

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 Monday, 20 November 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor:	Rowland Warboys (Chair) Dr Daniel Pratt (Vice-Chair)	
Councillors:	David Bradbury James Caston Rachel Eburne Nicholas Hardingham Colin Lay Sarah Mansel John Matthissen Gilly Morgan James Patchett David Penny Keith Scarff Ollie Walters John Whitehead	Terence Carter Teresa Davis Lucy Elkin Terry Lawrence Anders Linder Adrienne Marriott Andrew Mellen Jen Overett Janet Pearson Dr Ross Piper Andrew Stringer Tim Weller Richard Winch

In attendance:

Officers:	Chief Executive (AC) Deputy Chief Executive (KN) Interim Monitoring Officer (JR) Director – Planning and Building Control (TB) Corporate Manager - Strategic Planning (RH) Corporate Manager - Strategic Policy (JH) Planning Lawyer (IDP) Assistant Manager - Governance (HH)
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Apologies:

Austin Davies
Lavinia Hadingham
Matthew Hicks
David Napier
Miles Row
Nicky Willshere

63 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

- 63.1 The Monitoring Officer granted dispensation to all Councillors regarding the Joint Local Plan item.
- 63.2 There were no other declarations of interests by Councillors.

64 MC/23/25 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 OCTOBER 2023

It was RESOLVED:-

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th October 2023 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

65 MC/23/26 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

65.1 The Chair referred Councillors to Paper MC/23/26 for noting.

66 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

66.1 Councillor Mellen, Leader of the Council, made the following announcements:-

1. Cosy Homes

Last week, the council was able to launch the Mid Suffolk Cosy Homes scheme. This £2million investment will make hundreds of homes in our district more energy efficient, lowering their energy bills and reducing their carbon emissions in the process. This work will be carried out free of charge for those people who are eligible - funding the likes of loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and draft proofing works. It is aimed at private homeowners in our district meeting the criteria, and landlords with less than five properties. We want to improve the EPC rating of hundreds of homes. For more details about the criteria and how to apply, I would encourage people to visit our website. I would also encourage members to spread the word to your communities about this excellent scheme, which I acknowledge was funded by cross-party agreement on last year's budget.

2. Financial support for those impacted by flooding

It is a month since severe flooding hit a number of our communities, and for many of our residents the process of recovery continues. Can I pay tribute to members who got stuck in to help their communities during the immediate crisis and since. The Government has announced grants for homes and businesses that were impacted - £500 for homes, and £2,500 for businesses – to assist with initial recovery costs. Mid Suffolk District Council has been working with neighbouring districts and Suffolk County Council to get these grants to those eligible as quickly as we can. We will be able to start distributing funding before the end of this month. I would like to remind everyone that all reports of property flooding need to be submitted via the Suffolk County Council website. We will be reviewing our response to the flooding to see what could be improved – and also how we can build more resilience into our communities.

3. Gateway 14

And, finally, tomorrow I will be attending the official unveiling of the new building at Gateway 14 to be occupied by garden and leisure products retailer The Range. Completion of this building is a significant milestone for Gateway 14 and Mid Suffolk. By bringing its operations to Stowmarket, The Range is creating hundreds of new jobs for the region and providing a boost for the local economy. They are also the first business to come to Gateway 14 – with the site taking shape as a major landmark for business and innovation in the east, we hope that more businesses will soon join. I am really pleased that the building has been constructed with high environmental standards, as we want this whole development to be an exemplar of good, sustainable practice.

- 66.1 Councillor Elkin asked if there was anything more Councillors and the Council could do to reach all residents affected by flooding. Councillor Mellen responded that Councillors could use their networks with Parish Councils to connect with residents. The Chief Executive added that whilst Suffolk County Council was the flooding authority, the Council could contact residents and businesses and feed responses back to the County Council.
- 66.2 Councillor Penny highlighted that the number of reported cases of flooding was lower than the actual number of cases as many residents would not want to report to not claim against their home insurance. Councillor Mellen responded that residents would still be approached to apply for funding, and these concerns could be addressed.

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

67.1 None received.

68 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

68.1 None received.

69 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

69.1 None received.

70 MC/23/27 BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2023-2026

- 70.1 The Chair invited Councillor Stringer, Cabinet Member for Planning, Heritage and Infrastructure to introduce the report.
- 70.2 Councillor Stringer gave an overview of the report and proposed the recommendations as set out in the report. Councillor Caston seconded the motion.

- 70.3 Councillor Winch questioned whether the decade long process to develop the plan was a normal time scale. Councillor Stringer responded that this time scale was normal and needed to fit the timetable of the inspector, and time is needed to thoroughly consider responses from the public and developers.
- 70.4 Councillor Mansel queried whether the timetable could be reviewed ahead of 2026. Councillor Stringer responded that there would be a review within 5 years of adoption, additionally the Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) would need to be looked at in this time and added to the JLP at a possible review.
- 70.5 During the debate Councillor Mansel outlined that it had been a long process to get to this point, and that the plan would add certainty to the decision-making process. Additionally, she was happy with the SPDs and their possibilities, and seeing results from the process.
- 70.6 Councillor Eburne thanked Members and officers for their work on the plan. She added that the timetable was clearly laid out for Part 1 and 2 of the SPDs, which Councillors could have effect over and could highlight what was important to communities across the district.
- 70.7 Councillor Walters showed appreciation to the officers for their work, and outlined that the SPDs on biodiversity, air quality, and wellbeing ensured that each issue could have adequate attention which was important.
- 70.8 Councillor Stringer thanked Councillors for their questions and observations and advised that formal communications on SPDs to Councillors would come early in the process.

By a unanimous vote of 28 for.

It was RESOLVED:

That the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Development Scheme 2023-2026 (November 2023) (Appendix A) is agreed and brought into effect from 20th November 2023 in Mid Suffolk.

71 MC/23/28 BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK JOINT LOCAL PLAN FOR ADOPTION

- 71.1 The Chair invited Councillor Stringer, Cabinet Member for Planning, Heritage and Infrastructure to introduce the report.
- 71.2 Councillor Stringer gave an overview of the report and proposed the recommendations as set out in the report. Councillor Caston seconded the motion.
- 71.3 Councillor Pratt questioned why the Council's biodiversity target for developments had been set at 10%, as the recommendation from the wildlife trust had been 20%.

Councillor Stringer responded that an argument for greater than 105 had been put to the inspector and was denied, however, this could be improved by SPDs. Additionally, a blanket goal would not work for all sites as sites with protected species would be hard to improve by 10%, whereas this would be easier to achieve on arable land. This could be changed through SPDs in the future.

- 71.4 Councillor Winch queried what the key benefit of the plan was. Councillor Stringer responded that whilst the previous 1998 plan was a good document, it was now out of date, and it was hoped that the new plan could be useful for as long. Additionally, the plan would help deliver aspirations for communities in terms of better built environment, better design and better sustainability.
- 71.5 Councillor Overett questioned whether Community Land Trusts had any protection over Right to Buy legislation. Councillor Stringer responded that Community Land Trusts currently had protections over Right to Buy schemes, and the Council would encourage Community Land Trusts going forward.
- 71.6 During the debate Councillor Scarff outlined that the Council could lead by example by exceeding the 10% biodiversity target and create exemplar schemes to show developers how this could be achieved.
- 71.7 Councillor Mellen highlighted the importance of the plan as in 2019 before the Joint Local Plan and 5 year land supply, it was harder to refuse planning applications for large developments outside of settlement boundaries. He added that the Joint Local Plan gave greater certainty to the planning committee and planning officers.
- 71.8 Councillor Caston outlined that whilst the net gain of 10% biodiversity increase seemed a small amount, it needed to work for all developments so they would not get overturned at appeal. Additionally, the Joint Local Plan was what the Council needed, the SPDs were what the Council could ask for.
- 71.9 Councillor Bradbury queried that with the additional biodiversity conditions, whether additional funds would be needed for planning enforcement.
- 71.10 Councillor Eburne outlined that the Joint Local Plan was a complicated subject to discuss with residents, however the new plan gave a set of 10 strategic policies, and 32 local policies that were easy to understand and relatable to communities in the planning framework.
- 71.11 Councillor Mansel welcomed the Joint Local Plan and whilst Part 2 was still needed, Part 1 set out a basis to make planning decisions. She added that the Joint Local Plan was an improvement on the 1998 plan and was compliant with the NPPF and land supply, and that she hoped that Members would participate in the development of Part 2.
- 71.12 Councillor Stringer responded to Councillor Bradbury's question and stated that with a clearer set of policies, the enforcement team had sufficient resources.

71.13 Councillor Stringer thanked the Planning Policy team for their work on the Joint Local Plan. He added that this was a chance to look forward as policies were now in date and in line with government policies. Whilst there was still Part 2 and the SPDs to undertake, Part 1 gave a good starting point. He also encouraged the continuation of Neighbourhood Plans and that they should be kept up to date as well as having the Joint Local Plan.

71.14 The Corporate Manager – Strategic Planning thanked Members and the Planning Policy team for their work and highlighted the importance of having an up to date plan in place.

71.15 Councillor Warboys stated that it was a momentous occasion for the Council and acknowledged that many hours of work had been put into the development of the Joint Local Plan.

By a unanimous vote of 28 for.

It was RESOLVED:

That the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan DPD (November 2023) (Appendix A) be approved for adoption under Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

72 COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS

72.1 There were no changes to placings.

73 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

73.1 None received.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 18:23 pm.

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Chair