

Cabinet

(Non-decision making virtual meeting)



Title	Agenda																						
Date	Tuesday 25 May 2021																						
Time	6.00 pm																						
Venue	<p>Facilitated by Microsoft Teamslive virtual meetings platform only – Members and officers attending this meeting are requested to see their separate Outlook meeting invitation to join the meeting.</p> <p>The meeting will be accessible by the press and public via a live stream; the link to which will be published on the Council’s website alongside guidance on how to join and the agenda papers</p>																						
Membership	<p style="text-align: center;">Leader John Griffiths</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Deputy Leader Sara Mildmay-White</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Councillor</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Portfolio</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sarah Broughton</td> <td>Resources and Performance</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Carol Bull</td> <td>Governance</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Andy Drummond</td> <td>Regulatory</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Robert Everitt</td> <td>Families and Communities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Susan Glossop</td> <td>Growth</td> </tr> <tr> <td>John Griffiths</td> <td>Leader</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sara Mildmay-White</td> <td>Housing</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Joanna Rayner</td> <td>Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs</td> </tr> <tr> <td>David Roach</td> <td>Local Plan Development and Delivery</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Peter Stevens</td> <td>Operations</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Councillor	Portfolio	Sarah Broughton	Resources and Performance	Carol Bull	Governance	Andy Drummond	Regulatory	Robert Everitt	Families and Communities	Susan Glossop	Growth	John Griffiths	Leader	Sara Mildmay-White	Housing	Joanna Rayner	Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs	David Roach	Local Plan Development and Delivery	Peter Stevens	Operations
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	<p>The Constitution of the Cabinet is to be announced at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 18 May 2021. As this Cabinet agenda was prepared prior to the Annual Meeting of the Council, it reflects the Portfolio Holders and the Portfolios held immediately prior to the Annual Meeting.</p>																						
Interests – declaration and restriction on participation	<p>Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda (subject to the exception for sensitive information) and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on an item in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.</p>																						
Quorum	Four Members																						
Committee administrator	<p>Sharon Turner Democratic Services Officer Telephone 01638 719237 Email sharon.turner@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p>																						

Public information



Venue	Virtual non-decision making meeting only to be facilitated by Microsoft Teamslive
Contact information	Telephone: 01638 719237 Email: democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk Website: www.westsuffolk.gov.uk
Access to agenda and reports before the meeting	<p>The agenda and reports will be available to view at least five clear days before the meeting on our website.</p> <p>On this occasion, a link to the meeting livestream broadcast, and guidance on how members of the public can access the meeting broadcast will be made available on the Council's website when the agenda is published.</p>
Attendance at meetings	<p>The Council actively welcomes members of the public and the press to attend its meetings and holds as many of its meetings as possible in public.</p> <p>The meeting will be held virtually. You can view the livestream of the meeting via the link provided on the webpage where the agenda and papers are published. Please note that a virtual meeting is not invalid by virtue of members of the public being unable to attend or participate in meetings that are held virtually.</p>
Public participation	<p>Members of the public who live or work in the district are welcome to speak and may ask one question or make a statement of not more than three minutes duration relating to items to be discussed in Part 1 of the agenda only.</p> <p>If a question is asked and answered within three minutes, the person who asked the question may ask a supplementary question that arises from the reply. As the meeting is taking place virtually, a person who wishes to speak must register by 9am the last working day before the day of the meeting. This can be done by sending the request to democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk or telephoning 07776 254986, 07595 428481 or 01638 719237. See Agenda Item 5 for further details on how to participate.</p> <p>If a member of the public cannot attend the meeting remotely, they may submit a written question or statement to Democratic Services by midday at the very latest on the day of the meeting and this will be read out on their behalf during the meeting. There is an overall time limit of 15 minutes for public speaking, which may be extended at the Chair's discretion</p>
Accessibility	If you have any difficulties in accessing the meeting, the agenda and accompanying reports, including for reasons of a

	<p>disability or a protected characteristic, please contact Democratic Services at the earliest opportunity using the contact details provided above in order that we may assist you.</p>
Recording of meetings	<p>The Council may record this meeting and permits members of the public and media to record or broadcast it as well (when the media and public are not lawfully excluded).</p> <p>Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Committee Administrator who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.</p>
Personal Information	<p>Any personal information processed by West Suffolk Council arising from a request to speak at a public meeting under the Localism Act 2011, will be protected in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. For more information on how we do this and your rights in regards to your personal information and how to access it, visit our website: https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Data_and_information/howweuseinformation.cfm or call Customer Services: 01284 763233 and ask to speak to the Information Governance Officer.</p>

Agenda

Procedural matters

1. Apologies for absence

2. Minutes

1 - 14

To review and note any amendments to the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021 (copy attached).

3. Declarations of interest

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any pecuniary or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, **no later than when that item is reached** and, when appropriate, to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.

Part 1 - public

4. Open forum

At each Cabinet meeting, up to 15 minutes shall be allocated for questions or statements from and discussion with, non-Cabinet members. As this meeting is being held virtually, members wishing to speak during this session must notify Democratic Services **by 9am on the day of the meeting** that they wish to attend. Who speaks and for how long will be at the complete discretion of the person presiding.

5. Public participation

Members of the public who live or work in the district are invited to put one question or statement of not more than three minutes duration relating to items to be discussed in Part 1 of the agenda only. If a question is asked and answered within three minutes, the person who asked the question may ask a supplementary question that arises from the reply.

As the meeting is taking place virtually, **a person who wishes to speak must register by 9am on Monday 24 May 2021** to ensure that there is time to brief them on how they can speak at the meeting. This can be done by sending the request to democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk or by telephoning one of the numbers provided on the Public Information Sheet at the start of this agenda. Members of the public will either be set up as a 'Guest Speaker' or be provided with a telephone number they can call when prompted to do so during the meeting to enable them to participate.

If a member of the public cannot attend the meeting remotely, they may submit a written question or statement to Democratic Services by midday at the very latest on the day of the meeting and this will be read out on their behalf during the meeting.

There is an overall time limit of 15 minutes for public speaking, which may be extended at the Chair's discretion.

6. Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 9 March 2021 15 - 26

Report number: **CAB/WS/21/018**
 Portfolio holder: Councillor Sarah Broughton
 Lead officer: Rachael Mann

7. Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 18 March 2021 27 - 32

Report number: **CAB/WS/21/019**
 Chair of the Committee: Councillor Ian Shipp
 Lead officer: Christine Brain

Non key decisions

8. Western Way Development, Bury St Edmunds 33 - 36

Report number: **CAB/WS/21/020**
 Portfolio holder: Councillor Joanna Rayner
 Lead officer: Alex Wilson

9. Annual Review and Appointment of the Cabinet's Joint Committee, Panel and Other Working Groups 37 - 56

Report number: **CAB/WS/21/021**
 Portfolio holder: Councillor John Griffiths
 Lead officers: Jen Eves and Leah Mickleborough

10. Decisions Plan: 1 May 2021 to 31 May 2022 57 - 76

To consider the most recently published version of the Cabinet's Decisions Plan

Report number: **CAB/WS/21/022**
 Portfolio holder: Councillor John Griffiths
 Lead officer: Ian Gallin

11. Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs 77 - 80

Report number: **CAB/WS/21/023**
 Portfolio holder: Councillor Sarah Broughton
 Lead officer: Rachael Mann

12. Exclusion of press and public

To consider whether the press and public should 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 items, 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 each item and, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Part 2 - exempt

13. Exempt Appendices: Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs (paragraphs 1 and 2) 81 - 90

Exempt Appendices 1 and 2 to Report number:

CAB/WS/21/023

Portfolio holder: Councillor Sarah Broughton

Lead officer: Rachael Mann

(These exempt Appendices are to be considered in private under paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as they contain information relating to an individual and information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual).

(No representations have been received from members of the public regarding this item being held in private.)

Cabinet



Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held virtually via **Microsoft Teams** live remote meeting platform on **Tuesday 9 February 2021** 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	Susan Glossop
Carol Bull	David Roach
Andy Drummond	Peter Stevens
Robert Everitt	

By invitation

Ian Houlder	(Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee)
Ian Shipp	(Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
Jim Thorndyke	(Chair of the Grant Working Party)

In attendance

Brian Harvey	(observer)
Marion Rushbrook	(observer)

211. 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.

Leah Mickleborough, Service Manager (Democratic Services), was acting as facilitator for the meeting where support was felt necessary and upon being invited to do so, assisted the Chair in detailing the housekeeping matters and guidance as to how the meeting would operate within the virtual setting.

212. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Joanna Rayner.

213. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

214. **Declarations of interest**

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

215. **Open forum**

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

(Councillor Marion Rushbrook joined the meeting during the consideration of this item.)

216. **Public participation**

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

217. **Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 8 December 2020 (Report number: CAB/WS/21/002)**

The Cabinet received and noted this report, which informed members of the following substantive items discussed by the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee at its meeting held on 8 December 2020:

1. Performance and Service Updates;
2. Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) Financial Performance 2020 to 2021;
3. ARP Joint Committee Partnership Budget;
4. Anglia Revenues Partnership Service Delivery Plan and Risk Register;
5. Welfare Reform Update; and
6. Forthcoming Issues.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet, including placing her thanks on record for the additional work ARP had undertaken in supporting residents since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

218. **Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 14 January 2021 (Report number: CAB/WS/21/003)**

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 14 January 2021:

1. Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO): West Suffolk; and
2. Work programme update 2021 and suggestions for scrutiny.

Councillor Ian Shipp, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet, including that together with

making comments on suggested variations to existing PSPOs and proposals for moving forward with two variations, the Committee had agreed to establish a small working party to undertake a scrutiny review of the Council's website with particular emphasis on customer access.

Councillor Everitt, Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities, explained that stakeholder and public consultation was now being undertaken on the proposed variations to existing PSPOs in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill, as outlined in 2.1.3 of the report, and having analysed the outcomes from the consultation, a final decision would be sought from Cabinet on whether to make the variations on 16 March 2021.

219. **Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 28 January 2021 (Report number: CAB/WS/21/004)**

The Cabinet received and noted this report, which informed members of the following substantive items discussed by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 28 January 2021:

1. Ernst and Young – Annual Audit Letter 2019 to 2020;
2. 2020 to 2021 Performance Report (Quarter 3);
3. Delivering a Sustainable Medium Term Budget;
4. Financial Resilience (December 2020);
5. Financial Resilience – Strategy Statement 2021 to 2022 and Treasury Management Code of Practice; and
6. Work Programme Update 2021.

Councillor Ian Houlder, Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (PASC) drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet, including that separate reports were contained on the agenda for items 3, 4. and 5. above.

Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, Portfolio Holder for Housing, provided an explanation in respect of the point made under paragraph 2.2.7 of the report where a discussion had been held at the PASC meeting on whether the temporary housing units in Olding Road, Bury St Edmunds were still being used. Councillor Mildmay-White stated that 14 units were currently occupied and were vital to support those in need, particularly during the difficult winter months. Work was being undertaken with different housing providers to bring forward more accommodation options.

220. **Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 28 January 2021: Delivering a Sustainable Medium-Term Budget (Report number: CAB/WS/21/005)**

The Cabinet considered this report, which was recommending to Council, the approval of proposals for inclusion in the medium-term financial plans.

In July 2020, Cabinet had agreed proposed next steps and principles for future financial planning across the medium term (Report number: CAB/WS/20/043). The approach was designed to enable the Council to respond effectively to changing circumstances while maintaining a medium-term focus on the Council's financial sustainability.

On 19 November 2020, the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (PASC) supported the key budget assumptions underpinning the 2021 to 2022 and medium-term budgets for West Suffolk Council, which were subsequently approved by Cabinet and Council in December 2020.

Report number: PAS/WS/21/003 presented to the Committee on 28 January 2021 provided an update on those key budget assumptions as a result of both the provisional settlement announced on 25 November 2020 and the detailed budget process undertaken by service areas supported by their finance business partners during November and December 2020.

The report also set out the scale of the financial challenge for West Suffolk Council for 2021 to 2022 and the medium-term, and the plans to address those financial challenges in enabling the Council to meet its statutory responsibility to set a balanced budget for the forthcoming year.

The proposals were set out in Section 2 and Appendix B: Table 1 of Report Number: PAS/WS/21/003 (and reproduced in the Cabinet report) had been incorporated into the budget setting process, the composite report for which was to be considered by Cabinet later in the meeting under agenda item 12, for referral to Council on 23 February 2021. Should Cabinet therefore not endorse any of the proposals endorsed by PASC, or suggest alternatives, this would need to be reflected in the subsequent budget setting documentation and recommendations.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet, including thanking the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for their role in helping to shape the budget for 2021 to 2022 and beyond.

Cabinet demonstrated its support for the approach to the Council's future financial planning previously agreed in July 2020 and considered the proposals outlined in the report pragmatically underpinned this approach and would contribute to the delivery of a sustainable medium-term budget.

Recommended to Council, as part of the budget setting process (23 February 2021):

That the proposals as detailed in Section 2 and Table 1 at Appendix B of Report number: PAS/WS/21/003, be included in the medium-term financial plans.

221. Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 28 January 2021: Financial Resilience (December 2020) (Report number: CAB/WS/21/006)

The Cabinet considered this report, which was recommending to Council, the approval of the Financial Resilience Report for the third quarter of the 2020 to 2021 financial year.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet, including that the total amount invested at 1 April 2020 was £29,900,000 and at 31 December 2020, £38,900,000.

The 2020 to 2021 Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy set out the Council's projections for the current financial year. The budget for investment income in 2020 to 2021 was £142,141 which was based on a 0.65 percent target interest rate of return on investments.

As at the end of December 2020, interest earned during the third quarter of the financial year amounted to £73,250.00 against a profiled budget for the period of £106,605; a budgetary deficit of £33,355. The budgetary deficit related to continued low interest rates as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic which started in mid-March 2020.

The report also included a summary of the borrowing and capital costs - affordability; borrowing and income - proportionality; borrowing and asset yields; borrowing and temporary loans and other market considerations.

As at the end of December 2020 a total of £16.8 million had been borrowed internally to fund agreed business case investments from available cash balances. This had meant the Council had not had any additional external borrowing over the long-term £4 million loan.

Recommended to Council (23 February 2021):

That the Financial Resilience Report (December 2020), as contained in Report number: FRS/WS/21/001, be approved.

222. Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 28 January 2021: Financial Resilience - Strategy Statement 2021 to 2022 and Treasury Management Code of Practice (Report number: CAB/WS/21/007)

The Cabinet considered this report, which was recommending to Council, the approval of the Financial Resilience - Strategy Statement 2021 to 2022 and Treasury Management Code of Practice.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet, including that the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Treasury Management Code of Practice required that, prior to the start of the financial year the Council should formally approve a Treasury Management Policy Statement and Investment Strategy, setting out the Council's treasury management policy and strategy for the forthcoming year.

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021 to 2022 was attached as Appendix 1 to Report number: FRS/WS/21/002, and the Treasury Management Code of Practice attached as Appendix 2.

The report also included additional supporting information on treasury advisors; borrowing strategy; investment strategy counterparty ratings and interest rate projections.

Recommended to Council (23 February 2021):

That:

1. the Financial Resilience Strategy Statement 2021 to 2022 as set out in Appendix 1 to Report number: FRS/WS/21/002, be approved; and
2. the Treasury Management Code of Practice, as set out in Appendix 2 to Report number: FRS/WS/21/002, be approved.

223. Budget and Council Tax Setting 2021 to 2022 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021 to 2025 (Report number: CAB/WS/21/008)

The Cabinet considered the above report, which presented the proposals for Budget and Council Tax Setting in 2021 to 2022 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2021 to 2025.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that Report number: CAB/WS/21/008 provided details of the Council's proposed revenue and capital budgets for 2021 to 2022 and in the medium term, and the Cabinet was required to recommend to Council approval of the 2021 to 2022 budget for the authority, including establishing the level of council tax required to help fund the Council's activities over the next year.

As minuted under minute 220. above, the Cabinet supported the key budget assumptions and proposals for securing a balanced budget for 2021 to 2022, as previously considered and recommended by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and incorporated into Report No: CAB/WS/21/005.

The 2021 to 2022 budget had been prepared in the context of not only the significant challenges facing local government, such as reductions in national funding streams, but also a national and worldwide Covid-19 pandemic. Since the outbreak of Covid-19 in the UK, a number of events had occurred which had had a significant impact on all local government, including West Suffolk Council's financial position in the current financial year and these were expected to continue into 2021 to 2022. Some of these had been restrictions imposed by Government which would continue to affect the Council's investments, assets and services; and other events had been announcements of Government financial support.

The Council had played a vital role in responding to the pandemic, in supporting businesses and communities for example, as well as running essential services during challenging conditions. Further details were provided in section 1 of the report, including the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's financial position which would not be fully known for a significant time.

The medium term plans had also been prepared in the context of significant uncertainties around Government policy, examples of which were contained in section 1.8 of the report, while continuing to acknowledge the economic impact, challenges, uncertainties and unknowns of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Councils nationally were expected to achieve a balanced budget through savings and producing local income to fund services due to reduced Government funding. This year, as a one off to assist with the expected continued impact of Covid-19, the Council would see an increase in funding from the Government. However, members noted this would not completely neutralise the impact expected from the pandemic. Nor would it address the financial challenges that already existed for local government following a decade of funding reductions and increases in the demand for services such as housing and homelessness support.

Despite this and the additional pressures presented by Covid-19, through prudent budgeting, a review of the Council's vacant posts, investment as well as transformation, West Suffolk Council was in a good financial position. However, while this meant a balanced budget could be set for 2021 to 2022 there were gaps to be met in later years, as set out in the report.

Members considered the report in detail, which included the following issues for securing a balanced budget for 2021 to 2022 and plans for the medium term from 2021 to 2025, together with corresponding detailed appendices:

- Section 1: Background and context, which included reference to the Council's 'Investing in our growth agenda' and the proposed transformation of West Suffolk Council
- Section 2: Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, which included reference to the Revenue Support Grant and Rural Services Delivery Grant; the new Lower Tier Services Grant; the future of New Homes Bonus; the homelessness and rough sleeping funding allocation; Covid-19 support funding; funding from the sales, fees and charges lost income reimbursement scheme; funding from the National Leisure Recovery Fund; business rates and business rates reliefs; Collection Fund deficits; funding for council tax support; and council tax referendum limits.
- Section 3: Council tax for 2021 to 2022
- Section 4: Setting the budget – 2021 to 2022 and across the medium term to 2024 to 2025
- Section 5: Capital programme 2020 to 2025 (including disposal of surplus assets)
- Section 6: Minimum revenue provision (MRP)
- Section 7: General fund balance
- Section 8: Earmarked reserves
- Section 9: Strategic priorities and MTFS reserve
- Section 10: Adequacy of reserves

Having acknowledged the issues highlighted above, the Cabinet also noted that currently, council tax made up approximately one fifth of the authority's budget (exclusive of housing benefit) and therefore only contributed to a fifth of service delivery. West Suffolk Council charged around 11 percent of a local

council tax payer's bill with the rest comprising precepts from the County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner as well as the relevant Parish or Town Council. It was recognised that any increase in council tax would place an extra burden on tax payers but it meant vital services would be protected. Covid aside, bridging the gap between income and demand remained the single biggest challenge facing local government across the country.

To help secure a balanced budget for 2021 to 2022, the Cabinet was recommending an average £4.99 increase in Band D council tax across both predecessor areas of St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath. The budget for council tax for 2021 to 2022 and future years was based on the option to harmonise the two predecessor areas (St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath) using the average Band D rate across both predecessor areas, harmonising the council tax bills by 2022 to 2023, whilst maximising the council tax receipts to protect services and to support the Council's investment plans. For 2021 to 2022 this represented an average Band D weekly increase of 22 pence (for the predecessor area of Forest Heath) and three pence (for the predecessor area of St Edmundsbury).

Therefore, the level of Band D council tax for 2021 to 2022, was recommended by Cabinet to be set at £185.40 for the predecessor area of St Edmundsbury and £175.59 for the predecessor area of Forest Heath. Noting that just over 70 percent of West Suffolk residents were in bands A to C, these would actually see a lower increase.

Councillor Broughton commended the finance team and the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, together with staff and other members across the authority for their work in securing a balanced budget for 2021 to 2022 and for developing plans in the medium term.

The Cabinet acknowledged that despite the financial challenges being faced including the added pressures of Covid-19, the Council had made, and were continuing to make, successful investments in services; growth and health and well-being projects; together with creating efficiencies, resilience and ensuring the effective management of resources, all of which and more would enable West Suffolk Council to secure a balanced budget for 2021 to 2022.

Recommended to Council (23 February 2021):

That:

1. the revenue and capital budget for 2021 to 2025, plus 2020 to 2021 capital projects that subsequently require to be carried forward at the year end, attached at Attachment A and as detailed in Attachment D (Appendices 1-5), Attachment E (Appendices 1-3) and Attachment F to Report number: CAB/WS/21/008, be approved.
2. Having taken into account the conclusions of the Assistant Director's (Resources and Performance) report on the adequacy of reserves and the robustness of budget estimates (Attachment C) and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (Attachment D), particularly the Scenario Planning and Sensitivity Analysis

(Attachment D, Appendix 5) and all other information contained in Report number: CAB/WS/21/008, the Cabinet recommends an average £4.99 increase in Band D council tax across both predecessor areas of St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath. This assumption is based on the option to harmonise the two predecessor areas by April 2022. The level of Band D council tax for 2021 to 2022, therefore, be recommended to be set at £185.40 for the predecessor area of St Edmundsbury and £175.59 for the predecessor area of Forest Heath. (The level of council tax beyond 2021 to 2022 will be set in accordance with the annual budget process for the relevant financial year).

3. The Assistant Director (Resources and Performance), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, be authorised to vire funds between existing Earmarked Reserves (as set out at Attachment D, Appendix 3) as deemed appropriate throughout the medium term financial planning period.
4. Approval be given to the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy (as set out in Attachment G).

(Councillor Ian Houlder left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

224. Decisions Plan: 1 February 2021 to 31 May 2021

The Cabinet considered this report which was the Cabinet Decisions Plan covering the period 1 February 2021 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.

225. Recommendations from the Grant Working Party - January 2021: Community Chest 2021 to 2022 (Report number: CAB/WS/21/010)

(Councillor David Roach declared a local non-pecuniary interest in this item in his capacity as a Haverhill Town Councillor; the Town Council is the sole trustee of the Haverhill Community Trust. Councillor Robert Everitt declared a local non-pecuniary interest in this item as a Suffolk County Council appointed observer on the board of the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds. Both members remained in the meeting for the consideration of the item and voted.)

The Cabinet considered this report, which sought approval for the recommendations of the Grant Working Party following its consideration of applications for Community Chest funding in the 2021 to 2022 financial year. Approval was also sought for a separate core funding grant to the Theatre Royal in Bury St Edmunds.

Applications for Community Chest funding for 2021 to 2022 closed on 30 October 2020. A total of 64 applications were received, totalling £1,661,855.93 from a wide variety of organisations as detailed in Appendix 1

to the report. Due to one application being withdrawn by the applicant and one being received after the deadline, 62 applications were subsequently considered.

The Community Chest budget for 2021 to 2022 was £466,733. £15,000 of the budget was committed in 2019 for second year funding, as listed in the report and noted by the Cabinet. The remaining budget available for 2021 to 2022 was therefore £451,733.

There were a number of potential synergies between the applications and as such they were grouped into various categories as set out in section 2.3 of the report. Each application was required to be evaluated by the Working Party in accordance with the eligibility and selection criteria set out in Appendix 2 of the Grant Working Party report and was considered in turn.

Councillor Robert Everitt, Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities, drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet and commended the Grant Working Party for their sterling work and thanked officers that had supported the process. Before making any further comments, with the agreement of the Chair, he invited Councillor Jim Thorndyke, Chair of the Grant Working Party to provide a summary of their work.

Councillor Thorndyke informed Cabinet that the Working Party had met on three occasions in December 2020 and January 2021 to consider each application and to make appropriate recommendations for Community Chest funding (if any). The main challenge faced by the Working Party was that over £1.6 million worth of funding had been applied for and following the removal from the 2021 to 2022 budget of funding already allocated in 2019 as part of two year funding agreements, a budget of just over of £451,733 remained. A significant amount had been applied for by Citizens Advice West Suffolk, and therefore following a sizeable allocation to this organisation, the budget was depleted further for allocation to other applicants.

Councillor Thorndyke explained that the Working Party spent over 12 hours thoroughly considering each of the 62 applications and extremely difficult decisions needed to be made. Having ascertained whether an application firstly met the selection and eligibility criteria, the Working Party felt that the amount it applied for could not be granted in full in 2021 to 2022. This was largely due to the limited funds available and maintaining a fair and equitable approach to all, basing their rationale on the quality of the application and the amount of funding applied for. The Working Party had also considered that the proposed reduction would not impact on the organisation's ability to deliver the project, having also acknowledged that many could be signposted to alternative sources of funding to potentially bridge the shortfall should it be required.

The majority of the proposed allocations were derived from examining the breakdown of costs of the project contained in the application and proposing that funding be granted to cover that specific element. In addition, where applications had been made for two years, these had been recommended to be limited to one year funding only, for the reasons given in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

Councillor Thorndyke thanked the Working Party for its work and also officers from the Families and Communities and Democratic Services teams. He particularly commended the depth of knowledge for enabling organisations that were turned down or had a reduction in Community Chest funding to be signposted to alternative grant schemes and sources of funding. This provided some reassurance that projects may still come to fruition.

Councillor Everitt acknowledged the benefits to organisations of the discretionary Community Chest grant scheme and whilst the Council faced ongoing financial challenges, he was pleased that the scheme currently remained available to offer some help to eligible organisations, particularly with the challenges and uncertainties faced by all during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. He recognised the extremely difficult task undertaken by the Working Party and in light of the constraints it had, he felt the Working Party had made appropriate recommendations that would benefit a range of laudable projects to be delivered across West Suffolk.

Members supported the recommendations, including the recommendation to presently continue the core funding grant to the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds. Having acknowledged that the Council would review the Covid-19 recovery of the theatre and consider how to implement a phased reduction to their grant over a three to five year period from 2022 onwards in line with the wider Council's budget, the Cabinet agreed that funding should continue at the current level of £61,250 for 2021 to 2022.

Resolved:

That:

1. the allocation of Community Chest funding for 2021 to 2022, as previously approved in 2019 to 2020 as part of two-year funding agreements, be noted, (Report number: CAB/WS/20/007 refers) namely:
 - a. Reach Community Projects, Haverhill (separate project to that listed in 2a. below) £10,000
 - b. Relate, West Suffolk (separate project to that listed in 2m.below) £5,000
2. The allocation of Community Chest funding for 2021 to 2022, be approved, namely:
 - a. Reach Community Projects, Haverhill £10,000
 - b. West Suffolk Citizens Advice, West Suffolk £204,000
 - c. Friends of Priory School, Bury St Edmunds £5,304
 - d. Haverhill Community Trust, Haverhill £6,900
 - e. Student Life, West Suffolk £5,000
 - f. Greener Growth CIC, West Suffolk £2,660
 - g. Suffolk Accident And Rescue Service (SARS), West Suffolk £10,000
 - h. Risby Village Hall, Risby £1,340
 - i. St John's Church, Beck Row £2,000

- j. Alumah CIO, Brandon £5,880
 - k. Bury Women's Aid, West Suffolk £6,280
 - l. Fresh Start New Beginnings, West Suffolk £10,000
 - m. Relate, West Suffolk £5,000
 - n. Suffolk Cruse Bereavement, West Suffolk £5,738
 - o. Suffolk Rape Crisis, West Suffolk £5,625
 - p. Best Before Project, Bury St Edmunds £8,740
 - q. Epic Dads CIC, West Suffolk £14,500
 - r. Homestart in Suffolk, West Suffolk £7,000
 - s. Homestart Mid and West Suffolk – Forest School, West Suffolk £9,510
 - t. Sharing Parenting – Family Outreach, West Suffolk £13,000
 - u. St Peter's Church, Brandon £9,623
 - v. Art Branches CIC, West Suffolk £9,600
 - w. Headway, West Suffolk £6,240
 - x. Millennium Farm Trust, West Suffolk £6,480
 - y. St Nicholas Hospice Trust, West Suffolk £13,158
 - z. Suffolk Mind, West Suffolk £5,360
 - aa. The Shed, West Row £1,139
 - bb. Bury Drop In, Bury St Edmunds £11,996
 - cc. Gatehouse, Bury St Edmunds £15,000
 - dd. Lightwave, Red Lodge and Beck Row £6,000
 - ee. Our Special Friends, West Suffolk £10,660
 - ff. The Voluntary Network, West Suffolk £12,000
 - gg. West Suffolk Vineyard Church, Bury St Edmunds £6,000
3. No Community Chest funding be awarded for two years for the reasons outlined in paragraph 3.3 of Report number: CAB/WS/21/010.
4. No Community Chest funding for 2021 to 2022 be awarded to:
- a. Babylon Arts West Suffolk
 - b. Bury Cricket Club, Bury St Edmunds
 - c. Bury Scout Group, Bury St Edmunds
 - d. Haverhill Running Club, Haverhill
 - e. Ipswich Town Football Club, Brandon
 - f. Kinetic Science, West Suffolk
 - g. M&L Arts, West Suffolk
 - h. Mildenhall Girl Guides, Mildenhall
 - i. Mildenhall Sea Scouts, Mildenhall
 - j. Newmarket Swimming Club, Newmarket
 - k. St Edmundsbury Sailing and Canoe Club, Lackford Lakes
 - l. The Racing Centre, Newmarket
 - m. The Suffolk Foundation, West Suffolk
 - n. Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds (separate project to 5. below)
 - o. Bardwell Allotments, Bardwell
 - p. Brandon in Bloom, Brandon
 - q. Bury Water Meadows Project, Bury St Edmunds
 - r. Pakenham Water Mill, Pakenham
 - s. Radio West Suffolk, Bury St Edmunds

- t. SOS Bus, Newmarket
 - u. West Suffolk Hive, West Suffolk
 - v. All Saints Church, Newmarket
 - w. Honington and Sapiston Village Hall
 - x. Jiggins Memorial Hall and Playing Field, Ixworth
 - y. Ousden Village Hall, Ousden
 - z. Stansfield Village Hall, Stansfield
 - aa. Homestart Mid and West Suffolk – Home Talk, West Suffolk
 - bb. Sharing Parenting – Mental Health Worker, West Suffolk
 - cc. Resume Foundation, Newmarket
5. The current level of £61,250 core funding grant for the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds be continued for 2021 to 2022, as set out in section 4 of Report number: CAB/WS/21/010.

(Councillor Thorndyke left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

226. Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs (Report number: CAB/WS/21/011)

The Cabinet considered this report, which provided the collection data in respect of council tax and National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) and sought approval for the write-off of the amounts contained in the exempt appendices attached to the report.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including the current performance of both council tax and business rates collection, as set out in Section 2 of the report.

Members noted that reliefs introduced by central Government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic (many of which provided 100 percent relief for 2020 to 2021) had reduced the amount of debt to be collected and, in turn, had contributed to a slight improvement on the collection rate to date.

Resolved:

That:

The write-off of the amounts detailed in the exempt appendices to Report number: CAB/WS/21/011, be approved, as follows:

- 1. Exempt Appendix 1: business rates totalling £29,946.61
- 2. Exempt Appendix 2: West Suffolk Council sundry debts totalling £43,656.53

227. Exclusion of press and public

See minute 228. below.

228. **Exempt Appendices: Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs (paragraphs 1 and 2) (Report number: CAB/WS/21/011)**

The Cabinet considered the exempt appendices 1 and 2 to this report. However, no reference was made to specific detail and, therefore, this item was not held in private session.

229. **Conclusion**

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

The meeting concluded at 7.03 pm

Signed by:

Chair



Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 9 March 2021

Report number:	CAB/WS/21/018	
Report to and date:	Non-decision making virtual Cabinet	25 May 2021
Cabinet member:	Councillor Sarah Broughton Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Telephone: 07929 305787 Email: sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Performance) Telephone: 01638 719245 Email: rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: This item is not required to be included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendation: The Cabinet is requested to note the content of Report number: CAB/WS/21/018, being the report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee.

1. Context to this report

1.1 On 9 March 2021, the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership (ARP) Joint Committee met virtually where the following items of substantive business were discussed:

1. Performance Report
2. ARP Forecast Financial Performance 2020 to 2021
3. Performance Management Framework 2021
4. Welfare Reform Update
5. Forthcoming Issues.
6. Exempt Item: Risk Based Verification (RBV) Policy Review and Verification Policy 2021 to 2022
7. Exempt Item: Succession Planning

This report is for information only. No decisions are required by the Cabinet.

2. Updates within this report

2.1 **Performance Report: January 2021 (agenda item 5)**

2.1.1 **a. Joint Committee performance report: January 2021**

The Joint Committee received and **noted** an update on performance. This report provides relevant information relating to the performance of ARP as a whole and that of the individual partners. This detailed report can be viewed on Breckland Council's website at the following link:

[Performance Report 2020 -21 Qtr 4 January.pdf \(breckland.gov.uk\)](https://www.breckland.gov.uk/Performance%20Report%202020%20-%20Qtr%204%20January.pdf)

The report indicated that when considering performance as a whole for all partner councils, the majority of targets as at January 2021 were currently being met in respect of the following categories:

- Business rates collection
- Council tax collection
- Number of electronic forms received
- Fraud and compliance

2.1.2 In respect of West Suffolk Council's individual performance, all targets as at January 2021 were currently being met in respect of the following categories:

- Business rates collection
- Local council tax reduction
- Housing benefit
- Fraud and compliance

In respect of council tax collection, this was currently underachieving its target by £1,191,722. The Government is funding a hardship scheme which has provided up to £150 to each working age recipient of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Targets have been adjusted to reflect these payments. Whilst Covid-19 has affected some customers ability to pay, ARP had not been able to take its normal action to recover outstanding amounts through the magistrates' court due to Covid-19 safety restrictions imposed, with bookings only recently been taken from January 2021. In addition, the amount of council tax support awarded has increased during the first part of the 2020 to 2021 financial year, reducing the amount to be collected.

Further recovery action in the 2020 to 2021 financial year has resulted in collection of £92,302, with enforcement action resulting in collection of £377,157. Charging orders have been obtained to secure £463,620 debt.

2.1.3 Attention was drawn to the service updates as at 31 January 2021:

- a. **Enforcement:** All enforcement visits were suspended by the Ministry of Justice in March 2020 and re-commenced on 24 August 2020; however, while ARP's enforcement agency had resumed visits, the amounts collected had not yet risen to the levels achieved in 2019. In the meantime, ARP has continued to try and engage with customers offering long term payment arrangements and assisting customers where possible. Consequently, the level of collection has reduced substantially. This year ARP has currently collected £2.419 million compared to £4.186 million at the same point last year. The team had also taken on the collection of parking fines for East and West Suffolk.
- b. **Further recovery:** With effect from March 2020 all recovery actions were temporarily suspended due to Covid-19 until summer 2020. While actions had recommenced, income of £544,540 in total has been received compared to £1.103 million at the same point last year. ARP has £1.925 million debt secured through Charging Orders.
- c. **Non-domestic rates:** The team has had an increased workload over the first two months of this financial year due to the additional rate reliefs being awarded and the payment of grants to businesses as part of the mitigating the impacts of Covid-19. This has seen extremely high levels of telephone calls and correspondence; however, the team has worked hard to bring the outstanding work down to normal levels. A new set of business grants was rolled-out for the lockdowns in November 2020 and from January 2021 onwards, which adds further pressure to the team; however, the additional work is being handled efficiently and effectively.

As a result of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's budget announcements on 3 March 2021, and in particular support provided to businesses during the 2021 to 2022 financial year, annual billing has been moved so that rate reliefs announced could be calculated into the annual rate demands.

The revaluation planned to take place on 1 April 2021 has been postponed until 1 April 2023 with an antecedent date of 1 April 2021 (this is the date that the valuations are based on).

- d. **Council tax:** As expected Covid -19 has had an impact on collection despite the application of hardship fund payments to eligible accounts. ARP has updated its website and phone message to provide help and support to those struggling to pay through this difficult time and are signposting customers to claim Universal Credit and Council Tax Support.

The option of a two month payment break has been offered to provide more flexibility during Covid-19. An online form has been produced to allow customers to request a two month payment break, a change from 10 to 12 instalments or a change of payment date.

ARP has sent two rounds of 'soft reminders' which have had a positive effect on collection. The magistrates' courts have now re-opened and hearing dates have been booked for the new year.

Demand for council tax billing continues to be significantly greater than last year, largely because of the direct impacts of the pandemic. The project to introduce Generic Council Tax Billing Officers which provide a resilient team who have been able to switch between billing and benefits to help cope with ever changing workloads and priorities during the pandemic has provided increased flexibility in the use of ARP's resources and has supported the reduction in outstanding work.

- e. **Benefits:** Whilst both Council Tax Support and Benefits performance is presently achieving targets, there is a risk Covid-19 could cause a prolonged economic downturn with potentially significant increases in unemployment and claims.

ARP continues to see significant increases in claims and ARP has seen significant increases in claims, and throughput overall for benefits has been approximately a third up on the 2019 to 2020 financial year.

In April 2020, ARP changed the Local Council Tax Support schemes for all partners to include a 'tolerance rule' which is applied to monthly changes in Universal Credit which are notified to ARP via Universal Credit Data Share (UCDS) from DWP. The new rule allows ARP to ignore changes in Universal Credit of under £15 per week, which has helped reduced the number of council tax adjustment notices being issued, and refund requests being received. It also allows customers to manage their payments more easily. As at 31 January 2021, the introduction of the tolerance rule has reduced the number of council tax support re-assessments resulting from DWP UCDS records by 32 percent, which is in line with the modelling undertaken during the consultation.

The Council Tax Support Hardship Fund awards were issued to every qualifying working age customer by the end of July 2020, either by a credit of up to £150 on to their council tax account or by arranging a refund where one is due. ARP is monitoring expenditure given the rise in caseload due to Covid-19 to ensure the fund for each partner council is neither overspent or has plans in place to fully spend the fund, either in 2020 to 2021 or in 2021 to 2022.

Since the end of September 2020, ARP has worked with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) to implement the Covid-19 Test and Trace Self-Isolation payment scheme. This scheme pays £500 to each eligible person notified of a requirement to self-isolate. Whilst funded by DHSC, ARP are seeing demand outweigh the forecasted volumes, especially with the substantial increase in infections since the end of 2020, which led to the third national lockdown. The scheme has now been extended to end on 30 June 2021 and now includes provision for parents of school age children required to self isolate being able to apply for a payment.

- f. **Fraud and compliance:** The fraud team, having had a successful prosecution regarding tenancy fraud, continue to work with social housing providers in an attempt to expand the commercial aspect of their investigation service.

A full risk assessment has now been agreed across the partnership and visits have successfully resumed, with social distancing restrictions in place and supplies of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment provided to all visiting officers. Desk based fraud and compliance work continues, which is undertaken by fraud team officers working from home.

Both Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils have committed to continue providing funding for fraud and compliance work until March 2022, at which point a further review will take place.

During the pandemic it has not been possible to interview customers under caution on a face to face basis. Advice has been taken from the Law Society and the Crown Prosecution Service in relation to alternative methods of interviewing under caution. With assistance from the solicitor used for ARP Fraud prosecutions it has been agreed that customers will be interviewed by letter and a process and procedure has been set up to enable this. A number of sanctions have now been conducted using this process.

- g. **ARP systems and digital:** There continues to be an increase in ARP website activity by 60 per cent when compared with 2019 due to the effect of the pandemic. This is largely due to all the ARP offices continuing to be closed for face to face visits for the majority of customers.

The ARP Technical Team Manager continues to work with Capita, the main software provider for Revenues and Benefits in establishing a design team to develop the self-serve portal that is easy to use and satisfies the requirements expected of a modern self-service option. There have been continued discussions between the ARP Management to Senior Managers at Capita offering a more collaborative approach in development of their products, making them relevant to the Revenues and Benefits Strategic Business needs. Working with West Suffolk Council's ICT team, the ARP Technical Team Manager will be leading on a mandatory upgrade of the Capita platform for all five partners' databases. A full end to end testing of the annual billing process for each of the partners began in January 2021 and was expected to go live in February 2021.

- h. **Better Customer Journeys Programme:** Through the Better Customer Journeys Programme, ARP is identifying how to build on the major increases in ARP website visits and self-service usage. ARP partners' customer service heads are progressing plans to map out how best ARP can support customer service teams' new, emerging operating models. A gap analysis, and a set of plans for closing that gap is currently nearing completion. For example, discussions will have been held on how best to capitalise on increased online activity and interest and make sure ARP's communications with customers are pointing that way (allowing more opportunity to support traditional channels for people who need them).

Since April 2020, ARP has met every week with Capita's digital product and helpdesk teams. These sessions work alongside the design workshops and ensure the partnership can deliver on its self-service aspirations.

In a separate but related strand, ARP is developing its change delivery and project management capabilities, which apply to Better Customer Journeys projects, the Performance Framework Programme, further automation and other standalone projects.

- 2.1.4 Discussion was specifically held at the meeting on a number of topics including how council tax e-billing was being promoted, which had specific challenges as the majority of residents were only aware of their council tax bills once a year. The Customer Services Strategy Group was already looking at ways to attract more customers to sign up to e-billing which included the possibility of linking existing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software (if partner councils already had a system). An update would be provided to a future meeting.

2.2 **ARP Forecast Financial Performance 2020 to 2021 (agenda item 6)**

- 2.2.1 The Joint Committee **noted** the financial performance report as at 31 January 2021, which currently showed an overspend against budget of £491,973 (5.02 per cent) for the whole of ARP. Appendix 1 attached to that

report provided further details, together with details and reasons for the specific variances, which were largely due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As stated above, less income than forecast was currently being generated by the enforcement agency and had a significant effect on the budget. The forecasted outturn assumed that the level of work will be back to budgeted expectations for the remainder of 2020 to 2021. It was assumed the enforcement agent visits would continue and court hearings would take place.

It is worth noting that each partner council has directly received new burdens funding from the Government to cover the costs of administering the Covid-19 grant schemes. These grants will be retained by each authority to cover additional resource costs for administering the schemes internally. In addition, the Government is providing grants to individual local authorities to offset the losses from sales fees and charges income. Authorities are expected to absorb the initial five per cent of lost income against budget and after that the grant will provide 75 pence in every pound of lost income. The lost enforcement income will be claimed under this scheme for each partner.

Other budget risks were also highlighted to members.

- 2.2.2 An update was also provided on the remaining transformation funding which had been set aside in previous years. £20,000 was earmarked for projects in progress in 2020 to 2021 and there is a further £139,509 available for future transformation projects.
- 2.2.3 Details of the funding held in the ARP ICT reserve, which had been approved as part of the budget setting process, was also contained in Appendix 1. This reserve has been established to cover costs of ICT replacement in future years.
- 2.2.4 The reasons for other specific variances, together with other details, are contained in the report at:

[ARP Forecast Financial Performance 2020-21](#)

Appendix 1:

[Appendix 1 for ARP Forecast Financial Performance 2020-21.pdf \(breckland.gov.uk\)](#)

2.3 **Performance Framework (agenda item 7)**

- 2.3.1 The Joint Committee considered a [report](#) which sought approval for the proposed performance framework.
- 2.3.2 Following an internal audit exercise undertaken in the 2019 to 2020 financial year, a conclusion had been reached that ARP's performance management

should be reviewed and expanded, with particular emphasis placed on the customer journey.

- 2.3.2 Objectives were reviewed against ARP's strategic priorities and the critical success factors were identified for meeting those objectives. Consideration was then given to the targets and measures needed to monitor progress against those objectives (at individual and team reporting level).
- 2.3.3 Attached as [Appendix 1](#) (and [Appendices A](#) and [B](#)) to the report was the proposed Performance Framework, which contained details of the targets and measures which have been identified and the strategic priority they relate to. This also contained the proposed dashboard for the presenting the monthly performance to the Operational Performance Board.
- 2.3.4 Discussion was specifically held at the meeting on whether ARP's annual plans and strategies should be reviewed every six months, particularly given the challenges being faced during the pandemic and the ongoing impacts during the recovery phase and in the medium to longer term. It was agreed that if appropriate, the Service Delivery Plan would be presented to the Joint Committee in June alongside the Risk Register, and the performance updates would continue to be provided on a quarterly basis.
- 2.3.5 Subject to the above, the Joint Committee **resolved: That**
- 1. The indicators identified, targets, tolerance levels and level of reporting be agreed; and**
 - 2. the use of the dashboard be approved.**

2.4 **Welfare reform update (agenda item 8)**

- 2.4.1 The Joint Committee **noted** an update on welfare reform, which included:
- a. **Universal Credit (UC):** From 1 April 2019, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) awarded a 12 month funding contract to Citizens' Advice to provide help to new Universal Credit customers to make a claim (Assisted Digital Support) and to help customers with budget monthly payments (Personal Budgeting Support). Having met with various Citizens' Advice branches across Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, ARP has established that the following arrangements are being implemented:
 - Local advisors will dial into a national call centre.
 - Web chat is being provided.
 - Face to face arrangements will be in place – some on an appointment basis, others on a drop in basis or a mixture of the two. Rural provision may be patchy.

ARP has raised concerns that Citizens' Advice are only funded to help to the first UC payment received; however, Citizens' Advice have said they will

continue to help vulnerable customers, drawing on their usual funding streams. Through regular liaison meetings ARP will monitor this.

DWP are yet to publish a review of the Citizens' Advice Help to Claim service and at the time of writing the report, the DWP had still not stated the contract position for the 2021 to 2022 year, citing their Covid-19 response had delayed plans. It is assumed the Citizens' Advice arrangement will continue into the 2021 to 2022 year.

The summary of the latest position on the expansion of UC and concerns raised by officers regarding specific issues in respect of the expansion on a national level were contained in sections 2.1.9 and 2.2 of the report, and which were duly noted by the Joint Committee. During July 2019, DWP commenced a small scale managed migration trial at Harrogate Job Centre, to test various aspects of the service, details of which were provided in section 2.2.1. Parliament is required to consider the outcome of the trial, which due to Covid-19, was temporarily suspended and to date has not been rescheduled.

New matters arising via the DWP in respect of UC were provided in section 2.2.3

- b. **Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP):** For the 2020 to 2021 financial year, the DWP increased funding to offset the impact of private sector rents increasing above the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates used to calculate housing benefit. Spend continues to be within the grant provided by the DWP, and is forecast that all grant monies would be allocated to customers. This grant is designed to help customers remain in their homes or to move to affordable and sustainable accommodation. The main area of expenditure continues to be to assist customers with rent shortfalls, in particular due to restrictions on housing benefit rent levels. ARP works closely with partner Housing Options teams to identify and help customers and the scheme is promoted through stakeholder contacts.
- c. **Benefit cap:** In November 2016, the maximum family income before the benefit cap applies reduced from £26,000 to £20,000 (£13,400 for single adults with no children). The Benefit Service continues to work with colleagues in Customer Service and Housing Options teams to seek to avoid homelessness and the cost of temporary housing.

DWP has provided New Burdens funding to assist councils with extra administrative costs and have increased discretionary housing payment grants to help customers with the reduction; however, it should be noted that the increase does not cover all reductions.

- d. **Social rented sector rent restrictions:** The Government has responded to consultation on funding for supported housing, removing proposals to move away from a subsidised demand led model to a grant model. For the foreseeable future, supported accommodation, including hostel tenancies will remain in within the

Housing Benefit service and will not therefore move to Universal Credit.

- e. **Welfare benefit uprating - April 2021:** The Government has confirmed an end to the four year benefit uprating freeze in 2020. From April 2021, all benefits will increase by the September 2020 Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) measure, which equates to 0.5 per cent for the state pension rising by 2.5 per cent due to the 'Triple Lock'.

2.4.2 Further details are contained in the report at:

[Welfare Reform Report](#)

2.5 **Forthcoming issues (agenda item 9)**

2.5.1 No forthcoming issues were reported at the meeting on this occasion.

2.6 **Exempt Item (paragraph 3): Risk Based Verification (RBV) Policy Review and Verification Policy 2021 to 2022**

2.6.1 The Joint Committee considered this item in private session, therefore the information contained in this report is limited and based on the content of the public minutes.

2.6.2 The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) requires councils to review their Risk Based Verification Policies annually and requires members to approve the continuance or revision of their policy.

2.6.3 The Joint Committee **resolved: That**

- 1. The Risk Based Verification (RBV) policy remains unchanged in 2020 to 2021; and**
- 2. the replacement of RBV with a Verification Policy for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims from April 2021 for Breckland Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, East Suffolk Council, Fenland Council and West Suffolk Council.**

2.7 **Exempt Item (paragraphs 1, 2 and 3): Succession Planning**

2.7.1 The Joint Committee considered this item in private session, therefore the information contained in this report is limited and based on the content of the public minutes.

- 2.7.2 As contained as an action in ARP’s Service Delivery Plan, work is being held relating to ‘Leadership and Succession Planning’ which aims to ensure the continuation of service delivery while securing efficiencies within the partnership. As part of this, and due to a few personnel in key roles deciding to leave the organisation, a review of the structure within in the ARP establishment is being undertaken.
- 2.7.3 The suggested interim and future arrangements were explained to members at the meeting in detail, which were welcomed.
- 2.7.4 The Joint Committee **resolved that the recommendations as listed in the exempt report, be approved.**

3. Minutes

- 3.1 For further information on the discussions held at the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee meeting on 9 March 2021, the draft minutes of the meeting may be viewed on Breckland District Council’s website at the following link:

[Printed minutes 09th-Mar-2021 11.00 Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee.pdf \(breckland.gov.uk\)](#)

4. Background papers

- 4.1 Breckland DC Website:
[9 March 2021](#)

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Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 18 March 2021

Report number:	CAB/WS/21/019	
Report to and date:	Non-decision making virtual Cabinet	25 May 2021
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Councillor Ian Shipp Overview and Scrutiny Committee Telephone: 07368 134769 Email: ian.shipp@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Telephone: 01638 719729 Email: christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: **This item is not required to be included on the Decisions Plan.**

Wards impacted: **All wards**

Recommendation: **It is recommended that Report number: CAB/WS/21/019, being the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be noted.**

1. Context to this report

- 1.1 On 18 March 2021, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held its virtual TeamsLive meeting, at which it considered the following items:
- (1) Exiting the European Union: West Suffolk Council's preparations and current status.
 - (2) Update on the Mildenhall Hub.
 - (3) Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee – 13 January 2021.
 - (4) Work programmes update 2021.

2. Proposals within this report

- 2.1 **Exiting the European Union: West Suffolk Council's preparations and current status (Report number: OAS/WS/21/003)**
- 2.1.1 The Committee received and noted the above report which set out some of the context from when UK voters voted to leave the European Union (EU) in June 2016, a summary of preparations and impacts including collaborative work across Suffolk and West Suffolk Council's preparations.
- 2.1.2 The report provided the Committee with a better understanding of the implications of existing the EU for the council, partner organisations, residents, and businesses in Suffolk and to understand how organisations were working together to ensure that information and advice was disseminated appropriately.
- 2.1.3 West Suffolk Council was working collaboratively with partners to be proactive and pragmatic in maximising possible opportunities and minimising potential risks following the UK's exit from the EU. Consideration of Brexit implications were included in the council's business planning and interactions with partners and providers and officers continue to monitor the full impacts as they emerge. Ongoing council preparations have included support and advice to businesses; review of data security; impacts on projects; supply chain; EU residency and housing; support to staff and communications.
- 2.1.4 The Committee scrutinised the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which comprehensive responses were provided. Discussions were held on the Free Port Status for Felixstowe and Harwich Ports; packages from the continent being opened and, in some cases, contents missing; customers receiving customs bills from packages coming from the EU when they were bought from a UK website domain; data security; and whether there was any data on EU nationals leaving West Suffolk.

2.2 **Update on the Mildenhall Hub (PowerPoint Presentation)**

2.2.1 The Committee received and noted a follow-up presentation by the Director, which provided the latest information on the planned opening of the Mildenhall Hub and the specific impact of Covid-19. The presentation included some images of what the site looks like at the present time, landscaping etc.; the latest timetable; reopening plans for leisure facilities; initial impact of Covid-19 on using the Hub; practical adjustments; engagement and the College Heath Road offices.

2.2.2 The Chair of the Committee wished to thank everyone involved in the planning and delivery of the project, as it had been challenging at times due to Covid-19.

2.2.3 The Committee considered the presentation and asked questions to which comprehensive responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on the new swimming pool.

2.3 **Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee – 13 January 2021 (Report number: OAS/WS/21/004)**

2.3.1 The Committee received and **noted** the report, prepared by Councillor Margaret Marks setting out what was considered at its meeting held on 13 January 2021. The focus of the meeting was:

- What are children and young people in Suffolk struggling with in terms of their emotional health and wellbeing?
- In terms of accessing the support needed, what has been working well and what could be improved.

2.3.2 The Committee considered the report in detail and asked questions to which Councillor Marks provided comprehensive responses. In particular discussions were held on the West Suffolk Hospital Future Systems Board Task and Finish Group and whether there were any ambitions for having any specialist services, whether the delivery of chemotherapy would continue to be delivered at home after Covid-19 and young people struggling with mental health.

2.4 **Work programme update 2021 and suggestion for scrutiny (Report number: OAS/WS/21/005)**

2.4.1 The Committee received and noted Report number OAS/WS/21/005, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items, and items currently agreed but had yet to be programmed for 2021 as attached at Appendix 1.

- 2.4.2 The Committee also received an update from Councillor Stephen Frost, Chair of the Website Working Party. The group held its first meeting on 24 February 2021 where they received a range of information on how and why customers were using the website and accessing services. All members of the group agreed to do some homework, where they would go away and try to do the “top 10” things customers do the most on the website to see how they find the experience and journey and would feed back their findings to the next meeting on 26 March 2021.

3. Alternative options that have been considered

- 3.1 Please see background papers.

4. Consultation and engagement undertaken

- 4.1 Please see background papers.

5. Risks associated with the proposals

- 5.1 Please see background papers.

6. Implications arising from the proposals

- 6.1 Financial:
Please see background papers.

- 6.2 Equalities:
Please see background papers.

7. Appendices referenced in this report

- 7.1 Please see background papers.

8. Background documents associated with this report

- 8.1 Report number: [OAS/WS/21/003](#), to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Exiting the European Union: West Suffolk Council’s preparations and current status

- 8.2 Report number: [OAS/WS/21/004](#), [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee – 13 January 2021

- 8.3 Report number: [OAS/WS/21/005](#) and [Appendix 1](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Work programme update 2021

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Western Way Development, Bury St Edmunds

Report number:	CAB/WS/21/020	
Report to and date:	Non-decision making virtual Cabinet	25 May 2021
Cabinet member:	Councillor Joanna Rayner Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs Tel: 01284 750366 Email: joanna.rayner@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Alex Wilson Strategic Director Tel: 01284 757695 Email: alex.wilson@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: The decision made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included in the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All Wards

Recommendation: That the Cabinet recommends to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs, that a full report for decision on the delivery of the Western Way Development, Bury St Edmunds will be referred directly to Council on 15 June 2021.

1. Context to this report

- 1.1 The Western Way Development (WWD) in Bury St Edmunds is a major capital project proposed by the Council and its partners to deliver a national exemplar mixed-use hub as part of the One Public Estate Programme. Background on the project can be found at www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/wwd.
- 1.2 The Council approved a final business case for the project in September 2019. In approving the business case, Council authorised Cabinet and officers to deliver the scheme subject to certain tests being met.
- 1.3 The first examination of those tests was in January 2020 when Cabinet agreed an action plan from an independent external assurance review. At that time, procurement of a contractor was expected to begin in spring/summer 2020, with delivery of the scheme by late 2023/early 2024.
- 1.4 An update on the impact of Covid-19 on this and other capital projects was given to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in November 2020. In summary, good progress to achieve the original timetable had been made by the time that the pandemic triggered the business continuity plans of the Council and its partners in early 2020. This included the submission of a planning application in late 2019 which was subsequently approved in 2020 subject to the completion of a s106 agreement. However, the effect of Covid-19 will be a delay of around one year to the original timetable.

2. Proposals within this report

- 2.1 Work has now fully resumed on the project and will shortly be sufficiently progressed to bring a proposal to councillors on how phase one might be taken forward with other public sector partners.
- 2.2 Because they required changes to the agreed budget, the outline and final business cases for the WWD were both referred by Cabinet to Council for decision in 2018 and 2019 respectively. This was in accordance with our own procedure rules and schedule 4 of the Local Authority (Function and Responsibility) Regulations 2000. Given the length of time that has passed since those original decisions, and the wider impacts on the Council's finances since 2020, it is felt appropriate by the Leader and Portfolio Holder to ask Council to reconfirm its intent to continue with the project before any procurement starts. Depending on the outcome of the current work on the business case, a new Council decision may be needed in any event under the above rules.
- 2.3 Work on updating the business case with partners will not be finished before early June. Therefore, to avoid any further delay to the project, the Leader is satisfied that this matter will not require any Cabinet approval prior to being referred back to Council i.e. Cabinet will see it at the same time as all other councillors.

- 2.4 For clarity, it is only this initial decision to re-frame the WWD project due to Covid-19 that would be taken by Council. If the project is approved by Council to proceed, any subsequent delivery decisions would be made by Cabinet (or Portfolio Holders or Officers within the scope of their delegated authority) as long as they continue to remain consistent within the agreed budget or policy framework and/or the specific safeguards already agreed for the project.
- 2.5 The Portfolio Holder and Strategic Director will also be able to give a short oral update at this informal Cabinet meeting on how the project is progressing. However, any information provided to Cabinet will also be included in the published Council report in June. A full briefing to support the published Council report will be also offered to all councillors in June.

3. Alternative options that have been considered

- 3.1 In the context of what is being noted in this report, the only alternative options would be to delay consideration of the update to the business case until later scheduled meetings of Cabinet and/or Council or hold special meetings. In the case of the former, this could risk delay to the project and/or additional costs. In the case of the latter, this is felt to be unnecessary by the Leader and Portfolio Holder because they are content that all councillors receiving and considering the report at the same scheduled meeting in June is the most inclusive and efficient way to progress this particular matter. Councillors are also encouraged to raise any issues or questions before the meeting.

4. Consultation and engagement undertaken

- 4.1 The wider project has been and is subject to extensive consultation. In relation to what is being noted in this report, consultation has taken place with the members of the Cabinet.

5. Risks associated with the proposals

- 5.1 A risk appraisal for the project will be contained in main report to Council. In relation to what is being noted in this report, there are not regarded to be any risks since Cabinet itself is content to receive the updated business case at the same time as all councillors (see section 3 above).

6. Implications arising from the proposals

- 6.1 None – see sections 2, 3 and 5 above.

7. Appendices referenced in this report

7.1 None

8. Background documents associated with this report

- 8.1 Outline Business Case for WWD, October 2018
- 8.2 Final Business Case for WWD, September 2019
- 8.3 External Assurance Review, January 2020
- 8.4 All three documents above can be found at www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/wwd



Annual Review and Appointment of the Cabinet’s Joint Committee, Panel and Other Working Groups

Report number:	CAB/WS/21/021	
Report to and date:	Non-decision making virtual Cabinet	25 May 2021
Cabinet member:	Councillor John Griffiths Leader of the Council Telephone: 01284 757001 Email: john.griffiths@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officers:	<p>Jen Eves Director (HR, Governance and Regulatory) Telephone: 01284 757015 Email: jennifer.eves@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Leah Mickleborough Service Manager (Democratic Services) Telephone: 01284 757162 Email: leah.mickleborough@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p>	

Decisions Plan: **The decision made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.**

Wards impacted: **All wards**

Recommendations: That the Cabinet recommends to the Leader of the Council that:

- 1.**
 - a. Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, be re-appointed as the full member representing West Suffolk Council on the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee in 2021 to 2022.**
 - b. Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing, be re-appointed as a substitute member representing West Suffolk Council on the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee in 2021 to 2022.**
 - c. It be noted that on the nomination of the Leader of the Council, the Service Manager (Democratic Services) may exercise their delegated authority to appoint appropriate Cabinet membership (full and substitute members) to the above joint committee during 2021 to 2022, as necessary.**
- 2.**
 - a. The Staff Consultative Panel continues to operate in 2021 to 2022 in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) contained in Appendix A to Report number: CAB/WS/21/021.**
 - b. Periodical meetings of the above Panel be scheduled as and when required but with regard to the discussion outlined in Section 2.2.2 of Report number: CAB/WS/21/021.**
- 3. The West Suffolk Grant Working Party continues to operate in 2021 to 2022 in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) contained in Appendix B to Report number: CAB/WS/21/021.**
- 4. The West Suffolk Local Plan Working Group continues to operate in 2021 to 2022 in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) contained in Appendix C to Report number: CAB/WS/21/021.**

- 5. It be noted that should it become necessary and on the nominations of Group Leaders, the Service Manager (Democratic Services) may exercise their delegated authority to appoint appropriate membership (full and substitute members) to the above Panel, Working Party and Working Group during 2021 to 2022 in accordance with their Terms of Reference.**

- 6. Provided that resources are available to support them, informal task-and-finish working groups or taskforces be established to consider specific issues as required throughout 2021 to 2022.**

1. Context to this report

1.1 Under Article 6 (The Cabinet) (paragraph 6.5.2) of the Council's Constitution, it states that:

"The Cabinet may carry out its functions:

- d. by delegating power to a joint committee, area committee or another local authority".

1.2 Under Article 9 (Joint Arrangements and Working Groups) of the Council's Constitution, it states that:

"9.2 Joint Arrangements

9.2.3 the Cabinet may only appoint Cabinet Members to a joint committee and those Members need not reflect the political balance of the Council as a whole."

"9.3 Working Groups

9.3.1 The Council, Cabinet or Committees may appoint from time to time such Working Groups as they think fit. The Working Groups which have been appointed are identified in Part 3 of this Constitution.

1.3 The following joint committee, panel and other informal working groups, either report to the Cabinet or exercise executive functions:

- a. **Exercise executive functions on behalf of the Cabinet**
 - Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee
- b. **Report to the Cabinet**
 - Staff Consultative Panel
 - West Suffolk Grant Working Party
 - West Suffolk Local Plan Working Group
 - Other informal working groups

1.4 The Cabinet is requested to review and appoint membership in accordance with the terms of reference for its joint committee, panel and other informal working groups for the year 2021 to 2022 as set out in section 2. below.

2. Joint committee, panel and other informal working groups

2.1 Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee

2.1.1 The Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee comprises membership of each of the councils represented on the partnership (West

Suffolk Council, Breckland Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Fenland District Council and East Suffolk Council). To comply with the Constitution, the Council’s Joint Committee exercises executive functions on behalf of the Cabinet. West Suffolk Council’s (WSC) current membership of the Joint Committee is indicated below and is required to comprise Cabinet members:

WSC full member (1)	Sarah Broughton
WSC substitutes (2)	Sara Mildmay-White Vacancy

2.1.2 The constitution, partnership agreement and terms of reference for the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee was last fully reviewed and approved by the partner councils in January 2020. Due to the size of the document, it is **not** attached to this report, but can be viewed electronically at [CAB.WS.20.003 Appendix 1 - Review of the ARP Constitution.pdf \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](http://CAB.WS.20.003 Appendix 1 - Review of the ARP Constitution.pdf (westsuffolk.gov.uk))

2.1.3 The Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee continues to work effectively, with the member representation from each partner authority jointly managing the administration and performance of the five councils’ respective statutory functions relating to the collection of council tax and non-domestic rates, and the payment of housing and other relevant benefits.

2.1.4 It is **recommended** that:

- 1. Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, be re-appointed as the full member representing West Suffolk Council on the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee in 2021 to 2022.**
- 2. Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing, be re-appointed as a substitute member representing West Suffolk Council on the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee in 2021 to 2022.**
- 3. It be noted that on the nomination of the Leader of the Council, the Service Manager (Democratic Services) may exercise their delegated authority to appoint appropriate Cabinet membership (full and substitute members) to the above joint committee during 2021 to 2022, as necessary.**

2.2 **Staff Consultative Panel**

2.2.1 The Staff Consultative Panel provides a positive environment through which to engage on the development of employment policies and practices. Some

of the policies are referred to Cabinet or Council (as appropriate) to approve, whilst other papers are presented to the Panel to keep them informed on employment related matters within the Council. Panel members may also be consulted on / informed of items through e-mail notification.

- 2.2.2 Having regard to the political balance of the Council, the Panel was established when adopting the Constitution for the new West Suffolk Council and is made up of councillors and representatives of the staff (usually through representatives from Unison, the Council's recognised staff union). The Panel has its own work programme, but additional items or meetings can be called on request.
- 2.2.3 Agendas and non-exempt papers are published on the West Suffolk Council website; however, as a non-decision making body, meetings are held informally and are not accessible to the public.
- 2.2.4 It is **recommended** that:
- 1. the Staff Consultative Panel continues to operate in 2021 to 2022 in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) contained in Appendix A to Report number: CAB/WS/21/021.**
 - 2. Periodical meetings of the above Panel be scheduled as and when required but with regard to the discussion outlined in Section 2.2.2.**

2.3 **West Suffolk Grant Working Party**

- 2.3.1 Following implementation of transitional arrangements which were applied as part of the creation of West Suffolk Council, the Cabinet agreed on 10 September 2019, to establish the West Suffolk Grant Working Party (Report number: [CAB/WS/19/027](#) refers).
- 2.3.2 The primary function of the Grant Working Party is to consider applications to the Council's Community Chest grant fund and make recommendations to Cabinet on the level of funding (if any) that should be granted to applicants.
- 2.3.2 The Working Party is an informal non-decision making body that comprises seven councillors and respects the political balance of the Council. It primarily meets on three occasions a year to consider the Community Chest applications. Agenda papers and meetings are not accessible by the public; however, the Working Party's composite report and recommendations are published when presented to the subsequent publicly accessible Cabinet meeting.
- 2.3.3 Due to the significant number and quality of applications received, difficult decisions often need to be made within the eligibility and selection criteria,

and the budgetary constraints of the Community Chest fund. The Grant Working Party thoroughly considers each application submitted in turn and effectively supports the Cabinet in making these decisions by providing the rationale behind their recommendations. The Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities who has the responsibility for the awarding of grants, is invited to attend each meeting of the Working Party to ensure the Cabinet remains involved in the process.

2.3.4 Without a Grant Working Party, an alternative mechanism would be needed to consider the Community Chest grant awards. This could take the form of a portfolio holder or officer-led process; or consideration by Cabinet. These options are not considered to be proportionate either in terms of the level of accountability involved, or the time needed to consider a large number of applications, respectively.

2.3.5 **It is recommended that the West Suffolk Grant Working Party continues to operate in 2021 to 2022 in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) contained in Appendix B to Report number: CAB/WS/21/021.**

2.4 **West Suffolk Local Plan Working Group**

2.4.1 On 16 March 2021, the Portfolio Holder for Local Plan Development and Delivery took the decision to establish a West Suffolk Local Plan Working Group. (Note, this decision was intended to be made collectively by the Cabinet but due to technical issues which prevented the Cabinet agenda and livestream to the meeting being accessed by the public, the meeting had to be cancelled.)

2.4.2 The Working Group is an informal non-decision making body that comprises ten councillors and respects the political balance of the Council. Where possible, on the nominations of Group Leaders, representation is drawn across the geography of the West Suffolk district. Agenda papers and meetings are not accessible by the public; however, the Working Group's recommendations and the rationale behind them are published when presented to subsequent publicly accessible Cabinet meetings.

2.4.3 To help shape and form a leadership/political process to develop and progress the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan, the Working Group's primary function is to deal with the detail of policy development, monitoring and best practice covering the Local Plan preparation, public engagement, and responses to consultations.

2.4.4 The Working Group is currently in its infancy having only recently been established and therefore, **it is recommended that the West Suffolk Local Plan Working Group continues to operate in 2021 to 2022 in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) contained in Appendix C to Report number: CAB/WS/21/021.**

2.5 **Delegated Authority**

- 2.5.1 During 2021 to 2022, there may be a requirement to change the current membership of each of the above bodies. The Constitution's scheme of delegation to officers already allows the Service Manager (Democratic Services) to appoint to the various bodies of the Council on the nominations of Group Leaders.
- 2.5.2 **It should therefore be noted that should it become necessary and on the nominations of Group Leaders, the Service Manager (Democratic Services) may exercise their delegated authority to appoint appropriate membership (full and substitute members) to the above Panel, Working Party and Working Group during 2021 to 2022 in accordance with their Terms of Reference.**

2.6 **Other informal working groups**

- 2.6.1 The Cabinet may also during 2021 to 2022 set up informal member/officer working groups to consider specific issues, which would usually be on a task-and-finish basis. Such groups would make recommendations directly to Cabinet or the appropriate committee in the form of reports. It is proposed that such groups or taskforces would be formed as required.
- 2.6.2 **It is recommended that provided that resources are available to support them, informal task-and-finish working groups or taskforces be established to consider specific issues as required throughout 2021 to 2022.**

3. **Alternative options that have been considered**

- 3.1 Not to undertake an annual review; however, it is prudent to do so to ensure the Cabinet's groups remain effective and fit-for-purpose.

4. **Consultation and engagement undertaken**

- 4.1 Appointments to the joint committee, panel and other working groups detailed in this report will be made on the nominations of the Leader of the Council and /or Group Leaders, as applicable.

5. **Risks associated with the proposals**

- 5.1 The Council could consider the creation of joint committees with partner authorities to maximise opportunities for joint working.
- 5.2 To avoid duplication of effort between member bodies, undertaking reviews of its working parties, panels etc is considered prudent to ensure they are

still relevant, adding value and do not cross over with other activities or other bodies, for example scrutiny committees or task and finish groups.

- 5.3 To ensure meetings and reviews are accommodated with available member and officer time and resources, it is considered prudent to carry out reviews and disband any groups no longer required, and to optimise frequency of meetings.

6. Implications arising from the proposals

- 6.1 Financial implications:

The review has been undertaken within existing resources. Any changes required as a result of the review will also be borne from existing budgets.

Constitutional compliance:

See sections 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 above.

7. Appendices referenced in this report

- 7.1 Appendix A – Staff Consultative Panel Terms of Reference
Appendix B – West Suffolk Grant Working Party Terms of Reference
Appendix C – West Suffolk Local Plan Working Group Terms of Reference

8. Background documents associated with this report

- 8.1 Cabinet: 14 January 2020 – Report number: [CAB/WS/20/003 Appendix 1](#)
Cabinet: 10 September 2020 – Report number: [CAB/WS/19/027](#)
Portfolio Holder Report: 16 March 2021 – Report number: [CAB/WS/21/015 Appendix A](#)

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Staff Consultative Panel – Terms of Reference

1. Overview

- 1.1 The Panel's membership will be drawn from Councillors and staff of the Council. The definition of 'staff' includes all groups of employees covered by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.
- 1.2 The Panel will consider the Council's staffing arrangements and provide a regular forum to secure the largest measure of agreement between the Council as an employer and Trade Union employees regarding matters directly affecting employment by the Council
- 1.3 To provide a group of Members who can develop an enhanced level of understanding on staffing matters.
- 1.4 To make recommendations to the Cabinet about policies and actions required to develop and maintain effective employee/employer arrangements.

2. Constitution

- 2.1 The Panel shall comprise 12 Members, to be comprised of six Councillors, which desirably reflects the political balance of the Council, as far as practically possible, to be the 'Employers' Side' and six members of staff from the Council to be the 'Employees' Side', nominated by the Trade Unions recognised by the Authorities in accordance with the formula set out below:-
 - (a) Employee representatives appointed by each of the Trade Unions recognised by the Authority should be on a proportional basis to the total number of employees within the individual union compared to the total Trade Union membership; and
 - (b) Each Trade Union recognised by the Authority shall have a minimum of one seat.
- 2.3 The Trade Unions recognised by the Council shall represent all Council employees. This will include raising issues on behalf of non-Trade Union members, should they be requested.
- 2.4 In the event of any failure to appoint/elect the number of representatives provided for by this Constitution, such failure to appoint/elect shall not invalidate the decisions of the Panel.
- 2.5 Two substitute Members shall be permitted on the 'Employers' Side' and two substitutes shall be permitted from the 'Employees' Side'.
- 2.6 It shall be the duty of a senior Human Resource Officer to attend and advise the Panel.

- 2.7 The Panel shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from its Members. When the Chair is a Member of one Side of the Panel, the Vice-Chair shall be a Member of the other Side. The Chair of the Panel shall be rotated on an annual basis between the Employees' and Employers' Side. The Chair of the meeting shall not have a casting vote.
- 2.8 The Panel may invite attendance by any person whose particular knowledge or experience may assist the Panel in its considerations. Such attendance shall be in a consultative capacity and only for the period during which the relevant subject is under consideration. In addition, the Employee side may arrange for the attendance of a Trade Union official at any meeting of the Panel, subject to the prior agreement of the Chair and Vice Chair.

3. Terms of Reference

- 3.1 To establish and maintain methods of negotiation and consultation, to consult on matters affecting the employment of all groups of employees of the Council, with a genuine commitment to seek consensus and enter into agreements, as appropriate.
- 3.2 These matters may include such subjects as:-
- (a) Application or implementation of National Agreements.
 - (b) Application or implementation of Local Agreements or local conditions of service.
 - (c) Productivity or performance arrangements.
 - (d) Issues referred to the Panel by the Trade Unions as provided for by the formal 'Consultation Procedures' (Employment Restructuring & Redundancy).
 - (e) Working conditions.
 - (f) Welfare and health of employees.
 - (g) Personnel procedures including recruitment, sickness, discipline and handling of grievances and redundancies.
 - (h) Training and development of employees.
 - (i) Equality issues; and
 - (j) Any issue referred to the Panel by the Cabinet.
- 3.3 Issues affecting individuals (eg pay, discipline) are excluded from consideration unless they represent matters of principle which are of general application to employees.

4. Authority of the Panel

- 4.1 Decisions of the Panel shall be in accordance with the voting arrangements set out in paragraph 5.3 below and shall be subject to the approval of the Cabinet, as provided for by the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

5. Arrangements and Procedures

- 5.1 Meetings shall normally be held quarterly but, exceptionally, the Chair may decide, after consultation with a senior Human Resources Officer to convene an Extraordinary meeting at any time or to cancel a scheduled

- meeting due to lack of business to transact. Meetings to alternate between the Council Offices or as agreed by the Panel.
- 5.2 The quorum for the Panel shall be four, comprising at least two Employee representatives and two Members.
 - 5.3 Voting shall be by a show of hands and simple majority. No motion shall be regarded as carried unless it has been approved by a majority of Employer representatives and a majority of Employee representatives present and voting.
 - 5.4 The report from the Panel to the respective Cabinet shall be by way of presentation of the minutes or by way of a brief report in a format agreed by the Cabinet.
 - 5.5 If the Panel is unable to agree and no local settlement can be achieved, the matter may be referred by either side to the Cabinet.

(*Note: This meeting is not governed by the normal Access to Information rules (The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012) in the Council. Therefore these meetings are not open to attendance by the public).

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West Suffolk Grant Working Party Terms of Reference

To consider grant applications and recommend the level of grants payable to organisations to officers or the Cabinet, based on the policies agreed by Council and in accordance with the criteria for Community Chest Grant funding.

The governance and membership arrangements are based upon the terms of reference for the former West Suffolk Grants to External Organisations Review Group (Cabinet Report number: [CAB/WS/19/007](#) and [Appendix 1](#) refer)

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West Suffolk Local Plan Working Group

Terms of Reference

Background

West Suffolk Council is in the process of developing a new Local Plan for its area. The Local Plan must be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and be informed by evidence gathered that relates to West Suffolk and the wider area. All Local Plan policies and documents must be approved by the Council, on the recommendation of Cabinet.

This Local Plan Working Group is being established to support Cabinet in the development of West Suffolk Local Plan, reviewing matters in depth, assessing a wide range of evidence and providing a range of thoughts, opinions and recommendations for Cabinet to consider.

Role and Purpose of the Local Plan Working Group

In addition to drawing on local insights and experience, members will be asked to share their knowledge and insights of West Suffolk as a whole. This balance is important and will support Cabinet in creating an informed local plan, which benefits all our community. Specifically, they will:

- Advise on the development of Local Plan documents, through reviewing and commenting on the associated evidence base and draft documentation.
- Review consultation responses, assessing how these should inform policy preparation and how the local plan should be influenced by responses
- Support the Council in its duty to consult with its partners including other local authorities in the development of the local plan, evaluating their proposals and how these shape / influence policy developments, particularly with regard to cross-boundary issues
- Evaluate how the local plan is compliant with national planning policy guidance and good practice
- Evaluate consultation approaches, advising on potential methods and options to ensure effective engagement. Support the Portfolio Holder for Local Plan Development and Delivery in monitoring the delivery of the project timetable
- Undertake other roles that the Portfolio Holder for Local Plan Development and Delivery, in consultation with the Chair, considers appropriate

In order to perform these roles, the Portfolio Holder for Local Plan Development and Delivery shall agree a Work Programme for the Working Group. This Work Programme shall be reviewed by the Group at each meeting to ensure that progress is being achieved as expected. From time to time, the Portfolio Holder for Local Plan Development and Delivery may modify the work programme or notify the Committee of changes to it.

Membership

10 Members including the **Portfolio Holder for Local Plan Development and Delivery**.

The working group will comprise councillors from across all political groups. Membership will be broadly apportioned in line with the political balance and appointees from each party will be agreed by their respective group leader.

Group leaders are encouraged to work to ensure there is a balance in the geographic representation across the District and ensure there is representation from both rural and urban areas.

Continuity and commitment is important to make this group effective. Members on the Working Group are expected to ensure they make every effort to attend meetings and where they are unable to do so, appoint a substitute.

In addition to performing their collective role, members of the group will be expected to:

- Act as a champion for engagement with the local plan development process, promoting consultations with local community groups, residents and stakeholders, and attending in person and virtual consultation events where able to do so
- Engage with their political groups to ensure all members are kept informed on the local plan development process
- Keep informed of national and local developments and legislation that may impact on the work of the group
- Actively participate in debates at the Working Group meetings
- Be creative, supporting new ideas coming forward and being open minded to alternative proposals or viewpoints
- Read and consider papers presented in advance of the meeting, being proactive in contacting officers to resolve any points of confusion ahead of the meeting
- As mentioned above, they will use their experience, knowledge and insight of their local area, but be mindful of the need to consider the plan across the whole of West Suffolk

At all times when taking part in the Working Group, members will be subject to the West Suffolk Code of Conduct

Substitutes

Each group is allowed to appoint one standing substitute. In order to ensure they can effectively contribute to debate when called upon, substitutes are allowed to be in attendance at all Group meetings and will have access to all papers and reports.

Chair

Portfolio Holder for Local Plan Development and Delivery will Chair the group.

The Chair shall appoint a Vice-Chair from amongst their members.

The Chair shall be responsible for the effective conduct of meetings and ensuring clear conclusions are reached.

The Chair will also be expected to attend Cabinet meetings and other committees / groups as appropriate to present the views of the Group as required.

Quorum

The Quorum for meetings shall be 4 members

Frequency

Meetings shall take place in accordance with the work programme, established to ensure the effective delivery of items on forthcoming agendas.

Voting

The Group should work towards achieving a consensus on matters subject to consideration. The Portfolio Holder, as above, will be in attendance at meetings in order to consider all views put forward in debate.

Officer Support

The lead officer for the Working Group shall be the Assistant Director (Growth), supported by the Service Manager (Strategic Planning). Reports will be prepared and presented to the Group by Officers from the Planning Policy team and officers from the Council when relevant. Administration of meetings will be undertaken by the Democratic Services Team.

Authority

The working group is advisory and has no decision-making powers.

Confidentiality

As a non-decision-making body, the normal Access to Information Rules do not apply. Members may want to have a free and frank debate, in which they may test concepts and ideas and to share such information when it is in a formative state. These ideas may be subsequently discounted in entirety. Releasing information into the public domain could undermine the subsequent proposals and decisions of the taskforce and have the potential to damage the Council's reputation.

Papers should therefore (minutes, reports etc) should be treated as confidential unless it is stated / agreed otherwise, or the information is already in the public domain. Confidential information should not be shared with other parties, including other Councillors and outside organisations.

Any members who have concerns regarding access to information or the papers of the meeting should raise this with the Monitoring Officer.

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Decisions Plan

Key decisions and other executive decisions to be considered

Date: 1 May 2021 to 31 May 2022

Publication date: 23 April 2021

The following plan shows both the key decisions and other decisions/matters taken in private, that the Cabinet, portfolio holders, joint committees or officers under delegated authority, are intending to take up to 31 May 2022. This table is updated on a monthly rolling basis and provides at least 28 clear days' notice of the consideration of any key decisions and of the taking of any items in private.

Executive decisions are taken at public meetings of the Cabinet and by other bodies/individuals provided with executive decision-making powers. Some decisions and items may be taken in private during the parts of the meeting at which the public may be excluded, when it is likely that confidential or exempt information may be disclosed. This is indicated on the relevant meeting agenda and in the 'Reason for taking the item in private' column relevant to each item detailed on the plan.

Members of the public may wish to:

- make enquiries in respect of any of the intended decisions listed below; or
- receive copies of any of the documents in the public domain listed below; or
- receive copies of any other documents in the public domain relevant to those matters listed below which may be submitted to the decision taker; or
- make representations in relation to why meetings to consider the listed items intended for consideration in private should be open to the public.

In all instances, 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 or via West Suffolk Council, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3YU or College Heath Road, Mildenhall, Bury St Edmunds IP28 7EY.

Expected decision date	Subject and purpose of decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio holder contact details	Lead officer contact details	Documents to be submitted
Page 58	Investment and Development Opportunity As previously published on the Decisions Plan, this item was not considered by Cabinet on 16 March 2021 or referred as a recommendation to Council as the option to pursue a potential investment opportunity no longer applied.				Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	
25/05/21 (deferred from 10/11/20)	Western Way Development The Cabinet will be asked to consider the delivery of phase 1 of	Exempt appendix: paragraph 3	(KD)	Cabinet	Joanna Rayner Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs	Alex Wilson Strategic Director 01284 757695	Report to Cabinet with exempt appendix.

Expected decision date	Subject and purpose of decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio holder contact details	Lead officer contact details	Documents to be submitted
Page 59	the project in the context of the framework for proceeding agreed by Council in 2019 and the Cabinet's own action plan arising from the external assurance review in January 2020.				01284 750366		
25/05/21	<p>Annual Review and Appointment to Cabinet Panel/Working Groups/Joint Committee</p> <p>The Cabinet will be asked to review its membership and appoint to its Panel/Working</p>	Not applicable	(D)	Cabinet	John Griffiths Leader of the Council 01284 757001	<p>Jen Eves Director (HR, Governance and Regulatory) 01284 757015</p> <p>Leah Mickleborough Service Manager (Democratic Services)</p>	Report to Cabinet.

Expected decision date	Subject and purpose of decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio holder contact details	Lead officer contact details	Documents to be submitted
	Groups/Joint Committee.					01284 757162	
25/05/21 (new) Page 60	Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding debts, as detailed in the exempt appendices.	Exempt appendices: paragraphs 1 and 2	(KD)	Cabinet	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	Report to Cabinet with exempt appendices.
20/07/21 (new)	Environment Action Plan The Cabinet will receive an update on the implementation of actions arising from the West Suffolk Environment and Climate Change Taskforce, together	Not applicable	(D)	Cabinet	John Griffiths Leader of the Council 01284 757001	Jill Korwin Strategic Director 01284 757252	Report to Cabinet.

Expected decision date	Subject and purpose of decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio holder contact details	Lead officer contact details	Documents to be submitted
	with any other issues relating to this topic.						
21/09/21 (Deferred from 25/05/21)	West Suffolk Rural Taskforce –Action Plan Update The Cabinet will be asked to consider the final update on implementation of actions arising from the West Suffolk Rural Taskforce.	Not applicable	(D)	Cabinet	John Griffiths Leader of the Council 01284 757001	Jill Korwin Strategic Director 01284 757252	Report to Cabinet.
21/09/21 (Deferred from 27/04/21 or 25/05/21)	Newmarket Cumulative Impact Assessment Review The Cabinet will be asked to consider approving and renewing the Newmarket Cumulative Impact Assessment	Not applicable	(KD) (e)(ii)	Cabinet	Andy Drummond Regulatory 07710 027343	Jen Eves Director (HR, Governance and Regulatory) 01284 757015 Fiona Quinn Service Manager (Environmental	Report to Cabinet, with accompanying consultation analysis and background evidence/data

Expected decision date	Subject and purpose of decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio holder contact details	Lead officer contact details	Documents to be submitted
Page 62	<p>(CIA), which has been subject to consultation. This policy was introduced to manage the growth of licensed premises in an area where the number, type and density of premises selling alcohol had been identified as leading to nuisance and disorder. The existing policy requires reviewing to ensure it complies with the legislative changes introduced on 6 April 2018. The Licensing and Regulatory Committee will have been involved with the consultation process.</p>					Health) 01284 757042	

Expected decision date	Subject and purpose of decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio holder contact details	Lead officer contact details	Documents to be submitted
21/09/21 (new) Page 63	Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding debts, as detailed in the exempt appendices.	Exempt appendices: paragraphs 1 and 2	(KD)	Cabinet	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	Report to Cabinet with exempt appendices.
21/09/21 (new)	Annual Financial Resilience Report 2020 to 2021 The Cabinet will be asked to consider the recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee regarding seeking approval for the Annual Financial Resilience Report for	Not applicable	(R) – Council 28/09/21	Cabinet / Council	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and Council.

Expected decision date	Subject and purpose of decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio holder contact details	Lead officer contact details	Documents to be submitted
	2020 to 2021.						
21/09/21 (new) Page 64	Financial Resilience Report - June 2021 The Cabinet will be asked to consider the recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee regarding seeking approval for the financial resilience activities between 1 April 2021 and 30 June 2021.	Not applicable	(R) – Council 28/09/21	Cabinet / Council	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and Council.
09/11/21 (new)	Council Tax Base for Tax Setting Purposes 2022 to 2023 The Cabinet will be asked to recommend to Council the basis of	Not applicable	(R) – Council 14/12/21	Cabinet/ Council	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	Report to Cabinet with recommendations to Council.

Expected decision date	Subject and purpose of decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio holder contact details	Lead officer contact details	Documents to be submitted
	the formal calculation for the Council Tax Base for West Suffolk Council for the financial year 2022 to 2023.						
09/11/21 (new)	Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022 to 2023 The Cabinet will be asked to consider proposals for potential revisions to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme prior to seeking its approval by Council.	Not applicable	(R) – Council 14/12/21	Cabinet/ Council	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	Report to Cabinet with recommendations to Council.
09/11/21 (new)	Council Tax Technical Changes 2022 to 2023 The Cabinet will be	Not applicable	(R) – Council 14/12/21	Cabinet/ Council	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Performance)	Report to Cabinet with recommendations to Council.

Expected decision date	Subject and purpose of decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio holder contact details	Lead officer contact details	Documents to be submitted
Page 6	asked to consider proposals for potential Council Tax technical changes prior to seeking its approval by Council.				07929 305787	01638 719245	
07/12/21 (new)	<p>Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2022 to 2023 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022 to 2026</p> <p>The Cabinet will be asked to consider recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for recommending to Council on proposals</p>	Not applicable	(R) – Council 14/12/21	Cabinet/ Council	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and Council.

Expected decision date	Subject and purpose of decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio holder contact details	Lead officer contact details	Documents to be submitted
	for achieving a sustainable budget in 2022 to 2023 and in the medium term.						
07/12/21 (new) Page 67	Financial Resilience Report – September 2021 The Cabinet will be asked to consider the recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee regarding seeking approval for the Financial Resilience activities between 1 April 2021 and 30 September 2021.	Not applicable	(R) – Council 14/12/21	Cabinet / Council	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and Council.
07/12/21 (new)	Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs	Exempt appendices: paragraphs 1	(KD)	Cabinet	Sarah Broughton Resources and	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and	Report to Cabinet with exempt appendices.

Expected decision date	Subject and purpose of decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio holder contact details	Lead officer contact details	Documents to be submitted
Page 88 11/01/22 (new)	The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding debts, as detailed in the exempt appendices.	and 2			Performance 07929 305787	Performance) 01638 719245	
	Applications for Community Chest 2022 to 2023 The Cabinet will be asked to consider the recommendations of the West Suffolk Grant Working Party in respect of the levels of funding (if any) to be awarded to applicants to the Community Chest funding scheme for 2022 to 2023 and in some cases, 2023 to	Not applicable	(KD); however, some funding allocations may be subject to the budget setting process.	Cabinet	Robert Everitt Families and Communities 01284 769000	Davina Howes Director (Families and Communities) 01284 757070	Recommendations of the West Suffolk Grant Working Party to Cabinet.

Expected decision date	Subject and purpose of decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio holder contact details	Lead officer contact details	Documents to be submitted
	2024.						
08/02/22 (new) Page 69	Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2022 to 2023 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022 to 2026 The Cabinet will be asked to consider recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for recommending to Council on proposals for achieving a sustainable budget in 2022 to 2023 and in the medium term.	Not applicable	(R) – Council 22/02/22 Unless separate proposals are recommended by Cabinet, consideration by Council will take place as part of the separate budget setting paper on 22/02/22	Cabinet	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and Council.
08/02/22	Budget and Council	Not applicable	(R) – Council	Cabinet/	Sarah	Rachael Mann	Report to Cabinet

Expected decision date	Subject and purpose of decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio holder contact details	Lead officer contact details	Documents to be submitted
(new) Page 70	<p>Tax Setting 2022 to 2023 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022 to 2026</p> <p>The Cabinet will be asked to consider the proposals for the 2021 to 2022 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022 to 2026 for West Suffolk Council, prior to its approval by Council. This report includes the Minimum Revenues Provision (MRP) Policy and Prudential Indicators.</p>		<p>22/02/22</p> <p>Unless separate proposals are recommended by Cabinet, consideration by Council will take place as part of the separate budget setting paper on 22/02/22</p>	Council	Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	with recommendations to Council.
08/02/22	Financial Resilience - Strategy Statement	Not applicable	(R) – Council 22/02/22	Cabinet/ Council	Sarah Broughton	Rachael Mann Director	Recommendations of the

Expected decision date	Subject and purpose of decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio holder contact details	Lead officer contact details	Documents to be submitted
(new) Page 71	2022 to 2023 and Treasury Management Code of Practice The Cabinet will be asked to recommend to Council, approval of the Strategy Statement 2022 to 2023 and Treasury Management Code of Practice for West Suffolk Council, which must be undertaken before the start of each financial year.				Resources and Performance 07929 305787	(Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and Council.
08/02/22 (new)	Financial Resilience Report – December 2021 The Cabinet will be asked to consider the	Not applicable	(R) – Council 22/02/22	Cabinet / Council	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to

Expected decision date	Subject and purpose of decision	Reason for taking item in private (see Note 1 for relevant exempt paragraphs)	Decision (D), Key Decision (KD) or Rec (R) to Council on date (see Note 2 for Key Decision definitions)	Decision taker (see Note 3 for membership)	Portfolio holder contact details	Lead officer contact details	Documents to be submitted
Page 72	recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee regarding seeking approval for the Financial Resilience activities between 1 April 2021 and 31 December 2021.						Cabinet and Council.
15/03/22 (new)	Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding debts, as detailed in the exempt appendices.	Exempt appendices: paragraphs 1 and 2	(KD)	Cabinet	Sarah Broughton Resources and Performance 07929 305787	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Performance) 01638 719245	Report to Cabinet with exempt appendices.

Note 1: Definition of exempt information and relevant paragraphs of the Local Government Act 1972

In accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)

The public may be excluded from all or part of the meeting during the consideration of items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information defined in Schedule 12(A) of the Act, as follows:

1. Information relating to any individual.
 2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
 4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
 5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
- Page 17 of 20
- a. Information which reveals that the authority proposes –
 - a. to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - b. to make an order or direction under any enactment.
 - b. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

In accordance with Section 100A(3) (a) and (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)

Confidential information is also not for public access, but the difference between this and exempt information is that a Government department, legal opinion or the court has prohibited its disclosure in the public domain. Should confidential information require consideration in private, this will be detailed in this Decisions Plan.

Note 2: Key decision definition

A key decision is an executive decision that either:

- a. Results in new expenditure, or a reduced income or savings of more than £100k in any one year that has not otherwise been included in the Council's revenue or capital budgets.
- b. Comprises or includes the making, approval or publication of a draft or final scheme, which is not a routine business decision, that may require, either directly or in the event of objections, the approval of a Minister of the Crown.
- c. Results in the formation of a new company, limited liability partnership or joint venture.
- d. Has a potentially detrimental impact on communities outside of West Suffolk District.
- e. Is a decision that is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in a definable local community in the District, or on one or more wards, in that it will:
 - i. Have a long-term, lasting impact on that community; or
 - ii. Restrict the ability of individual businesses or residents in that area to undertake particular activities; or
 - iii. Removes the provision of a service or facility for that community; or
 - iv. Increases the charges payable by members of the community to provide a service or facility by more than 5%; or
 - v. Have the potential to create significant local controversy or reputational damage to the Council
- f. A matter that the decision maker considers to be a key decision.
- g. Any matters that fall under the scope of e. above must be subject to consultation with the local Member(s) in Wards that are likely to be impacted by the decision prior to the decision being made.

Note 3: Membership of bodies making key decisions

a. Membership of West Suffolk Council's Cabinet and their portfolios

Cabinet Member	Portfolio
John Griffiths	Leader of the Council
Sara Mildmay-White	Deputy Leader of the Council and Housing
Sarah Broughton	Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance
Carol Bull	Portfolio Holder for Governance
Andy Drummond	Portfolio Holder for Regulatory
Robert Everitt	Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities
Susan Glossop	Portfolio Holder for Growth
Jo Rayner	Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs
David Roach	Portfolio Holder for Local Plan Development and Delivery
Peter Stevens	Portfolio Holder for Operations

b. Membership of the Anglia Revenues Partnership Joint Committee (made up of Breckland Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, East Suffolk Council, Fenland District Council and West Suffolk Council)

Member Council	Full representative	Substitute representative
Breckland	Philip Cowen	Sam Chapman-Allen and Paul Claussen
East Cambridgeshire	David Ambrose-Smith	David Brown and Joshua Schumann
East Suffolk	Steve Gallant	To be confirmed
Fenland	Jan French	David Connor and Kim French
West Suffolk	Sarah Broughton	Sara Mildmay-White

Jennifer Eves
Director (Human Resources, Governance and Regulatory)
Date: 23 April 2021



Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs

Report number:	CAB/WS/21/023	
Report to and date:	Non-decision making virtual Cabinet	25 May 2021
Cabinet member:	Councillor Sarah Broughton Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Tel: 07929 305787 Email: sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Rachael Mann Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) Tel: 01638 719245 Email: rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk	

Decisions Plan: The decision made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included in the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All Wards

Recommendation: That the Cabinet recommends to the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance to write-off the amounts detailed in the Exempt Appendices to Report No: CAB/WS/21/023, as follows:

1. Exempt Appendix 1: Council Tax totalling £22,480.28
2. Exempt Appendix 2: Business Rates totalling £34,962.30.

1. Context to this report

- 1.1 The Revenues Section collects outstanding debts in accordance with either statutory guidelines or Council agreed procedures.
- 1.2 When all these procedures have been exhausted the outstanding debt is written off using the delegated authority of the Assistant Director, Resources and Performance for debts up to £4,999.99 or by Cabinet, or the Portfolio Holder for debts over £5,000.00.
- 1.3 It is best practice to monitor the recovery procedures for outstanding debts regularly and, when appropriate, write off irrecoverable debts.
- 1.4 Provision for irrecoverable debts is included both in the Collection Fund and the General Fund and writing off debts that are known to be irrecoverable ensures that staff are focussed on achieving good collection levels in respect of the recoverable debt.
- 1.5 The Council Tax percentage of debt written off during 2021/22 for all previous years is 0% as at 30 April 2021.
- 1.6 The Business rates percentage of debt written off during 2021/22 for all previous years is 0% as at 30 April 2021.

2. Proposals within this report

- 2.1 To review the current revenue collection performance and to consider writing off outstanding debts, as detailed in the exempt Appendices.
- 2.2 Provision is made in the accounts for non-recovery but the total amounts to be written off are as follows with full details shown in **Exempt Appendix 1 for Council Tax totalling £22,480.28 and Appendix 2 for Business Rates totalling £34,962.30**
- 2.3 The total National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) billed by Anglia Revenues Partnership on behalf of West Suffolk Council on 1 April 2021 (as the billing Authority) is £42.8m per annum. The collection rate at 30 April 2021 was 14.71% against a profiled target of 12.55%
- 2.4 It should be noted that reliefs introduced by central Government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic (many of which provided 100% relief for 2020/21) have been extended to the end of June 2021 at which point the remainder of the year will be discounted by 66%. Any accounts eligible will be rebilled in July for an increased amount which will adjust the net collectable debt.

- 2.5 The total Council Tax billed by Anglia Revenues Partnership on behalf of West Suffolk Council on 1 April 2021 (includes Suffolk County Council, Police and Parish precept elements) is £104.9 per annum. The collection rate at 30 April 2021 was 11.10% against a profiled target of 10.71%.
- 2.6 West Suffolk residents seeking support with paying their council tax because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic were offered the opportunity to reprofile their payment plans for 2020/21. This has had the effect of moving some recovery activity into 2021/22 where final instalments were set very late in the financial year.

3. Alternative options that have been considered

- 3.1 There is an extensive and supportive recovery process prior to the engagement of an enforcement agency. The Council currently uses the services of the ARP Enforcement Agency to assist in the collection of business rates and Council Tax and also has on-line tracing facilities. Although this service was suspended during the lockdown and up to more recently, enforcement is now reinstated in line with government guidance. It is not considered appropriate to pass the debts on to another agency.
- 3.2 It should be noted that in the event that a written-off debt becomes recoverable, the amount is written back on, and enforcement procedures are re-established. This might happen, for example, if someone has gone away with no trace, and then they are unexpectedly 'found' again, through whatever route.

4. Consultation and engagement undertaken

- 4.1 Leadership Team and the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance have been consulted with on the proposed write-offs.

5. Risks associated with the proposals

- 5.1 Low Risk - Debts are written off which could have been collected
Control - Extensive recovery procedures are in place to ensure that all possible mechanisms are exhausted before a debt is written off.

Medium Risk – Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on recovery of debts and the increase in bankruptcies, IVA, CVA's are likely to impact this years' collection rates. Close monitoring is taking place and support provided where possible.

6. Implications arising from the proposals

- 6.1 Financial - as above.

- 6.2 Legal Compliance - the recovery procedures followed have been previously agreed; writing off uncollectable debt allows staff to focus recovery action on debt which is recoverable.
- 6.3 Personal Data Processing - no changes to the way we process personal data.
- 6.4 Equalities
- the application of predetermined recovery procedures ensures that everybody is treated consistently.
 - failure to collect any debt impacts on either the levels of service provision or the levels of charges.
 - all available remedies are used to recover the debt before write-off is considered.
 - the provision of services by the Council applies to everyone in the area.
- 6.5 Crime and Disorder
- 6.6 Environment or Sustainability
- 6.7 HR or Staffing
- 6.8 Changes to existing policies
- 6.9 External organisations (such as businesses, community groups)

No significant implications on 6.1 – 6.8, as a result of this report.

7. Appendices referenced in this report

- 7.1 Exempt Appendix 1 – Council Tax Write-Offs
Exempt Appendix 2 – Business Rates Write-Offs

8. Background documents associated with this report

- 8.1 None

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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