

Cabinet



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 15 September 2016	
Report No:	CAB/FH/16/043	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	25 October 2016
Chairman of the Committee:	Simon Cole Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tel: 07974 443762 Email: simon.cole@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead Officer:	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01638 719729 Email: christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	<p>On 15 September 2016, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the following items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Annual Presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth;(2) Approach to Delivering a Sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016-2020 and Consideration of the Four-Year Settlement Offer from Central Government;(3) Local Air Quality Strategy Progress Report (2015-2016)(4) Final Report of the New Housing Development Sites Joint Task and Finish Group;(5) Decisions Plan: September 2016 to May 2017; and(6) Work Programme Update. <p>(Recommendations for Item 2 above were considered by the Joint Cabinet meeting held on 20 September 2016)</p>	

Recommendation:	The Cabinet is requested to <u>NOTE</u> the contents of Report CAB/FH/16/043, being the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.		
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report for information only.		
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 		
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 		
Implications:			
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below
Risk/opportunity assessment: <i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>			
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
See Reports listed under background papers below			
Wards affected:	All Wards		
Background papers:	Please see background papers, which are listed at the end of the report.		
Documents attached:	None		

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation

1.1 Annual Presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth (Report No: OAS/FH/16/021 and Verbal)

- 1.1.1 As set out in the Council's Constitution, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting at least one Cabinet Member shall be invited to attend to give an account of his or her portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.
- 1.1.2 The Committee was reminded that on 10 September 2015, the Committee received a presentation from the then Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth (Councillor James Waters), setting out responsibilities covered under the planning and growth portfolio.
- 1.1.3 At this meeting, the newly appointed portfolio holder for Planning and Growth from May 2016, Councillor Lance Stanbury, had been invited to the meeting to provide a follow-up presentation on his portfolio and the work of his predecessor. Report No: OAS/FH/16/021, set out the focus for the follow-up presentation, which was to:
- Outline the main challenges faced since May 2016;
 - Outline some key successes and any failures since May 2016 and any lessons learned:
 - Set out the vision for the Planning and Growth Portfolio through to 2019 and were you on target to meet that vision.
- 1.1.3 Members discussed the presentation in detail and asked questions of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth, to which comprehensive responses were provided. In particular detailed discussions were held on initiatives in supporting market towns and the creation of masterplans; the A11 technology study to attract the IT sector along the A11 corridor; the Community Infrastructure Levey; and the provision of suitable business properties to attract higher salaried jobs to Brandon and the surrounding area.
- 1.1.4 The Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth thanked officers for all the work they were doing and for the Committee's scrutiny of his portfolio.
- 1.1.5 There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the presentation.

1.2 Local Air Quality Strategy Progress Report (2015-2016) (Report No: OAS/FH/16/023)

- 1.2.1 The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/16/023, which reported on work that had been undertaken during 2015-2016 to meet the Local Air Quality Regulations across the District and recommend changes to the approach and specific actions. For the majority of the District, air quality remained good. However, work had concluded that some areas of the major towns warranted further monitoring to confirm that this continued to be the case in respect of the main pollutant of concern, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂).

- 1.2.2 During the year officers also undertook a more strategic review of the approach to air quality across West Suffolk. The timing and scope of the review reflected several factors and needs:
- Changes to statutory guidance published by the Department of the Environment (Defra)
 - The role of Suffolk County Council Highways Department in respect of air quality management in the light of experience locally and across Suffolk
 - Experienced gained with respect to air quality regulation and planning since the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework in March 2012
 - The need to revise, consult upon and adopt an Air Quality Strategy in Forest Heath District Council when it lapses in 2012-2017 given that a shared service approach had been operating for over three years and no equivalent was adopted in St Edmundsbury.
 - The need to raise awareness of the issues of Local Air Quality as they affect the District.
- 1.2.3 The results of the review were set out in paragraph 2.5 of the report with additional detail provided at Appendix 1. Attached at Appendix 2 was the new streamlined report as recommended by Defra.
- 1.2.4 The Committee considered the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on air quality in Brandon. Members were disappointed to see that there had not been a substantial decrease in NO₂. Members were advised that officer were working with Suffolk County Council to look at why NO₂ levels had not decreased as anticipated in Brandon.
- 1.2.5 The Committee supported the report, and **RECOMMENDED that the Licensing and Regulatory Committee undertake external consultation on the proposal to amend the declared area of the Air Quality Management Area in Newmarket, subject to technical approval from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.**
- 1.3 **Final Report of the New Housing Development Sites Joint Task and Finish Group (Report No: OAS/FH/16/024)**
- 1.3.1 The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/16/024, which provided the findings and recommendations of the New Housing Development Sites Joint Task and Finish Group.
- 1.3.2 The Joint Task and Finish Group (the Group) was formed in March 2013, to look into the problems of adoption sometimes encountered on larger housing developments, and related to both open space and highways matters. Problems had been encountered in the past when houses were occupied before the promised open space or access roads had been completed and adopted.
- 1.3.3 The Group considered ways in which the Development Management Service and other corporate teams (such as Parks), and Suffolk County Council

Highways could work smarter together to avoid these problems in the future with major housing schemes.

- 1.3.4 Both Cambridgeshire County Council and Northamptonshire County Council had protocols in place to ensure that suitable planning conditions were imposed with major developments to ensure that phasing of streets and adoptions were controlled through the planning process. In addition, Central Government recommended the use of similar standard conditions where appropriate.
- 1.3.5 The use of such conditions needed to be agreed with Suffolk County Council (SCC), as Highways Authority. SCC had indicated that they would be amenable in using such conditions, subject to all other Suffolk authorities signing up to their use. The use of such conditions was generally seen as good practice and other colleagues in Suffolk were also informally amenable to their use.
- 1.3.6 The introduction of standard conditions regarding adoption would improve the situation the Council currently had and the good practice of pre-application advice and the development team approach would also provide benefits to address the concerns raised by the Joint Task and Finish Group.
- 1.3.7 The Group concluded that the introduction of standard conditions regarding adoption would improve the situation currently encountered and the good practice pre-application advice and the development team approach would also provide benefits in addressing the concerns raised by the Group.
- 1.3.8 The Committee **RECOMMENDS that the Head of Operations be asked to progress with Suffolk County Council and the other Suffolk Authorities the introduction of standard conditions regarding highway adoption.**
- 1.4 **Decisions Plan: September 2016 to May 2017 (Report No: OAS/FH/16/025)**
 - 1.4.1 The Committee considered the latest Decisions Plan, covering the period September 2016 to May 2017. Members reviewed the Decisions Plan in detail and asked questions to which responses were provided.
 - 1.4.2 There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the Decisions Plan.
- 1.5 **Work Programme Update and Suggestion for Scrutiny (Report No: OAS/FH/16/026)**
 - 1.5.1 The Committee received and **noted** Report No: OAS/FH/16/026, which provided an update on the current status of the Committee's Work Programme for 2016-2017.
 - 1.5.2 The Chairman updated the Committee on the issue of parking enforcement in Newmarket in relation to specific roads. A reworded suggestion form had not been resubmitted at this time, because since the Committee's last meeting, the Councils representative, Councillor Brian Harvey on the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel had raised our concerns with the Panel regarding parking issues in

Newmarket. A task force team on enforcement had been established to try and “blitz” areas where parking was an issue in Newmarket. If following this initiative, parking issues in Newmarket had not improved, a reworded suggestion form on parking enforcement in Newmarket could be resubmitted to the Committee in January 2017, for further consideration.

2. Background Papers

- 2.1.1 [Report No OAS/FH/16/021](#): Annual Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth
- 2.1.2 [Report No OAS/FH/16/023 & Appendix 1](#) & [Appendix 2](#): Local Air Quality Strategy Progress Report (2015-2016)
- 2.1.3 [Report No OAS/FH/16/024](#): Final Report of the New Housing Development Sites Joint Task and Finish Group
- 2.1.4 [Report No OAS/FH/16/025](#) & [Appendix 1](#): Decisions Plan: September 2016 – May 2017
- 2.1.5 [Report No OAS/FH/16/026](#): Work Programme Update