

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Wednesday 7 June 2017** at **4.00 pm** at the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Diane Hind
Vice Chairman Susan Glossop

Tony Brown
John Burns
Patrick Chung
Paula Fox
Paul Hopfensperger

Richard Rout
Andrew Speed
Clive Springett
Jim Thorndyke
Frank Warby

Substitutes attending:
Patricia Warby

By Invitation:
John Griffiths, Leader of the Council

Remembrance

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Committee observed a one minute silence in memory of Councillor Angela Rushen, who had recently passed away.

156. **Substitutes**

The following substitution was declared:

Councillor Patricia Warby for Councillor Simon Brown.

157. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simon Brown and Sarah Stamp.

Councillor Jeremy Farthing was also unable to attend.

158. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2017, were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

159. Public Participation

There were no questions/statements from members of the public.

160. Announcements from the Chairman regarding responses of the Cabinet to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman attended Cabinet on 31 May 2017, and presented the Committee's report on items it considered on 19 April 2017, which was accepted without any questions raised.

161. Draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2016-2017

[The Chairman agreed for this item to be brought forward on the agenda]

The Leader of the Council, Councillor John Griffiths presented Report No: OAS/SE/17/016, which outlined the draft West Suffolk Annual Report (2016-2017), which had been written as a joint West Suffolk document and was before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their comments.

The Council had taken a slightly different approach in producing this year's Annual Report, and hoped that the new format was more engaging and would provide the opportunity to provide updates on the Council's achievements throughout the year.

The draft West Suffolk Annual Report (Appendix A) highlighted the key activities and developments which had been achieved over the financial year 2016-2017, with regard to the priorities set out in the West Suffolk Strategic Plan. The draft report contained a number of case studies and examples from West Suffolk to illustrate the achievements described.

The Leader highlighted relevant issues for the attention of the Committee.

Members examined the document in detail and asked a number of questions of the Leader and officers, to which comprehensive responses were provided. Discussions were held on the Bury Masterplan; West Suffolk Operational Hub; Camps Road Recreation Ground; Town Council Handyman; Haverhill Youth Survey and the Dementia Action Alliance.

In response to a question raised regarding "campaigning for the right infrastructure", the Leader advised that the Council was looking at improving ways of working with Suffolk County Council. In particular closer working links with Highways and planning.

Comments were made on the following areas of the draft Annual Report:

- (1) Page 27: Promoting Physical Activity: suggest removing reference to Clare and focusing on the largest population centres.
- (2) Annex 1: Community Chest Funding: suggest including the geographical area the organisation serves and the amount of funding allocated to each organisation.

The Leader wished to thank the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their comments on the draft Annual Report. He also wished to thank officers and councillors working together across West Suffolk.

It was then proposed by Councillor John Burns, seconded by Councillor Paul Hopfensperger, and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

RECOMMENDED

That the Draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2016-2017, as contained in Appendix A to Report No: OAS/SE/17/016 be approved, subject to comments made during the meeting.

162. Annual Presentation by the Leader of the Council

The Committee was reminded that on 8 June 2016, it had received a presentation from the Leader of the Council, setting out his responsibilities covered under the portfolio.

At this meeting, the Leader of the Council had been invited back to provide a follow-up presentation on his portfolio. Report No: OAS/SE/17/017 set out the focus of the follow-up presentation, which was to:

- Outline the main challenges faced during the first year;
- Outline some key successes and any failures during the first year and any lessons learned; and
- Set out the vision for the Portfolio through to 2019, and whether on target to meet that vision.

Councillor John Griffiths opened his presentation by thanking the Committee for the invitation and for its support over the past year. It had been an extremely busy and challenging year, and was proud of the successes members had achieved together as a council, and in partnership with Forest Heath District Council.

He then provided a number of examples, outlining challenges faced; successes and lessons learnt; and the vision through to 2019, such as:

- Devolution: the outcome was disappointing but had provided greater working across East Anglia;
- Driving forward growth and investment;
- Single Council: Agenda moving forward;
- Housing: continuing to face challenges of availability and affordability;
- Families and Communities: Supporting lots of local projects through our Community Chest and Locality Budget funding

Members discussed the update in detail and asked questions of the Cabinet Member and officers, to which comprehensive responses were provided. Discussions were held on Civil Parking Enforcement and whether it would be "cost neutral" the future of West Suffolk (Single Council); the disbandment of Western Area Highways and progress on the proposed works at Bury St Edmunds Train Station.

In particular discussions were held on Suffolk County Council's (SCC) performance with regards to highways. Reference was made to concerns raised by members of the public and parish councillors at four parish council AGMs, where they had expressed disappointment with the lack of response from SCC on poor quality pothole repairs; no repairs at all; and the general lack of care and performance.

The Leader informed members that the effective delivery of highway works, whether new roads or the maintenance of existing roads was crucial to the council achieving its goal of balanced growth and strong and connected communities. Council officers were continuing to try and improve the way of working with SCC and West Suffolk whether through major projects; planning decisions; or through our families and communities officers working in their localities. He further advised that the Committee might wish to consider adding Highways and Maintenance to its work programme and could invite the SCC Highways Portfolio Holder and relevant officers to future meeting of the Committee to talk about planned maintenance and issues around rural road.

The Committee acknowledged that this was an issue of concern and Councillors Susan Glossop and Diane Hind agreed to complete the relevant Work Programme Suggestion Form, which would be submitted for further consideration by the Committee at its July 2017 meeting.

The Chairman thanked the Leader of the Council for the update on his portfolio. There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the presentation.

163. Cabinet Decisions Plan: June 2017 to May 2018

The Committee received Report No: OAS/SE/17/018, which requested that Members peruse the Cabinet Decisions Plan for the period June 2017 to May 2018 for which it would like further information on or might benefit from the Committee's involvement. The Committee considered the Decisions Plan, and asked questions to which the Leader of the Council provided responses.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the June 2017 to May 2018 Decisions Plan.

164. Work Programme Update and Re-appointments to the Suffolk County Health Scrutiny Committee

The Committee received Report No: OAS/SE/17/019, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2017-2018 (Appendix 1).

Following on from earlier discussions held under the "Leaders Annual Presentation", relating to Suffolk County Council Highways, it was agreed that Councillors Susan Glossop and Diane Hind would complete and submit a work programme suggestion form inviting Suffolk County Council Highways to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee **noted** the update on the current status of its forward work programme for 2017-2018.

The report also sought the Borough Council's nominated representative and substitute member on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee.

Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny

As in previous years, Suffolk County Council wished a representative to be appointed to its Health Scrutiny Committee from each of the County's District and Borough Councils. It was recommended that the Members should ideally be from the Borough's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, although it was not essential as the necessary training would be provided by the County.

The current members on this joint body were:

- Councillor Paul Hopfensperger as the nominated representative; and
- Councillor Margaret Marks as the nominated substitute.

The Committee considered the report and re-nominated Councillor Paul Hopfensperger as the Borough's nominated representative and Councillor Margaret Marks as the substitute Member on the Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee for 2017-2018.

It was then proposed by Councillor Diane Hind, seconded by Councillor Frank Warby, and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

RECOMMENDED

That full Council be asked to confirm the appointment of Councillor Paul Hopfensperger as the Borough Council's nominated representative and Councillor Margaret Marks as the substitute member on the Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee for 2017-2018.

Councillor Paul Hopfensperger then gave a brief summary on the work Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee had done over the past year.

It was then suggested that from June 2018 the Council might wish to consider receiving an annual update on "outside bodies", which the Leader of the Council supported.

The Meeting concluded at 5.50 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
