

## MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK COUNCIL** held in the King Edmund Chamber - Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Thursday, 22 February 2018

### PRESENT:

Councillor:           Derrick Haley (Chairman)  
                          John Levantis (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:	Roy Barker	Gerard Brewster
	Michael Burke	David Burn
	James Caston	Rachel Eburne
	Paul Ekpenyong	John Field
	Julie Flatman	Jessica Fleming
	Kathie Guthrie	Lavinia Haddingham
	Matthew Hicks	Glen Horn
	Diana Kearsley	Anne Killett
	Wendy Marchant	John Matthissen
	Lesley Mayes	Suzie Morley
	Dave Muller	Mike Norris
	Derek Osborne	Penny Otton
	Timothy Passmore	Jane Storey
	Andrew Stringer	Keith Welham
	Kevin Welsby	John Whitehead
	David Whybrow	

### 116    **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

116.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gowrley, Councillor Gibson-Harries, Councillor Green, Councillor Humphreys, Councillor Mansel and Councillor Wilshaw.

### 117    **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS BY MEMBERS**

117.1 The Monitoring Officer under her delegated authority had granted dispensations to all members in respect of Item 12, MC/17/15 Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy and 2018/19 Budget.

### 118    **MC/17/31 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 DECEMBER 2017**

#### **It was Resolved: -**

118.1 That subject to the third paragraph of the supplementary question reading that Councillor Eburne had looked at the website and a policy was not stated but that it just gave an application form and the spelling of Councillor Killett's name being amended, the Minutes be approved as a true record.

**119 MC/17/32 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

119.1 The Chairman's report was noted.

**120 MC/17/33 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

120.1 In the absence of the Leader, Councillor Whitehead presented the Leaders report and added an update relating to Item 2 in the report with regards to the purchase in Stowmarket, informing Council that the contracts had now been exchanged on the property with completion being anticipated in mid-March. Councillor Whitehead then invited the Chief Executive to update Council on the Boundary Commission Review.

120.2 The Chief Executive informed Council that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England was due to publish its final recommendations for Babergh and Mid Suffolk boundary reviews on 6<sup>th</sup> February. However, the Council had been advised that the Commission had delayed publication of its final recommendations as they were currently examining the electorate data and forecasts that underpin all of the recommendations and considering the suggested amendments to the recommendations arising from the consultation. Officers have been working with the Boundary Commission to verify the electorate forecasts and provide additional clarity around the expected growth areas. Following his meeting with the Boundary Commission this week the Chief Executive went on to say that a further announcement was due shortly regarding an additional 8 week public consultation. This information would be circulated as soon as it was received.

120.3 Commenting further the Chief Executive referred to Item 3 in the Leaders report in respect of Comres and informed Council that they would all be receiving an invitation to a presentation from Comres in the Council Chamber on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 at 5.30pm.

120.4 Councillor Eburne added that following the original announcement which had been due on the 6<sup>th</sup> February, Councillor Eburne had phoned the Boundary Commission on the 7<sup>th</sup> February to discuss some concerns she had relating to her wards and had been informed by the Commission that they were working with the Council to correct some anomalies and the new timetable will result in potential new recommendations to be published on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

120.5 In response the Chief Executive stated Councillor Eburne probably had more up to date information than he had. All he could say that there would be an additional 8 week public consultation and then it would go through the normal processes.

120.6 Councillor Marchant asked if there was any update on the possibility of the compulsory purchase of the ex-showroom in Needham Market High Street?

- 120.7 In response Councillor Whitehead told Council that due to the short notice of the Leaders absence because of an unexpected emergency he had not been able to update Councillor Whitehead fully before the meeting, however as soon as any information was known he would update Council accordingly.
- 120.8 Councillor Welham asked what had the Council planned to support Suffolk Day and also what support the Council were giving to Stowmarket Town Council and Suffolk Chamber of Commerce with regard to the business exhibition in Stowmarket?
- 120.9 In response Councillor Whitehead stated that he certainly hoped that councillors and the Council would be participating in Suffolk Day although he had no further details he could give. He then invited Councillor Brewster to respond to the question relating to the business exhibition.
- 120.10 Councillor Brewster added that the Council had been involved very early on with the Chamber with regard to the organisation of the exhibition and would be sponsoring vouchers for the car parking for the trade stalls, also the Economic Team would be present at the exhibition to promote the Council's open for business strategies.

## **121 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PROCEDURE RULE**

- 121.1 The Council noted that one petition had been received for Paddock House, signed by 53 valid signatures. The petition had requested that there was due public consultation and discussion before any commercial development was considered. In response the Council had agreed through the Assets and Investments Team to hold a consultation event on Tuesday 27 February 2018 specifically for Paddock House.

## **122 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC**

- 122.1 There were no questions received by the public.

## **123 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

- 123.1 The following questions were received in accordance with Council procedure Rule 12 of the Constitution:-

### **Question 1**

#### **Councillor Eburne to Councillor Nick Gowrley (answered by Councillor Whitehead in Councillor Gowrley's absence)**

1. In December 2014, a £3.35 million transformation challenge award was provided by Government to Suffolk. How has this been spent across Suffolk, what amount spent in Mid Suffolk and what on?

**Response:**

**Thank you for your question. Just under £2.5m has been spent or committed to date. The majority of this funding has been directed to the 'Suffolk System' as a whole; and so Mid Suffolk has been an equal beneficiary. In answer to both this question and your next question I will email you the tables which detail exactly how these funds have been allocated.**

**Supplementary Question**

Can all of those figures be sent out to all Members?

**Response:**

**Yes I am committed to send the figures out on behalf of Councillor Gowrley.**

**Question 2**

**Councillor Eburne to Councillor Nick Gowrley**

1. As Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group has access to funding from Government and also from business rates pooling, how much funding is currently held as at 31 December 2017; how is this funding accounted for; and where is this reported to Mid Suffolk District councillors?

**Response:**

**As a result of the decision made across Suffolk, since 2013/14 our Councils have taken a pooling approach to Business Rates, which has enabled us to retain several million pounds within Suffolk rather than losing it back to Government.**

**As at 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018, when the position was last reported to the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders, there is £2.1m available to be allocated by the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders. As I mentioned previously I will ensure that the tables for both the transformation challenge award funding and the business rate pool be circulated to all Councillors.**

**In addition the Leaders decided at their meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018 that a review of Suffolk Public Sector Leaders governance arrangements should be carried out. The outcome of this review is likely to also improve the mechanisms for reporting discussions and decisions of the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders to Mid Suffolk.**

### **Supplementary Question**

Councillor Eburne asked if a business rates pooling briefing for all councillors could be held including the details about both business rates and how the Suffolk Public Sectors Leaders works, she also sought clarification from Councillor Passmore as to when the next meeting of the Suffolk Public Sectors Leaders would be?

### **Response**

**Councillor Passmore in response stated that the Group's TOR had changed over the last couple of year because of the Transformation Challenge Award and the Pooled Business Rates Fund, there was absolutely no reason why the table of grant funding shouldn't be published and that he agreed it should be much more open and transparent.**

### **Question 3**

#### **Councillor Matthissen to Councillor Wilshaw**

1. How many private householders have we helped to downsize, and at what cost?
2. Will you respond to the Commons Communities and Local Government Committee call (report on Housing for Older People published 9/2/18) to all local councils to employ a handyman to assist elderly residents?

**Response:- (In the absence of Councillor Wilshaw Councillor Whitehead gave the response)**

**To your first question we do not currently provide any assistance to help private householders downsize and to the second the report published by the Commons Communities and Local Government Committee makes a suggestion that the coverage of Home Improvement Agencies (HIA) should be expanded so there is access to at least one HIA with a handyperson service in each local authority area.**

**In our district we already have an Home Improvement Agency namely Orbit East Care & Repair that already provide a chargeable handy man service to everyone over the age of 60, or disabled or vulnerable. It can help with minor repairs and odd jobs around the home. We therefore see no current business case to employ our own handyman to assist elderly residents.**

#### **Question 4**

##### **Councillor Matthissen to Councillor Whybrow**

Will you publish a new timetable for Joint Local Plan production to adoption?  
Why have delays occurred?

##### **Response:-**

**The Council will publish a new Local Development Scheme in April with a revised timetable for Joint Local Plan production through to adoption.**

**The current Local Development Scheme identified preparation of the draft Local Plan and consultation in the summer of 2017. Public consultation did take place in the summer of 2017 commencing on 21<sup>st</sup> August for a period of twelve weeks to 10<sup>th</sup> November.**

**The Councils' public consultation was effective at this first stage of the Local Plan preparation and resulted in 13,960 comments from 1,370 respondents as reported at the recent Member training event on 8<sup>th</sup> February. This was an unexpected level of response that presents challenges which the team are working through. The timetable agreed last summer did not have sufficient time allocated to enable officers to satisfactorily address the quantum of consultation responses received. However, this level of response can only be seen as positive and a sign of good community engagement. It will aid production of a robust and mature new Joint Local Plan**

**The timetable for the plan is important but it is equally important that we listen to our communities and I am confident that Officers are working hard to achieve the right balance.**

**Member briefings are arranged for March and April to develop the next draft of the Local Plan with further public consultation expected in the summer of 2018.**

#### **Supplementary Question**

Are you not willing to hazard a date about when we'll get to adoption then?

##### **Response**

**A revised scheme timetable will be published in April, the effect of this slippage will enable the councils to produce a draft submission plan that takes into account the revised National Planning Policy Framework and the governments new housing needs figures for the Councils. However the timing of those may actually alter the timing of any proposed timetable so hence it is difficult to nail down a timetable.**

A further regulation 18 consultation is hoped to be taking place in the summer with preferred site allocations to meet any increased housing requirements before proceeding to a draft submission plan shortly thereafter. That would result if it were to take place without any further disruption in submission of a joint Local Plan to Government in March 2019 for an examination in public some 9 months later than originally planned.

#### **Question 5**

**Councillor John Matthissen to Councillor Whitehead**

In what way is the Council's adopted Investment Strategy consistent with the Government's **STATUTORY GUIDANCE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/678866/Guidance\\_on\\_local\\_government\\_investments.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/678866/Guidance_on_local_government_investments.pdf)

which takes effect on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2018? In particular with reference to paragraphs 34-37

#### **Response**

Thank you for your question. If you refer to paragraph 12 of the guidance, to which you kindly sent me the link, you will see that it says:

**“Strategies presented to Council or equivalent before 1 April 2018 but relating to 2018-19 and future financial years do not need to include all of the additional disclosures required by this edition of the guidance should it not prove practical or cost effective to do so. If a local authority chooses not to include the new disclosures in its 2018-19 Strategy, it must include the disclosures in full in the first Strategy presented to full Council or equivalent after 1 April 2018.”**

**Due to the late notification of this guidance in our Budget process and approval of our Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19, it has not proven practical to include this information, but I will ensure that the Council complies with the disclosure requirements in the 2019/20 Strategy.**

## **124 MC/17/34 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT**

124.1 Councillor Eburne introduced her report and informed Council that the Committee had an interesting meeting the week before where the five year land supply and waste services had been scrutinised. She then invited questions from members.

**It was Resolved: -**

**That the report be noted.**

**125 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET AND COMMITTEES**

**126 JOINT TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018/19 (PAPER MCA/17/41 - CABINET - 5 FEBRUARY 2018)**

- 126.1 Councillor Whitehead introduced the report and informed Council that the report had been scrutinised by the Audit and Standards Committee prior to the presentation of the report to Cabinet and then to full Council. He added that he felt that the level of scrutiny undertaken underlined the importance of the report to the Council's operations and financial wellbeing.
- 126.2 Councillor Barker seconded the report and reserved the right to speak.
- 126.3 Councillor Stringer drew attention to page 29 of the report relating to the existing investment and debt portfolio holder position and said given that by the time the Minutes are published for this meeting the government will insist that Council's publish all borrowing from the Public Loans Board and where it goes including in CIFCO, why has the Council not taken that action already?
- 126.4 In response Councillor Whitehead stated that the new guidance had been announced very late in both the production of the report and the budget setting process and for this reason and the cost point of view it had not been actioned for this year.
- 126.4 The Section 151 Officer added that the Council would be examining the guidance in preparing the 19/20 Treasury Management Strategy to ensure the Council was compliant going forward.
- 126.5 Councillor Stringer then asked with the guidance from the Local Government Association it states that before you set a balance budget you should check all your significant risks, why is the significant risk register not in front of the Council when setting the budget that might need to address some of those risks.
- 126.6 Councillor Whitehead replied that the Corporate Manager for that area kept them under constant review, however he also said that he understood the thrust of the question and that it would take a long answer in terms of how the Council approached all of its investment strategies and all of the various risks, but in each case professional advice had been taken and every case the risk scenarios had been looked at and mitigations had been put in place.

**It was Resolved:-**

- (i) That the following be approved:**
- (a) The Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19, including the Annual Investment Strategy as set out in Appendix A of the report**

- (b) The Treasury Management Policy Statement set out in Appendix B of the report.**
  - (c) The Treasury Management Indicators set out in Appendix E of the report.**
  - (d) The Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Statement set out in Appendices F and G of the report.**
- (ii) That the key factors and information relating to and affecting treasury management activities set out in Appendices C, D and H of the report be noted.**

**127 MC/17/35 JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND 2018/19 BUDGET**

- 127.1 Councillor Whitehead introduced the report and informed Council that it was now in a position where it had a clear vision of not only next years budget but also a clearer view of how the Council's finances should look over the four terms of the Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy. He was pleased to report that although the Council faced a number of challenges from changing funding landscapes the Strategy responded to those challenges.
- 127.2 Continuing further he went on to say that Central Government continued to reduce core funding through the revenue support grant as part of its ongoing deficit reduction strategy. Going forward the Council's core funding was now predominantly business rates and council tax income and together they covered well over 80% of the Council's net service cost. Along with other Suffolk councils the Council had been selected to pilot the 100% business rate retention scheme. The Council anticipated receiving a one -off benefit from this of £1m however this had not been included within the figures in the report as it had been placed in an earmarked reserve where the activities from this had still to be agreed.
- 127.3 Councillor Whitehead informed Council that the future funding of New Homes Bonus remained uncertain. This funding stream had been a major element behind Mid Suffolk's ability to build up such a robust level of reserves. Since it was introduced in 11/12 the Council has received £11,000,000 in new homes bonus the bulk of which has been transferred to reserves rather than rely on core funding. The graph on page 74 of the papers illustrated that the new homes bonus peaked in 2016/17 and was now in decline. The reduction in amounts given from 6 years, first to 5 and then to 4 along with an imposed 40.4% growth baseline both contribute to this fall in new homes bonus income. Since 2015/16 the Council has had to utilise a part of the new homes bonus to balance the budget. Now in the Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy the Council has looked at 3 scenarios to determine the amount of new homes bonus it receives. The first, the minimum level of new homes bonus. Secondly, one based on a 5-year average of new homes built, and thirdly one based on projected completions. Now intuitively Councillor Whitehead felt that projected completions should prove to be the most realistic assumption to use.

And this reflected the Council going into a relatively modest budget deficit position in 2021/22. With earmarked reserves forecast to fall to 10,584,000 by the end of 2018 according to attachment 5 on page 144 of the report.

- 127.4 Commenting further Councillor Whitehead said this figure was after putting significant money aside from the transformation fund for the Regal Theatre improvement project. That was by far the major driver behind the year on year fall. He also explained to all members that the transformation fund was being renamed to the Growth and Efficiency Fund effective from 01 April 2018 as many of the Council's transformation activities which were started from 2011 were now completed. The new name not only explained where the funding had come from i.e. growth that produced new homes bonus, additional planning income, along with many operating efficiencies that have produced out turns well ahead of those budgeted and going forward the Council can use this fund to create further growth or improved efficiencies.
- 127.5 Councillor Whitehead also advised Council that following a meeting with the Green Party their various suggestions were discussed with the Conservative Group and he was pleased to say that they had been incorporated into the 18/19 budget initiatives to increase the uptake of disability grants, action on stalled planning sites and the tree at birth concept as these have cross party consensus.
- 127.6 Councillor Whitehead also stated that the general fund budget position for 2018 had resulted in a very modest increase in council tax. For a band D property, it would increase by 81p a year which is 1.5p a week and that would equate to a 0.5% increase.
- 127.7 Turning to the Housing Revenue Account, Councillor Whitehead said that when he had introduced last year's budget at full council he had said that there was no real gloss act put on the position of the HRA and the Council faced medium-term challenges. That conclusion was driven primarily by the effect of the 1% annual reduction in council house rents. The Council has since been able to update the HRA business plan to reflect the impact of increases in rent from 2021 by CPI plus 1%. This had mitigated by £9,500,000 the effect of the earlier rent reductions. However, the mandatory 1% reduction remained in place for 18/19 and was therefore included in the budget recommendations. The Council was nearing the completion of the housing stock condition survey and had built £1,100 contingency per property into the 18/19 budget. The historically subsidised sheltered service charges of £100,000 a year were unsustainable in the longer term, so the Council was proposing changes which overall would result in a net increase of £2 per week in 18/19 that being half of last year's increase. The Council were proposing no changes to sheltered housing utility charges and were maintaining garage rents at current levels. The capital programme was set out in appendix D of the report for both general fund and HRA. as well as showing the detailed proposals year by year, it also shows how the Council intended to finance the capital programme.

The paper also sets out the council tax collected on behalf of the other authorities i.e. the County, Police, and a multitude of parish councils within Mid Suffolk including the late submission from Syleham Parish of their precept that had been included in the papers.

- 127.8 Finally Councillor Whitehead expressed his heart felt appreciation for all the hard work of the finance team in preparing the budget.
- 127.9 Councillor Whybrow seconded the recommendations and reserved the right to speak.
- 127.10 On the proposal of Councillor Otton and seconded by Councillor Field the following amendment was tabled:-
- a. Invest 50k in a feasibility study covering the introduction of a separate food waste collection aimed at processing that element of the waste stream by anaerobic digestion as the Energy from Waste Plant is close to capacity. The free capacity could then be used to deal with local commercial waste at a profit.
  - b. £50k to be set aside for a referendum on merger to ensure that the current Mid Suffolk opinion is polled transparently and equally to that of Babergh
  - c. Support the 0.5% rise in Council tax
  - d. Work with SCC to use police/firestations for emergency homeless provision
  - e. Introduce a radical approach for getting disabled grants dealt with, using £40k that is currently unspent to do so.
  - f. Re-instate £30k for supported living. It is not reasonable to introduce a £2 per week increase in costs for the residents of supported housing while keeping the rise to council tax payers to £0.015per week.
  - g. Reduce the £200K rent loss on council homes by £100k by targeting delays in the assessment, authorisation, materials procurement and scheduling of work processes possibly using a local contractor to deal with any backlog.
  - h. Make a robust approach to Government to ensure that Mid Suffolk benefits from the lifting of the Cap on HRA borrowing.
  - i. Take advantage of the raised cap to Increase borrowing by £20million to deliver 200 new affordable homes using the Transformation Fund to fund interest until building is complete and rent revenue increases.
  - j. Investigate the possibility of MSDSC setting up a Community Land Trust to build more social and affordable homes thus avoiding right to buy
  - k. Re-establish the income stream from building control by setting up a stand-alone company to provide this service operating from premises nearer to its clients.
- 127.11 Councillor Otton presented the Motion to Council and told members that the reasons for the amendment was that their Group felt that waste was an important area and many other councils had a food waste recycling scheme and they believed that Mid Suffolk and Suffolk should do the same.

She went on to say that £50k should also be set aside for a referendum for the residents of Mid Suffolk to have the opportunity to vote on the proposed merger with Babergh Council as it seem illogical and undemocratic if Babergh were given the chance to have their say but Mid Suffolk residents were not. Commenting further she said that this was an important decision which must not be left to officers and a few Council leaders to make.

- 127.12 Councillor Otton stated that her Group were prepared to support the 0.5% increase in Council tax and she asked the Council to support her request to investigate the possibility of using manned fire stations as emergency provision for rough sleepers when the temperatures dropped below zero, she had spoken with the Chief Fire officer and was investigating the scheme in Nottingham.
- 127.13 Commenting further Councillor Otton raised the issue of disabled facilities grants and the long waiting list many of them awaiting discharge from hospital therefore exacerbating the problem of bed blocking. She therefore proposed to use the £40k that was not spent to do this.
- 127.14 She went on to say that she could not support the introduction of a £2 a week increase for those people in sheltered housing when the rise to council tax payers of all incomes equated to just 15p per week. She also recommended that the loss of income from voids should be reduced by targeting and scheduling work and using local contractors to clear the backlog. Councillor Otton also requested that the Council lobby the government to raise the cap on housing borrowing then the Council could use its healthy transformation fund to fund this borrowing and also investigate the possibility of the council setting up a community land trust to build more homes to replace the void from right to buy.
- 127.15 Councillor Field spoke about the concept of a separate food waste collection service saying that the County may no longer wish to block such an initiative as it now has its EFW plant operational, the cost aspect of this with the need to provide waste freighters which had additional compartments in which food could be collected was not as concerning as previously. Councillor Field went on to say if technology such as an anaerobic digestion the Council could generate methane for commercial use the residue to improve soil fertility, avoid the incinerator gate fee and free up capacity at the EFW to sell to local companies so although clearly there would be a cost associated with this, there would also be benefits.
- 127.16 Councillor Fleming spoke as a Green County Board member representative and said that generally speaking trying to recycle food waste from households did not provide enough benefit to the environment and he would rather focus on reducing the amount of food waste that was generated.
- 127.17 Councillor Hicks added that unfortunately food waste collection only really worked in real urban areas where you could collect a lot in a very short space of time, the cost of separating the waste was just too prohibitive and would be more environmentally more damaging because you would need a

whole new fleet of vehicles travelling around Suffolk.

- 127.18 Councillor Passmore commented on the proposal to use fire stations as emergency provision for rough sleepers stating that there was a lot of provision already available for the homelessness in Ipswich. He also saw problems around using the fire stations due to security, sensitive information, who would supervise them and how would the facilities be available 24/7 and felt that the suggestion was impractical.
- 127.19 Councillor Barker said that he could not support the proposal for food waste and felt that money should be spent on changing people's behaviour on buying food and not using food past its sell by date.
- 127.20 Councillor Matthiessen stated that he was in support of the amendment especially the proposal to set aside money for a referendum, lobbying the Government to lift the cap on housing borrowing and the proposal to set up a community land trust.
- 127.21 Councillor Norris also stated that he supported the proposal to put aside £50k for a referendum for Mid Suffolk.
- 127.22 Councillor Whybrow felt that the amendment had been brought forward at the eleventh hour and suggested that earlier discussion and engagement would have yielded better outcomes.
- 127.23 Councillor Whitehead thanked Councillor Otton for her support of the proposed council tax rise. Commenting further he could not support the request for a referendum as he felt that the Comres results would illustrate that there was not a strong case for a referendum. With regard to the disabled facilities grant he felt that an increase in staffing was the Chief Executive's prerogative, so rather than being specific the Administration had requested that they would like to see better spending of the disabled grants and take whatever steps were needed to improve the process. Commenting further he went on to say with regard to the £2 increase in sheltered housing fees between 60% and 70% of the people affected are on housing benefit and therefore personally won't be paying this. In terms of the voids Councillor Whitehead stated that the Administration were very keen to see these voids reduced and there was a current ongoing project to get these reduced.
- 127.24 Councillor Otton in her response said that she had forwarded her proposals to Councillor Gowrley and Councillor Whitehead several weeks ago and had no response. With regards to the use of fire stations for rough sleepers this was a model that had been introduced in other places such as Manchester and Nottingham and was working extremely well with the help of the Red Cross. As for the increase of £2 for those in sheltered accommodation because they are on benefits, this is a major issue as the government policy was to reduce benefits, she hoped the Council would continue to lobby the government to lift the cap on the HRA borrowing and felt very disappointed that Suffolk would not be following other counties across the country to

recycle food waste. She thanked members who had supported the amendment.

127.25 The amendment was **PUT** to the meeting and **LOST**.

127.26 In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.3 the vote was recorded as follows:-.

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstention</b>
<b>Cllr Eburne</b>	<b>Cllr Barker</b>	
<b>Cllr Field</b>	<b>Cllr Brewster</b>	
<b>Cllr Killett</b>	<b>Cllr Burke</b>	
<b>Cllr Marchant</b>	<b>Cllr Burn</b>	
<b>Cllr Matthissen</b>	<b>Cllr Caston</b>	
<b>Cllr Norris</b>	<b>Cllr Ekpenyong</b>	
<b>Cllr Otton</b>	<b>Cllr Flatman</b>	
<b>Cllr Stringer</b>	<b>Cllr Fleming</b>	
<b>Cllr Welham</b>	<b>Cllr Guthrie</b>	
	<b>Cllr Hadingham</b>	
	<b>Cllr Haley</b>	
	<b>Cllr Hicks</b>	
	<b>Cllr Horn</b>	
	<b>Cllr Kearsley</b>	
	<b>Cllr Levantis</b>	
	<b>Cllr Mayes</b>	
	<b>Cllr Morley</b>	
	<b>Cllr Muller</b>	
	<b>Cllr Osborne</b>	
	<b>Cllr Passmore</b>	
	<b>Cllr Storey</b>	
	<b>Cllr Welsby</b>	
	<b>Cllr Whitehead</b>	
	<b>Cllr Whybrow</b>	
<b>Total 9</b>	<b>Total 24</b>	<b>0</b>

127.27 The Chairman announced that the Motion was lost and returned to debate the substantive motion.

127.28 Councillor Matthiessen asked if there was a response regarding the lobbying of the MH DCLG with regards to lifting the HRA cap?

127.29 Councillor Eburne asked if the Council was confident that BMBS would break even in the timescale predicted and sought clarification on what projected completions actually meant with regards to the five- year land supply?

- 127.30 In response Councillor Whitehead stated that the Business Case was based on three scenarios:- the worst, best and middle case and the budget and performance was kept under constant review. The Assistant Director for Housing added that Overview and Scrutiny would be reviewing the service in April and a revised business plan and financial forecast would be going to Cabinet in April or May. A lot of work had been done in revising the business plan where originally the forecast had predicted a surplus within year 5 of the scheme, however this was looking increasingly likely that a surplus would not be seen until year 6 but Obviously this would be greatly scrutinised in the forthcoming weeks and months.
- 127.31 In response to the questions relating to projected completions Councillor Whitehead stated that he would need to go back to the Strategic Planning team to gain an exact definition of what numbers and assumptions they have used.
- 127.32 Councillor Eburne asked if it would be possible to have the figures on which the graph was based?
- 127.33 Councillor Whitehead in response stated that he would be happy to provide the figures and would be very disappointed if those figures couldn't be robustly supported.
- 127.34 Councillor Stringer stated that for the first time in his Groups history they had not produced an alternative budget however they had welcomed the opportunity to sit down with the Administration and go through some of the reasoning behind the budget decisions, it was for this reason on balance that his Group would be voting for the recommendations purely because he felt that the Administration had listened .
- 127.35 Councillor Whitehead in his summing up thanked Councillor Stringer for his comments he also went on to say that in terms of the budget the recommendations would be taken as a whole and a recorded vote would be undertaken.
- 127.36 The recommendations were **PUT** to the meeting and **CARRIED**.
- 127.37 In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.3 the vote was recorded as follows:-.

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstention</b>
<b>Cllr Barker</b>	<b>Cllr Field</b>	<b>Cllr Matthissen</b>
<b>Cllr Brewster</b>	<b>Cllr Marchant</b>	
<b>Cllr Burke</b>	<b>Cllr Norris</b>	
<b>Cllr Burn</b>	<b>Cllr Otton</b>	
<b>Cllr Caston</b>		
<b>Cllr Eburne</b>		
<b>Cllr Ekpenyong</b>		
<b>Cllr Flatman</b>		
<b>Cllr Fleming</b>		

Cllr Guthrie		
Cllr Hadingham		
Cllr Haley		
Cllr Hicks		
Cllr Horn		
Cllr Kearsley		
Cllr Killett		
Cllr Levantis		
Cllr Mayes		
Cllr Morley		
Cllr Muller		
Cllr Osborne		
Cllr Passmore		
Cllr Storey		
Cllr Stringer		
Cllr Welham		
Cllr Welsby		
Cllr Whitehead		
Cllr Whybrow		
<b>Total 28</b>	<b>Total 4</b>	<b>1</b>

**It was Resolved:-**

- (i) That the Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Budget proposals set out in the report be approved.**
- (ii) That the final General Fund Budget for 2018/19 be based on a council tax increase of 0.5%, an increase of 81p per annum for a Band D property to support the Council's overall financial position be approved.**
- (iii) That the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Investment Strategy 2018/19 to 2022/23 and HRA Budget for 2018/19 be agreed.**
- (iv) That the mandatory decrease of 1% in Council House rents, equivalent to an average rent reduction of £0.83 a week, as required by the Welfare Reform and Work Act be implemented.**
- (v) That the Sheltered Housing Supported people cost of £3 per week be removed and Service charges 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.**
- (vi) That Sheltered Housing utility charges are kept at the same level.**
- (vii) That in principle, Right to Buy receipts should be retained to enable continued development and acquisition of new council dwellings.**

- (viii) That garage rents are kept at the same level.
- (ix) That the revised HRA Business Plan in Appendix E of the report be noted.
- (x) That the Capital Programme in Appendix D of the report be agreed.
- (xi) That the offer to participate for Mid Suffolk in the Business Rate Pilot for 2018/19 as set out in paragraph 11.9 to 11.10 of the report be accepted.

**128 APPOINTMENTS**

128.1 There were no changes to placings.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 7.19 p.m.

.....

Chairman