

## MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **MSDC COUNCIL** held in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Thursday, 25 January 2024

### PRESENT:

Councillor: Rowland Warboys (Chairman)  
Dr Daniel Pratt (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:	David Bradbury	Terence Carter
	James Caston	Austin Davies
	Teresa Davis	Rachel Eburne
	Lucy Elkin	Nicholas Hardingham
	Matthew Hicks	Terry Lawrence
	Colin Lay	Anders Linder
	Sarah Mansel	Adrienne Marriott
	John Matthissen	Andrew Mellen
	Gilly Morgan	Jen Overett
	James Patchett	David Penny
	Dr Ross Piper	Miles Row
	Andrew Stringer	Ollie Walters
	Tim Weller	John Whitehead
	Nicky Willshere	Richard Winch

### In attendance:

Officers: Director – Planning and Building Control (TB)  
Director – Economic Growth and Climate Change (FD)  
Director – Customers, Digital Transformation & Improvement (SW)  
Corporate Manager - Finance, Commissioning & Procurement (KW)  
Corporate Manager - Electoral Services and Land Charges (DC)  
Corporate Manager - Strategic Policy (JH)  
Assistant Manager - Financial Accountant (MH)  
Assistant Manager - Governance (HH)

### Apologies:

Lavinia Hadingham  
David Napier  
Janet Pearson  
Keith Scarff

## 74 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

- 74.1 Councillor Eburne declared an interest as a Director of Freeport East.
- 74.2 Councillor Pratt declared an interest as an employee of Stowmarket High School.
- 74.3 Councillor Davies, Councillor Winch, Councillor Matthissen and Councillor Lay

declared an interest as Board Members for Mid Suffolk Holdings Ltd.

74.4 Councillor Stringer declared an interest as Director of Gateway 14.

**75 MC/23/29 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2023**

**It was RESOLVED:-**

**That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2023 be confirmed and signed as a true record.**

**76 MC/23/30 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

76.1 The Chair referred to Paper MC/23/30 for noting.

**77 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

77.1 The Chair invited Councillor Mellen to make the following announcements.

**1. Update on Government payments after Storm Babet**

It is three months since Storm Babet had a devastating impact on our communities. With several storms and heavy rainfall events since, for many residents and businesses the recovery is still ongoing.

Following the storm, the Government announced flooded households could apply for up to £500 to help with costs, and businesses could apply for up to £2,500. I am happy to be able to update councillors today, and I can confirm that all these grants have now been paid out. There are more than 300 households and nearly 40 businesses who have received the recovery funding.

Our officers worked to get these grants to those impacted as quickly as possible, working closely with Suffolk County Council as the lead local flood authority. I would like to thank everyone involved in this process.

Debenham was one of the worst affected communities in Suffolk, so I am very pleased that tomorrow a flood forum will be held in the Debenham Community Centre, where residents will be able to hear from, and speak to, the Environment Agency, Suffolk County Council, our officers and others. I think this will be a very useful event, I am planning to attend to see how it goes, and I am grateful to Councillor Davies as the ward councillor for Debenham for making this event happen.

**2. Living Well in Winter grants**

I am pleased to report Mid Suffolk has provided grants under the 'Living Well in Winter' scheme to 14 projects in the district.

The grant was introduced last year to support VCFSE organisations (Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprises) in providing new accessible spaces and activities, or to expand upon existing projects, in order to provide warm spaces and help tackle social isolation.

I'd like to thank all of the people who make projects like these happen in our communities. We hope that this extra funding will go a long way to supporting the wellbeing of residents during the colder months and help people to forge new connections within their communities.

### **3. Tribute to Charlie Flatman**

Finally, I was sorry to learn of the death of Charles Flatman, who served as ward councillor for Eye between 1993 and his retirement in 2017, but represented the town at either town, district or county level for a total of 43 years.

He sat on various committees over the years, including environmental health, housing and local economy committees. During his tenure he was also heavily involved in bringing forward Eye Community Centre, working with the town's cricket club, and the reopening of the Queen's Head pub.

Charlie served his community with dedication and distinction, and I am sure all members will join me in sending our condolences to his family and friends.

#### **78 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

78.1 None received.

#### **79 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

79.1 None received.

#### **80 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

80.1 None received.

#### **81 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET / COMMITTEES**

#### **82 MC/23/31 HALF YEAR REPORT ON TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2023/24**

82.1 The Chair invited John Matthissen, Joint Chair of the Joint Audit and Standards Committee to introduce the report.

82.2 Councillor Matthissen proposed recommendations 3.1 and 3.3 as set out in the report. Councillor Patchett seconded this motion.

- 82.3 Councillor Caston asked for clarification on paragraph 1.6 in appendix C of the report. Councillor Matthissen outlined that as the value of investments go up and down in value over time, any losses on these investments did not need to be declared until they were sold.
- 82.4 Councillor Whitehead queried the £2 million limit within the Council's bank accounts and whether this should extend to the companies owned by the Council. The Senior Financial Accountant responded that whilst this was not required under current legislation, it was best practice to increase disclosure in relation to Gateway 14.
- 82.5 Councillor Winch questioned how interest rates were modelled. The Senior Financial Accountant responded that advice was sought from external experts who provide the worst case, best case, and expected scenarios which forecasting is based on.
- 82.6 During the debate Councillor Caston outlined that the report was useful to see what was going on in the Council and highlighted how successful the CIFCO investment had been.
- 82.7 Councillor Matthissen stated that points made at the meeting would be taken into consideration when setting the strategy for 2024/25.

By a unanimous vote.

**It was RESOLVED: -**

- 1.1 That the Treasury Management activity for the first six months of 2023/24 as set out in this report and Appendices be noted.**
- 1.2 That it be noted that Mid Suffolk District Council's treasury management activity for the first six months of 2023/24 was in accordance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy, and that, except for one occasion when the Council exceeded its daily bank account limit with Lloyds, as mentioned in Appendix C, paragraph 4.1, the Council has complied with all the Treasury Management Indicators for this period.**

### **83 MC/23/32 MID SUFFOLK PLAN**

- 83.1 The Chair invited Councillor Mellen, Leader of the Council, to introduce the report.
- 83.2 Councillor Mellen proposed the recommendations as set out in the report. Councillor Stringer seconded this motion.
- 83.3 During the debate Councillor Mansel welcomed the plan and the thread of sustainability throughout, and she praised the process for including communities.

- 83.4 Councillor Whitehead welcomed the plan and the extensive consultation, but raised concern about putting environmental sustainability and social justice at the centre of everything and outlined that this should have limits.
- 83.5 Councillor Hicks supported the plan and highlighted that cross-party working would be required for the benefit of residents.
- 83.6 Councillor Eburne outlined that the word corporate had been removed from the plan as the Council's purpose was to serve residents. She added that the plan was straightforward in what the Council wanted to achieve and would ensure that communities thrived.
- 83.7 Councillor Walters stated that environmental policies were crucial for the undertaking of the plan.
- 83.8 Councillor Willshere praised the amount of consultation work that had gone into the plan and commented that she would like to see the impact going forward.
- 83.9 Councillor Stringer outlined that the plan was an entirely new document and not a refresh of the previous corporate plan.
- 83.10 Councillor Mellen thanked Members for their comments and support for the plan.

By a unanimous vote.

**It was RESOLVED:**

**To accept the recommendation from Cabinet to adopt the Mid Suffolk Plan, setting out the vision, approach and strategic priorities for Mid Suffolk District Council for 2023-2031 (Appendix A).**

#### **84 MC/23/33 POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW**

- 84.1 The Chair invited the Corporate Manager – Electoral Services to introduce the report.
- 84.2 Councillor Mellen proposed the recommendations as set out in the report. Councillor Whitehead seconded this motion.
- 84.3 Councillor Mansel queried why Elmswell had two unequal groups of 25 and 2537 who used the same polling station and why this was spilt. The Corporate Manager – Electoral Services responded that during the administration of an election the Returning Officer can split a polling station into different polling places, and these would be evenly distributed at the time of an election.
- 84.4 During the debate Councillor Row raised concern about the accessibility of polling stations and how all polling stations may not be accessible by foot

which may discourage voters and encourage car use.

- 84.5 Councillor Carter stated that not having an accessible route to polling stations for some residents was a missed opportunity.
- 84.6 Councillor Penny thanked the officers for putting environmental considerations as part of the decisions as it would decrease travel to polling stations.
- 84.7 Councillor Mellen outlined that the Council wanted to remove as many barriers as possible for those who wanted to vote in person, and ensured people had the best opportunity to vote.

By a unanimous vote.

**It was RESOLVED:**

**That the Polling Districts and Polling Places as listed in Appendix A to this report be agreed.**

**85 MC/23/34 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

- 85.1 The Chair invited Councillor Mellen, Leader of the Council, to introduce the report.
- 85.2 Councillor Mellen introduced the report and proposed the recommendations. Councillor Stringer seconded this motion.
- 85.3 During the debate Councillor Hicks stated that he disagreed with the proposal as Councillors were elected to read papers.
- 85.4 Councillor Mansel welcomed the Special Responsibility Allowance as training was a requirement to sit on the committee and named substitutes provided a consistency of membership and continuity in the committee, especially in cases where applications are deferred.
- 85.5 Councillor Bradbury stated that he supported the proposal and added that site visits were also part of the role and could be time consuming.
- 85.6 Councillor Winch outlined that the principle of named substitutes has been established and that the work involved justified the allowance.
- 85.7 Councillor Caston stated that he was against the proposal as there were few times where there would not be sufficient time ahead of the meeting to read the agenda. Additionally, if there was an allowance it should be per meeting not an annual allowance.
- 85.8 Councillor Stringer outlined that named substitutes was an outcome of the peer review and would be a valuable insurance policy for the planning

committee and set out the expectation that papers would be read.

85.9 Councillor Mellen highlighted that being a named substitute meant being readily available for meetings, and being trained and familiar with cases and the allowance recognised the commitment of this.

By 27 votes for and 3 against.

**It was RESOLVED:**

**1.1 That Council agrees to adopt a special responsibility allowance for the named substitutes for Planning Committee.**

**a) That the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) be set at:-**

<b>Named Substitutes</b>	<b>Multiplier</b>	<b>SRA</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>0.025</b>	<b>£ 163</b>

**1.2 That the Special Responsibility allowance for the named substitutes take effect from 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023.**

**1.3 That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make any necessary amendments to the Members Allowance scheme following approval of the recommendations.**

**86 MC/23/35 DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE UNDER DELEGATED POWERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 2 OF THE CONSTITUTION**

86.1 The Chair gave an overview of the report and proposed the recommendation. Councillor Whitehead seconded the motion.

By a unanimous vote.

**It was RESOLVED:**

**That Council noted the decisions taken under delegated powers by the Chief Executive as detailed in Appendix A.**

**87 MC/23/36 STOWMARKET HEALTH, EDUCATION AND LEISURE FACILITIES (SHELF)**

87.1 The Chair invited Councillor Weller, Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture & Wellbeing, to introduce the report.

87.2 Councillor Weller proposed the recommendations as set out in the report. Councillor Davis seconded the motion.

87.3 Councillor Hicks questioned where the project was in relation to commitment

from health. Councillor Weller responded that this did not relate to package 1, however the Council was in dialogue with health for upcoming packages.

- 87.4 Councillor Hardingham questioned whether there were any alternatives to artificial pitches. Councillor Weller responded that the 4g pitch was what the Football Foundation would provide funding for, additionally, 5g pitches were a new science and there was currently little clarity on maintenance costs. Also, the pitch provided the needs of the community without incurring an additional cost to the Council.
- 87.5 Councillor Mansel questioned what the timescales between package 1 and package 2 would be. Councillor Weller responded that due to the reliance on grant funding availability the timeline was uncertain, however it would happen under the current administration.
- 87.6 Councillor Mansel further questioned whether there would be improvements to the car park, including EV charging points, under the scheme. Councillor Weller responded that this would not be under package 1, however this would be considered under a future package.
- 87.7 Councillor Carter questioned whether the pitch could be delayed until a more environmentally friendly pitch had undergone testing. Councillor Weller responded that the cost for the 4g pitch had already been budgeted. The Director – Economic Growth and Climate Change added that whilst there were pilots for 5g pitches undergoing tests there were not any more being accepted whilst this was under review in relation to health and safety and maintenance.
- 87.8 Councillor Walters questioned what infrastructure for connectivity would be put in place. The Regenerations Project Manager responded that there would be improvements to the route 51 cycle route through Stowmarket, additionally discussions around parking at peak times and with local bus providers were ongoing.
- 87.9 Councillor Marriott questioned why an artificial pitch had been chosen. Councillor Weller responded that as the pitch would be needed for extended periods throughout the year it needed to be durable, and an artificial pitch was in line with the offerings of other local authorities.
- 87.10 During the debate Councillor Pratt stated that he was in full support of the project as the current facilities were in poor condition and this was a good investment in the community which would encourage young people to engage in sports.
- 87.11 Councillor Lawrence outlined that he was in support of the project, however in future when working with third parties' sustainability should be greater considered.
- 87.12 Councillor Mansel highlighted that this was a step in the right direction, however the rest of the community such as young adults and young families



needed to be considered, and collaborative working with sports providers on inclusion of all abilities was a necessity.

- 87.13 Councillor Willshere stated that the scheme was a long time coming but raised concern that the cost of activities and need for advance payments could be an accessibility barrier.
- 87.14 Councillor Whitehead stated that he was pleased to see the scheme come forward, however he was disappointed that the pavilion for the rugby and cricket club was not coming forward in package one.
- 87.15 Councillor Caston outlined that he supported the scheme and he hoped that the wellbeing hub would be delivered and highlighted that parking for the scheme needed great consideration so that it would not cause issues for residents.
- 87.16 Councillor Eburne outlined that there had been due diligence in the figures and consultation on the project, and she thanked other Members and officers for their work on the project.
- 87.17 Councillor Walters supported the project and commented that whilst there were issues with sustainability issues with the pitch it had been debated by the working group and engagement had been done with partners.
- 87.18 Councillor Carter stated that he was in favour of the scheme overall, however he still had sustainability concerns with the artificial pitch.
- 87.19 Councillor Weller thanked Members for their contributions and highlighted that the pitch needed to be available for use and would provide a greater access for residents to services.

By 29 votes for and 1 abstention.

**It was RESOLVED:**

- 1.1 That Council approve the addition of this project to the Capital Programme as outlined in the recommended funding strategy, specifically the Council's commitment of £450,000 from the Council's Strategic Reserve towards the total cost of delivery of Work Package 1.**
- 1.2 That Council note the Full Business Case (FBC) for Work Package 1, approved by Cabinet, in respect of the Stowmarket, Health, Education and Leisure Facilities as attached as Appendix A (confidential).**
- 1.3 That Council note the full delivery of this element of the project as outlined in the FBC which will include pitch and land-based elements of the overall masterplan.**
- 1.4 That Council note Cabinet's approval of the recommended funding strategy detailed in Appendix B (confidential) as the preferred method of**

**delivering the project, SUBJECT TO the securing all internal and external funding outlined in the recommended funding strategy.**

- 1.5 That Council note work carried out to date on a sustainable management model for the wider Stowmarket, Health, Education and Leisure Facilities (as outlined in Appendix A – Business case confidential) and that a further recommendation on the preferred model will be brought back to Cabinet for consideration early in 2024.**

A short break was taken between 19:25pm and 19:35pm.

## **88 MC/23/37 SKILLS & INNOVATION CENTRE ON GATEWAY 14**

- 88.1 The Chair invited Councillor Winch, Cabinet Member for Housing and Property to introduce the report.
- 88.2 Councillor Mellen proposed the recommendations as set out in the report. Councillor Davis seconded this motion.
- 88.3 Councillor Lawrence questioned how an operator would be decided. Councillor Winch responded that an operator would be sought as soon as possible and would have references checked ahead of being decided.
- 88.4 Councillor Hicks queried what research had been done on similar centres to gauge what demand would be. Councillor Winch outlined that officers had visited other innovation centres in the area and had found that office space had been utilised more than training facilities. The Director – Economic Growth and Climate Change added that officers had a dialogue with operators of innovation centres in the East and had a Head of Innovation as a critical friend. Additionally, there would be a small void within the centre in order to allow for movement and flexibility for operators.
- 88.5 Councillor Linder referred to the green roof and questioned how durable this would be. Councillor Winch outlined that whilst the green roof had not been decided on, research on maintenance would be undertaken before this went ahead.
- 88.6 During the debate Councillor Matthissen outlined that the centre would help generate a pool of people within the district with desirable skills.
- 88.7 Councillor Caston stated that he supported the scheme but raised concerns about the use of reserves to fund the project.
- 88.8 Councillor Carter outlined the need for the skills centre to be accessible.
- 88.9 Councillor Eburne highlighted that this was an investment in Mid Suffolk and would benefit young people and adults retraining in areas where there are gaps in skills.

88.10 Councillor Patchett was in support of the centre and suggested that ESG principles be used in the design of the building.

88.11 The Chairman advised Members that in accordance with the Council Constitution, Rule 9, the meeting was approaching the Guillotine rule deadline. Councillor Mellen proposed that the meeting be extended until the business of the meeting had been completed. Councillor Caston seconded this motion.

By a majority vote for.

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**That the meeting continue beyond the guillotine deadline, until all business was concluded.**

88.12 Councillor Pratt outlined that the building would meet green standards of excellence and would both create a bridge in the skills gap and would create jobs and could attract other businesses to Gateway 14.

88.13 Councillor Whitehead raised concern on paragraph 6.9 of the report stating that the scheme was not financially viable.

88.14 Councillor Winch highlighted that that whilst the centre would be funded by reserves, this would be paid back once companies joined the Gateway 14 site.

88.15 Councillor Hicks stated that he had confidence in the Freeport East board and the technical skills they had to scrutinise potential skills providers.

88.16 Councillor Mellen outlined that he had visited other sites in rural locations that were successful, and the opportunity for the skills and innovation centre was good with a lot of work and due diligence being undertaken.

By 29 votes for and 1 abstention.

**It was RESOLVED:**

**1.1 That Council approve the addition of this project to the Capital Programme as outlined in the recommended funding strategy including the virement of the Gateway 14 Capital budget of £10.75m and the use of earmarked reserves or Pot B retained business rates to finance this.**

**1.2 To note that Cabinet endorsed the Full Business Case (FBC) attached as Appendix A (confidential).**

**1.3 To note that Cabinet approved the full delivery of the project as outlined in the FBC for an approximate 35,690 sq ft. Skills and Innovation Centre on Gateway 14 at Stowmarket up to a maximum total cost envelope of £18.75m.**

- 1.4 To note that Cabinet approved the recommended funding strategy detailed in Appendix D (confidential) as the Cabinet's preferred method of delivering the project, SUBJECT TO the satisfactory completion of all related legal, financial, cost and valuation advice and contractual agreements, full access to Freeport seed fund capital payment and full access to the required level of Pot B retained business rates generated on the Gateway 14 site as part of Freeport agreements (as forecast in the recommended funding strategy attached as Appendix D - confidential).**
- 1.5 To note that Cabinet agreed delegated authority for completion of all necessary matters and agreements pursuant to the approval of recommendation 3.3 to the Council's Director for Economic Growth and Climate Change and Section 151 Officer/Director for Corporate Resources in consultation with the Leader of the Council. This requires that all 'subject to' elements within 3.3 are met.**
- 1.6 To note that Cabinet authorised the forward funding of next stage technical design, planning and related preparatory works, up to a total value of £150k, from the Gateway 14 capital budget.**

**89 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)**

The meeting was not required to go into closed session.

**90 RESTRICTED APPENDICES - STOWMARKET HEALTH, EDUCATION AND LEISURE FACILITIES (SHELF)**

The meeting was not required to go into closed session.

**91 RESTRICTED APPENDICES - SKILLS & INNOVATION CENTRE ON GATEWAY 14**

The meeting was not required to go into closed session.

**92 RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)**

The meeting was not required to go into closed session.

**93 COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS**

93.1 Councillor Hicks left the meeting at 20:18pm

93.2 Councillor Mellen proposed the appointments as set out in the agenda. Councillor Eburne seconded this motion.

By a unanimous vote.

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**That Councillor Teresa Davis and Councillor Rowland Warboys be appointed to Suffolk Enhanced Bus Partnership**

**94 MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

**95 TO CONSIDER THE MOTION ON NOTICE RECEIVED FROM COUNCILLOR OVERETT**

95.1 Councillor Overett **PROPOSED** the Motion which asked the Council to set up a Mid Anglia Community Rail Partnership encompassing the rail stations of Thurston, Elmswell, Stowmarket and Needham Market. And that The Council agreed to contact Greater Anglia to progress this Partnership as soon as possible.

95.2 Councillor Bradbury **SECONDED** the Motion.

95.3 Councillor Mansel praised the motion and outlined that whilst the service had improved, the timing of services was not ideal.

95.4 Councillor Row supported the motion and highlighted that the train line was used by a diverse group of people and welcomed engagement with these groups.

95.5 Councillor Eburne thanked Suffolk County Council for their support on Community Rail Partnerships and praised the engagement across the district to optimise the service for residents.

95.6 Councillor Carter highlighted that the partnership could increase accessibility and could improve the interconnectivity to health and socialisation services for residents.

95.7 Councillor Willshere stated that she hoped that the partnership could help improve safety within stations.

95.8 Councillor Overett concluded that whilst the Community Rail Partnership was not a quick fix for issues, it would increase the Council's voice and the voice of local communities.

By a unanimous vote.

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**This Council resolves to work to set up a Mid Anglia Community Rail Partnership encompassing the rail stations of Thurston, Elmswell, Stowmarket and Needham Market.**

**This Council agrees to contact Greater Anglia to progress this Partnership as soon as possible.**

**96 TO CONSIDER THE MOTION ON NOTICE RECEIVED FROM COUNCILLOR WELLER**

- 96.1 The Chair invited Councillor Weller to introduce and **PROPOSE** his Motion as detailed in the tabled papers.
- 96.2 Councillor Mellen **SECONDED** the Motion.
- 96.3 Councillor Patchett supported the motion but outlined that it could go further in holding agencies to account.
- 96.4 Councillor Mansel questioned whether the motion went far enough in encouraging the flood authority to consider the impact of storms in the future, especially in relation to planning applications.
- 96.5 Councillor Linder raised concern that the phrasing of the motion was coercive to parish councils and could put a strain on their resources.
- 96.6 Councillor Matthissen proposed the following amendment to the motion: This Council calls on parish and town councils to actively participate in assessing flood risk in their communities and to work collaboratively with officers to develop or enhance all of their local community emergency response plans (not just in response to flooding). Councillor Carter seconded this proposal.
- 96.7 Councillor Weller and Councillor Mellen accepted the amendment.
- 96.8 Councillor Lawrence outlined that he did not support the motion as the production of local flood resilience plans had not been costed for parish councils.
- 96.9 Councillor Pratt outlined that whilst there would be a cost in developing plans, they were worth doing as they could improve safety for residents and reduce the impact of flooding.
- 96.10 Councillor Stringer outlined that due to resource issues in the County Council and the Environment Agency plans would be beneficial in order to identify areas where there are issues and identify solutions.
- 96.11 Councillor Whitehead raised concern that parish councils may not be receptive to developing plans.
- 96.12 Councillor Weller highlighted that grassroot and community solutions in relation to flooding could be undertaken by communities without great expenses, and that collaborative working with the County Council and Environment Agency was a necessity to solve flooding issues.

96.13 Councillor Mansel left the meeting at 21:05 pm.

96.14 Councillor Lawrence left the meeting at 21:07 pm.

By a unanimous vote.

**It was RESOLVED: -**

- 1) This Council recognises the excellent response to floods associated with Storms Babet, Ciaran and Henk within our communities. Only collaborative efforts of communities and statutory agencies provide immediate interventions to critical and widespread incidents such as those experienced in recent months. Rectifying longer term disruption to residents and businesses must be a shared responsibility of this Council and partner agencies.**
- 2) This Council calls on parish and town councils to actively participate in assessing flood risk in their communities and to work collaboratively with officers to develop or enhance all of their local community emergency response plans (not just in response to flooding), and that;**
- 3) The Council calls on Suffolk County Council and the Environment Agency to accelerate the recovery phase of repairs and urgently addressing the infrastructure maintenance backlog.**
- 4) Concurrent with the above, the Council calls on Suffolk County Council, DEFRA, the Environment Agency and Natural England to focus attention on both natural flood alleviation measures and structural remedial activity to mitigate future risk of flooding to property and essential infrastructure. These approaches should be managed and a balance struck to ensure maximisation of environmental benefit and limitation of carbon intensive solutions (e.g. mechanical flood defences) to only those areas where the former is impractical or ineffective.**
- 5) It will be vital to bring together technical expertise (hydrology and ecology) along with local knowledge of landowners and their representative bodies (e.g. National Farmers Union, Country Landowners Association and Nature Friendly Farming Network) and third sector partners (e.g. The Pickerel Project and River Waveney Trust).**

The business of the meeting was concluded at 9:13pm.

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Chair