



MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

REVISED AGENDA

COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 21 December 2017



COUNCIL	
DATE	Thursday, 21 December 2017
PLACE	King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX
TIME	5.30 pm

Please ask for: Robert Carmichael

Direct Line: 01449 724930

Email: Committees@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

NOTE:

The Council, members of the public and the press may record/film/photograph or broadcast this meeting when the public and press are not lawfully excluded. Any member of the public who attends the meeting and wishes to be filmed should advise the Committee Clerk.

A G E N D A

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1 Apologies for absence	
2 To receive any declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests by Councillors	
3 MC/17/26 Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2017	1 - 10
4 MC/17/27 Chairman's Announcements	11 - 12
5 MC/17/28 Leader's Announcements	13 - 14
6 To receive notification of petitions in accordance with the Council's Procedure Rule	

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, The Chief Executive will report the receipt of any petitions. There can be no debate or comment upon these matters at the Council meeting.

7 Questions by the Public

The Chairmen of Committees to answer any questions from the public of which notice has been given no later than midday three clear working days before the day of the meeting in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.

8 Questions by Councillors

The Chairman of the Council, the Chairman of Committees and Sub-Committees and Portfolio Holders to answer any questions on any matters in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affect the District of which due notice has been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.

9 Motions on Notice

- a** Councillor Penny Otton has given notice of her intention to move the under-mentioned Motion at the meeting:-
Councillor Penny Otton has given notice of her intention to move the under-mentioned Motion at the meeting:-

Suffolk has the ambition to be "the Greenest county", I congratulate the Minister for the Environment, Michael Gove, on his initiative to look at introducing a plastic bottle return scheme. It is a well established fact that plastic is one of the worst pollutants of the environment.

A recent report (available from link below) to the Government by Eunomia showed that a deposit return scheme would lead to savings of between £62,000 and £495,000 for any local authority that introduces it, by reducing the authority's waste handling costs. It would also send a strong message that plastics are not for single use and would significantly cut the amount of plastic ending up in the marine environment, endangering our sea life.

The Council also notes that recycling rates for plastic bottles in Britain stands at 57% - in comparison to over 90% in countries that have a Deposit Return Scheme (e.g. Germany, Norway, Sweden, Denmark)

Suffolk is ranked as the second-best performer out of 32 Waste Disposal Authorities in two tier areas for the recycling of dry-recyclables so we will always welcome any proposals brought forward to further improve our performance.

Therefore we ask the chief executive to write to the minister informing him that this council supports the proposed scheme and that Mid Suffolk council will look favourably upon any pilot proposals and will seek to participate where we believe the pilot would help to improve environmental outcomes and reduce costs in Suffolk.

<http://www.eunomia.co.uk/reports-tools/impacts-of-a-deposit-refund-system-for-one-way-beverage-packaging-on-local-authority-waste-services/>

- b** Councillor David Burn has given notice of his intention to move the under-mentioned Motion at the meeting:-
As Cabinet Member for Environment I should like to propose the following motion at Mid Suffolk District Council's meeting on 21 December 2017:

That this Council signs the Woodland Trust's Charter for Trees, Woods and People in support of the ten principles that the Charter promotes as a basis for harmony and mutual benefit between trees and people.

10	To receive reports from Cabinet Members	15 - 34
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13	Appointments	

Please note that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 25 January 2018 commencing at 5.30 pm

Introduction to Public Meetings

Babergh/Mid Suffolk District Councils are committed to Open Government. The proceedings of this meeting are open to the public, apart from any confidential or exempt items which may have to be considered in the absence of the press and public.

For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact the Governance Officer on: 01449 724930 or Email: Committees@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Domestic Arrangements:

- Toilets are situated opposite the meeting room.
- Cold water is also available outside opposite the room.
- Please switch off all mobile phones or turn them to silent.

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If you hear the alarm:

1. Leave the building immediately via a Fire Exit and make your way to the Assembly Point (Ipswich Town Football Ground).
2. Follow the signs directing you to the Fire Exits at each end of the floor.
3. Do not enter the Atrium (Ground Floor area and walkways). If you are in the Atrium at the time of the Alarm, follow the signs to the nearest Fire Exit.
4. Use the stairs, not the lifts.
5. Do not re-enter the building until told it is safe to do so.

Agenda Item 3

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK COUNCIL** held at the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Thursday, 23 November 2017

PRESENT:

Councillor: Derrick Haley – Chairman

Councillors:	Gerard Brewster	Michael Burke
	David Burn	James Caston
	Rachel Eburne	Paul Ekpenyong
	John Field	Julie Flatman
	Jessica Fleming	Elizabeth Gibson-Harries
	Lavinia Hadingham	Matthew Hicks
	Glen Horn	Barry Humphreys MBE
	Diana Kearsley	Anne Killett
	John Levantis	Sarah Mansel
	Wendy Marchant	John Matthissen
	Suzie Morley	Dave Muller
	Mike Norris	Derek Osborne
	Penny Otton	Timothy Passmore
	Jane Storey	Andrew Stringer
	Keith Welham	Kevin Welsby
	John Whitehead	David Whybrow
	Jill Wilshaw	

In attendance:

Chief Executive
Strategic Director (JS)
Assistant Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Assistant Director – Corporate Resources
Corporate Manager – Democratic Services
Senior Governance Support Officer (LS)

87 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillors Roy Barker, Nick Gowrley, Gary Green, Kathie Guthrie, Esther Jewson and Lesley Mayes.

88 TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

John Field declared a non-pecuniary interest in Paper MC/17/25 as a landowner.

MC/17/21 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 OCTOBER 2017

In response to Councillor Otton who wished to ask a question about the costs of the move out of the Needham Market and Hadleigh offices in relation to works to accommodation at Endeavour House and Gipping Court, the Chairman advised that confirming the accuracy of the minutes did not provide an opportunity for this. The Cabinet Member for Organisational Delivery said to email him with her questions and he would respond to her outside the meeting.

Councillor Eburne queried the wording of Minute No 83, which she considered did not fully reflect the debate, and it was suggested that this could be addressed by the inclusion of additional wording.

RESOLUTION

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2017 be agreed, subject to (a) the inclusion of Councillor Brewster's name in the list of apologies and (b) an amendment to Minute No 83 to reflect more fully the proceedings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

In the absence of the Leader, the Deputy Leader Councillor Whitehead gave a brief update as supplied by Councillor Gowrley, which related mainly to the Public Sector Leaders meeting.

Members queried why no reference had been included about the legal opinion requested by the Babergh Council in relation to the process for making decisions on the proposed merger and were advised that this advice would be obtained in writing and made available to the Members of both Councils.

In response to a question as to why information about staffing costs was not being shared across both Councils, Councillor Whitehead confirmed that a full response to questions about the differences between Babergh's and Mid Suffolk's costs and variances would be supplied outside the meeting. The absence of a Chairman's Announcements paper was commented on, together with the cancellation of the September Council meeting without the Chairman's consent to which Councillor Haley replied that although annoying he considered it a genuine oversight.

Members also queried why only two Portfolio Holder reports had been provided for this meeting, and had not been sent with the agenda, bearing in mind the need for all Members to be kept informed in this period of considerable change, and the Council's previous decision to accept unanimously a Motion for reports from all Portfolio Holders to be supplied at least quarterly. Councillor Horn, Cabinet Member for Organisational Deliver, referred to the information which was updated regularly on the internet and confirmed that future Cabinet Member reports would be sent out with the agenda. He also outlined the reasoning behind limiting the number of Portfolio reports submitted to every meeting, to avoid 8-10 reports being read out each time.

The Chief Executive explained that it had been agreed with the Leader that the submission of 2-3 reports on a rotational basis at each meeting would include the flexibility to allow pertinent key issues to be reported to Members in a timely manner. It was suggested that the Chief Executive should talk to the Leader about brief quarterly updates from all Portfolio Holders, with a bullet point-type format taking up in the region of one side of A4. A Member referred to the Council not being obliged to carry out a Motion. In the absence of the Leader, Councillor Whitehead stated that the Administration would take on the messages from both sides and would look to ensure a transparent process and outturn.

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

A petition signed by 959 residents had been received objecting to the proposed erection of 250 dwellings, School Road, Elmswell.

In accordance with the Council's Petitions Scheme, the petition has been dealt with as a Consultation Petition in connection with Planning Application No DC/17/03853 and its receipt will be reported to the relevant Committee in due course. The contents of the petition will be taken into account when the planning application is determined.

92 **QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC**

None received.

93 **QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

Question from Councillor Matthissen to Councillor Gowrley

How long has Paddock House remained empty in Mid Suffolk ownership, when is it anticipated re-development work will begin, and has the Council considered short-life use of the building for emergency homelessness or as a convalescent home managed rent free by an appropriate agency?

Answer (given by Councillor Whitehead, Deputy Leader)

The Council completed the purchase of Paddock House in February 2017.

Following work with the Town Council, and engagement with residents and other interested groups of people on the proposals for the site, we anticipate submitting a planning application in the spring next year and beginning development of the site once planning permission is achieved.

The Investment and Development team consulted with colleagues in Housing prior to purchase of the site. The building wasn't considered suitable for emergency homeless accommodation because of its location and configuration (bedsits); making access to support services and organisations difficult for people without transport.

Supplementary Question

What about a temporary use as a convalescent home, which is not covered in the above response?

Answer

My understanding is that this particular use was not considered at the time. Proposals with the aim of providing affordable social housing are now moving forward.

94

TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS

Members had before them updates from the Cabinet Member for Housing (Paper CMU1) and the Cabinet Member for Economy (Paper CMU2) which were circulated to Members the day before the meeting.

Questions were asked of the Cabinet Members on their reports as follows:-

To the Cabinet Member for Housing (Paper CMU1)

Councillor Otton

How much is it costing to keep the Needham Market Middle School site secure?

Answer to be provided outside the meeting.

Councillor Eburne

1. In the Budget, the borrowing cap for HRAs was lifted for councils in areas of high affordability pressure. Given we have a median house price to average salary ratio of 9.2, how does this affect Mid Suffolk?
2. Also in the Budget, the Government is going to increase Local Housing Allowance rates where private rents have been rising fastest. How does this affect Mid Suffolk?

Answer to be provided outside the meeting.

Councillor Stringer

Paragraph 3.15, it mentions the MSDC has bought 8 new build properties etc, how many houses is Mid Suffolk targeting to buy or build each year?

Answer

A development pipeline of 38 homes for rent and shared ownership is already underway, and there is financial capacity within the HRA to develop a further 60 homes. A pipeline for this delivery is currently being produced.

Councillor Stringer

I wasn't just referring to HRA financing.

Answer

We are using assets from outside the HRA

Councillor Stringer

Para 2,4.1 Housing delivery, it states that we are working to make average voids 10 days less, what is the average at the moment?

Answer

The current average void time is 45 days

Councillor Matthissen

During 2017/18 how many empty homes have been returned to occupancy as a result of council intervention, and what is the estimate of the number currently empty?

Answer

31 homes have been returned to occupancy in the first two quarters of 2017/18

The current number of empty properties stands at
182 properties: empty 6 months to 2 years
71 properties: 2 years+

Councillor Welham

No report back has been received with reference to the Passivhaus investigation – could this be key to provision?

Answer

Passivhaus is not on the agenda at present – too expensive but we are building properties which are more energy efficient

Comment from Councillor

Passivhaus need not be more expensive.

Councillor Ekpenyong

Bearing in mind the number of houses empty for a long time – what are the plans for bringing them back into use?

Answer

We are on the case – full answer to be provided outside the meeting.

Follow up question

Will you come back to Council with a plan to bring vacant properties back into use?

Answer

We will look into that.

Councillor Field

What about the 8 empty properties in Great Blakenham?

Answer to be provided outside the meeting.

Cabinet Member for Communities – I'm also in discussion about this issue with the Cabinet Member for Housing

To the Cabinet Member for Economy (Paper CMU2)

Councillor Stringer

Given the chancellor's budget declared some support for electric vehicle infrastructure, and the fact that midsuffolk has manufactures of electric vehicle charging, what specific measures are Mid Suffolk taking to ensure government funding helps midsuffolk reach its full potential in the migration from Fossil fuel to electric fuelled vehicles?

Answer

Iain Farquharson from Environmental Management is leading a 7 authority bid for Highways England funding in relation to rapid charge points along the strategic road network. One point will be in Mid Suffolk. Iain has already instigated the Kingfisher (Sudbury) fast charge point.

The (budget) £400m has only just been announced so not clear yet what that means. Iain will be following the government's pledge and see what we can draw down. Biggest issue is connection to electric network which is constrained and costs from UKPN can easily be tens of thousands. There are difficulties in establishing take up so modelling payback on investment is tricky.

Iain is exploring options with partners to identify potential charge points. Suffolk Councils policy on parking for new development requires a minimum provision of EV infrastructure.

We also support businesses by signposting support available for energy efficiency audit and grant through initiatives such as BeeAnglia and Growth Hub.

Local 'space to innovate' enterprise zone work also potentially supports feasibility and other project work to encourage electric vehicle charging points etc.

There is also a potential legislation development to require petrol stations to include charge points, in addition to a national OLEV grant scheme that funds up to 75% of the cost of installing a charge point in a domestic property.

Councillor Matthissen

When did the Council's members adopt a policy of supporting the Ipswich northern by-pass, as included in the draft Joint Local Plan?

Answer

The Joint Local Plan Consultation Document was approved by Full Council on 20th July 2017. On page 12 of the document it states that one of the *proposed* objectives for the Economy is "to support the 'Ipswich Northern Route' project and the strengthening of Ipswich and the surrounding area as the key economic driver of the County." Councillors unanimously approved this document for consultation. The questions that followed this section in the document included the question, "Do you agree with the identified objectives?" and as such it was part of the consultation that has just finished. Officers are still working through the many responses that have been received as part of that consultation.

Councillor Otton

Do we have the name of the Company which might be involved in unlocking the potential of Eye Airfield (para 3.6 of the report)?

Answer

To be advised when known.

Questions relating to other Cabinet responsibilities

Councillor Welham

Requesting update on Public Realm review, Joint Leisure Strategy and Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre Management?

Answer to be provided outside the meeting

Councillor Mansel

Queried the arrangements for phones and computer use in Endeavour House.

Answer

The Cabinet Member for Organisational Delivery referred to forthcoming member training and the Assistant Director – Law and Governance confirmed that the phones in the Members’ area can now be accessed without the need for a log in.

95 **MC/17/22 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Councillor Eburne, Chair of the Mid Suffolk District Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented Paper MC/17/22 updating Members on the October and November meetings of the Committee. She also referred to the Joint meeting of Mid Suffolk and Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Members which would be held on 18 December. Members who were not on the Committee were welcome to come along.

The report was noted.

96 **RECOMMENDATION AND REPORT FROM JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

JAC/17/10 MID YEAR REPORT ON TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2017/18

Councillor Morley, Mid Suffolk Chair of the Joint Audit and Standards Committee, introduced the Committee’s recommendation to note the Mid Year position.

The Assistant Director – Corporate Resources answered questions from Members as follows:-

Review of Funding Circle performance (Page 27 – paras 2.4 and 2.10)

Review concluded – No new investments to be made and as repayments come in from existing investments that money will instead be invested elsewhere.

Regulatory updates – qualifications/experience of person authorised to make investment decisions, possible delegation of technical detail (Pages 19-20 – paras 4.1.1, 4.1.2 and 4.2.3)

Further guidance and the outcome of the current consultation awaited.

Current value of CCLA (long term investment) – (Page 26)

Impact of current performance under consideration.

Current value of CCLA (long term investment) – (Page 26)

Impact of current performance under consideration, but always anticipated to be a long term investment, so confident that the market value will increase again before the Council needs to redeem the investment.

RESOLUTION

That it be noted that Treasury Management activity for the first six months of 2017/18 was in accordance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy, and that, except for one occasion when Babergh District Council exceeded its daily bank account limit with Lloyds by £120k for one day, as mentioned in Appendix D, paragraph 1.1 of Paper JAC/17/10. Both Councils have complied with all Treasury Management Indicators for this period.

Note: It is a requirement of the Code of Practice on Treasury Management that the full Council notes the Mid Year position.

97

MC/17/23 BOUNDARY REVIEW - RESPONSE TO STAGE TWO CONSULTATION ON WARDING PATTERNS

Councillor Whitehead introduced Paper MC/17/23 which had been circulated with the agenda. Members also had before them the Administration's response to the LG BCE which Councillor Whitehead had circulated prior to the meeting and which he read out. The draft proposals had generally received the Administration's support except in two ward areas for which counter-proposals had been put forward. He referred to the recommendation in Paper MC/17/23 which allowed for further comments arising from the meeting to be included in the Council's response.

During the course of the ensuing debate, Members put forward views and comments on various aspects of the proposals, as referred to below, for inclusion by the Chief Executive as part of the Council's formal response.

- Councillor Eburne – Haughley and Wetherden – proposals are based on an erroneous number for the electorate because an incorrect boundary with Stowmarket has been used – if not corrected, this would lead to a further review being triggered almost immediately after the current one because the population could be 26% under the required number.
- Councillor Matthissen – Harleston – Onehouse, Shelland and Harleston work together and have a number of shared community facilities – concern about the percentages if the current proposals go ahead unless changes are made to Haughley and Wetherden – request for concerns to be included in the response.

- Councillor Mansel – disappointed at basic spelling errors in the LGBCE’s report and that the East had been confused with the west. Supported comments about Haughley and Harleston, also general concern about western parishes expecting considerable planning growth potentially leading to significant increases in electorates.
- Councillor Otton – queried the wording ‘best reflected the communities in this area’ under para 35 on page 49 of the report as she agreed with the views expressed about Harleston as above. She also had reservations about the suggested ward name of Onehouse.
- Councillor Stringer – would have preferred to see a joint response with the administration.
- Councillor Norris – queried the Creetings being put with Needham Market – they have little in common.
- Councillor Whybrow and others – agreed that the Haughley issue should be raised.
- Councillor Gibson-Harries – concerned about the distance north-south in some of the proposed wards to be covered by one Member eg Hoxne / Horham / Redlingfield, but understands the difficulties in the very rural areas.
- General concerns were expressed about the effect of planning growth on electoral numbers, the balance between community interests and electoral equality, and whether some of the single member larger wards, eg Needham Market, should have two Members, also the inaccuracies in some of the figures used by the LGBCE.

Councillor Whitehead responded to the comments made by reiterating that the LGBCE was particularly focussed on electoral equality, although he recognised the concerns expressed about the community interest aspect. He was happy to work with the officers on the Council’s response, and would include the comments about Haughley / Harleston in the administration response, and general support was expressed for this approach. He indicated that Needham Market on its own is too large to be a single member ward but too small to be a standalone two member ward. Accordingly some of the hinterland villages must be included in the new Needham Market ward to produce good electoral equality.

The Assistant Director – Law and Governance referred to a consequential amendment that would be required to make the county division boundaries co-terminous with the town and district ward boundaries.

Councillor Haley referred to Members making their own submissions about matters of particular concern to their Wards, particularly in relation to areas where considerable growth was anticipated.

RESOLUTION

That the Chief Executive be authorised to submit the Council’s formal response to the stage two consultation on warding patterns, including the comments appended to Paper MC/17/23 at Appendix 2, together with the further comments of the Administration as circulated to Members at the Council meeting and points made by Members as above.

98 **MC/17/24 DRAFT TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2018/19**

Members commented on various matters and requested that the following be taken into account when finalising the Timetable:-

- To avoid clashes of evening meetings with Ipswich Town FC home fixtures, because of parking issues
- To avoid clashes with Suffolk Council meetings (22 March 2018 was quoted as an example)
- The information on page 26 regarding room capacities was queried – in particular, the Britten Room capacity was referred to as being inadequate for a recent Committee meeting
- Mid Suffolk Licensing and Regulatory Committee meetings to be scheduled for 10.30 a.m., as agreed
- Corporate link to Councillor diaries requested (the Corporate Manager – Democratic Services confirmed that this would be implemented through the Modern.Gov Committee system)

RESOLUTION

That the draft Timetable of Meetings for 2018/19 (Paper MC/17/24) be agreed, subject to amendments as necessary to reflect the comments made at the meeting, as set out above.

99 **RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC**

That pursuant to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the business specified below on the grounds that if the public were present during this item, it is likely that there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information as indicated against the item.

The Council was also satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

100 **MC/17/25 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 OCTOBER 2017 (EXEMPT INFORMATION BY VIRTUE OF PARAGRAPH 3 OF PART 1)**

RESOLUTION

That approval of Confidential Minute No 86 of the meeting held on 24 October 2017 be deferred to allow the inclusion of additional detail.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 8 p.m.

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Chairman

Agenda Item 4

				MC/17/27	
MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS					
COUNCIL - 21 DECEMBER 2017					
EVENT	LOCATION	DATE	CHAIRMAN	VICE CHAIR	LEADER
NOVEMBER 2017					
Act of Remembrance at Dias	Stowmarket	11-Nov			✓
Festival of Remembrance	Stowmarket	11-Nov	✓		
St Edmundsbury Rose Garden Remembrance Service	Bury St Edmunds	11-Nov		✓	
Remembrance Service & Parade	Stowmarket	12-Nov			✓
Remembrance Service	Thurston	12-Nov	✓		
Remembrance Service & Parade	Bury St Edmunds	12-Nov		✓	
Mayor's Chinese Charity Evening	Stowmarket	14-Nov	✓		
St Edmund's Day Celebratory Dinner	Bury St Edmunds	17-Nov	✓		
DECEMBER 2017					
Mayor's Christmas Carol Concert	Diss	05-Dec	✓		
St Edmundsbury Mayors Carol Service	Bury St Edmunds	07-Dec		✓	
Christmas Visit to Sheltered Housing Scheme	St Peter's Court, Claydon	08-Dec	✓	✓	
Christmas Visit to Sheltered Housing Scheme	Hurstlea Court, Needham Market	08-Dec		✓	
Bishop of St Edmundsbury's Drinks Party	Ipswich	08-Dec	✓		
Christmas Visit to Sheltered Housing Scheme	Cherryfields, Bramford	11-Dec	✓		
Christmas Visit to Sheltered Housing Scheme	Partridge Court, Stowmarket	12-Dec	✓		
Carol Service	St Peter's Church, Thurston	17-Dec	✓		

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Council – 21 December 2017

Leaders Report

1. The Budget – some implications for housing

The Chancellor announced £44billion of capita funding loans & guarantees to support the housing market to deliver 300,000 homes a year on average by the 2020s. An announcement about the details of the housing schemes is expected to be made by Sajid Javid soon. The package includes £15.3billion of new investment and support. Councils will be invited to bid for increases in their HRA caps from 2019/20 up to a total of £1bn by the end of 2021/22. The government will monitor how councils respond to the offer and 'consider whether any further action is needed'. There will be an extra £2.7billion to more than double the housing infrastructure fund; and £400million for estate regeneration.

The Homes & Communities Agency is to expand to become 'Homes England' bringing together money and expertise, and planning and compulsory purchase powers with a remit of ensuring sufficient new homes are provided and an improvement in affordability.

2. State of the Nation report 2017 – Social Mobility

The Social Mobility Commission's latest 'State of the nation' report assesses the progress that Great Britain has made towards improving social mobility. It puts the social mobility index at the heart of the report and ranks all English local authorities into hot spots and cold spots, using a range of 16 indicators for every life stage from the early years through to working lives. The report uncovers a striking geographical divide with London and its surrounding areas pulling away from the rest of the country. Mid Suffolk is placed at 80 out of 324 local authority areas.

3. Merger

Hopefully you are aware that the consultation process has restarted in MSDC and commenced in Babergh. There is a wide range of ways for residents, businesses and shareholders to participate in the engagement, and I would ask you to encourage all your contacts to participate.

Cllr. Nick Gowrley
Leader - MSDC

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Agenda Item 10

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

From: Councillor Nick Gowrley Leader and Cabinet Member for Assets and Investment	Report Number: CMU3
To: Council	Date of meeting: 21 December 2017

TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ASSETS AND INVESTMENT

1. Overview of Portfolio

- 1.1 Property investment to generate income and regenerate local areas
- 1.2 Making best use of land and buildings across the Suffolk system
- 1.3 Manage our corporate assets effectively

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Council notes the report.

3. Regeneration of the Needham Market Headquarters Site

- 3.1 The proposals for the regeneration of the Hurstlea Road headquarters site are progressing. In October the design team presented early options to the Sounding Board (Ward Members, County Councillor, Leader of the Council and Needham Market Mayor). Comments and views from the Sounding Board were taken forward to the next stage of work.
- 3.2 In January, the design team will be presenting the recommended option for regeneration to all Members and Needham Market Town Council for comments and views. Engagement events with residents and other groups of interested people will follow in late January/early February.
- 3.2 The final recommended option will be presented to Council in February for debate and Cabinet for approval in early March. A planning application will be submitted following Cabinet approval in March.

4. Affordable Housing Development Programme

- 4.1 The Councils have appointed Icen Homes as their development partner. Icen Homes have considerable experience in delivering affordable housing programmes in partnership.
- 4.2 Icen are working with officers to bring forward an ambitious programme of housing development. Early focus is on the sites acquired from Suffolk County Council, these are; Needham Market Middle School, Stowmarket Middle School and Paddock House Eye.
- 4.3 Early feasibility work, including financial appraisals, planning appraisal and surveys are nearing completion. This will enable the team to consider the options for the sites.

These developments will be undertaken through the Affordable Housing Development Strategy which seeks to maximise affordable housing provision within a set of approved, delegated financial, investment and development parameters.

- 4.4 It is proposed that following a period of engagement with Members, Town Councils, residents and other interested groups of people, planning applications will be submitted in the spring 2018 with start on sites anticipated late summer 2018.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The essential, behind the scenes work, which is required to support the development of options for regeneration of the headquarters and housing development sites has been significant. With this work nearing completion officers will begin a period of engagement during which options and designs will be shared.

Authorship: Councillor Nick Gowrley

MID SUFFOLK COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

From: Councillor Julie Flatman Cabinet Member for Communities	Report Number: CMU4
To: Council	Date of meeting: 21 December 2017

TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES

1. Overview of Portfolio

- 1.1 The Communities Portfolio includes three themed service areas: Safe Communities (including community safety, antisocial behaviour, safeguarding and the Community Safety Partnership), Strong Communities (including grants, external funding, community development, community rights, arts) and Healthy Communities and Policy (including health and wellbeing, Health and Wellbeing Board, health interventions and preventative activity).

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Council notes the report.

3. Key Activities/Issues Over the Past Three Months

Strong Communities:

- 3.1 The grants and external funding programmes are a very effective way in which we maintain and develop community capacity. Below are examples of recent grants and events:
- Stonham Aspal Village Hall Refurbishment held their opening celebration 'Afternoon Tea' on Nov 25th, we supported them with a total of £25,000.00 funding.
 - Stowmarket Town Council Recreation Ground Play Area Improvements have now been officially opened, we supported them with £10,000.00 funding
- 3.2 The latest round of Parish Liaison meetings was held during November with a combined meeting at Westhorpe village hall. Attendance was good and the engagement effective.
- 3.3 A successful Community Volunteering and Funding event was organised at Henley on 25th of October with 5 partner organisations offering advice to over 40 people from 29 different organisations. The event will be repeated in February 2018 in partnership with Stowmarket Town Council.
- 3.4 Assets of Community Value - The Redgrave Community Society have purchased The Cross Keys, Redgrave. This was listed as an ACV two years ago. This is the second ACV to move into community ownership.

- 3.5 Lullaby Project – During October, 2 concerts took place at Stowmarket United Reformed Church attracting 303 people. Workshops for 90 people were delivered at Stowmarket Library and the John Peel Centre prior to the performances.

Safe Communities:

- 3.6 The district council leads the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) process on behalf of the local Community Safety Partnership when a domestic homicide meets the Home Office DHR criteria. We have completed one review earlier in the year. We are in the latter stages of a second review which will be submitted to the Home Office before the end of December.

National Domestic Violence Week (The White Ribbon Campaign) - Mid Suffolk organised a stand at the Stowmarket Leisure Centre manned by volunteers and officers from SCC and BMSDC. This offered white ribbons and information leaflets about domestic violence and domestic abuse and advice on how to access help.

Health and Wellbeing

- 3.7 *Connect programme* – The Connect programme continues to integrate delivery of health and social care services. Connect teams in Mid Suffolk are now working across: Stowmarket, Eye & Northwest Suffolk and Bury Rural. Our communities and housing teams are engaged with the Connect teams, where they provide local intelligence and information on district services.
- 3.8 *Cycling* - The Men's cycling Tour of Britain passed through Mid Suffolk Friday 8th September 2017. We supported community engagement events and spectator activities along the route. Turnout of spectators and visitors on the day was excellent.
- 3.9 *Later Life Activity programme* – We publish a regular Ageing Well activity programme for both districts. This promotes a wide variety of opportunities for older people to be active and social; encouraging older residents to try something new and to connect to their community by making new friends.
- 3.10 *Fit Villages* - 3 new Fit Villages (FV) projects have been established in Mid Suffolk since April. There are now 19 FV projects in Mid Suffolk. The number of active projects is currently at its highest level since the programme began; 85% of projects across the district are sustainable and continue beyond the 8 weeks of funding.
- 3.11 *Walking programmes* - 12 walks were held in Mid Suffolk as part of the tenth Suffolk Walking festival. This built on activity from the 'Let's Walk Stowmarket...' mini walking festival where participants included those living with a mental health condition and who are physically inactive. A total of 149 people attended the 15 walks.
- 3.12 *Great Run Local – Needham*. The number of runs completed at this weekly volunteer-led event continues to grow with a 50% increase in participations between quarter 2 this year and the equivalent period last year. The Needham Lake Great Run Local is now one of the most successful events of its type in the UK.
- 3.13 *Dementia* - Through the local Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) we have supported new opportunities for those living with dementia and their carers in Stowmarket dementia friendly events now run at the Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre and the Regal Cinema. A Memory Walk was also held in Stowmarket earlier this year as part of the Walking Festival with 30 attendees.

- 3.14 Mid Suffolk was recently identified as the 3rd happiest district in England! This was based on the Office for National Statistics headline estimates of personal well-being.

4. Future Key Activities

Strong Communities

- 4.1 *Place Based Social Action (PBSA) Fund.* This is a joint £4.5m Government and Big Lottery Fund to enable communities, local non-statutory organisations and the statutory sector to work collaboratively to create a shared vision for the future of their place and to tackle local priorities through social action. The fund works with established partnerships the community at Redgrave has a successful record of supporting community facilities and assets. With our support the Redgrave Community Partnership have submitted an expression of interest as a potential participant.

Safe Communities

- 4.2 Safeguarding requirements have been extended to include vulnerable adults as well as young people. Safeguarding training sessions (including Members sessions) will take place from January 2018 – dates, venues and times will be published shortly.

Health and Wellbeing

- 4.3 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Active Wellbeing Programme – We are working with Suffolk Sport and Public health to design and pilot (from April 2018) a new project to engage those who need to increase physical activity. The project aims to provide an education package to GP Practice staff to increase their confidence in advocating physical activity. A social prescription approach will be used enabling health professionals to direct individuals to physical activity in their local area.
- 4.4 Walking programmes - We are supporting Eye's bid for 'Walkers are Welcome' accreditation for the town. Working with One Life Suffolk we will also enable Health Walks (Stepping Out in Suffolk) in Mid Suffolk. 2018 There are already 10 walks planned within Mid Suffolk (January to March).
- 4.5 *Mental Health and Wellbeing* – We are working with services and partners to develop a mental health and wellbeing implementation plan for the two districts. Initial work is focused on workplace mental health and wellbeing and includes mental health first aid training for staff.
- 4.6 *Great Run Local* - Following on from the success of the Great Run Local at Needham Lake we are working with the community in Eye to help establish a GRL starting in 2018.
- 4.7 *Dementia* - We are currently working with partners and communities to establish DAAs in Needham Market and Eye.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The level of current and planned activity across the Communities Portfolio remains high. The constant challenge is to decide which programmes and opportunities best support the Joint Strategic Priorities and have the greatest community benefit. To help with this we will develop Community Strategy for both councils.

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MID SUFFOLK COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

From: Councillor David Burn Cabinet Member for Environment	Report Number: CMU5
To: Council	Date of meeting: 21 December 2017

TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

1. Overview of Portfolio

- 1.1 The Environment Portfolio covers several distinct service areas. This report provides a snapshot and summary of recent work.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Council notes the report.

3. Key Activities/Issues Over the Past Six Months

Waste Service

- 3.1 Our Commercial Waste service continues to grow, building on the previous good work of the team. As at the end of quarter 2 in this financial year we have attracted 36 net new customers equivalent to an additional £55,000 annualised income.
- 3.2 The Garden Waste service now has over 14,500 homes subscribed, which is an increase of over 1,000 customers on the previous year.
- 3.3 Our recycling rate, National Indicator 192, was 47.92% for Quarter 2 which compares with 48.59% for 2016/17. The small reduction this year is probably because fines (see below) such as bottle tops are no longer included in the recycling figure. The issue of contamination in the dry recycling waste stream continues to be a problem for the Suffolk Waste Partnership. The current average monthly contamination rate across Suffolk is 11.64% (April–Oct 2017), the MSDC average for the period is 7.21%. The data is collated from samples taken from vehicle loads delivered either directly to the MRF or to waste transfer stations.
- 3.4 Food waste, glass, and fines (material that is below 45mm) continue to be the main contaminants found in recycling bins. The Suffolk Waste Partnership is currently undertaking door knocking and educational campaign trials in Ipswich and Lowestoft to explore a more targeted approach to this issue; early indications are that this is having a positive impact on reducing contamination levels. The intention is to expand the campaign throughout the county in the coming months.
- 3.5 We are working with our service provider Serco on planning for growth across our joint waste contract. This work involves a review of our current collection rounds across both districts, ensuring that the rounds are as efficient and effective as possible and allowing for both current and future housing growth. The work is in its early stages, but any changes will be implemented during 2018.

Sustainable Environment Service

- 3.6 Highways England is undertaking a national project to install electric vehicle charging points across the strategic road network; in Suffolk this would include the A11, A14 and A12. Officers from BMSDC are leading on a project to obtain a 100% grant from Highways England to create a network of rapid-charging points every 20 miles along these key trunk roads. We have prepared a joint bid on behalf of nine other local authorities in Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex, which will cover all procurement and administration costs for the project (including our officer's time). Highways England has indicated its intention to approve the bid, although we are awaiting formal confirmation. A charging point at Needham lakes is being scoped for suitability. The charging points will generate income due to the predicted exponential growth in the uptake of electric vehicles (90% of all vehicles in the UK by 2050).
- 3.7 We are currently working on a programme to convert around 100 replacement street and car park lights with LEDs in Mid Suffolk, which will reduce the annual running costs by £3,300 (a 72% saving, and a return on the investment costs of around 9%).
- 3.8 Eastern England Energy Strategy – The Suffolk Climate Change Partnership is playing a key role in the development of a joint Eastern England Energy Strategy (across the New Anglia, Greater Cambridge-Greater Peterborough and Hertfordshire LEPs). Funding for this work was secured from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy earlier in the year. The strategic priority is to accelerate enterprise, skills, inward investment and innovation to enable local growth in energy demand and supply. The strategy will develop the East's response to key areas of the Industrial Strategy's priority areas of affordable energy, changes to energy infrastructure and securing the industrial opportunities for the UK economy of energy innovation. A draft strategy for local authority endorsement is due in Spring 2018.
- 3.9 Warm Homes Fund – Through membership of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (SCCP) we are seeking to further extend our offer to homeowners, by submitting a joint bid for money from the Warm Homes Fund (a £150 million fund announced by National Grid and Community Interest Company Affordable Warmth Solutions) to deliver first time central heating systems and gas connections to 540 fuel poor households in Suffolk.
- 3.10 The project would be delivered over a three-year period and has a value of £4.3 million. We have submitted two bids to deliver: first time condensing gas boiler central heating systems and gas connections to 230 households in urban areas (urban is defined as within 2km of a gas main); and first time condensing oil boiler central heating systems or air source heat pumps to 310 households in rural areas (rural is defined as more than 2km from a gas main). Additional insulation measures, cavity wall and loft insulation, would also be delivered to these households to achieve a 'whole house' approach.
- 3.11 The grant being sought from the fund is £2,776,800, with £1,569,930 of 'match' funding from existing schemes including the Energy Company Obligation, Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme, Suffolk's Warm Homes Healthy People, Suffolk Community Foundation Surviving Winter Fuel Payments and local authority renovation grants. The SCCP has received positive feedback from the Warm Homes Fund, although we are awaiting formal confirmation of an award.

- 3.12 BEE Anglia (Business Energy Efficiency Anglia) – Through our membership of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (SCCP), Mid Suffolk businesses have benefited from the BEE Anglia programme to provide free support to at least 1,000 SMEs across Suffolk and Norfolk to help them become more energy efficient. The Partnership successfully bid for £6.5M of funding from the EU European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for this 3-year programme of support and grants to businesses. Since the programme began in April 2016, 33 businesses in Mid Suffolk have received free audits, which have identified measures that are projected to achieve energy bill savings of £79,600 and save 364 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

Food and Safety Service

- 3.13 New Anglia Better Business for All (BBfA) Programme – This is a partnership between all the Norfolk and Suffolk local authorities, the New Anglia LEP and Growth Hub and various business organisations that was formed to improve the way in which regulators and businesses interact. Babergh/Mid Suffolk is the lead local authority partner working with BEIS (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy).
- 3.14 The partnership has been awarded funding by both Suffolk and Norfolk local authorities. Part of this funding has enabled the appointment of a project manager for two years hosted by Babergh and Mid Suffolk.
- 3.15 In November 2017, the BBfA Programme ran four launch workshops, for regulatory officers, held in Ipswich and Norwich. These were attended by more than 200 who learned about the support that is available to businesses in Suffolk and Norfolk from the LEP, the Growth Hub, the Department for Trade and Industry (exports), ACAS and MENTA as well as hearing from BEIS about communicating with businesses, providing the tools to add value to interactions with businesses. BMSDC staff from the planning, sustainable environment, building control, food and safety and Open for Business teams attended the workshops.
- 3.16 Eat Out Eat Well and Take Out Eat Well Awards – The Suffolk district and borough councils, working with the SCC public health team, introduced a healthy catering award in 2015/16, celebrating the 100th Suffolk Eat Out Eat Well Award at the beginning of November 2017. BMSDC continues to take a lead in developing the award with the public health team. At the end of November 2017 we began piloting a simplified version of the award (Take Out Eat Well) for take-away food outlets, working with businesses in Babergh and Mid Suffolk.
- 3.17 Business as Usual – The Food Safety service plan identified 538 planned inspections of food premises for the year. By the end of the first half of 2017/18 we had carried out 292 inspections, which put us ahead of schedule at that stage.

Licensing Service

- 3.18 We are redesigning the service, and trialling how to share workload effectively and fairly across the team, with business needs remaining front and central to how we do that. The team is using the new Customer Access Points to deliver front facing elements of the service (identity, right to work, criminal and medical checks etc.) which are vital for safeguarding the public.
- 3.19 Business activity in the taxi licensing sector is consistently high. The team has worked successfully to expediently remove licences of two drivers being investigated for relevant offences.
- 3.20 New premises are also opening and existing premises diversifying in relation to event, alcohol, entertainment and late-night refreshment licensing areas. We are still operating on reduced capacity ahead of recruiting in the new year (following the resignation of two key officers over the past 6 months). Despite this the team has stepped up admirably in difficult circumstances, given the need to continue front-facing business support for two districts and at the same time coping with our office moves.
- 3.21 The Licensing & Regulatory Committees have reviewed central government proposals to change (reduce) stakes for fixed odds betting terminals (available in high street bookmakers), which have been linked to problem gambling, money laundering and issues in more deprived communities. The media popularly report these gaming machines as being the 'crack cocaine of gaming machines' (the stake can be £100 every 20 seconds). This is not a prevalent problem in either Mid Suffolk or Babergh but there is still a social responsibility and Licensing Committee interest. A response to government is being drafted by the team.
- 3.22 The Committee also explored some of the issues surrounding recent deregulatory matters in the taxi and private hire sector, particularly safety issues and public awareness concerns arising from cross-border hiring relaxations. As usual there is a fine balance to be struck between public protection principles and business/consumer flexibility.
- 3.23 The full Licensing team also attended in support of the New Anglia Better Business for All launch in Ipswich earlier in November (see paragraph 3.15). The team has represented BMSDC at county level in relation to improving how the safety review of public outdoor events operates. We begin the new 2018 event season BMSDC review meetings from January 2018.

Building Control Service

- 3.24 Our Building Control service had a change in management in September of this year following the retirement of the Building Control Corporate Manager and the appointment of a replacement. We also saw the loss of a further two surveyors but have successfully recruited replacements who are due to start in post at the end of January 2018.
- 3.25 Although the Building Control team continues to perform well it faces several challenges with increased competition from Approved Inspectors, it is essential to become more commercially aware as a service both to retain current levels of business and to grow the service.

An option currently being explored is a strategic, collaborative working approach across all Suffolk building control teams under a single identity and a shared vision. Work is now being undertaken, in conjunction with other Suffolk authorities, to identify key areas in the market place where work is being lost and to develop a Suffolk-wide business plan to address these issues.

Planning Enforcement Service

- 3.26 The Planning Enforcement service has experienced resource issues over the past 6 months with the loss of two experienced officers. Within a team of 5.2 full-time-equivalent operational officers, two vacant posts is a significant proportion of our resource. Recruitment is currently being undertaken to fill these vacant positions.
- 3.27 The team has also experienced several issues with the transfer of data from the previous Accolade IT system to the new IDOX 'Uniform' IT system. We have been unable to access historical information for a period of time between the changes in the IT systems, which has created further challenges. This data has recently been transferred but needs to be quality checked for accuracy.

Heritage Service

- 3.28 The Victorian Society has recently ranked the buildings at the former Fisons site in Bramford among the top ten listed Buildings-at-Risk in England and Wales. Although the Council has granted planning permission and listed building consent for the repair and reuse of the buildings within a scheme that includes a significant housing development, there are questions over its viability because of the scale and nature of the site and buildings and its former industrial use. We have been in discussion with the owners to 'unblock' the barriers to redevelopment. In October we submitted a bid to the Housing Communities Agency/DCLG for £6.472m from the Housing Infrastructure Fund to assist in the delivery of the infrastructure needed to unblock and support redevelopment of the site. We await a decision on the bid in the new year.
- 3.29 Like Planning Enforcement, the Heritage team has experienced a number of challenges as a result of the change in the IT system. When Development Management migrated from Accolade to IDOX 'Uniform' a significant backlog of consultation responses occurred. It was also identified that the new Uniform system is unable to allocate tasks as required and officers have had to adapt using another existing system as well as the Uniform system. This difficulty has been compounded because the team is also two full officers short due to vacancies. The vacant posts have been advertised; some candidates who seem promising on paper have applied but we are unlikely to have people in post until February.

Public Realm Service

- 3.30 Public Realm Transformation – The first draft report from consultants WYG was received in September. The report highlights the excellent and value-for-money work that is delivered by Mid Suffolk's in-house grounds maintenance and street cleansing teams. Standards were assessed by a number of inspections and the district was given an overall rating of good. The report along with a number of options to take forward the transformation project is being considered by a task-and-finish panel and will be considered by Cabinet in February.

3.31 Pikes Meadow, Stowmarket – Over the past few years a partnership between the Council, the Friends of Pikes Meadow and Stowmarket Town Council has been developing proposals for a new play site at Pikes Meadow. The new play site was officially opened by the Leader of the Council on 15 July. It has been very popular with young people and their parents and has developed greatly the amenity that this important local recreation has to offer. The Friends group is already planning future additions to the site, such as a roundabout that can be used by wheelchair users.

MID SUFFOLK COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

From: Councillor Glen Horn Cabinet Member for Organisational Delivery	Report Number: CMU6
To: Council	Date of meeting: 21 December 2017

TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ORGANISATIONAL DELIVERY

1. Overview of Portfolio

- 1.1 The Organisational Delivery Portfolio encompasses Customer Services, Business Improvement and ICT. Over the past 6 months much of the work undertaken across these areas has related to the All Together programme of work including the move to Endeavour House and the opening of a new customer access point for Mid Suffolk District Council in Stowmarket. Highlighted below is a summary of activity that has taken place across the three themes.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Council notes the report.

3. Key Activities/Issues Over the Past Six Months

Customer Services

- 3.1 Following the implementation of the new customer telephony system Genesis at the end of March 2017, further back office calls were subsumed into the customer services team, including Housing Repair calls. Significant training was undertaken to ensure that staff were able to answer queries accessing multiple IT systems and following new policies and procedures.
- 3.2 To improve resilience, during a period when staff resources were depleted, a mini contact centre was established in Needham Market offices to make best use of the staff located there.
- 3.3 A review of our telephony opening times was conducted, with a different opening time trialled. Analysis of call volumes and abandonment rates informed a revised opening time of 8.45am.
- 3.4 Opening of the new customer front facing offices in Stowmarket, which is also where our telephony services are based. Significant work was undertaken in partnership with Suffolk County Council and Vertas to ensure the building was fit for purpose, including all staff receiving laptops, implementation of self-service facilities for customers, a touchdown point for other members of staff to work, as well as providing meeting/interview rooms for staff from other service teams (eg housing) to use.
- 3.5 During the past 6 months Customer Services has experienced significant changes in staffing levels and roles. The consolidation of the telephony service into one location has resulted in staff undertaking new training and skills.

This continues to be a work in progress as new staff have recently joined the organisation and we reach our full complement of resource.

Business Improvement including Policy & Performance, Data analysis and Programme Management

- 3.6 The Business Improvement team has needed to prioritise activity over the past 6 months due to temporary resource issues, and have therefore focused on some key areas, including:

Developing our Performance Framework - working with Assistant Directors and their teams, Cabinet and Lead Members, to develop and embed an outcome focused approach that measures and monitors delivery of the Joint Strategic Plan. Greater alignment with the risk management process has been achieved. Work is on-going to review indicators and targets as well as capture key achievements alongside the impact of our activities. We are also reviewing the software tools that we use, and looking to further develop our benchmarking capacity alongside the use of more qualitative data.

- 3.7 End of Year Report – a more digital interactive report that collated news stories across the two authorities, providing greater transparency to members and communities and a means to celebrate success. Bite size chunks of data and information were complimented by videos of community spokespersons providing testimonials on their experience of Council services. Work has already commenced on 17/18 End of Year report.

- 3.8 Research & Data Analysis – the team has continued to support the Overview and Scrutiny committee; assisting Members to develop their scrutiny function, by providing research, insight and knowledge through scoping and topic papers. The team has worked collaboratively across a range of partners including Public Health, Suffolk County to provide a Suffolk wide intelligence function, demonstrated by the joint development of the Suffolk Observatory.

- 3.9 Projects and Programme – development continues in this area where Assistant Directors work with a dedicated member of the Business Improvement team. Fortnightly programme meetings have started to support a more consistent approach across our organisation. CONNECT has been developed as a repository for information relating to project/programme delivery as well as performance information. However more work is needed to ensure that this resource is continually kept up to date to provide a single point of information for both staff and members.

- 3.10 Stage 2 complaints – the team continue to provide an independent investigation of stage 2 complaints, working objectively with complainants to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

4.0 *ICT*

- 4.1 Much of the activity particularly in ICT has been driven by the move to Endeavour House, enabling staff to work in an agile way. Activity has included; the set-up of a centralised scanning team that scans incoming post and distributes electronically by email to the relevant teams. Scanning of approximately 93% of paper records enabling staff to access information easily.

- 4.2 Roll out of Skype for Business for staff, enabling staff to make and receive calls from their laptops at home, in the office or out and about in the districts. Roll out of over 120 laptops to staff also, so that they can work flexibly from any location. Touch Down points created across the district, providing multiple geographical locations for staff to work from, and access facilities such as printing and meeting rooms.
- 4.3 Server room at Needham Market decommissioned and all necessary applications have been transferred into Suffolk County IT.
- 4.4 Other transformation work has continued including: Implementation of a joint planning system, enabling teams across Mid Suffolk and Babergh to integrate working practices. Introduction of a new Council Committee Information system to better manage Council business. In vehicle devices have been installed into our refuse lorries, to more efficiently collect up to the minute round information, including missed bins. Upgrade of our Finance system and the transfer of our HR system to Suffolk County Council. On-going roll out of Office 2016 and Windows 10 to all teams, to keep abreast of latest software releases. Whilst these projects have been implemented, work continues to ensure we make best use of the new functionality available.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Progress has been made across the range of teams, notably in relation to the implementation of the All Together programme of work, and supporting business as usual activity across the organisation throughout a significant period of change. Focus will now shift so that we prioritise some key issues of work that will enable us to continue our journey of improvements, including an update and refresh of the customer access strategy, optimisation of CONNECT, review of our programme and project management function and the development of our working relationship with our partners Suffolk CC IT to ensure our IT is fit for purpose and ambitious in outlook.

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MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

From: Councillor Whybrow Cabinet Member for Planning	Report Number: CMU7
To: Council	Date of meeting: 21 December 2017

TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING

1. Overview of Portfolio

1.1 The role includes the following responsibilities:

Ensure the Council carries out its statutory duties as Local Planning Authority
Ensure Development Management makes good quality and timely Decisions
Ensure that the Council has up-to-date Planning Policies that have a positive impact without unduly restricting development

1.2 These collectively deliver the following outcomes:

Protect and enhance our built and natural environment
Understand what housing and employment sites are needed
Unlock the barriers to sustainable growth
Help create and maintain sustainable communities
Agree where growth goes
Liaise with neighbouring authorities to fulfil our Duty to Cooperate

2. Recommendation

2.1 That Council notes the report.

3. Key Activities/Issues Over the Past Six Months

3.1 Performance on planning applications (as judged by DCLG statistics) is good, with Mid Suffolk delivering 81% of majors in time since the beginning of April. On non-majors Mid Suffolk is at 73%. As part of this statistic, 75% of Householder applications have been determined within the statutory 8-week timescale.

3.2 In respect of the numbers of dwellings where decisions have been issued, as at the end of November, Mid Suffolk had approved 64% of the dwellings before it. The numbers of dwellings with a resolution to grant but which haven't yet had a decision is significant, though it is difficult to give a definitive number because several of these applications are in outline form with exact numbers subject to reserved matters applications. Many of these applications remain subject to negotiations relating to legal agreements.

3.3 Neighbourhood Plans continue to be of interest, with thirteen communities actively working towards developing their plans.

Over the last six months new area designations have been received from Botesdale and Rickingham, Diss and District (including the Mid Suffolk villages of Palgrave, Stuston and Brome and Oakley), Eye and Thorndon. A Joint Member Briefing session was held on Wednesday 29th November.

- 3.4 The Joint Local Plan consultation began on 21st August and finished on 10th November. Approximately 12,500 responses were received from around 1300 people (including organisations, such as Parish Councils).
- 3.5 Parish Liaison sessions in May and November have included updates on Planning as well as opportunities for Town and Parish Councils to discuss issues with the Assistant Director – Planning for Growth.
- 3.6 Council Officers have also attended other discussion forums, including SALC area meetings, to listen to Parish Councils about the issues affecting them and the ways in which the Council can continue to improve services.

4. Future Key Activities

- 4.1 The next stage of the Joint Local Plan is an important piece of work. The number and range of consultation responses has demonstrated that people have engaged with the process so far, so it is important that the Councils continue to concentrate on ensuring future stages are as well advertised.
- 4.2 Continuing to provide support to Neighbourhood Planning groups remains a priority. It is likely that several groups will be moving towards their pre-submission consultation from the beginning of the year though given the nature of these types of plans, the timing of this depends wholly upon the groups themselves.
- 4.3 Developing the Councils' Infrastructure Strategy and particularly the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) spending arrangements will be an important piece of work over the coming few months. This has been subject of discussion at Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and will also be discussed at the Joint Member Briefing session on 20th December. Plans to engage with Councillors and communities more broadly will be developed over the coming weeks.
- 4.4 The coming months will see a range of major planning applications come before Planning Committee. These are likely to include the Snoasis development, phase 2 of the Mill Lane employment site at Stowmarket and housing developments in Elmswell and Fressingfield, as well as a range of other applications.
- 4.5 There have been a range of challenges relating to workforce capacity. New roles have recently been advertised and recruited to, including the new Corporate Manager Strategic Planning who commences in this role on the 18th December. Other new roles including Senior and Principal roles within the Development Management team, a new Senior officer in the Strategic Planning team (to add capacity to support Neighbourhood Plans) and a new Infrastructure related post, are also in the recruitment process.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The service is currently dealing with high demand on a day-to-day basis as well as several significant projects. It is vitally important to maintain momentum and engagement on the Joint Local Plan. Developing the Councils' Infrastructure Strategy and particularly the approach and governance around CIL spending processes are also high priority. At the same time, it is important that we retain focus on decisions made on individual planning applications and continue to improve the efficiency and quality of our decision-making processes.

Authorship: Councillor David Whybrow

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Agenda Item 11

MC/17/29

MSDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report for Council – 21 December 2017

The November 2017 Mid Suffolk District Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting covered:

- Implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act
- Scoping a review of the Legal Services Partnership
- A follow up to supporting business growth

The December 2017 Joint Overview and Scrutiny meeting (which at the time of writing will be held on 18 December 2017) will cover:

- Review of the Legal Services Partnership
- Review of the impact and delivery of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Off-Payroll costs

Homelessness: Following a review of this in July, much work has been undertaken towards preparing for the implementation of the Act in April 2018. Members had particular concern regarding whether the Council was allocating sufficient funding and asked that Cabinet monitor this.

Supporting business growth: Following a Committee discussion in October on how the Councils can support micro and small businesses, Members reviewed the forthcoming “local” economic strategy and looked at how members could assist in its delivery.

Shared Legal Services Partnership: This shared service has been in operation since November 2016 and Members will be reviewing whether it has achieved its objectives, how it is working and whether any changes should be made. This will include responses to legal issues, any delays in providing legal services, the level of expertise within the service and delivery in relation to the budget.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): This is the first review of the impact and delivery of CIL and will include detail on collection of CIL monies including debt recovery and appeals. Information is provided on how CIL is to be spent and the process for this.

Off-Payroll Costs: A review of the costs for interims and consultants shows that, across both Councils, for 2016/17 a total of 98 positions will have cost £2.4 million and for 2017/18 to date 81 positions at a cost of £1.1 million.

Forward plan: Items include:

- Budget scrutiny
- Pre-scrutiny of the Waste Strategy
- Review of BMBS (Babergh and Mid Suffolk Building Services)
- Review of the impact of the office move

Councillor Rachel Eburne

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Agenda Item 12

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Cabinet Member - Finance	Report Number: MC/17/30
To: MSDC Council	Date of meeting: 21 December 2017

ADOPTION OF REVISED COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION (CTR) SCHEME FOR WORKING AGE HOUSEHOLDS – EFFECTIVE 1 APRIL 2018

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To propose the adoption of a Revised Council Tax Reduction (Working Age) Scheme that will come into effect from 1 April 2018.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Mid Suffolk District Council adopt the Council Tax Reduction (Working Age) Local Scheme (Revised) from 1 April 2018, as set out in Appendix A of the report.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The financial effect of:
- a. The legislative changes and their potential for impact are outlined in Appendix D, most of the proposed changes have no cost or saving implications for current customers;
 - b. The cost of changes to accommodate UC are nil. These amendments seek to equalise access to CTR as for customers still in receipt of legacy benefits;
 - c. The introduction of a minimum Working Age CTR award would affect fifteen current cases. As the intention is to award Discretionary Financial Assistance instead of a minimal CTR award, the financial implications will be nil. It is not possible to gauge how many new applications will be received where the customers will become entitled to a new CTR or DFA award.
- 3.2 The impact to the Collection Fund is demonstrated below. The cost borne by Mid Suffolk District Council is circa 10% of the total costs of any scheme change or savings because of the way the precepting authorities share the revenue generated from Council Tax collection.

Collection Fund expenditure item	2018/19
	£
Cost of current scheme	1,697,452.10
Gain from £1 min Awd	-396.76
Total cost of revised scheme	1,697,055.34
Reduced cost to MSDC @ 10%	-39.68

3.3 It should be noted that the caseload has decreased at an average of 1.9% over the past 3 years. This decrease has not been shown in the costings as it is dependent upon the economic position, which could slow, causing a consequent increase.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 Under the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended) the Council has the power to set its own Working Age CTR scheme.

4.2 Section 13a of the Local Government Finance Act gives power to reduce the amount of council tax payable.

5. Risk Management

5.1 This report is most closely linked with the Councils' Significant Risk No 5f – If we do not understand our financial position and respond in a timely and effective way, then we will be unable to deliver the entirety of the Joint Strategic Plan. Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
It there is a successful legal challenge to the Working Age CTR scheme changes then it will negate any potential benefits	1 – Highly Unlikely	3 – Bad / Serious	Liaison with Legal Services and use of the wording used in Statutory Instruments referred to in Appendix D
If the changes impact individuals ability to pay then it could result in hardship and a reduction in the amount of council tax collected	2 - Unlikely	2 – Noticeable / Minor	Monitor collection closely and use discretionary financial assistance in special cases.

6. Consultations

6.1 Consultation on the revised scheme was undertaken with both Suffolk County Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner for Suffolk, both of whom were approached directly and provided with details of the proposed revised scheme.

- 6.2 The revised scheme was published on the Council's Web Site, with attention drawn to it on the "Home" page and elsewhere, including:
- a. In the signature panel of all Shared Revenue Partnership e-mails;
 - b. In a standard paragraph in every Council Tax, CTR and Housing Benefit information request letter sent out;
 - c. On the Council's Landlord Portal;
 - d. In Social Media;
 - e. By direct mailing to Registered Social Landlords and Debt Advisors; and
 - f. In press releases.
- 6.3 This ensured that the revised scheme was made available to:
- a. Council Tax liable persons;
 - b. Those currently in receipt of a Council Tax Reduction (CTR):
 - c. Advisers regarding debt problems – including SCC's Financial Information and Advice Service, Citizens Advice, Ipswich Housing Action Group , Step Change and Shelter;
 - d. Landlords, in particular, Social Landlords and the Council's Housing Department.
- 6.4 The consultation period ran from 30th October to 27th November 2017. Whilst the response to the consultation was largely in favour of adopting the new revised scheme, no formal response was received from either Suffolk County Council or the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 6.5 The full survey results are available within Appendix C of this report but importantly 75.00% of all those who responded were in favour of adopting the revised scheme, 62.50% of those who responded were not direct beneficiaries of the revised scheme (i.e. did not currently receive CTRS).

7. Equality Analysis

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this report.
- 7.2 The proposals in this report, aside from the maximum and minimum CTR proposals, equalise the Pension Age CTR Scheme and the Working Age CTR Schemes ensuring age is not a reason for difference in treatment under either scheme.
- 7.3 The Council is required to operate a Discretionary Financial Assistance (DFA) scheme. DFAs are outside both the Council's Working Age CTR scheme and the Pensioner CTR scheme, but contained within the same legislation. DFAs are not dependent upon receipt of CTR for eligibility but are a reduction in Council Tax liability (effectively, a write-off) in a similar way to CTR.

7.4 DFAs exist to help with anomalies in the CTR schemes and council tax liability legislation, dealing with exceptional and unusual cases, enabling Councils to assist those in greatest need more than “normal” CTR.

8. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

8.1 Equalising the maximum CTR across both Councils at 95% will avoid confusion for staff in the Shared Revenues Partnership administering the schemes. It also eases confusion for customers moving between the areas or those who have joint HB/CTR claims. The confusion is currently caused by MSDC having a maximum reduction of 91.5% whilst MSDC has a maximum of 95% and entitlement being calculated differently for the two sides of a joint HB/CTR claim.

9. Links to Joint Strategic Plan

The outcome to be achieved by this report most closely aligns with the ambition outlined in the Enabled and Efficient Organisation section of the Joint Strategic Plan.

10. Key Information

Background

10.1 Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) currently operates two Council Tax Reduction (CTR) schemes:

- CTR State Pension Age Scheme; and
- CTR Working Age (Local) Scheme

10.2 The State Pension Age Scheme is a prescribed scheme and councils are prohibited from changing any aspect of the scheme. This report is limited to proposed changes to the Mid Suffolk District Council CTR Working Age (Local) Scheme.

10.3 Mid Suffolk District Councils CTR Working Age (Local) Scheme (CTRS) was introduced in April 2013 offering an up to 95% ‘discount’ to the poorest households. However, by 2017, significant change had occurred within the Housing Benefit Scheme on which the CTRS administration ‘piggy backed’ and the scheme needed to be aligned to both ease the administration of the scheme and reduce confusion caused to customers. A new scheme from 1st April 2018 was proposed.

10.4 The Department for Work and Pensions announced Ipswich Job Centre would move to ‘Full Service’ for Universal Credit from April 2018 and Stowmarket and Diss Job Centres would move from May 2018 – fundamentally changing the welfare support available to Mid-Suffolk District Council residents.

10.5 This provided an opportunity to make provision within a revised CTRS for customers in receipt of Universal Credit to be allowed the same access to CTRS as for recipients of the legacy benefits which it replaced – effectively ‘passporting’ these customers to maximum CTR without the need to undergo further means testing. This change also eases the burden of administration placed upon the authority. A further suggestion was considered which would further ease the administrative burden – a minimum award of £1.

- 10.6 A revised scheme was proposed that aligned the CTR Working Age Scheme with the Housing Benefit Scheme, made provision for Universal Credit and introduced a minimum weekly CTR award of £1 per week.
- 10.7 Authorisation to enter a 4-week period of public consultation on the proposed revision to the Mid Suffolk District Council (Working Age) Council Tax Reduction Local Scheme was sought and granted by the Council on 26th October 2017 (MC/17/19). This ensured that the statutory consultation requirements were met and that the findings could inform future decision making.
- 10.8 The details of the revised scheme can be viewed in Appendix A.
- 10.9 The details of those currently in receipt of CTRS can be viewed in Appendix B.

11. Background Documents

Revising and updating the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme for working age households – Council report (MC/17/19) of 26th October 2017.

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Appendix A – The Revised Scheme

A revised scheme which:

- ***Maintains the proportion of CTR that the poorest households receive at 95% of the Council Tax charge,***
- ***aligns the CTR Working Age Scheme with the Housing Benefit Scheme,***
- ***makes provision for Universal Credit; and***
- ***introduces a minimum weekly CTR award of £1 per week.***

For customers with existing claims there is no financial cost and minimal impact.

The 16 changes that align the MSDC Working Age CTR scheme with the Housing Benefit Scheme (effective from 1st April 2018) would only impact new claims made on or after 1st April 2018. These changes include:

1. Restrictions on “persons from abroad” such that a person receiving a Job Seekers Allowance is no longer automatically deemed to have a right to reside in the UK and can be excluded from CTR eligibility;
2. Changes to the list of persons from abroad who do not need to show habitual residence in the UK;
3. Exclusion of persons subject to immigration control from CTR entitlement;
4. Remove the non-dependant deduction from a member of the military away on operations;
5. Disregards certain relatively unusual payments;
6. Correcting drafting errors
7. Changes in wording due to changes to Employment & Support Allowance,
8. Changes consequent upon introduction of Personal Independence Payments and Universal Credit.
9. Further changes affecting persons from abroad
10. Minor wording changes.
11. When earnings are taken in to account, consequent on a Court case;
12. Consequent upon changes to National Insurance changes;
13. Remove the Family Premium from the means test for new claims from April 2018;
14. Where a carer gets a care element in their Universal Credit the person being cared for cannot get a care addition in their CTR;
15. Reduce the period that a customer can be temporarily absent, yet maintain their claim, from 13 weeks to 4 weeks in most cases.
16. Limit the number of dependent children taken in to account to 2, with certain exceptions, for new claims from April 2018;

The new scheme also provides for the inclusion of Universal Credit (without earnings or other income) as a ‘passport’ benefit and aligns the treat as claim made date with the date of claim for Universal Credit.

The scheme also introduces a minimum award of £1.00 but maintains the proportion of CTR that the poorest households would receive at 95%.

Under this scheme, 15 Households would lose CTR altogether from having entitlement to less than £1 per week. Discretionary Financial Assistance could be made available to those customers to replace CTR entitlement as a one off lump sum credit to their Council Tax account in recognition of their reduced circumstances.

The Collection Fund's expenditure on CTR would decrease by about £397 per annum on top of current CTR costs of about £1,697,452 – a reduction of 0.02%, but as this cost is borne between precepting authorities, a small gain for MSDC would exist of about £40.

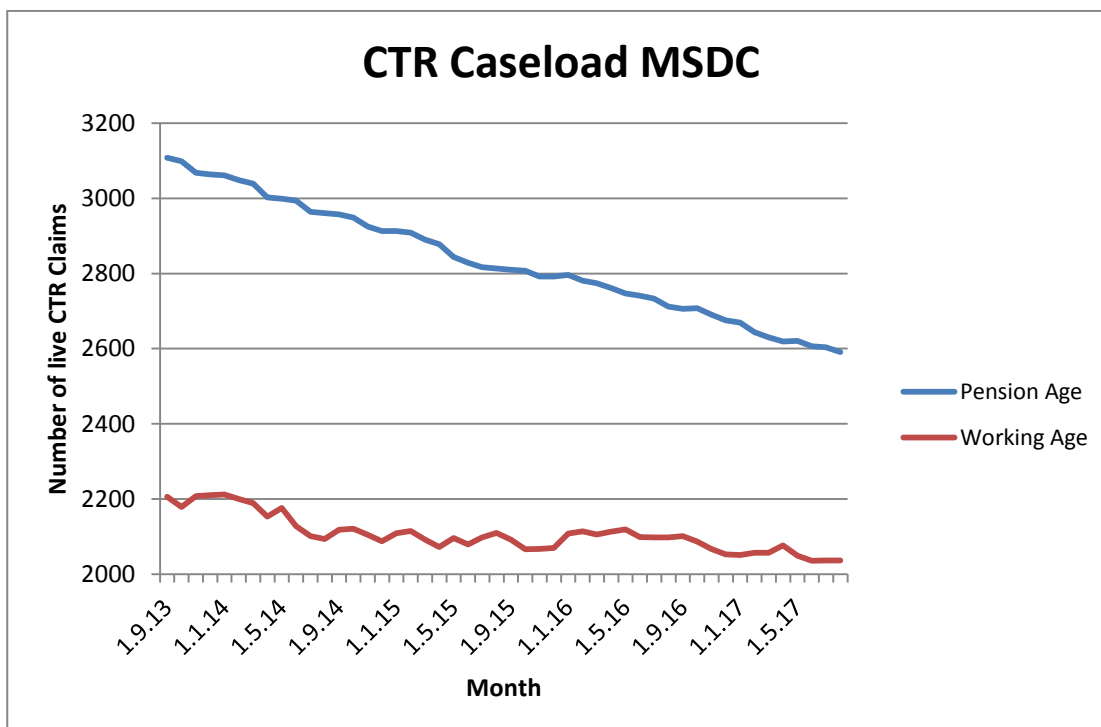
Effect of introducing a minimum award of £1 a week					
		Number	Total Weekly CTR Increase/loss (-)	Avg Wkly Inc/loss (-) of CTR	Annual Cost/Gain(-) to the Collection Fund
Means Tested	Award under £1 per week	15	-£7.63	-£0.51	-£396.76
	Awards	706	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Passported	Award under £1 per week	0	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
	Awards	1,221	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
UC Recipients	Award under £1 per week	0	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
	Awards	42	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
TOTAL		1,984	-£7.63	-£0.51	-£396.76

Appendix B - Background Information

This report uses October 2017 as its reference point. In October 2017, the number of claims for CTR was as follows:

MSDC CTR Claims as at 01 Nov 2017	Number	Percentage
Total CTR claims	4,525	100.00%
Pension Age Passport Claims	1,440	31.82%
Pension Age Means Tested	1,099	24.29%
Working Age Passport Claims	1,222	27.01%
Working Age Means Tested	764	16.88%

From its introduction in April 2013, the number of CTR claims has steadily fallen. This is mainly attributed to the improvement in the economy.



MSDC Working Age claims fell from 2,206 to 2,037 in 4 years, a fall of 7.6%. The number of Pensioner claims has also fallen significantly, 16.6% in 4 years. This fall in claim numbers reduces the Council's expenditure on CTR, but could, of course, reverse if the economic situation were to worsen.

The Current Scheme 'cost of reduction' is set out below:

MSDC April 2013 Working Age CTR Scheme as at 01 Nov 2017					
	Number	Weekly CT Payable	Weekly CTR Entitlement	Gross CT Due	% Awarded
Total All	1,984	£6,509.73	£32,643.31	£39,153.04	83.37%
Average All	1,984	£3.28	£16.45	£19.73	83.37%
Total Passported	1,221	£1,310.13	£22,311.19	£23,621.32	94.45%
Average Passported	1,221	£1.07	£18.27	£19.35	94.42%
Total Means Test	721	£5,114.51	£9,685.79	£14,800.30	65.44%
Average Means Test	721	£7.24	£13.72	£20.96	65.46%
Total UC	42	£85.09	£646.33	£731.42	88.37%
Average UC	42	£2.03	£15.39	£17.41	88.40%

This shows, for example, that the average MSDC Working Age CTR customer, receiving maximum CTR (i.e. in receipt of a 'passport' benefit) has their weekly Council Tax liability reduced from an average of £19.35 to £1.07.

Appendix C Consultation Results

Do you agree that the Council should bring in a new scheme aligning the Housing Benefit legislation and the local Council Tax Reduction scheme, thereby making the scheme easier to understand and quicker to access?	
Yes 75.00%	No 25.00%
Do you support the Council's increase in the level of Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of 95% discount, to help those in need?	
Yes 70.00%	No 30.00%
Do you agree that the Council should seek cost savings in the administration of the local Council Tax Reduction scheme?	
Yes 60.00%	No 40.00%
Would you be prepared to pay increased Council Tax to pay for the administration of the local Council Tax Reduction scheme?	
Yes 11.11%	No 88.89%
Are you or someone in your household receiving a Council Tax Reduction Scheme discount currently?	
Yes 37.50%	No 62.50%
If you said 'No' to the previous question, please state which group or organisation you replied on behalf of.	
Council Tax Payer 100%	Other 0.00%
Which age group do you fall within?	
<p style="text-align: center;"> 18-24 0.00% 25-34 33.33% 35-44 0.00% 45-54 16.67% 55-64 33.33% 65-74 16.67% 75-84 0.00% 85+ 0.00% Prefer not to say 0.00% </p>	
What is your gender?	
Male 0%	Female 100%

Appendix D – Legislative Changes

- Legislative changes and their impact explained.

- Restrictions on “persons from abroad” such that a person receiving a Job Seekers Allowance is no longer automatically deemed to have a right to reside in the UK and can be excluded from CTR eligibility;

There are very few such customers in the MSDC area, the financial effect of this change will therefore be minimal.

- Making changes to the list of persons from abroad who do not need to show habitual residence in the UK;

There are very few such customers in the MSDC area, the financial effect of this change will therefore be minimal.

- Excluding persons subject to immigration control from CTR entitlement;

There are very few such customers in the MSDC area, and as such customers tend to occupy Hostel or Houses in Multiple Accommodation where CTR does not apply, the financial effect of this change will therefore be minimal.

- Removing the non-dependant deduction from a member of the military away on operations;

This change would only affect a member of the military whose sole or main residence was at their Parent’s or other relative’s home. To date, SRP has not come across such a case in any of the Council areas.

- Disregarding certain relatively unusual payments;

The payments listed are very rare and the financial effect would therefore be minimal, if any.

- Correcting drafting errors;

These do not affect the overall meaning of the legislation and have no financial effect.

- Changing the wording due to changes to Employment & Support Allowance;

These changes accommodate the removal of the “Work” element from Employment & Support Allowance. As this change has already taken place, the wording is currently obsolete and has no financial effect in itself.

- Changes consequent upon introduction of Personal Independence Payments and Universal Credit.

This is a wording clarification and has no financial effect.

- Further changes affecting persons from abroad

There are very few affected customers in the MSDC area; the financial effect of this change will therefore be minimal.

- Minor wording changes.

This is a wording clarification and has no financial effect.

- When earnings are taken in to account, consequent on a Court case;

This is a wording clarification and has no financial effect.

- Changes consequent upon changes to National Insurance changes;

As this change has already taken place, the wording is currently obsolete and this has no financial effect in itself.

- Remove the Family Premium from the means test for new claims;

This would result in a reduction in the CTR award for means-tested working age **new** CTR claims of a maximum of £3.49 per week (20% of the £17.45 Family Premium). This has been introduced as a transition step towards UC where no Family Premium applies.

- Where a carer gets a care element in their Universal Credit the person being cared for cannot get a care addition in their CTR;

Carers cannot currently claim UC in MSDC, there is therefore no financial effect as yet. This change prevents a “double” carer award in such cases.

- Reduce the period that a customer can be temporarily absent, yet maintain their claim, from 13 weeks to 4 weeks in most cases.

A Temporary Absence award is very rare in CTR as, for example, if the person liable for Council Tax is on remand, they are exempt from Council Tax. In many other cases, the property remains occupied by another person, who would then become liable for the Council Tax.

- Introduces the “2 child” restriction for new claims to CTR so as to align the CTR scheme with all other Benefits

Many of our current Working Age claims with more than 2 children have “passport benefits” and therefore are unaffected by this change (as far as CTR is concerned); a few are Pension Age customers and their claims will be subject to this change already.