

# Cabinet



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held on  
**Tuesday 2 December 2014 at 5.00 pm** at the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

**Chairman** John Griffiths (Leader of the Council)

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

Terry Clements

Dave Ray

Anne Gower

Sarah Stamp

Alaric Pugh

Peter Stevens

By Sarah Broughton (Chairman of the Performance and Audit  
Invitation: Scrutiny Committee)

Ian Houlder (Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee)

In Tony Brown Helen Levack  
Attendance:

David Nettleton

## 1. **Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

## 2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the Cabinet Member detailed immediately below the heading for Minute 65, '*Recommendations from the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel:15 September 2014*', being amended to replace '*Cllr Terry Clements*' with '*Cllr David Ray*'.

## 3. **Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 22 October 2014**

The Cabinet received and noted Report No: CAB/SE/14/001 (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 October 2014:

- (1) Outdoor Advertisement and Signs, St Edmundsbury Borough;
- (2) Quarter 2 Directed Surveillance Authorised Applications;
- (3) Decisions Plan: September 2014 to May 2015; and
- (4) Work Programme Update

Councillor Houlder, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that recommendations emanating from discussion on Item (1) above were included within a separate report for consideration next on the Cabinet agenda (Report No: CAB/SE/14/002 refers).

4. **Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 22 October 2014: Outdoor Advertisement and Signs, St Edmundsbury Borough**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/002 (previously circulated) which sought approval for a revised approach for managing the use of advertising boards (so-called A-Boards) in the Borough.

Councillor Clements, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulation drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that following the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review of its original proposals regarding the regulation of the display of A-Boards on the highway, it was felt this could be better achieved through the use of the Outdoor Advertisement Regulations 2007. The exercising of these Regulations, instead of incorporating the requirements within the Street Vending Policy, provided the Council with greater powers to enforce.

RESOLVED:

That in view of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's wish to achieve the original objectives of its review of "A" Boards as quickly as possible:

- (1) the approach of using the Outdoor Advertising Regulation 2007 to control the use of "A" Boards through the Borough, as set out in Section 4 of Report F155, be approved;
- (2) the Street Vending Policy be amended by deleting the section relating to "A" Boards; and
- (3) the Council produces and publishes clear guidance to businesses on how the Outdoor Advertising Regulations would work in practice, including partnership working with the Highways Authority.

5. **Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 26 November 2014**

The Cabinet received and noted Report No: CAB/SE/14/003 (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 26 November 2014:

- (1) Mid-year Internal Audit Progress Report 2014/2015;
- (2) Key Performance Indicators and Quarter Two Performance Report 2014/2015;
- (3) West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Monitoring Report – September 2014;
- (4) Biannual Corporate Complaints and Compliments Digest;
- (5) West Suffolk Fees and Charges Policy;
- (6) Accounting for a Single West Suffolk Staffing Structure and the Move to a West Suffolk Cost Sharing Model;
- (7) Work Programme Update;
- (8) Ernst and Young Presentation of Annual Audit Letter 2013/2014;
- (9) Financial Performance Report (Revenue and Capital) Quarter 2 – 2014/2015;
- (10) Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2015/2016 and Budget Consultation Results; and
- (11) Mid-Year Treasury Management Report 2014/2015 Investment Activity 1 April to 30 September 2014.

Councillor Mrs Broughton, Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that the Committee had informally considered the first seven items listed above jointly with Forest Heath District Council's Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.

The Cabinet was informed that separate reports relating to Items (5), (6) and (10) above were included on the Cabinet agenda as these required separate consideration of the recommendations provided.

**6. Recommendations from the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee - 26 November 2014: Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2015-2016 and Budget Consultation Results**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/004 (previously circulated) which sought approval for several proposals for savings and income generation to enable the delivery of a balanced budget in 2015/2016.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet including that in light of continuing financial challenges as a result of uncertainty in the wider economy and constraints on public sector spending, difficult financial decisions are needed to be taken.

A public consultation exercise was undertaken over summer 2014 in order to inform the budget setting process and help Members make decisions on the 2015/2016 budget. The feedback received was analysed and as a result, a number of budget proposals had been considered by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for inclusion or removal, as detailed in Sections 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 of Report No: PAS/SE/14/010 (duplicated in Sections 1.2.3 and 1.2.4 of Report No: CAB/SE/14/004).

The Cabinet noted that some areas of the budget consultation still required further work and these were likely to be the subject of individual business cases over the coming months.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

**That, taking into account the public consultation results outlined in Appendix A to Report No: PAS/SE/14/010:**

- (a) the proposals, as detailed in Table 2 at paragraph 1.5.1 of Report No: PAS/SE/14/010, be included; and**
- (b) the proposals, as detailed in paragraph 1.5.2 of Report No: PAS/SE/14/010, be removed.**

*(Councillor Mrs Levack arrived during the consideration of this item.)*

**7. Recommendations from the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee - 26 November 2014: West Suffolk Fees and Charges Policy**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/005 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the West Suffolk Fees and Charges Policy.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, informed the Cabinet that the Policy had been formulated to create a single, clear and consistent approach to formulating, agreeing and reviewing the fees and charges set by the West Suffolk councils (St Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District Councils).

RESOLVED:

That, the West Suffolk Fees and Charges Policy, attached as Appendix B to Report No: PAS/SE/14/005, be approved.

**8. Recommendations from the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee - 26 November 2014: Accounting for a single West Suffolk staffing structure and the move to a West Suffolk Cost Sharing Model**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/006 (previously circulated) which sought approval for accounting for a single West Suffolk staffing structure and the move to a West Suffolk cost sharing model.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet including that:

- (i) the allocation of the single staffing structure across the West Suffolk partnership between Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council had to date been driven by the level of savings generated from the baseline position back in 2012; and
- (ii) this was a new approach to cost sharing for West Suffolk which acknowledged the shared nature of much of West Suffolk's service delivery and recognised that the Councils remained separate legal entities. The West Suffolk cost sharing model must therefore be transparent and comply with external audit requirements.

Section 1.1.5 summarised the benefits for implementing a new cost sharing model. In addition, extracts from Report No: PAS/SE/14/006, as referred to in the recommendations below, were included in the Cabinet report. These set out the principles of the cost sharing model; how it would be cost effective for the tax payer and would not result in either council subsidising the other; and how the model would be implemented.

The model would be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process with any necessary amendments reported to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

#### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

**That:**

- (1) as part of the 2015/16 budget setting process and subject to external audit support, the proposed cost sharing model for income and employee costs, as detailed in Table 2 and 3 and at paragraph 2.17 of Report No: PAS/SE/14/006, be approved; and**
- (2) the proposed model, as detailed in Tables 2 and 3 and at paragraph 2.17 of Report No: PAS/SE/14/006, be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process with any necessary amendments to the model (in order to secure delivery against the principles set out in paragraph 2.12 of Report No: PAS/SE/14/006), being reported through to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee in the autumn.**

#### **9. Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Technical Changes 2015/2016**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/007 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Technical Changes 2015/2016.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet including amendments to the following typographical errors contained in the report:

Section 3.2: the in-year collection rate was 98.4% and not 97.12%, as printed; and

Section 6.1, Table 2: the 30% figure in the first row, second column needed to be replaced with 10% [discount for a twelve month period].

Councillor Ray then explained that Sections 2 and 3 provided a summary of the first year review (2013/2014) on the new Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) and the technical changes on some empty properties and second homes, introduced from 1 April 2013. These findings, which included

the behavioural, administrative and financial impacts, were duly noted by the Cabinet.

Members' attention was then drawn to recommendations for the 2015/2016 LCTRS and the technical changes from 1 April 2015. The recommended continuation of the current schemes covered in the report was intended to continue to deliver a 'cost neutral scheme' against the original 10% Government grant reduction. The impact of the 2015/2016 24% reduction in Central Government grant would therefore be required to be addressed elsewhere and would form part of the Council's wider Medium Term Financial Strategy review and 2015/2016 budget setting process.

Based on the overall findings of the first year review outlined in Sections 2 and 3 of the report, and the monitoring information for 2014/2015 contained at Appendix A, the Cabinet supported the recommendation to continue the LCTR scheme in its current form, including applying the current 2014/2015 level of applicable amounts (as defined in the report) within the LCTRS, for 2015/2016. As it was recommended that the LCTRS should not be changed this year, there was no requirement to undertake specific consultation.

In respect of the technical changes, based on the overall findings of the first year review outlined in Sections 2 and 3 of the report, and the monitoring information for 2014/2015 contained at Appendix A, Members supported the recommendations, as shown in Table 2 (as amended) of paragraph 6.1.

RESOLVED :

That:

- (1) the first year review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2013/2014 be noted;

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

**That:**

- (2) no change be made to the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015/2016;**
- (3) the 5% second homes discount be removed from 1 April 2015; and**
- (4) a change to a one week exemption for Class C empty property from 1 April 2015 be approved, subject to the conditions contained in Table 2 of paragraph 6.1 of Report No: CAB/SE/14/007, as amended to replace 30% with 10% [discount for a twelve month period], in the first row, second column.**

## 10. **Council Tax Base for Tax Setting Purposes 2015/2016**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/008 (previously circulated) which sought approval for Council Tax Base for Tax Setting Purposes 2015/2016.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet including that the tax base formed the basis for the formal calculation of Council Tax for 2015/2016.

The CTB1 Tax Base Return form was attached at Appendix 1, which had been updated as at 6 November 2014 to allow for:

- (a) technical changes outlined in Report No: CAB/SE/14/007; and
- (b) potential growth in the property base during 2015/2016 taken from an average of the housing delivery numbers for those sites within the local plan and those that had planning permission, adjusted for an assumed level of discounts/exemptions within that growth of property base.

An allowance was then made for losses on collection, which assumed that overall collection rates would be maintained at approximately 98%. In addition to this collection rate change, an adjustment had been made to allow for the collectability of the Council Tax arising from the Local Council Tax Support scheme, which had been assessed at 90%. The resulting Tax Base for Council Tax collection purposes had been calculated as 34,839.29 which was an increase of 114.29 on the previous year.

The tax base figures provided within Appendix 2 of the report had been communicated to town and parish councils so they could start to factor these into their budget setting process.

### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

#### **That:**

- (1) the tax base for 2015/2016, for the whole of St Edmundsbury is 34,839.29 equivalent Band 'D' dwellings, as detailed in paragraph 1.4 of Report No: CAB/SE/14/008; and**
- (2) the tax base for 2015/2016 for the different parts of its area, as defined by parish or special expense area boundaries, are as shown in Appendix 2.**

## 11. **Developing a Community Energy Plan**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/009 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the development of a West Suffolk Community Energy Plan and associated funding allocations.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, informed the Cabinet that the report summarised the business case and made

recommendations regarding potential viable options which, if approved, would establish for the first time a long term energy investment plan generating stable revenue and energy cost savings for the Council alongside its existing support for improved community energy efficiency. Produced jointly with Forest Heath District Council, this would form the West Suffolk Community Energy Plan.

Since its launch in 2011, the West Suffolk Greener Business Grant had contributed to the improvement in efficiency of 62 businesses in West Suffolk from a pot of £60,000 provided by West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership. The fund had been used by businesses to match-fund either their own capital or other funds, for example Grants for Growth funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

As part of the broader support to business in the Community Energy Plan, the Cabinet supported the proposal for the Council allocating £15,000 to top up this grant pot. A similar amount would be sought from Forest Heath District Council so that the grant could continue to be offered to help cut local business costs which in turn would support the Councils' strategic priority to stimulate economic growth across West Suffolk.

Attention was then drawn to the various options for energy efficiency investment schemes, as outlined in Appendix A. Appendix B provided a summary of the options appraisal.

Councillor Stevens, Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for the environment, emphasised that each proposal recommended for development in Appendix A would need to be considered in the context of ensuring various robust procedures had been undertaken before each scheme could progress. Measures such as financial viability, the potential impact on the landscape and residential amenity, and its engagement with the local community would need to be considered.

Councillor Brown was in attendance and expressed some concern regarding the viability of the proposed schemes and whether there were other means in which CO2 emissions could be reduced. The Environment Manager comprehensively responded to these concerns and also answered additional questions raised.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (1) the development of a West Suffolk Community Energy Plan, be supported;
- (2) appraisal of other energy-related options set out in the report with a view to receiving further investment proposals, be supported;



## **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

**That:**

- (3) The following be allocated:**
  - (a) £15,000 to continue the West Suffolk Greener Business Grant in support of energy efficiency improvements, as outlined in paragraphs 1.1.4 and 1.1.5 of Report No: CAB/SE/14/009;**
  - (b) £85,500 to improve business resource efficiency and install the next phase of solar schemes on Council property (Option 1), as outlined in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/SE/14/009;**
  - (c) as part of the 2015/2016 budget setting process, £1.62 million over three years to develop rent-a-roof solar schemes in partnership with local businesses (Option 3), as outlined in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/SE/14/009; and**
  - (d) as part of the 2015/2016 budget setting process, £50,000 to cover the identification, detailed feasibility and associated community engagement activities in support of potential sites for larger scale solar and renewable energy generation technologies (Option 5) where supported and/or led by communities in the Borough, as outlined in paragraph 1.3.5 to Report No: CAB/SE/14/009.**

### **12. Public Service Village Phase II, Olding Road, Bury St Edmunds**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/010 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the existing Public Service Village (PSV) Masterplan to be reviewed and for the allocation of funding to enable Phase II of the PSV to progress.

Councillor Clements, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulation, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that the Public Service Village concept was approved and adopted by the Council in 2006. Phase I had been successfully completed by the construction and occupation of West Suffolk House. The improving economic climate and the possible relocation of the Council's depot together with a change of ownership of the DHL logistics building, presented an opportunity for the Council to progress Phase II of the project.

To do this the Council would need to review the adopted Masterplan to bring it up to date with the changes since 2006 and to put in place resources to help deliver this ambitious plan. £100,000 had therefore been requested to be allocated towards the appointment of specialist resources to help formulate the project and ensure that the Council obtains 'Best Consideration'.

An amendment to the second recommendation was reported in respect of inserting the word 'masterplanning' after the word 'legal' to make it clear that some of the funding would be used for this purpose.

Councillor Griffiths, Chairman and Leader of the Council, explained that this was an exciting investment proposal, which had implications for the majority of portfolios, not just planning. He, supported by other Cabinet Members, looked forward to the development of the scheme and the future savings to be made through effective and efficient partnership working between public service providers.

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White wished it to be recorded that Appendix A showed an illustration of the original 2006 Masterplan, and therefore did not show the recently refurbished skate park, but a building in its place. The Council was not looking to relocate the new skate park and the site would be indicated on the revised Masterplan.

### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

#### **That:**

- (1) the Masterplan for the Public Service Village, Bury St Edmunds (2006), be reviewed; and**
- (2) £100,000 be allocated from earmarked reserves (invest to save) to support the appointment of project management, legal, masterplanning and property expertise, as detailed in Section 1.4 of Report CAB/SE/14/010.**

### **13. Bridging Loan to the Samaritans**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/011 (previously circulated) which sought approval for an additional £25,000 loan to the Samaritans, bringing the total secured loan to £175,000.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Performance and Resources, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that in September 2014, full Council had approved a bridging loan of £150,000 at an interest rate of 3% above bank base rate, in order that the charity could relocate to more suitable premises without a break in operations. These terms were acceptable to the charity, as well as meeting the Council's own loans policy.

The property identified had fallen through, but the charity had identified another suitable property, which was more expensive, but still within their available capital funds, once they had sold 46 Well Street, Bury St Edmunds. Purchase of the new property meant that the charity was £47,710 short of cash, pending the sale of 46 Well Street. They had endeavoured to fill the gap, and had indeed found two benefactors who were prepared to loan some of the money. However, there was still a shortfall of £25,000 and the Council had been approached to consider increasing the value of the already agreed loan by £25,000. The loan would still be repaid within six months. The

benefactors would have a second charge (meaning that the Council's loan repayment would take precedence).

The Cabinet was pleased to note that the Samaritans had made their own efforts to source funding to bridge the gap and considered the proposal was acceptable.

RESOLVED:

That a further £25,000 be loaned to Samaritans (bringing the total secured loan to £175,000) subject to the appropriate level of due diligence being undertaken by the Chief Finance Officer as already agreed by full Council on 23 September 2014.

#### 14. **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Guidance and Standards**

The Cabinet considered Report CAB/SE/14/012 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the West Suffolk Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Guidance and Standards.

Councillor Mrs Gower, Portfolio Holder for Housing, informed the Cabinet that the West Suffolk HMO Guidance and Standards document aligned the existing standards and fees for both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath District Councils, and ensured a consistent approach towards dealing with HMOs and gaining compliance with relevant legislation and standards.

The document and associated fee had been subject to public and stakeholder consultation. Larger HMOs (those with three or more storeys and five or more persons) were required to be licensed and there was a fee to cover the cost of this process; the proposal being that it should be £500 for a five year period, which accorded with Forest Heath's existing policy. No adverse comments had been received from landlords in respect of this proposal.

Councillor Brown expressed concern regarding the proposed inspection programme as contained in Appendix 3 to the HMO Standards and Guidance (Appendix A), with particular reference to those properties being considered to be at lower risk, which were scheduled to be inspected on a five yearly basis. In response, Members were advised that if robust information was received regarding a potential problem within this timeframe, Public Health and Housing Services would be informed and appropriate action would immediately be taken.

RESOLVED:

That the West Suffolk Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Guidance and Standards, and HMO licence fee, as contained in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/SE/14/012, be approved.

*(Councillor Brown left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)*

**15. Draft West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/013 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the draft West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy for consultation.

Councillor Mrs Gower, Portfolio Holder for Housing, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet including that the Homelessness Act 2002 required all councils to produce a Homelessness Strategy at least every five years. This Strategy set out how St Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District Councils (the two West Suffolk Councils), along with their partners, would address and prevent homelessness over the next three years, ensuring that sufficient suitable temporary accommodation and support was available for those who were homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The document would be subject to public and stakeholder consultation before adoption was sought in February 2015.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (1) the draft West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018, as contained in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/SE/14/013, be approved for consultation to the public, local authorities, voluntary and statutory agencies; and
- (2) following consultation, the amended Strategy be brought back to Cabinet for consideration in February 2015 with a recommendation to full Council for adoption.

**16. West Suffolk Data Protection Policy**

The Cabinet considered a narrative item, which sought approval for the West Suffolk Data Protection Policy, as attached as Report No: CAB/SE/14/014 (previously circulated).

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that compliance with the Data Protection Act (DPA) was monitored and enforced by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO had the power to impose fines of up to £500,000 for a serious breach of one or more of the data protection principles and where the breach was likely to cause substantial damage or distress. This was in addition to any penalties imposed by the courts against individuals who unlawfully breached the DPA. ICO guidance therefore stressed that it was vital for all Council employees, Members and contractors to understand the importance of protecting personal data; that they were familiar with the organisation's security policy; and that they put its security procedures into practice.

The joint policy (based on that previously adopted by Forest Heath District Council) outlined the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and identified

how both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (jointly referred to as West Suffolk Councils throughout the policy) complied with the Data Protection Act. It aimed to give guidance on how the requirements of the Act applied to the work of the Councils.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

**That the West Suffolk Data Protection Policy, provided as Report No: CAB/SE/14/014, be adopted.**

**17. Recommendation from the West Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Panel: 29 October 2014**

The Cabinet considered a narrative item, which contained a recommendation from the West Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Panel emanating from its meeting on 29 October 2014.

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for emergency planning informed the Cabinet that the Joint Panel wished to make minor amendments to its terms of reference to bring them up to date, as detailed in the narrative item.

**RESOLVED:**

That paragraph 2.7 of the Terms of Reference for the West Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Panel be amended to:

*At the discretion of the Chairman, or if absent the Vice-Chairman, in the event that either:*

- (a) an emergency event arises which affects the area of either authority, or both authorities, or*
- (b) the risk of an emergency that affects the area of either authority, or both authorities, is assessed as significant by the District Emergency Planning Officer,*

*an extraordinary meeting of the Panel may be called.*

**18. Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs**

*(At this point it was determined that the meeting did not need to go into private session to consider the Exempt Appendices attached to Report No: CAB/SE/14/016. Therefore, with the agreement of the Chairman, Agenda Item 19 was taken before Agenda Item 18 whilst the meeting remained in public session.)*

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/016 (previously circulated) which provided the collection data in respect of Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates and sought approval for the write-off of debts as contained in the Exempt Appendices.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that as at 31 October 2014, the total National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) billed by Anglia Revenues Partnership on behalf of St Edmundsbury Borough Council (as the billing Authority) was nearly £47.3 million per annum. The collection rate as at 31 October 2014 was 66.67% against a profile of 66.75%.

As at 31 October 2014, the total Council Tax billed by Anglia Revenues Partnership on behalf of St Edmundsbury Borough Council (included the County, Police and Parish precept elements) was just under £53.8 million per annum. The collection rate as at 31 October 2014 was 67.87% against a profiled target of 68.31%

The Revenues Section collected outstanding debts in accordance with either statutory guidelines or Council agreed procedures. When all these procedures had been exhausted the outstanding debt was written off using the delegated authority of the Head of Resources and Performance (for debts up to £2,499.99) or by Cabinet (for debts over £2,500).

The specific reasons for recommending each write-off were included in Exempt Appendices 1 and 2.

RESOLVED:

That the write-off of the amounts detailed in the exempt appendices to Report No: CAB/SE/14/016 be approved, as follows:

- (1) Exempt Appendix 1: Council Tax totalling £13,945.63; and
- (2) Exempt Appendix 2: Business Rates totalling £17,736.82.

19. **Proposals for the Commercial Development of West Stow Country Park**

*(Councillor Clements declared in the interests of transparency that he held a fishing permit for West Stow Country Park. Councillor Mrs Broughton declared a Local Non-Pecuniary Interest as Chairman of the West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village Trust. Both remained in the meeting for the consideration of this item.)*

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/015 (previously circulated) which sought approval for a number of recommendations relating to the development of part of West Stow Country Park.

Councillor Mrs Stamp, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that West Stow Country Park would cost the Council £132,350 in 2014/2015. Whilst considerable savings had already been made against the spend in previous years, a range of proposals needed to be considered to fill this budget gap for 2015/2016 and beyond whilst protecting West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village. Such options were summarised in Exempt Appendix 1a. A preferred option

was provided in a business case, as contained in Exempt Appendix 1. Exempt Appendices 2-10 and A-C provided additional information in support of the preferred option.

The following amendments to the first two recommendations were proposed:

That Cabinet:

- (1) considers a range of proposals for appropriate **further leisure commercial** development of part of West Stow Country Park to complement the existing attractions;
- (2) considers minimising the risk of the preferred option by **seeking gaining** planning permission in advance of selecting a partner to work with;

These proposed amendments were accepted by the Cabinet.

Councillor Mrs Stamp commended the Commercial Manager for his work on this project and how the business case provided a good starting point for encouraging commercial partners to come forward and develop the preferred option.

Councillor Mrs Broughton, Chairman of the West Stow Anglo-Saxon Trust, stated that the Trust had been consulted on the preferred option and had supported the scheme. The Trust had acknowledged the prospect of attracting additional tourism to the Park and the Anglo-Saxon Village, and reducing the budget gap.

Councillor Mrs Levack was in attendance and wished to speak on matters provided in the Exempt Appendices.

Therefore at this point, it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

Following consideration in private session, the Cabinet concluded its discussion in public. It recognised the exciting opportunities for creating further leisure development at West Stow Country Park and subsequently

RESOLVED:

That:

- (1) a range of proposals for appropriate further leisure development of part of West Stow Country Park to complement the existing attractions have been considered;

- (2) planning permission for the preferred option be sought in advance of selecting a partner to work with in order to minimise the risk; and
- (3) the taking of the business plan to the market in order to secure a suitable operating partner for the preferred option, as contained in Exempt Appendix 1 to Report No. CAB/SE/14/015, be approved.

20. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Referred to under Item 19 above.

21. **Exempt Appendices: Proposals for the Commercial Development of West Stow Country Park**

The Cabinet considered Exempt Appendices 1, 1a, 2-10 and A-C to Report No: CAB/SE/14/015 (previously circulated) and the discussion on these is contained in the Exempt version of these minutes.

22. **Exempt Appendices: Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs**

The Cabinet considered Exempt Appendices 1 and 2 to Report No: CAB/SE/14/016 (previously circulated), however no reference was made to specific detail and therefore this item was not held in private session.

The meeting concluded at 6.52pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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