

Shadow Executive (Cabinet)

Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

West Suffolk
working together

Minutes of a meeting of the **Shadow Executive (Cabinet)** held on **Tuesday 18 September 2018** at **6.22 pm** in the **Conference Chamber West, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3YU**

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman John Griffiths (Leader of the Shadow Council)

Vice Chairman James Waters (Deputy Leader of the Shadow Council)

David Bowman
Ruth Bowman J.P.
Carol Bull
Andy Drummond
Stephen Edwards
Robert Everitt

Ian Houlder
Sara Mildmay-White
Robin Millar
Joanna Rayner
Lance Stanbury
Peter Stevens

By invitation:

Sarah Broughton

(Chairman of SEBC's Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee)

Susan Glossop

SEBC Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth and pending nominee to the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) (*see minute 13 below*)

In attendance:

Simon Cole

(Chairman of FHDC's Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

13. Introduction

Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Shadow Council and Chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance. As stated during the extraordinary meeting of the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee, which had been held immediately prior to this meeting, Members noted that Councillor Alaric Pugh, former SEBC Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, had recently and reluctantly taken the decision to resign from SEBC's Cabinet for personal reasons. This also meant that Councillor Pugh had resigned from the Shadow Executive (Cabinet).

Unlike appointments to Forest Heath District or St Edmundsbury Borough Councils' Cabinets, appointments to the Shadow Executive required a vote by the Shadow Council on the nomination. Following her recent appointment to

SEBC's Cabinet, thus replacing Councillor Alaric Pugh, Councillor Susan Glossop would be nominated to be appointed to the Shadow Executive at the Shadow Council meeting on 25 September 2018.

(Note: As the agenda and papers for this meeting had been published prior to Councillor Alaric Pugh's resignation from the Shadow Executive (Cabinet), this had not been reflected on the agenda front.)

14. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence had been received; however, Councillor Alaric Pugh had recently resigned from the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) after the agenda and papers had been published for this meeting.

15. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16. Open Forum

No non-Cabinet Members in attendance wished to speak under this item.

17. Public Participation

There were no questions/statements from members of the public.

18. Report of the Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committees: 25 July 2018 (Report No: EXC/SA/18/008)

The Shadow Executive (Cabinet) received and noted the above report, which informed Members of the following substantive items discussed by FHDC's and SEBC's Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committees during an informal joint meeting held on 25 July 2018:

- (1) Approach to Delivering a Sustainable West Suffolk Budget 2019-2020 and Medium Term Plan; and
- (2) Appointment of External Auditors for West Suffolk Council.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Chairman of SEBC's Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee drew relevant issues to the attention of the Joint Committee, including that a separate report was on this Shadow Executive (Cabinet) for Item (2) above.

19. **Recommendations of the Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committees: 25 July 2018: Arrangements for Appointment of External Auditors for the West Suffolk Council and West Suffolk Shadow Authority (Report No: EXC./SA/18/009)**

The Shadow Executive (Cabinet) considered the above report which sought approval for arrangements for the external audit of the accounts for the Shadow Authority and for West Suffolk Council.

The new West Suffolk Council was required to confirm its external audit arrangements to appoint a local auditor to audit its accounts for 2019/2020. Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils had previously in 2016, agreed to 'opt-in' to the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) audit arrangements; however, as these arrangements could not transition across to West Suffolk Council, the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committees had recommended to the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) and Shadow Council that the Councils' present commitment to option 3, which was to 'opt-in' to the PSAA arrangements, should be reaffirmed.

Officers, in consultation with the Chairmen of FHDC's and SEBC's Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committees, had also recommended proposed arrangements for auditing the accounts of the West Suffolk Shadow Authority (WSSA). The WSSA met the criteria of a 'smaller authority' and following consideration of alternative options, as set out in Attachment A to the report, officers had considered that opting-in to the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments scheme would be the most cost-efficient route whilst also providing a well-established audit regime.

Councillor Ian Houlder, one of the Shadow Executive Members with the responsibility for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Shadow Executive (Cabinet). Councillor Stephen Edwards, the other Shadow Executive Member with the responsibility for Resources and Performance, acknowledged the work of the officers in managing to secure a pragmatic and extremely cost effective method for auditing the accounts for the Shadow Authority.

Therefore, it was:

RECOMMENDED TO SHADOW COUNCIL (25 September 2018):

That:

West Suffolk Council

- (1) Option 3, to 'opt-in' to the sector led body (Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited) for the independent appointment of the Council's External Auditor, beginning with responsibilities for the financial year 2019-2020, as set out in Report Nos: PAS/SE/18/025 and PAS/FH/18/024, be approved.

West Suffolk Shadow Authority

- (2) Agreement be given for the External Audit of the West Suffolk Shadow Authority Accounts to be prepared under the Smaller Authority audit procedures, as set out in Attachment A of Report No: EXC/SA/18/009; and
- (3) approval be given for the S151 Officer to write to the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA) informing them that the West Suffolk Shadow Authority would like to be treated as 'opted in' to the smaller authorities scheme and as such the auditor would be PKF Littlejohn (the appointees for Suffolk).

20. **Transfer of Joint Policies to West Suffolk Council (Report No: EXC/SA/18/010)**

The Shadow Executive (Cabinet) considered the above report, which sought approval for transferring the existing suite of joint policies adopted by Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils to West Suffolk Council, together with giving delegated authority for officers to make minor drafting changes to existing and additional joint policies due to be adopted between September 2018 and 31 March 2019.

Whilst the consequential Order would effectively enable the transfer the existing joint policies, frameworks and guidance of Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils to West Suffolk Council from 1 April 2019, best practice suggested that the Shadow Authority should proactively consider and confirm its support to the process being followed, as set out in the report.

The majority of policies that governed the work of Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils were already joint policies, presented as 'West Suffolk Councils' policies. Changes to these documents would therefore be relatively minor textual and grammatical amendments, with examples shown in paragraph 1.1.3. It was therefore proposed that these minor drafting changes be made by officers, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder (Shadow Executive Member). Similarly, this practice would also apply to joint policies that were due to be approved between September 2018 and 31 March 2019.

Councillors Ruth Bowman and Carol Bull, Shadow Executive Members with the responsibility for Future Governance, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Shadow Executive (Cabinet).

Members agreed the proposal was a pragmatic and sensible approach.

Therefore, it was:

RECOMMENDED TO SHADOW COUNCIL (25 September 2018):

That:

- (1) the existing suite of joint policies adopted by Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils be transferred to West Suffolk Council, as detailed in paragraph 1.1.3 of Report No: EXC/SA/18/010;
- (2) delegated authority be given to Officers, in consultation with relevant Portfolio Holders, to make necessary minor drafting changes to existing policies and then agree them for West Suffolk Council, as detailed in paragraph 1.1.4; and
- (3) delegated authority be given to Officers, in consultation with relevant Portfolio Holders, to make necessary minor drafting changes and then agree the additional joint policies that are adopted by Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils between September 2018 and March 2019, as detailed in paragraph 1.1.4 and 1.1.5.

21. **Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan: 1 September 2018 to 6 May 2019 (Report No: EXC/SA/18/011)**

The Shadow Executive (Cabinet) considered this report which was the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan covering the period 1 September 2018 to 6 May 2019.

Members took the opportunity to review the intended forthcoming decisions of the Shadow Executive (Cabinet). However, no further information or amendments were requested on this occasion.

The Meeting concluded at 6.32 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
