

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK COUNCIL** held at the Council Chamber, Mid Suffolk District Council Offices, High Street, Needham Market on Thursday, 23 March 2017

PRESENT:

Councillors:	Roy Barker	Gerard Brewster
	David Burn	Rachel Eburne
	John Field	Julie Flatman
	Jessica Fleming	Elizabeth Gibson-Harries (Chairman)
	Nick Gowrley	Kathie Guthrie
	Lavinia Hadingham	Matthew Hicks
	Glen Horn	Barry Humphreys MBE
	Diana Kearsley	Anne Killett
	John Levantis	Sarah Mansel
	Wendy Marchant	John Matthissen
	Lesley Mayes	Suzie Morley
	Dave Muller	Mike Norris
	Derek Osborne	Penny Otton
	Jane Storey	Andrew Stringer
	Kevin Welsby	John Whitehead
	David Whybrow	

In attendance:

Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Temporary Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Governance Support Officer (VL/HH)

15 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillors James Caston, Paul Ekpenyong, Gary Green, Derrick Haley, Esther Jewson, Tim Passmore, Keith Welham and Jill Wilshaw.

16 **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS BY MEMBERS**

There were no declarations of interest.

17 **C/09/17 - CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 FEBRUARY 2017**

Report C/09/17

It was noted that the minutes to be signed had been amended to include the names of Councillors Elizabeth Gibson-Harries, Nick Gowrley, Derrick Haley and Diana Kearsley as attending.

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2017 were confirmed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- Page 3 – Minute JAC93 – third paragraph: delete ‘Ireland or’
- Page 4 – first paragraph: replace ‘...0.4% growth’ with ‘...0.4% threshold’
- Page 4 – penultimate paragraph: amend to read ‘...that Disability Adaptations Grant was *not* being *fully* utilised in the budget.’
- Page 5 – first paragraph: amend to read ‘... that *some* schemes already existed to enable *some of this*.’

By a majority vote

RESOLUTION

That subject to the amendments detailed above the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February be confirmed as a correct record

18 **C/10/17 - CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Report C/10/17

The report was received.

Councillor Charles Flatman – Retirement

Councillor Gibson-Harries said that it was her pleasure to say a few words about Councillor Charles Flatman who had retired from the Council with effect from 13 March after 43 years as a councillor for the Eye Ward. She said he had been a faithful and dedicated Town and District Councillor, often sitting in the Chocolate Shop with residents queueing to ask for help. He had got things done, for example the Community Centre, Cricket Club and the reopening of the Queens Head, perhaps his favourite accomplishment! He had been the Father of the House for many years and she thanked him sincerely for representing his constituents so diligently and wished him well for the future.

Councillors Barker, Otton, Stringer and Storey also paid tribute to Councillor Flatman for his knowledge and passion for Council business, particularly housing, over the years and he was known for always following his conscience. He was always humorous and could be relied upon to liven up proceedings with a quip. His re-election over so many years showed how much he was thought of within his Ward.

Mr Flatman replied saying that it was the first time he had heard so many good things said about him in the 43 years. He paid tribute to three particular past Members who had influenced him as a young Councillor and in particular to one, who when he had been on the point of resigning, encouraged him to stay and to ‘never use two words when one will do’. He encouraged other Councillors to take

note of this advice. He went on to thank everyone for how he had been treated over the years.

19 **TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PROCEDURE RULE**

None received.

20 **QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC**

None received.

21 **QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

Question from Councillor Otton to the Chairman of the Council:

'The Boundary Commission are conducting a review of Parliamentary Boundaries. The second consultation ends on 27 March. Their current proposal is to put a number of parishes into the South Suffolk Constituency. These parishes are very concerned. When will Mid Suffolk District Council have the opportunity to formally debate this issue?'

Councillor Gibson-Harries replied that Councillor Gowrley would respond.

Councillor Gowrley responded:

'The review of Parliamentary Boundaries commenced on 13 September 2016 with the consultation on the initial constituency boundary proposals. The Council was advised at that time that a Full Council response to this consultation was not appropriate given the political implications of the review and that Councillors could respond as individuals or through their political groups. This approach is being taken by the other district and borough councils in Suffolk and by Suffolk County Council.

The current, secondary, consultation which closes on 27 March 2017 is inviting comments on the responses received during the initial consultation. There will be a further eight week consultation period following the publication of revised proposals later this year.'

22 **C/11/17 - MENDLESHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Report C/11/17

Corporate Manager – Strategic Planning

Councillor Brewster, Business Growth and Increased Productivity Portfolio Holder, introduced the report which provided details of the local referendum that was held in relation to the Mendlesham Neighbourhood Plan. He said the work done by Mendlesham's neighbourhood planning committee set an impressive example of how communities could see their vision for the future become part of the planning process. He went on to congratulate Mendlesham on becoming the first community in the Mid Suffolk District to see its plan adopted and added that he hoped it would be the first of many.

Councillor Stringer, proposed the recommendation saying Neighbourhood Plans were important to give communities the opportunity to have an impact on planning decisions and help local people get what they wanted in the way of development. He was proud that Mendlesham was the first village in the District to deliver a Neighbourhood Plan and paid tribute to the volunteers and Officers commitment to ensuring its completion. He advised that it was important to keep politics out of the process and ensure a Plan was the 'people's document'.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Whybrow said that Mid Suffolk strongly supported the Neighbourhood Planning process and were currently supporting several communities with the production of Neighbourhood Plans. If adopted parishes would receive 25% of CIL payments relating to developments in the village, rather than 15%, strengthening local decision making and how the funds were utilised.

Terry Moore, a member of the Mendlesham Neighbourhood Planning Group was invited to speak by the Chairman. He said it had been a large project for a small Council and had taken four years to complete. Mid Suffolk had been relied upon for guidance and support and a good relationship had been built up with Officers. There had been much support from residents with people giving their services freely which had allowed costs to be kept down. There had been a great deal of local consultation and this was recognised by the Inspector. The community understood the need for growth but wanted measured growth and it was hoped the Plan would help this to be the case. He paid special thanks to Mid Suffolk Officers past and present including Jonathan Free, Peter Freer, Nick Ward and Paul Bryant and Councillor Stringer.

Members congratulated Mendlesham on their success in completing the Neighbourhood Plan and the referendum results.

Councillor Guthrie asked that it be noted that the planning process was non-political as were the Mid Suffolk Development Control Committees.

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION

That the Mendlesham Neighbourhood Plan be formally made (adopted) as part of the District Council's Development Plan and used to help determine planning applications where relevant

23

C/12/17 - LEADER'S REPORT

Report C/12/17

The report was received.

Councillor Gowrley expressed his thanks to Charles Flatman for his work as a Councillor. He said he had first met him when he joined the Council as a young

officer in 1988 and thanked Mr Flatman for his support and guidance regarding Council procedures since that time.

24

C/13/17 - PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORTS

Report C/13/17

(a) Enabled and Efficient Organisation Portfolio

The report was received.

Councillor Mansel asked when the Modern.Gov system would be set up to allow Members access to restricted papers. The response was that discussions were underway regarding how to make this possible. Members should advise any other issues to the Assistant Director – Law and Governance.

Councillor Matthissen asked that the word 'customers' not be used when referring to residents. Council residents should be engaged as citizens and not arms-length customers.

(b) Housing Delivery Portfolio

The report was received.

Councillor Otton asked whether, in view of the importance of the legislation, Members would be able to see the draft response to the Housing White Paper. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that it was intended to involve all political groups but the consultation timescale did not allow time for the draft consultation response to be presented to Executive Committee.

Councillor Otton said she had heard of a case where a single mother was unable to access rented accommodation as benefits were paid in areas and private landlords were unwilling to accept the situation. She said it was important this situation did not occur in Mid Suffolk.

Councillor Eburne said the Mid Suffolk Scrutiny Committee had discussed a report regarding the 30 Year HRA Business Plan but had been disappointed that there were many unanswered questions. She looked forward to seeing a revised Business Plan as soon as possible.

Councillor Marchant asked how many of the housing acquisitions had been privately owned and how many ex council houses previously purchased under the Right to Buy Scheme. Councillor Levantis replied the houses had been purchased on the open market and he did not know if any were ex-council houses.

(c) Business Growth and Increased Productivity Portfolio

The report was received.

Councillor Matthissen asked what proportion of the total planning applications

received were majors. He believed it was less than 5% and asked what were the performance figures were for other applications. Councillor Whybrow replied he was unaware and would advise the figures.

Councillor Eburne advised that a Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel comprising herself and Councillors Gibson-Harries and Hadingham had been set up to look at how Neighbourhood Planning groups could be supported. She asked that if anyone had any issues to contact a member of the task and finish group.

(d) Environment Portfolio

The report was received.

(e) Community Capacity Building and Engagement Portfolio

The report was received.

Councillor Stringer asked in relation to the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams whether there were links to business development regarding supporting providers and growing capacity for social care. Councillor Flatman replied that she would look into the issue and provide a response.