

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BABERGH CABINET HELD IN KING EDMUND CHAMBER - ENDEAVOUR HOUSE, 8 RUSSELL ROAD, IPSWICH ON THURSDAY, 12 JULY 2018 AT 9:30AM

PRESENT: John Ward – Chair  
Jan Osborne – Vice Chair

Kathryn Grandon	Tina Campbell
Margaret Maybury	Jan Osborne
Peter Patrick	Nick Ridley
Derek Davis	Frank Lawrenson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Bavington  
Councillor Hinton  
Councillor McCraw

Corporate Manager – Investment and Commercial Delivery  
Assistant Director for Environment and Commercial Partnerships  
Corporate Manager – Countryside and Public Realm  
Corporate Business Coordinator (SM)  
Strategic Director (KN)  
Strategic Director (JS)  
Assistant Director for Customer Services (SW)

13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

14 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

Councillor Campbell declared a non pecuniary interest in Item 10, Report BCa/18/11, Merger Proposal South Suffolk Leisure and Abbeycroft Leisure, as a Trustee of South Suffolk Leisure. Councillor Lawrenson declared a non pecuniary interest in Item 16, Report BCa/18/16, Regeneration of Belle Vue Park and Surrounding Areas, as an owner of a Bed and Breakfast.

15 BCA/18/07 - TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2018 were confirmed as a correct record.

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

None received.

17 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS

None received.

18 MATTERS REFERRED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OR JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES

There were no matters arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the Joint Audit and Standards Committee.

19 BCA/18/08 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST

The Forthcoming Decisions list was noted and the following comments were made:

- CNL03, CNL14 and CAB70, the Cabinet Member should be amended to read Councillor Ridley.
- It was questioned as to when the BMBS Business Case would be coming back into Cabinet for full approval?
- CAB39, was questioned as to whether it should be Councillor Campbell or Councillor Maybury as the Cabinet member. It was noted at the moment it was the Environment portfolio holder, if this changed members would be informed.
- CAB72, was questioned as to the requirements for a Suffolk Chamber? It was explained at present there was not a Chamber which covered both the Mid Suffolk and Babergh areas. The focus would be on Sudbury and Hadleigh towns.

20 BCA/18/09 - PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

20.1 Councillor Maybury, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities introduced BCa/18/09 and moved the recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Patrick.

20.2 Members questioned whether water meters were fitted as water rate costs were high? The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities explained the current provision for public conveniences was quite dated and as such systems required alteration. There were not water reduction measures in place at present and some facilities had water metres whilst others did not. When the facilities were being updated the correct tap would be used to help with water reduction. Councillor Maybury had lobbied James Cartlidge, the local MP for South Suffolk, about water and business rates. She felt water companies should offer Councils a reduction in their water rates as well as providing systems which would reduce the usage of water. The Cabinet Member for Communities felt it was worth pursuing all water authorities on this issue. However, Councillor Maybury was pleased to report the anomaly on business rates (as some facilities, which were Council run, did occur business rates whilst others did not) would change in due course.

20.3 In response to a question regarding some locations having no water rate costs, it was explained some were closed facilities at present and some were run by the

Parish Council.

- 20.4 Members noted that basic repairs were being carried out in respect of providing some long term modifications as well as water reduction measures. Public Conveniences which were being run by Parish Council's helped to bring the costs down, however, not all would be transferred but the provision would be provided in towns and tourist centres. The new policy would be flexible.
- 20.5 Cabinet felt it was a very thorough report which would enable the proposal to be taken forward. They were aware of the amount of work which had gone into the rural provision and it was sensible to concentrate on towns whilst encouraging the local parish councils.
- 20.6 Councillor Maybury gave thanks to the Community team for their hard work.

By a unanimous vote:

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the findings of the Public Realm Member Advisory Task and Finish Group in respect of public conveniences be noted.
- (2) That the Joint Public Convenience Policy to guide the Council's decisions about existing and future provision be approved.
- (3) That a Community Toilet Scheme be established.
- (4) That the expenditure of £13,000 from the Public Realm budget to carry out basic repairs and improvements to existing public convenience provision be noted.
- (5) That the Corporate Manager for Public Realm be asked to further engage town and parish councils, or other community groups, with a view to devolving public conveniences to those who wish to take them on.

**Reason for Decision:** To put in place a policy to guide decisions about the future of existing provision of public conveniences in Babergh.

21 BCA/18/10 - REFRESHED CUSTOMER STRATEGY

- 21.1 Councillor Davis, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Organisational Delivery, introduced report BCa/18/10 and the Assistant Director for Customer Service gave an overview of the document. Councillor Davis thanked the Assistant Director for Customer Service for an excellent document and moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Patrick.
- 21.2 Members were keen that the strategy would link in with the new tenant engagement model. It was also questioned, in terms of the action plan, as to how this would be monitored and reported back to members. The Assistant Director for Customer Services explained all staff would have input into developing the distinct activities which would take place. It would form part of a customer programme of work which

would be reported through the Senior Leadership Team. Cabinet Members would be kept informed through regular means and performance measures. A range of organisations and stakeholders would also be consulted, and this would include liaison with the tenant's board.

- 21.3 There was concern over the access point in Hadleigh which had not yet been confirmed. It was explained libraries were likely to be used but unfortunately, at present, this had not been established.
- 21.4 Cabinet felt it was important to recognise not everyone used digital means to access services and as such it was important telephone lines were still kept in place to respond to queries. Customer services staff were improving their skills in order for them to direct people more quickly.
- 21.5 If problems were being encountered, such as members of the public not having phonecalls returned etc. then the relevant Member should be informed, and it should be dealt with through the individual departments. Response times should be measured which ensured procedures could be improved upon to embed a culture based around service level agreements. This should then be followed up with teams, as well as, individually.
- 21.6 It was questioned as to how the "pop up" library service would be run. It was explained that there had been a cultural change and this service had shown that the lending rate had increased. Wherever possible the council would work in tandem with the libraries.
- 21.7 Cabinet were confident the new strategy would work.

By a unanimous vote:

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the Refreshed Customer Strategy be agreed.
- (2) That in consultation with the Cabinet Members, minor amendments to the Strategy be delegated to the Assistant Director for Customer Services to ensure the Strategy is kept up to date, and reflective of emerging Strategies which overlap.
- (3) That an action and communication plan be developed, which would ensure the Customer Strategy was widely shared across the organisation and provided for an opportunity to engage with staff, embedding a customer focussed organisational culture.

**Reason for Decision:** To provide an updated and refreshed Customer Strategy that states our organisational aim to put the customer at the heart of the organisation, and by doing so, improves our ability to better deliver our customer need.

- 22.1 Councillor Maybury, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities introduced report BCa/18/11 and moved the recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Patrick.
- 22.2 It was questioned how the Management Boards would be manned in the future. It was explained the intention was to have three trustees appointed to the Abbeycroft Board in order to have a 3-way split. Tracey Lloyd, the Chief Executive of South Suffolk Leisure (SSL), explained that there would be one Councillor representative on the Group who would work as an independent rather than a Councillor. They would continue to work with the Assistant Director for the Environment and Commercial Partnerships from a client point of view but would have a more enhanced relationship with the Cabinet Member for Communities to ensure they were both driving and delivering on the outcomes aligned to them.
- 22.3 Cabinet were confident of the way forward and hoped that the local connection would continue, as well as recruitment staying within the District. The Chief Executive for SSL explained there were no intentions for redundancy, managers had met, and it would bring greater opportunities for career advancement.
- 22.4 In response to a question it would be business as usual and the customer would not see any change. There would be a phased approach to any brand change.
- 22.5 In relation to Section 7, legal implications, the Capital Investment and the protection of the level of investment into SSL was questioned. Would the elected representative be protecting SSL facilities democratically? The Assistant Director for the Environment and Commercial Partnerships explained that in terms of the Capital Investment it would be discussed at a later date at Cabinet in order to agree the management fee going forward. He gave reassurance that the fee would be set at a particular level. In terms of elected representation onto a Board he explained that a representative from a District Council onto a Trust would mean you would have to work for the best interest of that Company. It was best to keep the partnership working and the ongoing client relationship. Appropriate legal documentation was in place.
- 22.6 There were concerns as to why, following the merger, the Trust would be called "Abbeycroft" and that the Memorandum of Understanding was not part of the debate. The Chief Executive of SSL explained that both Boards had been through the Memorandum of Understanding, as well as having been audited. SSL had worked with Abbeycroft since January 2018 and the Senior Leadership Team had the resilience. It was felt appropriate to revert to Abbeycroft due to the word "South".
- 22.7 In response to a question it was noted that Babergh District Councillors were still landowners of the site and would continue to own the properties.
- 22.8 Cabinet felt it was an excellent report and both facilities were well run. Following the merger it would result in a stronger financial position. They were happy that the legal team had thoroughly inspected the proposal and it was felt as long as there was the relationship with the responsible Cabinet Member that both the wishes and aspirations of Babergh District Council would be heard.

By a unanimous vote:

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the merger of South Suffolk Leisure with Abbeycroft Leisure be approved. Which could be completed through a novation of the current lease allowing South Suffolk Leisure to assign the management agreement to Abbeycroft Leisure, the merged partner.
- (2) That delegation be given to the Assistant Director for Environment and Commercial Partnerships in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities to make the necessary changes to any legal documentation and any appropriate revisions to existing legal agreements as part of the novation process.

**Reason for Decision:** To strengthen the resilience of the partner operator of our leisure facilities. Taking into account the proposed £3.4million capital investment for the refurbishment of the Kingfisher Leisure Centre and replacement of Hadleigh Swimming Pool. If approved this would allow the formal merger to be completed on 1 October 2018.

23 BCA/18/12 - FORMER HQ REGENERATION PROJECT - APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED OPTION - PART 1

- 23.1 Councillor Lawrenson, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Assets and Investments introduced report BCa/18/12 and explained it was to approve the recommended option in order to move forward to the Planning stage. It was noted the outline planning proposal had already been debated and approved at Full Council. Councillor Lawrenson moved the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Ward.
- 23.2 There were a number of questions which had been covered during the debate at Full Council and as such were not relevant to the Planning Permission being discussed. The decision to be made was to consider the comments made at Full Council of which there were very few and to make any amendments to Option 2. Members felt there were able to take forward the recommendations as presented.
- 23.3 There was a concern due to it being a complex application whether it would be an Officer report rather than being a Cabinet decision considering as the Cabinet Member would effectively be functioning as the applicant. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Assets and Investments explained that Cabinet Members would not have any role on the Planning Committee and it would be up to those members who sat on the Planning Committee to decide. If significant changes were suggested then the proposal would be brought back into Cabinet.
- 23.4 Cabinet felt Option 2 would be the best solution for Corks Lane as it was an imaginative design and would enhance the aspect of the listed building.

By an unanimous vote:

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the comments made by Full Council on 19 June 2018 were noted in relation to the preferred option (Option 2 in report BCa/18/12) and development scheme.
- (2) That Option 2 (section 2.1 of report BCa/18/12) be approved and responsibility to the Strategic Director, with responsibility for Assets and Investments, be delegated, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments, to submit a full planning application for the redevelopment of the former Council HQ site at Corks Lane and the Bridge House and car parks.

**Reason for Decision:** To provide a sympathetic and comprehensive regeneration of the site whilst enhancing the significance and setting of the important listed buildings and preservation of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

24 BCA/18/13 - LOCAL TOURISM STRATEGY (BABERGH VISITOR INFORMATION OPTIONS) - PART 1

- 24.1 Councillor Ward, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economy introduced report BCa/18/13 and moved the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Ridley.
- 24.2 In relation to the Lavenham Tourist Information Centre it was questioned what the percentage of the market rate lease would be and how many employees would be retained? The Corporate Manager for Investment and Commercial Delivery explained that if the appropriate delegation was granted it would enable these conversations to be had. In terms of employees this was still to be determined. It could depend on whether TUPE would apply and these discussions were ongoing. It was noted there were 5.3 full time equivalents, as well as seasonal workers affected.
- 24.3 Cabinet felt the VIP proposal would be flexible and fit for purpose allowing more areas in the District to be covered, as well as working with other partners. The result would be more comprehensive, in tune with how people wished to access the service and a sensible progression. It would be a positive step forward to promote and enhance the tourist strategy.
- 24.4 Members wished to convey their thanks to the Corporate Manager for Open for Business and his team as it was recognised some very sensitive negotiations had taken place in a professional manner.

By a unanimous vote:

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the updated position in relation to Visitor Information Point development, and the specific and ongoing progress in relation to supporting Lavenham and

the broader Babergh and Mid Suffolk area; be noted.

- (2) That principle be given to both options of (i) a below market rate lease agreement with Lavenham Parish Council (or community group linked to the parish council); and (ii) a freehold disposal to the same body for the existing Tourist Information Centre premises at 2 Lady Street, Lavenham be approved.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director with responsibility for Visitor Economy matters to enter negotiation with the lessee regarding duration, terms and conditions, periodic review and other relevant detail, or else a freehold disposal negotiation.

**Reason for Decision:** To continue to strategically support progression of the visitor economy within the Babergh District, and within financial and operational resource constraints for the Authority. To responsively support the community and local economy of Lavenham, bringing potential benefits to broader economy of the district.

25 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED:**

That pursuant to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public should be excluded from the meeting for the business specified below on the grounds that if the public were present during these items, it was likely there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information as indicated against each item. The authors of the reports proposed to be considered in Part II of the agenda were satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

26 BCA/18/14 - FORMER HQ REGENERATION PROJECT - APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED OPTION - PART 2

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the recommendations set out in report BCa/18/14 be approved.

**Reason for Decision:** To provide a sympathetic and comprehensive regeneration of the site whilst enhancing the significance and setting of the important listed buildings and preservation of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

27 BCA/18/15 - LOCAL TOURISM STRATEGY (BABERGH VISITOR INFORMATION OPTIONS) - PART 2

By a unanimous vote



**It was RESOLVED:-**

(1) That the recommendations set out in report BCa/18/15 be approved.

**Reason for Decision:** To continue to strategically support progression of the visitor economy within the Babergh District, and within financial and operational resource constraints for the Authority. To responsively support the community and local economy of Lavenham, bringing potential benefits to broader economy of the district.

28 BCA/18/16 - REGENERATION OF BELLE VUE PARK AND SURROUNDING AREAS

By 5 votes to 2 with 1 abstention (*note that Councillor Maybury had left the meeting at the point in which the vote was taken*)

**It was RESOLVED:-**

(1) That the recommendations set out in report BCa/18/16 be approved.

**Reason for Decision:** To provide Cabinet with the latest position on the opportunity and seek delegation to finalise the agreement.

29 BCA/18/17 - TO CONFIRM THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE OF 11 JUNE 2018 MEETING

The confidential minute of the meeting held on 11 June 2018 was confirmed as a correct record.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 1:10pm.

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Chair (date)