

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 14 March 2024

Report number:	CAB/WS/24/024	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	21 May 2024
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Councillor Sarah Broughton Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Telephone: 07929 305787 Email: sarah.broughton@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
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Decisions Plan: This item is not required to be included in the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All wards.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Report number: CAB/WS/24/024, being the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be noted.

1. Context to this report

- 1.1 On 14 March 2024, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the following items:
1. UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund - Progress Update
 2. Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee - 24 January 2024
 3. Suffolk County Council: Police and Crime Panel - 26 January 2024
 4. Cabinet Decisions Plan: 1 March 2024 to 31 May 2024
 5. Work programme update 2024.

2. Proposals within this report

2.1 **UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund – Progress Update (Report number: OAS/WS/24/004)**

- 2.1.1 The Committee received the above report presented by the Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities, which provided an update on how the Council had been allocating funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) to projects and initiatives in West Suffolk. The report included information on how the £1.9 million UKSPF and the £753,000 REPF allocations had been spent to date in the district and where allocations remained to be spent next year. Appendices A to D provided details of the projects which had been funded and the remaining allocations.
- 2.1.2 The Committee considered the report and appendices in detail and asked questions of the Cabinet Member to which responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on making ward members aware of funding so they could inform community groups in their wards of what was available; how the funding was publicised to community groups/organisations and what happens to funding if not all allocated by 2025, whether feedback was collected on how funding had helped organisations; what criteria had the Government used to allocate funding to local authorities; double funding and core funding; .
- 2.1.3 In response to a question was raised on the £38,109 funding provided in 2023-2024 to support projects for town and parish councils and Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) for high street improvements, the Committee questioned how it was used, to which a breakdown was provided.
- 2.1.4 At the conclusion of the discussions the Chair on behalf of the Committee thanked the Cabinet Member for her attendance and noted the challenges which officers had faced. She also suggested more communication on this topic as it was a good news story for West Suffolk. There being no

decisions required the Committee **noted** the progress made so far in allocating West Suffolk's UKSPF and REPF allocations to local projects and initiatives.

2.2 **Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee - 24 January 2024 (Report number: OAS/WS/24/005)**

2.2.1 Councillor Andrew Martin, the Council's appointed representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee presented report number OAS/WS/24/005, which Councillor Sue Perry attended on his behalf on 24 January 2024. The report set out what was considered at the meeting, with the primary focus of the meeting being:

- Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT) mental health services.
- West Suffolk Hospital Future Systems Programme update.

Attached to the report was the following appendix:

- Appendix 1 – Report from Councillor Perry.

Councillor Martin also provide a verbal update on the NSFT Joint Mortality Review Group which had been set up and co-chaired by Caroline Aldridge and had now been disbanded.

2.2.2 The Committee considered the report in detail and asked questions to which Councillor Martin responded. In response to a question raised in relation to what influence did Suffolk County Council have to influence the NSFT, it was reported that Suffolk County Council was the commissioning function, and not an accountability function. The NSFT as an organisation was not providing the necessary services needed. General commissioning was allocated by the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

2.2.3 The Committee also discussed what its role was and how it could support the Council's appointed representatives more on the Health Scrutiny Committee, to which officers agreed to look into.

2.2.4 There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the frustrations and supported the update presented by Councillor Andrew Martin.

2.3 **Suffolk County Council: Police and Crime Panel - 26 January 2024 (Report number: OAS/WS/24/006)**

2.3.1 The Committee received the above report presented by Councillor Mike Chester. Attached at Appendix 1 to the report was a summary of topics discussed at the Police and Crime Panel meeting held on 26 January 2024, being:

- Proposals to increase the policing precept for 2024 to 2025.
- Recent decision made by the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections, May 2024 and the requirement of the Police and Crime Panel to review its Panel Arrangements and Rules of Procedure.

2.3.2 Councillor Mike Chester also provided a verbal report on matters which had been considered at a recent meeting held on 8 March 2024, being:

- Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) Inspection of Suffolk Constabulary.
- Police and Crime Plan Objective 2: "Provide services which effectively support victims of crime and invest in initiatives which reduce crime and disorder."
- Recent decision made by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

2.3.3 The Committee considered the reports in detail and asked questions to which responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on the proposal to increase the policing precept by 4.9%, which was regrettable, and noted the Panel did not take the decision lightly in supporting the proposal.

In response to a question raised regarding Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls and whether there was an action plan, Councillor Mike Chester agreed to provide a written response on where the Police and Crime Commissioner was in the process of developing an Action Plan.

In response to a question raised on whether the Police and Crime Commissioner was collecting data on "Right Care, Right Person", which was introduced on 1 October 2023, Councillor Mike Chester agreed to provide a written response.

2.3.4 A member of the Committee referred to Lakenheath and Mildenhall airbases, which had a range of civilian, military and MOD police covering the same areas but there was no joined up thinking which resulted in the civilian police, of which there was only one officer being left to tackle an incident unaided and outnumbered while the MOD police sat by unable to help, and asked whether the Police and Crime Panel would consider how the police might work together to avoid this happening. In response, Councillor Mike Chester agreed to raise with the Police and Crime Panel.

2.3.5 There being in decision required the Committee **noted** the contents of the report, subject to written responses being received.

2.4 **Cabinet Decisions Plan: 1 March 2024 to 31 May 2024 (Report number: OAS/WS/24/007)**

2.4.1 The Committee reviewed the latest version of the Cabinet Decisions Plan, covering the period 1 March 2024 to 31 May 2024.

2.4.2 The Committee considered the Decisions Plan and was disappointed to see that the “Olding Road Options Appraisal” had been deferred for consideration with no future date being included.

2.5 **Work programme update 2024 (Report number: OAS/WS/24/008)**

2.5.1 The Committee received Report number OAS/WS/24/008, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items at attached at Appendix 1.

2.5.2 The Chair of the Committee sought the Committee’s views on inviting Councillor Wijenayaka to attend its June 2024 meeting to discuss the West Suffolk Markets in relation to the increase in losses which were raised by Councillor Andy Neal under the Leaders Statement at Full Council on 20 February 2024 and the Council’s plans to address the issue.

2.5.3 Councillor Mager raised the issue of potholes and flooding and suggested inviting Suffolk County Council Highways to a future meeting to provide a general overview of the issues and what was happening to rectify the issues. Councillor Waldon made further comments on flooding in Lakenheath.

2.5.4 The Committee considered its forward work programme and **agreed** to inviting Councillor Wijenayaka to its June 2024 to discuss West Suffolk Markets and that Councillors Mager and Waldon would complete a work programme suggestion for relating to Suffolk County Council Highways issues on potholes and flooding.

3. **Alternative options that have been considered**

3.1 Please see background papers.

4. **Consultation and engagement undertaken**

4.1 Please see background papers.

5. **Risks associated with the proposals**

5.1 Please see background papers.

6. Implications arising from the proposals

6.1 Financial - Please see background papers.

6.2 Equalities - Please see background papers.

7. Appendices referenced in this report

7.1 Please see background papers.

8. Background documents associated with this report

8.1 Report number: [OAS/WS/24/004](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund - Progress Update

8.2 Report number: [OAS/WS/24/005](#) and [Appendix 1](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee - 24 January 2024

8.3 Report number: [OAS/WS/24/006](#) and [Appendix 1](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Suffolk County Council: Police and Crime Panel - 26 January 2024

8.4 Report number: [OAS/WS/24/007](#) and [Appendix 1](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Cabinet Decisions Plan 1 February 2024 to 31 May 2024

8.5 Report number: [OAS/WS/24/008](#) and [Appendix 1](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Work Programme Update 2024