

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Thursday 14 November 2019** at **5.00 pm** in the **Council Chamber**,
College Heath Road, Mildenhall, IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chair David Nettleton
Vice Chair Simon Cole

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

In attendance:

John Griffith, Leader of the Council
Margaret Marks, Council's appointed representative on the SCC Health Scrutiny Committee

26. **Substitutes**

The following substitutions were declared:

Councillor Jim Thorndyke substituting for Councillor Marion Rushbrook.
Councillor Dawn Dicker substituting for Council Paul Hopfensperger.

27. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simon Brown, Tony Brown, Paul Hopfensperger and Marion Rushbrook.

28. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

29. **Public Participation**

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

30. **Announcements from the Chair Regarding Responses from the Cabinet to Reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Chair informed members he attended Cabinet on 8 October 2019 to present the Committee's report on items it considered on 2 September 2019,

and drew relevant points from the report to the Cabinet's attention. In particular discussions were held on the West Suffolk Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

31. **Draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-2024**

[Councillor Mike Chester declared a non-pecuniary interest as he provides assists to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and remained in the meeting].

[Councillors Terry Clements and Margaret Marks arrived at 5.15pm, during the consideration off this item].

The Leader of the Council, Councillor John Griffiths presented Report No: OAS/WS/19/012, which sought input into the development of the draft West Suffolk Framework 2020-2024 (Appendix A). The document was intended to succeed the West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2018-2020.

The report summarised the work which had been carried out to date on the development of the draft West Suffolk Framework 2020-2024 and sought the Committee's views on the draft document.

Work undertaken in preparing the document had involved officers compiling information on Members' existing and future priorities. This included analysis of the previous Strategic Framework and other council strategies, the Single Council Business case, existing business plans for council services and Ward member priorities, as shared with the Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities. Two workshops were then held on 11 and 17 September 2019, to which all Members were invited. Following the workshops, input from Members was then combined with the existing commitments and priorities, including those of partner organisations to produce the attached draft document.

The Committee was asked to note the following, that:

- The document was not comprehensive;
- It was proposed that the council's strategic priorities remain the same;
- West Suffolk's contribution was only part of the picture;
- The document included a new emphasis on the Environment and Rural issues; and
- The document was a draft which would be designed and formatted before final publication.

The Leader of the Council wished to thank officers for their work in developing the attached document.

The Committee considered the report in detail and asked questions to which responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on the following areas:

- 1) Given the evidence for the need for one bedroomed properties and bungalows, could this be made clear housing priorities in the framework.

Members were informed that the document recognised there was an issue. However, the detail, size and type of properties to be delivered would be covered in depth in the new West Suffolk Local Plan, following the Housing Needs Assessment which would be commissioned shortly.

- 2) The document should highlight the work required in responding to issues arising from an ageing population, increased prevalence of dementia and disparities between areas that had been highlighted in the recent Ward reports, especially around children and educational attainment.

Members were informed that the Council recognises its commitment to work in partnership with other bodies who had lead responsibility for these issues. The final framework document would include infographics and information setting out how the council would support initiatives, which focused on prevention and early intervention.

- 3) The Vision and Strategic Priorities should include more reference to climate change.

Members were informed that more emphasis on climate change and the environment would be included throughout the document, in particular within the Leader's Foreword.

- 4) The Strategy should include more detail on the evidence to support the priorities.

Members were informed that the updated version to be presented to Cabinet would include a range of statistics and infographics.

The Committee suggested the following amendments to the draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework document:

- (1) Page 10: Bullet Point 1, - suggest sentence be reworded to read as follows:

*"Encourage economic growth in West Suffolk that benefits our local economy, our workforce, our families and communities and our global and local environments, **in particular by tackling climate change.**"*

- (2) Page 10: number 3, under "during 2020-2024 we will" – suggest sentence be reworded to read as follows:

*"Drive progress with partners to plan for the infrastructure needed to support our economy, **including infrastructure that reduces our impact on the environment, for example, non-car transport.**"*

Councillor Lisa Ingwall-King commended the document, but felt the priority of protecting the environment and mitigating the impact of climate change should be integrated more fully in the document. She then tabled a paper setting out a number of suggestions for inclusion in the document (attached to this minute as Appendix 1).

The Leader thanked Councillor Lisa Ingwall-King for the tabled paper and welcomed the draft wording/suggestions, which officers would look into in more detail following the meeting and would advise him on updates to the document, where appropriate, which would then be considered by Cabinet.

It was then proposed by Councillor Richard Route, seconded by Councillor Patrick Chung, and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RECOMMENDED:

That subject to the approval of Cabinet and Council, the Draft West Suffolk Strategic Framework 2020-2024, attached as Appendix A to Report No: OAS/WS/19/012, be approved, inclusive of comments made during the meeting.

Appendix 1

Cllr Lisa Ingwall-King's Proposed Amendments to the Strategic Framework 2020-2024

Vision and strategic priorities

1. Inclusive and green growth¹ in West Suffolk's economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc.

Alternatively

Growth in West Suffolk's developing circular economy for the benefit of all our residents and UK plc.

- Encourage green growth, with a focus on promoting a circular economy, in West Suffolk that benefits our local businesses, our workforce, our families and communities and our local and global economy.
- Secure improved sustainable infrastructure and facilities, which prioritise active travel and public transport (over cars), to support existing and new communities.
- Invest to future proof our towns, villages, and country side by building on their unique strengths and by mitigating and adapting to the climate crisis.

As a minimum circular economy and the encouragement of its adoption and growth needs to be added to align with the outcome of Environment and Climate Taskforce.

2. Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active living in a clean environment, with easy access to green spaces:

¹ The OECD Green Growth Report defines green growth as "fostering economic growth and development, while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide the resources and environmental services on which our well-being relies"

(Stronger words for the three bullet points would be encouraged, use similar language as for the Growth goal e.g. invest, secure..)

Only got changes for last bullet point for this goal.

- Improve our community, leisure, public open space, countryside and heritage assets so that they give maximum benefits to West Suffolk communities, biodiversity and global climate.
3. Improved provision of sustainable and affordable/appropriate housing in West Suffolk in both our towns and rural areas:
- Ensure a variety of new energy efficient/passive and affordable housing is provided in appropriate location that meets the needs of current and future generations without damaging local nor global environment and biodiversity.
 - Improve the quality of housing, with particular focus on energy efficiency, and the local environment for our residents.

4th goal – Enhanced provision of healthy/resilient natural spaces, rich in biodiversity and ecosystem services that mitigate and support the adaptation to the climate crisis

- Invest in natural based solutions to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis, with the goal of improving the resilience of the whole of West Suffolk to minimise the risks and protect our residents.
- Ensure a healthy environment that secures our natural capital for future generations and provides green spaces for all West Suffolk residents.
- Encourage and support residents, communities and businesses to reduce their ecological footprint.

32. Cross Authority Task and Finish Group - Citizens Advice

[Councillor Richard Route declared a non-pecuniary interest as the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment and Public Protection at Suffolk County Council].

The Committee received Report No: OAS/WS/19/013, presented by the Chair of the Committee, which asked members to consider whether they wished to be involved in a Cross Authority Task and Finish Group on Citizens Advice, led by Mid-Suffolk and Babergh District Councils. If so, it was asked to nominate the Chair and a member of the majority group from this Committee to represent West Suffolk.

In August 2019, Babergh and Mid Suffolk's Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation from the Sudbury and Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice (CA) services. The Councils currently revenue fund both organisations (with some funding also going to the CA services in Ipswich and Diss). Councillors wished to have a greater understanding of the work undertaken

by CA and the current funding position. Councillors were concerned about the uncertainty faced by Citizens Advice following last year's budget processes. This attracted a lot of public and press comment. Babergh and Mid Suffolk's Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees decided to examine CAB's from the point of view of their Funding, Value and Impacts (both on the public and on council services).

Attached at **Appendix 2** was their report which summarised the presentation and subsequent debate and resolutions, provides additional contextual information and invites Suffolk local authorities to join with Babergh and Mid Suffolk in a joint scrutiny exercise. Attached at **Appendix 1** for the Committee's consideration was the Cross Authority Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference, produced by Mid-Suffolk and Babergh District Councils Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The position regarding West Suffolk however was different from Mid-Suffolk and Babergh. In our area, the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) had come together as West Suffolk, aligned to our Council area. Each year, they applied to the council for Community Chest funding and their application was considered alongside other funding bids. Any funding was provided subject to the CAB providing satisfactory monitoring reports to Council staff. As such, officers had no present concerns regarding the operation of the CAB in West Suffolk, and were satisfied that the CAB was delivering support to residents in line with our strategic priorities. The operation of the Council's grant funding scheme had recently been reviewed by the Grant Review Group.

Whilst officers had no concerns regarding the operation of the CAB locally, there was the opportunity through the review to share learning amongst participating Councils, and understand how the sector could work together with the CAB's to support each other effectively.

The Committee considered the request in detail and asked questions, to which the Chair duly responded. In particular discussions were held on the merits of sitting on the Task Group.

In response to a question raised, the Chair stated the next meeting of the Task Group would be held on Wednesday, 18 December 2019 at 1pm - 3pm at Ipswich Borough Council.

Councillor Joe Mason said he attended his first meeting of the Suffolk West Citizens Advice (SWCA), as one of the councils outside bodies representatives (Councillor Patrick Chung was also a representative). At that meeting he noted the SWCS was facing issues with recruiting volunteers. He was also concerned to hear that 67% of calls were not being answered. He felt the proposed Task Group should also look into these issues.

The Committee felt there was some merit in being on the proposed Task Group, in particular around sharing the work which had gone into the reorganisation of the Citizens Advice in West Suffolk.

At the conclusion of the discussions, it was proposed by Councillor Simon Cole, seconded by Councillor Joe Mason, and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That Councillor David Nettleton, being the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be nominated to represent West Suffolk on the Cross Authority Task and Finish Group – Citizens Advice.

It was then proposed by Councillor Terry Clements, seconded by Councillor Diane Hind, and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Patrick Chung be nominated to represent West Suffolk on the Cross Authority Task and Finish Group – Citizens Advice.

It was then proposed by Councillor Richard Rout, seconded by Councillor Diane Hind, and with the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mike Chester be nominated as a substitute member to represent West Suffolk on the Cross Authority Task and Finish Group – Citizens Advice.

33. Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee - 10 October 2019

Councillor Margaret Marks, the Council's appointed representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee presented Report No: OAS/WS/19/014.

The report, prepared by Councillor Margaret Marks, set out what was considered at its meeting held on 10 October 2019, being:

- The provision of non-emergency transport services (NETS) in Suffolk; and
- An update on progress with the transformation of mental health services in Suffolk.

The Committee considered the report and asked a number of questions to which Councillor Margaret Marks provided comprehensive responses.

In particular discussions were held on NETS and the number of transport journeys which could not take place; agencies working together in relation to re-ablement; mental health and the early adopter sites in Haverhill.

In response to a question raised regarding re-ablement, Councillor Marks agreed that people should be at home and not in care homes or hospitals. Accommodation needed to be suitable and the service needed to be patient centred.

In response to a question raised regarding EZEC, Councillor Marks said the owners were enthusiastic and generally cared. They were fully aware of what

needed to be done to improve the transport service, as they do not want to lose the tender for the transport service, next time round.

There being no decisions required, the Committee **noted** the report on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10 October 2019, from Councillor Margaret Marks.

34. Cabinet Decisions Plan: 1 November 2019 to 31 May 2020

[Councillor Mike Chester declared a non-pecuniary interest as he provides assists to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and remained in the meeting].

The Committee received Report No: OAS/WS/19/015, which informed Members on forthcoming decisions to be considered by the Cabinet for the period 1 November 2019 to 31 May 2020.

The Committee considered the Decisions Plan and requested further information on the following items contained in the Plan:

- 1) Queensbury Lodge, Urgent Works Notice: Members requested further information on why this had been removed from the Decisions Plan.
- 2) Newmarket Cinema: Members asked whether the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could look at this in the future as a critical friend as the project develops.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the 1 November 2019 to 31 May 2020 Decisions Plan, subject to receiving further information on the above points.

35. Work Programme Update

The Committee received Report No: OAS/WS/19/016, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2019-2020 (Appendix 1).

The Chair advised that due to the General Election being held on 12 December 2019, the Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting had been cancelled, and would be rescheduled for late January 2020 to scrutinise the report from the Parking Review Group.

The Committee was also informed that the Chair had written to the Chief Executive at Havebury Partnership inviting him to its meeting on 12 March 2020, which he had accepted.

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

The meeting concluded at 6.20 pm

Signed by:

Chair
