

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, 10 February 2020

PRESENT:

Councillor: Suzie Morley (Chair)
Gerard Brewster (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: David Burn
Jessica Fleming
Harry Richardson
Julie Flatman
Peter Gould
John Whitehead

In attendance:

Councillor(s): Rachel Eburne
John Field
Keith Welham

Officers: Chief Executive Officer (AC)
Strategic Director (KN)
Assistant Director – Corporate Resources (KS)
Assistant Director – Housing (GF)
Assistant Director – Assets and Investments (EA)
Assistant Director – Environment and Commercial Partnerships (CC)
Operations Manager – Shared Revenue Partnership (AW)
Deputy Monitoring Officer (JR)
Governance Officer (CP)

WELCOME

The Leader of the Council welcomed Councillor Harry Richardson as a Cabinet Member, and thanked Councillor Peter Gould for taking on the responsibility of Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments. Councillor Morley advised that the remainder of the meeting would be chaired by Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Gerard Brewster.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

There were no declarations of interest.

MCA/19/41 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 06 JANUARY 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 06 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct

record.

MCA/19/42 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

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

None received.

QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS

A question had been received from Councillor John Matthissen and included in papers tabled at the meeting, along with a response.

MATTERS REFERRED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OR JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES

Councillor Welham, Chair of the Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee, advised that the Committee welcomed the additional funds allocated to climate change in Report MCA/19/43 Draft General Fund Budget 2020/21 and Four-Year Outlook. The Committee had questions regarding the funding of civil parking enforcement as detailed in paragraphs 20.19 – 20.22 of the draft minute from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Assistant Director for Environment and Commercial Partnerships advised that revenue from off-street car parking was returned to Mid Suffolk District Council to fund the parking function, and on-street parking was a Suffolk County Council function with funding being returned to them.

Councillor Welham commented that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were satisfied with report MCA/19/44 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2020/21 and Longer-Term Outlook, and that the Committee would like to see a timescale for the programme of building new council properties.

Councillor Brewster advised that the recommendations regarding report number MCA/19/47 Outputs for 2019-23 to Support the Delivery of the Joint Corporate Plan, would be discussed alongside the report later in the meeting at the relevant point in the agenda.

FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST

The Forthcoming Decisions List was noted.

MCA/19/43 GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2020/21 AND FOUR-YEAR OUTLOOK

The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report and advised Members that the report had been presented to Cabinet in January 2020 and to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Whitehead provided details of the updated figures contained within the report. Members were advised that the report contained the Pay Policy Statement which had previously been a separate report.

The recommendations in the report and the tabled paper were proposed by Councillor Whitehead. Councillor Gould seconded the recommendations and commented that the budget displayed an ideal balance between risk and opportunity.

Councillor Eburne thanked the administration for liaising with them on the budget proposals and commented that there were issues which she would like to see more work carried out on, for example electric vehicle charging units and the Stowmarket visioning work.

Following a question raised by Councillor Eburne, the Assistant Director for Corporate Resources confirmed that the final finance settlement made on 06 February 2020 had not resulted in any changes to the figures contained in the budget.

Councillor Brewster commented that some of the issues raised by Councillor Eburne would be covered by Report MCa/19/47 Outputs for 2019-23 to Support the Delivery of the Joint Corporate Plan, which would follow later in the agenda.

Councillor Field queried the pension fund assumptions contained in the report. The Assistant Director for Corporate Resources clarified that there was a 1% reduction per annum included for the next three years.

In response to a question from Councillor Welham regarding the increasing workload and the affect on staff members, particularly with regard to the Neighbourhood Planning Team, the Chief Executive confirmed that the current level of resources was sufficient.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:-

- 1.1 That the General Fund revenue budget proposals for 2020/21 and four-year outlook set out in the report and the updates tabled at the meeting be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 27 February 2020 as detailed below.**
- 1.2 That the General Fund capital budget proposals for 2020/21 set out in Appendix B in the report be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 27 February 2020.**
- 1.3 That the General Fund Budget for 2020/21 is based on an increase to Council Tax of 1.66%, which equates to £2.76 per annum (5p per week) for a Band D property, to support the Council's overall financial position.**

- 1.4 That from the 1st April 2020 properties that are unoccupied and unfurnished (Class C discount) receive a 25% reduction for the first 28 days as set out in section 11 of the report.
- 1.5 That the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 as set out in section 12 of the report be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 27 February 2020.

Reason for Decision: To bring together all the relevant information to enable Cabinet Members to review, consider and comment upon the Councils General Fund budget before recommendation to Council.

MCA/19/44 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET 2020/21 AND LONGER-TERM OUTLOOK

The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report which had been reviewed by the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2020. Councillor Whitehead advised Members of the revisions to the figures contained in the draft budget and moved the recommendations. Councillor Flatman seconded the recommendations.

Councillor Eburne enquired what action was being taken to ensure costs were as low as possible for sheltered housing tenants. The Assistant Director for Housing advised that plans were in place for the larger Sheltered Housing schemes to upgrade heating systems and also to provide more energy efficient systems. A review was to be undertaken to consider the wider context of sheltered housing later this year.

Councillor Whitehead responded to Councillors Eburne's comments regarding maximising the opportunities to install PV panels on Council owned properties, and advised that there had previously been complications with installing these systems in multi tenanted properties however this would be reviewed again in the future.

In response to a question from Councillor Field regarding capital spend, the Assistant Director for Housing confirmed that work would be undertaken over the forthcoming months with Cabinet Members to review the HRA business plan.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:-

- 1.1 That the HRA revenue budget proposals for 2020/21 and the longer-term outlook set out in the report and the updates tabled at the meeting be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 27 February 2020 as detailed below.
- 1.2 That the HRA capital budget proposals for 2020/21 set out in Appendix A in the report be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 27 February 2020.
- 1.3 That the CPI + 1% increase of 2.7% in Council House rents, equivalent to an average rent increase of £2.19 a week be implemented.
- 1.4 That garage rents are kept at the same level as 2019/20.
- 1.5 That Sheltered Housing Service charges be increased by £2 per week to

- reduce the subsidy by £30k.
- 1.6 That Sheltered Housing utility charges be increased by 5% (average £0.62 increase per week).
 - 1.7 That the budgeted deficit of £564k be transferred from the HRA Reserves in 2020/21.
 - 1.8 That in principle, Right to Buy (RTB) receipts should be retained to enable continued development and acquisition of new council dwellings.
 - 1.9 That the revised 30-year HRA Business Plan in Appendix B of the report be noted.

Reason for Decision: To bring together all the relevant information to enable Cabinet Members to review, consider and comment upon the Councils Housing Revenue Account budget before recommendations to Council.

MCA/19/45 JOINT CAPITAL, INVESTMENT AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES 2020/21

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Finance who explained to Members that the report had been presented to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and would be presented to Full Council in February. Councillor Whitehead explained that this was a joint report and the strategies contained within the report applied to both Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils.

Councillor Whitehead proposed recommendations 3.1 to 3.8 of the report and explained that recommendation 3.8 had been proposed by the Joint Audit and Standards Committee. The recommendations were seconded by Councillor Burn.

In response to a question from Councillor Field, Councillor Whitehead provided details of the types of returns from the various proposed investments.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:-

- 1.1 That the Joint Capital Strategy for 2020/21, including the Prudential Indicators set out in Appendix A of the report and the updates tabled at the meeting be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 27 February 2020 as detailed below.
- 1.2 That the Joint Investment Strategy for 2020/21, as set out in Appendix B of the report and the updates tabled at the meeting be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 27 February.
- 1.3 That the Joint Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21, including the Joint Annual Investment Strategy as set out in Appendix C of the report and the updates tabled at the meeting be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 27 February 2020 .
- 1.4 That the Joint Treasury Management Indicators as set out in Appendix D

of the report be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 27 February 2020.

- 1.5 That the Joint Treasury Management Policy Statement as set out in Appendix G of the report be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 27 February 2020.
- 1.6 That the Joint Minimum Revenue Provision Statement as set out in Appendix H of the report be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 27 February 2020.
- 1.7 That the key factors and information relating to and affecting treasury management activities set out in Appendices E, F, and I of the report be noted.
- 1.8 That Officers and Members, Working Parties and whatever mechanisms have been set up commence exploring alternative investment strategies that take greater account of the Councils' own declaration of a climate change emergency.

Reason for Decision: Local authorities are required to approve their Treasury Management Strategy (TMS), their Capital Strategy (including an overview of the TMS) and their Investment Strategy annually before the start of the financial year.

MCA/19/46 BUSINESS RATES DISCOUNT POLICY

The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced report number MCA/19/46 and advised Members that changes to the existing Business Rates Discounts had been introduced by Government and explained the implications of these changes to local businesses.

Councillor Whitehead proposed the recommendations in the report which was seconded by Councillor Morley.

The Shared Revenues Partnership Operations Manager responded to a query from Councillor Brewster regarding the discount applicable to charity shops and provided an explanation as to how this was applied.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:-

That authority be given to the Assistant Director – Corporate Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Finance and the Leaders to agree a local discretionary discount for pubs, update the current retail discount policy and extend the local newspaper discount, once the Government has provided the full details of the schemes.

Reason for Decision: To provide a discretionary retail discount, local newspaper discount and pub discount to support ratepayers in Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

To enable the implementation of the discretionary discount schemes.

MCA/19/47 OUTPUTS FOR 2019-23 TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF THE JOINT CORPORATE PLAN

The Leader of the Council introduced report MCA/19/47 which set out the key proposed outputs for 2019-2023. Councillor Morley explained that the outputs supported the six priorities of the Joint Corporate Plan, and each of these priorities was supported by its own strategy. Corporate Performance indicators were currently being revised.

Councillor Morley then introduced the five new outputs contained within the tabled papers which had been proposed following discussion with the Green Group and Liberal Democrat Group. An all Member Briefing would be held in March 2020 to enable Members to fully understand the Corporate Outputs.

The recommendations in the report and the addendum report tabled at the meeting were moved by Councillor Morley and seconded by Councillor Brewster.

Councillor Welham, Chair of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised Members that much debate had taken place at the committee meeting regarding the report. The Members of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee had expressed concerns over how the outputs would be able to be measured and their recommendation to Cabinet reflected this.

Councillor Eburne thanked the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance for the discussions which had taken place. Councillor Eburne expressed concern over the focus on outputs rather than outcomes, and enquired what the corporate outcomes were and if funding was available to deliver them.

In response the Chief Executive confirmed that the outcomes should already be contained within the six key strategic priorities, and that these strategies should be revisited should they become ineffective.

Councillor Eburne then enquired how the social return on investment would be shown. It was confirmed by the Chief Executive that there was a project being led by the Assistant Director for Communities in conjunction with the Finance Department and Commissioning and Procurement.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:-

- 1.1 That Cabinet agreed the outputs for 2019-23 set out at Appendix One of the main report and also the five additional outputs listed at paragraph 1.25 of the addendum report, tabled at the meeting.**

1.2 That Cabinet agreed that the environmental outputs relevant to the parameters of the Climate Change Task Force be referred to that group.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that Babergh and Mid Suffolk have appropriate plans in place to address the challenges and seize the opportunities facing the districts, and their organisations, for the foreseeable future.

MCA/19/48 STOWMARKET FOOTBALL CLUB

The Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments introduced the report which sought to support the Stowmarket Community Sports & Social Club (CIC) by securing a long-term lease for their premises.

Councillor Gould confirmed that Appendix A of the report should read 'land to be leased to CIC by MSDC'.

Councillor Gould advised Members of the tabled paper which contained an additional recommendation regarding action to be taken in the event that Option 3a of the report is not achievable.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Gould and seconded by Councillor Morley.

Councillor Eburne asked in view of the short timeframe, would the CIC and the Stowmarket Church Charity be able to resolve any issues. The Assistant Director for Assets and Investments confirmed that the Council was working with both the CIC and the Stowmarket Church Charity to resolve issues within the timescale.

In response to a query from Councillor Welham the Assistant Director confirmed that the lease to the CIC would be for a period of 50 years.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:-

- 1.1 That Cabinet approved Options 3 and 3a of the report being progressed simultaneously.**
- 1.2 That Cabinet approved the grant of a new lease for 50 years at a peppercorn rent of the Council owned land and continuation of the existing lease with the Church until expiry in 2025.**
- 1.3 That Cabinet approved the grant of a sublease of the Church land from the Council to Stowmarket CIC which is co-terminus with the existing head lease at an annual rent of £4,000.**
- 1.4 That in the event that Option 3a is not achievable due to the lack of agreement with the Stowmarket Church Charities, the Assistant Director for Assets and Investments in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments is authorised to agree an alternative transaction structure in respect of the Stowmarket Church Charities owned land subject to a maximum financial cost of £55,000.**

Reason for Decision:

- 1.1 To enable the CIC to secure occupation and successfully apply for Football Association funding.
- 1.2 To minimise the Councils expenditure and ensure the most effective outcome is reached securing the future of the CIC and enabling it to thrive.

MCA/19/49 JOINT AREA PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Environment introduced the report, which set out the Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Joint Area Parking Management Plan.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Fleming and seconded by Councillor Flatman.

Councillor Welham raised a query regarding parking enforcement in instances where a footpath had been obstructed but no yellow line existed. It was clarified by the Assistant Director for Environment and Commercial Partnerships that where a Traffic Regulation Order was in place a civil enforcement officer can enforce. If a Traffic Regulation Order was not in place, the police were able to enforce. Councillor Welham advised that this was not the advice provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner and requested that this be followed up for clarity. This was agreed by Councillor Flatman.

Councillor Eburne enquired whether there was a limit on how much money received from parking fees would be spent on the parking function. The Assistant Director for Environment and Commercial Partnerships advised that the parking income was expected to pay for the parking service however exact figures were not available and therefore these would be provided outside of the meeting.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:- That Cabinet agreed the final content of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Area Parking Management Plan following a stakeholder consultation process undertaken February - May 2019.

Reason for Decision: The Councils are required to have a parking policy and to demonstrate that they have reviewed the content. Suffolk County Councils Parking Management Strategy which forms part of the application to the DfT for the granting of CPE powers for the remaining majority of Suffolk requires the district and boroughs to develop Area Parking Plans.

MCA/19/50 LEISURE INVESTMENT PROPOSALS - MID SUFFOLK LEISURE CENTRES

The Cabinet Member for Communities introduced the report and outlined the proposed plans for the existing sites in Stowmarket and Stradbroke.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by Councillor Flatman and

seconded by Councillor Richardson.

Councillor Eburne enquired whether the report would be presented to Cabinet again in the future. Councillor Flatman confirmed that there were no plans for the report to be presented to Cabinet however updates would be provided to Cabinet of any progress made.

In response to a question from Councillor Field the Assistant Director for Environment and Commercial Partnerships confirmed that as the building was owned by the Authority there were no issue with State Aid.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:-

- 1.1 That Cabinet approved use of £2.2m from the Growth and Efficiency Fund, together with £200,000 from existing leisure facility capital funds to undertake the proposed development and refurbishment works.**
- 1.2 That Cabinet agreed to delegate to the Assistant Director – Environmental and Commercial Partnerships in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, to undertake a process to achieve the most economically advantageous costs to enable the works to be undertaken.**
- 1.3 That Cabinet recommends to Council on 27 February 2020 that the 2020/21 Capital Programme and the Joint Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies 2020/21 be updated to reflect the financial implications set out in this report.**

Reason for Decision: To meet the outcomes of the adopted Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)

The Cabinet decided not to go into closed session as matters had already been discussed and the recommendations agreed.

103 PART 2 - MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PRESS AND PUBLIC EXCLUDED

MCA/19/50 LEISURE INVESTMENTS PROPOSAL - MID SUFFOLK LEISURE CENTRES

Matters covered by this report were discussed in the open session.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 04:20pm.

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Chair (and date)