

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **BABERGH COUNCIL** held in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Tuesday, 24 October 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor: Elisabeth Malvisi (Chairman)

Councillors:	Peter K Beer	David Busby
	Jane Carruthers	Jessie Carter
	Paul Clover	Helen Davies
	Sallie Davies	Derek Davis
	Kathryn Grandon	Ruth Hendry
	Bryn Hurren	Leigh Jamieson
	Alastair McCraw	Mary McLaren
	Mark Newman	John Nunn
	Alison Owen	Stephen Plumb
	Daniel Potter	Isabelle Reece
	Tim Register	Brian Riley
	Deborah Saw	Laura Smith
	John Ward	John Whyman

In attendance:

Officers: Chief Executive (AC)
Deputy Chief Executive (KN)
Interim Director – Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer (IA)
Director – Corporate Resources (ME)
Director – Operations (ME)
Corporate Manager – Governance and Civic Office (JR)
Corporate Manager – Communications and Engagement (BJ)

Apologies:

Councillor(s) Simon Dowling (Vice-Chair)
Michael Holt
Margaret Maybury
Adrian Osborne
Lee Parker

49 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

- 49.1 Councillor Beer declared an other registerable interest in item BC/23/21 as an elected Member of Sudbury Town Council.

50 BC/23/18 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2023

- 50.1 Councillor Reece requested an amendment to point 47.1 as she had not left the meeting at the time specified with the rest of her party.
- 50.2 The Corporate Manager for Governance and Civic Office confirmed that this amendment would be made to the minutes.
- 50.3 Councillor Owen **PROPOSED** that the minutes of the meeting be confirmed and signed as a true record with the agreed amendment which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Hurren.

It was RESOLVED:

That the amended minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2023 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

51 BC/23/19 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND LEADER

- 51.1 The Chair referred Councillors to Paper BC/23/19 for noting.
- 51.2 The Chair expressed her disappointment at the lack of attendance from fellow Babergh Councillors at the Charity Funding Fair in Sudbury on 6th October, and gave special thanks and well wishes to Ifty Ali, the Interim Monitoring Officer, on behalf of Babergh Council for all his work and support ahead of his upcoming retirement.
- 51.3 The Chair invited the Acting Leader of the Council to make his announcements.
- 51.4 Councillor Ward made the following announcements:

The weekend's floods hit a number of our communities badly, and it has been a deeply distressing time for many residents and businesses, who have seen property damaged and lives disrupted. A clean-up is now well under way, and I know we will all continue to do what we can to support residents, businesses, and communities during this recovery period.

Additional council staff have been deployed in the worst affected areas to assist with the clean-up – areas like Hadleigh, Long Melford and parts of the Dedham Vale. I spoke to one of our public realm team just outside Hadleigh on Saturday morning while visiting my parishes along the Brett and Stour. I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who was there for our communities at the weekend:

- To our emergency services.
- To the council staff who have worked tirelessly.
- To our town and parish councils, who did such a great job.
- To the local volunteers who helped their neighbours, family and friends.

- And to you, our councillors – I know many of you have been doing outstanding work, identifying issues in your communities during the most critical times and taking action. I do want to make a special mention for Cllrs Malvisi and Nunn who, along with others, were very active in Long Melford on Friday night when Chad Brook burst its banks and flooded several premises. You really made a difference, so thank you both.

It was a difficult weekend, there is still a lot of clean-up work to do, but we should recognise this fantastic show of community spirit.

Along with the Chairman and Councillors Carter and Reece, I was invited to attend the official opening of the new Hastoe Housing development in Stoke-by-Nayland on 29th September. This development of 8 homes on land that was part of the former middle school site has been named in honour of Margaret Underwood who lived her whole life in the village and dedicated her 50-year career to educating children in and around Stoke by Nayland.

The houses have been built to Hastoe's New-Build Standard and we could all see that this has delivered high quality and energy efficient homes for those with connections to the village.

The Befriending Scheme is a charity based in Sudbury that supports people with learning disabilities and mild mental health conditions. It provides friendship and learning opportunities and runs a community farm called the Red Rose Community Farm, that moved earlier this year from Assington to a new, bigger site in Lindsey Tye. Babergh provided £100k of CIL, approved by Cabinet last November, to help with this and I was delighted to be invited to their open afternoon on 30th September. They have achieved a huge amount in less than a year to get the farm up and running with workshops, a café, polytunnels and accommodation for a range of animals.

I would like to remind everyone that there is still time for people to have their say on the council's future direction and priorities. We have outlined the administration's draft priorities, but we made a commitment to getting feedback from the community – are these priorities right, what else could we do, what have we missed? The survey will be live until the 15th November, and details can be found on our website. I'd encourage all councillors to share this with their networks. Posters and postcards have also been created which you can share in your communities.

We're pleased to have partnered with Groundwork East to deliver free and impartial expert advice to help businesses and organisations save energy, reduce their emissions, and establish tailored decarbonisation plans. This new Net Zero Business Advice Service will provide free support to help businesses, the voluntary sector and other organisations understand their greenhouse gas emissions, set a plan to reduce these and access grant funding to implement carbon reduction actions.

More information about the Net Zero Business Advisor can be found on our website.

Finally, we have also joined forces with Suffolk's other district and borough councils to deliver a ground-breaking project to improve life for landlords and tenants in the private rented sector.

'Safe Suffolk Renters' is designed to create a better understanding of the pressures and problems in the sector, and to improve standards – particularly in the worst private rented homes in the area. To achieve this, the project team will consult widely with tenants, landlords and stakeholders in the county. A conference taking place at the University of Suffolk in Ipswich on 3rd November is free for any landlord to attend. Details are also available on our website. Similar conferences for tenants and stakeholders will follow.

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

52.1 None received.

53 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

53.1 None received.

54 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

54.1 None received.

55 BC/23/20 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

55.1 The Chair invited Councillor McLaren, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to introduce Paper BC/23/20.

55.2 Councillor McLaren introduced the report to Councillors explaining its purpose and commented that this report was for noting only.

55.3 Councillor Riley queried the reason why recommendation 1.3. for item JOS/23/02 as detailed in the committee action tracker in Appendix B had not yet been brought back before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as requested. Councillor McLaren responded that a timescale for bringing this issue back to Committee would be devised with the Lead Officer for Overview and Scrutiny outside of the meeting.

55.4 Councillor S. Davies asked if the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was satisfied by the level of cost of living support being provided to residents in rural areas or those without internet access. Councillor McLaren responded that the committee was satisfied that appropriate care and support was being provided to all communities and praised officers involved in co-ordinating this support.

55.5 Councillor McCraw commented that all Members could attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and highlighted that questions from both Members and the public could be submitted to the Chair for answering at such meetings.

55.6 Councillor Riley raised an issue that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had refused to receive an update on the development at Corks Lane due to it not being the appropriate body to consider this. Councillor McLaren reminded Councillor Riley that he was both a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Babergh Growth, the board that oversees the development of Corks Lane, and that he had been previously advised this matter would be dealt with at the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November.

55.7 The report was noted.

56 BC/23/21 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS 2022/23

56.1 The Chair invited the Interim Monitoring Officer to introduce Paper BC/23/21.

56.2 The Interim Monitoring Officer introduced the report to Councillors explaining its purpose and asked for a proposer and a seconder.

56.3 Councillor McCraw **PROPOSED** the recommendations which were **SECONDED** by Councillor Busby.

56.4 Councillor McCraw asked if Sudbury Town Council would be able to co-opt a parish councillor currently representing Sudbury South into the Sudbury South West ward. The Interim Monitoring Officer responded that this was an option but the existing Member would have to officially step down from their current position first.

56.5 Councillor Register questioned whether the amalgamation of smaller wards in Sudbury had been considered by the working group. The Interim Monitoring Officer responded that amalgamation was considered under the original submission but that any changes would result in a change to the county and ward boundaries and the existing electoral arrangements so were dismissed.

By a unanimous vote,

It was RESOLVED:

- 1. That the draft recommendations as set out in Appendix A of the report be approved.**
- 2. That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to complete the CGR process and any required Orders.**

57 BC/23/22 CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

57.1 The Chair invited the Interim Monitoring Officer to introduce Paper BC/23/22.

57.2 The Interim Monitoring Officer introduced the report to Councillors explaining its purpose and asked for a proposer and a seconder.

- 57.3 Councillor Ward **PROPOSED** the recommendations and made the following amendment: that the word 'full' be removed from paragraph 4.2 of the report so that it reads 'That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair is not appointed from the administration group unless there is a coalition administration or standing in for the Chair'.
- 57.4 Councillor Saw **SECONDED** the amended recommendations.
- 57.5 Councillor Riley questioned whether provisions were being made to scrutinise contract standing orders and hold contractors to account. The Chief Executive responded that details on the performance management of contracts are set out in 13.1, 13.2, and 13.3 of Appendix B: Part 3 – Contract Standing Orders.
- 57.6 Councillor Reece asked if the current language used in the constitution was not compliant with equality legislation. The Interim Monitoring Officer responded that the current constitution was compliant with equality legislation but that the proposed changes to language and descriptors would make the document more inclusive to all.
- 57.7 Councillor McCraw commented that the proposed change in language would also improve the readability of the constitution.
- 57.8 Councillor Hurren queried what the term liquidated damages meant. The Interim Monitoring Officer responded that this was an option available to the Council in the instance of a contract breach where the Council can request finances from the original contractors to complete specified work with another supplier.
- 57.9 The Interim Monitoring Officer clarified for Members that the language changes proposed regarding the role of the Chair were specifically for the Council's documents with the aim of improving their inclusivity and did not preclude any Member from requesting to be addressed by another term.
- 57.10 Councillor Jamieson questioned why bids of up to £150k in the standard procurement scheme of delegations were not put out to tender. The Interim Monitoring Officer responded that these did not go out to tender due to not being classed as key decisions.

By a unanimous vote,

It was RESOLVED:

- 1. That Council approves the Schedule of amendments to the Constitution at Appendix A of the report and the inclusion of the reviewed Contract Standing Orders at Appendix B of the report along with the proposed amendment.**
- 2. That the Monitoring Officer makes all consequential changes to the Constitution to give effect to the decision of the Council to amend the Constitution.**

58 BC/23/23 DRAFT TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2024/25

58.1 The Chair invited Councillor Ward to introduce Paper BC/23/23.

58.2 Councillor Ward introduced the report and **PROPOSED** the recommendations.

58.3 Councillor Saw **SECONDED** the proposal.

By a unanimous vote,

It was RESOLVED:

- 1. That the draft Committee Timetable for 2024/25, attached as Appendix A of the report, be approved.**
- 2. That the Chief Executive calls the meetings in accordance with the agreed Timetable unless there is insufficient business for the meeting to go ahead.**

59 BC/23/24 APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

59.1 The Chair invited the Chief Executive to introduce Paper BC/23/24.

59.2 The Chief Executive introduced the report to Councillors and asked for a proposer and a seconder.

59.3 Councillor Davis **PROPOSED** the recommendation which was **SECONDED** by Councillor McLaren.

By a unanimous vote,

It was RESOLVED:

That Janice Robinson, Corporate Manager for Governance and Civic Office, be appointed as the Council's Interim Monitoring Officer from 31st October 2023.

60 COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS

60.1 Councillor Ward **PROPOSED** that Councillor Malvisi be appointed as Mental Health Member Champion.

60.2 Councillor Hurren **SECONDED** the proposal.

By a unanimous show of hands vote,

It was RESOLVED:

That Councillor Malvisi be appointed as Mental Health Member Champion.

61 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

61.1 None received.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 6.30 pm.

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Chair