

## **ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

#### **Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 11 February 2014 at 5.00 pm in the Conference Chamber West (F1R09), West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds**

PRESENT: Councillor J H M Griffiths (Leader of the Council) (in the Chair)  
Councillors Clements, Everitt, Mrs Gower, Pugh, Ray, Mrs Stamp and Stevens

BY INVITATION: Councillor Houlder (Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee)

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Nettleton

#### **78. Apologies for absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White.

#### **79. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **80. Declarations of Interests**

Members' declarations of interests are recorded under the item to which the declaration relates.

#### **81. Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 22 January 2014**

***Decisions Plan Ref: N/A***

***Cabinet Members: All Portfolios***

The Cabinet received and noted Report E267 (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 January 2014:

- (1) Draft West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014/2016 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/2016;
- (2) Decision Plan: February to May 2014;
- (3) Quarter 3 Directed Surveillance Authorised Applications;
- (4) New Housing Development Sites Joint Task and Finish Group – Progress Report; and
- (5) Work Programme Update.

Councillor Houlder, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that a separate report was included on the Cabinet agenda in respect of item (1) above. He stated that the separate report (Report E268 referred) contained the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee emanating from the joint informal discussions held on 22 January 2014 and the subsequent discussions held on 5 February 2014.

The Cabinet acknowledged the detailed scrutiny undertaken on both documents by both the Borough Council's and Forest Heath District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees and also to commended the work of the officers involved in making the amendments suggested by the Committees to the documents for reconsideration at their subsequent meeting in such a short timescale.

**82. Recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:  
West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014/2016 and Medium Term  
Financial Strategy 2014/2016**

***Decisions Plan Ref: Feb14/12 Cabinet Members: Cllrs John Griffiths  
and Feb14/07 and David Ray***

The Cabinet considered Report E268 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014/2016.

Councillor Griffiths, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for Corporate Planning, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet. He reiterated that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered draft versions of the West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014/2016 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/2016. The Cabinet was to consider these amendments ahead of adoption of both these documents being sought by full Council on 25 February 2014.

The Strategic Plan was a revision of the previous St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) and Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) Corporate/Strategic Plans, taking account of the changed economic climate, sharing of services and other developments since 2012. The Plan set out the vision and priorities for St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, as well as the high level projects and actions that would support the delivery of these priorities. Both SEBC and FHDC Overview and Scrutiny Committees had jointly made a number of suggestions for improving the content of the document, which was attached as Appendix A to Report E268.

Alongside the Strategic Plan, the Committees had also scrutinised the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/2016 and made some suggestions for amendment to this document, as contained in Section 4.6 of Report E268. These were discussed during the consideration of Report E272 (Minute 86 below refers).

Councillor Houlder, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, explained that the Committee had considered the documents during a joint informal meeting with Forest Heath District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 January 2014, and as a number of suggested amendments had been identified, both Committees had considered a second informal joint meeting should be held to enable both Committees to jointly reconsider the revised versions. Following the second meeting on 5 February 2014, subsequent amendments were suggested and these were contained in Sections 4.5 and 4.6 of Report E268. Councillor Cox had also raised some issues with officers following the meeting and officers had suggested further amendments to the draft Strategic Plan, and these were contained in Section 4.7.

Upon consideration of the further suggested amendments to the draft Plan, as contained in sections 4.5 and 4.7 of Report E268, three out of the four were accepted by the Cabinet, as detailed in the recommendations below.



**RECOMMENDED:**

***That subject to the approval of full Council, the West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014/2016, as contained in Appendix A to Report E268, be adopted, subject to the following amendments:***

- (a) 'Homes for our communities' be retained as the wording for the third priority relating to housing;***
- (b) page 11, paragraph 7: the wording 'All of these approaches will require councillors and staff alike to learn new skills and ways of working' be amended to read, 'All of these approaches may require councillors and staff alike to learn new skills and ways of working'; and***
- (c) page 11, paragraph 7: the wording '...maintain existing relationships with other parts of the public sector...' be amended to read, '....strengthen existing relationships with other parts of the public sector...'***

**83. Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 29 January 2014**

***Decisions Plan Ref: N/A***

***Cabinet Members: All Portfolios***

The Cabinet received and noted Report E269 (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 29 January 2014:

- (1) Third Quarter 2013/2014 Internal Audit Progress Report;
- (2) Key Performance Indicators and Quarter 3 Performance Report 2013/2014;
- (3) Interim Annual Performance Report for The Apex;
- (4) Budget Monitoring Report 1 April to 31 December 2013;
- (5) Corporate Risk Register Quarterly Monitoring Report: December 2013;
- (6) Investment Activity 1 April to 31 December 2013;
- (7) Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2014/2015
- (8) Treasury Management Code of Practice; and
- (9) Work Programme Update.

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, the Scrutiny Officer drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that separate reports were included on this Cabinet agenda in respect of items (7) and (8) above.

**84. Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2014/2015**

***Decisions Plan Ref: Feb14/06 Cabinet Member: Cllr David Ray***

The Cabinet considered Report E270 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements for 2014/2015.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that on 29 January

2014 the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee had considered Report E225, which had been scrutinised by the Treasury Management Sub-Committee on 20 January 2014.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management required that, prior to the start of the financial year, the Council formally approved an Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy which set out its treasury management policy and strategy statements for the forthcoming year.

Report E225 had provided information on the proposed Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2014/2015 (including treasury related prudential indicators), which met the requirements of the CIPFA Code, together with the Department of Communities and Local Government's Guidance on Local Government Investments in England.



**RECOMMENDED:**

***That subject to the approval of full Council, the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2014/2015, as contained in Appendix 1 to Report E225, be adopted subject to the following minor amendment:***

***Paragraph 42: the wording set out in the table be amended to read 'Investment Date', instead of 'Date Loaned'.***

**85. Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Treasury Management Code of Practice**  
***Decisions Plan Ref: Feb14/06 Cabinet Member: Cllr David Ray***

The Cabinet considered Report E271 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the Treasury Management Code of Practice and for any changes required to be made to the Code to be annexed to the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy on an annual basis.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that on 29 January 2014 the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee had considered Report E226, which had been scrutinised by the Treasury Management Sub-Committee on 20 January 2014.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) recommended that all councils adopt a Treasury Management Code of Practice based on the treasury management practices published in the CIPFA and guidance issued in their Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

In response to a question, the Cabinet was informed that CIPFA recommended adoption of a Treasury Management Code of Practice by all tiers of local Government.



**RECOMMENDED: That subject to the approval of full Council,**

- (1) the Treasury Management Code of Practice, as contained in Appendix 1 to Report E226, be adopted; and**
- (2) any changes required to be made to the Treasury Management Code of Practice to be annexed to the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy on an annual basis.**

**86. Budget and Council Tax Setting 2014/2015 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/2016**

**Decisions Plan Ref:** Feb14/09 &  
Feb14/07

**Cabinet Member:** Cllr David Ray

The Cabinet considered Report E272 (previously circulated) which presented the proposals for Budget and Council Tax Setting in 2014/2015.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that Report E272 set out details of the Council's proposed revenue and capital budgets for 2014/2015 and the Cabinet was required to consider the 2014/2015 budget for the authority and recommend to Council the level of Council Tax required to fund this budget.

The proposed 2014/2015 net revenue budget was £11.843m compared to the 2013/2014 net budget of £11.872m, which included savings totalling £0.679m, arising from shared services with Forest Heath District Council together with other local savings initiatives. It was estimated that £12.285m would be spent on the Council's capital programme during 2014/2015, to be funded from a combination of grants and contributions (£5.435m), earmarked revenue reserves (£2.368m) and usable capital receipts reserve (£4.482m).

The Council faced a number of financial challenges and opportunities in the future. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2014/2016, attached at Attachment D to the report, set out in general terms how the Council proposed to respond to these over the coming years. The most significant challenge that the Council faced was both the continuation of public expenditure cuts and the reduction in Central Government grant funding and the changing landscape of local government financing, such as the recently introduced business rate retention scheme. The Council also faced a number of local challenges in ensuring that its expenditure was constrained in the face of declining interest receipts and increased demand on front line services such as Housing Benefits and Homelessness.

Upon consideration of two further suggested amendments to the draft MTFS, (as contained in Section 4.6 of Report E268) these were accepted by the Cabinet, as detailed in the recommendation below.

The Finance Team was commended for delivering a sustainable budget for 2014/2015 and for the work involved with producing the new joint Medium Term Financial Strategy. Staff were also recognised for showing dedication and commitment in making the Council more efficient in delivering the necessary savings whilst maintaining the delivery of services.

The Cabinet supported the proposal for maintaining the same level of Council Tax as 2013/2014, which meant there had been no increase in Council Tax for the fourth consecutive year and for five out of the last six years. With costs rising and all the other changes and pressures on the Council, the Cabinet considered this to be a tremendous achievement whilst maintaining the provision of excellent services for the residents of the Borough. Members also supported the proposal in connection with business rates retail relief, as detailed in Sections 4.9 to 4.15 of the report.

The Cabinet was then reminded that on 20 February 2014, a Member Development event covering Local Government Finance would be held at Forest Heath District Council offices at 6.00 pm. All were invited to attend.

*(Councillor Houlder left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)*



***RECOMMENDED: That subject to the approval of full Council,***

- (1) the revenue budget attached at Attachment A to Report E272, together with the shared services and local savings proposals, detailed at Attachment B, be approved;***
- (2) the revised capital programme detailed at paragraphs 4.23 to 4.26 and attached at Attachment D, Appendix 2 of Report E272, be approved;***
- (3) a general fund balance of £3m be agreed to be maintained, as detailed in paragraph 5.1 of Report E272;***
- (4) having taken into account the conclusions of the Head of Resources and Performance's report on the adequacy of reserves and the robustness of budget estimates (Attachment C) and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (Attachment D), particularly the Scenario Planning and Sensitivity Analysis (Attachment D, Appendix 5) and all other information contained in this report, Cabinet recommends a 0% increase in council tax for 2014/2015;***
- (5) the Head of Resources and Performance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, be authorised to transfer any surplus on the 2013/2014 revenue budget to the General Fund, and to vire funds between existing Earmarked Reserves (as set out at Attachment D, Appendix 3) as deemed appropriate throughout the year;***
- (6) all businesses that fall within Government's criteria be awarded relief equally; and delegated authority be given to the Head of Resources and Performance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, to determine the final guidelines for the operation of the relief following publication of the final scheme by Government, as***

**set out in paragraphs 4.9 to 4.15 of Report E272;  
and**

- (7) the West Suffolk Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2014/2016, as contained in Attachment D to Report E272, including all appendices, be approved, subject to the following amendments to the MTFS (Attachment D) itself:**
- (a) page 9, paragraph 5: the final sentence be amended to begin with 'Some older people...', rather than 'Others...'; and**
- (b) page 9, final paragraph: the words '...to bring it in line with county or national averages' be deleted from the final sentence.**

**87. Policy to Discharge Homelessness Duties Through the Private Rented Sector**

**Decisions Plan Ref: Feb14/19 Cabinet Member: Cllr Anne Gower**

The Cabinet considered Report E273 (previously circulated) which sought approval for a new joint policy with Forest Heath District Council to discharge its homelessness duties through the Private Rented Sector.

Councillor Mrs Gower, Portfolio Holder for Housing, informed the Cabinet that the Localism Act 2011 gave Local Authorities the power to discharge their duty to secure accommodation for homeless applicants by way of arrangements with the Private Rented Sector, without the agreement of the applicant and providing them with a 'suitable' offer. Currently the Council was restricted to discharging its duties into social housing. The ability to discharge in to the Private Rented Sector would:

- (a) give the Council more options to house homeless households;  
(b) reduce pressure on social housing; and  
(c) reduce pressure on temporary accommodation.

The policy set out how St Edmundsbury Borough Council would apply the legislation.

Councillor Mrs Gower wished to make a number of amendments to Section 7.1 of the draft policy, as detailed in the recommendation below, which were accepted by the Cabinet.



**RECOMMENDED:**

***That, subject to the approval of full Council, the Policy to Discharge Homelessness Duties through the Private Rented Sector, as contained in Appendix 1 to Report E273, be adopted, subject to Section 7.1 of the Policy being replaced with the following text:***

***'Under section 195A Housing Act 1996, should the applicant approach the Council as homeless within a period of two years following acceptance of the private rented sector offer under s.193(7AA) Housing Act 1996, the Council will, in accordance with the Legislation :***

- ***Treat the applicant as being homeless from the date of expiry of the Notice Requiring Possession. The landlord therefore will not be required to apply to court to regain possession. The Council will confirm the validity of the notice.***
- ***Consider the household to have priority need as it will be retained from the date of the acceptance of a duty under 193 (2) irrespective of any change in circumstances or household composition that may affect this.***
- ***Satisfy itself that the Applicant is still eligible for assistance (eg: has correct immigration status) and,***
- ***Did not become homeless intentionally from their last settled accommodation (eg: was not evicted for rent arrears).'***

**88. Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 12 December 2013**

***Decisions Plan Ref: N/A Cabinet Member: Cllr David Ray***

The Cabinet received and noted Report E274 (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee on 12 December 2013.

On 12 December 2013 the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership (ARP) Joint Committee considered the following substantive items of business:

- (1) Fraud;
- (2) Performance Report;
- (3) Pension Update;
- (4) Partnership Budget 2014/2015;
- (5) Balanced Scorecard;
- (6) Welfare Reform;
- (7) Forthcoming Issues;
- (8) New Partner Business Case; and
- (9) Waveney and Coastal Partnership.

Councillor Everitt, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Member of the Joint Committee, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet.

In response to a question, the Cabinet was informed that some additional work was being undertaken in respect of Fenland District Council formally joining the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership and further details would be provided to the next meeting of the Joint Committee on 13 March 2014.

**89. Report of the West Suffolk Waste and Street Scene Services Joint Committee: 17 January 2014**

***Decisions Plan Ref: N/A Cabinet Member: Cllr Terry Clements***

The Cabinet received and noted Report E275 (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the West Suffolk Waste and Street Scene Services Joint Committee on 17 January 2014.

On 17 January 2014 the West Suffolk Waste and Street Scene Services Joint Committee considered the following substantive items of business:

- (1) Update on the Procurement of Waste Transfer and Recycling Facilities;
- (2) Review of Waste Management Performance 2013; and
- (3) Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP) Organic Waste Review Project – Update.

Councillor Stevens, Portfolio Holder for Waste and Property, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet.

**90. Report of the Shared Offices Joint Committee: 24 January 2014**  
***Decisions Plan Ref: N/A Cabinet Members: Cllrs Peter Stevens and David Ray***

The Cabinet received and noted Report E276 (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Shared Offices Joint Committee on 24 January 2014.

On 24 January 2014 the Shared Offices Joint Committee considered the following substantive items of business:

- (1) West Suffolk House and Haverhill House: Building Manager's Report;
- (2) Haverhill House Budget Proposals 2014/2015; and
- (3) West Suffolk House Occupation Review and 2014/2015 Budget.

Councillor Everitt, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee, informed the Cabinet that the Joint Committee had received a comprehensive presentation on the findings of the West Suffolk House Occupation Review, and discussions had been held on car parking issues which had led to an additional decision being taken, as detailed in Section 4.3 of the report.

In response to a question, the Cabinet was informed that the opening hours for Haverhill House would be as those listed under Section 4.2 of Report E276 and the building would be secured outside of those times. Should there be any operational issues resulting following the change, such as if it became evident that a significant number of staff needed to work later on a regular basis, the situation would be reviewed and the Joint Committee kept informed.

**91. Recommendations From the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel: 16 January 2014**  
***Decisions Plan Ref: Feb14/25 Cabinet Member: Cllr David Ray***

The Cabinet considered Report E277 (previously circulated) which sought approval for recommendations emanating from the meeting of the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel held on 16 January 2014.

On 16 January 2014 the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel considered the following substantive items:

- (1) New Joint (West Suffolk) Human Resources Policies: Travel; Maternity Leave and Pay; Organisational Change and Redundancy; and
- (2) Shared Services – Shaping the Organisation.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet including that as St

Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District Councils had a Joint Leadership Team, a single Pay and Reward Strategy, and were bringing together a shared workforce, three new joint Human Resources' policies and procedures had been prepared to underpin the terms and conditions of employment.

These policies were tools for both managers and employees to utilise to deal with matters when they arose, providing clarity, fairness and consistency in regard to dealing with the situations covered by these policies. The adoption of these joint and up-to-date policies would be supported by information sharing and training for managers, as appropriate.

As a revised version of the Joint Travel Policy and Procedure was tabled at the Panel meeting and the Panel had since proposed another amendment, as contained in Section 4.5 of Report E277, the Policy was attached as Appendix 1 to this Cabinet report with the amendments incorporated for clarity.

RESOLVED: That

**(a) Joint Travel Policy and Procedure**

RESOLVED:

That the Joint Travel Policy and Procedure, contained in Appendix 1 to Report E277, be adopted.

**(b) Joint Maternity and Paternity Leave and Pay Policy and Procedure**

RESOLVED:

That the Joint Maternity and Paternity Leave Policy and Procedure, contained in Appendix B to Report JSP14/006, be adopted.

**(c) Joint Organisational Change and Redundancy Policy and Procedure**

RESOLVED:

That the Joint Organisational Change and Redundancy Policy and Procedure, contained in Appendix C to Report JSP14/006, be adopted subject to the following amendments:

*11. Entitlement to redundancy payments*

Pages 8 and 9 – paragraphs 11.1 and 11.3: the word 'your' be deleted from these paragraphs, so that it is amended to read:

*11.1 The calculation of redundancy payment is based on age, length of continuous local government service, and actual pay.*

*11.3 Entitlement can be calculated at [INSERT LINK](#) on the Councils' intranet.*

**92. Recommendations from the Licensing and Regulatory Committee: 21 January 2014: Guidance Policy on Criminal Convictions**

***Decisions Plan Ref: Feb14/27 Cabinet Member: Cllr Terry Clements***

The Cabinet considered Report E278 (previously circulated) which sought approval for a recommendation emanating from the meeting of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee held on 21 January 2014.

On 21 January 2014 the Licensing and Regulatory Committee considered the following substantive items:

- (1) Review of the Cumulative Impact Policy; and
- (2) Guidance Policy on Criminal Convictions.

Approval was sought for the Guidance Policy on Criminal Convictions in respect of taxi and private hire vehicle licensing.

Councillor Clements, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulation, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that consideration of criminal convictions when assessing whether applicants for Hackney Carriage and/or Private Hire Driver or Operator Licences were 'fit and proper' persons was a significant concern for officers and Members of Licensing Sub-Committees. It was therefore vital that clear and up to date guidance existed to encourage consistency and provide information to applicants and existing licence holders on the approach the Council was likely to take in respect of any convictions or cautions they may have.

Local Government Regulation (LGR), the coordinating body for Local Authority Regulatory Services (part of the Local Government Association), in consultation with local councils, Department for Transport (DfT), Institute of Licensing (IoL), National Association of Licensing Enforcement Officers (NALEO) and Transport for London (TfL) had produced a guidance policy regarding criminal convictions. This had been localised and a proposed draft was attached at Appendix 1 to Report E238.

Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council remained two separate and distinct licensing authorities, however for the purposes of efficiency and consistency, the proposed policy guidance on convictions was intended to be a joint policy to coincide with a common approach and framework to handling applications and other licensing matters.

Forest Heath District Council's Licensing Committee had recommended approval of the policy subject to a minor textual amendment, the substitution of 'require' for 'expect' in the second line of paragraph 18.1. The regulations cited in paragraph 4.4 above also required updating, which could be made under officer delegated authority.

***RECOMMENDED:***

***That subject to the approval of full Council, the Joint Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Criminal Convictions Policy, as contained in Appendix 1 to Report E238, be adopted, subject to the amendment of paragraph 18.1 by the substitution of 'require' for 'expect' in the second line.***

*(Following Cabinet's making of this recommendation, it had since transpired that the recommendation detailed in Report E278 contained a typographical error as it should have stated, '... subject to the amendment of paragraph 18.1 by the substitution of 'expect' for 'require' in the second line' and not '... by the substitution of 'require' for 'expect' ...', as printed. This had been rectified in the recommendation to Council on 25 February 2014.)*

**93. Recommendations from the Sustainable Development Working Party: 4 February 2014**

**Decisions Plan Ref:** Feb14/21 **Cabinet Member:** Cllr Terry Clements  
Feb14/13 and Nov13/12

The Cabinet considered Report E279 (amended) (previously circulated) which sought approval for a number of recommendations emanating from the meeting of the Sustainable Development Working Party held on 4 February 2014.

On 4 February 2014 the Sustainable Development Working Party considered the following substantive items:

- (1) Joint Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): Adoption;
- (2) Moreton Hall, Bury St Edmunds Masterplan; and
- (3) Vision 2031: Infrastructure Delivery Plans.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required local planning authorities to prepare a SCI, which was essentially a strategy for involving the community in the Local Plan and planning application processes. Given the approach to a shared planning service for Forest Heath District (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils (SEBC), it was considered appropriate to have a joint SCI which set out a 'consistent engagement' strategy for applications across both authorities.

Both SEBC's Sustainable Development Working Party and FHDC's Local Plan Working Group had considered the document in detail. Several minor textual and factual amendments had been suggested by both Groups and these were rectified under officer delegated authority where appropriate.

The Working Party had also proposed an amendment to provide reference to the treatment of statutory requests relating to Environmental Impact Assessment screening options, as contained in the recommendation below. This was accepted by the Cabinet.

The Masterplan for Moreton Hall, Bury St Edmunds was considered to be in accordance with the adopted Replacement Local Plan, the emerging Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031 document and the Council's protocol for preparing Masterplans. Section 4 of Report E279 (Amended) provided the key issues that had led to this point in seeking the adoption of this Masterplan.

Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDPs) had been prepared in support of the Policies and Proposals in Vision 2031. In light of the comments received during the consultation period, further work had been undertaken to review the content of the draft IDPs and bring them up to date. Section 4 of Report E279 (Amended) provided the key issues that had led to this point in seeking the approval of the IDPs. During the Vision 2031 Examination in Public that was currently being held, the Inspector had recognised that the information contained in the IDPs represented a point in time and were primarily required to demonstrate that there were no

significant issues in relation to the delivery of the Vision 2031 development proposals.

Councillor Clements, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulation drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet. He explained that the eastern boundary for the Moreton Hall Masterplan accorded with the Council's Concept Statement and Vision 2031 allocation, despite objections from the developer, Taylor Wimpey, as heard during a Vision 2031 Examination in Public hearing. The fact that Taylor Wimpey was asking for the Masterplan to be adopted put the Council in a strong position to defend any further eastward extension of this site.

Councillor Clements then commended the officers for the significant amount of work involved in the Vision 2031 process to order to reach the point of Examination. The hearings were due to finish on 12 February 2014, following which the Council would need to carry out a further period of consultation on modifications, as required by the Inspector.

***RECOMMENDED: That, subject to the approval of full Council,***

***(a) Joint Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): Adoption***

- (1) the joint Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), as contained in Appendix A to Report E260, be adopted, subject to the following amendments:***

***the insertion in paragraph 2.1 'Where a screening opinion is requested under the Environment Impact Assessment Regulations we will place the opinion on the public register and website and notify the relevant Town or Parish Council when it is made'; and***

- (2) the Local Ward Member(s) be informed via the Members' Bulletin once an Environmental Impact Assessment request has been made by the Council.***

***(b) Moreton Hall, Bury St Edmunds, Masterplan***

***That the Masterplan for development of the site at Moreton Hall, Bury St Edmunds, as contained in Appendix A of Report E261, be adopted as non-statutory planning guidance.***

***(c) Vision 2031: Infrastructure Delivery Plans***

- (1) the responses to comments submitted on the Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plans, as contained in Appendix A to Report E262, be noted; and***

- (2) the revised Vision 2031 Infrastructure Delivery Plans for Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and for the Rural Area, as contained in***

**Appendices B, C and D to Report E262, be approved and published.**

**94. Recommendations from the Grant Working Party: 5 February 2014: Arts and Sports Revenue Support Grants**

**Decisions Plan Ref: Feb14/22 Cabinet Member: Cllr Robert Everitt**

The Cabinet considered Report E280 (amended) (previously circulated) which sought approval for a number of recommendations emanating from the meeting of the Grant Working Party on 5 February 2014.

On 5 February 2014 the Grant Working Party considered the following substantive item:

(1) Arts and Sports Revenue Support Grants.

Councillor Everitt, Portfolio Holder for Communities informed the Cabinet that Report E263 considered by the Working Party had contained details of future core funding for the following organisations:

- (a) Victory Sports Ground, Bury St Edmunds;
- (b) Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds; and
- (c) Smith's Row Art Gallery.

Section 4 of Report E263 provided a brief background to the funding awarded by the Borough Council to each of the above organisations in previous years and the level of support recommended to be provided in 2014/2015 and onwards, as shown in the resolution below.

A typographical error was identified at the Working Party meeting in respect of the proposed grant to be awarded to the Theatre Royal for 2014/2015. The figure should have read £71,250 and not £71,750, as printed, which accurately reflected the proposed 5% reduction in grant for the forthcoming financial year.

Councillor Mrs Stamp, Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture and Heritage added that this was a new era for arts and sports organisations whereby reliance on local government funding was no longer a sustainable option with grants likely to be reduced over a number of years. Each organisation was being encouraged to be more self sufficient with support provided by the Council during the transitional phase.

Councillor Clements, the Borough Council's nominated representative on Suffolk Sport, stated that at the recent Suffolk Sport Awards, one of the volunteers that had been involved with the Victory Sports Ground project had won an award for services to the community. The Cabinet acknowledged how this achievement had recognised the benefits of partnership working to enable the facility to come to fruition.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the budget setting process for 2014/2015:

- (1) Victory Sports Ground, Bury St Edmunds be awarded a £45,250 revenue support grant for 2014/2015 and a review be undertaken to produce a funding agreement from 2015/2016 based on year on year reductions which over a number of

years will result in the grant ceasing, as outlined in Section 4.2 of Report E263;

- (2) Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds be awarded a revenue support grant of £71,250 for 2014/2015 and a review be undertaken to determine grant support in the medium term, as outlined in Section 4.3 of Report E263; and
- (3) Smith's Row Art Gallery, Bury St Edmunds be awarded a revenue support grant of £34,485 for 2014/2015 and a review be undertaken to determine the level of support in the medium term, as outlined in Section 4.4 of Report E263.

**95. Recommendations from the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group: 20 January 2014: Terms of Reference**

***Decisions Plan Ref: Feb14/26 Cabinet Members: Cllrs Alaric Pugh and Terry Clements***

The Cabinet considered Report E281 (previously circulated) which sought approval for a recommendation emanating from the meeting of the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group on 20 January 2014.

On 20 January 2014 the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group considered the following substantive items:

- (1) Refining the Terms of Reference for the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group;
- (2) To agree the following in relation to the meetings of the Steering Group:
  - (a) Frequency of meetings;
  - (b) Time of meetings; and
  - (c) Format/Content of meetings;
- (3) Planning Policy Update – Presentation;
- (4) Introduction to Economic Development and Growth – Presentation;
- (5) The importance of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and the Strategic Economic Plans – Presentation;
- (6) Economic Development and Growth: Local Context – Presentation; and
- (7) West Suffolk Six Point Plan for Jobs and Growth – Presentation.

Councillor Pugh, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, informed the Cabinet that upon consideration of its terms of reference, the Steering Group considered that '*monitoring the delivery of the West Suffolk Six Point Plan for Jobs and Growth*' should be an additional term of reference for the Joint Growth Steering Group. This related to Report E282, which was considered next on the Cabinet agenda (Minute 96 refers.)

RESOLVED:

That 'Monitoring the delivery of the West Suffolk Six Point Plan for Jobs and Growth' be an additional term of reference for the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group, as set out in Section 4 of Report E281.

**96. West Suffolk Six Point Plan for Jobs and Growth**

***Decisions Plan Ref: Dec13/06 Cabinet Member: Cllr Alaric Pugh***

The Cabinet considered Report E282 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the West Suffolk Six Point Plan for Jobs and Growth.

Councillor Pugh, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that following consultation with stakeholders during the production of the Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) Strategic Plan and the St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) Corporate Plan it was agreed that a key focus for West Suffolk was economic growth.

To deliver on this key focus, the Economic Development and Growth (EDG) team had the following targets: to engage with at least 100 businesses; help create at least 120 new jobs; and help create at least 10 new businesses in West Suffolk over the next two years. In addition to these targets, support would be provided to the majority of existing businesses in West Suffolk.

The EDG team had produced a plan of action, entitled 'West Suffolk Six Point Plan for Jobs and Growth', which set out what the West Suffolk Councils (FHDC and SEBC) would do to meet these targets and the priority of economic growth. It was essential that a plan was in place that enabled the Councils to be prepared for capitalising on any opportunities that arose.

The Plan, attached as Appendix A to the report, was closely aligned to, and derived from, the strategic growth plans of our principal partners, including Suffolk County Council's (SCC) 'Suffolk Growth Strategy' and the growth plans (Strategic Economic Plans) produced by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) and the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (GCGP) (see Minute 97 below).

RESOLVED:

That the West Suffolk Six Point Plan for Jobs and Growth, as contained in Appendix A to Report E282, be approved.

**97. Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough (GCGP) and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnerships (NALEP) Strategic Economic Plan**

***Decisions Plan Ref: Feb14/14 Cabinet Member: Cllr John Griffiths***

The Cabinet considered Report E283 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the seeking of delegated authority for the final versions of the GCGP and NALEP Strategic Economic Plans to be approved by the Head of Economic Development and Growth, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

Councillor Griffiths, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for Strategic Economic Development, informed the Cabinet that

the Government had asked each Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to produce Strategic Economic Plans (SEP), which would drive their approach to investing in local priorities, whether that was in skills, priority growth sectors, business support, or infrastructure. It was only through the new Local Growth Fund (via the LEPs) that local authorities would be able to access Government funding towards these priorities. The adoption of the SEPs would therefore underpin and give weight to the Council's existing Economic Development and Growth strategies and policies.

Councillor Pugh, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, added that the draft consultation responses both sought to ensure that West Suffolk was distinctly recognised in the Plans.

At their request, the GCGP LEP's Plan was confidential at this stage and was attached as Exempt Appendix A. The NALEP's Plan was contained in Appendix B.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the content of the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership's draft Strategic Economic Plan, as contained in Exempt Appendix A to Report E283, be noted;
- (2) the content of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's draft Strategic Economic Plan, as contained in Appendix B to Report E283, be noted;
- (3) comments on the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership's draft Strategic Economic Plan (Exempt Appendix A) and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's draft Strategic Economic Plan (Appendix B), be submitted to the Head of Economic Development and Growth by 23 February 2014, to enable a coordinated West Suffolk response; and
- (4) the Head of Economic Development and Growth, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be given delegated authority to approve the final versions of the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plans.

#### **98. Revenue Collection Performance and Write-Offs**

***Decisions Plan Ref: Feb14/18 Cabinet Member: Cllr David Ray***

The Cabinet considered Report E284 (previously circulated) which provided the collection data in respect of Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates and sought approval for the write-off of debts as contained in the Exempt Appendices.

As at 31 December 2013 the total National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) billed by Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership on behalf of St Edmundsbury Borough Council (as the billing Authority) was nearly £46.3 million per annum. The collection rate as at 31 December 2013 was 88.39% against a profiled target of 86.70% and the annual target was 99.00%.

As at 31 December 2013 the total Council Tax billed by Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership on behalf of St Edmundsbury Borough

Council (which included the County, Police and Parish precept elements) was just under £53.1 million per annum. The collection rate as at 31 December 2013 was 87.08% against a profiled target of 84.00% and the annual target was 98.50%.

The Revenues Section collects outstanding debts in accordance with either statutory guidelines or Council agreed procedures. When all these procedures have been exhausted the outstanding debt is written off using the delegated authority of the Head of Resources and Performance (for debts up to £1,499.99) or by Cabinet (for debts over £1,500).

The specific reasons for recommending each write off are included in Exempt Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet. He highlighted that the collection rate for Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates was currently ahead of target, as detailed above. The Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership was commended for this work.

RESOLVED:

That the write-off of the amounts detailed in the exempt appendices to this report be approved, as follows:

Exempt Appendix 1: 12 accounts for Council Tax totalling £49,941.07;

Exempt Appendix 2: 5 accounts for Business Rates totalling £24,561.18;

Exempt Appendix 3: 8 Housing Benefit overpayments totalling £15,547.27;

Exempt Appendix 4: 1 Sundry Debt totalling £3,763.12.

**99. Exempt Appendices: Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs**

***Decisions Plan Ref: Feb14/18 Cabinet Member: Cllr David Ray***

The Cabinet considered Exempt Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4 to Report E284 (previously circulated), however no reference was made to the specific detail and therefore this item was not held in private session.

**100. Exempt Appendix: Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough (GCGP), and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnerships (NALEP) Strategic Economic Plans**

***Decisions Plan Ref: Feb14/14 Cabinet Member: Cllr David Ray***

The Cabinet considered Exempt Appendix A (GCGP SEP) to Report E283 (previously circulated), however no reference was made to the commercially sensitive content of the Appendix and therefore this item was not held in private session.

At this point it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

**101. Bringing the Tree Maintenance Contract Back In House**

***Decisions Plan Ref: Feb14/23 Cabinet Member: Cllr Sarah Stamp and Peter Stevens***

The Cabinet considered Exempt Report E285 (previously circulated) which sought approval for a proposal for bringing the tree maintenance contract back in house.

Councillor Mrs Stamp, Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for Parks and Landscapes, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that the maintenance of the Borough Council's 14,000 trees was currently outsourced to a private tree work contractor and this five-year contract was due to expire at the end of March 2014.

In order to make savings and utilise the Council's existing operational assets more fully, it was proposed that the service was brought back in-house. Bringing the service in-house would not only provide the capability of maintaining the Council's own tree stock but would also allow for the opportunity to derive revenue from maintaining privately owned trees in the area.

A typographical error was contained under section 4.2 of the report whereby the actual year in which the Tree and Woodland Strategy had been adopted was omitted from the text. The text should have read '2009' and not '200' as printed.

Councillor Mrs Stamp explained that there was a measured risk to the proposal, but this was the situation with any commercial activity. This was supported by Councillor Stevens, Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for the Waste and Street Scene Service, adding that in the present economic climate and increasing reductions in Central Government grant, it was imperative that more commercial opportunities were exploited by the Council.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the decision to bring tree maintenance works back in-house, be endorsed;
- (2) approval be given for the Arboricultural Officer to procure the services of a tree work contractor on a diminishing value contract in accordance with Table 1 in Section 4.6 of Exempt Report E285; and

- (3) approval be given for the Waste and Street Scene Operations Manager to employ the staff and procuring the necessary training, tools and equipment to develop an in-house Tree Surgery Team and service, as detailed in Appendix A to Exempt Report E285.

The meeting concluded at 6.28 pm

**J H M GRIFFITHS  
CHAIRMAN**