

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 13 September 2016 at 2.00 pm in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, Ipswich.

Present: Councillors Colin Noble (Chairman), Jane Storey (Vice Chairman), James Finch, Matthew Hicks, Beccy Hopfensperger, Christopher Hudson, Gordon Jones and Richard Smith MVO

Also present: Councillors Sonia Barker, Peter Beer, Kathy Bole, Stephen Burroughes, Terry Clements, James Crossley, Mary Evans, John Field, Sandra Gage, Peter Gardiner, Leonard Jacklin, Inga Lockington, Sandy Martin, Bill Mountford, Graham Newman, Caroline Page, Reg Silvester, Joanna Spicer and David Wood

Supporting officers present: Susan Cassedy (Democratic Services Officer)

13. Election of Vice Chairman

The Chairman advised that the inclusion of this item on the agenda was an administrative error and confirmed that the Vice Chairman had been elected at a previous Cabinet meeting.

14. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tony Goldson, Cabinet Member for Health.

15. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillor Jane Storey, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Broadband and Rural Issues and Localities declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 7 "Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2015/17" by virtue of the fact that she was a member of the Suffolk Local Access Forum.

16. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17. Public Questions

There were no public questions received.

18. Standing Item – Update from the Scrutiny Chairman

At Agenda Item 6 the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee provided the Cabinet with an update on recent Scrutiny activity.

Decision: The Cabinet noted the report.

Reason for decision: The Cabinet recognised the importance of the Scrutiny function.

Comments by other councillors: A Local Councillor expressed concern over the accountability of the decision making regarding the development of primary care services at Hopton and Stanton.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None reported.

19. **Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2015/17**

A report at Agenda Item 7 by the Director for Resource Management invited the Cabinet to receive the annual report of the Suffolk Local Access Forum

The Chairman welcomed Barry Hall, Chairman, Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) to the meeting and invited him to present the report.

Decision: The Cabinet:

- i) Accepted the 2015/16 annual report of the SLAF; and
- ii) Noted the report's recommendations and the action that the Council was taking to address these recommendations.

Reason for decision: The Suffolk Local Access Forum was required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to submit an annual report on rights of way and access matters to the Council. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs guidance stated: "We would expect the authority to respond positively to the forum's annual report and to say what actions they have taken on the advice and recommendations of the forum."

Comments by other councillors: The Cabinet Member for Broadband and Rural Issues and Localities, who sat on the SLAF advised that the administration for the SLAF was carried out by the council, however the SLAF was very independent and offered very good value for money.

In response to councillors' questions the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport together with Barry Hall, Chairman, SLAF provided the following information:

- i) SLAF would take on board the concerns of the local councillor for the whole of the Sizewell C site regarding EDF stating they did not wish the public to have access to land at the Aldhurst Farm Development on which lagoons had now been developed due to the possible risk of drowning.
- ii) The SLAF was keen to be involved in the development of the Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan and was aware that long standing footpaths did not appear on the definitive map for Ipswich and this would be pursued in the coming year.
- iii) Many Parishes had previously taken advantage of the opportunity to be involved in the maintenance of footpaths and the Council would look to

extend this invitation again as the importance of local knowledge was recognised.

- iv) SLAF was keen to support the Natural England consultation taking place in October/November 2016 on the extension to Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB on the southern side of the Stour.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport thanked Barry Hall, Chairman, SLAF and his team for their hard work.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: Councillor Jane Storey, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Broadband and Rural Issues and Localities declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of the fact that she was a member of the Suffolk Local Access Forum.

Dispensations: None reported.

20. Annual Safeguarding Reports

A Report at Agenda Item 9 by the Corporate Director for Children and Adults invited the cabinet to comment on proposed priorities for Safeguarding.

The Chairman welcomed Sue Hadley, Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) to the meeting and invited her to present the LSCB Annual report.

Decision: The Cabinet:

- i) received the reports on how effective Suffolk County Council and partners were in safeguarding vulnerable children in Suffolk; and
- ii) received and accepted the recommended priorities in the LSCB annual report for the coming year.

Reason for decision: Local authorities had overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area. They had a number of statutory functions under the 1989 and 2004 Children Acts. This included specific duties in relation to children in need and children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Under section 14a of the Children Act 2004 the LSCB chair must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and on promoting the welfare of children in the local area. Statutory guidance required that this must be presented to the Leader of Council and the Chief Executive.

Comments by other councillors: Sue Hadley advised councillors that the LSCB had taken particular interest in the 2015 Cyber Survey and confirmed that there was evidence that cyber bullying experiences had significant impact on a child's emotional wellbeing. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills informed Cabinet that over 4,000 people responded to the survey and a successful conference had been held. This would now be held every year in response to attendee demand, the next conference taking place in February 2017.

Sue Hadley advised that the definition of a child in need was a child working with children's services but was not in local authority care or on a child protection plan.

Sue Hadley advised that any member of the public could make contact if they had any concern over a child's wellbeing.

In response to a councillor's concern about the change in court boundaries, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills reminded the Chamber that the County Council voted in favour of a motion to monitor the impact these changes would have.

Sue Hadley confirmed that Suffolk Police did use the same referral form for the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) however, as with the Ambulance Service, they did not always have the necessary information to complete the form at the time when an incident occurred.

In response to a councillor's concern about the uptake of schools choosing to receive notifications of domestic abuse, an officer explained that the 28% current take up was considered good progress to date. Sue Hadley informed the councillor that, although they could not insist on schools taking part, the Education Safety Coordinator was speaking to all schools on why they should participate, providing them with examples from other Headteachers.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills thanked Sue Hadley, Independent Chair, LSCB for all her hard work.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None reported.

21. Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2015/16 and Children in Care and Care Leavers Council (C2C) Annual Report 2015/16

A Report at Agenda Item 10 by the Corporate Director for Children and Adults invited the Cabinet to note the annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board in order to monitor and challenge the quality of services to children in care and care leavers. The report also included the Board's priorities for 2016/17 mutually-agreed with the Children in Care Council and CYP's priorities to ensure a sufficiency of placements for children in care.

The Chairman welcomed Aaron Williams, Chairman of the Children in Care Council to the meeting and invited him to present the Care Leavers Council Annual Report.

Decision: The Cabinet:

- i) noted the progress made by the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) in raising the awareness of Members and senior officers in Suffolk County Council and partner agencies of their corporate parenting responsibilities;
- ii) endorsed the continuing role of the Board as champions for the voice of children in care and care leavers, acting 'as if they are our child';
- iii) noted the performance and achievements of the CPB in meeting its 2014-15 *[NB. subsequent to the meeting it was noted that this should be 2015,16]* priorities to promote and improve outcomes for looked after children and care leavers; and
- iv) noted and agreed the proposed priorities for the CPB for 2015/16 *[NB. subsequent to the meeting it was noted that this should be 2016/17]*

Reason for decision: In recognition of the continuing importance of services specifically provided for Children in Care and the effectiveness of agencies in discharging their Corporate Parenting responsibilities this report had been provided to Cabinet and provided information on the work of the Corporate Parenting Board over the last year (2015/16).

Cabinet noted that this would assist it in fulfilling its duty to ensure that the interests of children in care and care leavers were appropriately reflected in all Council policies and in the priorities of the Children's Trust commissioning group, and Local Safeguarding Children and Health and Wellbeing Boards. The work of the Corporate Parenting Board and C2C was acknowledged to be effective in the most recent Ofsted Inspection of services provided for children in care and care leavers undertaken at the end of 2015.

The report provided Cabinet with an overview of the work of the CPB and highlighted the achievements and challenges the Board had identified, setting out the proposed actions for the coming year.

Comments by other councillors: In recognising that children in care was one of the council's most important responsibilities the Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection noted how the council's work in this area had developed and grown and that he was proud of what had been achieved.

In response to a councillor's query regarding the closure of the Foyer in Ipswich, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills advised that it was to close as the management had decided not to continue due to the cost of bringing it up to an acceptable standard.

With regard to a councillor's query about appropriate accommodation for care leavers, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills stated that he did not believe there to be any young people currently in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation and agreed to send councillors information on how many young people had gone into B&B accommodation after leaving care in the recent past. A councillor noted that the Council and Ipswich Borough Council were working with young people leaving care to support them in becoming self-supporting adults, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills stated that this was an example of agencies, all wanting the same thing, working together.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills confirmed that the Council always put the welfare of a child above financial considerations and that this did have consequences to the budget.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills thanked Aaron Williams, Chairman of the Children in Care Council for all his hard work.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None reported.

22. Funding for Changes to Speed Limits

A report at Agenda Item 10 by the Director for Resource Management invited the Cabinet to approve the adoption of a revised Speed Limit Policy that provided

clearer parameters for the consideration of valid speed limit change requests in order to avoid abortive work or raise false hopes.

Decision: The Cabinet agreed that all requests for speed limit changes from communities are directed to the local County Councillor and, if they were supported, that all costs of developing the changes, including preparations for the Speed Limit Cases Panel, be funded from Councillors' Local Highway Budgets.

Reason for decision: When the speed limit policies were approved, no budget was allocated for the associated work. Henceforth, all speed limit work undertaken by Suffolk Highways needed to be on a fully cost recoverable basis so a funding source was now required.

Comments by other councillors: The Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage stated that he understood that the decision had to be made although he did not necessarily agree that the whole costing should come from a councillor's highway budget and he did not wish to exclude contributions coming from other sources, including town and Parish Councils. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport endorsed the approach of councillors acquiring funding from other sources to contribute to the cost of the schemes.

In response to councillors raising concern about the number of schemes not having been completed, officers referred to paragraphs 27 and 28 of the report which provided information on schemes completed and advised that the schemes that were not previously delivered, were now being delivered.

Councillors noted the varied quality of reports going to the Speed Limit Cases Panel and, if charging was to be involved, councillors should have access to a report template so that they could have the opportunity to write the reports. Officers advised that although input was welcomed from the parish and the local councillor the completion of the report required some technical information gathering and engineering judgement and that independent view was an important part of the process. In recognising the variable quality of reports, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport agreed to send all councillors an email explaining the complexity of the reports.

In response to a councillor raising concern about over promising the delivery of schemes in their role as local councillors whose budgets got committed elsewhere, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport agreed to discuss the councillor's issues outside of the meeting.

A councillor advised that she had raised her concern about there being no dedicated budget when she sat on the Policy Development Panel in 2014. She noted that not only would the individual councillor now have to pay they would also have to pay up to £2,000 on designs before even getting to the Speed Limit Cases Panel. The Councillor considered that speed limits would only be reduced in those communities able to afford the money when the priority should be where there would be most benefit.

In response to a councillor's concerns the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport advised that the intention of the Transformation Programme was to have an integrated team which would speed up the delivery of the schemes and to drive down costs. In acknowledging that design costs were an annoyance to councillors, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport advised that the cost of scheme designs had been challenged.

The Chairman requested that an email be sent to all councillors to ensure that they were all aware that they could access the balances of their highways budgets via the councillors' area of the Council's intranet system.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None reported.

23. Peasehall and Yoxford Primary Schools

A report at Agenda Item 12 by the Corporate Director for Children and Adults invited the Cabinet to consider the results of public consultation on the future of Middleton, Peasehall, and Yoxford Primary Schools; and approve the publication of statutory notices proposing changes to Middleton, Peasehall and Yoxford Primary Schools

Decision: The Cabinet agreed to publish statutory notices to close Peasehall Primary School and expand Yoxford Primary School from a pupil admission number (PAN) of 10 to 15.

Reason for decision: The proposal to close Peasehall and expand Yoxford Primary Schools would address the issue of the longer term viability of Peasehall and Yoxford Primary Schools and would:

- Improve significantly the education of Peasehall and Yoxford pupils by enabling them to be educated within a larger school community which would also bring cultural, social and sporting benefits;
- create a strong staff structure on one site and build on the improvements already being made;
- locate a school centrally in the area where the greatest number of children live;
- provide a school which could be expanded in the future to take pupils from the wider area.

Comments by other councillors: A Local Councillor accepted, with sadness, that this was the best way forward and acknowledged the great facilities at Yoxford Primary School.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills thanked the Local Councillors involved for their input.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None reported.

24. 2016/17 Forecast Revenue and Capital Spending

A report at Agenda Item 12 by the Director for Resource Management invited the Cabinet to consider the Council's latest Revenue and Capital financial position.

Decision: The Cabinet:

- i) noted the forecast outturn position for 2016/17 for revenue and capital spending;
- ii) agreed that the budget was being appropriately managed by Officers to remain within the resource limit agreed by the Council; and

- iii) noted the significant transfers (virements) in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

Reason for decision: The paper presented a forecast for the 2016/17 revenue and capital budgets based on expenditure trends and information available at the end of July 2016.

Comments by other councillors: A councillor commented that there seemed to be a pattern with the report setting out a position very similar to papers received each autumn and questioned the Administration's use of Reserves. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage stated that the Administration had a good reputation in financial management. The councillor was informed that, yes there may be a pattern, but the paper did show the financial pressures and it was the Administration's job to bring these back into line. With regard to Reserves, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage advised that they were made up of different categories and were considered by the Director for Resource Management to be barely adequate. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage explained that it would be a very difficult task to draw up a budget for 2017/18 and that he was very pleased that the Council had the reserves to act as a buffer. With regard to the impact on services, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage advised that Children and Adult services continued to be the priority with their net budgets increasing in the current financial year.

In response to a councillor's questions the Cabinet Member for Finance and Heritage advised that:

- i) The £40m for the two river crossings was made up of a mixture of Capital (£30m) and Revenue (£10m).
- ii) The Council did receive funding from central government for unaccompanied asylum seeking children which was guaranteed for 2 years. The Council had, so far, taken 15 of the children that had arrived via Kent.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport wished to congratulate his officers who had succeeded in obtaining grant money for highways projects.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None reported.

25. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 5.00 pm.

Chairman