

# Public Document Pack



<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	<b>JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>MONDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2021 1.00 PM</b>
<b>VENUE:</b>	<b>VIRTUAL MEETING</b>

<b>Members</b>	
<u>Conservative Group</u> Sian Dawson Mary McLaren Adrian Osborne	<u>Green Group</u> Terence Carter Keith Welham (Co-Chair) Jane Gould
<u>Conservative and Independent Group</u> James Caston Paul Ekpenyong Dave Muller	<u>Independent Group</u> Kathryn Grandon Alastair McCraw (Co-Chair)  <u>Liberal Democrat Group</u> Keith Scarff

This meeting will be broadcast live to YouTube and will be capable of repeated viewing. The entirety of the meeting will be filmed except for confidential or exempt items. If you attend the meeting in person you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed and that the images and sound recordings could be used for webcasting/ training purposes.

The Council, members of the public and the press may record/film/photograph or broadcast this meeting when the public and the press are not lawfully excluded.

## REVISED AGENDA

### PART 1

#### MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PRESS AND PUBLIC PRESENT

Page(s)

- 1 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES**
- 2 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**
- 3 **JOS/20/11 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 23 NOVEMBER 2020** 7 - 18
- 4 **TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 14 DECEMBER 2020**

The minutes of this meeting are deferred to next Joint Overview and Committee Meeting in March.

- 5        **BOS/20/5 TO CONFIRM THE BABERGH MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 18 JANUARY 2021**        19 - 32
- Babergh Members are asked to approve the Minutes of the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 18 January 2021.
- 6        **MOS/20/5 TO CONFIRM THE MID SUFFOLK MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 14 JANUARY 2021**        33 - 42
- Mid Suffolk Members are asked to approve the Minutes of the Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 14 January 2021.
- 7        **TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME**
- 8        **QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC**
- To consider questions from and provide answers to members of the public on any matter in relation to which the Committee has powers or duties and of which due notice has been given in accordance with the Committee and Sub-Committee Procedures Rules.
- 9        **QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**
- To consider questions from and provide answers to Councillors on any matter in relation to which the Committee has powers or duties and of which due notice has been given in accordance with the Committee and Sub-Committee Procedure Rules.
- 10       **JOS/20/12 REVIEW OF LOCAL CITIZENS ADVICE**        43 - 48
- Babergh Cabinet Member – Communities  
Mid Suffolk Cabinet Member - Communities
- Corporate Manager – Communities
- Members are asked to review the Local Citizens Advice.
- 11       **PRESENTATION LOCAL CITIZENS ADVICE**
- Chief Officers from the Local Citizens Advice will provide a presentation to Members.
- The Local Citizens Advice present are:
- Citizens Advice Diss, Thetford and District  
Citizens Advice Ipswich  
Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk  
Sudbury and District Citizens Advice

12      **JOS/20/13 INFORMATION BULLETIN**

49 - 50

The Information Bulletin is a document that is made available to the public with the published agenda papers. It can include update information requested by the Committee as well as information that a service considers should be made known to the Committee.

This Information Bulletin contains updates on the following subjects:

Responses to questions raised at Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee 18 January 2021

13      **COMMUNITY GRANTS REVIEW UPDATE**

The Corporate Manager – Communities will provide a presentation updating Members on the Community Grants.

14      **FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

To review the Council's Forthcoming Decisions List and identify any items to be brought before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Please note the most up to date version can be found via the Website:

[FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST](#)

15      **JOS/20/14 BABERGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN**      51 - 52

To agree the Work Plan

16      **JOS/20/15 MID SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN**      53 - 54

To agree the Work Plan

**Date and Time of next meeting**

Please note that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 22 March 2021 at 9.30 am.

**Webcasting/ Live Streaming**

The Webcast of the meeting will be available to view on the Councils YouTube page:  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSWf\\_0D13zmegAf5Qv\\_aZSg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSWf_0D13zmegAf5Qv_aZSg)

For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact the Committee Officer, H. Holloway on: 01449 724681 or Email: [Committees@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Committees@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)

## **Introduction to Public Meetings**

Babergh/Mid Suffolk District Councils are committed to Open Government. The proceedings of this meeting are open to the public, apart from any confidential or exempt items which may have to be considered in the absence of the press and public.

### **Protocol for Virtual Meetings**

#### **Live Streaming:**

1. The meeting will be held on TEAMS and speakers will be able to join via invite only. Any person who wishes to speak at the meeting must contact Committee Services at: [committees@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:committees@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk) at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting.
2. The meeting will be live streamed and will be available to view on the Council's YouTube page as detailed below:  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSWf\\_0D13zmegAf5Qv\\_aZSg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSWf_0D13zmegAf5Qv_aZSg)

#### **Recording of proceedings:**

1. Proceedings will be conducted in video format.
2. A Second Governance Officer will be present and will control the TEAMS call and Livestreaming.

#### **Roll Call:**

1. A roll call or electronic confirmation of attendance of all Members present will be taken during the Apologies for Absence/Substitution to confirm all Members are present at the meeting.

#### **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

1. A Councillor declaring a disclosable pecuniary interest will not be permitted to participate further in the meeting or vote on the item. Where practicable the Councillor will leave the virtual meeting, including by moving to a 'lobby' space and be invited to re-join the meeting by the Committee Officer at the appropriate time. Where it is not practicable for the Councillor to leave the virtual meeting, the Committee Officer will ensure that the Councillor's microphone is muted for the duration of the item.

#### **Questions and Debate:**

1. Once an item has been introduced, the Chair will ask if there are any questions. The Chair will either ask each Member in turn if they have any questions or Members of the Committee will be asked to use the "Hands Up" function within teams. The Chair will then ask Members to speak.
2. Any Councillors present who are not part of the Committee will then be invited to ask questions by using the "Hands up function" within teams. The Chair will then ask Members to speak.
3. At the end of the questions the Chair will ask Members whether they have any further questions before entering into debate.
4. In the instance where a Member of the Committee would like to formally make a proposal, they should raise their hand using the Hands Up function. At this point the

Chair would go directly to them and take the proposal. Once the proposal has been made the Chair would immediately ask if there was a seconder to the Motion. If there is it would become the substantive Motion and the Chair would again continue down the list of Councillors until there is no further debate.

5. Upon completion of any debate the Chair will move to the vote.

Voting:

1. Once a substantive motion is put before the committee and there is no further debate then a vote will be taken.
2. The Governance Officer will conduct the vote by roll call or the vote will be conducted via an electronic voting method.
3. The total votes for and against and abstentions will be recorded in the minutes not the individual votes of each Councillor. Except where a recorded vote is requested in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.
4. The governance Officer will then read out the result for the Chair to confirm.
5. A Councillor will not be prevented from voting on an item if they have been disconnected from the virtual meeting due to technical issues for part of the deliberation. If a connection to a Councillor is lost during a regulatory meeting, the Chair will stop the meeting to enable the connection to be restored. If the connection cannot be restored within a reasonable time, the meeting will proceed, but the Councillor who was disconnected will not be able to vote on the matter under discussion as they would not have heard all the facts.

Confidential items:

1. The Public and Press may be Excluded from the meeting by resolution in accordance with normal procedural rules. The Committee Officer will ensure that any members of the public and press are disconnected from the meeting.

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## BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS

Minutes of the meeting of the **JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Virtual Meeting on Monday, 23 November 2020

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor: Alastair McCraw - Chair

Councillors:

Terence Carter  
Paul Ekpenyong  
Kathryn Grandon  
David Muller  
Keith Scarff

James Caston  
Jane Gould  
Mary McLaren  
Adrian Osborne  
Keith Welham (Co-Chair)

### **In attendance:**

Councillor(s): Susan Maria Ayres  
Gerard Brewster  
Margaret Maybury  
Jan Osborne

Officers: Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer (EY)  
Corporate Manager – Governance and Civic Office (JR)  
Senior Governance Support Officer (HH)

### **Apologies:**

Siân Dawson

## **1 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

1.1 There were no declarations from Councillors.

## **2 JOS/20/1 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2020**

### **It was Resolved:-**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on the 4 September 2020 be confirmed as a true record and be signed at the next practicable opportunity**

## **3 JOS/20/2 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 21 SEPTEMBER 2020**

### **It was Resolved:**

**That with the following amendments the minutes of the meeting held on the 21 September 2020 be confirmed as a true record and be signed at the next practicable opportunity:**

**Paragraph 77.14 – 77.15 amend band to ban**  
**Paragraph 77.19 amend quit to quiet**

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

4.1 None received.

**5 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC**

5.1 None received.

**6 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

6.1 None received.

**7 JOS/20/3 REVIEW OF OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Chairman invited Jan Robinson, Corporate Manager – Governance and Civic Office to introduce the report JOS/20/3.

7.1 The Corporate Manager – Governance and Civic Office outlined the previous review from 2019 of Representation on Outside Bodies.

7.2 The current review had been undertaken during the Covid-19 Pandemic, which had caused many outside bodies to delay meetings until now. However, the review had taken into account the responses received from a brief questionnaire forwarded to the Outside Bodies.

7.3 She pointed out to Members that they would only be indemnified by the Council for their Council duties and not for any outside duties that Members themselves embarked on.

7.4 The Chairman advised that he intended to address each Outside Body for Members' comments, however, there were representations which could only be appointed to by Cabinet member and leaders and those positions would not be discussed at the meeting.

7.5 He asked Councillors Welham and Caston, who were representative on the **East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board** to provide a summary. The Board meet three times a year but undertook work between meetings. The work involved more than drainage and the management of other water related issues were part of the function of the board. Consideration had been made to rename the panel to the East Suffolk Water Management Board.

7.6 Councillor Welham stated the representation was useful for the District and for the Councils' involvement in Planning Committees.

7.7 Councillor Carter asked if the work of the Drainage Board fed into local groups for the river Gipping and environmental Groups, for the possible



contaminates into the Gipping.

- 7.8 Councillor Welham responded that it was unlikely as this was a routine matter and not a contaminate issues.
- 7.9 Councillor McCraw then addressed the **Suffolk Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Sub Committee**. The committee dealt with a variety of matters including future water shortage for Suffolk and East Anglia. The Committee met twice a year and made site visits. Any organisation involved with water issues were part of the Committee.
- 7.10 Councillor Caston added that the Suffolk Drainage Flood Risk Sub Scrutiny Committee crossed over with the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board and that it issues included climate changes, planning and sustainable drainage systems, agricultural policies covering flood risk and the allowance to flood area to ensure other areas did not. As a farmer, he found it personally interesting, as the committee address a broad area of subjects.
- 7.11 Councillor Ekpenyong asked that since there was a 30% water deficiency in water need in East Anglia, how would water issues be mitigated in relation to housing developments, especially as the Council was under pressure to provide more homes for residents.
- 7.12 Councillor McCraw responded there was a strategic approach to water management and the anticipated water shortage in East Anglia. There were approximately 50 partners involved in a water management partnership to address these issues.
- 7.13 Councillor Caston detailed how work was being undertaken to identify areas suitable for both domestic and industrial developments.
- 7.14 Councillor Welham added that that there was a major shift in water management and efforts were made to identify better ways to retain flood water. Water was a valuable resource now and for the future.
- 7.15 Councillor Ekpenyong responded that it was important that both energy and water resources were taken into consideration to ensure that industrial and domestic developments were sustainable in the future.
- 7.16 Councillor McCraw informed Members that industrial developments ranked third behind domestic and agricultural use in the current water consumption.
- 7.17 In response to Councillor Carter's query regarding being an observer on the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Sub Committee, Councillor McCraw would forward information directly to Councillor Carter.
- 7.18 Councillor Welham explained that the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board now worked on retaining water instead of directing it to the sea.
- 7.19 The Chairman invited Councillor Gerard Brewster, Cabinet Member for

Economy and Mid Suffolk's Representative on the **Haven Gateway Partnership** to provide background information on Partnership.

- 7.20 Councillor Brewster informed Members that it was a cross border project and had been useful in the past, however the Partnership had been attempting to reinvent itself and it now seemed that the Partnership focused more on Essex areas. He thought that currently Babergh representation might benefited more than Mid Suffolk's due to the cross border with Essex. He had attempted to gain information from the Partnership during the past few months to enable him to identify the benefits for Mid Suffolk District Council.
- 7.21 Members discussed the Councils' involvement with Haven Gateway Partnership and that Cabinet Members were the elected representative for this organisation.
- 7.22 Councillor McCraw suggested that the issues were raised via the Cabinet Member to the Haven Gateway Partnership, as Councillor Brewster was concerned that the funding for Heaven Gateway Partnership was not spend in the Council's interests.
- 7.23 Councillor Carter raised an issue with regards to appointments of observers to Outside Bodies and thought that both Councils could benefit from having member representations on **HomeStart** in the form of observers if possible. He added that might also be the case for the Stowmarket Citizens Advice.
- 7.24 The Chairman then address the **Citizen Advice (CA)** representation and informed Members that Councillor Adrian Osborne was an observer on the Sudbury and District Citizens Advice for Babergh Council and that Councillor Maybury was a trustee and as Director for the same Citizens Advice, She did not represent Babergh Council in her role. Both Councillors were present to respond to questions.
- 7.25 Councillor Muller informed Members that he was also a trustee for the Stowmarket CA and not elected by the Council. He detailed the work undertaken by the CA including that funding was received from Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council.
- 7.26 Councillor Maybury explained that the CA in Sudbury had organised a programme for debt advice, which enabled the CA to respond to an increasing demand for debt advice.
- 7.27 Councillor Welham noted that historically Mid Suffolk Council had appointed a trustee, who had taken an active role in the Stowmarket CA. He noted that the Mid Suffolk Council had not recently elected a representative to the Stowmarket CA and that he had raised this with the Leader of the Council. He had received a response that due to a risk of conflict of interests for an elected member of the Council it would not be beneficial for the Council to elect an observer. Officers held regular meetings with the CA, and it was felt that there was a risk of putting an elected representative in a difficult position.

- 7.28 Councillor Welham suggested that an observer be elected in line with the arrangement for Babergh District Council, as he felt it would be a benefit to have a member involved to provide updates to the Council from a Member perspective.
- 7.29 Members considered the implications of members being elected as observers in relation to declarations of local non-pecuniary interests.
- 7.30 The Corporate Manager – Governance and Civic Office clarified how proposed representation were selected for the list of put forward to the Annual Council. The Leader offer positions to the members whom she wished be representation on Outside Bodies and any unfilled positions would be offered to Group Leaders of the opposition to fill.
- 7.31 Councillor Maybury added that she felt an observer on the Sudbury and District CA was a benefit to the Council and residents.
- 7.32 Councillor McCraw moved to the next item, which was **Joint Advisory Committee and Partnership to Dedham Vale (AONB)** and **Joint Advisory Committee and Partnership to Suffolk Coast and Heaths (AONB)**, for which members agreed that representation was vital.
- 7.33 As there were no representative for the **Museum of East Anglian Rural Life (MEAL)** and **Pin Mill**, the Chair invited Councillor Ayres to update the Committee on the **Quay Theatre**. He added that Babergh Council provided funding for the Theatre.
- 7.34 Councillor Ayres was elected a representative for Sudbury Town Council and informed Members that there had been weekly meetings and that it had been very busy despite the Covid-19 Lockdown.
- 7.35 Councillor Jan Osborne provided an update on the work of Sudbury and District CA and how Covid-19 had impacted on the service provided.
- 7.36 Councillor McLaren outlined the meetings and work of **the Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee**, which met quarterly for six hours long meetings. It was cross authority committee and Councillor Fleming chaired the Committee. The scrutiny process involved health providers across the County, Norfolk and Essex and she found the work stimulating and useful. The Committee put health service providers through a strict security process, and the participants had a wide range of interests. The work also involved the Clinical Commission Group. However, she was concerned that there was no formal way of reporting back to members on the work undertaken.
- 7.37 Councillor Welham then updated on the **Suffolk Police and Crime Panel** and explained that the Panel scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PPC) decisions for the work programme, budget and the council tax was to be levied. The Panel could veto the budget within set parameters. The Panel discussed valuable resources for rural areas and Stowmarket Policing management. Members of the Panel received information bulletins,

performance, and panel reports. Most of the public meetings were held in various towns in Suffolk. He had a personal interest in rural areas, speed cameras and the Stowmarket night-time economy and the work programme for the Police Community Service Officer, which are funded by Mid Suffolk District Council.

- 7.38 Councillor McLaren queried how the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel fed into local communities and local policing.
- 7.39 The Chair advised Councillor McLaren to contact Councillor Peter Beer, who was Babergh's representative on the panel to discuss further.
- 7.40 Councillor Welham added that the local Police and Crime Panel was operating on a strategic level and that the Panel was mainly a scrutiny function. Community engagement officers operated across the County.
- 7.41 Councillor Muller informed Members that the Community Engagement Officer for Stowmarket was PC Stefan Henriksen.
- 7.42 Councillor McLaren advised Members on the work of the **Suffolk Violence and Abuse Partnership** which comprised of all agencies dealing with violence and domestic abuse. The Partnership was also a member of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP). She asked how she could update all Members on the work of the Partnership, as she felt this could be useful.
- 7.43 The Chairman was the representative on the **Suffolk Waste Partnership** and reported that the partnership had been very successful across the County.
- 7.44 Councillor McLaren was the Babergh representative on the **WSCSP** but due to her commitment to the Council had only been able to attend one meeting. She would discuss this further with the Leader of the Babergh Council.
- 7.45 The Chairman explained to Members that the Council had a statutory obligation to review the work of Crime and Safety Partnership each year and that the Committee undertook this duty by scrutinising the WSCSP, which was included in the annual work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 7.46 Councillor Jan Osborne, the Babergh representative on **Gainsborough House Committee**, had join the meeting and updated Members on the Gainsborough House project in Sudbury. Babergh District Council had invested in this project, including Community Infrastructure Levy funding (CIL) She felt it was important to monitoring the progress of the project both during and after the project had finished. The Committee normally met quarterly. She queried that there was no reporting mechanism for the representative to update all Members on the progress on the project.
- 7.47 Councillor Carter suggested that a representative was elected for the Suffolk Disability Forum.

- 7.48 The Corporate Manager – Governance and Civic Office advised Members that the Forum included officer representation and that the Council worked closely with the Forum.
- 7.49 The **Babergh Domestic Violence and Abuse Forum** had informed the Council that the Forum no longer required Member Representation.
- 7.50 The Babergh representation on the **East West Rail Consortium** was discussed and it was generally agreed by Babergh Members that Babergh Council would have very little input on this organisation and that the subscription fee would not provide value for money.
- 7.51 The **Joint Waste Management Board** no longer met.
- 7.52 The **Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Policy Panel** had not met for several years and no longer existed.
- 7.53 Members Debated the issues of representation on Outside Bodies including:
- That the East West Rail Consortium often meet at far away venues and usually then only for one hour.
  - That Councillor Smart from Ipswich Borough Council was the representative on the Consortium for the County.
  - That climate changes should be a larger part of the plans for the East West Rail Consortium.
  - That the Councils should not rely on other authorities to represent them on the Consortium.
  - That improvements to railway stations were a separate issue.
  - That subscription to the East West Rail Consortium would need to be considered.
  - The East West Rail Consortium was important because of the need to reduce the number of lorries on the A14 by increasing the volume of goods conveyed by rail.
  - That training and support of new representatives was important.
  - That a twice a year reporting mechanism in the form of a template should be recommended to Council.
  - That the reporting should be short and mainly consist of bullet points.
- 7.54 Members discussed recommendations and determined that each recommendation would be proposed, seconded and voted on separately to

allow for separation between joint and sovereign resolutions.

7.55 The following recommendations were agreed to be put to members for voting:

- 1.1 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to the Councils named that the following appointments to Outside Bodies, no longer requiring representation, be removed from the appointments made, based on the information received.

Babergh District Council

Babergh Domestic Violence and Abuse Forum  
East West Rail Consortium  
Joint Waste Management Board  
Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Policy Panel  
Suffolk Rail Policy Group

Mid Suffolk District Council:

Joint Waste Management Board  
Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Policy Panel

- 1.2 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that both Councils consider withdrawal from the Haven Gateway Partnership as the Committee feels that the Partnership cannot demonstrate Value and relevance.
- 1.3 That Babergh District Council considers that a member representative be appointed to Home-Start in line with Mid Suffolk District Council
- 1.4 That consideration be given by Mid Suffolk District Council that an observer be appointed to Stowmarket Citizens Advice in line with Babergh District Council.
- 1.5 That a reporting mechanism in the form of a template for Representatives on Outside Bodies be established to provide valuable information to members and Public, the information be presented as part of the annual review of Member Representation on Outside Bodies to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.6 That support and training be established for members when appointed as representatives on Outside Bodies.
- 1.7 That Mid Suffolk District Council considers taking up the appointment of a representative to the East West Rail Consortium by making a payment of the subscription fees required for full participation.

**It was Resolved:-**

Councillor Adrian Osborne proposed recommendation 1.1, which was seconded by Councillor Welham

By a joint unanimous vote

- 1.1 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to the Councils named that the following appointments to Outside Bodies, no longer requiring representation, be removed from the appointments made, based on the information received.**

**Babergh District Council**

**Babergh Domestic Violence and Abuse Forum  
East West Rail Consortium  
Joint Waste Management Board  
Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Policy Panel  
Suffolk Rail Policy Group**

**Mid Suffolk District Council:**

**Joint Waste Management Board  
Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Policy Panel**

Councillor Adrian Osborne proposed recommendation 1.2, which was seconded by Councillor Ekpenyong.

By a joint unanimous vote

- 1.2 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that both Councils consider withdrawal from the Haven Gateway Partnership as the Committee feels that the Partnership cannot demonstrate Value and relevance.**

Councillor McCraw proposed recommendation 1.3, which was seconded by Councillor Gould.

By a BDC unanimous vote

- 1.3 That Babergh District Council considers that a member representative be appointed to Home-Start in line with Mid Suffolk District Council**

Councillor Welham proposed recommendation 1.4, which was seconded by Councillor Scarff

By MSDC 5 votes to 1 vote

- 1.4 That consideration be given by Mid Suffolk District Council that an observer be appointed to Stowmarket Citizens Advice in line with Babergh District Council**

Councillor Ekpenyong proposed recommendation 1.5, which was seconded by Councillor Caston

By a joint unanimous vote

- 1.5 That a reporting mechanism in the form of a template for Representatives on Outside Bodies be established to provide valuable information to members and Public, the information be presented as part of the annual review of Member Representation on Outside Bodies to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor McCraw proposed recommendation 1.6, which was seconded by Councillor Caston.

By a joint unanimous vote

- 1.6 That support and training be established for members when appointed as representatives on Outside Bodies.**

Councillor Welham proposed recommendation 1.7, which was seconded by Councillor Ekpenyong

By a MSDC unanimous vote

- 1.7 That Mid Suffolk District Council considers taking up the appointment of a representative to the East West Rail Consortium by making a payment of the subscription fees required for full participation.**

## **8 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

**It was Resolved:**

**That the Forthcoming Decisions List be noted.**

## **9 JOS/20/4 /BABERGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN**

**It was Resolved:**

**That the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan be noted.**

## **10 JOS/20/5 MID SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN**



**It was Resolved:**

**That the Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Plan was noted**

**11 RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)**

11.1 As there was no comments made for the restricted minutes the Committee did not exclude the public and press from the meeting.

**12 JOS/20/1 TO CONFIRM THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE FROM THE MEETING 4 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**By a unanimous vote**

**It was Resolved:**

**That the confidential minute from the meeting on the 4 September 2020 be confirmed as a true record and will be signed at the next practicable opportunity.**

**13 JOS/20/2 TO CONFIRM THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 21 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**By a unanimous vote**

**It was Resolved:**

**That the confidential minute from the meeting on the 21 September 2020 be confirmed as a true record and will be signed at the next practicable opportunity.**

The business of the meeting was concluded at 12:11 pm.

.....  
Chair

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## **BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of the **BABERGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
held in the Virtual Meeting on Monday, 18 January 2021

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor: Alastair McCraw (Chair)  
Adrian Osborne (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Sue Ayres Siân Dawson  
Kathryn Grandon Bryn Hurren  
Margaret Maybury Mary McLaren  
Jan Osborne Alison Owen  
Lee Parker

### **Ward Member(s):**

Councillors: Sue Ayres  
Bryn Hurren  
Margaret Maybury  
Jan Osborne – Cabinet Member for Housing  
Alison Owen  
Lee Parker  
John Ward – Cabinet Member for Finance

### **In attendance:**

Guest(s): Richard Walker – Parking Partnership Group Manager – North Essex  
Parking Partnership

Officers: Senior Finance Business Partner  
Chief Executive  
Assistant Director - Environment and Commercial Partnerships  
Corporate Manager - Waste Services  
Assistant Director - Housing

### **Apologies:**

Jane Gould

## **1 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS**

1.1 There were no declarations made by Councillors.

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

2.1 None received.

### **3 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC**

3.1 None received.

### **4 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

4.1 None received.

### **5 BOS/20/1 TOWN CENTRE PARKING IN BABERGH DISTRICT**

5.1 Councillor McCraw made the Committee aware of the decision process for this item and asked for Members to remain apolitical.

5.2 Councillor Malvisi – Cabinet Member for Environment introduced the report and stated that the report would be amended to take into account comments from this Overview and Scrutiny meeting and the debate on the petition at Council on 19 January 2021 before being taken to Cabinet in February.

5.3 Councillor Malvisi detailed the background for the report and explained that several car parks in Babergh were in need of repair to make them fit for purpose and that action plans were needed for bicycle parking and electric charging points.

5.4 The revised Car Parking Review would enable car parks in town centres to pay for upkeep of the car parking spaces and be financially viable for the future.

5.5 The Assistant Director - Environment & Commercial Partnerships detailed the main content of the report. She explained how the Car Parking Survey in February 2020 had been conducted and how the observations were made for the use of car parks in Hadleigh and Sudbury.

5.6 She stated that any changes should be based on strategic requirements and that parking tariffs were to be used as a tool to change parking behaviours to utilise the spaces available for parking in the town centres. The survey had identified several aspects including the number of cars parking, for how long and if there was enough appropriate parking available. However, a much wider strategic review would be needed but this survey was the first step.

5.7 Budgetary considerations had been included in the report and Option 2 was the preferred option. Currently the cost of maintaining and running the car parks was subsidised and the proposal endeavoured to cover the cost of the service and to reinvest into the service. An element of some of the income would be invested in sustainable travel.

- 5.8 The Chair thanked the Assistant Director and proposed possible areas of questioning to Members.
- 5.9 Councillor McLaren stated that the report was comprehensive, however, she felt that the subsidy of parking had been a major point for residents, and that the remainder of the report had been overlooked. She asked if this had been taken into consideration in preparing the report. She also asked how long Babergh had been subsidising car parking in Sudbury.
- 5.10 The Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships responded that the car parking service had always been subsidised and that the reaction to the subsidy issues had been anticipated but could not coherently be separated from the report.
- 5.11 Councillor Dawson asked why this report had been brought to Cabinet in January with little or no communication or consultation with Ward Members or other stakeholders.
- 5.12 The Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships explained that it had been a corporate objective for some time to review the parking provision within the Babergh District and that the report had been in progress since February 2020 and should have been presented to Cabinet in November 2020. However, this had been delayed due to the redeployment of staff as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. She added that the report was the initial phase to establish if the current car parking provision was fit for purpose. In addition, a need to address car parking issues in town centres had arisen and she assured Members that all stakeholders would be consulted in the wider strategy review.
- 5.13 Councillor Grandon asked how much research had been undertaken in Hadleigh and why the report had been deferred to January, as Christmas and the Covid-19 restrictions had made a wider debate difficult.
- 5.14 The Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships responded that the initial data survey had been completed by Alpha Parking, who had visited car parks on both weekdays and weekends to gather data including any data accessible from the ticket machines.
- 5.15 In response to the timing of the report, the Officer clarified that Covid-19 redeployment had affected the timing, however, she assured Members that members of the public and Councillors had forwarded responses to the report.
- 5.16 Councillor Grandon enquired why Dedham had been included as a good

example. When she had visited the town during the summer there appeared to be an issue with people trying to avoid parking charges by parking on the road instead of using car parks.

- 5.17 Richard Walker, Parking Partnership Group Manager – North Essex Parking Partnership, explained that the examples in the report illustrated that car parking charges did not discourage visitors and that the management of car parking tariffs improved parking in towns.
- 5.18 Councillor Dawson stated that the report did not address the issue of displacement of traffic and asked why this was not being delayed until after the wider review.
- 5.19 The Chair advised Members of the constraints of timing in relation to the budget.
- 5.20 The Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships clarified that on-street parking was not charged for and managed by Suffolk County Council. However, on-street parking depended on traffic regulations.
- 5.21 Councillor McCraw queried whether the suggested tariffs seemed low in comparison with parking in similar towns and asked if this was the case.
- 5.22 The Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships replied that she believed that these charges were modest in comparison.
- 5.23 Richard Walker explained that parking management tended to follow what the destination had to offer and that factors had been established by looking across nationally to similar places, type of stay, mode of use and congestion of the network. The introduction of tariffs was not solely about generating an income but also to manage parking issues in a sensible way for residents and visitors.
- 5.24 Councillor McLaren asked if the Shotley Peninsula had been reviewed as there was a shortage of car parks. Especially since Anglian Water had raised car parking charges at Alton Water, which appeared to have resulted in more people parking in quieter lanes and villages.
- 5.25 Councillor Grandon stated that Hadleigh and Sudbury were not comparable, but the suggested tariffs were comparable.
- 5.26 The Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships replied that the fee structures were different in Sudbury and Hadleigh in the recommended option.

- 5.27 Councillor Dawson questioned why the survey had been completed in February which was one of the worst times of the year for visitors to the towns.
- 5.28 Richard Walker replied that February was a quiet time of the year, however the car parks had still been full.
- 5.29 Councillor Adrian Osborne queried what would be the impact on the budget if changes were not made.
- 5.30 The Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships responded that the current parking budget was showing a £185,000 deficit, which did not include any funding for improving deteriorating car parks. Tables 4a and 4b in section 6.5 of the report detailed the current budget for parking services.
- 5.31 In response to Councillor McCraw’s question for the provision of 3 hours free parking, Richard Walker stated that it was unusual to have such a long period of free parking.
- 5.32 Councillor Dawson asked if enforcements had been considered and Councillor McCraw enquired further if the authority received any income from enforcements.
- 5.33 The Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships responded that a service level agreement with Suffolk County Council and West Suffolk Council were in place and that the income from car parking charges were unlikely to cover the cost of enforcement.
- 5.34 Councillor McLaren enquired if any comments had been received from residents, who would gain resident’s parking permits in Sudbury, to which the Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships replied that it was expected that views would be made under the wider review.
- 5.35 Councillor McCraw questioned if there was a capacity to amend the timeline in the report and were delays feasible within budget and practical constraints.
- 5.36 The Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships clarified that the budget would be a separate issue, however it would be feasible to delay the implementation date.
- 5.37 In response to Councillor Dawson’s questions relating to the alternative options explored, Councillor Malvisi referred to the alternative strategies’

options detailed in the report.

- 5.38 The Chair invited Members to debate the issues.
- 5.39 Councillor McLaren began the debate by raising the method of consultation and stated that some people felt that their views had been missed.
- 5.40 Councillor Adrian Osbourne stated that he understood that the three hours free parking was unsustainable and suggested that the implementation date should be amended to late 2021/early 2022. He added that residents being unable to park near their homes should be investigated as this impacted car parks.
- 5.41 Councillor Dawson agreed that factors of displacement needed reviewing and suggested that this report be deferred until after the strategic parking review.
- 5.42 Councillor Grandon thought that businesses and the public needed time to recover from the effects of the Covid-19 crisis before implementation of car parking charges. She thought that the Sudbury and Hadleigh tariffs should be different and that more work should be undertaken regarding the displacement issues.
- 5.43 Councillor McCraw felt that the tariffs suggested were reasonable and acceptable, however he suggested one hour of free parking instead of the half hour proposed. He thought that a comprehensive parking review was required in addition to considerations of residential parking permits.
- 5.44 Councillor Dawson enquired why Lavenham had been omitted and The Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships explained that Lavenham Parish Council had approached Babergh District Council regarding the transfer of responsibilities for a number of services in Lavenham and that it was hoped that these talks would come to a conclusion soon.
- 5.45 Councillor McCraw suggested that recommendation 3.1 in the report be amended so that the commencement date for the strategy review be changed to quarter three and that the implementation date in recommendation 3.2 be amended to '*no earlier than 01 July 2021*'.
- 5.46 Councillor Grandon thought that engineering investments to car parks should not be delayed.
- 5.47 Councillor Dawson suggested delaying the implementation date until after the



## Strategic Parking Review.

- 5.48 The Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships confirmed that the average time for a Strategic Parking review was 12 to 18 months.
- 5.49 Councillor McLaren suggested one-hour free parking in town centres and an implementation date of no earlier than September.
- 5.50 Councillor McCraw proposed a recommendation of no change to recommendations 3.1, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 in the report, that the implementation date in recommendation 3.2 be amended to: *'be implemented no earlier than September 2021'* and recommendation 3.3 be amended to a variant of options 2 and 3 to: *'but includes that one hour free parking be provided in Hadleigh and Sudbury'*, which was seconded by Councillor Osborne.
- 5.51 Councillor Grandon proposed an amended recommendation for 2 hours free parking and that the implementation date should be 6 months after the majority of the general public had received a Covid-19 vaccination.
- 5.52 The Monitoring Officer advised against using the Covid-19 vaccination as a cut off time for implementation and suggested implementation after the Strategic Review instead.
- 5.53 This was agreed by Councillor Grandon and she proposed that Recommendations 3.1 and 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 remained unchanged and that Recommendations 3.2 and 3.3 be amended as follows:
- 3.1 *That a comprehensive parking strategy review be undertaken for the whole District, which will commence in quarter two 2021/22 and that delegation be given to the Assistant Director for Environment & Commercial Partnerships in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment.*
- 3.2 *That the parking management principles and interventions detailed in Appendix A **not be implemented until the comprehensive Parking Strategy review has been completed.***
- 3.3 *That additional parking controls or tariffs be applied to District car parks in accordance with Option 2, table 3, paragraph 6.3 of this report **but to include two hours free parking in Hadleigh and that free parking in Sudbury to be determined,** subject to the Statutory Order Process and requirements for consultation, in order to achieve availability and*

*occupancy priorities outlined below.*

- 3.4 *That residential parking permits be implemented in Mill Lane Car Park, Sudbury for overnight stays, subject to the Statutory Order Process and requirements for consultation.*
- 3.5 *That a proportion of income generated from chargeable parking will be allocated to the delivery of the sustainable travel agenda.*
- 3.6 *To resolve to delegate the decision to make changes to the parking orders in order to bring in the agreed changes to the AD for Environment and Commercial Partnerships so that appropriate actions can be undertaken in a timely manner.*

5.54 Councillor Dawson seconded the amended proposal, which was put to Members for voting.

By 2 votes for and 3 votes against

**It was RESOLVED:-**

**That the vote for the amended proposal was lost.**

5.55 Members returned to the substantive proposal, which was put to Members for voting.

By 3 votes for and 2 votes against

**It was RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:**

- 3.1 **That a comprehensive parking strategy review be undertaken for the whole District, which will commence in quarter two 2021/22 and that delegation be given to the Assistant Director for Environment & Commercial Partnerships in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment.**
- 3.2 **That the parking management principles and interventions detailed in Appendix A be implemented no sooner than 1st of September 2021.**
- 3.3 **That additional parking controls or tariffs be applied to District car parks in accordance with Option 2, table 3, paragraph 6.3 of this report but includes that one-hour free parking be provided in Hadleigh and Sudbury, subject to the Statutory Order Process and requirements for consultation, in order to achieve availability and occupancy priorities**

outlined below.

- 3.4 That residential parking permits be implemented in Mill Lane Car Park, Sudbury for overnight stays, subject to the Statutory Order Process and requirements for consultation.
- 3.5 That a proportion of income generated from chargeable parking will be allocated to the delivery of the sustainable travel agenda.
- 3.6 To resolve to delegate the decision to make changes to the parking orders in order to bring in the agreed changes to the AD for Environment and Commercial Partnerships so that appropriate actions can be undertaken in a timely manner.

## **6 BOS/20/2 DRAFT GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2021/22 AND FOUR-YEAR OUTLOOK**

Note: The Committee adjourned between 11:50 am and 12:00 Noon.

- 6.1 Councillor Ward – Cabinet Member for Finance introduced paper BOS/20/2 and summarised the main points in the budget. Overall, the Council was in a good financial position for the year, however the prediction for the coming years for the Council's financial position required careful attention.
- 6.2 Councillor Grandon understood the seriousness of the Council's situation and asked why there was only a minimal increase for the brown bin collection. She felt that as it was an excellent service it could be increased further, and she believed an increase would not discourage current or new subscribers.
- 6.3 Councillor Ward responded that this had been reviewed earlier in the year. However, after comparison of garden waste collection charges with other authorities, it was felt that £2.50 was the right amount.
- 6.4 Councillor McLaren referred to page 47, bullet point 6.6, in relation to the Public Realm service, which was being brought in-house and asked if there were other services, which could be brought inhouse.
- 6.5 Councillor Ward responded that currently no other services had been identified.
- 6.6 Councillor McLaren then queried the use of external consultants and Councillor Ward explained that external consultants were only used when necessary to provide specialism and skills for specific projects, which the Council's officers could not provide.
- 6.7 Councillor Dawson referred to the service charges for Endeavour House and that the rental income in the commercial market had come down. She

questioned why the service charge for Endeavour House had increased by £43K.

- 6.8 The Assistant Director – Corporate Resources clarified that when the Council entered the rental and service charges contract with Suffolk Country Council (SSC) it included planned increases. However, as a result of the current situation an ongoing conversation with SCC for a reduction in service charges was being conducted as SCC had seen a reduction of overhead charges. However, there were still fixed overheads included in the charges and the Council had agreed to increases when the agreement was signed with SCC.
- 6.9 Councillor A. Osborne thanked the Finance team for putting together a balanced budget in difficult circumstances.
- 6.10 Councillor McCraw queried the £404K surplus forecast for this year, achieved by using the New Homes Bonus, Section 31 Grant and Rural Service Delivery Grant, and he compared this figure with the £381K in the reserves and asked if consideration had been made to not using the reserves and have a smaller surplus.
- 6.11 Councillor Ward responded that the reserves were earmarked for specific service areas. He added that the New Homes Bonus was reducing every year, however, the new reserves were used for the Council's priorities such as the biodiversity commitment for the coming years.
- 6.12 The Assistant Director – Corporate Resources added that the reserves were used to fund particular service areas such as homelessness. The Council received funding for homelessness on an annual basis and this funding was put into the reserves and was drawn upon when required to fund homelessness services.
- 6.13 Councillor Grandon queried the £88K increase in vehicle running costs and asked if this was part of the project to become carbon neutral and if so when would this be balanced.
- 6.14 Councillor Ward explained that this was the price difference between the cost of diesel and HVO and would be an ongoing cost. This was a consequence of the Council's dedication to climate change.
- 6.15 Councillor Dawson asked for details for the returns on the investment funds.
- 6.16 The Assistant Director – Corporate Resources responded that these investments were still paying positively to the Council and that details would be presented to the Joint Audit and Standards Committee (JASC) next week. The investment funds were providing a reasonable return to the Council, helping the Council's budget position.
- 6.17 Councillor Dawson asked if a summary of the investment funds could be provided to all Members.

- 6.18 Councillor McCraw stated that as a member of JASC he could confirm that the investment funds returns were meeting expectations.
- 6.19 Councillor McLaren supported the above comments and stated that the matter of ethical investments would be raised at the next JASC meeting.
- 6.20 Members debated the budget issues including that the budget had been presented to all Members at several briefings before coming to committee and that it was a fairly neutral but balanced budget, including a small increase in Council Tax, of which the Council received 10% of the total amount collected. It was noted that a deficit was forecast for the next three years.
- 6.21 Members commended the Assistant Director and the Finance team on the General Fund Budget for 2021/22 and Four-year Outlook.
- 6.22 Members debated the recommendations to Cabinet and Councillor McCraw proposed that the Committee commended recommendation 3.1 and 3.2, with the exception of the matters relating to the parking item discussed previously.
- 6.23 Councillor A. Osborne seconded the proposal.

By 3 votes for, 1 vote against and 1 abstention.

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commends Recommendations 3.1 and 3.2 in the report to Cabinet, with the exception of any effects made in relation to the parking matter which has been debated at the meeting today.**

## **7 BOS/20/3 DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) 2021/22 BUDGET AND FOUR-YEAR OUTLOOK**

- 7.1 Councillor Ward – Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced paper BOS/20/3, and summarised the main points of the report to Members.
- 7.2 Councillor Grandon asked for a clarification of the service charges for sheltered housing tenants and what was included in the increase of 69 pence per week.
- 7.3 Councillor J. Osborne – Cabinet Member for Housing responded that the new residents in the de-sheltered houses had been offered to continue the same service as the sheltered houses at a cost. For the sheltered sites the services remained the same.
- 7.4 The Assistant Director – Housing, added that the service was a wraparound service and included Health & Safety and a warden on-call system and utilities costs which was all included in the service charges. A review would

be brought to Cabinet later in the year. The 69 pence increase paying for increase in utility charges.

- 7.5 Councillor Grandon asked how many tenants live in the Council's sheltered accommodations and the Assistant Director- Housing response approximately 450 tenants but he would provide a more detailed response outside of the meeting.
- 7.6 Councillor McLaren referred to the national reports of thousands of council houses standing empty and asked if an update could be provided for the number of empty houses and garages across the District.
- 7.7 The Assistant Director – Housing responded that the demand for garages was higher in some area while other areas had a low demand. There would be a project around the consideration of strategic sites and the use of sites in the long term in due course. There was a turnover of houses becoming empty as tenants moved and the property had to be maintained between tenants. There was also a review of empty garage sites, some of which might be under consideration for redevelopment.
- 7.8 Councillor McLaren asked if the Council would provide 'pods' for rough sleepers, similar to Ipswich Borough Council.
- 7.9 The Assistant Director – Housing responded that this came under the General Fund Budget, but he reassured Members that the Council had made every effort to ensure that rough sleepers had been provided with accommodation. This could be either in the Councils own accommodation or in B&B and hotel accommodation in which the Council currently housed rough sleepers as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Cabinet had considered the options and made the decision that hotel accommodation was the best option, based on a business case, and was more cost effective and flexible for the Council.
- 7.10 Councillor Jan Osborne added that some properties might appear to be empty when a resident has gone into temporary care as the property had to remain available as stated in the tenancy agreement until the resident went into permanent care.
- 7.11 Councillor McCraw asked when the last time was the Council had increased the council housing rent and he referred to the increase of 1.5% in recommendation 3.3 in the report.
- 7.12 The Assistant Director - Housing responded that the council housing rent had been increase last year based on the CPI, which was the first year of the new Government rent standards. However, prior to this Council had for the previous five years been obliged to reduce rents. He did not have the figure for Babergh available, but Mid Suffolk District Scrutiny Committee members had compared and contrasted figures for last week for 2015/16 and 2021/22, and drawn the conclusion that the rent increase was on average 11pence higher now than 6 years ago.

- 7.13 In response to Councillor Ayres' comments regarding the repairs on Minden Road in Sudbury the Assistant Director – Housing responded that the repair had been for fire safety and environmental issues, as agreed with the stakeholders involved there, and had been long overdue.
- 7.14 Councillor Grandon asked if any of the Council's properties had any of the combustible cladding which was discussed in the current news and the Assistant Director – Housing confirmed that there were no high rises in the area and none of the council's housing had any of the combustible cladding applied.
- 7.15 Members briefly debated the issues and congratulated the Assistant Director – Housing, the Corporate Manager – Housing Solutions and the Housing team on the work undertaken, problems resolved and the work they have achieved.
- 7.16 Councillor Grandon proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the Recommendations in the Report, which was seconded by Councillor Dawson.

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee supports Recommendations 3.1 to 3.7 in the Report to Cabinet.**

## **8 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

**It was RESOLVED:-**

**That the Forthcoming Decisions List be noted.**

## **9 BOS/20/4 BDC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN**

**It was Resolved: -**

**That the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan be noted.**

The business of the meeting was concluded at 1:45 pm.

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Chair

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## **MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
held in the Virtual Meeting on Thursday, 14 January 2021

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor: Keith Welham (Chair)  
Keith Scarff (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Terence Carter James Caston  
Paul Ekpenyong David Muller

### **In attendance:**

Councillor(s): John Whitehead - Cabinet Member – Finance  
John Field

Officers: Assistant Director - Housing (GF)  
Assistant Director – Corporate Resources and Section 151 Officer (KS)  
Corporate Manager - Financial and Commissioning and Procurement (ME)  
Senior Finance Business Partner (SB)  
Senior Governance Officer (HH)

### **Apologies:**

None

### **1 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS**

1.1 There were no declarations made by Members.

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

2.1 There were no petitions received.

### **3 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC**

3.1 None received.

### **4 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

4.1 None received.

### **5 MOS/20/1 DRAFT GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2021/22 AND FOUR-YEAR OUTLOOK**

- 5.1 Councillor Whitehead introduced paper MOS/20/1 and provided the following main points from the report.
- 5.2 The initial projections of the effects of the pandemic on the Council's finances were horrendous, but since those early days, Central Government had been generous with their assistance to local councils, helping them to minimise the impact of the pandemic on finances, which would extend through to the end of the first quarter of 2021/22. The Budget report detailed the financial impact of Covid-19 and the present economic environment in which the country now found itself, as detailed in paragraphs 4.5 through to 4.18. The Government had announced a one-year Spending Review and would soon be starting a consultation on a future replacement for New Homes Bonus. They had delayed the Fair Funding Review, Business Rates Review and a business rates reset. This made it very difficult to make any forecast beyond March 2022 for the four-year outlook. In addition, the Provisional Finance Settlement was only announced on 17 December 2020 and details of this provisional settlement were included in paragraphs 4.19 - 4.21 but some of the changes had still to be fed through into the Budget numbers.
- 5.3 The draft budget did show healthy surpluses throughout the four-year period, but he emphasised how much uncertainty was built into the numbers beyond March 2022 for the reasons outlined above. The budget that was approved in February 2020 for the present year 2020/21 and incorporated an increase in the Mid Suffolk share of Council Tax by 1.66% in that year. This increase was assumed to continue year-on-year throughout the four-year outlook. This draft budget for 2021/22 continued with that assumption. These were modest annual increases, which along with a small growth every year as new-built homes become occupied, meaning that the Council would be gradually building up an ever-more robust council tax-base to serve the Council for the future. Current projections showed raising of £6.382m from Council Tax in 2021/22, increasing to £6.987m by 2024/25. This year £1m would be added to the Commercial Development Risk Management Reserve, whilst awaiting planning permission on the revised Masterplan for Gateway14 development before groundworks can begin. A further £0.5million was added to the Climate Change and Biodiversity Reserve.
- 5.4 Cllr Whitehead had recommended to Cabinet a need to consider further significant additions to reserves to cover future Planning Legal and Planning Enforcement expenditure before finalising the numbers in February. He believed that it was vital that the Council could robustly defend any planning application going to appeal.
- 5.5 It was anticipated getting CIFCO fully invested by the end of March 2021 and therefore no further capital investment for yield had been incorporated into the future Capital Programme. The details of the future Capital Programme from April 2021 to March 2025 were set out in Appendix A.
- 5.6 Councillor Scarff queried the Business Rates referring to paragraph 8.5 and asked when Government would be changing the Business Rate system.

- 5.7 The Assistant Director – Corporate Recourses responded that if the the Government intended to change the Business Rates in 2022 then the work would have to start early this year. The implementation date had been scheduled to April 2022, which was the deadline Officers were working to.
- 5.8 Councillor Caston queried the lack of growth for Business rates and asked if this was because of the current uncertainty.
- 5.9 The Assistant Director – Corporate Resources explained that the figures in the report were from February 2020. However, the Council submits a return to the Government this month and the new figures would be added to the final report for Council. It was difficult to predict the income from business rates, as there were a couple of changes in relation to the offshore wind farm coming into a site in Bramford.
- 5.10 Councillor Welham referred to Table 1, page 12 and asked if the Lower Tier Service Grant was explained in the report. To which the Assistant Director responded that it was detailed in page 12, bullet point 1. The New Homes Bonus had not all been used and some of the balance had been allocated to this new one-off Lower Tier Services Grant, for one year only.
- 5.11 Councillor Welham queried page 22 and the spend of £1m on Gateway and asked if this had been envisaged for the start of the financial year.
- 5.12 The Cabinet Member – Finance, responded that this had happened during the past year. Gateway 14 did not have a cashflow and did not provide an actual income and it was prudent to put this money aside until income was certain.
- 5.13 In response to Councillor Welham’s question regarding the reserves Table 7, line 40 of £2.027m, the Assistant Director – Corporate Resources explained that Table 7 was for the current year and she referred to Table 6 on page 22, which detailed the projected position for next year and at the allocations of extra reserves was details at the bottom. She added, in response to a further question, that the £2m surplus for the current year was planned to be allocated to the Growth and Efficiency Fund.
- 5.14 Councillor Welham asked that this was made clearer in the report.
- 5.15 He continued questioning officers regarding service charges, page 23, and why there was an increase of £43K for Endeavour House and if going forward it would be possible to give up some of the floor space, if it was not utilised.
- 5.16 The Cabinet Member – Finance explained that the Council was tied into a rental agreement. The Assistant Director – Corporate Resources added that there was a break clause in the rental agreement. However, the agreement had included planned increases for service charges for each year.
- 5.17 Councillor Carter queried if the service charges could be reduced, to which

the Assistant Director explained the cost incurred and agreement for the service charges.

- 5.18 Councillor Whitehead – Cabinet Member – Finance added that there were some costs incurred in the service charge agreement and he hoped that these would reflect reality going forward.
- 5.19 Members asked the following to be amended in the report:
- The heading on page 26 and 27.
  - That scale of the graphs to be the same to make comparison easier.
  - Appendix B, page 28, to be amended to Appendix A
- 5.20 Councillor Ekpenyong referred to section 8.19 regarding the pension fund and whether the contribution of 23% was a future assumption for contributions.
- 5.21 The Assistant Director – Corporate Resources explained that the 23% was the employer's contribution and this remained the same. The employer had to pay 23% of the basic pay for each employee into the pension fund and it was separate from the National Insurance Contributions. The pension fund was not yet a 100% funded, however, at the last evaluation of the pension fund the trajectory had indicated the fund was nearly fully funded, therefore the pension deficit lump sum allowed a 1% reduction over next three years and was reflected in the £69K savings.
- 5.22 Councillor Ekpenyong referred to page 24 and asked for context of the waste contract as there was an increase of £235K.
- 5.23 The Assistant Director – Corporate Resources believed this increase was tied up with the negotiations with the waste contractor SERCO, as there was an agreed increase in the payments made by the Council. The number of bin collections by SERCO were increasing and the Council had to pay for this increase in volume of collections and the cost implications incurred.
- 5.24 Councillor Carter inquired if SERCO also collected the brown bins for which the collections had currently been suspended.
- 5.25 The Assistant Director responded that SERCO had experienced staff shortages, as staff either became ill or had to self-isolate due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. It had therefore been agreed to suspend the collection of the garden waste bins to enable crews to be transferred to the refuse and recycling bin collections.
- 5.26 Councillor Caston queried the cost of transport on page 23, he realised the conversion to vegetable oil had increased the running cost by £88K but asked if this included installation of tanks and infrastructure to enable the running of the vehicles on vegetable oil.
- 5.27 The Cabinet Member – Finance responded that the cost for the tanks was £50k per site and that there was also Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

funding grants available to fund the required infrastructure implications.

- 5.28 Councillor Ekpenyong referred to page 21 and the draft Capital Investment Programme and the empty homes grant and asked for clarification.
- 5.29 The Assistant Director – Housing explained that the Empty Homes Grant was used by the Private Sector Housing Team for maximisation of private rented homes for use and occupation. Grants could be offered as incentives, in the form of improvements to the properties and to make them safe for tenants to use.
- 5.30 Councillor Ekpenyong questioned where the funding for electrical charging points were to be found in the budget and the Assistant Director – Corporate Resources responded that the Assistant Director for Environment and Commercial Partnerships was leading on this project, and that it had not been included in the Capital Programme at this stage. She would get a response to members outside the meeting.
- 5.31 Councillor Whitehead added that £1/2M had been put aside last year and again this year for climate change initiatives.
- 5.32 Members debated the issues including:
- That there was a lot of uncertainty for the future.
  - That further clarification for the biodiversity fund should be included in the budget report.
  - That the General Fund budget was sound given the circumstances under which it had been prepared.
  - That more focus on staff welfare and mental health, especially during the pandemic should be included (reference page 15, 6.4 and 6.5) and that staff welfare should be included in public documents and in the overarching principles.
- 5.33 Members debated the recommendations and that the comments made at this meeting should be included in the recommendations to cabinet. Further considerations for funding should be allocated for planning enforcement and legal costs associated with planning.
- 5.34 Councillor Ekpenyong proposed the recommendations, which was seconded by councillor Caston

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED: -**

- 1.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asks that Officers and Cabinet take into consideration the comments made at this meeting, when submitting the General Fund Budget 2021 and Four-year Outlook for consideration at the Cabinet meeting and Council in February 2021.**

- 2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asks that Cabinet considers funding be allocated for planning enforcement and legal costs associated with planning.**

**6 MOS/20/2 DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) 2021/22 BUDGET AND FOUR-YEAR OUTLOOK**

- 6.1 The Chair, Councillor Welham invited the Cabinet Member for Finance to introduce the report.
- 6.2 Councillor Whitehead stated that for the year 2021/22 a surplus on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) of £116k had been forecasted. This was a contrast to the large deficit forecasted for 2020/21 of £564k. The table in paragraph 5.2 compared the budgets for the two years with explanations behind the various line movements set out in detail in paragraph 5.5. Savings and efficiencies have been identified during a robust budget-setting process, as set out and explained in the report.
- 6.3 He would like to take this opportunity, to give Members some more background to the proposed Council House rent increase. In April 2020 council house rents was increased by 2.7%, being the Consumer Price Index plus an additional 1.0%. This was the first increase after four years of a central government-imposed reduction of rents by 1% each year. For the coming year, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, an increase based on September 2020's CPI plus one percent works out to be only 1.5%. The net effect of these decreases then increased over a six-year period so that the average council house weekly rent in March 2022 would only be 11p higher than it was in March 2016 and therefore virtually unchanged.
- 6.4 Sheltered Housing utility charges would not be changed in 2021/22. There was an element of subsidy presently built into these charges there had been some reductions in the price of gas, electricity and especially oil. Therefore, utility prices for 2021/22 would be frozen whilst still make some reduction in the level of subsidy.
- 6.5 Sheltered Housing Service Charges had not been increased this current year. There remained an element of subsidy with these charges and to eliminate this subsidy in 2021/22, Service Charges would need to be increased by £2.90. The Council was not proposing to make such an increase and the recommendation for 2021/22 was an increase of just £1.00 per week. Members should note, as mentioned within paragraph 5.5 that it was the intention to develop a Rent and Service Charge Policy for sheltered housing during 2021 with a view to bringing it into effect for 2022/23.
- 6.6 There was an ambitious Capital Programme for the four years from 2021 to 2025. The Council had now identified development sites for 254 affordable homes and 119 shared ownership homes. New builds and acquisitions were forecast to cost £42.2m and the Housing Maintenance Programme £15.8m. Appendix A indicated how the capital programme was to be financed.

- 6.7 Councillor Whitehead draw Members' attention to paragraph 4.2, which explained how the Council would be reviewing the 30-year HRA Business Plan to incorporate new build specifications, the Design Guide, environmental 'retrofit' improvements and new safety enhancements. This new Business Plan, articulating the Council's vision for Council Housing should be coming to Cabinet by this summer.
- 6.8 Councillor Carter queried how the council would manage the utilities bills with regards to the 11 pence per month, as he was concerned for residents, who had lost employment or had reduced income caused by the current circumstances.
- 6.9 The Cabinet Member- Finance explained that the capping of utilities cost was for tenants in sheltered housing, which was collated and paid centrally. Council house tenants negotiated their own utilities contracts.
- 6.10 The Assistant Director – Housing added that the Council as landlord sought to support tenants, who were struggling, to help them remain in their homes. The Council had also imposed an eviction ban before Central Government, to support tenants who were impacted by the covid-19 pandemic.
- 6.11 Councillor Whitehead explained that the HRA budget was a ring-fenced account and was not subsidised by the General Fund, and therefore the Council produced a 30-year business plan to ensure a sustainable position. It was difficult to increase Council Housing rent but an increase would ensure retrofitting and improvement to tenant houses for environmental improvements and that they were sustainable.
- 6.12 Councillor Scarff referred to page 39 and the Right to Buy receipts, paragraph 7.17. The money received from this scheme could only be used as a 30% contribution toward a replacement home. He asked what happened to the 70%, of the sale of assets, which belonged to the authority.
- 6.13 The Assistant Director – Housing responded that when the Council received the value of the receipts for selling a a property, a significant amount belonged to the Government, therefore when the Council used the 30% value of the receipts allocated the value had to be matched funded from the Capital Programme.
- 6.14 Councillor Scarff referred to the Councils Development Programme, paragraph 5.18, and the ability to spend all its receipts. If the Council failed to spend all the receipts due to the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 Pandemic, would the receipts have to be paid back to Government, or were officers confident that the full spend could be achieved under the current circumstance.
- 6.15 The Assistant Director – Housing assured Members that the Assets and Investment Team had been focusing on spending the Right to Buy receipts and the Government had extended the deadline for spending the receipts. This had been due to the housing market slowing down and that estate

agents and legal establishments had been closed during the Covid-19 Pandemic lockdowns. It was possible to spend the amount of the receipts up front based on the houses being sold and the Assets and Investment Team was currently undertaking this. During the past eighteen months the Right to Buy scheme had slowed down due to the economic down-turn.

- 6.16 Councillor Carter questioned the increase for Council tenant rent, though he did not disagree with an increase, as he understood the reasoning.
- 6.17 The Assistant Director – Housing clarified that the increase was for all council tenants and the utility charges were for all communal council tenants, who shared a communal metering.
- 6.18 The Chair invited non-committee Members to ask questions.
- 6.19 Councillor Field question solar panels on council housing and whether tenants who lived in these properties received their electricity for free or at least as a reduction in their utility charges.
- 6.20 The Assistant Director – Housing responded that tenants received a reduction in utility charges.
- 6.21 Councillor Field then questioned the issues around the 30% restriction on the Right to Buy scheme. The Council must use the 30% of money to buy further housing and the Government was therefore forcing the Council to borrow the remainder of the money to be able to add to the Council housing stock. Did the Council then have to buy three times as many houses than planned in order to use the 30% allocation.
- 6.22 The Assistant Director – Housing explained that the Council did have to find the additional capital to supplement the 30% retained from the receipts from the Right to Buy Scheme.
- 6.23 Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member – Finance, added that the Council did not have to borrow all the money to supplement the scheme, funding was detailed in the Appendix. There were other ways of getting funding.
- 6.24 The Assistant Director – Corporate Resources clarified that there were different rules depending on what kind of property was sold, The Government allowed a number of assumed Right to Buy properties in the Business Plan and for some of those the Council was allowed to keep 100% of the receipt However, for other properties the figure was 25%.
- 6.25 Members debated the issues including:
- That the increases in service charges for Sheltered Housing was sensible and represented value for money.
  - That the report was excellent, well-constructed and thorough.
  - That the increase in council rents was acceptable.
  - That the Right to Buy receipts should be allowed to be kept by the



- Council for reinvestment into council housing.
- That the increases were modest in the Budget.

- 6.24 Councillor Whitehead clarified that the weekly increase in Council rent was on average £1.20 a week. The 11 pence were the difference between the Council rent six years ago and the current rent including increases and decreases. The 11 pence were included to illustrate that the increase of £1.20 had just surpassed the Council rent six years ago by 11 pence.
- 6.25 Members considered recommendations and the Chair suggested that the Committee endorsed the budget, but that Cabinet took the comments made at this meeting into account when considering the HRA Budget in February.
- 6.26 Councillor Ekpenyong proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Caston.

By a unanimous vote

**It was RESOLVED:-**

**That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorses the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2021/22 and Four-Year Outlook but asks that Officers and Cabinet Members take into consideration the comments made at this meeting, when submitting the budget for consideration at the Cabinet and Council meetings in February 2021.**

## **7 MOS/20/3 REVIEW OF THE REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES - ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 The Chair advised Members that this item was for voting only and asked for a proposer and seconder.
- 7.2 Councillor Scarff proposed recommendation 3.1, which was seconded by Councillor Muller.

By a unanimous vote

**It was Resolved:**

**That the Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that Mid Suffolk District Council approaches the Suffolk Disabilities Forum to establish whether formal councillor representation on the forum would be appropriate and possible and that any appointment to the Suffolk Disabilities Forum be made by resolution of the Full Council.**

## **8 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

**It was REOLVED:**

**That the Forthcoming Decisions List be noted.**

**9 MOS/20/4 MSDC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN**

**It was REOLVED:**

**That the Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan be noted.**

The business of the meeting was concluded at 11:09 am

.....  
Chair

# Agenda Item 10

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE:</b> Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<b>REPORT NUMBER:</b> JOS/20/12
<b>FROM:</b> Cllr Derek Davis- Babergh Cabinet Member for Communities Cllr Julie Flatman -Mid Suffolk Cabinet Member for Communities	<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b> 15 February 2021
<b>OFFICER:</b> Vicky Moseley Corporate Manager Communities	<b>KEY DECISION REF NO. Item No.</b>

### REVIEW OF LOCAL CITIZENS ADVICE

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To review the annual performance of Citizens Advice in receipt of revenue funding from the Councils
- 1.2 To review progress of both Mid Suffolk Cabinet and Babergh Cabinet recommendations to endorse the granting of a three-year funding agreement to Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice and Sudbury and District Advice commencing 2020/21.

#### 2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 None.

<b>3. RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
3.1 That the Committee note the contents of this report.
<b>REASON FOR DECISION</b>  For Overview and Scrutiny Committee to satisfy itself that the Citizens Advice in receipt of revenue funding are delivering the outcomes set out in their Annual Agreements and that Cabinet recommendations to award three-year funding agreements to Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice and Sudbury and District Advice have been implemented.

#### 4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 On the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020, Mid Suffolk District Council and Babergh District Council Cabinets agreed to award three-year funding agreements to Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice and Sudbury & District CA.

- 4.2 Grants Officers worked with both CAs during 2020 and both have been offered a three year funding agreement as proposed.
- 4.3 The key driver for this change was to confirm the Councils ongoing commitment to both CAs in their provision of significant and evidenced support to the Districts most vulnerable people assisting with advice on benefits, debt and a range of other often interconnected and complex issues. It is also in recognition that CAs can struggle to attract sufficient long-term, 'core' funding for ongoing operations, not dependant on one-off projects that may or may not be renewed.
- 4.4 The amount awarded to both CAs during 20/21 was the same amount awarded in the previous three financial years. In line with the Cabinet reports, CA funding will continue to be awarded at no less than the funding level for 2019/20.
- 4.5 The Councils continue to provide a lower level of funding to the CAs in West Suffolk, Diss and Ipswich & District in recognition that some Babergh / Mid Suffolk residents access those services. One-year agreements continue to be in place for these CAs and any change to three-year agreements will be addressed as part of the Council's grants review.

#### **Citizens Advice – Revenue Grant Funding 2020/21**

4.5 Table 1

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Purpose of the Grant</b>	<b>Amount Awarded 2020/21</b>
<b>Diss, Thetford &amp; District CA</b>	Training for new and existing volunteers, part funding of the salary for the Learning Development Lead, volunteer travel expenses.	<b>£8,810.00</b>
<b>Mid Suffolk CA</b>	To support the core running costs of the charity including salaries, rent, administration, governance, training and volunteers.	<b>£86,700.00</b>
<b>West Suffolk CA</b>	A contribution towards core running costs	<b>£5,200.00</b>
<b>Ipswich &amp; District CA</b>	To contribute towards core running costs, salaries, rent and office expenditure	<b>£7,673.00</b>
<b>Sudbury &amp; District CA</b>	A contribution towards increased costs of salaries, volunteer expenses, training, premises, general running and administration costs	<b>£53,500.00</b>

- 4.6 The amount awarded to each CA in 2020/21 was the same amount awarded in the previous three financial years.
- 4.7 Thetford and Diss CA has informed the Grants Team that it does not plan to apply for a Revenue Grant for 2021/22. During the pandemic/lockdowns it had to close their outreach service, which was based at the Eye Medical Centre. The CA has reported that it is not getting the normal amount of traffic from the Suffolk villages that surround the Diss office mostly likely because customers are not going to Diss to shop or visit friends/family whilst in lockdown. Therefore it has reported to the Council that there is little justification in them making an application. Thetford and Diss is involved in the Suffolk helpline service, but that area of work is already receiving funding.
- 4.8 Grants officers will continue to maintain contact with Thetford and Diss to monitor referrals numbers in case the position changes.

## **5 THREE YEAR FUNDING AGREEMENTS.**

- 5.1 The funding will be provided as a three-year rolling agreement and applicants will have to apply on an annual basis to extend their agreement, therefore both Mid Suffolk and Sudbury CA will be asked to apply for 2024/25 funding in 2021/22.
- 5.2 Applicants will have to complete a three-year funding application form and supporting documentation on an annual basis.
- 5.3 The Grants Officer will meet with applicants to review the three-year application on a six-monthly basis, to ensure the agreement is flexible to accommodate any changes in client demand, new projects/funding opportunities, or service provision.

## **6 PERFORMANCE**

- 6.1 When applying for a Revenue Grant, each applicant is asked to provide the following documents. (If an applicant receives a grant from both councils, applicants have to complete an application for each District Council.)
- Part 1 & 2 application forms:
    - highlighting how the service delivery will meet the Council's Strategic Priorities in terms of outputs/outcomes for the coming year.
  - Grant Monitoring Form:
    - Highlighting how the project/service has delivered against the activities described in the previous year's application.
  - Case studies/testimonials that support the application.
  - Proposed budget for the financial year.
  - The Annual Report and a copy of the previous financial year's accounts.
  - Copies of Key Policies:
    - Equal Opportunities

- Safeguarding
- Health & Safety

6.2 The Grants officers within the Communities Team maintain an ongoing dialogue with each CA throughout the year including two formal review meetings every 6 months where progress will be discussed and if necessary and in exceptional circumstances amendments to expected outcomes revised.

6.3 An outline of achievements and challenges will be addressed in the LCAs Joint Powerpoint Presentation.

## 7 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

7.1 The work of the CA is strongly linked to the Communities strategic priorities within the recently adopted Corporate Plan (2019-27) and the delivery of the Communities Strategy which underpins it.

## 8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Revenue/Capital/ Expenditure/Income Item	Total	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Mid Suffolk CA		£86,700.00	£86,700.00	£86,700.00
Sudbury & District CA		£35,500.00	£35,500.00	£35,500.00
Diss Thetford		-	-	-
West Suffolk CA		£5,200.00	-	-
Ipswich & District		£7,673.00	-	-

The above table reflects the 3 year agreements in place of Mid Suffolk & Sudbury & Districts CAs.

## 9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Council has power to award funding under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, which allows the Council to do anything that individuals generally may do, in particular if it is carried out for the benefit of the Council, its areas or persons, resident or present in the area.

9.2 Legal advice will be taken in respect of the final wording of the agreement to ensure that necessary legal safeguards are in place and that payments will depend on satisfactory performance against stated outputs and submission of required documents.

## 10 RISK MANAGEMENT

10.1 Table 2

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
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Council requirements not fully satisfied over the three-year period	Unlikely (2)	Serious (3)	Contract to specify performance required and documentary evidence, annual.
Other funders reduce or withdraw funding	Probable (3)	Serious (3)	Ongoing dialogue with CA and other funders to increase resilience and mitigate risk.
Impact of Covid-19 not yet fully known	Probable (3)	Serious (3)	Ongoing dialogue with CA and other funders to increase resilience and mitigate risk.

## **11 CONSULTATIONS**

- 11.1 On-going dialogue continues with all CAs as part of the Grants Performance Framework.

## **12 EQUALITY ANALYSIS**

- 12.1 The content of this report is such that there are no equality issues arising from this report although the review itself may consider any equality impacts.

## **13 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 NONE

## **14 APPENDICES**

- 14.1 NONE

## **15 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- 15.1 Mid Suffolk Cabinet Report MCa/19/31  
15.2 Babergh Cabinet Report Ba/19/25

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## INFORMATION BULLETIN

### Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 15 February 2020



### Responses to questions raised at Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee 18 January 2021

#### How many tenants are there currently in sheltered housing?

- As of the end of Q3, we had **528 tenants in Sheltered Housing**
  - 310 in Mid Suffolk** across 281 units in 13 schemes, and
  - 218 in Babergh** across 199 units in 8 schemes)
- The table below shows the percentage of tenants who receive our support, those that do not ('waivers') and percentage of void (empty) units

	Calls	Waivers	Void
<b>MSDC</b>	63.70%	30.96%	5.34%
<b>BDC</b>	79.40%	19.60%	1.01%
<b>Both Councils</b>	70.21%	26.25%	3.54%

- In the three months of Q3, the team made 9700 telephone calls to sheltered tenants in Mid Suffolk, and 7323 telephone calls in Babergh
- In terms of age groups in sheltered, the percentages are as follows:

50-59	3.46%
60-69	23.08%
70-79	38.27%
80-89	23.46%
90-99	10.96%
100+	0.77%

#### How many de-sheltered tenants took up the offer a continuation of service charges?

- After some of the schemes were de-sheltered, only the properties in Spring Lane, Lavenham, opted to continue to receive the sheltered housing support service. Of these, only two tenants are still in receipt of that support.
- Other tenants arranged to have their own dispersed alarm system installed, and others moved at the time into other sheltered schemes. However, I do not have access to the numbers for either of these groups

**How many Council Garages are not being used?**

	<b>Total no. of garage sites</b>	<b>Total no. of garages</b>	<b>No. of garages that are occupied</b>	<b>Empty/Void garages</b>
BDC	64	1218	975	243
MSDC	112	1098	814	284

### BABERGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2020/21:

TOPIC	PURPOSE	LEAD OFFICER	CABINET MEMBER	PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED TO COMMITTEE
<b>15 February 2021 – BDC</b> Chair – Cllr McCraw				
<b>Review of Petition 11 January 2021</b>	Review of the process that the Council followed in dealing with the petition after receipt of the petition on the 11 January 2021.	Corporate Manager – Governance and Civic Office, Deputy Monitoring Officer and Petitions Officer		
<b>22 March 2021 – JOINT</b> Chair – Cllr Welham				
<b>Crime and Disorder Panel meeting</b>	The Committee conduct a scrutiny review of the SWSCP to fulfil the Councils Statutory requirements	Assistant Director – Sustainable Communities  Community Safety Professional Lead - Communities	BDC Cabinet Member for Communities  MSDC Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities	8 January 2020 – JOS/19/20
<b>Information Bulletin Public Realm</b>	A review of Management of public open space secured in relation to planning	Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships  Corporate Manager - Communities	Cabinet Members for Environment and Commercial Partnerships	
<b>19 April 2021 – JOINT</b> Chair – Cllr McCraw				
<b>POSSIBLE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD</b>				
<b>24 May 2021 – JOINT</b> Chair – Cllr Welham				
<b>Review of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2020/21</b>	Review of the work conducted throughout 2020/21 – Lessons learnt, improvements and achievements	Corporate Manager – Democratic Services  Senior Governance Support Officer		

### Topics identified for review but not currently timetabled:

**Underspend of Grants for bringing empty homes back into to use**

A report to be brought to Committee for the effect of the underspending off grants for bringing empty homes back into use – **To be reviewed by the Chair in February/March 2021**

**Crime and Disorder Panel meeting**

Required to take place at least once a year, provisionally agreed to take place in **March 2021**

**Annual Review of Joint Homes and Housing Strategy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Reduction Strategy** to be reviewed in **June/July 2021**

**Customer Service Update July 2021** – an Information Bulletin brought to Committee as a result of the presentation update on 20 July 2020, to include a general update but focusing on Face-to-Face customer services performance.

**Improving Access to the Private Rented Sector** - Chairs to discuss the timing for bringing this to Committee

**Other topics identified:**

- Home ownership review

## MID SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### WORK PLAN 2020/21:

TOPIC	PURPOSE	LEAD OFFICER	CABINET MEMBER	PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED TO COMMITTEE
<b>22 March 2021 – JOINT</b> Chair – Cllr Welham				
<b>Crime and Disorder Panel meeting</b>	The Committee conduct a scrutiny review of the SWSCP to fulfil the Councils Statutory requirements	Assistant Director – Sustainable Communities  Community Safety Professional Lead - Communities	BDC Cabinet Member for Communities  MSDC Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities	8 January 2020 – JOS/19/20
<b>Information Bulletin Public Realm</b>	A review of management of public open space secured in relation to planning	Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships	Cabinet Members for Environment and Commercial Partnerships	
<b>19 April 2021 – JOINT</b> Chair – Cllr McCraw				
<b>POSSIBLE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD</b>				
<b>24 May 2021 – JOINT</b> Chair – Cllr Welham				
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#### **Annual Review of Joint Homes and Housing Strategy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Reduction Strategy to be reviewed in June/July 2021**

Updated 25 January 2021

Henriette Holloway

Senior Governance Officer Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Tel: 01449 724681

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[www.midsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk) and [www.babergh.gov.uk](http://www.babergh.gov.uk)

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