

**ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXTRAORDINARY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Notes of informal discussions held on Tuesday 13 May 2014 at  
4.00pm in the Council Chamber at Forest Heath District Council,  
College Heath Road, Mildenhall**

PRESENT: St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC)

Councillor Hind  
(Chairman for the informal discussions)

Councillors Chung, Hopfensperger, Marks, Oliver, Mrs Rayner, Mrs  
Rushbrook, Mrs Rushen, Springett, Thorndyke and F J Warby

Forest Heath District Council (FHDC)

Councillors Anderson, Barker, Bimson, Hood, Jaggard, Jefferys,  
and Simmons

BY INVITATION: SEBC Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council  
FHDC Councillor James Waters, Leader of the Council

Prior to the formal meeting, at 4.00pm informal discussions took place on the  
Draft West Suffolk Annual Report (2013-2014).

All Members of the St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee had been invited to attend the District Offices to enable joint informal  
discussions on the document to take place between the two authorities prior to their  
presentation to both authorities' Cabinets and Councils during June and July 2014.

The Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees jointly welcomed all  
those present to the District Offices and advised on the format of the proceedings for  
the informal discussions and subsequent separate meetings of each authority.

The St Edmundsbury Leader, together with the Forest Heath Leader, then  
outlined the Draft West Suffolk Annual Report (2013-2014), which had been written  
as a joint West Suffolk document for the first time and was before the Overview and  
Scrutiny Committees for their comments.

The covering report highlighted the key activities and developments which had  
been achieved over the financial year 2013-2014, with regard to the priorities set  
out in the Forest Heath Strategic Plan 2012-2016 and the St Edmundsbury Corporate  
Plan 2012-2016. The draft report reflected the fact that a great deal of the work our  
services carried out in the 2013-2014 financial year was on behalf of both Councils  
and for the benefit of all residents, visitors and businesses in West Suffolk; whilst  
also allowing for the distinctive needs, activities and characters of the two councils'  
areas to be captured. The final version of the report would be designed and would  
include photographs to highlight progress during the year.

Both Leaders drew relevant issues to the attention of the Committee, in particular the councils continued to support the Suffolk Business Park development; work with partners to deliver housing and economic growth summit; created a West Suffolk Diary website; continued to support the Home of Horseracing project in Newmarket; Mildenhall Museum project; supported over 60 community projects through the Forest Heath locality budgets and supported 178 households across West Suffolk to make improvements to their home.

Members examined the document in detail and asked a number of questions of both Leaders, to which comprehensive responses were provided. In particular, discussions were held on the following topics:-

- (1) The importance of our town centres across West Suffolk and the continued need to bring empty shops back into use to attract visitors to the area.
- (2) Case study for the Rural Profiling Project – members questioned whether any villages had gained anything from the profiling data to which officers agreed to look into further.
- (3) Water and energy use – officers agreed to look into how much the grant was in 2013-2014 to support seven businesses in West Suffolk to become more resources efficient.
- (4) Locality budget projects in 2013-2014 – officers agreed to look into the purpose of the grant awarded to the Keystone Development Trust.
- (5) the “Wos Up” project – officers noted that 67 sessions had been delivered during 2013-2014 and that the programme was in its sixth year of operation and not it’s fifth.
- (6) the Bury St Edmunds Skate Park – Members noted that the skate park had re-opened. However members questioned the percentage of funding awarded by St Edmundsbury Borough Council to the Bury Skate Park Experience Charity in rebuilding the skate park, to which officers agreed to look into.
- (7) It was suggested that more councillor discussions/focus groups should be held as they had been very useful in helping shape policy.
- (8) Members complimented the Leaders and officers on the Draft Annual Report.

The Leaders thanked both Overview and Scrutiny Committees for their comments and advised that any additional comments be forwarded to the Policy Business Partner.

On behalf of the Joint Informal Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Chairman thanked the Leaders for their presentation of the Draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2013-2014.

On the conclusion of the informal joint discussions, the Chairman formally opened the meeting of St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee at 5.02pm in the Council Chamber.

## **ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **EXTRAORDINARY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

#### **Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 13 May 2014 at 5.02pm in the Council Chamber, at Forest Heath District Council, College Heath Road, Mildenhall**

PRESENT: Councillor Hind (Chairman)  
Councillors Chung, Hopfensperger, Marks, Oliver, Mrs Rayner, Mrs Rushbrook, Mrs Rushen, Springett, Thorndyke, and F J Warby

BY INVITATION: Councillor Griffiths, Leader of the Council.

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Houlder.

#### **2. Substitutions**

No substitutions were declared.

#### **3. Declarations of Interest**

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

#### **4. Draft West Suffolk Annual Report (2013-2014)**

Further to the joint informal discussions held prior to the meeting on the Draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2013-2014 with Members of Forest Heath's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Committee formally considered Report E345 (previously circulated) which sought approval of the Draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2013-2014. Subject to the comments suggested during the informal discussions, it was:



#### **RECOMMENDED:**

***That the Draft West Suffolk Annual Report (2013-2014), as contained in Appendix B to Report E345, be approved, subject to comments made during the informal discussions.***

The meeting closed at 5.03pm.

**I HOULDER  
CHAIRMAN**

Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 13.05.2014