

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Tuesday 6 June 2017** at **6.00 pm** at the **Council Chamber, District Offices**, College Heath Road, Mildenhall IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Simon Cole
Vice Chairman Ruth Bowman J.P.

Chris Barker
John Bloodworth
Rona Burt

Reg Silvester
Nigel Roman
David Palmer

Substitutes attending:

David Bowman, Cabinet Member for Operations
James Waters, Leader of the Council

158. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutes declared.

159. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brian Harvey and Christine Mason.

160. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2017, were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

161. **Public Participation**

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

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

Chairman attended Cabinet on 16 May 2017 and presented the Committee's report on items it considered on 20 April 2017, which was noted.

The Chairman questioned the Leader regarding the "Future Governance in West Suffolk" and the possibility of Overview and Scrutiny being involved in the process to which the Monitoring Officer had indicated September 2017.

163. **Renewable Energy Provision for the Mildenhall Hub**

The Committee received a presentation on "Investing in Renewable Energy" in relation to the Mildenhall Hub. The Committee noted that the Council was awaiting financial information from the Consultants, Concertus and that design and planning issues would to be considered as part of the planning process only.

The Service Manager (Environmental Health Services) went through the presentation which included the following:

- Key objectives (financial viability; CO₂ emissions reduction; affordability; security of supply)
- Areas considered (reducing demand; heating and cooling; generating and storing power; exporting heat and power to others; monitoring and managing performance)
- Heating and cooling
- Power generation (combined heat and power; roof-mounted solar panels; currently 50kw solar pv generation at College Heath Road)
- Power storage
- Potential benefits (investment return; cost savings to consumers; carbon savings; improved resilience);
- Additional Options (using the Hub as an energy centre to create a heat network serving more than one building; providing heat to Mildenhall College Academy)
- Next steps (interim report to Cabinet in June 2017, based on this presentation; Business Case to Council in July 2017).

The Committee discussed the presentation in detail and asked a number of questions to which comprehensive responses were provided.

In particular the Committee discussed the build life of the proposed facility, including the size and design; the power storage facility which could be located onsite; battery technology (including battery life) and the various CO₂ targets with regards to using ground source energy verses steam energy.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the presentation.

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

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/17/014, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2017-2018 (Appendix 1).

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

The report also sought District 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 District'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 Christine Mason as the nominated representative; and
- Councillor John Bloodworth as the nominated substitute.

The Committee considered the report and suggested that Councillor John Bloodworth be nominated as the District's nominated representative and Councillor Christine Mason as the substitute Member on the Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee for 2017-2018.

It was then proposed by Councillor John Bloodworth, seconded by Councillor Rona Burt, and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

RECOMMENDED

That full Council be asked to confirm the appointment of Councillor John Bloodworth as the District Council's nominated representative and Councillor Christine Mason as the substitute member on the Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee for 2017-2018.

165. **Decisions Plan: June 2017 to May 2018**

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/17/015, 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 officers provided responses. In response to a question raised relating to the West Suffolk Community Energy Plan Update 2016-2017, the Committee was advised that Cabinet would receive an Annual Report on the Toggam Solar Farm and data was also readily available on the Councils website.

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

166. **Draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2016-2017**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor James Waters presented Report No: OAS/FH/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 and officers then 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. In particular, comments were held on the following areas of the draft Annual Report:

- (1) Page 9: Local markets: suggest including an additional sentence setting out that the "Council was working with Suffolk County Council to improve the offer on the market in Newmarket".
- (2) Annex 1: Community Chest Funding: suggest including the amount of funding allocated to each organisation.
- (3) Page 21: Locality Budgets: suggest including an additional sentence advising that "the website was regularly updated with information about the latest projects which had been supported by Members".

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 Simon Cole, seconded by Councillor Nigel Roman, 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/FH/17/016 be approved, subject to comments made during the meeting.

167. **Annual Presentation by the Leader of the Council**

The Committee was reminded that on 9 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/FH/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 James Waters opened his presentation by thanking the Committee for the invitation and for its support over the past year.

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

- Driving forward economic development;
- Devolution: the outcome was disappointing but had provided greater working across East Anglia;
- Solar Farm: major investment for the Council over the last year;
- Single Council: Agenda moving forward;
- Mildenhall Growth Agenda: MOD Masterplan which was now progressing in relation to RAF Mildenhall and
- Mildenhall Hub.

Members discussed the update in detail and asked questions of the Leader of the Council and officers, to which comprehensive responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on the Omar Homes and the closure of RAF Mildenhall.

The Chairman thanked the Leader of the Council for the update on his portfolio.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the presentation.

The Meeting concluded at 7.30 pm

Signed by:

Chairman