

Public Document Pack



	MID SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	Thursday, 14 September 2017 at 9.30 am
PLACE	Council Chamber, Council Offices, High Street, Needham Market

PLEASE NOTE START TIME OF MEETING

Members

Chairman: Rachel Eburne
Vice Chairman: Derek Osborne

James Caston
John Field
Elizabeth Gibson-Harries

Lavinia Hadingham
Lesley Mayes
Kevin Welsby

A G E N D A

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The Information Bulletin is a document that is made available to the public with the published agenda papers. It can include update information requested by the Committee as well as information that a service considers should be made known to the Committee.

The Information Bulletin contains updates on the following subjects:

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Agenda Item 3

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**
held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, High Street, Needham Market on Thursday,
17 August 2017.

PRESENT:

Councillors	Rachel Eburne - Chair	Lesley Mayes
	Derek Osborne – Vice Chairman	Suzie Morley*
	John Field	Kevin Welsby
	Lavinia Hadingham	

*Denotes a substitute

In attendance:

Councillor Robert Everitt
Councillor Nick Gowrey
Councillor Jill Wilshaw
Strategic Director
Assistant Director – Communities and Public Access
Assistant Director – Law and Governance
Senior Development Management Planning Officer
Corporate Manager – Housing Options
Governance Support Officer

28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/SUBSTITUTIONS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor James Caston. Councillor Suzie Morley was substituting for Councillor Elizabeth Gibson – Harries.

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

None received.

30 MOS/17/8 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JULY 2017

The minutes from the meeting held on the 20 July 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

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

None received.

32 MOS/17/9 REVIEW OF WESTERN SUFFOLK COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (WSCSP)

Jonathan Free, Assistant Director – Communities and Public Access, introduced

Councillor Robert Everitt for St. Edmundsbury Borough Council and Chairman for Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP) and Melanie Yolland, Communities Officer (Safe) and Safeguarding Lead and Prevent Lead with responsibility for Mid Suffolk District.

Councillor Robert Everitt explained the structural organisation of the WSCSP and how the councils in Western Suffolk co-operated across the districts to address issues within the area. Similarities often existed between the issues raised and it was beneficial to the Districts to share experiences and practices.

Melanie Yolland said that the WSCSP conducted an annual strategic assessment which was required as a statutory responsibility. The assessment investigated crime and disorder issues across the four districts and was compiled by Suffolk County Council. The data was collected from sources such as crime and disorder services, ambulance and public health Services. An analysis of the different types of crime was undertaken to identify current issues and emerging trends. Once these were established the WSCSP worked with partnership groups to establish the best way to address these.

Based on the strategic assessment, a three-year partnership plan was produced and a workable action plan was created to identify priorities and how these were to be addressed by the partners. The WSCSP did not receive any funding, but worked actively with voluntary and community groups to help them manage applications for funding for projects in the community.

Members wanted to know how the relationship between the WSCSP and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) worked and Councillor Everitt responded this was a well-established and supportive relationship. Reports were produced in co-operation with the PCC and were especially relevant when the WSCSP was applying for funding from the PCC for partnership groups in the community. An example of how this worked in the community was given for high risk domestic abuse cases and the process for implementing Target Hardening, a term used for providing security for victims. Melanie Yolland worked with Safe Partnership, a charity, to assess the need for Target Hardening across West Suffolk and together they produced a secure funding bid from Suffolk Community Foundation, obtained funding of £6000 for Safe Partnership to install safety equipment in identified properties across Mid Suffolk District. This success lead to a standardised Target Hardening policy across the Districts and funds were being shared from all of the Districts including the PCC and Suffolk County Council to address this need.

The Assistant Director – Communities and Public Access explained the process for how a Domestic Homicidal Review was conducted. It was the obligation of each district or borough to conduct the review and this was costly in terms of both time, planning and financial implications because it was difficult to plan for this kind of reactive response. It was the responsibility of the WSCSP to initiate the review and for the individual district to take the lead in the review process. The cost of the reviews was shared equally across the four districts to alleviate the cost for the individual district or borough.

The Domestic Homicide Review generated an action plan and it was the

responsibility of the WSCSP to monitor that the recommendations within the action plan was carried out by the principle agency. The action plan was forwarded both to the Home Office and the relevant district and was published on their websites respectively. The action plan often identified areas of improvement and the WSCSP take the lead in the implementation of such improvements. As the WSCSP had a strategic function the panel organised the involvement of the relevant community groups, but it was up to the individual councils and community groups to implement the required action.

Members questioned the need for updates on the outcomes of projects and reviews. They felt that there was a lot of focus on the input into such cases, and not enough focus of what had been achieved. Members felt it would be useful to have examples of successful cases included in the next annual report. Councillor Everitt suggested that the Member, who represented the District at the WSCSP should report back to all Members in the District Council.

Members then inquired about the progress of mental health issues in relation to Domestic Homicide Reviews. The response was that a representative from the Clinical Commissioning Group attended the WSCSP Committee and that any outcome from a Domestic Homicide review would be discussed at committee meetings.

Questions were then raised regarding the accountability of the funding provided by the Suffolk Community Foundation to community groups. Officers explained that as a statutory partnership, the WSCSP could not directly apply for funds but they contacted the appropriate community groups and provided support for the application process to enable a successful bid for funding. Community groups were required to produce regular quarterly reports and statistics of how the funding was spent to the WSCSP. Adjustments could be made to the funding if it was deemed necessary. The PCC also monitored how the funding was spent.

Councillor Rachel Eburne said that a lot of work was being done with limited resources and Members appreciated how many community groups were involved in the WSCSP and the work done by the panel.

Councillor Eburne suggested two amendments to the recommendations:

- That the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership's annual report includes an outcome summary.
- The designated WSCSP Member to report annually to the Council on the work of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership.

Councillors Rachel Eburne and Lesley Mayes proposed and seconded the recommendations respectively.

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION

The Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership's annual report includes an outcome summary.

The designated WSCSP Member to report annually to the Council on the work of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership.

To review and scrutinise the community safety activity of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP) from April 2016 to July 2017

33 MOS/17/10 SCOPING A REVIEW OF VOIDS

Councillor Rachel Eburne asked Members to consider the Scoping Review Document MOS/17/10.

Some Members felt that the voids report was a challenge to read and that it was not always clear how the voids was being measured. The Officer explained the measuring of voids was the time it took to re-let a property and properties which were deemed to be demolished and they would not be included in the voids lists. Members asked to have a list of the explanations of the abbreviation used in the reports.

It was agreed that to compare voids statistics with statistics from other similar councils, it was necessary to understand what was being included in the voids lists and what exactly was being measured. Comparison was not easy as the method of dealing with voids varied in different councils.

The Corporate Manager – Housing Options said that during the last three years the voids time had been reduced on all properties by just under a half. However, the introduction in April of Babergh and Mid Suffolk Building Service (BMBS) had increased the turnaround time for voids. The Senior Leadership Team acknowledged this and it was understood that the BMBS team was now fully operational, but still had a few issues to solve. In 2015/16 the turnaround time for voids in Mid Suffolk was 31 days compared with the median figured of 29 days supplied by Housemark, a benchmarking provider. The team was continuously working towards improving performance.

The Committee discussed the differences between the operation of BMBS and a privately operating repair service for housing. The Strategic Director said that it was not possible to make this comparison, because the Councils was not able to evict tenants in the same way as a private organisation could. The Council was not a profit-making operation and worked within different parameters than an organisation in the private sector.

Generally, members were satisfied with the Scoping Document and the Committee discussed the time scale for the Voids Report. Councillor Eburne suggested that a draft be provided to the Chair, Vice-chair and the Strategic Director recommended this was done in cooperation with the Chairman of Babergh District Council. He also said it was important to include a way forward to issues raised in the report, so that it

was possible to measure progress in next year's voids review.

RESOLUTION

The Voids report be presented at the Overview and Scrutiny on 19 October 2017 and that a draft report be circulated to the Chair and Vice-Chair of Mid Suffolk District Council and to the Chair of Babergh District Council before the final report was produced.

34 UPDATE FROM DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ON PLANNING APPEALS

John Pateman-Gee - Senior Development Management Planning Officer, provided the update, and directed Members to the tabled papers for Mid Suffolk Planning Appeals. He said that there were consequences for the Council if the thresholds set out in the Performance Charter were not observed, so it was important that the Council performed above the designated thresholds.

He then explained Table 1 of the tabled papers and said there were two thresholds which had to be meet:

- The time it took for an application to be processed, which depending on the type of application was between eight to sixteen weeks.
- The quality of decision making, which was a statistical term for how many appeals were permitted.

In terms of timing for major and non-major applications the Council performed above the threshold. But although the Council performed above the threshold for quality, it was important to improve on the current level as the percentage of major applications allowed to go to appeal was 5.6%, which only left a margin of 4.4% before the threshold was reached (Table 2, page 2). For the 2500 non-major applications only 25 or 1% of these applications went to appeal and this was well below the 25% threshold.

The Senior Development Management Planning Officer then explained the 2016 statistics obtained from the Planning Inspectorate website for the appeals in Mid Suffolk District. Members questioned him on the figures provided and it was agreed that the officer would forward the latest statistics to Members of the Committee.

Councillor Eburne reminded members that they needed to consider the effect of the planning applications appeals process and if there were any areas that Members felt should be scrutinised.

Some Members suggested that it would be useful to divide the performance statistics up between Mid Suffolk District and Babergh District, as the difference between the two councils would influence the overall results.

The Officer continued to say that in the last two years there had been many changes to the planning department and to policy. The loss of a five-year land supply also had an effect on the appeal process. The challenge was to determine how to improve the appeal process to remain within the required threshold.

Members questioned the Senior Development Management Planning Officer including:

- If there existed a common trend between the successful appeals;
- How often Members overturned officers' recommendations and what kind of appeals did Members overturn;
- The difference between major and non-major appeals;
- Increases in charges for major planning applications and appeals;
- Increases in applications without pre-applications advice, as a result of the introduction of charges for pre-application advice;
- The need to change the overall process as the appeals process performance was well within the threshold.

Councillor Eburne ask that it be noted that if the Committee had the assurance that the Planning Department monitored the performance of appeals and that the performance was maintained above the threshold, no further scrutiny was necessary unless the performance fell below the threshold.

Councillor Eburne asked what element of the performance was recorded in the Performance Report as the latest performance figures would be included and Members could then decide if further scrutiny was required.

Emily Yule, Assistant Director – Law and Governance confirmed that the performance for appeals was available in the Performance Report.

The latest performance figures from the Planning Inspectorate to be forwarded to Members.

RESOLUTION

The update be noted

35 INFORMATION BULLETIN

The was no item for the bulletin.

36 MOS/17/11 MSDC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FORWARD PLAN

The Overview and Scrutiny Forward Plan was noted with the following amendments:

The Void Review to be presented on 19 October and the Neighbourhood Plan to moved forward to the 14 September.

The business of the meeting concluded at 11.15 am.

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Chairman

Agenda Item 5

MOSMID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Cabinet Member for Housing	Report Number: MOS/17/12
To: Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date of meeting: 14 September 2017

VOID TIMES IN COUNCIL PROPERTIES

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of the committee with information about the average time to re-let vacancies within Council housing stock and the action being taken to improve performance.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee has received assurances that appropriate steps are being taken to reduce void times and that the position be reported to Cabinet;
- 2.2 That the approach to reducing void times be endorsed;
- 2.3 That the performance against void targets be monitored and that any underperformance be reported back to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 Re-let performance has a direct impact on resources within the HRA. Rent loss and payment of council tax reduces the funds available for other activities. Average rent equates to £80 per week and with approximately 200 vacancies a year, a reduction of 7 days in the void time would achieve a saving of around £16,000 in rent loss and £3500 in council tax.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications to this report.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1 This report is not closely linked with the Council's Corporate / Significant Risks However risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Rent loss resulting from long void periods poses a risk to the Council's HRA business plan	Unlikely (2)	Minimal (1)	Void Improvement Project, efficiency gains from improved utilisation of IT systems

6. Consultations

6.1 There have been no consultations specifically associated with this report.

7. Equality Analysis

7.1 There are no equality & diversity implications related directly to this report, however the Housing Options service routinely undertakes equality impact assessments around service delivery.

8. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

8.1 Since April this year an integrated team has been responsible for carrying out repairs in void properties.

9. Links to Joint Strategic Plan

9.1 The services described in this report relate to the following strategic aim: Manage our housing assets effectively.

10. Key Information

Mid Suffolk has around 200 void properties each year. During the time they are unoccupied no rent is received and council tax has to be paid.

The work required from the time a tenant gives notice to the start of a new tenancy is carried out by the Housing Options Team and Babergh and Mid Suffolk Building Services (BMBS).

The Housing Options Team visits the outgoing tenant, advertises vacancies on Gateway to Homechoice, carries out viewings for potential new tenants and completes a number of administrative tasks.

BMBS carries out or arranges repairs and safety checks to bring the properties up to the Council's lettable standard.

10.1 Average re-let times

The table below shows the average time to re-let vacancies within Council stock from the end of one tenancy to the start of a new one.

Table 1: Average time to re-let

Year	All properties	Major works	Minor works	Standard repairs		
				All	General needs	Sheltered
2015/16	42	161	49	31	31	30
2016/17	35	97	42	29	29	30
2017/18 quarter 1	47	82	70	37	35	48

The table is broken down to show the time to re-let different types of property. A small number of properties each year required extensive repair work which would have required an existing tenant to move out. Minor works include a new kitchen, bathroom or a new heating system.

The columns for properties which required standard repairs show separate figures for sheltered properties and all other types. Sheltered vacancies are sometimes harder to let. This could be down to a number of reasons, including location and demand.

The figures do not show any properties which were demolished as part of a redevelopment such as the unity schemes in Woolpit, Haughley and Stowmarket as they were not re-let.

They also exclude properties which were left unoccupied pending a potential development scheme such as those in Haughley which were used to decant tenants whose homes were refurbished.

10.2 Comparison with other landlords

Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) compiled by central government includes the average time to re-let standard void properties. Amongst Suffolk stock owning authorities the average time in 2015/16 was 39 days with a range from 20 to 67 days. In Norfolk the average was 33 days with a range from 15 to 51. For Essex authorities the average was 35 which a range from 18 to 60.

In each county the higher performance was in the urban areas, primarily down to geographic spread (less distance to travel to properties and less time collecting materials etc). The average for rural districts, excluding Mid Suffolk and Babergh, was 48 days.

The Corporate Manager - BMBS has visited the Flagship Group and at the end of September has a further meeting to discuss performance related issues and average timescales.

10.3 Factors which increase the average re-let time.

A number of factors affect the time taken to bring properties up to the lettable standard:-

Prior to work commencing in a void property an asbestos inspection has to take place and any components containing asbestos, such as floor tiles or bath panels removed. This work has to take place once the property is empty as this is an invasive survey and so the outgoing tenants cannot be exposed to asbestos fibres.

Some older long-term tenants have refused improvements such as kitchens or bathrooms which necessitates additional work to reach the lettable standard.

A minority of properties are left in a poor condition by the outgoing tenant and have to be cleared or require flea treatment.

Some properties are hard to let such as sheltered vacancies or bungalows in rural locations.

We have an ageing stock. Half of our current void properties are over 50 years old.

10.4 BMBS

Prior to this April repairs in Mid Suffolk were carried out in-house and in Babergh by an external contractor. The launch of BMBS brings the two teams together to provide an in-house repairs service for both councils. BMBS is facing some initial challenges which have affected the time taken to complete repairs on void properties.

Two separate IT systems were consolidated onto a single platform (Open Housing) in December last year. However, the two councils still operate differently. With the implementation of the new team, members of staff are having to adapt to new roles and have steep learning curves. The void team leader appointed has been off sick since the end of June, so this has impacted on the consistency of the approach in dealing with voids from BMBS. A project is on-going to reconfigure the system and how it is used to support the business. This includes data cleansing, a review and streamlining of processes and procedures, integration of the BMSDC system with external contractors, staff training and temporary administrative resource to enable changes to be made whilst the day to day work of the service continues.

An additional team leader is being recruited which will double the resource available to focus on repairs in void properties and supervision of the trades team.

With the removal of the void co-ordinators / inspector's roles, the trades team itself is being given more responsibility to diagnose problems and complete the work needed to bring vacant properties up to the lettable standard. This removes the requirement for a surveyor to visit properties and specify the requirements and is intended to shorten the time taken to carry out repair work. A change to ways of working and the culture of the whole team are in progress but will take time to become fully embedded.

BMBS operatives have also been required to assist in the creation of a number of touchdown points across the district with a hub at Creeting Road (requiring some quite significant changes to layout and function). Those operatives would normally be carrying out works on various properties across the district, so this will also have some impact short term.

10.5 The Void Improvement Project

Within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan is a section on increasing financial capacity and improving efficiency to deliver savings of £300,000 over three years.

Included within the plan is a reduction in the overall average re-let time to 21 days by 2019/20. With an average rent of £80 per week and 200 vacancies a year, a reduction of 7 days in the void time would achieve a saving of around £16,000 in rent loss and £3500 in council tax.

For reasons shown in 10.6 above there has been an increase in the time taken to repair void properties since April. The project is currently focussing on the new processes and staff roles which flow from the launch of BMBS and the move out of the two offices in Needham and Hadleigh.

Other factors to be addressed include making best use of pre-termination inspections and IT solutions, understanding the reasons some properties are left in poor condition

to reduce the number which require substantial repairs and visiting existing tenants who are likely to be offered a transfer to ensure their properties are up to standard. Within the pre-termination period, it is recommended that more information is gathered relating to works that may be required, instructions are given to outgoing tenants to what they will be responsible for, also highlighting condition of decoration and potential for carpets etc to be left to assist new tenants (also supporting the works done by other groups within the local area who support families on lower budgets).

There have been some significant delays caused by the work relating to asbestos surveys being carried out prior to work being able to commence. This process has been looked at and is being monitored to ensure that the impact is as minimal as possible, highlighting where problems have been encountered and learning from these lessons.

Tracking and influencing indicators for this project are set out in Appendix (A).

11. Appendices

Title	Location
(A) Void Improvement – Tracking and Influencing Indicators and Milestones	Attached
(B) Lettable standard	Attached

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Appendix A

Void Improvement – Tracking and Influencing Indicators and Milestones

Efficiency plans within the two Councils' Business Plans include reducing the time properties remain vacant between tenancies over the next three years.

Target for reduction of void times in days

	17/18	18/19	19/20
Babergh	29	25	21
Mid Suffolk	35	28	21

The following indicators and milestones contribute to achieving this target

	Indicator/Milestone	Rationale	Resources Needed	Targets
Page 13	1 Identify, monitor and set targets for the time taken for the different stages in the void process	A number of activities are required before a property can be re-let. Setting targets for the main contributors to the overall void time and monitoring performance allows us to identify areas of concern and direct resources appropriately.	Staff time to record events in the void process and report on performance	Targets 1a to 1c to be monitored in working days on a monthly basis. Taking into account the number of properties typically requiring major works, minor works or standard repairs the targets in working days would achieve an average total re-let time of 21 calendar days.
	1a Asbestos surveys	Asbestos surveys are required before any repairs can be carried out. Asbestos removal may also be required.	Staff time to record events in the void process and report on performance	Average time to complete: Asbestos surveys: 3 days

Appendix A

		Surveys can be carried out prior to the end of a tenancy but if not the time taken contributes to the overall void time.		
1b	Completion of void repairs	<p>Before a property can be re-let work is completed to bring the property to the lettable standard and to carry out safety checks.</p> <p>Due to the variable condition in which properties are returned by the outgoing tenant, targets are set for the 3 different levels of work required.</p>		<p>Average time to complete:</p> <p>Standard repair work: 5 days</p> <p>Minor works: 10 days</p> <p>Major works: 35 days</p>
1c	Time taken from when properties are ready to let to the start of the new tenancy.	This records the time after BMBS has confirmed a property is ready to be re-let to the date a new tenancy commences and the void period ends.		<p>Average time to complete:</p> <p>5 days</p>
2	Implement workflow within Open Housing	<p>Workflow for the voids process will improve efficiency, accuracy and communication between the different teams involved in void management.</p> <p>It will also enable reports to be run direct from Open Housing to monitor performance and remove the need to maintain manual spreadsheets.</p>	<p>Although some work was carried out prior to implementation of a consolidated OH, sufficient expertise and resource needs to be identified to introduce work flow to the voids process. Other priorities in the pipeline of OH development may take precedence.</p>	Aim to complete by March 2018
3	Reliable advance dates for completion of void repair work provided by BMBS	Advance dates provide allocations officers with important information which allows them to prioritise their own workload effectively and ensure		

Appendix A

	<p>new tenancies start as soon as the property is ready to let.</p> <p>They allow new tenants to plan their move and reduce “failure demand” from repeated calls to the allocations team asking for updates.</p> <p>They are also an indicator of efficient management of the trades team.</p>		
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Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Joint Lettable Standard



Appendix B

Joint Working Together' Void Standard

Item	Void Standard
General	<p>This standard sets out the <u>minimum</u> level of condition that must be achieved before a tenant moves in to a vacant property. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return vacant properties to use quickly to provide much needed accommodation and to minimise rent loss. • Ensure properties are clean, safe and secure, • Undertake, as far as possible, all repairs and improvements that have been identified when the property becomes vacant prior to the new tenant moving in. • Advise incoming tenant of the timescale for any outstanding repairs to be carried out and the estimated programmed dates for any improvement works in the future. • Take responsibility for any alterations or improvements carried out by the previous tenant, if fit for purpose
Electrical	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a full safety test of the electrical systems in the property • Remove non-Council electrical fittings. e.g. brass/chrome switches/sockets, dimmer switches and replace with white PVC fittings • Remove electrical fittings e.g. spotlights installed by previous tenants, make good and re-charge outgoing tenants for the work • Ensure whenever possible, that consumer units will be readily accessible with reusable fuses or fitted with Miniature Circuit Breakers (MCB's) or Residual Current Circuit Breakers (RCCB's). • Ensure a mains-operated smoke detector is fitted to each floor of the property. In houses the ground floor will have a smoke/heat type detector. • Disconnect un-authorised electrical supplies to non-habitable outhouses and garages.
Gas/Oil/ Solid Fuel installations	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a full safety inspection on any, gas, oil or electrical heating in accordance with the current safety regulations and provide a copy of the Safety Certificate to the incoming tenant. • In cases of card meters with debt, clear the debt prior to the start of the new tenancy. • Where there is no oil remaining for the central heating system, cap off the supply until a new delivery is made, and then test, re-commission and provide the Safety Certificate. • Any appliances which have been installed by previous tenants will be removed. • Decommission any open flue (or room-sealed) solid fuel appliance, brick up the opening, and ensure the flue is capped and vented to eliminate the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and any future compliance issues.
Heating/ hot water	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all homes will be provided with an adequate and safe form of central heating and hot water supply. • Drain down heating systems if weather conditions make it imperative to do so, and re-commissioned at the start of the new tenancy. • Ensure hot water cylinders will be fully insulated and operational, including an immersion heater whenever possible. • Ensure roof tanks are fully supported, lagged and made of a non-metallic substance. • Ensure pipe work in roof voids (or the like) is adequately lagged. • Provide an accessible stop tap that isolates all incoming supplies to the property. The location of this stop tap will be recorded in the handover documentation.

Appendix B

Water supply/ waste	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the property is free of leaks and all stop taps will be in good working order. • Ensure any waste pipes will be free flowing and free of leaks. • Inspect and sanitise the water systems in line with regulations relating to legionella ensuring all shower heads are cleaned or replaced. • Provide a cold water supply and waste suitable for a washing machine in the kitchen
Security	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that locks to all external doors will be to insurance standards where possible with a minimum of two sets of keys. • Remove keys to locking windows (this is now a health & safety recommendation to ensure any loss of keys does not prevent upstairs windows being opened in the event of a fire)
Floors	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that concrete/cement based floors will be dry, flat and free from excessive cracking, and ready to receive carpet or covering without preparation work being necessary. • Repair damaged or missing floor tiles with a levelling compound to provide a suitable surface for floor coverings. • Ensure that timber floors will be dry, flat and free from any signs of excessive movement, rot or wood worm infestation. Any timber floors in a poor condition will be covered with plywood (or similar). • Leave a vinyl floor covering that has previously has been fitted (kitchen or bathroom) if it is free from damage. • Provide a non-slip floor covering to kitchen & bathroom floors.
Kitchen	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that adequate storage space is provided by cupboards, floor units or storerooms/pantries. • Provide cupboards with all drawers, door fronts, blanks, hinging mechanisms and openers in full working order. It should be noted that where a non-standard kitchen has previously been fitted some repairs may not fully match. • Ensure shelving will be clean and free from signs of dampness, is securely fixed and level without any excessive marking, chipping or staining, and sealed at all edges to tiling, sinks etc. • Replace sinks (complete with plugs and chains) that have excessive marking or chipping • Where possible provide space for a cooker, fridge and washing machine will be provided. • Ensure taps are easy to operate without undue pressure.
Bathroom	We will : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure suites are clean, free from defects and leaks and securely fixed (complete with plugs and chains) with all panels and other fixtures (hand rails, towel rails etc.) secured and undamaged • Ensure taps are easy to operate without undue pressure. • Provide a new toilet seats • Provide a new non-slip floor covering whenever possible

Appendix B

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previously fitted non-standard bathrooms (which will be expensive to maintain) will be left until such a point where it is too expensive to maintain them, they will then be removed and a new bathroom fitted. Retain previously installed wet rooms in flats and bungalows, but first floor installations will be replaced by a traditional bathroom.
Walls & ceilings	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all walls'& ceilings will be in a sound condition with no loose plaster Remove flammable polystyrene ceiling tiles and coving and the remaining surface prepared for decoration. Ensure all tiles are securely fixed and free from cracks. Provide a minimum of three rows of wall tiles over baths, worktops, sinks and basins. Provide full height around the bath for over-bath showers Ensure all handrails will be safe and securely fixed.
Internal doors/ joinery	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all internal doors will open and close freely and will be fitted with handles and catches in good working order. Check that all internal joinery is sound, securely fixed, free of major defects and have a surface suitable for decoration, and remedy if not Ensure that all internal woodwork is free from active woodworm or rot.
Windows/ Glazing	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all windows will be, as far as possible, draught-proof and watertight, and will open and close freely. Check that any glazing extending below 800mm from floor level will be either safety glass or will be replaced by a timber infill panel fitted. Replace any cracked glass, or failed double glazed sealed units
Decoration	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave all rooms in a condition such that they are ready for the incoming tenant to decorate. Not remove wall or ceiling paper which is in good condition will be left. For properties in poor decorative order compensation or vouchers will be issued to the incoming as a contribution to decorating costs for each affected room in accordance with a defined scale of costs Seal existing 'artex' walls and apply a plaster skim coat that does not contain asbestos
Clearance	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear every property of all belongings from the previous tenancy, with outgoing tenants being re-charged as necessary Remove carpets and curtains and other fittings left by the out-going tenant with outgoing tenants being re-charged as necessary Ensure properties will be free from any pests and/or vermin.
Gardens/ Externals	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange for any substantially overgrown weeds, shrubs, trees and grass will be cut back. Lop or remove trees if they are likely to cause structural damage.

Appendix B

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove sheds or outbuildings and • Fill in fish ponds • Ensure external walls are free from major defects and graffiti. • Check all paths, driveways and any other pedestrian areas to ensure they are free from 'Category 1' trip hazards. • Remove existing water butts. These are only permitted if fitted under a tenants alteration request. You will be advised to remove these at the point of a pre-termination inspection and recharged if not removed and the pipework made good prior to the property becoming empty.
Insulation	We will identify the level of loft insulation and upgrade the insulation on a planned program
TV Aerials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants in individual properties are responsible for the aerial system or satellite system. • We will ensure that aerial socket faceplates are intact and securely fixed. • We will maintain communal aerials systems in blocks of flats
Cleaning	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweep or vacuum all hard floors and/or carpets and mop all vinyl sheeting and/or tiled floors • Damp wipe all fixtures, fittings (including electrical face plates), cills, radiators, pipes and ledges • Clean all windows internally and ensure vents are clear. • Clean and de-scale wash hand basins, baths and toilets including around the U bend as required and polish taps. • Wash all worktops, cupboards and sink units inside and out. • Clean/degrease all extractor fans and degrease behind appliances.
Roof space	We will clear roof spaces of any alterations, previous stored items, debris, rubbish or clutter. The outgoing tenant will be recharged.
Outbuildings	<p>We will:</p> <p>Ensure that attached or detached outbuildings are not intended for habitable use and can only be used as storage areas. These areas will not be upgraded in terms of heating, security or insulation.</p>
Work after start of tenancy	<p>While the Councils will endeavour to carry out repairs and improvements while a property remains empty there is always a possibility that planned maintenance work will be undertaken at a later date.</p> <p>Such works will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • replacement windows or double glazed units • new exterior doors • a new kitchen • a new bathroom • a new or improved central heating system • minor roof repairs • repairs to gutters • repairs to downpipes and drains • loft insulation top ups • repairs to paths, walls, fencing and gates.

Appendix B

Homes Standard	At least three double socket outlets in the living room, kitchen and bedrooms; Electrical socket in the bathroom for electric shavers and toothbrushes; and Carbon monoxide detectors (linked to smoke detectors wherever possible). To be reviewed after 12 months in conjunction with the average void costs.
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Agenda Item 6

MOS/17/13

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE INFORMATION BULLETIN - 14 SEPTEMBER 2017

The Information Bulletin is a document that is made available to the public with the published agenda papers. It can include update information requested by the Committee as well as information that a service considers should be made to the Committee.

1. Community Engagement

(An update on the Committee Recommendations from April 2017)

The Senior Leadership Team does take into account the feedback from all aspects of community engagement, particularly the feedback received from the presentation to Joint Scrutiny Committee by the Tenant Forum and Suffolk Food Hall business. Indeed, as part of our Public Access Strategy going forward, we are seeking better ways of engaging with communities, customers, businesses, tenants, and all those with whom we have dealings in a professional, customer and community-focused way. The feedback that we have received is an important element of this work.

We do take a pragmatic approach where we can, and where we have the flexibility so to do. Staff are receiving training accordingly, and the Customer Service Team, even without a Corporate Manager or Assistant Director, are striving to work better and improve the way we do business even in advance of the complete implementation of the Public Access Strategy.

The website was recently the subject of some positive and helpful feedback from our Parish Liaison Meetings, and we have made changes to it in order to improve responses and communications. Where we have not done as well as we would like is the operation of the 0300 single telephone number. However, the response times for answering telephone calls have improved significantly since the number was introduced, and there has been a commensurate fall in the abandoned call rate. For example, in May where our performance was not as good as we would have liked, it was taking over 4 minutes to answer calls, we were only answering 78-80% of them and our abandoned call rate was high at 19-20%. Through good teamwork, training and close supervision by the seniors in the staff, by the end of June we were consistently answering calls in times ranging from under 20 seconds to just over a minute. The answer rate was 91-96%, with abandoned rates down to 3-9%. August figures were good with calls answered in about 1 - 2 minutes, 90-98% answered and only 1 - 10% abandoned. We are re-working the telephone answering script based on customer feedback, and we shall be using a professional recording studio in The Mix

at Stowmarket with a trained voice-over person to give a better telephone response in the coming weeks, at no cost because we are being helped by The Mix in Stowmarket and an internal colleague. In addition to this, we have been training staff throughout the organisation in over-the-telephone card payment procedures to cut down service failure that has existed up to now.

In terms of responding to customers through media other than emails, we shall be using Skype for Business when the Customer Access Points in Sudbury and Stowmarket are up and running and once the move to Endeavour House is complete. Skype for Business is going to be used at the Customer Access Points to connect people with back office staff if we need to. This, together with a 24/7 website and self-service options for payments, planning and waste collection should improve our service to customers overall.

There has been a cultural change in the organisation as a result of the decision to move to Endeavour House and in the way that we will provide our services to customers, this is particularly so with Agile working. There is more to do and we continue to make cultural changes throughout all our teams. The communication for the move to Endeavour House has improved, but we do recognise that as ever with these matters, there are always lessons that can be learned about how it could have been more effective".

Forthcoming Decisions list (KEY, EXEMPT AND OTHER EXECUTIVE DECISIONS)

September to December 2017

Status	Subject	Summary	Decision Maker & Decision Date	Contacts:		Reason for Inclusion
				Portfolio Holder(s)	Officer(s)	
New	Lawshall Neighbourhood Plan	For comment and agreement	Cabinet 7 September 2017	Lee Parker	Paul Bryant/Paul Munson 01449 724771 Paul.bryant@aberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	
New	Quarter one Budgetary Control	For comment and agreement	Cabinet 4/7 September 2017	Peter Patrick John Whitehead	Katherine Steel 01449 724806 Katherine.steel@aberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Key Decision
New	New Economic Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk	To agree the proposals for endorsement	Cabinet 9/12 October	John Ward Gerard Brewster	Ian Winslett Lou Rawsthorne 01449 724772 Louise.rawsthorne@aberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Key Decision
New	New Anglia Strategic Economic Plan	To endorse the final strategy	Cabinet 9/12 October	John Ward Gerard Brewster	Ian Winslett Lou Rawsthorne 01449 724772 Louise.rawsthorne@aberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Key Decision
Amended	Leisure Strategy	For comment and agreement	Cabinet 9/12 October 2017	Julie Flatman/ Margaret Maybury	Chris Fry 01449 724805 Chris.fry@aberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Key Decision
Amended	Regeneration Proposal Business Case	EXEMPT	BDC Cabinet 12 October 2017 BDC Council 24 October 2017	John Ward	Ian Winslett Lou Rawsthorne 01449 724772 Louise.rawsthorne@aberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Key Decision - Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council) with regards to detailed financial information to enable negotiated acquisitions.

New	Investment and Commercial Delivery	EXEMPT	BDC Cabinet 12 October 2017 BDC Council 24 October 2017	John Ward	Ian Winslett Lou Rawsthorne 01449 724772 Louise.rawsthorne@aberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Key Decision - Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council) with regards to detailed financial information to enable negotiated acquisitions.
Amended	Land Acquisition – Business Case	EXEMPT	MSDC Cabinet 9 October 2017 MSDC Council 26 October 2017	Gerard Brewster	Ian Winslett Lou Rawsthorne 01449 724772 Louise.rawsthorne@aberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Key Decision - Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council) with regards to detailed financial information to enable negotiated acquisitions.
New	Investment and Commercial Delivery – New Business Model	EXEMPT	MSDC Cabinet 9 October 2017 MSDC Council 26 October 2017	Gerard Brewster	Ian Winslett Lou Rawsthorne 01449 724772 Louise.rawsthorne@aberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Key Decision - Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council) with regards to detailed financial information to enable negotiated acquisitions.
Amended	Future Options HQ Sites	To agree and recommend to Full Council for adoption	Cabinet 9/12 October 2017 Council 24/26 October 2017	Nick Gowley Jennie Jenkins	Ian Winslett Lou Rawsthorne 01449 724772 Louise.rawsthorne@aberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	
New	Public Realm Transformation Project	EXEMPT	Cabinet 9/12 October 2017	David Burn Tina Campbell	Peter Garrett 01449 724944 peter.garrett@aberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Key Decision - Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council) with regards to detailed financial information to enable negotiated acquisitions. -
New	Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) – Amendments from April 2018	To agree and recommend to Full Council	Council 24/26 October	John Whitehead Peter Patrick	Katherine Steel 01449 724806 Katherine.steel@aberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	To seek approval to go out to public consultation on options for changes – recommendation to Full Council

	New	2018/19 Budget Report	For comment and agreement	Cabinet 4/7 December 2017	Peter Patrick John Whitehead	Katherine Steel 01449 724806 Katherine.steel@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Key Decision
	Amended	Quarter Two Budgetary Control	For comment and agreement	Cabinet 4/7 December 2017	Peter Patrick John Whitehead	Katherine Steel 01449 724806 Katherine.steel@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Key Decision
	Amended	Suffolk Framework for Growth – Housing, Economic and Infrastructure Strategies	To agree and recommend to Full Council for Adoption	Cabinet 4/7 December 2017	John Ward/Gerard Brewster	Ian Winslett Lou Rawsthorne 01449 724772 Louise.rawsthorne@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	
Page 27	New	Half Yearly Performance Report – April to September '17	For comment and agreement	Cabinet 4/7 December 2017	Peter Patrick Glen Horn	Karen Coll 01449 724566 Karen.coll@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	
	New	Neighbourhood Plan Update	For comment and agreement	Cabinet TBA	David Whybrow/ Lee Parker	Paul Bryant/Paul Munson 01449 724771 Paul.bryant@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Key Decision
	New	Introduction of Fixed Term Tenancies	For comment and agreement	Cabinet TBA	Jan Osborne/ Jill Wilshaw	Sue Lister 01449 724758 Sue.lister@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk	Key Decision

If you have any queries regarding this Forward Plan, require further information about Council or Committee meetings, please contact the Governance Team on 01449 724673/01473 826610 or Email: CommitteeServices@babergh.gov.uk

If you wish to make any representations as to why you feel an item that is marked as an “exempt” or confidential item should instead be open to the public, please contact the Monitoring Officer on 01473 825891 or Email: emily.yule@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk. Any such representations must be received at least 10 working days before the expected date of the decision.

Arthur Charvonia

Chief Executive

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

If you require this document in large print, audio or Braille or in a different language, please contact the Governance Team on 01449 724673/ 01473 826610 or email CommitteeServices@babergh.gov.uk

Agenda Item 8

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS

From: Ben Staines, Project and Research Officer	Report Number: MOS/17/15
To: Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date of meeting: 14 September 2017

FORWARD PLAN FOR 2017/2018

The table below is a draft of the forward plan for the Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This table will be reviewed at each meeting and could be amended in the light of new items arising or as a result of items on the Forthcoming Decisions List being selected for scrutiny.

Date of Committee – 19 October 2017

Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Joint Strategic plan reference
Neighbourhood plans	The Corporate Manager – Community Planning and Heritage was asked to report back on progress on the recommendations made by the Joint Scrutiny Committee in April 2017.	William Newman - Corporate Manager – Strategic Planning	Communities engaged as early as possible - community led planning
Supporting Business Growth	To look at how the growth of small and micro-businesses could be supported.	Lee Carvell – Corporate Manager - Open for Business	Engage with and support business to thrive; Increased understanding of local businesses and their needs.
Community Grants	The Corporate Manager – Strong and Safe Communities was asked to report back following a 'health check' of the groups receiving grants.	Sue Clements - Corporate Manager – Strong and Safe Communities	Targeted grants and funding to support Community capacity building; Community led solutions to deliver services and manage assets.
Performance Management	To consider the performance measures that have been developed since the matter was considered at the July meeting of the Committee.	Karen Coll - Corporate Manager – Business Improvement (Communities)	Intelligence-based community insight and outcome-focused performance management.

Date of Committee – 16 November 2017

Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Joint Strategic plan reference
CIL	Review of the impact and delivery of the CIL regime for Infrastructure	William Newman - Corporate Manager – Strategic Planning	Agree where growth goes
Review of the effectiveness of preparations for the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act	To review the actions that are being taken to prepare for the anticipated impacts of the Homelessness Reduction Act being implemented in April 2018	Heather Sparrow – Corporate Manager - Homeless Prevention and Older Persons	Make best use of our existing Housing assets
Scoping a review of the Legal Services Partnership.	To identify what the Committee would want to look at in this review and also what the aims, objectives and desired outcomes, of the review would be.	Emily Yule - Assistant Director – Law and Governance.	Financially sustainable Councils; Strengthened and clear governance to enable delivery.

Date of Committee – 14 December 2017

Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Joint Strategic plan reference
Review of the Legal Services Partnership.	To carry out the review in accordance with the aims, objectives and desired outcomes identified in the scoping carried out at the November 2017 meeting.	Emily Yule - Assistant Director – Law and Governance.	Financially sustainable Councils; Strengthened and clear governance to enable delivery.

Date of Committee – January 2018

Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Joint Strategic plan reference
Draft Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy and 2017/18 Budget.	To scrutinise the papers before final presentation to Full Council and to make any suggestions of changes felt appropriate.	Katherine Steel - Assistant Director – Corporate Resources	Financially Sustainable Councils

Topics identified for review by O&S but not currently timetabled:

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Building Services.

Plan for this to be reviewed 12 months after the implementation of the services, in April 2018.

Shared Legal Services

Plan for this to be reviewed 12 months after the implementation of the services, in April 2018.

Home Ownership Review.

This was on the forthcoming decisions List for July 2017 but has been deferred for Cabinet consideration in August 2017.

Investment Strategy

It was agreed at the July 2017 meeting that this would be included in the forward plan at an as yet to be determined date.

Crime and Disorder Panel meeting

Required to take place at least once in 12 months following August 2017 meeting.

Authorship:

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