

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held on
Tuesday 11 February 2020 at 6.00 pm in the **Council Chamber,**
District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chair Sara Mildmay-White (Deputy Leader of the Council)

Sarah Broughton
Carol Bull
Andy Drummond
Robert Everitt

Susan Glossop
Joanna Rayner
David Roach
Peter Stevens

By invitation:

David Nettleton

(Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny
Committee)

Ian Houlder

(Chair of the Performance and Audit
Scrutiny Committee)

In attendance:

John Burns
Mike Chester
Brian Harvey
Diane Hind
Rachel Hood

Aaron Luccarini
Jim Meikle
David Palmer
Ian Shipp

96. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Griffiths.

97. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

98. **Open Forum**

The following non-Cabinet Members spoke under this item:

1. **Councillor Brian Harvey**, asked questions/made statements in respect of Agenda Item 7 (*Report No: CAB/WS/20/019 - Sunnica Energy Farm: Consultation Process*).

Councillor Harvey opened by raising his concerns with regards to the scale of the proposal, which had now increased to over 850 hectares.

Appendix A of Report No: CAB/WS/20/019 was a joint response from West Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council (dated 26 July 2019), to the non-statutory public consultation report and Councillor Harvey asked whether a response had been received from Sunnica.

Councillor Harvey raised concerns as to whether there were informal/formal consultations taking place between Sunnica, West Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council. He was also concerned to ensure that local engagement was undertaken with the Town/Parish Councils.

Paragraph 2.7 of Report No: CAB/WS/20/019 set out the expected decisions required and known timescales. Councillor Harvey made specific reference to the response to Sunnica's Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) which was due in approximately February 2020 and asked if that was going to take place and if so, had the Council seen Sunnica's response.

Councillor Harvey also referred to the following, which may, in his view, be affected by the proposed site:

- One of the proposed routes for the potential Mildenhall Relief Road would be through the centre of the site.
- The existing anaerobic digestion plant located in that area, may have to apply for a variation in their traffic route, meaning that there could be an increase in traffic through the local villages.
- Within the proposed area was Bay Farm Quarry, Worlington, which was an operational sand and gravel quarry.
- The development could impact on the proposed route alignment for the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM) route from Cambridge to Mildenhall.

Councillor Harvey concluded by stating that the local Town/Parish Councils in the area, and particularly those located within the Manor Ward, must be provided with the opportunity to be consulted over these proposals, with the involvement of West Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council, alongside Cambridgeshire County Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council.

In response, Councillor Andy Drummond, Portfolio Holder for Regulatory, replied to the questions/statements made by Councillor Harvey. In terms of the joint response submitted in July 2019, a response had not been received from Sunnica. Councillor Drummond referred to paragraph 2.7 of the report and stated that he would be informing the Cabinet that the timetable for this application had now slightly changed and that the Statement of Community Consultation was likely to be received in March 2020.

Councillor Drummond also explained that Officers were currently negotiating the terms of a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with Sunnica in respect of technical advice being sought, as part of the preparation of the Council's response to this application.

Councillor Drummond concluded his response by explaining that the report on the Cabinet agenda this evening was not about the merits of the proposal, but as to how the Council responded as a statutory consultee. A Member briefing had been arranged for 12 February 2020 and following that, further follow-up meetings could be held with Councillor Harvey to ensure that his specific issues were addressed.

2. **Councillor Diane Hind** made a statement in respect of Agenda Item 8 (*Report No: CAB/WS/20/020 – Recommendations of the Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 23 January 2020: West Suffolk Parking Review Group*) and Agenda Item 9 (*Report No: CAB/WS/20/021 – West Suffolk Parking Review*).

Councillor Hind opened by requesting that the proposed increases in car parking charges should not be implemented. Herself and her colleagues in the Labour Group, believed that car park charges should not be raised by more than 10p per session. This alone would raise additional revenue of over £370,000 (based on paid parking events held between April 2018 and March 2019). The Council should not take the responsibility of paying the charge levied by RingGo (cashless parking), which would also save in the region of £180,000.

Councillor Hind explained that she felt the current evening charge from 6pm should be ended, with the charging period for the day to end at 7pm, provided that four-hour parking was retained in the Cattle Market Car Park. 'Free from 3' must be retained in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill. Alternative and additional days must also be considered, as should exploring other incentives to bring people into the Town Centres. Councillor Hind also queried the rationale for benchmarking Bury St Edmunds alongside Cambridge, as the parking in Cambridge was charged at a premium rate to encourage the use of the Park and Ride facility. In the future, Bury St Edmunds should also aspire to having Park and Ride facilities with the use of electric buses.

As mentioned, four-hour parking should be retained in the Cattle Market Car Park, as it would give people more opportunity to want to shop, eat and visit an entertainment venue in the Town. Charging people for both parking and charging their electric cars was not an incentive to encourage the use of electric cars in towns. There should be a maximum top-up charge, with the charges being the same as those for disabled users.

At a time when High Streets were generally suffering from decline, the Council should be protecting its own High Streets and increasing car park charges did not assist to support visitors, residents, businesses or employees. There were already empty shops within the Town and she did not want that number to rise.

Councillor Hind concluded by stating her views of having a dead town centre versus having a thriving town centre.

In response, Councillor Peter Stevens, Portfolio Holder for Operations, replied to the statements made by Councillor Hind. Councillor Stevens

thanked Councillor Hind for the points raised and explained that the Car Parking Review Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also considered these. The Cabinet would be considering their recommendations later on the agenda. Councillor Stevens also wished to acknowledge that it was not just car parking charges which was relevant to the health and well-being of Town Centres and that there was a wider debate to be had to address the challenges, particularly the changing nature of retailing.

3. **Councillor Rachel Hood** made a statement in respect of Agenda Item 8 (*Report No: CAB/WS/20/020 – Recommendations of the Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 23 January 2020: West Suffolk Parking Review Group*) and Agenda Item 9 (*Report No: CAB/WS/20/021 – West Suffolk Parking Review*).

Councillor Hood opened by expressing her concerns with regard to the extremely disappointing state of the car parks in Newmarket. The maintenance of the car parks in Newmarket had been sporadic, resulting in them being in an unsatisfactory state. This was preventing the Town from being able to contribute, as it would wish, to the West Suffolk area as a major tourist destination, the international historic home of horseracing and a town that welcomed visitors.

Councillor Hood wished to make it very clear that there should be no increase in any car parking charges before the car parks in Newmarket had been satisfactorily renovated. Councillor Hood, therefore, asked for reassurances from the Cabinet that all the car parks in Newmarket would be brought up to an acceptable standard before there was any change in car parking charges.

In response, Councillor Peter Stevens, Portfolio Holder for Operations, made reference to his previous response and that the Cabinet would be considering the recommendations from the Car Parking Review Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee later on the agenda.

4. **Councillor Jim Meikle** made a statement in respect of Agenda Item 9 (*Report No: CAB/WS/20/021 – West Suffolk Parking Review*).

Councillor Meikle opened by explaining that he was the Ward Member for Clare, Hundon and Kedington. In Clare, a further three shops would be closing this month, which meant that there were now five empty shops within the Town. One contributory factor was the under-capacity of car parking facilities in the Town.

Councillor Meikle expressed his disappointment that the Car Parking Review Group had not recommended any definitive solutions to the parking issues within Clare. In his view, one solution could be the relocation of the existing fire station on donated land to the west of the Town. Councillor Meikle felt there was the opportunity for the delivery of a wider long-term vision for the Town, with the creation of a public service hub to include a fire and rescue base, an ambulance and clinical response service and community hospital outreach medical services.

Councillor Meikle had been working with Officers over the last few months to develop this project.

Councillor Meikle concluded by asking the Cabinet to consider the creation of this public service hub in Clare to provide the services needed, the provision of a short-term parking solution, alongside the development of a longer-term solution for off-street parking in Clare.

In response, Councillor Jo Rayner, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs, thanked Councillor Meikle for his statement and explained that the Car Parking Review Group had addressed this issue, in part. It was recognised that Clare needed more off-street parking and further opportunities would be reviewed and reported back to Cabinet accordingly. Councillor Rayner also explained that she was aware of Councillor Meikles' vision for a public service hub in Clare and she would ensure that the West Suffolk Property Board worked on the recommendations from the Car Parking Review with regards to off-street parking opportunities, so that all suitable options could be reviewed and brought together for the benefit of Clare.

99. **Public Participation**

The following members of the public spoke under this agenda item:

1. **Mark Cordell, Chief Executive, Our Bury St Edmunds Business Improvement District (BID)**, made a statement in respect of Agenda Item 9 (*Report No: CAB/WS/20/021 – West Suffolk Parking Review*).

Mr Cordell appreciated the funding challenges being faced by West Suffolk Council and that there had been no recent increases in car parking charges. The car parks in Bury St Edmunds provided both a good service and a quality surface. He also acknowledged the recent work between the BID Chair, Councillor Peter Stevens and the West Suffolk Council Car Parking Team regarding the trial for the pay-on-exit car park in the Town.

Mr Cordell also supported the recommendation to Cabinet to retain the 'Free from 3' scheme on a Tuesday and to also retain the night charge in Bury St Edmunds.

Mr Cordell explained that he specifically wished to raise the following issues with the Cabinet. The High Street crisis had hit Bury St Edmunds and 2019 had been the worst year ever for recorded footfall levels in Bury St Edmunds and the level of vacant units was the highest for nine years. He considered that car parking charges were proportionately detrimental to low income households. Public transport infrastructure in and around Bury St Edmunds was poor and cars were the only real option to get to work. To implement these proposed increases in full, from April 2020, would have a huge impact on low income households and urged the Cabinet to reconsider this.

In addition, Mr Cordell also requested the Cabinet to reconsider the reimbursing of the RinGo transaction charges, currently at a cost of £180,000 per year. He considered that this reimbursement was a waste of public money as people who used RinGo were prepared to pay the 20p charge associated with that convenience/choice. Not reimbursing this charge would then provide the Council with the flexibility to reconsider the implementation of all of the charges from April 2020.

In conclusion, Mr Cordell urged the Cabinet to consider the recommendations before them this evening and not to reimburse the RinGo charge, as he considered that this could become an uncontrollable cost for the Council in the future.

In response, Councillor Peter Stevens, Portfolio Holder for Operations, thanked Mr Cordell for his statement and also acknowledged the good working relationship between the Council and the Bury BID. Councillor Stevens wished to specifically refer to the statement which had been made with regard to the Council reimbursing the RinGo charge. He explained that the Council also incurred costs for the collection, sorting and securing of cash in the car parking machines throughout the Town. Therefore, there were competing costs and it must be recognised that a balance had to be struck between the Council's costs in collecting cash from the machines and the costs associated with card payments.

2. **Andrew Appleby, a resident of Newmarket**, made a statement in respect of Agenda Item 9 (*Report No: CAB/WS/20/021 – West Suffolk Parking Review*).

Mr Appleby explained that the intention of the car parking charges proposals must be to facilitate business and especially retail growth for the towns of West Suffolk. Equally to improve the retail experience for both residents and visitors and to respect the interest of residents, especially those living close to the town centres who experienced problems with parking within the vicinity of their homes. Car parking charges were first introduced in Newmarket to primarily control and optimise the use of limited car parking capacity.

The proposed increase in car parking charges for Newmarket may not seem excessive, but these could be sufficient to reduce the footfall within the town. He would prefer to retain the status quo, whilst the effect of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) (due to be implemented from April 2020) was assessed. CPE could produce increased parking and fines income and improve the parking situation and traffic flow within the town.

Mr Appleby explained he felt increasing the charging period in Newmarket would be detrimental to the footfall within the town. Applying charges from 9am to 3pm would increase the late afternoon footfall. Not starting the charging period until 9am would allow local residents to utilise the car parks overnight, due to the lack of available spaces near to their homes.

Mr Appleby also questioned the suitability of parking in the High Street (except for disabled users, taxi vehicles and delivery vehicles) as drivers seeking car parking spaces disrupted the traffic flow within the High Street.

Mr Appleby concluded by stating that he appreciated the financial aspirations and implications of the proposals, but suggested that the Council must ensure that any changes made were not counter-productive.

In response, Councillor Peter Stevens, Portfolio Holder for Operations, thanked Mr Appleby for his statement and explained that the proposals for Newmarket would be considered by the Cabinet later on the agenda. As had been mentioned earlier in the meeting, Councillor Stevens explained that it was not just car parking charges which were relevant to the health and well-being of Town Centres and that there was a wider debate to be had to address the challenges, particularly the changing nature of retailing.

3. **Paul Brown, Manager, Love Newmarket Business Improvement District (BID)**, made a statement in respect of Agenda Item 9 (*Report No: CAB/WS/20/021 – West Suffolk Parking Review*).

Mr Brown stated that this was an unprecedented time with the decline of High Streets, therefore, it seemed an unusual step to increase car parking charges. He fully understood the budget challenges facing the Council, but if Newmarket was to be revived, then in his view, the car parking charges needed to remain at the current level. If there was to be an increase in charges, then these needed to be equitable and fair.

As had been mentioned earlier in the meeting by Councillor Rachel Hood, the surfaces in the car parks in Newmarket were not in an acceptable state. Mr Brown expressed his support of the moving of the market to the High Street and suggested that subsidised parking charges should also be considered on market days. Further, the proposed increases in car parking charges would result in charging from 8am to 6pm.

Mr Brown concluded that if the Cabinet were to implement increased car parking charges, then these should be deemed to be fair and equitable.

In response, Councillor Peter Stevens, Portfolio Holder for Operations, thanked Mr Brown for his statement and stated that he welcomed a close working relationship with the Newmarket BID, to be able to share their vision for Newmarket. Councillor Stevens again emphasised that it was not just car parking that was affecting the health of the market towns. Visitors wanted to come to Newmarket and this must be made as pleasant an experience as possible.

Mr Brown responded and stated that he accepted that there had been increases made to car parking charges in Newmarket in the past, but again reiterated that these were unprecedented times for High Streets.

Therefore, no assumptions should be made of the impact that these increases may have at this particular time.

Councillor Stevens responded by stating that the Council was looking to support businesses in its town centres through additional business rate reliefs (which were detailed in the budget papers later on the agenda). Councillor Stevens also explained the aspirations for the promotion of the District's market towns.

100. Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 9 January 2020 (Report No: CAB/WS/20/017)

The Cabinet received and noted this report, which informed Members of the following substantive items discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on 9 January 2020:

1. Management of Events in West Suffolk.
2. Cross Authority Task and Finish Group – Citizens Advice.
3. Work Programme Update 2020.

Councillor David Nettleton, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, also drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet.

101. Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 30 January 2020 (Report No: CAB/WS/20/018)

The Cabinet received and noted this report, which informed Members of the following substantive items discussed by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 30 January 2020:

1. 2019-2020 Performance Report (Quarter 3).
2. Delivering a Sustainable Medium-Term Budget 2020-2021.
3. Treasury Management Report and Investment Activity (April – December 2019).
4. Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2020-2021.
5. Re-appointments to the Financial Resilience and the Health and Safety Sub-Committee's (2019-2020).
6. Work Programme Update 2020-2021.

Councillor Ian Houlder, Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet, including that separate reports were included on this Cabinet agenda for Items 2., 3., and 4. above.

Councillor Houlder also referred to paragraph 1.2.5 of the report which had contained a recommendation for Cabinet to consider Brandon as a special case and to look at property investments in the town. The Cabinet stated that it recognised the specific challenges within Brandon. All property investments were considered on a case-by-case basis, including those within Brandon. The Cabinet agreed with the principle of investing in the district, as supported by the recently approved Asset Management Strategy, but did not consider that it was appropriate to concentrate on one specific town.

Therefore, the Cabinet did not support the recommendation made by the Committee, as set out in paragraph 1.2.5.

102. **Sunnica Energy Farm: Consultation Process (Report No: CAB/WS/20/019)**

The Cabinet considered this report which explained that the Sunnica Energy Farm was a scheme for the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) generating panels and on-site energy storage facilities across two sites within Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. The proposal would include the infrastructure associated with the required connection to the national grid, including an extension to the Burwell National Grid Substation.

Councillor Andy Drummond, Portfolio Holder for Regulatory, drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet and explained that West Suffolk Council were a formal consultee and needed to decide how to respond to the consultations and various formal stages of the process. It was being proposed for the regulatory responses to be executive decisions and, therefore, to be agreed by Cabinet, Portfolio Holders or Officers.

The scheme was defined as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure project as an onshore generating station in England, exceeding 50MW and an application for a Development Consent Order must be made by the applicant to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS).

Councillor Drummond explained that paragraph 2.7 of the report set out the expected decisions required and known timescales. Since the publication of the report, the timescales had now been amended as follows:

- Response to Statement of Community Consultation (now March 2020)
- Response to Statutory Consultation (now June/July 2020)
- Draft and comments on the Statement of Common Ground (now late Autumn 2020)
- Preparation and submission of a Local Impact Report (now early 2021)

Any decision making would need to be accompanied by local member(s) and Cabinet member briefings. Regular updates had been provided to local Members, including engagement in the informal consultation response provided in the Summer of 2019. This engagement would continue as the Council developed future formal responses. Councillor Drummond also took the opportunity to remind of the briefing for Members which had been arranged for 12 February 2020 at 5pm.

The general public's main opportunities to have their say in the process run by the Planning Inspectorate would be at the Statutory Consultation Stage and during the Examination in Public.

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The decision making in respect of the formal stages of the development process for the Sunnica Energy Farm be in

accordance with the table at paragraph 2.7 of Report No: CAB/WS/20/019 (as amended); and

2. The Council's Scheme of Delegation be amended to include delegated authority to Officers to discharge the requirements attached to any Order granted, monitor the implementation of the Order, take any necessary enforcement action and determine any non-material and material amendment applications.

103. **Recommendations of the Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 23 January 2020: West Suffolk Parking Review Group (Report No: CAB/WS/20/020)**

The Cabinet considered this report which explained that on 11 July 2019, a West Suffolk Car Parking Review Group had been established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review parking in West Suffolk. Report No: OAS/WS/20/003 (attached as Appendix A to Report No: Cab/WS/20/020) set out the conclusions and recommendations from the Review Group, which had been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 January 2020.

The recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from their meeting on 23 January 2020, were as set out in Report No: CAB/WS/20/020 for consideration by the Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations as set out in Section 10 and Tables 1 and 2, being the West Suffolk Parking Review Group's Report, attached as Report No: OAS/WS/20/003, be approved (Appendix A), subject to the following amendments/referrals being made:

1. *Table 1: Brandon* – no parking charges should be introduced in Brandon. Instead, a maximum stay of 3 hours is allowed in the Bury Road car park, with users required to obtain a free ticket. A review should be undertaken after 12 months to evaluate how this is operating.
2. *Table 1: Brandon* – No recommendation be made to Suffolk County Council regarding parking on Brandon High Street.
3. *Table 1: Bury St Edmunds* – That all aspects relating to Bury St Edmunds be referred to Cabinet for determination, subject to recommendation 4., 5., 6. and 9. below:
4. *Bury St Edmunds* - Cabinet to be asked to consider the implications of retaining the "free from 3" scheme on Tuesdays and also consider the implications of extending it to include 8am to 12 midday on Wednesdays.
5. *Bury St Edmunds* - Cabinet to be asked to consider the implications of removing the nightly charge from 6pm.

6. *Bury St Edmunds* - Cabinet to be asked to consider the implications of retaining the tariff period to 6pm (from the 8pm proposal).
7. *Haverhill* - Cabinet to be asked to consider retaining the "free from 3" on Fridays (subject to 9 below).
8. Cabinet to be asked to determine its own proposals for Newmarket.
9. Cabinet to be asked to look at the implication of "free from" parking options in all market towns across West Suffolk on market days (Fridays in Haverhill and Tuesdays in Newmarket).
10. Cabinet to be asked to examine the electric vehicle bay charging structure across West Suffolk, with the potential to introduce charging for electric bays at a concessionary rate rather than the full rate.

104. **West Suffolk Parking Review (Report No: CAB/WS/20/021)**

Prior to the consideration of this report by the Cabinet, Councillor Peter Stevens, Portfolio Holder for Operations reiterated that, as had been mentioned earlier in the meeting, it was not just the issue of car parking charges which were relevant to the health and well-being of Town Centres and that there was a more wider debate to be had to address the decline of Town Centres generally.

The Cabinet then considered this report which explained that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 23 January 2020, considered a report by the West Suffolk Car Parking Review Group (Report No: CAB/WS/20/020 referred). Since the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting had been held, a petition had been received by the Council calling for free parking in Bury St Edmunds and other market towns, as set out in Section 3 of Report No: CAB/WS/20/021.

A number of recommendations were made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, of which eight referred matters to the Cabinet for further consideration. This report provided more information on the referrals in order for Cabinet to be able to reach a decision.

Councillor Stevens also specifically referred to page 143 of the agenda papers which set out the draft Newmarket Parking Plan and recommendations. Councillor Stevens referred to the concerns raised earlier in the meeting with regard to the unsatisfactory state of the car park surfaces in Newmarket and confirmed that a programme of works for the refurbishment of these car parks would be undertaken at the earliest opportunity from April 2020. These works would be started, as and when deemed most appropriate, taking into account weather conditions and the avoidance of conflicting with race days.

Whilst considering this report, the Cabinet also proposed the following amendments, to Appendix 1; Table 1 (Draft Newmarket Parking Plan and Recommendations):

- Proposed off street tariffs – Rous Road
3 hrs - £1.00 **be amended to 2 hrs - £1.00**
- Guineas
Weekly Charge - £10.00

The Cabinet also proposed an additional recommendation, as follows:

6. The Portfolio Holder for Operations be delegated to approve any changes needed to the Traffic Regulation Order, to accommodate any reasonable requirements from third party car park landlords.

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. Those matters referred to it by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in its report "*Recommendations of the Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee 23 January 2020: West Suffolk Parking Review Group*", recommendations 3-10 (Report No: CAB/WS/20/020) be noted.
2. The Parking Petition submitted on 24 January 2020 be noted.
3. The recommendations in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee referrals, as set out in Section 2 of Report No: CAB/WS/20/021, be agreed.
4. The recommendation in Section 3 of Report No: CAB/WS/20/021, not to give two free days parking in market towns, be agreed.
5. The recommendations in Section 4 in respect of Newmarket and, in particular, the Parking Plan as attached at Appendix 1 of Report No: CAB/WS/20/021, be agreed, subject to the following amendments:

Appendix 1: Draft Newmarket Parking Plan and Recommendations: Table 1:

- Proposed off street tariffs – Rous Road
3 hrs - £1.00 be amended to: 2 hrs - £1.00
 - Guineas
Weekly Charge - £10.00
6. The Portfolio Holder for Operations be delegated to approve any changes needed to the Traffic Regulation Order, to accommodate any reasonable requirements from third party car park landlords.

Following the conclusion of the discussions, Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, Deputy Leader of the Council, announced that a Town Centre Summit would be held in Spring 2020, to bring together both local and external experts to

look at the many challenges being faced in high streets and town centres and how we could all work together to best address these. Invitations to this Summit would be sent out in due course.

105. **Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee - 30 January 2020: Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020-2021 and Treasury Management Code of Practice (Report No: CAB/WS/20/022)**

The Cabinet considered this report which explained that the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Treasury Management Code of Practice required that, prior to the start of the financial year, that the Council formally approved a Treasury Management Policy Statement and Investment Strategy, setting out the Council's treasury management policy and strategy for the forthcoming year.

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020-2021 was attached as Appendix 1 and the Treasury Management Code of Practice was attached as Appendix 2 to Report No: PAS/WS/20/004. The report also included additional supporting information on treasury advisors; counterparty ratings; approved investment counterparties and limits; revised building society limits and interest rate projections.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: (25 February 2020)

That:-

1. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020-2021, as set out in Appendix 1 to Report No: PAS/WS/20/004, be approved; and
2. The Treasury Management Code of Practice, as set out Appendix 2 to Report No: PAS/WS/20/004, be approved.

106. **Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee - 30 January 2020: Treasury Management - December 2019 (Report No: CAB/WS/20/023)**

The Cabinet received this report which explained that the Cabinet was required to consider the Treasury Management Report as at 31 December 2019, prior to seeking its approval by Council.

The 2019-2020 Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy set out the Council's projections for the current year. The report included assumptions on borrowing for the capital projects included within it and which was based around three specific projects. The report also summarised the investment activities for the period 1 April to 31 December 2019.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: (25 February 2020)

That the Treasury Management Report (December 2019), being Report No: PAS/WS/20/003, be approved.

107. **Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee - 30 January 2020: Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2020/2021 (Report No: CAB/WS/20/024)**

The Cabinet considered this report which explained that the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee had agreed the principles and approach for delivering a balanced budget in 2020/2021 and a medium-term financial plan for the years up to 2023/2024.

Workshops had taken place during August to December 2019, alongside a detailed "line-by-line" review of each service cost base to ensure that budgets were only set for planned and understood expenditure, which had then been considered by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee in November 2019.

At their meeting on 30 January 2020, the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee were updated on the workshops and line-by-line reviews which had now concluded and any further proposed changes in cost and income assumptions, as a result had been included in Table 1 of Report No: PAS/WS/20/002. Section 2 of Report No: PAS/WS/20/002 also set out information with regards to the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement and the New Homes Bonus.

Having taken the current and future financial pressures and challenges facing West Suffolk into account, including the budget gap, budget assumptions, proposed timetable and the methodology for securing a balanced budget for 2020-2024, the Cabinet considered that the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee's recommendations were acceptable for incorporating into the final budget proposals for 2020/2021 and in the medium term financial plan for the years up to 2023/2024.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: (25 February 2020 - as part of the budget setting process)

That the proposals detailed in Section 2 and Table 1 of Report No: PAS/WS/20/002, be included in securing a balanced budget for 2020/2021 and the medium-term financial plans.

108. **Budget and Council Tax Setting 2020/2021 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2024 (Report No: CAB/WS/20/025)**

The Cabinet received this report which explained that the Cabinet was required to recommend to Council the budget and the level of council tax required to fund the Council's activities over the next year. The Cabinet supported the budget proposals for securing a balanced budget for 2020/2021, as previously considered and recommended by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and incorporated into Report No: CAB/WS/20/025.

In 2020/2021 it was being recommended for a £4.97 increase in Band D council tax across both predecessor areas of St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath. The budget for council tax for 2020/2021 and future years was based on the option to harmonise the two predecessor areas (St Edmundsbury and

Forest Heath) using the average Band D rate across both predecessor areas, harmonising the council tax bills by 2022/2023, whilst maximising the Council Tax receipts to protect services and to support the Council's investment plans. For 2020/2021 this represented an average Band D monthly increase of 97p (for the predecessor area of Forest Heath) and 14p (for the predecessor area of St Edmundsbury).

Therefore, it was being recommended that the level of Band D council tax for 2020/2021, be set at £183.78 for the predecessor area of St Edmundsbury and £163.98 for the predecessor area of Forest Heath.

In addition, the Government had announced that additional business rates measures would apply from 1 April 2020. These measures would increase the current retail discount and extend that discount to cinemas and music venues; extend the duration of the local newspapers office space discount and introduce an additional discount for public houses. Therefore, it was also being recommended to support these additional rate reliefs to facilitate delivery of the Council's ambition to support its town centres and high streets in West Suffolk.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: (25 February 2020)

That:-

1. The revenue and capital budget for 2020-2024, including the capital budget flexibility set out in paragraph 5.7, attached at Attachment A and as detailed in Attachment D (Appendices 1-5), Attachment E (Appendices 1-3) and Attachment F to Report No: CAB/WS/20/025, be approved.
2. The additional business rate reliefs set out in paragraphs 2.8-2.10 of Report No: CAB/WS/20/025, in support of our business community in particular our town centres and high streets in West Suffolk, be approved.
3. Having taken into account the conclusions of the Assistant Director's (Resources and Performance) report on the adequacy of reserves and the robustness of budget estimates (Attachment C) and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (Attachment D), particularly the Scenario Planning and Sensitivity Analysis (Attachment D, Appendix 5) and all other information contained in Report No: CAB/WS/20/025, the Cabinet recommends a £4.97 increase in Band D council tax across both predecessor areas of St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath. This assumption is based on the option to harmonise the two predecessor areas by April 2022. The level of Band D council tax for 2020/2021, therefore, be recommended to be set at £183.78 for the predecessor area of St Edmundsbury and £163.98 for the predecessor area of Forest Heath. (Note: the level of council tax beyond 2020/21 will be set in accordance with the annual budget process for the relevant financial year.).

4. The Assistant Director (Resources and Performance), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, be authorised to transfer any surplus from the 2019/2020 revenue budget to the Invest to Save Reserve as detailed in paragraph 7.4, and to vire funds between existing Earmarked Reserves (as set out at Attachment D, Appendix 3) as deemed appropriate throughout the medium term financial planning period.
5. The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy as set out in Attachment G, be approved.

109. **Decisions Plan: 1 February 2020 to 31 May 2020
(Report No: CAB/WS/20/026)**

The Cabinet considered this report which was the Cabinet Decisions Plan covering the period 1 February 2020 to 31 May 2020.

Members took the opportunity to review the intended forthcoming decisions of the Cabinet. However, no further information or amendments were requested on this occasion.

110. **Queensbury Lodge, Newmarket (Report No: CAB/WS/20/027)**

The Cabinet considered this report which explained that Queensbury Lodge, Queensbury Cottage and Stables were each individually Grade II Listed Buildings and were situated on a prominent site at the entrance to Newmarket's town centre. The Yard was considered to be the second oldest racehorse-training establishment in the town after Palace House Stables.

The buildings were all included in the Suffolk Historic Buildings at Risk Register due to neglect or prolonged lack of maintenance. They were on one of the main approaches to the town centre within the Newmarket Conservation Area and created a poor impression of the town and its attitude towards its horse racing and build heritage. The condition of the three listed buildings had worsened and a survey in April 2019 identified part of the Lodge which was in danger of collapse.

Section 54 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 allowed the Council to serve an Urgent Works Notice on the owner giving notice of the Council's intention to undertake works required to keep the buildings weather-tight, secure and safe from collapse. The owner was also given the opportunity to undertake the works themselves. Historic England's Advisers were aware of the site through previous planning discussions and were in agreement that the buildings were in urgent need of protection and supported the Council's proposed approach.

If the urgent works were not secured, the listed buildings would have to endure at least two more winters with subsequent further deterioration and Officers were concerned that the Lodge, in particular, was in imminent danger of collapse.

It was, therefore, considered that the condition of the buildings needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency using the Council's powers under Section 54. To progress this, an urgent decision was needed on whether the Council should use its powers to serve an Urgent Works Notice and also to accept the cost of taking direct action, together with the mitigation measures, which were set out in the exempt Appendix to this report.

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The undertaking of the Urgent Works process be authorised.
2. The acceptance of the mitigation measures, as set out in the exempt Appendix to Report No: CAB/WS/20/027, be agreed.

111. Exclusion of Press and Public

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the following items because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt categories of information as prescribed in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and indicated against each item and, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**112. Exempt Appendix: Queensbury Lodge, Newmarket (para 3)
(Report No: CAB/WS/20/027)**

The Cabinet considered this exempt Appendix which set out the mitigation measures for the undertaking of urgent works at Queensbury Lodge, Newmarket.

RESOLVED:

The recommendations be approved as set out in the Exempt Appendix to Report No: CAB/WS/20/027.

**113. Investing in our Commercial Asset Portfolio (para 3)
(Report No: CAB/WS/20/028)**

The Cabinet considered this report which set out an opportunity for the Council to invest in its commercial asset portfolio.

RESOLVED:

The recommendations be approved as set out in Exempt Report No:
CAB/WS/20/028.

The meeting concluded at 7.46 pm

Signed by:

Chair
