

Minutes of the Suffolk County Council Annual Meeting held on 14 July 2016 at 2.00 p.m. in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, Ipswich.

Present: Councillors Colin Spence (Chairman of the County Council), Sarah Adams, Jenny Antill, Helen Armitage, Nick Barber, Sonia Barker, Trevor Beckwith, Mark Bee, Peter Beer, Kathy Bole, Michael Bond, Tony Brown, John Burns, Stephen Burroughes, David Busby, Peter Byatt, Kim Clements, Terry Clements, Janet Craig, James Crossley, Mary Evans, John Field, James Finch, Jessica Fleming, Julian Flood, Sandra Gage, Peter Gardiner, Mandy Gaylard, Tony Goldson, John Goodwin, Michael Gower, Gary Green, Derek Hackett, Matthew Hicks, Beccy Hopfensperger, Christopher Hudson, David Hudson, Len Jacklin, Gordon Jones, Richard Kemp, Michael Ladd, Inga Lockington, Sandy Martin, Guy McGregor, Robin Millar, Bill Mountford, David Nettleton, Graham Newman, Colin Noble, Patricia O'Brien, Keith Patience, Bert Poole, Chris Punt, Bill Quinton, Andrew Reid, David Ritchie, John Sayers, Stephen Searle, Reg Silvester, Richard Smith MVO, Joanna Spicer, Sarah Stamp, Jane Storey, Julia Truelove, Robin Vickery, James Waters, Paul West, Robert Whiting and David Wood.

17. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed councillors, officers and members of the public to the meeting and made the following announcements:

County Councillor Robin Vickery

The Chairman congratulated Councillor Robin Vickery on his election as County Councillor for the Carlford Division and welcomed him to the meeting.

Senior staff leaving

The Chairman informed the Council of the following members of senior staff leaving the Council:

Sally Stoker, Head of Fostering and Adoption in Children and Young People's Directorate The Chairman reported that Sally was due to retire on 15 July 2016. Sally had begun her career as a Child Protection Manager at Suffolk County Council and held positions at Norfolk Adoption Service, and Head of Adoption and then Head of Adoption and Fostering at Suffolk County Council. The Chairman reported that Sally had led Suffolk to obtain an Ofsted judgement of 'Outstanding' for the Council's Adoption Service and last year as 'Good' for both Fostering and Adoption.

Eric Prince, Assistant Director in Adult and Community Services The Chairman reported that Eric was retiring after 41 years' service. Eric had started his

career in local government in 1965 and worked at two local authorities whilst qualifying as an accountant. Eric had been working in Suffolk in a range of roles including technical accountant, internal auditor, Chief Accountant for the whole of the council and Assistant Director. His responsibilities had included finance, HR, ICT and office services and providing strategic financial advice. During his appointment to Adult and Community Services, Eric had led the price negotiations with the independent care providers on several occasions, with good outcomes for Adult and Community Services.

Staff awards and accolades

RoSPA Gold Award The Chairman was pleased to inform members that Suffolk County Council had been awarded a Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Gold Achievement Award for the first time. He commented on the award recognising the excellent ongoing work across all areas of the Council to continually improve the management of the safety, health and wellbeing of staff, clients and all those who come into contact with the Council.

Municipal Journal Award winner The Chairman announced that the 'Moving into Adulthood' team had won the prestigious Municipal Journal Awards for the category of Behaviour Change. He informed members that the team worked to improve the lives of young people with special educational needs and disabilities who were preparing for adulthood saying that the judges had commended the team for their application of behavioural insights to this complex area of social policy and their ambitious, innovative and creative approach.

Highly Commended for 'Website Project of the Year The Chairman informed members that the Council had received a 'Highly Commended' accolade for its entry in the Website Project of the Year category at the V3 Digital Technology Leaders Awards. The entry had been based on the facility for members of the public to report highway faults through the online highways 'Report It' tool.

Councillors joined the Chairman in congratulating staff and in giving best wishes to Sally Stoker and Eric Prince for their future.

Future meetings of the Council

The Chairman referred to the Agenda where 'date of next scheduled meeting', 29 September was marked as 'to be confirmed'. He reported that the meeting had originally intended to be held to consider the next decision for Devolution and that the meeting on 29 September would not now go ahead. He reported that it was now intended that any decision regarding the Devolution proposals would be taken at the scheduled meeting on 20 October 2016.

18. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Ereira, Penny Otton, Caroline Page, Bryony Rudkin and Andrew Stringer.

19. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations.

20. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Annual meeting held on 30 June at 10.00 a.m. were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 30 June 2016 at 2.00 p.m. were also confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21. Public Questions

The Chairman reported that there were no questions received for this meeting.

22. Motions

At Agenda Item 6, in accordance with Rule 3.1, one Motion had been received.

Motion 1 – Proposed by Councillor Len Jacklin and seconded by Councillor Keith Patience

“This Council believes that high quality apprenticeships are a necessary ingredient in a strong and vibrant economy, as well as an excellent way of providing an opportunity for young people to gain skills and to improve their chances of securing employment.

This Council aims to encourage local businesses to provide good apprenticeships to Suffolk’s youth. Suffolk County Council is committed to being an example of good practice, and therefore:

This Council requests;

- That the Council’s Procurement Team investigates the powers given to Local Authorities under the Social Value Act 2012, to ensure that the Council secures the maximum number of high quality apprenticeships when contracts are awarded.

- That Suffolk County Council adheres to new Government recommendations and pledges to raise the proportion of apprentices to 2.3% of the authority’s workforce by the 1st April 2018.

- That Cabinet should consider establishing Suffolk County Council as an ‘Apprenticeship Training Agency’.”

In proposing the motion, Councillor Jacklin referred to the Council’s commitment to apprenticeships but emphasised the need for a supporting infrastructure and culture to achieve a significant increase in the number within its own workforce. He added that there was a need to monitor progress and outcomes, taking opportunities to address skills shortages and become an employer of choice. He referred to Bradford’s Apprenticeship Training Agency as an example of where expertise had been built up to support Apprenticeships.

Speaking in support of the Motion, councillors referred to the existing numbers of agencies supporting apprentices, the need to support businesses and young people across the county, not just in towns, apprenticeships that, when completed, translated into jobs. Councillors also referred to the need to address access issues to enable young people to get to apprenticeship placements, the provision of appropriate careers advice and mentoring support

and opportunities to promote apprenticeships across all industries, including those where growth is forecast and the potential involvement of the National Youth Parliament with Suffolk County Council leading the way.

Members also referred to the value of apprenticeships such as those in highways as civil engineers or technicians, in early years and childcare, and the opportunities councillors have individually, as well as collectively, to encourage employers to take up apprenticeships. Acknowledgement was given to the difficulty small businesses may have in dealing with apprenticeships and making jobs available and how an Apprenticeship Training Agency could take on some of the responsibility and some of the expense. Councillors referred to the opportunities to work with appropriate organisations such as Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth Colleges??, the Ipswich Vision Board, the University College Suffolk and for firms to go in to schools to promote their work. One councillor referred to potential risk of Apprenticeship Training Agencies and another urged the Council to consider and learn from failures and see what the Council could do.

Councillor Jones, as Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills, welcomed the Motion and referred to apprenticeships as an essential first step for individuals to develop personal and technical skills, with benefits to business. He made reference to the Council's financial commitment and initiatives which included provision of advice and guidance on apprenticeship vacancies and support to small and medium enterprises, raising the profile at events and through the media as well as the MyGo model in Ipswich which is being rolled out to Lowestoft. He referred to other options that were being explored to improve recruitment of apprentices by the Council and said he would take a report to Cabinet in the future.

Decision: The Council agreed:

- a) That the Council's Procurement Team should investigate the powers given to Local Authorities under the Social Value Act 2012, to ensure that the Council secures the maximum number of high quality apprenticeships when contracts are awarded.
- b) That Suffolk County Council adheres to new Government recommendations and pledges to raise the proportion of apprentices to 2.3% of the authority's workforce by the 1st April 2018.
- c) That Cabinet should consider establishing Suffolk County Council as an 'Apprenticeship Training Agency'.

Reason for decision: Councillors overwhelmingly supported the motion.

Alternative options: None were considered.

Declarations of interest: None were declared.

Dispensations: None were given.

23. Safety, Health and Wellbeing Annual Report 2015-16 Extended Executive Summary

At Agenda item 7 the Council received a report by the Chief Fire Officer on the progress the Council had made with regard to the Health and Safety Strategy

and the Working Well for Suffolk Strategy along with ongoing work to manage safety, health and wellbeing across the Council.

In proposing the recommendations, Councillor Matthew Hicks, Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection, referred to the Gold RoSPA award to the Council demonstrating the ongoing commitment of the Council and staff to health and safety management. He emphasised that health, safety and wellbeing were everybody's responsibility and the strategy represented future work that had been prioritised.

Councillors made reference to the progress made in some areas, and of some needing more time to take effect. Councillors suggested further improvements could be made in relation to free schools and academies, councillors setting an example for healthy eating, reducing the availability of chocolate, fizzy drinks and sweets in council buildings, the impact of vacancy management on remaining staff, attention to employees with low mobility who could feel left out of events such as the 'Everest Climb', keeping an eye on research into vaping and suggesting smokers may swap to vaping.

Decision: The Council received the extended executive summary of the Safety Health and Wellbeing (SHAW) annual report 2015-16 and acknowledged progress made and endorsed the new SHAW strategy 2016-19 outlined in the report.

Reason for Decision: The Council wanted to be transparent in its approach to health and safety, in accordance with best practice guidance from the Health and Safety Executive.

Alternative options: None were considered.

Declarations of interest: None were declared.

Dispensations: None were given.

24. Annual Equalities and Inclusion Report 2016

At Agenda item 8 the Council received a report by the Acting Director of Public Health on the activities undertaken during 2015-16 to embed equalities across the Council.

In proposing the recommendations, Councillor Tony Goldson, Cabinet Member for Health, emphasised the need for fair access to services and information in an accessible format. He emphasised that this was everybody's responsibility and referred to a range of activities undertaken by the Council to as referred to in the report.

Councillors commented on complaints received about how the recently awarded rural transport contract had impacted on young people and those with a physical impairment. Comments were also made about the potential for mandatory equality training on an annual basis, no reference in the report to there being a minority ethnic network, improving access in mainstream schools, removal of funding to supplementary schools and the need to listen to and hear local communities. One councillor questioned the lack of objectives relating to age discrimination and others referred to taking proactive action to dispel the myth of 'benefits Britain' and advocated the Council take a stand on disability and give funding support to projects like Connect, in the long term.

Other councillors commented that members have a duty to pay due regard to equalities and inclusion duties and understand their responsibilities, and it was disappointing that there was not greater uptake of training by some councillors. It was confirmed that a Black and Minority Ethnic network had only recently been set up, that the networks referred to were set up and supported by staff and more support for these and for equalities training from councillors would be welcomed.

Decision: The Council received the report and reconfirmed the Council's commitment to having due regard to equalities and inclusion in all that it does and to meeting its equality duties.

Reason for Decision: The Council has a duty to ensure that services provided to the people of Suffolk are fair and proportionate and take into consideration the particular needs of people from the nine protected groups.

Alternative options: None were considered.

Declarations of interest: None were declared.

Dispensations: None were granted.

25. Cabinet Member Reports and Questions

Question 1 to Councillor Colin Noble from Councillor Derek Hackett

"Can the Leader of the Council advise how he and this administration might persuade the sceptical people of Suffolk that devolution in its proposed form will not fundamentally damage and devalue democratically made decisions made by very local Councillors?"

Response from Councillor Colin Noble

"I think you have to start by going back to some of the principles of what Devolution is meant to be. At a very fundamental level it is about the decisions taken in Whitehall, some of those decisions being taken more locally. So those of us who have to deal with Whitehall and negotiate with Whitehall, realise on a regular basis we go down there, we meet with 'spads' and civil servants, they are not councillors and we sit there and we try and explain about our area, we try and explain what is going on and they say "Well where is that then?" and they look on a map. So this is about bringing decision making to a more local area. So we have all talked in this chamber about directly elected mayors, well if that is what we end up with, its directly elected, so that is actually some form of democratic accountability. The Combined Authority body is going to take over strategic planning, transport, economic growth and investing in infrastructure and is made up of the Leaders of all of the councils. So I will sit in that, and all of the district and borough Leaders will sit in that, so again they are very local councillors who will be making those decisions. Suffolk County Council will continue to deliver the services that Suffolk County Council delivers so everybody in this room will be part of that process, again, very local councillors. And built in to our proposal is subsidiarity and that is about working out, by reforming and thinking about what services are delivered by what council, about making sure that those services are as local as we can get them to the residents we represent, again, decisions that will be made by very local

councillors. So at its very heart, what we are proposing with Devolution is about very local councillors making more decisions.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor Derek Hackett

“Under Article 7 of the Mayor of London Order 2008, the Mayor has absolute power to call in any planning decision which in effect makes him or her, the planning authority. This power has been used to overturn decisions taken locally. Some councils have taken steps to address this undemocratic process by limiting the Mayor’s power. What steps will this Administration take to ensure that if a mayor is foisted on this county, such undemocratic powers will not be available to either a mayor or the unelected upper tier of devolved government.”

Response from Councillor Colin Noble

“Well first of all I am going to take offence at the term ‘unelected upper tier’ because it is made up of all the Leaders of all the councils and they are all elected. So I don’t agree with that first bit. Again, not that interested in what the governing arrangements are for the Mayor of London, I am interested in the document that was presented before us on the 30 June where we actually had the scheme of governance that the mayor would operate under in East Anglia.

But actually there is a slightly more fundamental point, for us, in our district and boroughs, and quite a few of us are twin hatters, if a decision is appealed it goes down to the inspectorate in Bristol, and then ultimately goes to the Secretary of State and Councillor Waters who leads Forest Heath and myself and Councillor Millar will be very aware of something in our area called Hatchfield Farm, where a year later we are still waiting for the Secretary of State to tell us what we are going to do.

So part of what this is about is more local decision making. So you say about a mayor, and I understand that the terms and we will debate whether we think it is a good or bad idea, all of us are agreed that actually think that somebody elected by the Combined Authority, call it a mayor if you will, is a far better idea, but even then that person is going to be by definition more local and under the scheme of governance, they are going to have to make decisions, the Combined Authority is going to have to make decisions and they are going to have to make decisions together. So you negotiate things and they will be negotiated at the local level. So at the moment in a district, if it is appealed, it goes down to Bristol to make a decision or eventually it ends up with the Secretary of State. In the long term in the future what we are arguing is that a decision should be made by a directly elected mayor or a Combined Authority because it is made up of people who live here and are from our area. There is real danger in the notion and nobody knows how it could possibility work, if there was no appeals procedure. So there is a debate about that, but I haven’t read one single thing, and that happens to be the business I am involved in, that has suggested that there won’t be some form of appeals process. So the more local you can get that appeals process, the more knowledgeable it is going to be in making the right decision.”

Question 2 to Councillor Matthew Hicks from Councillor Bert Poole

“Due to two councils shutting down waste incinerators because of high costs, please can the Cabinet member tell me when we will have a cost /benefit analysis of the Suffolk waste incinerator for the first full year of production?”

Response from Councillor Matthew Hicks

“Thank you Councillor Poole for giving me an opportunity to update you on the success of our Energy from Waste facility.

The benefits of the facility include:

- Reducing the amount of Suffolk’s waste going to landfill to virtually nothing.
- Reducing Suffolk’s carbon footprint by 75,000 tonnes of CO2 equivalent emissions per year when compared to landfill.
- In addition the facility generates enough electricity to power 30,000 homes, equivalent to a town the size of Lowestoft.
- The facility has also achieved the environmental Rolls Royce standard of BREEAM outstanding status. This is the first waste facility to achieve this exemplar standard.

The annual saving which has flowed from the Energy from Waste facility was £8m in its first year and this amount has been taken out of the waste budget permanently. Over the life of the Energy from Waste contract we are projected to avoid £350m expenditure in landfill tax. In addition to these projected savings we are currently saving £2 million over a 4 year period as a result of making spare capacity available to our colleagues across the border in Norfolk and we are also on track to deliver further savings of £1m as the result of a planned partial refinancing of the facility.

I would point Cllr Poole in the direction, if he feels he needs more information than I have just given, that the Scrutiny Committee on 29 October 2015, issued a full report on the first year of the Energy from Waste facility and there is more information in here than I can give out now and I have got a copy for you if you would like it. I would also like to take this opportunity to invite all councillors to please contact me if they would like to go the Energy from Waste site and have a trip round it, it is the most fascinating tour and I would encourage everyone to do it.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor Bert Poole

“Just looking forward, now we are out of the EU, and we will no longer be subject to Landfill Tax, I wonder how that will affect the viability?”

Response from Councillor Matthew Hicks

“We are not out of the EU yet and that will probably take some time, but if things do change, that will have to be analysed and looked at, at the appropriate time.”

Question 3 to Councillor James Finch from Councillor David Hudson

“Due to years of underfunding and inefficiencies, our highways infrastructure is increasingly becoming just one very bad winter from disaster. It is apparent that

this cannot be remedied at county level alone. Therefore, does the Cabinet Member believe as I do, that it is now time that this Council took the lead and put forward this recommendation to the Government:- Highways maintenance should be regarded as being in a state of National Emergency and Government funds should be made available now to prevent escalating costs in the future?"

Response from Councillor James Finch

"I have two versions of answers here, the first one is 'no'. Although let me say, I think Councillor Hudson does deserve an explanation. I say 'no' as I don't believe actually that 'disaster' is likely. The Council this year and next year has allocated a further £10m to supplement Government funding for highway maintenance and a significant proportion of the local highway network is being surface dressed this year to combat the adverse impact of wintry conditions. I would also add that our winter service provided by the Highways team is highly looked upon as an efficient service. The Council's adoption of an asset management approach is ensuring that the allocated money is being wisely spent. It is known however, that Government ministers are concerned that funding has been allocated to Highways England on the trunk roads to ensure that 80% of all motorways and trunk roads are resurfaced, but insufficient funding has been allocated to tackle the backlog of highway maintenance for local roads, and that is being done on a national basis estimated by the Asphalt Industry Alliance. The Department for Transport view is that sufficient funding has been allocated nationally to retain a highway maintenance steady state, in other words, no further decline. The Department for Transport has been directed by Government Ministers, is to evaluate the real value of this backlog, with a view to potentially providing supplementary funding. So I hear what you are saying but I don't think we should be saying disaster is around the corner. What I would add actually is that the Government has offered the County Council out of a £250m Pothole Action Fund, has offered us £1.38m and we are, at this very point in time, deciding how best to utilise that prudently during this 2016/17 year, in accordance with the Council's asset management-led approach to highways maintenance as described in the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday."

Supplementary Question from Councillor David Hudson

"In view of this answer can the Cabinet Member tell County Council that the current highways reporting tool is overhauled immediately as it is currently not fit for purpose?"

Response from Councillor James Finch

"What I would say, is that the highways reporting tool is being more and more successfully used by people, and the increase of that is the most efficient way of getting any concerns on the highway to those who maintain it, so I can assure you that it has always been evaluated, but there are amendments to it in responses to the general public as well as councillors and parish clerks."

Question 4 to Councillor Colin Noble from Councillor Sandy Martin

"Following the vote to Leave the EU and various recent incidents of verbal abuse, many of Suffolk's resident foreign citizens are worried and unsure about

their futures in our County, and need help, advice and reassurance. What does the Leader of the Council intend to do to help to reassure them?"

Response from Councillor Colin Noble

"This is a very serious and important subject for this Council and for Suffolk as a county and frankly, the country. On the 30 June we all voted in favour of the Suffolk Solidarity Campaign and I think what that says to the people of Suffolk as a Council we live in a wonderful county, and part of what makes that wonderful county is our acceptance and our tolerance towards everybody who lives here.

It is important that everything we do, that we stress it, and whether it be declarations that we agree here, or whether it be in our own communities when we see things, when we hear things, that we just very quietly say 'no, that is not acceptable' and it is often said that bad things happen when good people stand aside. And that is the incredibly important part of this.

Before the Referendum vote, Suffolk County Council along with our colleagues, the Police and others took part in a series of workshops and there has been some feedback from those and I think at the first level it's to take that feedback and think about how you work with communities. Councillor Goldson, when we were looking at the Annual Equality and Inclusion report, talked about some of the drop in sessions that take place in different places for different reasons in communities and I think all of us here have had contact with various community groups over the years. I think it is how we support those groups rather than individual things here. And I think it is about proportionality, I think if this situation got worse, then I think there would be the need for us to escalate our response. But at the moment it is about working with foreign citizens and people that live here in these drop in advice services, ISCRE, Suffolk Refuge Support, Citizens Advice, English for speakers of other language providers and all the different community groups that go to make more resilient communities its about how we in the background, support them as they work with their communities and work with people who have concerns.

As I do say, if this does get worse then I think it is important that we as a Council think about what our response would be. Because it is important we are community leaders. We get called many things as councillors, but actually we are community leaders and I think it is very important for each of us in our own patch to just, on a daily basis, demonstrate that that type of behaviour is absolutely not acceptable in Suffolk."

Supplementary Question from Councillor Sandy Martin

"There are various voluntary sector groups and organisations which help people from specific countries and communities. Will the County Council support these organisations to enable them to provide help and advice and will Councillor Noble take a role in reviewing the Council's funding of voluntary sector organisations for that purpose?"

Response from Councillor Colin Noble

"I think the simple answer to that is 'yes'. As I said earlier it is about the proportionality. I think we need to look at those things and if those

organisations feel that they do want to increase some of their activities in response to this then I think it is something that we do need to look at because at the end of the day that is what we are here for.”

Question 5 to Councillor Matthew Hicks from Councillor Bill Quinton

“Can the Cabinet Member tell us what the feedback has been from members of the public to the change in opening times and new charges for disposal of some waste at Suffolk’s Household Waste Sites?”

Response from Councillor Matthew Hicks

“The changes to opening times were made as a result of customer feedback and customer requests. Users wanted us to extend the opening hours during the times when most members of the public actually use our sites, which tends to be at weekends and on Bank Holidays. However, in the current financial climate we were unable to increase the costs of the service, but we were able to fund extended opening hours on Sundays, Bank Holidays and late opening during the summer months on a Thursday night by closing the sites on their quietest day, which is a Wednesday.

With regard to the charge for plasterboard and rubble, I can clarify this is an extra service which local councils are not required to provide as this waste is not considered household waste. Customer feedback showed that the public were frustrated with the previous 2 bag limit so, in common with other councils in April, we introduced a modest charge and removed the limit so we could provide a useful service without again increasing service costs.

Our network of recycling centres receives around 1.5 million visits each year or about 120,000 visits a month and as you might expect, we have had some customer feedback from the changes introduced on the 1 June. In fact we have had about 70 customers contact us. Let me give you a flavour of some of these issues, a number felt we hadn’t publicised the changes to the hours sufficiently, others were unhappy with the level of the charges, or the payment method because we don’t encourage cash. The changes were made are a result of customer feedback. This is a valued and much appreciated service.”

Supplementary Question form Councillor Bill Quinton

“Given the poor public response in the press, is the Cabinet Member going to push on to further cuts making it even more difficult for the public to dispose of rubbish by introducing waste permits.”

Response from Councillor Matthew Hicks

“There are no cuts, this wasn’t a cut, this was a cost neutral exercise at the request of the general public.”

Question 6 to Councillor James Finch from Councillor Len Jacklin

“A requirement of the new highways contract in 2013 was to save the Council £2 million a year. Can the Cabinet Member advise what is the current annual saving to this Council from the Kier contract?”

Response from Councillor James Finch

"I can confirm that, through the Highways Services Contract, an annual saving of £2m has been generated, and this was reported to Scrutiny Committee on 29 October 2015 and 10 February this year. The Highways Transformation Programme is currently fundamentally altering the relationship between the County Council and its contractor and is beginning to make additional efficiency savings through process change. The value of these savings is being determined and will offset the impact of the £1.45m reduction in the highways revenue budget for this financial year."

Supplementary Question from Councillor Len Jacklin

"Can I just ask the Cabinet Member do you agree with me that the £1.9m overspend on last year's highways budget on disputed Kier claims almost wipes out any savings this contract was expected to make for the County Council?"

Response from Councillor James Finch

"Not all the claims in the first 2 years of the contract were fully processed. A significant amount of effort has been made by the Council working with our contractor's representatives, to resolve these claims, but this resolution was not finalised until March this year. The area highways offices have been working in line with revenue budgets for 2015/16 without fully taking into consideration the impact of settling these claims."

Question 7 to Councillor James Finch from Councillor Sandra Gage

"In the Highways Infrastructure Assessment Management Plan there is over a third increase from last year in planned capital expenditure for 2016/17. Can the Cabinet Member advise when Councillors will receive details of where and when this will be spent on roads, footways, drainage and lighting in their areas?"

Response from Councillor James Finch

"The planned additional expenditure of £10m is spread over the two financial years of 2016/17 and 2017/18. The extent of what work will ultimately be carried out this year, is dependent upon the rate at which such work can be designed and then delivered on the ground. Bespoke, integrated teams have now been formed to achieve this output, so it is an additional £10m.

Also now the detail of what is happening: further to my newsletter yesterday, I am pleased to report that the programmes of work being carried out during the 2016/17 year are now accessible on the County Council's website at www.suffolk.gov.uk/roadworks-programmes This matter is referred to in the latest message I have just talked about. It must be recognised that such programmes have never been visible before, so, whilst there is additional detail to be added at a later stage, this does represent a significant step forward in accessible information for our councillors, county, district and parish and members of the public.

The preparatory design work has been completed by the Suffolk Highways integrated design team for the additional surface dressing sites for this year and the schedule of pre-patching work is being assembled into a works programme, in readiness for the subsequent surface dressing work itself. So the site will be updated.

A list of locations where there has been historically recorded internal flooding was also passed to the Suffolk Highways design team so that investigation work can be conducted and subsequent alleviation work can be compiled for this year, over and above the drainage work that is identifiable via the link I have told you about.

As I said, the message that went out yesterday, the programmes on the website will be updated with the additional information as soon as it is available and we have a site there now.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor Sandra Gage

“Well, I am very pleased to hear that there, hopefully, will be some information as it has been lacking in previous years. However, irrespective of if or when councillors are informed of when schemes will be taking place in their Divisions how can any member in this chamber, including the Cabinet Member for that instance, have any confidence in Kier delivering even half of this, given that Kier has spectacularly underspent year by year so far.”

Response from Councillor James Finch

“I think we should be actually measuring the performance of Suffolk Highways by what they are doing. We are doing another £10m worth of work this year, and why are we not doing more? Because actually it is the capacity within the industry that prevents us from doing so. I am very proud of the work that Suffolk Highway’s Team are putting in. You have heard already in this meeting this afternoon, Chairman, that there is a lot of work and a number of them are feeling stressed and that is because of the enormous amount of work they are doing and I think we should have confidence in what we are doing. We are doing 20% more work than we did last year and the overall spend will be nearer to £60m, so I think we do owe due thanks to our Highways Team for the extra work they are doing and the improvements on the highways.”

Question 8 to Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger from Councillor Sarah Adams

“How would the Cabinet Member rate the performance of the Administration in Adult Social Care?”

Response from Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger

“This Administration takes the care of the elderly and vulnerable residents very seriously and we are committed to and indeed, it is our priority, to provide the very best care for the residents of Suffolk, it is what they deserve. Which is why we have been offered the opportunity by central government to introduce a 2% Adult Social Care Precept, we did, and we increased the budget for ACS ensuring investment in this most essential of sectors. This administration has focused the necessary savings in Adult Social Care on efficiencies and

implementing the Supporting Lives and Connecting Communities programmes of work which is ensuring that people stay independently and recover well from crisis resulting in 80% of customers in receipt of re enablement go on to remain independent. This compares to a national average of 77.4%. We are also proud that we are improving our position of our customers getting into employment. We now exceed the national average of 9% of customers with a learning disability in paid employment. We are reducing the number of people in residential care and people are not spending as long in this form of care. We know that this is what people want to stay in their own homes as long as possible and again also reduces costs.

We know Suffolk is not immune to national issues of concern. Like much of the country it has struggled to recruit carers and this impacts on our ability to get people out of hospital quickly. It also impacts on our providers of care. This Council has invested and has developed its service quality and monitoring team and provider support team to ensure that services provided in residential homes are proactively monitored to help identify concerns and issues and are working with providers on increased quality of care and tackle problems such as the Checking Out Care Manager Leadership Programme.

So how would I rate this Administration? When it comes to Adult Social Care I would say that, in the challenging financial climate, with increasing pressures, we are striving to continue to improve on our performance to meet these challenges targeting our investments and efforts on areas where it is needed to ensure that the residents of Suffolk receive high quality care.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor Sarah Adams

“Taking all that into account could Councillor Hopfensperger please explain to us why, though I believe Tim Beech has resigned as Chair of the Adult Safeguarding Board, and how is the relationship with the Safeguarding Board and Adult Social Care, what is being done to take account of this, if this has happened, and what is happening with the Safeguarding Board at the moment when it meets and have any other people resigned from it and are they going to be any other resignations or retirements from Adult Social Care in the next 12 months.”

Response from Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger

“Yes, you are right, Tim Beech has resigned from the Adult Safeguarding Board through personal reasons. That’s why he’s done it. I don’t know if anyone else is going to resign but I can assure you that it is in good hands. Our current Assistant Director, Julie, actually now chairs it and we are looking at moving that forward with regard to recruiting a new Independent Safeguarding Manager going forward.”

Question 9 to Councillor Matthew Hicks from Councillor Peter Byatt

“Can Cllr Hicks assure residents in Pakefield & Carlton Colville, that the six key recommendations made at the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Sub-Committee will be actioned and monitored by all the agencies involved?”

Response from Councillor Matthew Hicks

“Yes, I can confirm that the recommended actions identified by the Scrutiny Committee will be monitored as part of the ongoing work of this Committee. In addition, for recommendations where Suffolk County Council is the responsible body, officers will endeavour to implement these in full, as well as supporting our partners to implement other recommendations.”

Supplementary question from Councillor Peter Byatt

“First of all, I would like to recognise and thank you for your personal endeavours with the problems with the flooding and also the excellent work from your officers. However, bearing in mind the rather anguished email that 43 of us received on Monday from one of the residents involved, and others we have received since, i.e. water lapping at their doors, this is a very serious issue. Only 23 properties but some 100 of our Divisions representatives and what I would really like to ask you is, from their point of view, when will an action plan be published for the funding, implementation and review of all the rest of the recommendations. We need dates and times because on their behalf, I would say to you, and say it in language that Councillor Hudson may translate later, but from the point of view of those residents, I ask you basically ‘de digitum tuum?’”

Response from Councillor Matthew Hicks

“What happened two days ago, up again in Lowestoft, and I have received emails, and started getting emails around 10.30 at night and I have spoken to the residents, I have called particularly Luke Wright whose garage did see some water luckily that was the only property. We have achieved a lot in the year since the houses flooded in that part of Lowestoft and it has been actually partnership working that has involved yourselves, Councillor Barker, other councillors from across the floor. We have all come together to work really hard and I think it is about partnership working, Anglian Water, the Environment Agency and ourselves have all come together and made huge efforts. There is a much bigger piece of work going on in Lowestoft, a £25m project and in fact there is Lowestoft Flood Risk Management project which is underway. And that is part of a much bigger project. I have actually, just before this meeting, as you know have sent you an email actually laying out exactly what work is being done and the hopeful time frames. But with any funding project, when you are dealing with a project of £25m you can’t go in and start doing things until the funding is in place, because otherwise you jeopardise it later, you can’t apply retrospectively. So we have done short term measures and I am optimistic that we will be able to get the longer term measures going as soon as possible, but as you know, there a lots of cogs to this wheel, but I think we have achieved a lot in a very short space of time and we will do everything that we can to protect those residents in Lowestoft.”

Question 10 to Councillor Gordon Jones from Councillor Kim Clements

“Dr Tim Coulson, the Regional Commissioner, has sent warning notices to seven County Primary schools in Suffolk, using new powers gained under the Education & Adoption Act, which came into force on the 1 April, this year. Can

Councillor Jones inform us of the action he and the SCC Learning Improvement Service have taken to support the schools that were sent notices?”

Response from Councillor Gordon Jones

“Time prevents me from giving you a full answer I am afraid. But I Chair the School Improvement Accountability Board (SIAB) which meets every month with local authority officers.

Through the SIAB meetings, I and other Board members, hold local authorities to account by reviewing the work that is being done in all schools. Detailed information is provided regarding our highest priority schools and this monthly monitoring of the impact of actions ensures that I am alert to any changes regarding the current progress of school improvement.

The 7 schools that received warning notices from the RSC had previously been raised at SIAB meetings and we ensure that the appropriate local authority action for school to school support is in place.

Regarding what action the officers have taken, the Standards and Excellence Teams provide school improvement support for school leaders. This team work with school leaders in all local authority maintained schools and also in academies where requested. This support is matched to meet each school’s individual needs. It is personalised support.

This support has included strengthening the school leadership through coaching them to accurately know their schools strengths and weaknesses from the evidence of assessment results, visiting lessons and pupils’ work. It is also including modelling, questioning and advising how to make sure the school’s plan for improvement has the correct actions on it, with the right timescales and clear milestones that the school leaders, including Governors, can track progress against.

Following the Regional Schools Commissioner’s warning notices, a guidance document was developed and shared with these 7 schools to help them in the response. There has been very positive feedback from the Headteachers about the usefulness of this and this document provided key questions for the school leaders to use in order to provide strong responses. And I should also like you to note that the model of the warning notices that the Regional Schools Commissioner now uses actually was taken from Suffolk County Council.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor Kim Clements

“Will councillors be updated when improvements are achieved at the schools?”

Response from Councillor Gordon Jones

“Yes, they will be and I will advise the local member.”

Question 11 to Councillor Gordon Jones from Councillor Sonia Barker

“Given that teachers in Suffolk County Council’s supply pool can ensure a ready supply of qualified teachers, who are properly paid through the payroll, to be available when schools require a supply teacher, does Cllr Jones agree that this is the most sensible way of ensuring adequate cover for sickness and other occasional vacancies in our schools in Suffolk?”

Response from Councillor Gordon Jones

“Schools have delegated funding and use many different methods to manage absence and vacancies, including having their own bank of trusted, quality, teachers who they call upon as and when needed. Schools also have access the many organisations who provide supply teachers on a professional, commercial basis. However, Schools’ Choice is currently exploring options around creating a traded service for schools for supply teachers. And actually this is precisely the sort of flexibility that we want and actually was the reason for bringing the paper to Cabinet earlier this week.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor Sonia Barker

“You have partly answered the question but I am still going to ask this anyway. So why is Suffolk County Council not actively recruiting teachers to the supply pool and is thus forcing schools to use agencies, who charge high fees to the schools, but pay below national rates to the teachers.”

Response from Councillor Gordon Jones

“We have looked at the costs of administrating this for schools and actually the income that would be achieved is actually well below the cost of running the services. And also we have consulted with a group of schools and they were not prepared to pay more and their view is it is better managed by schools and head teachers through the market. But as I said earlier, Schools Choice will be visiting it as part of their traded service and if they think that it is a good business model they will do so, I am sure.”

Question 12 to Councillor Tony Goldson from Councillor Helen Armitage

“Since the iconic Orwell Bridge was completed in 1982, it has developed an infamous reputation as one of the top suicide spots in the UK and unfortunately the frequency with which these deaths are occurring seems to be increasing. Can you tell me what discussions and briefings you have had with officers regarding the prevention of future bridge deaths and what, if any, solutions are being proposed?”

Response from Councillor Tony Goldson

“Deaths from suicide in Suffolk are an issue of concern and in 2014, which is the last year we have figures for there were 5 deaths at the Orwell Bridge and these were recorded by the Police and the Coroner, which was more than the previous 2 years. All suicide deaths are tragic, and deaths at the Orwell Bridge only make up 4% of all suicides in Suffolk during the period 2012-2014. For context, in that time, 5% of suicides occurred on railway lines, 75% of people took their own lives at their own home. I agree, the Orwell Bridge has a reputation as a frequently used location for suicide, but as you can see this is not the only cause for concern. Currently a Suffolk wide suicide prevention strategy is in development stages. This has involved partners including the mental health trust, the voluntary sector and discussions are also taking place with those affected by suicide or attempted suicide. The draft strategy will be discussed at the Health and Wellbeing Board at the partnership session this coming Thursday. Prevention of suicide will be the subject at a stakeholder

conference for the Health and Wellbeing Board in October and we are very serious about decreasing deaths from suicide in Suffolk.

One of the actions we need to agree as part of strategy action plan is how to prevent deaths from suicide at the Orwell Bridge. There are various options for consideration. One recent report commissioned by the Highways Agency into possible suicide prevention measures, included erecting barriers. They estimated that the cost of a barrier installation at around £2.4m and it would double the cost of regular inspection by over £200k. Other options include closing footpath across the bridge to make access to the walkway more difficult. This may be a more cost effective option for reducing deaths from the bridge but this also has implications, for example, there is a long distance footpath that actually runs over that bridge. There are already free Samaritan phones, at each of the four corners of the bridge which are due to be upgraded shortly to reduce the effects of traffic noise which currently makes communication difficult. As you can see, the Orwell Bridge is an important part of a complex issue. However, I hope that this reassures you that reducing deaths by suicide in Suffolk is being taken seriously and we hope to see a decrease in suicides overall in the coming years, by working with partners and co-ordinating our efforts.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor Helen Armitage

“It was reported in the press in April this year that one of the Assistant Coroners, Nigel Parsley, had called for the authority to do more to prevent deaths from the bridge, under Rule 28 of the Coroners Investigations Regulations. I notice that this was not something that you mentioned and I cannot find reference as to whether it was this was the authority that he was talking about, or the highways authority, do you have any other information about that and you have 56 days to respond from the date that the report was put in, but I can’t find any record of it at all.”

Response from Councillor Tony Goldson

“There is a delay in reporting deaths from the Coroner’s Office to us, however, if you see me afterwards I will try to get some answers for you, but they will only be what we keep.”

Question 13 to Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger from Councillor Inga Lockington

“How are you ensuring that the extra income, the 2% Tax precept, brings in to the Council budget, is being invested in Adult Care as intended and how will you make sure that this funding will make a difference to Care Services in Suffolk?”

Response from Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger

“Throughout my time as Cabinet Member for Adult Care, I have consistently drawn this Council’s attention to the cost pressures on this department which is why I welcomed the Government’s initiative to allow this Council to raise the 2% Adult Social Care precept.”

We are ensuring that these cost pressures are dealt with as well as dealing with our other challenges. In Suffolk this meant a total of £5.4m extra being invested in adult care which is being used as follows:

High quality care is dependent on a sustainable care market and we have therefore used £1.8m to meet the costs of the new national living wage, through increased fees to our care providers. We are committed to protecting the most vulnerable in our society which is why we are spending £1m in order to meet the significant changes to our statutory duties under the Mental Capacity Act Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and recognise the need to improve the services for people with learning disabilities we have therefore invested £0.4m into these services. We also understand the challenges of an increased demand on our services with an aging population who have more complex care needs which is why we are spending £2.2 m to meet the growing needs of adult care as our population ages and demand increases, therefore I can assure you that we recognise the challenges and ensure the resources are targeted in those areas where it is needed and where it will make the most difference.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor Inga Lockington

“I would like reassurance that you have spent every penny you have there and we don’t see any of the extra money, nor the other money allocated to adult care, put into reserves at the next budget meeting at the end of next year’s full budget, because I think it is important that we have got the money to spend and adult care need to have it. Can you reassure me of that?”

Response from Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger

“We have got three months of the budget left, but I can assure you that the money is being targeted to where it is needed and every penny that goes in to adult care is being used to improve services and to protect the vulnerable of our society.”

The meeting closed at 4.25 p.m.

Chairman

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