

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK COUNCIL** held in the King Edmund Chamber - Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Thursday, 25 October 2018

PRESENT:

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

Councillors: Roy Barker Gerard Brewster
David Burn James Caston
Rachel Eburne Paul Ekpenyong
John Field Julie Flatman
Jessica Fleming Elizabeth Gibson-Harries
Nick Gowrley Kathie Guthrie
Lavinia Hadingham Matthew Hicks
Glen Horn Barry Humphreys MBE
Esther Jewson Anne Killett
Sarah Mansel John Matthissen
Suzie Morley Dave Muller
Penny Otton Timothy Passmore
Andrew Stringer Keith Welham
John Whitehead Jill Wilshaw

In attendance: Chief Executive (AC)
Monitoring Officer (EY)
Strategic Director (KN)
Corporate Manager- Democratic Services (JR)

60. Apologies: Michael Burke
Gary Green
Diana Kearsley
Wendy Marchant
Lesley Mayes
Mike Norris
Derek Osborne
Jane Storey
David Whybrow

61 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

61.1 There were no declarations of interest.

62 MC/18/23 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2018

It was Resolved:-

That subject to Minute 53.8 being amended to read "the change of 40 million" the Minutes of the meeting held on 27th September 2018 be confirmed as a true record.

63 MC/18/24 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

63.1 The Chairman presented his report for noting.

63.2 Councillor Otton asked if it would be possible to circulate the names of the recipients of Long Service Awards to all councillors in the future.

63.3 The Chairman noted the request.

64 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

64.1 The Corporate Manager for Democratic Services reported that a petition with 161 valid signatures in support of planning application DC/18/03267 and DC/18/03268 the change of use for Cherry Tree Inn, Debenham had been received and would be dealt with through the planning process.

65 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

65.1 There were no questions received.

66 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

66.1 The following questions were received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12:-

Question 1:

From Councillor Rachel Eburne to Councillor Jill Wilshaw, Cabinet Member for Housing

Given the issues with meeting house-building targets and the Five-Year Housing Land Supply when is Mid Suffolk District Council going to set up a housing company, to build the homes that we need both for sale and for rent, to contribute towards this?

Response

As you are aware the Council are in the final stages of investigating options to assist in delivering more homes within Mid Suffolk, and a report will be presented to Cabinet in December. The Council has already identified land to deliver the Councils current ambitious pipeline of housing, with the delivery of 309 homes predicted over the next 3 years with 200 of these being affordable. A housing company is one of many vehicles the Council will be looking to use to accelerate housing development, though as we know from other Councils nationally that having a housing company, on its own, does not necessarily deliver more homes.

We are though confident that with a range of different vehicles and partnerships we can be at the forefront of making a positive intervention in the housing market and we endeavour to meet, and hopefully exceed, the housing targets we have been set.

Supplementary Question

Given the importance of this and the relatively low ambitions really within the housing strategy which is at a draft form at the moment there are housing companies that are quite successful and one is just north of the border actually but will the Council therefore provide a quarterly update on the amount of homes built in order to give confidence to local communities that we will achieve the overall housing numbers?

Response

Yes, we can do that.

Question 2:

From Councillor Keith Welham to Councillor Jill Wilshaw, Cabinet Member for Housing

Could we please have an update on progress towards building a passivhaus development in Mid Suffolk?

There has never been a more opportune time to purchase land to provide truly affordable energy efficient homes for tenants. Climate change is happening and becoming critical; energy prices are continuing to rise; more and more families are finding that Universal Credit makes them worse off financially. We can, as a Council, do our bit to tackle climate change, contribute towards the 5-year land supply target; assist families on low incomes; and lead the way locally by demonstrating how to provide truly sustainable housing. I moved a motion in October 2015 seeking a commitment from Council to plan and carry out the construction of a passivhaus development by 2017. After discussion, Council resolved as follows:

‘That this Council calls on Executive to investigate further how to achieve the aspiration for building Passivhomes’.

Please detail for Members the steps taken in the three years since that resolution of Council in October 2015.

Response

Whilst I accept that Mid Suffolk District Council have yet to build a Passivhaus since we began our ambitious housing development programme. We have been able to achieve the development of 38 new build homes and 65 acquisitions in the past three years. With a further 143 new build of our own homes planned over the next four years.

It is important that we develop sustainable and energy efficient homes and that is why our draft Housing Strategy for the period 2019-2024 identifies:

- Explore the development of a passivhaus standard for some new builds
- New homes are built to a high standard with the aspiration of Lifetime homes
- Expanding the air source heating programme for our council housing
- Updating of heating systems in council stock – replacing oil where possible, with gas or air source heating
- Granting funds to private landlords to install affordable, efficient and controllable heating systems and energy efficiency works
- Making sure all Council housing has an ‘EPC C’ rating or above

We know we must balance the viability of sites including standards and specifications with land and build costs.

I propose that the next steps should be:

- Housing Strategy – will include a commitment in relation to our own new builds that we will consider a range of options.
- Design brief that we are using for imminent contracts is completed by officers using advice from building control and the brief is explained to members about what sustainable measures are already in place.
- ‘A Member Board’ - Cross party member involvement /tenant involvement /officer involvement with development of new design brief for future builds. This could involve a range of specifications for measures that help those on a low income to have warm homes. Including passivhaus, the use of Air Source, electric charging points, and lifetime homes standard.

Supplementary Question

I am indebted to a Babergh Conservative Cabinet Member for her support. She’s clearly understood the reasons for my motion in 2015. Cllr Tina Campbell, a Babergh District Council Cabinet Member for Environment has requested inclusion in our Joint Environment Strategy the following:-

“Housing development should be required to meet passive house standards. In her email to Councillor Burn and copied to Councillor Roy Barker and a number of others states ‘if we don’t demand passive housing for all developments we are missing an opportunity so can we receive back please at the next Council meeting some firm dates for commissioning passive house designs and a target date for completion of construction of our first development?’.

Response

At the moment we are considering all aspects of buildings whether they’re passive house or others and we will look into this and see what we can achieve.

TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS**67.1 CMU25 Councillor Gowrley, Leader and Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments****Q1 Councillor Otton to Councillor Gowrley, Leader and Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments**

How many people do we have in the Foyer at the moment?

Response Cllr Gowrley Leader and Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments

The Foyer is full. There was one vacancy because there was a fire in one of the units recently but that's being dealt with by BMBS. The Foyer is not just for Mid Suffolk residents it's for Babergh residents as well and anybody else that wants to use it.

67.2 CMU26 Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Communities**Q1 Councillor Welham to Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Communities**

The Parish Liaison meeting - I attended that meeting and I was thoroughly embarrassed for most of the time, speakers could not be heard, the live demonstration via the internet couldn't be live because there was no internet and the feedback from attendees. I'm sure that officers will have seen feedback from attendees. This was really a lost opportunity and I would like you to note that.

Response Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Communities

I certainly have noted this. I have a meeting with the Assistant Director next week and I will certainly raise this.

Q2 Councillor Matthissen to Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Communities

There is a need for health and wellbeing initiatives to include some measure of performance. How many subsequent initiatives have begun as a result of the active wellbeing launch by Suffolk Sport on the 17th of July?

Response Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Communities

Active Wellbeing is a programme MSDC have commissioned Suffolk Sport (the County Sports Partnership) to undertake on its behalf. Over the next 3 years the project will deliver a targeted physical activity programme based in the GP surgeries in Fressingfield and Stradbroke (2018/19), Debenham (2019/20) and Eye (2020/21) supporting older patients/residents to become and stay more active and socially connected in their local community. The project launched in mid-July and as at end of September, 19 people have been referred to Physical Activity Advisor Annie Groves and successfully supported to access an appropriate community-based

initiative to support their health and wellbeing. This performance is on track with the annual target set out in the performance and evaluation framework. Suffolk Sport are currently surveying local residents in the catchment area for this GP practice group to understand what additional or new activities are needed. This is likely to involve them establishing new health walks locally and 'Fit village' type activities such as Otago and New Age Curling, tailored to local need. Linked to this initiative the Council are also working with our leisure operator (SLM) to establish a gym-based GP exercise-on-referral scheme at Stradbroke Swimming Pool & Fitness Centre.

Q3 Councillor Matthissen to Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Communities

How many people took part in the Women on Wheels events on the 22nd of September?

Response Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Communities

The event in Debenham was cancelled due to a lack of interest. Unfortunately only 6 women signed up which was not sufficient to make the event viable. We will work with Debenham Leisure Trust to raise the profile of this event should the organisers wish to hold it again in future years. The Sudbury event attracted 96 participants so we are confident that this model can and does work.

Q4 Councillor Matthissen to Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Communities

How many yoga and health walk events took place during workplace Health Week 10th to 14th of September?

Response Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Communities

The Health and Wellbeing team worked with our partners at Suffolk County Council to host Workplace Health Week. During the week, 2 Health Walks were held on the 11th & 13th September and 2 Yoga sessions on the 14th September. Other activities included Health Checks provided by One Life Suffolk and taster sessions for Mindfulness and Pilates.

Q5 Councillor Otton to Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Communities

This question may well not be for this Cabinet Member but it's on the Community Infrastructure website that we have all had training on. I have tried but I certainly could not get access to it.

Response Councillor Horn, Cabinet Member for Planning

My understanding is that we are going through the last testing on that so it will be very soon I know it's been slightly delayed and everybody is very keen to see it because when it is up and running it's very impressive but as soon as it goes live all parishes, parish clerks and members will be made aware of it and we'll do a little bit of training to make sure people fully understand it.

Apologies it's not there yet but it will be very very soon.

67.3 CMU27 Councillor Brewster, Cabinet Member for Economy

Q1 Councillor Killett to Councillor Brewster, Cabinet Member for Economy

Please could you provide clarity in paragraph 4.2 as to what these lines of conversation are relating to the developments?

Response Cllr Brewster, Cabinet Member for Economy

Obviously with some of the work that is going on there are sensitivities which we have to work through before the Council can really make them public. Stored sites - I am aware certainly that there is work going on with a site at Stowmarket Ashers Farm. It has certainly been unlocked and there is work actually starting to happen, not work on site but work starting to continue towards the purchase of the site and also with a planning application eventually coming in. The promotion of our enterprise zone and food enterprise zones the designated sites are at Gateway 14, again there is much work to do before we can actually progress work on the site although there is some work going on with surveying and that sort of thing but also there is a lot of pre-commencement conditions which are being worked through and we're certainly have employed a planner for the master plan of that site overall. Once we have these up and running they will create jobs and will increase the options for micro and SME businesses. The Council will be kept updated on these as and when we are able to do that around the commercial sensitivities.

Q2 Cllr Stringer to Councillor Brewster, Cabinet Member for Economy

You mentioned Ashers Farm my understanding of the allocation there was that it was a residential not a commercial application, has there been a change?

Response Cllr Brewster, Cabinet Member for Economy

No there hasn't this is certainly a residential site.

Q3 Councillor Mathissen to Cllr Brewster, Cabinet Member for Economy

At the Parish Liaison meeting I've found out that there is a sort of a two- tier system in terms of the shop front grant mentioned in 3.1 of the report. Shop fronts in Stowmarket were offered up to 75% up to £15,000 whereas shop fronts in villages were only offered 50% up to £5,000. I was given the assurance by e-mail that the grant that is available to shops in the rural areas is now the same as those available to shops in Stowmarket. I would like to have that confirmed because I think it is important that we do all we can to maintain our shops and make our shops in rural areas as attractive as possible.

Response Cllr Brewster, Cabinet Member for Economy

I can confirm that is the case.

67.4 CMU28 Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for the Environment

Q1 Councillor Otton to Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for the Environment

Under 3.11 in the report it mentions the changes to animal licensing legislation which now the District Council has to take on and I would like to know what is meant by performing animals?

Response Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for the Environment

I can't answer your question directly now but will clarify this with our Licensing Team and come back to you.

Q2 Councillor Matthissen to Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for Environment

What is the Current Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP) Policy position regarding the recycling of plastic, in view of reports of fraud in the recycling industry and some other councils stopping recycling?

Response Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for the Environment

The SWP position has not changed on plastics and will not as part of the current procurement of the new MRF arrangements. Viridor have confirmed that although black plastic tubs and trays are problematic in so far as recycling and recovery they are and will continue to recycle these products.

A little bit of additional information you'll have seen or may have seen that today in fact all the Suffolk Household Waste Recycling Centres are ceasing to accept plastic film, plastic bags and plastic film as a recyclable product. They are now asking that for people not to take them take such items but if they do they are currently asked to put them in the in the residual waste bin and this is something that we in Mid Suffolk have been doing for quite some time we don't accept plastic film in our recycling bins and we have asked all our residents to put their plastic film into their black bin for some time now.

Councillor Barker, Lead Member for Waste

Thankyou Chair just to clarify a bit more on that because it is very much in the news that the value of plastic has just dropped out of down to zero. At the recycling centre we'll still be taking bottles, washed bottles, plastic bottles and bottle tops, tubs, plastic tubs plastic pots, tubs and food trays and also the tetrapaks the one thing we don't want and we have been advertising it for a long while is the plastic bags and the film is not wanted there and also polystyrene as well because at the moment if they get some it costs money to deal with.

Q3 Councillor Matthissen to Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for Environment

How many electric vehicle charging points have so far been installed in the district and how many are expected to be available by the 31st of March 2019?

Response Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for the Environment

We have not installed any electric charging points in Mid Suffolk so far. We will have installed one at Needham Markey by March/April next year as part of the work we are doing with highways England.

Supplementary Question

Have you been in touch with the company in Stowmarket Tomo Industrial Estate which is actually a major UK supplier installer of vehicle charging points that they're right here?

Response Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for the Environment

No I haven't been in touch with them but our Environmental Management officer after this sort of thing will ask him on your behalf Cllr Matthissen.

Q4 Councillor Field to Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for Environment

On the solar PV bulk buy I appreciate this is actually a county scheme. The sheer number of residents 2800 in Suffolk and 5000 across Essex and it mentions further down that this company has installed 15000 over the last 9 years. What is the chance of what is reported here actually going to get installed and getting done on time.

Response Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for the Environment

It's an interesting question and I will find the answer for you and report back to you.

Q5 Councillor Welham to Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for Environment

Under paragraph 3.27 Wren Close, Cedar's Park, Stowmarket. Please could you provide some sort of information/clarification here. First of all I'm pleased to see that the play area is to be revamped and I'd like to ask is the Council funding this work and if so from which budget and why given that local Councils are expected to raise funds for refurbishing play areas as a general rule or in some cases as is going to be the case in Stowupland the maintenance cost of the play area is going to fall upon the people that move into the new houses?

Response Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for the Environment

The management of open spaces public realm property is by several different mechanisms as you know. I'm not familiar with the one on Cedar's park so I can't tell you how it is managed. It could be that there is still a commuted sum in operation there, which would which would conceivably fund this refurbishment if you'll bear with me I will get some information put together on that one and get it to you in writing.

Q6 Councillor Mansel to Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for Environment

I was interested to hear in paragraph 3.9 that there is a Suffolk Strategy to combat obesity and wondered if that meant that there was any sort of strategy to restrict development of new fast food outlets in particular drive through fast food outlets which I don't think do anything to combat obesity.

Response Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for the Environment

This will be addressed to some degree in the new Joint Local Plan it's certainly something that I have suggested should be in the Joint Local Plan

Q7 Councillor Stringer to Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for Environment

In paragraph 3.26 it mentions fly tips collected during this period can I ask is that an increase/decrease or about the same as last year?

Response Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for the Environment

At the moment it's about average, it might have dropped a fraction but it all depends how you actually measure fly tipping. I think it would be helpful in future if we indicated quarter on quarter on that, so there would be some indication but it's perfectly true that somebody throws an old toaster into the bottom of a hedge that's one incident, somebody dumps 3 tonnes of stuff in a layby that's another one. It doesn't tell you too much without the overall tonnage but it is an indication.

Q8 Councillor Fleming to Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for Environment

Has the Suffolk Waste Partnership ever worked with the Environment Agency to audit what actually happens to the recycled plastics we are learning that plastics are going off to Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Malaysia goodness knows where and actually British plastics are ending up in pacific beaches and rivers do we know what actually happens?

Response Councillor Barker, Lead Member for Waste

As a representative on the Suffolk Waste Partnership, yes we trace as much as we can. I will ask the Waste Partnership Manager to provide a full response.

67.5 CMU29 Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

Q1 Councillor Eburne to Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

Paragraph 4.2 of the report refers to a £2M deficit over the 4- year period. This was mentioned at the Parish Council Liaison meeting and not without any substantiating information and again it's been mentioned here without any substantiating information so please could you advise what are these figures based on given that in the Medium -Term Financial Strategy we've looked at aligning that potentially with the Annual Monitoring report. What is the expected amount per year because the current Medium -Term Financial strategy has a small amount £0.2 million surplus in the first year.

Does this mean there is a massive deficit in year 4 and has the government indicated that new homes bonus is to be scrapped. Please can we not include figures in reports without substantiating them because it doesn't allow for proper public scrutiny.

Response Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

I think Members are all aware that once the financial year is closed in June/July and the audit finished then we go straight back into budget setting formation right from late July/August. We have started this from a zero- budgeting point of view and worked with the finance team and department managers to formulate the budget over quite a long period of time prior to it coming to both Cabinet and Council early next year. My understanding is that at the last Parish Liaison meeting there was an early indication of where the budget was going. The Chief Executive advised the parish representatives there that we are looking at a £2M pound deficit at that point in time prior to any new homes bonus. There are plenty of challenges, opportunities, efficiencies and things still to be looked at, the Chief Executive in order to set the scene announced that figure. That is why it has been included in my report for Members to be aware of that. We are still working through opportunities, challenges, efficiencies and the final result will no doubt be quite different to that. With the question about new homes bonus and obviously that's based I guess very much on the fact that as a Council we've taken a policy from when it started in 2011 not to include that as core finance but sort of see that as additional finance. Now as those figures have increased and the Council's has decreased I can see the policy could come under question. More recently the Government first of all decided to topslice 20% to the County Council, they have also decreased the amount from 6 years to 4 years and then more latterly started a base point of 0.4% growth before starting it so that it has been tinkered with quite a lot. I am not aware that the government plan to scrap it. The Council is still of the view that new homes bonus is very much a bonus rather than core finance and therefore when we look at our numbers we are trying to produce a balanced budget and indeed a balanced 4 year medium term financial strategy without relying too much on new homes bonus. With last year's bonus the Council took about £324K out of just over a million of the new homes bonus but it worked out about 25% that we used. Going forward we will have to use some of the bonus of perhaps that sort of magnitude but very much it's still our policy not to rely on new homes bonus.

Supplementary Question

You mention in your report that we will be required to find savings where you've just said early indications so could you correct your report please if that is not the case if it's not a definite and secondly, new homes bonus lots of councils have different systems for using that and give it back to communities will you change your report to say is early indication rather than will require and can you let me know if you're going to investigate other uses for a new homes bonus in the future. Thankyou.

Response Cllr Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

I'm certainly happy to make that minor edit insofar as when it was written it was a statement of fact as at that point in time but obviously as things have moved on it does become a little historic. In terms of the new homes bonus, I mean any surplus

we have is put into our what was that the transformation fund and more recently the growth and efficiency fund; if you look through the various things that have been taken out of there. I think there was probably 60 or 70 different projects that were one off specials that we have used that money for and perhaps if it hadn't have been there, we wouldn't have done them. Other things that we have used the funding if we haven't had the new homes bonus we would still had to find the funding from somewhere within our overall budget so I think the lines are a bit blurred really the blurred edges between when new homes bonus is used and when general budgeting is used but the growth efficiency fund is now down to around about £2M and as I said earlier the new homes bonus quantum are dropping off so I think going forward it's probably less of an issue than it was in the past.

Q2 Councillor Stringer to Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

I thank you for that clarification, to avoid any confusion in the future would it be possible if Members could have a briefing noted before this is announced to the public.

Response Cllr Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

I take on board your comments.

Q3 Councillor Field to Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

In paragraph 3.9 of the report it mentions about the HRA shortfall, is the £322k shortfall a shortfall in income or is it an overspend is it you know something that really will correct itself during the rest of the year so no one should be worried or is it a sign of a trend?

Response Cllr Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

I will provide a written response as I don't have that detail to hand.

67.6 CMU30 Councillor Wilshaw, Cabinet Member for Housing

Q1 Councillor Otton to Councillor Wilshaw, Cabinet Member for Housing

I was concerned that the recent report we were hearing on the news about the lack of action that councils across the country have taken against rogue landlords. Has this council been in a position of being able to prosecute such people or whether or not this is an issue that you have not been able to deal with?

Response Councillor Wilshaw, Cabinet Member for Housing

As far as I know the Council has not prosecuted anybody. I don't know whether the Council has any rogue landlords here at the moment but I will find out for you.

Q2 Councillor Welham to Councillor Wilshaw, Cabinet Member for Housing

In the Social Housing Green paper there's a list of things there that will be consulted upon. Will Members be given a sight of the response to the Social Housing Green

paper and will the response specifically include references to the need to ensure that homes are not only safe and decent but also efficient in terms of use of energy and water.

Response Councillor Wilshaw, Cabinet Member for Housing

You will be consulted.

Q3 Councillor Stringer to Councillor Wilshaw, Cabinet Member for Housing

I did write a question earlier to the portfolio holder for housing delivery earlier in the week about completions in Mid Suffolk this year because we learned from the briefing earlier of course how important that is to know how many houses we've delivered and I did get an answer back to show that the government's statistics said that we had 110 completions in the first quarter of this financial year and if you were to times that by 4 it arrived at a figure of 440. However, since 2012 this group has put in every consecutive alternative budget proposals to invest in finding out what our actual delivery numbers are and at the last budget the administration kindly agreed to put an element of that in there so I am I have to say I'm quite surprised that after two quarters into this year we still don't have our own evidence as to what we are building when do you feel we'll have our own evidence as to what the housing completions are in Mid Suffolk?

Response Councillor Wilshaw, Cabinet Member for Housing

As you know the Assistant Director has replied via me and we won't really know the final statistics until the end of the year and that's when we can give you a positive number.

67.7 CMU31 Councillor Gowrley, Cabinet Member Law and Governance

Q1 Councillor Field to Councillor Gowrley, Cabinet Member, Law and Governance

In the report it mentions the annual canvass and electors. There is actually an election going on in Bosmere at the moment as you know and I had to point out to the Council that a substantial number of voters in my village certainly had not received any form of polling cards and I believe the number missing overall was something like 900 which seems quite significant I'm just really questioning what has been put in place to ensure that nothing like that happens again because people are often confused in that they think they need such a card and equally well it's obviously a prompt to voters for whoever they may choose to vote for to get out and do just that duty.

Response Deputy Returning Officer for the election

As Deputy Returning Officer for this election. Cllr Field is correct we were made aware of an error where some electors did not receive a poll card for this election. We rectified that as soon as we were made aware. The cause of the problem was printer error where they had manipulated the data that was used for printing the poll cards and that had meant that a number of electors were not included so in the future we have taken steps to ensure that there should be no manual intervention

and also to go back to our checking procedures which on this occasion unfortunately failed.

Q2 Councillor Fleming to Councillor Gowrley, Cabinet Member, Law and Governance

Do we understand from that then, that everyone who didn't apparently receive a polling card along with everyone else subsequently received one. They were just late?

Response Deputy Returning Officer for the election

That is correct all electors have now had a poll card. They were sent more than a week before polling day.

67.8 CMU32 Councillor Morley, Cabinet Member Organisational Development

Q1 Councillor Welham to Councillor Morley, Cabinet Member, Organisational Development

In paragraph 3.2 on average 88% of the calls were answered within one minute 30 seconds. Do we know how many of those 88% of the calls were answered within 1 minute 30 seconds. Do we know how many of those 88% were answered by a machine or how many by a person please? In my recent experience is that when I've called into a number into Endeavour House more often than not it's a machine that answers and I have to say the machine is very efficient it answers well within a minute and a half.

Response Councillor Morley, Cabinet Member Organisational Development

I believe that that is real people answering the phone and subsequent to the quarter to figures the response has now dropped or in the last month has dropped to under 1 minute.

67.9 CMU32 Councillor Horn, Cabinet Member for Planning

Q1 Councillor Eburne to Councillor Horn, Cabinet Member for Planning

"What steps is the Council taking to clarify the situation regarding the lack of a Five-Year Housing Land Supply to developers, agents, Parish/Town Councils and the public?"

Response Councillor Horn Cabinet Member for Planning

Officers are currently working to clarify and solidify the evidence that underpins the calculation, including contacting developers with Outline Planning Permissions to secure the evidence required by the new NPPF to demonstrate their deliverability. This is a challenge because providing us with detailed information is not necessarily in their commercial interests – a point that Nick as Leader of the Council has raised with the Minister, James Brokenshire.

We do need to gather the evidence though and are committed to doing so. Further communication with developers, agents, Parish and Town Councils and the wider public will be undertaken once this evidence has been gathered and I am satisfied that it is robust.

Supplementary

I am concerned that there is a slight difference in the responses in that today an officer said and I quote “the Inspector said and that’s the Inspector in the Woolpit case we do not have a 5 year housing land supply and we do not have the evidence to dispute and at that date our housing land supply is 3.4 years and my question would be how when are we going to communicate this fully to the members of the public because in the response given it says further evidence needs to be done beforehand but communities are already confused about what’s happening and I dispute that they aren’t just wanting 5 year land supply so they can turn down applications. Communities do want the right homes in the places that communities that need them so when we are going to put a public statement out to all communities and give them the assurance of the work that’s going to be done following the fact that we have been told by officers today that we have a 3.4 year housing land supply.

Response Cllr Horn, Cabinet Member for Planning

Thankyou Chair I think once again there’s a little bit of confusion crept in here that shouldn’t be. This was the position that the Inspector took on one particular appeal as I’ve stated several times in public in the press and on the radio I don’t agree with that decision. What we were not able to do was provide the evidence that the Inspector required to provide our 5- year land supply. That’s the piece of work that’s going on now. I am not going to take one Inspector’s decision as evidence of our land supply and that’s not the message that was given this afternoon at the briefing. This was one particular point in time the interpretation of one particular Inspector who as I think the Assistant Director made very clear this afternoon has applied the new rules to old evidence and has certainly muddied the waters in a lot of people’s minds. I completely agree with you, the communities are confused about this which is why we have provided all the resources we need and Strategic Planning team to provide this robust evidence to show us exactly where we stand. That will be delivered as quickly as possible but it won’t be delivered until it’s been checked and tested and is absolutely robust and that it will come out formally.

Q2 Councillor Otton to Councillor Horn, Cabinet Member for Planning

I’d like to know whether the Council is taking any action to challenge that Inspector’s decision?

Response Councillor Horn, Cabinet Member for Planning

We’ve taken legal counsel so far and we need to make a formal decision. I am awaiting comments from a couple of my colleagues at the moment with regard to how they would proceed. At the moment we have not made a formal decision but as soon as we do that will be announced as well.

The Chairman thanked Cabinet Members for their updates

68 MC/18/25 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

68.1 Councillor Welham introduced his report to Council and updated Council on the latest activity that the Committee had undertaken.

68.2 The Chairman thanked Councillor Welham for his report.

69 MC/18/26 DISBANDMENT OF JOINT HOUSING BOARD

69.1 Councillor Wilshaw introduced the report and informed Council that the purpose of the report was to gain agreement from the Council that the Joint Housing Board should be disbanded and to describe the alternative form of tenant engagement that was being pursued.

69.2 The proposal to disband the Joint Housing Board followed on from a review of Babergh and Mid Suffolk tenant engagement structure carried out by HQN between October 2016 and July 2017. A project was commissioned in October 2017 to explore ways to involve tenants that would both ensure compliance and also allow tenants to have meaningful involvement in the development and scrutiny of the housing services. The project team held a series of consultations and workshops with the principal tenant groups, the Tenants' Forum and the Joint Housing Board and other key individuals. These sessions developed an alternative tenant engagement structure that would replace the existing groups with a single tenant board. It is intended that this board will be able to scrutinise services and act as a consultative group and it would be supported by the Housing Management Team and Tenant Sounding Boards. It should be noted that this structure should also put the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils in a good position to meet the government's expectations as set out in the recent Housing Green paper. In particular that it ensures genuine engagement with residents so that they have influence over the decisions that affect their lives. The Tenant Board is now up and running and is working closely with staff and external consultants to develop their skills and knowledge. The Board have agreed their own Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct and will soon be developing their work schedule for 2019. As you can see in the report both the Joint Housing Board and the Tenants' Forum have been consulted on this proposal and have voted in favour of their disbandment and replacement with the Tenant Board.

69.3 Councillor Wilshaw then moved the recommendations in the report which Councillor Gowrley seconded.

69.4 On the proposal of Councillor Mansel and seconded by Councillor Eburne an amendment to the recommendation adding the additional wording "disbanded subject to the Sounding Boards as outlined in the report under Sections 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 being created instead".

69.5 This was **PUT** to the meeting and **AGREED**.

It was Resolved:-

That the Joint Housing Board be disbanded, subject to the Sounding Boards as outlined in the report under Sections 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 being created instead

70 MC/18/27 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - BATTISFORD

70.1 The Chief Executive introduced the report and informed Council that a request had been received from Battisford Parish Council to carry out a community governance review that related to a proposed development of 10 homes. The Council were being asked whether to agree to hold a review as a result of this request.

70.2 On the proposal of Councillor Gowrley and seconded by Councillor Killett

It was Resolved:-

- (i) That a Community Governance Review be undertaken in respect of the boundary of Battisford and the Terms of Reference at Appendix B be approved.**
- (ii) That a politically balanced Community Governance Review Working Group be created to conduct the review, consisting of 5 members nominated by group leaders**
- (iii) That the Community Governance Review Working Group be required to report its findings and recommendations to full Council for decision.**

71 COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS

71.1 There were no changes made.

72 UPDATES TO 2019/20 TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS

72.1 The Corporate Manager for Democratic Services informed Council that the Development Control Committee A that was scheduled for 29th May 2019 had been cancelled.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 6.51 pm.

.....
Chair