

Minutes of the Suffolk County Council Meeting held on 16 March 2017 at 2.00 pm 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, Terry Clements, Janet Craig, Mary Evans, John Field, Jessica Fleming, Julian Flood, Sandra Gage, Peter Gardiner, Mandy Gaylard, Tony Goldson, John Goodwin, Michael Gower, 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, Penny Otton, Keith Patience, Bert Poole, Chris Punt, Bill Quinton, Andrew Reid, David Ritchie, Bryony Rudkin, John Sayers, Stephen Searle, Trevor Sheldrick, Reg Silvester, Richard Smith MVO, Joanna Spicer, Sarah Stamp, Jane Storey, Andrew Stringer, Robin Vickery, Paul West, Robert Whiting and David Wood.

#### **60. Thought for the Day**

Council received a thought for the day from Diana Porter, Chief Executive and Founder of Fresh Start – new beginnings.

#### **61. Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed people to the meeting and thanked Diana Porter for her presentation.

##### Senior Staff Leaving

The Chairman announced that Valerie Hill, MVO, would be retiring year after 42 years of local government service in Suffolk, during which time she had personally supported various Chief Executives, 5 Lord Lieutenants of Suffolk and 29 Chairmen of the County Council. In 2007, Her Majesty the Queen recognised Valerie's work as Assistant to the Clerk of the Lieutenancy of Suffolk for over 30 years by appointing Valerie to the Royal Victorian Order. The Chairman referred to Valerie's tireless work and her encyclopaedic knowledge of etiquette and her many years' experience of organising complex royal visits and civic events. He expressed his personal gratitude, as Chairman, for the helpful advice and guidance and support given to him during his tenure and on behalf of the Council wished her all the best in her retirement, and thanked her for 42 years of exemplary service.

[Members and officers stood and applauded Valerie Hill.]

The Chairman also announced that Geoff Dobson, would be retiring at the end of May after 40 years' in local government. Geoff had been with the Council since 2006 when he joined as Interim Strategic Finance Manager and progressed to his current role of Director of Resource Management. As Director he had led a wide and diverse group of services including roads and transport, environment and waste management and economic growth and infrastructure as well as finance. The Chairman paid tribute to Geoff's sound financial judgement and highlighted a number of positions Geoff also held outside the Council and commented that it was testament to Geoff that that the Council had been able to develop a strategy to respond to the recent financial challenges.

[Members and officers stood and applauded Geoff Dobson.]

#### Senior Staff starting

The Chairman informed Council of the appointment of Andrew St Ledger as the new Head of Communications and Media on 10 April and thanked Adam Barnes for acting as Interim Head of Communications.

#### Awards

The Chairman announced the following awards:

The Suffolk Youth Offending Service was given the Youth Justice Board Effective Practice Award for the Enhanced Triage Programme in November 2016 and the Restorative Service Quality Mark from the Restorative Justice Council.

Suffolk County Council's Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) had received a Special Commendation for its 'Teaching Controversial Issues' Toolkit

#### Major Development

The Chairman was pleased to announce that Foster and Partners had been selected as the architectural team to join the Orwell Crossings Project in Ipswich and confirmed that the Council was working with Design Council Gabe to develop design ideas for the Lake Lothing third crossing and local people could share their views.

The Chairman then invited Councillor Goldson to address the Council to make an appeal on behalf of the hunger crisis in East Africa.

#### County Councillors standing down

The Chairman reported that not all councillors were standing at the next election on 4 May 2017. On behalf of the Council, and in recognition of their public service, the Chairman presented a small clock as a token of thanks to those councillors present who wished to receive the token. Those presented were:

Councillors Jenny Antill, Nick Barber, Michael Bond, Tony Brown, Terry Clements, John Goodwin, Michael Gower, Chris Punt and Sarah Stamp.

## **62. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kim Clements, James Crossley, Mark Ereira, James Finch, Gary Green, Caroline Page, Julia Truelove and James Waters.

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

The following Councillors declared a local non pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 10 'Pension Fund Pooling – Inter Authority Agreement' by virtue of their membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme:

Sarah Adams, Peter Beer, Janet Craig, Mandy Gaylard, Beccy Hopfensperger, Christopher Hudson, Len Jacklin, Guy McGregor, Keith Patience, Bill Quinton, Andrew Reid, Richard Smith and Robert Whiting.

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

The minutes of the Council meeting on 9 February 2017 were agreed as a correct record and were subsequently signed by the Chairman.

### **65. Public Questions**

In accordance with Rule 28.2 of the Council's Rules of Procedure (Part 2 of the Constitution), the Chairman reported that no public questions had been received.

### **66. Police and Crime Commissioner**

At Agenda Item 7 Council received an oral update from Tim Passmore, the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner and responded to questions asked by Councillors West, McGregor, Lockington and Gaylard.

### **67. Motions**

At Agenda Item 8, in accordance with Rule 3.1, two Motions were received. They were considered and resolved in the order of receipt.

Motion 1 - Proposed by Councillor Sandra Gage and seconded by Councillor Peter Byatt

*"Highways Maintenance Permit Scheme*

*This Council understands the importance of keeping our county road network open and available to all for the benefit of sustainable economic growth of Suffolk communities and businesses.*

*This Council is therefore committed, as the highway authority, to providing Suffolk with both a high standard road network and to take appropriate action to ensure any disruption, due to roadworks, is effectively managed to the benefit of Suffolk and the travelling public.*

*Therefore, this Council calls on the administration to use best practice already in place elsewhere in many Local Authorities across England and adopt a Highways Permit Scheme to:*

*- Facilitate the better coordination and cooperation between this Highway Authority, utility companies and any other organisations seeking to undertake roadworks*

*- Minimise the impact of roadworks by rigorously requiring applications to work in the highway to be for the least inconvenience to the public, and for all overrunning of works to be subject to an appropriate penalty*

*- Improve the confidence of Suffolk residents in the actual roadworks information published."*

In proposing the motion, Councillor Sandra Gage referred to the impact of roadworks on residents and drivers and encouraged the introduction of a permit scheme for utility companies to encourage greater co-ordination and control of roadworks. She referred to benefits in reduced utilities costs and reduced duration of works, and to Surrey County Council's initial set up costs being recovered by permit fees net income. Councillor Gage also referred to savings made at Kent County Council estimated to reduce fuel costs, carbon emissions and reduce the number of crashes, and that permit schemes elsewhere had funded regular inspection of highways as opposed to the Council's current policy where programmes that had over-run were not being managed effectively.

In support of the motion, members referred to concerns of residents about traffic congestion, problems of poor co-ordination, disruption to bus services and potential for improved highways performance. A councillor referred to the impact roadworks had had in Oulton Broad where drivers had used unofficial diversion routes and the road surface had broken up leaving massive potholes and collapsed drains with the Council having to resurface roads. Another councillor referred to roadworks where there was no person on site for days on end and some roads being closed for months saying that contractors would not move swiftly but a permit scheme could attract penalties on schemes which overrun. A suggestion was made that the permit scheme could be extended to individual councillor's local highways budget. Comments were also made about the impact on people's health of stand still traffic and to a utility company that had finished work but not removed signage resulting in bus cancellation for an additional two weeks.

Councillors who were not in support of the motion referred to the need to ensure the safety of road workers, the current highways transformation programme which was working with utilities to give closer collaboration, and more proactive involvement with utilities. It was commented that the proposals would introduce a bureaucratic process and require more officers to administer. Another councillor commented on likelihood of longer lead in times, the fact that works were already programmed in, and commended highways' approach to work around schools which was supported by local residents, and the need to respond quickly to emergency work. Comments were also made about the unknown cost of introduction of a permit scheme and the need for a business case with costs and benefits to be considered.

On a vote being taken 31 councillors voted in favour of the motion and 34 councillors voted against. There were no abstentions.

**Decision:** The Council rejected motion 1.

**Reason for decision:** The majority of councillors present did not support the motion.

**Alternative options:** The Council could have accepted the motion as referred to above.

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

**Dispensations:** None were given.

*At 4:05 pm the Chairman adjourned the meeting.*

*At 4.22 pm the meeting was reconvened.*

Motion 2 - Proposed by Councillor Julian Flood and seconded by Councillor Tony Brown

*“This council demands that LEP decisions which affect Suffolk’s residents are brought under full democratic control.”*

In introducing the motion, Councillor Julian Flood referred to the financial impact of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) being more than that of Forest Heath District Council, yet there were no reports from the Local Enterprise Partnership to full Council. He commented that the LEP should be open to democratic scrutiny and proposed that the LEP should be incorporated within democratic bodies of the County Council so that it could maximise benefits and accountability to Suffolk.

In support of the motion councillors commented on the benefits of identification of where infrastructure should be, and provision of opportunity for councillors to be asked for their views on where money should be spent or provide feedback on plans. A member commented that he would like to be made aware of how people can influence the NALEP and another advocated NALEP meetings being open to the public, asking if the Leader would report back to the Council on decisions made by the Board on behalf of the people of Suffolk. Other comments from councillors referred to not being able to explain to parish councils how proposed schemes arose, a lack of recognition by the Board of agricultural and rural heritage, food production and tourism or impact of proposed housing on roads and water. A suggestion was made that LEP’s should be dissolved and monies restored to local authorities.

Speaking against the motion, Councillor Noble referred to the importance of business and commerce to the economy, to his role on the NALEP Board and his interface with all democratically elected representatives and health services, clinical commissioning groups, and the Health and Wellbeing Board which debate and work together. Comments were made that the NALEP minutes were published on its website, unless they were commercially sensitive, newsletters were also available there to see what money is being spent. It was also commented that the Council’s Scrutiny Committee had scrutinised the NALEP and the Cabinet had discussed the strategic economic plan and the Growth Deal. It was commented that Members of the Board included other Council Leaders as well as other outstanding business leaders, and the NALEP had an impressive track record of attracting new investment and gaining matched funding leading to many new jobs, extra prosperity and enterprise zones for new business and was one of the best performing LEP’s in England. Examples were given of benefits including major project enterprise zones, Beccles southern relief road, the new bridge in Lowestoft, the wet dock crossing in Ipswich and support to protection of landscapes. Additional support was given to councillors being able to undertake further scrutiny individual councillors could ask questions of the Board members

On a vote being taken, 10 councillors voted in favour of the motion, 37 voted against and there were 13 abstentions.

**Decision:** The Council rejected motion 2.

**Reason for decision:** The majority of councillors did not support the motion.

**Alternative options:** The Council could have accepted the motion as referred to above.

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

**Dispensations:** None were given.

#### **68. Pay Policy Statement 2017/18**

Council considered a report at Agenda Item 9 'Pay Statement 2017/18' by the Director of Resource Management which sought the Council's approval to the proposed statement.

In proposing the report, Councillor Storey highlighted the value of all staff within the Council and a change to the Council's policy with regard to reemployment of staff who had previously left the Council. Councillor Storey clarified that paragraphs 45 and 50 of the report referred to £50,000 per annum.

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

- a) Approve the Pay Statement for 2017/18, and
- b) Authorise the Director of Resource Management to amend the Pay Policy Statement to reflect any legislative changes during 2017/2018.

**Reason for decision:** Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to produce a Pay Statement for each year.

**Alternative options:** None were considered.

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

**Dispensations:** None were given.

#### **69. Pension Fund Pooling – Inter Authority Agreement**

Council considered a report at Agenda Item 10 'Pension Fund Pooling – Inter Authority Agreement' by the Director of Resource Management which sought the Council's approval of the appropriate decisions, which had been discussed and were recommended to the County Council by the Pension Fund Committee, to enable Suffolk County Council to continue to participate in the ACCESS Pool.

In introducing the report and recommendations of the Pension Fund Committee, Councillor Andrew Reid thanked members of the Committee and paid tribute to the former Chairman, Councillor Peter Bellfield for their part in helping the Suffolk Local Government Pension Fund go from strength to strength to become joint 9<sup>th</sup> highest performing fund. Councillor Reid commented that the fund was invested over a range of assets including a minority in FTSE 100 and the majority in others including private equity, infrastructure and woodland.

**Decision:** Council agreed by a show of hands:

- a) to delegate authority to the Director of Resource Management in consultation with the Chairman of the Pension Fund Committee to finalise and agree the terms of the IAA in order to implement the pooling arrangements, and

the Council resolves to delegate the functions to the joint committee as specified in Appendix 1 of the report with effect from the date of execution of the IAA.

b) to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to make consequential amendments to the County Council's Constitution to reflect the agreed pooling arrangements and the creation of the Joint Governance Committee.

**Reason for decision:** The IAA is required to create the Joint Governance Committee which will take decisions on behalf of the 11 Pension Funds collectively. All Funds need to accept these terms so that the pool can progress.

**Alternative options:** The County Council could have decided to enter into an alternative pooling arrangement.

**Declarations of interest:** Members made declarations of interest as referred to in minute 63 above.

**Dispensations:** None were required.

## **70. Annual Report of the Audit Committee**

Council considered a report at Agenda Item 11 'Annual Report of the Audit Committee' which members of Council were invited to consider and comment on.

In introducing the report Councillor Bond commented on the internal audit team only having 7 people and being recognised nationally as the best public sector audit team for its agile and swift approach. He commended Peter Frost and the Audit team and Louise Ainsley for the End of Year Accounts receiving an 'unqualified' report from the Council's external auditors, and commented on the support of Linda Pattle for him as Chairman and the Audit Committee. Comments for other councillors endorsed praise for the Audit team and members of the Audit Committee.

**Decision:** Councillors approved the Annual Report of the Audit Committee.

**Reason for decision:** Members had the opportunity to consider and comment on the work of the Audit Committee.

**Alternative options:** Councillors could have made comments to the Chairman of the Audit Committee or to the Head of Audit Services.

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

**Dispensations:** None were given.

## **71. Review of Scrutiny Activity 2016-17**

Council considered a report at Agenda Item 12 on 'Review of Scrutiny Activity 2016-17' which provided Council with an update on scrutiny activity since the last report to Council on 10 December 2015.

In introducing the report, Councillor Mary Evans referred to joint working with district and borough councils in scrutiny of the proposed Suffolk devolution and expressed her hope that the Council had not lost sight of joint working. She referred to scrutiny being effective when recommendations were acted upon and spoke of two key areas of scrutiny around consultation and contracting and procurement where councillors were acting as critical friends. Councillor Evans also referred to the work of the Police and Crime Panel, Health Scrutiny

Committee and Education and Children's Services scrutiny of child exploitation across the county and the talented and dedicated staff supporting the scrutiny committees.

Comments from other councillors paid tribute to Councillor Evans as an excellent Chairman, the non-political approach to scrutiny the range of processes scrutinised, recommendations made and accepted by Cabinet. Councillors commented on the format of pre-decision budget scrutiny, the use of external support to challenge and inform recommendations, the extensive scrutiny of highways, the use of appreciative scrutiny and the value of getting the right people as witnesses to give an honest view. One councillor commented on the make-up of the Education and Children's Services Committee and suggested it be reviewed with regard to celebrating diversity and multi-faith membership and another encouraged greater vigilance by councillors within communities to ensure children requiring intervention got their needs addressed.

**Decision:** Councillors approved the report on the review of Scrutiny Activity 2016-17.

**Reason for decision:** Members had the opportunity to consider and comment on the work of scrutiny committees.

**Alternative options:** None were considered.

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

**Dispensations:** None were given.

## 72. Amendments to the Constitution

At Agenda Item 13 members considered a report by the Director of Resource Management on proposals from the Constitution Working Party with regard to traffic regulation orders and JNC for Chief Executives of Local Authorities.

**Decision:** Council agreed by a show of hands:

- a) that the criteria for considering permanent and temporary traffic regulation orders be more closely defined by the Assistant Director Operational Highways in conjunction with the Speed Limit Cases Panel; and
- b) the key principles of a revised procedure in relation to making decisions on traffic regulation orders detailed in paragraph 19; and
- c) the changes to Part 8 of the Constitution as shown in Appendix A
- d) to authorise the Monitoring Officer to make the necessary changes to the Constitution, where appropriate.

**Reason for decision:** In respect of a) and b) the time taken to implement traffic regulation orders in Suffolk was already considered as lengthier and costlier than it needed to be and the volume of work was known to be increasing significantly due to a number of highway improvement schemes being progressed over the next two years. In respect of c) to ensure that the arrangements for the appointment and dismissal of the Head of Paid Service were in accordance with legislation and conditions of service.

**Alternative options:** The Council could have referred the matters back to the Constitution Working Party.

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

**Dispensations:** None were given.

### **73. Cabinet Member Reports and Questions**

The Council received the reports by each Cabinet Member at Agenda Item 14. 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 a.m. 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 from the original question or reply.

The Chairman reported that 10 questions had been received from Councillors.

It was proposed that Councillors who had asked a question could receive a written response rather than prolong the meeting further. Having consulted with his group colleagues, Sandy Martin, as Leader of the Labour Group, confirmed this would be acceptable, provided each person who had asked a question would be able to also ask a supplementary question and receive a response. The questions and responses given in writing are recorded as Appendix 1.

The following questions were asked, and responded to, at the meeting:

#### **Question 1 to Councillor Matthew Hicks from Councillor David Wood**

“Could the Portfolio Holder please tell me why the Suffolk Fire & Rescue Service’s review of the Reduced Crewing Policy is not part of the formal IRMP procedure, thereby giving the public and Councillors of Suffolk a chance to have their say and see the proposals before they are adopted?”

#### **Response from Councillor Hicks**

“The Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan sets out the future intentions of the Fire and Rescue Service to look at ways in which we can crew engines differently, seek out opportunities to improve the availability of on-call firefighters, and respond appropriately and safely to emergencies in local and rural communities.

It is my view that the question of crewing reserve is largely an operational matter. Councillor Wood will be aware that Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has had a ‘reduced crew’ policy in fact in place for many years and the current review is being led by the Chief Fire Officer Mark Hardingham.

Councillor Wood you are also a member of the Fire and Rescue Service Steering Group that is comprised of a cross-party group of councillors. And his group has considered this reduced crew work at 3 of its last 4 meetings. On the 12<sup>th</sup> May last year it was considered as part of a paper on on-call availability; on the 5<sup>th</sup> December last year it was considered as a specific paper about reduced crewing; and at the most recent meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> March again at which you attended it was considered as part of the Information Bulletin. So then, councillors are regularly updated by officers through that process.

I would be happy to meet again with you again of course Councillor Wood to if you feel the last three meetings to discuss this has not been sufficient.”

### **Supplementary Question from Councillor Wood**

“Can the Portfolio Holder therefore guarantee that the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service and the County Council will be complying with all aspects of Health and Safety legislation in respect of mobilising reduced crews to any type of incident whereby our biggest asset, firefighters, will not be placed in foreseeable danger and be expected to operate when they are not given the proper resources from the outset of the incident?”

### **Response from Councillor Hicks**

“Yes I can assure Councillors that I, along with the Chief Fire Officer, will be applying a very robust approach to these new arrangements and to ensure the balance is totally right between the public expectations about what firefighters will be responding to at incidents and above all of course, firefighters safety.”

### **Question 8 to Councillor Gordon Jones from Councillor Penny Otton**

“3 free schools in Suffolk including Ixworth have more than half of its school places empty whilst other schools in Suffolk are oversubscribed. And yet the Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced more money for more Free Schools. How will you be responding to this announcement?”

### **Response from Councillor Jones**

“We recognise the problem where free schools have been built to meet parental choice, but where there is insufficient need for school places in that locality. We are now working much more closely with the DfE and the EfA and they have shifted their policy to targeting free schools into areas where there is a real need for school places.

Whilst the location of free schools continues to be a decision of the DfE, I am pleased that recent announcements such as central Ipswich and Stowmarket free schools are in places where there is a real need for new school places, to meet the growing population.”

### **Supplementary Question from Councillor Otton**

“The Chancellor has also announced that he will give free transport to some pupils who go to selective schools. How does this accord with your view of equality?”

### **Response from Councillor Jones**

“I am still studying the proposals and I think it will bring great pressure on the home to school transport budget and I am not so sure it will actually get my support at this moment in time. But equally we don't have any selective schools within this county.”

### **Question 9 to Councillor Colin Noble from Councillor Inga Lockington**

“What is the savings in running cost per Street Light to the County Council in changing our Street Lighting system from the old system to the new Intelligent LED Lighting system?”

### **Response from Councillor Noble**

“Our savings are realised through two programmes, one is using the intelligent lighting system which lights are switched off for part of the night, or dimmed with

accordance with the policy. The second is converting existing units to LED units and particularly those that operate all night because they generate the greatest savings so between the two programmes it saves about £1.25m per annum but it isn't £1.25m every single year because there is a law of diminishing returns that the more you replace you don't count those and it is the new savings that come in to system. So that is the level of savings we are achieving at the moment but it will go down as more and more lights are converted to LED."

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Lockington**

"Would you agree that a proportion of the savings could be spend on keeping the street lights on for a little longer during the night in streets where residents are asking for it or for example on Fridays and Saturdays in Ipswich when young people might go out to enjoy themselves but would like to walk home in safety?"

**Response from Councillor Noble**

"I think that the idea of the programme is that we take the savings and convert more lights to LED lights so that we accelerate that programme to generate the savings and in particular lower the carbon footprint as well. My understanding of the policy is that if people come along and talk about a particular set of street lights for a particular reason, and I certainly know in my own division, that there are lights that have been turned on because people feel that it is a dark corner and they want it lit. Also in my own division, where people have said that actually the distance between the village pub and the high street or something like that, those lights have been left on on a Friday and Saturday night as well. So in the policy there is that flexibility it's just a question of putting that to officers, letting them consider and then trying to do it."

**Decision:** Council agreed that the majority of questions would be responded to in writing and that the councillor's asking the question would be able to ask a supplementary question.

**Reason for decision:** Members were mindful of the time and the duration of the meeting.

**Alternative options:** Members could have agreed to continue to hear all questions, the responses and supplementary questions and responses.

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

**Dispensations:** None were required.

*The meeting closed at 6:08 p.m.*

Chairman

## **County Council – 16 March 2017**

### **Cabinet Members reports and questions**

The following questions were received in accordance with the Council's Constitution. It was agreed at the meeting that the majority of questions would be responded to in writing and that the councillor asking the question would have the right to ask a supplementary question which the Cabinet member would also respond to. The following questions were asked and given.

#### **Question 2**

#### **Question to Councillor Gordon Jones from Councillor Helen Armitage**

"To quote the Joint local area SEND inspection report for Suffolk: "... a written statement of action is required because of significant weaknesses in the local area's practice." What action is Cllr Gordon Jones taking to address the 'significant weaknesses' in the report?"

#### **Response from Councillor Jones**

"The Joint local area SEND Inspection identified four main areas that needed to be addressed within the written statement of action:-

- The ineffective governance and leadership of the joint strategic planning and delivery of the disability and special educational needs reforms.
- The poor timeliness, integration and quality of SEND statutory assessments and plans, this includes when statements of special educational needs are transferred to EHC plans, and the delivery of subsequent individual packages of support.
- The lack of local understanding of the support available and the poor quality of the local offer, including access to CAMHS support across the area, which lead to high levels of parental complaint and anxiety.
- The lack of joint working to monitor, quality-assure and maximise the efficiency of the work undertaken to improve outcomes for children in a diverse range of settings and circumstances.

I have taken the following action to begin to address these issues:

#### **Governance and Leadership**

- Strengthened the leadership capacity by allocating an Assistant Director to lead the inclusion work.
- Worked with Health and SPCN to established new governance arrangements providing more rigorous oversight through a Programme Board.
- Work is advancing well on development of a new SEND Strategy, again with health and parent reps.

## Statutory Assessments / EHCPs

- Rigorous oversight via the CSAB.
- Improved weekly management information to enable effective performance monitoring and oversight.
- Increased investment in staff.
- Performance now improved so that new EHCP requests are being delivered within 20 week statutory guideline.
- Greater focus on co-production with families and professionals is resulting in more positive feedback from parents now embarking on EHCP process.
- In longer term a new system for digital management of EHCPs is being developed.

## Local Offer

- A senior officer has been identified to work on improving the quality of the local offer information and a review of all information on the site is currently underway.
- Local offer live events will be trialled at forthcoming parental events and we are also considering other approaches to supporting parents to secure the information they need e.g. webchat, telephone support.

## Quality Assurance / Outcomes for Children

- Early work is under way to develop an agreed “SEND Journey” for service users to ensure that services are more co-ordinated and this will improve outcomes for families.
- Moderation workshop has been set up to ensure better quality and consistency of statutory plans and assessments – supported by DfE adviser.
- Staff training programme in development for all staff.
- Introduction of new outcomes monitoring system – similar to that used by virtual school being explored to monitor progress with implementation of outcomes for SEND children.”

There was no supplementary question from Helen Armitage.

## Question 3

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

“The ‘New Fairer Funding Formula’ (NFFF) is soon to be rolled out nationally with the aim of making School funding more equal. However, at least 3,600 schools in the UK will see a significant reduction in funds as a result. Has Cllr Gordon Jones identified those Schools in Suffolk who will have their school budget cut by the Conservative government?”

### **Response from Councillor Jones**

“Yes. The Department for Education (DfE) modelling indicates that 55 schools in Suffolk will see reduced funding, with 246 attracting increases. Those with reductions

are all primaries with the exception of 2 secondary schools. The reductions are between 0.2% & 1.4% in the first year.

The schools that have been affected are aware of this position as the DfE has provided school by school modelling on their website, and we have drawn this to the attention of the schools affected.

Overall there is an increase in funding of 2.7% for schools in Suffolk over two years, which is welcome but does not redress the balance for those like Suffolk whose schools are underfunded.

We are lobbying strenuously and encouraging schools and others to make the case that more needs to be done to provide a fair level of funding for Suffolk.

I have written to all our MPs setting out my concerns and am a signatory to the f40 Group's letter dated 10 March to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State expressing our joint concerns that the Government is in danger of replacing one injustice with another and the opportunity in the current review which is a once in a generation opportunity to get things right will be missed."

There was no supplementary question from Sonia Barker.

#### Question 4

#### **Question to Councillor Matthew Hicks from Councillor Peter Byatt**

"How many Suffolk Schools and Council-owned buildings have solar panels?"

#### **Response from Councillor Hicks**

"I cannot give a total figure on how many of Suffolk Schools have solar panels as many schools are now sitting outside of this authority. I can report however that there are 92 SCC buildings that have Solar PV installed, with the majority of these being schools within our control, the remainder being corporate buildings such as Endeavour House and Constantine House. In the last full year they have produced 1,200,000 kW/h of electricity, which is enough to power an electric car to travel 4.8 million miles or supply approximately 400 homes for a year.

All sites will be considered over time and further installations will be undertaken when it is financially beneficial to do so."

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

"Across the UK more than 1000 schools have installed solar panels in recent years, in good faith, to address climate change, to educate young pupils and to provide a crucial new revenue stream to help ease squeezed budgets.

However, taxation changes coming into force in April will mean that schools across the country will be billed up to £1.8 billion, obviously affecting Suffolk Schools.

Can you tell us how much money will be lost to our schools due to this new taxation, combined with government changes to the amount paid to schools in feed-in tariffs and will the taxation charges also apply to our other public buildings?"

## **Response from Councillor Hicks**

“The changes in taxation relate to the proposed re-evaluation of properties for business rates that would now include an assessment of any installed solar PV. To clarify, the Council will continue to receive the Feed-in-Tariff at the rate relevant to the installation date, there is no planned reduction in these payments. It is currently not clear if schools will be subject to the increased business rates, in Suffolk the panels are owned by the Council not the school, which may mean they are exempt. This will not be apparent until re-evaluations are undertaken and the exemption is tested over the coming months. It is clear that Council owned and operated non-school buildings are likely to be subject to the additional taxation. However, the charges are likely to be relatively minor when compared against the Feed-in-Tariff income. For example, a building that installed a 50kW system in 2010 is projected to see a rise in business rates of approximately £800, but the Feed-in-Tariff income would be £24,000. Officers will continue to work to minimise the impact of this national change to business rates on schools in Suffolk.”

### Question 5

## **Question to Councillor Gordon Jones from Councillor Len Jacklin**

“What services are provided for children with hearing impairment by the County Council?”

## **Response from Councillor Jones**

SCC provides a range of tailored services to meet the wide variety of needs of hearing impaired children across Suffolk. We have a specialist staff team who work with each individual family to plan for their future needs and support schools in providing an appropriate offer.

This includes Lead Teachers of the Deaf, Specialist Teachers of the Deaf plus 2 trainees, Sensory Support Practitioners, who support the teachers and provide sign language tuition to children, families and settings and a dedicated technician who provides support to pupils regarding their equipment.

There is a specialist Social Care Service that is provided by experienced social workers in sensory impairment who all have British Sign Language skills ranging from Level 1 through to Level 3.

Where possible, pupils are supported to learn in a mainstream school alongside their peers, so that they can access the broadest possible education and social opportunities.

Suffolk also provides four specialist units, attached to mainstream schools, for hearing impaired children and young people in the County, three primary (Rushmere, Westgate and Elm Tree) and one secondary provision (King Edwards).

SCC also offers a specialist Intervenor service that provides intensive intervention to support the children who have both a hearing impairment and a visual impairment (Multi-Sensory Impaired children / MSI) Intervenor are trained specialist learning support assistants who make the curriculum and wider world accessible to the children who are multi-sensory impaired.

There was no supplementary question from Len Jacklin.

## Question 6

### **Question to Councillor Matthew Hicks from Councillor Peter Gardiner**

“How successful has the County Council been in recent efforts to recruit 40 additional on-call Firefighters to meet an urgent shortfall?”

### **Response from Councillor Hicks**

In the past 2 years Suffolk has completely revised the way it attracts and recruits on-call firefighters. The process has been simplified for the applicant; new recruitment literature has been developed that seeks to attract firefighters from all parts of our communities – women, men, black, minority ethnic or white, young or old; and we have engaged extensively with the local news media and social media to support these campaigns across all parts of our communities.

I have also joined the LGA lobbying for a national on-call firefighters recruitment campaign, as this is not a challenge that only presents itself in Suffolk, but nationally.

All Councillors have recently been in receipt of an on-call firefighter recruitment pack and I must take this opportunity to encourage all Councillors to use these packs to please advertise the role more widely within your Divisions.

Today, the newest 14 on-call firefighters are on the last 2 days of their basic training course and will, at the weekend, be responding to 999 calls from their local on-call fire stations in Suffolk. We are already recruiting for the next basic training course and have had about 100 people apply. We hope that at least 20 of these are successful through the recruitment process for the next course in July.

Councillor Gardiner, we are not resting on our laurels – we know that recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters will be something we are always working on, learning from what goes well and more importantly what doesn't go well. We have officers who sit on a national on-call firefighter working group so we are sharing what we do and learning from the good work of others.

### **Supplementary Question from Peter Gardiner**

Thank you for this long answer, however it does not actually answer my question. When you announced you would recruit at least 40 on-call firefighters was that intended to include the 14 who are just now completing their basic training or was it genuinely additional. If it was genuinely additional, how does your hoped for “at least 20” equate to a public pledge to recruit 40?

### **Response from Matthew Hicks**

The process of recruiting on-call firefighters is a rolling one, we currently run 4 back to back recruitment campaigns each year and on each occasion recruit as many on-call firefighters as we can from those who apply. As I'm sure you appreciate, not everyone who applies is able to be an on-call firefighter and our selection process is rigorous and comprised of several different elements. Much of this is set out in the Councillor Information Pack recently circulated. The number of on-call firefighters in Suffolk can change on a daily or weekly basis as we currently turnover, on average, about 8-10% of our firefighters every year. The most recent intake of 14 who passed their basic training last week has reduced the number of vacancies to about 30. We are committed to recruiting as many on-call firefighters as we need but in doing so it is

important that we maintain an appropriate recruitment standard – this means that our efforts to bridge the current recruitment gap of c30 firefighters will take several rounds of recruitment campaign and will be coupled with efforts to reduce the number of on-call firefighters who leave the Service.

#### Question 7

##### **Question to Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger from Councillor Sandy Martin**

Suffolk Disability & Health Action Group are currently working on a draft health and social care passport to enable disabled people to convey their needs more easily to providers of any sort of service “on the spot”. Will the Cabinet member pledge the support of Suffolk County Council for this initiative?

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

The County Council would support this initiative in principle, based on the understanding it supports people to stay independent, well and feel safe. I would suggest that a good way to take this forward would be in the Suffolk Co-production network (SCONE), where the proposal can be discussed more and if agreed as viable, then taken forward in partnership between people who use services and professionals from statutory and voluntary and community sector organisations.

##### **Supplementary Question from Councillor Martin**

Thank you Beccy. Given that, as you say, this initiative ought to be able to support people to stay independent, will the support of the County Council extend to paying for the costs of the initiative?

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

I don't think there's anything to add as response to follow-up question, but could suggest the enquirer is directed to Brenda Joyce (SCODP) for agenda item at the next SCONE meeting.

#### Question 10

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

Can the Cabinet member for Social Care tell us how much additional money this Council will receive to pay for Social Care in 2017-18 as a result of the Budget announcement last week?

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

It was announced in the Spring Budget that a new grant, worth £2bn over the next three years, will be paid to local authorities with social care responsibilities. For Suffolk this equates to £14.174m in 2017/18. We are awaiting the guidance to accompany this funding and so whilst it is understood that there will be conditions attached to the money, we have not yet been informed as to what they are. Whilst this new funding is very welcome, it should be noted that it is in effect bringing forward funding that we had already accounted for to be received in later years and therefore once the guidance is received the Council will need to carefully plan how this is to be utilised.

I would remind Council that even without these funds we have recognised the pressure in social care, and put forward a funding pot of £12.3 million to invest in the care sector. This means that all providers will get a rate rise that covers inflation in full, and most will get 1% above this level of inflation. In addition we are targeting significant sums into areas where we believe current funding is too low; for example the lowest rates of residential and nursing care will be increased by 20% and 12.7% respectively, and our Support to Live at home contracts for home care will be increased by 10%.

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Adams**

Can I have a categorical assurance from you that the amount Suffolk County Council spends on Adult Social Care in 2017-18 will be at least £14.174m more than you had agreed to spend in the County Council's budget on February 9th?

**Response from Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger**

We are confident that all the new money will be spent. Whilst the new money is welcome it is non-recurrent and will diminish over time. So this years £14 million reduces to £9 million in 2018/19 and £4.5 million in 2019/20. After that we simply don't know. We are required to use this money in partnership with the NHS, and agree its use with them. We are looking at investing in assistive technology, increasing the skills of the workforce, meeting the demand for LD care, and developing our reablement offer.

We believe these steps will be sustainable, help the local health and care system work better together, and meet the needs of the people of Suffolk.