

West Suffolk Shadow Council

West Suffolk Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Notice

(Published: Thursday 12 July 2018)



The following decisions were taken by the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) on **Tuesday 10 July 2018** and, if not called in by Councillors, will come into operation on Friday 20 July 2018. This procedure does not however, apply to decisions that have been recommended to Shadow Council for a final decision (and which are also indicated within the decisions below). A shadow executive decision may be called in, in accordance with the Shadow Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules contained within Part 4 of the Shadow Council's Constitution, by any ten Councillors of the Shadow Council submitting the required call-in request form to the Assistant Director (HR, Legal and Democratic Services) (e-mail: democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk) **by 5.00 pm on Thursday 19 July 2018.**

Should you have a query regarding any of the decisions taken, contact should be made with the named officer in the first instance, either on the telephone number listed against their name, or via email using the format firstname.surname@westsuffolk.gov.uk. Alternatively, you may also contact the relevant Shadow Executive Member on the telephone number listed against their name, or via email using the format firstname.surname@stedsbc.gov.uk or firstname.surname@forest-heath.gov.uk Contact may also be made via Democratic Services, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk, IP33 3YU

Agenda Item and Report No.	Declarations of Interest/Dispensations Granted	Decision(s) (including recommendations to Council)	Reason(s) for Decision(s)	Other Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection	Contacts
Item No. 5 EXC/SA/18/002	None	<p><u>West Suffolk Council - Setting the Strategic Context for the Development of the 2019/2020 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plans</u></p> <p>RECOMMENDED TO SHADOW COUNCIL (17 July 2018):</p> <p>That:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The West Suffolk Strategic Framework (subject to rebranding; wording changes from "councils" to "council" and other consequential amendments, which will be 	<p>The West Suffolk Shadow Council, on 12 June 2018, agreed the Single Council Implementation Plan which outlined how the functions and responsibilities of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Councils would transfer to the West Suffolk Council on 1 April 2019. The Shadow Council's responsibilities included the adoption of policy and strategy and to set a budget precept for the West Suffolk Council on 1 April 2019.</p>	<p>No alternative options were considered as it was the responsibility of the Shadow Council to develop the 2019/2020 budget for adoption in February 2019.</p>	<p><u>Shadow Executive Members:</u></p> <p>Cllr Stephen Edwards (FHDC) 07904 389982</p> <p>Cllr Ian Houlder (SEBC) 07970 729435</p> <p><u>Officer:</u></p> <p>Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and</p>

Agenda Item and Report No.	Declarations of Interest/ Dispensations Granted	Decision(s) (including recommendations to Council)	Reason(s) for Decision(s)	Other Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection	Contacts
		<p>completed by Officers) as its Strategic Framework from 1 April 2019, be adopted.</p> <p>2. Both the West Suffolk Medium Term Financial Strategy, contained at Appendix A and West Suffolk Capital Strategy contained at Appendix B to Report No: EXC/SA/18/002 as its strategic financial framework from 1 April 2019, be adopted.</p> <p>3. The key principles and approach for the development of the 2019-2020 budget and medium term financial plans for West Suffolk Council as set out in Section 3 of Report No: EXC/SA/18/002, be supported, including the consideration of a further report (setting out the proposed approach to achieve these principles) to the Joint Informal Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 25 July 2018.</p> <p>and</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>4. That both Leaders to write to</p>	<p>This report set out the strategy context against which the 2019/2020 budget and medium term financial plans were proposed to be developed between now and the formal council tax and budget meeting of the Shadow Council in February 2019.</p> <p>The report also proposed that the West Suffolk Shadow executive supported both the Leader and Deputy Leader (the Leaders) in writing to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on behalf of the West Suffolk Shadow Executive confirming the West Suffolk Council's plans for a seven year council tax harmonisation period, whilst also taking into account its Implementation Plan Five Key Principles.</p>		<p>Performance) 01638 719245</p>

Agenda Item and Report No.	Declarations of Interest/ Dispensations Granted	Decision(s) (including recommendations to Council)	Reason(s) for Decision(s)	Other Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection	Contacts
		the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on behalf of the West Suffolk Shadow Executive, confirming the West Suffolk Council's plans, taking into account its implementation plan five key principles for a seven year council tax harmonisation period.			
Item No. 6 EXC/SA/18/003	None	<p><u>West Suffolk - Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2019/2020</u></p> <p>RECOMMENDED TO SHADOW COUNCIL (17 July 2018):</p> <p>That the West Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for West Suffolk be approved, to take effect from 1 April 2019 as attached at Appendix A and as detailed in Section 5 of Report No: EXC/SA/18/003.</p>	<p>Since 1 April 2013, St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Councils had operated a Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) to replace the previous, centrally administered Council Tax Benefit. These initial schemes required working age claimants to pay 8.5% more of the council tax charge than previously. This requirement had been continued over the subsequent five financial years to 2018-2019. The Councils had also protected War Pensioners from the reduction in maximum benefit and removed the Second Adult Rebate for working age claimants.</p> <p>Each year the Council was</p>	<p>An alternative option would be to increase the customer contribution rate to more than 8.5%. The possible increase in Council Tax collected for the Council was considered to be less than the additional costs of recovery (additional recovery staff, postage and enquiries to customer services), including the</p>	<p><u>Shadow Executive Members:</u> Cllr Stephen Edwards (FHDC) 07904 389982</p> <p>Cllr Ian Houlder (SEBC) 07970 729435</p> <p><u>Officer:</u> Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245</p>

Agenda Item and Report No.	Declarations of Interest/ Dispensations Granted	Decision(s) (including recommendations to Council)	Reason(s) for Decision(s)	Other Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection	Contacts
			required to review its LCTRS and this report advised the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) about the conclusion of the 2018 annual review and the resultant proposals for the LCTRS to take effect from 1 April 2019 under the new West Suffolk Council.	inability to receive the debt in year by deduction from DWP benefits. Such an approach would have a negative impact on Council Tax collection, as detailed in the findings of Report No CAB/SE/17/068 (SEBC Cabinet: 5 December 2017) and Report No: CAB/FH/17/062 (FHDC Cabinet: 12 December 2017).	
Item No. 7 EXC/SA/18/004	Cllr James Waters <i>(As a landlord in the private sector housing market)</i>	<u>West Suffolk Council Tax Technical Changes - Including Empty Property Reliefs and Premiums Changes</u> RECOMMENDED TO SHADOW COUNCIL (17 July 2018) That:- 1. The West Suffolk Council Tax Technical Changes – Second Homes set out in Section 1.4 of Report No: EXC/SA/18/004, from 1 April 2019, be	Since April 2013, Councils have had the discretion to charge up to 100% for some previously exempt properties; to charge up to 100% in respect of furnished empty properties (holiday homes); to charge up to 100% in respect of second homes and to charge up to 50% empty homes premium for properties that had been empty for over two years. In offering these new powers, the Government were seeking to influence	A scheme that was less or more favourable could be considered. However, these were discounted for the reasons set out in Section 2.0 of the report.	<u>Shadow Executive Members:</u> Cllr Stephen Edwards (FHDC) 07904 389982 Cllr Ian Houlder (SEBC) 07970 729435 <u>Officer:</u> Rachael Mann Assistant

Agenda Item and Report No.	Declarations of Interest/ Dispensations Granted	Decision(s) (including recommendations to Council)	Reason(s) for Decision(s)	Other Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection	Contacts
		<p>approved.</p> <p>2. The West Suffolk Council Tax Technical Changes – Empty Property Reliefs as set out in Section 1.4 of Report No: EXC/SA/18/004, from 1 April 2019, be approved.</p> <p>3. Subject to the coming into force of legislation accordingly on 1 April 2019, an additional 50% Council Tax premium on long term properties raising the current premium to 200% as set out in Section 1.4 of Report No: EXC/SA/18/004, be approved.</p>	<p>owners to bring empty homes back into use, as well as the ability for councils to increase council tax income.</p> <p>As part of the 2017 Government budget, it was announced that the Government would be implementing new flexibilities in respect of charging an additional 50% Council Tax on long term empty property premiums. It was anticipated that this would come into effect on 1 April 2019 and these powers would provide local authorities with the ability to implement a scheme that would enable 200% Council Tax charge on properties that had been empty for longer than two years (deemed as a long term empty property).</p> <p>Paragraph 1.4 of the report set out the differences between the current schemes and the approach proposed for the West Suffolk Council. As the second homes element was already aligned, it had been proposed that this continued into the West Suffolk Council.</p>		<p>Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245</p>

Agenda Item and Report No.	Declarations of Interest/ Dispensations Granted	Decision(s) (including recommendations to Council)	Reason(s) for Decision(s)	Other Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection	Contacts
Item No. 8 EXC/SA/18/005	None	<p><u>West Suffolk Discretionary Rate Relief Guidelines</u></p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the West Suffolk Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme, as set out at Appendix A to Report No: EXC/SA/18/005, be approved, subject to the following additional wording being inserted into paragraph 33:-</p> <p><i>'Government are intending to double Mandatory Rural Rate Relief to 100%. Legislation will be passed in due course. However, in the meantime, Government have funded local authorities to award 50% Discretionary Relief where an organisation qualifies for 50% Mandatory Relief. Therefore, properties that qualify for Mandatory Relief will also be awarded 50% Discretionary relief.'</i></p>	<p>Business Rates legislation stipulated that some organisations qualified for 'Mandatory Rate Relief'. Examples of which include charities, organisations that meet the condition of Charitable Purpose and registered community amateur sports clubs. A further category of Mandatory Rural Rate Relief was also available to sole Post Offices, general stores in certain rural populations. Local authorities had the ability to grant Discretionary Rate Relief, either to 'top up' the Mandatory Rate Relief or to give Discretionary Rate Relief.</p> <p>The guidelines for determining Relief were not intended to be a rigid set of rules. Neither were all the guidelines applicable to every organisation. Each case was judged on its merits, taking into account the contribution which each organisation/business made to the West Suffolk strategic priorities.</p> <p>The proposed draft guidance, as set out in Appendix A, would</p>	<p>A scheme that was less favourable could be considered. However, it was discounted as it was considered that the proposed scheme achieved better outcomes for these community and charitable groups which supported the families and communities agenda.</p>	<p><u>Shadow Executive Members:</u> Cllr Stephen Edwards (FHDC) 07904 389982</p> <p>Cllr Ian Houlder (SEBC) 07970 729435</p> <p><u>Officer:</u> Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245</p>

Agenda Item and Report No.	Declarations of Interest/ Dispensations Granted	Decision(s) (including recommendations to Council)	Reason(s) for Decision(s)	Other Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection	Contacts
			<p>become the West Suffolk Council Discretionary Rate Relief Guidance from 1 April 2019. It brought together the previous Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury schemes, with some changes to align areas where there were currently differences (as set out in Section 2 of the report).</p> <p>The Shadow Executive were also informed of further additional wording, for inclusion within paragraph 33 of the proposed West Suffolk Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme, to take account of the Government's intention to double the Mandatory Rural Rate Relief. This proposed additional wording was circulated to the meeting for consideration by the Shadow Executive.</p>		

Jennifer Eves
Assistant Director (Human Resources, Legal and Democratic Services)
12 July 2018