

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Thursday 13 June 2019** at **5.00 pm** in the **Conference Chamber West (FR1-09), West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

Chair David Nettleton
Vice Chair Simon Cole

Michael Anderson	Mike Chester
Tony Brown	Patrick Chung
Diane Hind	Terry Clements
Paul Hopfensperger	Stephen Frost
Lisa Ingwall-King	Joe Mason
Ian Shipp	Richard Rout

Substitutes attending for a full Member

Councillor Jim Thorndyke for Councillor Marion Rushbrook

In attendance:

Robert Everitt, Cabinet Member for Families and Communities
John Griffiths, Leader of the Council
Margaret Marks
Sara Mildmay-White, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing

By invitation:

Councillor Joanna Spicer, Chair of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership

1. **Substitutes**

The following substitution was declared:

Councillor Jim Thorndyke substituting for Councillor Marion Rushbrook.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simon Brown and Marion Rushbrook.

Councillor Paul Hopfensperger had also sent his apologies in advance, however arrived at the meeting at 5.50pm.

3. **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public in attendance on this occasion.

4. **Community Safety Monitoring Report**

[Councillor Paul Hopfensperger arrived at 5.50pm, during the consideration of this item].

It was the duty of the Committee, as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee designated under the Police and Justice Act 2006, to scrutinise the work of the Partnership.

The Committee received Report No: OAS/WS/19/001, presented by the Chair of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership, Councillor Joanna Spicer, and the Council's Cabinet Member for Families and Communities, Councillor Robert Everitt.

The report set out the background to the partnership and the statutory bodies involved which Councillor Joanna Spicer expanded on, as well as updating Members on the community safety activity in West Suffolk, including the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP) for 2018-2019.

Over the past year the WSCSP had continued to meet and discharge its statutory duties by carrying out an annual assessment of crime and disorder in the area, continuing to deliver the three year plan and action plan to reflect the priorities of the partnership, and carrying out Domestic Homicide Reviews.

Attached at Appendix A to the report, was the WSCSP Plan 2019-2022, which was required to reflect the Suffolk Police and Crime Plan published by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

In May 2018, the WSCSP considered its priorities for 2018-2019. Based on the outcomes of partnership discussions and a strategic assessment of crime, the following priorities were identified as the focus of the WSCSP:

- County Lines;
- Violence against women and girls (including men and boys);
- Domestic homicide reviews;
- Hate crime; and
- Prevent

Councillor Robert Everitt, the Council's Cabinet Member for Families and Communities then drew relevant issues to Members' attention from the report, in particular providing an overview on each of the five areas set out above.

The Chairman then invited Councillor Margaret Marks, Ward Member for Haverhill West to address the Committee in respect of this item. She thanked the Committee for allowing her to speak and informed members she had attended a County Lines training event, and questioned how this would be rolled out to community groups. She also suggested that it would be useful

for the St Johns Ambulance to receive training on county lines, as well as sending out general information to all town/parish councils as not everyone understood what county lines meant.

In response to Councillor Marks' question, members were informed that county lines had been ongoing for over 18 months, and the Partnership was engaging with the voluntary sector on this. Work was being carried out in encouraging the public and members to report any incidents they saw relating to county lines via the 101 police non-emergency telephone number, the police's website or crime stoppers. Training and awareness was a priority for the Partnership, and was being provided firstly in schools and to all frontline staff within the Partnership. An introduction about county lines had also been provided at a recent Parish Conference.

Councillor Spicer expanded on county lines by explaining this was a serious issue, which linked into other crimes. The Partnership had the Western Suffolk tactical action plan in place and partners of the WSCSP were working through the objectives and prioritising actions within it. This work would remain a priority for the WSCSP.

The Committee scrutinised the report in detail and asked questions, to which comprehensive responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on the following.

- 1) Modern day slavery: Members noted that the report did not go into detail, and asked that officers provide a written response setting out more detail.
- 2) Target hardening: Members sought clarification on numbers and success rates. Members were informed, that where appropriate the council would support people to stay in their own homes, if it was safe to do so. In response to numbers, officers agreed to provide a written response.
- 3) Teen chill: This was a successful project and the Partnership was working with Abbeycroft Leisure to promote the project in other areas of West Suffolk and was looking at youth provision in its wider sense.

In response to a question raised regarding how many people had been charged in relation to county lines drug dealing in Western Suffolk, officers agreed to request an up to date written response on figures from Suffolk Police.

In response to a question raised regarding accessing data and analysis, members were informed that the Partnership continually works to ensure that they had access to all relevant partner information. Suffolk County Council provided the Partnership with data analysis. A recent step forward was that the NHS were now recording and sharing information on knife incidents presented at Accident and Emergency.

In response to a question raised regarding the importance of creating safe environments and forums to engage with young people, and encouraging parents to become more involved, officers outlined the work that the

Partnership was carrying out in schools, which included children, parents and school governors.

Members raised concerns regarding the police not attending town/parish council meetings to gather intelligence, and suggested producing a document setting out how information raised at town/parish meetings, should then be forwarded to the relevant organisation for actioning. In response, officers agreed to look into producing information which could be made available to town/parish councils.

Discussions were also held on domestic abuse; the reduction in police officers and Safer Neighbourhood Teams; Police funding in Suffolk; low level anti-social behaviour and how it might develop into serious crimes; the use of councillor locality budgets to engage with youth groups; and the importance of evaluating data and how the WSCSP could benchmark progress.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the report, subject to comments made during the meeting to the Chair of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership and officers.

5. **Draft West Suffolk Councils' Annual Report (2018-2019)**

[Councillor Diane Hind left the meeting at 6.30pm during the consideration of this item, and prior to the vote being taken.

Councillor Ian Shipp left the meeting at 6.55pm during the consideration of this item, and prior to the vote being taken].

The Leader of the Council, Councillor John Griffiths thanked the Committee for the opportunity to present Report No: OAS/WS/19/002, which outlined the draft West Suffolk Councils' Annual Report (2018-2019), and was before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their comments.

This was the final report of Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council working together as West Suffolk councils. 2018-2019 saw years of hard work by both members and officers come to fruition with the establishment of a new West Suffolk Council, putting us in pole position for the future to face challenges and seize opportunities. It reported retrospectively on achievements over the financial year 2018-2019, and therefore referred to the "councils" throughout. In 2019-2020 the Leader looked forward to presenting the first West Suffolk Council annual report.

The draft West Suffolk Councils' Annual Report (Appendix A) before the Committee, highlighted the key activities and developments that had been achieved over the financial year 2018-2019, with regard to the priorities set out in the West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020. The draft report contained a number of case studies and examples from West Suffolk to illustrate the achievements described.

The Leader then highlighted relevant issues for the attention of the Committee, such as West Suffolk continuing to develop a strategic partnership with the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority. Discussions were underway with the Combined Authority examining the

opportunity to bring the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM) to both Haverhill (estimated 2025) and Mildenhall (estimated 2028). The CAM would provide a rapid mass transit solution between areas of West Suffolk and Cambridge, connecting people to jobs, housing and educational opportunities. He explained that there was no doubt that in West Suffolk we were the envy of many parts of the country. We were a national leader in our ability to deliver to high quality services for the communities we serve whilst being able to invest in housing and businesses to encourage growth and prosperity. From talks with Government and other councils, we were seen as innovators in how we deliver better outcomes, both socially and financially for our residents.

The Leader wished to thank all members and staff who had not only shared our ambitious vision but were making it a reality. This was a team effort across parties and even council and organisational boundaries.

The Committee examined the document in detail and particular comments were made on the following areas of the draft Annual Report:

- (1) Page 27: Parks and green spaces: officers agreed to look at adding reference to bio-diversity in its parks, in this section.
- (2) Page 43: Anglia Revenues Partnership: officers agreed to reword this section.

Detailed discussions were also held on the following areas of the draft Annual Report, to which the Leader of the Council provided comprehensive responses as follows:

The Chair stated that whilst recognising that this was a retrospective report, it looked a bit "light" on climate change, and questioned what initiatives were being proposed for the first year of the West Suffolk Council and how could communities assist in promoting these initiatives.

In response the Leader made reference to electric charging points; solar farms and the former Forest Heath District Council being carbon neutral. He explained that Cabinet was currently working on the Terms of Reference for the Climate Change Task Force Group, which would be looking at a variety of issues, including parking which was linked, and hoped the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would get involved with the Climate Change Task Force Group. Also the Council was working hard with the Local Enterprise Partnership, who had taken on the Green Agenda.

In response to a question raised about what priorities would the Leader change, he explained that the council will review and consider its priorities over the next few months. The Leader expressed the hope that all Councillors would get involved in developing new priorities and a new strategic plan.

In response to a question raised regarding fly-tipping and the need for prevention rather than cure, members were informed that the council had recently prosecuted an offender and explained the process of having to have clear evidence to ensure a successful prosecution.

Members also discussed solar panels on social housing, parish conferences; reviewing locality budgets; community awards certificates; crucial crew; working in partnership with Suffolk County Council and town/parish councils; and the role of registered social landlords and ensuring the right houses were being built.

The Leader of the Council wished to thank the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for scrutinising the draft Annual Report and for their comments.

It was then proposed by Councillor Paul Hopfensperger, seconded by Councillor Mike Chester and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

RECOMMENDED:

That the Draft West Suffolk Annual Report 2018-2019, attached at Appendix A to Report No: OAS/WS/19/002 be approved, subject to comments made during the meeting.

6. Cabinet Decisions Plan: 7 May 2019 to 31 May 2020

The Committee received Report No: OAS/WS/19/003, which informed Members on forthcoming decisions to be considered by the Cabinet for the period 7 May 2019 to 31 May 2020.

The Committee considered the Decisions Plan and requested further information on Housing Delivery Plan: Update on First Phase.

In response to a question raised regarding the item on Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2020-2021, members were informed that the report to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee would set out proposals for balancing the budget for 2020-2021. It would also include proposals for closing the budget gap for the subsequent years up to 2023-2024, in line with the Medium Term Plan.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the 7 May 2019 to 31 May 2020 Decisions Plan.

7. Appointments to the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee (2019-2020)

The Committee received Report No: OAS/WS/19/004, which sought nominations (annually), for one full member and one substitute member to serve on the Suffolk County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee for 2019-2020.

The Chair explained that district council members of the Health Scrutiny Committee should ideally be nominated from that council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, although this was not essential as the necessary training would be provided by Suffolk County Council (SCC). The only caveat was that the nomination must not be a member from the nominating Council's Cabinet.

The Health Scrutiny Committee was responsible for scrutinising wellbeing and health services across the County. The Committee had 10 members in total: - five county councillors and one co-opted representative from each of the district and borough councils in Suffolk. Attached at Appendix 1 to the report was an extract from the SCC's constitution, setting out the role of the Health Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee meets four times a year. Since the report was published the July and October 2019 dates had been changed, and the revised dates for 2019-2020 were as follows:

Thursday 11 July 2019	Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich	10am
Thursday 10 October 2019	Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich	10am
Wednesday 15 January 2020	Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich	10am
Wednesday 22 April 2020	Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich	10am

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report and two nominations for the position of the West Suffolk Council's nominated representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee were received, which were both duly seconded. These being Councillor Margaret Marks and Councillor Paul Hopfensperger.

Councillor Joe Mason, who had proposed Councillor Margaret Marks, explained why he felt she would be an excellent full representative on the Health Scrutiny Committee for the new West Suffolk Council given her extensive background in the health profession and participation in various health organisations and initiatives over many years (including being a substitute member on the Health Scrutiny Committee for the former St Edmundsbury Borough Council).

Councillor Richard Rout then explained his reasons for proposing Councillor Paul Hopfensperger. This was followed by a personal statement from Councillor Paul Hopfensperger himself. Through these two supporting statements, the Committee was advised of: Councillor Hopfensperger's own background in health matters, including his own wellness business; Councillor Hopfensperger's record as the full representative of the former St Edmundsbury Borough Council on the Health Scrutiny Committee over the last 3½ years; and why Councillor Hopfensperger would be best placed to continue this work as the full representative for the new West Suffolk Council. Reference was also made to an email from the Chair of the SCC Health Scrutiny Committee, expressing her support for him to continue on the Health Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Hopfensperger also questioned why nominations for this role were sought each year.

Councillor Terry Clements then also explained why he supported Councillor Paul Hopfensperger in continuing his role on the Health Scrutiny Committee.

Nominations were then put to the vote by way of a show of hands and, with the vote being 6 for Councillor Margaret Marks and 6 for Councillor Paul

Hopfensperger and 1 abstention, the Chair exercised his casting vote, being for Councillor Margaret Marks. Accordingly, it was:

RECOMMENDED

That Council be asked to confirm at its meeting on 16 July 2019, the appointment of Councillor Margaret Marks as the West Suffolk Council's nominated representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee for 2019-2020.

Councillor Patrick Chung then proposed Councillor Paul Hopfensperger as the West Suffolk Council's nominated substitute representative, this was duly seconded by Councillor Tony Brown, and with the vote being unanimous, it was:

RECOMMENDED

That Council be asked to confirm at its meeting on 16 July 2019, the appointment of Councillor Paul Hopfensperger as the West Suffolk Council's nominated substitute representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee for 2019-2020.

8. Developing a Scrutiny Work Programme (Verbal Discussion)

The Director, Alex Wilson introduced this item on developing an effective scrutiny work programme. He explained that a scrutiny work programme needed to be timely and relevant, by having:

- A good understanding/split of roles between the Executive (Cabinet) and scrutiny.
- A range of meeting and decision-making styles tailored to the topic, with proper evidence.
- A work programme that was deliverable and well resourced.

The work programme also needed to be balanced, by including:

- Holding the Executive and others to account (with the need to have space in the work programme to do this as needed).
- Monitoring or oversight work (scheduled items in the work programme such as the annual reports considered earlier at this meeting)
- Reviews and developing new policy and practice (with the need to develop a structured work programme, and provide time to do this properly).

Ideally a scrutiny review in the latter category needed to have several of the following characteristics:

- Reflect the council's and community priorities
- Reflect a strong consensus on the need for the review

- Be led by scrutiny
- Not contrived (i.e. needed to take place)
- Genuine scope to add value/form ideas

The Director then informed the Committee that one of Cabinet's projects for the coming year would be to look at car parking, and the Portfolio Holder for Operations would be contacting the Chair and Vice-Chair to discuss how Overview and Scrutiny could be involved in the review.

The Chair and the Committee were keen to be involved in the review and suggested that the scope should be broader than it had been in the past. Members felt that car parking fitted into a bigger picture around the whole environmental review; and specifically felt residents' parking schemes, bus timetables and why people were not using buses should also be taken into consideration.

The Chair and Vice-Chair agreed to meet with the Portfolio Holder for Operations as soon as possible to discuss the scope of the review, before a report was brought to the Committee for its consideration.

The Chair then informed the Committee of the importance of not overloading its agenda.

Finally, the Chair informed the Committee of a change of date for its September 2019 meeting. This had been rescheduled and would now be held on Monday 2 September 2019 at West Suffolk House, and not Thursday 5 September 2019.

The meeting concluded at 7.30pm

Signed by:

Chair
