

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Wednesday 11 July 2018** at **4.00 pm** in **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Diane Hind
Vice Chairman Susan Glossop

Simon Brown
John Burns
Mike Chester
Paula Fox

Margaret Marks
Robin Pilley
Clive Springett
Sarah Stamp

Substitutes attending:
Patricia Warby

By Invitation:
Sara Mildmay-White, Cabinet Member for Housing

236. **Substitutes**

The following substitution was declared:

Councillor Patricia Warby for Councillor Richard Rout.

237. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Patrick Chung, Paul Hopfensperger, Richard Rout and Frank Warby.

238. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2018, were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

239. **Public Participation**

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

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

The Chairman advised she attended the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee on 25 June 2018, and presented the Committee's report on items it considered on 6 June 2018, which was noted. She also reminded members that an Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting had been arranged for Wednesday 31 October 2018 to receive a follow-up from Suffolk County Council Highways.

She informed members should would be speaking with Councillor Simon Cole, Chairman of Forest Heath's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look at the possibly of holding an informal joint meeting to receive an update on Barley Homes.

Finally, the Chairman advised she had spoken with officers who attended meetings of the Committee. It was the general concensu they were happy being at meetings of Committee, and waiting to present their agenda item as they were able to work from their electronic devices.

241. **Haverhill Research Park**

The Committee received Report No: OAS/SE/18/020, which updated members regarding the progress in delivering the Haverhill Research Park. Officers had been working on a number of options to help to deliver the Council's vision for high quality jobs to complement the growth in homes locally.

The report including information on the background; strategic links; the vision for the site; Enterprise Zone status; key challenges; the role of the council and next steps.

Whilst considering the information outlined in the covering report, officers also wished to give an exempt verbal presentation on the various options being considered. As there was to be detailed discussion on the various exempt options, which would involve the discussion of commercially sensitive information, it was proposed by Councillor Margaret Marks, seconded by Councillor Clive Springett, and unanimously **RESOLVED** for these discussions to be held in private session (see Minute Number 247 below) and the press and public were then excluded from the meeting.

Following the conclusion of the detailed discussions held in the private session, the press and public were re-admitted to the meeting.

The Committee then **noted** the update report on the current position, and that it was proposed that progress would be reported back through the democratic process in six months' time.

242. **Annual Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Housing**

The Committee was reminded that on 19 July 2017, it had received a presentation from the Cabinet Member for Housing, setting out responsibilities covered under her portfolio.

At this meeting, the Cabinet Member had been invited back to provide her annual update, and Report No: OAS/SE/18/021 set out the focus of the update.

The Cabinet Member was also provided in advance of the meeting with some key questions identified by scrutiny members on areas they wished to be appraised on during the annual update, which were included in the report along with responses.

The Cabinet Member, Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, thanked the Committee the questions submitted, as set out in the report.

The Committee asked follow-up questions relating to the two submitted questions (policy on building housing and the trend for new homes being sold freehold with ongoing management fees), to which responses were provided.

In response to a question raised regarding the development of the new West Suffolk Local Plan and involving local members in the process, officers advised that members would be a key element in the process to ensure that the new Plan included the right mix of housing for residents in West Suffolk. However, this would be difficult with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Finally, the Cabinet Member for Housing informed members that the Housing Workshop held on Monday 9 July 2018, was very well received. In particular the workshop was looking at accommodation for the ageing population.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for their attendance and **noted** the update.

243. Cabinet Decisions Plan: 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019

[Councillor Robin Pilley left the meeting at 4.50pm during the consideration of this item].

The Committee received Report No: OAS/SE/18/022, which asked Members to pursue the Cabinet Decisions Plan for the period 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019, on items it would like further information on or might benefit from the Committee's involvement.

The Committee considered the Decisions Plan and did not request any further information on items contained in the Plan.

There being no decision required the Committee **noted** the contents of the 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019 Decisions Plan.

244. Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan: 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019

The Committee received Report No: OAS/SE/18/023, which informed Members on forthcoming decisions to be considered by the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) for the period 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019.

The Committee considered the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan and did not request any further information on items contained in the Plan.

There being no decision required the Committee **noted** the contents of the 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019 Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan.

245. **Work Programme Update**

The Committee received Report No: OAS/SE/18/024, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2018-2019 (Appendix 1).

The Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) informed Members of an additional item to be included in its work programme for its meeting on 9 January 2019, being:

- West Suffolk Customer Access Strategy, Business Case and West Suffolk Digital Strategy.

The report also requested that Members identify questions they would like the Cabinet Member for Operations to cover in his annual report to the Committee on 12 September 2018.

The Committee considered Appendix 1, and identified the following questions they wished to put to the Cabinet Member for Operations:

- 1) To receive a progress report on the West Suffolk Operational Hub.
- 2) In the longer term, the Haverhill Waste Transfer Station was not included in the West Suffolk Operational Hub, but the contract for the Haverhill Station was up for renewal, and questioned what contingency plans were in place?

Any further questions could be submitted to the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) by Monday 23 July 2018.

Finally, Councillor Margaret Marks raised concerns regarding Barley Homes, to which the Service Manager (Democratic Service/Monitoring Officer) updated members on the current position. The Vice-Chairman then informed the Committee that it was disappointing that these concerns had not been raised directly with the Cabinet Member for Housing who had been in attendance at the meeting, along with a Director of Barley Homes, under Item 7 of the agenda, when she gave her annual update of her housing portfolio, who could have responded to members concerns.

There being no decision required the Committee **noted** the update and the additional item to be included in its forward work programme for January 2019.

246. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

It was proposed by Councillor Margaret Marks, seconded by Councillor Clive Springett, and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED

That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as prescribed in Part 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

247. Exempt Presentation (Verbal) - Haverhill Research Park

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation setting out a number of options and their associated risks.

Officers would continue to work on to understand the financial implications and risks of each of the options.

Detailed discussions were held on each of the options, to which comprehensive responses were provided.

Once the discussions were concluded in the private session, the meeting then moved back into the open session, where the press and public were re-admitted and the Committee then considered the recommendation contained within the report (see Minute Number 241 above).

The Meeting concluded at 5.20 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
