

## MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Virtual Meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK COUNCIL** held on Thursday, 24 September 2020

### PRESENT:

|              |                     |                   |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 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      | Lavinia Hadingham |
|              | Sarah Mansel        | Matthew Hicks     |
|              | Barry Humphreys MBE | John Matthissen   |
|              | Andrew Mellen       | Richard Meyer     |
|              | Suzie Morley        | David Muller      |
|              | Mike Norris         | Penny Otton       |
|              | Timothy Passmore    | Stephen Phillips  |
|              | Dr Daniel Pratt     | Harry Richardson  |
|              | Keith Scarff        | Andrew Stringer   |
|              | Wendy Turner        | Rowland Warboys   |
|              | Keith Welham        | John Whitehead    |

### In attendance:

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Officers: | Chief Executive (AC)  |
|           | Strategic Director (KN)   |
|           | Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer (EY)     |
|           | Assistant Director – Corporate Resources and Section 151 Officer (KS) |
|           | Assistant Director - Customer Services (SW)                           |
|           | Assistant Director – Sustainable Communities (TB)                     |
|           | Assistant Director - Environment and Commercial Partnerships (CC)     |
|           | Assistant Director - Economic Development & Regeneration (FD)         |
|           | Corporate Manager - Financial and Commissioning and Procurement (ME)  |
|           | Corporate Manager - Strategic Planning (RH)                           |
|           | Corporate Manager - Governance and Civic Office (JR)                  |
|           | Senior Governance Support Officer (HH)                                |

### Apologies:

None received.

## 1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

- 1.1 Councillor Lavinia Hadingham, the Chair, asked for nominations for Chairman of the Council for the Municipal Year 2020/21.
- 1.2 Councillor Eburne **PROPOSED** Councillor Penny Otton as Chairman of the Council and was **SECONDED** by Councillor Field.

- 1.3 Councillor Morley **PROPOSED** Councillor Barry Humphreys MBE as Chairman of the Council and was **SECONDED** by Councillor Hicks.
- 1.4 The vote for Councillor Otton was 17 For and 17 Against.
- 1.5 The vote for Councillor Humphreys was 17 For and 17 Against.
- 1.6 Due to the deadlock vote, the Chair, Councillor Hadingham, exercised her casting vote in favour of Councillor Humphreys.

By the Chair's casting vote

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**That Councillor Barry Humphreys MBE be appointed Chairman of the Council for the Municipal Year 2020/21.**

- 1.7 Councillor Humphreys thereupon made his Declaration of Office.
- 1.8 Councillor Humphreys thanked everyone who had voted for him as Chair of the Council, and Councillor Hadingham for her service in the previous Municipal year. Councillor Humphreys announced his chosen charity would be Stowmarket Dementia Action Alliance.

## **2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL**

- 2.1 Councillor Matthissen **PROPOSED** Councillor Rowland Warboys and was **SECONDED** by Councillor Mansel.
- 2.2 Councillor Muller **PROPOSED** Councillor Paul Ekpenyong and was **SECONDED** by Councillor Hadingham.
- 2.3 The vote for Councillor Warboys was 17 For and 17 Against.
- 2.4 The vote for Councillor Ekpenyong was 17 For and 17 Against.
- 2.5 Due to the deadlock vote, the Chairman, Councillor Humphreys, exercised his casting vote in favour of Councillor Ekpenyong.

By the Chair's casting vote

**It was RESOLVED:-**

**That Councillor Paul Ekpenyong be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the Municipal year 2020/21.**

- 2.6 Councillor Paul Ekpenyong thereupon made his Declaration of Office.

2.7 Councillor Ekpenyong thanked Members for voting for him as Vice-Chair of the Council.

### **3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

3.1 There were no apologies received.

### **4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS**

4.1 There were no declarations of interests declared.

### **5 MC/20/1 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JULY 2020**

**It was RESOLVED:-**

**That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2020 be confirmed and signed as a true record.**

### **6 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

6.1 Councillor Morley, the Leader made her announcements and said that throughout the year and especially over the past 6 months of COVID-19, she would like to recognise all the staff as the 'unsung heroes' of local government. The Council's staff had worked through, sometimes, difficult personal circumstances, always with the best interests of Mid Suffolk residents at the forefront of their minds. Members recognised what had been achieved in managing, and helping to mitigate, the spread of COVID-19 in addition to maintaining vital services to residents and communities. Mid Suffolk remained one of the safest places to live, with only two new confirmed cases within the last week, the lowest number across the whole of Suffolk. So "Stick with It Suffolk" – we can do this! She also wanted to pay tribute to Councillors, who have continued to represent their residents and helped share important public messages. "Working Together" are achieving good outcomes for the people who live or work in Mid Suffolk.

6.2 Councillor Morley then highlighted some of the Council's achievements:

- Paddock House redevelopment received the go ahead – creating 16 affordable homes in Eye.
- The Council had received £800,000 Government funding for electricity micro generation and solar storage car ports, as part of the Climate Change initiatives.
- Great progress had been made on the Regal Theatre refurbishment and extension as part of the Stowmarket visioning work.
- Gateway 14 consultation was underway. This was an opportunity for the community to be heard and would help to support our economic recovery.
- A £200k investment in Stradbroke Pool & Fitness Centre had been completed and a £2.2m upgrade and extension to Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre in Stowmarket was now underway, including a new gym, poolside features and

changing rooms.

- CIL awards – eg improvements to Thurston Railway Station, new electrical vehicle charging points in Stowmarket, improvements to the Moors Lane children’s play area in Eye, a new car park in Debenham and conversion of the Granary in Wingfield into a children’s nursery. Each of these were creating communities with bright and healthy futures.
- “Working Together “with Babergh, the Council had secured £100,000 to provide safe and warm accommodation for homeless people and rough sleepers this winter.
- Inaugural Innovation Awards 2020 had been launched – this was recognising forward thinking businesses large and small (27th Sept closing date for nominations, held virtually on 3rd Nov).

6.3 The Leader then thanked Councillor Hadingham who had approached the role of Chair with energy and enthusiasm, both within the Chamber and as part of her Civic functions. It was a shame that the last 6 months had curtailed some of her duties out and about in our Communities, however her chosen charities had benefited from her endeavours to the tune of £1244.78. Councillor Hadingham had been, perhaps, an unconventional Chair with her somewhat irreverent style and she had kept Members on their toes throughout. She was determined that Councillor Hadingham’s talents would not go to waste and she would like to take this opportunity to announce that Councillor Hadingham would join the Cabinet as the Portfolio Holder for Housing with immediate effect, where her abilities would be put to good use.

6.4 Councillor Eburne also thanked staff for their hard work during the challenging circumstances of recent months.

## **7 DESIGNATION OF COMMITTEES AND JOINT COMMITTEES**

7.1 To appoint the following Committees and Joint Committees:

- Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Development Control Committee A
- Development Control Committee B
- Planning Referrals Committee
- Mid Suffolk Licensing and Regulatory Committee
- Joint Audit and Standards Committee
- Joint Appointments Committee

7.2 Councillor Morley **MOVED** the proposal, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Ekpenyong.

**It was RESOLVED:-**

**That the following Committees and Joint Committees be appointed:-**

**Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Development Control Committee A**

**Development Control Committee B**  
**Planning Referrals Committee**  
**Mid Suffolk Licensing and Regulatory Committee**  
**Joint Audit and Standards Committee**  
**Joint Appointments Committee**

## **8 MC/20/2 POLITICAL BALANCE AND COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES**

- 8.1 Councillor Hicks raised the issue of an inappropriate 'GIF' posted in the meeting chat box, which the Monitoring Officer had requested the Councillor concerned to remove.
- 8.2 The Monitoring Officer informed Members that this would be dealt with outside of the meeting.
- 8.3 The Chair requested that the post be removed.
- 8.4 The Monitoring Officer introduced Paper MC/20/2 Political Balance and Composition of Committees and Appendices A and B.
- 8.5 Councillor Morley proposed the recommendations in the report, and this was seconded by Councillor Eburne.

Note: Councillor Amorowson was not available to vote.

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- 1.1 **That the Committees' size and numerical allocation of seats be approved as detailed in Appendix A of the report.**
- 1.2 **That Committee Members be appointed as set out in Appendix B of the report.**

## **9 ELECTION OF CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES**

- 9.1 Nominations for the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees were received as follows:-

**Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

Chair: Councillor Keith Welham  
Vice-Chair Councillor Keith Scarff

Vote: Carried

**Development Control Committee A:**

Chair: Councillor Matthew Hicks  
Councillor Sarah Mansel

Vote: By the Chair's casting vote – Councillor Matthew Hicks

Vice-Chair: Councillor Dave Muller  
Councillor Sarah Mansel

Vote: By the Chair's casting vote – Councillor Muller.

**NOTE: The meeting was adjourned between 6:18pm until 6:23pm.**

9.2 The Chair then addressed Councillor Amorowson regarding his inappropriate use of the chat function, despite that the Chair had outlined the protocol at the beginning of the meeting. Therefore, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 20.3, the Chair **MOVED** that Councillor Amorowson be no longer heard.

9.3 The Monitoring Officer clarified that Councillor Amorowson would not be permitted to debate any of the remaining items on the agenda but would be able to vote. If this Motion was seconded it would move straight to a vote without discussion.

Councillor Muller **SECONDED** the Motion.

By 17 votes to 16, with 1 abstention the vote was **CARRIED**

**It was Resolved:-**

**That Councillor Amorowson be no longer heard.**

9.4 Members then returned to the vote for Vice-Chair of the Development Control Committee A

Vote: By the Chair's casting vote - Councillor Dave Muller.

**Development Control Committee B:**

Chair: Councillor Kathie Guthrie  
Councillor Andrew Stringer

Vote: By the Chair's casting vote – Councillor Kathie Guthrie.

Vice-Chair: Councillor Barry Humphreys  
Councillor Andrew Stringer

Vote: By the Chair's casting vote – Councillor Barry Humphreys.

**Mid Suffolk Licensing and Regulatory Committee**

Chair: Councillor Kathie Guthrie  
Councillor Daniel Pratt

Vote: By the Chair's casting vote – Councillor Kathie Guthrie.

Vice-Chair: Councillor Dave Muller

Councillor Daniel Pratt

Vote: By the Chair's casting vote – Councillor Dave Muller

**Joint Audit and Standards Committee**

Co-Chair: Councillor Dave Muller  
Councillor Mike Norris

By the Chairs Casting Vote – Councillor Dave Muller

**Joint Appointments Committee**

Co-Chair: Councillor Suzie Morley

By 22 to 0 votes, 12 abstentions

It was **RESOLVED:-**

**That the following Councillors be appointed as Chairs and Vice-Chairs to the Committees for the Municipal year 2020 to 2021.**

**Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

**Chair: Councillor Keith Welham**  
**Vice-Chair Councillor Keith Scarff**

**Development Control Committee A:**

**Chair: Councillor Matthew Hicks**  
**Vice-Chair: Councillor Dave Muller**

**Development Control Committee B:**

**Chair: Councillor Kathie Guthrie**  
**Vice-Chair: Councillor Barry Humphreys**

**Mid Suffolk Licensing and Regulatory Committee**

**Chair: Councillor Kathie Guthrie**  
**Vice-Chair: Councillor Dave Muller**

**Joint Audit and Standards Committee**

**Co-Chair: Councillor Dave Muller**

**Joint Appointments Committee**

**Co-Chair: Councillor Suzie Morley**

**10 MC/20/3 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES FOR 2020/21**

10.1 The Chair referred to Paper MC/20/3 and Appendix A in the Tabled Papers and invited the Leader to introduce the paper.

10.2 Councillor Morley introduced the paper and **MOVED** recommendation 2.1 and Appendix A in the Tabled Papers, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Richardson.

10.3 Councillor Eburne **PROPOSED** that Councillor Welham be appointed substitute for Suffolk Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Sub Committee and that Councillor Sarah Mansel be appointed as substitute for Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee.

10.4 The Proposer and Secunder approved this proposal.

By 33 to 1 vote, 1 abstention.

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**That Councillors be appointed to Outside Bodies as detailed in Appendix A to Paper MC/20/3 and the above amendment to the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Sub Committee for the Municipal year 2020/21, as follows:**

| NAME OF BODY OR PANEL                                | NAME OF MEMBER NOMINATED                   |
|--|--|
| ARMED FORCES COVENANT                                | Barry Humphreys - Armed Forces Champion    |
| ASSOCIATION FOR SUFFOLK MUSEUMS                      | Richard Meyer                              |
| EAST OF ENGLAND ASSEMBLY OF LEADERS                  | The Leader                                 |
| EAST OF ENGLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION         | Suzie Morley                               |
| EAST SUFFOLK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD                 | James Caston<br>John Field<br>Keith Welham |
| EAST WEST RAIL CONSORTIUM                            | Gerard Brewster                            |
| HAVEN GATEWAY PARTNERSHIP                            | Gerard Brewster                            |
| HOME-START MID SUFFOLK                               | Lavinia Hadingham                          |
| JOINT WASTE MANAGEMENT BOARD                         | Jessica Fleming                            |
| LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION – SPARSE                | Suzie Morley                               |
| LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION ASSEMBLY                | Suzie Morley<br>Observer: Rachel Eburne    |
| MID SUFFOLK DOMESTIC ABUSE FORUM                     | Stephen Phillips                           |
| MUSEUM OF EAST ANGLIAN LIFE LTD                      | Richard Meyer                              |
| SUFFOLK VIOLENCE AND ABUSE PARTNERSHIP               | Stephen Phillips                           |
| SUFFOLK FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE | James Caston<br>Keith Welham               |
| SUFFOLK HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD                   | Harry Richardson<br>(Sub: Penny Otton)     |
| SUFFOLK HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE                    | Julie Flatman<br>(Sub: Sarah Mansel)       |
| SUFFOLK JOINT EMERGENCY PLANNING POLICY PANEL        | Suzie Morley                               |
| SUFFOLK POLICE AND CRIME PANEL                       | Keith Welham<br>(Sub: Terence Carter)      |
| SUFFOLK WASTE PARTNERSHIP (SWP)                      | Jessica Fleming                            |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| WESTERN SUFFOLK COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (WSCSP) | Sarah Mansel<br>(Sub: Harry Richardson) |
|--|---|

**11 APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLORS TO THE SHARED REVENUES PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE**

11.1 The Chair advised Members that nominations to the Shared Revenues Partnership were detailed under Item 11 in the Tabled Papers.

11.2 Councillor Kathy Guthrie **PROPOSED** the nominations in the Tabled Papers which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Flatman.

By 17 votes to 13, 4 abstentions

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**That Councillors Suzie Morley and John Whitehead be appointed as Members of the Shared Revenues Partnership Joint Committee and that Councillors Gerard Brewster and Jessica Fleming be appointed as substitute Members for the Municipal year 2020/21.**

**12 APPOINTMENTS TO THE SUFFOLK JOINT STANDARDS BOARD**

12.1 The Chair advised Members that nominations to the Suffolk Joint Standards Board were detailed under Item 12 in the Tabled Papers.

12.2 Councillor Brewster **PROPOSED** the nominations in the Tabled Papers under Item 12, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Hadingham.

By 33 votes, 1 abstention

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**That Councillors Paul Ekpenyong, John Matthissen and Mike Norris be appointed as Members of the Suffolk Joint Standards Board for the Municipal year 2020/21.**

**13 APPOINTMENTS TO THE JOINT GYPSY AND TRAVELLER STEERING GROUP**

13.1 The Chair stated that Council was asked to appoint four Councillors to the Joint Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group and that the nominations were under Item 13 in the Tabled Papers.

13.2 Councillor Fleming **PROPOSED** the tabled nominations which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Mellen.

By 33 votes, 1 abstention

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**That Councillors Julie Flatman, Lavinia Hadingham, John Field and Andrew Stringer be appointed to the Joint Gypsy and Traveller Steering Group for the Municipal year 2020/21.**

#### **14 APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS**

14.1 The Chair referred to the Tabled Papers Item 14 Appointments to the Council Working Groups and asked for a proposer.

14.2 Councillor Morley **PROPOSED** the nominated Councillors, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Hadingham.

By 33 votes, 1 abstention

**It was RESOLVED: -**

1.1 **That Councillors Suzie Morley, John Whitehead, Sarah Mansel and Penny Otton be appointed to the Community Governance Review Working Group.**

1.2 **That Councillors Matthew Hicks, Sarah Mansel and Keith Scarff be appointed to the Constitution Working Group.**

1.3 **That Councillors Suzie Morley, Rachel Eburne and Stephen Phillips be appointed to the Member Learning and Development Working Group.**

**That Councillors David Burn, Kathie Guthrie, John Field and Andrew Stringer be appointed to the Local Plan Working Group.**

#### **15 MC/20/4 EXTENSION TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT PERSONS FOR CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS**

15.1 The Monitoring Officer introduced Paper MC/20/4 which sought Councils approval to extend the appointment of the independent persons for a further two years.

15.2 Councillor Guthrie **PROPOSED** Recommendation 2.1, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Richardson.

By 33 votes, 1 abstention

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**That the appointment of the four Independent Persons listed in section 3 of paper MC/20/4, be extended for a further two years pursuant to section 28 7) of the Localism Act 2011.**

#### **16 RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM CABINET / COMMITTEES**

- 16.1 The Chair invited Councillor Muller, Co-Chair of Joint Audit and Standards Committee, to move the recommendations in Paper JAC/19/24.

**16a JAC/19/24 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2019/20**

- 16.1a Councillor Muller introduced Paper JAC/19/24 Annual Treasury Management Report 2019/20, which provided details of the performance and effects of decisions taken during the 2019/20 period. He provided a brief summary of the details in the report.
- 16.2a Councillor Muller **MOVED** Recommendations 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 in the report. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Whitehead.
- 16.3a Councillor Eburne queried Appendix B of the report, page 55, bullet point 1.1, the changes to the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) interest rates and how this would affect any plans the Council has, Appendix C, page 60, bullet point 2.8 regarding the use of the equity in CIFCO, and Appendix C, page 60, bullet point 2.9 whether the investment income referred to was a net figure.
- 16.4a The Assistant Director for Corporate Resources confirmed that the increase in interest rates from the PWLB would only impact future borrowing from the PWLB and not existing loans. Councillor Eburne further queried whether the Council had any current plans to borrow any additional funds. It was confirmed that there were no current plans in place.
- 16.5a The Corporate Manager for Finance and Commissioning and Procurement provided clarification with regards to CIFCO that 10% of each purchase was attributable to equity.
- 16.7a Regarding the investment income in Appendix C the Corporate Manager for Finance and Commissioning and Procurement confirmed that this was a gross figure.
- 16.8a Councillor Otton requested an explanation regarding the Council's bank account being exceeded and enquired whether any penalties had been incurred.
- 16.9a The Assistant Director for Corporate Resources advised that this transaction related to a CIL payment and that no penalties were incurred.
- 16.10a In response to a query from Councillor Field regarding interest received from CIFCO, the Assistant Director advised that this figure related to interest on figures loaned to CIFCO from the Council.
- 16.11a Councillor Matthissen commented on the risks involved with investing in CIFCO, and the existing investments in Companies using fossil fuels.
- 16.12a Councillor Eburne felt that more clarity was needed with regards to reporting of matters relating to CIFCO. The Assistant Director for Corporate

Resources advised that this would be taken into consideration when preparing the next report.

16.13a Councillor Richardson thanked the Officers involved in producing the report, and Councillor Muller for his comprehensive introduction.

By 17 votes for to 16, and 1 abstention.

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- 1.1 **That the Treasury Management activity for the year 2019/20 be noted. Further, that it be noted that performance was in line with the Prudential Indicators set for 2019/20.**
- 1.2 **That it be noted that Mid Suffolk District Council Treasury Management activity for 2019/20 was in accordance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy, and that, except for one occasion when the Council exceeded its daily bank account limit with Lloyds by 2129k, as mentioned in Appendix C, paragraph 4.6 of the report, the Council had complied with all the Treasury Management Indicators for this period.**

## **17 MC/20/5 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2020/21**

- 17.1 Councillor Welham, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee introduced Paper MC/20/5 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Workplan 2020/21 and informed Members that the Committee worked with Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that most meetings were joint.
- 17.2 The Committee would not meet in October and would be undertaking a review of the Representations on Outside Bodies at the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November.
- 17.3 Councillor Otton asked if the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would consider the increasing number of people, who had applied for Universal Credit and Councillor Welham responded that he would raise the issue at the next Overview and Scrutiny Joint Chairs' Briefing.
- 17.4 Councillor Whitehead enquired if the Overview and Scrutiny Committees intended to seek any feedback from Parish Councils when scrutinising Planning Enforcement.

**It was RESOLVED:-**

**That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Plan for 2020/21 be noted.**

## **18 MC/20/6 MSDC SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE CHARGES FOR 2020/21**

- 18.1 The Chair invited Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing, to introduce Paper MC/20/6.

- 18.2 Councillor Flatman clarified that the sheltered housing service charges had not be agreed at the Full Council Meeting in February 2020 due to a procedural error, which had not been legally resolved before the District went into lockdown due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. However, the Sheltered Housing Team felt that it was not reasonable to increase charges for 2020/2021 due to the reduced service currently provided.
- 18.3 Councillor Flatman **MOVED** the Recommendation in the report, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Hadingham.
- 18.4 Councillor Eburne queried if the increase in service charge income included in this year's Budget would be brought forward to next year's budget and if it would be staggered, as it had been previous years.
- 18.5 The Tenant Services Corporate Manager responded that the Budget setting for next year would be brought to Council for approval at a later stage.
- 18.6 Members debated the issues including:
- That it was the right decision to take in the current circumstances.
  - Some felt that the decision taken in February had been wrong, and so now supported the recommendations not to increase the Sheltered Housing Service Charges.
  - That the Sheltered Housing Team had worked successfully under difficult circumstance during the past months.
  - That support to residents had been possible because carers had recognised themselves to provide a good service to residents and at the same time avoiding spreading the Covid-19 virus.
- 18.7 Councillor Flatman thanked the Sheltered Housing Team and all of the Housing Team and officers, who had done a fantastic job during the Covid-19 Pandemic for the Sheltered Housing Service. She also thanked all the officers across the Council, who had been redeployed to help with the work undertaken.
- 18.8 The Chair asked that this be noted, and that Members thanked the whole Housing Team for the service they had provided and that this was appreciated.
- 18.9 Several further thanks were expressed by Members during the remainder of this item.
- 18.10 Councillor Phillips supported the Sheltered Housing team but had been dismayed when he had been informed by some residents that single parents had been housed in sheltered housing during the Covid-19 lockdown. This had caused some concern for the elderly people already housed there, as visitors of those temporarily housed there, had not been appropriate.
- 18.11 The Tenant Services Corporate Manager responded that this option had only

been taken in a few cases.

18.12 The Chair advised that this question was responded to outside the meeting. However, Councillor Phillips reiterated his question, as he had raised this question to Officer previously.

18.13 Councillor Flatman responded that some sheltered housing was unoccupied and that during the Covid-19 Pandemic there had been an increase in the need for emergency temporary accommodation. The decision had been taken to place those in need in emergency accommodation, until more suitable accommodation could be found.

18.14 Councillor Eburne asked that responses to questions taken outside the meeting be forwarded to all Members. She also expressed her thanks to the team and hoped that the issues addressed at this meeting for the most vulnerable in the community be taken into account when the budget was set for next year.

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**That MSDC Sheltered Housing service charges not be increased in 2020/21.**

## **19 MC/20/7 CHANGES TO THE CURRENT PLANNING SYSTEM CONSULTATION**

**NOTE: The meeting was adjourned between 8:02pm to 8:16pm**

19.1 The meeting had reached the guillotine deadline and the Chair asked for a proposer and seconder for the meeting to continue.

19.2 Councillor Morley **PROPOSED** that the meeting continued, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Eburne.

**NOTE: Councillor Passmore left the meeting at 8:19pm**

By 31 votes to 1, 1 abstention

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**that the meeting continued beyond the guillotine deadline, until all business was concluded**

19.3 The Chair invited Councillor Burn, the Cabinet Member for Planning to introduce Paper MC/20/7.

19.4 Councillor Burn outlined the background for the report and drew Members' attention to Paragraph 1.3, which outlined the proposed four points to which

consultation was sought. The Council's responses to the Consultation were outlined in Appendix A. There had been a cross party discussion on the 10 September 2020, which had formulated the responses.

- 19.5 Councillor Burn stated that the cross-party discussion had expressed concerns for the method to assess housing need which would raise the need from 535 dwellings per year to 750 dwellings per year. This would have implications for the Joint Local Plan, Communities, rural landscaping developments and the five-year Housing Land Supply position.
- 19.6 Councillor Burn **PROPOSED** Recommendations 3.1 and 3.2 in the report, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Brewster.
- 19.7 Councillor Eburne **PROPOSED** an amendment to Recommendation 3.2 that after 'the Cabinet Members for Planning' the wording '*and the Opposition spokesperson for Planning, Councillor Andrew Stringer*' be added.
- 19.8 Councillor Otton **SECONDED** the amendment.
- 19.9 Councillor Burn responded that Councillor Stringer was part of the cross-party discussions and he **APPROVED** that Councillor Stringer be part of the collaboration.
- 19.10 He continued that Councillor Arthey, Babergh Cabinet Member for Planning, would also be part of the collaborations, as this was a joint response to the consultations.
- 19.11 Councillor Geake queried the answer to question three in relation to the adjustment to the standard measure and why the response was 'yes'.
- 19.12 The Assistant Director for Sustainable Communities responded that the standard method was not part of the consultation, and that the 'yes' in the response could be removed and go straight into the narrative, which Councillor Geake appreciated.
- 19.13 Councillor Mansel queried the responses relating to First Homes which was to form part of the affordable mix in a development, and if there was scope for any concept of whether First Homes formed part to the affordable homes or not.
- 19.14 The Assistant Director – Sustainable Communities, responded that the principles of First Homes had been part of a Consultation, which had taken place earlier in the year and to which the Council did not provide a response to this consultation. The answers in the report were responses to questions being asked now.
- 19.15 In response to Councillor Mansel's question regarding the consultation for First Homes, the Assistant Director – Sustainable Communities responded he would respond to this and further questions relating to this outside the meeting.

- 19.16 Councillor Field questioned the maturity and stability of the document. He thought the document was not completely clear on some of the points, and that some of the estimates were highly volatile. He asked what level of revision would be made to the Document, which would potentially be agreed this evening.
- 19.17 The Assistant Director - Sustainable Communities pointed Members' attention to the final paragraph in answer four. He continued to detail for the ration for shared ownership and affordable homes.
- 19.18 Councillor Carter asked for the definition of first homes and if this included adapted homes too. He questioned if there were any protections for disabled first time buyers, as standard able bodied first home buyers were means tested.
- 19.19 The Assistant Director – Sustainable Communities responded that expansion on the specific technical definitions provided in the report could be responded to outside the meeting. However, as a general rule there were no specifications for what size a home for first time buyers would be.
- 19.20 In response to Councillor Scarff's question in relation to the raise of the small site threshold from 40 to 50 dwellings and if the responses were strong enough to convey the Council's concerns. Councillor Burn responded that he was not averse to amend part of the responses in this was expressed by Members during the debate.
- 19.21 In response to Councillor Warboy's question for the first part of the consultation, the standard method and the proposed method factor, the Assistant Director – Sustainable Communities explained the algorithm and the methods. Responses to 1 to 7 evaluated if affordability was an appropriate way to adjust this. This was something the collaborations of Members and the Assistant Director – Sustainable Communities could consider. However, the housing targets were set by the Government and it was not possible to add local information.
- 19.22 Councillor Field queried question 13 and why first homes was media priced homes rather than lower quartile homes. To which the Assistant Director responded that some first-time buyers might be considering buying larger homes.
- 19.23 Members then debated the issues including:
- The issues around planning applications and outline planning applications in relation to developers' approach to affordable housing.
  - That affordable homes development could decrease if the planning system was changed.
  - That the affordability ration in question 3 did not work due to the way homes were being sold and that there was a risk that the Council's Five-year Housing Land Supply could be at risk, if the planning

system changed.

- That some Members were concerned that the changes in the planning system were a delivery vehicle for the upcoming white paper.
- That the changes did not consider biodiversity and carbon reduction.
- That the environmental implications could not be mitigated as suggested in paragraph 11.1 of the report.

**NOTE: Councillor Carter left the meeting at 9:04pm**

- That a robust response was required for the algorithms and that the document needed a careful quality assurance to ensure the Council's points were expressed in clear English.
- That the objections in responses 16 and 17 should be extremely clear.
- Some felt that the whole thrust of First Homes was to increase planning applications, which increased land value and profits for development companies.
- That further incentives should be made available to encourage the building of homes for social rental, which would stabilise house prices. For some a first home would be the only home they would ever own and for many this would be a council house.

19.24 Councillor Burn summed up the debate and that some questions asked during the debate were not questions asked in the Consultations. Many of the points made were specifically related to Mid Suffolk, though he shared Members' concern. However, the proposed responses would be reviewed, and he would ensure that the responses made would reflect the concerns made during the debate. He thanked both Mid Suffolk and Babergh Members of the Working Group for the work undertaken in the report.

19.25 The **SUBSTANTIVE MOTION** was put to Members for Voting and the votes was **UNANIMOUS**.

It was **RESOLVED**: -

**1.1 To respond to the 'Changes to the Planning System' consultation.**

**1.2 That the Assistant Director for Sustainable Communities in collaboration with the Cabinet Members for Planning and the Green and Liberal Democrat Groups' Spokesperson for Planning consider any proposed amendments to the suggested response and be authorised to make amendments before submitting a response to the Government.**

## **20 WHITE PAPER: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

20.1 The Chair invited Councillor Burn, the Cabinet Member for Planning to introduce Item 20 on the Agenda.

20.2 Councillor Burn provided Members with an overview of the White Paper: *Planning for the Future being consulted on by the Government*.

- 20.3 Councillor Burn advised that the recommendation was included in the Tabled Papers and that an accompanying report had not been prepared for this item due to time constraints. It was therefore recommended that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director for Sustainable Communities to prepare a response.
- 20.4 Councillor Burn **PROPOSED** the recommendation as detailed in the Tabled Papers under Item 20, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Guthrie.
- 20.5 In response to Councillor Warboy's question, Councillor Burn would be happy to receive any Member comments for discussion, as soon as possible.
- 20.6 Councillor Otton asked if the Council would be looking at responses from other organisations such as the LGA, to which Councillor Burn replied that the working group would be considering those and other groups and organisations responses.
- 20.7 Councillor Eburne asked that the Working Group met as soon as possible.
- 20.8 She continued with stating that there was a contradiction in the consultation between the support for the Neighbourhood Plan and the concerns that local government and Members were getting too involved in developments. She was concerned about 'zoning of protected areas' which referred to green belts which did not exist in Mid Suffolk.
- 20.9 Councillor Burn advised that he respond to this outside the meeting.
- 20.10 Councillor Geake asked what problems the paper was trying to solve, as there was a surplus of houses, which were of the wrong type, location and purpose, but a shortage of housing. As there were no shortage of planning permissions, she thought that the issues were that Councils should buy up 'hoarded' houses and turn them around for social housing, which would help first time buyers mentioned earlier to save up for a deposit for a house.
- 20.11 Members debated the issues including:
- That Members were content with the Working Group, and that the response would have to be well planned and within the five-weeks' timescale.
  - That the White Paper was created before the Pandemic and that it would be difficult to predict what the post pandemic world would be like and that there might be extensive empty commercial properties in town centres, which might be repopulated for private dwellings.
  - That the housing being proposed had a locally led planning system which should include and support infrastructure, schools, and promote greener and active travel and take into account the Government and the Councils commitment to the climate emergency.
- 20.12 Councillor Burn summed up the debate and thanked Members for the comments and suggestions put forward, which would be considered, when responding to the paper.

20.13 The recommendation was put to Members for voting and the vote was **UNANIMIOUS.**

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director for Sustainable Communities to submit a response to the consultation on the White Paper: Planning for the Future on behalf of the Council, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and the same cross-party group that considered the changes to the current planning system consultation.**

The business of the meeting was concluded at 9.36 pm.

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Chair