

Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee
held at Riverside, Lowestoft on **Thursday, 4 October 2018 at 6.00pm**

Overview & Scrutiny Committee Members Present:

Councillors A Cackett (Chairman), D Beavan, P Byatt, L Coulam, J Murray, K Robinson, J Smith, K Springall, M Vigo di Gallidoro and N Webb

Cabinet Members in attendance

Councillor G Catchpole - Cabinet Member for Operational Partnerships

Officers present

K Blair (Head of Operations) and S Davis (Democratic Services Officer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / SUBSTITUTES

Apologies were received from Councillors L Gooch, P Light and C Topping.

Councillor P Byatt attended as a substitute for Councillor L Gooch.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 September 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

The Chairman reported that she was waiting for confirmation that several items listed on the Work Programme would now be considered by the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She pointed out that this would result in space on the Committee timetable to consider more items so she urged Members to submit any outstanding scoping forms as soon as possible.

The Chairman reported that there would be 7 Waveney District Council Members on the new Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee which would take place at 6.30pm on 15 November 2018 at Riverside and at East Suffolk House on 17 December 2018 and 4 February 2019. Members noted that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services was currently determining the political balance for the Shadow Committee and then appointments would need to be made by the Groups as usual. It was clarified that substitutes were allowed from any Member not just Scrutiny Committee Members.

5 CURRENT POSITION OF THE COMMITTEE’S WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman presented the report giving details of the current position of the Committee’s Work Programme. She reiterated that it was likely that several financial reports that would normally be considered by the joint Audit and Governance and Overview and Scrutiny meetings were likely to now be presented to the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Clarification was sought on the reason why the Suffolk County Council scrutiny into the proposed closure of the Lowestoft Records Office was no longer going to be a joint meeting with this Committee. The Chairman responded that it had been a difficult decision but given the public interest in this issue she had reluctantly agreed because Suffolk County Council allowed the public to ask questions at their Scrutiny Committee whereas Waveney did not. In addition, it had been agreed that all Waveney District Councillors rather than just the Scrutiny Committee Members would be invited to attend and ask questions if they wished. She added that she had asked Officers to review the possibility of introducing public speaking at Waveney Scrutiny Committees in the future. The Chairman was thanked for her explanation and it was stressed that the meeting needed to allow plenty of time to enable the public to have a fair hearing. The Chairman informed the Committee that the meeting would still take place at Riverside on 29 November and reiterated that all Members of Waveney District Council would be able to speak at the meeting. She added that the Suffolk County Council Vice-Chairman would chair the meeting instead of Councillor Bee the normal Scrutiny Committee Chairman. Members were reminded that the scope of the scrutiny was that they were only looking at the process of how the decision was made and not the decision itself. Concern was expressed that Suffolk County Council had not been more transparent by informing the Labour Group about the change given they had submitted the motion to scrutinise the decision.

The Chairman referred to the discussions at the previous meeting when it had been agreed that an Information Bulletin would be provided in relation to 1 hour free car parking and asked whether Member still wanted information given town and parish councils paid towards the free hour. Clarification was sought as to whether the free parking was only in Bungay and Beccles and the Chairman responded that it was available in several locations including Halesworth where it worked well. A query was raised as to whether reduced rates could be made available for healthcare workers. The Cabinet Member for Operational Partnerships responded that he had met with the Head of Operations to discuss this but was concerned that it would be difficult to isolate one group of workers as it should really be open to all. He added, however, that it might be possible to introduce a business type permit on specific car parks at a cost of approximately £8.00 per permit. It was agreed that an Information Bulletin would be considered at the next meeting with a decision made at that point on whether a full Committee Report would be required.

The Committee was informed that a full Business Case in relation to the redevelopment of chalets on Jubilee Parade South would hopefully be available shortly. The Head of Operations assured Members that it would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to going to Cabinet.

RESOLVED

That the current position of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s Work Programme, as set out in Appendix A, be agreed.

6 INFORMATION BULLETIN – ASSET MANAGEMENT SERVICE

The Committee received an Information Bulletin which summarised the steps taken to improve the Asset Management Service following the receipt of Internal Audit recommendations. Clarification was sought on whether the Head of Operations was confident that an average of 14 inspections per week per surveyor would be achievable. He admitted that this might be optimistic and that 10 inspections per week would be more likely. He added, however, that additional administrative resource was in place which would hopefully free up surveyor's time so the target of getting everything on the system by the end of March 2019 should still be met.

It was agreed that a full Committee report on this item was not required, however, the Head of Operations was asked to provide a further update on progress early in the New Year to enable Members to monitor progress and ensure the March deadline would be met.

RESOLVED

That the Information Bulletin in relation to the Asset Management Service be received and the Head of Operations be asked to provide another Information Bulletin in January or February giving further details of progress.

7 INFORMATION BULLETIN – PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Committee received an Information Bulletin which provided an update on the review of Public Conveniences in Waveney District. The Head of Operations pointed out that until the Asset Management Register was completed, the Team would be able to focus on the second phase of the Public Conveniences review including looking at locations where investment, reconfiguration or transfer could generate savings whilst not impacting on service availability.

RESOLVED

That the Information Bulletin in relation to the Review of Public Conveniences in Waveney be received.

8 EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

RESOLVED

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public were excluded from the meeting for agenda item 9 – Waveney Norse Annual Progress Report, on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

9 WAVENEY NORSE ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received the Cabinet Member for Operational Partnerships' annual progress report for Waveney Norse for 2017/18 and, due to the commercially sensitive nature of this report, it was agreed that the debate would be held in exempt session.

RESOLVED

That the annual report and progress of Waveney Norse be noted.

The meeting was concluded at 7.05pm

Chairman