

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held virtually via **MS Teams** live remote meeting platform on **Tuesday 26 May 2020** at **6.00 pm**

Present: **Councillors**

Chair John Griffiths (Leader of the Council)

Vice Chair Sara Mildmay-White (Deputy Leader of the Council)

Sarah Broughton
Carol Bull
Andy Drummond
Robert Everitt

Susan Glossop
Joanna Rayner
David Roach
Peter Stevens

By invitation

Ian Shipp

(Chair of Overview and Scrutiny
Committee)

In attendance

Diane Hind

(Leader of the Labour Group)

John Burns

(observer - attendance by viewing
the live broadcast only)

Brian Harvey

(observer - attendance by viewing
the live broadcast only)

114. **Welcome and Meeting Facilitation**

The Chair formally opened the meeting and welcomed all persons present including those that were viewing the meeting externally via the live broadcast, to the Council's first virtual meeting of Cabinet.

Jill Korwin, one of the Directors, was acting as facilitator for the meeting, and upon invited to do so by the Chair, detailed a number of housekeeping matters and guidance to help those present and viewing to familiarise themselves with how the meeting would operate within the virtual setting.

115. **Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

As it was not possible to see on screen all those present in the virtual meeting room at any one time; for the benefit of all persons present and those viewing the live broadcast, the facilitator verbally listed the names of those

present, which included all Cabinet Members, two non-Cabinet Members and several officers supporting the meeting.

116. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

117. Open Forum

The following non-Cabinet Member spoke under this item:

1. **Councillor Diane Hind**, Leader of the Labour Group, asked a question in connection with one of the Chief Executive's Urgency Decisions listed under Agenda Item 6.

Councillor Hind made a suggestion to amend the wording of the motion that would have been presented to Council on 31 March 2020 had the meeting not been cancelled due to the impacts of COVID-19. This was in respect of seeking adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of Anti-Semitism.

In response, Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council stated that whilst the Cabinet would wholeheartedly agree with Councillor Hind's sentiments, the decision made by the Chief Executive using his urgency powers was to agree to adopt the definition. The wording of the motion, which was attached to the report for information, helped explain the background as to why the decision was made. A review of the Chief Executive's decision was not considered to be necessary; however, Councillor Robert Everitt, Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities, who would have put the motion to Council, was invited to add further comments.

Councillor Everitt responded accordingly, stating that it was unfortunate that due to the circumstances, Members did not have the opportunity to resolve this motion which, in ordinary times, would have been considered by Council at the end of March 2020. Councillor Everitt agreed that the Council was firmly committed to promoting equal opportunities and eliminating all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and this had already been recognised in the Council's approved equality scheme prior to adoption of the IHRA definition.

Councillor Hind sought clarification on whether there was a time limit by which the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism needed to be adopted; and whether she could be directed to the exact wording regarding the Council's commitments in the Council's equality scheme. A detailed response would be provided by Councillor Everitt following the meeting.

118. Public Participation

There were no members of the public present within the virtual setting. No members of the public viewing the live broadcast had registered to speak.

**119. Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 12 March 2020
(Report No: CAB/WS/20/029)**

The Cabinet received and noted this report, which informed Members of the following substantive items discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 12 March 2020:

1. Registered Provider of Social Housing (Havebury Partnership);
2. West Suffolk Housing Strategy Implementation Plan 2018-2023: Year 1 Review;
3. Suffolk Cross-Authority Task and Finish Group – Citizens Advice (Final Report);
4. Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee – 21 January 2020;
5. Decisions Plan: 1 March 2020 to 31 May 2020; and
6. Work Programme Update 2020.

This report was scheduled to be considered by Cabinet on 24 March 2020; however, that meeting was cancelled following the publication of the agenda and papers due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chair firstly welcomed Councillor Ian Shipp to the meeting and took the opportunity to congratulate him on his appointment as the new Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, following Councillor David Nettleton's decision to step down having fulfilled this role between May 2019 and May 2020.

Councillor Griffiths paid tribute to Councillor Nettleton for his excellent work steering the Committee over the past year. Unfortunately, Councillor Nettleton was unable to attend this meeting to present his final report; however, Councillor Shipp was more than willing to assist.

Councillor Shipp paid his own tribute to Councillor Nettleton, adding that he was very much looking forward to the role and working with his Vice-Chair, Councillor Simon Cole, other Committee Members, the Cabinet and officers.

He then drew relevant issues from the report to the attention of Cabinet.

120. Chief Executive Urgency Decisions (Report No: CAB/WS/20/036)

The Cabinet received and noted this report, which provided a summary of decisions recently taken by the Chief Executive utilising his urgency powers.

The COVID-19 pandemic had required the Council to work rapidly to respond to the emerging threat and Government guidance as the situation evolved.

In the vast majority of cases, officers throughout the organisation were empowered, through the Council's business continuity plans and scheme of delegation, to be able to make decisions to support the Council's response. This had enabled the Council to continue to deliver vital services to its communities whilst ensuring appropriate measures were taken to safeguard staff and its stakeholders.

In a small number of cases, decisions needed to be made that fell outside the scope of the scheme of delegation, or the terms under which decisions were delegated to officers, and therefore it was necessary to employ the Chief Executive's Urgency Powers.

Two decisions were taken that fell under the scope of executive functions, namely:

- Suspension of on and off street car parking charges;
- Adoption of the IHRA definition of Anti-Semitism.

One further decision, relating to the moving of a polling district in Haverhill, was scheduled to be reported to Cabinet on 24 March 2020, however, that meeting was cancelled following the publication of the agenda and papers due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and was therefore deferred for reporting at this meeting.

121. **Decisions Plan: 1 May 2020 to 31 May 2021 (Report No; CAB/WS/20/037)**

The Cabinet considered this report which was the Cabinet Decisions Plan covering the period 1 May 2020 to 31 May 2021.

Members took the opportunity to review the intended forthcoming decisions of the Cabinet; however, no further information or amendments were requested on this occasion.

122. **Conclusion**

On conclusion of the meeting, the Chair thanked all present for their attendance at this first virtual meeting of Cabinet. The live broadcast subsequently ended at this point.

The meeting concluded at 6.26 pm

Signed by:

Chair
