

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Thursday 12 November 2020** at **5.00pm** facilitated by MS TeamsLive virtual meetings platform.

Present **Councillors**

Chair Ian Shipp

Michael Anderson
Simon Brown
Tony Brown
Mike Chester
Patrick Chung
Terry Clements
Stephen Frost

Diane Hind
Lisa Ingwall King
Margaret Marks
Joe Mason
Jim Meikle
Marion Rushbrook

Observing the meeting

Councillors Richard Alecock, Susan Glossop and Andy Neal

78. **Substitutes**

No substitutions were declared.

79. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simon Cole and Paul Hopfensperger.

80. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2020 were confirmed as correct record by the Chair.

81. **Declarations of interest**

Councillor Lisa Ingwall-King declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to item 7 on the agenda, in that her husband was a council employee working on the Mildenhall Hub.

82. **Announcements from the Chair regarding responses from the Cabinet to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Chair informed members he attended Cabinet on 22 September 2020 and presented the Committee's report from its meeting held on 3 September 2020. As per the minutes above, the Chair updated Cabinet on the presentation given by the Assistant Director (Families and Communities) and

officers on "Reflections on Community Response to Covid" and the Western Suffolk Community Safety Monitoring Report (April 2019 to March 2020), presented by Councillor Joanna Spicer, Chair of the Partnership and Councillor Robert Everitt, which was noted by Cabinet.

83. Public participation

No members of the public had registered to speak on this occasion.

84. Major Council Capital Projects and the Impact of Covid-19 (Presentation)

[Councillor Jim Meikle joined the meeting at 5.18pm]

The Coronavirus pandemic has had an impact on all aspects of the Council's work in 2020. Arising from the update provided by the Leader and Chief Executive at 9 July 2020 meeting, the Committee had asked for a briefing at its November 2020 meeting on the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's major capital projects, in terms of how the pandemic had affected their timescales, budgets and strategic and operational outcomes.

The Committee received a presentation by a Director and the Service Manager (Corporate Policy). It was emphasised that the session was not intended as scrutiny of the projects themselves, only of the specific impact of the pandemic on them and was intended to focus on the most significant of the Council's projects. A brief overview of the Covid-19 impacts was given on most of the projects but, at the request of the Committee, more detail was provided on the Western Way Development and the Mildenhall Hub.

The presentation set out: the business continuity process followed; general impacts of the pandemic; major projects which had needed to continue in March 2020; projects put on hold for review in March 2020 due to Covid-19; the Western Way Development (in terms of where the Council had got to pre-lockdown, the impact of Covid-19 on the development and next steps); and the Mildenhall Hub (including immediate impacts and Covid-19 actions, such as working with partners on how the Hub would operate if social distancing was still needed in Spring 2021 or in future pandemics).

The Committee considered the presentation in detail and asked a number of questions to which comprehensive responses were provided.

In response to a question raised regarding the impact of Covid-19 on the tendering and contract price for 17-18 Cornhill, officers agreed to provide a written response.

In response to a question raised regarding the Western Way Development and when the procurement process would commence, members were informed this was subject to Council approval in February 2021 on the outcome of the business case review with partners. If approved, a two-stage procurement process would commence from spring 2021 and would continue through the remainder of 2021. Members asked about the traffic impacts of the development, to which it was noted that there had been a full traffic assessment undertaken and considered when the development was approved

by the Development Control Committee. The mitigation involved significant junction improvements and a robust travel plan.

In response to a question raised about the opportunities to engage with young people and specifically the Youth Council, regarding the Western Way Development (WWD), members were informed that an equality impact assessment had been carried out for the project and the building would be designed similar to the Mildenhall Hub, with flexible spaces available to all age groups within the community. This could include the Youth Council, if they wished. In addition, space in the building would be available for use by West Suffolk College and local schools, as needed. Finally, although not exclusively a young person's activity, the skate park users had also been involved in designing the new skate park and appointing specialist contractors.

Members were impressed with progress on the Mildenhall Hub, which they felt was an exemplar development. The Chair in particular wished to thank R G Carter and their team for all of their work, particularly through the pandemic, on the Mildenhall Hub, which he felt was a fantastic investment for Mildenhall.

The Committee **noted** the presentation and thanked the Director and the Service Manager (Corporate Policy) for providing a comprehensive presentation on the Impact of Covid-19 on the Council's major capital projects.

85. Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee - 14 October 2020

Councillor Margaret Marks, the Council's appointed representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee presented Report number OAS/WS/20/016.

The report, prepared by Councillor Margaret Marks, set out what was considered at its meeting held on 14 October 2020. The focus of the meeting was on:

- Winter Planning 2020 to 2021; and
- West Suffolk Foundation Trust – Future System Programme.

The Committee considered the report and asked questions. In particular discussions were held on the impact on day-to-day surgery due to Covid-19, whether the NHS was still using private hospitals, and the current availability of flu jabs to which Councillor Marks provided responses.

There being no decision required, the Committee noted the report on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 October 2020 from Councillor Margaret Marks.

86. Work programme update 2021 and suggestions for scrutiny

The Committee received Report number OAS/WS/20/017, 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 the 2020 to 2021 as attached at Appendix 1.

At the Committees meeting held on 3 September 2020 it agreed in principle to looking at the operation of West Suffolk Markets and the West Suffolk Council statement and approach to modern-day slavery.

Attached to the report at Appendix 2 was the completed work programme suggestion for a review on the operation of West Suffolk Markets, which was presented to the Committee by the Chair. Attached to the report at Appendix 3 was the completed work programme suggestion for a review of the West Suffolk Council statement and approach to modern-day slavery, which was presented by Councillor Diane Hind.

The Chair also informed members that he had agreed for a report on Public Space Protection Orders to be presented to the Committee at its 14 January 2021 meeting.

The Committee discussed the suggestions form, in particular the proposed markets review. In response to a question raised, the Chair explained that the review would not be delving too deeply into the day-to-day management of the markets, although members could raise these issues for consideration, the review needed to focus on the strategic role of West Suffolk in enabling successful markets.

Councillor Meikle informed members that not all markets were run by West Suffolk Council. There were other agencies who ran markets across West Suffolk.

Officers informed the Committee that at its January 2021 meeting a report from the Anglia Revenues Partnership was currently scheduled to be presented on the debt recovery process. Officers were confident in bringing the report forward but wished it to be noted that if another round of business grants needed to be administered, the report might need to be deferred.

At its conclusion, the Committee noted the current status of topics currently scheduled in its rolling work programme for 2021 (Appendix 1) and the inclusion of Public Space Protection Orders at its January 2021 meeting.

Councillor Margaret Marks then moved the recommendations, this was duly seconded by Councillor Jim Meikle, and with the vote being unanimous, the Committee:

RESOLVED:

- 1) To include in its forward work programme for March 2021 a review on the operation of West Suffolk Markets; and**
- 2) To include in its forward work programme for 2021 a review of the West Suffolk Council statement and approach to modern-day slavery and identified the following members willing to be part of a small working party to support the review, being Councillors Diane Hind, Mike Chester and Lisa Ingwall-King.**

The meeting concluded at 6.51pm

Signed by:

Chair
