

Council



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Council** held on
Wednesday 20 December 2017 at **6.00 pm** at the **Council Chamber,**
District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Ruth Bowman J.P.

Vice Chairman Brian Harvey

Ruth Allen	Victor Lukaniuk
Michael Anderson	Carol Lynch
Chris Barker	Christine Mason
John Bloodworth	Robert Nobbs
David Bowman	Colin Noble
Rona Burt	David Palmer
Louis Busuttill	Peter Ridgwell
Simon Cole	Nigel Roman
Roger Dicker	Lance Stanbury
Andy Drummond	James Waters
Stephen Edwards	

276. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 27 September 2017 and 18 October 2017 were unanimously received as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

277. **Chairman's Announcements (Report No: COU/FH/17/031)**

The Chairman advised the meeting that contrary to the list in Report No COU/FH/17/031 she did not attend the engagements listed against 10 December 2017 (Open House Event, RAF Mildenhall) or 18 December 2017 (Newmarket Town Council meeting) as both events were cancelled.

Councillors Carol Lynch and Simon Cole asked questions with regard to the postponed Newmarket Town Council meeting which were responded to by the Service Manager (Democratic Services).

278. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Appleby, Robin Millar and Reg Silvester.

Councillor Louise Marston was also unable to attend the meeting.

279. **Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

280. **The Leader's Report (Report No: COU/FH/17/032)**

The Leader presented his statement to the meeting, as set out in Report No COU/FH/17/032.

Further to the topics covered in his written report, the Leader advised that Karen Points, Assistant Director for Human Resources, Legal and Democratic Services, would be leaving the West Suffolk councils to take up a new role as Strategic Director of Abbeycroft Leisure in early 2018. He thanked the Assistant Director for all her support and wished her well in her new role.

The Leader also invited the Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance to inform the meeting that Councils in Suffolk, including Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, had been successful in bidding to become a '100% Business Rates' pilot area. The Cabinet Member advised Council of the benefits being involved in this scheme could bring about to the West Suffolk councils.

Lastly, the Leader concluded by thanking his fellow Members and Officers for all their valued input over the past year and wished all a very Merry Christmas.

The report was noted.

281. **Public Participation**

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

282. **Referrals Report of Recommendations from Cabinet (Report No: COU/FH/17/033)**

The Council considered the referrals report of recommendations from Cabinet as set out in Report No COU/FH/17/033:

1. West Suffolk Local Code of Corporate Governance
(Cabinet: 24 October 2017)

Councillor Stephen Edwards, Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, presented this referral item.

On the motion of the Cabinet Member, seconded by Councillor Andy Drummond and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the West Suffolk Local Code of Corporate Governance, attached as Appendix A to Report No PAS/FH/17/025, be approved.

2. First Year Review of Performance of the Council's Solar Farm and Future of its Wholly Owned Company Greenheath Energy Ltd
(Cabinet: 24 October 2017)

Councillor Stephen Edwards, Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, presented this referral item and responded to questions, alongside the Assistant Director (Resources and Performance), where posed by Members.

The Cabinet Member also took this opportunity to provide Council with a short briefing on the performance of the District Council's entire investment portfolio.

Councillor Nigel Roman posed a question as to whether the return from current District Council investments would be ring-fenced to District Council residents when the West Suffolk Council came into being. The Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) explained that there was no statutory requirement to segregate in this way. The Cabinet Member also reminded the meeting that St Edmundsbury Borough Council similarly had a significant investment portfolio.

Councillor Victor Lukaniuk raised specific questions with regard to The Flowerpot premises in Brandon and occupancy levels of the industrial units on the Brandon Industrial Estate.

Councillor David Bowman, Cabinet Member for Operations, advised that three new businesses had recently taken up occupancy on Brandon Industrial Estate. However, in light of the questions requiring detailed responses it was agreed, through the Chairman, for a written reply to be provided to Councillor Lukaniuk.

On the motion of the Cabinet Member, seconded by Councillor Simon Cole and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. Forest Heath District Council, as the shareholder of Greenheath Energy Ltd, agree to the small company audit exemption being applied and the Council to give financial guarantee over Greenheath Energy Ltd; and
2. Forest Heath District Council, as the shareholder of Greenheath Energy Ltd, support the Directors in applying to strike off Greenheath Energy Ltd on their behalf.

3. West Suffolk Operational Hub
(Cabinet: 12 December 2017)

Councillor David Bowman, Cabinet Member for Operations, presented this referral item.

The Cabinet Member was pleased to inform Council that the Secretary of State had formally decided not to call in the West Suffolk Operational Hub application for his determination, hence planning permission had now been formally granted by St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

On the motion of the Cabinet Member, seconded by Councillor Nigel Roman and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. Report No CAB/FH/17/057 and its appendices be noted;
 2. The allocation of an additional £589,000 to the Council's Capital Programme, funded in line with Paragraphs 5.14 – 5.17 of Report No CAB/FH/17/057, be approved;
 3. Subject to receiving a planning consent:-
 - a) The Council's option to procure land at Hollow Road Farm be exercised; and
 - b) With Suffolk County Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, a contract be entered into for the construction of the West Suffolk Operational Hub at Hollow Road Farm; and
 4. It be agreed for the Council's Section 151 Officer to make the necessary changes to the Council's 2017/2018 prudential indicators as a result of 2. above.
4. Mid-Year Treasury Management Performance Report and Investment Activity (April to September 2017)
(Cabinet: 12 December 2017)

Councillor Stephen Edwards, Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, presented this referral item.

On the motion of the Cabinet Member, seconded by Councillor David Bowman and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the Mid-Year Treasury Management Report 2017-2018, attached as Appendix 1 to Report No PAS/FH/17/039, be approved.

5. Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2018/2019
(Cabinet: 12 December 2017)

Councillor Stephen Edwards, Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, presented this referral item.

On the motion of the Cabinet Member, seconded by Councillor Nigel Roman and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That taking into consideration the consultation and engagement feedback detailed in Section 7 of Report No: CAB/FH/17/062, the following changes to the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme be agreed to take effect from 1 April 2018:

- a. Update the "applicable amounts" to 2015 prices as detailed in Paragraph 5.1 of Report No CAB/FH/17/062;
- b. Incorporating changes that have occurred as a result of the Government's welfare reforms, as detailed in Paragraph 5.2 of Report No CAB/FH/17/062, regarding family premiums; dependence allowances; where there are two or more children; and eligibility of foreign nationals; and
- c. Modernise the scheme, as detailed in Paragraph 5.3 of Report No CAB/FH/17/062, so that claimants in receipt of Universal Credit don't need to make a separate application to qualify for Council Tax Discount.

6. Council Tax Base for Tax Setting Purposes 2018/2019
(Cabinet: 12 December 2017)

Councillor Stephen Edwards, Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, presented this referral item.

On the motion of the Cabinet Member, seconded by Councillor Louis Busuttil and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The tax base for 2018/2019, for the whole of Forest Heath is 17,964.44 equivalent Band D dwellings, as detailed in Paragraph 1.4 of Report No CAB/FH/17/063; and
2. The tax base for 2018/2019 for the different parts of its area, as defined by parish or special expense area boundaries, are as shown in Appendix 2 to Report No CAB/FH/17/063.

7. Draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020
(Cabinet: 12 December 2017)

The Leader presented this referral item.

A typographical error was pointed out on Page 3 of the document and Members were assured that this would be corrected prior to publication.

On the motion of the Leader, seconded by Councillor Simon Cole and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020, as contained in Appendix A of Report No CAB/FH/17/064, be adopted.

283. **Questions to Chairmen of other Committees**

There were no questions to Chairmen of other Committees.

284. **Urgent Questions on Notice**

There were no urgent questions on notice.

On conclusion of the meeting the Chairman wished all Members and Officers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The meeting concluded at 6.35 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
