

Council



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Council** held on
Wednesday 25 April 2018 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	Stephen Edwards
Michael Anderson	Victor Lukaniuk
Andrew Appleby	Carol Lynch
John Bloodworth	Christine Mason
David Bowman	Robert Nobbs
Rona Burt	David Palmer
Louis Busuttill	Peter Ridgwell
Simon Cole	Nigel Roman
Roger Dicker	Lance Stanbury
Andy Drummond	James Waters

By Invitation:

Sara Mildmay-White West Suffolk Lead for Housing

300. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2018 were unanimously received as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

301. **Chairman's Announcements (Report No: COU/FH/18/009)**

In addition to the list of engagements recently undertaken and set out in Report No COU/FH/18/009 the Chairman also advised Members that as part of the work to create a new West Suffolk Council a decision was required on whether the new Council would be a District, or whether it would apply to the Privy Council to be made into a Borough.

The Chairman explained that this was a fundamental and wider matter of what civic leadership would look and feel like in West Suffolk in the future and it was important that we took the opportunity to have a review to inform the decision.

Accordingly, having consulted with colleagues from St Edmundsbury, the new Shadow Council will make a recommendation to set up a Civic Leadership Working Group to consider this important topic. The Working Group would look at civic leadership across the whole of West Suffolk and would be working with all our Members and our communities to understand their views.

302. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chris Barker, Louise Marston, Robin Millar and Reg Silvester.

Councillor Colin Noble was also unable to attend the meeting.

303. **Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

304. **The Leader's Report (Report No: COU/FH/18/010)**

The Leader presented his statement to the meeting as set out in Report No COU/FH/18/010.

Councillor Victor Lukaniuk raised a question with regard to the Council's purchase of a property in Newmarket, as made reference to within the statement. The Leader duly responded, whilst highlighting that the matter in question was the subject of a separate report later on the agenda (Item 13).

305. **Public Participation**

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

306. **Referrals Report of Recommendations from Cabinet (Report No: COU/FH/18/011)**

The Council considered the referral report of recommendations from Cabinet as set out in Report No COU/FH/18/011:

Tackling Rogue Landlords: Civil Sanctions Policy
(Cabinet: 3 April 2018)

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Sara Mildmay-White to the meeting, who was in attendance in her capacity as the West Suffolk Lead for Housing.

Councillor Mildmay-White presented this referral item which sought Council approval for the new delegations regarding enforcement powers to be incorporated within the Constitution, following Cabinet's adoption of the Civil Sanctions Policy.

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

RESOLVED:

That the new delegations regarding the enforcement powers (described within the Housing Standards – Civil Sanctions Policy contained in Appendix A to Report No CAB/FH/18/023) be incorporated into the Scheme of Delegation, contained in Part 3 of the Constitution, to enable these (housing standards civil) sanctions to be enforced.

307. West Suffolk Council - Electoral Review (Report No: COU/FH/18/012)

The Chairman opened this item by addressing the meeting in her capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Future Governance Steering Group.

She outlined the work the Group had undertaken in respect of the proposed options for the West Suffolk warding pattern, as set out in Report No COU/FH/18/012 and gave thanks to the Members concerned as well the public and various organisations who had taken part in looking at the ward boundaries.

Council were advised that the Boundary Commission would be developing their warding proposal during May and June and would publish it for public consultation in July, and the importance of Members responding to the consultation was stressed.

The Chairman then outlined the way in which the report would be considered; in that each block of options would be taken in turn with Members being given opportunity to comment.

Any comments made would be noted; with the view to taking one collective vote on the recommendations within Report No COU/FH/18/012, inclusive of an amendment to Recommendation 2 in order to reflect that Members would be given until Friday 27 April in which to submit any further comments on the options to Officers.

Attention was drawn to the supplementary paper, which had been circulated following publication of agenda, and which set out some typographical corrections to the report.

Lastly, Members were advised that St Edmundsbury Borough Council, at their meeting the night before, confirmed that they were happy with the preferences that had been expressed by the Steering Group, as set out in the report.

Each of the following options were then taken in turn, with Members being invited to comment upon each:

- Options A, A1, A2 & B (Rural Wards);
- Options C & D (Brandon Wards)
- Options E, E1, F, F1, G and H (Bury St Edmunds & Haverhill Wards)
- Options I & J (Mildenhall Wards)
- Options K & L (Newmarket Wards)

Following which the Director summed up the comments made as follows:

Options C & D (Brandon Wards)

Councillors Victor Lukaniuk, David Palmer and Peter Ridgwell collectively raised concerns at the proposed reduction in the number of Ward Councillors for Brandon.

Specific concerns were raised with regard to the potential reduction in the level of Locality Budget for the town. The Chairman explained that the

Shadow Council was yet to have set a budget for the West Suffolk Council and Locality Budgets would be considered as part of this.

The Director agreed to note the Members' concerns and reiterated that the Boundary Commission's statute when setting ward boundaries was to ensure electoral equality. Future housing/population forecast growth was therefore considered as part of this, however, factors such as deprivation were not.

Options K & L (Newmarket Wards)

It was noted by the Director that the majority of Members preferred Option L over Option K. However, there was a desire to amend the ward names proposed.

The Director explained that he would welcome alternative ward name proposals by 27 April, however, if it was not possible to submit these by the deadline he would specify to the Boundary Commission that the ward names in Option L were 'holding names' and that the Council reserved their right to name the wards at a later date.

It was then proposed by Councillor Simon Cole, seconded by Councillor Andy Drummond and with 20 voting for the motion, 1 against and with 1 abstention it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. Council considered the evidence received during the Council's consultation and the advice of the Future Governance Steering Group, so that it could make the final decision required in respect of the Council's representation to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on the proposed ward boundaries for West Suffolk; and
2. Subject to the reporting of comments on them made at this meeting, or submitted to Officers by 27 April 2018, all of the options set out in Appendix A of Report No COU/FH/18/012 be adopted for submission to the MHCLG.

308. Senior Pay (Report No: COU/FH/18/013)

(Prior to the consideration of this item all members of the West Suffolk Leadership Team left the meeting.)

The Chairman welcomed Karen Points to the meeting, previous Assistant Director (Human Resources, Legal & Democratic), having recently left the West Suffolk Councils for employment with Abbeycroft Leisure.

The Leader presented this report which sought to realign the salary range for West Suffolk Councils' Leadership Team roles.

He moved the recommendations set out in Report No COU/FH/18/013 subject to an amendment to Recommendation 1 to make the realignment effective from 1 April 2019, and not April 2018, as printed. This was duly seconded by Councillor Andy Drummond.

Members were advised that St Edmundsbury Borough Council had approved the report, inclusive of the proposed amendment, at their meeting the previous night.

Councillor Lance Stanbury spoke in support of the recommendation and highlighted that West Suffolk Council, once formed, would become the seventh largest Local Authority in the country.

Councillor Stephen Edwards echoed support and made reference to the importance of staff recruitment and retention.

Councillor Peter Ridgwell raised objection to the proposed salary realignment and requested that a recorded vote be taken which was duly supported by four other Members.

Upon being put to the vote Members voted as follows:

Name of Member	For	Against	Abstained
Ruth Allen	X		
Michael Anderson	X		
Andrew Appleby	X		
John Bloodworth	X		
David Bowman	X		
Ruth Bowman	X		
Rona Burt	X		
Louis Busuttil	X		
Simon Cole	X		
Roger Dicker	X		
Andy Drummond	X		
Stephen Edwards	X		
Brian Harvey	X		
Carol Lynch	X		
Victor Lukaniuk	X		
Christine Mason	X		

Name of Member	For	Against	Abstained
Robert Nobbs	X		
David Palmer	X		
Peter Ridgwell		X	
Nigel Roman	X		
Lance Stanbury	X		
James Waters	X		
TOTAL	21	1	0

With 21 voting for the motion and with 1 against, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The proposed salary range for the Joint Chief Executive of the West Suffolk Councils and the subsequent amendment to Leadership Team pay bands, as set out in Section 1.2 of Report No COU/FH/18/013, be approved subject to deferring implementation until 1 April 2019; and
2. The Pay Policy Statement be revised accordingly.

309. Questions to Chairmen of other Committees

There were no questions to Chairmen of other Committees.

310. Urgent Questions on Notice

There were no urgent questions on notice.

311. Use of Chief Executive's Urgency Powers (Report No: COU/FH/18/014)

The Chairman asked Members to note this report on the use of the Chief Executive's Urgency Powers in respect of the National Heritage Centre for Horseracing and Sporting Art, as outlined in Report No COU/FH/18/014.

Councillor Andy Drummond, Cabinet Member Leisure and Culture, spoke in support of the report explained the reasoning for the use of the Council's urgency procedure.

The Director also made reference to the recent meeting of the FHDC Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 16 April 2018 which was hosted by the National Heritage Centre for Horseracing and Sporting Art.

RESOLVED:

That the use of the Chief Executive's Urgency Powers in accordance with the Council's Constitution be **NOTED**.

312. **Report on Special Urgency and Use of Chief Executive Urgency Powers (Report No: COU/FH/18/015)**

The Chairman asked Members to note this report on Special Urgency and the use of the Chief Executive's Urgency Powers in respect of the purchase of a property in Newmarket, as outlined in Report No COU/FH/18/015.

The Leader spoke on this item and explained that the property purchased would provide not only additional temporary accommodation for those who were homeless or at risk of being homeless, but also a commercial rental income from the ground floor retail units.

Given that it was for sale at auction it meant that the Council had to move quickly to agree the maximum funding available to bid, hence, the need for the use of the Council's urgency procedure.

Councillor Simon Cole also spoke as Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and explained the Committee's role in the robust process.

Councillor Victor Lukaniuk raised concerns with the process and queried as to why alternative buildings, such as The Flowerpot in Brandon, were not considered for the scheme.

In response, the Leader advised Councillor Lukaniuk that a potential project for The Flowerpot was due to be considered by Cabinet in May and he would ensure that Councillor Lukaniuk was briefed accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the use of the Chief Executive's Urgency Powers in accordance with the Council's Constitution be **NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 7.10 pm

Signed by:

Chairman

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