

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BABERGH CABINET HELD IN ELISABETH ROOM, ENDEAVOUR HOUSE, RUSSELL ROAD, IPSWICH ON THURSDAY, 18 JANUARY 2018 AT 5:30PM

**PRESENT:** John Ward - Chairman

Jan Osborne  
Lee Parker

Tina Campbell  
Peter Patrick

**In attendance:**

Councillor Clive Arthey  
Councillor Tony Bavington  
Councillor John Hinton

Chief Executive (AC)  
HRA Accountant (TA)  
Corporate Manager – Finance (ME)  
Assistant Director – Housing (GF)  
Corporate Business Co-ordinator (SM – notes)  
Interim Strategic Director (KN)  
Assistant Director – Finance (KS)  
Strategic Director (JS)  
Assistant Director – Law and Governance (EY)

Councillor Ward, gave a brief introduction as his first meeting as Leader. He explained Councillor Ridley had taken on the Portfolio for Assets and Investments. For the interim Councillor Maybury would take on the Portfolio for Communications on a part time basis until a permanent member could be appointed and he was also looking to make an appointment to the Portfolio for Organisational Delivery. He hoped to make an appointment in next two to three days.

77 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Maybury and Ridley.

78 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

There were none.

79 BCA/17/40 - TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2017

79.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2017 were confirmed as a correct record subject to the following amendment to minute number 74.6 by adding in the following comment:

79.2 “Councillor Bavington wished it noted there were two paragraphs within report BCa/17/37 which he objected to. The first was the statement in 10.1 which he felt referred to the motion being a Labour party stunt which was incorrect and the other, paragraph 11, were the options given as, in his view, they were not options at all, they merely stated whether to pursue the motion put or not.”

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

None received.

81 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS

There were none.

82 MATTERS REFERRED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OR JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES

No matters had been referred by either the Overview and Scrutiny or Joint Audit and Standards Committees.

83 BCA/17/41 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST

83.1 The Forthcoming Decisions List was noted and the following comments made:

- BMS Invest – to be updated to Councillor Ward as the Cabinet Member.
- Public Realm – noted the Task Group looked at the contract element only and not whether any areas could be transferred to Parish Councils. It was noted this would be the next step.
- The Provision of Homelessness Accommodation in Stowmarket – why was Councillor Osborne listed? This was because it could provide accommodation for residents in both Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council areas.
- The number of confidential items listed – further information was required in order to make the list more transparent. More detail would be provided in the future.
- Why Mid Suffolk District Council reports were shown on the list? It was understood this was to provide visibility and greater understanding across both districts.

84 BCA/17/42 DRAFT JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND 2018/19 BUDGET

84.1 Councillor Patrick, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance, introduced report BCa/17/42 and moved the recommendation, with the addition in 2.9 of the words “subject to further consideration at the February Cabinet meeting for recommendation to Council”. This was seconded by Councillor Osborne.

84.2 Members noted the following:

- There had been an omission in minimum revenue provision – ie PV Panel costs had not been included.
- In paragraph 12.5 it was clarified the additional £546k would be split over the next four years.
- It was planned to build and acquire a total of 210 homes for the Council's housing stock. Some members raised the point if you did not build houses the actual housing stock would not increase.
- Local Members were to be involved in the assessment of the use of underutilised space in relation to garage sites, severed gardens and open spaces.
- Some Members asked whether the Joint Housing Board could be allocated a budget for repairs and maintenance in order to further tenant involvement.
- The footnote at the bottom of the HRA Business Plan on page 36 gave an explanation into the drop of funds. This was due to a predicted additional payment on the loan.
- It was noted on page 46, Organisational Development, the net expenditure figure related to employee costs.

84.3 After a lengthy discussion the following amendments were **AGREED** and would be applied to the report before the final version was tabled at the February Cabinet meeting:-

- Further explanation would be given in terms of Babergh District Council's liability for the South Suffolk Leisure Contract
- There would be a new description of the Transformation fund indicating specific purposes. It was felt this would be an opportune moment to assess projects.
- The Appendices would be updated.
- The graphs on page 63 would be updated, showing New Homes. On page 78, three different scenarios were shown, based on growth assumptions. The graph on page 63 would show the worst case scenario. Some Members wished to see all three different scenarios shown in graph form as easier to read. It was thought it would be more prudent to use the smaller figure in graph form as the Government had changed the goal posts in the past.

By an unanimous vote

84.4 **It was RESOLVED:-**

- 1.1 That the draft Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Budget proposals set out in the report be endorsed, subject to further consideration at the February meeting for recommendation to Council.
- 1.2 That the final General Fund Budget for 2018/19 be based on an increase to Council Tax of £5 per annum (10p per week) for a Band D property, which is equivalent to 3.25%, to support the Council's overall financial position, which will be considered further at the February Cabinet meeting.

- 1.3 That the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Investment Strategy 2018/19 to 2022/23 and draft HRA Budget for 2018/19 be agreed, subject to further consideration at the February Cabinet meeting.
- 1.4 That the mandatory decrease of 1% in Council House rents, equivalent to an average rent reduction of £0.90 a week as required by the Welfare Reform and Work Act be implemented.
- 1.5 Sheltered Housing Supported people cost of £3 per week to be removed. Service charges to be increased by £5 per week for each scheme (set at £4 cap per week last year) meaning a net increase of £2 per week to tenants. This will reduce the subsidy by £30k.
- 1.6 Sheltered Housing utility charges are kept at the same level.
- 1.7 That in principle, Right to Buy receipts should be retained to enable continued development and acquisition of new council dwellings.
- 1.8 That garage rents are kept at the same level.
- 1.9 That the revised HRA Business Plan in Appendix D be noted.
- 1.10 That the proposed Capital Programme in Appendix C be agreed, subject to further consideration at the February Cabinet meeting for recommendation to Council.
- 1.11 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Budget will be subject to final determination by Cabinet and Council in February 2018.

**Reason for Decisions:** To ensure that Members were aware of the draft budget proposals for 2018/19 and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:** The options considered were as detailed in the report.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 6:45pm.

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Chair (date)