

Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held on
Tuesday 10 February 2015 at 5.00 pm in the **Conference Chamber West,**
West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

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

Terry Clements
Anne Gower
Alaric Pugh

Dave Ray
Sarah Stamp
Peter Stevens

By Sarah Broughton,
Invitation: Ian Houlder and
David Nettleton

(Chairman of the Performance and Audit
Scrutiny Committee)

(Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny
Committee)

In
attendance: David Nettleton

23. **Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was received from John Griffiths.

24. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25. **Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 17 December 2014**

The Cabinet received and noted Report No: CAB/SE/15/001 (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 December 2014:

- (1) Car Park Tariffs 2015/2016;
- (2) Decisions Plan: December 2014 to May 2015; and
- (4) Work Programme Update and Suggestions for Scrutiny.

Councillor Houlder, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that issues emanating from the discussion on Item (1) above had been included within a

separate report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for consideration next on the Cabinet agenda (Report No: CAB/SE/15/002 AMENDED refers).

He added that a date of 16 April 2015 had been set for a Member Learning and Development Session to cover the following topics, both of which had been subjects of proposed suggestions for scrutiny but had been considered by the Committee that a more suitable approach would be to be address both issues in this manner:

- (a) Shared Services model and corporate working practices; and
- (b) Leader and Cabinet model.

26. **Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 29 January 2015**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/15/002 (AMENDED) (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 29 January 2015:

- (1) Key Performance Indicators and Quarter Three Performance Report 2014/2015;
- (2) West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Monitoring Report – December 2014;
- (3) Work Programme Update;
- (4) Financial Performance Report (Revenue and Capital) Quarter 3 – 2014/2015;
- (5) Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2015/2016 Update;
- (6) Treasury Management Report 2014/2015 Investment Activity 1 April – 31 December 2014;
- (7) Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2015/2016; and
- (8) Update on Procurement Exercise for External Fund Manager to Support Treasury Management Activities.

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 three 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 (7) and (8) above were included on the Cabinet agenda as these required separate consideration of the recommendations provided. In addition, a recommendation relating to car park tariffs for 2015/2016, which was considered as part of item (5) above was detailed in Report No: CAB/SE/15/002. This recommendation was subsequently revised and included in the amended version of the report.

It was explained at the meeting that the bold underlined text in italics in the amended version of the report had been added to assist the Cabinet in its own decision-making on the findings of both scrutiny committees in respect of car parking (which were presented as a formal recommendation to Cabinet

only once, under this item on the agenda). The proposed amendment reflected the information which had been considered and noted by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2014, and was now necessary in order to seek authority from Cabinet to bring those matters into effect through a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), subject to the satisfactory outcome of the statutory 28 day consultation. However, it was confirmed that this specific aspect of the car parking review had not actually been considered by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee itself. That Committee had only examined and endorsed the car parking proposals insofar as they affected the draft budget, a fact which would be reflected in the minutes of its meeting.

A discussion was then held on Paragraph 1.94 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding Car Park Tariffs 2015/2016 and the associated proposals to make changes to the TRO (Report No: OAS/SE/14/001 refers). Paragraph 1.9.4 had sought to introduce a low emission car park and vehicle tariff on the Old Sale Yard (Rose and Crown PH) car park in Haverhill. However, Councillor Mrs Gower, Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for Haverhill, considered this proposal warranted further investigation as part of the full review of car parking currently scheduled to be held in June 2015.

As there were no budget implications as a result of removing this proposal from the recommended changes to the TRO, it was agreed to accept Councillor Mrs Gower's suggestion.

RESOLVED:

That the car park tariffs for 2015/2016, as set out in Paragraph 1.3.2 of Report No: PAS/SE/15/005 and the amendments outlined to the Borough of St Edmundsbury (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2010, as set out in Paragraph 1.9 of Report No: OAS/SE/14/001, be approved as part of the budget setting process for 2015/2016, subject to the exclusion of the proposal outlined in Paragraph 1.9.4 of Report No: OAS/SE/14/001 and the satisfactory outcome of consultation with local residents on the remaining amendments to the Order.

27. **Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee:
29 January 2015: Annual Treasury Management and Investment
Strategy Statements 2015/2016**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/15/003 (previously circulated), which sought approval for the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements for 2015/2016.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management required that, prior to the start of the financial year, the Council formally approved an Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy, setting out the Council's treasury management policy and strategy statements for the forthcoming year.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that the potential implications of changes to credit ratings calculated by rating agencies as a result of the implied removal of sovereign support to banks needed to be assessed. The Cabinet therefore considered it prudent to accept the second recommendation proposed by Councillor Ray, as detailed in the recommendation to full Council below.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That:

- (1) the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2015/2016, as contained in Appendix 1 to Report TMS/SE/15/002, be adopted; and**
- (2) the Head of Resources and Performance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance and the Chairman of Treasury Management Sub-Committee, be given delegated authority to make amendments to the Treasury Management Investment Strategy, taking into account advice of the Council's Treasury Management Advisors in response to changes to credit ratings resulting from the implied removal of sovereign support in the Bank of England's 'bail-in' regulations.**

(Councillor Houlder left the meeting during the consideration of this item.)

28. Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 29 January 2015 - Update on Procurement Exercise for External Fund Manager to Support Treasury Management Activities

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/004 (previously circulated), which sought approval for a preferred option relating to the timing for undertaking a procurement exercise for the appointment and use of an external fund manager.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that following Cabinet's approval of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee's recommendation in November 2013, to use both Treasury Management Advisors and External Fund Managers, Report No: CAB/SE/15/004 summarised two potential options on the timing for a procurement exercise for appointment and use of an External Fund Manager, as detailed in Report No: TMS/SE/15/003.

On the recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet considered Option B was the most appropriate, which was as follows:

'A procurement exercise commences during the summer of 2015, allowing for further opportunity to consider the business cases for some potentially significant investment opportunities such as Public Sector Village II, Waste Transfer Site and Investing in Housing within the Borough and the Council's overall spending plans.'

RESOLVED:

That Option B, as detailed in paragraph 1.2.1 of Report TMS/SE/15/003, be approved.

29. **Budget and Council Tax Setting: 2015/2016 and Medium Term Financial Strategy**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/15/005 (previously circulated), which presented the proposals for Budget and Council Tax Setting in 2015/2016.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that Report No: CAB/SE/15/005 set out details of the Council's proposed revenue and capital budgets for 2015/2016 and the Cabinet was required to consider the 2015/2016 budget for the authority and recommend to Council the level of Council Tax required to fund this budget.

The Finance Team was commended for delivering a sustainable budget for 2015/2016. Staff were also recognised for showing dedication and commitment in making the Council more efficient in delivering the necessary savings whilst maintaining the delivery of services.

It was also acknowledged that by 2018/2019, the projected budget gap amounted to £2.5million for St Edmundsbury, as set out in the adopted Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Six themes contained within the MTFS and summarised in Section 2.3 of the report, related to areas of the West Suffolk councils' business which would support sustainability in a more financially constrained environment, which included continuing the shared services agenda and behaving more commercially.

The Cabinet supported the proposal for maintaining the same level of Council Tax as 2014/2015, which meant there had been no increase in Council Tax for the fifth consecutive year and for six out of the last seven years. With costs rising and all the other changes and pressures on the Council, the Cabinet considered this to be a tremendous achievement whilst maintaining the provision of excellent services for the residents of the Borough. Members also supported the proposal in connection with the business rates transitional relief 2015/2016 to 2016/2017, as detailed in paragraphs 1.4.3 to 1.4.7 of the report.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That:

- (1) the revenue and capital budget for 2015/2016 attached at Attachment A to Report No: CAB/SE/15/005, and as detailed in Attachment D, Appendix 1-5 and Attachment E be approved;**

- (2) having taken into account the conclusions of the Head of Resources and Performance's report on the adequacy of reserves and the robustness of budget estimates (Attachment C) and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (Attachment D), particularly the Scenario Planning and Sensitivity Analysis (Attachment D and Appendix 5) and all other information contained in this report, Cabinet recommends a 0% increase in council tax for 2015/2016;**
- (3) the Head of Resources and Performance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, be authorised to transfer any surplus from the 2014/2015 revenue budget to the Invest to Save Reserve as detailed in paragraph 1.8.4, and to vire funds between existing Earmarked Reserves (as set out at Attachment D, Appendix 3) as deemed appropriate throughout the year; and**
- (4) that the use of the Council's discretionary power (S47 Local Government Finance Act) to provide the transitional relief be approved and delegated authority be given to the Head of Resources and Performance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, to determine the final guidelines for the operation of the transitional relief for 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 following the current scheme and guidance issued by Government (Attachment F), as set out in paragraphs 1.4.3 to 1.4.7 of Report No: CAB/SE/15/005.**

30. Suffolk Business Park Land Assembly

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/15/006 (previously circulated), which sought approval for the principle of exercising the Council's compulsory purchase powers to help facilitate the development of Suffolk Business Park, Bury St Edmunds.

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, Deputy Leader of the Council, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that planning permission for the Eastern Relief Road (ERR) had been granted, which would provide a new link from the A14 trunk road to Moreton Hall and the Suffolk Business Park. The Relief Road was an important piece of infrastructure designed to help relieve congestion at junctions 43 and 44 of the A14 that currently served Moreton Hall and Suffolk Business Park.

The 68 hectare extension to Suffolk Business Park and further housing growth on the Moreton Hall Estate was in three ownerships – Taylor Wimpey, the Borough Council and Rougham Estates. Rougham Estates was represented by an agent, Churchmanor. The land in control of Churchmanor was now the only parcel of land needed to complete the ERR and extension to Suffolk Business Park, however, negotiations with Churchmanor and the Council had currently stalled. It was therefore now concerning that unless the Council considered the use of its powers and approved the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order, the current impasse would continue indefinitely, further delaying this important scheme and thereby failing to provide much needed housing, education, community and employment land.

At this stage, the Cabinet was required to consider whether the Head of Planning and Growth should be authorised to continue exploring options with the landowners which would resolve the matter without needing to invoke its compulsory purchase powers. Should negotiations be unsuccessful however, a further report would be brought back to Cabinet and full Council to progress the use of its CPO powers.

The Cabinet fully supported the recommendations as detailed in the decision below.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (1) the principle of using the Council's compulsory purchase powers (CPO) under section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to acquire such estates and interest in the land as may be necessary to facilitate the development of the Eastern Relief Road and Suffolk Business Park in accordance with the local development plan, as detailed in Section 2 of Report No: CAB/SE/15/006, be approved; and
- (2) the Head of Planning and Growth be authorised to continue to explore options with the landowners which would resolve the matter without the need for the Council to invoke its compulsory purchase powers. In the event of negotiations proving unsuccessful, a further report will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting to seek a recommendation to Council for use of CPO powers in accordance with recommendation 1 above.

31. **Grant Funding 2015/2016: Arts and Sports Revenue Support Grants**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/15/007 (previously circulated), which sought approval for revenue support grants for arts and sports organisations.

Councillor Mrs Stamp, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that the Council had traditionally supported Smith's Row Art Gallery and the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds with revenue grant funding. The Council had suffered significant funding cuts over the last few years, and as funding became tighter, the requirement to ensure the Council was getting value for money had become even more imperative.

The report provided details of how the Council had met with each organisation to establish an appropriate way forward. The Theatre Royal had been informed that it was to receive a cut in Arts Council England funding with effect from April 2015. The Theatre had responded positively to this with better, more commercial programming that attracted larger audiences, and efforts made to reach out into the community. Work was being undertaken to ascertain whether the Theatre and The Apex could benefit from greater

partnership working. In the meantime, it was proposed that the Theatre's grant should be reduced by £5,000 to £66,250 in 2015/2016 with the aim of working more closely with them in future years to look at reducing this grant further.

Having taken into account a number of factors as summarised in the report, it was proposed that Smith's Row should receive a 25% reduction in its current Borough Council funding of £34,485 to £25,000 in 2015/2016 with a view to withdrawing funding completely from 2016. Some of the £25,000 previously granted to Smith's Row would then be allocated to other visual art projects in Borough which supported the Council's strategic priorities around economic growth and families and communities.

In respect of the Victory Sports Ground, Bury St Edmunds, it was proposed that as the opening of the community sports facility at the Sports Ground was a relatively new venture, further support was required from the Council's strategic sports partner, Abbeycroft Leisure to help them look at commercial opportunities and make the facility more independently financially viable. It was therefore proposed that in 2015/2016, the Victory Sports Ground would receive a reduction in grant of £2,500 to £45,250 with a view to reducing this grant to zero within a number of years, as previously agreed by Cabinet.

On 12 January 2015, the Grant Working Party had considered and endorsed these proposals.

RESOLVED:

That the following levels of funding be approved and included in the budget for 2015/2016, as detailed in Report No: CAB/SE/15/007:

- (1) Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds: £66,250 (a reduction of £5,000);
- (2) Smith's Row Art Gallery, Bury St Edmunds: £25,000 (a reduction of £9,485); and
- (3) Victory Ground Sports Ground, Bury St Edmunds: £45,250 (a reduction of £2,500).

32. **West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/15/008 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018.

Councillor Mrs Gower, Portfolio Holder for Housing, informed the Cabinet that the Homelessness Act 2002 required all councils to produce a Homelessness Strategy at least every five years. Section 1.2 of the report outlined the issues that were required to be considered within the Strategy. The West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy set out how St Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District Councils, along with their partners, would address and prevent homelessness over the next three years, ensuring that there was

sufficient suitable temporary accommodation and support for those who were homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The Strategy, which had been subject to a period of stakeholder and public consultation, supported and complemented the recently adopted West Suffolk Housing Strategy and was fully endorsed by the Cabinet. The Housing team were commended for their work on the document, with particular recognition given to the Housing Options Manager.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That the West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018, as contained in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/SE/15/008, be adopted.

33. West Suffolk Equality Scheme 2015-2020

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/15/009 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the West Suffolk Equality Scheme 2015-2020.

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for equality and diversity, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet. She explained that both St Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District Councils' existing schemes were due to be updated and the opportunity had been taken to develop one single scheme for West Suffolk. This scheme, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, had been produced having regard to The Equalities Act 2010, the Public Sector Equalities Duty and the guidance provided by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. It set out how the Council would manage and monitor equality, as an employer, as a service provider and in its role as local authority.

Appendix 2 provided a template and guidance which set out a two stage approach. The first stage involved completing an equality screening assessment. The second stage of a full Equality Impact Assessment was a natural progression from the screening stage if there remained significant uncertainties about the levels of impact on one or more of the identified diversity groups.

A discussion was held on appropriate training for staff and Members on equality and diversity issues. The Cabinet was informed that together with an e-learning package which was available for staff and councillors to complete, new and re-elected Members would be encouraged to attend a Member Development Session on this issue, as part of the forthcoming post-election induction programme.

RESOLVED:

That the West Suffolk Equality Scheme 2015-2020 at Appendix 1 to Report No: CAB/SE/15/009 and the Equality Guidance and Forms at Appendix 2, be approved.

34. **West Suffolk Pension Discretions Policy**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/15/010 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the Pension Discretions Policy.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance informed the Cabinet that The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) changed to a career average ('CARE' – career average revalued earnings) scheme in April 2014. The new pension regulations gave employers a number of discretionary options. The Council was required to agree and publish its decisions in relation to these discretions in a written Statement of Policy.

Appendix A attached to the report contained the Policy, with a summary of the recommended discretions contained in Appendix B.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

That the Pension Discretions Policy, as contained in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/SE/15/010, be approved.

35. **Report from the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee: 11 December 2014**

The Cabinet received and noted (previously circulated) which provided an outline of the issues discussed by the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee at its meeting held on 11 December 2014.

On 11 December 2014, the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee considered the following substantive items of business:

- (1) Fraud;
- (2) Performance Report;
- (3) ARP Partnership Budget 2015/2016;
- (4) ARP Risk Register;
- (5) Strategic Review; and
- (6) Welfare Reform.

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

36. **Recommendations from the Rural Area Working Party: 26 January 2015**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/15/012 (previously circulated) which sought approval for recommendations emanating from the meeting of the Rural Area Working Party held on 26 January 2015.

On 26 January 2015, the Rural Area Working Party considered the following substantive items of business:

- (1) St Edmundsbury's Rural Youth Work Project 2015;
- (2) Rural Public Transport;

- (3) Funding of Rural Local Authorities;
- (4) Parish Conference: Thursday 26 March 2015; and
- (5) Work Programme.

Councillor Stevens, Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for rural issues, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that a review of the rural youth work programme was considered to be required for implementation in 2016/2017 so that it better complemented the Families and Communities Strategy and the work of locality officers. In relation to the use of the 'On the Spot' vehicle in 2015, it was also considered further negotiation was required with the YMCA regarding the possible introduction of a transitional programme, as suggested by the Working Party.

Discussion was then held on the recommendation emanating from Item (3) above. It was noted that residents in urban areas currently received £178 more per head each year in government funding for council services than those in rural areas, a gap which would not be closed by government proposals for 2015/2016. Whilst it had also been noted that the Council had already highlighted this disparity in its response to the Government's consultation on the provisional finance settlement in January 2015, the Cabinet supported the Working Party's proposal to carry out further lobbying and awareness raising.

(a) St Edmundsbury's Rural Youth Work Project 2015

RESOLVED:

That:

- (1) the Council's existing funding of £10,600 for rural youth programmes, as outlined in paragraph 1.1.3 of Report No: RUR/SE/15/001, continue to be ring-fenced for that purpose within any new wider approach to grants and commissioning, and underspends in that budget in any year be rolled forward as appropriate;
- (2) a review of the delivery and funding of the rural youth programme be carried out for implementation in 2016, with a view to enabling rural communities to provide sustainable and locally-led youth initiatives in their villages;
- (3) for 2015, the officers negotiate with the Suffolk YMCA to provide a transitional programme using the On the Spot Vehicle, taking into account the steer of the Rural Area Working Party at its meeting on 26 January 2015, and with the final detail to be approved in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

(b) Funding of Rural Local Authorities

RESOLVED:

That, supporting the work of the Rural Services Network and SPARSE, the Council raises its concerns regarding the relative under-funding of rural local authorities with its Members of Parliament.

**37. Recommendations from the Sustainable Development Working Party:
28 January 2015**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/15/013 (previously circulated) which sought approval for recommendations emanating from the meeting of the Sustainable Development Working Party held on 28 January 2015.

On 28 January 2015, the Sustainable Development Working Party considered the following substantive items of business:

- (1) Joint Development Management Policies Document – Planning Inspector’s Report and Adoption;
- (2) Erskine Lodge, Great Whelnetham Development Brief; and
- (3) West Suffolk Shop Front and Advertisement Design Guide Consultation Responses and Adoption.

Councillor Clements, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulation, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that the recommendations emanating from the consideration of the Joint Development Management Policies Document referred to in Item (1) above would be considered by the Joint Development Management Policies Committee and its recommendations would subsequently be considered directly by full Council on 24 February 2015.

On consideration of the Erskine Lodge, Great Whelnetham Development Brief, the Working Party had expressed a number of concerns with its current form, including:

- (a) that the Core Strategy ‘Local Service Centre’ allocation for Great Whelnetham envisaged small developments of around ten dwellings per site. This was considered to be one such site and the capacity of 63 dwellings proposed was too many given the constraints;
- (b) such constraints identified were: part of the site was in a conservation area; potential flooding from surface water run-off; the proximity of the adjacent sewage treatment works; the topography of the site and its associated difficulties; the close relationship to existing dwellings; and the potential impact on the sensitive rural landscape and a nearby protected rookery.

Given the above concerns, as detailed further in the report and minutes of the Working Party meeting, the recommendation not to support adoption of the Development Brief in its current form was supported.

Once adopted, the West Suffolk Shop Front and Advertisement Design Guide would be a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and would provide detailed guidance on the design of new and replacement shop fronts throughout West Suffolk. The guidance covered matters such as general design principles; materials and colour; signage and lighting; blinds and canopies; and security measures for retail and other commercial properties. The document had been subject to public consultation and the comments were summarised in the report considered by the Working Party

(SDW/SE/15/003 refers). The Cabinet commended its thoroughness and content.

(a) Erskine Lodge, Gt Whelnetham Development Brief

RESOLVED:

That the Development Brief for Erskine Lodge, Great Whelnetham in its current form, as contained in Appendix A to Report SDW/SE/15/002, be NOT adopted; and

(b) West Suffolk Shop Front and Advertisement Design Guide

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That:

- (1) the West Suffolk Shop Front and Advertisement Design Guide with suggested amendments, as contained in Appendix A to Report SDW/SE/15/003 be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document subject to it being noted in the Glossary on page 28 in respect of the second item 'Building of Local Interest', reference to 'Birmingham' be deleted and 'the areas' inserted therefor; and**
- (2) the Head of Planning and Growth be given delegated authority to edit/insert appropriate images as part of the final document publishing process.**

38. Exemption to Contract Procedure Rules

The Cabinet received and noted a narrative item which provided an exemption to the Contract Procedure Rules of the Constitution, relating to the procurement of replacement flooring for Haverhill Leisure Centre's sports hall flooring system.

Section 4.3 of the Contract Procedure Rules stated that: *Between £50,001 and the EU Threshold any exemption must be approved by the Officer and Head of Service in consultation with the Head of Resources and Performance. The Officer must produce evidence to support the request for any exemption. The Head of Service shall prepare a report for the next Cabinet to support the action taken. The exemption, being a Contracting Decision, the reason for it (together with support evidence) shall be forwarded to the Head of Resources and Performance.*

This exemption was exercised on 23 December 2014 for a contract to 4 Runner Ltd valued at £52,275 for the urgent replacement of flooring to the sports hall at Haverhill Leisure Centre. The semi-sprung floor system has failed and is rapidly deteriorating requiring urgent replacement to protect the safety of sports hall users.

The exemption was made on the basis that there was:

- (a) an unforeseeable emergency involving immediate risk to persons or property, or serious disruption to council services; and
- (b) unforeseen works where delay will adversely impact on the service delivery of the council.

The exemption was duly noted by the Cabinet.

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

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/15/014 (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 following the publication of the report, updated collection rate figures could now be provided. As at 31 January 2015, the collection rate of National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) was 92.56% against a profiled target of 92.62%. As at 31 January 2015, the Council Tax collection rate was 95.67% against a profiled target of 96.46%

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, 2 and 3.

RESOLVED:

That the write-off of the amounts detailed in the exempt appendices to Report No: CAB/SE/15/014, be approved, as follows:

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Exempt Appendix 1: | Council Tax totalling £5,363.83 |
| Exempt Appendix 2: | Business Rates totalling £4,727.56 |
| Exempt Appendix 3: | Housing Benefit Overpayments £6,991.65 |

40. **West Suffolk Operational Hub**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/015 (previously circulated) which sought approval for proceeding with the next stage of the West Suffolk Operational Hub project.

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, Deputy Leader of the Council, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet. She explained that the proposed development of a West Suffolk Operational Hub at Hollow Road Farm, Bury St Edmunds would be one of a number of important public sector estate projects in Suffolk.

A new facility at Hollow Road Farm, which could potentially include provision of a new Waste Transfer Station and Household Waste Recycling Centre for West Suffolk, would mean that immediate efficiency gains could be realised by all parties and new commercial opportunities explored.

The relocation of waste services into this new facility would also enable a series of exciting new developments to be completed on the vacated land. This would include the second phase of the ambitious Public Sector Village (PSV) in Bury St Edmunds, which in turn could potentially allow other sites in West Suffolk to be vacated and put to better use.

This programme sought to identify opportunities for shared use of public sector facilities. Bringing services from different partners together on to the same site and sharing costs (co-location) would give better value for taxpayers and better services for residents and businesses through efficiencies which came from more joined-up working. This reorganisation would make better use of assets; ensuring modern, efficient facilities with room for growth to be available for the future with a minimum overall cost to taxpayers.

Report No: CAB/SE/15/015 provided an update on the current anticipated costs and benefits and asked that the next stage of the project regarding the starting of planning application process, which was also dependent on Forest Heath and Suffolk County Councils' approval, to be formally commenced. During this next phase, options for capital funding would also be reviewed which would include funds from other related projects (such as PSV Phase Two) and consideration of financing options. Approval to fully proceed with the project would be required by Cabinet and full Council at a later stage.

A detailed discussion was held and the Cabinet was pleased to note that Suffolk County and Forest Heath District Councils' Cabinets appeared to be supportive of the principles of the proposed scheme and it was encouraging that there seemed to be a tremendous will from all parties to bring this project to fruition.

Members were also encouraged that a holistic approach to the project was being taken with capacity for the site expected to be sufficient for the next 10 to 20 years.

Councillor Mrs Broughton, neighbouring Ward Member for the site, 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.

Such matters included:

- (a) the length of the consultation period during the proposed pre-planning application stage;
- (b) provision of sufficient consultation sessions with neighbouring parish councils and the public;
- (c) proposed access and egress to the site; and
- (d) potential traffic implications during both the site's development and upon completion.

Issues (c) and (d) above and more would be considered during the pre-planning application stage and interested parties would have the opportunity to submit their comments during the consultation.

Following consideration in private session, the Cabinet concluded its discussion in public.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (1) the contents of Report No: CAB/SE/15/015 be noted; and
- (2) the next stage of the project be agreed to proceed which will be to seek planning consent for a West Suffolk Operational Hub at Hollow Road Farm, Bury St Edmunds.

41. Exclusion of Press and Public

Referred to under Minute 40 above.

42. Exempt Appendices: West Suffolk Operational Hub

The Cabinet considered Exempt Appendices A and B to Report No: CAB/SE/15/015 (previously circulated) in private session.

43. Exempt Appendices: Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs

The Cabinet considered Exempt Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to Report No: CAB/SE/15/014 (previously circulated), however no reference was made to specific detail and therefore this item was not held in private session.

44. Exempt Minutes: 2 December 2014

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting concluded at 6.45 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
