

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK CABINET** held in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich on Friday, 13 October 2017 at 9:30am.

This meeting was held simultaneously with Babergh District Council's Cabinet.

PRESENT:

Councillor: Nick Gowrley – Chairman

Councillors:	Gerard Brewster	David Burn
	Glen Horn	Andrew Stringer
	John Whitehead	David Whybrow
	Jill Wilshaw	

In attendance:

Councillor Rachel Eburne
Councillor Paul Ekpenyong
Councillor Jessica Fleming
Councillor Sarah Mansel
Councillor Wendy Marchant
Councillor Keith Welham

Corporate Manager – Development (AB)
Chief Executive (AC)
Corporate Manager – Open for Business (LC)
Strategic Director (ME)
Corporate Manager – Finance (ME)
Corporate Business Co-ordinator (SM)
Assistant Director – Investment and Commercial Delivery (LR)
Corporate Manager – Internal Audit (JS)
Assistant Director – Corporate Resources (KS)
Strategic Director (JStephenson)
Investment and Development Consultant (IW)
Monitoring Officer/Assistant Director Law and Governance (EY)

28 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Roy Barker, Julie Flatman, Diana Kearsley and Penny Otton.

The Chairman welcomed Jonathan Stephenson as the new Strategic Director.

29 **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS**

None declared.

30 **MCA/17/14 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 AUGUST 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 August 2017 were confirmed as a correct record.

31 **TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME**

None received.

32 **QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

It was noted a question had been received from Councillor Wendy Marchant. It was agreed to take this during the relevant agenda item.

33 **MCA/17/15 MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OR JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

Councillor Eburne, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee introduced report MCA/17/15 and explained there was concern in respect of performance monitoring. Both an impact and a change in the targets for void times were urgently required.

It was agreed performance would continue to be monitored and if not as expected to report back.

34 **MCA/17/17 FUTURE OPTIONS FOR "WORKING TOGETHER" BETWEEN BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS**

The Chief Executive gave an introduction to report MCA/17/17 which gave a balance of positive and negative reasons for merging into one Council. In order to ensure the two districts were in the best possible position to respond to, and take advantage of, the emerging opportunities and challenges within Local Government and Suffolk both Council Leaders had requested the Chief Executive to investigate the various options available to further evolve the Councils partnership working.

It was stressed no formal decision would be made but the recommendation was to endorse the approach of creating one new, larger District Council and to conduct stakeholder, public and staff engagement.

The Chairman, Councillor Gowrley, took Councillor Merchant's question which was:

"The recommendation on page 14 is described as an 'endorsement'. Endorsement means confirmation of a decision already made. But isn't this Cabinet making the decision? Because it is described as an endorsement, and not a decision, it cannot be called into Scrutiny, nor will it go to Full Council. Isn't there a democratic deficiency here? Some people might say the two councils merging together has come along by stealth?"

In response Councillor Gowrley stated:

“At my request, and that of Councillor Jenkins, the Chief Executive has reviewed our existing partnership arrangements between Mid Suffolk and Babergh.

The Chief Executive is recommending that the existing two Councils are dissolved and a new single council is created for our area in order to ensure that we remain ‘fit for purpose’ for the future.

Clearly this is not a final decision that either Cabinet can make without comprehensive public engagement and a detailed Business Case. Such work is not something that either council would do however unless the Cabinets first believe that there is some merit in the Chief Executive’s recommendation.

That is therefore what we are doing – simply ‘provisionally endorsing’ the concept in order to enable that further work to be carried out.

We are not today deciding to become one council. After such public engagement and having seen a detailed a Business Case, if both Cabinets still believe that the approach has merit, then I anticipate that this would first be considered by both Scrutiny Committees and Councils.

Councillor Gowrley then moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Horn.

Councillor Stringer brought up a point of order as to why the recommendations were being proposed and seconded before debate. The Monitoring Officer, Emily Yule, responded by explaining this was standard process.

Councillor Stringer questioned as to why the Chief Executive stated we were living in a “post devolution world” even though devolution had not happened. In response the Chief Executive explained he meant it was a post devolution discussion.

Concern was expressed as to why a business case had not been submitted as well as the amount of public consultations already taking place. In response Councillor Gowrley explained the Chief Executive had outlined reasons but was happy to amend the recommendation so it included as 2.1b:

“Subject to the outcome of public engagement a draft (DCLG compliant) business case for the dissolution of BMSDC’s and creation of a new single district council for the area could be considered by each Council.”

This amendment was moved by Councillor Gowrley and seconded by Councillor Horn.

The Chairman then invited questions from Councillors Welham, Mansel, Ekpenyong, Marchant and Eburne, to which Cabinet members responded in relation to the timing of the decision, the high level financial aspect of the proposal and the cost of public consultation and the lack of business case. The first step would be to conduct public

consultation, there was no control over the Boundary Committee timing and that the Business Case would be developed at the same time as the consultation. A formal decision would then be made from the Business Case which would go before Overview and Scrutiny Committee as well as Full Council. The Chief Executive also explained a comparison had been completed with Suffolk Coastal in respect of a similar exercise and their telephone poll cost had come to around £20,000.

By 8 votes to 1:

RESOLUTION 1

That the approach of formally dissolving the two district councils; and creating a new larger District Council be provisionally endorsed.

RESOLUTION 2

That the council's utilise the Transformation Funding to jointly conduct stakeholder, public and staff engagement during Autumn 2017.

RESOLUTION 3

That subject to the outcome of the public engagement a draft (DCLG compliant) business case for the dissolution of BMSDC's and creation of a new single district council for the area could be considered by each Council.

35 MCA/17/18 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2017/18 - QUARTER 1

Councillor Whitehead, the Cabinet Member for Finance introduced report MCA/17/18 and moved the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Brewster.

Councillor Stringer questioned favourable variance and whether income was being lost. In response Councillor Whitehead, with the help from Officers, explained the report showed in year monitoring which were not in relation to the performance in service.

The Chairman allowed Councillor Eburne to ask a question in relation to the variances shown for staff and her concern regarding some departments being extremely short staffed. The Chief Executive recognised there were some areas i.e. in planning where there were staff concerns.

RESOLUTION 1

That the potential or likely variations in relation to the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme compared to the Budget be noted.

RESOLUTION 2

That, subject to any further budget variations that arise during the rest of the financial year, the transfer of £1.459m to the Transformation Fund, referred to in

Section 11.8 of the report, be noted.

RESOLUTION 3

That the revised 2017/18 Capital Programme referred to in Appendix B and section 11.14 be approved.

36 **MCA/17/19 NEW ANGLIA ECONOMIC STRATEGY (2017 TO 2036)**

Councillor Brewster, the Cabinet Member for Economy, introduced report MCA/17/19 and moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Horn.

Councillor Stringer flagged up the document stated both Cambridge and Bury St Edmunds were well connected by rail which he did not believe to be correct.

The Chairman allowed Councillor Eburne to ask a question who flagged up the omission of the Gender Pay gap issue. Councillor Gowrley agreed this would be included in the local strategy.

Although Cabinet Members felt it was an excellent and detailed plan, they were disappointed over the lack of acknowledgement of international businesses operating within the district and the lack of aspiration in the Executive Summary and hoped the housing target would meet need in a realistic and sensible way. In this regard it was also hoped transport links and demand would be sustainable.

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION 1

That the New Anglia Economic Strategy, attached as Appendix A, be endorsed by Mid Suffolk District Council.

RESOLUTION 2

That the information within this report regarding the forthcoming strategies for Economy, Housing and Infrastructure, in support of the Suffolk Framework for Growth, be noted.

37 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)**

By 8 votes to 0 with 1 abstention

RESOLUTION

That under section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act in the paragraphs registered against the item.

Item

Schedule 12A Reason

<i>MCa/17/20</i>	3
<i>MCa/17/21</i>	3
<i>MCa/17/22</i>	3

38 **MCA/17/20 INVESTMENT AND COMMERCIAL DELIVERY - A NEW DELIVERY MODEL**

The minute relating to the above mentioned item was excluded from the public record. A summary of the Minute made by the Proper Officer in accordance with sub-section 2 of Section 100(c) of the Local Government Act 1972 was set out below:

The Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments, Councillor Gowrley, introduced report MCa/17/20 and moved the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Horn.

Cabinet accepted the recommendations contained in the report together with a minor amendment proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Councillor Horn.

39 **MCA/17/21 LAND ACQUISITION - BUSINESS CASE**

The minute relating to the above mentioned item was excluded from the public record. A summary of the Minute made by the Proper Officer in accordance with sub-section 2 of Section 100(c) of the Local Government Act 1972 was set out below:

The Chairman, Councillor Gowrley, introduced report MCa/17/21 and moved the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Whitehead.

Cabinet accepted the recommendations contained in the report.

40 **MCA/17/22 MUTUAL LAND TRANSACTION**

The minute relating to the above mentioned item was excluded from the public record. A summary of the Minute made by the Proper Officer in accordance with sub-section 2 of Section 100(c) of the Local Government Act 1972 was set out below:

The Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments, Councillor Gowrley, introduced report MCa/17/22 and moved the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Brewster.

Cabinet accepted the recommendations contained in the report together with a minor amendment proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Councillor Brewster.

41 **MCA/17/16 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

The report was noted.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 12:56pm

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Chairman