

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXTRAORDINARY CABINET

**Notes of informal discussions held on Tuesday 16 September 2014 at
5.40pm in the Council Chamber, District Offices,
College Heath Road, Mildenhall**

PRESENT: Forest Heath District Council (FHDC)

Councillor J E Waters (Leader of the Council) (in the Chair for the informal discussions)

Councillors Mrs Burt, Edwards, Hirst, Millar and Roman

St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC)

Councillors Clements, Mrs Gower, Griffiths (Leader of the Council), Mrs Mildmay-White, Pugh, Ray, Mrs Stamp and Stevens

IN ATTENDANCE: FHDC Councillor Simmons (Chairman of FHDC's Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

Prior to the formal meeting, informal discussions took place on the following two substantive items:

- (1) West Suffolk Housing Strategy; and
- (2) West Suffolk Tree Management Policy.

All Members of St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Cabinet had been invited to attend Forest Heath District Council's offices to enable joint informal discussions on the reports to take place between the two authorities prior to seeking formal approval at their respective separate Cabinet meetings immediately following the informal discussions.

The Leader of Forest Heath District Council welcomed all those present to the District Offices and the Legal Services Manager advised on the format of the proceedings for the informal discussions and subsequent separate meetings of each authority.

SEBC's Cabinet noted that under its Constitution, FHDC permitted public participation during its Cabinet meetings. Therefore, for the purpose of facilitating this Constitutional requirement, it was proposed that public speaking should be permitted prior to the start of the informal discussions to enable any questions/statements to be considered by both Cabinets as the outcome may inform the decisions taken during the separate formal meetings. On this occasion however, no members of the public were in attendance.

Each report was then considered in the order listed on the agenda.

1. West Suffolk Housing Strategy

Decisions Plan Ref: Mar14/03 **Cabinet Members:** Cllrs Anne Gower and Rona Burt

The Cabinets considered Report F115 (previously circulated) which presented the 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 a strategic overview was necessary to assess how both Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) delivered a range of housing and related assets to the community.

The West Suffolk Housing Strategy, attached as Appendix A to Report F115, had been subject to extensive consultation across both authorities, which included scrutiny of the Strategy by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees at an informal joint meeting held on 23 July 2014. The document was subsequently amended, where appropriate, having taken comments received during the consultation into account.

Councillors Mrs Burt and Mrs Gower, Portfolio Holders with the responsibility for Housing, drew relevant issues to the attention of both Cabinets. Both Cabinets commended the document and supported the recommendation for the Strategy to be adopted by both full Councils on 23 September and 8 October 2014 respectively.

A detailed discussion was then held on the second recommendation contained in Section 2.1 of the report, which related to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees' discussion on 23 July 2014 of the New Homes Bonus (NHB). During consideration of the draft West Suffolk Housing Strategy, the Committees had discussed proposed options in which to allocate the NHB. Members had felt that a proportion of the monies received from each new house built should go back into the community where the houses had been built. This discussion resulted in the Committees recommending to both Cabinets that they consider part of the NHB being allocated to community facilities and a report on the options for the use of the NHB being referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for consideration.

Councillor Ray, SEBC Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance duly responded to the recommendation. He explained that the NHB received was not included in the revenue budget and had currently been placed in earmarked reserves, including the current year 2014/2015 allocation. In line with the budget report presented to both full Councils in February 2014, the NHB's use was being considered as part of delivering a sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy (MFTS) and the delivery of the new Strategic Plan. Options and various strands of work were currently being considered that would, in turn, help to determine the future allocation of NHB reserve. This work was presently in progress and would feed into the 2015/2016 budget setting process with the final decision(s) being taken by both full Councils by February 2015. It was therefore not considered appropriate to make any new decisions in isolation on the NHB reserve. This view was not only supported by Councillor Edwards, FHDC Portfolio Holder for Resources, Governance and Performance but also all other Cabinet Members present.

A proposed response to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees' recommendation contained in 2.1 (2) from the Cabinets was tabled; however, it was considered that the Portfolio Holders for Resources

[Governance] and Performance should reply directly in writing to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees with an appropriate response based on the discussion held above and to reiterate that no new decision was required.

2. West Suffolk Tree Management Policy

Decisions Plan Ref: Sep14/01 Cabinet Members: Cllrs Sarah Stamp and Warwick Hirst

The Cabinets considered Report F116 (previously circulated) which presented the West Suffolk Tree Management Policy.

Councillor Hirst, FHDC Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinets, including that the West Suffolk Tree Management Policy for both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council would:

- (a) provide a clear standardised approach to the way in which both FHDC and SEBCs' trees and woodlands were managed in the future and the way in which the authorities communicated their plans to the local communities;
- (b) outline how current service specific issues/problems would be addressed; and
- (c) provide clarity around the Councils' responsibilities in maintaining its tree stock in a safe and appropriate manner.

Councillor Hirst commended the comprehensive detail of the document, a view not only supported Mrs Stamp, SEBC Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage, but also those of other Cabinet Members present.

On the conclusion of the informal joint discussions and following the vacating of SEBC's Cabinet to the Training Centre to convene its formal Extraordinary Cabinet meeting, the Chairman formally opened the meeting of Forest Heath District Council's Cabinet at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber.

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXTRAORDINARY CABINET

**Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 16 September 2014 at 6.05 pm
in the Training Centre, District Offices,
College Heath Road, Mildenhall**

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

48. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

49. Declarations of Interests

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

50. West Suffolk Housing Strategy

Decisions Plan Ref: Mar14/03 Cabinet Member: Cllr Anne Gower

Further to the joint informal discussions held prior to the meeting with Forest Heath District Council's Cabinet on Report F115, *West Suffolk Housing Strategy* (including the discussions on the separate New Homes Bonus issue), it was proposed, seconded and,



RECOMMENDED:

That the West Suffolk Housing Strategy, as contained in Appendix A to Report F115, be adopted.

RESOLVED:

That having noted and discussed the recommendation of the FHDC and SEBC Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the Portfolio Holders for Resources, Governance and Performance (FHDC) and for Resources and Performance (SEBC) are asked to jointly respond in writing to both FHDC and SEBC Overview and Scrutiny Committees, to confirm the position of both Cabinets concerning the allocation of the New Homes Bonus.

The Cabinet wished to record its thanks to the Head of Housing and his team for the tremendous amount of work that had been committed to the production of the West Suffolk Housing Strategy.

51. West Suffolk Tree Management Policy

Decisions Plan Ref: Sep14/01 Cabinet Member: Cllr Sarah Stamp

Further to the joint informal discussions held prior to the meeting with Forest Heath District Council's Cabinet on Report F116, *West Suffolk Tree Management Policy*, it was proposed, seconded and,

RESOLVED:

That the West Suffolk Tree Management Policy, attached as Appendix A to Report F116, be adopted.

The Cabinet wished to record its thanks to the Leisure, Culture and Communities Manager and his team for the tremendous amount of work that had been committed to the production of the West Suffolk Tree Management Policy.

52. Recommendations from the Sustainable Development Working Party: 8 September 2014: Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031, Haverhill Vision 2031 and Rural Vision 2031: Planning Inspector's Reports and Adoption

Decisions Plan Ref: Jun14/05 Cabinet Member: Cllr Terry Clements

(Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White declared that her son was the son-in-law of the landowner of the area of land to the west of Rougham Road in Bury St Edmunds known as the 'Leg of Mutton', and left the meeting during the consideration of Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031 to avoid the perception of bias.)

The Cabinet considered Report F117 (previously circulated) which provided the recommendations emanating from the Sustainable Development Working Party at its meeting held on 8 September 2014.

On 8 September 2014 the Sustainable Development Working Party considered the following documents:

- (a) Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031 as modified (Report F108);
- (b) Haverhill Vision 2031 as modified (Report F109); and
- (c) Rural Vision 2031 as modified (Report F110).

Councillor Clements, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulation drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that in 2011 the Council had commenced the preparation of the Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and Rural Vision 2031 Local Plan documents. In October 2013, following extensive consultation, the Council had agreed to submit the documents to the Government for independent examination by a Planning Inspector.

The Planning Inspector's report, attached as Appendix A to Reports F108, F109 and F110) into the examination was received on 14 July 2014. The report concluded that the Vision 2031 documents provided an appropriate basis for the allocation of sites for development in the towns and rural areas until 2031 and related matters, provided that a number of modifications were made to it. The main modifications appended to the Inspector's report satisfied the requirements of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and met the criteria for soundness in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Councillor Clements added that whilst each of the three Vision 2031 documents had been subject to extensive consultation and examination, the

Working Party had held another detailed and thorough discussion on the documents on 8 September 2014, which resulted in the amendments proposed to the recommendations contained in Section 2.1 of Report F117.

Discussions were held on the mechanisms in place to enable the documents to remain current and in line with the latest Government policy; situations where exceptions to planning policy would be acceptable; and the impact of not adopting all three documents and their associated appendices, as detailed in Section 5 of Report F117.

The Cabinet wished to record its thanks to the Place Shaping Manager and his team for the tremendous amount of work that had been committed to the production of the Vision 2031 documents and how it was an extremely significant achievement to reach this point of recommending adoption by full Council on 23 September 2014.



RECOMMENDED:

- (1) In respect of Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031 (Report F108), the following documents be adopted:**
 - (a) Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031 (Appendix B to Report F108);**
 - (b) Vision 2031 Policies Map (Borough Map, Policies Map Book and Bury St Edmunds Inset Maps 1 and 2) (Appendix C to Report F108), subject to the adjustment of inset map boundaries 47 – Stanton and 48 – Stanton Shepherd’s Grove on the Borough Map, to reflect the areas shown on the respective inset maps; and subject to the removal of text ‘BV16’ on allocation BV14d (British Sugar) and amendment of the map key to read ‘British Sugar – Areas North of Compiègne Way (BV16);**
 - (c) Habitat Regulations Screening Assessment for Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031 (Appendix D to Report F108); and**
 - (d) Sustainability Appraisal for Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031, (Appendix E to Report F108).**
- (2) In respect of Haverhill Vision 2031 (Report F109), the following documents be adopted:**
 - (a) Haverhill Vision 2031 (Appendix B to Report F109);**
 - (b) Vision 2031 Policies Map (Borough Map, Policies Map Book and Haverhill Inset Maps 3 and 4) (Appendix C to Report F109), subject to the adjustment of inset map boundaries 47 – Stanton and 48 – Stanton Shepherd’s Grove on the Borough Map, to reflect the areas shown on the respective inset maps; and**

subject to the removal of text 'BV16' on allocation BV14d (British Sugar) and amendment of the map key to read 'British Sugar – Areas North of Compiègne Way (BV16);

- (c) Habitat Regulations Screening Assessment for Haverhill Vision 2031 (Appendix D to Report F109); and**
 - (d) Sustainability Appraisal for Haverhill Vision 2031 (Appendix E to Report F109).**
- (3) In respect of Rural Vision 2031 (Report F110), the following documents be adopted:**
- (a) Rural Vision 2031 (Appendix B to Report F110) subject to the amendment of the foreword on page three so the last sentence of the second paragraph reads 'As well as Rural Vision 2031....';**
 - (b) Vision 2031 Policies Map (Borough Map, Policies Map Book - Appendix C to Report F110), subject to the adjustment of inset map boundaries 47 – Stanton and 48 – Stanton Shepherd's Grove on the Borough Map, to reflect the areas shown on the respective inset maps; and subject to the removal of text 'BV16' on allocation BV14d (British Sugar) and amendment of the map key to read 'British Sugar – Areas North of Compiègne Way (BV16);**
 - (c) Habitat Regulations Screening Assessment for Rural Vision 2031 (Appendix D to Report F110); and**
 - (d) Sustainability Appraisal for Rural Vision 2031 (Appendix E to Report F110).**

The meeting concluded at 6.21 pm

**J H M GRIFFITHS
CHAIRMAN**

