

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **BABERGH COUNCIL** held in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Wednesday, 22 March 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor: Kathryn Grandon (Chair)
Derek Davis (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Clive Arthey
Simon Barrett
Dave Busby
Siân Dawson
John Hinton
Bryn Hurren
Robert Lindsay
Alastair McCraw
Mark Newman
John Nunn
Jan Osborne
Lee Parker
John Ward
Melanie Barrett
Peter Beer
Sue Carpendale
Mick Fraser
Michael Holt
Leigh Jamieson
Elisabeth Malvisi
Mary McLaren
Zachary Norman
Adrian Osborne
Alison Owen
Stephen Plumb

In attendance:

Officers: Chief Executive (AC)
Deputy Chief Executive (KN)
Monitoring Officer (IA)
Corporate Manager Governance & Civic Office (JR)
Director Planning & Building Control (TB)
Professional Lead - Key Sites and Infrastructure Development
Manager (CT)
Infrastructure Officer (JM)
Professional Lead Growth & Sustainable Planning (PI)
Corporate Manager - Strategic Planning (RH)
Head of HR and Organisational Development (SH)

Apologies:

Sue Ayres
Trevor Cresswell
Jane Gould
Richard Hardacre
Margaret Maybury

77 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

77.1 There were no declarations of interest by Councillors.

78 BC/22/45 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 FEBRUARY 2023

It was RESOLVED:-

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th February 2023 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

79 BC/22/46 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND LEADER

79.1 The Chair referred Councillors to paper BC/22/46 for noting.

79.2 The Chair thanked Councillors and officers for their support during her time as Chairman and wished all Councillors well for the future.

79.3 The Leader of the Council made the following announcements:

End of Term

Last month I reminded members about our end of term report, and I thought that this month, as it is the last council meeting before the election, I would take the opportunity to talk about what I think have been the highlights of the past four years. It has been a very different and unusual term, characterised by the changes in the way we work that were imposed by Covid but which have now been embedded in agile and flexible work patterns. This has been supported by the recently opened new gold floorplate design. Our officers rose to the challenge of Covid magnificently to support our businesses, communities and vulnerable residents, including the homeless and rough-sleepers.

As we emerged from Covid, our Economic Development team put together a very comprehensive and successful economic recovery plan, covering town centre regeneration, business support and skills development. I have to say, for me this has been one of the best things this council has done in my time as a councillor. It didn't just include things that our councils have done on our own, but, crucially, it also linked with wider county initiatives from SPSL and the LEP.

Over the past four years we have built or bought about 180 new council houses across the district and our HRA Business Plan commits us to further increases in our stock to help meet the affordable housing requirements of the Joint Local Plan.

Talking of the JLP, the part 1 modifications required by the inspectors have been completed and are now out for consultation. Part 1 will be ready for council to adopt towards the end of the summer. Meanwhile, work requested by the inspectors for part 2 has started.

Our Carbon reduction management plan and biodiversity action plan are starting to deliver a real impact on improving the environment. Moving from diesel to HVO for our vehicle fleet and the installation of solar panels on our leisure centres and on carports in their car parks are now delivering significant reductions in the carbon emissions of the two councils as well as generating a substantial proportion of the electricity used by the leisure centres. We have completed a ground-breaking Tree Canopy Survey so that we now know where to target new tree and hedgerow planting for maximum benefit.

I just want to list several other highlights – it is by no means an exhaustive list, but it does represent the breadth of what we have been able to do:

- Virtual High Street, Innovation Labs, Innovate Local, and the Innovate to Elevate programmes, two innovation awards events, and events and competitions for school children and young adults entering the workforce
- Cultural, Heritage and Visitor Economy Strategy
- New customer access points, digital improvements, with a new website imminent, and digital skills sessions for residents
- LCWIP
- Hadleigh commercial workspace project
- The new Hadleigh swimming pool
- Refurbishment of the Kingfisher leisure centre
- Communities and Wellbeing Strategies
- The new combined in-house public realm service
- Our support for Gainsborough's House and St. Peters in Sudbury
- The many community grants and CIL grants we have made for projects and groups across the district
- Cost of living action plan

So, a very busy term which has delivered a huge amount for our residents. However, there are still some unresolved issues that the new council and cabinet will have to address:

- The further development of our partnership with Mid Suffolk
- Parking charges
- The regeneration of the Hamilton Road area of Sudbury
- Building services and our programme of repairs and energy saving retrofitting for our council houses.

The new council term will, I am sure, see a significant change in the membership of the council. These are still difficult times, although, as you have heard, we have had many achievements that have helped our businesses and communities. All the new councillors will have to grapple with the ongoing challenge of how to deliver services with continuing pressures on funding and costs, but they will inherit a council that is in good shape to meet that challenge. However, we must remain responsible and credible and not make promises that are impossible to deliver or which may impair our ability to deliver, or indeed waste money.

Finally, despite the problems along the way, I want to thank you all for your support and allowing me to form two very effective coalitions. It has been difficult at times, but I have enjoyed it and I am proud of our record. It will be interesting to see how many of us will still be here when the new council convenes in May.

I would also like to thank the Chief Executive, SLT and officers who have given me a huge amount of support and help and encouragement and I think that we are well rewarded with the staff we have here at Babergh.

80 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

80.1 None received

81 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

Question 1

Question 1 Deborah Dwyer to Councillor Jan Osborne Cabinet Member for Housing

Local budgets are already under enormous strain, and there is concern that any intake of Economic Refugees to the area will be given precedence to access to local services such as housing, healthcare, and social services. How will Babergh Council ensure that the needs of local people are protected?

Response from Councillor Jan Osborne Cabinet Member for Housing

The Localism Act 2011 brought in local connection rules, which allow the Council to protect the needs of local people regarding housing. This ensures that local residents are given preference for housing within the district.

Babergh Council uses several schemes to ensure that local connection rules protect the needs of local people; these include a local connection rule meaning that applicants will be placed one band below their assessed band if they do not have a local connection.

If applicants claim a location connection to the district through family, this is defined as a son, daughter, brother, sister, mother or father aged 18 or over who lives in the scheme area and has done so for at least five years.

This is checked during the application process.

When properties are shortlisted, officers review applications again to ensure that circumstances and housing needs qualify an offer, including local connections.

We will continue to work with communities, developers and Registered Providers to increase the supply of housing within the Babergh; the Joint Local Plan underpins these. Healthcare and social care fall outside the scope of our responsibilities; these will fall under the CCG/NHS and Suffolk County Council.

Supplementary Question

Would there be any interference from Government in terms of having to take Economic migrants – any pressure from Government to house them?

Response from Councillor Jan Osborne Cabinet Member for Housing

Cllr Osborne confirmed that a response would be provided by email outside of the meeting.

82 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

82.1 None received.

83 BC/22/47 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

83.1 The Chair invited Councillor Hinton - Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee to introduce paper BC/22/47 which was for noting.

84 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS

CMU1 – Cabinet Member for Planning

84.1 The Chair invited Councillor Arthey – Cabinet Member for Planning to introduce paper CMU1 which was for noting.

85 BC/22/48 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) - CIL EXPENDITURE FRAMEWORK FIFTH REVIEW - MARCH 2023

85.1 The Chair invited Councillor Arthey – Cabinet Member for Planning to introduce paper BC/22/48 and to move the recommendations in the report.

85.2 Councillor Arthey introduced the report, highlighted the key points and **PROPOSED** the recommendations within the report. Councillor Arthey thanked members of the Joint Member Panel and the officers for their guidance throughout the Review.

85.3 Councillor Ward **SECONDED** the recommendations.

85.4 Councillor Parker asked for more information regarding the claw back provision and why it had been introduced.

85.5 Councillor Arthey responded that the claw back was introduced as a result of a specific CIL bid and Christine Thurlow, Professional Lead - Key Sites and Infrastructure Development Manager provided further information.

85.6 Councillor M Barrett asked about failed CIL bids and the process for bids and projects that didn't meet the framework criteria.

85.7 Councillor Arthey responded that some bids failed and were then re-submitted modified. He also advised that some bids took a couple of years to be completed.

85.8 The Professional Lead - Key Sites and Infrastructure Development Manager further responded that negotiations took place and help was provided to assist bids and projects that didn't quite meet the framework criteria. She confirmed that no CIL bids had been refused and that there had been changes to the framework year on year to allow new bids to be submitted.

85.9 Councillor Holt asked about funding for the maintenance of village halls.

85.10 Councillor Arthey responded that the framework didn't allow for bids for repairs and maintenance, but this could be provided through Neighbourhood CIL applications.

85.11 Councillor Hinton asked a number of questions regarding the framework and information contained in Appendix E – Infrastructure List for Babergh.

85.12 Councillor Arthey, the Professional Lead - Key Sites and Infrastructure Development Manager and Tom Barker, Director – Planning & Building Control responded to advise on the bid process and explained the information contained in Appendix E.

85.13 During the debate, Councillor Parker expressed his support for the report and commented that it was important for Members to work with their parishes to help them understand how the process worked and how the money could be spent.

85.14 Councillor McLaren reiterated the benefit of parish liaison meetings and commented that Members should be encouraging their parishes to attend. She thanked Christine Thurlow's team for their work.

By a unanimous vote,

It was RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That Babergh Council approve the amendments to the CIL Expenditure Framework– March 2023 (arising from the fifth review) - (Appendix A) and the CIL Expenditure Framework Communications Strategy – March 2023 (Appendix B).
- 1.2 That Babergh Council agree that the CIL Expenditure Framework and the CIL Expenditure Framework Communications Strategy be reviewed again whilst Bid round 12 is being considered (October 2023) so that any amended scheme can be in place before Bid round 13 occurs (May 2024).
- 1.3 That Babergh agree that the Joint Member Panel be retained to inform this (sixth) review.

86.1 The Chair invited Councillor Arthey – Cabinet Member for Planning to introduce paper BC/22/49 and to move the recommendations in the report.

86.2 Councillor Arthey introduced the report, highlighted the key points and **PROPOSED** the recommendations within the report, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor McCraw.

86.3 Councillor McLaren asked, once the Plan had been adopted, whether there were any plans to hold parish liaison meetings or training for parishes.

86.4 Councillor Arthey agreed that briefings for parishes would be a great idea and asked Phil Isbell – Chief Planning Officer to respond.

86.5 The Chief Planning Officer confirmed that appropriate training would be needed for parish councils and his team would be looking to do that in the coming months.

86.6 Councillor McLaren asked if there were sufficient resources in the team to deal with this extra work.

86.7 The Chief Planning Officer responded that he now had a full team who were undergoing training and development and once completed they would have the resource needed to do the work.

86.8 Councillor Arthey responded to a question from Councillor J Osborne regarding wording in Appendix A, page 216.

86.9 Councillor Arthey and the Chief Planning Officer responded to a question from Councillor S Barrett regarding the flow-chart contained in Appendix C.

86.10 The Chief Planning Officer responded to a question from Councillor Hinton regarding legal issues and response times.

86.11 During the debate, Councillor McCraw welcomed the report and stated that the Plan was much needed.

By a unanimous vote,

It was RESOLVED:

- 1.1 **That the draft Joint Local Planning Enforcement Plan 2023 (JLPEP) set out at Appendix A be adopted and published on the Councils website.**
- 1.2 **That the Director of Planning and Building Control be authorised to make any necessary consequential amendments to finalise and publish the JLPEP.**

1.3 That the plan be reviewed by a Joint Member Working Group within 12 months of its implementation

87 BC/22/50 SPECIAL URGENT DECISIONS TAKEN BY OFFICERS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 2 OF THE CONSTITUTION

87.1 The Chair invited the Chief Executive to introduce paper BC/22/50 which was for noting.

It was RESOLVED:

That Council notes the decision taken under delegated powers by the Deputy Chief Executive as detailed in Appendix A.

88 BC/22/51 COUNCILLORS PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

88.1 The Chair invited Councillor Ward – Leader of the Council to introduce paper BC/22/51 and to move the recommendation in the report.

88.2 Councillor Ward introduced the report, highlighted the key points and **PROPOSED** the recommendation within the report.

88.3 Councillor S Barrett **SECONDED** the recommendation and expressed his support for the Policy.

88.4 Councillor M Barrett asked what the arrangements were for cover if a Councillor is on parental leave for 6 months.

88.5 Councillor Ward responded to confirm there was provision in the Policy to arrange cover for Councillors on leave.

88.6 Councillor Ward responded to a question from Councillor Hinton regarding remuneration and special responsibility allowances for Councillors taking parental leave.

88.7 Jan Robinson, Corporate Manager – Governance & Civic Office clarified that both Councillors taking parental leave and Councillors covering would be able to claim any applicable special responsibility allowance, but that Councillors had the discretion to refuse any allowance they did not wish to take up.

88.8 The Corporate Manager – Governance & Civic Office responded to a question from Councillor Grandon to confirm that the Policy was for parental leave only and that carers allowances were already provided for in the Members Allowances Scheme.

88.9 The Corporate Manager – Governance & Civic Office responded to a question from Councillor Parker to confirm that there was a legal requirement for Councillors to attend a meeting within six months but that dispensation could be granted as appropriate.

Councillor Peter Beer and Councillor Mark Newman left the meeting at 7.02pm.

By a vote of 24 for and one abstention,

It was RESOLVED:

That Council approves the adoption of a Parental Leave Policy for Councillors.

Councillor Zac Norman left the meeting at 7.09pm.

89 BC/22/52 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/2024

89.1 The Chair invited Councillor Ward – Leader of the Council to introduce paper BC/22/52 and to move the recommendations in the report.

89.2 Councillor Ward introduced the report, highlighted the key points and **PROPOSED** the recommendations within the report, which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Barrett.

By a vote of 23 for and 1 abstention,

It was RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That the proposed pay policy statement for 2023/24 as set out in section 3 be approved.
- 1.2 That publication of the Council's gender pay gap, as of 31st March 2022, be noted.

90 BC/22/53 REVIEW OF JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVE REMUNERATION

90.1 This item had been withdrawn.

91 COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS

91.1 There were no changes to Councillor appointments.

92 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

92.1 None received.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 7.13pm.

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Chair