

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held on **Tuesday 8 February 2022** at **6.00 pm** in the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present

Councillors

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

Sarah Broughton
Carol Bull
Andy Drummond
Robert Everitt

Susan Glossop
David Roach
Peter Stevens

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

Trevor Beckwith

Ward member for Moreton Hall
ward (speaking under Item 4. in
relation to Item 7.)

318. Welcome and introduction

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all persons present within the Conference Chamber. She explained the rationale behind the precautionary health and safety measures that remained in operation for this meeting which aimed to reduce and restrict the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

319. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Griffiths.

320. Minutes

The Chair highlighted an error within the second paragraph of minute 314. which related to the consideration of the Barley Homes Business Plan 2021. It

was suggested that this paragraph be amended to read (as shown in bold text and strikethrough):

'.....including that the Barley Homes schemes at Westmill Place (formerly Westfield) **and Stonemill Park (formerly Castle Hill)** Haverhill, ~~for the delivery of~~ **would deliver a combined total of** 63 homes, of which 19 were affordable. **The Westmill Place development** had been completed during the summer of 2021 and sold with residents moving in shortly afterwards and throughout September and October 2021....'

With the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

321. **Declarations of interest**

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

322. **Open forum**

The following non-Cabinet member spoke under this item:

1. **Councillor Trevor Beckwith (Agenda Item 7: Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 13 January 2022)**

Councillor Trevor Beckwith, one of the ward members for Moreton Hall ward drew Cabinet's attention to discussion held at the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee on 13 January 2022 regarding Suffolk County Council's (SCC) response to his Councillor Call for Action (CCfA).

For further details regarding the nature of the CCfA, see minute 325. below.

Councillor Beckwith reiterated his disappointment and frustration with SCC's response to the O&S Committee's recommendations to remedy the situation that had been devised following the Committee's initial consideration of the CCfA on 2 September 2021.

The Chair thanked Councillor Beckwith for attending Cabinet and noted his concerns. The item would be considered in detail later in the meeting under agenda under Item 7.

323. **Public participation**

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

324. **Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 7 December 2021 (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 their meeting held on 7 December 2021:

1. Joint Committee Service Plan and Risk Register Report
2. Performance Report
3. ARP Financial Performance 2021 to 2022
4. Welfare Reform Update
5. ARP Budget Setting 2022 to 2023
6. Forthcoming Issues
7. Exempt Item: Norwich Fraud Services – Section 113 Agreement

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet.

Members placed their thanks on record for the sterling work of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership, particularly with regards to the administering of the various COVID-19 support grants issued by the Government.

**325. Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 13 January 2022
(Report number: CAB/WS/22/003)**

(Councillor Sarah Broughton declared a pecuniary interest in the Councillor Call for Action element of this item, as her husband owned a parcel of land adjacent to Orttewell Road, Bury St Edmunds. Councillor Broughton left the meeting during the consideration of this item.)

The Cabinet received this report, which informed members of the following substantive items discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 January 2022:

1. Suffolk County Council update provided on Councillor Call for Action recommendations
2. Markets Review Working Group update
3. Work programme update 2022

Councillor Ian Shipp, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee, drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet, including that a number of recommendations for action relating to 1. above were presented within the report for Cabinet's consideration.

Councillor Shipp firstly explained that the review of the district's markets was progressing well with another meeting of the Markets Review Working Group being held the previous day. It was expected that the findings and recommendations of the Working Group would be presented to the O&S Committee, and Cabinet thereafter in summer 2022.

Councillor Shipp then sought Cabinet's support and endorsement for a number of recommendations relating to 1. above.

In accordance with the Constitution and having exhausted all other possible avenues for resolution of the issue, Councillor Trevor Beckwith had submitted a CCfA entitled "Impact of the Eastern Relief Road and A14 Junction 45 on the Moreton Hall Residential Area" for the O&S Committee's consideration on 10

June 2021. The Committee had agreed to accept the CCfA and referred the matter to a CCfA hearing.

On 2 September 2021, the Committee heard from a variety of organisations and witnesses who had been involved in this matter. As the issues of concern largely fell within the responsibility of the Highways Authority (HA), the Committee had made a number of recommendations to Suffolk County Council (SCC) as the HA and requested a three-month progress report for presentation at its meeting on 13 January 2022.

The recommendations of the Committee to SCC and their subsequent responses to each were reproduced in Report number: CAB/WS/22/003.

Councillor Shipp explained that on 13 January 2022, the Committee had shared Councillor Beckwith's disappointment with the responses of SCC in respect of addressing the legitimate concerns of the residents of Moreton Hall. Councillor Birgitte Mager, one of the other ward members for Moreton Hall had similarly expressed her concerns and the adverse impact the current issues were having on the residential amenity of those living in the area.

The Committee considered the Cabinet should take the matter further and had presented a number of recommendations, as set out in paragraph 2.1.5 of Report number: CAB/WS/22/003 to endorse and take forward.

Councillor Shipp personally thanked Councillor Beckwith for his endeavours, recognising that he had spent a considerable amount of time and effort over the past five years on this matter to try and provide a better quality of life for the residents in his ward.

A detailed discussion was held and the Cabinet also acknowledged the extensive work and commitment Councillor Beckwith had dedicated to the issues contained within his CCfA. The Chair sought clarity from Councillor Beckwith on specific points and invited him to speak.

Councillors Susan Glossop and Andy Drummond responded to areas that were covered within their portfolios, including:

- The Growth portfolio included strategic liaison with Suffolk County Council on highways matters and Councillor Glossop would work with officers to investigate the issues raised and take forward the Committee's recommendation to write to the County Council.
- It was noted that one of the recommendations was to return the Rougham Hill Lorry Park to operation; however, this was not under the ownership or responsibility of West Suffolk Council, as it was owned by SCC and managed by Highways England under a lease. Highways England had indicated that the facility was operating as normal. The current situation with the lorry park would, however, be checked and any issues raised with the County Council or Highways England, as appropriate. Councillor Mildmay-White also offered to carry out a visit to the lorry park with Councillor Beckwith as this also affected her ward.

- The air quality along Orttewell Road was monitored in 2019 and the levels of nitrogen dioxide pollution along this road were very low when compared to other locations in Bury St Edmunds and the wider district. However, despite this, the Council was aware of the complaints received from residents regarding the perceived poor air quality in this location and a monitoring point had been reinstated. This should provide evidence to ascertain whether there had been any substantial change in air quality over the last three years.
- There was no legal limit regarding the level of road noise generated and therefore no enforcement powers could be utilised by West Suffolk Council to mitigate any potential impact of noise from the road. However, some of the measures suggested by the O&S Committee to reduce the noisier vehicles and flow of traffic may assist with reducing noise levels. Councillor Drummond would support Councillor Glossop with her work to raise these issues with SCC. In addition, the continued promotion of greener vehicles not only had a positive impact on the environment but would also help to reduce noise levels.

Although no vote was required, the Cabinet formally noted, supported and endorsed the recommendations of the Committee for Cabinet to take forward, which were as follows:

It be agreed that West Suffolk Council Cabinet will write to Suffolk County Council to:

1. Find out whether Orttewell Road has been monitored as part of the county HGV review and if so, what are the results.
2. Request Suffolk County Council (SCC) to define "no frontage development" and why numerous dwellings, play area, sports field etc. adjacent to Orttewell Road are not considered vulnerable.
3. Find out what is "the very significant projected increase in traffic flow as a result of planned housing developments" preventing opening-up the rail bridge to two-way traffic flow? and whether SCC advised the local planning authority (LPA) of the need to restrict traffic flow at the bridge during the Vision 2031 process?
4. Request Suffolk County Council and/or West Suffolk Council Cabinet to establish if National Highways are still agreeable to new A14 signage and if developers of Suffolk Park are open to funding.

It be agreed that West Suffolk Council Cabinet will:

1. Instigate investigation into noise, air pollution and residential amenity in the Orttewell road area.
2. Check that the Rougham Hill lorry park is in full operation.

The Chair thanked Councillors Shipp and Beckwith for their contributions to the discussion.

(At the conclusion of this item, Councillors Beckwith and Shipp left the meeting and Councillor Broughton returned.)

326. Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 27 January 2022 (Report number: CAB/WS/22/004)

The Cabinet received this report, which informed members of the following substantive items discussed by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee held on 27 January 2022:

1. Ernst and Young – Auditor’s Annual Report 2020 to 2021.
2. Delivering a Sustainable Medium-Term Budget
3. Treasury Management Report (December 2021)
4. Financial Resilience – Strategy Statement 2022 to 2023 and Treasury Management Code of Practice
5. Work Programme Update 2022.
6. 2021 to 2022 Performance Report (Quarter 3)

Councillor Ian Houlder, Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet, including that separate reports were included on the Cabinet agenda for items 2, 3 and 4 above.

327. Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 27 January 2022 - Delivering a Sustainable Medium-Term Budget (Report number: CAB/WS/22/005)

The Cabinet considered this report, which was recommending to Council, approval of proposals for inclusion in the budget for 2022 to 2023 and medium-term financial plans.

Following the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee’s (PASC) consideration and subsequent recommendation to Cabinet on 18 November 2021 regarding the inclusion of proposals in the budget for 2022 to 2023 and in the medium term, PASC was recommending further proposals, having been provided with an updated position.

On 27 January 2022, PASC received a further update on assumptions, anticipated savings and initiatives proposed or delivered to date to achieve a sustainable and balanced budget for 2022 to 2023. This would not only deliver services but also the strategic vision and priorities of the Council while meeting future challenges.

The proposals, as set out in Section 2 and Table 1 at paragraph 3.4 of Report number: PAS/WS/22/002 (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 22 February 2022. 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 Property, 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 2022 to 2023 and beyond.

Recommended to Council, as part of the budget setting process (22 February 2022):

That the proposals detailed in Section 2 and Table 1 at paragraph 3.4 of Report number: PAS/WS/22/002, be included in the 2022 to 2023 budget.

328. Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 27 January 2022 - Financial Resilience - Strategy Statement 2022 to 2023 and Treasury Management Code of Practice (Report number: CAB/WS/22/006)

The Cabinet considered this report, which was recommending to Council, the approval of the Financial Resilience - Strategy Statement 2022 to 2023 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 2022 to 2023 was attached as Appendix 1 to Report number: FRS/WS/22/002, 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.

On 27 January 2022, the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (PASC) considered the report and asked various questions relating to the setting of net costs, capital and revenue limits and the borrowing strategy, to which responses were provided. In particular, the Committee discussed the Treasury Management Code of Practice (Appendix 2) and referred to page 24 of the Code and the section which related to 'Use of External Brokers/Advisors/Fund Managers'. The Committee expressed some reservations around the wording used within that section, in that the Council 'will' employ the services of other organisations to assist it in the field of treasury management. The Committee recommended that this word be replaced with 'may', so that the Council had the flexibility around the use of services of other organisations.

Councillor Broughton thanked Councillor Houlder, Chair of PASC and his Committee for their careful scrutiny of both documents, and together with other members of the Cabinet, supported the approval of the Code of Practice, including the proposed amendment, and approval of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2022 to 2023.

Recommended to Council (22 February 2022):

That:

1. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2022 to 2023 as set out in Appendix 1 to Report number: FRS/WS/22/002, be approved.
2. The Treasury Management Code of Practice, as set out in Appendix 2 to Report number: FRS/WS/22/002, be approved, subject to an amendment within the section of the Code of Practice entitled 'Use of External Brokers / Advisors / Fund Managers', with the removal of the word 'will', to be replaced with the word 'may', to ensure that the Council has the flexibility on the use of services of other organisations.

329. Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 27 January 2022 - Treasury Management Report (December 2021) (Report number: CAB/WS/22/007)

The Cabinet considered this report, which was recommending to Council, the approval of the Treasury Management Report for the third quarter of the 2021 to 2022 financial year.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property, drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet, including that the total amount invested at 31 December 2021 was £76,500,000. Interest achieved in the first nine months of the financial year amounted to £53,087 against a budget for the period of £33,750.

External borrowing as of 31 December 2021 increased to £14,000,000 from £4 million at 30 September 2021. Correspondingly, the Council's level of internal borrowing reduced to £37,675,406 as at 31 December 2021. Overall borrowing, both external and internal was expected to increase over the full financial year, but not by as much as was originally budgeted for. Borrowing costs (interest payable and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)) for the year were forecast to be £1,026,452 against an approved budget of £3,135,850, although this could change if more external borrowing was undertaken than was currently forecast. The difference would be placed in the capital financing reserve to use towards future interest rate fluctuation.

The 2021 to 2022 Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy set out the Council's projections for the current financial year. The budget for investment income in 2021 to 2022 was £45,000, which was based on a 0.25 percent target average interest rate of return on investments.

Report number: FRS/WS/22/001 also included a summary of the borrowing activity during the period; borrowing strategy and sources of borrowing; borrowing and capital costs – affordability; borrowing and income – proportionality; borrowing and asset yields; Prudential Code, Treasury Management Code and MRP consultation and market information.

The Cabinet noted the scrutiny of the report undertaken by the Financial Resilience Sub-Committee and subsequently by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (PASC), noting from Report number: CAB/WS/22/007, the discussions that had been held.

Having been invited by the Chair to speak on this item, Councillor Houlder, Chair of PASC stated that representatives of the Council's appointed treasury management advisors, Arlingclose, had been invited to a future meeting of the PASC to give further detail on the service they provided to the Council.

Recommended to Council: (22 February 2022):

That the Treasury Management Report (December 2021), as contained in Report number: FRS/WS/22/001, be approved.

330. Budget and Council Tax Setting: 2022 to 2023 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022 to 2026 (Report number: CAB/WS/22/008)

The Cabinet considered this report, which presented the proposals for Budget and Council Tax Setting in 2022 to 2023 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2022 to 2026.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property, drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet, including that Report number: CAB/WS/22/008 provided details of the Council's proposed revenue and capital budgets for 2022 to 2023 and in the medium term, and the Cabinet was required to recommend to Council approval of the 2022 to 2023 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 327. above, the Cabinet supported the key budget assumptions and proposals for securing a balanced budget for 2022 to 2023, as previously considered and recommended by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and incorporated into Report number: CAB/WS/22/005.

West Suffolk Council had an exemplary track record in robust financial management which had meant it had continued to deliver high quality services as well as meeting the strategic vision of the authority.

This was despite a series of challenges. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic which had not only reduced income (Government policy had been that councils created income to supplement reduction in national funding) but also costs to the Council in playing its role to support communities and businesses. National finances had been reduced significantly over the last decade for local councils and added burdens had been placed on authorities too during this time.

The 2022 to 2023 budget had been created not only to be balanced and sustainable but as an investment in the priorities of the district's residents and businesses. It was designed to make the communities of West Suffolk greener, healthier and more prosperous.

Members considered the report in detail, which included the following issues for securing a balanced budget for 2022 to 2023 and plans for the medium term from 2022 to 2026, together with corresponding detailed appendices:

- Section 1: Summary: which included reference to the Council's proposed new £9 million investment in a range of initiatives to help meet priorities that would contribute to achieving the aspiration of zero carbon emissions by 2030; progressing its health and wellbeing agenda; and a proposed £1.3 million (2022 to 2026) for the upkeep of the district's open spaces, parks and other leisure attractions
- Section 2: Context: which included reference to the Council's robust financial planning and management enabling the Council to deliver both services and the strategic aims of West Suffolk despite the pressures on local government finances; the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Council's finances, including the role of the Council in supporting residents and businesses throughout the pandemic; 'Investing in our Growth Agenda'; the Council's transformation programme; and further detail on the Council's plans to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030
- Section 3: Provisional local government finance settlement: which included reference to the Revenue Support Grant and Rural Services Delivery Grant; the Lower Tier Services Grant; the new 2022 to 2023 Services Grant; the future of New Homes Bonus; the expected cessation of the Sales, Fees and Charges Lost Income Reimbursement scheme; business rates and business rates reliefs; Transitional Relief and Supporting Small Business Relief; Collection Fund deficits; and council tax referendum limits.
- Section 4: Council tax for 2022 to 2023
- Section 5: Setting the budget – 2022 to 2023 and across the medium term to 2025 to 2026: which included reference to inflation assumptions assumed in the MTFS; fees and charges (see further detail below); delivering a sustainable future beyond 2022 to 2023
- Section 6: Capital programme 2020 to 2025: which included reference to the planned capital expenditure over four years to 2025/2026; disposal of surplus assets
- Section 7: Minimum revenue provision (MRP)
- Section 8: General fund balance
- Section 9: Earmarked reserves
- Section 10: Strategic priorities and MTFS reserve
- Section 11: Adequacy of reserves

Members noted that a number of fees and charges had been reviewed, as explained in Attachment D, Appendix 6. Detailed in Attachment D, Appendix 6a were those fees and charges that were proposed to be increased by more than five percent or be increased by less than five percent but due to their

nature and potential public interest had been included. As set out in the West Suffolk Fees and Charges Policy and the Constitution, where fees and charges were proposed to be increased by more than five percent, this constituted a Key Decision. This would therefore be a decision of Cabinet and would be subject to call-in.

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 provided an extra burden on taxpayers but did mean the protection of vital services which would otherwise possibly have to be considered for reductions. Councillors were asked and expected by Government to look at local taxation levels to meet the authority's financial needs to support its communities and help future proof from financial uncertainty.

To help secure a balanced budget for 2022 to 2023, it was proposed that the Cabinet should recommend to Council the level of Band D council tax for 2022 to 2023 be set at £187.11, an increase of £5 on the average West Suffolk council tax for 2021 to 2022. This recommendation was based upon the option to harmonise the council tax levels of the two predecessor areas (Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury) by 2022 to 2023. For 2022 to 2023 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). 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 2022 to 2023 and for developing plans in the medium term. This sentiment was echoed by other members, including commending the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership, particularly for the additional work created for the partnership during the pandemic.

The Cabinet acknowledged that despite the financial challenges being faced including the added pressures of COVID-19 and particularly its impact on income, the Council had made, and were continuing to make, successful investments in services; growth; greener; 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 2022 to 2023.

Recommended to Council, as part of the budget setting process (22 February 2022):

That:

1. the revenue and capital budget for 2022 to 2026, plus 2021 to 2022 capital projects that subsequently require to be carried

forward at the year end, attached at Attachment A to Report number: CAB/WS/22/008, and as detailed in Attachment D (Appendices 1-5), Attachment E (Appendices 1-4), Attachment F and Attachment H, be approved.

2. Having taken into account the conclusions of the Director's (Resources and Property) 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/22/008, the Cabinet recommends the level of Band D council tax for 2022 to 2023 be set at £187.11, an increase of £5 on the average West Suffolk council tax for 2021 to 2022. This recommendation is based on the option to harmonise the council tax levels of the two predecessor areas (Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury) by 2022 to 2023. The level of council tax beyond 2022 to 2023 will be set in accordance with the annual budget process for the relevant financial year.
3. The Director (Resources and Property), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property, 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 extension of the business rate reliefs set out in paragraphs 3.12 to 3.15 of Report number: CAB/WS/22/008, in support of West Suffolk's business community.

Resolved:

That:

5. Approval be given for the fees and charges price increases (as set out in Attachment D appendix 6a).

Recommended to Council, as part of the budget setting process (22 February 2022):

That:

6. 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.)

331. Community Chest and Theatre Royal Grants 2022 to 2023 (Report number: CAB/WS/22/009)

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 2022 to 2023 financial year.

Approval was also sought for a separate core funding grant to the Theatre Royal in Bury St Edmunds.

Community Chest had £466,733 available for allocation for 2022 to 2023. No project monies have been previously committed and carried forward from 2021 to 2022.

Applications for Community Chest funding for 2022 to 2023 closed on 29 October 2021. A total of 56 applications were considered, totalling £1,19,398.80 from a wide variety of organisations as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

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 2021 and January 2022 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 the scheme was oversubscribed by 256 percent with almost £2 million worth of applications received. 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 56 applications and extremely difficult decisions needed to be made. Having ascertained whether an application firstly met the selection and eligibility criteria, on many occasions, the Working Party felt that the amount it applied for could not be granted in full in 2022 to 2023. 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 requested. The Working Party had also considered that a proposed reduction for some 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.

The Cabinet acknowledged the benefits to organisations of the discretionary Community Chest grant scheme and recognised the extremely difficult task undertaken by the Working Party and in light of the constraints it had, members felt the Working Party had made appropriate recommendations that would benefit a range of laudable projects to be delivered across West Suffolk.

A discussion was held on the sizeable grant recommended for Citizens Advice West Suffolk (CAWS); however, the value of the organisation to the community, Council and other services in West Suffolk was acknowledged, recognising the importance of their work in supporting residents in need and the delivery of their preventative services. Due to the level of expertise and the Council's longstanding positive relationship, the Working Party was keen for the Council to support CAWS as best it could within the limited parameters of the Community Chest scheme and budget.

In response to questions, the Cabinet was informed that successful recipients of a Community Chest grant were required to submit quarterly monitoring reports to ascertain progress on project delivery. The Working Party was due to meet in March 2022 where a discussion would be held on options for reporting project progress to Cabinet and better promoting success stories.

The Cabinet turned to its consideration of the proposed core funding grant for the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds, as set out in Appendix 2. Having acknowledged that the Council would review the theatre's recovery plans from COVID-19, together with the Council's long-term plan 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 be granted at £61,000 for 2022 to 2023.

Resolved:

That:

A. Recommendations of the Grant Working Party: Community Chest

1. the allocation of Community Chest funding for 2022 to 2023, be approved, namely:

a.	Reach Community Projects, Newmarket	£5,000
b.	West Suffolk Citizens Advice, West Suffolk	£215,000
c.	Abbeycroft Leisure, West Suffolk	£10,992
d.	Mildenhall and District Sea Cadets, Mildenhall	£6,000
e.	Moreton Hall Youth Action Group, Bury St Edmunds	£12,520
f.	Suffolk Accident and Rescue Service (SARS) West Suffolk	£10,000
g.	West Suffolk Hive CIC, West Suffolk	£1,880
h.	Alumah CIO, Brandon	£4,058

i.	Bury Women's Aid, West Suffolk	£16,225
j.	Hope After Suicide Loss, West Suffolk	£14,175
k.	Relate, West Suffolk	£3,750
l.	Room 4, Haverhill	£4,680
m.	Suffolk Rape Crisis, West Suffolk	£7,000
n.	The Befriending Scheme, Haverhill	£5,267
o.	Homestart in Suffolk, West Suffolk	£5,700
p.	Homestart Mid and West Suffolk West Suffolk	£15,000
q.	Sharing Parenting – Community Outreach Newmarket	£5,400
r.	Sharing Parenting – SEN Parent Support West Suffolk	£12,480
s.	Still Good Food CIO, Bury St Edmunds	£7,400
t.	Art Branches CIC, West Suffolk	£10,776
u.	Memories are Golden CIO, Haverhill	£5,100
v.	Millennium Farm Trust, West Suffolk	£5,000
w.	St Nicholas Hospice Trust, West Suffolk	£20,000
x.	Steel Bones, West Suffolk	£5,500
y.	The Shed, West Row	£5,000
z.	Bury Drop In, Bury St Edmunds	£10,000
aa.	Gatehouse Caring, Bury St Edmunds	£10,000
bb.	Our Special Friends, West Suffolk	£10,000
cc.	The Voluntary Network, West Suffolk	£14,430
dd.	Wood Monkey CIC, West Suffolk	£8,400

2. No Community Chest funding be awarded for two years for the reasons outlined in paragraph 3.3 of Report number: CAB/WS/22/009.

3. For the reasons set out in paragraph 3.5.2 of Report number: CAB/WS/22/009, no Community Chest funding for 2022 to 2023 be awarded to:

- a. Abbey 1000, West Suffolk
- b. All Saints Under Fives Pre-School, Newmarket
- c. Brandon Creative Forum, Brandon
- d. Bury Christian Youth, Bury St Edmunds
- e. Cavendish Bowls Club, Cavendish
- f. Clare Swimming Club, Clare
- g. Dance East, West Suffolk
- h. Mildenhall Girl Guides, Mildenhall
- i. St Peter's Church, Brandon
- j. Suffolk Young People's Health Project, West Suffolk
- k. Brandon in Bloom, Brandon
- l. Greener Growth CIC, West Suffolk
- m. Haverhill Community Trust – Volunteer Centre, Haverhill
- n. SOS Bus CIO, Newmarket
- o. The Tree Action Society of Clare (TASC), Clare
- p. Beck Row Methodist Church, Beck Row
- q. Honington and Sapiston Village Hall, Honington and Sapiston
- r. Lidgate Village Hall, Lidgate

- s. Suffolk Building Preservation Trust Limited, Pakenham
- t. Freedom Bury St Edmunds CIC, Bury St Edmunds
- u. Restitute CIC, West Suffolk
- v. Suffolk Family Carers, West Suffolk
- w. Suffolk Mind, West Suffolk
- x. The Lightwave Community CIO, Red Lodge and Beck Row
- y. St John's Church, Beck Row
- z. Newmarket Community Arts Centre Forum, Newmarket

B. Core Funding: Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds

That a grant of £61,000 core funding be approved for the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds for 2022 to 2023, ahead of a wider review of funding in time for the 2023 to 2024 award, as set out in Appendix 2 to Report number: CAB/WS/22/009.

332. Decisions Plan: 1 February 2022 to 31 May 2022 (Report number: CAB/WS/22/010)

The Cabinet considered this report which was the Cabinet Decisions Plan covering the period 1 February 2022 to 31 May 2022.

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

The meeting concluded at 6.53 pm

Signed by:

Chair
