

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Thursday 13 September 2018** at **6.00 pm** in the **Council Chamber, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall IP28 7EY**

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Simon Cole

Chris Barker
Brian Harvey
Christine Mason
Robert Nobbs

David Palmer
Nigel Roman
Reg Silvester

254. Substitutes

There were no substitutions declared.

255. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Bloodworth and Rona Burt.

256. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2018 were confirmed as an accurate record, and signed by the Chairman.

257. Public Participation

There were no questions/statements from the public.

258. Announcements from the Chairman regarding responses from the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other updates from the Chairman

The Chairman advised that he attended the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee on 24 July 2018, and presented the Overview and Scrutiny Report from 12 July meeting, which was noted.

259. Annual Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth

[Councillor Nigel Roman left the meeting at 6.40pm during the consideration of this item].

The Committee was reminded that on 14 September 2017, it had received a presentation from the Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth setting out responsibilities covered under his portfolio.

At this meeting the Cabinet Member had been invited back to provide his annual update, and Report No: OAS/FH/18/025 set out the focus of the update.

The Cabinet Member was 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 Lance Stanbury firstly thanked the Committee for the questions submitted, as set out in the report.

The Committee then asked a number of follow-up questions relating to building control (enforcement/breaches); tourism (promoting what's on offer in West Suffolk); the A11 Tech corridor (work in progress); growth and regeneration (dual electric train line between Newmarket and Cambridge); and town centres (reinventing our high streets), to which comprehensive responses were provided.

In response to a question raised asking whether the council had statistics on the number of business units across West Suffolk, officers advised that the Council had commissioned consultants to develop a new Asset Management Strategy and associated Asset Management Plan, which would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2018 for its consideration.

In response to a question raised regarding business units, members were advised that officers in Economic Growth Team were actively promoting what the council offered regarding business units and start-ups and sign posting businesses to the council's website. The Cabinet member further explained that the council wanted to offer small incubation units on short-term leases to help businesses grow. However, these needed to be in the right place for a commercial business. Incubation units worked, but there needed to be a critical mass of businesses for them to work.

In response to a question raised regarding the need for a dual electric train line and dualling the track between Ipswich and Cambridge, members were informed that all Suffolk councils were pushing through a prospectus for the east part of the rail line to Newmarket and on to Ipswich. The prospectus would include the growth ask from each of the local authorities. The council was working closely with colleagues and the Cambridge Combined Authority.

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

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the Cabinet Members annual report.

260. Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee Decisions Plan: October 2018 to March 2019

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/026, which asked Members to peruse the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan for the period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019.

The Committee considered the Decisions Plan and asked a question relating to the "Annual Review of the Performance of the Council's Solar Farm", scheduled to be presented to Cabinet on 2 October 2018, to which the Assistant Director (Planning and Regulatory) provided a response.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan.

261. Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan: September 2018 to 6 May 2019

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/027, which informed Members on the forthcoming decisions to be considered by the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) for the period 1 September 2018 to 6 May 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 Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan.

262. Work Programme Update

The Committee received Report No: OAS/FH/18/028, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2018-2019 (Appendix 1).

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 8 November 2018.

The Committee considered Appendix 1 and in particular the items currently scheduled for its November meeting. At the time of the meeting Members had not identified any questions they wished to put to the Cabinet Member for Operations, but would submit questions following the meeting to the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) by Friday 28 September 2018.

Finally, the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) informed members that St Edmundsbury's Overview and Scrutiny Committee had arranged an Extraordinary Committee meeting for Wednesday 31 October 2018 at 4pm when the Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transports would be attending to discuss progress made in relation to the recommendations made at the SEBC Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25 October 2017. The Chairman of St Edmundsbury's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Diane Hind,

therefore wished to extend the invitation to members of Forest Heath's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to attend as observers.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the current status of its forward work programme for 2018-2019.

The Meeting concluded at 7.13pm

Signed by:

Chairman
