

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK COUNCIL** held at the Council Chamber, Mid Suffolk District Council Offices, High Street, Needham Market on Thursday, 20 July 2017

PRESENT:

Councillors:	Gerard Brewster	Michael Burke
	David Burn	James Caston
	Rachel Eburne	Paul Ekpenyong
	John Field	Nick Gowrley
	Kathie Guthrie	Lavinia Hadingham
	Glen Horn	Anne Killett
	John Levantis (Vice Chairman in the Chair)	Sarah Mansel
	John Matthissen	Suzie Morley
	Mike Norris	Derek Osborne
	Penny Otton	Andrew Stringer
	Keith Welham	Kevin Welsby
	John Whitehead	David Whybrow
	Jill Wilshaw	

In attendance:

Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Strategic Director (KJ/ME)
Assistant Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Corporate Manager – Strategic Planning
Governance Support Officer (VL/HH/RC)

52 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillors Roy Barker, Julie Flatman, Jessica Fleming, Gary Green, Elizabeth Gibson-Harries, Derrick Haley, Matthew Hicks, Barry Humphreys MBE, Esther Jewson, Diana Kearsley, Wendy Marchant, Lesley Mayes, Dave Muller, Tim Passmore and Jane Storey.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

54 **MC/17/9 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22 MAY 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2017 were confirmed as a correct record subject to an amendment to Minute 12 (g) Appointments to the Joint Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group, to read:

RESOLUTION

That Jessica Fleming, Kevin Welsby and Andrew Stringer be appointed to the Joint Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group

55 **MC/17/10 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The report was received.

56 **MC/17/11 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The report was received.

Councillor Gowrley advised that Jonathan Stephenson, currently with Enfield Council and formerly with Ipswich Borough Council had been appointed as the new Strategic Director.

It was noted that Sue Cook, Corporate Director for Children and Adult Services had been appointed as Interim Chief Executive at Suffolk County Council.

In response to a Member's question he confirmed that although the Secretary of State, at the LGA Conference, had indicated that the Government was open to devolution bids he did not think devolution was now an option for Suffolk.

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

A petition signed by 460 residents was received regarding Applications 1432/17 and 1648/17 and Stradbroke Road (not yet active) in Fressingfield, asking that the above planning applications be rejected.

In accordance with the Petition Scheme the petition had been dealt with as a Consultation Petition lodged in response to invitations for a representation in connection with planning applications 1432/17 and 1648/17.

The petitions were noted.

58 **QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC**

None received.

59 **QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Matthissen put the following questions to the Cabinet Member for the Environment:

In view of the deteriorated contractor performance regarding brown bin and latterly also twin bin collections:

1. What action was being taken to restore the service to an acceptable level?

Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for the Environment responded:

While in general the level of service remained high, the service had experienced a period, between May and June, where service standards had dropped below the expected level.

Members were informed that Serco managed 19 domestic waste collection rounds, 4 garden waste rounds, 2 trade waste rounds, 2 bulky / delivery rounds, and a clinical and glass collection around, servicing in the region of 100,000 waste collections a week.

There were two main factors for the drop in level of service, these were:

1. Staff shortages, particularly drivers, and
2. Vehicle availability

Serco had suffered from a high turnover of HGV drivers, the retention and recruitment of trained HGV drivers was an industry wide issue. Serco had been through a period with a high number of vacancies, they had now addressed this and had recruited more staff and agency drivers. Operational staffing levels were now back to normal levels.

Serco management also seem to have resolved the issues with their vehicle maintenance contractor. The pressure of maintaining the fleet of vehicles had been eased with hiring of 2 additional vehicles while long term issues with vehicles were resolved.

Officers raised the issue of poor performance with Serco at the beginning of May, writing to both the Managing Director and Regional Director. Performance review meetings were held in May and June and a further meeting was programmed in August. Some additional actions have also been undertaken:

- Serco have also appointed a new contract supervisor within the last 2 weeks to help improve the day to day management that had impacted the service.
- Restructuring had been undertaken of the garden waste rounds in Mid-Suffolk earlier this year to rebalance the rounds due to the continued growth of the service and this had a positive impact.
- A more fundamental review was undertaken of all the rounds later this year to ensure there was a better balance which would minimise potential issues.

During the summer period, the service experienced a peak in demand on the garden waste service both in terms of the numbers of bins presented and the weight of waste the rounds have collect. On occasions, this resulted in areas at the end of some collection rounds not being collected on the correct day, however any outstanding work was cleared first thing the next morning.

Throughout this period, the service had continued to work with Serco locally and raised the Council's concerns at senior level as explained. The Council continue to maintain a strong working relationship Serco and were working with them through the recent problems.

2. What penalties were imposed on the contractor for failures?

Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for the Environment responded:

No penalties had been imposed on Serco at this time. There was a need to work constructively with Serco and build a strong partnership at a local level rather than take a punitive approach, as long as they were actively working to correct any issues.

Councillor Matthissen put the following question to the Cabinet Member for Customers:

What certainty and clarity could members provide to their local communities when, having originally assured them that the HQ move to Ipswich would be mitigated by four or five public access points, or "spokes" (based on briefings and MSDC Exec 7/9/2015) subsequently reduced to only two (Council 22/9/2016) when they read the Article in Stowmarket Mercury 22/6 which states:

"In Stowmarket the set up will be around giving members of the public help with self service. They will be able to make pre-bookable appointments to see council officers but there will be no walk ins." said DC spokeswoman.

At the recent parish liaison meeting, members are now told:
"Alongside presentations, Parish representatives were asked for their suggestions on what we should call our two centres in Sudbury and Stowmarket, which to date have been called "Customer Access Points". The current name is readily acknowledged to not be the right one and suggestions ranged from "council walk in centre" to local service point". (The Moves update 6/7/2017)

Please could members and public have some consistency and clarity as to the function and operation of these two remaining outposts within the districts?

Councillor Horn, Cabinet Member for Customers replied:

There was to be two Customer Access Points, one in the Babergh District at Sudbury Town Hall and one in the Mid-Suffolk District at 54 Ipswich Street, Stowmarket. These two facilities would provide support to people who 'dropped-in' on an ad-hoc basis to access services. They would operate a supported self-service provision where people could access all the services via on-line facilities with staff available to assist them if needed. The two sites would also cater for appointment based service provision where Officers could make pre-determined appointments and meet face to face in a meeting room or via a video link to Endeavour House.

Councillor Wilshaw, Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the report and recommendation from Cabinet. She said that under the self-financing regime introduced in 2011/12 stock holding authorities must have a 30 year business plan for how they would manage stock. There had been several changes recently that had affected the Authority's previous Plan, for example the increase in Right to Buy and the changes introduced by the Welfare Reform Act, and the report provided a summary of the update position of the Business Plan. Following a considerable amount of work across a whole range of services the Plan would now enable financial security for the Council and would keep it below the debt cap for the foreseeable future, enabling use of that headroom for the delivery of additional homes.

Councillor Wilshaw moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Ekpenyong.

It was noted that there would be a six-monthly review of the Plan to ensure it was still appropriate for the time.

Members fully supported the Business Plan but made the following comments:

More could have been included regarding empty homes, local housing companies, help-to-rent schemes for the self-employed, zero carbon standards for council houses.

A review of the de-sheltering of the Sheltered Housing Schemes was also requested to ensure that it had been successful.

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION

That the updated 30 year business and financial plan is approved

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RECOMMENDATION FROM JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Councillor Morley, Joint Chairman of the Joint Audit and Standards Committee introduced the report. She said that there had been no changes requested to the report following its consideration at the Joint Audit and Standards Committee meeting on 17 July.

Councillor Morley moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Guthrie.

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION

That the Treasury Management activity for the year 2016/17 be noted. Further, that it be noted that performance was in line with the Prudential Indicators set for 2016/17

MC/17/12 CONSULTATION ON THE BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK JOINT LOCAL PLAN

The report was introduced by Councillor Whybrow, Cabinet Member for Planning. He said the Council needed to replace its current Local Plan and Focused Review with a new Plan that identified the up to date requirements of its communities, used contemporary information that provided evidence of those requirements and capacity to meet them and which provided a realistic prospect of delivering growth in a way which was proportionate, appropriate and measured. A considerable amount of work had been undertaken to update the evidence base, including the annual housing requirement, jobs forecast and town centre and retail requirements. Work continued on updating the position on heritage, leisure and infrastructure requirements. In consequence, there was now a good understanding of the key issues that arose from meeting the growth requirements of the District. The new Joint Local Plan would complement the priorities of the Council and the objectives of the Joint Strategic Plan. Among the 79 questions in the Consultation Document were a number of issues on which the Council particularly wanted to engage with communities, including where it should distribute or concentrate growth over the next 20 years, the range and mix of homes and to develop a robust approach to ensuring appropriate infrastructure provision when development was implemented, hence the proposal for Infrastructure Management Policies. An extensive programme of consultation would commence in August to ensure that communities' views on these issues were obtained.

Councillor Whybrow proposed the recommendations. Councillor Stringer seconded the motion and thanked the team for their work.

In response to Members' questions Councillor Whybrow clarified that:

- the proposed timetable
- the Local Plan weight in planning terms as it progressed
- future briefings for Members / Member involvement

By a unanimous vote

RESOLVED 1

That the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan: Consultation Document (July 2017) appended to this report be approved.

RESOLVED 2

That the Corporate Manager – Strategic Planning, in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning, be authorised to make consequential amendments to the consultation document arising from:

- (i) *the outcomes of the Sustainability Appraisal of the document,*

- (ii) removal of drafting and technical errors and typing mistakes, and
- (iii) improvements to the layout of the document necessitated by printing requirements.

RESOLVED 3

That consultation on the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan: Consultation Document (July 2017) be commenced

63 **MC/17/13 APPOINTMENTS OF COUNCILLORS TO SERVE ON DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL AND MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL**

The report was noted.

64 **APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLORS TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES**

Councillor Gowrley advised Members that it was proposed to appoint Councillor Derrick Haley to the Joint Traveller and Gypsy Steering Group, together with those appointments detailed on the agenda.

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION

That the following appointments are made to Committees and Outside Bodies:

Development Control Committee B
Dereck Osborne (replacing John Levantis)

Joint Audit and Standards Committee
John Levantis (replacing Elizabeth Gibson-Harries)

Joint Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group
Councillor Derrick Haley

65 **MC/17/14 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Councillor Rachel Eburne introduced the report.

She advised that a further meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been held earlier in the day when an excellent discussion had been held on the topics of homelessness, use of bed and breakfast accommodation and temporary accommodation. These topics would be followed up at a future meeting.

The Committee would be undertaking a scoping review of Voids at the August meeting and she advised any Member who wished to comment to contact a Member of the Committee.

The report was noted.