

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Thursday 16 June 2022** at **5.00 pm** in the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present **Councillors**

Chair Ian Shipp
Vice Chair Stephen Frost

John Augustine
Trevor Beckwith
Patrick Chung
Diane Hind

Margaret Marks
Sarah Pugh
Marion Rushbrook
Sarah Stamp

In attendance

John Burns, Chair of the Markets Review Working Group
Robert Everitt, Cabinet Member for Families and Communities
Sarah Mansell, Vice-Chair of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership

169. **Substitutes**

The following substitution was declared:

Councillor John Augustine substituting for Councillor Mike Chester.

170. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Michael Anderson, Mike Chester, Joe Mason and Julia Wakelam.

Councillor Simon Brown was also unable to attend the meeting.

171. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

172. **Declarations of interest**

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

173. Announcements from the Chair regarding responses from the Cabinet to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Chair informed members the Vice-Chair attended Cabinet on 26 April 2022 and presented the Committee's report from its meeting held on 17 March 2022. As per the minutes confirmed above, the Vice-Chair updated Cabinet on the detailed presentation received from the Cabinet Member for Planning on "Homes for Life and Age Population"; the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny meeting held on 26 January 2022 where it considered Dentistry Services in Suffolk; and the Committee inviting Suffolk County Council to a "virtual informal Overview and Scrutiny" meeting between April and May 2022 to brief the Committee on the "20mph zone" process, which was duly noted by Cabinet.

174. Public participation

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

175. West Suffolk Community Safety Partnership Monitoring Report (April 2021 to March 2022)

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/22/007, presented by the Vice-Chair of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP) Councillor Sarah Mansell, and the Council's Cabinet Member for Families and Communities, Councillor Robert Everitt.

Councillor Sarah Mansell firstly wished to thank Councillor Joanna Spicer for all her hard work over the years as the Chair of the WSCSP. She explained that the WSCSP covered a large geographical area, which included a number of important organisations, and updated Members on the community safety activity in West Suffolk. 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.

A review of the WSCSP action plan was completed in June 2021 and following discussions with statutory partners the action plan was formally agreed by the WSCSP Responsible Authorities in June 2021. Based on the outcomes of partnership discussions, the following priorities remained the focus of the WSCSP:

- County Lines
- Violence against women and girls
- Hate Crime
- Prevent
- Domestic homicide reviews.

The Committee considered the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which comprehensive responses were provided by Councillor Mansell and officers. In particular discussions were held on county and local lines; anti-social behaviour; violence against women and girls; delays by Central Government in approving domestic homicide reviews; and the impact of the pandemic on the partnership.

In response to a question asked about domestic abuse and whether there were any specific triggers or patterns to domestic abuse, officers explained that domestic abuse increased during the year at key times or major events, such as Christmas. The partnership collected data if alcohol was a factor otherwise there were no trigger factors.

In response to a question raised regarding county lines and how to report drug issues, Councillor Everitt explained if you witnessed the process of cash being handed over for drugs then you should call 999. Drug issues could also be reported to the Safer Neighbourhood Team or Crime Stoppers.

In response to a question raised regarding anti-social behaviour (ASB) and what the partnership was doing to improve ASB, officers advised that ASB was a priority for the partnership. Monthly forums were held to discuss how to tackle individual issues. However, there was more work to be done around early interventions and publicising more activities for young people.

In response to a question raised on how local members could get involved in the work of the partnership, officers explained that the partnership was looking at how to engage local members more, with a focus for example on webinars.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

176. **West Suffolk Markets Review Working Group - Recommendations Report**

The Chair of the Markets Review Working Group, Councillor John Burns presented report number OAS/WS/22/008, which set out the findings and proposed recommendations attached at Appendix A.

The Review Group was set up in November 2020 to look at the strategic role of the markets; aligning the operation of the markets to the council's strategic vision and supporting their development to meet the corporate priorities.

The Review Group sought collectively to uncover a wide range of views and experiences from other quarters and commissioned a detailed piece of engagement work which included a tailor-made survey of all the different groups and stakeholders involved with markets. There were seven different groups identified and a survey was created for each market day at each town.

In addition to the survey, the Review Group interviewed "expert witnesses" who brought a different perspective to the review. This included two representatives from the National Market Traders Federation who were very

complimentary about the work being done on our markets, particular with regard to the encouragement of young traders.

The review of the baseline information; the feedback from the engagement work; evidence of best practice from elsewhere; and the site visit to Saffron Walden helped to shape the findings of the Review Group.

In essence, the Review Group did not reach any conclusions that would suggest a fundamental change in the way the markets in West Suffolk were configured or operated. Instead, the Review Group identified approaches and enhancements that could build on the existing work in order to support the markets to grow and improve in the future.

Attached at Appendix A to the report was the proposed recommendations which were split into five key themes. The Committee was asked to endorse the recommendations and recommend the findings to Cabinet for approval.

The Committee considered the report and proposed recommendations and asked questions to which responses were provided.

In response to a question raised relating to the desire to move markets to town councils to operate, Councillor Burns advised that every market and town was unique in its own way. The Review Group had engaged with town councils and there was a desire by one town council to look at operating the market. No decisions had been made and it was open for further discussion.

In response to a question raised regarding supporting young people to trade on markets. Councillor Burns advised that the council already had measures to support and encourage young market traders and more events were planned for July 2022 in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill to help young traders get on to the ladder.

In response to a question raised relation to action point 7 in Appendix A regarding markets being financially self-sufficient, Councillor Burns informed members that the Review Group had looked at the costs of each market. The outcome was Bury St Edmunds market was more self-sufficient than the other markets. The Review Group looked at the overall budget to see whether the council should continue to subsidise those markets which were less self-sufficient. The proposal was for each market to become self-sufficient by understanding the current costs for each market.

Councillor Pugh informed the Committee that Clare's market had transformed, but there were issues with parking. She felt that new traders needed a mentor and suggested that the Markets Development Officer should wear a high visibility vest so they could be identified whilst on the market. In response officers explained that there was support available for new traders and points of contact in place for mentoring.

In response to a question raised about traders needing more clarity in who they needed to report to, Councillor Burns explained that this was a known problem, and was set out in the report. The Markets Development Officer had also produced a crib sheet setting out who they needed to contact to

resolve any issues, and officers would be looking at the whole reporting structure for market traders.

It was then proposed by Councillor Patrick Chung, seconded by Councillor Margaret Marks, and with the vote being unanimous it was:

RECOMMENDED:

That Cabinet be recommended to approve the proposed recommendations attached at Appendix A to Report number OAS/WS/22/008.

177. Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee - 6 April 2022

Councillor Margaret Marks, the Council's appointed representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee briefly updated the Committee on the previous meetings discussion on dentistry and advised that Central Government had confirmed it would be carrying out a review of dentistry.

She then presented report number OAS/WS/22/009, which set out what was considered at its meeting held on 6 April 2022. The primary focus of the meeting was childhood obesity.

Attached to the report were the following appendices:

- Agenda Item 5 – Childhood Obesity Strategy Action Plan - (Attendance List)
- Agenda Item 5 – Childhood Obesity Strategy and Action Plan
- Evidence Set 1 – Childhood Obesity Strategy and Action Plan
- Suffolk County Council: Tackling Childhood Obesity in Suffolk 2019 to 2023
- Health Scrutiny Committee Draft Recommendations

Councillor Marks informed the Committee that obesity had risen due to Covid and food choices. She felt this issue needed to be tackled from the ground up, and that supermarkets needed to get on board in helping to tackle obesity. The Health Scrutiny Committee was setting up a Task a Finish Group to look into obesity and if the Committee had any suggests/ideas Councillor Marks would feed these into the process.

Councillor Marks informed the Committee that she had spoken with Abbeycroft Leisure and suggested that Warren Smyth should attend a Suffolk County Council full Council meeting and speak to them about the issues of obesity and deprivation.

The Committee considered the report in detail and asked questions to which Councillor Marks provided comprehensive responses. In particular discussions were held on the need to reintroduce home economics into schools for children to understand food; limited open spaces available for children to play safely; and encouraging people to grow more fruit and vegetables.

The Committee suggested there needed to be more community allotments and encouraging supermarkets to give away fruit and vegetables. In response to a question raised about food banks, Councillor Marks advised that vouchers were not required anymore to go to a food bank. She explained that food banks were good, but they did not include fresh fruit and vegetables.

Councillor Pugh suggested that Barley Homes could lead the way in having community allotments. In response the Chair advised that there would be opportunities for Barley Homes, the new local plan and other policies in contributing towards reducing obesity.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the report on the Suffolk County Health Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 6 April 2022.

178. **Appointment to Outside Scrutiny Bodies (2022 to 2023)**

The Committee received Report No: OAS/WS/22/010, which sought nominations (annually), for one full member and one substitute member to serve on the Suffolk County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee for 2022 to 2023.

The Health Scrutiny Committee was responsible for scrutinising wellbeing and health services across the County and meets four times a year. 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 considered the report for the position of the West Suffolk Council's nominated representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee. One nomination was received from Councillor Stephen Frost for Councillor Margaret Marks to continue on the Health Scrutiny Committee, which was seconded by Councillor Diane Hind. There were no further nominations received. With the vote being unanimous, it was

RECOMMENDED

That Council be asked to confirm the appointment of Councillor Margaret Marks as the West Suffolk Council's nominated representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee for 2022 to 2023.

The Committee then considered the substitute position on the Health Scrutiny Committee. One nomination was received from Councillor Margaret Marks for Councillor Mike Chester to continue as the substitute, which was seconded by Councillor Sarah Stamp. There were no further nominations received. With the vote being unanimous, it was

RECOMMENDED

That Council be asked to confirm the appointment of Councillor Mike Chester as the West Suffolk Council's nominated

substitute representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee for 2022 to 2023.

179. Cabinet Decisions Plan: 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023

The Committee received report number: OAS/WS/22/011, which informed members on forthcoming decisions to be considered by the Cabinet for the period 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023.

The Committee considered the Decisions Plan in detail. In particular the Committee discussed the "West Suffolk Procurement Policy and West Suffolk Contract Procedure Rules" being considered by Cabinet on 21 June 2022 and suggested that the procurement policy, if it did not already, should make more use of local contractors. Officers agreed to pass on the Committee's comments to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Property.

In response to a question raised in relation to Sunnica Energy Farm and the local impact report Portfolio Holder decision, officers advised that a decision was not being taken at this time due to Sunnica requesting changes to the application which were being consulted on.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023 Decisions Plan.

180. Work programme update

The Committee received report number: OAS/WS/22/012, which updated members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2020-2021 (Appendix 1).

The Chair advised that on 11 May 2022, a "virtual informal Overview and Scrutiny" meeting was held, when Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding, and Suffolk County Council officers briefed the Committee on the "Suffolk County Council 20mph zone, signage and enforcement" process, and discussed how councillors could work with their communities in supporting them through the process. The briefing was extremely informative and following the virtual meeting, the presentation was circulated to all West Suffolk Councillors to enable them to pass on to their Town/Parish councils for their information.

The Chair also updated the Committee on the Modern-Day Slavery Bill which was mentioned in the 2022 Queens Speech. Once the Bill had progressed and more detail was published the Modern-Day Slavery Working Group would convene its first meeting. He advised that there was a vacancy on the Working Group and if any member was interested in sitting on the Working Group they could either email the Chair or the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) after the meeting.

Councillor Trevor Beckwith raised the issue of street lighting in relation to public safety and whether there could be a future work programme item on this topic. Officers explained that a report on "Street Lighting in West Suffolk" was due to be presented to Cabinet on 21 June 2022 where they would be

considering the ownership and future management of street lighting within the district and that he may wish to attend Cabinet to speak on this issue. Following the outcome of any engagement with Suffolk County Council on street lighting, Councillor Beckwith could then submit a work programme suggestion form, if he felt it was still deemed appropriate and was not duplicating any existing council work.

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

The meeting concluded at 6.43 pm

Signed by:

Chair
