



Utilities Liaison Group

Date & Time 16 May 2013
10:00 – 12:15
Location West Suffolk House (GFR12), Western Way,
Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3YU
Present Sue Bull – Anglian Water
Martyn Lunn – Essex & Suffolk Water
Carrie Shannon – UK Power Networks
Andrea Mayley – Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury Councils
Desi Reed – Suffolk Coastal & Waveney Councils
Robert Hobbs – Ipswich Borough Council
Sue Dawes – Babergh & Mid Suffolk Councils
James Cutting – Suffolk County Council

Notes

1 ***Welcome and introductions***

The mergers of the administrative functions of Suffolk's local authorities was explained and discussed.

2 ***Terms of reference***

The role of the members being the single point of contact to pass issues up within the organisation was added.

Openreach and Environment Agency were added to the list of organisations.

Two other organisations were suggested (the Highways Agency and Suffolk Chamber) and would be invited on occasion. The function of this forum, the degree of liaison and the presence of other forums does not warrant such regular linkage.

Notes of the main points from each meeting would be taken and be made available through Suffolk County Council's website after all members agree.

All agreed that the group should meet quarterly at first.

3 ***Role of utilities in economic growth and planning***

The roles of local authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnerships was discussed, as was the growth strategy and the status and stages of local plans.

The utility firms would appreciate regular updates on major developments likely to come forward. Phasing and some form assessment of certainty would also be useful. The overall need is to be able to react quickly to new projects.

The work of the Water Resources East Anglia 2040 group could feed back into this group. Planning for water resources has links with local authorities

through surface water management and the promotion of water efficiency.

4 Who pays for infrastructure?:

The differences between the cost of connections was discussed. In particular, when regulated funds pay for investment. The difference between water and electricity was also discussed – e.g. influence of private firms for a wider range of works and the “second-comer” rule which provides a return on private electricity infrastructure investments over five years.

5 How local authorities could support utility firms

The role of this group was welcomed and the updating on sites in particular. There could also be a benefit in identifying regulatory burdens – an example is the difference to make water and sewage infrastructure viable; 12 years for residential but four years for commercial.

7 Future challenges

The deregulation of the markets was discussed: for water - retail for commercial customers and, for electricity, previously non-contestable works.