that final documents had been signed outside the Spa on Friday afternoon but the Council was not due to complete until 15 May 2015. The keys had been given to the new group, which had experience of the theatre, and were currently assessing the work to be done. They would be running the Spa as a theatre and restaurant and anticipated that it would open on 5 June 2015.

In response to a question from Councillor Block regarding whether NANT would be able to take an action to the European Court, Councillor Holdcroft invited the Monitoring Officer to clarify this issue.

The Monitoring Officer stated that NANT had applied for leave to appeal however they may not receive permission to do so. They may then have an option to take this further but the Council was optimistic that they would not receive leave to appeal to the Supreme Court and, if refused, would bring this issue to a close.

Councillor Williams requested an update on progress regarding Felixstowe Seafront Gardens as she understood that a report of the Audit and Governance Committee had been sent to Cabinet as a hard copy and an electronic copy made available on the website. Councillor Williams also asked why a hard copy had not been made available to all Members.

Councillor Holdcroft invited the Leader to respond regarding progress and the Monitoring Officer to respond regarding hard copies of the report.

The Leader reported that the new contract was progressing on schedule and on budget. It was expected that three gardens would be open in the spring with all work completed by the end of August.

The Monitoring Officer clarified that wherever possible electronic means of delivering reports was encouraged as this saved paper, postage and time. Committee members received hard copies of reports relevant to their particular Committee. Other Members were asked to view reports via electronic means unless they specifically ask for a hard copy to be sent to them. Members were reminded that confidential reports were available on the Members' confidential page of FRED.

Councillor Williams thanked Councillor Holdcroft and the Leader for the update on the gardens and requested a hard copy of the Audit and Governance Report.

Councillors Deacon and Morris also requested hard copies to be sent to them.

In response to a question from Councillor Blundell regarding whether the sale of the Spa Pavilion was leasehold or freehold, Councillor Holdcroft confirmed that it was freehold.

Councillor Smith (Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Coastal Management)

Councillor Smith congratulated Mr Osmanski on his retirement.

Councillor Smith reported a series of grants coming out of Government and a successful bid to the Coastal Community Fund (CCF).

Councillor Smith referred to a new scheme called Felixstowe Forward which would replace Felixstowe Futures and be more widely and interactively based and governed by a smaller sponsoring group. They hoped to be up and running for the new District Council and Town Council to take on board after May. He also announced the appointment of Helen Greengrass as the new 'Change Director'.

Councillor Smith thanked Councillor Block for her hard work, with colleagues, on the Deben Estuary Plan.

Regarding Sizewell, Councillor Smith referred to a major community engagement event which had been held with Parishes. This had been a constructive day with a very good presentation by the Planning Inspectorate regarding the process. Suffolk Coastal was requested to provide a stronger lead.

Councillor Williams congratulated Councillor Smith on the successful bid to the CCF. She then enquired how many people had used the TIC customer services desk at Felixstowe Library since its opening, what the source of the feedback had been and how it had been evaluated.

Councillor Smith responded that he was unable to give an immediate answer to Councillor Williams question and also asked to be informed of any negative feedback in order to address any issues.

Councillor Fryatt referred to JLAG rather than the Council having a major role in discussions regarding Sizewell and asked whether the Council could have more of a role in the process.

Councillor Smith responded that the Council would be more involved at the launch of the Stage 2 Consultation when it could assist Towns, Parishes and others to respond as effectively as possible. As Chairman of JLAG, Councillor Smith had stated that it was his view that members should be firmer and bring people together to achieve the best and most realistic outcomes for communities.

Referring to one of the main reasons for moving the TIC to the library being cost and the fact that services would be available 7 days a week, Councillor Deacon commented that he had visited the library on a Saturday and asked where the TIC was located to be told that they did not work on weekends.

Councillor Smith expressed surprise that it had been closed and agreed to look into the reasons for this.

Councillor Fellowes referred to the Council's role being assessed once the Sizewell Stage 2 consultation had been announced, however once announced this could move very quickly. Councillor Fellowes asked at what time consideration would be given to communicating the strategy and role of the Council to the Sizewell C Task Group and whether there was any information which the Cabinet Member could share from his meeting with the MP and the meeting at Hinkley.

Councillor Smith advised that indirect discussions were around construction and long term benefit. The two MPs and Councillor Smith had decided that a firmer commitment was required from Government. He advised that there would be another event held to widen discussion.

Referring to the change from Felixstowe Futures to Felixstowe Forward, Councillor Bird sought assurance that this would be more than a cosmetic change and would deliver more tangible results and return for the £100,000 budget.

Councillor Smith assured Councillor Bird that Felixstowe Forward would be more community based and would be a 'hub and spoke' concept with clear objectives and a better reporting system to Felixstowe Town Council.

Councillor Savage (Cabinet Member for Housing)

Councillor Savage referred to the excellent work being carried out by the Housing and Benefits and Fraud teams. She acknowledged that Members would like to see more affordable homes being built, however there had been a deep recession and one of the most important social housing providers had ceased building but were now back on track. Council was informed that it was expected that 205 affordable homes would be built by the end of March 2017.

In response to a question from Councillor Ball regarding how much was still available in the discretionary fund for those people in need, Councillor Savage agreed to send this information to Councillor Ball as soon as she had it to hand.

Referring to the delivery of the fraud service moving to the DWP, Councillor Williams asked what would be happening to the staff members currently working in the Fraud team. Councillor Savage confirmed that they would be re-deployed.

Councillor Nunn (Cabinet Member for the Green Environment)

Councillor Nunn offered his best wishes to Mr Osmanski on his retirement and thanked him for his help over the years.

Council was informed that Suffolk Coastal had the best recycling performance in Suffolk. Council was also informed that there had been a successful prosecution for fly tipping in Leiston and a notice had been issued in Felixstowe. With regard to roadside littering, the Highways Agency had agreed to allow seven of their signs to display anti-littering notices. The litter squad had filled five vehicles with litter from the Wickham Market by-pass over two days, however it was not always possible to clear the central reservation on safety grounds and the cost of organising lane closures.

Councillor Block enquired where the funding for the additional enhancements to Martello Park would be coming from. Councillor Nunn invited the Leader to respond to this question.

The Leader confirmed that funding would be coming from the Martello Park Development.

Councillor Morris referred to her role as the District Council's representative on the Suffolk Disability Forum and had been pleased to be consulted at an early stage and thanked the Leader for the positive improvements. She was also pleased to see that there would be changing facilities available as this would be an inclusive area for families to meet and would also be accessible for children with disabilities.

Referring to the new car park built over the boating lake in Felixstowe, Councillor Garfield asked whether performers would be charged car park fees which would be lost when this was being used as a performance area.

The Leader responded that they had not reached that level on the agreements as yet, however the proposal had been well received in Felixstowe in terms of having a flexible space. The Leader advised that there would also be a planning related issue and the eventual project would be determined by a business case. The spend may exceed the planned £500,000 but they were looking at options. Once the business case was produced they would know what was required.

Councillor Garfield thanked the Leader for what was happening in the Felixstowe area.

Councillor Block (Suffolk County Council Joint Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Panel)

Councillor Block informed Council that this was a panel which looked at the whole of Suffolk and referred to the flood investigation report which highlighted areas where there were serious recurrences of flooding. This was significant in terms of the storms Suffolk had experienced.

Councillor Nunn (Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB JAC and Partnership)

In response to a question from Councillor Block regarding whether funding for estuaries officers would be ongoing, Councillor Nunn agreed to circulate the answer to this question to Members.

Councillor Snell (The Mills Trust Charity)

Councillor Snell highlighted the planning application for 12 low cost cottage-style houses in Framlingham which would effectively be affordable homes.

The meeting concluded at 9.03pm