

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held on **Tuesday 21 June 2022** at **6.00 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 Chairs Sarah Broughton (Deputy Leader of the Council)
Joanna Rayner (Deputy Leader of the Council)

Carol Bull
Andy Drummond
Robert Everitt
Susan Glossop

Sara Mildmay-White
David Roach
Peter Stevens

By invitation

Ian Houlder

(Chair of the Performance and Audit
Scrutiny Committee)

In attendance

Andy Neal
David Palmer

358. Welcome and Introduction

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all persons present within the Conference Chamber. He explained the precautionary health and safety measures that remained in operation for this meeting, which aimed to reduce and restrict the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

359. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

360. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

361. Declarations of interest

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

362. **Open forum**

The following non-Cabinet members spoke under this item:

1. **Councillor David Palmer, Ward Member for Brandon West**
2. **Councillor Andy Neal, Ward Member for Mildenhall Queensway (Agenda Item 7: Report number CAB/WS/22/027 - Street Lighting)**

Both Councillors indicated that they had not read the specific content of Report number CAB/WS/22/027 prior to the meeting, but again wished to raise the historic anomaly between the provision and cost of street lighting between the former Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury areas, following the creation of West Suffolk Council. They particularly raised the specific costs which were being borne by the Town Councils within Brandon and Mildenhall, for the provision of street lighting and made potential suggestions as to how this could be resolved.

The Chair thanked both Councillors for attending and addressing the Cabinet on this matter. The Chair urged the Councillors to read and consider the content of Report number CAB/WS/22/027, which attempted to address their previous concerns, by the undertaking a review of street lighting within the district, ahead of the undertaking of the wider review of future relationships with town and parish councils.

Councillor Carol Bull, Portfolio Holder for Governance, also responded and also urged the Councillors to read the content of this report, which had been produced as a result of their previously raised concerns regarding the anomalies around the provision of street lighting across the district.

The Chair again thanked the Councillors for attending and the item would be discussed by the Cabinet later in the meeting, under Agenda Item 7.

363. **Public participation**

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

364. **Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 26 May 2022 (Report number CAB/WS/22/026)**

The Cabinet received and noted this report, which informed members of the following substantive items considered by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 26 May 2022:

1. Internal Audit Annual Report (2021 to 2022)
2. Outline Internal Audit Plan (2022 to 2023)
3. CIPA Financial Management Code
4. Health and Safety Summary Report 2021 to 2022
5. Annual Re-appointments to the Financial Resilience Sub-Committee and the Health and Safety Sub-Committee (2022 to 2023)
6. Work Programme Update 2022 to 2023

7. 2021 to 2022 Performance Report (Quarter 4)

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

The Leader also expressed his thanks to Councillor Houlder on the work of the Committee.

365. **Street Lighting (Report number CAB/WS/22/027)**

The Cabinet considered this report which explained that the majority of street lights in West Suffolk were owned and maintained by Suffolk County Council as highway authority. However, West Suffolk Council (WSC) had the power to provide lighting as a local authority, acting with the consent of the Highways Authority via the powers conferred by the Highways Act 1980. Town and Parish Councils had similar powers to their areas.

It was indicated at the Council meeting in February 2022, that following the delay caused by the response to the pandemic, the Cabinet intended to carry out the planned review of WSC's future relationship with Town and Parish Councils. Report number CAB/WS/22/027 provided more information on the proposed scope for that long-term review.

However, in response to concerns raised and ahead of that main review, the Cabinet had also indicated that it would look at the ownership and future management of street lights in West Suffolk during 2022 to 2023, including those owned by Parish and Town Councils. Report number CAB/WS/22/027 also provided background to that interim review and proposed how it would be taken forward in the remainder of the municipal year and in the context of that wider review.

Councillor Carol Bull, Portfolio Holder for Governance, also drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet and specifically outlined the next steps to be taken in the review, ahead of it feeding into the wider Town and Parish Council review in 2023 to 2024:

1. Over the summer of 2022, to undertake an audit or survey of lighting at district-level, including all Parish and Town Council lighting (ideally in partnership with Suffolk County Council).
2. Investigate the potential costs to upgrade the street lights. This would require specific working with Suffolk County Council and the Town and Parish Councils to understand accurate cost implications.
3. Work with Suffolk County Council to review feasibility, costs and savings involved in incorporating Town and Parish Council street lights into the Suffolk County Council Central Management System.
4. To report back to Cabinet in early Autumn 2022 on the findings.

Resolved:

That:

1. The draft vision, scope and guiding principles for the proposed 2023-2024 review of West Suffolk Council's relationship with Town and Parish Councils as set out in section 2.1 of Report number CAB/WS/22/027, be approved.
2. Pending a more detailed audit, the initial analysis of the disposition of street lighting in West Suffolk contained in section 2.2 of Report number CAB/WS/22/027 be noted.
3. The next steps for working with Suffolk County Council and Town and Parish Councils on a review of street lighting in West Suffolk as set out in section 2.3 of Report number CAB/WS/22/027, be approved.

366. Procurement Policy and Contract Procedure Rules (Report number CAB/WS/22/028)

The Cabinet received this report which explained that the current Procurement Policy had not been changed since the establishment of West Suffolk Council on 1 April 2019. Since that time, there had been changes in the wider economic environment and strategic priorities of the Council that would now be reflected appropriately in the Procurement Policy and Contract Procedure Rules. Procurement was a key role in ensuring that the Council achieved its strategic priorities and adhered to wider regulation on transactions and transparency. The key aims for these revised documents were to:

- Deliver value for money for West Suffolk Council.
- Ensure sustainable procurement.
- Adhere to the Council's Modern Slavery Statement.
- Deliver social value.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property, also drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet and explained that the Policy and Contract Procedure Rules had been fully reviewed and updated in conjunction with key internal stakeholders. The key changes made could be grouped into the following significant areas:

- The proposed revised thresholds for internal process and supplier engagement had been increased upwards to recognise inflation, increase access for local business and reduce onerous proves at lower procurement levels (as set out in Section 4 of Report number CAB/WS/22/028).
- Commitment from suppliers and target setting for reduction of environmental impact had been introduced into the Contract Procedure Rules and revised thresholds.
- Driving down CO2 production in the areas that currently produced the highest volumes (ie construction projects, fleet, facilities and utilities).

- The Procurement Policy referenced the West Suffolk Council Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement and asked for consideration by staff and self certification from suppliers in all quotations. For businesses larger than £36m turnover, evidence of their own Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy must be supplied.

In order to support the implementation and adherence to the new Policy and Rules, there would be internal workshops for all officers responsible for procurement, which would focus on the main changes and the new areas for consideration and responsibilities. There would also be a new Learning and Development Programme for all officers responsible for procurement with the focus on negotiation and contract management. Work would also be undertaken with the Suffolk procurement partners to define options for improving the user experience on the online ICT system (Suffolk Sourcing) that supported the Council's procurement process.

Resolved:

That:

1. The new West Suffolk Council Procurement Policy, attached at Appendix A to Report number CAB/WS/22/028, be approved.

Recommended to Council (27 September 2022):

That:

2. The constitutional changes, as set out in the revised West Suffolk Council Contract Procedure Rules, at Appendix B to Report number CAB/WS/22/028, be approved.

367. West Suffolk Workforce Strategy 2022 to 2028 (Report number CAB/WS/22/029)

The Cabinet received this report which explained that the Workforce Strategy outlined the Council's commitment to work together to deliver its vision and to develop a future focused workforce plan to help to deliver against its Strategic Framework, whilst building a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflected and understood the communities that it served.

The Council recognised that the greatest asset that it had to deliver services to the communities of West Suffolk, was its workforce. The delivery of the Council's vision and priorities could only be achieved if it was able to retain and recruit the right people, with the right skills and the right attitude, those who would innovate and collaborate to deliver transformation of services and maximise the Council's organisational potential.

Councillor Carol Bull, Portfolio Holder for Governance, also drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet and explained that the Strategy (as set out in Appendix A to Report number CAB/WS/22/029) outlined how the Council would continue to deliver services in a changing and challenging environment focusing on how to attract, reward, nurture and develop its staff, through five key workstreams:

- Skills and behaviours
- Recruitment and retention
- Reward and recognition
- Health and well-being
- Future planning

The success of the Strategy would be measured through the Council's annual reporting processes, as well as through regular dialogue in Leadership/Senior Management Team, workforce planning, future employee surveys/pulse surveys and the Joint Negotiating Committee. The Portfolio Holder for Governance and the Staff Consultative Panel also received regular updates on progress against the workstreams.

In response to a request raised by Councillor Susan Glossop, the Cabinet supported the organisation of a corporate event to provide Councillors with the opportunity to be able to meet with all staff. Officers suggested that this could be incorporated within the Annual Staff Awards Event, which was scheduled for December 2022.

Resolved:

That the West Suffolk Workforce Strategy 2022 to 2028, as set out in Appendix A to Report number CAB/WS/22/029 be endorsed and its implementation be supported across the organisation.

368. Annual Review and Appointment of the Cabinet's Joint Committee, Panel and Other Working Groups (Report number CAB/WS/22/030)

The Cabinet considered this report which was recommending appointments to the Cabinet's Joint Committee, Panel and other Working Groups for the year 2022 to 2023. Upon doing so, the existing Terms of Reference for each had been reviewed, as set out in the Appendices attached to this report.

Resolved:

1. That the Leader of the Council re-appoints:
 - a. Councillor Sarah Broughton, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property, as the full member representing West Suffolk Council on the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee in 2022 to 2023.
 - b. Councillor Sara Mildmay-White, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Strategic Health, as a substitute member representing West Suffolk Council on the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee in 2022 to 2023.
 - c. It be noted that on the nomination of the Leader of the Council, the Monitoring Officer may exercise their delegated authority to appoint appropriate Cabinet membership (full and substitute members) to the above joint committee during 2022 to 2023, as necessary.

2. That:
 - a. The Cabinet continues to operate the Staff Consultative Panel in 2022 to 2023 in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) contained in Appendix A to Report number: CAB/WS/22/030.
 - b. Periodical meetings of the above Panel be scheduled as and when required, but with regard to the discussion outlined in Section 2.2.2 of Report number: CAB/WS/22/030.
3. The Cabinet continues to operate the West Suffolk Grant Working Party in 2022 to 2023 in accordance with the ToR contained in Appendix B to Report number: CAB/WS/22/030.
4. The Cabinet continues to operate the West Suffolk Local Plan Working Group in 2022 to 2023 in accordance with the ToR contained in Appendix C to Report number: CAB/WS/22/030.
5. It be noted that should it become necessary and on the nominations of Group Leaders, the Monitoring Officer may exercise their delegated authority to appoint appropriate membership (full and substitute members) to the above Panel, Working Party and Working Group during 2022 to 2023 in accordance with their Terms of Reference.
6. Provided that resources are available to support them, informal task-and-finish working groups or taskforces be established to consider specific issues as required throughout 2022 to 2023.

369. **Decisions Plan: 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023 (Report number CAB/WS/22/031)**

The Cabinet considered this report which was the Cabinet Decisions Plan covering the period 1 June 2022 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.

370. **Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs (Report number CAB/WS/22/032)**

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 Appendix attached to the report.

Councillor Sarah Broughton, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Property, also 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.

Resolved:

That the write-off of the amounts detailed in the Exempt Appendix 1 to Report number CAB/WS/22/032 be approved, as follows:

1. Exempt Appendix 1: Business Rates totalling £163,686.01.

371. Exclusion of press and public

See minute number 372. below.

372. Exempt Appendix 1: Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs (paragraphs 1 and 2) (Report number CAB/WS/22/032)

The Cabinet considered the exempt Appendix 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 6.36 pm

Signed by:

Chair
