

## **MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK COUNCIL** held in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Thursday, 21 July 2022

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor: James Caston (Chairman)  
Paul Ekpenyong (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:	Gerard Brewster	David Burn
	Austin Davies	Rachel Eburne
	John Field	Julie Flatman
	Jessica Fleming	Dr Helen Geake
	Peter Gould	Kathie Guthrie
	Matthew Hicks	Barry Humphreys MBE
	Sarah Mansel	John Matthissen
	Andrew Mellen	Richard Meyer
	Suzie Morley	David Muller
	Mike Norris	Penny Otton
	Timothy Passmore	Harry Richardson
	Andrew Stringer	Rowland Warboys
	Keith Welham	John Whitehead

### **In attendance:**

Officers: Chief Executive (AC)  
Corporate Manager – Governance & Civic Office (JR)  
Director – Assets & Investments (EA)  
Professional Lead – Key Sites and Infrastructure Manager (CT)

### **Apologies:**

Terence Carter  
Lavinia Hadingham  
Stephen Phillips  
Dr Daniel Pratt  
Keith Scarff

## **28 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS**

28.1 There were no declarations of interests by Councillors.

## **29 MC/22/11 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JUNE 2022**

It was **RESOLVED:-**

**That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2022 be confirmed and signed as a true record.**

## **30 MC/22/12 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

30.1 The Chair referred Members to paper MC/22/12.

## **31 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

31.1 It has been a relatively short period of time since our last Full Council meeting and so I have focused my announcements this month on our recent successes.

However, I do also want to start by praising our Emergency Services, and in particular the Suffolk fire service who have been under such pressure and been so fantastic during this recent spell of extreme heat.

It has been a busy few weeks of significant milestones for our companies and Council projects, with the Range being confirmed as the first occupier at Gateway 14, and completion of the first phase of 32 new homes and a new Co-op store at Chambers Green in Needham Market. A further 60 homes will follow as part of phase two which is expected to start later in the year.

Cabinet have also agreed to fund the development of detailed designs, and public engagement, of a potential new wellbeing and leisure hub for Mid Suffolk. The project will provide new and improved facilities for a wide range of sports, leisure and health organisations, all brought together across a single site in Stowmarket.

The hot weather has also coincided with the start of school summer holidays and I am really proud that we are able to provide, alongside our partners, an array of activities. Explore Outdoor will again be getting children out and about in nature, while Kinetic Science will be encouraging children to learn through fun with some hands-on experiments. There will also be a variety of cooking lessons provided by The Food Museum, Explore Outdoor and Debenham Sports and Leisure – all supporting our ambition to combat holiday hunger.

There will also be sessions for swimming, football, arts and crafts, dodgeball, and filmmaking workshops. Free places are available for all of the activities for those most in need.

We are also continuing to tackle issues in relation to housing and homelessness. Through our newly adopted Empty Homes Policy we will be reducing the number of long-term empty properties in Mid Suffolk. This includes our Empty Homes Renovation Loan. This is an interest free loan of up to £20,000 to help owners to renovate properties that have been empty for more than six months.

I am also really pleased that alongside Councillor Hicks and Councillor Passmore as part of the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group, we have been able to create a new climate change fund.

The £150,000 Suffolk Climate Action Community Match Fund is available for all not-for-profit organisations looking to deliver community-based carbon reduction projects. These could include improving the energy efficiency of buildings, promoting walking and cycling, using sustainable/recycled materials and raising awareness of climate change through events.

Looking ahead to later in the year, our second Innovation Awards has been launched. The awards are a celebration of all types of innovation across businesses in all sectors. It showcases how our businesses are using innovative approaches to deliver their products and services, ranging from customer services to new technologies.

There are 10 categories across a range of sectors that celebrate the best of innovation in the high street, healthcare, construction, customer service and foods. There are also awards for young innovators, innovation in future technology and the Business Innovator of the Year. Applications for the awards close on 14<sup>th</sup> August so please do encourage and support the businesses in your wards to get involved.

I do also want to take the opportunity to mention the Local Government Association Peer Review report which has been published on our website. The report describes how we are “punching above our weight” and praises our ambition and delivery. However, we will not rest on our laurels as we all want to be even better, and to keep improving our services and the quality of life for all our residents. This has never been more important given the cost of living crisis and climate emergency. Alongside the report we have therefore published an action plan based upon the peer review’s recommendations.

Finally, I want to confirm the changes I have made to Cabinet and welcome new colleagues to the senior leadership team...

As you will be aware, Councillor Harry Richardson has taken over from Councillor Gerard Brewster as Deputy Leader of the Council. Harry has also become the Portfolio Holder for Economy, and Councillor Julie Flatman will be both Portfolio Holder for Communities and also for Wellbeing. Gerard remains on Cabinet without a portfolio. I am really grateful to Gerard for his support both as Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder; and I am sure you will all join me in sending our best wishes to Gerard’s family.

As Councillors know, we are currently recruiting to three roles within the Senior Leadership Team. In the interim we have appointed temporary support for all three roles. So, I would like to welcome Anita Cacchioli as Director of Operations and Di Robinson as Director of Communities & Wellbeing. Chris Stratford will also be joining us during August as Director of Housing. Interviews for the permanent appointments to these roles will be happening in early September.

**32 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

32.1 None received.

**33 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

33.1 None received.

**34 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

34.1 None received

**35 MC/22/13 CAPITAL INVESTMENT FUND COMPANY (CIFCO CAPITAL LTD) BUSINESS TRADING AND PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22 AND BUSINESS PLAN**

35.1 Councillor Gould announced that this report had been withdrawn from the agenda following the cancellation of the Babergh District Council meeting and it would be rescheduled to be considered by both Councils in September.

**36 MC/22/14 GATEWAY 14 LIMITED- EXTENSION TO PEAK LOAN FACILITY**

36.1 The Chair invited Councillor Gould to present report MC/22/14.

36.2 Councillor Stringer questioned the number of jobs to be created as there was a discrepancy between the numbers quoted from various sources.

36.3 The Director for Assets and Investments confirmed that 1650 jobs would be created at Gateway 14.

36.4 Councillor Eburne asked for clarification of any agreements that were in place and if these affected the increase in peak debt facility.

36.5 The Director for Assets and Investments confirmed that there was no interdependency regarding the recommendations in the report and that conditional contracts had been exchanged with The Range.

36.6 In response to a question from Councillor Field, the Director for Assets and Investments stated that an indicative budget was set in 2020 and since then a much more detailed due diligence had been undertaken which has led to some increases and decreases in costs.

36.7 Councillor Warboys asked if the contract with The Range was fully compliant with the Council's set of environmental standards.

- 36.8 The Director for Assets and Investments stated that The Range shared the Council's aspirations with regard to delivering a highly sustainable building and through working together it was hoped to exceed the requirement set out.
- 36.9 Councillors debated issues within the report including the positive impact to the local community, the need to be an exemplar site for environmental aspirations and the need to move forward with the works in a timely manner.
- 36.10 The recommendations in the report were **PROPOSED** by Councillor Gould and **SECONDED** by Councillor Brewster.

**It was RESOLVED: -**

- 1.1 That £5m be added to the Capital Programme and that the peak debt threshold for Gateway 14 Limited be extended to £42.9m.
- 1.2 That authority be delegated to the S151 Officer to approve and document loan authorisation.

**37 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)**

The meeting did not move into closed session.

**38 RESTRICTED APPENDIX - CIFCO CAPITAL LTD BUSINESS PLAN (EXEMPT INFORMATION BY VIRTUE OF PARAGRAPH 3 OF PART 1)**

The meeting did not move into closed session.

**39 RESTRICTED APPENDIX - GATEWAY 14 LIMITED (EXEMPT INFORMATION BY VIRTUE OF PARAGRAPH 3 OF PART 1)**

The meeting did not move into closed session.

**40 RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)**

The meeting did not move into closed session.

**41 MC/22/15 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) - EXPENDITURE FRAMEWORK FOURTH REVIEW**

- 41.1 The Chair invited Councillor Burn to introduce paper MC/22/15.
- 41.2 Councillor Welham asked if invitations to briefings to parish councils could be extended to village hall committees and community groups.
- 41.3 Councillor Burn stated that it would have to be agreed with Babergh District Council but it seemed a sensible idea, the Professional Lead – Key Sites and Infrastructure Manager commented that the scope had been widened to include other organisations.

- 41.4 In reply to several questions from Councillor Otton, the Professional Lead – Key Sites and Infrastructure stated that table 2 of the CIL expenditure framework set out the parameters for spend outside the Councils geographical boundaries and repairs and maintenance had been ruled out of the CIL expenditure framework because a key principle of CIL was to use it for infrastructure to service new growth.
- 41.5 In reply to questions from Councillor Mansel, the Professional Lead – Key Sites and Infrastructure stated that works had begun to update the infrastructure delivery plan and the infrastructure list and as these were evidence based documents looking at growth and trying to understand what capacity there was in the system to support the infrastructure, Councillors would be unlikely to be able to influence what was on the infrastructure list. Also, the Joint Member Panel were very keen to put forward a measure which would allow some costed schemes to be brought forward in relation to the local cycling and walking infrastructure plan and collaborative works with the Sustainable Travel Officer were taking place.
- 41.6 Councillor Eburne asked if it was realistic to expect a quote to be valid for up to four months as stated in the report and could it be communicated what the £18.8 million currently in the strategic CIL fund was proposed to be spend on in the future.
- 41.7 The Professional Lead – Key Sites and Infrastructure agreed that holding quotes for any length of time was unrealistic therefore it has been agreed to update quotes as assessments of projects were progressed. In relation to the moneys held in the strategic CIL fund, a 5-year work plan was being worked on which would allow a budget and forecast to be formulated.
- 41.8 Following questions from Councillor Mellen and Councillor Whitehead, the Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed that although Babergh District Council would not be voting on this report until September it would not prevent Mid Suffolk Council from approving the amendments to the CIL expenditure framework in relation to Mid Suffolk bids.
- 41.9 Councillor Warboys asked if clarification could be given to parish councils regarding how parish infrastructure plans related to CIL bids.
- 41.10 Councillor Burn confirmed that if an item was not on a parish infrastructure plan it did not mean a CIL bid could not be submitted.
- 41.11 Councillors debated issues in the report including improving communications with parish councils in relation to CIL, approving a joint framework when the Babergh report had been deferred to September, the CIL charging framework and future all member briefings on the subject of CIL.
- 41.12 The recommendations in the report were **PROPOSED** by Councillor Burn and **SECONDED** by Councillor Flatman.

It was **RESOLVED**: -

- 1.1 That the amendments to the CIL Expenditure Framework – July 2022 (arising from the fourth review) - (Appendix A) and the CIL Expenditure Framework Communications Strategy – July 2022 (Appendix B) be approved.
- 1.2 That the CIL Expenditure Framework and the CIL Expenditure Framework Communications Strategy be reviewed again whilst Bid round 10 is being considered (October 2022) so that any amended scheme can be in place before Bid round 11 occurs (May 2023).
- 1.3 That Mid Suffolk agree that the Joint Member Panel be retained to inform this (fifth) review.

**42 MC/22/16 BMSDC SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL VISION & LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (LCWIP)**

- 42.1 The Chair invited Councillor Fleming to introduce report MC/22/16.
- 42.2 Councillor Eburne asked if any CIL monies were being allocated to the LCWIP project.
- 42.3 Councillor Fleming replied that CIL funds were not being allocated but would be available on a case by case basis.
- 42.4 In reply to a request from Councillor Welham, the Sustainable Travel Officer confirmed that the Babergh.gov link to the sustainable travel webpage used in the report would be replaced by a Mid Suffolk.gov link when contacting Mid Suffolk Parish Councils.
- 42.5 Councillors thanked the officers involved in the project, debated issues in the report including ensuring the enthusiasm shown by communities were acted upon and the project was moved forward and using the LCWIP to influence planning decisions.
- 42.6 The report was noted.

**43 MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

**44 TO CONSIDER THE MOTION ON NOTICE RECEIVED FROM COUNCILLOR MELLEN**

- 44.1 Councillor Mellen **PROPOSED** the motion which asked the council to research the Lewes model of retrofitting social housing which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Eburne.
- 44.2 Councillor Morley **PROPOSED** the following amendment to the second paragraph of the motion –

This Council agrees to ask the housing task group which is a sub-group of the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders group, to start dialogue with other local authorities and external stakeholders, to investigate if a similar project could be initiated in Suffolk to improve the pace of retrofitting.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Richardson.

The amendment was accepted by Councillors Mellen and Eburne with the condition that updates were brought back to full Council.

- 44.3 Councillors debated the motion, discussing the possibility of using funds from the general fund for external environmental improvements, updates being brought back to council in a forum that allows questions and debate and working collaboratively with wider partners.

**It was RESOLVED:**

**As set out in the recently approved HRA business plan, retrofitting insulation and other energy-saving measures to the council's housing stock is expensive, and progress is limited by the constraints of HRA funding. A group of seven councils in Sussex have set up a project, known as the Lewes Model, pooling resources, adopting a consistent approach and gaining economies of scale in order to facilitate the retrofitting of up to 40,000 social homes.**

**This Council agrees to ask the Housing Task Group which is a sub-group of the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders group, to start dialogue with other local authorities and external stakeholders, to investigate if a similar project could be initiated in Suffolk to improve the pace of retrofitting.**

## **45 COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS**

- 45.1 There were no changes to Councillor appointments.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 7:40pm

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Chair