

## **BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of the **BABERGH CABINET** held in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Monday, 5 December 2022

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor: John Ward (Chair)

Councillors: Jan Osborne  
David Busby  
Elisabeth Malvisi  
Clive Arthey  
Jane Gould  
Alastair McCraw

### **In attendance:**

Councillor(s): John Hinton  
Adrian Osborne

Officers: Chief Executive (AC)  
Deputy Chief Executive (KN)  
Deputy Monitoring Officer (JR)  
Director - Corporate Resources & Section 151 Officer (ME)  
Director – Customers, Digital Transformation and Improvement (SW)  
Director – Operations (ME)  
Director - Housing (DF)  
Director - Assets & Investments (EA)  
Corporate Manager - Finance, Commissioning & Procurement (RH)  
Corporate Manager - Customer Operations (SL)  
Corporate Manager – Communities (VM)  
Regenerations and Capital Projects Manager (LC)  
Assistant Manager – Governance (HH)

### **Apologies:**

Mary McLaren

### **64 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS**

None received.

### **65 BCA/22/31 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2022**

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**That minutes of the meeting held on the 7 November 2022 be confirmed and signed as a correct record of the meeting.**

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

None received.

**67 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

None received.

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

No matters were referred.

**69 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

The Forthcoming Decisions List was noted.

**70 BCA/22/32 GENERAL FUND FINANCIAL MONITORING 2022/23 - QUARTER 2**

70.1 The Chair, Councillor Ward invited the Cabinet Member for Finance, Assets and Investments, Councillor Busby to introduce the report.

70.2 Councillor Busby gave an overview of the report and moved the recommendations as detailed in the report. Councillor Malvisi seconded the recommendations.

70.3 Councillor McCraw queried whether any late changes were likely to be made to the budget.

70.4 Councillor Busby stated that there were still uncertainties from the Government on business rates and settlements, additionally calculations in the budget were ongoing.

70.5 Councillor Arthey questioned the Corporate Resources figure, and the vacancy management underspends in all services.

70.6 Councillor Busby responded that the underspend on staff vacancies was budgeted for the whole Council under Corporate Resources.

70.7 The Corporate Manager - Finance, Commissioning & Procurement added that during the year when vacancies occurred the underspends were put under the relevant service areas.

70.8 During the debate Councillor Ward commented that the Quarter 2 Performance was an improvement on the forecast from Quarter 1. In addition, due to the surplus last year being placed in the Inflationary Pressures Reserve, this reserve could be used for the forecasted overspend.

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**1.1 That, subject to any further budget variations that arise during the rest of the financial year, the net expenditure overspend position of £693k and forecast reserve movements, referred to in section 5.5 and Appendix A of the report, be noted;**

**1.2 The revised 2022/23 Capital Programme referred to in Appendix B and section 5.9 be noted.**

**71 BCA/22/33 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) FINANCIAL MONITORING 2022/23**

71.1 The Chair, Councillor Ward invited the Cabinet Member for Finance, Assets and Investments, Councillor Busby to introduce the report.

71.2 Councillor Busby gave an overview of the report and moved the recommendations as detailed in the report. Councillor Osborne seconded the recommendations.

71.3 Councillor Arthey queried the overspend on subcontractors to support the trades team following the lifting of covid restrictions.

71.4 The Cabinet Member for Housing Councillor Osborne stated that the Council had underestimated repair costs and as a result of this the cost of contractors had been underestimated in the budget.

71.5 The Director for Housing added that due to the backlog of repairs use of contractors would be continued. A transformation plan and a stock condition survey were being developed, and both would inform the Housing Revenue 30-year business plan. This would create a planned approach to maintenance instead of a reactive approach.

71.6 During the debate Councillor Osborne commented that Members should support the work of the housing team, as they were working hard in challenging circumstances.

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**1.1 That, subject to any further budget variations that arise during the rest of the financial year, the adverse variance of £825k, referred to in section 6.5 of the report, be noted.**

**1.2 The 2022/23 revised Capital Programme referred to in Appendix A and section 6.12 be noted.**

**72 BCA/22/34 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE 2022/23**

72.1 The Chair, Councillor Ward invited the Cabinet Member for Customers, Digital Transformation and Improvement, Councillor McCraw to introduce the report.

- 72.2 Councillor McCraw provided a brief introduction and outlined that an average of 556 calls had been received per day, however this was a reduction from quarter one. Additionally, there had been a total of 506 visits to customer access points across the district.
- 72.3 Councillor McCraw invited Cabinet Members to outline the progress under their portfolio.
- 72.4 Councillor Ward, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, highlighted the innovate local scheme in Hadleigh Markets with nine additional businesses supported under the scheme.
- 72.5 Councillor Malvisi, Cabinet Member for Environment, outlined that garden waste subscribers had increased by 51. Additionally, 98 fly tipping incidents had been cleared within 48 hours.
- 72.6 Councillor McCraw outlined that under the Communities & Wellbeing portfolio a total of 11 new anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases were discussed at the ASB partnership panel, and 29 lower risk ASB cases were dealt with by officers. Additionally, under Wellbeing 36,722 households had received the council tax energy rebate.
- 72.7 Councillor Osborne, Cabinet Member for Housing, highlighted that the Empty Homes Policy had been approved and as a result six empty homes had been inspected, and 122 owners had been engaged with. This had led to 26 homes being brought back into use.
- 72.8 Councillor Arthey queried whether in the next quarter there would be an improvement in the call abandonment rates and wait times for customers. Councillor McCraw responded that new staff had been trained which would help decrease the response times.
- 72.9 Councillor Osborne asked for an Update on the introduction of a pilot scheme in Great Cornard to reduce domestic fly tipping and whether the scheme would be rolled out across Babergh District. The Director for Operations would provide a response outside of the meeting.

The Quarter 2 Performance 2022/23 report was noted.

### **73 BCA/22/35 COST OF LIVING CRISIS: 5 POINT ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT (PHASE 1) AND PHASE 2 ACTION PLAN**

- 73.1 The Chair, Councillor Ward invited the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Osborne to introduce the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing.
- 73.2 Councillor Osborne provided an overview of the report and moved the recommendations as detailed in the report. Councillor Malvisi seconded the recommendations.

- 73.3 In response to Councillor Osborne's query regarding whether officers had been working with town and parish councils, as many had developed their own schemes separate from the Council, the Corporate Manager – Communities detailed the information sharing processes between town and parish councils and the District Council. In addition, locality officers were also directly involved with town and parish councils to assist with partnership working.
- 73.4 Members debated the issues including the importance of partnership working, the work of some community groups, and the involvement of Ward Members with communities.
- 73.5 The Cabinet Member for Housing Councillor Osborne stated that working with partners would be key to the success of the action plan, including the involvement of Suffolk County Council, and healthcare providers.
- 73.6 Councillor Ward queried the number of discretionary housing payments that had been administered through the Shared Revenues Partnership, and whether there was a cap on the funds that could be distributed. Councillor Osborne responded that the full grant was £86,572 and that £33,580 had been paid out. Currently £8522 was committed for payment, with £44,469 of the fund remaining to be spent.

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**1.1 To review and note the content of the Phase 1 Cost of Living 5 Point Action Plan Dashboard Report at Appendix 1.**

**1.2 To note the focus of the Phase 2 Cost of Living Action Plan at Appendix 2.**

**74 BCA/22/36 HADLEIGH A1071 ROADSIDE COMMERCIAL WORKSPACE DEVELOPMENT**

- 74.1 The Chair, Councillor Ward provided an overview of the report and moved the recommendations as detailed in the report. Councillor McCraw seconded the recommendations.
- 74.1 Councillor McCraw moved that the meeting went into closed session to enable consideration of the confidential appendices. This was seconded by Councillor Malvisi.

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**That pursuant to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public should be excluded from the meeting for the business specified below on the grounds that if the public were present during this item, it was likely that there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information as indicated against the item. The author of the report proposed to be considered in Part 2 of the Agenda is satisfied that the public interest in**

**maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.**

74.2 The meeting went into closed session between 3:02pm – 3:20pm.

74.3 Upon returning to Open session Councillor Busby queried whether there had been any interest in the units. The Regenerations and Capital Projects Manager responded that there had been enquiries into the units and this interest would continue once the development was approved.

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**1.1 That Cabinet noted progress, since its last meeting of 08 July 2022, on refinement of an optimal scheme layout and design to support the Council's regeneration priorities. Further, that Cabinet notes the updated order of costs estimate and viability assessment (attached as Confidential Appendix A).**

**1.2 That Cabinet authorised the Director for Economic Growth and Climate Change to conclude an optimal scheme design and layout, based upon occupier and local marketing intelligence gathered, and proceed to submit a planning application during early 2023.**

**1.3 That Cabinet approved the draft Heads of Terms lease agreement for the office unit (with associated parking and service areas) identified in Confidential Appendix B, and with the tenant identified within that draft agreement.**

**1.4 That Cabinet delegated to the Director for Economic Growth and Climate Change the authority to agree or vary the final terms for the lease agreement of the land shown in Confidential Appendix B.**

**1.5 That Cabinet approved the substituted bid terms of offer for the freehold transfer of the A1 use-class convenience retail/drive-thru unit identified in Confidential Appendix C, and as being the best consideration reasonably obtainable.**

**1.6 That Cabinet delegated to the Director for Economic Growth and Climate Change the authority to agree or vary the final terms for the freehold disposal of the land shown in Confidential Appendix C. Further, that the Director for Economic Growth and Climate Change be delegated authority to accept a substitute bid received on the same or similar terms, in the event this latest sale agreement does not proceed.**

**1.7 That Cabinet authorised the Director for Economic Growth and Climate Change to proceed with marketing for the Light Industrial (B1 use class) units.**

**It was RESOLVED: -**

**That pursuant to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public should be excluded from the meeting for the business specified below on the grounds that if the public were present during this item, it is likely that there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information as indicated against the item. The author of the report proposed to be considered in Part 2 of the Agenda is satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.**

**76 BCA/22/36 HADLEIGH A1071 ROADSIDE COMMERCIAL WORKSPACE DEVELOPMENT - CONFIDENTIAL APPENDICES**

The business of the meeting was concluded at 3:24 pm.

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Chair