

# West Suffolk Council

## Cabinet Decisions Notice

(Published: Thursday 7 December 2023)

The following decisions were taken by the Cabinet on Tuesday 5 December 2023 and, if not called in by councillors, will come into operation on Friday 15 December 2023. This procedure does not however, apply to decisions that have been recommended to Council for a final decision (and which are also indicated within the decisions below). An executive decision may be called in, in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules contained within Part 4 of the Council’s Constitution, by at least five councillors submitting the required call-in request form to the Director (Human Resources, Governance and Regulatory) (e-mail: [democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk)) **by 5.00 pm on Thursday 14 December 2023**. Should you have a query regarding any of the decisions taken, contact should be made with the named officer in the first instance, the relevant portfolio holder or via Democratic Services, West Suffolk Council, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk, IP33 3YU.

Agenda item and report number	Declarations of interest	Decision(s) (including recommendations to Council)	Reason(s) for decision(s)	Other options considered and reasons for rejection	Contacts
Item 8 CAB/WS/23/054 (and exempt appendix A)	None	<p><b>Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 9 November 2023 - Abbeycroft Leisure Strategic Partnership</b></p> <p>Resolved: That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers be instructed to update the Collaboration Agreement between Abbeycroft Leisure and West Suffolk Council noting no fundamental</li> </ol>	<p>Following the establishment of a task and finish group that was asked to review the Council’s partnership with Abbeycroft Leisure between 2019 and 2023 against the current Collaboration Agreement between the two organisations, together with reviewing the current Collaboration Agreement outcomes, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee put forward a number of recommendations that</p>	<p>The task and finish group was not asked to look at alternative delivery options other than changes to the Collaboration and Funding Agreement between West Suffolk Council and Abbeycroft</p>	<p><b>Portfolio holder:</b> Ian Shipp</p> <p><b>Officer:</b> Jill Korwin Strategic Director 01284 757252</p>

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		<p>revisions are required on the principles of the current agreement. However, some technical changes may be required and the approach to health funding which is currently dealt with through side letters should be clarified.</p> <p>2. Cabinet requests Abbeycroft and West Suffolk Council to work collaboratively to promote the activities and programmes delivered at the leisure centres, ensuring residents are aware of what they deliver and provide (which can be reflected in further revisions to the Collaboration Agreement).</p> <p>3. Cabinet and officers work with providers and partners to secure</p>	<p>emanated from the review for Cabinet to consider.</p> <p>The Cabinet has considered the task and finish group's approach to the review, as summarised in section 2 of Report number: CAB/WS/23/054, and its findings, as set out in Report number: OAS/WS/23/019. Having noted that the findings found that Abbeycroft is strongly compliant with the existing Collaboration Agreement and has demonstrated that they have optimised delivery, outcomes, efficiency and financial performance in challenging conditions; together with noting the strength of the partnership between the Council and Abbeycroft and the way in which they had worked together to address challenges, particularly through Covid and in response to the energy crisis,</p>	<p>Leisure.</p>	

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		<p>additional long-term and sustainable external funding streams (particularly on health improvement interventions).</p> <p>4. Cabinet asks officers to explore further capital investment in the leisure offer and facility mix across the leisure centre sites through business cases where appropriate to provide outcomes and financial benefits through invest to save/earn initiatives with Abbeycroft.</p> <p>5. Subject to the outcome of the condition surveys of each Leisure Centre, Cabinet to consider the extension of the Council's Net Zero Fund as part of the 2024 to 2025 budget development process to include a programme of improvements (where</p>	<p>the Cabinet supports the acceptance of the recommendations.</p>		

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		<p>appropriate and where they meet the outcomes of the fund) to upgrade and improve the facilities to maximise energy efficiency, support Net Zero and carbon reduction targets, and extend the life span of the facilities.</p> <p>6. As part of the 2024 to 2025 West Suffolk Council budget development, consideration be given to whether the extraordinary utility support grant should be continued and phased out in the short-term (linked to market expectations around utility costs).</p>			
Item 9 CAB/WS/23/055	None	<b>Recommendations from the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 23 November 2023 - Treasury Management Report</b>	The report is part of the Council's management and governance arrangements for Treasury Management activities under the CIPFA	As it is a requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance	<b>Portfolio holder:</b> Diane Hind

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		<p><b>(September 2023)</b></p> <p>Recommended to Council: (19 December 2023)</p> <p>That the Treasury Management Report (September 2023), as contained in Report number: FRS/WS/23/005, be approved.</p>	<p>Code of Practice on Treasury Management. It provides a comprehensive assessment of activities from 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.</p> <p>The Cabinet was required to consider this Treasury Management Report, prior to seeking its approval by Council.</p>	<p>and Accountancy for Council to approve the Treasury Management Report, no other options have been considered.</p>	<p><b>Chair of Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee:</b> Peter Armitage</p> <p><b>Officer:</b> Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245</p>
<p>Item 10 CAB/WS/23/056</p>	<p>None</p>	<p><b>West Suffolk Local Plan Publication (Regulation 19) Consultation and Submission</b></p> <p>Recommended to Council: (19 December 2023)</p> <p>That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The West Suffolk Local Plan Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) document (Appendix A to Report number: CAB/WS/23/056), together with supporting documents be approved for public consultation</li> </ol>	<p>This final West Suffolk Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation will be focused on the whether the plan is a 'legally compliant' and 'sound' document. This is a technical consultation which will ask the public and stakeholders specific questions required by the Planning Inspectorate and requires that representations consider whether the tests of soundness have been met.</p>	<p>The alternative option would be to not progress a new local plan or delay preparation and consultation. This would leave the Council at risk of unplanned, speculative development.</p>	<p><b>Portfolio holder:</b> Jim Thorndyke</p> <p><b>Officers:</b> Julie Baird Director (Planning and Growth) 01284 757613</p> <p>Marie Smith (Planning Strategy) 01638 719260</p>

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		<p>and its subsequent submission to the Secretary of State for the purposes of independent examination.</p> <p>2. Delegated authority be given to the Director (Planning and Growth), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning to make any presentational improvements or minor non-material consequential changes to the document as necessary prior to the consultation commencing.</p> <p>3. Delegated authority be given to the Director (Planning and Growth), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, to agree and consult upon a set of proposed modifications during the examination process.</p>	<p>The Cabinet accepts that the West Suffolk Local Plan Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) document (Appendix A to Report number: CAB/WS/23/056) is both final and sound and that, subject to the outcome of the independent examination, it has recommended to Council that it approves the Local Plan as presented in Appendix A with a minor amendment to Recommendation (3) which removes a potential time constraint.</p>	<p>As the Government requires West Suffolk to have an up-to-date plan in place, to not progress a local plan in a timely manner would be reputationally damaging and lead to Government intervention to produce a local plan for the district council and remove local decision making.</p>	

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<p>Item 11 CAB/WS/23/057</p>	<p>None</p>	<p><b>West Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) 2024 to 2025</b></p> <p>Recommended to Council: (19 December 2023)</p> <p>That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTRS) Scheme for 2023 to 2024 as outlined in Report number: CAB/WS/23/057, be reviewed.</li> <li>2. It be recommended to Council to make the changes to the Scheme outlined in section 2 of Report number: CAB/WS/23/057 and that the maximum discount change only relates to 2024 to 2025, in line with the recent consultation.</li> </ol>	<p>Each year the Council is required to review its Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS). Report number: CAB/WS/23/057 provides an annual review of the 2023 to 2024 scheme and proposes to make changes to the scheme for 2024 to 2025.</p> <p>It is proposed for the West Suffolk LCTRS that the maximum reduction on Council Tax paid of 100 per cent should be extended for a further 12 months. This would take effect from 1 April 2024 (and last for one year only). This would be a means tested scheme.</p> <p>A consultation on the proposals was held from 2 October to 30 October 2023. Major preceptors and stakeholders had responded and the responses received and the key points raised were covered in section 4 of</p>	<p>If the proposed extension of a further 12 months, enabling a maximum discount to Council Tax of 100 percent to be applied to the LCTRS is not agreed, the maximum Council Tax reduction will revert to 91.5 per cent.</p> <p>The recommended option has been selected because it maximises the benefit to customers while minimising the administrative resources</p>	<p><b>Portfolio holder:</b> Diane Hind</p> <p><b>Officer:</b> Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245</p>

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			<p>Report number CAB/WS/23/057. It was noted that 90.2 per cent of the respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the proposal to extend the maximum discount on Council Tax.</p> <p>The Cabinet supported the recommendations and have recommended their acceptance to Council accordingly.</p>	required to collect small payments.	
Item 12 CAB/WS/23/058	None	<p><b>Council tax base for tax setting purposes 2024 to 2025</b></p> <p>Recommended to Council: (19 December 2023)</p> <p>That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The tax base for 2024 to 2025, for the whole of West Suffolk be 58,684.97 equivalent band D dwellings, as detailed in paragraph 2.3</li> </ol>	The council tax base is the total taxable value at a point in time of all the domestic properties in the council's area. It is a yearly calculation and represents the estimated number of chargeable dwellings after allowing for exemptions and discounts, projected changes in the property base and after applying an estimated collection rate.	The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 set out the requirements for the calculation of the council tax base for tax setting	<p><b>Portfolio holder:</b> Diane Hind</p> <p><b>Officer:</b> Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245</p>



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		<p>of Report number: CAB/WS/23/058.</p> <p>2. The tax base for 2024 to 2025 for the different parts of its area, as defined by parish or special expense area boundaries, be as shown in Appendix 3 to Report number: CAB/WS/23/058.</p>	<p>The calculation of the tax base for council tax setting purposes consists of three stages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Calculation of the tax base for central government purposes as at 2 October 2023 (DLUHC return – CTB).</li> <li>2. Calculation of the tax base for council tax setting purposes by adjusting the band D equivalents to reflect changes in the tax base as a result of Local Council Tax Support scheme changes (see Report number: CAB/WS/23/057), projected changes in the property base and predicted collection rates.</li> <li>3. Analysis of band D equivalents over each of the parish areas in order to determine</li> </ol>	<p>purposes. Therefore, there are no alternative options.</p>	

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			<p>individual parish council tax bases.</p> <p>The resulting tax base figure for council tax collection purposes, expressed in terms of the number of band D equivalent properties, is 58,684.97 for 2024 to 2025. This is an increase of 697.96 on the tax base for the current year of 57,987.01.</p>		
<p>Item 13 CAB/WS/23/059</p>	<p>None</p>	<p><b>Barley Homes Business Plan 2023</b></p> <p>Resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The progress update for Barley Homes and steps outlined in Report number: CAB/WS/23/059 to secure its medium-term pipeline of sites, be noted.</li> <li>2. The Barley Homes Business Plan 2023, covering 2024 to 2028,</li> </ol>	<p>The Barley Homes Business Plan 2023 to 2028 contains a review of the previous year; an overview of the operating conditions for the company; a summary of the planned development programme, including aspirations around current and medium-term delivery rates; and an overview of the financial underpinnings to the future development strategy, all to demonstrate prudent resource planning.</p>	<p>The business plan sets out how Barley Homes, working with the Council, has evaluated potential development opportunities. Opportunities that do not meet the criteria, based on the principles set</p>	<p><b>Portfolio holder:</b> Richard O’Driscoll</p> <p><b>Officers:</b> Julie Baird Director (Planning and Growth) 01284 757613</p> <p>Rachael Mann Director (Resources and</p>

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		<p>attached at Appendix A to Report number: CAB/WS/23/059, be approved.</p>	<p>The total investment facility already available to support Barley Homes Ltd is a £14.25 million revolving facility (available for loans to, equity in and land purchases to support, our wholly owned housing company) funded through a mixture of capital receipts (which supports the equity element) and the Investing in our Growth Agenda fund. The annual business planning process has not highlighted a need to revise the total investment fund, considering known cash flow forecasts across the medium term.</p> <p>The business plan outlines the progress with the committed sites and associated financial implications. Section 2 of Report number: CAB/WS/23/059 expands on progress and forthcoming proposals contained within the business plan.</p>	<p>out in 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 of Report number: CAB/WS/23/059, and the evaluation method established in the 2019 report CAB/WS/19/041 have been discounted.</p>	<p>Property) 01638 719245</p>

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			The Cabinet supports progress made and the future direction of Barley Homes, as set out in the business plan.		
Item 14 CAB/WS/23/060  (and exempt appendices 1 and 2)	None	<p><b>Revenues collection performance and write offs</b></p> <p>Resolved: That:</p> <p>The write-off of the amounts detailed in the exempt appendices to Report number: CAB/WS/23/060, be approved, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Exempt Appendix 1: NNDR totalling £68,414.51</li> <li>2. Exempt Appendix 2: Sundry debt totalling £6,962.44</li> </ol>	The detailed reasons for the decisions to write-off these amounts, are included in the exempt appendices to Report number: CAB/WS/23/060.	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 online tracing facilities.	<p><b>Portfolio holder:</b> Diane Hind</p> <p><b>Officer:</b> Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245</p>

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				<p>Although this service was suspended during the COVID-19 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.</p> <p>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</p>	

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				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.	
Item 16 CAB/WS/23/062  (and exempt appendices A, B and C)	None	<p><b>Investing in our asset portfolio - Provincial House</b></p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The project objectives as set in the strategic case for Provincial House, Haverhill, be endorsed.</li> <li>2. Up to £2 million of capital budget, funded by the Investing in Growth Fund, in line with this</li> </ol>	<p>West Suffolk acquired Provincial House in Haverhill High Street in 2019 using £3.7 million of the Investing in Growth Agenda Fund with the aspiration to re-purpose vacant space creatively, create jobs, deliver wider public benefits, and drive footfall into the town centre.</p> <p>Through the One Public Estate Programme, the Council is partnering with West Suffolk College to</p>	<p>The following alternative options have been considered:</p> <p>Option 1: Do nothing: This option provides a baseline scenario where no refurbishment takes place. This option will</p>	<p><b>Portfolio holder:</b> Diane Hind</p> <p><b>Officer:</b> Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245</p>

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		<p>business case to progress the remodelling and refurbishment of Provincial House to enable both public sector and commercial lettings, be approved.</p> <p>3. The revenue risks be noted, including any project expenditure that is unable to be capitalised, will be covered by the Capital Financing Reserve.</p> <p>4. It be acknowledged that in line with recommendations (2), (3) and (4) above, officers will proceed in line with the Council's agreed Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p>5. It be agreed for the Council's Section 151 Officer to make the necessary changes to the Council's prudential</p>	<p>explore the potential relocation of the Adult Learning Centre (currently being rebranded as Personal and Professional Learning Centre) back into the heart of the town and centre of the community.</p> <p>The confidential business case attached at Exempt Appendix A to Report number: CAB/WS/23/062 sets out the proposal for Cabinet to agree to invest up to a further £2 million into Provincial House, from the Investing in our Growth Agenda fund (supported by external borrowing). This is to facilitate the investment in the remaining vacant floors including the works required to relocate the college offer into the town centre. The income generated by the project currently is estimated to create a net surplus after borrowing in line with the Investing in our Growth</p>	<p>result in; the loss of a potential anchor tenant in West Suffolk College, failure to deliver strategic outcomes identified in the acquisition business case, and results in the council continuing to incur significant indefinite holding costs (c.£200-250K p.a.) associated with the vacant space.</p> <p>Whilst this is a low financial risk option but would fail to deliver on the wider social</p>	

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		<p>indicators as a result of recommendation (3).</p>	<p>Agenda fund that will go towards the delivery of Council services.</p> <p>Therefore, the project will ensure adult learning provision remains in Haverhill and in the easily accessible town centre. It will also provide further commercial space at Provincial House more suited to the local market and therefore attract more people into the town centre to use these and surrounding facilities and businesses. At the same time the project will bring a return to the Council which can be put back into funding services vital for West Suffolk communities.</p> <p>The Cabinet supports the proposal and recognises the benefits of the investment both in terms of supporting the service that is intended to be provided by West Suffolk College and the</p>	<p>and environmental improvements anticipated in the acquisition business case and which may have a reputational impact for the council. This option may also risk the retention of the adult learning centre for Haverhill.</p> <p>Option 2: Basic refurbishment: This option considers the 'Do the Minimum' scenario and involves basic repairs and maintenance with minimal changes to the</p>	



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			associated income generated.	<p>office layout or facilities. This option would be unlikely to be sufficient to change the status quo and would counter market advice which has highlighted the size and condition of the accommodation and the lack of flexibility as significant barriers to successfully letting the space. This option would deliver limited social, environmental, and growth outcomes.</p> <p>Further details are provided in</p>	

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				the business case attached as Exempt Appendix A to Report number: CAB/WS/23/06 2.	

Jennifer Eves  
 Director (Human Resources, Governance and Regulatory)  
 7 December 2023