

Forest Heath District Council

MINUTES of the **CABINET** held at the District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall on Tuesday 15 October 2013 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

J E Waters (Leader)	S J Edwards
N A Roman (Deputy Leader)	R J Millar
Mrs R E Burt	

Councillor T Simmons was also in attendance.

Also in attendance:

J Bowes, Head of Legal and Democratic Services
I Gallin, Chief Executive
D Howes, Head of Policy, Communications and Customers
R Mann, Head of Resources and Performance
S Phelan, Head of Housing
K Points, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
M Walsh, Head of Waste Management and Property Services
L Watts, Director
A Wilson, Director
S Turner, FHDC Cabinet Officer/Committee Administrator

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D W Bowman and W Hirst.

739. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions/statements from members of the public.

740. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 3 September 2013 were unanimously accepted as an accurate record and signed by the Leader.

KEY DECISIONS

741. **SUFFOLK WASTE PARTNERSHIP INTER-AUTHORITY AGREEMENT (REPORT NO CAB13/109)** (Decision Plan Reference: OCT13/06)

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste presented this report which set out the proposed future arrangements for the members of the Suffolk Waste Partnership to enter into an Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) to ensure continuous improvement and effectiveness in delivering joint waste service contracts in Suffolk.

The purpose of the Inter-Authority Agreement was to establish a clear and accountable framework under which the SWP Authorities could continue to work together, in the context of Suffolk's Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, to deliver their respective waste management responsibilities. It did this by providing the partner authorities with a set of principles and agreements from which all waste activities can be planned and developed with the full commitment, understanding and support of each other.

The Agreement provided an on-going commitment to how waste management services were conducted and funded, over and above the requirements of the statutory regime alone. As such, the Agreement would provide a mechanism by which the councils could clearly define agreement on matters relating to waste service funding, collection services, and long-term disposal arrangements.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The Suffolk Waste Partnership Inter-Authority Agreement and its associated annexes (as set out in Appendix 1 to Report No CAB13/109) be approved.
2. Delegated authority to given to the Head of Waste Management and Property Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste, to agree any final details and enter into the agreement on terms that best protect the Council's interest.

742. **REVENUES COLLECTION PERFORMANCE AND WRITE-OFFS (REPORT NO CAB13/110)** (Decision Plan Reference: OCT13/08)

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Governance and Performance presented this report which sought approval for the write-off of uncollectable amounts in respect of accounts for Council Tax and Business Rates. The specific reasons for recommending each write-off, was included within the exempt Appendix 1 and 2.

Whilst considering this report, reference was made to paragraph 5.2, where Members considered that the wording of this paragraph could be construed as ambiguous. The Cabinet Member agreed and confirmed that this wording would be amended accordingly within future reporting.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the write-off of the amounts detailed in the exempt Appendix 1 and 2 of Report No CAB13/110, be approved as follows:

1. Five accounts for Council Tax totalling £17,857.90 (exempt Appendix 1).
2. Four accounts for Business Rates totalling £82,027.12 (exempt Appendix 2).

NON KEY DECISIONS

743. **JOINT GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE (REPORT NO CAB13/111)**
(Decision Plan Reference: OCT13/02)

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Governance and Performance presented this report which explained that the Human Resources Service was currently working through the HR Policies that were in place at each Council, in order to produce and agree new joint policies for West Suffolk. This report proposed a new joint Grievance Policy and Procedure, as set out within the Appendix to the report.

Both existing policies and procedures, in place at Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, had been reviewed and changes made to ensure that managers had a sound and effective single policy for dealing with employee grievances. The new joint Policy and Procedure ensured that issues that employees raised as a grievance, could be dealt with in a fair and timely way, to achieve an effective resolution.

The new Policy and Procedure was in accordance with current employment legislation (specifically the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992) and the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RECOMMENDED:

That the Joint Grievance Policy and Procedure be adopted.

744. **JOINT APPEAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE (REPORT NO CAB13/112)**
(Decision Plan Reference: OCT13/09)

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Governance and Performance presented this report which explained that the Human Resources Service was currently working through the HR Policies that were in place at each Council, in order to produce and agree new joint policies for West Suffolk. This report proposed a new joint Appeal Policy and Procedure, as set out in the Appendix to the report.

Both existing policies and procedures, in place at Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, had been reviewed and changes made to ensure that managers had a sound and effective single policy for dealing with employee grievances. The new joint Policy detailed the composition of an Officer Appeals Panel, therefore, removing the requirement for the current Member Appeals Committees which were in place at both Councils.

The new Policy and Procedure were in accordance with current employment legislation specifically the Employment Rights Acts 1996, 1999 and the Employment 2008 and the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RECOMMENDED:

That:-

1. The Joint Appeal Policy and Procedure be adopted.
2. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services be required to make the necessary changes to the Forest Heath District Council Constitution.

745. **WEST SUFFOLK HOUSING STRATEGY SCOPING REPORT (REPORT NO CAB13/113)** (Decision Plan Reference: OCT13/04)

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Transport presented this report which outlined the scope of the new single West Suffolk Housing Strategy.

It was no longer a legal requirement for local authorities to have a Housing Strategy in place. However, it was recognised that in order to have a strategic overview of how councils would deliver the range of housing options and related assets to communities, it was prudent to develop one. The new approach going forward was to provide a holistic package around housing to the residents of West Suffolk. This would be reflected in the new structure and would include developing and supplying a range of housing options across the private sector, the private rented market and social and affordable housing, ensuring that all tenures would provide sustainable and suitable homes for the residents of West Suffolk. This would continue to be delivered in partnership with other agencies and to build on the relationships that had been established over many years.

Appendix 1 to the report, illustrated the current housing documents which both Councils had in place. The new Strategy would draw together all housing related policies and plans, each having a supporting action plan.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the scope of the new West Suffolk Housing Strategy and the governance of the Member Focus Group be approved.

746. **WEST SUFFOLK EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY 2013 – 2015 (REPORT NO CAB13/114)** (Decision Plan Reference: OCT13/05)

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Transport presented this report which explained that this Strategy would ensure that the Council continued to pro-actively target empty homes by using a range of informal and formal measures, which encouraged property owners to bring properties back into use. The refreshed Joint Policy, as set out in Appendix A to the report, capitalised on the successes to-date and repositioned the empty homes procedure in West Suffolk, to bring them in line with current Government policy.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The revised West Suffolk Empty Homes Strategy be endorsed, to ensure that the council has a robust and transparent strategy for bringing empty properties back into use.
2. The Head of Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Transport, be authorised to make any minor typographical, factual, spelling and grammatical changes to the document, provided that it does not materially affect the substance or meaning of the Strategy.

747. **REVIEW OF THE CABINET'S WORKING GROUP, JOINT COMMITTEES/PANELS, STEERING GROUPS AND WORKING PARTY FOLLOWING THE DISTRICT COUNCIL BY-ELECTION FOR THE EXNING WARD (REPORT NO CAB13/115)** (Decision Plan Reference: OCT13/07)

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Governance and Performance presented this report which requested the Cabinet to review the membership of its Working Group, Joint Committees/Panels, Steering Groups and Working Party, following the District Council By-Election for the Exning Ward, which took place on 11 July 2013.

The Cabinet was also being requested to disband the Forest Heath District Council/St Edmundsbury Borough Council Shared Services Steering Group, as its operation was no longer required and any residual issues could be presented directly to both Cabinets.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The membership of the Cabinet's Working Group, Joint Committees/Panels, Steering Groups and Working Party, for the remainder of 2013/2014 be confirmed as:
 - (a) Local Plan Working Group
Mrs R E Burt (Chairman)
R J Millar (Vice Chairman)
W J Bishop
W Hirst
R D S Hood
M J Jefferys
Mrs C F J Lynch
W E Sadler
T Simmons
 - (b) Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee
S J Edwards
R J Millar
N A Roman (Substitute)
J E Waters (Substitute)

- (c) Joint Development Management Policies Committee
Mrs R E Burt
D W Bowman
W Hirst
R J Millar (Substitute)
J E Waters (Substitute)
 - (d) West Suffolk Waste and Street Scene Services Joint Committee
N A Roman (Vice Chairman)
S J Edwards
D W Bowman (Substitute)
J E Waters (Substitute)
 - (e) West Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Panel
D W Bowman
Mrs R E Burt
A Drummond
N A Roman
A J Wheble (Substitute)
 - (f) West Suffolk Joint Health and Safety Panel
Mrs R E Burt
A Drummond
T Simmons
J W McGhee (Substitute)
 - (g) West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel
S J Edwards
G Jaggard
T Simmons
W Hirst (Substitute)
M J Jefferys (Substitute)
 - (h) West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group
W J Bishop
D W Bowman
R Dicker
R D S Hood
T J Huggan
M K Smith
Substitute (TBC)
Substitute (TBC)
 - (i) Joint Diversity Working Party
G Jaggard
R J Millar
2. The Forest Heath District Council/St Edmundsbury Borough Council Shared Services Steering Group be disbanded, with any residual issues emanating from the Steering Group being presented directly to both Cabinets.

748. **REVIEW OF THE DECISIONS PLAN (REPORT NO CAB13/116)**

The Cabinet was asked to review the Decisions Plan for the period October 2013 to May 2014.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the Decisions Plan for the period October 2013 to May 2014, attached as an Appendix to Report No CAB13/116, be noted.

749. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as prescribed in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and indicated against each item and, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

KEY DECISIONS

750. **CUSTOMER ACCESS: BUSINESS CASE – IMPLEMENTING CHANNEL SHIFT, WORKFLOW AND APPLICATION INTEGRATION (PARA 3) (REPORT NO CAB13/117X)** (Decision Plan Reference: OCT13/03)

The Cabinet Member for Families and Communities presented this report which set out the business case for the future delivery of customer access across both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the full business case, implementing channel shift, workflow and application integration, as contained in Appendix A to Report No CAB13/117X, for enabling the purchase of a CRM and workflow solution, in accordance with the financial costs outlined in paragraph 8. of Report No CAB13/117X, be approved.

The meeting closed at 6.40 pm.