

Confirmed

Minutes of the Council meeting held at Riverside, Canning Road, Lowestoft
on **Wednesday, 20 March 2019** at **6.30 pm**.

Members present:

F Mortimer (Chairman), S Ardley, P Ashdown, E Back, M Barnard, D Beavan, M Bee, N Brooks, P Byatt, A Cackett, G Catchpole, J Ceresa, M Cherry, Y Cherry, L Coulam, J Craig, G Elliott, J Ford, T Gandy, T Goldson, I Graham, K Grant, A Green, M Ladd, P Light, T Mortimer, J Murray, K Patience, M Pitchers, B Provan, C Punt, D Ritchie, C Rivett, K Robinson, M Rudd, L Smith, K Springall, C Topping, M Vigo di Gallidoro and N Webb.

Officers present:

S Baker (Chief Executive), C Bing (Legal & Licensing Services Manager), S Blease (Coastal Manager South), P Harris (Communications Manager), S Hubbard (Principal Planner for Policy & Delivery), A Jarvis (Strategic Director), N Khan (Strategic Director), D Reed (Planning Policy & Delivery Manager), S Taylor (Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer), and N Wotton (Democratic Services Manager).

Officers in attendance:

K Blair (Head of Operations), S Carter (Democratic Services Officer), C Clamp (Assistant Planning Officer), R Cook (Planning Technician), S Davis (Democratic Services Officer), S Martin (Head of Internal Audit), N Rickard (Head of Communities), P Wood (Head of Economic Development & Regeneration).

Others present:

T Doherty (Project Manager, Balfour Beatty, Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project Contractors).

The Chairman welcomed all those present to the last ever Waveney District Council meeting. He stated that he felt very privileged and honoured to have served Waveney District Council as Chairman for the past 2 years and to preside over this, the very last Waveney District Council meeting. This meeting would be a momentous and exciting occasion, which would lead to the formation of the new East Suffolk Council, and would ultimately provide a greater voice and more opportunities for the District Council and the Communities it served.

During his 2 years as Chairman, he had met old friends, made new friends, and had created many happy memories, which he would treasure. He reported that he had also been instrumental in local charities receiving much needed funding, of £61,250, which would help transform the lives of many people living in Waveney. It was noted that he was continuing to raise funds for a defibrillator at Pathways Farm.

He then paid tribute to the late Councillor Colin Law, who had worked tirelessly for this Council and who was instrumental in the creation of a new Council for East Suffolk. Councillor Bee had then carried on with this area of work, since he had taken over as Leader. The Chairman then thanked the Vice Chairman, Councillor Paul Light, for his work and support over the past year.

He also thanked the Chief Executive, who had steered the Council through troubled waters over many years. He also thanked all officers, past and present, for their ongoing hard work for the Council.

The Chairman then took the opportunity to thank all Members for their respect, patience and constructive input during Full Council meetings, which was very much appreciated. He also thanked the Democratic Services Manager and her team for all the help and support provided to him as Chairman, for the past 2 years.

There was, however, one person whom the Chairman wished to thank personally and that was his wife, Councillor Trish Mortimer, who had tolerated his ups and downs since he was first elected in 2003. Over time, Councillor Trish Mortimer had joined forces with him in the Carlton Ward and had helped to double the Conservative majority that for that Ward.

The Communications Manager then took a panoramic photograph of all Councillors in the Conference, to capture the last meeting, for posterity.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Gooch, L Nicholls, J Smith, S Webb and S Woods.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 January 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
- (b) That the Minutes of the Charity Board Meeting held on 14 November 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Celebratory Buffet after the meeting

The Chairman was pleased to invite all Members to a small celebratory buffet after the meeting this evening, to celebrate the occasion of the last ever meeting of Waveney District Council. He reported that he also had a number of Waveney District Council ties and enamel pin badges to distribute and that he had kept a small number to present to the families of Members who had recently passed away.

Cancellation of the Chairman's Ball

The Chairman reported that he had sadly made the difficult decision to cancel the Chairman's Ball, which had been due to take place on Saturday, 23 March 2019. Although over 145 people had expressed an interest in attending the event, only 20 people had paid in advance for their tickets. Therefore, following discussions with Senior Officers and the Leader of the Council, it had been agreed, with regret, that cancellation was the only option.

Wheelchair Access to Lowestoft South Beach

The Chairman advised that he had been involved in fundraising to purchase 2 specially designed wheelchairs, which would allow disabled people to have access to the beach. The wheelchairs had been ordered from a specialist company in the USA, however upon their arrival, it had been noted that a wheel was missing. This omission was in the process of being rectified and further work was underway to provide secure wheelchair storage on the sea front, to allow wheelchair users to safely store their equipment, whilst using the special wheelchairs to access the beach. The importance of making sure that the beach was accessible to all was noted and endorsed.

Change in the Order of Business

The Chairman reported that he had decided to change the order of business to allow the presentation to be received earlier during the meeting and that the Member Questions would be moved towards the end of the agenda.

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

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive took the opportunity to update Members on the results of the latest Staff Engagement Survey. He then provided a summary of the results received:

98% of Line Managers felt they were given the opportunity to 'get on with the job';
88% of staff felt they were fully committed to the Council's vision within the East Suffolk Business Plan;
83% of staff felt they were treated with dignity and respect;
91% of staff were proud to say they work for Waveney District Council.

The Chief Executive stated that the Council had been through an unsettling time, whilst working towards the creation of a new Council for East Suffolk, however staff were continuing to do a phenomenal job and were working extremely hard for the local residents of Waveney. The results from this survey showed a significant increase in positivity and confidence and it was hoped that this would continue into the new East Suffolk District Council.

Leader of the Council

There were no announcements from the Leader at this point in the meeting.

6. PRESENTATION ON THE LOWESTOFT FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PROJECT

The Chairman welcomed the Coastal Manager and the Project Manager from Balfour Beatty to the meeting, to give their presentations to Full Council.

The Coastal Manager thanked Members for inviting her to the meeting and stated that it was a privilege to be able to talk about the work underway for the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project.

In December 2013, there had been a catastrophic flood in Lowestoft, which had devastating effects on 90 homes and 143 businesses. Road and rail infrastructure in the town was also affected. There had also been a flooding near miss in 2017, whereby temporary flood barriers had assisted in preventing large scale flooding. It was noted that rising sea levels and climate change meant that coastal areas were increasingly prone to flooding events and Lowestoft was one of the few urbanised coastal towns with no flood defences in the UK.

The Flood Risk Management Project had commenced 3 years ago and involved Suffolk County Council as the lead flood authority, the Environment Agency, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Associated British Ports (ABP) and the District Council. The Project was in two parts:

- Flooding had been experienced in Pakefield, due to extreme rain fall, which had led to 200 properties being flooded. As a result, works had been undertaken to improve the maintenance of the local rivers and a pumping station was due to be installed, to help carry excess water away from the area, to stop water logging and overall flooding, caused by heavy rain.
- To stop the flooding caused by high tides, a tidal barrier was due to be constructed across the port in Lowestoft. This was an extremely difficult, technical and complex operation, which would take several years to complete. More detailed information would be provided in this respect in due course.

The funding for the maintenance works and pumping station had been secured to prevent flooding caused by heavy rainfall and the project was due to be completed later this year. However the costs for the tidal barrier were significant, at approximately £63 million, and there was currently a funding gap of around £38 million. Reassurance was provided that the Council was approaching all possible sources of funding, to help reduce the funding gap.

It was noted that Lowestoft Port was crucial for the renewable energy industry and, along with Great Yarmouth Port, was servicing the off shore wind farms in the region. It was reported that Lowestoft Port was at its busiest from April to October each year, therefore the majority of the construction work for the tidal barrier would need to take place over the winter months only and the Port would need to be kept open and accessible at all times.

A Member queried whether Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) could be involved with the project. It was confirmed that the Coastal Manager had attended an LTC meeting and had

provided a presentation regarding the project. However she confirmed that she would be happy to attend a future meeting, after the Parish and Town Council elections in May 2019.

A Member queried how close the town had been to flooding again in 2017. It was reported that the current flood walls were 2.3 m at their lowest point and the sea level had got to 2.2 m on that occasion, so it had been extremely close.

Clarification was provided on the timescales involved in relation to the construction of the tidal barrier. The work on increasing the height of the flood walls would commence in 2019 and would be completed in 2021. It was noted that work could only take place over the winter months, which considerably extended the length of the project. The flood barrier itself would be fitted during 2023/24.

Reassurance was provided that the extensive cliff fall which had taken place at Pakefield beach, further along the coast, would not affect the work on the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project.

A Member raised concerns about the current state of the river walls locally, as many were old and in a state of disrepair. She queried whether the river walls, specifically around Nicholas Everitt Park in Oulton Broad, could be repaired as part of this project. It was confirmed that computer modelling would be used to make sure that the maintenance works to the river walls were undertaken in the most effective locations. Work was also underway to ensure that the local rivers did not become silted up, which would help additional flood waters to flow away from the area and reduce flooding. It was noted that Oulton Broad was occasionally affected by tide blocking, whereby increased rain fall meant that the rivers were full and a high tide meant that additional sea water was also forcing its way in. With the tidal barrier in place, the tidal waters could be kept out, which would allow the additional rain water in the rivers to dissipate and would reduce the overall flooding problem in that area.

A Member raised concerns that there was often flooding in Carlton Colville and asked whether any works were being considered to address this problem. It was reported that surface water flooding, as experienced in Carlton Colville, was the responsibility of Suffolk County Council, not the District Council. Further information on who to contact could be provided outside of the meeting, if required.

The Chairman advised that should Members have any further questions regarding the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project, they should direct them to the Democratic Services Manager, who would collate them and forward them on. Members thanked the Coastal Manager for her interesting and informative presentation.

The Chairman then welcomed the Project Manager from Balfour Beatty, to provide a more detailed summary of the tidal barrier works. Members were then provided with a virtual reality tour of Lowestoft Port, the site of the tidal barrier and how the individual stages of the works would take place over time, during the winter months only.

It was noted that cranes on platforms would be used to build the supporting sides of the tidal barrier and this would allow for vessels to pass by the construction and for the port to stay open. Piling would take place first and it was noted that this would only take place during the day, in order to reduce the amount of disturbance for local residents. Work

would then take place to strengthen the barrier site. The construction of the 2 barrier 'gates' would take place off site and they would then be brought over on barges. The barriers would be 40m long, 7m wide and would weigh 2,500 tonnes. The barrier would have a clear opening of 28m.

The barriers needed to be cast and brought to the Port, the site would be dredged, to remove any debris and then a concrete base would be installed. The barriers would then be installed during 2024 and there was a full maintenance programme planned, to ensure that the barriers were fully operational for years to come.

A Member queried whether the tidal barrier works would have any impact upon the Third Crossing. It was reported that this was a very good question, as there would be two significant infrastructure projects underway in the town at the same time. It was noted that the officers working on the two projects were sharing information and their timetables to ensure that there was minimum disruption for local residents.

A Member queried whether Hamilton Lock would need to be closed off. It was confirmed that it would not, as access was required at all times. Notices would be provided to mariners, so that they were aware of the work programme and they would be kept apprised of any developments.

In respect of the draught of the river, it was confirmed that the tidal barrier works would not reduce this. The sea bed would be dredged prior to the installation of the concrete base between the tidal barriers and this would allow for some silt to build up in the meantime, however the original draught would be unaffected.

With regard to the creation of local jobs during the construction phase of the tidal barrier, it was reported that it was critical for the Council to use every opportunity to add social value and create local jobs for local people. It was confirmed that there was a commitment to use local contractors and sub contractors for the project, wherever possible. It was also anticipated that a number of apprenticeships would also be created during the project.

A Member queried whether ABP would impose any fines, should the completion of the flood barrier be delayed. It was confirmed that the situation was not clear at this stage of the process, as the legal agreements were currently being negotiated. ABP had so far been extremely supportive of the project and it was noted that all works would be undertaken in consultation with the project partners. Members were also reassured that there would be no overnight working, so that the disturbance of local residents was kept to a minimum.

A Member commented that there was a care home nearby and the pile driving required for the project would be extremely loud. It was confirmed that the project would be noisy, however it would be a considerate construction project and care would be taken to minimise disruption wherever possible. The importance of keeping local people aware of each individual stage of the work being undertaken, as part of the project, was noted. It was confirmed that although the work would be undertaken as considerately as possible, it would be noisy and disruptive at times and Members should not lose sight that the project would reduce the risk to life caused by flooding and would ultimately help to regenerate the whole area.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank the Coastal Manager and the Project Manager, on behalf of all Members, for their detailed presentations which had been very interesting and informative. The Chairman then paused the meeting temporarily to allow the Coastal Manager and Project Manager to leave the meeting.

7. NOTICES OF MOTION

The Chairman advised that two Notices of Motion had been received for this meeting and that each Notice of Motion would be considered individually. The Chairman then handed over to the Leader of the Council.

The Leader reported that he would like to move that the Notice of Motion from Councillor Beavan be heard at this point in the meeting, which was duly seconded and on being put to the vote, it was **CARRIED**. He then invited Councillor Beavan to speak to his Motion.

(a) A Notice of Motion had been received from Councillor D Beavan:

Councillor Beavan advised that since the publication of the meeting papers, there had been a Simultaneous WDC Cabinet and Southwold Town Council meeting to discuss the future of the Southwold Harbour Lands. The meeting had been extremely positive and productive and he would now like to amend his Motion in order to withdraw and remove the following words from the end of the Motion: ‘...rather than withdrawing behind close doors again to produce a fait accompli.’ His Motion would therefore read -

“This Council welcomes the progress made in the consultation about Southwold Harbour, and urges the Joint Committee to remain open to discussions with stakeholders about the constitution of a new, inclusive, independent and effective management committee subject to an agreed budget.”

Councillor Beavan stated that he would like to reserve his right to reply, at this point.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the amendment of the Motion. He confirmed that the recent Simultaneous WDC Cabinet and Southwold Town Council meeting had been extremely positive and was the culmination of 15 years hard work in this respect. A new way forward had been agreed, which would include local people and ensure the sustainability of the Southwold Harbour Lands for future generations. The Simultaneous Meeting had been the last act of the WDC Cabinet and it was fitting that a lasting legacy had been agreed. He took the opportunity to wish all those involved with the Southwold Harbour Lands well for the future and he stated that he thoroughly supported the Motion.

Members were pleased at the developments to date and congratulated all those involved to date. The Motion was moved, seconded and being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED

That the Notice of Motion be endorsed by Full Council – That this Council welcomes the progress made in the consultation about Southwold Harbour, and urges the Joint Committee to remain open to discussions with stakeholders about the constitution of a new, inclusive, independent and effective management committee subject to an agreed budget.

(b) A Notice of Motion had been received from Councillor M Bee, Leader of the Council:

“Waveney District Council has been in existence since 1974 and during that time Members and Officers have worked hard for the Council and the communities of Waveney. I would therefore like to put on record my thanks to all Members and Officers, past and present, for their hard work and commitment over the last 45 years.”

The Leader of the Council reported that he would like to formally thank all of those involved in Waveney District Council, Members and Officers, over the last 45 years. It was noted that Waveney District Council had been created following a rigorous reorganisation of local government, which had seen the replacement of various Councils that had been in existence since the middle ages. At the time of its creation, Waveney District Council had a population of 117,000, comprised of 143 square miles, with 48 Councillors spread over 24 Wards. The first elections took place on 5 May 1973 and the Council had swapped overall control between Labour and the Conservatives many times.

He reported that he had found the first set of Minutes from Waveney District Council and he was delighted to announce that 2 of the people who had been present at the inaugural meeting, were also present this evening: Firstly, Councillor M Barnard, who was also the longest serving Waveney District Councillor. The Chairman then invited Councillor Barnard to the top table to receive a resume of his career and his appointments held at Waveney District Council. Secondly, Stella Bostock was also present this evening as a member of the public. She had been the Leader of the Council in 1998 and still held a prominent position within the Waveney Labour Group. Both were congratulated and thanked for their hard work on behalf of the Council and the residents of Waveney.

The Leader then reported that the early Minutes for Waveney District Council had also listed a number of parcels of land, which had been transferred to Waveney District Council at that time, as part of the local government reorganisation. It had been interesting to note that the list had also included the Southwold Harbour Lands and Caravan Site, among many other sites.

Waveney District Council had also seen several of its prominent Councillors become Members of Parliament which included: David Porter, Conservative MP for Waveney, from 1987 to 1997, Bob Blizzard, Labour MP for Waveney, from 1997 to 2010 and Peter Aldous, Conservative MP for Waveney, from 2010 to date.

The Council had dealt with many difficult, challenging and sensitive issues over the years, which included the housing stock transfer, North Denes Caravan Site, the Local Government Review, being in Special Measures, the Sunrise Scheme which had brought £14.7 million of EU funding to Lowestoft, the creation of Waveney Norse, the Marina Trust and Sentinel Leisure Trust. The Council had also achieved some national notoriety for ‘cancelling Christmas’ and had even been mentioned on the Richard and Judy Show.

The creation of a new East Suffolk Council had commenced many years ago with the partnership working with Suffolk Coastal District Council and the appointment of a joint Chief Executive. Working in partnership had saved over £22 million over the years and there had been many significant achievements including the Flood Defences for Lowestoft, the Third Crossing, the creation of the Riverside building and redevelopment of the Marina

Centre, the creation of Lowestoft Town Council and Oulton Broad Parish Council. Indeed, there was much to be proud of.

The Leader reported that there were some Councillors, who were sadly no longer with us, who were much missed. These included Sue Allen, John Groom, Roger Bellham and John Goldsmith to name but a few. It was also important to mention Colin Law who had been instrumental in the creation of a new Council. The Leader stated that he was very proud to announce that the new service road to the Riverside Offices would be named Colin Law Way, in his memory.

The Leader then took the opportunity to thank all of the current and former Chief Executives, Heads of Service, Officers and Members for their hard work over the years. He reported that he was extremely proud to be the last ever Leader of Waveney District Council and he wished everyone well for the future. He then took the opportunity to move his Motion, which was duly seconded.

The Leader of the Labour Group stated that he echoed all of the words which had already been said. He reported that he had been a Councillor since 2010 and whilst Councillors may have some radical political differences, all worked together in the best interests of their local community. Should Members get anything incorrect, they were soon held to account by their electorate. Whilst it was important to reflect on the past, it was more important to look to the future and to behave with honesty and integrity. He then took the opportunity to thank all Officers and Members that he had worked with over the years, and in particular, the Democratic Services Team. He reported that since 2015, the Labour Group had submitted over 100 Member Questions and Notices of Motion and he hoped to continue this into the new East Suffolk Council.

The Leader of the Independent Group stated that he had been first elected in 2001. He had been directly involved in the creation of the Sentinel Leisure Trust which had generated huge savings over the years. He had also been deeply involved in the North Denes work, which had lasted for 8 years. He felt that it was important to take a start and finish approach to these ongoing projects and that all Councillors, whatever their political view point, should work together for the benefit of their constituents. He then thanked all of the officers that he had worked with over the years and noted that there had been significant streamlining regarding overall staff numbers over time. He then wished everyone well for the future.

Councillor Elliott was then asked to speak on behalf of the Green Party Members, the Liberal Democrat and the Unaffiliated Independent Member. He reported that he had been the sole Green Party Member for 12 years and had needed detailed advice and support from officers on several occasions, more so than other Members from political groups. He wished to record his thanks to all officers and he stated that he was now happy to be part of a group of 2 Members.

Councillor M Barnard then took the opportunity to announce that he had been elected to the Shadow Waveney District Council in 1973 and one of his first tasks had been to appoint officers, choose Ward Names and decide on the number of the Council's Committees. The Council had been given the name of 'Waveney' as it had been felt that it best united all of the constituents across the District. He reported that he had very much enjoyed his time as a Waveney District Councillor and he would miss his walks to Riverside for Council meetings. He then thanked all Members and officers for their hard work and

dedication over the years. Waveney District Council had been a part of his life for many years and he had been a Member of Lowestoft Borough Council prior to that.

The Leader of the Council thanked all those Members for their kind words and comments. He reported that the Council currently had the best officers in place, in the 21 years that he had been a Councillor. He then paid tribute again to Councillor M Barnard and invited him to come along to observe the future meetings of East Suffolk Council. It was noted that any Councillors who were elected onto the East Suffolk Council would do their best to ensure that this part of North Suffolk was well represented and he wished everyone all the best for the future. He then announced that he would like to amend his Motion very slightly, to replace 'my' with 'our' in the second sentence. With the agreement of Full Council it was then

RESOLVED

That the Notice of Motion be endorsed by Full Council – Waveney District Council has been in existence since 1974 and during that time Members and Officers have worked hard for the Council and the communities of Waveney. I would therefore like to put on record our thanks to all Members and Officers, past and present, for their hard work and commitment over the last 45 years.

8. MEMBER QUESTIONS

The Member Questions had been moved towards the end of the Agenda, as advised previously, by the Chairman.

9. PETITIONS

No petitions had been received.

10. QUESTIONS FROM THE ELECTORATE

No questions had been submitted by the electorate as provided by Council Procedure Rule 10.

11. ADOPTION OF THE WAVENEY LOCAL PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Planning & Coastal Management presented the report, which sought approval for the adoption of the Waveney Local Plan. It was noted that the Local Plan had taken 3 ½ years of work and the Draft Local Plan had been approved for public consultation exactly one year ago. The final version of the Waveney Local Plan was now presented for approval and was substantially unchanged. There was significant emphasis on growing the economy and this was reflected in both local and national planning strategy. He then took the opportunity to thank all of those officers and Members who were involved in the creation of the Local Plan for Waveney.

The Local Plan clearly identified where growth within Waveney should be located and this was reflected in all of the Council's Planning Policies. This was essential to ensure that any future growth was sustainable and completed in a planned manner. The Local Plan would also lead to a significant reduction in speculative development, which was a threat to the District. The Local Plan was based upon robust evidence and there had been

significant consultation with stakeholders. The Local Plan had also been endorsed by the Government Planning Inspector, who had confirmed that the Local Plan was sound, legally compliant and only some minor amendments were required. The Local Plan would cover the whole of Waveney and would form part of the development plan for East Suffolk Council in due course. He then took the opportunity to propose the Plan for Adoption, which was duly seconded.

The Leader of the Labour Group took the opportunity to thank all of the officers involved in the Local Plan and reported that the work had transcended political differences and all Members had worked in the best interests of the District. It was important to ensure that the Local Plan was not ignored in the future, as it was vital to protect local people and communities.

Councillor Pitchers reported that he had been a Member of the Local Plan Working Group for many years, the group was non political and all Members had worked well together to get the best results. He then took the opportunity to thank all of those who had been involved with the creation and development of the Local Plan.

Councillor Elliott reported that nobody wanted the scale of development within the Local Plan, however the level of development was effectively set by Government and there was nothing that the District Council could do to reduce it. The methodology used to develop the Local Plan was also prescriptive and could not be changed. The Council needed to be able to demonstrate that it had sufficient housing supply, otherwise it would be vulnerable. If the Local Plan was not adopted, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) would apply. Some District Councils did not have a current Local Plan and were therefore severely affected by unplanned developments which they had not been able to refuse. Waveney District Council was very fortunate to have the high calibre of officers in place to ensure that the District was thoroughly protected.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

1. That the Waveney Local Plan (Appendix A to the report) be adopted.
2. That the Policies Map be updated as shown in Appendix B, and necessary adoption statements are published and made available in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

12. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

The following questions had been submitted by Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11:

- (a) Question from Councillor D Beavan to the Leader of the Council

Whilst welcoming the reduction in price of the Southwold Fire Station by the County Council to enable affordable homes, I wonder if the Police and Crime Commissioner has also replied to this Council's letter, sent following the acceptance of my Motion by the last

Council meeting, seeking justification for their high price for the police station that we gave them.

Response from Councillor M Bee

I wrote to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk on 31 January 2019. The response from the Police and Crime Commissioner on 26 February 2019 was that he cannot lawfully sell property at less than its market value, even if the new owner intends to use it for a socially useful purpose. In order to help comply with his obligation, the asking price was guided by professional advice.

Supplementary Question from Councillor D Beavan

If the law dictates that we should all behave like property developers, then the law is an ass!

(b) Question from Councillor P Light to the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Resources

How many employees did WDC have in February 2019 and what is the present monthly salary for these and how does this compare to like figures for February 2015?

Response from Councillor M Bee

Date	Number of WDC staff employed Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	Average monthly pay
February 2019	411.70	£1,978.50
February 2015	356.41	£1,793.33

Supplementary Question from Councillor P Light

I was really hoping to have the cumulative values, however I will work them out.

(c) Question from Councillor P Light to the Cabinet Member for Resources

What has been the financial outlay in expenditure, all associated costs, and loss of income, relating to the land behind the Town Hall on Mariners Street?

Response from Councillor B Provan

The land retained by the Council at Mariners Street consisted of the Council's former Finance/ICT offices, which had been judged to be no longer fit for purpose.

In preparing the land for redevelopment, the former offices were demolished and cleared from site at a cost of £80,000. There were also corresponding Business Rate savings.

Professional fees were incurred for site preparation such as asset management, soil testing, archaeological surveys, pre planning advice and site security. This work would benefit the current project to redevelop the site for much needed housing. The costs of the initial building works and prelims purely associated with the Burger King development

project, which collapsed when the franchisee went into liquidation, could reasonably be said to be £150,000. Again, a significant proportion will benefit any future development.

There has been no loss of income on the site, as the previous development with Burger King never got to a position where the proposed lease of the site would be activated, therefore the Council was never entitled to any income.

Supplementary Question from Councillor P Light

Over the years, the Council has been involved in several projects that local residents have been concerned about. For example, the cost of works to the Town Hall was £63,000 and the fast food development is no longer going ahead, so the Council is now going to develop the site for social housing. There were issues with the clearance of the land on the Sanyo site, the Post Office building was purchased for an excessive amount of money and what about the purchase of Battery Green Car Park, which had concrete decay? What safeguards have been put in place to prevent the future waste of public money?

Response from Councillor B Provan

The Leader of the Council reported that he did not agree with Councillor Light’s assertions and that it was not possible to legislate for public opinion, which would not always be supportive or accurate. It was not possible to comment on hearsay, factual information was required.

Councillor Provan reported that in respect of the land at Mariners Street, adjacent to the Town Hall, the money would have been required to be spent on clearing up the site, regardless of its future use. The lease for the site had gone out to tender and it was not possible to regulate against companies going out of business in the future. Things were now moving quickly to ensure that the site would be used for affordable housing and the Council would have needed to have paid for the site to be cleared, regardless of its use. Lowestoft Town Council had been kept apprised of the developments and all were looking forward to the creation of much needed additional housing in Lowestoft.

(d) Question from Councillor I Graham to the Cabinet Member for Operational Partnerships

In September 2015, I asked for information about incidents of fly-tipping in Waveney, the costs of removal and the number of prosecutions resulting from fly-tipping. What are the figures for each of the years since May 2015 to date?

Response from Councillor G Catchpole

The fly tipping information is as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Incidents</u>	<u>Cost</u>
2015	604	£48,222
2016	874	£74,317
2017	893	£70,035
2018	1177	£94,749

The number of prosecutions relating to fly tipping are one in 2017 and one that is ongoing, which started in Autumn 2018.

Supplementary Question from Councillor I Graham

Thank you for that information and thank you to all officers for their support. Just to let you know, I will not be standing in the District Elections in May. I would therefore like some reassurance that East Suffolk Council will continue to provide good value for money and support for important things like fly tipping. Can I be reassured that Norse will have comparative numbers of staff in the future, to continue this important work in North East Suffolk?

Response from Councillor G Catchpole

I have already asked about this and initially the 2 Norse Groups (Waveney and Suffolk Coastal) will continue to work separately. The 2 Norse Groups will then merge in due course, to service the whole of East Suffolk Council area. The performance figures will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis and there are no plans to reduce staffing levels.

(e) Question from Councillor A Green to the Leader of the Council

With reference to Item 12 on the Agenda at the Full Council Meeting on the 16th November 2016, regarding the use of IT, the following was reported and I quote:

‘It was therefore suggested that the use of paper copies of the Agenda Papers for Members be phased out, commencing with Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Audit & Governance Committee meetings. Members would instead receive a zipped folder by email, containing all of the papers, which they could then either access via the internet during the meetings or they could download the meeting papers in advance and save the files onto their IT equipment.

And it was resolved:

1. The Council takes a phased approach to reducing the amount of paper copies, starting with the Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Audit & Governance Committees.’

It is now over two years since that ‘resolution’ and despite the fact that regular Forward Planning advice is sent out via e-mail, Members still receive other hard copies of papers by post, particularly for the Cabinet. These documents are frequently heavy and thus costly having to be delivered to all 48 members.

May I ask why this phased approach to reducing the papers hasn’t appeared to have happened, and what has been the cost since November 2016, of the posting out of any WDC material to Members?

Response from Councillor M Bee

All Waveney District Council (WDC) Members were surveyed in early 2016 on their ICT usage and preferences. Of the 54% of Members who responded, over half indicated that they still wished to receive hard copies of council meeting papers. The survey also

identified that there were a number of Members who needed to receive paper copies due to accessibility issues.

Any WDC Member, at any time, has the option of requesting that meeting papers be sent to them electronically. Only 6 members have opted to receive meeting papers in this way.

Paper copies are sent out to all Members for Full Council and Cabinet meetings and to relevant serving Committee Members for all the other Committees. Some Members have opted to have their meeting papers left in the Members’ Room post tray for collection, so as to save on postage.

The cost of printing and postage of Council Meeting papers since November 2016 is £32,665.40:

	Nov '16 to March 2017	April '17 to March '18	April '18 to Jan'19	Total
Internal Printing	£ 6,162.78	£ 13,262.43	£ 8,857.66	£ 28,282.87
Postage	£ 842.01	£ 2,012.21	£ 1,528.31	£ 4,382.53
Total	£ 7,004.79	£ 15,274.64	£ 10,385.97	£ 32,665.40

Supplementary Question from Councillor A Green

I feel that the Council needs to be more eco-friendly and we ought to go paperless. The Cabinet papers from September 2018 were 180 pages and if that was sent to all 48 Councillors, it would have totalled 8,000 pages. Can we use the future East Suffolk Council as an opportunity to go paperless?

Response from Councillor M Bee

Yes, it is our aim to encourage Councillors to use less paper for the new Council.

(f) Question from Councillor L Gooch to the Leader of the Council

In February 2016 the most recent Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission Report was published. It warned that “Britain has a deep social mobility problem, which is getting worse for an entire generation of young people.” It also highlighted significant differences between age cohorts and a widening geographical divide. The Report also looked at how well the poorest children did at school, university and in the job and housing market. Waveney was placed in 318 position out of 324 Local Authorities in England. What measures have this Council taken to improve that situation since then, given that there are almost 5000 children living in households across Waveney (3500 in Lowestoft alone), where families are in receipt of out-of-work benefits and that 15% of all children in the District live in low-income families?

Response from Councillor M Bee

Social mobility is a challenge which requires a cross sector, multi agency response and the Council continues to work with partners to increase the social mobility of people in our District. The report was published three years ago now and there is evidence that things are improving in a number of areas across the District, including increased educational

attainment, reducing numbers of young people who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and increased aspirations in young people.

Through Lowestoft Rising, we have initiated a number of projects to raise awareness of local career opportunities and provide support, so that these opportunities can be accessed. 70 mentors from a wide range of organisations have been trained and have supported more than 100 young people to date, and a network of transition ambassadors are in place to help young people with the transition between primary and secondary education. These ambassadors are now also mental health ambassadors and key to our work in embedding mental wellbeing in schools and workplaces by encouraging young people to talk about mental health.

All schools in Waveney now have a 50%+ GCSE pass rate and Lowestoft 6th Form is in the top 5% nationally and rated one of the best for progression. The Warren Special School recently won a national award for Careers and Enterprise work and we have initiated a STEM based project for 80 disengaged young people working alongside Cefas staff.

The Economic Development Team's interventions are aimed at enhancing employability skills and raising career aspirations to align with labour market needs, such as the growing offshore energy sector. This includes engaging local employers such as Cefas in inspiration and aspiration sessions with local schools, to raise awareness of the full range of quality Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) related career opportunities available locally. The Team also work closely with County Council's skills team on initiatives aimed at raising attainment, aspirations and awareness of opportunities. Examples include Raising the Bar, the MyGO replacement youth employment project, the ICANBEA careers platform and the Suffolk Skills Show.

The Communities Team support various place based initiatives. For example, the recent Living Well event at the Kirkley Centre in the February half term holidays aimed at engaging children, young people and their parents in a range of activities and the engagement event on the Whitton Estate was attended by more than 200 children and young people.

The Council's HR Team also supports Apprenticeship Days and works with schools/colleges on Career Events.

Supplementary Question from Councillor L Gooch

Councillor L Gooch was not present at the meeting, therefore there was no Supplementary Question on this occasion.

(g) Question from Councillor M Pitchers to the Leader of the Council

In July 2016 Councillor Elliott asked what the Council was doing to encourage more sustainable travel (i.e. car sharing, public transport, walking and cycling) to Riverside? Given that the car park is full to busting every time I visit Riverside, what progress has been made on this since then?

Response from Councillor M Bee

As you correctly point out, limited car parking spaces – and environmental considerations – mean that WDC has to continue to promote alternatives to driving into Riverside, or any other Council office.

The Travel and Driving Policy was revised in 2017. A key principle of the policy is defined as “For environmental purposes the policy must encourage the use of small engine or more efficient vehicles, public transport and other modes of transport such as greater use of cycles, the encouragement of car sharing and discourage the use of cars”.

With regard to car sharing the Policy goes on to state – “If you undertake travel on Council business and share your car with other colleagues, the driver can claim for each additional business passenger at the HMRC rate detailed in Appendix A. You could use the Suffolk car sharing website <https://suffolkcarshare.liftshare.com/> to identify car sharing opportunities.”

We promote this scheme regularly, with messages put out to staff via the Intranet and the Managers’ Bulletin, to encourage car sharing and taking public transport. Where possible staff are encouraged to take the train and work on it and to use their journeys as work time.

Supplementary Question from Councillor M Pitchers

Has the Council considered installing electric charging points in its car park?

Response from Councillor M Bee

There are already some in the Riverside car park, close to the back door. There are also electronic charging points at East Suffolk House. We are mindful that we need to be as environmentally friendly as possible.

(h) Question from Councillor T Gandy to the Leader of the Council

In September 2016 a Motion was put to this Council by Councillor Keith Patience on behalf of the Labour Group, asking for support for the WASPI Campaign. This was supported unanimously. The Leader stated that Peter Aldous M.P was taking a Petition to Parliament on the matter, and that “he would also write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on behalf of the Council, raising the concerns of the Council and asking for the transitional arrangements for the women adversely affected to be reconsidered.” What was the outcome of that letter, as we don’t appear to have ever had any report back to this body?

Response from Councillor M Bee

Councillor Colin Law was the Leader of the Council in September 2016. Unfortunately, we no longer have his correspondence from 2016 and so cannot confirm whether a response was received from the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to his letter. However, if such a response had been received, Councillor Law would have ensured that this was shared with all Councillors at the time.

Supplementary Question from Councillor T Gandy

Do you know if the WASPI Group were sent a copy of the original letter or the response? It would be helpful for us to know that.

Response from Councillor M Bee

I will need to check outside of the meeting, to see if we have any records of that being done. However the Council is very supportive of the WASPI cause and Peter Aldous, MP, has also been working to support them. It is extremely relevant at the moment, as WASPI have been granted a Judicial Review of the decision and it is going to be heard on 5 and 6 June 2019 in London. I would be happy to write again to WASPI, on behalf of the Council, to advise them of our ongoing support, if that would be helpful.

(i) Question from Councillor Y Cherry to the Cabinet Member for Housing

In November 2016 a question was asked about provision for the Homeless, and we were assured that Severe Weather Emergency Provision would be hosted by the Access Community Trust. We have also had the Thin Ice Project this winter, which came to an end on 28 February 2019. Bearing in mind the recent encampment on the Battery Green Roundabout, what further support will be given to address this obviously growing problem of people living rough, particularly around Lowestoft?

Response from Councillor C Punt

Various attempts have been made to assist the individuals previously located on the Battery Green roundabout. Unfortunately these individuals have either refused assistance or have been refused assistance by supported housing providers, as they have complex needs and lifestyles or represent a significant risk to themselves or others i.e. arson, violence towards members of staff, refusing to pay rent or service charges, not wanting to live in a hostel environment and/or mental impairment/capacity.

A joint Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Council application has been made to the Ministry of Housing and Communities and Local Government to employ a Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator and 3 specialist outreach workers.

A second, county-wide, bid will be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by the 29 March 2019 under the auspices of the Rapid Rehousing Programme. The two components that the County Wide Suffolk Homeless Officer Group has agreed to apply for, through this programme are:

'Somewhere Safe to Stay'

- 72 hour assessment hub - offered in areas of high demand across Suffolk - 2 or 3 self contained units have been identified at Bostock House for this purpose.
- Access Community Trust works in partnership with Waveney to provide Relief accommodation for single homeless people.
- The funding will be used to provide 24/7 staff cover at Bostock House, rental/void loss and an Emergency Fund to include travel costs.
- This will also enable reciprocal arrangements across the County for people who need to relocate for fresh start.

Supported Letting Provision

- Recruitment of 7 Rough Sleeper Tenancy Sustainment Officers + 1 Tenancy Sustainment Manager to be based in each of the Suffolk District and Borough Areas.
- The Rough Sleeper Tenancy Sustainment Officers will support people to secure and sustain tenancies.

- Once individuals have been resettled Tenancy Support Officers will ensure that they do not lose the accommodation again.

Both Suffolk Coastal and Waveney's chances of MHCLG funding approval will be significantly improved by a cross authority bid.

Housing First

The Tenancy Services and Housing Needs Managers will be investigating the potential of a 'Housing First Model' to be implemented across East Suffolk. Different variations of the model are being piloted across the country and are currently being evaluated - approaches have been made or will be made to Manchester, Sheffield and Ipswich.

This type of scheme is for entrenched rough sleepers who can't or won't engage with services to address the deep seated underlying causes of their homelessness. The concept of the Housing First Model is to secure housing **first** and then lever in other wrap-around services. Outcomes are still very patchy and successful outcomes depend on all sorts of factors (including the location/proximity of services). This provision can be very costly but there are significant long term savings to the public purse.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Y Cherry

Can you tell me where the people who were sleeping rough on the Battery Green roundabout have gone to?

Response from Councillor C Punt

There is all the information you need about Homelessness prevention and support in Report REP1964 – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government External Funding to address Homelessness, which was considered at the last Cabinet meeting. There is a table in there which lists all the different options that can be explored.

Clarification was also provided that Bostock House was part of the Fyffe Centre in Lowestoft.

(j) Question from Councillor M Cherry to the Cabinet Member for Tourism & Economic Development

In February 2017 a "funding boost" from the Arts Council to Suffolk County Council was announced, for the promotion of culture and tourism. What evidence is there of this having actually benefitted Waveney?

Response from Councillor M Ladd

Arts Council England offered the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Cultural Board £300k in 2017, to grow the visitor economy in Norfolk and Suffolk by:

- By supporting the programming and marketing of Felixstowe Book Festival, Bury Festival, Kings Lynn Festival and Festa Fiesta (Great Yarmouth) in 2018 and 2019.
- By developing some new family friendly cultural activity in February (2020) and October (2018, 2019) half terms in Great Yarmouth, Norwich, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds and promoting family friendly activity across the region during these half terms.

- Developing a new website with Visit East Anglia that actively promotes the rich cultural offer across the region (to be launched in 2019).

The project is managed by Suffolk County Council on behalf of the LEP Cultural Board. It runs from October 2017 to March 2020. The project is being evaluated by The Audience Agency. A full evaluation report will be published in 2020.

Suffolk County Council has been working closely with Waveney District Council, Hemingway Designs and FlipSide to support the development of The First Light Festival in Lowestoft, a major new Festival with the potential to support the growth of cultural tourism in the area. This festival has attracted £99k of investment from the Arts Council.

Suffolk County Council worked closely with the Lowestoft Rising Cultural Education Partnership and Poetry People to develop Pearls from the Grit and 'Grit Fest' a local Festival in Lowestoft, attracting £60k of investment from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

In addition to the above, WDC bid for £738k, in partnership with Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC), from Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund. This funding is being used to progress a major cultural regeneration programme in Lowestoft, which complements our ambitious physical regeneration programme. A Lowestoft Cultural Leadership Group has been established which will oversee the development of a Cultural Strategy for the town which will aim to engage the community and promote cultural tourism in the area. One of the early tangible outcomes has been the securing of £40k from ACE, SCC and WDC to support the Marina Theatre in realising the objectives of their new strategic plan.

Supplementary Question from Councillor M Cherry

When did the Administration publish information about all this? Why is the Council not more open about what we are doing with the funding we receive?

Response from Councillor M Ladd

We do publicise this information, however we can always look at different ways of achieving this, to make more people aware of the positive work that is being undertaken in the District.

(k) Question from Councillor J Smith to the Cabinet Member for Resources

In November 2017 a question was asked relating to Government support for Councils to pursue owners of moving vehicles for littering without evidence of who was driving. How many Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued since then, and have there been any Prosecutions?

Response from Councillor B Provan

The answer is "none" under the new provisions.

Supplementary Question from Councillor J Smith

Councillor J Smith was not present at the meeting, therefore there was no Supplementary Question on this occasion.

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

In January 2018 and July 2018, I asked questions relating to the Sustainability Transformation Partnerships and making sure the public were made aware of the proposed changes to NHS Services across Waveney, given the lack of information and publicity. Why have residents of Waveney still been denied a full and open consultation on future plans for Waveney and East Suffolk, which will directly affect their access to NHS services?

Response from Councillor M Rudd

The body directly responsible for planning NHS services in Waveney is NHS Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). They have confirmed that they have no plans for major service changes at the moment. If and when these were to occur, then they have confirmed that a full and meaningful public engagement or consultation would be undertaken. Local authorities are a valued partner in all the work the CCG does, which is why district councils and the county councils are members of the Local Delivery Group (LDG). The LDG includes representatives from providers of services, Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils, both Healthwatch Suffolk and Healthwatch Norfolk, Coastal Health (GP Provider Organisation), Community Action Norfolk and Community Action Suffolk, Waveney District Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and the local pharmaceutical council. The work of the LDG is presented to the CCG's Governing Body meetings in public, the forum where key decisions are made.

The Norfolk and Waveney Sustainability and Transformation Partnership comprises 13 different NHS and local authority partners, including Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG. As the STP is not a formal 'entity' but a partnership, statutory responsibilities and 'sovereignty' lies with the partners. By working together we are achieving considerable improvements to care and support offered to local people. For example, we have arranged more evening and weekend GP appointments, investment in cancer services and a united approach to winter planning. The STP has also been able to co-ordinate reviews of both adult and children's mental health services, for which there was considerable public engagement including in the Waveney area.

The STP reports its work through its partners; updates are published at public meetings of the CCG, NHS Trusts and both Suffolk and Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Boards and also through publicly issued updates from the STP Chair. We welcome people to subscribe to receive these at <https://www.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk/ingoodhealth/>. The STP is advised by a Stakeholder Group which brings together representatives of voluntary organisations - which I am represented on as the Cabinet Member for Health & Safety - and a Social Partnership Forum which involves local trade unions representatives.

On the general topic of public engagement in Waveney, both the CCG and the STP have carried out a considerable amount of public engagement:

- The STP conducted considerable public engagement for the two mental health reviews, and held stakeholder meetings including, in Waveney, to discuss proposals for an Integrated Care System.
- The CCG engages local people continuously in its business, for example through the Patient Participation Group Forum and via specific pieces of engagement or consultation, such as advocates to work with people with learning disabilities around changes to residential services.

- During September and October 2018 the CCG held a number of market place or library events, talking to people about the steps they can take to stay well this winter, as well as offering advice on self-care and the best place to get the right medical help. The schedule included Southwold, Halesworth, Bungay, Lowestoft and Beccles. During the six events we spoke to over 200 people and recorded feedback from 77 people.

Supplementary Question from Councillor J Murray

Thank you, Councillor Rudd, for your detailed response. However, I am still concerned for the future, as East Suffolk Council will be working with 2 different Sustainability Transformation Partnerships, which involves several different Counties. There are significant decisions being made, which will affect access to GPs, as well as other matters, and the public are not aware of what is being considered and their views need to be taken into account. Can I please seek reassurance that there will be representatives on all of the Health-related Committees and Outside Bodies for East Suffolk Council, to ensure the residents of Waveney are thoroughly and robustly represented in the future?

Response from Councillor M Rudd

Yes, of course, we will ensure that Waveney is represented properly in the future.

(m) Question from Councillor J Craig to the Leader of the Council

Since before 2014, I have been working to support a number of residents in my Ward who have had issues with cladding installed under the Community Energy Savings Programme. This has now resulted in the eventual intervention of Peter Aldous M.P., who raised this in the House of Commons recently. Will the Leader of the Council join me in congratulating Philip and Diane Smith of Seago Street, whose tenacious pursuit of this issue has enabled residents complaints to be taken seriously, and explain what measures are now being taken by WDC to move this forward beyond the Merger?

Response from Councillor M Bee

Councillor Craig's question insinuates some reluctance on behalf of Peter Aldous to support those residents who have experienced poor workmanship by Mitie, which is not the case. The Council is aware that Peter Aldous has been very involved in supporting a number of affected residents and is pleased that residents have taken up his offer of support. Since January 2019, a clear strategy has been put in place to address the problems that some residents have experienced and I am aware that letters have now been sent to Ofgem, NPower, Mitie and the Minister of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Progress is therefore being made as a result of the collective approach adopted by Councillor Craig, Mr and Mrs Smith, other affected residents, officers of this Council and Mr Aldous.

The Council has carried out its own investigation and officers have offered all appropriate help and will continue to provide reasonable support if the residents decide to take legal action against the contractors. This offer of support will continue following the inception of East Suffolk Council and the matter has been included within the proposed work programme for East Suffolk Council's Scrutiny Committee.

Supplementary Question from Councillor J Craig

I would like to thank Mr and Mrs Smith for their hard work, however it is a shame that Peter Aldous did not help them 3 years ago.

Response from Councillor M Bee

Peter Aldous has always been open to helping Mr and Mrs Smith, as well as other residents. However this has been a lengthy and complicated issue. I would like to congratulate Councillor Craig for her ongoing hard work in support of Mr and Mrs Smith and for her tenacity. It is a shame that residents have been experiencing these problems, however all Councillor are here to support their local constituents.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank everyone for their attendance and participation at Council meetings over the years and he then formally closed the last ever meeting of Waveney District Council. He then reminded all those present that there was a buffet after the meeting and everyone was invited to take part.

The meeting concluded at 9.20 pm.

Chairman