

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Wednesday 7 November 2018** at **4.00 pm** at the **Conference Chamber West, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

**Chairman** Diane Hind  
**Vice Chairman** Mike Chester

Simon Brown  
John Burns  
Paula Fox  
Paul Hopfensperger

Margaret Marks  
Robin Pilley  
Richard Rout

**By Invitation:**

Susan Glossop, Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth  
Sara Mildmay-White, Cabinet Member for Housing

261. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutions declared.

262. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Patrick Chung, Andrew Speed, Clive Springett, Sarah Stamp and Frank Warby.

Councillor Anthony Williams was also unable to attend.

263. **Minutes**

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

264. **Public Participation**

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

265. **Announcements from the Chairman regarding responses from the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Chairman advised she attended the Joint (Executive Cabinet) Committee on 2 October 2018, and presented the Committee's report on items it considered on 12 September 2018, which was noted.

She also informed the Committee that she had written to Mr Jesse Norman MP, the Rt. Hon Matt Hancock and Mrs Jo Churchill MP regarding Civil Parking Enforcement. To date a response had been received back from Mrs Jo Churchill MP.

## 266. **West Suffolk Housing Strategy and West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy**

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Mildmay-White provided Report No: OAS/SE/18/030, which presented the West Suffolk's draft Housing Strategy (Appendix 1) and draft Tenancy Strategy (Appendix 2).

A review of the Housing Strategy was due in 2018. By adopting a new strategy the Councils would be aligning its priorities with the Strategic Framework 2018-2020 and responding to new legislation and additional duties. Attached to the report were a number of appendices relating to the Housing Strategy which provided additional information:

- Appendix A: Was an illustrative summary of the types of housing available as well as the council's role in supporting the delivery and availability of each of these options.
- Appendix B: Sets out data relating to West Suffolk's population and housing that had supported the development of the strategy.
- Appendix C: The implementation plan would identify the main tasks needed to increase and improve the provision of appropriate housing over the next five years. The plan was being developed during the consultation period and would be finalised once the consultation had concluded.
- Appendix D: provided an overview of the Equality Impact Assessment. No negative impacts as a result of the strategy had been identified.

The strategy had been informed by an engagement exercise that included Councillor workshops and a consultation event with key partners. The formal consultation was taking place for a six week period between 9 October and 20 November 2018 and involved an online survey that was available on the council's webpages.

As at 5 November 2018, 21 responses had been received and there was strong support for the priorities and actions set out in the strategy and for the issues that the council was addressing. Specific comments had been received that relate to affordable housing, the need for appropriate housing for specific

groups and the importance of infrastructure and transport to support the needs of individuals and communities.

A review of the Tenancy Strategy was also due in 2018. The Localism Act 2011 required local authorities to produce a Tenancy Strategy that outlines how councils and registered providers approached issues which affected tenants living in the area.

Informal discussions had taken place with registered providers operating in West Suffolk about the proposed changes. As with the Housing Strategy, the formal consultation was taking place for a six week period between 9 October and 20 November 2018 and involved an online survey that was available on the councils webpages.

As at 5 November 2018, two responses had been received which would help the council continue to develop how it worked with registered providers and assist tenants living in West Suffolk.

The Housing Strategy and Tenancy Strategy, together with any feedback or comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, would be considered by the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee on 11 December 2018.

The Committee considered the report and the attached appendices in detail and asked a number of questions, to which comprehensive responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on homelessness and rough sleepers; the number of new homes needed by 2031 and where the figures came from; who set the criteria for affordable housing and rents set above the Local Housing Allowances by registered providers.

In response to a question raised regarding rough sleepers and how these could be reported, members were informed to use "StreetLink", which was a national system set up to help end rough sleeping by enabling members of the public to connect people sleeping rough with the local services that could support them ([www.streetlink.org.uk](http://www.streetlink.org.uk)).

In response to a questions raised regarding the Housing Forum, members were informed that the Housing Forum met on a monthly basis, which was more intelligence led as well as weekly to discuss all of those who were rough sleepers.

Members referred to paragraph 1.2.1 of the report, and questioned what the number was of rural houses being delivered, and suggested including the figures in the draft Housing Strategy. Officers agreed to provide a written response setting out the breakdown between rural and urban houses, and would incorporate the figures into the Housing Strategy.

Members discussed the number of consultation responses currently received, and suggested promoting the consultation more through social media outlets, to which officers agreed to look into.

Councillor Simon Brown then moved the recommendations, this was duly seconded by Councillor John Burns, and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

**RECOMMENDED:**

**That Draft West Suffolk Housing Strategy and the Draft West Suffolk Tenancy Strategy, attached as Appendix 1 and 2 to Report No: OAS/SE/18/030, be approved by Joint Executive (Cabinet) on 11 December 2018 and Council on 18 December 2018, where appropriate, subject to comments made by the Committee during the meeting.**

**267. Garden Waste Collection Service Review - Final Report from the Joint Task and Finish Group**

*[Councillor John Burns left the meeting at 5pm after presenting the report to the Committee].*

Councillor John Burns presented Report No: OAS/SE/18/031, which summarised the review of the Garden Waste Collection Service (GWCS) by a Joint Task and Finish Group and presents recommendations for the service moving forward.

On 6 and 7 June 2018, both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Overview and Scrutiny Committees resolved to establish a Joint Task and Finish Group (the Group) to review the progress of the GWCS and to consider the Motion put forward by Councillor Nettleton to introduce a sliding scale of subscription charges. The Group met on five occasions to discuss the planned approach to the review and to consider the specific areas to be explored. It was agreed that the review would explore the following areas:

- Finance
- Customer access
- Service terms and conditions
- Impact on residual waste
- Communications and marketing
- Operational changes
- Impact of proposed changes

The report included the background to the review and progress to date; the review carried out by the Group and proposed recommendations. Also attached to the report were a number of appendices, namely:

- Appendix A – Summary of meetings
- Appendix B – Financial modelling
- Appendix C – Subscription charges of other councils
- Appendix D – Subscriptions through the Customer Access Team
- Appendix E – Information flow and process map
- Appendix F – Examples of branding used
- Appendix G – Summary of meeting content, observations, recommendations

Throughout the four meetings, the Group reviewed the various elements of the GWCS, experiences from other councils and the options moving forward. At the final meeting the Group formulated its recommendations, which were set out in Section 4 of the report. Subject to the approval of the recommendations, officers would then develop an Implementation Plan.

The Committee considered the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which comprehensive responses were provided.

In particular the Committee discussed the proposed increase to £43, and questioned why the Group decided not to go with an increase to £45. In response members were informed that the Group had considered the size of the uplift, and felt a 12% increase to £45 would not be acceptable to customers. The aim of providing the service was to ensure that it was financially self-supporting and not making large surpluses.

In response to a question raised regarding whether Suffolk County Council could increase fees, members were informed that the Council had an arrangement with SCC for a five-year period. The only variable would be gate fees and the number of subscribers to the scheme, hence why the Group was proposing an annual review of the fees as part of the budget setting process.

Councillor Mike Chester then moved the recommendation, this was duly seconded by Councillor Richard Rout, and with the vote being 7 for and 1 abstention, it was:

**RECOMMENDED:**

**That the recommendations, as set out in Section 4 of Report No: OAS/SE/18/031, be approved by the Shadow Executive (Cabinet).**

*[Councillor Margaret Marks left the meeting at 5.05pm following the vote taking place].*

**268. Review of Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre - Final Report**

*[Councillor John Burns re-joined the meeting at 5.29pm to collect his belongings, and left the meeting at 5.30pm prior to the vote taking place on this item.*

*Councillor Paula Fox left the meeting at 5.30pm prior to the vote taking place on this item].*

Councillor Diane Hind presented Report No: OAS/SE/18/032, which summarised the review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre and presented a draft Action Plan (Appendix F) for taking forward the recommendations from the Christmas Fayre Joint Task and Finish Group.

On 18 and 19 April 2018, both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Overview and Scrutiny Committees resolved to establish a Joint West Suffolk Task and Finish Group (the Task Group) to complete a review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre. The Task Group met to discuss the planned approach to the

review and to consider the specific areas to be explored. It was agreed that the review would explore the following areas:

- Principle and ownership
- Vision
- Timing and length
- Format and venues
- Type of stalls
- Links to wider economy (retail and tourism)
- Transport and accessibility
- Finance
- Staffing and volunteers
- Safety and Security
- Examples from other places
- Communications and marketing
- Management and resources

The report summarised the review of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre and presented a proposed three-year action plan for taking forward the recommendations from the Task Group. It also included an introduction; the background to the review; engagement; evidence base and Christmas Fayre review findings and recommendations. Also attached to the report were a number of appendices, namely:

Appendix A – Christmas Fayre key details document.

Appendix B – 2015 Christmas Fayre Review Action Plan and progress table.

Appendix C – Christmas Fayre Engagement/surveys summary document.

Appendix D – Information from Christmas Fayres held in other places and scheduled of Christmas events in West Suffolk.

Appendix E – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats document.

Appendix F – Proposed Three Year Action Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth then thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address the Committee, and commended the Task Group on its work which had resulted in the recommendations being proposed. She then updated members on how important it was to ensure the safety of the public at events, and referred to paragraph 5.32 in the report. She explained that two weeks ago, the Council led a table-top exercise to test how all partners would be able to respond in the event of an incident occurring at the Fayre. This unfortunately took place after the Task Group's final meeting, but raised some important points and hoped the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would support an additional recommendation arising from the review. This would add the following wording to Appendix F on "Safety and Security" as follows:

*"An Independent Peer Review of the Council's Command and Management of the Christmas Fayre and Event Safety Plan is commissioned. This should consider the management and skills/expertise to deliver the roles required, learning and development as well as whether the skills set within the organisations involved are fit for purpose for continuing to deliver the Plan in the future. The recommendations of the review will be considered by the Chief*

*Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth”.*

In addition, the Portfolio Holder suggested a further minor change for the purposes of clarity; in Appendix F under “Finance”, which states “*Contact town centre organisations offering them the opportunity to contribute towards the Christmas Fayre*”. She proposed that the word “organisations” be replaced with “stakeholders”, as this felt a broader word which potentially captures all parties who might contribute.

The Committee then scrutinised the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which comprehensive responses were provided.

Some members of the Committee broadly supported parts of the report, but felt it lacked forward thinking and ambition, and suggested the Task Group could have done more, such as reviewing the timing and length of the Christmas Fayre; comparing actual like-for-like examples of other Fayres with Bury’s Christmas Fayre; the mix, types and location of stalls; more promotion of the Fayre such as having souvenirs (mugs for mulled wine); and involving Bury Town Council in the review.

Concerns were also raised about too many people being set in one location for a short periods of time due to health and safety.

Some members also felt that there was a general misunderstanding about what the Bury Fayre was about, and suggested it needed a complete make-over to become “Christmas in Bury St Edmunds”. Some members felt it should be run more along the lines of “continental Christmas Markets” with stalls throughout the town, and various examples of continental markets were provided.

In response to concerns raised by members, the Committee was informed that the Task Group had looked at all of the issues which had been raised including options for the length and time of the Fayre, which was set out in paragraphs 5.12 and 5.16 of the report. The Task Group had also looked at five different cities and a SWOT analysis had been carried out. It was proposed that a stall audit would be carried out this year to capture the views from stall holders on the Fayre. In addition to safety and security being considered as part of the Review the proposed amendments put forward by the Portfolio Holder to Appendix F to include an “Independent Peer Review”, would pick up a number of points expressed by members about potential risks with crowd management at all parts of the Fayre, if agreed.

Councillor Diane Hind who chaired the Task Group, informed members that the Task Group had looked at extending the time, and her wish and hope would be to have a Fayre with more of a Christmas feel in future.

In response to a question raised on when work would start on the 2019 Fayre, members were informed that work would be starting now, for next.

The Committee was unanimous in wanting the Fayre to continue and suggested an amendment in addition to the Portfolio Holders proposed recommendations, in that the annual report be brought back to the

Committee next year. It was further suggested that it should include feedback from the Destination Management Organisation and Our Bury St Edmunds on the willingness and desire to have additional stalls throughout the town over a longer period of time.

In response members were advised that one of the recommendations of the Task Group was that an annual report be undertaken to reflect on feedback provided from each event, and this could also look at responses received from the stall holders audit/survey year on year, over the period of the proposed three year plan.

Councillor Mike Chester then moved the recommendations, this was duly seconded by Councillor Paul Hopfensperger, and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

**RECOMMENDED**: That

- 1) The Christmas Fayre Review Report (OAS/SE/18/032) and the Three-Year Action Plan (Appendix F), be approved, subject to the inclusion of the following paragraph in Appendix F under "Safety and Security":**

**"An Independent Peer Review of the Council's Command and Management of the Christmas Fayre and Event Safety Plan is commissioned. This should consider the management and skills/expertise to deliver the roles required, learning and development as well as whether the skills set within the organisations involved are fit for purpose for continuing to deliver the Plan in the future. The recommendations of the review will be considered by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth".**

- 2) To modify the Finance Section, contained in Appendix F, in order to replace the word "organisations" with the word "stakeholders"**
- 3) That the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) be recommended to accept the above recommendations (1 and 2 above), subject to an Annual Report on the Christmas Fayre being presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and specifically in 2019, to report back on discussions with the Destination Management Organisation and the BID (Our Bury St Edmunds) on willingness; desire of businesses to have/provide additional Christmas stalls throughout the town, over a longer period to create "Christmas in Bury".**

*[Councillor Richard Rout left the meeting at 5.49pm following the vote taking place].*



269. **Quorum**

As there were only five members of the Committee present, the Chairman declared the meeting inquorate under Part 4, Paragraph 4 of the Committee Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution and announced that (where indicated below), the items of business would stand adjourned for consideration at the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 January 2019.

270. **Local Air Quality Management - Vehicle Anti-Idling**

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9 January 2019), due to the meeting being inquorate.

271. **Annual Report by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth**

The Committee was reminded that on 13 September 2017, it received a presentation from Councillor Alaric Pugh, the then Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth setting out responsibilities covered under his portfolio.

At this meeting the recently appointed Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth, Councillor Susan Glossop had been invited to give an update on her portfolio since taking over. Report No: OAS/SE/18/034 set out the focus for the annual update.

Prior to the meeting taking place, the Cabinet Member was provided with some key questions from Scrutiny Members on what they would like included in the update, and responses were set out the report.

The Cabinet Member thanked the Committee for the invitation and the questions submitted, as set out in the report. At this point the Cabinet Member took the opportunity to update the Committee on the following areas:

- Following the Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 31 October 2018, regular meetings would now be held with Councillor Mary Evans, Suffolk County Council Cabinet for Highways and Transport, Leaders/Growth Portfolio Holders with support from officers to look at:
  - Large scale infrastructure projects
  - Masterplan/place projects
  - Major planning applications
  - Policies including the Local Transport Plan
  - Joint funding bids and service delivery in West Suffolk including OSPA
- Looking at improving communications with members. If members had any issues or concerns in their ward regarding planning and growth she was keen to hold one to one meetings to discuss.
- Looking at harmonising licensing policies prior to becoming a West Suffolk Council on 1 April 2019.

The Committee asked a number of follow-up questions relating to the responses provided on growth areas and regeneration to which responses were provided.

In response to a particular question raised regarding the whole development of the Western Way Project, the Cabinet Member agreed to relook into the aspiration of having a bridge from the Howard Estate to Asda as part of the overall project.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the annual update.

## 272. **Work Programme Update**

The Committee received Report No: OAS/SE/18/035, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2019 (Appendix 1).

The report also requested that Members identify questions they would like the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture to cover on 9 January 2019.

The Committee considered Appendix 1 and due to the size of the work programme suggested that the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee Decisions Plan and the Shadow Executive (Cabinet) Decisions Plan be removed from the January 2019 meeting to allow sufficient time to consider the rest of the proposed agenda.

Also, at the time of the meeting members had not identified any questions they wished to put to the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture, but would submit questions following the meeting to the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) by Wednesday 21 November 2018.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the update and the removal of the Decisions Plans from the January 2019 meeting.

The Meeting concluded at 6.15 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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