

# Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee** held on **Tuesday 24 July 2018** at **6.00 pm** in the **Conference Chamber West, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU**

Present: **Councillors**

**Chairman** John Griffiths (SEBC Leader of the Council)  
**Vice Chairman** James Waters (FHDC Leader of the Council)

**Forest Heath DC:**

David Bowman  
Andy Drummond  
Stephen Edwards  
Robin Millar

**St Edmundsbury BC:**

Carol Bull  
Robert Everitt  
Ian Houlder  
Sara Mildmay-White  
Alaric Pugh  
Joanna Rayner

**By Invitation:**

Simon Cole

(Chairman of FHDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

Diane Hind

(Chairman of SEBC Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

**In attendance:**

Susan Glossop

(SEBC Member)

17. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ruth Bowman, Lance Stanbury and Peter Stevens.

18. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 19. **Open Forum**

In response to questions from SEBC Councillor Diane Hind, the Joint Committee was informed that:

- (a) whilst not the only authority with issues, the Customer Services and Housing Options teams were working with Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) to establish the difficulties being experienced by Universal Credit claimants since the roll-out of SEBC's live operation of the full service. The Director explained that she would provide an update on progress following discussions with the teams and ARP; and
- (b) the West Suffolk Councils worked closely with Suffolk County Highways and the Police to ensure abandoned vehicles were removed as quickly as possible and enforcement action taken, as appropriate.

## 20. **Public Participation**

No members of the public in attendance had registered to speak.

## 21. **Reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

The reports of the SEBC and FHDC Overview and Scrutiny Committees were received and noted as contained in minutes 21(a) and 21(b) below.

### (a) **St Edmundsbury Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 11 July 2018 (Report No: CAB/JT/18/014)**

The Joint Committee received and noted the above report, which informed Members of the following substantive items discussed by SEBC's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 July 2018:

- (1) Haverhill Research Park;
- (2) Annual Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Housing;
- (3) Decisions Plan: 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019;
- (4) Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan: 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019; and
- (5) Work Programme.

Councillor Diane Hund, Chairman of SEBC's Overview and Scrutiny Committee drew relevant issues to the attention of the Joint Committee.

### (b) **Forest Heath Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 12 July 2018 (Report No: CAB/JT/18/004)**

The Joint Committee received and noted the above report, which informed Members of the following substantive items discussed by FHDC's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 July 2018:

- (1) Annual Presentation by the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing;
- (2) Evaluation of the Families and Communities Approach;
- (3) Annual Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities;

- (4) Decisions Plan: 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019
- (5) Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan: 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019
- (6) Work Programme.

Councillor Simon Cole, Chairman of FHDC's Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee drew relevant issues to the attention of the Joint Committee. Attention was particularly drawn to (2) above and how the Committee had held a thorough discussion on evaluating the Families and Communities (F&C) approach and whether it was making a difference to communities and residents. It had been acknowledged by the O&S Committee that it was difficult to score, measure and evaluate using traditional methods; however the Committee considered that the Councils should continue to refine the evaluation approach and develop the methods and ethos applied. It was anticipated that this work would be embedded within the Councils' F&C Strategy, a revised version of which would come forward for consideration by the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee in due course.

The Joint Committee commended the O&S Committee for its scrutiny of this extremely important area of the Councils' work.

22. **Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 26 June 2018 (Report No: CAB/JT/18/016)**

The Joint Committee received and noted the above report, which informed Members of the following substantive items discussed by the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership (ARP) Joint Committee on 26 June 2018:

- (1) Highlight Report, Balance Scorecards and Finance Report;
- (2) Welfare Reform Update;
- (3) Joint Committee Update – New Councils' Status;
- (4) Summary of 2017/18 Internal Audit Reviews of Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) for Joint Committee; and
- (5) Forthcoming Issues.

Councillors Stephen Edwards and Ian Houlder, FHDC and SEBC Portfolio Holders for Resources and Performance respectively, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee.

23. **Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan: Pre-Submission Consultation (Report No: CAB/JT/18/017)**

*(Councillor Andy Drummond declared a local non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. He remained in the meeting but did not vote.)*

The Joint Committee considered the above report, which sought approval for proposed consultation responses to the Pre-Submission Consultation Draft Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan.

Members noted the background to the development of the Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan (pre-submission version), and the actions and conditions that must be undertaken / met before the Plan proposal could be "made"

(adopted) to become part of the Forest Heath District Council (or West Suffolk after April 2019) statutory development plan. Together with meeting the basic conditions of neighbourhood planning, as summarised in paragraph 1.2.1 of the report, the Neighbourhood Plan needed a designated area, and was required to successfully progress through Pre-submission, Submission, Examination and Referendum stages and adhere to the findings of the independent Examiner's report on the Plan.

The Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan (NNP), which was being developed by Newmarket Town Council (NTC), had reached Pre-Submission stage. Whilst significant progress had been made by NTC in refining the NNP, concerns had been raised by officers regarding policy content, wording, mapping and whether some of the policies and proposals were based on robust evidence that would stand the test of Examination.

In the absence of Councillor Lance Stanbury, FHDC Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, Councillor Alaric Pugh, SEBC Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Joint Committee, including that whilst it was acknowledged that a significant amount of work had been undertaken by NTC and its partners to reach this point which was to be commended, the advice of the officers contained in both Appendix B (Planning Policy team) and Appendix C (other services affected by the NNP's proposals) should be taken on board. He highlighted issues that would need addressing, as set out in Appendices B and C, and explained that NTC would need to consider all responses to the Pre-Submission consultation, make any amendments they considered appropriate, and submit the revised Neighbourhood Plan (Submission version) to Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) as Local Planning Authority for assessment. A formal six week consultation would then take place on this version before progression to the Examination stage could be made.

Councillor Pugh added that the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) had been published that day and would therefore need to be assessed to ascertain whether any revisions to the NPPF would necessitate amendments to the Council's proposed consultation responses (Appendices B and C) accordingly. These revisions, if required, could be taken under delegated authority, as set out in Recommendation (2).

Members also noted potential timetabling issues in relation to the NNP proposal progressing through to the Examination, Referendum and "Making" stages as there were potential implications if these were to coincide with the timing of the district/borough/town/parish elections in May 2019. NTC would therefore be urged to submit the Submission version of the NNP to FHDC either before or after the district/borough/town/parish pre-election (purdah) period.

The Joint Committee considered the consultation responses contained in Appendices B and C were acceptable for submission to NTC, subject to the final wording being agreed under delegated authority.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- (1) the content of the Pre- Submission Consultation Draft Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan as attached at Appendix A to Report No: CAB/JT/18/017, be noted; and
- (2) the Planning Policy response to the Pre-Submission Consultation Draft Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan, as attached at Appendix B and the Corporate Response at Appendix C to Report No: CAB/JT/18/017, be endorsed to form the basis of a submission to Newmarket Town Council.

The approval of the final wording be delegated to the Assistant Director (Growth) and the Service Manager (Strategic Planning).

24. **Single Council Preparations: Approval to Consult on Harmonised Regulation and Licensing Policies (Report No: CAB/JT/18/018 and Addendum)**

The Joint Committee considered the above report, which sought approval for a proposed approach for consulting on licensing and regulation policies to be harmonised in preparation for the creation of West Suffolk Council.

As Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils moved towards the creation of a single council for West Suffolk from 1 April 2019, it was acknowledged that in respect of Licensing and Regulatory services, new West Suffolk policies needed to be in place that reflected the purpose of regulation in protecting the public, regulating business activity and enabling growth.

Updating the policy framework was a matter for the Shadow Authority and its Executive, and in this case, taking advice from the Licensing and Regulatory Committee and officers. The approach to the review took into account the principles set out in the adopted Single Council Implementation Plan developed for that purpose. Specifically, these principles set certain parameters, as summarised in paragraph 1.1.2 of the report.

The report detailed the proposed approach to policy harmonisation, including that some policies:

- (a) were already harmonised but required decisions for renewal;
- (b) required harmonisation decisions to be made for the Planning and Regulatory Service;
- (c) were already harmonised and would only be subject to minor amendment and were anticipated to be 'rolled forward' to West Suffolk Council; and
- (d) other additional planning and regulatory publications and decisions required for 2018/19 in the normal course of business as they were due for renewal.

These policies referred to above were listed in the report accordingly.

The policy areas and proposed approach to harmonisation listed in Section 1.1.7 of the report were for specific consideration at this meeting. Consultation on each of the proposed approaches would be undertaken with stakeholders and interested parties accordingly, details of which was provided in Section 2 of the report.

Councillor Alaric Pugh, SEBC Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth drew relevant issues to the attention of the Joint Committee, including that an addendum to Report No: CAB/JT/18/018 had been previously circulated which provided further information on exploring the scope for retaining existing hackney carriage licensing zones. However, whilst a different approach was proposed in this addendum, this had not affected the proposal to still undertake the original consultation process on taxi policy transition options, as proposed in the original report.

In response to a question, the Joint Committee was informed that the mandatory training for existing and new taxi drivers was working well and was already incorporated into a harmonised policy and therefore would be 'rolled forward' to West Suffolk Council, as referred to in (c) above.

The Joint Committee was supportive of the proposed approaches for consultation on the various policies detailed in the report, including the different consultation approach on taxi policy transition options, as set out in the addendum.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- (1) the proposed approach for consultation on the following policies, as set out in Report No: CAB/JT/18/018, be agreed:
  - (a) Taxi policy
  - (b) Street Trading and Vending policy
  - (c) Enforcement policy; and
- (2) the FHDC Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth be asked to take decisions on undertaking the following consultations under their existing delegated authority:
  - (a) Statement of Licensing Policy; and
  - (b) Newmarket Cumulative Impact Area.

In addition, and following the consideration of an addendum to the original Report No: CAB/JT/18/018, which necessitated consideration of issues relating to exploring the scope for retaining existing Hackney Carriage licensing zones, the following decisions have also been made to clarify the process that will be undertaken:

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- (3) it be noted that officers are exploring the necessity to combine the hackney carriage licensing areas of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury for the new single West Suffolk Council;
- (4) it be noted that, as resolved in (1) above, the recommendation set out in the original Report No: CAB/JT/18/018, which seeks to undertake consultation on taxi policy transition options, continues as proposed; and
- (5) the current approach for the taxi policy transition consultation, as outlined in paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 of the Addendum to Report No: CAB/JT/18/018, be agreed.

**25. Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Decisions Plans**

The Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Decisions Plans were received and noted as contained in minutes 25(a) and 25(b) below.

**(a) Forest Heath Decisions Plan: 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019 (Report No: CAB/JT/18/019)**

The Joint Committee received the above report, which was Forest Heath District Council's (FHDC) Executive Decisions Plan covering the period 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Members took the opportunity to review the intended forthcoming decisions of FHDC's Cabinet, its Joint Committees, Portfolio Holders and Officers under delegated authority; however, no further information or amendments were required on this occasion.

**(b) St Edmundsbury Decisions Plan: 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019 (Report No: CAB/JT/18/020)**

The Joint Committee received the above report, which was St Edmundsbury Borough Council's (SEBC) Executive Decisions Plan covering the period 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Members took the opportunity to review the intended forthcoming decisions of SEBC's Cabinet, its Joint Committees, Portfolio Holders and Officers under delegated authority; however, no further information or amendments were required on this occasion.

**26. Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs (Report No: CAB/JT/18/021 and Exempt Appendices)**

The Joint Committee considered the above report, which provided the collection data in respect of Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates for both Forest Heath District Council (FHDC and St Edmundsbury Borough

Council (SEBC) and sought approval for the write-off of FHDC and SEBC debts as contained in the Exempt Appendices.

The Chairman explained that whilst each Cabinet was familiar with the format for presenting the quarterly write-off reports to each authority, this was the first occasion that both FHDC's and SEBC's proposed write-offs were contained in a combined report. The write-offs themselves were however, listed separately in the Exempt Appendices to ensure the distinction between the two authorities remained clear.

Councillors Ian Houlder and Stephen Edwards, SEBC and FHDC Portfolio Holders for Resources and Performance respectively, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Joint Committee, including the current collection performances of each authority, as set out in Section 3 of the report.

Following a brief discussion, Members considered that further detailed discussion on specific elements of the Exempt Appendices was required in private session.

**27. Exclusion of Public and Press**

As discussion was required on specific elements of the Exempt Appendices attached to Report No: CAB/JT/18/021, it was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:**

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the following items because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt categories of information as prescribed in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and indicated against the item and, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

*(Councillors Simon Cole and Alaric Pugh left the meeting before discussion was held in private session.)*

**28. Exempt Appendices: FHDC and SEBC Revenues Collection and Performance Write-Offs (paras 1 and 2)**

The Joint Committee considered the Exempt Appendices attached to Report No: CAB/JT/18/021.

Together with raising specific questions regarding the amounts proposed to be written off, clarification was sought on the reasons given for writing off the debt and whether further detail could be given in future reports. This would be fed back to the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership accordingly.



**RESOLVED:**

That the write-off of the amounts detailed in the exempt appendices to Report No: CAB/JT/18/021, be approved, as follows:

- (1) Exempt Appendix 1: FHDC Council Tax totalling £9,602.00
- (2) Exempt Appendix 2: SEBC Council Tax totalling £29,404.88
- (3) Exempt Appendix 3: FHDC Business Rates totalling £56,255.40
- (4) Exempt Appendix 4: SEBC Business Rates totalling £41,225.83
- (5) Exempt Appendix 5: SEBC Sundry Debt totalling £2,917.08

The meeting concluded at 6.49 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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