

# Cabinet

<b>Title</b>	<b>Agenda</b>																								
<b>Date</b>	<b>Tuesday 21 May 2024</b>																								
<b>Time</b>	<b>6.00 pm</b>																								
<b>Venue</b>	<b>Conference Room Mildenhall Hub</b> Sheldrick Way Mildenhall IP28 7JX																								
<b>Membership</b>	<table> <tr> <td><b>Leader</b></td> <td>Cliff Waterman</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Deputy Leader</b></td> <td>Victor Lukaniuk</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Councillor</b></td> <td><b>Portfolio</b></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>	<b>Leader</b>	Cliff Waterman	<b>Deputy Leader</b>	Victor Lukaniuk	<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>	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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	<b>The Constitution of the Cabinet is to be announced at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 14 May 2024. As this Cabinet agenda was prepared prior to the Annual Meeting of the Council, it reflects the Portfolio Holders and the Portfolios held immediately prior to the Annual Meeting.</b>																								
<b>Interests – declaration and restriction on participation</b>	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest, other registerable or non-registerable interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, <b>no later than when that item is reached</b> and, when appropriate, to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.																								
<b>Quorum</b>	Four Members																								
<b>Committee administrator</b>	<b>Sharon Turner</b> Democratic Services Officer <b>Telephone</b> 01638 719237 <b>Email</b> <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk">democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>																								

## Public information

<b>Venue</b>	Conference Room, Mildenhall Hub, Sheldrick Way, Mildenhall, IP28 7JX
<b>Contact information</b>	Telephone: 01638 719237 Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk">democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk">www.westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>
<b>Access to agenda and reports before the meeting</b>	The agenda and reports will be available to view at least five clear days before the meeting on our website.
<b>Attendance at meetings</b>	<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>
<b>Public participation</b>	<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. <b>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.</b></p> <p>There is an overall time limit of 15 minutes for public speaking, which may be extended at the Chair's discretion.</p>
<b>Accessibility</b>	If you have any difficulties in accessing the meeting, the agenda and accompanying reports, including for reasons of a

	<p>disability or a protected characteristic, please contact Democratic Services at the earliest opportunity using the contact details provided above in order that we may assist you.</p>
<b>Recording of meetings</b>	<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>
<b>Personal information</b>	<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: <a href="https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Data_and_information/howweuseinformation.cfm">https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Data_and_information/howweuseinformation.cfm</a> or call Customer Services: 01284 763233 and ask to speak to the Information Governance Officer.</p>

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# Agenda

## Procedural matters

**1. Apologies for absence**

**2. Minutes**

**1 - 4**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2024 (copy attached).

**3. Declarations of interest**

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest, other registerable or non-registerable 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](mailto: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.

- |           |  |                |
|-----------|--|----------------|
| <b>6.</b> | <b>Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 5 March 2024</b>                                | <b>5 - 14</b>  |
|           | Report number: <b>CAB/WS/24/023</b><br>Portfolio holder: Councillor Diane Hind<br>Lead officer: Rachael Mann               |                |
| <b>7.</b> | <b>Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 14 March 2024</b>  | <b>15 - 20</b> |
|           | Report number: <b>CAB/WS/24/024</b><br>Chair of the Committee: Councillor Sarah Broughton<br>Lead officer: Christine Brain |                |

### **Non key decisions**

- |            |  |                |
|------------|--|----------------|
| <b>8.</b>  | <b>Proposed Changes to the Council's Community Chest Grant Fund</b>  | <b>21 - 26</b> |
|            | Report number: <b>CAB/WS/24/025</b><br>Portfolio holder: Cllr Donna Higgins<br>Lead officer: Jill Korwin   |                |
| <b>9.</b>  | <b>Annual Review and Appointment of the Cabinet's Joint Committee and Working Groups</b>   | <b>27 - 46</b> |
|            | Report number: <b>CAB/WS/24/026</b><br>Portfolio holder: Councillor Cliff Waterman<br>Lead officers: Jen Eves and Teresa Halliday  |                |
| <b>10.</b> | <b>Decisions Plan: 1 May 2024 to 31 May 2025</b>   | <b>47 - 64</b> |
|            | To consider the most recently published version of the Cabinet's Decisions Plan<br><br>Report number: <b>CAB/WS/24/027</b><br>Leader of the Council: Councillor Cliff Waterman<br>Lead officer: Ian Gallin |                |

### **Part 2 – exempt - None**



# Cabinet

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held on **Tuesday 12 March 2024** at **6.00 pm** in the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present **Councillors**

**Chair** Victor Lukaniuk (Deputy Leader of the Council) (in the Chair)

Donna Higgins  
Diane Hind  
Gerald Kelly  
Richard O'Driscoll

Ian Shipp  
Jim Thorndyke  
Indy Wijenayaka

**In attendance**  
Peter Armitage  
Birgitte Mager  
Joe Mason

559. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cliff Waterman and David Taylor.

560. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

561. **Declarations of interest**

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

562. **Open forum**

The following non-Cabinet member spoke under this item:

1. **Councillor Joe Mason (Ward Member for Haverhill North)**

Councillor Joe Mason addressed the Cabinet with specific questions in relation to car parking charges and measures to support the High Street in Haverhill.

Councillor Mason asked if Cabinet had a clear, cohesive plan to help improve the vibrancy and encourage greater footfall in Haverhill's High Street. As part of the plan for encouraging greater footfall, Councillor Mason stated that

there was currently no free car parking in Haverhill and asked whether there were plans to support that.

In response, Councillor Indy Wijenayaka, Portfolio Holder for Growth, provided Councillor Mason with examples of initiatives that were in place to support Haverhill High Street, including the forthcoming 'Makers' Market' which had previously proved successful and the 'Free from Three' car parking initiative on Fridays. The Cabinet was committed to supporting the High Street with an holistic strategy in place which aligned with the Council's strategic priorities.

Councillor Mason was informed that he would be provided with a written response which would expand on this further.

**563. Public participation**

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

**564. West Suffolk Council Food Safety and Health and Safety Service Plan 2024 to 2025**

**(Report number CAB/WS/24/017)**

The Cabinet considered this report which sought approval for the West Suffolk Food Safety and Health and Safety Service plan 2024 to 2025.

The Food Safety and Health and Safety Service plan outlined the Council's commitment to protect public health and safety and the environment by conducting programmed and reactive interventions, investigations, and research to detect, eliminate and control hazards by applying fair, transparent, and proportionate enforcement.

The plan, which was a statutory requirement set out in the code of practice for food safety, was attached as Appendix A to the report, and was considered in detail by the Cabinet.

Councillor Gerald Kelly, Portfolio Holder for Governance and Regulatory, drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet, which included summarising progress made against the 2022 to 2023 plan; the key challenges identified that would affect the implementation of the 2024 to 2025 plan, and how resourcing of the team was a key factor to the successful implementation of the plan, as set out in sections 2.1, 3.1 and 5.1 of the report respectively.

The Cabinet supported approval of the plan and acknowledged the extensive amount of work undertaken by officers in this service area.

**Resolved:**

That the Food Safety and Health and Safety Service Plan 2024 to 2025, as contained in Appendix A to Report number: CAB/WS/24/017, be approved.



**565. Decisions Plan: 1 March 2024 to 31 May 2024**

**(Report number CAB/WS/24/018)**

The Cabinet considered this report which was the Cabinet Decisions Plan covering the period 1 March 2024 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.

**566. Revenues collection performance and write offs**

**(Report number CAB/WS/24/019)**

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

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

Members noted that there was an extensive and supportive recovery process prior to the engagement of an enforcement agency. The Council currently used the services of the ARP Enforcement Agency to assist in the collection of business rates and council tax and also had online tracing facilities.

In response to a question, the Cabinet was informed that every effort was made to recover a debt before reaching the point of seeking approval to write it off. In the event that a written-off debt became recoverable, the amount was written back on, and enforcement procedures would be re-established. Debt recovery rates were improving considerably.

Recognition was given to the extensive amount of work undertaken by officers in this service area and to the Anglia Revenues Partnership as a whole.

**Resolved:**

That the write-off of the amounts detailed in the exempt appendices to Report number: CAB/WS/24/019, be approved, as follows:

1. Exempt Appendix 1: Council Tax totalling £24,604.84
2. Exempt Appendix 2: Overpayment of Housing Benefit totalling £25,713.11
3. Exempt Appendix 3: Sundry Debt of £9,439.63

**567. Exclusion of press and public**

See minute number 568. below.

568. **Exempt appendices: Revenues collection performance and write-offs (paragraphs 1 and 2)**

**(Exempt appendices 1, 2 and 3 to Report number CAB/WS/24/019)**

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

The meeting concluded at 6.21 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chair**

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# Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 5 March 2024

<b>Report number:</b>	<b>CAB/WS/24/023</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	21 May 2024
<b>Cabinet member:</b>	Councillor Diane Hind Portfolio Holder for Resources Email: <a href="mailto:diane.hind@westsuffolk.gov.uk">diane.hind@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) Telephone: 01638 719245 Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk">democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	

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

**Wards impacted:** All wards

**Recommendation:** The Cabinet is requested to note the content of Report number: CAB/WS/24/023, being the report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee.

## 1. Context to this report

1.1 On 5 March 2024, the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership (ARP) Joint Committee met where the following items of substantive business were discussed:

1. Performance report
2. ARP forecast financial performance
3. Welfare reform update
4. Forthcoming issues

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

## 2. Updates within this report

### 2.1 Performance report (agenda item 5)

2.1.1 The Joint Committee received and **noted** an update on performance up to 31 December 2023.

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

[Performance Report Quarter 3 2023-2024](#)

The report indicated that when considering performance as a whole for all partner councils, all targets for the 2023 to 2024 financial year were presently being met in respect of the following categories:

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

2.1.2 In respect of West Suffolk Council's individual performance, with the exception of local council tax reduction and housing benefit, all targets were currently being met for the 2023 to 2024 financial year in respect of the following categories:

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

The number of days to process new claims for council tax reduction and change in circumstances is slightly over the 9 day target. This was being focussed on in January 2024 with aim of meeting the target.

The number of days to process housing benefit in Quarter 3 is short of the eight day target at 10.72 days. This can be attributed to the additional workload placed on ARP to administer support schemes; however, these have now ended. An ICT issue had also affected the automation of Universal Credit records which had impacted on the resource requirements within the Benefits team. This has been resolved; and whilst performance has improved since Quarter 2, it is not anticipated that the target will be met by the end of the financial year.

2.1.3 Attention was drawn to the service updates:

- a. **Enforcement:** As at 31 December 2023, the total collected for the 2023 to 2024 financial year was just over £3.2 million pounds in debt repayment with an additional £935,834 in fees.
- b. **Further recovery:** The strong performance is continuing with a total of £1,119,077 being collected by the end the third quarter, which exceeds the total amount of monies collected for the whole of 2022 to 2023.
- c. **Council tax:** Overall collection for council tax in the third quarter was on target for the majority of the partner councils including West Suffolk.

Demand for council tax billing remained high; however, with the recruitment of additional Council Tax Billing Officers in July 2023, this has assisted with easing the workload.

At the end of last year, the Government announced a new £100 million Council Tax Support Fund for 2023 to 2024 to help economically vulnerable residents with their council tax bills. The majority of allocations were applied directly to 2023 to 2024 council tax bills during annual billing, with the remaining funds being used to provide additional support to new council tax reduction claimants throughout the 2023 to 2024 year and additional exceptional hardship funds for vulnerable council tax payers.

- d. **Benefits:** Targets for the processing of benefits in the third quarter have currently been missed by all partner councils. See 2.1.2 above regarding West Suffolk's current position. ARP are addressing this issue to help improve performance in these areas with focus days being planned for January 2024.

ARP continues to see significant increases in demand, particularly increases in change of addresses and continue to utilise generically trained staff to focus resource where it is most needed.

The two Government funded Energy Bills Support Schemes (alternative funding) have now closed.

The DWP held a successful face-to-face workshop at ARP to help them understand the difficulties and complexities of administering housing benefit for supported and specified accommodation as the time taken to process these claims is far greater than the general housing benefit claims that are due to migrate to Universal Credit (UC). The Government is expected to announce a full UC roll-out plan for the remaining legacy benefits, including housing benefit, in the new year.

- e. **Non-domestic rates:** The overall collection rate for each partner authority is currently above target at the end of the third quarter of 2023 to 2024.

A new NDR Valuation list came into effect on 1 April 2023 where every property has been assigned a property value. This means changes are being administered from the 2017 and 2023 Valuation Office Agency (VOA) lists. Apart from a handful of outstanding appeals, the 2010 list is now closed.

The review of Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) reductions has been completed in quarter three thus meeting the internal audit deadline.

- f. **ARP systems and digital:** Work is progressing with ARP's supplier to review their digital product where it is currently being utilised by other local authorities to gain feedback from a wider group of users. Knowledge and experiences are being shared, which will potentially benefit ARP in the future.

Work volumes with both System Administration and Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) have been quite high but a strong plan of priorities has been devised to ensure resources can meet expectations and demands.

Success has been had on automating web-based direct debits and testing has begun on refund automation. These projects will help complement the move to automation and it is anticipated that progress will be seen during Quarter 4 following some system enhancements and fixes. Other automation projects are in the pipeline.

- g. **Fraud and compliance:** The Cambridgeshire Fraud Hub became operational in Quarter 1, which provides fraud-related savings for the partnership, with encouraging early results in Quarter 3.

Both Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils have continued providing funding for fraud and compliance work for two years from April 2022. This funding includes the premium matching service for both East and West Suffolk, providing for an additional post within the team. Fraud work commenced for Broadland and South Norfolk in Quarter 2 although a change in software supplier has impacted this work.

A s113 agreement with Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and the seven district councils within the Lincolnshire district, had been established to provide these councils with single person discount fraud services; however, ARP has since received notification that LCC has withdrawn funding for ARP to undertake their single person discount reviews within their seven district councils.

To improve the registration of new properties, the Visiting Team are trialling a new database containing details of new properties in Fenland. This trial has been expanded to East and West Suffolk Councils with results expected in January 2024.

- h. **Better Customer Experience Programme:** ARP is in the final stages of development in preparation for the launch of its new Contact Us form. This will help enhance the customer experience by capturing all required information within the one form.

The report also outlined additional specific continuing automation projects and digital measures in place, and those being explored, which all aim to improve the customer experience. This included working with West Suffolk Council's ICT team on ARP's telephony project.

2.1.4 Discussion was specifically held at the meeting on:

- the reasons for all partner authorities not meeting the processing of council tax reduction claims and housing benefit claims targets in Quarter 3 and the actions in place to mitigate this.
- The success of the Fraud and Compliance Team in terms of the amount of fraud being identified. As such, whether more emphasis should be placed on making potential applicants for discounts more aware of the eligibility criteria to prevent claims being made where they were not necessarily entitled. This may include highlighting potential fines that could be imposed for fraudulent claims.
- Of the amount of fraud identified, the amount actually recovered.
- Details of tenancy fraud and the implications of this.
- A briefing paper would be provided to members to define fraud; the quantity being identified; and the amount of monies being recovered.

2.2 **ARP forecast financial performance report 2023 to 2024 (agenda item 6)**

- 2.2.1 The Joint Committee **noted** the forecast financial performance report which presented the forecast full year financial position against budget for the ARP.

The forecast as at 31 December 2023, showed an overspend against budget of £185,831 (1.76 percent) for the whole of the partnership. This was mainly due to the recently agreed national staff pay award which was higher than original budget estimates, and the significant increase in Royal Mail

postage charges that came into effect in October 2023. Other reasons for the specific variances, are contained in the report at:

[ARP Forecast Financial Performance Report](#)

[Appendix A](#)

- 2.2.2 The current budget includes an efficiency target of £100,000, rising to £200,000 in future years. The 100,000 target has been met for 2023 to 2024 and work is underway to achieve the £200,000 target that had been set in the budget for 2024 to 2025.
- 2.2.3 Appendix A also provides details on the remaining transformation funding which was set aside in previous years from below budget spend and grant funding. £52,000 is earmarked for projects in progress or due next year and there is a further £64,000 available for future transformation projects. The appendix also provides detail on the values held and earmarked in the ICT reserve, which was introduced to smooth the financial effects of major ICT spend.
- 2.2.4 The table below shows the share of the forecast outturn for each partner based on the Joint Committee constitutional agreement; however, this will change for the final values at the end of March 2024:

	<b>Actual outturn (£)</b>
Breckland	20,291
East Cambridgeshire	17,034
East Suffolk	76,287
Fenland	36,641
West Suffolk	35,578
<b>Total</b>	<b>185,831</b>

2.3 **Welfare reform update (agenda item 7)**

- 2.3.1 a. **'Help to Claim' scheme:** The Minister of State for Employment had announced that the 'Help to Claim' scheme operated by Citizens' Advice will be extended to March 2024 with support being considered post April 2024. The outcome of the bid for the continuing operation of the scheme should have been announced in December 2023 but was yet to materialise.
- b. **Universal Credit (UC):** The summary of the latest position on the expansion of UC and concerns raised by officers regarding specific issues in respect of the expansion on a national level were contained



in sections 2.1.15 and 2.2 of the report, and which were duly noted by the Joint Committee.

The expansion of 'Move to UC' continues with this work taking place in Southeast Wales and Central Scotland in October 2023 with Southwest Scotland in November 2023.

A plan for the 2024 to 2025 migration has now been decided and would be based on benefit types starting with income support cases followed by Employment Support Allowance (ESA) with tax credits and then the Jobseekers allowance. Housing benefits only cases and housing benefit with tax credits would follow. A gradual movement should be seen in terms of housing benefit cases for this year and into April 2025.

Work has already been carried out and the implications for the partnership. Guidance was still awaited, but in the interim an all-local authority conference call would be taking place on 15 March 2024.

- c. **Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP):** DWP are proposing to retain the current methodology for DHP allocations with a two-year funding freeze with allocations to be paid in one upfront payment. This is to retain consistency and help local authorities plan.

DHP allocations for the financial year ending March 2025 will remain the same as the previous two years as part of the two-year funding freeze.

- d. **Benefit cap:** From April 2023, the maximum family income before the benefit cap applies rose from £20,000 to £22,020 (from £13,400 to £14,753 for single adults with no children). The Benefit Service continues to work with colleagues in Customer Service and Housing Options teams to seek to avoid homelessness and the cost of temporary housing.

It was announced in the Autumn Statement in November 2022 that the benefit cap would rise by 10.1 percent in line with Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) from April 2023. This means that 60,000 households are no longer capped, 130,000 receive more support and 30,000 are out of the scope of the cap.

- e. **Social rented sector rent restrictions:** The Government has responded to consultation on funding for supported housing, removing proposals to move away from a subsidised demand led model to a grant model. For the foreseeable future, supported accommodation, including hostel tenancies will remain in within the Housing Benefit service and will not therefore move to Universal Credit.
- f. **Welfare benefit uprating – April 2024:** The Government ended the four year benefit uprating freeze in 2020. However, the link

between pensions and the 'Triple Lock' was severed in September 2021 because of wage inflation. Instead in 2022 to 2023, the state pension rose in line with the highest inflation rate or 2.5 percent. The Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) rate for September 2021 is historically the figure used, reported then at 3.1 percent. This figure has risen considerably since then and it was announced in the Autumn Statement in November 2023 that from April 2024, the state pension and other benefits will increase by 8.5 percent under the 'Triple Lock' guarantee. Certain benefits, including UC, will also rise by 6.7 percent.

- g. **Homes for Ukraine scheme:** DWP confirmed in circular A4/2022 that there will be no impact on housing benefit for anyone entering into the Homes for Ukraine scheme. As such, the £350 'thank you' payment will be disregarded as income and there would be no non-dependant deductions applied. The same disregards are also covered in the prescribed Local Council Tax Reduction scheme for pensioners and ARP has provisions in all the partners' Local Council Tax Support schemes for working age customers to disregard such payments.

2.3.2 At the meeting, a number of topics were discussed, particularly in respect of timelines potentially being affected by the outcome of the forthcoming General Election; and the relationship between DWP and Citizens Advice and the potential implications for ARP.

2.3.3 Further details are contained in the report at:

[Welfare Reform Update](#)

## 2.4 **Forthcoming issues (agenda item 8)**

2.4.1 At the meeting, the Chair advised that it was Adrian Mills', Head of ARP, last meeting before his retirement.

2.4.2 Members joined the Chair in paying tributes to Mr Mills for his sterling work and commitment to the partnership.

2.4.3 Lorraine King has been appointed as the new Head of ARP. The Joint Committee placed their support on record regarding Ms King's appointment and wished her well in her new role.

## 3. **Minutes**

3.1 For further information on the discussions held at the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee meeting on 5 March 2024, the draft minutes of the meeting may be viewed on Breckland District Council's website at the following link:

[Minutes](#)

#### 4. **Background papers**

4.1 Breckland DC Website:

[5 March 2024](#)

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# Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 14 March 2024

<b>Report number:</b>	<b>CAB/WS/24/024</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	21 May 2024
<b>Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</b>	Councillor Sarah Broughton Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Telephone: 07929 305787 Email: <a href="mailto:sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk">sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Telephone: 01638 719729 Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk">democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	

**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/24/024, being the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be noted.

## 1. Context to this report

- 1.1 On 14 March 2024, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the following items:
1. UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund - Progress Update
  2. Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee - 24 January 2024
  3. Suffolk County Council: Police and Crime Panel - 26 January 2024
  4. Cabinet Decisions Plan: 1 March 2024 to 31 May 2024
  5. Work programme update 2024.

## 2. Proposals within this report

### 2.1 **UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund – Progress Update (Report number: OAS/WS/24/004)**

- 2.1.1 The Committee received the above report presented by the Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities, which provided an update on how the Council had been allocating funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) to projects and initiatives in West Suffolk. The report included information on how the £1.9 million UKSPF and the £753,000 REPF allocations had been spent to date in the district and where allocations remained to be spent next year. Appendices A to D provided details of the projects which had been funded and the remaining allocations.
- 2.1.2 The Committee considered the report and appendices in detail and asked questions of the Cabinet Member to which responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on making ward members aware of funding so they could inform community groups in their wards of what was available; how the funding was publicised to community groups/organisations and what happens to funding if not all allocated by 2025, whether feedback was collected on how funding had helped organisations; what criteria had the Government used to allocate funding to local authorities; double funding and core funding; .
- 2.1.3 In response to a question was raised on the £38,109 funding provided in 2023-2024 to support projects for town and parish councils and Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) for high street improvements, the Committee questioned how it was used, to which a breakdown was provided.
- 2.1.4 At the conclusion of the discussions the Chair on behalf of the Committee thanked the Cabinet Member for her attendance and noted the challenges which officers had faced. She also suggested more communication on this topic as it was a good news story for West Suffolk. There being no

decisions required the Committee **noted** the progress made so far in allocating West Suffolk's UKSPF and REPF allocations to local projects and initiatives.

## 2.2 **Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee - 24 January 2024 (Report number: OAS/WS/24/005)**

2.2.1 Councillor Andrew Martin, the Council's appointed representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee presented report number OAS/WS/24/005, which Councillor Sue Perry attended on his behalf on 24 January 2024. The report set out what was considered at the meeting, with the primary focus of the meeting being:

- Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT) mental health services.
- West Suffolk Hospital Future Systems Programme update.

Attached to the report was the following appendix:

- Appendix 1 – Report from Councillor Perry.

Councillor Martin also provide a verbal update on the NSFT Joint Mortality Review Group which had been set up and co-chaired by Caroline Aldridge and had now been disbanded.

2.2.2 The Committee considered the report in detail and asked questions to which Councillor Martin responded. In response to a question raised in relation to what influence did Suffolk County Council have to influence the NSFT, it was reported that Suffolk County Council was the commissioning function, and not an accountability function. The NSFT as an organisation was not providing the necessary services needed. General commissioning was allocated by the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

2.2.3 The Committee also discussed what its role was and how it could support the Council's appointed representatives more on the Health Scrutiny Committee, to which officers agreed to look into.

2.2.4 There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the frustrations and supported the update presented by Councillor Andrew Martin.

## 2.3 **Suffolk County Council: Police and Crime Panel - 26 January 2024 (Report number: OAS/WS/24/006)**

2.3.1 The Committee received the above report presented by Councillor Mike Chester. Attached at Appendix 1 to the report was a summary of topics discussed at the Police and Crime Panel meeting held on 26 January 2024, being:

- Proposals to increase the policing precept for 2024 to 2025.
- Recent decision made by the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections, May 2024 and the requirement of the Police and Crime Panel to review its Panel Arrangements and Rules of Procedure.

2.3.2 Councillor Mike Chester also provided a verbal report on matters which had been considered at a recent meeting held on 8 March 2024, being:

- Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Inspection of Suffolk Constabulary.
- Police and Crime Plan Objective 2: "Provide services which effectively support victims of crime and invest in initiatives which reduce crime and disorder."
- Recent decision made by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

2.3.3 The Committee considered the reports in detail and asked questions to which responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on the proposal to increase the policing precept by 4.9%, which was regrettable, and noted the Panel did not take the decision lightly in supporting the proposal.

In response to a question raised regarding Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls and whether there was an action plan, Councillor Mike Chester agreed to provide a written response on where the Police and Crime Commissioner was in the process of developing an Action Plan.

In response to a question raised on whether the Police and Crime Commissioner was collecting data on "Right Care, Right Person", which was introduced on 1 October 2023, Councillor Mike Chester agreed to provide a written response.

2.3.4 A member of the Committee referred to Lakenheath and Mildenhall airbases, which had a range of civilian, military and MOD police covering the same areas but there was no joined up thinking which resulted in the civilian police, of which there was only one officer being left to tackle an incident unaided and outnumbered while the MOD police sat by unable to help, and asked whether the Police and Crime Panel would consider how the police might work together to avoid this happening. In response, Councillor Mike Chester agreed to raise with the Police and Crime Panel.

2.3.5 There being in decision required the Committee **noted** the contents of the report, subject to written responses being received.



**2.4 Cabinet Decisions Plan: 1 March 2024 to 31 May 2024 (Report number: OAS/WS/24/007)**

2.4.1 The Committee reviewed the latest version of the Cabinet Decisions Plan, covering the period 1 March 2024 to 31 May 2024.

2.4.2 The Committee considered the Decisions Plan and was disappointed to see that the “Olding Road Options Appraisal” had been deferred for consideration with no future date being included.

**2.5 Work programme update 2024 (Report number: OAS/WS/24/008)**

2.5.1 The Committee received Report number OAS/WS/24/008, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items at attached at Appendix 1.

2.5.2 The Chair of the Committee sought the Committee’s views on inviting Councillor Wijenayaka to attend its June 2024 meeting to discuss the West Suffolk Markets in relation to the increase in losses which were raised by Councillor Andy Neal under the Leaders Statement at Full Council on 20 February 2024 and the Council’s plans to address the issue.

2.5.3 Councillor Mager raised the issue of potholes and flooding and suggested inviting Suffolk County Council Highways to a future meeting to provide a general overview of the issues and what was happening to rectify the issues. Councillor Waldon made further comments on flooding in Lakenheath.

2.5.4 The Committee considered its forward work programme and **agreed** to inviting Councillor Wijenayaka to its June 2024 to discuss West Suffolk Markets and that Councillors Mager and Waldon would complete a work programme suggestion for relating to Suffolk County Council Highways issues on potholes and flooding.

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

3.1 Please see background papers.

**4. Consultation and engagement undertaken**

4.1 Please see background papers.

**5. Risks associated with the proposals**

5.1 Please see background papers.

## **6. Implications arising from the proposals**

6.1 Financial - Please see background papers.

6.2 Equalities - Please see background papers.

## **7. Appendices referenced in this report**

7.1 Please see background papers.

## **8. Background documents associated with this report**

8.1 Report number: [OAS/WS/24/004](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund - Progress Update

8.2 Report number: [OAS/WS/24/005](#) and [Appendix 1](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee - 24 January 2024

8.3 Report number: [OAS/WS/24/006](#) and [Appendix 1](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Suffolk County Council: Police and Crime Panel - 26 January 2024

8.4 Report number: [OAS/WS/24/007](#) and [Appendix 1](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Cabinet Decisions Plan 1 February 2024 to 31 May 2024

8.5 Report number: [OAS/WS/24/008](#) and [Appendix 1](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Work Programme Update 2024

# Proposed Changes to the Council’s Community Chest Grant Fund

<b>Report number:</b>	<b>CAB/WS/24/025</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	21 May 2024
<b>Cabinet member:</b>	Councillor Donna Higgins Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities Tel: 01284 763233 Email: <a href="mailto:donna.higgins@westsuffolk.gov.uk">donna.higgins@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Jill Korwin Strategic Director Tel: 01284 763233 Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk">democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	

**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 within West Suffolk

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Agree the proposals as outlined in Section 3. of Report number CAB/WS/24/025.
2. Agree the role of the Grant Working Party be retained for consideration of the Thriving Communities Fund, making recommendations to Cabinet.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 West Suffolk Council, and its predecessor councils, has had grant funding available for allocation to community and voluntary sector groups, in later years through the 'Community Chest' fund.
- 1.2 A number of changes have been made over the years to the funding criteria and the application process, with the most recent significant changes being made following a Grant Review in 2019. This review was led by the Grant Working Party, with recommendations to Cabinet (paper CAB/WS/19/042 refers).
- 1.3 Following discussions on suggestions for improving the process at the Grant Working Party meeting on 8 January 2024 it was agreed that members would email officers directly with their suggestions, comments and views which would assist in capturing the proposed changes to the process to be considered.
- 1.4 A further Grant Working Party meeting on 20 March 2024 was presented with a draft proposal outlining changes to the grant process, these changes represented feedback from members as well as discussion between the portfolio holder and members.
- 1.5 Based on comments discussed at the Grant Working Party, as part of the 2023-2024 process, a number of recommended changes are set out in this report. These recommendations are made on the basis that the total available fund remains at £466,733.
- 1.6 This report sets out proposals to launch the 'Thriving Communities Funding' in July this year, as a successor to the Community Chest, which, Locality Budgets will come under and will provide a total of £645,953 available to West Suffolk's community and voluntary organisations to develop thrive and provide much needed support for our communities.

## 2. Principles

- 2.1 When considering changes, any grant funding allocation or process needs to meet the following principles:
  - a. Fair, transparent and accessible,
  - b. Support the delivery of the Council's Strategic Priorities,
  - c. Be in accordance with requirements of procurement and contract rules,
  - d. Be proportionate in terms of administration to applicants and the council,
  - e. Provide certainty and confidence to applicants,
  - f. There is unlikely to be enough money to fund all applicants, so support will continue to be provided to organisations to find alternative funding through the Council's Community Team.

### 3. Proposed Changes

- 3.1 Based on feedback and the principles outlined in paragraph two above, in summary, these are:
- Fund Citizens Advice West Suffolk through a three-year grant agreement (to be agreed) to the total of £200,000 funding per year.
  - Remaining £266,733 to be allocated through a 'Thriving Communities' grant scheme, with two levels of funding available for smaller and larger projects.
  - Continue to administer £179,220 to West Suffolk communities via Locality budgets.
- 3.2 The rationale for these changes is summarised below.
- 3.2.1 **Citizens Advice West Suffolk Grant Agreement – £200,000 a year for three years:** For a number of years, Citizens Advice (CA) West Suffolk has received the largest share of funding from Community Chest. Given the importance of the CA to the council in terms of its support to residents, and the fact this service reduces demand which may otherwise be managed by the council, it would be sensible to provide the CA with certainty over the funding and support for its work that we will provide each year. This will be achieved through a grant agreement (to be agreed) which would mean the CA would no longer be required to apply for funding.
- 3.2.2 To ensure transparency and accountability, funding to the CA would be allocated through a Grant Agreement which would set out, in detail, what outcomes the council wishes the CA to achieve with the funding as well as the monitoring arrangements.
- 3.2.3 It is recommended the Grant Agreement should be for £200,000 per year for the period April 2025 to March 2028 (this would cover the first term of an administration following elections to provide certainty to the CA and allow sufficient time for a new administration to consider its options).
- 3.2.4 The Grant Agreement would cover core costs only and should the CA wish to develop further initiatives (which could potentially support the delivery of the council's priorities) then it could apply to the 'Thriving Communities' fund (see below).
- 3.2.5 **Thriving Communities fund - £266,733:** The remainder of the budget would be made available through a Thriving Communities fund. This would be an annual open application process (similar to Community Chest).
- 3.2.6 The aim would be to ensure that smaller groups are able to bid into the fund (which has been consistent feedback from many councillors) but for larger amounts than the councillors' locality budget.

- 3.2.7 The fund, which is revenue and capital, would have two levels of application:
- 3.2.8 Smaller projects: open for smaller community groups focusing on local projects, benefiting the local community, working with trusted/established groups. Funding one off projects £2,000 to £8,000.
- 3.2.9 Larger projects: Available for larger projects, ongoing projects, benefitting the district as a whole or part of the district/the town/village as a whole. Funding projects between £8,001 to £20,000 and the project could be for two-years (no more than £20,000 ie: apply for £20,000 - £10,000 for each year).
- 3.2.10 Allocation of the £266,733 would be split between the two funds to fairly represent the level of applications we would expect for each based on the applications from this years and last year's Community Chest process:
- a) Over £20,001 equated to 14% of the total
  - b) Over £8,001 and up to £20,000 equated to 56% of the total
  - c) Under £8,000 equated to 30% of the total
- 3.2.11 Changes would be made to the application process for the Thriving Communities fund, these changes would be based on feedback from Grant Working Party and consider the following:
- a) Focus on strategic priorities,
  - b) Scoring matrix to reflect the application more for example, priorities, value for money, prior engagement,
  - c) Clearer understanding of the financial ask – management costs, what they are asking for, who they have received grants from,
  - d) If receiving part funding what impact will this have on the project's viability,
  - e) Engagement – to include all engagement with consideration of engagement with ward councillors and Parish and Town Councils,
  - f) New application form, which would have to be revised guidance and clear matrix scoring.
- 3.2.12 Any changes to the application process, guidance and scoring matrix will be drafted and agreed by the chair of Grant Working Party and the Portfolio Holder, with support from officers, in time for the launch of the Thriving Communities fund in June/July 2024.
- 3.2.13 **Locality Budgets - £179,200:** No changes have been made to Locality budgets. Each Councillor will continue to be allocated £2,800 for Locality Budgets to support community groups in their wards.

## **4. Role of the Grant Working Party**

- 4.1 Grant Working Party is vital in the consideration of applications and making recommendations to Cabinet. It provides a useful checking process and ensures wider engagement in the allocation of funding.
- 4.2 It also assists with the monitoring of outcomes, and that could include support for monitoring the CA Grant Agreement. The process through Grant Working Party should, therefore, be retained for the new Thriving Communities Fund.

## **5. Next steps**

- 5.1 To finalise the guidance and application process for Thriving Communities fund to launch in June/July 2024.
- 5.2 To develop a grant agreement with Citizens Advice ensuring that all necessary legal steps are undertaken.
- 5.3 To develop a communications plan highlighting the changes to the application process and proposed changes contained in this report.

## **6. Consultation and engagement undertaken**

- 6.1 Engagement has taken place with members of the Grant Working Party, as well as Cabinet members.
- 6.2 Engagement has taken place with external organisations that are affected by the proposed changes.

## **7. Risks associated with the proposals**

- 7.1 Organisations are not aware of the changes to the grant process, which equates to a medium risk. Control – to implement a wide-ranging communication plan.
- 7.2 Requests for funding exceed the amount of money available, equates to a medium risk. Control – revised eligibility criteria and evaluation scoring matrix to be used to identify best fit and value for money.

## **8. Implications arising from the proposals**

- 8.1 Financial – No implications as funding levels remain unchanged.

- 8.2 Legal compliance – Legal advice has been sought in terms of proposed changes and possible implications which are outlined in the report.
- 8.3 Personal data processing – no implications arise from this report, however personal contact details contained in applications are held by the council for internal use only. As non-decision making body, the meetings of the Grant Working Party are not held in public.
- 8.4 Equalities – The Council’s approach to grants has been subject of an Equality Impact Assessment and no negative consequences have been identified.
- 8.5 Crime and disorder – no implications
- 8.6 Safeguarding – no implications
- 8.7 Environment or sustainability – no implications
- 8.8 HR or staffing – no implications
- 8.9 Changes to existing policies – no implications although changes will be made to the existing terms of reference if proposals agreed.
- 8.10 External organisations (such as businesses, community groups) – engagement with those external organisations impacted by the proposed changes has taken place.

## **9. Appendices referenced in this report**

- 9.1 None

## **10. Background documents associated with this report**

- 10.1 Recommendations of the Grants to External Organisations Review [Report number CAB/WS/19/042](#) (Cabinet: 26 November 2019)





# Annual Review and Appointment of the Cabinet’s Joint Committee and Working Groups

<b>Report number:</b>	<b>CAB/WS/24/026</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	21 May 2024
<b>Cabinet member:</b>	Councillor Cliff Waterman Leader of the Council Telephone: 07974 092289 Email: <a href="mailto:cliff.waterman@westsuffolk.gov.uk">cliff.waterman@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Lead officers:</b>	Jennifer Eves Director (HR, Governance and Regulatory) Telephone: 01284 757015 Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk">democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>  Teresa Halliday Monitoring Officer Telephone: 01284 757144 Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk">democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	

**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 2024 to 2025.**
  - b. Two substitute members to be appointed to represent West Suffolk Council on the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee in 2024 to 2025.**
  - 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 2024 to 2025, as necessary.**
- 2. It is recommended that the Cabinet:**
  - a. Continues to operate the Staff Consultative Panel in 2024 to 2025 in accordance with the Terms of Reference contained in Appendix A to Report number: CAB/WS/24/026.**
  - 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/24/026.**
- 3. Continues to operate the West Suffolk Grant Working Party in 2024 to 2025 in accordance with the Terms of Reference contained in Appendix B to Report number: CAB/WS/24/026.**
- 4. Continues to operate the West Suffolk Local Plan Working Group in 2024 to 2025 in accordance with the Terms of Reference contained in Appendix C to Report number: CAB/WS/24/026.**

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- 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 Working Groups during 2024 to 2025 in accordance with their Terms of Reference.**
  
- 6. It be noted that, subject to resources being available to support them, informal advisory panels can be established by the Leader to consider specific issues as required throughout 2024 to 2025.**

## 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 and 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 and working groups for the year 2024 to 2025, as set out in section 2. below.

## 2. Joint committee and 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 and can be viewed electronically at [CAB.WS.20.003 Appendix 1 - Review of the ARP Constitution.pdf \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](#)
- 2.1.3 The Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee continues to work effectively, with the member representation from each partner authority jointly managing the administration and performance of the five councils' respective statutory functions relating to the collection of council tax and non-domestic rates, and the payment of housing and other relevant benefits.
- 2.1.4 It is **recommended** that:
- 1. One full member, be appointed to represent West Suffolk Council on the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee in 2024 to 2025.**
  - 2. Two substitute members be appointed to represent West Suffolk Council on the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee in 2024 to 2025.**
  - 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 2024 to 2025, 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 The Panel 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 Following the Council meeting on 26 March 2024 where proposed amendments to the West Suffolk Council Constitution were considered and resolved ([Report number COU/WS/24/008](#) refers), the following amendments have now been incorporated into the Terms of Reference for the Staff Consultative Panel, as set out in Appendix A to Report number CAB/WS/24/026:

- To provide clarity to the duty set out in paragraph 2.6.
- The Council also resolved that the Health and Safety Sub-Committee be disbanded and that the oversight and scrutiny of the health and safety function would now be undertaken by the Portfolio Holder for Governance and Regulatory, the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and the Staff Consultative Panel. Therefore, this element is now reflected in paragraph 3.2(f) of the Terms of Reference for the Panel.

2.2.5 It is **recommended** that:

- 1. The Staff Consultative Panel continues to operate in 2024 to 2025 in accordance with the Terms of Reference contained in Appendix A to Report number CAB/WS/24/026.**
- 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 Thriving Communities 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 Thriving Communities 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 Thriving Communities 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 Minor amendments are proposed to be made to the Terms of Reference, as set out in Appendix B to Report number CAB/WS/24/026:-
- To reflect the wording used within the Council’s Strategic Plan to refer to Thriving Communities funding.
  - To clarify the Officer Support which would be available to the Grant Working Party.
- 2.3.5 Without a Grant Working Party, an alternative mechanism would be needed to consider the Thriving Communities 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.
- 2.3.6 **It is recommended that the West Suffolk Grant Working Party continues to operate in 2024 to 2025 in accordance with the Terms of Reference contained in Appendix B to Report number: CAB/WS/24/026.**
- 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 The Working Group has helped develop and progress the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan. Its primary function was 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 West Suffolk Local Plan has now been submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination on Public, as per the decision of Council on 19

December 2023 ([Council on Tuesday 19 December 2023](#)). As a result, the West Suffolk Local Plan has been handed to an Independent Inspector who will conduct, lead and direct the examination. Therefore, no meetings are planned or expected to be required of the Working Group. However, it is proposed that until adoption, the Working Group remains in place should any exceptional circumstances arise e.g. the Local Plan is found to be unsound.

2.4.4 **It is recommended that the West Suffolk Local Plan Working Group continues to operate in 2024 to 2025 in accordance with the Terms of Reference contained in Appendix C to Report number: CAB/WS/24/026.**

## 2.5 **Delegated Authority**

2.5.1 During 2024 to 2025, 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 Working Groups during 2024 to 2025 in accordance with their Terms of Reference.**

## 2.6 **Other advisory panels**

2.6.1 The Cabinet may also during 2024 to 2025 set up informal member/officer advisory panels to consider specific issues, which would usually be on a task-and-finish basis. Such panels would make recommendations directly to Cabinet or the appropriate committee in the form of reports. It is proposed that such panels 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 advisory panels be established to consider specific issues as required throughout 2024 to 2025.**

## 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 and 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 groups 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](#)
- 8.2 Council: 26 March 2024 – Report number [COU/WS/24/008](#)
- 8.3 Council: 19 December 2023 [Council - Tuesday 19 December 2023](#)

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## Staff Consultative Panel – Terms of Reference

**(The amendments incorporated into these Terms of Reference are highlighted in grey shading)**

### **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 on behalf of the Head of Paid Service or their designated nominee.
- 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, including acting as a focus for employee participation in the promotion of health and safety at work, the prevention of accidents and incidents and the avoidance of work related ill health.
  - (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

**(Proposed amendments to these Terms of Reference are highlighted in grey shading. Proposed deletions are also shown with strikethrough text.)**

### 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 ~~Thriving Communities~~ ~~Community Chest Grant~~ funding (Cabinet meeting on 21 May 2024; Cabinet Report number [Report number CAB/WS/24/025](#) refers).

~~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~~ ~~Thriving Communities~~ 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 relevant Director (~~Families and Communities~~), responsible for Thriving 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 Thriving Communities ~~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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### Decisions Plan

#### Key decisions and other executive decisions to be considered

**Date: 1 May 2024 to 31 May 2025**

**Publication date: 19 April 2024**

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 2025. 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](mailto: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
21/05/24  Page 48	<p><b>Review and Appointment to Cabinet Panels/Working Groups/Joint Committees</b></p> <p>The Cabinet will be asked to review and appoint to its panels/working groups/joint committees.</p>	Not applicable	(D)	Cabinet	Cliff Waterman Leader of the Council	<p>Jen Eves Director (HR, Governance and Regulatory) 01284 757015</p> <p>Teresa Halliday Service Manager (Legal and Governance) 01284 757144</p>	Report to Cabinet.
21/05/24  (new)	<p><b>Proposed changes to the West Suffolk Council Community Chest grant fund</b></p> <p>The Cabinet will be asked to consider and approve proposed changes to the criteria and operation of the</p>	Exempt appendices: paragraph 3	(D)	Cabinet	Donna Higgins Families and Communities	Jill Korwin Strategic Director 01284 757252	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
	Council's Community Chest grant fund.						
Deferred from 12/03/24 to 25/06/24 49	<b>Olding Road Options Appraisal</b> The Cabinet will be asked to consider an options appraisal for the site at Olding Road, Bury St Edmunds and to agree and recommend to Council a preferred option with which to proceed.	Exempt appendices: paragraph 3	(R) Council	Cabinet/ Council	Diane Hind Resources	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245	Report to Cabinet with recommendations to Council and appendices, including exempt appendices attached.
25/06/24 (new)	<b>Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs</b> The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding debts, as detailed in	Exempt appendices: paragraphs 1 and 2	(KD) (a)	Cabinet	Diane Hind Resources	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
	the exempt appendices.						
17/09/24 (new) Page 50	<b>Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs</b> 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	Diane Hind Resources	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245	Report to Cabinet with exempt appendices attached.
17/09/24 (new)	<b>Annual Treasury Management and Financial Resilience Report (2023 to 2024)</b> The Cabinet will be asked to consider the recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny	Not applicable	(R) – Council 24/09/24	Cabinet/ Council	Diane Hind Resources	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
Page 51	Committee regarding seeking approval for the Annual Treasury Management and Financial Resilience Report for 2023 to 2024.						
17/09/24 (new)	<p><b>Treasury Management Report – June 2024</b></p> <p>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 2024 and 30 June 2024.</p>	Not applicable	(R) – Council 24/09/24	Cabinet/ Council	Diane Hind Resources	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
10/12/24  (new)  Page 52	<b>Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs</b> 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	Diane Hind Resources	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245	Report to Cabinet with exempt appendices attached.
10/12/24  (new)	<b>Council Tax Base for Tax Setting Purposes 2025 to 2026</b> The Cabinet will be asked to recommend to Council the basis of the formal calculation for the Council Tax Base for West Suffolk Council for the financial year 2025 to	Not applicable	(R) – Council 17/12/24	Cabinet/ Council	Diane Hind Resources	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
	2026.						
10/12/24  (new)  Page 53	<b>Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025 to 2026</b> 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 17/12/24	Cabinet/ Council	Diane Hind Resources	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245	Report to Cabinet with recommendations to Council.
10/12/24  (new)	<b>Delivering a Sustainable Medium-Term Budget</b> The Cabinet may be asked to consider at this stage, recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny	Not applicable	(R) – Council 17/12/24	Cabinet/ Council	Diane Hind Resources	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
Page 54	Committee for recommending to Council on proposals for achieving a sustainable budget in 2025 to 2026 and in the medium term.						
10/12/24 (new)	<b>Treasury Management Report – September 2024</b> 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 2024 and 30	Not applicable	(R) – Council 17/12/24	Cabinet/ Council	Diane Hind Resources	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
	September 2024.						
04/02/25  (new)  Page 55	<b>Delivering a Sustainable Medium-Term Budget</b> 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 2025 to 2026 and in the medium term.	Not applicable	(R) – Council 25/02/25  Unless separate proposals are recommended by Cabinet, consideration by Council will take place as part of the budget setting paper on 25/02/25	Cabinet/ Council	Diane Hind Resources	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
04/02/25  (new)  Page 56	<p><b>Budget and Council Tax Setting 2025 to 2026 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025 to 2029</b></p> <p>The Cabinet will be asked to consider the proposals for the 2025 to 2026 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025 to 2029 for West Suffolk Council, prior to its approval by Council. This report includes the Minimum Revenues Provision (MRP) Policy and Prudential Indicators, and also</p>	Exempt appendices: paragraph 3	<p>(KD) (e)- in relation to fees and charges element where proposed increases will be more than five percent</p> <p>(R) – Council 25/02/25</p> <p>Unless separate proposals are recommend-</p>	Cabinet/ Council	Diane Hind Resources	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245	Report to Cabinet with recommendations to Council and 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
Page 57	<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>		<p>ed by Cabinet, consideration by Council will take place as part of the separate budget setting paper on 25/02/25</p>				

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
04/02/25  (new)  Page 58	<p><b>Financial Resilience - Strategy Statement 2025 to 2026 and Treasury Management Code of Practice</b></p> <p>The Cabinet will be asked to recommend to Council, approval of the Strategy Statement 2025 to 2026 and Treasury Management Code of Practice for West Suffolk Council, which must be undertaken before the start of each financial year.</p>	Not applicable	(R) – Council 25/02/25	Cabinet/ Council	Diane Hind Resources	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
04/02/25  (new)  Page 59	<b>Treasury Management Report – December 2024</b> 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 2024 and 31 December 2024.	Not applicable	(R) – Council 25/02/25	Cabinet/ Council	Diane Hind Resources	Rachael Mann Director (Resources and Property) 01638 719245	Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and Council.
11/03/25  (new)	<b>Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs</b> The Cabinet will be asked to consider writing-off outstanding	Exempt appendices: paragraphs 1 and 2	(KD) (a)	Cabinet	Diane Hind Resources	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.
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- a. Information which reveals that the authority proposes –
    - a. to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
    - b. to make an order or direction under any enactment.
  - b. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

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

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

## **Note 2: Key decision definition**

A key decision is an executive decision that either:

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

**Note 3: Membership of bodies making key decisions**

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

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>
Cliff Waterman	Leader of the Council
Victor Lukaniuk	Deputy Leader of the Council
Donna Higgins	Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities
Diane Hind	Portfolio Holder for Resources
Gerald Kelly	Portfolio Holder for Governance and Regulatory
Richard O’Driscoll	Portfolio Holder for Housing
Ian Shipp	Portfolio Holder for Leisure
David Taylor	Portfolio Holder for Operations
Jim Thorndyke	Portfolio Holder for Planning
Indy Wijenayaka	Portfolio Holder for Growth

**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)**

<b>Member Council</b>	<b>Full representative</b>	<b>Substitute representatives</b>
Breckland	Philip Cowen	Sam Chapman-Allen Sarah Suggitt
East Cambridgeshire	James Lay	Anna Bailey Alan Sharp
East Suffolk	Paul Ashton	Peter Byatt Vacancy
Fenland	Jan French	Chris Boden Vacancy
West Suffolk	Diane Hind	Victor Lukaniuk David Taylor

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Jennifer Eves  
 Director (Human Resources, Governance and Regulatory)  
 Date: 19 April 2024