

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Thursday 19 April 2018** at **6.00 pm** in the **Council Chamber, District Offices**, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Simon Cole
Vice Chairman Ruth Bowman J.P.

Chris Barker
John Bloodworth
Rona Burt
Reg Silvester

Brian Harvey
Nigel Roman
David Palmer

By Invitation:

David Bowman, Portfolio Holder for Operations

221. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutes declared.

222. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Christine Mason.

223. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2018, were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

224. **Public Participation**

Report No: [OAS/FH/18/011 \(Car Parking Annual Update\)](#)

The Town Council Manager from Newmarket Town Council addressed the Committee to make them aware of the thoughts of the Town Council on car parking in Newmarket. The Town Council had recently completed the Suffolk County Council questionnaire on parking policies and their submission was summarised below:

PMS1: Strategic Parking Management

- Due to the increasing demands for tourism and business, there was insufficient capacity to meet future demand. *(The Town Council also*

expressed concerns with the occupancy figures contained within paragraph 1.3 of Report No: OAS/FH/18/011 and requested for this data to be shared with them)

PMS2: Managing Local Authority Parking Stock

- Parking spaces should not be allocated specifically to businesses under a planning approval.
- Recently installed machines in the car parks had been placed so that they were not easily accessible for wheelchair users.
- The car parks were small, inaccessible, poorly maintained and badly sign posted.

PMS3: Parking Charges

- Charges should be fair and proportionate across the towns in the district.
- Provision should be provided for very short stay parking (eg 30 minutes) which could be accommodated in the High Street, if correctly managed.

PMS4: Parking Schemes (on-street parking and parking permits)

- Due to its uniqueness, it was considered that Newmarket needed a bespoke on-street parking and parking permits solution.

PMS5: Civil Parking Enforcement

- Would like to see this implemented at the first possible opportunity.
- PCSO for Newmarket would be available from September 2018 and the Town Council would be proactively working with the PCSO to address parking enforcement in the interim.

PMS6: Accessible, high quality and safe parking

- The Town Council strongly supported this policy and looked forward to its implementation in Newmarket, where the car parking was not yet at this standard (and also referred to the car parking signage policy which had been developed by the Newmarket Vision).

225. Announcements from the Chairman regarding responses of the Cabinet to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Chairman attended Cabinet on 3 April 2018, and presented the Committee's report on items it considered on 8 March 2018, which was duly noted.

226. Monitoring Community Safety Activities Including Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (Report No: OAS/FH/18/010)

It is the duty of the Committee, as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee designated under the Police and Justice Act 2006, to scrutinise the work of the Partnership.

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/010, which updated Members on the community safety activity in West Suffolk, including the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP) from April 2017 to March 2018.

Over the past year the WSCSP continued to meet and discharge its statutory duties by carrying out an annual assessment of crime and disorder in the area; it continued to deliver the three year plan and action plan to reflect the priorities of the partnership, and carrying out Domestic Homicide Reviews, as required. In May 2016, the WSCSP considered its priorities for 2017-2018. Attached as Appendix A to the report, was the WSCSP project plan 2017-2018.

The report also set out the work of the Strong and Safe Communities Group; the multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour Group and the Public Space Protection Orders.

Members scrutinised the report and asked questions of Officers, to which responses were provided.

During the Committee's discussions on this item, reference was also made to Appendix A particularly in relation to the work being undertaken in relation to domestic abuse. To assist with the understanding of the nature of this issue, Members requested as to whether further quantitative data for the area of Forest Heath/St Edmundsbury could be provided to the Committee. Officers confirmed that they would enquire as to what level of data could be made available and would circulate this through to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members accordingly.

It was also noted that the Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities would be making their annual presentation on this portfolio to the meeting on 12 July 2018. Therefore, thought should be given in advance of that meeting, of particular questions which Members would like to see specifically covered by the Portfolio Holder on the subject of domestic abuse.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

227. Car Parking Annual Update (Report No: OAS/FH/18/011)

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/011, which provided members with an update on off-street parking outcomes and work priorities. The report included information on usage, occupancy, issue of fines, pocket car parks, RingGo cashless payments, electric charging points, Park Mark, Disabled Parking Accreditation, Civil Parking Enforcement and future work streams.

The Committee considered the report in detail and particularly noted the statement which had been made by Newmarket Town Council on the car parking in Newmarket (as set out under Minute Number 224. above).

Discussions were particularly held on the following substantive areas:

- 1) *Current car parking capacity within Brandon:* Councillor David Palmer explained that he regularly monitored the car parking capacity within Brandon and expressed his concerns around future capacity. He also referred to paragraph 1.3.4 of the report and questioned the estimated average occupancy figures listed for the car parks in Brandon. Officers

explained that work on estimating occupancy testing was on-going to ensure that best estimates could be provided. Councillor Palmer stated that he did have some suggestions which could increase the car parking capacity within Brandon, which he would share with Officers outside of the meeting.

- 2) *The results of the occupancy testing undertaken in Newmarket and the modelling of future car park capacity:* Members referred to the information within the report in relation to the occupancy and future car parking capacity within Newmarket (paragraph 1.3. of the report). Some Members expressed their concerns that the effect of any future housing developments within the Town, may not have been properly taken into account when estimating the future car parking capacity. Officers explained that work was being undertaken around this and they were satisfied that there would be sufficient car parking capacity in the Town, in the short term, up to 2020. However, it was also acknowledged that the capacity figures would need to be further reviewed once future housing developments started to come through. Members were keen to ensure that Newmarket Town Council, the Newmarket Vision and businesses within the town were fully consulted regarding any future options on car parking provision.

Taking into account the statement made by Newmarket Town Council with regard to the state of the car parks, including the facilities for disabled people, Officers referred to paragraphs 1.8 and 1.9 of the report which explained that the Council's pay and display car parks had been recognised for their high quality of management with a Park Mark Award. Also the car parks in Newmarket had been assessed in 2017 and had received Disabled Parking Accreditation. Officers explained that they would be willing to share the content of these assessments with the Town Council.

- 3) *The consideration of introducing very short stay parking in Newmarket (ie 30 minutes):* Following on from the statement made by Newmarket Town Council to support the introduction of very short stay parking, which was also supported by some Members of the Committee, Officers confirmed that they would further consider this suggestion when reviewing the car parking charges later this year.
- 4) *Implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE):* Paragraph 1.10 of the report explained the current position with regard to the implementation of CPE and for the potential transition of on-street parking enforcement in Suffolk to move from the Police to Local Authorities. All parties were keen to ensure that this could be implemented from 1 April 2019, but confirmation was still awaited from the Department of Transport.

As a result of the implementation of CPE, Officers would also need to give consideration for the potential for vehicle displacement from on-street parking to the car parks in Newmarket.

- 5) *The increase in the number of cars parking on grass verges in Newmarket:* Some Members raised concern with the increase in the

number of cars parking on the grass verges in Newmarket. The Councillor David Bowman, Portfolio Holder for Operations (who was also present at the meeting) explained that Members should inform Officers as to where this was occurring, which could then be further investigated to see if it was on grass verges owned by the Council.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

228. Review of Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre - Scoping Report (Report No: OAS/FH/18/012)

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/012, which sought the establishment of a West Suffolk Joint Task and Finish Group to conduct a review into the delivery of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre for 2019.

A formal review of the Fayre was last carried out in 2015 by a St Edmundsbury scrutiny Task and Finish Group and reported its recommendations to Cabinet in December 2015. The review concluded that "St Edmundsbury Council should commit to the Christmas Fayre for the remainder of the current administration" (May 2019) and made a number of recommendations that had been or were being implemented.

It was now proposed that a further review of the Christmas Fayre be carried out by way of a West Suffolk Joint Task and Finish Group comprising of four members from St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and four from Forest Heath District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, supported by officers including the Service Manager for Economic Development, Markets Development Officer, Service Manager (Health and Safety), a Policy Business Partner and the Portfolio Holders for Planning and Growth. The review was needed for the following reasons:

- The current commitment to continue with the Fayre only runs until April 2019, so decisions were needed as to what should take place in winter 2019;
- Planning for the Christmas Fayre started in the preceding year. As such, a decision would need to be made in 2018 for the 2019 Fayre;
- If the event went ahead as planned, the 2019 Christmas Fayre would be first to be run by the new West Suffolk Council as opposed to St Edmundsbury Borough Council. For this reason, current members from across West Suffolk needed to be involved in the decisions about the future of the Fayre; and
- The new anti-terrorist requirements for large scale events was not in place in 2015 when the previous review was carried out. These requirements had financial and other implications and it would be helpful to consider these alongside a wider review of the Fayre.

The Director also updated the Committee of the discussions by St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting which had been held on the previous evening. It was explained that

discussion had been held as to the membership of the Task and Finish Group and the importance of ensuring that rural areas and other towns were represented. However, the precise extent of involvement of Forest Heath Members was also carefully considered, to balance the fact that the event had historically been led by St Edmundsbury, versus the benefits from Forest Heath Members giving a different perspective. Various options were discussed, including splitting the review into retrospective and forward looking elements; the former being considered by St Edmundsbury Members only and the latter being constituted by the Shadow Authority.

Therefore, to reflect the outcome of the discussion, St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved that a Joint West Suffolk Task and Finish Group be established with six members from St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and up to six members from Forest Heath District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to carry out a review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre and to make recommendations for 2019.

The FHDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee acknowledged the importance of the Christmas Fayre for Bury St Edmunds and the surrounding area and expressed their appreciation to having the opportunity to be involved in this review, particularly taking into account that the 2019 Christmas Fayre would be the first to be run by the new West Suffolk Council.

The Chairman expressed concerns to ensure that the size of the Task and Finish Group did not become too unwieldy and would not wish to see the size exceed beyond 10 Members, but did indicate that in terms of the FHDC representation on the Group, then he would wish to at least have Members who represented the towns of Brandon, Mildenhall and Newmarket.

The Committee considered the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which Officers duly responded.

It was moved, duly seconded and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

RESOLVED

That:-

1. A Joint West Suffolk Task and Finish Group be established, with up to four Members from Forest Heath District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Councillors David Palmer, Robert Nobbs, John Bloodworth and Christine Mason) and six Members from St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to carry out a review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre and to make recommendations for 2019.
2. Final confirmation of the Members nominated to sit on the West Suffolk Task and Finish Group be delegated to the Chairmen of both St Edmundsbury Borough Council's and Forest Heath District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

229. **Work Programme Update (Report No: OAS/FH/18/013)**

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/013, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2018-2019 (Appendix 1).

The report also requested the Members identify questions they would like the Leader of the Council to as part of his overall presentation of the Draft West Suffolk Annual Report (2017-2018) on 7 June 2018.

The Committee considered the report and at the time of the meeting had not identified any questions they wished to put to the Leader of the Council, but would submit any questions following this meeting, to the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny).

It was also noted that at the meeting on 12 July 2018, along with the Annual Portfolio Holder presentation on Families and Communities (where it was again reiterated that thought should be given in advance of that meeting, of particular questions which Members would like to see specifically covered by the Portfolio Holder), there would also be a Families and Communities Evaluation Report, which would also give Members the opportunity to provide input and scrutiny on the monitoring information contained within this document.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the current status of its work programme.

The Meeting concluded at 7.35 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
