

## MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK CABINET** held in the King Edmund Chamber - Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Monday, 7 January 2019

## **PRESENT:**

Councillor: Nick Gowrley (Chair)  
John Whitehead (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Gerard Brewster David Burn  
Julie Flatman Glen Horn  
Suzie Morley Penny Otton  
Andrew Stringer

## In attendance:

Councillor Roy Barker  
Councillor Diana Kearsley  
Councillor Keith Welham

Chief Executive (AC)  
Strategic Director (KN)  
Strategic Director (JS)  
Assistant Director – Law and Governance (EY)  
Assistant Director – Planning for Growth (TB)  
Assistant Director – Corporate Resources (KS)  
Assistant Director – Housing (GF)  
Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Contracts (CF)  
Corporate Manager – Homeless Prevention and Financial Inclusion (HS)  
Corporate Manager – Finance (ME)  
Corporate Manager – Countryside and Public Realm (PG)  
Governance Support Officer (CP)

## **95 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Jill Wilshaw.

## **96 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS**

Dispensation was granted to all Councillors by the Monitoring Officer in respect of Item 8 Draft General Fund Budget 2019/20 and Four Year Outlook, and Item 9 Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Four Year Outlook.

97 MCA/18/51 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2018 were confirmed as a correct record.

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

None received.

**99 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

None received.

**100 MCA/18/55 JOINT COMMUNITIES STRATEGY**

With the agreement of the Chair this item was considered first.

Councillor Flatman (Cabinet Member for Communities) introduced report MCA/18/55 and explained that this has been developed as a consultative draft and at this stage Members had not been asked to comment on a detailed action plan.

Councillor Flatman moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Brewster.

Councillor Stringer commented that under paragraph 10.4 the word business should be replaced with an alternative such as operations for example, and that the role of Councillors should be included in the report. It was agreed that the wording would be looked at accordingly.

The Assistant Director for Planning for Growth responded to questions regarding resolving tensions and contradictory responses received from the consultation.

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- (i) **That the consultation approach and timetable for the Joint Communities Strategy described in paragraphs 10.5 and 10.6 of the report be agreed.**
- (ii) **That the Assistant Director for Planning and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, be given delegated authority to make any minor changes as necessary to the consultation version of the draft Joint Communities Strategy prior to the Strategy going out for consultation.**

**Reason for Decision:** To ensure that Mid Suffolk District Council have an up to date Joint Communities Strategy which provides:

- Strategic leadership on the key community issues facing the districts;
- Coherent and joined up approaches to the way we work with our communities and with partners;
- Greater local accountability for decision making; and
- A more focused approach to community development which has the greatest

impact.

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

Matters referred to Cabinet from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was included under item 12 as part of the discussion of Extension of Serco Contract 2021-2028.

**102 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

The Forthcoming Decisions List was noted.

**103 MCA/18/52 DRAFT GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2019/20 AND FOUR YEAR OUTLOOK**

Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced report MCA/18/52 and moved the recommendations with amendments as follows:

Within recommendation 3.3 the reference to paragraph 8.18 should be replaced with 8.20. This was seconded by Councillor Horn.

Councillor Horn declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of CIFCO.

Councillor Otton raised questions regarding Members locality budgets, the Capital Programme, and care leavers discounts which the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Assistant Director for Corporate Resources provided answers to.

Councillor Otton also queried why in Appendix A there was a rise in costs for premises, and a reduction for third party payments and supplies and services. Councillor Otton and the Corporate Manager, Finance will discuss this outside of the meeting.

The following amendments were agreed:

- Paragraph 6.7, in the right-hand column of the table the words 'economic growth' are to be moved to the top of the list.
- Graph 4, New Homes Bonus Payments the column representing year 2019/20 has an incorrect colour showing.

Councillor Otton expressed concerns over money being put into the corporate risk reserve.

By 7 votes to 2

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- (i) **That the draft General Fund Budget proposals for 2019/20 and four year outlook set out in the report be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 21 February 2019, subject to further consideration at the next Cabinet meeting on 4 February 2019.**

- (ii) That the draft General Fund Budget for 2019/20 is based on an increase to Council Tax of 2%, which equates to £3.26 per annum (6p per week) for a Band D property, to support the Council's overall financial position, which will be considered further at the February Cabinet meeting.
- (iii) That a further £25m be invested in CIFCO as set out in paragraph 8.20 of the report.
- (iv) That a discretionary Care Leavers Council Tax discount of up to 100% be introduced from the 1st April 2019 as set out in section 11 of the report.

**Reason for Decision:** To bring together all the relevant information to enable Cabinet Members to review, consider and comment upon the Council's General Fund budget before the February Cabinet review and recommendations to Council.

#### **104 MCA/18/53 DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET AND FOUR YEAR OUTLOOK**

Councillor Whitehead, the Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced report MCa/18/53 on behalf of Councillor Wilshaw, the Cabinet Member for Housing.

The recommendations 1.1 to 1.8 in report MCa/18/53 were to be presented to Full Council for approval.

The Assistant Director for Housing provided responses to questions from Members on the issues of the increases in utility charges and the removal of decorating vouchers.

Councillor Whitehead moved the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Gowrley.

By 8 votes to 1

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- (i) That the HRA Budget proposals set out in the report be approved.
- (ii) That the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme 2019/20 to 2022/23 and HRA Budget for 2019/20 be agreed.
- (iii) That the mandatory decrease of 1% in Council House rents, equivalent to an average rent reduction of £0.82 a week as required by the Welfare Reform and Work Act, be implemented.
- (iv) That garage rents are kept at the same level as last year.
- (v) That Sheltered Housing Service charges be kept at the same level as last year.

- (vi) That Sheltered Housing utility charges be increased by 5% (average £0.61 increase per week).
- (vii) That in principle, Right to Buy receipts be retained to enable continued development and acquisition of new council dwellings.
- (viii) That the revised HRA Business Plan in Appendix B be noted.

**Reason for Decision:** To bring together all the relevant information to enable Cabinet Members to review, consider and comment upon the Council's Housing Revenue Account budget before the February Cabinet review and recommendations to Council.

## 105 MCA/18/54 HOMELESS PREVENTION FUND POLICY

The Corporate Manager for Housing Solutions introduced report MCa/18/54. The recommendation was moved by Councillor Gowrley and seconded by Councillor Flatman.

Members discussed the issues of eligibility for the scheme and repayment of loans.

Councillor Horn commented that the team should be recognised for the work they have done.

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED:-**

**That the introduction of the Homeless Prevention Fund Policy for 2019/20 be approved.**

**Reason for Decision:** By approving the implementation of the policy, it will enable the Housing Solutions Officers to prevent or relieve homelessness in more cases and reduce the demands on temporary accommodation.

## 106 MCA/18/56 EXTENSION OF SERCO CONTRACT 2021 - 2028

The Cabinet Member for Environment introduced report MCa/18/56. This report had been to both Mid Suffolk and Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committees where the recommendations were approved. Councillor Burn moved the recommendations and this was seconded by Councillor Brewster.

The Chairman invited Councillor Welham, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make comment.

Councillor Welham thanked Officers for the prompt production of the minutes from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Welham advised Members that a presentation by Eunomia was given at the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee which Councillor Welham attended. After lengthy debate the Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided unanimously to recommend to Cabinet the approval of the recommendations.

The Assistant Director for Environment and Commercial Partnerships provided responses to questions from Members regarding vehicle fuel costs, the electrification of vehicles and the Government proposal for future collection of food waste.

By 8 votes to 1

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- (i) **That the current Household waste and Recycling contract with Serco be extended for a further 7-year period from 2021 to 2028.**
- (ii) **That the Assistant Director, Environment and Commercial Partnerships, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Environment be delegated authority to finalise the extension agreement and enter into contract with Serco for an additional 7years from 2021-2028.**

**Reason for Decision:** The decision to extend the current contract offers good value to the Councils and has a lower cost than any other option.

**107 MCA/18/57 THE ADOPTION OF A SET OF PRINCIPLES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF COUNCIL OWNED TREES**

The Cabinet Member for Environment introduced report MCA/18/57 and advised Members that this report has been developed following the Public Realm Task and Finish Group meeting outcomes.

Councillor Burn moved the recommendations in the report subject to an amendment in 3.2 to read “ That the increase in operational budgets outlined in 6.3 of the report be approved subject to a more detailed justification of the increase in costs being submitted and approved by the Portfolio Holder”. This was seconded by Councillor Brewster.

Councillor Brewster requested that on page 166 the reference to pruning is removed. It was also agreed that the reference to disruption to television signal requires amendment.

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- (i) **That the set of principles for the management of Council owned trees detailed in appendix A of the report be approved.**
- (ii) **That the increase in operational budgets outlined in 6.3 of the report be approved subject to a more detailed justification of the increase in costs being submitted and approved by the Portfolio Holder.**

**Reason for Decision:** The decision to agree the principles will allow the Councils to adopt a fair and consistent approach to the management of Council owned trees enabling clear guidance on how the tree resource is to be more sustainably managed.

**108 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.

**109 MCA/18/58 TO CONFIRM THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF 10 DECEMBER 2018 MEETING**

**It was RESOLVED:**

That the confidential minutes of the 10 December 2018 meeting be confirmed and signed as a true record subject to a minor typographical correction.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 4.10 pm.

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Chair