

Council



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Council** held on
Tuesday 24 February 2015 at 7.00 pm at the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

Mayor Robert Everitt
Deputy Mayor Patrick Chung

Trevor Beckwith	Beccy Hopfensperger	Karen Richardson
Sarah Broughton	Paul Hopfensperger	Marion Rushbrook
Tony Brown	Ian Houlder	Angela Rushen
Maureen Byrne	Helen Levack	Christopher Spicer
Terry Clements	Tim Marks	Clive Springett
Robert Clifton-Brown	Paul McManus	Sarah Stamp
Bob Cockle	Sara Mildmay-White	Peter Stevens
Paul Farmer	David Nettleton	Jim Thorndyke
Jeremy Farthing	Alaric Pugh	Paula Wade
Phillip French	Dave Ray	Julia Wakelam
Anne Gower	Joanna Rayner	Frank Warby
John Griffiths	Derek Redhead	Patricia Warby

23. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Buckle, Hind, Oliver, Simner, Adam Whittaker and Dorothy Whittaker.

The Acting Solicitor to the Councils asked members to note that there would be a special meeting of the council 25 March 2015 following the Joint Council meeting.

24. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 16 December 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

25. **Mayor's communications**

The Mayor reported on the civic engagements and charity activities which he, the Mayoress, Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress had attended since the last meeting on 16 December 2014.

26. **Announcements (if any) from the Leader of the Council or Members of the Cabinet**

Councillor Griffiths, Leader of the Council, advised Members that the Council would be considering freezing Council Tax for the fifth consecutive year which was an amazing achievement.

27. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

28. **Schedule of Referrals from Cabinet and Joint Development Management Policies Committee**

The Council considered the Schedule of Referrals contained within Report No. **COU/SE/15/001** (previously circulated).

(A) Referrals from Cabinet: 10 February 2015

1. Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2015/2016, Treasury management Code of Practice, and April-December 2014 Performance Report

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance informed Members that there had been no significant changes made to the Strategy since the previous year, and that the Council must formally approve such a Strategy prior to the start of the financial year. The second recommendation allowed amendments to be made to the Strategy due to the removal of sovereign support for banks.

On the motion of Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Spicer and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2015/2016, as contained in Appendix 1 to Report TMS/SE/15/002, be adopted; and
- (2) the Head of Resources and Performance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance and the Chairman of Treasury Management Sub-Committee, be given delegated authority to make amendments to the Treasury Management Investment Strategy, taking into account advice of the Council's Treasury Management Advisors in response to changes to credit ratings resulting from the implied removal of sovereign support in the Bank of England's 'bail-in' regulations.

2. Budget and Council tax Setting: 2015/2016 and Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Mayor informed members that this item would be considered at agenda item 8.

3. West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy

Councillor Gower, Portfolio Holder for Housing introduced this report which set out the strategy for preventing homelessness over the next three years.

In response to a question, Councillor Gower said she would provide figures to the Member detailing whether there had been an upturn in homelessness in response to the 'bedroom tax'.

On the motion of Councillor Gower, seconded by Councillor Brown and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:

That the West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018, as contained in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/SE/15/008, be adopted.

4. Pension Discretions Policy

The new pension regulations gave employers a number of discretionary options and the decisions had to be published in a Statement of Policy.

On the motion of Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Patsy Warby, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:

That the Pensions Discretion Policy, as contained in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/SE/15/010, be approved.

5. West Suffolk Shop Front and Advertisement Design Guide

Councillor Clements, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulation, introduced this report which sought approval of an extensive design guide for shop fronts throughout West Suffolk.

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

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the West Suffolk Shop Front and Advertisement Design Guide with suggested amendments, as contained in Appendix A to Report SDW/SE/15/003 be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document subject to it being noted in the Glossary on page 28 in respect of the second item 'Building of Local Interest', reference to 'Birmingham' be deleted and 'the areas' inserted therefor; and
- (2) the Head of Planning and Growth be given delegated authority to edit/insert appropriate images as part of the final document publishing process.

(B) Referrals from Cabinet: 24 February 2015 (Special Meeting)

1. Suffolk Business Park Land Assembly

Recommendations emanating from this report would be considered at a special meeting of Council on 25 March 2015.

2. Eastern Relief Road, Bury St Edmunds: Update

Councillor Griffiths, Leader of the Council, provided an update on the Eastern Relief Road and emphasised the council's determination to continue to facilitate and accelerate this scheme.

He acknowledged that there were calculated risks but that the end result would be a sound investment. He also confirmed that there was a recognised demand for business units within West Suffolk; a number of enquiries had already been received from local businesses wanting to expand, businesses from further afield and international businesses. The Compulsory Purchase Order would be presented to Council on 25 March 2015.

On the motion of Councillor Griffiths, seconded by Councillor Farthing, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) subject to the approval of full Council and the satisfaction of the Section 151 and Monitoring Officers, a commitment be made to the full £4,528,871 million programme of works for the provision of electricity to serve Suffolk Business Park, including an immediate financial allocation of £356,186 currently due on 27 February 2015, as detailed in Section 3 of Report No: CAB/SE/15/017;
- (2) subject to the approval of full Council and the satisfaction of the Section 151 and Monitoring Officers, delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Growth in consultation with the Leader of the Council to enter into an agreement or agreements to be entered into by St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) and the developer/landowner to enable the development of Suffolk Business Park and Eastern Relief Road to enable SEBC to realise a return on its investment in line with the principles approved in the Medium Term Financial Strategy; and
- (3) Council be asked to approve the financial allocation of £150,000 towards the costs of specialist advice for this project from reserves.

(C) Referrals from Joint Development Management Policies Committee: 11 February 2015 (Special Meeting)

1. Joint Development Management Policies Document: Planning Inspector's Report and Adoption

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

RESOLVED: That

(a) the following documents attached to Report No: JDM/JT/15/001, be adopted:

(1) The Joint Development Management Policies Document (Appendix B);

(2) Habitats Regulations Screening Assessments for Joint Development Management Policies Document, (Appendix C);

(3) Sustainability Appraisal for Joint Development Management Policies Document, (Appendix D); and

(4) St Edmundsbury Borough Policies Map and Inset Maps 1-4 (Appendix E)

(b) the following appendices attached to the Sustainability Appraisal for the Joint Development Management Policies Document (Appendix D to Report No: JDM/JT/15/001) be approved:

(1) Appendix G – Summary of Assessment of alternatives to the Joint Development Management Document Policies; and

(2) Appendix H – Assessment of reasonable alternatives to the policies set out in the Joint Development Management Policies Document.

29. **Mayoralty 2015/2016**

The Chairman of the Mayoral Advisory Committee, Councillor Houlder, reported informally that the Committee had recommended that at the Annual Meeting of the Council, Councillor Chung be nominated for election as Mayor for the 2015/2016 civic year.

Councillor Nettleton proposed a motion to refer this nomination back to the Mayoral Advisory Committee for further consideration, this was seconded by Councillor Beckwith, and upon a vote, the motion was defeated.

Councillor Chung said he was honoured to be nominated and would do his best for St Edmundsbury and West Suffolk.

30. **Budget and Council Tax 2015/2016**

(Councillor French left and Councillor Paul Hopfensperger arrived during the consideration of this item.)

The Council considered Report COU/SE/15/002 (previously circulated) which recommended that the level of Band D Council Tax for 2015/2016 be set at the same level as for 2014/2015, at £175.23 (this being the fifth successive year in which the council had delivered a Council Tax freeze).

The Council was required to consider the 2015/2016 budget for the authority and to set the level of Council Tax required to fund this budget. The proposed 2015/2016 net revenue budget was £12.757m

It was estimated that £8.832m would be spent on the Council's capital programme during 2015/2016, to be funded from a combination of grants and contributions (£2.214m) earmarked revenue reserves (£3.209m) and usable capital receipts reserve (£3.409m).

Council was required, in considering the budget, to take note of the report by the Head of Resources and Performance (S151 Officer), at Attachment x to the report. The conclusion was that overall, the estimates are robust and the reserves are adequate.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Performance and Resources, explained that the budget had been built around the council's strategic priorities and there had been a public consultation during the summer. Although the policies of a new government were not known at the time of setting the budget, it was clear that local government would rely more on local funding rather than central government funding. In addition:

- the future of the New Homes Bonus, Council Tax freeze bonuses and Business Rates Retention was not known;
- the Council had gone further with shared services and made more efficiencies in the way business was conducted but warned that there would be less opportunities to close future budget gaps;
- the Council would need to look at earlier intervention to prevent rather than cure;
- the Council needed to behave more commercially by maximising income from current initiatives and searching for other ways to generate income.

Councillor Ray thanked all of the Finance team and other council staff for their contribution in achieving his budget and producing this budget. Councillor Griffiths then thanked Councillor Ray for his tireless working and his achievements during his time on the Council.

In response to questions, Councillor Ray explained:

- £3.7m of the New Homes Bonus had gone into the strategic priorities reserve and £3m of this had been allocated to housing (see Attachment E to Report COU/SE/15/002).
- The overall budget for the Apex was covered in two separate lines in the Revenue Budget Summary: the income was shown under 'Leisure – Commercial Activities' and the expenditure under 'The Apex'.

Some concern was raised on the continued Council Tax freeze and whether an increase should be considered in future years and there should be public consultation on this matter. Some grants to other organisations had been cut when their need for funding was increasing as other services were being reduced. Supporting charities and other organisations should be considered as part of our strategic priority 'resilient families and communities that are

healthy and active'. Councillor Ray explained that the decision to freeze council tax was made annually taking all factors into consideration.

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

For the motion:

Councillors Broughton, Chung, Clements, Clifton-Brown, Everitt, Farmer, Farthing, Gower, Griffiths, Beccy Hopfensperger, Houlder, Levack, Marks, McManus, Mildmay-White, Nettleton, Pugh, Ray, Rayner, Redhead, Richardson, Rushbrook, Rushen, Spicer, Springett, Stamp, Stevens, Thorndyke, Wade, Frank Warby and Patsy Warby.

Against the motion:

Councillors Brown.

Abstentions:

Councillors Beckwith, Byrne, Cockle, Paul Hopfensperger and Wakelam.

31. **Amendments to Constitution, date of Annual Council 2015 and Programme of Meetings for 2015/2016**

(Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger left the meeting during the consideration of this item.)

On the motion of Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Rushen and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Constitution be amended at Part 4, Council Procedure Rule 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 (k) as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report No. COU/SE/15/003; and
(2) the date for the next Annual meeting of the Council be confirmed as Tuesday 19 May 2015; and

(3) the programme of meetings for 2015/2016 as detailed in appendix 2 to Report No. COU/SE/15/003 be approved.

32. **Question on Notice**

Councillor Nettleton had given notice under paragraph 11.2 of the Council Procedure Rules of the following question to Councillor Griffiths, Leader of the Council:

'As part of the council's 'Think Asia: Think Hong Kong' strategy, is any thought given to the 'one person, one vote' protest movement in Hong Kong as the Communist Chinese government in Beijing seeks to dictate who can or cannot stand for election to the Legislative Council?'

The Leader of the Council responded that the Council's strategy was to help businesses to promote themselves and develop good relationships throughout Asia for the good of West Suffolk.

Councillor Nettleton then asked the Leader whether any contracts arising from this strategy would be subject to scrutiny?

In response, Councillor Griffiths explained that any contracts would be subject to the laws of the land.

33. Report on Special Urgency

The Council received and noted a narrative item, as required by the Council's Constitution, in which the Leader of the Council reported that at the time the Council agenda was published, no executive decisions had been taken under the special urgency provisions of the Constitution.

34. Reports and Questions

(Councillor Nettleton left the meeting at the beginning of this item.)

35. Report from the Leader of the Council

Councillor Griffiths informed Members that Suffolk County Council's Cabinet had today agreed to go forward to the next stage on the Operational Hub project.

36. Report from the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Health and Communities

Councillor Mildmay-White agreed that the Newbury Community Centre was an exciting project delivering a state of the art community centre that was community led with support from the Council. She would liaise with the Member regarding Chalkstone Community Centre

37. Report from the Portfolio Holder for Waste and Property

In response to questions, Councillor Stevens:

- Confirmed that technology had shown that one freighter could be taken off the road by re-designing the brown bin collection routes.
- Concerns about access to the proposed Operational Hub and capacity at the roundabout at Hollow Road would be taken into

(Councillor Cockle left the meeting at the end of this item.)

38. Report from the Portfolio Holder for Housing

No questions were raised.

39. Report from the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance

No questions were raised.

40. **Report from the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth**

No questions were raised.

41. **Report from the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulation**

As mentioned in his report Councillor Clements advised Members that the new Enforcement team was taking shape.

In response to a question, Councillor Clements asked the Member to provide further information regarding cladding on properties in Cambridge Way, Haverhill so that he could investigate further.

42. **Report from the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage**

In introducing her report, Councillor Stamp reminded Members that the launch of the Bury Festival had taken place the previous week.

43. **Report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

No questions were raised.

44. **Report from the Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor Broughton confirmed that the Committee had decided to take Option B as detailed in paragraph 7.3 of Report No, COU/SE/15/012.

45. **Questions to Chairmen of other Committees**

No questions were raised.

The Meeting concluded at 9.23 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
