

49.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 20 December 2018 be confirmed as a correct record with the following amendments:

Page 1, minute number 36: held on the 19 November **2018** be confirmed
Page 5, minute number 40.3 That the Information Bulletin **be** confirmed.
Page 6, minute number 46 ... be amended to **Hurstlea Road** in both lines.

50 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME

50.1 There were no petitions received.

51 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

51.1 None received.

52 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS

52.1 None received.

53 MOS/18/23 MCA/158/52 DRAFT GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2019/20 AND FOUR YEAR OUTLOOK

53.1 Katherine Steel, Assistant Director for Corporate Resources introduced report MOS/1/24 and outlined the changes in the report layout. There was no longer a Medium Financial Term report, as this was incorporated into the general budget report

53.2 The Chair updated Members on points raised the previous Cabinet meeting:

- The Needham Lake Visitor Centre was not included in the budget and would be funded by the business rates capital budget;
- Council Tax Care Leavers Relief would be funded equally between by Suffolk County Council and Mid Suffolk District Council, and would be a continued relief;
- The Locality Budget was £250K and would be divided into 34 parts. Mid Suffolk would receive 1/34 of the budget.
- The significant risk register was updated on Connect.

53.3 Councillor Hadingham ask for clarification on the net income for the proposed investment of £25m and referred to page 21, 8.20 and page 29, line 13.

53.4 Councillor Field expressed concern for the proposed £25m investment for CIFCO and that the investment was outside the District. He was also concerned regarding the risk as some of the investments were in the retail market.

53.5 Councillor Welham suggested that additional risk management and more explanation round the issues regarding the economic conditions becoming

worse should be included.

- 53.6 He also asked for clarity for the returns on the loans in Table 7 and 8, page 19 to 20.
- 53.7 The Assistant Director – Corporate Resources responded to the questions and said that paragraph 8.20 was net income.
- 53.8 In response to the investments she referred to the CIFCO Board of Directors and said that currently investments were being made into retail.
- 53.9 The Cabinet Member for Finance explained that economic downturn would be an issue if the Council decided to sell assets invested by CIFCO as the Council received income from the rents. However, the investments were made for a minimum period of 10 to 15 years, which was historically considered a good capital investment period.
- 53.10 Councillor Welham suggested a change to the wording for the risk assessment and that this required more explanation of the risks.
- 53.11 The Cabinet Member for Finance agreed.
- 53.12 Councillor Gibson-Harries suggested a short information piece which could be made available for Parish Council meetings.
- 53.13 The Assistant Director responded to Members questions including:
- Bullet point 7.6 Risk Management covered a range of areas including Gateway 14, the previous HQ sites, Stowmarket Middle School, Paddock Site in Eye and investment in the commercial market;
 - Bullet point 8.10, c), business rates funding was uncertain after 2019/20 and the estimate had been prudent. The business rate base line had been moving upwards.
 - Table 7, page 19 staff salary was detailed further in the Budget book, page 31
 - The surplus in the General Fund for housing was ringfenced for Homelessness.
- 53.14 Members debated the budget including business rates and that the District had a lot of small and medium companies. The current market for retail could have an effect on the business rate.
- 53.15 Members debated the possible information note to parish Councils for CIFCO and the Chief executive added that explaining the purpose of CIFCO was relatively easy, but it would be a challenge to clarify the complicated reasons for the investments.
- 53.16 Some Members agreed and considerations as to how it would be possible to choose topics to include in a note for Parish Councils was debated further.
- 53.17 Councillor Welham thanked officers for a prudent budget, which was modest

throughout. CIFCO was a long-term investment strategy to maintain reasonable levels of Council Tax.

53.18 Members was provided with information to answer queries at Parish Council level.

53.19 Members agree that comments from the meeting should be delivered to Cabinet.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED: -

1.1 That the Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse Recommendations 3.1 to 3.4.

1.2 That the comments made by the Committee at the meeting be considered by Cabinet.

54 MOS/18/24 MCA18/53 DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET AND FOUR YEAR OUTLOOK

54.1 Gavin Fisk, Assistant Director for Housing, introduced report MOS/18/24 and responded to Members questions:

54.2 Councillor Gibson-Harries questioned the use of some garages for storages and some were empty.

54.3 The Assistant Director responded that identified empty garage sites across the district could be used for redevelopment and that this was being considered by the team.

54.4 Councillor Field asked if the acquisitions to replace the Right to Buy sold stock (page 49) was purchased at market price. This was confirmed by the officers. However, the Council was bidding against other developers and purchasing at the going market rate. However, there was also the question of purchasing the right properties for the housing stock.

54.5 The Chief Executive would provide a list of properties bought and the costs outside the meeting.

54.6 Councillor Field question New build properties and that rent from these did not meet the cost of the purchase. He asked for clarification of why it was economical to purchase new build properties when each property presented debt of £30,000 even if the income from these was in the rental charges.

54.7 The Assistant Director – Housing Explained that Housing Association had used this model for a number of years and that the rental yield would increase over a period of 25 years, which would justify the debt of £30,000. The purchase of housing stock also had social benefits. He referred to the

graphs on page 50.

54.8 The Cabinet Member for Assets and Investment added that each scheme involved a full business case.

54.9 Members continued to discuss the used of Housing Stock and redevelopments and Members agreed that the suggested redevelopment of empty garages should be included in the recommendations.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED: -

1.1 That the Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse recommendations 3.1 to 3.8

1.2 That the Strategy expressed by the Assistant Director for Housing in respect of the use of empty garages be considered for implementation.

55 MOS/18/25 BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK AREA PARKING PLAN

55.1 Chris Fry, Assistant Director for Environment and Commercial Partnerships introduced report MOS/18/25 and informed Members that minor changes would be added after the Joint Member and officer group meeting.

55.2 The Council was required to produce a parking policy for the area and Central Government had intended to introduce Civil Parking Enforcement in April 2019, however, this had been delayed due to Brexit. The Suffolk County Council (SCC) would be implementing a Transport Plan for the whole County.

55.3 The Assistant Director Produced a shot presentation for the Joint Parking Plan and informed Members that the Blue Badge policy had been remove as this was the responsibility of SCC.

NOTE: Presentation attached to the electronic minutes on the website.

55.4 Members queried Policy 2, page 65 and the Officer responded that the on-street parking would include residential parking zones. It was not the intentions to provide more off-street parking as this was not the responsibility of the District Council, however requirements for additional on-street parking would be part of the development strategies for town growth and would be at the request of the Council.

55.5 Issues round school parking and Blue Badge holders were questioned. Members were concerned that since the Highway Code Test was being abolished enforcement of responsible parking for Blue Badge holders could be an issue.

55.6 The Assistant Director would provide an answer to this out of the Committee.

- 55.7 Further questions were raised regarding school parking, anti-social and unauthorised parking. Members wanted to know if the Joint Parking Policy covered these issues.
- 55.8 The Assistant Director acknowledge that this was a problem, but that the Joint Parking Policy was a consultation on parking. The Policy was for use of town and Parish Councils. The Off-street Parking policy allowed the Council to tackle the above parking issues. Traffic regulations would also be enforced for this kind of parking issues.
- 55.9 Councillor Mayes thought that a comment should be sent to SCC to consider school parking when planning new school in the County to prevent the parking problems at drop-off and pick-up times.
- 55.10 Councillor Nick Gowrley – Cabinet Member for Assets and Investment suggested that school parking was included in Policy 11. He also reminded Members that the appointment of two new PCSOs would be part of the parking enforcement in the District.
- 55.11 The Assistant Director informed that Off-street parking generated an income of £700,000 across the County, which was utilised to fund the PCSOs in Suffolk.
- 55.12 Members agreed that the wording in Policy 2 should be changed to reflect that the Council could not provide additional off-street parking.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED: -

1.1 That the working in Policy 2 be amended to read:

Off-street parking places will be utilised to assist with traffic management and support and promote our communities

56 MOS/18/26 COMMUNITY GRANT - HEALTH CHECK FOR THE GROUPS RECEIVING GRANTS

- 56.1 The Corporate Manager – Strong and Safe Communities introduced the report and informed Members that Revenue Grants totalling over £200,000 have been allocated to community groups in 2018/19. It was essential that checks were made to ensure that the funds were effectively used.
- 56.2 Members generally agreed that the assessment form was good and that the team was very helpful assisting applicant with the applications.
- 56.3 Councillor Field enquired if there was a process for the applications to ensure that cost for smaller applications was in proportion to the grant application.

56.4 The Officer confirmed that this was the case.

56.5 Members thanked the Assistant Director for Strong and Safe Communities and her team for the report and update.

It was RESOLVED: -

That the Committee endorsed the continuation with the Health Check process and that these be undertaken bi-annually.

57 LEISURE PROCUREMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

57.1 The Assistant Director – Environment and Procurement provided a presentation to Members.

NOTE: Presentation attached to the electronic minutes on the website.

57.2 Members queried various points and the Assistant Director responded to these including:

- That the initial discussion would take place with SLM;
- That the development of the framework, bench-marking and costs were to suit the outcome for the future partner for the procurement;
- That consideration for managing existing staff would be part of the process for the procurement;
- That a reduction in the management fee was expected;
- That until the procurement had been conducted an income from the new arrangements were secondary.

57.3 Councillor Welham was concerned that the procurement negotiations would take too long in relation the growing population in Stowmarket.

Note Councillor Caston left the meeting at 12:02pm

57.4 Members discussed the governance of Abbycroft Leisure and that it was a not for profit organisation. SLM was a national organisation and was currently expanding.

Councillor Caston returned at 12:07pm.

57.5 Members debated the benefits of sharing a leisure contract with Babergh District Council, who currently held a 30-year contract with Abbycroft Leisure.

57.6 It was generally agreed that any future leisure providers should provide provisions for expanding of the existing Leisure Centre, but also be able to expand activities into rural areas of the District.

57.7 The Chief Executive stated that the procurement element was important in principle, However, it was also important to demonstrate best value for the future leisure contract.

57.8 Members agreed that provisional proposals should include best value but also detail suggestions for expansion of the existing leisure centre including rural areas.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED: -

1.1 The Committee asked Officers to initiate negotiations with potential providers with a view to coming forward with provisional proposals based on a landlord/tenant agreement seeking:

- **Best value**
- **Development of facilities at the two Leisure Centres, including provision of leisure activity district wide including in the rural areas.**

58 MOS/18/27 INFORMATION BULLETIN

58.1 The Information Bulletin for the Disabled Facilities Grant was deferred until the Joint Committee Meeting on the 14 February 2019.

59 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST

It was RESOLVED: -

That the Forthcoming Decisions List be noted.

60 MOS/18/28 MSDC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN

It was RESOLVED: -

That the MSDC Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan be approved.

61 MOS/18/29 BDC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN

It was RESOLVED: -

That the BDC Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan be noted.

62 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 be excluded from the meeting for the business specified below on the grounds that if the public were present during this item, it is likely that

there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information as indicated against the item.

The Committee was also satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

63 MOS/18/27 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION BULLETIN

It was RESOLVED: -

That the Restricted Service Level Agreement Information Bulletin be noted.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 12.48 pm.

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Chair