

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held on **Tuesday 21 September 2021** at **6.15 pm** in the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3YU

Present **Councillors**

Chair John Griffiths (Leader of the Council)

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

Sarah Broughton
Carol Bull
Andy Drummond
Susan Glossop

Joanna Rayner
David Roach
Peter Stevens

By invitation

Ian Shipp

(Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

Ian Houlder

(Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee)

In attendance

Mike Chester

266. **Welcome and meeting facilitation**

The Chair formally opened the meeting and welcomed all persons present within the Conference Chamber and explained that when meeting in person, the Council continued to consider the most recent Government guidance in relation to the safe use of Council buildings to host meetings.

267. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Robert Everitt.

268. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 29 June 2021 and 20 July 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

269. **Declarations of interest**

Members' declarations of interest are recorded under the item to which the declaration relates.

270. **Open forum**

The following non-Cabinet members had indicated their wish to speak under this item:

1. **Councillor Mike Chester (Agenda Item 10: Report number CAB/WS/21/039) West Suffolk Rural Taskforce: Final Report on Implementation of Recommendations**

Councillor Mike Chester had indicated to the Chair that he wished to address the Cabinet in relation to the above report but would like to do this directly under Agenda Item 10 itself. This was agreed by the Chair.

271. **Public participation**

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

272. **Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 2 September 2021 (Report number CAB/WS/21/035)**

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 2 September 2021:

1. Consideration of Councillor Call for Action.
2. Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee – 7 July 2021
3. Cabinet Decisions Plan: 1 September 2021 to 31 May 2022
4. Work programme update and suggestions for scrutiny

Councillor Ian Shipp, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, also drew relevant issues to the attention to the Cabinet. He particularly referred to the consideration of the Councillor Call for Action which had been submitted by Councillor Trevor Beckwith, entitled "*Impact of the Eastern Relief Road and A14 Junction 45 on the Moreton Hall Residential Area*", where the Committee had made seven recommendations to Suffolk County Council, in consultation with relevant partners (where appropriate).

Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health referred to paragraph 2.3.3 of the report, where it had been suggested that a written report setting out the role of the additional responsibility of health to her Portfolio, be included as an item for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 November 2021. Councillor Mildmay-White also confirmed, that she would be willing to attend the meeting, if so required.

273. **Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 29 July 2021 (Report number CAB/WS/21/036)**

The Cabinet received and noted this report, which informed Members of the following substantive items discussed by the Performance and audit Scrutiny Committee at this meeting held on 29 July 2021:

1. 2021-2022 Performance Report (Quarter 1).
2. Annual Treasury Management and Financial Resilience Report 2020 to 2021.
3. Financial Resilience Report (June 2021).
4. Work Programme Update

It was also noted that separate reports were included on the Cabinet agenda for Items 2. and 3. above.

Councillor Ian Houlder, Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet.

274. **Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 29 July 2021: Annual Treasury Management and Financial Resilience Report (2020 to 2021) (Report number CAB/WS/21/037)**

The Cabinet received this report, which was recommending to Council, the approval of the Annual Treasury Management and Financial Resilience Report.

This report was part of the Council's management and governance arrangements for Treasury Management activities under the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. It provided a comprehensive assessment of treasury activities from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

There was an analysis of the Council's Financial Resilience position as at March 2020, as reported by CIPFA in Appendix A – CIPFA Financial Resilience. The Cabinet was required to consider the Annual Financial Resilience Report for 2020/2021, prior to seeking its approval by Council.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet and also thanked the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for their role in the scrutiny of these documents.

**Recommended to Council:
(28 September 2021)**

That the Annual Treasury Management and Financial Resilience Report (2020 to 2021), as contained in Report number: FRS/WS/21/003, be approved.

275. **Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 29 July 2021: Financial Resilience Report (June 2021) (Report number CAB/WS/21/038)**

The Cabinet considered this report, which was recommending to Council, the approval of the Financial Resilience Report (June 2021).

This report was part of the Council's management and governance arrangements for Treasury Management activities under the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. It provided a comprehensive assessment of activities from 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021. The Cabinet was required to

consider the Financial Resilience Report, prior to seeking their approval by Council.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property, drew relevant issues to the attention of Cabinet and thanked the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for their role in the scrutiny of this document.

**Recommended to Council
(28 September 2021):**

That the Financial Resilience Report (June 2021), as contained in Report number: FRS/WS/21/004, be approved.

276. **West Suffolk Rural Taskforce: Final Report on Implementation of Recommendations (Report number CAB/WS/21/039)**

The Cabinet considered this report which provided an update on progress in implementing the agreed actions within the West Suffolk Rural Taskforce Action Plan and summarised some of the wider developments that had affected the Council's role in supporting West Suffolk's more rural areas.

The actions had focused on three main areas:

- Rural transport and communication
- Rural housing
- Strong rural communities

Councillor John Griffiths, Chair/Leader of the Council, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet and explained that the updated Action Plan (attached at Appendix A to the report), showed the progress which had been made in implementing the actions since January 2020. Progress had been inevitably slower than anticipated (for example, on transport initiatives), but in some areas (for example, communities initiatives), progress had been accelerated due to initiatives that had been developed in rural areas in response to COVID-19.

Given the stage that work on many of the recommendations had reached, the Cabinet agreed for this to be the last separate report to them on the specific suite of actions from the West Suffolk Rural Taskforce and now be 'mainstreamed' into ongoing work programmes. Paragraph 4.1 of the report also outlined the ways in which the Council would continue to ensure it supported rural businesses, communities and residents.

Councillor Mike Chester addressed the Cabinet and asked the following specific questions with regards to the actions within the Action Plan:

- **Action T9: Explore with Suffolk County Council/Police/Suffolk Roadside, the potential for a rural road safety/driver behaviour change campaign to tackle speeding in villages; a) Explore Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) use**

Please could more detail be provided as to the number of activities which had been undertaken under this action and where, the numbers who had been caught speeding and what was the plan moving forward?

- **Supporting and nurturing volunteering** – how was the Council making it easier for people to be able to volunteer?
- **Community engagement** – please could examples and the types of engagement being undertaken with rural communities be provided?

The Strategic Director thanked Councillor Chester for his questions and confirmed that a detailed written response would be provided accordingly.

In addition to a further question raised with regards to the Government roll-out of 'Project Gigabyte', which aimed to provide people in rural England access to the fastest broadband speeds on the market, the Strategic Director explained that further information on the provision of broadband within Suffolk could also be viewed via the link [Home - Better Broadband for Suffolk \(betterbroadbandsuffolk.com\)](http://Home - Better Broadband for Suffolk (betterbroadbandsuffolk.com))

Resolved:

That:

1. The progress made in implementation of the Taskforce's recommendations be noted; and
2. The ongoing activity, initiated as a result of the Taskforce, to be 'mainstreamed' into programmes of work and no longer reported on separately.

277. Decisions Plan: 1 September 2021 to 31 May 2022 (Report number CAB/WS/21/040)

The Cabinet considered this report which was the Cabinet Decisions Plan covering the period 1 September 2021 to 31 May 2022.

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

278. Newmarket Cumulative Impact Assessment Review (Report number CAB/WS/21/041)

The Cabinet considered this report as part of its policy on premises licensing, West Suffolk Council had a Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) in Newmarket. The current CIA, applying to the centre of Newmarket, was designated in 2008 and re-adopted in 2011, 2016 and 2018. This expired at the end of 2021 and consultation had been undertaken to enable a decision to be made as to whether this should continue to be supported.

Councillor Andy Drummond, Portfolio Holder for Regulatory and Environment, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet and explained the evidence and data to support the proposed decision to retain the Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) in Newmarket in its current boundaries. This evidence was based upon feedback received from public consultation and

stakeholders, as well as data from the Suffolk Constabulary and the Ambulance Service.

In reviewing the CIA, the Council had taken into consideration:

- Local crime and disorder statistics, including statistics on specific types of crime and crime hotspots such as antisocial behaviour offences
- Health-related statistics such as alcohol-related emergency attendances and hospital admissions
- Environmental health complaints, particularly in relation to noise evidence obtained through local consultation.

During the seven-week consultation period, the responses received to the consultation were in favour of retaining the CIA in Newmarket. In addition, all major stakeholders from the area, including the Police and the Town Council, were also in favour of retention. Responses that were not in favour of retaining the CIA, however, focused on the relatively low crime rates in Newmarket. On balance it was considered that to not renew the CIA was not appropriate at this time.

Given the support for retention of the CIA, but the unknown impact of COVID-19 on business and high street development, a review in two years rather than three years would allow the Council to fully understand the impact of COVID-19 on the town and whether the CIA had any undue effect on business recovery. It, also, provided the opportunity to explore a range of other mechanisms for controlling cumulative impact, both within and outside the licensing regime, that are available for addressing such issues. The rationale for the retention of the existing boundary was also detailed in paragraph 5.4.3 of the report.

Resolved:

That:

1. The Cumulative Impact Assessment in Newmarket at its current boundaries, be retained.
2. The review period be two years, rather than the usual three years.

279. **West Suffolk Fees and Charges Policy (Report number CAB/WS/21/042)**

The Cabinet considered this report which explained that the Council's Fees and Charges Policy had been last revised in 2014. In the context of the transformation work, the opportunity had been taken to review the Council's approach to fees and charges, in order to ensure that their contribution was maximised to the Strategic Framework and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet and explained that the fees and charges that could be set by the Council for the provision of services to residents or other businesses, varied depending on the legislative basis

behind them. Statutory fees and charges were set by the Government, with councils having no control or very little (within a range) over pricing, whilst discretionary services were defined as those that a council was authorised, but not required to provide.

The report set out the refreshed principles governing when, and at what level fees were set, so that decisions on individual fees and charges could be taken within a clear context. Fees and charges would be reviewed on an annual basis (unless agreed otherwise), such as licensing fees, that were set three-yearly and incorporated within the overall West Suffolk budget setting arrangements.

Therefore, the revised West Suffolk Fees and Charges Policy was attached at Appendix A for adoption.

Resolved:

That the revised West Suffolk Fees and Charges Policy, as contained in Appendix A to Report number: CAB/WS/21/042, be approved.

280. Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs (Report number: CAB/WS/21/043)

The Cabinet considered this report, which provided the collection data in respect of Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) and sought approval for the write-off of the amounts contained in the exempt Appendices attached to the report.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including the current performance of both Council Tax and Business Rates collection, as set out in Section 2 of the report.

Members noted that reliefs introduced by Central Government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (many of which provided 100 percent relief for 2020/21) had been extended to the end of June 2021, at which point, the remainder of the year would be discounted by 66 percent. Any accounts eligible would be rebilled in July for an increased amount which would adjust the net collectable debt.

Resolved:

That:

The write-off of the amounts detailed in the Exempt Appendices to Report number: CAB/WS/21/043, be approved, as follows:

1. Exempt Appendix 1: Council Tax totalling £11,748.29
2. Exempt Appendix 2: Business Rates totalling £69,601.54
3. Exempt Appendix 3: Sundry Debt totalling £5,857.92

281. **Exclusion of press and public**

See Minute number 282. below.

282. **Exempt Appendices 1,2 and 3: Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs (paragraphs 1 and 2) (Report number CAB/WS/21/043)**

The Cabinet considered the exempt Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to this report. However, no reference was made to specific detail and, therefore, this item was not held in private session.

The meeting concluded at 6.52 pm

Signed by:

Chair
