

## **BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of the **BABERGH CABINET** held in the King Edmund Chamber - Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Thursday, 9 January 2020

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor: John Ward (Chair)

Councillors: Jan Osborne  
Clive Arthey  
Lee Parker

Derek Davis  
Michael Holt

### **In attendance:**

Councillors(s): Alistair McCraw

Officers: Strategic Director (KN)  
Assistant Director – Planning and Sustainable Communities (TB)  
SRP Operations Manager (AW)  
Deputy Monitoring Officer (JS)  
Governance Support Officer (CP)

### **193 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor David Busby and Councillor Elisabeth Malvisi.

### **194 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Osborne declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8, BCa/19/25 Three-Year Funding for Sudbury and District Citizens Advice, in her capacity as a member of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

### **195 BCA/19/24 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 07 NOVEMBER 2019**

It was **RESOLVED:-**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 07 November 2019 be signed as a true record.**

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

There were no petitions received.

**197 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

There were no questions received.

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

There were no matters referred.

**199 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

The Forthcoming Decisions List was noted.

**200 BCA/19/25 THREE-YEAR FUNDING FOR SUDBURY AND DISTRICT CITIZENS ADVICE**

The Cabinet Member for Communities introduced the report and provided Members with background information regarding funding provisions for Citizens Advice. The recommendations were moved by Councillor Davis.

Councillor Osborne commented that she fully supported the report and would like to extend the recommendation to a three-year rolling agreement. The Assistant Director for Planning and Communities confirmed that recommendation 3.2 of the report would allow for a rolling three-year agreement under delegated authority.

Councillor McCraw, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised that the Committee's Task and Finish Group would be providing an updated report to the next Cabinet meeting which would follow the recommendations in this report. Councillor McCraw thanked both Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils for their approach to the matter.

Councillor Holt raised concerns regarding the funding Citizens Advice provided themselves and expressed the importance of Cabinet reviewing this on an annual basis. The Assistant Director for Planning and Communities assured Members that the funding agreement would include monitoring arrangements and require deliverables to be reported back to Cabinet.

Members further discussed the three-year rolling funding arrangement and agreed that recommendation 3.1 would be amended to include reference to this for the purpose of clarity. It was confirmed that an update would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis for discussion.

The revised recommendation was moved by Councillor Davis and seconded by Councillor Osborne.

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED:-**

**1.1 That a three-year rolling funding agreement for the Sudbury and District**

**CA be approved.**

- 1.2 That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Planning and Communities to sign off the agreement following discussion with the Cabinet Member for Communities.**

**Reason for Decision:** To provide the Sudbury and District CA with greater certainty about three-year funding from Babergh District Council, consistent with the Council's support for the value and impact that it achieves.

**201 BCA/19/26 INTRODUCTION OF A COUNCIL TAX PENALTIES POLICY**

The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report which had been prepared by the Shared Revenues Partnership. Councillor Ward explained the background to the policy and moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Osborne seconded the recommendations.

Councillor Arthey queried if this policy would apply to residents who own more than one property and benefit from a discount on each, for example a holiday home and a main residence. The SRP Operations Manager confirmed that these instances would be targeted by the review and provided an explanation of the method of determining a Council Taxpayers main residence.

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED:-**

**That the implementation of a policy for the issuing of Council Tax penalties be approved.**

**Reason for Decision:** The Council is committed to a pro-active approach in preventing and reducing the risks associated with fraud, error and other irregularities in the administration of Council Tax. Implementation of this policy supports this commitment.

**202 BCA/19/27 COUNCIL TAX - CITIZENS ADVICE COLLECTION PROTOCOL**

Report BCa/19/27 was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Finance who moved the recommendations. The recommendations were seconded by Councillor Osborne.

Councillor Arthey enquired if there had been a rise in Council Tax debt in the Babergh area. Andrew Wilcock advised that the figures for the final quarter had been impacted by changes in customers working patterns or benefits received. It was confirmed that the protocol would help to support residents who may have difficulty in funding council tax payments.

In response to a further query from Councillor Arthey it was confirmed that both Mid Suffolk District Council and Ipswich Borough Council had approved the protocol.

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED:-**

**That the adoption of the Citizen Advice Council Tax Protocol detailed at Appendix (a) of the report be approved.**

**Reason for Decision:** The protocol reflects best practice at a local level and is intended to facilitate regular liaison with the Council, its Enforcement Agents and Citizens Advice on practices and policy concerning Council Tax collection.

In setting down clear procedures and keeping these regularly under review, all parties to the protocol can ensure that arrears are dealt with appropriately whilst complaints are handled efficiently.

**203 BCA/19/28 DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE DURING THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD UNDER DELEGATED POWERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 2 OF THE CONSTITUTION**

The Cabinet Member for Housing provided background information to the decision made by the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Chair of the Council under delegated powers during the pre-election period.

It was confirmed, following a question from Councillor Arthey, that the Chief Executive agreed the Disabled Adaptations Policy and not the awards granted under the policy. Councillor Osborne confirmed that the policy would be forwarded to Cabinet Members.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Osborne and seconded by Councillor Parker.

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED:-**

**That the decision taken under delegated powers by the Chief Executive to approve the Regulatory Reform Order during the pre-election period be noted.**

**Reason for Decision:** The Cabinet Meeting has been cancelled due to the 'pre-election period' for the General Election taking place on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019. This meant that the Policy could not be considered until January 2020 which could result in funding being delayed.

Under Part 2 of the Constitution, Delegations to Officers, Paragraph 7.2 (page 68-69), the decision must be reported to the next ordinary meeting of the appropriate Committee/Cabinet.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 11.11 am.

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Chair (& date)