

## MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK CABINET** held in the King Edmund Chamber - Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Monday, 4 June 2018 at 2:30pm

### **PRESENT:**

Councillors: Nick Gowrley (Chair)  
John Whitehead (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Gerard Brewster  
Rachel Eburne  
Glen Horn  
Jill Wilshaw

David Burn  
Julie Flatman  
Penny Otton

### **In attendance:**

Councillor Roy Barker  
Councillor Michael Burke  
Councillor Diana Kearsley  
Councillor Suzie Morley  
Councillor Keith Welham

Chief Executive (AC)  
Corporate Business Improvement Manager (KC)  
Assistant Director – Housing (GF)  
Economic Development Officer (AMc)  
Corporate Business Co-ordinator (SM – notes)  
Corporate Manager – Democratic Services (JR)  
Strategic Director (JS)  
Corporate Manager – BMBS (JWN)

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Whybrow.

### **2 TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Horn declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 9, report MCa/18/04, Stowmarket Vision for Prosperity, as a Trustee of the Museum of East Anglian Life.

### **3 MCA/18/01 - CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 MAY 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2018 were confirmed as a correct record.

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

None received.

## **5 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

None received.

## **6 MATTERS REFERRED TO BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OR THE JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

There were no matters arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the Joint Audit and Standards Committee.

## **7 MCA/18/02 - FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

The Forthcoming Decisions list was noted, and the following comments were made:

- CAB60 to be amended to read Councillor Barker as the Lead Member.
- Whether a report on the Boundary Review would go before Full Council?
- Would there would be a report on the Suffolk Design Guide?

## **8 MCA/18/03 - END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE OUTCOME REPORTING**

8.1 Councillor Horn, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Organisational Delivery, introduced report MCA/18/03 and moved the recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Burn.

8.2 Some members questioned the consistency in respect of some of the performance indicators as some had targets whereas others did not. Also, the following points were raised:

- 8.3
- Further information required in relation to the 5 Year Land Supply.
  - The number of experienced staff which had left the authority and whether this was measured?
  - The number of staff vacancies at present.
  - The number of staff on long term sick leave at present and how many of these were down to stress? Also, what measures had been put in place to provide support?
  - Homelessness - it was hoped the figure would be reduced to zero.
  - The number of void properties should fall.
  - Disabled Facilities Grant, - whether obligations had been fulfilled?
  - The reduction in subsidy for affordable housing and the percentage of time spent on housing revenue.
  - Further information needed for fly tipping such as how many were enforcement cases.
  - Did the Council encourage or discourage volunteers in relation to on-call fire fighters?

- 8.4 Councillor Horn, the Cabinet Member for Organisational Delivery, agreed to address the issues raised as well as any additional matters. However, it was noted much work had been done around stress and mental health with staff; there was no record of volunteers for on call fire fighters and in respect of enforcement for fly tipping this could just involve a letter being sent.

By 8 votes to 0

**It was RESOLVED:**

That the performance report and the performance outcome information tabled at Appendices A to E to the report be agreed as adequately reflecting Mid Suffolk District Council's performance for April 2017 to March 2018.

**Reason for Decision:** To provide assurance that the Council is meeting its performance objectives.

**9 MCA/18/04 - STOWMARKET VISION FOR PROSPERITY**

- 9.1 Councillor Brewster, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economy, introduced report MCA/18/04 and moved the recommendation with an amendment. This was seconded by Councillor Wilshaw.
- 9.2 Members questioned what the next steps would be following the second round of public consultation. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economy, explained during June/July 2018 in Stowmarket, there would be a form of wider consultation.
- 9.3 It was unclear as to which parts of the document had been officer comments and which were residents. Also, statements in relation to infrastructure should be made carefully. It was important to focus on the inaccessibility from villages and ensure cycle pathways were included. With regards to the action plan it should ensure attention was put on both the large and small villages in terms of having the relevant transport infrastructure in place.
- 9.4 The Economic Development Officer explained infrastructure still required broadening out and cycle paths were aspirational at present and as such would be part of the next stage.
- 9.5 Following a question on the amended recommendation, it was explained the investment would help the whole of the district and could develop into a vision for others in the future, running in parallel with the Stowmarket vision.

By 8 votes to 1

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the draft "Vision for Posterity (VfP) Action Plan" and draft VfP All-Issues Response" is reviewed and endorsed for publication, and that the Cabinet Member for the Economy in consultation with the Strategic Director be

granted delegated authority to approve any updates/amendments prior to publication.

- (2) That a total of £200k be allocated from the Growth and Efficiency Fund as follows:
  - Investigate the Council's options for branding and marketing Stowmarket, and
  - Explore the feasibility/deliverability of a Stowmarket town centre regeneration project.
- (3) Members agree in principle that £350,000 be allocated from the Growth and Efficiency Fund for allocation across the whole of the District for shop front and access improvements and that a scheme of allocation be decided outside of the meeting.
- (4) That Consideration is undertaken on how and when the VfP response is presented to the public beyond the release of the document (to be available online and copies in prominent places). And, that a drop-in event is conducted with partner organisations, and appropriate publicity, to be held on 16 June 2018 as part of Stowmarket Civic Day.

**Reason for Decision:** The publication of the documentation will bring the first phase of VfP to a close by responding to the issues raised, and by setting out the action plan that will bring the community together and deliver positive changes in the Stowmarket area, and pave the way for further VfP projects and interventions. The grant schemes respond directly to issues raised through the consultation and will have a high-impact outcome to raise the profile of the town centres in the District.

## **10 MCA/18/05 - ASSET INVESTMENT FUND (ACQUISITION FUND)**

- 10.1 Councillor Gowrley, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Assets and Investments, introduced report MCA/18/05 and moved the recommendation with an amendment. This was seconded by Councillor Burn.
- 10.2 It was agreed to add into paragraph 4.5 of the report, within the criteria as (f), that it would need to meet strategic purposes.
- 10.3 Members were concerned as the new Assistant Director was not yet in post whether she would have a different approach, however, it was agreed the relevant Ward Member would be involved in the decision process and the opposition groups would also be kept informed.
- 10.4 A Member questioned within the criteria in paragraph 4.5 whether ethical standards would also be considered. It was felt as long as the group decided on the purchase and it met the strategic priorities it would be ethical.

By a unanimous vote.

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the establishment of a Strategic Property and Land Fund of £3 million, from the Growth and Efficiency Fund be approved in principle, subject to a revised allocation process.

**Reason for Decision:** To enable the Council to react and secure, when required, strategic property and land, as an investment opportunity, and to assist future housing building and economic growth within the district.

## **11 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)**

By a unanimous vote

### **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 these items, it was likely there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information as indicated against each item. The authors of the reports proposed to be considered in Part II of the agenda were satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **12 MCA/18/06 - BMBS REVIEW OF YEAR TO DATE**

- 12.1 Councillor Wilshaw, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, introduced report MCA/18/06 and moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Flatman.
- 12.2 Members agreed that paragraph 4.2.1 within the report should be amended to indicate that two Districts were served rather than stating "the whole district".
- 12.3 A member queried the financial charts within the appendices and whether any double counting had taken place. Also, why "other expenses" had materialised which had not been taken into account within the first business case. Also, it was felt the capped maintenance figures were going up and down considerably, and with voids, the worry was some really significant differences from the original business case to the current one.
- 12.4 The Cabinet Member for Housing, with the Assistant Director for Housing, explained there were now two Team Leaders in place and as such it was hoped there would be a vast improvement in deliverability. Further detail had been included within the financials in the business plan. The financial detail had been reviewed by an external consultant and the business case would also be referred to the internal audit team which should provide members with additional reassurance.
- 12.5 A concern was raised about one of the objectives for BMBS being commercialisation. Objectives needed to be clear and for members to have the confidence these could be achieved and delivered. Members agreed it would be much better to properly serve customers and provide a high-quality service in the first instance.

- 12.6 It was questioned whether the IT mobile working solution, Total Mobile, was now up and running, the impact was of not being able to complete jobs and whether these were being monitored? Whether the loss of staff as detailed on page 148 were experienced people and whether the use of Property Services added more staff time and costs.
- 12.7 The Corporate Manager for BMBS explained Total Mobile was still an ongoing issue but much work had been completed in respect of developing the system. This had been raised as an urgent item to be resolved. Paragraph 4.8 within the report gave detail on feedback, but it was noted that although the new service had experienced teething problems complaints had been low. Property Services were part of the process in terms of delivering the best customer service, providing a one stop shop for repairs.
- 12.8 After much discussion it was felt the recommendation should be amended so additional wording of *“that places a high-quality customer service above a surplus generating “commercial” business”* was added within the future vision. Also, that recommendation 3.3 was removed in order for the document to go straight to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations in the first instance. This was proposed by Councillor Wilshaw and seconded by Councillor Flatman.

By a unanimous vote.

**It was RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the progress made during Year 1 of the BMBS Business Plan be noted and endorsed.
- (2) That the following future vision for BMBS be supported:  
  
*BMBS will provide an inhouse repairs and maintenance service to both Babergh and Mid Suffolk with priority on delivering an efficient, value for money service that places a high-quality customer service above a surplus generating “commercial” business.*
- (3) That this report and the revised BMBS Business Plan is referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review and consideration.

**Reason for Decision:**

To ensure that BMBS can focus on achieving the ambitious targets set out in the revised Business Case.

**13 MCA/18/07 - ASSET INVESTMENT FUND (STRATEGIC PROPERTY ACQUISITION STOWMARKET)**

By a unanimous vote.

**It was RESOLVED:-**

(1) That the recommendations set out in report MCa/18/07 be approved.

**Reason for Decision:** To enable the Council to secure a strategic property and site within Stowmarket as an investment opportunity, and to assist economic growth within the District.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 4:40pm.

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Chair (date)