

Minutes of the Suffolk County Council Meeting held on 8 December 2016 at 2.00 pm in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, Ipswich.

Present: Councillors Colin Spence, (Chairman of the County Council), Jenny Antill, Helen Armitage, Nick Barber, Sonia Barker, Trevor Beckwith, Mark Bee, Peter Beer, Michael Bond, Tony Brown, John Burns, Stephen Burroughes, David Busby, Peter Byatt, Kim Clements, Terry Clements, Janet Craig, James Crossley, Mark Ereira, 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, Bill Mountford, David Nettleton, Graham Newman, Colin Noble, Penny Otton, Caroline Page, Keith Patience, Chris Punt, Bill Quinton, Andrew Reid, David Ritchie, Bryony Rudkin, John Sayers, Stephen Searle, Trevor Sheldrick, Richard Smith MVO, Joanna Spicer, Sarah Stamp, Jane Storey, Andrew Stringer, Julia Truelove, Robin Vickery, James Waters, Paul West and David Wood.

#### **41. Thought for the Day**

Council received a thought for the day from Sister Marian Davey AOS Port Chaplain for the ports of Felixstowe, Ipswich, Mistley, Harwich, Lowestoft and Kings Lynn.

#### **42. Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed people to the meeting and thanked Sister Marian Davey for giving her thought for the day.

##### Death in Service

The Chairman informed the Council of the death in service of IT Desktop Engineer, Martin MacLennan on 25 November 2016. Generally known as 'Lenny' he had worked for Suffolk IT for over 15 years and would be sadly missed by his many friends and colleagues. The Chairman offered his condolences to Martin's father and brother.

[Council stood in a minute's silence]

##### Senior Staff Leaving

The Chairman reported that Simon Higgins, Assistant Director of Communications and Customer Service would be leaving the Council to take up a post of Head of Communication at Edinburgh City Council on 6 February. The

Chairman paid tribute to Simon's role in leading the Council's media and communication function together with customer service and improved their performance and reputation.

The Chairman also reported that Fiona Harris, Corporate Parenting Board Manager, was retiring from her post as at the end of December. He paid tribute to her commitment to supporting vulnerable children and ensuring the voices of children and young people were listened to and that the services the Council provided took account of their views and feelings. He also paid tribute to her support to the Board which was recognised by Ofsted last year as being very effective in scrutinising the services the authority provided and holding officers to account for the range and quality of provision.

#### Award for Legal Services

The Chairman informed Council that Suffolk Legal had recently had multiple award nominations and been shortlisted as a finalist in three major national award events in 13 categories. He commented that the highlights were being 'highly commended' at the Law Society Excellence Awards 2016 for the approach to learning and development and its investment in its people, and winning the Legal Team of the Year at the Lawyers in Local Government Awards 2016 where the judges were impressed by their success across a range of different specialisms resulting in significant reductions in cost for the Council.

#### Digital Preservation Coalition Awards

Suffolk Record Office was a shortlisted finalist for the National Archives Award for Safeguarding the Digital Legacy in the Digital Preservation Coalition Awards. The Chairman congratulated staff in the record office, within IT and external suppliers on the submission which was based on the provision of a public website with access to 900 years of Suffolk's history.

#### Chairman's Charity

The Chairman thanked people who had supported the Chairman's charities and drew attention to information in Councillor Hicks' Cabinet Member's report regarding a donation from a member of the public. He also asked members to support a special concert that he was hosting on 31 January 2017.

### **43. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sarah Adams, Kathy Bole, Robin Millar, Patricia O'Brien, Bert Poole, Reg Silvester and Robert Whiting.

### **44. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

The following declarations of interest were received:

Councillor Graham Newman declared a local non pecuniary interest in respect of Motion 1 on the Greater Anglia Rail Franchise by virtue of his position as Chairman of Felixstowe Travel Watch and membership of Ipswich Transport Society.

Councillor Peter Byatt declared a local non pecuniary interest in respect of Motion 1 on the Greater Anglia Rail Franchise by virtue of his appointment by the County Council as a member of Community Rail Norfolk.

Councillor Inga Lockington declared a local non pecuniary interest in respect of Motion 2 on support to young people in care by virtue of her being a trustee of ICENI Ipswich.

#### **45. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Chairman referred to the incorrect omission of Councillor Chris Punt from the list of members present on the unconfirmed minutes of the Council meeting on 23 November 2016. Subject to this change being made, members agreed that the Minutes be signed as a correct record and were subsequently signed by the Chairman.

#### **46. Public Questions**

In accordance with Rule 28.2 of the Council's Rules of Procedure (Part 2 of the Constitution), the Chairman reported that two public questions had been received. Both members of the public had been provided with a written response to their question and were able to ask their question and a supplementary question arising from the response at the meeting. A copy of the questions and responses can be found at Appendix 1 to these minutes.

#### **47. Motions**

In accordance with Rule 3.1 three motions had been received. They were considered and resolved in the order of receipt.

Motion 1: Proposed by Councillor James Finch and seconded by Councillor Guy McGregor

*"On Sunday 16 October the nine year Greater Anglia Rail Franchise began with Abellio Greater Anglia as the winning bidder. This was mainly because of their focus on what their travelling customers were demanding and have included a major series of improvements for rail services in the region, which include a range of much needed improvements.*

*The reliability of the Franchise this last two years has been hampered by unreliable rolling stock, the effects of the competing freight service on the same lines and lastly by the unreliability of the infrastructure run by Network Rail. This causes regular major delays to the intercity and local service.*

*The Franchise Contract improvements require significant investments for the upgrading of the infrastructure by National Rail.*

*Suffolk County Council moves that the Leader and the Chief Executive write to Suffolk MP's and the Department for Transport to confirm that Network Rail has the focus and resources at the right time, to deliver the necessary improvements to the infrastructure in collaboration with Greater Anglia. This will enable them to achieve their franchise commitments over the nine-year period so the residents of Suffolk can be assured that a fit for purpose rail infrastructure is in place."*

In proposing the motion, Councillor James Finch referred to the opportunities the new franchise provided for passengers in terms of faster and better connections, improved reliability, and potential improvements in being able to compete for freight services.

Comments from members included questioning the need for the motion on the basis that it was endorsing something that was already happening, with Network

Rail already working in a constructive way, the historic poor record of Abellio in terms of punctuality and cost, and a suggestion that the Council should be pushing also for fairer price ticketing and fairer funding.

Other councillors referred to their confidence in the future plans in terms of new rolling stock and proposed possible re-opening of a line to Leiston, improved infrastructure, the intention to improve the East Suffolk line and the opportunity to learn from the past. There was also support for taking more freight off roads, but it was pointed out that there could be consequential impact on local residents in terms of rail noise.

There was cross party support for motion 1 which was agreed unanimously by a show of hands.

**Decision:** The Council agreed motion 1 as referred to above.

**Reason for decision:** Councillors supported the motion

**Alternative options:** None were considered.

**Declarations of interest:** Declarations are as recorded in Minute 44 above.

**Dispensations:** None were required.

Motion 2: Proposed by Councillor Helen Armitage and seconded by Councillor Sonia Barker

*“This Council reaffirms its commitment to the safeguarding of Children as a key priority and believes that the exceptional rise in the number of young people going in to care represents a major and urgent challenge to the authority.*

*This Council acknowledges that innovative and flexible measures that provide a range of services to children and families, supporting minors to remain in their family care where it is safe to do so, are key components of an effective care strategy.*

*Therefore, this Council calls on the administration to:*

- Pilot a ‘short breaks’ programme, which focuses on giving respite breaks for families with children on the ‘edge of care’, with a view to establishing the programme as a permanent intervention service for vulnerable families*
- Work alongside and financially support third-sector organisations, such as Iceni and 4YP, to provide a comprehensive family support system to complement the ‘short breaks’ programme”*

In proposing motion 2 Councillor Helen Armitage referred to the growing number of children in Suffolk in care, remaining in care longer and costing more. She recognised that although children were only taken into care when necessary, more work was needed to work with families and young people to support those at risk of abuse and neglect. She advocated learning from and applying good practice elsewhere and used Shropshire as an example where the rates of children going into care were falling because of their short breaks programme, estimated to have delivered around £2m in savings.

Councillor Gordon Jones proposed, and Councillor Stephen Burroughes seconded the following amendment:

*“Therefore this Council calls on the administration to:*

*Explore the development of a specific “short breaks” programme of respite breaks for families with children on the “edge of care” as part of the current review of the FAST service, and report progress to the regular Corporate Parenting Board meetings and for the Board to consider the developments of a pilot scheme*

*Continue to work alongside and financially support third-sector organisations, to provide a comprehensive family support system to complement any “short breaks” programme.”*

Councillors Armitage and Barker, as proposer and seconder of the original motion accepted the amendment, so the original motion as amended became the substantive motion.

Members recognised the importance of preventative and support work and reference was made to local Mothers Union who may raise money to fund respite for families, the need to support unaccompanied children, the FAST service (integrated Family and Short Term Support), the role of all councillors as corporate parents, the YMCA and the importance of providing opportunities for young people to get away from family for a few days. Reference was also made to reduced funding potentially impacting on support and prevention work and the difficulty of finding out what support may be available to families as situations arise and the need to consider the child’s point of view. Members also paid tribute to those people and agencies who worked with young people to look after children with multiple problems.

Councillor Jones, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills, emphasised the need to put the safety of young people first and referred to the range of support in Suffolk through Children’s Centres, respite and short breaks support networks and family assessment and support working with families at risk. He welcomed a review and working closely with partners on the Corporate Parenting Board.

There was cross party support for motion 2, as amended, which was agreed unanimously by a show of hands.

**Decision:** The Council agreed the following motion:

“This Council reaffirms its commitment to the safeguarding of Children as a key priority and believes that the exceptional rise in the number of young people going in to care represents a major and urgent challenge to the authority.

This Council acknowledges that innovative and flexible measures that provide a range of services to children and families, supporting minors to remain in their family care where it is safe to do so, are key components of an effective care strategy.

Therefore this Council calls on the administration to:

Explore the development of a specific “short breaks” programme of respite breaks for families with children on the “edge of care” as part of the current review of the FAST service, and report progress to the regular Corporate Parenting Board meetings and for the Board to consider the developments of a pilot scheme

Continue to work alongside and financially support third-sector organisations, to provide a comprehensive family support system to complement any “short breaks” programme.”

**Reason for decision:** Councillors supported the amended motion.

**Alternative options:** Members could have rejected the amendment.

**Declarations of interest:** Declarations are as recorded in Minute 44 above.

**Dispensations:** None were required.

Motion 3: Proposed by Councillor Keith Patience and seconded by Councillor Sonia Barker in the absence of Councillor Sarah Adams

*“This Council commits to adopt and promote the Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Charter.*

*By adopting the MND Charter, this Council pledges to deliver to those living with MND and their carers:*

- *The right to an early diagnosis and information*
- *The right to access quality care and treatments*
- *The right to be treated as individuals, with dignity and respect*
- *The right to maximise their quality of life*
- *Respect and support for carers of people with MND*

*The Council also agrees to promote the Charter amongst Councillors, staff, partner organisations and health and social care professionals who deliver services for the Council.”*

Councillor Keith Patience, proposed motion 3 and referred to the difficulties experienced by people with motor neurone disease and its aggressive nature and sought the Council’s support to the people in Suffolk affected by it by signing up to the Charter.

Members in support of the motion referred to existing inequalities between east and west Suffolk in terms of neurological nurses, and the consequential stress on sufferers. It was noted that a review was due to be done by the Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group in 2017, that most MND sufferers don’t pass a means test, the impact on sufferers, family and friends, and the benefits specific support could bring and recognition of the need to change support often and rapidly as the disease progressed.

Some councillors felt that other long term illnesses should also be included in the motion and hoped that the Council would take the same approach for other life limiting illnesses.

There was cross party support for motion 3 which was agreed unanimously by a show of hands.

**Decision:** The Council agreed motion 3 as referred to above.

**Reason for decision:** Councillors supported the motion

**Alternative options:** None were considered.

**Declarations of interest:** During the debate, Councillor Sonia Barker referred to the fact that her sister had been diagnosed with motor neurone disease in 2008.

**Dispensations:** None were required.

#### **48. Suffolk Minds Matter Annual Public Health report**

Council considered a report at Agenda Item 8 by the Director of Public Health describing some of the factors that affected mental health at different stages of people's lives and what could be done individually by communities and by services to promote mental health and emotional wellbeing, prevent mental ill health and ensure people lead happier, healthier lives for longer.

Councillor Tony Goldson, as Cabinet Member for Health, referred to the fact that a full report and a short film showing local initiatives to improve mental health and emotional wellbeing would be available on the Health Suffolk website in support of the summary report to Council.

Councillors welcomed receiving a more detailed report in the future and spoke of the extent of people living with depression, the difficulty for people to get onto medical support pathways, the potential detrimental impact of being prescribed the wrong medication, the fact that more can be gained through preventative work and early intervention and promotion of mental health. Councillors also expressed interest in knowing whether recommendations in previous Annual Public Health reports had been carried out, the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board and recognised that partnership was key to promoting good and preventing ill health.

**Decision:** The Council agreed unanimously by a show of hands to welcome the report of the Director of Public Health and took note of the wealth of information provided, as well as the ambition and recommendations to improve mental health and emotional wellbeing in Suffolk.

**Reason for decision:** Councillors supported the proposals to promote mental health and emotional wellbeing, the prevention of mental ill health and the aims of ensuring people lead happier, healthier lives for longer.

**Alternative options:** None were considered.

**Declarations of interest:** None were declared.

**Dispensations:** None were required.

#### **49. Annual Property report and Asset Management Plan**

Council considered a report at Agenda Item 9 by the Director of Resource Management which set out how the Council was using its property assets effectively as a resource and how those assets were supporting the Council's overall objectives.

In introducing the report, Councillor Richard Smith, Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage, referred to the new Riverside development in Lowestoft, a joint project with Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils which was delivered on time and £900k under budget and also paid tribute to the staff who had achieved capital receipts of £19m from the sale of surplus Council property.

Other councillors commented on the support property gave to the Council's core objectives, multiple occupancy, smarter workplaces and improved use of IT to create a good working environment, the comprehensive report, the amount of work put in by property officers and members, the extent to which the Council was able to get best value for money from the sale of assets, and potentially ring-fencing the use of capital and revenue receipts from Barleyhomes for housing development. It was also requested that local councillors are kept informed, in general terms, of what is happening to corporate property in their Division and greater transparency for members of the public when possible given the commercial sensitivities of some transactions.

**Decision:** The Council agreed by a unanimous show of hands to:

- a) note that the property assets of Suffolk County Council were being used effectively as a resource; and that those assets were supporting the Council's overall priorities and objectives, and
- b) the proposed focus and direction of approach for property assets including the Single Public Sector Estate (SPSE) and the One Public Estate Initiative (OPE).

**Reason for decision:** Members recognised that property was a fundamental resource of the Council and played a major role in the discharge of its functions, the importance of councillors, staff, users, tenants and the public of Suffolk being aware of the use to which property assets were put and how they impacted on the overall budget of the Council, the role property plays in contributing to the delivery of the Council's corporate objectives and changes to the way the services were delivered.

**Alternative options:** None were considered.

**Declarations of interest:** None were made.

**Dispensations:** None were given.

#### **50. County Council Elections – 4 May 2017: Appointment of returning Officer**

Council considered the appointment of Deborah Cadman OBE, Chief Executive, as the Returning Officer for the County Council Elections on 4 May 2017 and subsequent by-elections.

**Decision:** The Council agreed, by general assent, that Deborah Cadman OBE, Chief Executive, be appointed as the Returning Officer for the County Council elections to be held on 4 May 2017 and any subsequent by-elections.

**Reason for decision:** The representation of the People Act 1983 required the County Council to appoint an officer of the Council to be the Returning Officer for elections of the Councillors of the Council.

**Alternative options:** None were considered.

**Declarations of interest:** None were made.

**Dispensations:** None were given.

## 51. Amendments to the Constitution

Council considered a report at Agenda Item 11 by the Director of Resource Management which set out proposals from the Constitution Working Party about the Code of Corporate Governance, the Scheme of Delegation for Minerals and Waste and County Council Planning Applications and the Governors Appointment Committee.

**Decision:** The Council agreed to:

- a) adopt the Code of Corporate Governance attached as Appendix A to the report;
- b) the changes to the Scheme of Delegation shown in Appendix B to the report;
- c) continue with the current format for the Governor Appointments Committee; and
- d) authorise the Monitoring Officer to make the necessary changes to the Constitution, where appropriate.

**Reason for decision:** In respect of a) to be consistent with the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework published by CIPFA/SOLACE. In respect of b) to ensure that planning applications were determined in a timely manner. In respect of c) as the current arrangements were considered satisfactory.

**Alternative options:** None were considered.

**Declarations of interest:** None were made.

**Dispensations:** None were given.

## 52. Cabinet Member Reports and Questions

The Council received the reports by each Cabinet Member at Agenda Item 12. Under Rule 7.3 a period not exceeding 60 minutes was allowed for questions and answers and it was noted that the following councillors had submitted their question in writing to the Monitoring Officer prior to the 10:00 deadline two working days before the date of the Council meeting. Councillors were only allowed to ask one question during that period, but they were entitled to one supplementary question arising directly out of the original question or reply.

### **Question 1 to Councillor Colin Noble from Councillor Caroline Page**

“In 2015/16 Suffolk’s administration awarded special responsibility allowances to 48 out of the 75 Suffolk county councillors. This cost the hard pressed Suffolk taxpayer £335,000 which is £46,500 more than the Suffolk administration spent on special responsibility allowances the year before. How does the Cabinet member justify this sharp rise at a time of continuing belt-tightening?”

### **Response from Councillor Colin Noble**

“As you well know, we introduced an additional Cabinet Member and the members’ allowances are entirely in line with the approved scheme. Now we have a Remuneration Panel that is meeting and we are looking at aspects of it for example the Education Transport Appeals Committee, that has met 12 times and done 25 site visits, which is considerably more than one of the regulatory

committees. So they will look at that in the round for next time. But, as I say, every single allowance that is paid is within the approved Member Allowance Scheme which I believe you voted for as well?"

#### **Supplementary Question from Councillor Caroline Page**

"I kind of suspected the Leader would offer some such explanation as to why 82% of Conservative Councillors get paid Special Responsibility Allowances, though it hardly explains why so many other councillors such as my colleague, Councillor Barber do not. However, last year, the County Council stopped printing bus timetables to save £50k. This had an adverse impact on the elderly, including many of my constituents. Wouldn't it be better if the Leader recognised this when defining additional responsibilities, cut these additional allowances and we spent the money on timetables instead?"

#### **Response from Councillor Colin Noble**

"I think that is something you can put to the Remuneration Panel that they should be focused on bus timetables rather than members allowances. From my point of view, I believe that Councillors offer the best value for money of anybody involved in this Council and I am absolutely delighted with all the people who work incredibly hard for their allowances so they can contribute to the people of Suffolk."

#### **Question 2 to Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger from Councillor Inga Lockington**

"County Councillors were told just a year ago that the Support to Live at Home contract was awarded to successful providers in June 2015 and the Support to Live at Home service would start in September 2015 with a roll out programme starting in the west of the County and to be completed by November. We are now told that over the last few months three Support to Live at Home contracts have ended and the team have worked with other providers and customers to successfully transfer customers and staff to new providers with minimum disruption to customers. With such a record how can County Councillors trust Adult Care contracting processes?"

#### **Response from Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger**

"The market for home care is challenging nationally and locally. In Suffolk and elsewhere it is very difficult for agencies to recruit and keep carers. Changes in the National Living Wage, low unemployment and competitive terms and conditions offered by supermarkets and the image of the role of a carer as a job all contribute to this issue and it is not one where there is an easy solution in the short term. In Suffolk, as for others with many rural areas, we have the difficulties increased on travel times and low numbers of potential carers. Adult and Community Services are working with care providers and the LEP to look for a longer term solution to these issues attempting to improve the image of the profession and make it clear that it is a rewarding and important role where people can, if they wish, progress and develop their careers. We have produced a video and are sharing best practice across providers and are grateful for all ideas of how to tackle this. The contracting process "Support to Live at Home"

helps to address these concerns as it means that companies have a particular volume of work enabling them to offer favourable terms and conditions to their staff.

It is true that in a challenging environment 3 of the providers were unable to continue with the contract. We have listened to these providers and the issues they have experienced and we are currently working with the alternative companies who are operating successfully elsewhere in the county to make sure that care continues for the people of Suffolk just as you have stated in your question. This is our priority: we will continue to review how we award contracts and how we manage them and also to learn from other areas regionally and nationally that are attempting to tackle similar problems.

In an environment where we cannot control many of the elements, where recruitment policies of a supermarket can change and therefore the market in care can change too, we are looking to have contracting processes that enable us to respond to situations flexibly and this is what we have been focusing on.”

#### **Supplementary Question from Councillor Inga Lockington**

“Given that a lot of the differences in cost and supermarkets were known a year ago when we were all given a lovely map of where the different care agencies were working, given that we knew that at that time, what went wrong? Was it that the County Council didn’t give out the right information, or was it the bidders that didn’t bid correctly? What went wrong, because this is just one year and we were given this map?”

#### **Response from Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger**

“I think that I have explained the difficulties of the contract in my previous answer. It is difficult, the domiciliary care market is a very difficult market to manage and that goes for both us through demand and the price that we pay in a competitive market and those of the providers that actually provide that care as well but what I can assure you, is that it is one of our priorities to ensure that this continued care is high quality and best value for the Council and for the people it is provided for and we will continue to work with our providers to ensure that care continues.”

#### **Question 3 to Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger from Councillor Sandra Gage**

“A truly heroic wonderful war veteran who was seriously wounded in active service in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, has moved into sheltered social housing in my Division. Can the Cabinet Member explain why this Council includes his war pension as income, when calculating how much he has to pay for his home care visits?”

#### **Response from Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger**

“Firstly, I would like to say how proud and thankful this authority is to both those who are currently serving for their country and those who have served in the past. With regard to how War Pensions are considered when looking at paying for care, the Government has announced its intention to fully exempt payments from April 2017 in its 2016 budget. War Pensions are currently paid to veterans

injured in active service before 6 April 2005, so presently only the first £10 of the weekly payment is disregarded. Guaranteed Income Payments (GIPs), which are paid to those injured after 6 April 2005 and onwards are already exempt from local authority means testing but that does not apply to those who are not veterans and those who receive Customer Attendance Allowance or Survivor Guaranteed Income Payments and local housing benefit also has to be taken into account when looking at the payment for care. So, in summary, there is only one discretionary criteria and this depends on the particular type of pension currently being received and not knowing the individual circumstances, I cannot comment on his assessment. But if you would like to provide me with details outside this chamber, I am more than happy to look into the situation for you.”

#### **Supplementary Question from Councillor Sandra Gage**

“I would like to discuss it further with you. I think it is rather timely that we have had this in our pigeonholes only today because I did not appreciate the connection, but what I would like to ask, is that other councils have already ceased charging in this particular instance, several years ago, have ceased including his pension as an income in their calculations and I include in that and I have to say Ipswich Borough Council in terms of what he has to pay in terms of social rent, so I would really like to urge you that we look at this one as an example and see whether or not something could be done before the 2017 deadline that you have referred to because I frankly think that given this, it is not good enough.”

Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger acknowledged the points made.

#### **Question 4 to Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger from Councillor Sarah Adams**

The Chairman asked for a written response to the question from Councillor Adams who was not in attendance.

“How many applicants for social care packages and means tested benefits have been refused this year?”

#### **Question 5 to Councillor Colin Noble from Councillor Peter Byatt**

“What measures does SCC have in place to ensure that proper communication and liaison between public services is carried out?”

#### **Response from Councillor Colin Noble**

“Lots is the answer. We have a wide range of quite formal processes and quite informal processes and I like to think that Suffolk County Council tries to lead those. So, from informal networks of how people come together across places, as we look to work in our different communities, to perhaps some of the more formal ones such as Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Forum. Is it perfect? I hope that we try to make sure that major decisions on things that we are doing that both the districts, the boroughs, the health services, the police, everybody shares the information. Can there be instances where that doesn't quite come together? Of course there can because this is a learning process where we are trying to address things but as a generality as I go around the country in different LGA

roles, I do actually find that Suffolk works and comes together in a way that actually a lot of places don't."

### **Supplementary Question from Councillor Peter Byatt**

"May I just put my question in brief context. It wasn't really about the emergency services, its more about public services. I have actually three examples. Twice I have called to Anglian Water myself once regarding a personhole cover and once regarding a problem with drains. They said they would come and look into both. I received a phone call promptly from the engineer in both instances and to paraphrase he said "no mate, it's a highways issue, so you are going to have to phone them". My question is 'why do I have to phone highways when Anglian Water should be able to press a button and send a message to highways saying this is an issue?' Maybe I am wrong, maybe only a minor thing, but we have the IT to do it, or they should have and we as a County Council should be encouraged to look after our residents. And the other one is UK Power Networks. I had an outage in my road the other day and very promptly a generator arrived. We were out for two or three days and all connected up, they sent me text messages but I said 'Where does this information go to, who do you tell?' "Oh, we don't tell nobody mate". So I phoned BBC Radio, I phoned Radio Suffolk. Again, these are things I think are important. In the old days a van would have gone around with a loud hailer telling people this was happening, your power will be restored, tied in with this, we all had an e-mail from Power Network encouraging local residents who are vulnerable to go on-line, a bit tricky – you have to identify them first. The other thing is if you are going to put out radio broadcasts, it's a bit tricky if their power is gone, so that was another issue I came to. But we were talking earlier about vulnerable people and in all seriousness, how can we support those vulnerable people out there in situations like that? Does it have to come back to getting a public service vehicle with a loud hailer on the front saying 'your power will be off for two or three days, or are we going to go back to in times of the plague, go around with a hand cart, ringing, saying 'bring our your vulnerable' but will the portfolio holder not agree that this is something the Council needs to take the lead on particularly with the utilities to find out why they are not talking to each other as well as they should be?"

### **Response from Councillor Colin Noble**

"If you will allow me a bit of latitude, I will bring in Councillor Hicks. This is really important subject and there was definitely a question in there at the end, so I think you raise an important issue: how the way in which the utility companies and ourselves work, particularly around vulnerable people particularly identifying them, around the data that's involved in doing that and how you can share that, I think is important and does warrant perhaps a moment from colleagues, just to very briefly address some of those points. But you have raised some important points, there are reporting tools that do exist I think you raise an important point about what happens when things go wrong and how people who are vulnerable are identified within the system so it is an important point."

### **Response from Councillor Hicks**

"Just a couple of things on that, we do have the Joint Emergency Planning Unit which sits under my portfolio and they are out in all the districts. There are plans out there for real larger scale emergencies and obviously we have seen that in Lowestoft when we had flooding issues along the coast, so we have that piece

of action. There often is a disconnect and you've seen again in Lowestoft with the Kirkley stream that it's a matter of bringing everyone together but when they come together, it works, but it is a matter of getting to that stage and definitely on the smaller stuff it's something that can be picked up, but Anglian Water is a private company."

**Question 6 to Councillor Colin Noble from Councillor Sandy Martin**

"At the Cabinet meeting on the 15th November, Cllr Noble said in reference to new apprenticeship plans that "learning from other places is important as we move forward." How does SCC investigate best practice among other Local Authorities?"

**Response from Councillor Colin Noble**

"So what I am trying to get across though, there are organisations such as the County Councils Network, and through the Local Government Association as well, we try to work in collaboration with other councils around these agendas because I think what we know across local government is there is good practice in different places, and also what you find is we come up with an idea and actually its worth going out to the system and saying 'we've got this idea' because sometimes they say "That work's brilliantly, you should so this thing" and sometimes they say "yeah, we tried that and it did not quite work". So the reality there, is it is very much around trying to share that and I hope that as a Council, I hope that in terms of the Administration, trying to work with all councillors here in terms of going on courses going out on peer reviews and various other things we do all of those things. I think I am also very encouraging of the officers as well to get out there and share in networks and I know a number of my Cabinet colleagues sit across certainly the eastern region in lead member roles as well, where they do share information so it's an incredibly important part of it."

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Sandy Martin**

"In this instance, if it becomes clear that other local authorities are developing better models for the administration and delivery of the Apprenticeship Levy, how long will it take before this Council decides to take a more proactive approach to towards apprentices who are not care leavers?"

**Response from Councillor Colin Noble**

"I do know that the Local Government Association is launching an on-line knowledge hub around some of these issues and we certainly want to pay attention to that and I think, like any Council that wants to improve, it is about looking at the best practice that's out there and if there is better practice than what we are doing, then, quite frankly we will look at that and look to adopt it. It's as simple as that so there is always that opportunity. I know we've had a bit of politics here, but actually that is what this is about. It's about looking at what is out there and trying to find the best way forward on how we deal with things."

**Question 7 to Councillor Tony Goldson from Councillor Kim Clements**

"Does the Council possess figures for the overall number of homeless people in Suffolk?"

### **Response from Councillor Tony Goldson**

“There are two answers, the briefer one is ‘No’. The longer one is there is no available total number of homeless households in Suffolk. Those in priority need for whom there is a Local Authority Statutory duty are however recorded, but these are only a proportion of the total. ‘The vast majority of single homeless people are not considered statutorily homeless’ (IHAG 2014), and of these there is no record. Street counts and estimates of rough sleepers for autumn 2015 indicate 41 rough sleepers in Suffolk, of which 16, that’s 39%, of these were in Ipswich.

However, in a one year period (1 February 2014 to 31 January 2015), 85 clients applied for accommodation to Suffolk Coordination Service (SCS) as ‘rough sleepers’ in Ipswich alone. From April 2015 to March 2016 in Suffolk, 545 were accepted as being homeless and in priority need (HPN). More recent data from April to June 2016 indicates that 127 households in Suffolk were HPN. There is also data on the Public Health Outcomes Framework, but I would be reluctant to use this as a firm indicator.

### **Supplementary Question from Councillor Kim Clements**

“What financial resources of its own has this Council committed to working with other agencies to alleviate the suffering of homeless people?”

### **Response from Councillor Tony Goldson**

“I think it’s all commissioned services but I will check to make sure and get back to you.”

### **Question 8 to Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger from Councillor Helen Armitage**

“Are there any plans to divest Social Workers?”

### **Response from Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger**

“There are currently no plans to divest Social Workers. There is however a discussion taking place about Sensing Change which is a service for people with sensory impairment. The service includes some social work staff as part of its staffing complement. They complete assessments and co-ordinate care plans for people who have visual or sensory impairment. The Social Workers are a small element of this service and, as you know, this Administration has been keen to question and challenge whether divestment can produce a better quality of service at a lower cost to the taxpayer. It is in this context that discussions around Sensing Change have been taking place. As I have said, no clear decision has been made yet.”

### **Supplementary Question from Councillor Helen Armitage**

“Will you be able to give a clearer answer to this question at any time before the end of this Council period next year?”

### **Response from Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger**

“Yes.”

**Question 9 to Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger from Councillor Len Jacklin**

“According to the Adult Safeguarding Annual Report, there has been a 44% increase in elderly care home residents suffering from mistreatment. What is the percentage increase of investigations into this mistreatment and what is the percentage increase in the actions taken?”

**Response from Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger**

“The question is a slight misinterpretation of the data from the report. The proportion of safeguarding concerns raised from residential nursing settings has increased from 38% of the whole volume to 45%. This is not an increase of 44% in concerns in residential settings and the correlation between increasing safeguarding concerns does not mean that there is actually an increase in, as you use the word, ‘mistreatment’. In fact we are seeing a decline year on year on volumes of safeguarding concerns which meet the threshold for a Section 42 investigation, so while there was an increased proportion of concerns raised in residential nursing setting for 2014/15 to 2015/16, fewer of those were safeguarding issues that required an investigation down from 40% to 32%. Of these cases that have been investigated in a residential and nursing setting this year, 50% of customers have had their wishes fully met and 40% have had their wishes partially met and the others are where the outcome has not yet been recorded due to ongoing investigation.”

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Len Jacklin**

“You have partially answered the supplementary that I would have asked, but what I would like is to have those figures that you have just thrown at me as it does need analysis and need thinking about before I can go back with a supplementary but I will supplement it by a written question.”

**Response from Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger**

“I am more than happy to take any question from you at any time.”

**Question 10 to Councillor Tony Goldson from Councillor Janet Craig**

“Can Councillor Goldson tell us whether he has had any correspondence with the Ferns sexual assault referral centres about maintaining their counselling services for victims of sexual assault?”

**Response from Councillor Tony Goldson**

“The Ferns Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) is a very valuable service that is commissioned by NHS England. I have not had any correspondence with the Ferns about counselling services but it is very important that the Ferns has good links with some of the services Suffolk County Council commission, such as our sexual health services. To ensure this happens there are informal links with Public Health and also one of the Public Health team sits on the SARC Strategic Partnership Board which is again chaired by NHS England.

We are not aware of any specific issues relating to counselling services at the Ferns – our understanding is that they do not provide counselling services themselves but they signpost individuals to other organisations which do provide counselling when it is needed.”

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Janet Craig**

“Does this Council not consider that it has at least a partial responsibility of ensuring that this service is properly funded?”

**Response from Councillor Tony Goldson**

“It is funded by the NHS. It is not funded by us.”

**Question 11 to Councillor Gordon Jones from Councillor Sonia Barker**

“It has been stipulated that the establishment of a Combined Authority via the Devolution Deal was a prerequisite to launching an Education Committee. Are arrangements to establish the Education Committee still going ahead as planned, or is this on hold until such a time that the question on Devolution is less confused?”

**Response from Councillor Gordon Jones**

“Senior officers from both Council’s had been working on the possible structures and functions of an Education Committee for the combined Authority. This work also involved the Regional Schools Commissioner and his team. Given the devolution deal with Norfolk will not now proceed we have postponed further talks until there is a clearer view about the options open for Suffolk. This is a prudent approach to take at this stage.”

There was no supplementary question.

**Question 12 to Councillor Gordon Jones from Councillor Peter Gardiner**

“Can the portfolio holder for Children and Young People confirm whether this Council intends to support the Foyer for Ipswich into the future?”

**Response from Councillor Gordon Jones**

“The Foyer provides Housing Related Support services. Through our re-commissioning of Housing Related Support for adults and children, the Council has ensured that both the level and type of this support will continue to be available to young people in Ipswich.

As a result of detailed analysis on where most demand for these services is around the county, provision will be increasing in Ipswich. The selection of specific providers of these services is currently subject to formal procurement, in line with our legal responsibilities.”

**Supplementary Question from Peter Gardiner**

“In view of the fact that it appears the criteria may be very difficult for the Foyer to meet to put their bid in, if it were to close, has the Council estimated the cost of finding alternative places?”

**Response from Councillor Gordon Jones**

“As I pointed out, it is open to procurement at the moment and the Council is confident of providers coming forward to meet the needs that we have identified but either Councillor Hopfensperger or myself will keep you updated on that.”

*The meeting closed at 4.57 p.m.*

Chairman

## **Suffolk County Council 8 December 2016**

### **Agenda Item 6 – Public Questions**

#### **Question 1 - from Ipswich Borough Councillor Glen Chisholm to Councillor Gordon Jones**

“In schools such as Westbourne Academy which is in my ward there are 996 students, 270 of them take English as an Additional Language (EAL) it takes two years to learn basic English, but the children are only funded for one year.

What support is there for Academies with students for whom English is an additional language?”

#### **Answer from Councillor Gordon Jones**

“Academy schools sit outside the control of the County Council. Academies are directly funded from the Government and can use their financial resources as they wish to support their children. This autonomy around how resources are used is a feature of Academy status. The Academy can also apply to its sponsor for additional advice and support around EAL.

The local authority no longer provides support as the funding has been transferred to the schools. There are a number of national and regional organisations who can also provide advice and support.”

#### **Supplementary Question**

“The ethnic minority achievement group which the County Council used to provide has been disbanded and secondary schools are meant to make their own provision. Does Councillor Jones think that providing this sort of specialist service is realistic for individual schools?”

#### **Answer from Councillor Gordon Jones**

“As I am sure you are aware, Westbourne Academy is part of a large Academy Trust, the Academy Transformation Trust (ATT). Leaders at the school can seek examples of effective EAL support from across the Trust schools in order to support the children at Westbourne. It is very likely that the issue of EAL support is an issue across other ATT schools and I am sure that they are well aware of their responsibilities and the actions they can take.”

## **Question 2 – from Rob Bridgeman for Councillor James Finch**

“Following the recent all day closure of the Orwell Bridge, it is clear that this Council should make the construction of an Ipswich Northern Relief Road a priority. Can the Cabinet Member tell me when the feasibility study for this will be completed and published?”

### **Answer from Councillor James Finch**

“The closure of the Orwell Bridge inevitably results in high levels of congestion across the Ipswich area. Weekday traffic flow on the Orwell Bridge is currently around 68,000 vehicles per day. Traffic on other east-west routes already totals over 93,000 and when the A14 is closed, therefore an additional 68,000 vehicles is well beyond the capacity of the local network to cope.

Now, closure of the A14, whilst highly disruptive when it happens, is actually an unusual occurrence, and I think it is fair to say that we have not had it closed for 12 hours for many years. However, the east-west level of transport across the Ipswich area, if you add those two figures together is 161,000 vehicles per day and is such that the network is clearly under pressure at those peak times. Further planned growth suggests that pressure on the network is likely to increase.

Now one of the things we as a County Council do is to promote alternatives to the car for many short journeys, which actually account for a significant number of local trips, and we are investigating short, medium, and longer term highway improvements to address the congestion in Ipswich area.

Over the next two years some £5 million will be invested in localised improvements to traffic flow on the main roads into Ipswich, to make changes such as those already introduced in the Nacton area recently. In addition, we have also recently had confirmed almost £100 million from the Department for Transport for Suffolk for the delivery of a new crossing of the Upper Orwell. Preparatory work is now well advanced on that and the start of work is planned for 2019/20.

Working closely with neighbouring district and borough councils, Suffolk County Council is carrying out a feasibility study into the options for a relief road, distributor road, to the north of Ipswich. This work is closely linked to the options for future growth of housing and employment in the wider Ipswich area and it is important that those aspects are included in that feasibility study and that is crucial to any business case we need to put forward for business funding. Our plan is to provide a progress report before Christmas and that will then set out the next steps, but it won't be the conclusion of the feasibility study.”

### **Supplementary question**

“Given your assertion that a feasibility study of the northern bypass is taking place, can you explain if this important scheme was raised with the Transport Secretary when

you met him recently as it's a scheme that many people in Ipswich believe will require major funding?"

**Answer from Councillor James Finch**

"Quite frankly, I can't remember if I raised it or not. I raised so many things with him, but actually we have been working very closely on the RIS project, that's what we were talking about. The Road Investment Strategy project which is involving Highways England and part of that proposal is what is termed as RIS2 (Road Investment Strategy period two) which includes the A14 around Ipswich, Bury and Newmarket and there is also a feasibility study to encompass the northern distributor road, relief road as well. The traffic growth that occurs on the A14 and the trunk roads which is what Highways England is responsible for, they do have to take account of the effect, whether they are open or closed, on the surrounding roads. That is why we have included that all encompassing feasibility study of the surrounding areas."

This page is intentionally blank.