

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL** held Virtually on Wednesday, 11 November 2020

PRESENT:

Councillor: Barry Humphreys MBE (Chairman)
Paul Ekpenyong (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:	Oliver Amorowson	Gerard Brewster
	David Burn	Terence Carter
	James Caston	John Field
	Julie Flatman	Jessica Fleming
	Dr Helen Geake	Peter Gould
	Kathie Guthrie	Lavinia Hadingham
	Matthew Hicks	Sarah Mansel
	John Matthissen	Andrew Mellen
	Richard Meyer	Suzie Morley
	David Muller	Mike Norris
	Penny Otton	Timothy Passmore
	Dr Daniel Pratt	Harry Richardson
	Keith Scarff	Andrew Stringer
	Wendy Turner	Rowland Warboys
	Keith Welham	John Whitehead

In attendance:

Guest(s): Stuart Cook - Aspinall Verdi Property Regeneration Consultants
Ian de Prez – Shared Legal Service

Officers: Chief Executive (AC)
Strategic Director (KN)
Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer (EY)
Assistant Director – Sustainable Communities (TB)
Corporate Manager - Strategic Planning (RB)
Corporate Manager - Governance and Civic Office (JR)
Professional Lead - Key Sites and Infrastructure (CT)
Senior Governance Support Officer (HH)

Apologies:

Councillors Rachel Eburne
Stephen Phillips and Stephen Phillips

21 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

21.1 Under Section 31 of the Localism Act 2011, all Members were granted dispensation by the Monitoring Officer for all matters relating to the Local Plan.

21.2 There were no further declarations.

MC/20/8 BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK - DRAFT JOINT LOCAL PLAN AND STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ADDENDUM

- 22.1 Councillor Humphreys, Chairman of the Council invited Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for Planning to introduce Paper MC/20/8.
- 22.2 Councillor Burn addressed some of the key points in the report including the background stages of the Joint Local Plan's production, the extensive evidence base of the plan, the recommended options, and the principles provided by the plan.
- 22.3 Councillor Burn went on to explain the amendments required to the Statement of Community Involvement due to the ongoing situation with Covid-19.
- 22.4 Councillor Burn expressed thanks to the Chief Executive, the Assistant Director for Sustainable Communities, Tom Barker and his teams, especially the Strategic Planning team. He also thanked Phil Isbell, Chief Planning Officer and the Planning Team for their support. Special thanks were given to the Corporate Manager for Strategic Planning, along with the Joint Local Plan Members Working Group.
- 22.5 Councillor Burn **MOVED** recommendations 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 in the report, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Guthrie.
- 22.6 In response to Councillor Otton's question regarding the Neighbourhood Plans, which were still waiting to be sent out to referendum and those which were in the process of being developed, the Corporate Manager for Strategic Planning explained that Neighbourhood Plans would continue to be supported and any alternative views in relations to the Joint Local Plan (JLP) could be put forward for consideration.
- 22.7 Councillor Fleming asked for reassurance for that the Council's commitment to local and National environmental and biodiversity policies was taken into account in the JLP and that these policies and commitment were fed into the planning decision taken by the Council.
- 22.8 Councillor Burn reassured Members that the JLP had been developed around the Councils' environment ambitions and that the main issues of the plan were the provisions to mitigate carbon neutral and environment ambitions.
- 22.9 Councillor Mansel asked if consideration had been made for an extension of the minimum consultation period due to the Christmas period and the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- 22.10 The Assistant Director – Sustainable Communities explained that any extension of the consultation would be during the Christmas period. Consultation had been undertaken in the previous stages of the JLP in 2017 and 2019. The current draft JLP did not contain too many changes and that this consultation was for residents to comment.

- 22.11 In response to Members' questions, Councillor Burn said that careful consideration of the distribution and allocation of developments in the area had included not only the Ipswich fringe but also towns, villages and hamlets.
- 22.12 The Corporate Manager – Sustainable Housing clarified that representation would be online and that information was available on the Council's website.
- 22.13 Further responses to questions included how the JLP sought to meet the requirements for biodiversity and net gain, the relationship between site allocations for Neighbourhood Plans and the JLP and the weight each carried at Planning Committees, the dialogue between the JLP working group and parish councils and neighbourhood planning teams, the local policies included in the JLP which maximised the contribution to wellbeing in communities and the energy bio diversities document included in the plan.
- 22.14 Councillor Burn outlined the timeline for supplement planning documents, which would begin in a few months after the completion of the consultation.
- 22.15 Members debated the issues and Councillor Morley felt that this was a comprehensive plan, which replaced previous plans including the Core Strategy and provided clarity for communities. The JLP was underpinned by evidence and she felt it supported heritage, as well as biodiversity, carbon reduction it also developed economic support in the District.
- 22.16 Councillor Stringer felt that the plan provided certainty for developers and that it would benefit the Five-year Housing Land Supply. Although he thought the JLP failed in some areas in the attempts to be sustainable, he would be supporting the plan.
- 22.17 Members continued the debate including:
- That hamlets and clusters were included as small-scale developments.
 - That the plan would bring a democratic balance to planning applications.
 - That the JLP considered appropriate developments and responded to local needs.
 - That the plan was unfair to some villages, such as Elmswell and Thurston.
 - That the infrastructure was not well considered and was flawed for the distribution of developments along the A14 and risked losing the sense of community.
 - That the policies included in the plan for achieving carbon reduction and sustainable development would take too long to reach the Councils target for carbon zero.
 - That some compromises had to be made and that the document did not contain complete deliverable solutions.
 - That sustainable economic growth, tourism and employment would be supported by the JLP.
 - That residents had been consulted throughout the long journey of the JLP and that the allocation of sites was not an easy task.
 - That the JLP would provide a planning framework.

- That neighbourhood plan teams might feel that their work had been futile, if the JLP was approved.
- That the balance and mix of houses would support healthy communities and individual living.
- That the JLP would benefit the Council when dealing with planning applications and carried weight at Planning Committees.

22.18 Throughout Members praised the good debate and thanks were expressed to those involved in the process of bringing the JLP forward to Council.

22.19 Councillor Burn summed up the debate and thanked Members for their contributions. He felt that regardless of which side of the Chamber Members represented, there was generally a pragmatic feeling that the JLP should be supported, but he accepted the reluctance some Members displayed. He thought that the JLP would provide a period of stability, but it was important to review the JLP once the plan was in place.

22.20 On behalf of all Members the Chairman thanked all those involved in the development of the JLP for their diligence, passion, tenacity and at times compromise in developing the papers before them, specifically Councillor Burn and the cross-party Member Working Group, consisting of Councillors Guthrie, Stringer and Field. He also thanked Tom Barker, Assistant Director - Sustainable Communities, Robert Hobbs, Corporate Manager – Strategic Planning, and the whole team.

22.21 Recommendations 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 were put to Members for voting.

By 27 votes for, 3 votes against and 2 abstentions

It was RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Document (November 2020) (Appendix A) be approved for publication under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).**
- 1.2 That delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director for Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, to submit the Joint Local Plan Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Document to the Secretary of State for an independent Examination and for modification and procedural processes necessary for the Examination.**
- 1.3 That the addendum to the Statement of Community Involvement (November 2020) (Appendix E) be approved.**

23 **MC/20/9 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) - PROPOSED REVISED CIL CHARGING RATES (FOR CONSULTATION PURPOSES) FOR BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL (AS CIL CHARGING AUTHORITIES FOR THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS)**

NOTE: The meeting was adjourned between 7:57 pm and 8:08 pm.

23.1 The Chairman advised Members that in accordance the Council Constitution, Rule 9, the meeting was approaching the Guillotine rule deadline and he proposed that the meeting be extended until the business of the meeting had been completed.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED: -

That the meeting continues beyond the guillotine deadline, until all business was concluded.

23.2 The Chairman invited Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for Planning to introduce paper MC/20/9.

23.3 Councillor Burn introduced the report and asked that the words '*both Councils*' be replaced by *Mid Suffolk District Council* in the recommendations.

23.4 Councillor Burn **PROPOSED** recommendation 3.1 and 3.2 in the report, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Muller.

23.5 Councillor Amorowson queried the adoption of a flat rate CIL charge and whether it would be an increase or a decrease in income.

23.6 The Assistant Director – Sustainable Communities clarified how the CIL and Section 106 charging rates were currently applied and that the new approach would be an uplift to secure greater income for infrastructure through the proposed new CIL charging process. He explained that CIL was set up for strategic sites, as they were covered by Section 106 funding.

23.7 In response to Councillor Matthissen's query, the Assistant Director responded that the CIL charges would proceed through a consultation and examination process before a paper would be brought to Council in due course detailing the change over from Section 106 to CIL charges.

23.8 In response to Councillor Warboy's question regarding the changes to the planning system and the number of dwellings required for affordable homes, the Assistant Director – Sustainable Communities responded it could potentially have an impact on the threshold for affordable homes, if the threshold was increased to 40 to 50 homes.

- 23.9 He added that the report and the viability study in the appendices indicated how CIL was being calculated and that it was an affordable and deliverable charge. CIL contributions and other infrastructure costs and development costs came from land value rather than increases in house prices.
- 23.10 The Assistant Director continued to respond to questions including that Suffolk County Council and other infrastructure providers preferred Section 106 charges, that the CIL charges could be reviewed and undergo further viability studies if necessary, that Section 106 funding could still be used for projects such as behaviour projects and that there were no constraints of CIL funding being used across parish boundaries.
- 23.11 Councillor Field queried the viability report and table 6 in the report in relation to land value and deliverability of land for developments.
- 23.12 Stuart Cook from Aspinall Verdi Property Regeneration Consultants, who had undertaken the viability study, explained how the land value was calculated to ensure that landowners were still incentivised to sell land to the Council at competitive prices, whilst taking into account the Local Authorities' policies and CIL charges.
- 23.13 Members debated the issues including:
- That losing strategic sites would mean that funding would go to CIL funding, which was less flexible than Section 106.
 - That the proposed CIL charges would be more complicated due to the range of charges for different categories.
 - That moving specific sites from Section 106 to CIL charges could be problematic.
 - That the timing of the review of the charges was appropriate.
 - That the instalment policy aim was to ensure that smaller developers were not inconvenienced too much.
- 23.14 The Chairman thanked Councillor Burn, Tom Barker, Assistant Director - Sustainable Communities and Christine Thurlow – Professional Lead for Key Sites and Infrastructure and the members of the CIL Working Group.
- 23.15 Recommendations 3.1 and 3.2 with the proposed change to replace the words '*both Councils*' with *Mid Suffolk District Council* were put to Member for voting.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:-

- 1.1 That Mid Suffolk District Council approve the content of this report (and all Appendices) with a view to agreeing that this material be the subject of a formal consultation for a period of six weeks between the 12th November and the 24th December 2020.**

(This would be a separate consultation but run in parallel with the consultation exercise for the emerging Joint Local Plan).

- 1.2 That Mid Suffolk District Council agrees that all responses to the consultation relating to revisions to the rates of CIL charging will be considered, analysed by the Councils Viability Consultants, and taken into account and fed into an Examination in public to be held by an Inspector.**

That Mid Suffolk District Council also agrees to fully consider the Inspectors report when the Examination in public is concluded together with any consequent Inspectors report issued with his/her findings to the Council. This would allow Mid Suffolk District Council to consider outcomes together with any revision and subsequent adoption of any new revised CIL charging rates for the Council together with an implementation date.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 9:01 pm.

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Chair