

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, 26 September 2019

PRESENT:

Councillor: Lavinia Hadingham (Chair)

Councillors:	Oliver Amorowson	Gerard Brewster
	David Burn	Terence Carter
	James Caston	Rachel Eburne
	Paul Ekpenyong	John Field
	Julie Flatman	Jessica Fleming
	Dr Helen Geake	Peter Gould
	Kathie Guthrie	Matthew Hicks
	Barry Humphreys MBE	Sarah Mansel
	John Matthissen	Andrew Mellen
	Richard Meyer	Suzie Morley
	David Muller BA (Open) MCMI	Mike Norris
	RAFA	
	Penny Otton	Timothy Passmore
	Daniel Pratt	Harry Richardson
	Keith Scarff	Andrew Stringer
	Wendy Turner	Rowland Warboys
	Keith Welham	John Whitehead

In attendance:

Officers:

- Assistant Director - Assets and Investments
- Chief Executive
- Assistant Director - Environment and Commercial
- Corporate Manager - Financial Services
- Assistant Director - Housing
- Strategic Director
- Christine Parsons
- Corporate Manager - Democratic Services
- Corporate Manager - Internal Audit
- Assistant Director – Corporate Resources and Section 151 Officer
- Strategic Director
- Professional Lead - Key Sites and Infrastructure
- Assistant Director - Customer Services

Apologies:

Stephen Phillips

2.1 There were no declarations received.

47 MC/19/17 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JULY 2019

It was RESOLVED: -

That subject to the following amendments the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2019 be confirmed and signed as a true record:

Page 3 Third paragraph amend '*beenn*' to '*been*'

Paragraph 9.5 amend '*Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Environment*' to '*Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Communities*'.

Paragraph 10.1 amend '*Shawne*' to '*Shawn*'

Councillor Eburne referred to paragraph 3 on page 3 of the minutes and stated that Members had not received any daily headliners nor a briefing note.

48 MC/19/18 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 Councillor Hadingham, the Chair of the Council, referred Members to Paper MC/19/18, which was for noting.

4.2 She thanked those, who had attended the Home Start Charity Event on the 31st of August and said that the event had raised over £1700 for Home Start.

49 MC/19/19 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

5.1 There were no announcements from Councillor Morley, the Leader of the Council.

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

6.1 None received.

51 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

7.1 None received.

52 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

8.1 None received.

53 MC/19/20 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

- 9.1 Councillor Welham provided a summary of report MC/19/20 and informed Members that the buffer for the Five-year Housing Land Supply was 20% and not 5% as stated in the report on page 21.
- 9.2 Councillor Eburne enquired if the Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group meeting had been held and he responded that the Group had met and had made arrangements for further meetings.

54 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS

- 10.1 Councillor Morley, the Leader of the Council, introduced Cabinet Members' reports and asked that questions be directed to the relevant Cabinet Members.

CMU1 Leader and Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments

- 10.1 Councillor Matthissen referred to his question in the tabled papers:

Councillor John Matthissen to the Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments:

When will you next revalue the retail and restaurant properties bought by CIFCO, bearing in mind the sector has another round of closures under way?

Response

CIFCO re-values all of its assets on an annual basis. Its valuers (Knight Frank) are due to revalue the portfolio again in March 2020.

- 10.2 Councillor Eburne referred to paragraph 4.4 in the report and asked if there was enough staff to manage the development of social housing.
- 10.3 Councillor Morley responded that all the resources were with the growth company.

It was RESOLVED:

That report CMU1 be noted.

CMU2 Leader, Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments and Cabinet Member for Customers, Digital Transformation and Improvements (Law and Governance)

- 10.4 Councillor Mansel asked if the Council was preparing for a resilience

programme in line with other authorities.

- 10.5 Arthur Charvonia, Chief Executive, responded that the Council was working with all other District Councils and Suffolk County Council to prepare for Brexit in cooperation with businesses and communities. Specific areas, which would be directly affected by Brexit, such as Felixstowe Harbour, were being tested for resilience. Central Government had also provided funding, some of which had been pooled together for the Suffolk Centre of Commerce.
- 10.6 Councillor Passmore added that the Public Sector Leaders were also making plans and he would know more after the upcoming meeting.
- 10.7 Councillor Otton asked what arrangements were made for the possible upcoming general election in November, and the risk to electors and staff, due to the risk of poor weather conditions.
- 10.8 The Chief Executive responded precaution would be implemented in line with the usual preparations for elections if a general election would take place in November.
- 10.9 Councillor Carter enquired what arrangements were in place for EU Citizens ability vote in the general elections.
- 10.10 The Chief Executive explained that the arrangement would follow the statutory election rules and normal election procedures.
- 10.11 Councillor Matthissen asked how many UC1 forms had been returned before the EU election on the 23 May 2019, and officers responded that an answer would be provided after the meeting.

It was RESOLVED:

That report CMU2 be noted.

CMU3 Cabinet Member for Communities

10.12 Councillor Welham referred to his questions in the tabled papers.

Councillor Keith Welham to the Cabinet Member for Communities

Earlier this year, Council approved a Communities Strategy. Could the Cabinet Member for Communities, please:

1. Give some examples of where the strategy has enabled joint working to deliver new or improved services to rural communities
2. Give some examples of strategic delivery partnerships which have been set up
3. Tell us if there have been any new services or activities set up or developed

- which could with benefit be expanded for delivery across rural Mid Suffolk
4. Identify challenges or obstacles which have been encountered and how ward members could be asked to assist with meeting the challenges and overcoming the obstacles.
 5. Detail where there are staff vacancies in the Communities Team and how they are delaying delivery of services

Response

1. The Council works with a range of partners to help improve services to our communities – from County Council and Health colleagues to those in the voluntary sector including organisations like Citizens Advice and Community Action Suffolk. It's difficult to say what joint working is a direct result of the Communities Strategy but it has certainly helped reinforce open and inclusive ways of working.
2. There have not been any new strategic delivery partnerships as a direct result of the Strategy yet. Officers will be discussing the Delivery Plan for the strategy at my next Cabinet Briefing, but I would be happy to discuss any thoughts or suggestions you have outside the meeting.
3. Senior officers are also in conversation with senior officers in Health about how to integrate health and new housing through planning in more effective ways as well as developing projects to support digital inclusion and working out how we can develop our housing stock to improve health outcomes and address health inequalities.

New activities are changing within our communities all the time. Some start; others stop. Paragraphs 3.1 to 3.9 of my report refers to a range of activities delivered over the past 6 months and I'm particularly enthusiastic about the potential of social prescribing, which is really starting to take shape among significant parts of the Districts now.

There is too much happening to list it all here but to give more of a flavour, officers in the team have been supporting the Needham Market Train Station Access for All group to apply for funding to enable disabled access to the north side platform; Brome and Oakley village hall to improve facilities; Needham Market Community Centre to deliver new sports courts; Needham Market Town Council to improve Crowley Park; Claydon Football Club to develop their facilities; Claydon, Hartismere and Thurston High Schools to deliver dual use facilities; Debenham Leisure Centre to provide a hub; working with Gislingham, Bacton, Eye, Haughley, Stowupland on sports-related projects; and Walsham le Willows and Badwell Ash on play-related projects.

As well as the Active Wellbeing and Active Sports programmes referred to in paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8 of my report, officers are active participants in the Ipswich and East and West Health Alliances. Officers are also helping promote the 'How are you Suffolk?' mental health campaign; supporting Dementia Alliances across the District; supporting 'Chat and Chill' sessions for parents in Stowmarket; working with Suffolk Artlink to deliver 'Jumpstart' which provides

creative activities for adults with learning disabilities; supporting 'Around the Table' providing carers with practical food and cooking workshops in Claydon; working with the Rural Coffee Caravan and Dance East to deliver 'Celebrating Age' a partnership project providing 38 arts activities for older people across a range of rural locations; helping set up a Sporting memories project in Debenham linked to the Debenham dementia project; supporting a new Live Well class at Stradbroke Leisure Centre; and helping support the creation of a Women on Wheels event in Stowmarket.

Officers are also creating a mental health directory to support staff and customers to signpost to support services for those with mental health issues; working with the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) to provide a Health and Wellbeing network for Town and Parish Councils; developing the Fit Villages project with Active Suffolk; developing Health Walks with One Life Suffolk; and supporting the planning for the national Women's Cycling Tour.

As you can see, there is lots of fantastic work underway and I will be working with the team so that we can provide a more comprehensive All Member briefing as described in paragraph 3.10 of my report.

4. One particular challenge recently has included working to address changes to rural bus routes. I have been working with other Councillors as well as Officers from both the District and County Council and have encouraged officers to provide an all Councillor briefing on the issue soon. It really affects my villages and I know a number of people are concerned.
- 5 As you'll note from paragraph 3.11 of my report, new Grants officers, Josh Holmes and Roy Emmerson, are in place (with Roy due to start on Monday) and I can also now report that we have been successful in recruiting to the vacant Community Safety role.

10.13 Councillor Welham asked that updates were provided more frequently to Members, other than the Cabinet Members reports. He also asked that Ward Members were made aware of any activities in their wards.

10.14 Councillor Eburne asked if a list could be published or made available for the Service Level agreements for the organisation, which were being funded by the Council.

10.15 Councillor Flatman responded that the current Service Level agreements were under review and that a new list would be available shortly.

10.16 Councillor Passmore commented that facilities and activities available in the communities across the District and how to encourage activity should be included in the report.

10.17 Councillor Richardson enquired what the uptake was for the Social Prescribing and were there any plans to extend the schemes across the District.

- 10.18 Councillor Flatman responded that 77% of the elderly community in the area around Stradbroke and Laxfield had signed up for the programme and had successfully been extended to Debenham and Eye.
- 10.19 Councillor Carter enquired how the programme was being advertised and how people would be able to get to the activities.
- 10.20 Councillor Flatman clarified the process for Social Prescribing and how local charities, local volunteers, the CCG and Public Health were working to solve the issues in relation to rural services and the reduction in public transport.

It was RESOLVED: -

That report CMU3 be noted.

CMU4 Cabinet Member for Customers, Digital Transformation and Improvements.

- 10.21 Councillor Eburne referred to Section 6 of the report in relation to work undertaken for a logo.
- 10.22 Councillor Morley, Cabinet Member for Customers, Digital Transformation and Improvements responded that the Head of Communications would be contacting Mid Suffolk Leaders to set up a working party shortly.
- 10.23 Councillor Stringer asked for a clarification for the long waiting time for calling the Customer Service Centre, when the bin collection routes were changed.
- 10.24 Councillor Morley explained the process for customer calls to the Customer Service Centre and how the data was collected.
- 10.25 Councillor Welham enquired if Equality and Diversity training was mandatory and he was reassured by Councillor Morley that everything was being done to ensure that Members received the mandatory training required.

It was RESOLVED:

That report CMU4 be noted.

CMU5 Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

- 10.26 Councillor Matthissen referred to the tabled papers for his question:

Councillor John Matthissen to Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

It is now 2 ½ years since the Council bought Paddock House in Eye, during which

time it has become an eyesore deeply resented by local people. When will the necessary management resource be available to develop it?

Response

Further to the original public consultation, by the Council, in Spring 2018 the community of Eye made a number of representations to the late Cllr Michael Burke and officers at the Council. Following the review of these comments it became apparent that the planned proposed development of the site was not supported by the community due to their aspiration to gain a larger provision of public open space. Continued dialogue and consultation with key community members, and the Town Council, has been undertaken with new schemes created. The Council has recently been able to agree a scheme, with Eye Town Council, that will be submitted to planning by the end of the year with the expected development of the site to take place by the end of 2020.

To answer the question with regards to resource we can confirm that throughout the process the appropriate resources have been provided and this will continue until the development is completed. The delivery of this complex housing site is important but the most important outcome for Eye is delivering the best development for the town.

10.27 Councillor Ekpenyong enquired what was done for young unemployed people and, in particular, what training arrangements were in place for this group.

10.28 Councillor Brewster, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, responded that the Chief Executive Officer for the Mix in Stowmarket had received 70 referrals for training, of which 22 places had not been completed, 33% of those who had attended were now in fulltime employment in Stowmarket and the District.

10.29 Councillor Eburne asked what was being provided for the creative and small companies that existed in Stowmarket.

10.30 Fiona Duhamel, Assistant Director for Economic Development and Regeneration, responded that work was being undertaken across both the public and private sector to develop tech industries. Stowmarket had been identified as a creative and cultural centre for development in this area.

10.31 Councillor Field asked if Gateway 14 and other development projects were sustainable and the Assistant Director for Economic Development and Regenerations responded that consideration for servicing Gateway 14 with locally sourced energy, such as a heat source network was being

investigated.

10.32 Councillor Passmore raised a question regarding the Suffolk Growth Group, who received £1.8M to be spent on services and growth across the public sector in Suffolk. He thought it was important to ensure that enough funding was available for various areas such as apprenticeships, rehabilitation of offenders, and that local hospital source food from local suppliers. Supporting local business was crucial and he asked if the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth was in support of this.

10.33 Councillor Brewster agreed with Councillor Passmore.

10.34 Councillor Carter enquired who the members on the steering groups were and referred to paragraph 3.1 of the report, and if it was possible for Members to have an input to these groups.

10.35 Councillor Brewster responded he would provide an answer after the meeting.

10.36 Councillor Matthissen referred to his second question which was in the tabled papers.

Councillor John Matthissen to Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

Will you publish all MSDC written and verbal input to Local Economic Partnership (LEP) preparation and drafting of the Norfolk and Suffolk Local Industrial Strategy including the full text, dates and who was involved?

Response

In principle yes. We can definitely provide the responses we have made to the LEP However, as a lot of this is information from the LEP itself, we will need to speak with them first before releasing the information.

10.37 Councillor Matthissen asked why none of the information relating to the recent Cabinet Report had been put to Members and Councillor Brewster responded that the LEP had been working on a Government document. The Document had supported the recent development of the Environmental policy agreed.

It was RESOLVED: -

That report CMU5 be noted.

CMU6 Cabinet Member for Environment

- 10.37 Councillor Fleming, Cabinet Member for Environment, apologised to those Members of the public, who's bins had not been collected during the recent bin collection route change. She detailed some of the findings from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 21 September 2019.
- 10.38 Councillor Pratt questioned the waste service contract and if there had been any savings in the new contract.
- 10.39 Councillor Mellen asked if the Council had considered investing in electrical vehicles for the collection of bins, which drove approximately 60 miles per charged battery and would therefore be sufficient for the bin collection rounds.
- 10.40 He then stated that the Climate Emergency Motion had been agreed at the last Council and he wondered why the Task Forces were not meeting until October.
- 10.41 Councillor Fleming responded that a County wide meeting would take place on the 9 October, to coordinate the work and to agree terms of references.
- 10.42 In response to Councillor Stringer's question regarding further office space provision for officer working in the community, Councillor Fleming responded that she would provide a response after the meeting.
- 10.43 Councillor Field asked if indemnity insurance had been taken into consideration and Councillor Fleming responded that she would provide a specific answer after the meeting.
- 10.44 Councillor Pratt referred to the tabled papers for this next question:

Councillor Daniel Pratt to Cabinet Member for the Environment

Waste & Recycling: Route Changes

Despite the District Councils statistical record on the success of the round changes, I have received numerous complaints from my constituents over August regarding the delay in collecting the waste and recycling. This could have been partially avoided had not the Council decided to change the rounds teams.

- 1) I would like to know what was the objective behind changing the crew?

- 2) How does the Council justify discarding years of local knowledge of the rounds?
- 3) Would the Council like to take the opportunity to apologise to those who have not have their bins collected through no fault of their own?

In reference to Cllr Mellen's question, I would too like to know why the Council has failed to invest in electric powered refuse lorries. Diesel powered lorries are incredibly fuel inefficient and an electric fleet would have better contributed to our target to be carbon neutral by 2030 and made savings of £100's per day per lorry.

Response

The round review resulted in the generation of 100 new collection routes, unfortunately it was not possible to keep all collection crews with areas they were familiar with, however where possible Serco have tried to match areas with the old crews that had knowledge of the area.

Electric refuse collection vehicles are still under development and although under trials in some areas, we are not aware of any LA moving to an electric fleet at present.

We will continue to review the situation with Serco and when viable alternatives to diesel powered trucks become available, we will investigate the options to replace our fleet over its normal 7-year cycle.

A limited number of electric demonstrator vehicles are now coming into the marketplace, and we will be looking into these as an option as our fleet replacement programme develops, our current main line fleet is due for replacement in 2023.

10.45 Councillor Pratt then asked his second question in the tabled papers:

Councillor Daniel Pratt to Cabinet Member for the Environment

Residents from my ward have questioned the traceability of the plastic waste that we collect to be recycled. Can the Council provide answers to the following questions:

- 1) Can the Council hold the contractor accountable for where and how our plastic waste is recycled?
- 2) What is the mechanism for holding the contractor to account and what is the regularity of enquiry regarding the end point of our plastic waste?
- 3) Where does our plastic end up and how is it recycled?

Response

Plastics end destinations:

We publish information through the Suffolk Waste Partnership (detailing 'Where recycling goes')

<https://www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/learning-zone/where-recycling-goes>
The below is an extract from the link

“Exported materials are sold to various Environment Agency-accredited and licensed processing facilities abroad where they become an “end-of-waste product” which specifies no further onward trading as waste. An end-of-waste product refers to waste which has been reprocessed, often to produce a pellet or flake, which can be reused as a recyclable material.

Viridor, who are the company contracted to sort and sell Suffolk's household recycling operate an Audit Process with UK Authorities and the Environment Agency before recovered materials are shipped. Further audit is completed before recovered materials are sold to re-processors to ensure the supply-chain is fully verified in advance of implementation. Viridor are committed to the highest standards of business and ethical conduct and demonstrate considerable expertise in this area.”

- 10.46 Councillor Pratt enquired if the Council could trace the plastic collected in the District and the Assistant Director for Environmental and Commercial Partnerships would provide an answer after the meeting.
- 10.47 Councillor Amorowson enquired about the discontinued recycling of Tetra packs and what happen to these at the waste depot.
- 10.48 Councillor Fleming would provide an answer outside of the meeting.
- 10.49 Councillor Carter asked if the Council had considered ‘A Memorial Tree’ scheme similar to the ‘A Tree for Life’ scheme and Councillor Fleming responded it would be taken into consideration.
- 10.50 Councillor Pratt referred to the Northern Route and the fact that Suffolk County Council would have the final decision for this project. This would generate a large amount of CO2 and he asked if the Council would consider not supporting this project.
- 10.51 Councillor Fleming responded that the recent consultation for the Northern Route had been for a strategic outline of the project and that the Council had not made a decision on the Northern Route project yet.

It was RESOLVED:

That report CMU6 be noted.

CMU7 Cabinet Member for Finance

10.52 Councillor Warboys referred to the tabled papers for his question:

Councillor Rowland Warboys to the Cabinet Member for Finance

What assessments are we making of investments made on behalf of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, in particular the General Fund, with regards to progress towards meeting the Councils' Carbon Net Zero Targets?

Response

As your question has been directed to me as Cabinet Member for Finance, I am assuming that you mean the treasury management investments that the Council makes and not anything that is based around physical assets as the latter would need to be directed to one of my Cabinet colleagues. Before I answer however, I must make the observation that you refer in your question to “the Councils' Carbon Net Zero Targets”. The Motion agreed by Full Council in August did not contain that phrase, but rather it pledges “the ambition to make Babergh & Mid Suffolk Councils carbon neutral by 2030”. I will respond to your question on that basis. We are currently working to the 2019/20 Treasury Management Strategy that was approved by the Council in February before the ambition expressed in the climate change challenge Motion was adopted. When we are preparing the 2020/21 Strategy later this year, we can explore with our treasury management advisers, Arlingclose, what changes could or should be made to the draft 2020/21 Strategy to reflect this new ambition. The 2020/21 draft Strategy will then be presented to Council in February 2020 for approval.

10.53 Councillor Eburne asked for an update for the current Growth Efficient Fund and Councillor Whitehead provided a breakdown for the Funding, which at the end of June 2019 was £8.894M. Present and future projects including £2.575M for the Regal Theatre in Stowmarket, £3M in the Strategic Investment Fund and £223,000 was planned for a battery storage scheme at the leisure centre in Stowmarket. This left £3.1M in the Growth Efficiency Fund.

10.54 Councillor Eburne wondered if the remaining £6M could be spent on other projects including a local energy network, and an office in the District.

10.55 Councillor Mansel asked if it would be possible to conduct Member training on webinar to make Member training easier to access.

10.56 Councillor Matthissen requested that the minutes from the last Joint Audit and Standards Committee be forwarded to him.

It was RESOLVED:

That report CMU7 be noted.

CMU8 Cabinet Member for Housing

10.57 Councillor Mansel referred to the tabled papers and asked her questions:

Councillor Sarah Mansel to the Cabinet for Housing and Cabinet Member for

Economic Growth

I was pleased to see some houses for social rent are to be included in our development of the Stowmarket Middle School Site. Given that there have been recent comments in the press regarding a national need for more social rent housing, what proportion of MSDC's proposed new Council housing will be for social rent?

Response

We will continue to provide homes for social rent wherever possible, however it will always be dependent on the costs of bringing forward schemes and how these are funded. Since 2015 we have delivered a total of 99 new homes which include social and affordable rent as well as shared ownership. Our Affordable Housing Programme is funded through new borrowing, Homes England Grant, and reserves. Over the next four years it is forecast that we will invest £35 Million on New Homes Delivery.

Question 2

Councillor Sarah Mansel to the Cabinet for Housing

When the Joint Housing Board was disbanded a couple of years ago, it was agreed that a member sounding panel would be formed. Now that the Tenant Board has been established, when will the Member board be instigated?

Response

The Tenant Board has worked hard since its inception and has recently completed a draft of its first scrutiny project (looking at aspects of the BMBS repairs service). They will shortly be helping us look more closely at the Star survey results and thinking about action plans to improve some of the key areas of our work.

We have also completed one Tenant Sounding Board project, looking at our rent letters and how we can improve our written communication around rent collection.

A paper on the possible composition of a Members Sounding Board is being drafted and it will be added to the Forward Plan as soon as possible.

Question 3

Councillor Sarah Mansel to the Cabinet for Housing

Whilst it is pleasing to see a reduction in void times, what is our target for this? Also is there any significant reason why Babergh's void times are about 2/3 the length of ours?

Response

Our original target for Void times was an average of 21 days by 2020/21. The Void Project has clearly demonstrated that whilst it was originally an ambitious target, the work of officers and members has resulted in us exceeding it. Officers are now working towards reducing the average times further and will be setting new targets for staff to achieve. The variation in numbers is purely as a result of the number of empty homes being returned and the condition of those properties in each District. The approach and service being delivered by officers is the same in both districts.

10.58 Councillor Mansel asked for the number of social houses being included in the 99 new houses which had been built in the previous year and Councillor Flatman responded that an answer would be provided after the meeting.

10.59 Councillor Mansel then asked when Members would receive information about the Member Sounding Board, which had been established after the disbanding of the Joint Housing Board and Councillor Flatman would bring information to a Cabinet Briefing.

10.60 Councillor Turner referred to the tabled papers and asked her questions:

Councillor Wendy Turner to Cabinet Member for Communities

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

As of 1 July 2019, there were a total of 209 Council tenants in receipt of Universal Credit across the two districts (up from 102 tenants in December 2018); 129 in Mid Suffolk and 161 in Babergh.

Why has the number of Council tenants in receipt of Universal Credit doubled in 6 months? Is there any data to explain this huge rise which might help prevent further increases in the future?

Response

The roll out of the full digital service for Universal Credit was completed on 12 December 2018. Any new claimants, or existing claimants whose change of circumstances amount to a new claim, will now move straight onto Universal Credit.

The next stage of the process is called 'managed migration', which is where claimants transfer from existing benefits or tax credits onto Universal Credit. This process is being piloted between July 2019 and July 2020 by inviting existing claimants to make a Universal Credit claim, with the expectation that managed migration will be fully underway by the end of 2020. The government plan to complete the managed migration process by December 2023.

The rise in claimants in Babergh and Mid Suffolk is almost entirely driven by new claims, or changes in circumstances that have led to a new claim, a process known as 'natural migration'. We expect to see a steady rise in these

numbers. It is difficult to anticipate how quickly the number of claimants will rise as part of managed migration as much depends on the outcome of the pilot, but we will be keeping a careful eye on it.

Question 2 CMU8

Councillor Wendy Turner to Cabinet Member for Communities

3.13 Half-way house. Where is it located and how many residents does it cater for at one time?

Response

The property is located in Hoxne and provides a suitably adapted property for an individual who is ready to leave Hospital but whose own accommodation requires adaptation or alterations before they can return home. This approach is used elsewhere in Suffolk and the scheme is known as ‘Stepping Home’.

10.61 The Assistant Director for Housing said, in response to Councillor Turner’s question, that work was being undertaken, within areas such as drugs centres, to provide support with claims for Universal Credit.

10.62 Councillor Warboys enquired about households moving out of the community and the impact of moves from town to country specifically in relation to transport.

10.63 The Strategic Director for Housing said this this migration was being monitored and that a further response to the reason for this migration would be provided outside the meeting.

10.64 Councillor Welham raised concerns about mobility scooters and the availability of charging points and Councillor Flatman responded that consideration for Health and Safety had to be considered when installing charging points.

10.65 The Assistant Director for Housing added that a Mobility Scooter Policy had been adopted and would be forwarded to Members.

It was RESOLVED: -

That report CMU8 be noted.

CMU9 Cabinet Member for Planning

10.66 Councillor Mellen referred to the tabled papers and asked his question:

Councillor Mellen to the Cabinet Member for Planning

The Council received a letter from the environmental legal team “Client Earth”

regarding our emerging Local Plan complying with current UK environment legislation, requesting a response in October. Has a response been drafted and how did this answer the questions raised by Client Earth?

Response

Several other Councils received the same legal letter from “Client Earth”. We are therefore working in conjunction with these other Councils, through the Local Government Association, to reply.

10.67 Councillor Eburne asked in relation to the Joint Local Plan and that it appeared that the Council supported the Northern Route in this document.

10.68 The Chief Executive responded that the Joint Local Plan was subject to consultation and that the Council would make no response on the Northern Route until a strategic business plan had been completed.

10.69 Councillor Eburne stated that the reference was not in the policy but in the background papers, and it appeared as a definite statement. She felt this implied that the Council supported the Northern Route.

10.70 The Chief Executive reassured Members that the Council had not expressed support for the Northern Route.

10.71 Councillor Mansel enquired how Members could have an influence on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Professional Lead for Key Sites and Infrastructure responded that changes were made continuously to this document.

10.72 Councillor Stringer asked if the Joint Local Plan superseded neighbourhood plans and the Chief Executive confirmed that it did.

10.73 Councillor Geake referred to paragraph 3.7 and asked what training members of the planning Committee received for neighbourhood plans.

10.74 Councillor Guthrie stated that Planning Committee Members were well informed of neighbourhood plans and that these were taken into consideration both at planning briefings and at Planning Committees.

It was RESOLVED: -

That report CMU9 be noted.

10.2

55 MOTION ON NOTICE

15.1 The Chair of the Council invited Councillor Amorowson to move the Motion.

15.2 Councillor Amorowson began with an introduction and **MOVED** the Motion as detailed in the Agenda.

- 15.3 Councillor Mellen **SECONDED** the Motion.
- 15.4 Members then debated the Motion.
- 15.5 Councillor Humphreys did in principle agree with the overall aim of the Motion. However, he stated that nationally the Urban Tree Challenge had funded the planting of 130,000 trees across the U.K. He was concerned about several issues in the Motion, including the cost implications and the planning policy. He encouraged the Cabinet Member for Environment to seek further information on this issue and bring a report to Council.
- 15.6 Councillor Eburne supported the Motion, as woodland space had proven to improve mental health and the general wellbeing, which would benefit communities.
- 15.7 Councillor Passmore agreed with Councillor Humphreys. He thought that a Task and Finish Group could work to find a workable and productive solution for how to increase tree planting in the District.
- 15.8 Councillor Caston said that the Climate Change Motion agreed at the last Council Meeting had established a Task Force, which was meeting on the 9th of October and that he would take any comments made by the Council to the first meeting.
- 15.9 Councillor Otton supported the Motion, though there were a few issues which need to be clarified. She stated that more preservation orders for trees and mature woodland should be issued to help preservation of these. She also asked that plastic sleeves for protection of trees were not to be used.
- 15.10 Councillor Meyer agreed with Councillor Caston and thought that there was a risk of undermining the Task Force, if the Motion was agreed.
- 15.11 Councillor Stringer declared a non-pecuniary local interest as a member of the Woodland Trust. He said that the Council declared an emergency and had to undertake the work now.
- 15.12 Councillor Richardson supported the principle of the Motion but thought it would be duplication of the work of the taskforce and work around the green corridors. There was a mixture of other initiatives, which could support the work to achieve carbon reduction. There was not sufficient detail in the Motion to undertake the practical side of implementing the suggested actions in the Motion.
- 15.13 Councillor Pratt suggested that new ideas were considered. Farmers who were entrenched in debt could provide farmland for rewilding.
- 15.14 Councillor Hicks disagreed with Councillor Stringer and said that work for the Climate Emergency change had already been undertaken and he thought it was a mistake to issue a decree to the Task Force for Emergency Climate

Change. The sentiment in the Motion was right however, the timing was wrong. He stated that Climate Change was a top priority.

- 15.15 Councillor Geake said that locating enough land for planting trees was difficult. However, the Council controlled land at Planning Committee and also owned land in the District. She thought the Council needed to act as a corporate body to utilise options for planting of trees.
- 15.16 Councillor Welham believed that adoption of the Motion would help the Task Force and would show that the Council was leading the way to communities and local groups, who were interested in planting trees.
- 15.17 Councillor Mansel asked if the Motion could be re-worded if some Members were unhappy with the wording.
- 15.18 Councillor Fleming supported the principle of the Motion, however, the wording in the Motion supported too many financial commitments which were not substantiated. She thought that a report produced in collaboration between the Cabinet Member and officers would be more effective and allow Members to debate the issues properly.
- 15.19 Councillor Mellen stated the benefits of reforestation including that it had proved beneficial to public health, improved anti-social behaviour and could increase property values. He felt that there was a multitude of initiatives which the Council could undertake. The Motion detailed the measures for how to begin re-wilding and would influence the work of the Task Force.
- 15.20 The Chair asked if Councillor Amorowson would like to summarise which he declined.
- 15.21 The Motion was put to Members for the vote and the vote was **LOST**.

56 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET / COMMITTEES

57 JAC/19/4 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT – 2018/19

- 11a.1 Councillor Muller, Chair of the Joint Audit and Standards Committee, introduced report JAC/19/4 and **MOVED** recommendation 3.1, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Ekpenyong.
- 11a.2 Councillor Eburne referred to page 86 in the report, Appendix C, paragraph 2.3.6 and asked if the company folded, would the debt incurred by MSDC (Suffolk Holdings) Ltd be a liability to the Council's tax payers.
- 11a.3 In response to Councillors Eburne's and Passmore's questions, the Assistant Director for Assets and Investments responded that the accounts for Gateway 14 were consolidated and that the loan for Gateway 14 was secured against the asset and that the Holding Company held the debt for

Gateway 14.

11a.4 The recommendations were put to members for the vote and the vote was **CARRIED**.

It was **RESOLVED**: -

That the Treasury Management activity for the year 2018/19 be noted. Further that the performance was in line with the Prudential Indicators set for 2018/19 be noted.

58 MC/19/21 MID SUFFOLK CIL REGULATION 62 MONITORING REPORT

- 12.1 Councillor Burn, the Cabinet Member for Planning, introduced report MC/19/21 and **MOVED** recommendation 3.1 in the report, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Flatman.
- 12.2 In response to Councillor Eburne's question, the Professional Lead Key Sites and Infrastructure clarified that work was ongoing for CIL Funding and that a review of the expenditure framework had been undertaken, which would be detailed at Member briefings.
- 12.3 Councillor Humphreys had concerns regarding the risk measures and if there would be enough CIL funding to cover the required infrastructure in the communities the Council served.
- 12.4 The Professional Lead for Key Sites and Infrastructure explained that the way the CIL costs were chartered would be refreshed. However, there were prospects of a gap in funding and a priority CIL delivery plan was being determined. An assessment for the requirements were part of the Joint Local Plan.
- 12.5 Councillor Field queried that a total of £587,315.95 CIL funding had been collected, but only £20,972.57 had been spent.
- 12.6 The Professional Lead for Key Sites and Infrastructure explained that CIL funding was paid twice yearly into Parish Council's bank accounts, and that Parish Councils had spent some CIL funding. However, some Parish Councils were working with the CIL team to identify their priorities, using the Parish Infrastructure Investment Plans (PIIP) to establish the measures they would like to achieve.
- 12.7 The recommendation was put to Members for the vote and the vote was **UNANIMOUS**.

It was **RESOLVED**: -

That the Mid Suffolk CIL Regulation 62 Monitoring Report for 2018-19 be noted.

59 MC/19/22 DRAFT TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2020/21

13.1 The Chair of the Council advised Members to email the Corporate Manager for Democratic Services with any queries they might have regarding report MC/19/22.

13.2 Councillor Morley **PROPOSED** recommendation 2.1, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Fleming.

13.3 The recommendation was put to Members for the vote and the vote was **UNANIMOUS**.

It was RESOLVED: -

That the draft Committee Timetable for 2020/21 be approved.

60 COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS

14.1 Councillor Morley, the Leader of the Council, **MOVED** that Councillor John Whitehead be appointed as a representative on the on the Employers Pension Fund Committee, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Humphreys.

14.2 The Motion was put to Members for the vote and the vote was **UNANIMOUS**.

It was RESOLVED: -

That Councillor John Whitehead be appointed as a representative on the Employers Pension Fund Committee.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 8.05 pm.

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Chair