

BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS

Minutes of the meeting of the **JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Virtual Meeting on Monday, 23 November 2020

PRESENT:

Councillor: Alastair McCraw - Chair

Councillors:	Terence Carter	James Caston
	Paul Ekpenyong	Jane Gould
	Kathryn Grandon	Mary McLaren
	David Muller	Adrian Osborne
	Keith Scarff	Keith Welham (Co-Chair)

In attendance:

Councillor(s): Susan Maria Ayres
Gerard Brewster
Margaret Maybury
Jan Osborne

Officers: Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer (EY)
Corporate Manager – Governance and Civic Office (JR)
Senior Governance Support Officer (HH)

Apologies:

Siân Dawson

1 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

1.1 There were no declarations from Councillors.

2 JOS/20/1TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2020

It was Resolved: -

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 4 September 2020 be confirmed as a true record and be signed at the next practicable opportunity

3 JOS/20/2 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 21 SEPTEMBER 2020

It was Resolved:

That with the following amendments the minutes of the meeting held on the 21 September 2020 be confirmed as a true record and be signed at the next practicable opportunity:

**Paragraph 77.14 – 77.15 amend band to ban
Paragraph 77.19 amend quit to quiet**

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

4.1 None received.

5 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

5.1 None received.

6 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS

6.1 None received.

7 JOS/20/3 REVIEW OF OUTSIDE BODIES

The Chairman invited Jan Robinson, Corporate Manager – Governance and Civic Office to introduce the report JOS/20/3.

7.1 The Corporate Manager – Governance and Civic Office outlined the previous review from 2019 of Representation on Outside Bodies.

7.2 The current review had been undertaken during the Covid-19 Pandemic, which had caused many outside bodies to delay meetings until now. However, the review had taken into account the responses received from a brief questionnaire forwarded to the Outside Bodies.

7.3 She pointed out to Members that they would only be indemnified by the Council for their Council duties and not for any outside duties that Members themselves embarked on.

7.4 The Chairman advised that he intended to address each Outside Body for Members' comments, however, there were representations which could only be appointed to by Cabinet member and leaders and those positions would not be discussed at the meeting.

7.5 He asked Councillors Welham and Caston, who were representative on the **East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board** to provide a summary. The Board meet three times a year but undertook work between meetings. The work involved more than drainage and the management of other water related issues were part of the function of the board. Consideration had been made to rename the panel to the East Suffolk Water Management Board.

7.6 Councillor Welham stated the representation was useful for the District and for the Councils' involvement in Planning Committees.

7.7 Councillor Carter asked if the work of the Drainage Board fed into local groups for the river Gipping and environmental Groups, for the possible

contaminates into Gipping.

- 7.8 Councillor Welham responded that it was unlikely as this was a routine matter and not a contaminate issues.
- 7.9 Councillor McCraw then addressed the **Suffolk Drainage Flood Risk Sub Committee**. The committee dealt with a variety of matters including future water shortage for Suffolk and East Anglia. The Committee met twice a year and made site visits. Any organisation involved with water issues were part of the Committee.
- 7.10 Councillor Caston added that the Suffolk Drainage Flood Risk Sub Scrutiny Committee crossed over with the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board and that it issues included climate changes, planning and sustainable Drainage systems, agricultural policies covering flood risk and the allowance to flood area to ensure other areas did not. As a farmer, he found it personally interesting, as the committee address a broad area of subjects.
- 7.11 Councillor Ekpenyong asked that since there was a 30% water deficiency in water need in East Anglia, how would water issues be mitigated in relation to housing developments, especially as the Council was under pressure to provide more for residents.
- 7.12 Councillor McCraw responded there was a strategic approach to water management and the anticipated water shortage in East Anglia. There were approximately 50 partners involved in a water management partnership to address these issues.
- 7.13 Councillor Caston detailed how work was being undertaken to identify areas suitable for both domestic and industrial developments.
- 7.14 Councillor Welham added that that there was a major shift in water management and efforts were made to identify better ways to retain flood water. Water was a valuable resource now and for the future.
- 7.15 Councillor Ekpenyong responded that it was important that both energy and water resources were taken into consideration to ensure that industrial and domestic developments were developed in the future.
- 7.16 Councillor McCraw informed Members that industrial developments ranked third behind domestic and agricultural use in the current water consumption.
- 7.17 In response to Councillor Carter's query regarding being an observer on the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Sub Committee, Councillor McCraw would forward information directly to Councillor Carter.
- 7.18 Councillor Welham explained that the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board now worked on retaining water instead of directing it to the sea.
- 7.19 The Chairman invited Councillor Gerard Brewster, Cabinet Member for

Economy and Mid Suffolk's Representative on the **Haven Gateway Partnership** to provide background information on Partnership.

- 7.20 Councillor Brewster informed Members that it was a cross border project and had been useful in the past, however the Partnership had been attempting to reinvent itself and it now seemed that the Partnership focused more on Essex areas. He thought that currently Babergh representation might benefited more than Mid Suffolk's due to the cross border with Essex. He had attempted to gain information from the Partnership during the past few months to enable him to identify the benefits for Mid Suffolk District Council.
- 7.21 Members discussed the Councils' involvement with Haven Gateway Partnership and that Cabinet Members were the elected representative for this organisation.
- 7.22 Councillor McCraw suggested that the issues were raised via the Cabinet Member to the Haven Gateway Partnership, as Councillor Brewster was concerned that the funding for Heaven Gateway Partnership was not spend in the Council's interests.
- 7.23 Councillor Carter raised an issue with regards to appointments of observers to Outside Bodies and thought that both Councils could benefit from having member representations on **HomeStart** in the form of observers if possible. He added that might also be the case for the Stowmarket Citizens Advice.
- 7.24 The Chairman then address the **Citizen Advice (CA)** representation and informed Members that Councillor Adrian Osborne was an observer on the Sudbury and District Citizens Advice for Babergh Council and that Councillor Maybury was a trustee and as Director for the same Citizens Advice, She did not represent Babergh Council in her role. Both Councillors were present to respond to questions.
- 7.25 Councillor Muller informed Members that he was also a trustee for the Stowmarket CA and not elected by the Council. He detailed the work undertaken by the CA including that funding was received from Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council.
- 7.26 Councillor Maybury explained that the CA in Sudbury had organised a programme for debt advice, which enabled the CA to respond to an increasing demand for debt advice.
- 7.27 Councillor Welham noted that historically Mid Suffolk Council had appointed a trustee, who had taken an active role in the Stowmarket CA. He noted that the Mid Suffolk Council had not recently elected a representative to the Stowmarket CA and that he had raised this with the Leader of the Council. He had received a response that due to a risk of conflict of interests for an elected member of the Council it would not be beneficial for the Council to elect an observer. Officers held regular meetings with the CA, and it was felt that there was a risk of putting an elected representative in a difficult position.

- 7.28 Councillor Welham suggested that an observer be elected in line with the arrangement for Babergh District Council, as he felt it would be a benefit to have a member involved to provide updates to the Council from a Member perspective.
- 7.29 Members considered the implications of members being elected as observers in relation to declarations of local non-pecuniary interests.
- 7.30 The Corporate Manager – Governance and Civic Office clarified how proposed representatives were selected for the list of put forward to the Annual Council. The Leader offer positions to the members whom she wished be representation on Outside Bodies and any unfilled positions would be offered to Group Leaders of the opposition to fill.
- 7.31 Councillor Maybury added that she felt an observer on the Sudbury and District CA was a benefit to the Council and residents.
- 7.32 Councillor McCraw moved to the next item, which was **Joint Advisory Committee and Partnership to Dedham Vale (AONB)** and **Joint Advisory Committee and Partnership to Suffolk Coast and Heath (AONB)**, for which members agreed that representation was vital.
- 7.33 As there were no representative for the **Museum of East Anglian Rural Life (MEAL)** and **Pin Mill**, the Chair invited Councillor Ayres to update the Committee on the **Quay Theatre**. He added that Babergh Council provided funding for the Theatre.
- 7.34 Councillor Ayres was elected a representative for Sudbury Town Council and informed Members that there had been weekly meetings and that it had been very busy despite the Covid-19 Lockdown.
- 7.35 Councillor Jan Osborne provided an update on the work of Sudbury and District CA and how Covid-19 had impacted on the service provided.
- 7.36 Councillor McLaren outlined the meetings and work of **the Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee**, which met quarterly for six hours long meetings. It was cross authority committee and Councillor Fleming chaired the Committee. The scrutiny process involved health providers across the County, Norfolk and Essex and she found the work stimulating and useful. The Committee put health service providers through a strict security process, and the participants had a wide range of interests. The work also involved the Clinical Commission Group. However, she was concerned that there was no formal way of reporting back to members on the work undertaken.
- 7.37 Councillor Welham then updated on the **Suffolk Police and Crime Panel** and explained that the Panel scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PPC) decisions for the work programme and the council tax to be levied. The Panel could veto the budget within set parameters. The Panel discussed valuable resources for rural areas and Stowmarket Policing management.

Members of the Panel received information bulletins, performance, and panel reports. Most of the public meetings were held in various towns in Suffolk. He had a personal interest in rural areas, speed cameras and the Stowmarket night-time economy and the work programme for the Police Community Special officer, which are funded by Mid Suffolk District Council.

- 7.38 Councillor McLaren queried how the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel fed into local communities and local policing.
- 7.39 The Chair advised Councillor McLaren to contact Councillor Peter Beer, who was Babergh's representative on the panel to discuss further.
- 7.40 Councillor Welham added that the local Police and Crime Panel was operating on a strategic level and that the Panel was mainly a scrutiny function. Community engagement officers operated across the County.
- 7.41 Councillor Muller informed Members that the Community Engagement Officer for Stowmarket was PC Stefan Henriksen.
- 7.42 Councillor McLaren advised Members on the work of the **Suffolk Violence and Abuse Partnership** which comprised of all agencies dealing with violence and domestic abuse. The Partnership was also a member of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP). She asked how she could update all Members on the work of the Partnership, as she felt this could be useful.
- 7.43 The Chairman was the representative on the **Suffolk Waste Partnership** and reported that the partnership had been very successful across the County.
- 7.44 Councillor McLaren was the Babergh representative on the **WSCSP** but due to her commitment to the Council had only been able to attend one meeting. She would discuss this further with the Leader of the Babergh Council.
- 7.45 The Chairman explained to Members that the Council had a statutory obligation to review the work of Crime and Safety Partnership each year and that the Committee undertook this duty by scrutinising the WSCSP, which was included in the annual work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 7.46 Councillor Jan Osborne, the Babergh representative on **Gainsborough House Committee**, had join the meeting and updated Members on the Gainsborough House project in Sudbury. Babergh District Council had invested in this project, including Community Infrastructure Levy funding (CIL) She felt it was important to monitoring the progress of the project both during and after the project had finished. The Committee normally met quarterly. She queried that there was no reporting mechanism for the representative to update all Members on the progress on the project.
- 7.47 Councillor Carter suggested that a representative was elected for the Suffolk Disability Forum.

- 7.48 The Corporate Manager – Governance and Civic Office advised Members that the Forum included officer representation and that the Council worked closely with the Forum.
- 7.49 The **Babergh Domestic Violence and Abuse Forum** had informed the Council that the Forum no longer required Member Representation.
- 7.50 The Babergh representation on the **East West Rail Consortium** was discussed and it was generally agreed by Babergh Members that Babergh Council would have very little input on this organisation and that the subscription fee would not provide value for money.
- 7.51 The **Joint Waste Management Board** no longer met.
- 7.52 The **Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Policy Panel** had not met for several years and no longer existed.
- 7.53 Members Debated the issues of representation on Outside Bodies including:
- That the East West Rail Consortium often meet at far away venues and usually then only for one hour.
 - That Councillor Smart from Ipswich Borough Council was the representative on the Consortium for the County.
 - That climate changes should be a larger part of the plans for the East West Rail Consortium.
 - That the Councils should not rely on other authorities to represent them on the Consortium.
 - That improvements to railway stations were a separate issue.
 - That subscription to the East West Rail Consortium would need to be considered.
 - The East West Rail Consortium was important because of the need to reduce the number of lorries on the A14 by increasing the volume of goods conveyed by rail.
 - That training and support of new representatives was important.
 - That a twice a year reporting mechanism in the form of a template should be recommended to Council.
 - That the reporting should be short and mainly consist of bullet points.
- 7.54 Members discussed recommendations and determined that each recommendation would be proposed, seconded and voted on separately to

allow for separation between joint and sovereign resolutions.

7.55 The following recommendations were agreed to be put to members for voting:

1.1 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council that the following appointments to Outside Bodies be removed from the appointments made, based on the information received

Babergh District Council

Babergh Domestic Violence and Abuse Forum
East West Rail Consortium
Joint Waste Management Board
Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Policy Panel
Suffolk Rail Policy Group

Mid Suffolk District Council:

Joint Waste Management Board
Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Policy Panel

1.2 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that both Councils consider withdrawal from the Haven Gateway Partnership as the Committee feels that the Partnership cannot demonstrate Value and relevance.

1.3 That Babergh District Council considers that a member representative be appointed to Home-Start in line with Mid Suffolk District Council

1.4 That consideration be given by Mid Suffolk District Council that an observer be appointed to Stowmarket Citizens Advice in line with Babergh District Council.

1.5 That a reporting mechanism in the form of a template for Representatives on Outside Bodies be established to provide valuable information to members and Public, the information be presented as part of the annual review of Member Representation on Outside Bodies to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1.6 That support and training be established for members when appointed as representatives on Outside Bodies.

1.7 That Mid Suffolk District Council considers taking up the appointment of a representative to the East West Rail Consortium by making a payment of the subscription fees required for full participation.

It was Resolved:-

Councillor Adrian Osborne proposed recommendation 1.1, which was seconded by Councillor Welham

By a joint unanimous vote

- 1.1 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council that the following appointments to Outside Bodies be removed from the appointments made, based on the information received**

Babergh District Council

Babergh Domestic Violence and Abuse Forum

East West Rail Consortium

Joint Waste Management Board

Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Policy Panel

Suffolk Rail Policy Group

Mid Suffolk District Council:

Joint Waste Management Board

Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Policy Panel

Councillor Adrian Osborne proposed recommendation 1.2, which was seconded by Councillor Ekpenyong.

By a joint unanimous vote

- 1.2 That the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that both Councils consider withdrawal from the Haven Gateway Partnership as the Committee feels that the Partnership cannot demonstrate Value and relevance.**

Councillor McCraw proposed recommendation 1.3, which was seconded by Councillor Gould.

By a BDC unanimous vote

- 1.3 That Babergh District Council considers that a member representative be appointed to Home-Start in line with Mid Suffolk District Council**

Councillor Welham proposed recommendation 1.4, which was seconded by Councillor Scarff

By MSDC 5 votes to 1 vote

- 1.4 That consideration be given by Mid Suffolk District Council that an observer be appointed to Stowmarket Citizens Advice in line with Babergh District Council**

Councillor Ekpenyong proposed recommendation 1.5, which was seconded by Councillor Caston

By a joint unanimous vote

- 1.5 That a reporting mechanism in the form of a template for Representatives on Outside Bodies be established to provide valuable information to members and Public, the information be presented as part of the annual review of Member Representation on Outside Bodies to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor McCraw proposed recommendation 1.6, which was seconded by Councillor Caston.

By a joint unanimous vote

- 1.6 That support and training be established for members when appointed as representatives on Outside Bodies.**

Councillor Welham proposed recommendation 1.7, which was seconded by Councillor Ekpenyong

By a MSDC unanimous vote

- 1.7 That Mid Suffolk District Council considers taking up the appointment of a representative to the East West Rail Consortium by making a payment of the subscription fees required for full participation.**

8 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST

It was Resolved:

That the Forthcoming Decisions List be noted.

9 JOS/20/4 /BABERGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN

It was Resolved:

That the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan be noted.

10 JOS/20/5 MID SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN

It was Resolved:

That the Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Plan was noted

11 RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)

11.1 As there were no comments made for the restricted minutes the Committee did not exclude the public and press from the meeting.

12 JOS/20/1 TO CONFIRM THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE FROM THE MEETING 4 SEPTEMBER 2020

By a unanimous vote

It was Resolved: -

That the confidential minute from the meeting on the 4 September 2020 be confirmed as a true record and will be signed at the next practicable opportunity.

13 JOS/20/2 TO CONFIRM THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 21 SEPTEMBER 2020

By a unanimous vote

It was Resolved: -

That the confidential minute from the meeting on the 21 September 2020 be confirmed as a true record and will be signed at the next practicable opportunity.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 12:11 pm.

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Chair