

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Wednesday 8 June 2016** at **4.00 pm** at the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Diane Hind
Vice Chairman Jeremy Farthing

Simon Brown
Patrick Chung
Paula Fox
Susan Glossop
Angela Rushen
Andrew Speed

Clive Springett
Sarah Stamp
Jim Thorndyke
Frank Warby
John Burns
Paul Hopfensperger

Substitutes attending:

Margaret Marks

Anthony Williams

By Invitation:

John Griffiths, Leader of the Council

Also in attendance:

Patricia Warby

81. **Substitutes**

The following substitutions were declared:

Councillor Margaret Marks for Councillor Richard Rout.
Councillor Anthony Williams for Councillor Tony Brown.

82. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tony Brown and Richard Rout.

83. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2016, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

84. **Draft West Suffolk Annual Report (2015-2016)**

[Councillor Andrew Speed arrived at 4.05pm and Councillor Jeremy Farthing arrived at 4.10pm during the consideration of this item.]

The Leader of the Council, Councillor John Griffiths presented Report No: OAS/SE/16/013 which outlined the draft West Suffolk Annual Report (2015-2016), which had been written as a joint West Suffolk document and was before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their comments.

The draft West Suffolk Annual Report (Appendix A) highlighted the key activities and developments which had been achieved over the financial year 2015-2016, with regard to the priorities set out in the West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014-2016. The draft report contained a number of case studies and examples from West Suffolk to illustrate the achievements described. The final version of the report would be designed and would include photographs to help illustrate the progress during the year.

The Leader highlighted relevant issues for the attention of the Committee, in particular the start of the Eastern Relief Road build; working with ONE Haverhill to develop a masterplan for Haverhill town centre; the purchase of Abbotts House, Bury St Edmunds and the continued success of the locality budget scheme.

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

- (1) Executive summary – Officers agreed to provide an executive summary of the draft West Suffolk Annual Report for Parish Councils.
- (2) A-Boards – Officers agreed to provide a written response on the current position of the A-Boards Policy.
- (3) Housing – the Leader confirmed that the Council was committed in reducing dependency on bed and breakfast and the Council was actively looking for housing provision.

The Leader wished to thank the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their comments on the draft Annual Report. He also wished to thank officers and councillors working together across West Suffolk.

With the vote being unanimous, it was:

RECOMMENDED

That the Draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2015-2016, as contained in Appendix A to Report No: OAS/SE/16/013 be approved.

85. **Public Participation**

Simon Harding, a resident of Church Walks, Bury St Edmunds asked a question in connection with Item 8 on the agenda "Decisions Plan: June 2016

to May 2017". Page 63 referred to the "West Suffolk Operational Hub: Outcome of second round of consultation and proposed next steps" when this issue will be considered by Cabinet on 14 June 2016.

Due to the public interest in this item, I would like to suggest that the Cabinet meeting on 14 June 2016 and full Council on 28 June 2016 be moved to a larger alternative venue to enable the envisaged large number of members of the public to be accommodated, and that longer time be allowed for public questions.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that the Council was expecting a high level of public interest in this item at Cabinet on 14 June 2016, and the meeting is being held in the Conference Chamber West at West Suffolk House, which has the capacity to accommodate 100 people. It has been arranged, in addition to the Conference Chamber, for members of the public to be able to view the Cabinet meeting via video link to other areas of West Suffolk House.

86. Presentation by the Leader of the Council

As set out in the Council's Constitution, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member would be invited to attend to give an account of his or her portfolio and answer questions from the Committee. Therefore, to carry out this constitutional requirement, members were asked to consider the responsibilities of the Leader of the Council, who had been invited to the meeting.

Report OAS/SE/16/014, set out the overall responsibilities of the Leader of the Council, which were:

- Leadership and strategic direction of the Council
- External relations and communications
- Strategic economic development
- East Anglia devolution deal.

Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council opened his presentation by thanking the Committee for the invitation. He then set out the broad areas of responsibility in more detail on delivering against the Council's priorities; external relations with the wider world; strategic economic development and devolution. The presentation also included priorities for the future, such as developing a new strategic plan, taking into account of changing landscape; making the most of devolution opportunities; and anticipated changes from Whitehall, including RAF Barnham.

Members discussed the presentation in detail and asked a number of questions to which the Leader of the Council and officers, to which comprehensive responses were provided.

In particular discussions were held on the two devolution deals, shared funding and how the proposed mayor(s) would also be funded; the post office building in Bury St Edmunds and the prospect of enhancing it as another community facility.

The Chairman thanked the Leader of the Council for his informative presentation.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the presentation by the Leader of the Council.

87. New Housing Development Sites Joint Task and Finish Group - Update

The Committee was advised that since the last meeting of the Joint Task and Finish Group in December 2015, the Service Manager for Planning-Development had been working with Suffolk authorities to come to an agreement on the wording of highways conditions designed to address the adoptions issues which often arise on new housing developments/estates.

The Service manager had not been able to finalise the work with Suffolk Highways due to recent staff changes, but was actively pursuing the finalisation of this work and planned to report back to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 July 2016.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the update.

88. Decisions Plan: June 2016 to May 2017

The Committee received Report No: OAS/SE/16/015, which requested that Members peruse the Cabinet Decisions Plan for the Period June 2016 to May 2017, for which it would like further information on or might benefit from the Committee's involvement.

The Committee considered the Decisions Plan, and there being no decision required, **noted** the contents of the Decisions Plan.

89. Work Programme and Re-Appointments to Task Groups / Suffolk County Council Heath Scrutiny

The Committee received Report No: OAS/SE/16/016, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2016 (Appendix 1).

The report also sought the re-appointment of members to the New Housing Development Sites Joint Task and Finish Group with Forest Heath District Council and also the Borough Council's nominated representative and substitute member on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee.

Re-appointments to Task and Finish Groups

The Committee considered the re-appointments to the existing Task and Finish Group for 2016-2017:

- (a) **New Housing Development Sites Joint Task and Finish Group:**
Councillors Jim Thorndyke, Diane Hind and Angela Rushen.

With the vote being unanimous, it was:

RESOLVED

That for 2016-2017 Councillors Jim Thorndyke, Diane Hind and Angela Rushen be re-appointed to the New Housing Development Sites Joint Task and Finish Group.

Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny

As in previous years, Suffolk County Council wished a representative to be appointed to its Health Scrutiny Committee from each of the County's District and Borough Councils. It was recommended that the Members should ideally be from the Borough's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, although it was not essential as the necessary training would be provided by the County.

The Committee considered the report and two nominations were received for the position of the Borough Council's nominated representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee, this being Councillor Paul Hopfensperger and Councillor Margaret Marks. These nominations were then put to the vote by the way of a paper ballot and with the vote being 11 for Councillor Paul Hopfensperger and 5 for Councillor Margaret Marks, it was:

RECOMMENDED

That full Council be asked to confirm the appointment of Councillor Paul Hopfensperger as the Borough Council's nominated representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee for 2016-2017.

The nomination for the Borough Council nominated substitute representative was then put to the vote, and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

RECOMMENDED

That full Council be asked to confirm the appointment of Councillor Margaret Marks as the Borough Council's nominated substitute representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee for 2016-2017.

The Meeting concluded at 5.40 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
