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 Thursday, 21 June 2018

PRESENT:

John Levantis (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors:	Roy Barker	Gerard Brewster
	Michael Burke	David Burn
	James Caston	Rachel Eburne
	Paul Ekpenyong	John Field
	Julie Flatman	Jessica Fleming
	Elizabeth Gibson-Harries	Nick Gowrley
	Gary Green	Glen Horn
	Anne Killett	Sarah Mansel
	Wendy Marchant	John Matthissen
	Suzie Morley	Dave Muller
	Mike Norris	Derek Osborne
	Penny Otton	Andrew Stringer
	Keith Welham	Kevin Welsby
	John Whitehead	Jill Wilshaw

In attendance:

Chief Executive (AC)
Strategic Director (KN)
Strategic Director (JS)
Assistant Director – Law and Governance (EY)
Corporate Manager – Tenant Services (LC)
Corporate Manager – Democratic Services (JR)

12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

12.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Guthrie, Hadingham, Haley, Hicks, Humphries, Jewson, Kearsley, Mayes, Passmore, Storey and Whybrow.

13 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

13.1 The Monitoring Officer had granted dispensations to all Councillors in respect of Item 9 Report MC/18/7 Independent Remuneration Panel Report on Member Allowances.

13.2 The Monitoring Officer also gave advice on Item 11 and 13 (MC/18/9) Mid Suffolk HQ Regeneration Project to Development Committee Members regarding their position about being able to participate in the debate without prejudicing their ability to partake in the planning decision when it eventually came forward to the Development Committee.

14 MC/18/6 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON 21 MAY 2018

It was Resolved:-

That the Minutes from the Annual Meeting held on 21 May 2018 be approved.

15 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

15.1 The Leader's report was tabled.

15.2 The Leader drew attention to Item 7 the Annual Monitoring Report and informed Members that because of the complexity of the exercise that had been further complicated by the anticipated publication of the NPPF, officers had made initial calculations and given the substantial complexity surrounding the issue had submitted these for Counsel's opinion to confirm the validity of the approach taken. The Leader expected the figures to be published by the middle of July and would be accompanied by Member Briefings.

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

16.1 There were no petitions reported.

17 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

17.1 There were no questions received from the public.

18 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

<u>Question 1</u>

Councillor Marchant to Councillor Wilshaw Cabinet Member for Housing

Would it be possible for Mid Suffolk to have allocation rights for some of the large number of vacant properties on Wattisham Army Camp belonging to the MoD?

Answer

Officers have been in contact historically with both the Ministry of Defence and Suffolk County Council to discuss the vacant properties at Wattisham. Our understanding is that the MoD have made the decision to privately let all vacant properties via a local commercial Lettings Agency.

Thus there is no role for Mid Suffolk District Council to be involved in the letting of these properties.

Question 2

Councillor Marchant to Councillor Burn Cabinet Member for Environment

Has Mid Suffolk reduced too drastically the number of countryside staff, managing Mid Suffolk and Babergh's Countryside sites?

There used to be 2 x part time (22.2 hpw) Communities Officers (Countryside) – both posts cut.

And 2 Seasonal Ranger posts (May- September) 30 hpw covering weekend – both posts cut.

And 1 Communities Officer (Countryside) retained; and 1 Countryside Maintenance Officer – retained.

So now two countryside officers instead of six, and this is to manage eight countryside sites in Mid Suffolk, plus a further nine since countryside integrated with Public Realm, and now have involvement in Babergh as well as Town Parks in Hadleigh and Sudbury and numerous other small open spaces across both Districts.

Answer

The Countryside and Public Realm Team came together in 2015 but had separate budgets and management arrangements. It was identified at that time that there would be benefit from a full integration at some point in the future.

The Countryside Service had been holding 2 vacant Community Officer (Countryside) posts since 2015 in anticipation of the consultant's report on Countryside and Public Realm services produced by Whites, Green and Young (WYG) in 2017 and considered by Cabinet in March 2018. The report identified that the level of resources devoted to Countryside Services was unusually high compared to other authorities with a similar portfolio of sites and responsibilities and that there was also duplication with many of the functions delivered by the in-house Public Realm Grounds Maintenance Team. The two vacant posts also had a dual locality role in the Communities Team and were not able to devote their full time to Countryside work.

In 2017 the 2 vacant posts were put forward as a saving as well as two Seasonal Ranger posts. This reduction was confirmed during the budget setting process for 2018/19.

The functions formerly delivered by a separate Countryside Service have now been integrated into Public Realm. The Communities Officer (Countryside) who had already been working in Public Realm for the last 3 years will continue to work alongside the 3 Public Realm Officers and 2 Tree Officers delivering an integrated service for all open spaces owned by the Council. The Countryside Maintenance Officer will work more closely with the in-house Grounds Maintenance Team to ensure that sites are managed for both people to enjoy and for nature conservation.

In summary, because vacancies have been held in the Countryside Service since 2015, the level of resource in the now joint Public Realm and Countryside Service is not very different to the overall resourcing levels at the same time last year. The Corporate Manager confirms that he can manage with this amount of resource and that the expected efficiencies have been realised from the integration of the two services.

Supplementary Question

Would it be possible for this to be looked at again?

19 MC/18/8 DISBANDMENT OF JOINT HOUSING BOARD

19.1 Councillor Wilshaw introduced the report and **MOVED** the recommendations in the report.

19.2 Councillor Wilshaw informed Council that a review of the tenant engagement structure had been undertaken and had concluded that the Council was not fully compliant with the tenant involvement and empowerment standard in that there was no tenant scrutiny of the housing service and no rigorous customer led challenge both of which were integral to the current regulatory framework.

19.3 Following a series of consultations and workshops with tenants, an alternative tenant engagement structure had been developed that would replace the Joint Housing Board and Tenants Forum with a single Tenant Board. The Joint Housing Board at their last meeting agreed this approach and agreed to the disbandment of the Joint Housing Board.

19.4 Councillors queried what processes would be put in place to ensure that the Single Tenant Board would be independent. Councillors also asked for more information on how the tenants would be selected, what the criteria would be for those tenants on the Board and how the governance arrangements would work.

19.5 On the proposal of Councillor Gowrley and seconded by Councillor Eburne it was **MOVED** that the report be deferred to allow further information to be provided.

This was **PUT** to the meeting and **CARRIED.**

It was Resolved:-

That the report be deferred to allow for further information to be provided to Council.

20 APPOINTMENTS

20.1 There were no changes to appointments.

21 MC/18/9 MID SUFFOLK HQ REGENERATION PROJECT - APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED OPTION (PART 1)

21.1 Councillor Gowrley introduced the report and **MOVED** the recommendations within the report.

21.2 Commenting further he went on to say that in April 2017, Executive Committee had given approval for the appointment of a design and planning team following a full and compliant procurement process. The team were appointed to support the Assets and Investments Team to develop options for the future use of the existing headquarters building and associated car park sites at Hurstlea Road, Needham Market and to develop a programme of work which would ensure the successful delivery of a developed design for the site.

21.3 Councillor Gowrley then confirmed that the purpose of the report was to provide information on the proposed option for the site's development for Council to debate and comment on. The comments would be recorded and presented to Cabinet in July. Following which, if Cabinet approved the proposed option, a decision would be taken to submit a full planning application for the preferred option.

21.4 Finally, Councillor Gowrley stated that subject to planning permission being achieved he looked forward to the Council delivering a flagship, high quality development at the former HQ site, in a timely fashion that would provide much needed homes for residents and support the prosperity of Needham Market.

21.5 Councillor Welsby seconded the report and reserved the right to speak.

21.6 A short presentation on the design principles of the scheme was delivered by the Lead Design Partner.

21.7 Councillors were asked to comment on the proposals and the following comments were made:-

21.8 Councillor Mansel queried whether buyers for the properties not included in the exemplar proportion would have the opportunity to bring their properties up to those standards if they so wished?

21.9 Councillor Barker welcomed the electric charging points for cars and asked that the scheme be progressed as soon as possible.

21.10 Councillor Ekpenyong asked why radiators were being used and not underfloor heating?

21.11 Councillor Stringer welcomed the sustainability of the proposed design but asked if any consideration had been given to battery storage?

21.12 Councillor Burke queried whether there were enough car parking spaces for members of the public?

21.13 Councillor Welham asked if there would be any control over the sustainability of the retail units?

21.14 Councillor Killett queried whether there was any evidence to show that families were happy to live in this three- storey type of provision?

21.15 Councillor Eburne asked how the exemplar design and sustainable energy provision would be measured and recorded to highlight the benefits it would have on the environment and the residents.

21.16 Councillor Otton questioned whether consideration had been given to provide supported housing for people over 55?.

21.17 The Monitoring Officer advised at this point in the meeting that if the Council wished to discuss the relative merits of the different options they should move to exclude the public.

22 RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC

It was Resolved: -

That pursuant to part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the business specified in the report on the grounds that if the public were present during discussion of this item, it is likely that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as indicated in the report.

23 MC/18/9 MID SUFFOLK HQ REGENERATION PROJECT - APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED OPTION (PART 2) (EXEMPT INFORMATION BY VIRTUE OF PARAGRAPH 1 OF PART 1)

23.1 Council discussed the relative merits of the different options in closed session.

24 RESOLUTION TO RE- ADMIT THE PUBLIC

It was Resolved:-

That the public be re-admitted to the meeting.

25 MC/18/9 MID-SUFFOLK HQ REGENERATION PROJECT - APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED OPTION

It was Resolved:-

That the Council's comments on the proposed option for redeveloping the former Council HQ site and Hurstlea Road Carparks in Needham Market (Option 1, section 2.1 of the report and Appendix G) be reported to Cabinet for consideration, prior to a decision being taken to submit a full planning application for the sites redevelopment.

26 MC/18/7 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

26.1 The Chief Executive introduced the report and highlighted the key elements within it. He went on to say that due to the difficulty of Councillors debating their own allowances, a Cross Party Panel had been formed to undertake an analysis of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP)'s findings.

26.2 The Cross- Party Panel's recommendations were highlighted in the report in red, to draw attention to those areas where the Panel had deviated away from the recommendations of the IRP. The reasoning behind those recommendations were set out in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.12 in the report.

26.3 Finally, the Chief Executive drew attention to the Terms of Reference of the IRP and informed Council that the IRP had been asked to look at the Scheme on the basis that a period of time had elapsed since the last review, and more specifically because the Council had adopted a Leader/Cabinet model and to consider whether any changes should be backdated after the implementation of the Leader/Cabinet model.

26.4 Councillor Gowrley **MOVED** the recommendations in the report and informed Council of a further amendment to the recommendations as follows:-

"that the multiplier for the Lead Member role remain at 0.75 of the basic allowance"

26.5 Councillor Horn seconded the proposals and reserved the right to speak.

26.7 Councillor Mansel asked why the review had taken so long?

26.8 In response the Chief Executive stated that the formal decision to create the Cabinet/Leader model was made in May 2017. It was always known that there was a need to carry out a review and the intention was that the review would have taken place ahead of Christmas last year. The Panel itself was not created and commissioned until towards the end of the year and it had taken longer than expected to carry out the review. As the review had taken place further into the new model it has been possible to gain the actual evidence from Members as to what their new roles and responsibilities entailed.

26.9 Councillor Otton sought clarification on the recommendation from the IRP relating to childcare and dependents allowances and asked whether the allowance would only be paid for professional care on the production of a receipt?

26.10 In response the Chief Executive clarified that the Cross- Party Panel had disagreed that these allowances should only be paid for professional care and had amended the wording in 2.1e of the report to reflect this.

26.11 Councillor Field raised concerns relating to the proposals to pay more than one Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA).

26.12 In response Councillor Gowrley stated that there had always been a history of having multiple allowances at Mid Suffolk but the proposal was now to limit this to two, which he fully supported, as he felt that if you did the job you should receive the relevant allowance.

26.13 Councillor Eburne asked what the total cost of the recommendations would be to the Council if they were approved?

26.14 In response the Chief Executive confirmed that if the changes that Councillor Gowrley had moved at the start of the meeting be approved the cost to the Council would be £66,050.

26.15 Councillor Stringer stated that the review had been undertaken at the wrong time and should be done as the last task of the outgoing Council ready for the new incoming Councillors.

26.16 Under Part 3 Paragraph 18.5 of the Constitution a recorded vote was requested by five Councillors for the amended recommendations as tabled along with the additional amendment as detailed in Minute 26.4 “that the multiplier for the Lead Member role remain at 0.75 of the basic allowance”

26.17 The recommendations were **PUT** to the meeting and **CARRIED.**

26.18 The voting was recorded as follows:-

For	Against	Abstention
Cllr R Barker	**Cllr J Caston**	
Cllr G Brewster	**Cllr R Eburne**	
Cllr M Burke	**Cllr J Field**	
Cllr D Burn	**Cllr A Killett**	
Cllr P Ekpenyong	**Cllr S Mansel**	
Cllr J Flatman	**Cllr W Marchant**	
Cllr J Fleming	**Cllr J Matthissen**	
Cllr E Gibson- Harries	**Cllr D Muller**	
Cllr N Gowrley	**Cllr M Norris**	
Cllr D Green	**Cllr P Otton**	
Cllr G Horn	**Cllr A Stringer**	
Cllr J Levantis	**Cllr K Welham**	
Cllr S Morley		
Cllr K Welsby		
Cllr J Whitehead		
Cllr J Wilshaw		
Total 16	**Total 12**	**Total 0**

It was Resolved:-

(i) that the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) as reviewed by the joint, cross party panel of councillors be approved as set out below:-

a) That the Basic (Ward Representation) Allowance be set at £5,000.

b) That the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) be set at:-

Role	Multiplier	Amount
Chairman of the Council	1	£5,000
Deputy Chairman of the Council	0.5	£2,500
Leader of Council	2.5	£12,500
Deputy Leader of the Council	1.25	£6,250
Chair of Development Control Committee	1	£5,000
Vice-Chair of Development Control	0.25	£1,250
Chair of Scrutiny Committee	1	£5,000
Vice-Chair of Scrutiny Committee	0.5	£2,500
Chair of Joint Audit and Standards Committee	0.5	£2,500
Planning Committee Members	0.1	£500
Political Group Leaders	0.2	£1,000
Chair of Regulatory Committee	0.5	£2,500
Vice-Chair of Regulatory Committee	0.25	£1,250
Cabinet Member with Portfolio	1.25	£6,250
Cabinet Member without Portfolio	0.5	£2500
Lead Member	0.75	£3750

c) That with the exception of the SRA for Group Leaders, no Councillor will be entitled to claim more than two SRAs.

d) That the Travel and Subsistence Allowance be set at:-

- **Mileage Rate 45p per mile**
- **Cycle Mileage Rate 27.7p per mile**
- **Passenger Allowance 5p per mile**

e) That the Childcare and Dependants Allowance be set at:-

- **Childcare Allowance up to £13 per hour (subject to a receipt)**
- **Dependants Relative Care/Specialist Nursing Care Allowance up to £30 per hour (subject to a receipt)**

f) That the revised Member Allowance Scheme will take effect from the creation of the Leader/Cabinet model (22 May 2017)

g) That the revised Basic Allowance be increased in line with the Local Government Officer pay awards until the scheme is next reviewed in

2022 or earlier.

h) That a revised Members Allowances Scheme incorporating the decisions of the Council be prepared by the Monitoring Officer. Further, that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make any typographical and other minor / consequential amendments prior to publication of the final document.

i) That the Council formally records its thanks to the Independent Remuneration Panel for their work in preparing the report.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 7.46 pm

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Chair