

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **MSDC COUNCIL** held in the King Edmund Chamber - Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Monday, 18 March 2019

PRESENT:

Councillor: Derrick Haley (Chair)
 John Levantis (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Roy Barker Gerard Brewster
 David Burn James Caston
 Rachel Eburne Paul Ekpenyong
 John Field Julie Flatman
 Jessica Fleming Elizabeth Gibson-Harries
 Nick Gowrley Gary Green
 Kathie Guthrie Lavinia Hadingham
 Matthew Hicks Glen Horn
 Anne Killett Sarah Mansel
 Wendy Marchant John Matthissen
 Lesley Mayes Suzie Morley
 David Muller Mike Norris
 Derek Osborne Penny Otton
 Timothy Passmore Jane Storey
 Andrew Stringer Keith Welham
 Kevin Welsby John Whitehead
 Jill Wilshaw

In attendance:

Officers: Chief Executive (AC)
 Strategic Director (JS)
 Strategic Director (KN)
 Assistant Director - Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer (EY)
 Assistant Director - Planning and Communities (TB)
 Assistant Director – Assets and Investments (EA)
 Assistant Director - Housing (GF)
 Corporate Manager – Housing Solutions (HT)

Apologies:

Barry Humphreys MBE
Esther Jewson
Diana Kearsley
David Whybrow

103 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS**

103.1 Councillor Gowrley, being a retired member of Unison declared a local non-pecuniary interest in Item 19 Motion to Council.

103.2 Councillor Horn, being a director of the Mid Suffolk Holding Company declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in Item 11 (MC/18/47).

103.3 Councillor Brewster, being a director of the Mid Suffolk Holding Company declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in Item 11 (MC/18/47).

104 MC/18/43 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 FEBRUARY 2019

It was Resolved: -

That subject to Minute 95.24 being amended to read “free shuttle buses” and the headings on the recorded vote being amended, the Minutes of the 21st February 2019 meeting be confirmed and approved as a true record.

105 MC/18/44 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

105.1 The Chairman presented his report and added that he would be presenting a cheque to Suffolk Mind for money raised at the Concert in Stowmarket. He also thanked Councillors for the support that they had given him throughout his term.

105.2 The Chairman then invited the Leader to present his report.

106 LEADER'S REPORT

106.1 The Leader presented his report and, in addition, informed Council that following the closure of the recent public consultation he was pleased to be able to announce that the Council was able to demonstrate an interim housing land supply position for 5.06 years.

106.2 Following the Inspectors decision in Woolpit in November last year, further work was required to evidence that the Council did have a five-year supply. Officers undertook this work during the latter part of the year which involved revisiting numbers but also obtaining agreements with developers to demonstrate which outline planning permissions were deliverable. The Council consulted on the figure of 5.3 years and following comments received during the course of the consultation had revised this position slightly downwards. The figure of 5.06 years would be published as soon as practicable and will be used to inform decision making until the annual position is updated later in the year.

106.3 Lastly the Leader thanked all members of the Council for their hard work since he had been Leader. He said that it had been an absolute privilege and an honour for him to be in that position. And he gave his heartfelt thanks for everything they had done, for the support that they had given him and the residents of Mid Suffolk.

106.4 Councillor Welham queried whether the shop front grant scheme referenced in the report would apply to rural areas?

106.5 In response the Cabinet Member for Economy, informed Council that the 100% grant did cover rural areas.

The grant wasn't at the same level though, because it would be unlikely that there would be the same impact, although valuable as a row of shops in a market town.

106.6 Councillor Welham then asked if the applicants who had applied early and were given less than 100% of the grant could now request a 100% grant.

106.7 In response, the Cabinet Member for Economy confirmed that this would be the case.

106.8 Councillor Otton sought confirmation that any new projects proposed for the Suffolk Public Sectors Leaders Group Fund would involve district Councillors at an early stage, she also expressed her disappointment that the Rattlesden Community Shop had been refused planning permission for a small sign.

106.9 In response, Councillor Gowrley stated that he would speak with the Planning Department to find out what the issues with the sign were. With regard to the Suffolk Growth Fund it had only just been agreed that there would be a fund available. Mid Suffolk District Council would have £250,000, Babergh District Council would have £250,000. A Working Group was being set up to work out what bids could be considered, those submissions would then have to go to the County to get their agreement as the decision makers of the overall pot of funding.

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

107.1 The Corporate Manager for Democratic Services reported that the Council had received a valid petition with 1607 signatures relating to planning application DC/19/00662 in Stowmarket. This would be dealt with through the usual planning process.

108 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

108.1 There were no questions received.

109 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

109.1 There were no questions received.

110 MC/18/45 MID SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

110.1 The Chair of Scrutiny presented the Overview and Scrutiny Committee annual report which illustrated a very busy year for the Committee. He thanked officers for all the support they had given the Committee during the year, councillors on the Committee and colleagues from the Babergh O&S Committee and their Chairman for their input when undertaking a number of joint scrutiny meetings which he felt had worked very well.

110.2 Councillor Welham then **MOVED** the recommendations in the report which Councillor Hadingham **SECONDED**.

110.3 Cllr Gowrley placed on record his thanks to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the work they have done in the last year or so. He felt it was a vital function of the authority and he thought that the work that they have done had been exemplary, He particularly liked the mention in the report of the value-added information which he felt was really important and added that having just moved into a Cabinet system to have this sort of feedback had been excellent.

By unanimous vote

It was Resolved:-

- (i) **That the Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual for 2018/19 be noted.**
- (ii) **That the Mid Suffolk District Council Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan 2019/20 be approved.**

111 MC/18/46 PAY POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2019/20

111.1 Councillor Whitehead introduced the report on behalf of the Chief Executive in his formal role as Head of Paid Service and informed Council that the Localism Act 2011 required a Council to publish and approve each year a Pay Policy Statement which sets out the remuneration of its chief officers, the remuneration of its lowest paid employees and the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and the remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers. Chief officers were defined as the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Assistant Directors. Babergh and Mid Suffolk have a single pay policy statement covering both Councils as both share a single organisational structure with harmonised pay grades and terms and conditions of service. The lowest paid employees are those on the lowest increment within the grade 1 pay band. On 31st March 2019 that full time equivalent pay was £17,391. This pay rate exceeds the national minimum wage and the living wage set by the Living Wage Foundation and indeed this was 5.46% above last year's equivalent figure.

111.2 Councillor Whitehead also pointed out that the second-year data of the gender pay gap reporting, which was now required by a 2017 regulation under the 2010 Equalities Act, had now been published on the website. Both Councils must report separately, although strictly Babergh actually fell below the 250-employee reporting threshold. The data for both Councils was reported along with combined data and that combined data was more meaningful given the fully integrated nature of the workforce.

111.3 Councillor Whitehead then **MOVED** the recommendations in the report which Councillor Storey **SECONDED**.

By unanimous Vote

It was Resolved:-

That the Pay Policy Statement for 2019/20 attached as Appendix A to the report be approved.

112 MC/18/47 NOMINATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS TO THE BOARD OF MSDC (SUFFOLK HOLDINGS) LTD

112.1 Councillor Brewster introduced the report and informed Council that the new directors would be filling a current vacancy and also provide an additional director to increase the resilience of the Board. This would mitigate the risk of the Board being able to form a quorum and consequently being unable to act.

112.2 To further mitigate this risk, urgent decision-making powers were proposed to be delegated from the Board of MSDC Suffolk Holdings Ltd to the Strategic Director with the responsibility for Assets and Investments in the event that a quorum cannot be formed. These measures will further strengthen the Board of MSDC Suffolk Holdings Ltd, reinforcing the strong governance of all of the Council owned companies.

112.3 Councillor Brewster then **MOVED** the recommendations which Councillor Flatman **SECONDED**.

It was Resolved:-

- (i) That the appointment of Councillor Matthew Hicks and Councillor Jane Storey as Directors of the MSDC (Suffolk Holdings) Ltd be approved.**
- (ii) That the resolution of the Holding Company on 10th December 2018, to delegate urgent decision making to the Strategic Director for Assets and Investments in the event that the Holding Company cannot form a quorum, be noted (such delegations will be granted by way of a Power of Attorney).**

113 MC/18/48 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) - CIL EXPENDITURE FRAMEWORK REVIEW

113.1 Councillor Horn presented the report and informed Council that following approval of the expenditure framework in April 2018, it was agreed that the outcomes of the review carried out by the Joint Member Panel over the winter would be reported to Council and be agreed before Bid round 3 started in May 2019. The scope of the review was set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report and captured a lot of information from a wide array of sources including joint meetings between officers and Members in November, Overview and Scrutiny meetings in November, stakeholder meetings in November, feedback from internal teams and the work of the Joint Member Panel.

113.2 Councillor Horn added that detailed in the report was the revised CIL expenditure framework with tracked changes, a revised CIL expenditure communication Strategy and the key dates for 2019 in the form of a calendar to give Members confidence and certainty around the timescales. All of the changes took account of the recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny.

113.3 Councillor Horn then **MOVED** the recommendations in the report, which Councillor Flatman **SECONDED**.

113.4 Councillor Stringer sought clarification on who would fund the planning permissions, etc on education bids?

113.5 In response, Councillor Horn said as it stood now he would expect those bids to come from Suffolk Council but in the future, he didn't know what the answer would be with academies but would seek further clarification on this.

113.6 Councillor Welham sought clarification on the cost to the parishes of their clerk administering the CIL process and asked if it was possible that the parish CIL money could be used to reimburse the clerk for the extra work?

113.7 In response, Councillor Horn said that in terms of the clerks being able to make a claim for the time that they have put into the process, what was made very clear and what was discussed by the Joint Member Group was that the funding was purely for infrastructure.

113.8 The Infrastructure Officer added that the CIL regulations for local Councils stated that neighbourhood CIL must be spent on mitigating the impact of development in their area and any other matters which deal with that. So was quite vague, there was also parish council guidance which required them to justify their choices of expenditure in their yearly expenditure statement.

It was Resolved:-

- (i) That the detailed CIL Expenditure Framework (Appendix A of the report), the CIL Expenditure Framework Communications Strategy (Appendix B) and the 2019 Key CIL Dates Calendar (Appendix C) be approved as recommended. (Appendices D and E comprise the CIL "Regulation 123 lists" and were approved in January 2016 and accompany the other documents for reference purposes only)**
- (ii) That the Joint Member Panel inform the next Review of the CIL Expenditure Framework within the timescales contained in (iii) and Appended to the report.**
- (iii) That the following recommendations as suggested by the Joint Member Panel also be approved:-**

- Delegated authority to be given to the Assistant Director of Planning and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and the Cabinet Member for Communities, to produce a replacement for the Regulation 123 lists if these are altered/made obsolete/substituted by the Government in any new forthcoming legislation (together with any consequent changes to the key documents comprising Appendices A and B (to reflect any legislative change)).
- The CIL Expenditure Framework should be reviewed again whilst Bid round 4 is being considered (October 2019 onwards) so that any amended scheme can be in place before Bid round 5 occurs (May 2020).
- Delegated authority to be given to the Assistant Director of Planning and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and the Cabinet Member for Communities for the production, any amendment of and publication (on the Web site) of a CIL calendar each year to provide certainty around the Bid round process and other important measures/events throughout the year. (Appendix C provides the proposed key CIL dates calendar for 2019).

114 MC/18/49 STRADBROKE NEIGHBOURHOOD [DEVELOPMENT] PLAN

114.1 Councillor Horn introduced the report and informed Council that work on this plan had commenced in autumn 2014 and has been through an extensive period of preparation, public consultation and independent examination. Reports and plans came before Cabinet last December when it was agreed that, subject to the plans being modified in accordance with the independent examiners recommendations, they would be advanced to local referendums. The modifications were made, and the Stradbroke local referendum took place on 31st January 2019. The total number of votes cast was 481 which was approximately a 40% turn out, the number of 'yes' votes cast was 387 (80.5%) the number of 'no' votes cast was 94 (19.5%).

114.2 Councillor Horn **MOVED** the recommendations in the report which Councillor Flatman **SECONDED**.

114.3 Councillor Eburne commended the fact that both Stradbroke and Debenham were at the point of their neighbourhood plans but questioned whether there was adequate resource going forward and also asked how the plans were recognised within the development management process?

114.4 In response, Councillor Horn stated that in terms of resourcing for neighbourhood planning, the Council had committed £120,000 this year on the basis that the Council was aware that there were parishes who wanted to develop them so more resources had been made available, this would be reviewed because the Council was committed to ensuring they were fully resourced. In terms of planning weight, the neighbourhood plans did hold weight and it was important that Members were fully trained up to make the best use of neighbourhood plans for all of our communities.

It was Resolved :-

- (i) That the Stradbroke Neighbourhood Plan be formally ‘made’ (adopted) as part of the District Council’s Development Plan and be used to help determine planning applications where relevant.**
- (ii) That the Decision Statement (Appendix 1 of the report) be published with immediate effect.**

115 MC/18/50 DEBENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD [DEVELOPMENT] PLAN

115.1 Councillor Horn introduced the report and informed Council that work commenced on the Debenham Neighbourhood Plan in Autumn of 2014 and it has been through the same rigorous period of preparation, public consultation and independent examination as Stradbroke. The plan had come before Cabinet last December when it was agreed that subject to it being modified in accordance with the independent examiners recommendation, it be advanced to a local referendum. Those modifications were made and the Debenham local referendum took place on 7th February 2019. The total number of votes cast on the referendum was 1018 approximately 59% turn out, the number of ‘yes’ votes cast was 972 and the number of ‘no’ votes cast was just 46.

115.2 Councillor Horn then **MOVED** the recommendations in the report, which Councillor Guthrie **SECONDED**.

It was Resolved:-

- (i) That the Debenham Neighbourhood Plan be formally ‘made’ (adopted) as part of the District Council’s Development Plan and be used to help determine planning applications where relevant.**
- (ii) That the Decision Statement (Appendix 1 of the report) be published with immediate effect.**

116 MC/18/51 JOINT COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

116.1 Councillor Flatman introduced the report and summarised the background to its development. The Community Strategy had been developed as the Council’s response to some of the bigger community related changes which were taking place within the district and the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. It sets out the kind of vision the Council sees for its communities now and for the future as the population increases and gets older and needs more support whilst also focusing on giving younger people the best start in life. The Strategy celebrated the strength and vibrancy of many of the communities, and how local action undertaken by community volunteers made such a difference to the lives of the people who lived there. It was also recognised within the Strategy the pressures that population, economic and environmental changes present not only to the Council but across the whole public sector. Many issues could not just be tackled by the Council, therefore the Council’s partners must be involved. Partners have supported the development of the draft strategy and have realised the importance of this work and how it helped to shape their strategic decision making.

116.2 Councillor Flatman added that it was important not to ignore that what for some communities had become a more strained relationship particularly in relation to growth and planning issues, the Strategy could not provide all the answers and other plans were being developed to address these issues. Within the Strategy was detailed a commitment for 10 approaches not only to make the way processes would work more effective, but to make a commitment to develop and maintain relationships within communities. The final section within the Strategy summarised what this will mean in practice. The Strategy was not asking Councillors to approve an action plan strategy but was intended to provide overall direction. A delivery plan would be developed in collaboration with partners.

116.3 Councillor Flatman then **MOVED** the recommendations in the report which Councillor Muller **SECONDED**.

116.4 Councillor Killest referred to the 10 approaches and the devolved approach within the Strategy and asked if there had been any discussion as to whether there would be any decision making that would be devolved to perhaps a parish or community level?

116.5 In response, the Assistant Director for Communities informed Council one of the approaches that the Strategy identified and explored was an approach to community budgeting. That could be at one end of the spectrum highly significant in terms of budget setting and at the other end of the spectrum can often refer to some community led grant funding. So it was essential to explore where along that spectrum the Council would sit.

116.6 Councillor Hicks felt that the measures of success within the Strategy were vague and asked how the Council could clearly work out if the Strategy was working?

116.7 In response, the Assistant Director for Communities confirmed that a delivery plan was being developed that would have clear metrics with actions identified in the action plan. That would allow the Council to be more precise and more specific about exactly what it is that the Strategy was achieving.

By unanimous vote

It was Resolved:-

- (i) That the Joint Communities Strategy, attached as Appendix A to the report be approved.**
- (ii) That the Assistant Director for Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, be delegated the authority to make future minor amendments and updates to the Strategy, where required and appropriate.**

(iii) That, once the Strategy is approved, the Assistant Director for Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, be delegated the authority to take steps to make the vision and the direction of the Strategy more accessible to local communities, partner organisations and our staff, by:

- producing a summary version with more visuals and infographics,
- producing a delivery plan,
- producing a series of short films to explain the vision and the ways we want to achieve it.

117 MC/18/52 ADOPTION OF THE HOMES AND HOUSING STRATEGY 2019-2024

117.1 Councillor Wilshaw introduced the report and said that she was pleased to present for adoption the first ever Joint Homes and Housing Strategy. Everyone needed and deserved somewhere to live and call home. However, with house prices approximately eleven times the local average wage, delivery of new homes was in a difficult place, residents were still feeling the effects of the 2007 economic recession, very high private rents and people continuing to live longer. Residents were facing an unprecedented set of housing market circumstances which combined made it very difficult especially for lower earners and first-time buyers to find somewhere to call home. This Strategy will provide the right direction and level of accountability to realise the 9 aims set out and a comprehensive set of action plans are included. The actions are not limited to what only the Council can achieve but also working with all stakeholders involved in creating and sustaining a vibrant and accessible housing market, furthermore the Strategy makes it clear it is not just what the Council does but how to do it. The Homes and Housing Strategy committed the Council to working with anyone who wants to develop and deliver the right homes in the right places at the right time making the most effective use of housing stock already here. The Strategy made it clear the Council wants its residents to be able to find and secure homes which were affordable and high quality enabling them to build settled, safe and healthy lives in sustainable and thriving communities.

117.2 Finally, with such an ambitious housing vision it was important to stress that this was a long- term commitment. The Strategy and Action Plan presented sets the scene for the next five years focusing on ways to improve the quality choice of supplied homes.

117.3 Councillor Wilshaw then **MOVED** the recommendations in the report which Councillor Horn **SECONDED**.

117.4 Councillor Stringer raised a point relating to self-builders and felt that this was an aspect that had not been touched on in the Strategy.

117.5 Councillor Welham also raised a point relating to page 211 of the Strategy and said that when talking about viability it was not just about the cheapness of construction but should also be looking at producing houses with low energy and maintenance costs to make them more viable for people on low incomes.

117.6 In response, the Assistant Director for Housing gave his assurance that the Council was committed to provide sustainable houses and also informed Councillor Stringer that the Joint Local Plan now being formulated was looking at how to support and encourage the use of self-building where possible.

117.7 Councillor Eburne asked whether the Council would be looking at housing for social rent as part of this Strategy.

117.8 Councillor Wilshaw confirmed that this was the case.

By unanimous Vote

It was Resolved:-

- (i) **That the Homes and Housing Strategy (2019-2024) attached as Appendix A and associated Action Plans attached as Appendix B be approved for implementation.**
- (ii) **That the Assistant Director for Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing be delegated the authority to make future minor amendments and updates to the Strategy and Action Plans, where required and appropriate.**

118 MC/18/53 HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019 - 2024

118.1 Councillor Wilshaw presented the report and informed Council that it was required to publish a review of homelessness in the district and a Strategy focussed on tackling homelessness every 5 years. The Strategy has taken into consideration the new Homelessness Reduction Act which commenced last year. Since the introduction of the Act the Housing Solutions Team had seen an unprecedented increase in workloads far above what was predicted. However, despite this the team remained focussed on providing the highest possible service to residents and have prevented or relieved homelessness in over 125 cases since the Act came into effect. The review of the last five years shows that significant work had been undertaken to resolve homelessness issues including accessing funding from MHCLG to tackle rough sleeping, successfully preventing homelessness in the private sector and preventing and relieving homelessness in more than 820 cases. Preventing homelessness was a priority for Mid Suffolk District Council. The vision was to end rough sleeping in the district, working with clients as early as possible to prevent homelessness occurring, further reducing the use of bed and breakfast accommodation, supporting households to secure accommodation in the private sector and ensure every person contacting services received the same level of in depth advice and assistance to resolve their housing crisis. With key partners and stakeholders including those in the voluntary sector, the Council has developed six key priorities within the Strategy with associated actions to enable the Vision to be delivered for the service for the next 5 years.

118.2 Councillor Wilshaw then **MOVED** the recommendations in the report which Councillor Gowrley **SECONDED**.

118.3 Councillor Otton stated that she would be pleased to support the Strategy but asked if the Strategy could be amended to read “a Strategy for the prevention and the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping.”

118.4 Councillor Wilshaw accepted the amendment.

118.5 Councillor Killett asked if there was any data collected in urban areas to see whether people from the District were rough sleeping in other areas?

118.6 In response, the Corporate Manager for Housing Solutions confirmed that when the urban districts did have somebody present from the district they would contact the Council and work with them to integrate them back into the district.

It was Resolved:-

- (i) **That the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2019-2024), attached as Appendix A of the report and associated action plan, attached as Appendix B be approved for implementation.**
- (ii) **That the Assistant Director for Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing be delegated the authority to make future minor amendments and updates to the Strategy and Action Plan, where required and appropriate.**

119 MC/18/54 CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

119.1 The Monitoring Officer presented the revised Constitution which had been the work of a cross party working group. She added that she was happy to endorse that as being a legally compliant Constitution.

119.2 Councillor Otton **MOVED** the recommendations in the report which Councillor Horn **SECONDED**.

119.3 Councillor Stringer queried whether the Planning Charters had been reviewed?

119.4 In response, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that these were due to be reviewed and a working group of Members and officers would be constituted in the new municipal year to undertake this.

It was Resolved:-

That the recommended changes of the Constitution Working Group as set out in Appendix B of the report be approved.

120 MOTION ON NOTICE

120.1 On the proposal of Councillor Gowrley and seconded by Councillor Ekpenyong

It was **MOVED:**

“that this Council endorses the adoption of Unison’s End Violence at Work Charter”

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

It was Resolved:-

That this Council endorses the adoption of Unison’s End Violence at Work Charter.

121 COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS

121.1 There were no Councillor appointments.

Before the meeting ended the Chairman personally thanked all Councillors and officers for their hard work over the past four years and sent best wishes to all those Councillors who were not standing for election. He also thanked everyone for their support to him as Chairman and said that he was very sad to be leaving the Council.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 7.22 pm.

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Chair