

Cabinet

Title	Agenda																				
Date	Tuesday 13 June 2023																				
Time	6.00 pm																				
Venue	Conference Room Mildenhall Hub Sheldrick Way Mildenhall IP28 7JX																				
Membership	<p>Leader Cliff Waterman</p> <p>Deputy Leader Victor Lukaniuk</p> <table> <tr> <td>Councillor</td><td>Portfolio</td></tr> <tr> <td>Donna Higgins</td><td>Families and Communities</td></tr> <tr> <td>Diane Hind</td><td>Resources</td></tr> <tr> <td>Gerald Kelly</td><td>Governance and Regulatory</td></tr> <tr> <td>Richard O'Driscoll</td><td>Housing</td></tr> <tr> <td>Ian Shipp</td><td>Leisure</td></tr> <tr> <td>David Taylor</td><td>Operations</td></tr> <tr> <td>Jim Thorndyke</td><td>Planning</td></tr> <tr> <td>Cliff Waterman</td><td>Leader</td></tr> <tr> <td>Indy Wijenayaka</td><td>Growth</td></tr> </table>	Councillor	Portfolio	Donna Higgins	Families and Communities	Diane Hind	Resources	Gerald Kelly	Governance and Regulatory	Richard O'Driscoll	Housing	Ian Shipp	Leisure	David Taylor	Operations	Jim Thorndyke	Planning	Cliff Waterman	Leader	Indy Wijenayaka	Growth
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Interests – declaration and restriction on participation	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the authority's register or other registrable 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																				
Quorum	Four Members																				
Committee administrator	<p>Sharon Turner Democratic Services Officer</p> <p>Telephone 01638 719237</p> <p>Email democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p>																				

Public information



Venue	Conference Room, Mildenhall Hub, Sheldrick Way, Mildenhall, IP28 7JX
Contact information	Telephone: 01638 719237 Email: democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk Website: www.westsuffolk.gov.uk
Access to agenda and reports before the meeting	The agenda and reports will be available to view at least five clear days before the meeting on our website.
Attendance at meetings	<p>This meeting is being held in person in order to comply with the Local Government Act 1972. We may be required to restrict the number of members of the public able to attend in accordance with the room capacity. If you consider it is necessary for you to attend, please inform Democratic Services in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>As a local authority, we have a corporate and social responsibility for the safety of our staff, our councillors and visiting members of the public. We, therefore, request that you exercise personal responsibility and do not attend the meeting if you feel at all unwell.</p> <p>West Suffolk Council continues to promote good hygiene practices with hand sanitiser and wipes being available in the meeting room. Attendees are also able to wear face coverings, should they wish to</p>
Public participation	<p>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.</p> <p>The Constitution allows that a person who wishes to speak must register at least 15 minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start. We urge anyone who wishes to register to speak to notify Democratic Services by 9am on the day of the meeting so that advice can be given on the arrangements in place.</p> <p>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 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.
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:</p> <p>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 - 6

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2023 (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. Members wishing to speak during this session are encouraged to give notice in advance. 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.

A person who wishes to speak must register at least 15 minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start. This can be done online by sending the request to democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk or telephoning 01638 719237 or in person by telling the Committee Administrator present at the meeting. **We would urge anyone who wishes to register to speak to notify Democratic Services by 9am on the day of the meeting so that advice can be given on the arrangements in place.**

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

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| 6. | Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee:
30 March 2023 | 7 - 12 |
|-----------|--|---------------|

Report number: **CAB/WS/23/024**
 'Outgoing' Chair of the Committee: Councillor Ian Houlder
 'Outgoing' Portfolio holder: Councillor Sarah Broughton
 Lead officer: Christine Brain

Non key decisions

- | | | |
|-----------|---|----------------|
| 7. | Annual Review and Appointment of the Cabinet's Joint Committee, Panel and Other Working Groups | 13 - 36 |
|-----------|---|----------------|

Report number: **CAB/WS/23/025**
 Portfolio holder: Councillor Cliff Waterman
 Lead officers: Jennifer Eves and Teresa Halliday

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| 8. | Decisions Plan: 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024 | 37 - 56 |
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To consider the most recently published version of the Cabinet's Decisions Plan

Report number: **CAB/WS/23/026**
 Portfolio holder: Councillor Cliff Waterman
 Lead officer: Ian Gallin

- | | | |
|-----------|---|----------------|
| 9. | Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs | 57 - 60 |
|-----------|---|----------------|

Report number: **CAB/WS/23/027**
 Portfolio holder: Councillor Diane Hind
 Lead officer: Rachael Mann

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| 10. | Exclusion of press and public |
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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

11. Exempt appendices 1 and 2: Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs (paragraphs 1 and 2) 61 - 64

Exempt appendices 1 and 2 to Report number **CAB/WS/23/027**

Portfolio holder: Councillor Diane Hind

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)

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Cabinet



Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held on **Tuesday 11 April 2023** at **6.00 pm** in the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3YU

Present

Councillors

Chair John Griffiths (Leader of the Council)

Vice Chair Jo Rayner and Sarah Broughton (Deputy Leaders of the Council)

Carol Bull
Andy Drummond
Robert Everitt
Susan Glossop

Sara Mildmay-White
David Roach
Peter Stevens

By invitation

Ian Shipp

(Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

461. **Apologies for absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

462. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

463. **Declarations of interest**

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

464. **Open forum**

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

465. **Public participation**

There were no members of the public in attendance on this occasion.

466. Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 7 March 2023 (Report number CAB/WS/23/020)

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 March 2023:

1. Performance report: December 2022
2. ARP financial performance report
3. Welfare reform update
4. Forthcoming issues

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

Councillor Broughton also placed her thanks on record for the sterling work of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership.

467. Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 9 March 2023 (Report number CAB/WS/23/021)

The Cabinet received this report, which informed Members of the following substantive items discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on 9 March 2023:

1. Mildenhall Hub post implementation review
2. Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny – 25 January 2023
3. Work programme update 2023

Councillor Ian Shipp, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet and explained that a separate report was included later on the Cabinet agenda in relation to Agenda Item 1. above, under Report number CAB/WS/23/022. Councillor Shipp also advised the Cabinet that, subsequent to the Committee's meeting, Councillor Andy Neal had been approached by residents, as a local ward member, regarding a suggestion that given it was also a busy pedestrian crossing point for the Mildenhall Hub, a lower speed limit on Wamil Way might also be considered. Councillor Shipp considered that this suggestion was consistent with the Committee's findings. Councillor Jo Rayner, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs, indicated that she considered that it was appropriate that the Cabinet may wish to amend recommendation 7. of Report number CAB/WS/23/022 to include this proposal in the ongoing discussions with the Highway Authority.

Councillor Shipp also wished to thank Councillor Griffiths for his leadership and support over the past four years. He also thanked Councillor Margaret Marks for the work which she had undertaken as the Council's representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee.

Collectively, the Cabinet also thanked Councillor Shipp, along with the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for all of the work which they had undertaken within their scrutiny role.

468. **Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 9 March 2023 - Mildenhall Hub post implementation review (Report number CAB/WS/23/022)**

At its meeting on 9 March 2023, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received Report number OAS/WS/3/003 which had carried out a post implementation scrutiny review of the Council's involvement in the Mildenhall Hub, which had opened to the public in May 2021 and represented a combined public sector investment of over £40 million into facilities for Mildenhall and the surrounding area.

As a broad structure to the review, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee examined the following issues, to make recommendations to Cabinet/Council accordingly:

1. Had the capital project achieved the objectives last set for it by the Council?
2. How had the Mildenhall Hub performed in its first 20 months against its business plan and funding model?
3. What remaining actions were there to deliver the Council's original objectives.

The review had also included information on the baseline position; delivery of strategic objectives (non-financial); impact of new leisure facilities; wider hub concept and other partners' facilities; environmental performance; external recognition; delivery of financial objectives and further actions to implement project objectives.

After considering the content of the review, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had submitted eight recommendations for endorsement by the Cabinet, as set out in Report number CAB/WS/23/022.

Councillor Ian Shipp, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, also drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet.

As had been raised under the previous item (minute number 467. above), the Cabinet also discussed the proposed amendment to Recommendation 7. with regards to a lower speed limit being introduced on Wamil Way, Mildenhall. The Cabinet duly supported this amendment.

Resolved:

That:

1. Subject to the suggested actions below, the Cabinet endorsed the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's conclusion that the Mildenhall Hub has met the strategic and environmental objectives set for it by Forest Heath District Council in 2018 and is making good progress towards the break-even financial test by year five of its operation.
2. Subject to joint-funding and planning consent, adaptations be made to the eastern plaza to:

- Reduce the walking distance from disabled parking spaces to the eastern entrance;
 - Create a disabled drop-off;
 - Future-proof the future expansion of the Hub by providing more disabled parking spaces.
3. When any works to the east plaza are complete, investigate, consult on and, if appropriate, introduce a Traffic Regulation Order to regulate the parking on site.
 4. The current and future capacity of on-site car parking should be taken into account as part of any proposals for expansion of education capacity at and adjacent to the Hub; and the Council, as Hub landlord, should make submissions to the Local Planning Authority, Highways Authority and/or education partners accordingly on behalf of the partnership.
 5. The final required highways audit of the Queensway / Sheldrick Way junction be commissioned in late 2023.
 6. The current and future capacity of the Queensway / Sheldrick Way junction should be taken into account as part of any highway appraisals for the delivery of the West Mildenhall masterplan and/or any proposals for expansion of primary and secondary education capacity at and adjacent to the Hub; and the Council, as Hub landlord, should make submissions to the Local Planning Authority, Highways Authority and/or education partners accordingly on behalf of the partnership.
 7. Cabinet makes representation to Suffolk County Council regarding a light-controlled crossing being installed at the zebra crossing in the High Street leading to Church Walk, Mildenhall and the introduction of a 20mph speed limit on Wamil Way, Mildenhall.
 8. To review progress against the year five financial test, a final report on the Mildenhall Hub Post Implementation Review be included in the Committee's work programme for 2026, subject to the completion of a scoping / key lines of enquiry exercise being carried out with the Strategic Director.

469. **Decisions Plan: 1 April 2023 to 31 May 2024 (Report number CAB/WS/23/023)**

The Cabinet considered this report which was the Cabinet Decisions Plan covering the period 1 April 2023 to 31 May 2024.

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

470. **Vote of Thanks to the Leader of the Council**

Prior to the conclusion of the meeting, Councillor Jo Rayner, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs, made the following 'Vote of Thanks' to Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council, on behalf of the Cabinet:

"With the news last week of Councillor Griffiths deciding not to stand for leader after May, I would like to take a moment, on behalf of Cabinet, to share our thanks to John.

John, you have been an exceptional leader over the two decades in which you have led St Edmundsbury Borough Council and West Suffolk Council. You have created a long lasting legacy of investment in the wellbeing and prosperity of West Suffolk's communities, businesses and environment and have been a stalwart champion of the area locally, regionally and nationally.

The achievements we have seen in West Suffolk is testament to your ability to work across boundaries and parties to get the best outcomes and services for the people of West Suffolk, even during the most challenging times. John you will certainly be a hard act to follow. From your Cabinet colleagues, we would like to thank you for your long dedication to public service as Leader."

Councillor Griffiths responded by thanking Councillor Rayner and the Cabinet for their kind words and also acknowledged that the achievements had been a collective effort of the Cabinet.

The meeting concluded at 6.18 pm

Signed by:

Chair

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Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 30 March 2023

Report number:	CAB/WS/23/024	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	13 June 2023
'Outgoing' Cabinet member:	Councillor Sarah Broughton 'Outgoing' Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property Telephone: 07929 305787 Email: sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
'Outgoing' Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Ian Houlder Telephone: 07597 961069 Email: ian.houlder@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 in the Decisions Plan.
Wards impacted:	All Wards.
Recommendation:	It is recommended that Report number: CAB/WS/23/024, being the report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, be noted.

1. Context to this report

- 1.1 On 30 March 2023, the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the following items:
1. Ernst and Young – 2021 to 2022 Annual Results Report to those Charged with Governance
 2. West Suffolk Annual Governance Statement 2021 to 2022
 3. 2021 to 2022 Statement of Accounts

2. Proposals within this report

2.1 Ernst and Young – 2021 to 2022 Annual Results Report to those Charged with Governance (Report number: PAS/WS/23/004)

- 2.1.1 Prior to the consideration of the 2021 to 2022 Statement of Accounts, the Committee received the above report from Mark Russell from Ernst and Young (EY) on the results of EY's work to date. A copy of the Audit Results Report was attached as Appendix A. An updated Addendum to Appendix A dated 28 March 2023 was presented to the Committee by Mark Russell (EY Partner). Attached at Appendix B was the Letter of Representation on behalf of the Council in connection with the audit of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.
- 2.1.2 Mr Russell presented the report referred the Committee to the Addendum A (28 March 2023 – pages 1 to 16) and updated members on further progress made in the audit process.
- 2.1.3 The Committee then asked questions in relation to the report to Mark Russell duly responded. In particular discussions were held on the pension liability valuation and the £2.1m difference, identifying fraud, the valuation of the solar farm; the number of man hours taken to carry out an audit compared to previous years.
- 2.1.4 The Committee was deeply frustrated and disappointed in the delay in the audit process, considering the Chief Finance Officer had signed the unaudited accounts on 28 June 2022 and EY were now auditing those accounts. Members needed assurances about delegating to the Chief Finance Officer and the Chair of the Committee in signing off the accounts once the audit was fully completed.
- 2.1.5 After hearing from EY, the majority of the Committee felt the audit was reassuring. However, the Committee wanted an assurance from EY about their output and timing of the audit and that EY needed to be held formally to account and suggested an additional recommendation highlighting the Committee's frustration to the Public Sector Audits Appointments (PSAA) on the lateness of the EY Audit.

2.1.6 At the conclusion of the debate, the Committee:

- 1) **Noted** the work in respect of the audit opinion on the financial statements of West Suffolk Council for 2021 to 2022 were ongoing.
- 2) **Noted** the external auditors had no matters to report on the council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources issued by the Auditor (Appendix A and Addendum).

2.1.7 The Committee then **Resolved**: That

- 1) The Letter of Representation on behalf of West Suffolk Council (Appendix B) attached to Report number PAS/WS/23/004, be **approved**, before the Ernst and Young Partner issues his opinion and conclusion.
- 2) The Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee be given **delegated authority** to conclude the signing of the 2021 to 2022 accounts.
- 3) Council be instructed to highlight to the Public Sector Audits Appointments (PSAA) the frustration and disappointment of the lateness of the Ernst and Young (EY) Audit for 2021 to 2022, and to seek assurance from EY on the timing of future audits.

2.2 **West Suffolk Annual Governance Statement 2021 to 2022 (Report number: PAS/WS/23/005)**

2.2.1 The Committee received Report number: PAS/WS/23/005, which sought Members' approval of the West Suffolk Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2021 to 2022, attached as Appendix A.

2.2.2 The AGS is designed to provide stakeholders of the Council with the assurance that the Council has operated within the law and that the Council has met the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

2.2.3 A key function of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee is to review and approve the draft annual governance statement prior to it being signed by the council's Leader and Chief Executive.

2.2.4 The Committee considered the report and did not raise any governance issues.

2.2.5 The Annual Governance Statement for 2021 to 2022, attached as Appendix A to Report number: PAS/WS/23/005 was **approved** for signing by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.

2.3 **2021 to 2022 Statement of Accounts (Report number: PAS/WS/23/006)**

- 2.3.1 The Committee scrutinised the 2021 to 2022 Statement of Accounts as contained within Report number: PAS/WS/23/006. Approval was sought for the accounts attached at Appendix A, in accordance with the powers delegated to it under the Council's Constitution.
- 2.3.2 The Statement of Accounts (Appendix A) had been amended, as appropriate to take on board issues raised by the audit process up to the date of distribution.
- 2.3.3 The covering report summarised financial highlights in 2021 to 2022; revenue expenditure; capital expenditure; usable reserves; pensions fund; annual governance statement and payments to councillors. The Director (Resources and Property) drew the Committee's attention to the balance sheet and explained that overall, the long-term assets were mainly the same as reported in previous years.
- 2.3.4 The Committee scrutinised the draft accounts and asked questions to which comprehensive responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on Brandon Country Park and why it was not included in the list of venues on page 132 of the Statement of Accounts. The Committee was advised that Brandon Country Park was owned by West Suffolk Council and was therefore not classed as an external/outside body.
- 2.3.5 The Committee then **Resolved**: That
- 1) The 2021 to 2022 Statement of Accounts for West Suffolk Council (Appendix A), attached to Report number: PAS/WS/23/006, in accordance with the powers delegated to it under the Council's Constitution, be **approved**.
 - 2) The Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee signs the certification for the 2021 to 2022 Statement of Accounts on behalf of the Committee.
 - 3) The Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources and Property, be given **delegated authority** to make any changes that may be required up to the date of publication.

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: [PAS/WS/23/004](#) and Appendix [A](#), [Addendum to Appendix A](#) and Appendix [B](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny: Ernst and Young – 2021 to 2022 Annual Results Report to those Charged with Governance

8.2 Report number: [PAS/WS/23/005](#) and [Appendix A](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny: West Suffolk Annual Governance Statement 2021 to 2022

8.3 Report number: [PAS/WS/23/006](#) and [Appendix A](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny: 2021 to 2022 Statement of Accounts

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

Report number:	CAB/WS/23/025	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	13 June 2023
Cabinet member:	Councillor Cliff Waterman Leader of the Council Telephone: 01284 757001 Email: cliff.waterman@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officers:	Jennifer Eves Director (HR, Governance and Regulatory) Telephone: 01284 757015 Email: jennifer.eves@westsuffolk.gov.uk Teresa Halliday Monitoring Officer Telephone: 01284 757144 Email: teresa.halliday@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 on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards

Recommendations:

- 1. It is recommended that the Leader of the Council nominates:**
 - a. One full member to be appointed to represent West Suffolk Council on the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee in 2023 to 2024.**
 - b. Two substitute members to be appointed to represent West Suffolk Council on the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee in 2023 to 2024.**
 - c. It be noted that on the nomination of the Leader of the Council, the Monitoring Officer may exercise their delegated authority to appoint appropriate Cabinet membership (full and substitute members) to the above joint committee during 2023 to 2024, as necessary.**
- 2. It is recommended that the Cabinet:**
 - a. Continues to operate the Staff Consultative Panel in 2023 to 2024 in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) contained in Appendix A to Report number: CAB/WS/23/025.**
 - 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/23/025.**
- 3. Continues to operate the West Suffolk Grant Working Party in 2023 to 2024 in accordance with the ToR contained in Appendix B to Report number: CAB/WS/23/025.**
- 4. Continues to operate the West Suffolk Local Plan Working Group in 2023 to 2024 in accordance with the ToR contained in Appendix C to Report number: CAB/WS/23/025.**
- 5. Approves the ToR for the new West Suffolk Environment and Sustainability Working Group for 2023 to 2024 as set out in**

**Appendix D to Report number:
CAB/WS/23/025.**

- 5. It be noted that should it become necessary and on the nominations of Group Leaders, the Monitoring Officer may exercise their delegated authority to appoint appropriate membership (full and substitute members) to the above Panel, Working Party and Working Group during 2023 to 2024 in accordance with their Terms of Reference.**
- 6. It be noted that, subject to resources being available to support them, informal task-and-finish working groups or taskforces can be established by the Leader to consider specific issues as required throughout 2023 to 2024.**

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 / taskforces

- 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 working groups for the year 2023 to 2024, as set out in section 2. below.

2. Joint committee, panel and other 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) membership of the Joint Committee consists of one full member and two substitute members and is required to comprise of Cabinet members.

- 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 \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/CAB.WS.20.003%20Appendix%201%20-%20Review%20of%20the%20ARP%20Constitution.pdf)
- 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. One full member, be appointed to represent West Suffolk Council on the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee in 2023 to 2024.**
 - 2. Two substitute members be appointed to represent West Suffolk Council on the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee in 2023 to 2024.**
 - 3. It be noted that on the nomination of the Leader of the Council, the Monitoring Officer may exercise their delegated authority to appoint appropriate Cabinet membership (full and substitute members) to the above joint committee during 2023 to 2024, 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 in 2019 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. The terms of reference are attached as Appendix A.

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 2023 to 2024 in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) contained in Appendix A to Report number: CAB/WS/23/025.**
- 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 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 a 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 the applications 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 closely involved in the process. The terms of reference are attached as Appendix B.

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 2023 to 2024 in accordance with the ToR contained in Appendix B to Report number: CAB/WS/23/025.**

2.4 **West Suffolk Local Plan Working Group**

- 2.4.1 The Working Group is a 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. The terms of reference are attached as Appendix C.
- 2.4.2 To help shape and form a member-led 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.
- 2.4.3 The alternative option to continuing the operation of the Local Plan Working Group would be to test and refine site and policy options as well as draft policy and the Local Plan using Cabinet or Council, with the option for Overview and Scrutiny inspection. However, this is often a very detailed, technical task and can be more effectively undertaken by a small working group to explore options, key issues, and test policy/site options in detail. The continuing appointment of the Local Plan Working Group also allows members to lead and develop the Local Plan throughout its preparation process. Subject to the approval by Cabinet and Council in Autumn 2023, the consultation on the West Suffolk Local Plan Preferred Options Document is planned to commence by early 2024.
- 2.4.4 **It is recommended that the West Suffolk Local Plan Working Group continues to operate in 2023 to 2024 in accordance with the ToR contained in Appendix C to Report number: CAB/WS/23/025.**
- 2.5 **West Suffolk Environment and Sustainability Working Group**
- 2.5.1 The purpose of the proposed West Suffolk Environment and Sustainability Working Group is to review the progress that West Suffolk Council has made in delivering its action plans and move to Net Zero. It will also make recommendations to Cabinet on West Suffolk Council's future role in protecting and enhancing the environment, both in the way in which it carries out its operations and through wider work with West Suffolk's businesses and communities.

- 2.5.2 The Working Group will be a non-decision-making body and will consist of eight members. Cabinet will appoint the Chair and Vice-Chair and Group Leaders will appoint to the Working Group, with five members (including the Chair and Vice Chair of the Working Group) from The West Suffolk Working Partnership, and three members from the Conservative Group.
- 2.5.3 Agenda papers and meetings will not be accessible by the public; however, the Working Group's recommendations and the rationale behind them will be published when presented to subsequent publicly accessible Cabinet meetings.
- 2.5.4 **It is recommended that Cabinet approves the ToR for the new West Suffolk Environment and Sustainability Working Group for 2023 to 2024 as set out in Appendix D to Report number: CAB/WS/23/025.**

2.5 Delegated Authority

- 2.5.1 During 2023 to 2024, 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 Monitoring Officer 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 Monitoring Officer may exercise their delegated authority to appoint appropriate membership (full and substitute members) to the above Panel, Working Party and Working Group during 2023 to 2024 in accordance with their Terms of Reference.**

2.6 Other informal working groups

- 2.6.1 The Cabinet may also during 2023 to 2024 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 on the direction of the Leader.
- 2.6.2 **It should therefore be noted that, provided the resources are available to support them, informal task-and-finish working groups or taskforces be established to consider specific issues as required throughout 2023 to 2024.**

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](#)

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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

Role and Purpose of the Grant Working Party

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) This Group evolved to form the West Suffolk Grant Working Party, as agreed by Cabinet on 10 September 2019 (Report number: [CAB/WS/19/027 - 10 September 2019](#) refers)

Membership

Membership will be broadly apportioned in line with the political balance and appointees from each party will be agreed by their respective group leader.

Substitutes

Each political 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 Working Party meetings and will have access to all papers and reports.

Portfolio holders

Members of the Cabinet shall have observer status; however, the Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities will be specifically invited to attend each meeting, to oversee and contribute to discussions, as appropriate.

Chair and Vice Chair

The Working Party shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair from amongst its membership at its first meeting of each municipal year by a majority vote of the Working Party members.

Frequency of meetings

The Working Party will specifically need to meet to consider the applications for Community Chest funding, which may be on two or three occasions during the autumn/winter each year. Its recommendations will need to be presented to Cabinet by February each year. With the agreement of the Chair, other meetings may be convened at other times, as substantive business dictates.

It shall be the decision of the Chair whether meetings will be held virtually, in person, or a combination of both.

Quorum

The quorum for meetings shall be four members.

Voting

The Working Party should work towards achieving a consensus but where this cannot be achieved voting shall be by a show of hands with the Chair having a casting vote.

Officer Support

The lead officer for the Working Party shall be the Director (Families and Communities), supported by the Service Manager (Families and Communities), Families and Communities Team Leader and the Families and Communities Officer that has specific responsibility for facilitating Community Chest grants. Administration of meetings will be undertaken by the Democratic Services Team.

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 Working Party and have the potential to damage the Council's reputation.

Papers should therefore (minutes, reports etc) 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.

Limitations

As a working party, the group does not have any delegated decision making authority and any recommendations would be considered by Cabinet or the relevant Portfolio Holder/s for approval or adoption.

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 Planning in monitoring the delivery of the project timetable
- Undertake other roles that the Portfolio Holder for Planning, in consultation with the Chair, considers appropriate

In order to perform these roles, the Portfolio Holder for Planning 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 Planning may modify the work programme or notify the Committee of changes to it.

Membership

10 Members including the **Portfolio Holder for Planning**.

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 Planning 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 four 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 Director (Planning and 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.

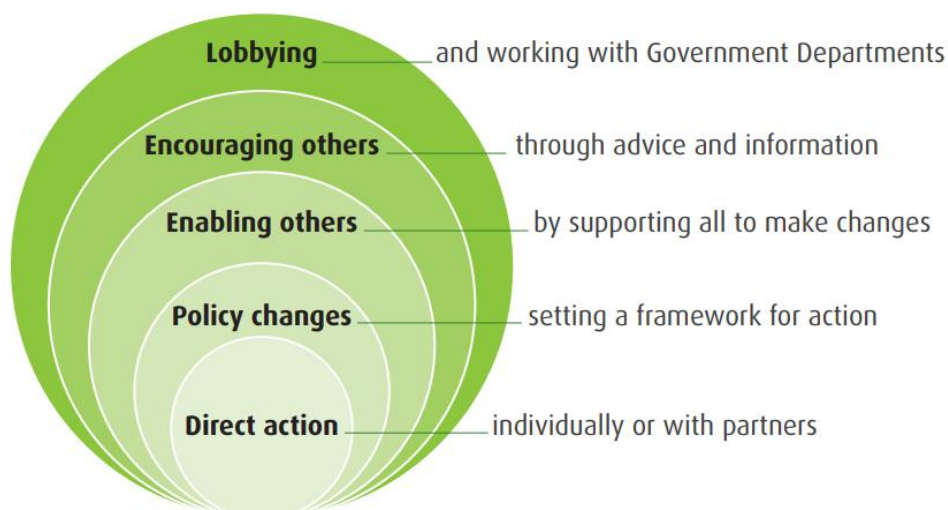
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**West Suffolk Environment and Sustainability Working Group –
Terms of Reference**

- 1. Title of group:** West Suffolk Environment and Sustainability Working Group
- 2. Purpose of group**
 - a. To review the progress that West Suffolk Council has made in delivering its action plans and move to Net Zero, and
 - b. To make recommendations to Cabinet on West Suffolk Council's future role in protecting and enhancing the environment, both in the way in which it carries out its operations and through wider work with West Suffolk's businesses and communities.
- 2.1 The review will consider how best to continue to embed environmental considerations into future decision-making, alongside wider social and economic factors and to develop a new more ambitious action plan to address both environmental, climate change and sustainability considerations. This will be brought together in an informed and considered action plan alongside recommendations for oversight of progress.
- 3. Background**
 - 3.1 In September 2019, West Suffolk Council declared a climate emergency, having already established the Environment and Climate Change Taskforce (the Taskforce). The taskforce carried out research and assembled an action plan and recommendations to be considered by Cabinet.
 - 3.2 On 21 July 2020, Cabinet agreed the action plan, to implement the recommendations of the Taskforce, to be taken forward by officers and overseen by Cabinet. Cabinet also agreed to a review of progress against the actions.
 - 3.3 The last update was agreed by Cabinet in July 2022. The action plan is monitored by the officers of the Environment Management Group (EMG) following the framework set by the Taskforce:
 - Council consumption and accreditation
 - Waste and Recycling
 - Travel and Transport
 - Housing
 - Renewables
 - Environment and Biodiversity
 - 3.4 Further information on the work of the Council to date can be found here: [Tackling climate change \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/tackling-climate-change) and each year the Council produces its [Environmental Statement](#).

- 3.5 The opportunities for West Suffolk Council to take action splits roughly into five areas as captured in the [Suffolk-Climate-Emergency-Plan.pdf \(greensuffolk.org\)](#)

Figure 3: Public sector spheres of influence



- 3.6 The previous taskforce focussed on direct actions and policy changes, and this new working group will ensure that the external opportunities are explored together with the shared commitments across Suffolk as set out in the [Suffolk-Climate-Emergency-Plan.pdf \(greensuffolk.org\)](#)
- 3.7 The working group will make recommendations to Cabinet on areas of potential future focus, in response to the evidence of current and future environmental challenges and existing activities.

4. Terms of reference (ToR)

- 4.1 To review the Council's progress on tackling environment and climate change to date to include, but not limited to:
- a. Progress against agreed action plans.
 - b. Scope and adequacy of existing action plans and opportunity to further embed net zero ambitions in all Council decisions.
 - c. Steps towards the long-term protection of specific aspects of West Suffolk's natural and built environment and enhancing the health and resilience of our communities when facing environmental threats.
 - d. Aims and delivery of the Council's £9m Net Zero fund.
 - e. The co-benefits of taking positive environmental action, particularly in regard to cost of living and health.
- 4.2 To **review** the Suffolk wide approaches and commitments including the [Suffolk-Climate-Emergency-Plan.pdf \(greensuffolk.org\)](#) and the opportunity to build on this in West Suffolk.
- 4.3 To **develop and appraise options** for:
- a. Updated actions the Council needs to take to be net-zero carbon by 2030.

- b. Updated actions the Council can take to develop a Net Zero ambition across West Suffolk.
- c. Updated actions to address the environment emergency and biodiversity improvements.
- d. Ongoing performance monitoring.
- e. Communications and campaigns.

- 4.4 This can include, but not be limited to:
- a. The council-wide policy framework.
 - b. Specific service areas or public campaigns.
 - c. The Council's purchasing decisions, including energy.
 - d. Working with communities, businesses, partner organisations and neighbouring local authorities.
 - e. Understanding the role of the council to influence and lead behavioural change across West Suffolk.
 - f. How environmental considerations can best be included in future council processes, policies and decision making, (including investment decisions and the local plan policies).
 - g. How performance is best tracked and measured in particular the roles of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Performance and Audit Committee as well as any on-going role for this working group.

- 4.4 These options will be appraised in terms of their deliverability, affordability and practicality, including their impacts and wider implications.

- 4.5 To make recommendations to Cabinet for how to take forward the preferred options from 3. above.

5. Timescale

June – July 2023	July – August 2023	By 01 September 2023
1. Initial meeting 2. Gather evidence from the Council's Environmental Action Group (EMG) 3. Identify further engagement	4. Meeting 2- review progress 5. Undertake wider engagement 6. Draft recommendations	7. Meeting 3 – review progress & recommendations for Cabinet agreed by the working group. 8. Draft report for Cabinet

6. Governance

- 6.1 The working group will be cross party and consist of eight members. Membership will be broadly apportioned in line with the political balance and appointees from each group will be agreed by their respective group leader.
- 6.2 The Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed by the Leader of the Council.
- 6.3 Working group meetings shall be scheduled in consultation with the Chair and members will be encouraged to meet virtually or use green travel options.

6.4 Meetings will be 'paperless' where it is possible for Members to access the relevant reports and information online. Papers will only be sent to members when specifically requested.

6.5 The quorum level for the working party shall be four.

7. Access to Information

7.1 As a non-decision making body, the normal Access to Information Rules do not apply to the working group.

7.2 Officers should endeavour to make clear to members of the working group where matters under discussion are confidential and should be treated by Members privy to the information as such.

8. Officer support

8.1 The working group will be supported by a Strategic Director and the Corporate Policy Team, the Democratic Services Team and representatives of the Environmental Management Group to provide service information and updates.

9. Consultation and engagement

9.1 The working group will take evidence from Councillors and external stakeholders, including partners, stakeholders, community groups, residents and businesses as it considers appropriate.

Decisions Plan

Key decisions and other executive decisions to be considered

Date: 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024

Publication date: 12 May 2023

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 2024. 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 Mildenhall Hub, Sheldrick Way, Mildenhall, Suffolk IP28 7JX.

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
13/06/23 Page 38	Review and Appointment to Cabinet Panels/Working Groups/Joint Committees The Cabinet will be asked to review and appoint to panels/working groups/joint committees.	Not applicable	(D)	Cabinet	Leader of the Council 01284 757001	Jen Eves Director (HR, Governance and Regulatory) 01284 757015 Teresa Halliday Service Manager (Legal and Governance) 01284 757144	Report to Cabinet.
13/06/23	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) (a)	Cabinet	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245	Report to Cabinet with exempt appendices attached.

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
18/07/23 Page 39	West Suffolk Annual Report 2022 to 2023 The Cabinet will be asked to consider and approve the West Suffolk Annual Report 2022 to 2023, which will previously have been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Contained within the Annual Report is highlights from the Council's Annual Environmental Statement.	Not applicable	(D)	Cabinet	Leader of the Council 01284 757001	Ian Gallin Chief Executive 01284 757001	Report to Cabinet, with draft Annual Report attached.
18/07/23	Environment and Climate Change Action Plans: 2023 Update In July 2020, the	Not applicable	(D)	Cabinet	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Jill Korwin Strategic Director 01284 757252	Report to Cabinet, with action plan attached.

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 40	Cabinet agreed an action plan, designed to implement the recommendations of its Environment and Climate Change Taskforce, and for it to be taken forward by officers and overseen by Cabinet. Cabinet also agreed to a review of progress against the actions. The Cabinet will be asked to consider progress to date.						
19/09/23	Annual Treasury Management and Financial Resilience Report (2022 to 2023)	Not applicable	(R) – Council 26/09/23	Cabinet/ Council	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 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 41	The Cabinet will be asked to consider the recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee regarding seeking approval for the Annual Treasury Management and Financial Resilience Report for 2022 to 2023.						Cabinet and Council.
19/09/23	Treasury Management Report – June 2023 The Cabinet will be asked to consider the recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee regarding	Not applicable	(R) – Council 26/09/23	Cabinet/ Council	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 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
	seeking approval for the financial resilience activities between 1 April 2023 and 30 June 2023.						
19/09/23	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) (a)	Cabinet	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245	Report to Cabinet with exempt appendices attached.
05/12/23	Council Tax Base for Tax Setting Purposes 2024 to 2025 The Cabinet will be asked to recommend	Not applicable	(R) – Council 19/12/23	Cabinet/ Council	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 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
Page 13	to Council the basis of the formal calculation for the Council Tax Base for West Suffolk Council for the financial year 2024 to 2025.						
05/12/23	Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024 to 2025 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 19/12/23	Cabinet/ Council	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245	Report to Cabinet with recommendations to Council.
05/12/23	Delivering a Sustainable Medium-Term Budget	Not applicable	(R) – Council 19/12/23	Cabinet/ Council	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and	Recommendations of the Performance and

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 44	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 2024 to 2025 and in the medium term.					Property) 01638 719245	Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and Council.
05/12/23	Treasury Management Report – September 2023 The Cabinet will be asked to consider the recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee regarding	Not applicable	(R) – Council 19/12/23	Cabinet/ Council	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 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
	seeking approval for the financial resilience activities between 1 April 2023 and 30 September 2023.						
05/12/23 Page 45	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) (a)	Cabinet	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245	Report to Cabinet with exempt appendices attached.
06/02/24	Community Chest Grants 2024 to 2025 The Cabinet will be asked to consider recommendations in respect of the levels of funding (if any) to be	Not applicable	(KD) (a)	Cabinet	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Davina Howes Director (Families and Communities) 01284 757070	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
	awarded to applicants to the Community Chest funding scheme for 2024 to 2025.						
06/02/24 Page 46	Delivering a Sustainable Medium-Term Budget 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 2024 to 2025 and in the medium term.	Not applicable	(R) – Council 20/02/24 Unless separate proposals are recommended by Cabinet, consideration by Council will take place as part of the budget setting paper	Cabinet/ Council	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 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
			on 20/02/24				
06/02/24 Page 47	Budget and Council Tax Setting 2024 to 2025 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2028 The Cabinet will be asked to consider the proposals for the 2024 to 2025 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2028 for West Suffolk Council, prior to its approval by Council. This report includes the Minimum Revenues Provision (MRP) Policy and Prudential Indicators, and also	Not applicable	(KD) (e)– in relation to fees and charges element where proposed increases will be more than five percent (R) – Council 20/02/24 Unless separate proposals are recommend-	Cabinet/ Council	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 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
Page 48	<p>the outcomes of the Council's review of its fees and charges.</p> <p>The fees and charges have been reviewed in accordance with the Council's Fees and Charges Policy, which has resulted in proposed increases to some. Where the proposed increase is greater than five percent, this constitutes a Key Decision. The Cabinet will consider the proposals as part of its consideration of this report.</p>		ed by Cabinet, consideration by Council will take place as part of the separate budget setting paper on 20/02/24				

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
06/02/24	Financial Resilience - Strategy Statement 2024 to 2025 and Treasury Management Code of Practice The Cabinet will be asked to recommend to Council, approval of the Strategy Statement 2024 to 2025 and Treasury Management Code of Practice for West Suffolk Council, which must be undertaken before the start of each financial year.	Not applicable	(R) – Council 20/02/24	Cabinet/ Council	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 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
06/02/24 Page 50	Treasury Management Report – December 2023 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 2023 and 31 December 2023.	Not applicable	(R) – Council 20/02/24	Cabinet/ Council	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245	Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and Council.
12/03/24	Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding	Exempt appendices: paragraphs 1 and 2	(KD) (a)	Cabinet	Portfolio Holder to be confirmed.	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245	Report to Cabinet with exempt appendices attached.

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
	debts, as detailed in the 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.
6. 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.
7. 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

The Leader of the Council will be elected at the Annual Meeting of Council on 23 May 2023, and where if practicable, the Cabinet and their portfolios will be announced.

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)

Membership to be confirmed in due course.

Prepared by
Jennifer Eves
Director (Human Resources, Governance and Regulatory)
Date: 12 May 2023

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Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs

Report number:	CAB/WS/23/027	
Report to and dates:	Cabinet	13 June 2023
Cabinet member:	Councillor Diane Hind Portfolio Holder for Resources Tel: 07890 198957 Email: diane.hind@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 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 on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All Wards

Recommendation: The write-off of the amounts detailed in the Exempt Appendices to Report No: CAB/WS/23/027, be approved, as follows:

1. Exempt Appendix 1: Council Tax totalling £10,165.01
2. Exempt Appendix 2: Housing Benefit Overpayment totalling £21,252.86

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 Director, Resources and Property for debts up to £4,999.99 or by Cabinet 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 As at 1 May 2023 the Council Tax percentage of debt written off during 2023/24 for all previous years is 0.01%.
- 1.6 As at 1 May 2023 the Business rates percentage of debt written off during 2023/24 for all previous years is 0.0%.

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 Council Tax totalling £10,165.01
Exempt Appendix 2 Housing Benefit Overpayment totalling £21,252.86
- 2.3 As at 1 April 2023 the total National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) billed by Anglia Revenues Partnership on behalf of West Suffolk Council (as the billing Authority) is £70.3m per annum. The collection rate as at 01 May 2023 was 10.87% against a profiled target of 10.39%
- 2.4 As at 1 April 2023 the total Council Tax billed by Anglia Revenues Partnership on behalf of West Suffolk Council (includes the County, Police and Parish precept elements) is £118.4m per annum. The collection rate as at 01 May 2023 was 10.79% against a profiled target of 10.96%.

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 Property 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 - Housing Benefit Overpayment

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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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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