

Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
held at Riverside, Lowestoft on **Thursday, 14 June 2018 at 6.00 pm**

Overview & Scrutiny Committee Members Present:

Councillors A Cackett (Chairman), G Elliott, T Gandy, L Gooch, P Light, J Murray, K Robinson, J Smith, K Springall and N Webb

Others in attendance

A Simpson, Strategic Growth Manager, Anglian Water Services Limited

Officers present

C Roberts (Democratic Services Officer) and N Wotton (Democratic Services Manager)

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Members were advised that the Suffolk County Council Emergency Planning Officer and the Head of Environmental Services & Port Health were unable to attend the meeting as planned, due to an emergency in Halesworth and they sent their apologies. However, it was noted that they would be happy to answer any queries outside of the meeting.

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies were received from Councillor C Topping.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Gandy.

NB Councillor Gandy arrived at this point in the proceedings at 6.10pm.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

Councillor Gooch welcomed Councillor Cackett as Chairman of the Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year and, noting that Councillor Cackett had not been a member of the Committee during Councillor Allen's Chairmanship and as a continuing Member of the Committee, she wished to recognise Councillor Allen's contribution during her time as Chairman.

Councillor Cackett thanked Councillor Gooch and acknowledged that, as she had not been a Member of the Committee at that time, it was appropriate for a continuing Member of the Committee to recognise Councillor Allen's contribution to the Committee.

**3 MINUTES**

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Gooch said that she had advised that she would be a little late in advance of the meeting and asked that the Minutes be amended to reflect this.

**RESOLVED**

That, subject to the correction of Councillor Gooch's apology for lateness, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 March 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**4 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN, RESPONSES OF THE CABINET TO ANY REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OR REPORTS OF ANY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET**

There were no announcements on this occasion.

**5 ANGLIAN WATER'S FUTURE SERVICE PROVISION AND ADDED VALUE IN WAVENEY**

The Committee received a report which had been previously requested as an additional item of business to the Work Programme, regarding Anglian Water's (AW) capacity to deal with the greater demands on existing sewage systems. Committee Members and Town/Parish Councils had been invited to submit questions which were then forwarded to AW for response.

The Chairman welcomed Allan Simpson, Strategic Growth Manager (Anglian Water Limited) to the meeting and clarified that the general questions set out in Appendix A to the report would be answered during the meeting. The more specific questions had been submitted to AW and, once received, the responses would be circulated to the Committee and Town/Parish Councils.

Mr Simpson informed the Committee that his background was in local government as a town planner and he would be presenting an overview of the business and how it approached growth. He advised that AW was responsible for 77,000km of sewer, 4,000+ pumping stations and 1,000+ water recycling centres servicing 6 million customers, working with 71 Internal Drainage Boards, 64 Local Planning Authorities and 22 Lead Local Flood Authorities.

He informed the Committee that AW's current Business Plan would come to an end in 2020 and they were currently working on the 2020-25 Plan. In addition, the renewed Strategic Direction Statement 2020-2045 was a 25 year strategy for supporting growth and tackling climate change and set out where investment would be made. Four stretching and long-term goals had been agreed:

'Make the East of England resilient to the risks of drought and flooding';

'Enable sustainable economic and housing growth in the UK's fastest growing region';

'Be a carbon-neutral business by 2015' and

'Work with others to achieve significant improvement in ecological quality across our catchments'.

The top risk was considered to be flooding, particularly with the scale of housing and economic growth in the East of England.

Mr Simpson referred to understanding how water resources were used and to the Water Resources East (WRE) project which was a multi-company, multi-sector, long-term water resource planning initiative to deliver a reliable, sustainable and affordable system of supply in the East of England and would be resilient to the effects of climate change, population growth and multi-season drought. It aimed to identify system vulnerabilities and select portfolios of schemes using advanced decision-making under uncertainty methods such as Robust Decision Making (RDM) and Multi-Criteria Search (MCS).

The Committee was informed that the Water Resources Management Plan was in the latter stages of preparation and it was hoped that it would be out for consultation around September 2018 and could be shared once it was released. This plan overlapped all locations and would help to inform serious options.

When considering planning, the key legislation was the Water Industry Act which was the driver to ensure that new development and existing customers had a supply of water. AW worked with developers to ensure that any proposals were sustainable but was not a statutory consultee for planning applications and, therefore, its comments carried less weight, although it was a statutory consultee on Local Plans.

Mr Simpson noted that AW was improving in terms of transparency and communication including social media and a portal setting out how to contact AW, as it was important for customers to report any issues. AW was mapping incidents and projects in the area to gather as much information as possible in the system to show what it was doing.

Members were advised that 80% of flooding incidents were caused by blockages, one of the biggest culprits being wet wipes. There were around 30,000 blockages per annum (one every 15 minutes) and £5.5m spent per annum to clean sewers. AW's mission statement 'Keep it Clear' would be going out to schools and communities to help them understand what could and could not be flushed down the toilet.

At this point Mr Simpson invited questions from the Committee.

### Questions from Members

**A Member expressed concern that existing customers' bills would increase to help towards funding infrastructure.** Mr Simpson clarified that this funding related specifically to growth and developers paid a charge towards this.

**A Member noted that most issues related to planning and growth and enquired whether the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) could be used rather than Section 106 Agreements and whether AW could get money from developers for infrastructure.** Mr Simpson advised that there was a connection charge of £500 - £600 per unit which developers had to pay should any reinforcement be required. This money was put into a pool and was different to CIL; however developers were pushing back on this.

**A Member further commented that, should a development of 600 houses require new facilities due to the system being at capacity, a charge of £500 - £600 would not pay for any serious investment needed to ensure those houses would not have an adverse impact.** Members were advised that this charge was paid by developers across the region and was for network reinforcement and there would be no claims made against CIL.

**Referring to 'Keep it Clear' a Member enquired whether there was a programme for this and how Councillors could help to get the message out to residents.** Mr Simpson informed the Committee that AW had a team which went out to community events, county shows and schools but any connection that Councillors could make would be very welcome and he could put Members in touch with the team.

**A Member referred to wanting to encourage residents to report problems and asked whether AW should be the first point of contact if a drain in a back garden became blocked or whether the resident would have to pay privately to have it cleared, even if it was reported to AW in the first instance.** Mr Simpson replied that AW would advise an individual of the best way to approach this but it was the householder's responsibility. He agreed to send Members a diagram of AW's responsibilities.

**Why do we have different providers?** Mr Simpson replied that water companies were originally set up by catchments but were split into areas following privatisation. Water

companies had interconnected systems with movement of water between companies. Referring to the boundaries, they were in the early stages of exploring the principle of getting everyone together, preparing a detailed modelling and reaching solutions which would be used to form long term strategies.

**Referring to question no. 3 on page 5 of Appendix A, a Member enquired what Waveney could do to support the 'Keep it Clear' campaign as it should be doing more as an authority.** Mr Simpson agreed to follow this up with the AW team. Informing the team of any events taking place would be very useful as it was important to get the information out to communities. AW could provide containers for oils and fats and was working with the Government and national bodies to reduce or change wet wipes to be biodegradable.

**Referring to question no. 6 on page 6 of Appendix A, a Member enquired whether the recruitment and training of flood wardens had been suggested to Suffolk County Council (SCC).** Mr Simpson responded that he was not aware whether or not this suggestion had been made. AW had a partnership programme and was looking to ensure that processes were joined up. There was also £8million available to work with local authorities to address flood risk issues.

**A Member referred to question no. 7 on page 6 of Appendix A regarding an update of the suggested improvements from SCC in relation to Kirkley Stream.** Mr Simpson agreed to follow this up and ensure that there was a clear way forward.

**Referring to the importance of customers reporting any issues, a Member advised that, although they had evidence dating back several years, customers in his area did not report incidents as it was their view that nothing was ever done about them. AW wanted developers to have pre-application meetings with them but it had to be considered that District, County, Town and Parish Councillors had insight into what was needed in their areas.** Mr Simpson clarified that the pre-application service was offered as part of AW's statutory duty for developers and was based on commercial and confidential information. It was a heavily monitored process, to ensure appropriate advice was being given. AW was aware of what was happening on the ground and had prepared a Neighbourhood Planning guide to encourage communities and Town/Parish Councils to work with them. Mr Simpson agreed that local knowledge would help to inform AW.

**A Member stated that it was important to involve local people and enquired at what stage AW would be in a position to know who was responsible for which drains and who maintained them.** Mr Simpson stated that AW had a good knowledge of its assets and the location of service water drains. Engineers carried 'live' laptops and fed in any changes. Mapping software was also used on a daily basis to collect data.

**Referring to an item on the news about global warming and the possibility of three trillion tonnes of ice melting causing water levels to rise, a Member asked whether AW had considered this.** Mr Simpson responded that global warming had been considered, including moving assets inland and would be part of AW's business resilience programme.

**Were there any other regulations, other than the Council's policy, to ensure that water did not go into the sewage system?** Mr Simpson responded that the planning system had more powers than AW; therefore it was important for AW to use its expertise to inform the master plan at the outset rather than seeking an amendment at a later date.

Referring to question no. 20 on page 1 of Appendix A, a Member commented that it was important to use the knowledge of Parish Councils and gave the example of Parish Councillors being aware of water running from the St Margaret's Church area, down through Sands Lane and into the Broads. There had been several issues of flooding and AW had realised that the pipes were not big enough to take the water flow and had to excavate various areas. Mr Simpson responded that AW considered the size of a site and the level of run off to ensure that a developer installed the correct size of pipe or AW would not sign off on it. The future was about developers installing SUDs where possible rather than surface water drainage, which should be captured at the pre-planning stage.

Referring to question no. 18 on page 7 of Appendix A, a Member referred to the damage done by concrete, bitumen and tarmac as they had noticed the increase in tarmacking or gravelling over areas of lawn which would not help in mitigating surface flooding and asked whether AW and Councillors were considering this. Mr Simpson agreed that education was needed but AW had to allow for people paving over their gardens in its modelling as the trend was not decreasing. More could be done to raise awareness through planning and design guidance.

A Member sought an update on a weak spot at Bellevue and Deans which repeatedly flooded. Mr Simpson advised that AW's Regional Flood Risk Manager led on those projects and a Section 19 investigation had been launched in order to reach a resolution.

A Member sought clarity around where AW was positioned regarding customer satisfaction levels, as their website said 3rd and according to Ofwat they were 9<sup>th</sup>. Mr Simpson confirmed that they were, in fact, top however the main aim was to ensure that customers were factored into every aspect of AW's business to inform its customer services.

A Member enquired how AW would cope with an additional 200 houses being built when Town and Parish Councils were of the view that there was no more capacity, particularly with regard to sewage. Mr Simpson advised that AW would carry out detailed modelling and work with developers to reach a solution e.g. a different connection point or storage solutions. There were occasions when communities saw blockages as capacity issues. AW was also working on improving its planning application responses and should give some additional commentary around why a certain condition was recommended. This would enable planning officers, the community and the Committee to understand AW's viewpoint.

At this point in the proceedings Councillor Springall left the meeting at 7.13pm.

A Member enquired whether AW had any input regarding developments with trees where the root systems were damaging drains. Mr Simpson advised that AW wasn't formally consulted on these matters. AW would flag up any assets it had in the area but landscaping was more difficult to control as AW was not consulted; however there was a Suffolk Design Guide being prepared and AW was a contributor to this guide.

A Member enquired whether there was a contact number for reporting surface water flooding. Mr Simpson advised that they had a 24 hour helpline number: 03457 145145.

A Member of the Committee, who was also on the Planning Committee, referred to planning consent being needed if a resident wished to lay more than 5 sq.m. of paving over their front garden and suggested that the Council should review its planning policies to ensure they were robust enough.

The Chairman acknowledged that there were residents who did not wish to have the upkeep of a large garden and therefore chose to pave over most of it.

Mr Simpson suggested that there could be more work carried with regard to planning applications and feedback on items going to the Planning Committee, which would help him to build a case internally as well as improving customer services.

**A Member enquired whether making AW a statutory consultee on all planning applications would be a way forward.** Mr Simpson agreed that it would help around major developments and the cumulative effect of small developments.

**A Member enquired whether AW sent representatives out to talk to Town/Parish Councils who were developing their Neighbourhood Plans.** Mr Simpson advised that someone would go out to them where possible or would have a telephone conversation with them if there were specific issues.

The Chairman thanked Mr Simpson for attending the meeting and informed the Committee that he had provided some booklets on 'Building a Resilient Future' which were available to Members. He would also be sending additional copies should anyone require a further copy. The Chairman suggested that it may be useful for all Councillors to have a copy.

Mr Simpson left at this point in the proceedings at 7.25pm.

A Member who was also a Member of the Planning Committee advised that AW could not be made a 'statutory consultee' as this was governed by legislation, however AW could be made a consultee.

During discussion, the Committee agreed that it could recommend to Planning that AW be included as a consultee on planning applications and to check that the team was as robust as possible in preventing non-porous surfaces and that the Enforcement Team followed up on the issue of non-porous surfaces in excess of 5 sq.m. It was important to raise public awareness about these matters. It was also agreed that the Communities Team be asked to contact AW with regard to any events which could be used to raise public awareness.

A Member of the Committee who was also a Member of a Working Group looking to produce a residents' magazine suggested that the Committee could request a feature on easy management gardens and driveways.

The Chairman invited Members to forward any further specific questions they may have to the Democratic Services Team.

It was therefore

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the responses of Anglian Water to the questions at **Appendix A** to the report had been received and noted.
2. That the Planning Team be recommended to include Anglian Water as a consultee on planning applications.
3. That the Communities Team be asked to contact Anglian Water regarding any events which could be used to raise public awareness.

4. That a feature be considered for inclusion in the residents' magazine on easy garden management and driveways, to raise public awareness of how to help reduce flooding issues.

## **6 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE SCRUTINY BODIES**

The Chairman presented a report which asked the Committee to make its annual appointments of scrutiny representatives onto the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Sub-Committee and the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee.

Nominations were sought for the appointment of one representative and one substitute to serve on the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year. Nominations were received for each of the positions which were duly seconded. On being put to a vote, it was

### **RESOLVED**

1. That Councillor Patience be appointed as the Member representative and Councillor Gandy the substitute representative on the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Joint Scrutiny Panel for the 2018/19 municipal year.

Nominations were sought for the appointment of one representative and one substitute to serve on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year. Nominations were received for each position, which were duly seconded. On being put to a vote, it was

### **RESOLVED**

2. That Councillor Murray be appointed as the Member representative and Councillor Cackett the substitute representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year.

## **7 SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS AND FORWARD SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman presented the report which invited Members to review and comment on the Committee's Work Programme for 2018/19.

Councillor Gooch referred to page 4 of the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2018 and the agreed amendments to the Work Programme to move the Waveney Norse Annual Progress Report and the Annual Report on Sentinel Leisure to the meeting on 4 October which had not been reflected in the current version. It was noted that the Waveney Norse Annual Progress Report should be moved to the meeting on 4 October 2018. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Annual Report on Sentinel Leisure should be considered at the meeting on 6 September 2018 and not moved to 4 October as previously agreed.

Members were advised that it was not possible to receive an information bulletin on the Food and Health and Safety Service Plan at their meeting on 6 September 2018, as the Committee had a duty to consider the report in full. Therefore the full report would be brought to the next meeting on 5 July 2018, as originally planned.

The Chairman brought the Committee's attention to an invitation to join the Audit and Governance Committee meeting on 25 July 2018, to comment on the final Annual Governance Statement prior to the Audit and Governance Committee considering its approval.

Referring to the possible joint Scrutiny meeting with Suffolk Coastal's Scrutiny Committee in September, the Chairman advised that this would not be taking place on 26 September 2018 as set out in the Work Programme. However, she would be speaking with Suffolk Coastal's Scrutiny Committee Chairman to arrange an alternative date.

A Member of the Committee asked that the meeting be held in an accessible location, particularly with regard to public access.

Referring to car parking, the Chairman informed the Committee that she was awaiting feedback from the consultation and that this would be a future agenda item which would include a presentation on finance.

The Committee was informed that the Waveney Youth Council had expressed an interest in giving a presentation to Full Council. The Chairman agreed to take this forward.

It was noted that Sentinel Leisure had also expressed an interest in giving a presentation to Full Council in addition to the report to Overview & Scrutiny.

Having reviewed the Work Programme the Committee agreed the following changes:

- Waveney Norse Annual Progress Report to be moved to the 4 October meeting as set out in the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2018.
- Annual Partnership Report on Sentinel Leisure Trust to be considered at the meeting on 6 September 2018 and not moved to the meeting on 4 October.
- Removal of an Information Bulletin on the Food and Health & Safety Service Plan from the Work Programme.

It was therefore

**RESOLVED**

That, subject to the above amendments, the Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme for 2018/19 as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved.

**8 INFORMATION BULLETIN – ASSET MANAGEMENT**

The Committee received an Information Bulletin which gave a progress update on Asset Management. Members were invited to contact officers if they had any questions regarding the Council's involvement in this area.

Following discussion, the Chairman agreed to ask for information bulletins on St Peter's Court and Public Conveniences to be added as Agenda items for a future meeting.

The meeting was concluded at 7.58pm

Chairman