

Council



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Council** held on
Tuesday 20 February 2018 at 7.00 pm at the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

Mayor Terry Clements
Deputy Mayor Margaret Marks

Trevor Beckwith	Paula Fox	Barry Robbins
Sarah Broughton	Susan Glossop	Richard Rout
Simon Brown	Wayne Hailstone	Andrew Smith
Tony Brown	Diane Hind	Andrew Speed
Carol Bull	Beccy Hopfensperger	Clive Springett
John Burns	Ian Houlder	Sarah Stamp
Mike Chester	Sara Mildmay-White	Peter Stevens
Patrick Chung	David Nettleton	Peter Thompson
Jason Crooks	Clive Pollington	Jim Thorndyke
Mary Evans	Alaric Pugh	Julia Wakelam
Robert Everitt	Joanna Rayner	

318. **Prayers**

The Mayor's Chaplain, the Venerable Dr David Jenkins, Archdeacon of Sudbury, opened the meeting with prayers.

319. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

320. **Mayor's announcements**

The Mayor reported on the civic engagements and charity activities which he and the Mayoress, and the Deputy Mayor and her Consort had attended since the last ordinary meeting of Council on 19 December 2017.

321. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Griffiths, Paul Hopfensperger, Betty McLatchy, Ivor McLatchy, Jane Midwood, Karen Richardson, David Roach, Frank Warby, Patsy Warby and Anthony Williams.

322. **Declarations of Interests**

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

323. **Leader's Statement**

In the absence of Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council, Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, Deputy Leader presented the Leader's Statement contained as Paper No: COU/SE/18/001.

In addition to the written statement, Councillor Mildmay-White drew attention to the following:

(a) **Former Councillor Bob Cockle and St Olaves Ward**

That in times of conflicting demands, St Edmundsbury Borough Council had always risen to the challenge and she was sure that former Councillor Cockle, who had recently resigned from the Council and to whom she gave her personal thanks, would agree that St Edmundsbury had much to be proud of, particularly in helping to bring communities together.

For example, in St Olaves, which was former Councillor Cockle's ward, it had been announced that the community had been successful in securing £670,000 from the One Public Estate and Land Release Fund Programme. The Land Release Fund was targeted at unlocking housing units on council-owned sites, through a contribution to remediation and infrastructure costs. This grant was specifically for the St Olaves Road scheme to provide 79 units and replace the Newbury Community Centre. In their response, the Government had praised the community involvement and ambition of the joint project between the Newbury Community Association, St Edmundsbury Borough and Suffolk County Councils, with local support in the early stages from Havebury Housing Partnership.

(b) **West Suffolk Growth Investment Strategy**

That the development of the West Suffolk Growth Investment Strategy was to help the Council meet financial challenges, protect services and invest in communities. Investing and managing growth would not only provide income but also social and economic benefits for West Suffolk's communities and businesses. Recent statistics in the press indicated that St Edmundsbury was thriving across the board (see further details in (d) below) with 659 new businesses formed in St Edmundsbury almost a quarter of those were in Haverhill.

(c) **Gender Pay Gap**

That a report would shortly be presented to Cabinet, which would present that there was no gender pay gap within the West Suffolk organisation. Whilst commended at the last meeting of Council for her work, special thanks were again given to Karen Points, Assistant Director (HR, Legal and Democratic Services) who was shortly leaving the organisation to take up the post of Strategic Director for Abbeycroft Lesiure.

(d) West Suffolk Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Recognition was given to West Suffolk Hospital's NHS Foundation Trust recent rating of 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission. This was a fantastic achievement which again, was an excellent indicator of the many successes of St Edmundsbury. The Borough had featured in a new survey linking literacy levels to life expectancy. Great Barton was rated top in Suffolk for life expectancy for men and ranked second for women.

The following questions were asked:

- (a) Councillor David Nettleton asked a question in connection with future warding proposals for West Suffolk as part of the process for creating the new single council, in respect of why 500 homes that had been earmarked to be retained in the parish of Rushbrooke with Rougham when the last Community Governance Review was undertaken in 2016, would these homes now be proposed to be within the neighbouring Moreton Hall ward within the parish of Bury St Edmunds.

In response, Councillor Sara Mildmay-White stated that parish boundaries were not sought to be changed as part of the future District warding process. Consultation proposals on future West Suffolk wards would be developed over the forthcoming weeks that all Members, Parish Councils, community groups etc could consider before Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils made their joint recommendations to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in April 2018.

- (b) Councillor Julia Wakelam asked for details regarding the amount of business rates contributed by St Edmundsbury to the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders' (SPSL) Group in the past four years, and the projects in St Edmundsbury that had been funded by these pooled rates.

In response, Councillor Sara Mildmay-White stated that the Borough Council had not 'contributed' any business rates to SPSL Group. On creation of the Suffolk pool in 2013, the additional benefit retained by Suffolk (rather than paying it to central government) as part of being a Business Rates pool included a share of that additional 'benefit' going to SPSL Group for them to determine how it would be best spent across the Suffolk System. This encouraged collaborative working across local authorities, rather than constraining activity within administrative boundaries

The Group was aiming to achieve benefits across Suffolk by working together and collaboratively, however if projects/initiatives were to be singled out that had or would either directly or indirectly benefit St Edmundsbury and West Suffolk, the A14 Capacity Improvement Study, Destination Management Organisation for Bury St Edmunds, and Suffolk Film Office Establishment were specific examples.

- (c) Councillor John Burns asked a question in connection with a request for information on how many meetings officers had attended with the

Cambridge Partnership regarding the transport study [the study was assumed to be the Cambridge South East Transport Study], and Cambridge Ahead (Cambridge City Deal) before that, and what were the outcome of the meetings on the A1307?

In response, Councillor Sara Mildmay-White stated that she would obtain a written reply, and in accordance with the Constitution, this would be circulated to all Members and published on the website.

324. **Public Participation**

The following questions were put and answered during this first session of Public Question Time.

1. **Peter Langdon**, Vice-Chairman of Rushbrooke with Rougham Parish Council asked a question in connection with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England 's (LGBCE) forthcoming review of ward boundaries, which was a requirement of creating the new council for West Suffolk, and whether this would be subject to a consultation process that would enable parish councils with the opportunity to respond. Mr Langdon expressed concern on the proposals that may be put forward by the Council to the LGBCE and how these might affect the parish of Rushbrooke with Rougham.

In response, Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, Deputy Leader of the Council, explained that the external parish boundaries would not be amended as part of this review (which was last undertaken in 2015/2016) and the Council would not consider making proposals around future warding without consulting with parishes. The Future Governance Steering Group would be exploring potential ward options, which would be subject to consultation, then these would be put forward to both Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils to consider. The LGBCE would determine the new West Suffolk warding pattern and their work would be informed by the Councils' proposals and the proposals of other interested parties.

No supplementary question was asked.

2. **Ian Steel**, Chairman of Rushbrooke with Rougham Parish Council, followed with a question along similar lines to Mr Langdon, as outlined above. He wished to express his view that Rushbrooke with Rougham parish was a rural ward which should be represented by one councillor that had knowledge of, and could identify with, issues facing residents within rural areas. He would not support a two-member ward comprising councillors that may have an affiliation towards a mix of rural and urban issues as he considered this would not benefit the parish of Rushbrooke with Rougham.

In response, Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, Deputy Leader of the Council, reiterated her response to Mr Langdon above and explained that as present Ward Member for Rougham ward, which covered Rushbrooke with Rougham parish and other parishes, other villages she represented may prefer a two-member ward. To this end, parish councils (and individuals) were encouraged to respond to the forthcoming consultation to be undertaken by the Council (as outlined above) to establish a consensus of opinion.

No supplementary question was asked; however Mr Steel placed further emphasis on his position outlined above.

325. Referrals report of recommendations from Cabinet

Council considered the Referrals Report of Recommendations from Cabinet contained within Report No: COU/SE/18/002.

(A) Referrals from Extraordinary Cabinet: 9 January 2018

Council noted there were no referrals emanating from the extraordinary meeting of Cabinet held on 9 January 2018.

(B) Referrals from Cabinet: 6 February 2018

1. Treasury Management Report 2017/2018 and Investment Activity (April to December 2017)

Approval was sought for the Treasury Management Report 2017/2018 for the third quarter.

Councillor Ian Houlder, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council.

On the motion of Councillor Ian Houlder, seconded by Councillor John Burns, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:

That the Treasury Management Report 2017/2018 for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 December 2017, attached at Appendix 1 to Report No: TMS/SE/18/001, be approved.

2. Treasury Management Policy Statement and Investment Strategy 2018/2019 and Code of Practice

Approval was sought for the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Investment Strategy 2018/2019 and Code of Practice.

Councillor Ian Houlder, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council, including highlighting the main changes to the proposed Strategy and the Code of Practice, as summarised in paragraph 2.3 of the referrals report.

On the motion of Councillor Ian Houlder, seconded by Councillor Sarah Broughton, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:

(1) the Updated (December 2017) Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-Sectional Guidance Notes, be adopted;

- (2) the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Investment Strategy 2018-2019, as set out in Appendix 1 to Report No: TMS/SE/18/002, be approved; and
 - (3) the Treasury Management Code of Practice 2018-2019, as set out in Appendix 2 to Report No: TMS/SE/18/002, be approved.
3. Budget and Council Tax Setting: 208/2019 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018-2022

Members noted that the recommendations emanating from this report would be considered separately under Agenda Item 9 (see minute 327 below.)

4. Overarching West Suffolk Growth Investment Strategy, Governance and Delegation

Approval was sought for a new Overarching West Suffolk Growth Investment Strategy, together with associated governance arrangements and delegation proposals.

Having approved a set of principles by which to develop the Overarching Growth Investment Strategy, this had now been produced and was attached to the Cabinet report (and for ease of reference to the Council report), together with an Executive Summary as Attachment A. The Strategy aimed to support the vision and objectives in the recently adopted West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020 and set out how the West Suffolk Councils (FHDC and SEBC) would invest to achieve these strategic priorities contained in the Framework.

Councillor Alaric Pugh, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council, including that the Strategy (which was subject to minor typographical and grammatical errors, which would be amended under existing delegated authority) included opportunities in four key areas (housing, business, infrastructure and inclusive growth) for investment in Growth across West Suffolk; not all of which the Councils had a role or could deliver. As such, the document would also act as a window to channel and focus energies and activities of external stakeholders and investors.

Members noted that additional investment opportunities would continue to be presented to the Councils from external stakeholders. The development of an assessment framework/guidance would be completed over the coming months to be available for proposals (both internal and externally) to be considered, taking into account various elements required as summarised in paragraphs 1.6 to 1.8 of the Cabinet report.

The proposed approaches to investing in growth and associated governance arrangements, together with proposed delegation thresholds to authorise applicable funding commitments from the previously approved capital and revenue Growth Investment Fund were provided in the report. The delegations, as set out in the table at paragraph 6.4 had been proposed to allow decisions to be made more quickly and efficiently to enable opportunities to be seized, whilst ensuring decisions remained in accordance

with the Strategy, and were subject to safeguards to ensure a democratic process was undertaken so the Council did not take unnecessary risks with public funds. It was noted that the proposed delegation thresholds applied to all investments with the exception of property and land acquisition, which would be guided by the emerging West Suffolk Councils' Asset Management Strategy.

A discussion was held on the future of Haverhill Research Park (HRP) and following previous investment from the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and HRP's designation as an Enterprise Zone, progress had been limited. In response, Council was informed that the HRP was not under the Council's direct control; however a team of officers were now looking at options in respect of how the Council could work collaboratively with others to bring this project forward. This was an example of where the adoption of the Growth Investment Strategy would help support the development of projects such as this.

Discussion was then held regarding the extended time it had taken to construct the Eastern Relief Road in Rougham/Bury St Edmunds and whether the Borough Council could have had any influence on avoiding this; and how housing schemes that had received planning consent were generally on target and being completed within the consent period, and within the adoption of the Growth Investment Strategy this would help the Council to consider actions that might support smaller developers in the delivery of their smaller housing schemes.

On the motion of Councillor Alaric Pugh, seconded by Councillor Tony Brown, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:
That

- (1) the Overarching West Suffolk Growth Investment Strategy, as attached at Appendix A to Report No: CAB/SE/18/012, be approved;
- (2) subject to the safeguards set out within Report No: CAB/SE/18/012, as detailed in Table 1 at paragraph 6.4, decisions on expenditure made from the previously approved capital and revenue Growth Investment Fund, be agreed as follows:
 - (a) in accordance with Section 1.3 (b) of the Cabinet Procedure Rules contained within Part 4 of the Constitution which allows the Leader to amend the delegations to individual Cabinet Members, the relevant Portfolio Holder and Leader, in consultation with the statutory officers, be authorised to make decisions of up to £0.5m expenditure;
 - (b) Cabinet be authorised to make decisions of up to £2m expenditure; and
 - (c) Council shall make decisions where the expenditure is anticipated to exceed £2m.

- (3) The Monitoring Officer shall make the necessary amendments to the Cabinet's scheme of delegation in accordance with her existing delegation, and be authorised to make other amendments to the Constitution as a consequence of (2) above.

326. **Single Council for West Suffolk: Legislative Process**

Council considered Report No: COU/SE/18/003, which sought endorsement for the policy requirements and next steps for progressing the legislative process towards creating a single council for West Suffolk.

The draft Orders, which were unable to be published in the public domain at the present time for the reasons given in paragraph 2.3 of the report, would be laid before Parliament following approval sought by both Cabinets on 27 February 2018 (as this was an executive decision.)

In summary, the first Order allowed for the Secretary of State to act upon a proposal for boundary change made by a local authority *without* the requirement of a review or recommendation from the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBCE). The second Order detailed the structural changes required to create the new council and abolished Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils. It also made provision for 'stop gap' electoral warding (see below), which would be amended following full review of the LGBCE.

An addendum to Report No: COU/SE/18/003 had previously been circulated following the distribution of the summons and papers for this meeting, which provided a proposal formed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on a warding pattern that was based on the 14 existing county divisions but was broken down, within each division, using the existing Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury wards as building blocks. This did not represent the Council's view on what the wards should be and was the stop-gap position; however, this was unavoidable in procedural terms and to comply with the legislative process.

Councillor Carol Bull, Portfolio Holder for Future Governance, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council, including the policy requirements summarised in Section 4 of the report, namely the requirements the Secretary of State would place to ensure the process was robust and transparent, which included the establishment of the Shadow Authority until the new council came into being on 1 April 2019.

Members were fully supportive of the policy requirements and the proposed next steps summarised in Section 6 of the report.

On the motion of Councillor Carol Bull, seconded by Councillor David Nettleton, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:

The policy requirements and next steps as set out in Report No: COU/SE/18/003 to create a single Council for West Suffolk be endorsed; and Cabinet be recommended to delegate the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leaders of the Councils and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Future Governance Steering Group to authorise the relevant Orders on the condition that they remain in line with the policy requirements within Report No: COU/SE/18/003.

(Note: Due to circumstances connected with the legislative process, a revised recommendation was subsequently considered and approved by the Forest Heath District Council's and St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Cabinets on 27 February 2018. See minutes of those meetings for details.)

(Councillor Clive Springett left the meeting during the consideration of this item.)

327. Budget and Council Tax Setting: 2018/2019 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018-2022

Council considered Report No: COU/SE/18/004, which presented the proposals for Budget and Council Tax Setting in 2018/2019 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018-2022.

Councillor Ian Houlder, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance drew relevant issues to the attention of Council, including that Report No: COU/SE/18/004 provided details of the Council's proposed revenue and capital budgets for 2018/2019 and in the medium term.

In light of the significant transformation in the funding of local services, the Council continued to face considerable financial challenges in the short, medium and longer term. Changes included reductions in Government grant funding, including the removal of the Revenue Support Grant; more business rates being retained locally (and the uncertainty around how that was going to work); plus the introduction, and then reduction of New Homes Bonus. Further details and the implications of these particular matters were detailed in the report.

Alongside these reductions, was the lowest bank base rate for years therefore the Council's income from interest was significantly reduced, together with the Council experiencing an increased demand in some services, such as support and advice relating to housing options and homelessness. Council tax increases had been capped at 3% (previously 2%) but this local tax raised only one fifth of the Council's income for local services. National policy encouraged councils to grow their local, and therefore UK, economy by supporting business, investment and housing to bring in income. Bridging the gap between income and demand was the single biggest challenge facing local government across the country.

St Edmundsbury Borough Council had been working in partnership with Forest Heath District Council (the West Suffolk councils) since 2010 and had saved in excess of £4 million annually through sharing services. The Councils were

continuing this savings and transformation theme through the creation of a new single Council from April 2019, with a further £800,000 of savings and efficiencies planned.

The West Suffolk Councils had recognised and taken a proactive investment role, not only to meet the challenges brought by funding for councils, but also importantly to manage growth and ensure prosperity for the local communities. It was therefore imperative that the income received now was maintained and that the strategic investment projects were delivered, particularly as moving into 2018/2019, further reliance was held upon their delivery to secure sustainable budgets in the medium and longer term. Section 1.1.5 and 1.1.6 provided further detail on this within the context of meeting the priorities of the West Suffolk Strategic Framework and the new Overarching West Suffolk Growth Investment Strategy (as adopted by Council, see minute 327 above.)

Section 1.2 of the report provided details of the Council's total formula grant for 2018/2019 (which included Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Baseline Funding from retained business rates - before growth) which was £2.689m. The reduction in RSG to zero in 2019/2020 had been confirmed. This section also provided an explanation of the Business Rates Retention scheme, including the offer for the Borough Council to participate in the Suffolk Business Rates pilot scheme for 100% business rates retention in 2018/2019. Based on the proposal submitted, the West Suffolk Councils were looking to receive a one-off benefit in 2018/2019 of approximately £2.6m.

Further to the above regarding supporting the delivery of ambitious current and future projects, Section 1.7 of the report provided details of skills and capacity challenges faced by the West Suffolk Councils. Recognition had been given to a requirement to increase capacity, primarily regarding delivery of the Councils' growth agenda, and skills where needed to ensure the recognised income challenges were overcome. A recommendation for the creation of capacity through making appropriate additions to the West Suffolk Councils' staffing establishment in order to support their priorities was therefore considered.

Having acknowledged the issues highlighted above, the Cabinet noted the position summarised in Sections 1.4 to 1.12 of the report for securing a balanced budget for 2018/2019 and over the medium term to 2021/2022, which was based on an assumption of a 0% increase in council tax for 2018/2019, as recommended by Cabinet on 6 February 2018. This was in line with the approved business case for the creation of a new single Council for West Suffolk. The level of Band D council tax for 2018/2019 would be set at £182.16; and it was noted that the level of council tax beyond 2019 would be set in accordance with the annual budget process for the relevant financial year. Details regarding the calculation of council tax, including the precepts of the organisations such as Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Police Authority and the Town/Parish Councils, were provided in Section 2 of the report.

Given the financial challenges facing the Council, as detailed above and together with the increased cost of inflation and changes required to some budget assumptions including pay inflation, Council commended the Finance Team, other staff and fellow Members of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny

Committee for showing dedication and commitment in making the Council more efficient in delivering the necessary savings and generating income whilst continuing to maintain the delivery of excellent services.

Councillor Houlder then moved the recommendations contained in the report, which were duly seconded by Councillor Patrick Chung.

The motion was then put to the statutorily required recorded vote. With 33 Members present, the votes recorded were 32 votes for the motion, 1 against, with no abstentions; the names of those Members voting for, against and abstaining being recorded as follows:

For the motion:

Councillors Broughton, Simon Brown, Tony Brown, Bull, Burns, Chester, Chung, Clements, Crooks, Evans, Everitt, Fox, Glossop, Hailstone, Hind, Beccy Hopfensperger, Houlder, Marks, Mildmay-White, Nettleton, Pollington, Pugh, Rayner, Robbins, Rout, Smith, Speed, Stamp, Stevens, Thompson, Thorndyke and Wakelam.

Against the motion:

Councillor Beckwith

Abstentions:

None

It was therefore

RESOLVED:

That:

- (1) having taken into account the information received by Cabinet on 6 February 2018 (Report No: CAB/SE/18/011) including the Report by the Assistant Director (Resources and Performance) (S151 Officer) set out in Attachment C, together with the up to date information and advice contained in Report No: COU/SE/18/004, the level of Band D Council Tax for 2018/19 be set at £182.16.
- (2) Subject to (1) above, the following formal Council Tax resolution be adopted:
 - (a) the revenue and capital budget for 2018-2022 attached at Attachment A and as detailed in Attachment D, Appendices 1-5, Attachment E and Attachment F of Report No: COU/SE/18/004, be approved;
 - (b) a general fund balance of £3 million be agreed to be maintained, as detailed in paragraph 1.11.2 of Report No: COU/SE/18/004;
 - (c) the statutory calculations under Section 30 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, attached as Attachment I, be noted;

- (d) the Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Police Authority precepts issued to St Edmundsbury Borough Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and outlined at paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 of Report No: COU/SE/18/004, be noted; and
 - (e) in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the amounts shown in Schedule D of Attachment H be agreed as the amount of Council Tax for the year 2018/19 for each of the categories of dwellings shown.
- (3) The Assistant Director (Resources and Performance), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, be authorised to transfer any surplus from the 2017/2018 revenue budget to the Invest to Save Reserve as detailed in paragraph 1.9.4 of Report No: COU/SE/18/004, and to vire funds between existing Earmarked Reserves (as set out at Attachment D, Appendix 3) as deemed appropriate throughout the year.
 - (4) The offer to participate for St Edmundsbury in the Business Rate Pilot for 2018/2019 as set out in paragraphs 1.2.7-1.2.9 of Report No: COU/SE/18/004, be accepted.
 - (5) Approval be given for the Assistant Director (HR, Legal and Democratic Services), in consultation with the relevant service Assistant Director, to determine the establishment and the employment arrangements to deliver the West Suffolk Councils' priorities within agreed budgets and the principles of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as detailed in paragraphs 1.7.1 – 1.7.7 of Report No: COU/SE/18/004.
 - (6) The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy, as set out in Attachment G to Report No: COU/SE/18/004, be approved.

328. **Review of Political Balance and Appointment to Politically Balanced Bodies**

Council considered Report No: COU/SE/18/005, which presented a review of the political balance and proposed appointments to the politically balanced bodies.

Following the recent resignation of Councillor Bob Cockle, a by-election for the vacancy on St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) (St Olaves Ward (Bury St Edmunds)) was due to take place in due course.

In addition, the Borough Council's UKIP political group had recently dissolved, which as a consequence, had resulted in five non-grouped Members now sitting on the Council, details of which were contained in Section 1.1.2 of the report.

Accordingly, this had altered the political composition of the Borough Council and Council was, therefore, requested to review the allocation of seats and substitutes to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules, as 'far as reasonably practicable'.

In the absence of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Carol Bull, Portfolio Holder for Future Governance, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council, including that Appendix 1 provided details of the committees required to be politically balanced and their respective place entitlement and proposed seat allocations. Proposals for the allocation of seats to non-grouped Members were also set out in this Appendix, as provisionally agreed by Group Leaders.

Appendix 2 showed the entitlement and proposed allocation of substitutes on the politically balanced committees. It was suggested that the Council continued its precedence of ensuring that each Group had a substitute if they were represented on a committee, and, once this was achieved, if there were additional substitute places on a committee, they were distributed by political balance, as indicated.

Council agreed this was a sensible approach.

Largely as a result of the resignation of Councillor Bob Cockle, the Charter Group currently had one additional seat across the Council than its present entitlement. Council considered that this may however, be for the short term pending the result of the by-election, and that it was prudent not to make any changes to this Group's seat allocation at the present time.

On the motion of Councillor Carol Bull, seconded by Councillor John Burns, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:

That:

- (1) the formula for the allocation of seats to the political groups on those Committees which are required by law to be politically balanced, as set out in paragraph 1.2.1, be approved;
- (2) the allocation of seats (and seats for substitute Members) on the Committees which are required by law to be politically balanced, as indicated in Appendices 1 and 2 to Report No: COU/SE/18/005, be approved;
- (3) the allocation of full member and substitute seats on the West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee, as indicated in Section 1.3.5, be approved. This Committee is not required to be politically balanced;
- (4) whilst the Democratic Renewal Working Party is not required to be politically balanced, the allocation of seats is by custom and practice, undertaken on this basis. Therefore, the allocation of full member and substitute seats to this Working Party, as indicated in Section 1.3.6, be approved; and
- (5) the Service Manager (Democratic Services) be requested to exercise their existing delegated authority to re-appoint or appoint as applicable, Members and substitute Members to those bodies set out in recommendations (2), (3) and (4) above on the basis of nominations from the relevant Group Leaders.

329. **Brownfield Land Register: Constitutional Amendments**

Council considered Report No: COU/SE/18/006, which sought approval for necessary amendments to the officers' Scheme of Delegation contained in the Constitution in order to assign responsibility for brownfield land register management.

Recent regulations (The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Register) Regulations 2017) required local authorities to set up and manage registers of brownfield sites within their areas, which may ultimately be suitable for residential development. An explanation of how the register was to be managed was detailed in the report, including that it was to be divided into two parts, namely:

First Part: List of brownfield sites that may be suitable for development, subject to criteria outlined in the report.

Second Part: Brownfield sites that may wish to be allocated for residential development, which according to the regulations, meant by virtue of the inclusion, the site had 'permission in principle' to develop housing on it. As 'permission in principle' was not clearly defined in the regulations, there was a judgement as to whether or not land should be included in this part of the register and be given permission in principle.

Given this, it was proposed that "management of the brownfield land register under The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) 2017" should be added to the responsibilities of the Assistant Director (Planning and Regulatory Services). This would mean that the officers had responsibility for general management of the register, but, in the event that a Ward Member or Parish Council raised concern regarding the proposal to include a site in the second part of the register, it would be referred to the Delegation Panel to consider and potentially to the Development Control Committee to determine.

On the motion of Councillor Carol Bull, seconded by Councillor Peter Stevens, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:

That the amendment to the Scheme of Delegation, as set out in paragraph 1.5 of Report No: COU/SE/18/006, be agreed, and authority be given to the Monitoring Officer to make the necessary Constitutional amendments.

330. **Calendar of Meetings: 2018/2019**

Council considered Report No: COU/SE/18/007, which sought approval for the proposed calendar of meetings for 2018/2019.

Councillor Carol Bull, Portfolio Holder for Future Governance, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council, including that other meetings not listed in the Council's Constitution and those arranged on an ad-hoc basis would be scheduled throughout 2018/2019 and Members would be advised of these separately.

In addition, Members noted that in light of the significant journey towards the creation of a single council for West Suffolk, which was currently timetabled to become effective from 1 April 2019, and the extensive number of projects currently in progress, elements of which required Member approval, the Calendar of Meetings for 2018/2019 contained a higher quantity of meetings than a usual municipal year.

The main changes were set out in Section 2.2 of the report and it was additionally noted that rather than calling extraordinary meetings at relatively short notice, some meetings may be cancelled where insufficient business warranted the convening of a meeting.

On the motion of Councillor Carol Bull, seconded by Councillor Clive Pollington, and duly carried it was

RESOLVED:

That the Calendar of Meetings for 2018/2019, attached as Appendix A to Report No: COU/SE/18/007, be approved.

331. **Questions to Committee Chairmen**

Council considered a narrative item, which sought questions of Committee Chairmen on business transacted by their committees since the last ordinary meeting of Council on 19 December 2017, as outlined below:

Committee	Chairman	Dates of meetings
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Diane Hind	10 January 2018 7 February 2018 <i>(scrutiny workshop)</i>
Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Sarah Broughton	31 January 2018
Development Control Committee	Cllr Jim Thorndyke	1 February 2018

No questions were asked of the above Chairmen.

332. **Urgent Questions on Notice**

No urgent questions on notice had been received.

The meeting concluded at 8.13 pm

Signed by:

Mayor