

Shadow Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Shadow Council** held on
Tuesday 15 January 2019 at **6.30pm** at the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

Chair Sarah Stamp

Vice Chair Brian Harvey

Ruth Allen
Andrew Appleby
Trevor Beckwith
John Bloodworth
David Bowman
Ruth Bowman J.P.
Sarah Broughton
Simon Brown
Carol Bull
Louis Busuttil
Mike Chester
Patrick Chung
Terry Clements
Simon Cole
Andy Drummond
Stephen Edwards

Robert Everitt
Susan Glossop
Wayne Hailstone
Beccy Hopfensperger
Paul Hopfensperger
Ian Houlder
Victor Lukaniuk
Carol Lynch
Margaret Marks
Elaine McManus
Sara Mildmay-White
Robin Millar
David Nettleton
Robert Nobbs
David Palmer
Robin Pilley

Clive Pollington
Alaric Pugh
Karen Richardson
Peter Ridgwell
David Roach
Nigel Roman
Richard Rout
Reg Silvester
Andrew Smith
Lance Stanbury
Peter Stevens
Jim Thorndyke
Julia Wakelam
Patricia Warby
James Waters

58. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

59. **Chair's Announcements**

No announcements were made by the Chair on this occasion.

60. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Michael Anderson, Tony Brown, John Burns, Rona Burt, Max Clarke, Jason Crooks, Roger Dicker, Mary Evans, Paula Fox, John Griffiths, Diane Hind, Jane Midwood, Colin Noble, Jo Rayner, Barry Robbins, Andrew Speed, Clive Springett, Peter Thompson and Frank Warby.

Councillors Chris Barker, Louise Marston and Christine Mason were also unable to attend the meeting.

61. Declarations of Interests

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

62. Leader's Statement (Report No: COU/SA/19/001)

Councillor James Waters, Leader of the Shadow Council, presented his Statement, as contained in Paper No: COU/SA/19/001.

Councillor Waters stated that, irrespective of the outcome of Central Government's vote on Brexit that evening, there was a huge opportunity ahead for West Suffolk and he looked forward to working with everyone on this.

63. Public Participation

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

64. Polling District Review (Report No: COU/SA/19/002)

(Councillor Sarah Broughton declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item in light of her husband owning land at Great Barton (Severalls) which had been identified as a Polling District within the report. She would remain in the meeting and would take part in the debate and voting thereon.

Councillor Jim Thorndyke declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item as he currently held the position of Chairman of the Stanton Village Hall Committee and was quoted in this capacity within the report. He would remain in the meeting and would take part in the debate and voting thereon.)

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) reviewed the Council's electoral arrangements and the final recommendations for the West Suffolk Council ward boundaries were published on 12 October 2018.

The Council was required to review polling districts and places and to approve a new schedule of polling districts to take account of the new ward boundaries; particularly in Brandon, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Mildenhall and Newmarket where the majority of ward boundaries had changed.

Councillor Ruth Bowman, one of the Cabinet Members for Future Governance, explained that as part of the review comments were sought from members of the public, local political groups, Parish Councils, Borough and District Councillors, County Councillors and the (Acting) Returning Officer for the South Suffolk constituency. Comments were invited via an online survey or by sending an email or letter to the Electoral Services team.

Councillor Bowman moved that the schedules of Polling Districts and Polling Places, attached as Appendices 3 and 4 of Report No COU/SA/19/002, be approved and this was duly seconded by Councillor Carol Bull.

Councillor David Nettleton spoke on the item and made reference to pages 26, 27 and 33 of the report and the reference therein to a "Bury St Edmunds Councillor" in relation to comments made about polling stations in Abbeygate, Eastgate and Westgate wards.

Councillor Nettleton confirmed that he was the Councillor in question and explained that his comments in relation to the wards concerned were:

- A suggestion that the 422 Westgate Ward electors transferred from Abbeygate Ward should continue to vote at the Hyndman Centre on the northern side of Hospital Road;
- If Bury Town Football Club was found to be unavailable then electors from the Eastgate 2 polling district should be found another easily accessible polling station rather than be asked to travel to Garland Street; and
- The unsuitability of Whiting Street for electors living south of the river Linnet in Abbeygate 1 due to being an uphill walk and the nearest car parking being some distance away.

For these reasons, Councillor Nettleton explained that he would not be supporting the report unless Recommendation 2 was amended to state that the issue he highlighted with Abbeygate 1, principally, was "investigated further".

During the debate questions on other elements of the report were posed and the following responses were provided:

- Confirmation that the letters to be sent to residents advising of a change to their polling district would also include what ward they came under;
- Assurance that the option to register to postal vote was offered to all residents in West Suffolk;
- Explanation on the mobile elections app which all polling station contacts had been asked to register with; and
- Acknowledgement that the polling station listed in Appendix 3 as 'Parkway Middle School' was not accurate, as the building in question was now occupied by West Suffolk College following closure of the Middle School.

Councillor Reg Silvester raised a query with regard to Santon Downham Village Hall which had been omitted from the table in Appendix 4. In response, attention was drawn to the paragraph within Appendix 3 (in relation to the Brandon East ward) which stated:

"Electors in Santon Downham have their own polling station within their parish and therefore do not have to travel to Brandon to vote".

*(*Following the meeting the Electoral Services Manager contacted all Brandon District Councillors and provided them with a corrected version of Appendix 4 which included Santon Downham Village Hall.)*

In response to the comments made by Councillor Nettleton, Councillor Carol Bull explained that approximately 1,700 electors from Abbeygate 1 had been assigned Whiting Street as their polling station for the past 9 years, and during that time the Council had received no complaints in relation to access/suitability.

Accordingly, Councillor Bowman stated that the Cabinet Members continued to support the original motion as proposed.

Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The Schedule of Polling Districts attached as Appendix 4 to Report No COU/SA/19/002 (**as amended*) be approved; and
2. The Schedule of Polling Places attached as Appendix 5 to Report No COU/SA/19/002 be approved.

65. Adoption of a Coat of Arms (Report No: COU/SA/19/003)

This report sought Shadow Council's approval to adopt a Coat of Arms for the West Suffolk Council by way of requesting the College of Arms to transfer the West Suffolk County Council Coat of Arms to West Suffolk Council.

Councillor Carol Bull, one of the Cabinet Members for Future Governance, explained that the proposal to transfer the existing West Suffolk Coat of Arms was because it closely related to the West Suffolk District and had links to the current Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Coat of Arms. The Future Governance Steering Group had considered the matter and had made this recommendation to Council.

Furthermore, Shadow Council were advised that the transfer of an existing Coat of Arms would cost £1,400; in comparison the adoption of a new Coat of Arms could amount to £17,000.

Councillor Ruth Bowman, the other Cabinet Member for Future Governance, made reference to the discussions which had also been held with regard to the adoption of a Motto, alongside the Coat of Arms.

As explained within the report, the Future Governance Steering Group had recommended that further research and consideration was given to this matter prior to any decision being made on whether to adopt a Motto.

Councillor Carol Bull moved that the College of Arms be requested to transfer the West Suffolk County Council Arms to West Suffolk Council and this was duly seconded by Councillor Ruth Bowman.

This item prompted considerable debate by Members. A number voiced support for a Coat of Arms and the need to represent the history of the West Suffolk District.

The recommendation to transfer the West Suffolk County Council Coat of Arms was generally supported and was considered both appropriate and financially sensible.

Members recognised that a decision was not yet being made in respect of a Motto, but a number expressed their thoughts on what a Motto should be.

Councillor David Nettleton stated that he did not support the adoption of a Coat of Arms for the West Suffolk Council, which he considered unnecessary and not fitting in modern times, and would be voting against the recommendation.

Councillors Victor Lukaniuk and Peter Ridgwell both raised concern that the Coat of Arms proposed did not reflect the entire West Suffolk District; in particular the Forest Heath area, and felt it would be more appropriate to design a new one.

Councillors Ruth Allen and Terry Clements both suggested West Suffolk schools be included in the process in some way in order to raise awareness of local heritage amongst young people.

Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED:

That the College of Arms be requested to transfer the West Suffolk County Council Arms, as outlined in Paragraph 4.1 of Report No COU/SA/19/003, to West Suffolk Council.

66. Urgent Questions on Notice

No urgent questions on notice had been received.

The meeting concluded at 7.13pm

Signed by:

Chairman
