

MINUTES OF ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 25 February 2014 at 7.00pm in the Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds.

PRESENT:

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Marks) (in the Chair)

Councillors:

Beckwith	Mrs Hind	Mrs Rushbrook
Mrs Broughton	Mrs R V Hopfensperger	Mrs Rushen
Brown	Houlder	Spicer
Ms Byrne	Levack	Springett
Chung	McManus	Mrs Stamp
Clements	Mrs Mildmay-White	Stevens
Clifton-Brown	Nettleton	Thorndyke
Cockle	Oliver	Mrs Wade
Mr Cox	Pugh	Ms Wakelam
Farmer	Ray	F J Warby
Farthing	Mrs Rayner	Mrs P A Warby
French	Redhead	A Whittaker
Gower	Mrs Richardson	Mrs D A Whittaker

65. **Prayers**

The Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford of Christ Church, Moreton Hall, Bury St Edmunds, opened the meeting with prayers.

66. **Minutes**

Subject to the following amendments the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17 December 2013 was confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Mayor.

- (a) Pages 2 and 3, Minute No. 57 – First and fifth paragraphs replace Councillor P Hopfensperger with Councillor Mrs R V Hopfensperger;
- (b) Page 7, Minute No. 58 (B) 6 – Delete '*Councillor Farthing left the room and did not return*';
- (c) Page 10, Minute No. 61 – Ninth line – '*West car parks be implemented, raising an additional c£25,000...*';
- (d) Page 10, Minute No 63 (ii) (b) – Delete '*residents*' and insert '*me*'.
- (e) Page 12, Minute No. 63 (ii) (f) – Insert '*Councillor Mrs Broughton left the room during the consideration of this item*';

67. **Mayor's Communications**

The Mayor reported on the 32 civic engagements which he and the Mayoress had attended since the Meeting of the Council on 17 December 2013. A further two civic engagements had been attended by Deputy Mayor Councillor Marks; one engagement had been attended by Past Mayors Councillor F Warby and Councillor Mrs P Warby. Details of

all the engagements attended had been published on Gold with a link from Front Line News on Thursday 20 February 2014.

68. **Announcements from the Leader of the Council**

In the absence of Councillor Griffiths, Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, Deputy Leader of the Council, welcomed Councillor Brown to his first Full Council meeting and hoped he enjoyed his term serving on the Borough Council.

She also welcomed members of the public to the meeting and, in particular, Will Austin, Clerk to Haverhill Town Council, who had recently announced that he would be leaving his position in the near future.

69. **Announcements from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Buckle, Everitt, Griffiths, P Hopfensperger and Simner. Under this item the Head of Legal and Democratic Services drew Members' attention to the late papers which had been circulated, these being Schedules 1 to 4 of Attachment E to Report E293: Budget and Council tax Setting 2014/2015 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/2016.

70. **Declarations of Interest**

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

71. **Public Question Time**

Mr Austin of Haverhill referred to a spreadsheet he had previously circulated and asked 'Please can the appropriate Cabinet member explain what the figure of £0.166m highlighted in yellow below represent? These are taken from the Government's local authority spending power calculations for 2014/15 and 2015/16.'

In reply, **Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance**, confirmed that the line referred to in the spreadsheet was for Council Tax Support Funding to Parishes for 2013/2014. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had repeatedly said that the Council Tax Support Grant would not be separately identified. There was a difference between spending power and cash allocation and the Portfolio Holder explained that the spending power assessment was a government tool to analyse the estimated percentage changes in spending power for any single authority between one year and another. Towns and parishes had asked for certainty and this had been provided as we had committed to paying town and parish councils for the next three years even though there was no guarantee that funding for this would continue to be provided by government. Locally, Waveney District Council had passed on zero grant this year and zero for next year; although Breckland had passed on the grant in full this year, it would not pass any on in future years; Suffolk Coastal passed on some grant last year but had opted for a 25% phased reduction in subsequent years; and finally, Babergh, East Cambridgeshire, Forest Heath, Mid Suffolk and ourselves had passed on the grant in full this year but would reduce this by 25% in subsequent

years. The Portfolio Holder concluded that St Edmundsbury were providing fair support over this transitional period.

As the time limit of five minutes had been exceeded the Deputy Mayor informed Mr Austin that he would not be able to ask a supplementary question, but agreed, that, provided there was sufficient time at the end of Public Question Time, Mr Austin may be able to put a further question after other Public Speakers who had submitted their questions had given and received responses.

Mr Harding of Bury St Edmunds stated that councillors have supported there being no disabled access for the rebuilding of Cupola House even though the façade had changed over the years including the entrance which could be modified to allow access for all. He asked if it is acceptable, in the 21st century, for councillors to appear to penalise the disabled and to treat them as second class citizens remembering English Heritage do appreciate modern day requirements for listed buildings especially when they are being rebuilt.

In reply, **Councillor Mrs Stamp, Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Arts and Culture**, confirmed that she would provide a written response to this question.

In a supplementary question, **Mr Harding** asked whether the councillor was aware that a Facebook page had just been opened on Cupola House.

In reply, **Councillor Mrs Stamp**, confirmed that she was not aware of the Facebook page but would now make herself familiar with it.

Mr Harding of Bury St Edmunds asked a further question with regard to the proposed waste transfer station which Suffolk County Council had granted permission to be sited on Rougham Hill. St Edmundsbury were not happy with this decision and had asked for a review which had been thrown out by the judge. St Edmundsbury had then asked for a formal hearing on 18 March 2014 before another judge. How much is this all costing and which budget is this coming from?

The **Head of Legal and Democratic Services** explained that the process for a judicial review is for the person to seek leave; the leave was originally turned down and the application for leave had been renewed by the applicant. The respondent to the judicial review was Suffolk County Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council were only an interested party.

In a supplementary question, **Mr Harding** asked whether we should be alarmed that councillors state that Rougham will be surrounded by houses (not true), that there would be 24/7 working (not true), there would be noise and smell (not true), there would be major traffic congestion on the four lane dual carriageway to the A14 (not true). Is it not true that another site, if chosen, would result in waste being moved twice at a large annual expense for the council? Where would this money come from?

In response, **Councillor Stevens** assured Mr Harding that the council would continue to look at every opportunity to run the waste service most efficiently on behalf of residents.

Mr Harding of Bury St Edmunds asked what was the council's recommendation on the safety, position, and damage to the street scene of 'A' boards, accepting that they were a useful and cheap way for shops to promote their business. This seemed to have disappeared from the council's radar and the number of 'A' boards were expanding rapidly.

In response **Councillor Clements** confirmed that work was continuing with Highways, Licensing and Planning to resolve this issue. He assured Mr Harding that he would forward any information as soon as it was available.

In a supplementary question, **Mr Harding** stated that the new Police Commissioner was working hard to improve public confidence and community involvement in the Police. As PCSOs and police officers patrolled our streets, they could make a very valuable contribution to provide advice to shopkeepers on the council's recommendations. Would the council approach the Police Commissioner regarding this suggestion?

In response **Councillor Clements** confirmed that he would follow this up.

The Mayor gave Mr Austin the opportunity to ask a further question.

Mr Austin of Haverhill quoted Brandon Lewis when he said that "we have been clear that we expect billing authorities to carry on passing on support to town councils and parishes to help mitigate any reduction in their tax base due to the local council tax support scheme". He went on to state that other districts were reviewing their hurried decisions to withdraw the grant, including Breckland District Council. He reminded the Council that one of the reasons they had given for withdrawing funding from towns and parishes was that DCLG did not separately identify the element paid for supporting towns and parishes. Mr Austin disagreed with this and expressed his view that the government made it clear in their spreadsheet as to how much should be passed on. He went on to explain in detail about projects the Town Council had taken on from the Borough. He stated that the Borough Council spent the bulk of its budget in Bury St Edmunds, although they would dispute this, and very little money was spent in Haverhill.

The time limit of five minutes was reached and no question had been asked.

72. **Mayoralty 2014/2015**

Councillor Houlder, Chairman of the Mayoral Advisory Committee, reported informally that, following a discussion on a number of excellent candidates, the Committee had unanimously recommended that at the Annual Meeting of Council, Councillor Robert Everitt be nominated for election as Mayor for the 2014/2015 civic year.

In his absence, Councillor Houlder read a statement from Councillor Everitt, advising that he would be honoured to accept the nomination.

73. **Amendment of Standing Orders (Rules of Procedure)**

Councillor Ray introduced this item and explained that new regulations, which were intended to improve transparency, had come into force on 25 February 2014 and required councils to record the vote when considering the Budget and any amendments.

There being no questions, and on the motion of Councillor Ray, seconded and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) with immediate effect, the Council's Rules of Procedure be amended so as to include the provisions of the Local Government (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014;
- (2) the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the necessary textual amendments to the Rules of Procedure to include the new provisions and to make any minor changes (such as numbering) which arise from those amendments; and
- (3) Democratic Renewal Working Party give consideration to the implications of the Regulations for other meetings.

74. **Schedule of Referrals from Cabinet, West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee and Development Control Committee**

The Council considered the Schedule of Referrals contained within Report E291 (previously circulated).

(A) Referrals from Cabinet: 11 February 2014

(A) 1. West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014/2016

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White introduced this item and reminded Members that this plan had been robustly reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees of both St Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District Councils (FHDC). Some of the suggested amendments had been accepted by Cabinet for recommendation to Council and approval was now being sought for this amended version.

There being no questions, and on the motion of Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, seconded and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014/2016, as contained in Appendix A to Report E291, be adopted.

(A) 2. Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2014/2015

Councillor Ray introduced this item and informed Members that these Statements had been aligned with FHDC but were still separate documents. It was not possible to have Joint Statements due to the differences between both authorities; the statements needed to take account of different investment criteria.

Councillor Ray explained that the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements were a requirement of the Code of Practice for the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), and the Statements needed to be approved by Council.

In response to a question, Councillor Ray confirmed that a tendering process for the External Fund Manager would take place during the coming year.

On the motion of Councillor Ray, seconded and with the majority in favour and one against, it was

RESOLVED:

That 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'.

(A) 3. Treasury Management Code of Practice

Councillor Ray introduced this item and explained to Members that the introduction he had given to the previous referral also applied to this referral. The Code of Practice was a working level document used by Finance and Treasury Management and brought Members attention to the second recommendation that any changes to be made to the Code of Practice in future would be annexed to the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy on an annual basis.

On the motion of Councillor Ray, seconded and with the majority in favour and one against, it was

RESOLVED: That

- (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.

(A) 4. Budget and Council Tax Setting: 2014/2015 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/2016

The recommendations emanating from the Cabinet's consideration of the above report were contained within Report E293, Budget and Council Tax Setting: 2014/2015 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/2016, on this full Council agenda, and no decision was therefore required at this point in the proceedings.

(A) 5. Policy to Discharge Homelessness Duties through the Private Rented Sector

Councillor Gower introduced this item and explained 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 it was a 'suitable' offer. Currently the Council was restricted to discharging its duties in to 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 sets out how St Edmundsbury Borough Council would apply the legislation.

On the motion of Councillor Gower, seconded and with the majority in favour, it was

RESOLVED: That

That 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 (e.g. has correct immigration status) and,
- Did not become homeless intentionally from their last settled accommodation (e.g. was not evicted for rent arrears).

(A) 6. Guidance Policy on Criminal Convictions

Councillor Clements introduced this item and explained that this policy would ensure that licences would only be granted to someone who was considered to be a 'fit and proper' person.

On the motion of Councillor Clements, seconded and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That 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 'expect' for 'require' in the second line.

(A) 7. Joint Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): Adoption

Councillor Clements introduced this item and explained that the Statement was a strategy for involving the community in the Local Plan and planning application processes. Given the approach to a shared planning service for both SEBC and FHDC, it was considered appropriate to have a Joint SCI which sets out a 'consistent engagement' strategy for applications across both authorities.

Councillor Clements informed Members of the following amendments to the recommendations that had been proposed by officers since their consideration by the Cabinet:

Recommendation (2) be deleted; and

the second paragraph of Recommendation (1) be amended to read:

'the insertion in paragraph 2.1 'Where a screening opinion is requested under the Environment Impact Assessment Regulations we will place the request, opinion or direction on the public register and website and notify the Local Ward Member(s) and the relevant Town or Parish Council, accordingly.'

On the motion of Councillor Clements, seconded and with the majority in favour and one against it was

RESOLVED:

That 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 request, opinion or direction on the public register and website and notify the Local Ward Member(s) and the relevant Town or Parish Council, accordingly.

(A) 8. Moreton Hall, Bury St Edmunds, Masterplan

Councillor Clements introduced this item and explained that the Masterplan was in accordance with the adopted Replacement Local Plan, the emerging Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031 document and the Council's protocol for preparing Masterplans.

On the motion of Councillor Clements, seconded and duly carried it was

RESOLVED:

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.

Councillor A Whittaker left the meeting during this item.

(A) 9. Vision 2031: Infrastructure Delivery Plans

Councillor Clements informed Members that further work had been undertaken to review the content of the Infrastructure Delivery Plans and bring them up to date following comments received during the consultation period.

On the motion of Councillor Clements, seconded and with the majority in favour and one against it was

RESOLVED: That

- (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.

(Councillor Mrs Broughton declared a Pecuniary Interest in this item as her husband had a beneficial interest in land referred to in the Bury St Edmunds Vision 2013 document. She left the room during the consideration of this item.)

(B) Referrals from Mayoral Advisory Committee: 5 February 2014

(B) 1. Mayor Making and Annual Council 2014

Councillor Houlder introduced this item and in response to questions, explained that the detailed arrangements for Mayor Making and Annual Council 2014 would be decided by the Mayoral Advisory Committee at a meeting to be held on 17 March 2014. It was acknowledged that the timetable would need to be carefully considered to allow enough time between events.

On the motion of Councillor Houlder, seconded and duly carried it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the 2014 Mayor Making be held in the Apex, commencing at 2pm;
- (2) the Mayor Making be preceded at 1.30pm by the Freedom Ceremony for Dr Ann Williams; and
- (3) the procession start from Moyses Hall.

75. Joint Development Management Policies: Consideration of Modifications (Report E292)

Councillor Clements informed Members that the Joint Development Management Policies document was currently with the appointed Planning Inspector. It was anticipated that modifications may be required in order for the Inspector to declare the document "sound". In order to meet a tight timetable, it was necessary for delegated authority to be given to allow for modifications to be made to the document.

In response to questions, Councillor Clements confirmed that there would be public consultations on any modifications made at the conclusion of the Hearings.

On the motion of Councillor Clements, seconded and with the majority in favour and three against , it was

RESOLVED:

That the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services, be given delegated authority to

approve proposed main modifications required to Joint Development Management Policies Document ahead of public consultation on the main modifications following the close of the local plan hearings.

76. Budget and Council Tax Setting 2014/2015 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/2016 (Report E293)

(Councillors Chung, Farmer, Oliver, Springett and F Warby declared local non-pecuniary interests as Members of Bury St Edmunds Town Council, and Councillor Brown declared local non-pecuniary interest as a Member of Suffolk County Council and all remained in the meeting during the consideration of this report).

The Council considered Report E293 (previously circulated) which recommended that the level of Band D Council Tax for 2014/2015 be set at the same level as for 2013/2014, at £175.23 (this being the fourth successive year in which the Council had delivered a Council Tax freeze). The precepts set by Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Police Authority had been confirmed as frozen as indicated in Recommendation 2.2 (v), so the only movement for St Edmundsbury residents would be a small increase or decrease where their parish council had chosen to increase or decrease their element of the tax.

The Council was required to consider the budget for the Borough Council, and set the level of Council Tax for 2014/2015 to fund this budget. The proposed 2014/2015 net revenue budget was £11.843m compared to the 2013/2014 net budget of £11.872m. Efficiency savings totalling £0.679m, arising from shared services with Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) together with other local savings initiatives were being proposed. 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 was required, in considering the budget, to take note of the report by the Head of Resources and Performance (S151 Officer), at Attachment C to the report. The conclusion of the Head of Resources and Performance was that overall, the estimates are robust, taking into account known risks and mitigating strategies and the reserves were adequate for the 2014/2015 budget plans. Members were asked to have regard to this report when making their decisions on the 2014/2015 budget.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Performance and Resources, introduced the budget, and stated that the revenue support grant had been cut by 23%. He drew members' attention to Table 1 in paragraph 4.5 which showed the government incentive for freezing Council Tax. However he warned that this was only a short term solution and would have a cumulative detrimental impact on the Council's finances (see paragraph 4.6). This impact had been factored into the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Councillor Ray thanked the all council staff for their contribution in achieving this budget through tremendous re-organisation and finding new ways of working. He also thanked the Head of Resources and Performance and all Finance staff for their work in producing this budget.

In response to questions, Councillor Ray advised that:

- (1) the figure of £1.2m expenditure for the Apex (in Attachment A included depreciation of more than £0.5m per year;
- (2) the decision to reduce funding to parish and town councils over the next four years was taken in September, not December 2013. Although an email to be sent to all parishes and towns did not get through, all borough councillors did receive a similar email and should have brought this to the attention of their parishes and towns, and September gave them sufficient notice in order to plan their budgets and set their precepts;
- (3) any redundancy payments made to staff were covered in this year's budget and were not ongoing payments;
- (4) the decision to freeze council tax had been taken so that the financial burden was not increased for residents but with the knowledge that we were falling further behind inflation and this would make life more difficult in the future;
- (5) the comments made by Members and the Haverhill Town clerk had presented a one-sided picture and officers would be asked to produce a written list of what this administration had done for Haverhill; both the direct council investment and investment drawn in as a consequence. This could be sent out to councillors through Front Line News.

On the motion of Councillor Ray and duly seconded, the motion was then put to the vote; the votes recorded were 31 votes for the motion, seven votes against and one abstention. The name of those Members voting for, against and abstaining being recorded as follows:-

For the motion:

Councillors Broughton, Chung, Clements, Clifton-Brown, Farmer, Farthing, Mrs Gower, Mrs R V Hopfensperger, Houlder, Mrs Levack, Marks, McManus, Mrs Mildmay-White, Nettleton, Oliver, Pugh, Ray, Mrs Rayner, Redhead, Mrs Richardson, Mrs Rushbrook, Mrs Rushen, Spicer, Springett, Mrs Stamp, Stevens, Thorndyke, Mrs Wade, F J Warby, Mrs P A Warby, and Mrs D A Whittaker.

Against the motion:

Councillors Beckwith, Brown, Ms Byrne, Cockle, Cox, Mrs Hind, Ms Wakelam.

Abstention:

Councillor French

It was therefore

RESOLVED: That

- (1) having taken into account the information received by Cabinet on 11 February 2014 (Report E272) including the Report by the Head of Resources and Performance (S151 Officer) set out at Attachment C, together with the up to date information and advice contained in this report, the level of Band D Council Tax for 2014/2015 be set at £175.23;
- (2) Subject to (1) above, the following formal Council Tax resolution be adopted:-
 - (i) the revenue budget, as summarised in Attachment A, together with the shared services and local savings proposals (detailed at Attachment B), be approved;
 - (ii) the revised capital programme detailed at paragraph 4.23 – 4.26 and attached at Attachment D, Appendix 2, be approved;
 - (iii) a general fund balance of £3m be agreed to be maintained, as detailed in paragraph 5.1;
 - (iv) the statutory calculations under Sections 30 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, attached as Attachment F, be noted;
 - (v) the Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Police Authority precepts issued to St Edmundsbury Borough Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below, be noted:-

Precepting Authority	2014/2015 precept by valuation bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
County Council	751.02	876.19	1,001.36	1,126.53	1,376.87	1,627.21	1,877.55	2,253.06
Police Authority (Provisional)	111.18	129.71	148.24	166.77	203.83	240.89	277.95	333.54

- (vi) in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the amounts shown in Schedule 4 of Attachment E be agreed as the amount of Council Tax for the

year 2014/2015 for each of the categories of dwellings shown;

- (vii) the Head of Resources and Performance be authorised to amend where necessary the amounts in Attachment E and F in accordance with any changes notified by Suffolk Police Authority, Euston, Fakenham, Horringer, Great Wratting and Haverhill Town Council.
- (3) The Head of Resources and Performance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Performance and Resources, be authorised to transfer any surplus on the 2013/2014 revenue budget to the General Fund, and to vire funds between existing Earmarked Revenue Reserves, (as set out at Attachment D, Appendix 3) as deemed appropriate throughout the year.
- (4) 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 E293
- (5) West Suffolk Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/16, as contained in Attachment D to Report E293, including all appendices, be approved.

77. **Motion on Notice**

Under Paragraph 12.1 of the Council Procedure Rules, as contained within the Council's Constitution, Councillor Wakelam had given notice of the following motion:-

'Council is asked to note:

- 1 *The receipt by the Council of £0.59m by way of New Homes Bonus (NHB) during financial year 2012-13 and £0.757m during 2013-14*
- 2 *That the provision of Homes for our Communities is one of three priorities in the proposed West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014-16*
- 3 *That the availability of housing for all underpins Strategic Priorities 1: Increased opportunities for economic growth and 2: Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active*
- 4 *That the purpose of NHB is to return the economic benefits of new housing to the community*
- 5 *That research by the Centre for Housing Policy (2011), the National Housing Federation (2013 2014) amongst others, is clear that new affordable housing is key to economic growth and that the converse is also true*
- 6 *That the number of applicants on the Housing Register, people accepted as homeless and living in temporary accommodation in the Borough continues to rise*

- 7 *That the market cost of housing is unaffordable for increasing numbers of people in the Borough thanks to high prices and low incomes*

And that Council therefore resolves that

- 8 *Not less than 30% of the New Homes Bonus be hypothecated to the provision of affordable housing, such sum to be an accretion to the allocated sum in the budget; and*
- 9 *The Council affirm their public commitment to ensuring that the right new housing in the right place at the right price is provided in the Borough by signing up to the Yes to New Homes campaign organised by the National Housing Federation.'*

This motion was duly seconded by Councillor Mrs Hind. In introducing this motion, Councillor Ms Wakelam drew attention to the West Suffolk Strategic Plan that had been approved earlier in the meeting. She concluded that the third priority, 'Homes for our communities' was key; that we needed the right houses at the right price and in the right place. The New Anglian Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) had also acknowledged the importance of decent housing as underpinning efforts to increase economic activity in eastern England.

Over the past decade, house prices had increased at twice the rate of wages and this had created an affordability crisis. This impacted on the local economy as employers regard the lack of affordable housing as being a restraint on economic growth.

The Mayor, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, considered that this motion, as a motion which, if carried, would involve the Council in expenditure not included in the approved budget, should be referred without discussion to the appropriate forum for consideration. He considered that the appropriate forum in this instance was Cabinet with a referral to full Council if required.

78. **Question on Notice**

In accordance with paragraph 11.2 of the Council Procedure Rules, as contained within the Council's Constitution, Councillor Nettleton has given notice of the following question to Councillor Pugh, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth:

'If free car parking is to continue in Haverhill or elsewhere in the borough, will bus users be able to reclaim their fare from the borough council on production of a valid ticket?'

Councillor Pugh responded that bus users would not be able to reclaim their fare.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Nettleton asked:

'Why does Councillor Pugh think it is fair that a car can get in free but those using sustainable transport have to pay for a bus ticket?'

In response, Councillor Pugh explained that car parking charges were used to manage traffic and access facilities in our towns. Economic growth needed to be encouraged in all of our towns and there needs to

be a tailored approach to maximise the potential of different places. Therefore a universal approach would not be appropriate.

79. **Report on Special Urgency**

The Deputy Leader of the Council reported that no executive decisions had been taken under the Special Urgency provisions of the Constitution.

The Deputy Mayor announced that there would be a ten minute break before resuming the Council meeting. Councillors Beckwith, Cockle, R Hopfensperger, Nettleton, Redhead, Thorndyke, F Warby and Mrs P Warby left the meeting at this point and did not return.

80. **Reports and Questions**

(i) Report from the Leader of the Council: Councillor Griffiths (Report E294)

In the absence of Councillor Griffiths, Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, Deputy Leader of the Council, informed Members that she was delighted to announce that Councillor Edwards, Forest Heath District Council, and Councillor Ray had won a Joint Award for their outstanding contribution to financial performance. The award was sponsored by the CCLA, which provides investment management for charities and local authorities, as part of the annual accolades from the Local Government Information Unit.

Councillor Ray responded that this award recognised the financial performance of both councils and reflected on Members and on Officers, particular those working in Finance.

(ii)(a) Report from the Deputy Leader of the Council: Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White (Report E295)

In response to questions, Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White confirmed that wine was not included in the list of high strength alcohol as it was not generally consumed by 'street drinkers'. She also confirmed that the route for the Women's Tour of Britain Cycle Race was decided by the race organisers and the Council had no influence on this matter.

Councillor Gower informed Members that she had been unable to attend the workshop hosted by the Health and Wellbeing Board as mentioned in 1.6, as she had been affected by the floods.

(ii)(b) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Waste and Property Portfolio: Councillor Stevens (Report E296)

In response to questions, Councillor Stevens:

- confirmed that he was unable to give any details on the possible relocation of the Waste Transfer Station due to commercial confidentiality but he assured Members that the Council would look at every opportunity to run the waste service most efficiently on behalf of residents.

- agreed to provide a written response, provided it was not confidential, to Haverhill Members regarding the Co-op shop which was currently empty but being modernised and redecorated.
- Confirmed that a review had been completed on the provision of litter and dog bins in Haverhill.

(ii)(c) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Housing Portfolio: Councillor Mrs Gower (Report E297)

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced her report and informed members that, where she would be unable to attend Gypsy and Traveller meetings due to clashes with St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Cabinet meetings and that Councillor Mrs Burt from Forest Heath District Council had kindly agreed to attend on behalf of West Suffolk.

In response to a question about provision of a notice board with map and directory in Haverhill, Councillor Mrs Gower confirmed that she would provide a written response.

In response to residents' concerns that the Station Hill development in Bury St Edmunds had no affordable housing, Councillor Mrs Gower confirmed that members of Development Control Committee were very good at making their voices heard on the percentage of affordable housing. She agreed to investigate further and provide a written response.

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White informed Members that the New Homes Bonus had not been used to prop up our revenue budget as other councils have chosen to do. This money would be used to support growth in the borough whether this is economic or housing or infrastructure because they are all connected.

Councillor Mrs Gower agreed that the aim was to achieve 30% affordable housing across developments. It was necessary to build communities including infrastructure, roads, schools, play areas, libraries etc. A funding paper was currently being written and would be looking at innovative and also existing methods of funding. Where appropriate, the New Homes Bonus would be utilised.

(ii)(d) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Resources and Performance Portfolio: Councillor Ray (Report E298)

Councillor Ray introduced his report and drew members' attention to paragraph 8.2 which informed members that they would be asked to complete a Training Needs Analysis form in March 2014. He encouraged members to complete this form, which would also be available as an online form. A 60% response was required in order to qualify for renewal of the Member Development Charter in September 2014.

No questions were raised.

(ii)(e) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Economic Growth Portfolio: Councillor Pugh (Report E299)

In response to questions, Councillor Pugh:

- confirmed that a Markets Development Officer had recently been employed and would be looking at all markets across the borough; there are a number of exciting plans being considered which are being enthusiastically supported by market traders; and
- confirmed that the latest update regarding the non-working VIM signs was encouraging and it was hoped there would be a solution soon.

(ii)(f) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Planning and Regulation Portfolio: Councillor Clements (Report E300)

Councillor Mrs Broughton left the meeting for the consideration of this item.

In response to questions, Councillor Clements:

- confirmed that he was not aware of any planning fees being refunded for applications that had not been approved within the time limit but would confirm this in writing;
- had no further information on A-boards at this stage;
- confirmed that flood prevention was now the responsibility of the county council;
- confirmed that applications that went to the delegation panel would be referred to Development Control Committee if at least one of the three panel members were concerned about the application;
- agreed that both ends of the age demographic need to be considered with regard to health and housing;
- confirmed he was aware that some authorities had a higher percentage requirement for affordable housing (i.e. 40% or more) but that it would be very difficult to deliver anything above 30%.

Councillor Mrs D Whittaker left the meeting during the consideration of this item.

(ii)(g) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Communities Portfolio: Councillor Everitt (Report E301)

Councillor Mrs Stamp introduced this report in the absence of Councillor Everitt. No questions were raised.

(ii)(h) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Heritage, Arts and Culture Portfolio: Councillor Mrs Stamp (Report E302)

Councillor Mrs Stamp informed Members that the launch of Bury Festival would take place on Monday and encouraged them to support this event. In response to questions, Councillor Mrs Stamp confirmed that she would take forward the suggestion that the project to sow a wildflower mix (on the banks of the River Lark) is also considered for Haverhill.

- (iii) Report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Councillor Houlder (Report E303)

No questions were raised.

- (iv) Report from the Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Councillor Mrs Broughton (Report E304)

In response to a question, Councillor Mrs Broughton confirmed that, in paragraph 3.2, the provision of public transport to Bury St Edmunds included Haverhill as well as rural areas.

- (v) Questions to the Chairmen of other Committees

No questions were raised.

81. **Conclusion of Business**

The meeting concluded at 10.17pm.

MAYOR