

Minutes of the Council meeting held at Riverside, Canning Road, Lowestoft on **Wednesday, 25 January 2017** at **6.30 pm**.

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Members present:

M Bee (Chairman), S Allen, S Ardley, P Ashdown, E Back, S Barker, M Barnard, N Brooks, A Cackett, G Catchpole, J Ceresa, M Cherry, Y Cherry, J Craig, G Elliott, J Ford, T Gandy, T Goldson, L Gooch, I Graham, K Grant, A Green, L Harris-Logan, M Ladd, C Law, P Light, S Logan, F Mortimer, T Mortimer, J Murray, R Neil, L Nicholls, K Patience, M Pitchers, B Provan, C Punt, D Ritchie, C Rivett, M Rudd, J Smith, L Smith, K Springall, C Topping, N Webb and S Woods

Officers present:

S Baker (Chief Executive), A Charvonja (former Strategic Director & Monitoring Officer), A Jarvis (Strategic Director), L Rogers (Finance Manager), H Slater (Head of Legal & Democratic Services), J Sturman (Senior Accountant), A Welham (Senior Accountant) and N Wotton (Democratic Services Manager)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Groom, T Reynolds and S Webb.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors P Ashdown, S Barker and J Craig declared a Local Non Pecuniary Interest in Item 11 – Lowestoft & Oulton Broad – Reorganisation of Community Governance Order. Councillors P Ashdown and J Craig were currently Directors on the Board of Trustees for the Marina Theatre. Councillor S Barker was due to be appointed as a Director on the Board of Trustees, on behalf of the largest Opposition Group, at Item 16 on the Agenda – Appointments to Outside Bodies for 2016-17 (Non Executive Function).

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 November 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
- (b) That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 23 November 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Holocaust Memorial Day

The Chairman advised that Holocaust Memorial Day was on Friday, 27 January 2017 at 10.00am at Station Square, Lowestoft. All Councillors were invited to attend to pay their respects.

Pigeon Holes

It was noted that Riverside Building would stay open for 30 minutes after the meeting, to allow for Members to collect their correspondence from their pigeon holes, in the Members Room on the second floor.

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

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive or Leader of the Council on this occasion.

6. NOTICES OF MOTION

No Notices of Motion had been received.

7. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

With the agreement of the Council, the Chairman changed the order of business to enable the reports to be considered prior to receiving Members Questions.

Councillor I Graham raised a point of order, as one of the questions which had been submitted was pertinent to Agenda Item 10 – Further Transformation in East Suffolk. It was therefore agreed that Question A from Councillor J Murray would be considered at this point in the proceedings:

(a) Question from Councillor J Murray to the Leader of the Council

Would the Waveney District Council Administration support a Local Advisory Referendum being held over the ‘Super District’ Merger proposals between Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council?

Response from Councillor Law

A referendum is an option we considered, however at a time when we are looking to take decisions which help save taxpayers money, this would have been very expensive to run (costing the public purse in the region of £100,000). Also the outcome of the vote would still be ‘non-binding’, meaning that councillors would ultimately have to make the final decision.

Crucially though, both councils believe that public opinion is extremely important and have gone to great lengths to ensure that views are welcomed and acknowledged, in a cost-effective way. First, an independent survey of 1,000 residents across the two districts was undertaken by leading national polling company ComRes. Statistically, a representative sample of this size reliably reflects overall views and the results of the survey show that residents are largely favourable towards the idea of the councils merging.

Then, between 1 November and 12 December, residents were actively welcomed to provide us with their views on the proposals via an engagement campaign which was widely publicised in the local press, on our website, on social media and in our residents’ magazines which are distributed to every household in both districts.”

The original indicative timetable included provision for a non-binding local advisory referendum in June / July 2016, as required by the LGBCE. Councillors had expressed concerns about this process for a number of reasons. These included the timing of it – given the potential clash of timing with the EU referendum, Lowestoft Community Governance Review and summer holidays; the likely costs of it – estimated at £100,000; and the overall value of it – given that it is a non-binding vote, designed to suit the needs of the LGBCE.

DCLG has also since made it clear that whilst meaningful public engagement is extremely important, such a referendum is of limited value, especially given the potential of such a referendum to significantly distract from the important devolution process taking place between July and October 2016. The DCLG are clear that the decision whether to submit a proposal to merge is, and should be, one for the democratically elected Councillors of SCDC and WDC to take, and it is for them to consider how best to engage their local people in this process.

DCLG have therefore recommended that any proposal for merger by SCDC and WDC should be done under the recent powers created by section 15 of the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016. This will involve any proposal for merger being put directly to the Secretary of State rather than to the LGBCE. Similarly SCDC and WDC’s proposals for the size of the new council (number of councillors) would be put directly to the Secretary of State. As a result the LGBCE would carry out a more limited role,

developing new ward boundaries for any new council. The additional benefit of this approach would be that SCDC and WDC would achieve clarity regarding the new council approximately nine months earlier; and would therefore have from approximately September 2017 through to April 2019 to fully prepare for implementation of the new Council.

Supplementary Question from Councillor J Murray

If the two Councils were to merge, they would effectively create a one party state, due to the dominance of the Conservative Group. Is the Leader of the Council concerned that this will create a lack of democracy and challenge for the future?

Response from Councillor Law

I have already stated that any referendum would be non-binding. It is for the Councillors of the two authorities to make this decision. Ultimately, the public decide who they wish to represent them and they have chosen the Councillors who must make this decision. It is better that the two Councils make these difficult choices for themselves, rather than having decisions imposed upon them by others.

The rest of the Member Questions would be considered at the end of the meeting.

8. PETITIONS

No Petitions had been received.

9. QUESTIONS FROM THE ELECTORATE

No Questions from the Electorate had been received.

10. FURTHER TRANSFORMATION IN EAST SUFFOLK

The Leader of the Council presented the report, which sought approval to create a new single Council for East Suffolk and to authorise the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Leaders of the Councils, to submit a written request to the Department of the Communities and Local Government to commence the formal process of merger of the Councils, based on the proposal set out in Appendix A to the report.

The Leader of the Council stated that the creation of a new, larger Council would be more efficient and have a greater voice during future regional discussions. It was important that the Councils were proactive and developing new ways of working, otherwise change would be imposed by central government, without any local input. A new Council was in the best interests of Waveney and all of its communities. The new Councils for Lowestoft and Oulton Broad would strengthen accountability and enhance democracy for the residents in those areas. A new East Suffolk Council would focus upon the economy, sustainability and would be in a much stronger position in the longer term. The best elements would be taken from Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils and the new East Suffolk Council would be more resilient and better able to take on additional roles and responsibilities which would arise through devolution and other changes from central government.

The Chief Executive gave a presentation, which provided the historical context and recent changes, both locally and nationally, which had led to the proposal for creating a single Council for East Suffolk. It was noted that a single Council would have a greater voice and would be able to deliver on its ambitions regarding growth, infrastructure and

housing. The single Council would also have more leverage when working with stakeholders, including the LEP, other councils and health partners.

Some concerns had been raised that the two Councils had too many differences to be able to work effectively as a single Council, however there were now more similarities than differences. The Councils were complementary and already had a shared Senior Management Team (SMT) and the majority of staff were already working for both authorities, therefore a single Council was the next logical step, which would provide estimated savings of £1.3 million per year. There would be a reduction in duplication, a reduction in the number of Councillors and there would be greater resilience and sustainability in the longer term. It was reported that other pairs of Councils were also working in partnership, both in Suffolk and nationally, and that this could also result in Councils being combined into single local authorities.

If the proposals were approved by both Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Council, the Chief Executive would write to the Secretary of State outlining the request to form a new East Suffolk Council. A Member Working Group would then be created to consider the number of Councillors needed for the new Council. The final decision in this respect would be needed by June 2017, so that the figure could be included within the Draft Order being written by the Secretary of State and final approval of the Order would be expected by September/October 2017. The elections for the new Council would take place in May 2019.

Members were reassured that they would be proactive in the development of the new East Suffolk Council and would be involved in the creation of the decision making process eg they would decide how many Planning Committees would be required and whether or not to have more localised meetings such as Area Forums.

The former Strategic Director & Monitoring Officer provided an update on the consultation process and the responses received. It was noted that ComRes, an independent and professional organisation, were commissioned by the Councils to conduct the independent survey of a representative sample of 1,000 residents from across East Suffolk. This involved 500 residents within Suffolk Coastal and 500 within Waveney. When provided with some very brief information about the proposed creation of a single District Council for East Suffolk, the majority of adults surveyed said that they were favourable towards the proposal (57%), whilst 22% were unfavourable. Later in the survey, after being given more information, 72% of respondents said that they were favourable to the proposals. The majority of adults confirmed that it would be important for the new Council to meet all of its intended objectives and sustained the delivery of important services to local people.

Wider community engagement was also carried out by the Councils during November and December 2016. This took the form of press releases, public forum workshops and presentations, town and parish council engagement and detailed information being provided to every household via the Councils' magazines. In addition, there was consistent engagement through various social media channels, including Facebook. Residents were encouraged to respond via email but all comments and views, including those via Facebook and Streetlife, were considered and analysed. Overall 313 interactions had been registered, although it was noted that some individuals may have responded more than once using different social media methods. Overall, those responding in this way during November and December 2016 were against the proposal

(57%) and the majority of those respondents were from Lowestoft. Their main concerns were: Loss of Local Democracy, Loss of Representation (fewer Councillors), Loss of Offices (new headquarters at East Suffolk House in Melton), Loss of identity for Lowestoft, Political Influence (Lowestoft would be a Labour voice in an otherwise Conservative area) and lack of a Referendum.

Members were advised that in order for the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to exercise its powers under Section 15 of the CLGDA, the Councils had been required to consult directly with Suffolk County Council. Members noted the County Council's response contained within the report, together with the response from the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce.

A Member requested clarification regarding paragraph 4.18 within the report, as they felt that the paragraph was factually incorrect and misleading. Clarification was provided that many of the 313 social media and email responses had been from the Lowestoft area, however that did not necessarily mean that the majority of the people in Lowestoft were against the proposals for a single East Suffolk Council.

A Member queried the estimated savings of £115,000 per year which would be generated by the reduction in the number of Councillors from 90 to 65. They were concerned that the amount spent on Councillors Allowances would actually increase, rather than reduce. It was reported that the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) would determine the level of allowances paid to the Councillors of East Suffolk Council. However, a best estimate had been produced, using the highest current rate for both Councils, for each different role and responsibility, which created a quasi allowance scheme for comparative purposes. By reducing the number of Councillors to 65, there would be a significant saving of £115,000 per year. It was conceded that the Suffolk Coastal Councillors currently had a £6,000 grant or 'locality budget' that they could use for projects within their particular areas, however that was not an allowance and was therefore not included in those figures. It would be up to the East Suffolk Councillors to decide if they wished to have a similar locality budget in the future. Members were advised that the new Council may decide to have fewer Councillors, however the business case had estimated 65 and the level of allowances as created for comparative purposes was similar to those provided in unitary authorities.

Clarification was provided that the DCLG had indicated that it would take approximately 6 – 8 months for them to make the secondary legislation to allow the merger to take place. During that time, they would also be considering the number of Councillors required by the new Council and would undertake this in parallel to the creation of the new legislation. It was acknowledged that the timetable for Devolution had slipped significantly, however that would not happen in this instance, as there were only two Councils involved and the DCLG were very supportive of the proposals.

With regard to Health, a Member raised concerns that the North of the proposed new Council worked primarily with Norfolk and the Norwich area on health services and commissioning, whilst the South worked primarily with Ipswich. Reassurance was provided that the new Council would have a stronger voice in all negotiations and that there would be significant engagement and involvement at a strategic level to ensure the best possible services for local residents.

In respect of Council staff, a Member queried whether there would be any job losses as a result of the new Council. It was confirmed that over 64% of the Councils staff were already fully integrated and were working for both authorities. The main areas which had not fully merged were Communications, Democratic Services, Housing (Suffolk Coastal do not have any Council housing) and Port Health (Suffolk Coastal has these services at Felixstowe Port). It was anticipated that there may be a small reduction in the number of staff required, as there would be reductions in the duplication of work eg only one meeting of the Full Council rather than two, one Cabinet, one Audit & Governance Committee etc. However, due to the size of the Council, it may be necessary for there to be additional Committees to be created. There was likely to be more than one Planning Committee and Area Forums could be created, to ensure all areas were democratically represented and engaged. The decisions would be made over the coming months to ensure that the new Council was undertaking its democratic responsibilities correctly.

A Member commented that most of the two Councils fees and charges were already aligned, however Waveney currently charged for Green Bin collections whilst Suffolk Coastal did not. They queried whether there may be an opportunity for the charging for some services to be reconsidered in the future. It was confirmed that the new Council would need to decide on its own fees and charges, however car parking was unlikely to be fully aligned as the level of charges was due to the locality of each car park.

A Member raised concerns about some of the services that Waveney currently had contracts with Waveney Norse to provide and queried whether Suffolk Coastal had similar arrangements in place and how the different contracts would continue in the future. It was confirmed that both Councils employed Norse to undertake work on their behalf – Waveney Norse and Suffolk Coastal Norse. Both companies had the same Managing Director and it would therefore be straightforward and efficient to amalgamate both companies and join the teams in future.

A Member sought reassurance that all of the new Council area would benefit economically, that there would be a fair distribution of future investment and that the North of the Council would not be ignored. The Leader of the Council reported that the new administration would make those decisions and they would be made in the best interests of the whole of East Suffolk.

A Member raised concerns that there may be a lack of democracy in future, if the public had to travel longer distances to attend meetings and the lack of public transport would further disadvantage them. It was reported that it was likely that meetings would take place in a variety of locations and they would not all be held at one site. However, by comparison Suffolk County Councillors often had to travel long distances across the County to attend meetings. New technology also meant that meetings could take place via video conference, which would reduce the need to travel.

With regard to meetings of the Full Council, a Member commented that it would be extremely difficult to fit 65 Councillors plus members of the public in the Conference Room at Riverside and they queried where Full Council meetings would take place in future. It was reported that the Council Chamber at East Suffolk House could easily accommodate 65 Councillors and the Conference Room at Riverside would also be able to do so, if the table layout was reconfigured. It was not anticipated that hosting future Full Council meetings would be a problem.

In respect of the background information provided to the residents during the ComRes survey, a Member queried whether this information could be shared, as the content would have had a direct impact upon their views. It was confirmed that ComRes were an independent and professional organisation and the background information could be provided outside of the meeting.

Members then went into debate, where they could each speak only once, for a maximum of 5 minutes. A summary of the discussions are shown below:

- Although broadly supportive of the proposals the Member felt that there should be a public referendum to make the final decision, this could also involve a question about the transfer of assets to the newly formed Parish Councils.
- The public are not concerned about who provides their services as long as their needs are met and the Council continues to provide an efficient service.
- A Member was concerned about additional travelling costs to attend meetings.
- The current Administration were imposing their views upon the District.
- The new offices for Suffolk Coastal District Council had been named East Suffolk House, which implied that they were going to be the new Headquarters for the new Council and that Waveney would be the lesser party. The cost savings for reducing the number of Councillors was unlikely to be realised, there would be more travel time needed for both officers and Members. Waveney also had a significant amount of debt, whilst Suffolk Coastal were debt free – would those Councillors be happy to take on that additional debt? There were also concerns that the consultation process was biased and a public referendum should take place regarding this important decision.
- The new Council would be able to make its own decisions and decide how it would like to operate. With the increased use of technology, more meetings could be held by video conference, which would reduce travelling still further. Although there were few minority group Councillors currently at Suffolk Coastal, it was important to have a strong opposition to hold the Administration to account and that was healthy for democracy.
- The proposals were in the best interests of the district and would lead to improved services and efficiency savings.
- People in Waveney tend to access services, shops, jobs to the north of Waveney and do not have much to do with Ipswich and the Southern areas, Waveney should be working more closely with our partners in the North.
- There was often a low turn out at referendums and they were very expensive. The public votes for who they think will do a good job and work hard for them and although it was hard work, the opposition could win back additional seats if they would put the effort in. The election in 2019 would give the electorate the opportunity to appoint whoever they wanted to represent them and there could be significant changes in political balance in the future.
- We owe it to do the best for Council Tax Payers and must do what we can following the significant cuts in funding from Central Government.
- Many Parish Councils were supportive of the merger and the reasons for it were understood by the public, unlike Devolution which was too complicated and too unwieldy.

The Leader of the Council reported that there was significant collaborative working throughout Suffolk and the amount of partnership working was also increasing. All

Councillors have a duty to do the best for the residents of Waveney and to ensure that the Council is robust and is sustainable in the longer term. It was recognised that there would be financial benefits from a single council for East Suffolk, but this was not the only reason for seeking this decision. The new Council would have a much stronger voice in the future and would have more influence in future discussions and negotiations on a wide range of issues such as infrastructure, health, renewable energy, all of which would have a significant impact on the well being of future generations.

On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED

That following consideration of the Business Case for the proposals previously (in Reports REP1359 and REP1380), and the public engagement conducted by the Councils, the Council of Waveney District Council:

- (i) To approve the proposal to create a new single Council for East Suffolk as their preferred way forward and;
- (ii) To authorise the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Leaders of the Councils, to submit a written request to the Department of the Communities and Local Government to commence the formal process of merger of the Councils, based on the proposal set out in Appendix A to this report.

N.B. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED FROM 8.50PM TO 9.05PM FOR A SHORT COMFORT BREAK

11. CHANGE IN THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

With the agreement of those present, the Chairman moved Item 15 – Kessingland Neighbourhood Plan up the Agenda to be the next item for consideration at this meeting.

12. KESSINGLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning & Coastal Management presented the report which sought approval to 'make' the Kessingland Neighbourhood Plan (as modified) part of the statutory development plan for the Kessingland Neighbourhood Area.

It was noted that Kessingland Parish Council was the first parish in the Waveney District to take up the opportunity to produce a neighbourhood plan for their community. Following consultation and research, Kessingland Parish Council submitted its neighbourhood plan and supporting evidence to Waveney District Council in May 2016. The plan was subject to independent examination and it was recommended that the plan proceed to referendum, subject to modifications.

In accordance with the relevant regulations, the referendum took place on 24 November 2016. 89% of the votes cast were in favour of the Kessingland Neighbourhood Plan.

Members took the opportunity to thank officers and Kessingland Parish Council for their hard work in this respect and commended the Neighbourhood Plan as an exemplar example for other Parish Councils to emulate.

RESOLVED

That Waveney District Council “make” the Kessingland Neighbourhood Plan (as modified) part of the statutory development plan for the Kessingland Neighbourhood Area.

13. LOWESTOFT & OULTON BROAD – REORGANISATION OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE ORDER

The Leader of the Council presented the report which sought confirmation for the Reorganisation of Community Governance Order, to be made through Section 86 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

It was noted that the un-parished areas of Lowestoft had been without a voice for the past 40 years, as they had no parish or town Council to represent them. The establishment of the new parish councils would correct a democratic deficit in the area and provide much needed local accountability. It was noted that Full Council had agreed to the creation of 2 new parish councils for the un-parished areas of Lowestoft at its meeting on 16 November 2016.

A Councillor queried whether the Marina Theatre Trust Members had been made aware that the Theatre may be transferred to Lowestoft Town Council. It was reported that the transfer had been included within the consultation documents for the Community Governance Review and within Council reports, therefore it was in the public domain, however the Board had specifically been made aware. It was not anticipated that there would be any difficulties with the transfer, as everything would continue as normal. The only difference would be that Waveney District Council representation on the Board would be replaced by Lowestoft Town Councillors in due course. There was money within the proposed budget for Lowestoft Town Council to support the Theatre and the transfer would be a smooth process. A Member then queried whether the Board had been formally consulted about the transfer. It was reported that a letter had been sent to the Chief Executive and he was fully aware of the proposals. A Working Group had also been established to assist with the transfer process.

In response to a question from a Member, reassurance was provided that all of the allotments within Lowestoft would be transferred to Lowestoft Town Council, for them to manage.

With regard to Tingdene Car Park, confirmation was provided that some of the area would be transferred to Lowestoft Town Council, however Area A would be excluded from this and would be treated differently.

A Member raised concerns that the sea wall at Ness Point was going to be transferred to Lowestoft Town Council, as it was a liability and needed considerable funds to be invested. It was reported that although it would be transferred to the Lowestoft Town Council, the overall responsibility for Coastal Management remained with Waveney District Council, therefore the District Council would be responsible for monitoring it, ensuring safety and procuring works, as appropriate.

A Councillor drew Members’ attention to the proposed asset transfer regarding Normanston Park and queried why that transfer in particular was subject to consent. It

was confirmed that this related to the Skate Park on the site, which had been built using Big Lottery Funding. There was likely to be no issue with the transfer to Lowestoft Town Council, however formal permission needed to be sought from the Big Lottery Funding, before the transfer could take place. It was noted that permission also needed to be sought to transfer the nature reserve to Lowestoft Town Council and that the correct legislation and due process needed to be followed, in this respect. It was also confirmed that for some sites, a lease arrangement must be in place, and the site would be leased back to Waveney District Council under Article 21.

It was noted that the proposed transfer of assets would take place on 1 April 2017 and a Member queried how that would take place, as the election for the Lowestoft Town Councillors was not until 4 May 2017. It was reported that the Oulton Broad Parish and Lowestoft Town Councils would come into existence as a legal entity on 1 April 2017. An interim Town Clerk would be appointed to oversee the establishment of the necessary processes and procedures, ready for the appointment of the Councillors and the appointment of the permanent Clerk(s). This would ensure a seamless transition to the new Councils.

14. CONTINUATION OF THE MEETING OVER THREE HOURS IN DURATION

At this point in the proceedings and in accordance with Paragraph 9 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution, the Chairman of the Council asked the Members if they were in agreement to continue with the meeting over three hours duration.

RESOLVED

To continue with the meeting over three hours duration.

N.B. Members continued with their questions regarding the Reorganisation of the Community Governance Order.

A Member raised concerns that the children's play area in Wellington Road, Pakefield was due to have some toddler play equipment installed in the next few months and queried whether the transfer to Lowestoft Town Council would delay the installation. It was reported that there would be no delay as Waveney Norse were due to install the equipment and they would be operating using the same contract for an interim period for Lowestoft Town Council, so there would be no loss of service.

A Member queried why the Marina Theatre was being transferred to Lowestoft Town Council, when it was a valued asset for the whole of the District and beyond. It was reported that the Marina Theatre was originally the responsibility of Lowestoft Borough Council and the responsibility was transferred to Waveney District Council when the Borough ceased to exist following the reorganisation in 1974. It should therefore be the responsibility of Lowestoft Town Council, as it was a Lowestoft facility and it was irrelevant where the Theatre's customers came from. The Trust had been set up to oversee the Theatre, there was a long term business plan in place for the Theatre to become self funding and it was only right that the Lowestoft Town Council had responsibility for it.

A Member stated they had a query about a particular area in Rookery Close, which was maintained by Waveney Norse. Although the area had originally been an ornamental garden space, over time residents had hung tyres from the trees to make swings and the

Councillor had concerns regarding safety and insurance. It was confirmed that this would be investigated outside of the meeting.

With regard to the Waveney District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2017, a Member queried why Lowestoft Town Council was referred to as Lowestoft Parish Council in the Order. It was reported that all newly established Parish Councils were called a 'Parish Council'. Only the Parish was able to decide what to name itself. It was extremely likely that the Council would choose to name itself 'Lowestoft Town Council' in the future, however in the Order, it had to be called Lowestoft Parish Council.

A Member queried whether any of the swimming pools in the un-parished area of Lowestoft could be transferred to the respective Town or Parish Council. It was confirmed that that would not be possible, as the swimming pools were now part of Sentinel Leisure Trust, who run the leisure facilities within the district.

A Member commented that there were many items of interest which had not been included within the Order for transfer to Lowestoft Town Council, such as the Cine Club at Sparrows Nest or the old map from the Town Hall. It was reported that the items included within the Order were all currently on loan to Broad House Museum. Work was currently underway to look at the items from the Town Hall and decisions would be made about their long term future in due course. Those items would be added to the Order, as appropriate, in the future. With specific reference to the Cine Club, all of Sparrows Nest was being transferred to Lowestoft Town Council and there may not be a specific lease for the Cine Club. With regard to a further query about the Crest for the Old Royal Hotel in Lowestoft, clarification was provided that it was being stored in the old East Point Pavilion and would be included within the list of assets to be considered and debated.

With regard to the transfer of the Marina Theatre, a Member raised their ongoing concerns that the Marina Theatre was a venue which attracted international artists and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, therefore they felt it should remain under Waveney District Council control. The Member also queried whether the decision regarding the transfer could be delayed until a response had been received from the Marina Theatre Trust Board. It was reported that the Board were aware of the proposals, however the Board would remain in place following the transfer, the only change being that Waveney District Councillors would be replaced by Lowestoft Town Councillors. The Director in charge would continue his excellent work and the public would see no difference following the transfer.

A Member was concerned about the proposed recharge to Lowestoft Town Council and Oulton Broad Parish Council for 'the reasonable costs incurred by Waveney District Council in establishing these new parish councils' and they requested clarification in this respect. Members were advised that the District Council was entitled to recharge the new authorities for the work which led to their establishment. Reassurance was provided that the recharge made would be for a reasonable amount and there would be no profit for the District Council from the recharge. It was noted that officer time would not be recharged, only the extra external costs.

Members then went into debate, where they could each only speak once for a maximum of 5 minutes. A summary of the discussions are shown below:

- A Member stated that they felt the Order should not be submitted until it contained all of the items from the Town Hall, which were due to be transferred. They also requested that there should be a separate vote for recommendation 2, as there were many concerns about the recharging for the cost of the establishment of the two Councils.
- Although they were happy that the people of the un-parished areas of Lowestoft would be getting a voice, they still had concerns that some of the assets being transferred would actually be a financial liability to the residents of Lowestoft.
- A Member reported that they were not happy about the way that the Community Governance Review had been undertaken, and comparisons were made to an inequitable divorce settlement. They also had concerns about the additional financial burden to the poorest people in Lowestoft.
- A Member provided reassurances that the poorest people in Lowestoft who were on benefits would continue to be protected from the full cost of the precept. There had been a democratic deficit for many years, which was something that the Members of the Lowestoft Charter Trustees had complained about and it was sad that the new Town Council was being received so negatively. The District Council was also protecting the Town Council in many ways, as it continued to support services which were loss making eg car parks.
- A Member stated that many residents in rural areas had complained about supporting Lowestoft for years, it was only fair that a precept be raised from the residents of Lowestoft to pay for the Town or Parish Council and the work needed for the area.
- There was a significant disparity in the amount of precept being set for Oulton Broad, compared to Lowestoft, which was further proof that the poorest residents were being affected more severely by the proposals.

The Leader of the Council reported that the establishment of the two Councils would give those residents a voice and remove the democratic deficit, which had been in place for many years. The asset list was not complete, however work was continuing in this respect and Councillors would be attending a Working Group so that they would be involved in the process of deciding what would happen to all of the items. Creating two new Councils was the only sensible way forward and it was important that high calibre residents were encouraged to stand as local Councillors.

In accordance with the earlier request, recommendations 1, 3 and 4 were voted for en bloc. A separate vote was then taken in relation to recommendation 2. It was therefore

RESOLVED

1. That, under section 86 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Council approves the Waveney District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2017 (Appendix A).
2. That Council approves recharging, over a four year period, Lowestoft Town Council and Oulton Broad Parish Council for the reasonable costs of establishing these new parish councils.
3. That the 2017/18 Precept demand to Waveney District Council for Lowestoft Town Council of £1,392,280.00 be approved on the following basis: budget of £1,392,280.00 divided by tax base of 12,173.90 resulting in a Band D rate of £114.37 per year.

4. That the 2017/18 Precept demand to Waveney District Council for Oulton Broad Parish Council of £176,720.00 be approved on the following basis: budget of £176,720.00 divided by tax base of 3,157.50 resulting in a Band D rate of £55.97 per year.

N.B. Councillor K Patience left the meeting at this point in the proceedings.

15 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY FOR 2017-18

The Cabinet Member for Resources & Welfare Reforms presented a report which set out the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement, Investment Strategy and Prudential Indicators for 2016/17, and which covered the capital plans (including prudential indicators), the Treasury Management Strategy (how the investments and any future borrowings were to be organised) including Treasury Indicators, and an Investment Strategy (the parameters on how investments were to be managed).

Members were reminded that, each year, every local authority had to approve a Policy Strategy which would govern its day-to-day Treasury Management objectives for that year. The report itself gave an overview of the current economic background, including the global economy, UK economy, inflation and the interest base rate. Appendix A to the report provided the Treasury Management Policy Statement for 2017/18, Appendix B gave details of the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2017/18, and Appendix C provided the Prudential Indicators 2017/18 to 2020/21, and included the revisions to 2016/17.

It was noted that the Council currently had £90.9 million of borrowing and £39.6 million of investments. Members were advised that the Cabinet Member for Resources & Welfare Reforms proposed an additional recommendation, which was duly seconded:

'That the 2017 Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) structure in Appendix B to the report be approved.

Members were advised that the report had been considered by the Joint Audit & Governance and Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting and also by the Cabinet.

RESOLVED

1. That Full Council approve the adoption of the Treasury Management Policy Statement for 2017/18, the Treasury Management & Investment Strategy for 2017/18, the Prudential Indicators 2017/18 and the 2016/17 to 2017/18 Counterparty list.
2. That the 2017 Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) structure in Appendix B to the report be approved.

16. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017-18 TO 2020-21

The Cabinet Member for Resources & Welfare Reforms presented a report on the Council's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programmes for the financial years 2017/18 to 2020/21 and which included revisions to the 2016/17 Programme. The report included the main principles applied to set the programme and provided details of the expenditure and finances for 2016/17 to 2020/21.

The Members were reminded 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. The capital programme itself played an important part in the delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which, in turn, supported wider service delivery.

A summary of the HRA Capital Programme was contained in the report and the capital expenditure included housing repairs, housing development and housing improvement. This was funded by external grants/contributions and internally by direct revenue finance, reserves and capital receipts.

Members were advised that the report had been considered by the Joint Audit & Governance and Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting and also by the Cabinet.

A Member commented that the Capital Programme was until 2020-21 and queried how this would work, as the new East Suffolk Council would be in place in 2019. It was reported that it was important to plan and continue to work in to the future. The plans would then be taken forward and used by the new East Suffolk Council for its future planning purposes, which would ensure that the whole district was fully supported.

A Member stated that they welcomed the planned future investments in new council housing and queried why there was funding of £14 million planned for 2017/18 but significantly less funding by 2019/19. It was reported that the funding was for planned projects which were currently being developed and worked upon. Funding had been secured and building would take place shortly. The plans for building new council housing further into the future had not been fully developed and so had not been included within the Capital Programme. When further information was available and plans had been confirmed, additional information would be included within future reports.

A Member commended the report, which had also been thoroughly considered by the Audit & Governance Committee. Clarification was requested in relation to the procurement of new vehicles which were required by Waveney Norse. It was confirmed that in accordance with the terms and agreement with Waveney Norse, the District Council paid for the vehicles they required to provide services in Waveney. Reassurance was provided that the correct processes and procedures were followed to ensure that the Council received the best value for money when purchasing these vehicles and funding was correctly allocated for this purpose in the budget.

RESOLVED

1. That the Capital Programme for 2017/18 to 2020/21, including revisions to 2016/17 be approved by Full Council.
2. That Delegated Authority be granted to the Cabinet to authorise those projects which are subject to a business case to proceed once a satisfactory business case has been presented and approved at a Cabinet meeting.

17. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET

The Cabinet Member for Resources & Welfare Reforms presented a report, which set out the Council's General Fund Capital Programme and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme for the financial year 2017/18 to 2020/21 and which included revisions to the 2016/17 programme. It was noted that the Capital Programme had been compiled taking account of the following main principles in order to:

- Maintain an affordable four-year rolling Capital Programme.
- Ensure the capital resources were aligned with the Council's Business Plan, Strategic Vision and Corporate Priorities.
- Maximise available resources by actively seeking external funding and disposal of surplus assets.
- Not anticipate receipts from disposals.

The General Fund Capital Programme totalled £45.18m, of which £35.28m (78%) was external funding from grants and contributions. The HRA Capital Programme, comprising housing repairs, housing development and housing improvement, totalled £48.7m and had not required any additional external borrowing to finance it as the programme was funded from external grants and contributions, and internal resources.

The Cabinet Member for Resources & Welfare Reforms was pleased to report that the building of Riverside and refurbishment of the Marina Centre had come in at £1m less than budget. He drew particular attention to paragraph 6 in the report which explained the revenue implications on capital projects.

Members were advised that the report had been considered by the Joint Audit & Governance and Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting and also by the Cabinet.

A Member stated that there was already a waiting list of 2,000 people wanting a council house in Lowestoft and they sought reassurance that when the East Suffolk Council was established, that Council housing in Lowestoft would be for those people on the current waiting list. It was confirmed that the Council was looking to build a large number of Council houses and affordable housing in the district. Suffolk Coastal currently didn't have any council housing at all but they were looking to start building in their district as well. The Councils were approaching a number of providers for funding, including Pension Funds and work was quite advanced in this respect.

With regard to rent arrears, a Member raised concerns that there had been a significant increase in arrears since the introduction of Universal Credit and reassurance was sought that the Council was prepared, should levels of arrears increase even further. Members were advised that the Council was monitoring the situation closely and additional staff were being trained to provide support and assistance in respect of Universal Credit. The Council also had significant bad debt reserves and was therefore adequately protected for the future.

A Member commented that the Chief Finance Officer provided an excellent presentation to the Audit & Governance Committee and requested that the presentation be circulated to all Members for information. It was confirmed this would be actioned outside of the meeting.

It was noted that although the Council had taken on a significant amount of debt in relation to council housing (£68 million), the Council was now able to keep all of the rents received for council housing, which were then used to service the debt, maintain the housing stock and build new council housing in the district.

RESOLVED

1. That Full Council approved the following;
 - (a) The Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2017/18, the revised estimates for 2016/17 and the indicative figures for 2018/19 to 2020/21;
 - (b) Movements in Reserves and Balances;
 - (c) Weekly housing rent decrease of 1% for 2017/18, giving an average weekly rent of £83.73 over a 50 week collection period; and
 - (d) Service Charges and associated fees for 2017/18.
2. That the forthcoming change affecting public and private sector housing and welfare be noted.

N.B. The Finance Officers left the meeting at this point in the proceedings.

18. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES FOR 2016-17 (NON EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS)

The Leader of the Council presented the report which sought approval to make some changes to the Councils' Non Executive representation on a number of outside bodies within the District. It was noted that at the Annual Council meeting held on 18 May 2016 approved appointments to Committees, Working Groups and Councillor representation on a wide range of diverse Outside Bodies, as part of the governance arrangements for the Council for the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

Since the Annual Council meeting, Councillor C Topping had resigned from the Pride in Beccles Board, as she was no longer able to attend their meetings, which now take place during the day.

It was noted that there had been some discussion regarding the Active Waveney Sports Partnership and it was felt that it was more appropriate for the Cabinet Member for Community Health & Safety to attend those meetings, as it was a better fit for their Portfolio.

Members were advised that the Cabinet Member for Operational Partnerships & Lowestoft Rising had recently suggested to the Marina Theatre Partnership Board that it would be useful to appoint an additional co-opted Member to their Board, from the largest Opposition Group. This would allow the largest Opposition Group to be fully involved in the oversight of the Marina Theatre and this suggestion had been formally agreed. There being no further discussion, it was

RESOLVED

1. That Councillor G Catchpole replaces Councillor C Topping as the Council's representative on the Pride in Beccles Outside Body with immediate effect.

2. That Councillor M Rudd replaces Councillor M Ladd as the Council's representative on the Active Waveney Sports Partnership Outside Body with immediate effect.
3. That Councillor S Barker be appointed to the Marina Theatre Partnership Board, as the co-opted Majority Opposition Group Member, with immediate effect.

18. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

The Chairman reminded Members that Question A had already been considered at the start of the meeting.

(b) Question from Councillor M Cherry to the Leader of the Council

On BBC Look East recently, Waveney District Council was accused of 'bungling incompetence' over the multi million pound sea wall project which cannot effectively be used by seafarers. What is Waveney District Council doing to ensure the reinstatement of the bollards to Southwold Quay so that seafarers can once again moor their boats?

Response from Councillor Law

The works to the North Wall of Southwold Harbour were carried out by a council appointed contractor, and followed an extensive and detailed scoping process.

At all times during the scoping, the requirements of different types of harbour user were taken into account. This included leisure users, visitors and the local fishing community. The needs of harbour users were represented by the Southwold Harbour Users Group.

With regard to the specific point on bollards; the load strength was correctly identified in the specification for the size of vessel using the harbour at that time. In the intervening period, however the size of boat using the harbour for commercial purposes has increased. This has increased the load on the moorings, with the result that some have failed.

Waveney District Council is in discussion with the contractor about the engineering solution that would allow higher pull out strengths – potentially up to 18 tons. This will require additional engineering work to the wall and a more substantial anchoring system. A meeting is being scheduled on site to price the additional works in February.

Waveney are committed to ensuring that Southwold Harbour remains a thriving, working harbour. The investment in the harbour north wall is part of an ongoing programme of works that will ensure that the harbour is a successful part of the local economy.

Supplementary Question from Councillor M Cherry

The BBC report was very concerning. Can the Leader of the Council provide assurances that the work to Southwold Harbour will be undertaken as quickly as possible, so that there is a significant improvement in the coming year?

Response from Councillor Law

Yes, however I take exception to the tone of the BBC report, which undermined the work of the Council. We have been talking to the Harbour Users Association and they were involved in the whole process of designing the works, the build process and were consulted. We will of course continue to work with all the relevant people involved to rectify the problems.

N.B. Councillor G Elliott left the meeting at this point in the proceedings.

(c) Question from Councillor I Graham to the Cabinet Member for Operational Partnerships & Lowestoft Rising

Could the Cabinet Member for Operational Partnerships & Lowestoft Rising inform the Council how successful the pilot food and glass household collection service has been in some parts of Lowestoft and Halesworth over the past six years and when is it due to be rolled out across other parts of Waveney?

Response from Councillor Ardley

Waste compositional analyses carried out in Waveney prior to 2007 concluded that two historical “hard to reach” areas (without gardens and green bins) in North Lowestoft (Roman Hill – 4,600 households) and Halesworth (850 households) were disposing of significant quantities of recyclables in their black (residual waste) bin: over 7% being glass and 33% being food waste – both being sent to landfill.

To increase landfill diversion and to capture this potentially recyclable waste, WDC secured one-off external (WRAP) funding in 2007 (c £80k) to purchase a bespoke food/glass vehicle to carry out weekly food and glass collections in these two areas, initially for a three-year trial. After the three-year trial, the District Council allowed this weekly service to continue to date, effectively making this a permanent arrangement and covering the ongoing running costs from existing budgets. Despite robust promotional and awareness campaigns, only relatively small quantities of food waste and glass (c 150 to 200 tonnes each waste stream) have been recovered, and as a stand-alone service this has proved to be an expensive way to collect such a small amount of household recyclables.

The scheme has been reviewed annually and the running cost of this has been mitigated to an extent with the vehicle and crew also being used to collect trade food waste from Adnams’ PLC premises via the contract Waveney Norse has with them.

Since 2007 there has been no external funding available to help extend this scheme and neither has there been an appetite to, given the high cost of recovering these waste streams. Importantly also, with the introduction of the Easy Green Bin Scheme (chargeable garden waste collection) in February 2016, the remaining 50,000 householders in Waveney have been forced to dispose of their food waste in their black (residual waste bins), no longer being allowed to use their green bins. This has created a “double standard” in the way food waste is collected, further endorsing the stance that the food waste scheme should not be extended.

Whilst it is noted that SCC has agreed to pay Suffolk councils a slightly higher recycling credit for food waste only collections, at only 200 tonnes collected per year this would equate to a miniscule £4,500 contribution towards this service, which is currently costing c £42k pa net to run. Therefore, to roll out a household food waste only collection service districtwide would be completely unviable (and politically difficult to support), given the current net annual running costs and the small potential income available to offset this, be it via commercial waste or SCC enhanced recycling credit income.

Supplementary Question from Councillor I Graham

Will this service be expanded to other households, as many people would find this extremely useful?

Response from Councillor Ardley

No, it is too costly to expand the service.

(d) Question from Councillor S Barker to the Cabinet Member for Housing

It was reported in the Lowestoft Journal on 30 December 2016 that ‘up to 30 homeless people are sleeping inside or outside of their cars in Waveney.’ Can the figure for homelessness in Waveney quoted in the Lowestoft Journal article be confirmed and what action is being undertaken to reduce the number?

Response from Councillor Allen

An Annual Rough Sleeper Estimate exercise was carried out on the evening/ early morning of the 17th/18th November in collaboration with a number of agencies. All the Suffolk and Norfolk housing authorities carried out the same exercise on the same night to avoid double counting. 20 Rough Sleepers were identified (rather than 30) and a multi-agency meeting was held at Lowestoft Police Station to verify and agree the estimate.

The reasons for Rough Sleeping are as follows:

- Eviction from local hostels/ general needs housing because of breach of occupancy rules such as substance misuse/ threats of violence 3 residents have been evicted from the Fyffe the week commencing the 02/01/2017 because of drug paraphernalia found in their rooms (with less than 24 hours notice given to the Council)
- Refusal of accommodation because of no pets policy
- Too high risk/ intensive support needs for hostel accommodation
- Refusals by client of offers of hostel/private sector/lodgings schemes
- Unable to access social housing because of rent arrears/ASB/unacceptable behaviour.
- Failed habitual residency test
- Refusal to claim Universal Credit because of the claim commitment
- No recourse to public funds- for foreign nationals
- Previous damage to property – including arson

WDC works in partnership with the Lowestoft Rising Interventions Group (multi-agency case conferencing meeting) for entrenched rough sleepers or street drinkers) and have funded the Making Every Adult Matter post for Rough sleepers through the DCLG Homelessness Grant.

In the last 24 months in Lowestoft we have taken on 65 cases, 52 cases were closed down as their situations have improved to the point they could be discharged from the scheme. Using data from the national MEAM pilot area study an individual on average would have cost statutory services (prior to intervention) £41,124 annually (this spending is reactive and maintains the status quo of the individual).

The Partnership of Statutory and Vol Agencies have sought to build on the above success and have recently received Government Funding to expand the scheme. The Council has received £266,000 from the Department of Communities and Local Government Rough Sleepers Directorate to fund the following posts.

- 2 X Outreach Workers
- 1x Mental Health Support Worker
- Provision of Emergency Fund to do ‘whatever it takes’
- The Council also offers Deposit Bonds, and emergency accommodation at our discretion but part of the offer involves the client engaging with services that will address the underlying causes of homelessness.

- The majority of the 20 named individuals are so chaotic and entrenched that they need to get to a position in their lives where they are willing and able to access other statutory or support services, hence the recruitment of intensive outreach workers.
- The issue of dual diagnosis mental health/substance misuse will also be addressed through the recruitment of a mental health support worker specifically dedicated to meeting the needs of clients that fall within the purview of the multi-agency/MEAM case management approach of the Lowestoft Interventions Group.

The issue of Rough Sleeping is clearly at the sharp end of acute housing need. The presence of the 20 rough sleepers belies the homeless prevention and relief work that has been successful in Waveney. It is hoped that the above provision will enable the resettlement/ reintegration of rough sleepers into accommodation that is suitable and appropriate for their needs.

Supplementary Question from Councillor S Barker

The DCLG has advised that rough sleeping had increased by over 20% in London. Are we likely to get a similar increase in Waveney?

Response from Councillor S Allen

We will be closely monitoring the situation, however I have already mentioned the significant number of measures and support that is being put in place to assist those people who are rough sleeping in the district.

- (e) Question from Councillor A Green to the Cabinet Member for Tourism, Economic Development & Rural Affairs

The East Point Pavilion on Lowestoft Seafront is still unoccupied and unused apart from the public toilet annexe. Can the Cabinet Member for Tourism, Economic Development & Rural Affairs explain the efforts made to date by Waveney District Council to secure new businesses within the East Point Pavilion?

Response from Councillor Ladd

The current Tenant, Keable and Flowers decided to cease operations but have continuing responsibilities under a lease until the 1st April 2017. We are now establishing the extent of any dilapidations and repair work which we will look to them to honour. Given that we had some prior knowledge of them vacating, we have marketed this opportunity through the local press, sent out targeted mailing to potential restaurant / café operators and given my back ground as a commercial property agent, included specialist property and restaurant trade platforms. Feedback has not been particularly strong although we did receive feedback from one well know national restaurant chain – although upon closer examination they were unwilling to trade from a ‘stand-alone’ location. We are renewing the marketing with WDC’s regeneration team. In the meantime, we have just commenced discussions with a nationally based catering organisation who are considering the business opportunity - they are also interested in the rail station too. In addition, we are looking at whether a more specialist retail type offer could compliment this seafront location. So we are very active on the marketing side and hope that this pays dividends shortly.

Supplementary Question from Councillor A Green

There was no supplementary question on this occasion.

(f) Question from Councillor J Murray to the Cabinet Member for Community Health & Safety

What will be the effect of the closure of Beccles Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) in mid-January, on the health of the residents of Beccles?

Response from Councillor Rudd

Before making a decision on the future of the Minor Injuries Unit at Beccles the Governing Body of NHS Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG asked for a clinical review of the service to be carried out. This work shows that the use of the Beccles Minor Injuries unit is generally low.

It also demonstrated that a number of attendances to the Beccles Minor Injury Unit were inappropriate and should have been seen in primary care. 56% of the patients who attend are from Beccles medical centre and 15% from outside of the area.

It is locally recognised that Beccles Minor Injuries Unit does not meet the standards required for Minor Injuries Units, for example there is no specialist children's nurse and no emergency care practitioners. The Care Quality Commission inspected the MIU in November 2016 as part of a wider inspection of East Coast Community Health Care, the report for the inspection has yet to be published. The CQC raised concerns with East Coast Community Healthcare that the skills and experience of the staff working at the MIU did not appear to be in line with national guidance for Minor Injuries Units and other urgent care centres.

This led the CCG to concluding that a dedicated Minor Injuries Unit is not necessary and that minor injuries services could be delivered to meet demand in a way that uses resources more effectively. It is the CCGs conclusion that this model does not support value for money and is not an effective use of scarce nurse resource.

The CCG Governing Body made a decision to re-provide a minor injuries service in Beccles through a minor injury Local Enhanced Service agreement with Beccles Medical Centre with alternative provision at weekends to be commissioned from IC24.

Supplementary Question from Councillor J Murray

Will the Cabinet Member for Community Health & Safety lobby our MP to get his support to stop the cut backs in health care that we are experiencing in Waveney?

Response from Councillor Rudd

It is not in our gift to instruct the Healthcare providers what to do, however I can assure Councillors that I am very vocal and attend all of the relevant meetings to represent the best interests of the residents of Waveney. Members were also advised that Peter Aldous MP was already working closely with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to stop cuts in the district.

(g) Question from Councillor Y Cherry to the Leader of the Council

Proposed Waveney District Council Disposal of Open Space Land – listed under Public Notices in the Lowestoft Journal on 16 December 2016 (42 No) were published as a precursor to the Asset Transfer of land to the proposed Lowestoft Town Council / Oulton Broad Parish Council. What and how many future disposal items are there coming up and will Waveney District Council Members be informed before the information appears in the Lowestoft Journal?

Response from Councillor Law

The decision to transfer assets to the new Lowestoft Town Council and Oulton Broad Parish Council was made at Full Council on 16th November last year. Following this decision, it was a necessary requirement that a public notice advertising the transfer of areas of public open space was published in a local newspaper. This is the only such

notice that is required in relation to the transfer of assets for the new town and parish council.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Y Cherry

Can you confirm, are the new Town and Parish Councils obliged to take over the assets that are being transferred to them?

Response from Councillor Law

Yes, they are.

(h) Question from Councillor L Gooch to the Cabinet Member for Operational Partnerships & Lowestoft Rising

I understand that District and County Councils can support local cultural assets, such as The Marina Theatre, with sponsorship deals. Is this being considered to ensure the viability of The Marina Theatre, as it is compulsorily transferred to Lowestoft Town Council?

Response from Councillor Ardley

As a valued cultural asset within Lowestoft, the decision has been taken to transfer responsibility for the Marina Theatre to Lowestoft Town Council.

The establishment of the Marina Theatre Trust has provided the management team with the autonomy to explore a range of fundraising options – which can include sponsorship. The management team at the Marina Theatre has launched a programme of fundraising activity that will provide financial support for the trust and the arts programme and this is proving successful in raising funds independently of the council.

Waveney District Council continues to support the Marina Theatre Trust financially, and in the delivery its long-term plans to grow community participation and increase audience numbers. To that end, the council is working with the Marina Theatre Trust to secure its lease on the building that currently houses the Café. This investment would allow the Trust to deliver exciting growth plans and expand its community engagement programme.

Supplementary Question from Councillor L Gooch

The Marina Theatre has a loan to pay for the glass connecting area and also for the car park area at the rear. How will these loans be supported and paid in the future, once the Marina has been transferred to Lowestoft Town Council?

Response from Councillor Ardley

That will be the responsibility of the Marina Theatre Trust, as it is now. The new building was purchased by Waveney District Council for the Marina Theatre to use. There is a full business case and funding plan available to show how that will be funded in future years. The car park is part of the Marina already and is for them to keep. As I have already said, when the Theatre is transferred, everything will remain the same, it is only the District Council representation on the Board that will be replaced by the Town Councillors.

20. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

RESOLVED

That under Section 100(A) 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 involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

21. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Confidential Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 November 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank Arthur Charvonia for all of his hard work for Waveney District Council over the years and wished him well for his new role as Joint Chief Executive for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. He then presented Mr Charvonia with a card, gifts and flowers, in appreciation of his hard work, on behalf of all the Councillors.

The meeting was concluded at 10.50 pm

Chairman