

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, 27 January 2022

PRESENT:

Councillor: Paul Ekpenyong (Chairman)

Councillors:	David Burn	Terence Carter
	James Caston	Rachel Eburne
	Julie Flatman	Jessica Fleming
	Dr Helen Geake	Peter Gould
	Lavinia Hadingham	Matthew Hicks
	Sarah Mansel	John Matthissen
	Andrew Mellen	Richard Meyer
	Suzie Morley	David Muller
	Mike Norris	Penny Otton
	Timothy Passmore	Stephen Phillips
	Dr Daniel Pratt	Harry Richardson
	Keith Scarff	Andrew Stringer
	Rowland Warboys	Keith Welham
	John Whitehead	

In attendance:

Officers:

- Chief Executive (AC)
- Monitoring Officer (EY)
- Corporate Manager, Governance and Civic Office (JR)
- Assistant Director, Housing (GF)
- Assistant Director, Corporate Resources (KS)
- Corporate Manager, Finance Operations (RH)
- Assistant Director, Environment and Commercial Partnerships (CC)
- Licensing Officer (KS)

Apologies:

- Oliver Amorowson
- Gerard Brewster
- John Field
- Kathie Guthrie
- Barry Humphreys (Vice-Chair)

45 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

45.1 There were no declarations of interests by Councillors.

46 MC/21/17 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Chairman advised Members that some inaccuracies had been identified in the Minutes and those amendments had been made to the Minutes.

Councillor Mellen advised that the minutes should note that the meeting was adjourned and not concluded.

Councillor Warboys advised that paragraph 25b.28 of the minutes was incorrect and confirmed that he did not give examples of the devastating effects of gambling.

It was RESOLVED:-

That subject to the amendments being made as detailed above, the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2021 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

47 MC/21/18 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2021

Councillor Mellen queried why the meeting was referred to as an extraordinary meeting and not a continuation of the previously adjourned meeting.

The Corporate Manager, Governance and Civic Office confirmed that as it had been agreed that the business that had been carried over from the previous meeting should be dealt with as soon as possible rather than wait until the next ordinary meeting of the Council. An extraordinary meeting was held outside of the normal Council meeting timetable, to deal with those specific items only, and therefore it was correctly referred to as an extraordinary meeting.

It was RESOLVED:-

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2021 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

48 MC/21/19 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked everyone who had attended the Civic Service at the Salvation Army in Stowmarket, and informed Council that the event had raised over £300, making the total raised for the Chairman's charities in excess of £1100.

Councillor Warboys asked the Chairman whether a response had been received to his letter to requesting that photographic ID be excluded from the Elections Bill.

The Chairman advised that the Minister had not yet responded.

49 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman invited the Leader of the Council to make her announcements.

Councillor Morley wished Members a Happy New Year, and thanked Councillor Wendy Turner for her service to residents of her ward and the council, following her resignation over the Christmas Period. Councillor Morley confirmed that a by-election would take place on 17 February 2022.

Councillor Morley went on to announce the following:

The Leader advised that although we are now able to begin to operate slightly more normally again, she would personally like to encourage residents to continue to be mindful of covid, in order to keep one another safe and keep services going.

The Leader expressed thanks, on behalf of herself and all councillors, for all of the work undertaken by MSDC, local government, healthcare staff and volunteers in delivering so many booster jabs in such a short time.

As always, continued thoughts and prayers were with the families and friends of those who had tragically died from covid and also with those who were living with long covid.

The Leader encouraged all those who were eligible to, to have the vaccine as soon as possible, and all eligible businesses to ensure that they accessed the financial support available to help them through Omicron.

Gateway 14 has been officially designated as part of Freeport East with infrastructure works due to start on site shortly.

The new visitor centre and café at Needham Lake has had its topping out ceremony and the Leader was looking forward to the Duck & Teapot opening very soon.

The Council is continuing to develop new affordable housing and it was great to see 8 more new homes being finished and occupied in Needham Market at our former HQ.

Significant progress had been made against the Councils climate change and biodiversity ambitions, as Councillors heard about at the briefing last week.

It was amazing to see officers pulling out all the stops to get the Woolpit GP car park built in record time to support the covid vaccination campaign.

The Councils new 4 day "Careeriosity" festival was launched in Stowmarket during October half term - with a series of different events for 9 to 19 year olds that offered practical tips and guidance on different career paths as well as hands-on experience and workshops to provide a taster of the media, tech, and creative job opportunities available locally.

The Council has continued to help residents in a number of other ways including the Holiday and Food funded schemes for children through half term and over Christmas; and the launch of the new iPad lending scheme with Suffolk Libraries as part of digital skills work.

The Leader stated that she was really proud that Cabinet was able to sign off the additional £5.1m of investment for a range of projects to boost the district's recovery from the impact of the Covid pandemic. The ideas for this were developed together through the detailed Councillor workshops in the Summer last year; and we are now looking forward to seeing the impact of these investments for our residents during 2022 and 2023.

The Leader mentioned the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the huge number of events planned across the district and the whole county throughout the year as part of the new Festival of Suffolk and encouraged all councillors and residents to look out for these and more local events so that we can make 2022 a year-long celebration!

Councillor Eburne raised a point of order to the Monitoring Officer as the Chairman had stated that Councillors were not able to ask questions at this point in the proceedings however at past meetings this had been allowed.

Councillor Eburne also commented that responses to questions asked at the previous Council meeting had not yet been received.

The Monitoring Officer emphasised the principle that the Chairman had discretion of how to manage questions and debate and confirmed that questions for clarity on the announcements which had been read out were permitted.

The Chairman encouraged Members of the Cabinet to ensure that responses to questions were provided to Councillors.

Councillor Morley asked Councillor Eburne to provide details of any questions which had not been replied to.

Councillor Scarff raised the issue of wearing face coverings, commenting that the Leader had advised it was not necessary to wear a face covering however the meeting protocol advised Members to do so if possible.

Councillor Morley confirmed that she had stated that although it was not a requirement to wear a face covering, she would continue to do so.

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

50.1 The Corporate Manager, Governance and Civic Office advised Council that a petition with 132 valid signatures had been received regarding planning application DC/21/06333, Land off A14 Elmswell.

51 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

51.1 None received.

52 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

Question 1 - Councillor Otton to Councillor Richardson, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

The decision of the chancellor to axe the £20 universal uplift on October 6th 2021 has left many people in Mid Suffolk struggling to meet the costs of rising energy bills, and many low income families will be hit by the increase in national insurance from April 2023, plus the rising cost of living. We recognise the extra money the Chancellor has made available but that still leaves many needing to seek advice. What is Mid Suffolk doing to help and support those individuals and families who are facing financial difficulties?

Response

There are a number of points to mention in response to Councillor Otton's very important question, not least because it touches on several Cabinet portfolios. On a local level, services consisting of communities, customer services, housing, and wellbeing are currently working together to develop a seamless system that will enable us to better understand trends across the district and provide targeted support where it is most needed.

The County Council are bringing together a range of stakeholders from across the districts to form a Poverty Board – this will help us to bring resources, understand issues and implement joint initiatives to manage the impact of the emerging crisis.

Moreover, Mid Suffolk also provides advice centres with a 3-year core grant provision to ensure there is longevity in providing support to people; this complements current housing/welfare support provision within the Council – so we already have well established systems to provide support and advice to our residents.

We also have been going further by providing a range of initiatives and schemes to tackle the crisis and support local people, these range from:

- Tenancy Support Management where our approach is one of support and the Income Officers look at each tenant individually, looking at their situation as a whole rather than just as rent owed. This may involve signposting to other agencies that can assist, such as Citizens Advice, or referring to our in-house Tenancy Support Officers, who can help with maximising income, budgeting and negotiating with creditors.
- As part of our Shared Revenues Partnership we make the best use of our remaining Discretionary Housing Payment budget which support customers whose rent is restricted due to imposition of Local Housing Allowance, Bedroom Tax or Benefit Cap.
- Our Council Tax Reduction Scheme offering up to 95% reduction in Council Tax for working age residents and 100% reduction for pension age residents.

- **Household Support Grants where new tenants are called by their rent officer within the first 2 weeks of their tenancy. This is identifying issues and providing greater support to tenants at an earlier stage. This is beneficial as it builds rapport and tenants know who to go to should they get into difficulties with their rent. It also means we can assist with benefit claims earlier on or help with referrals for debt.**
- **Alongside positive interventions locally, we also support people to cook healthier meals, the Department for Education have committed to three years funding for the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme which provides free activities and meals, during school holidays, to young people who are eligible for free school meals and as Councillors know, we have extended that to the half term as part of the £1,000,000 Wellbeing pot. Staff at BMSDC are coordinating this programme, making sure that it is available to those families most in need. The Family Park Cooking sessions are a great example of this whereby families are encouraged to cook inexpensive, healthy meals together and minimise food waste.**

In addition to the support we provide to individuals themselves, Mid Suffolk Community Grant schemes are administered on our behalf and provide funding to voluntary and local community groups that support residents often with specific needs with over half a million spent in this financial year already.

In summary to Councillor Otton's questions I want to provide assurance that the cost of living crisis is absolutely on Officers radar and they are preparing for the inter-sectional impact on individuals and families facing financial hardship. The funding from the Chancellor as Councillor Otton quite rightly said is welcomed but the focus must be on supporting people into well paid work whilst providing a safety net to prevent people from falling into crisis. That's why working with a breadth of organisations is absolutely crucial in connecting a coherent local system that works for people across our districts.

And finally Chair, as the Leader has already indicated, as this is the first question of the first full Council of the new year I would like to take the opportunity to reiterate our commitment to delivering for our residents. With our new performance framework covering our six strategic priorities supported by our key enablers finance, investments and planning, we are in a strong position to respond to what will be a difficult few months for many. We know that with rising inflation, and the aftermath of Covid, our residents will be faced with numerous challenges, but I passionately believe that this is the year Mid Suffolk can rise to meet those challenges and support our residents and our communities.

Supplementary Question

I have been made aware of an elderly couple, one has just finished chemotherapy, the gentleman is in his 90's. They have no way of knowing how to access all of those things that you have just mentioned other than ringing me up. I have been able to give them a form for surviving winter. I have been able to give them the telephone number for the CAB.

So, my question is can you assure me that all of those people that need that help will know exactly where to get that help from and will the Council make a supreme effort to publicise all of the help that may be available?

Response Councillor Richardson

Yes of course, we need to do absolutely everything we can to ensure that the support available from the District Council is well publicised and is accessible to all people in our communities. And if Councillor Otton is happy to give myself or Officers the details of this individual case we would be more than happy to look into it. The only thing I would mention is that if residents do contact Councillors, they are more than welcome to forward information about specific cases to myself or to our Communities and wellbeing team. As far as I am aware, we have not been notified about this case but Members can give officers that information rather than waiting to ask a formal question at Full Council.

Question 2 – Councillor Mellen to Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

During last year's budget discussion, the Council agreed to set aside £4 million for specific project areas to be agreed by all-Councillor workshops and subsequently Cabinet agreed in November the allocation of £5.1 million to the identified priorities. How much of this money will have been spent by the end of this current financial year?

Response

Thank you for your question Cllr Mellen. I appreciate the time that has been taken to get to a point where we are starting to spend these large sums of money, but this is public money, we wanted a cross-party consultation, we hoped for a consensus and most importantly, we wanted to establish a well-thought through, coherent suite of plans. Now I feel we are there, it should be and it will be full-steam ahead.

As you know, there is a comprehensive set of initiatives that are supported by the £5.1m and will be delivered over varying time periods. They were at different stages of development when Cabinet made its decision back in November and there are different delivery models for achieving the outcomes that are being put in place. As an example, a number of them required the recruitment of additional fixed-term staff, which I'm pleased to say is happening, but it means that the level of spend in this year will be limited by when the successful candidates can take up their roles.

Of course, when one embarks on new projects and initiatives it is difficult to predict at precisely what rate they will spend. Our managers have made an assessment of what they think is likely to be spent by the end of March, and based on what they currently know, this stands at somewhere between £250k - £300k. I know that this figure will be considerably higher during next financial year as activity increases.

When the allocation of the money was approved, the report outlined that expenditure would be reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis as part of the General Fund monitoring reports, as we do for the Growth and Efficiency Fund, so this is where you will see the detail in the future.

Supplementary Question

I am very grateful for that response but does he think that a commitment to spend the £5.1 million would be enhanced if it came with a detailed timetable for the spending?

Response

The Cabinet paper which I think ran over about six pages, I think had between 49 and 51 bullet points, but 51 projects it's a great deal of detail and some of those are four figure amounts, there's a six figure amount, and each one of those has been assigned to an Assistant Director and Corporate Manager and as far as I am concerned as this agreement goes through, its full steam ahead and all of those are seen as valued projects and need to be delivered as soon as possible.

Question 3 – Councillor Eburne to Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

Since September 2020 individuals can claim £500 from the Self-isolation Support Payment Scheme if they cannot work due to self-isolation during Covid. What percentage of claims received have been paid? How much Government funding is the Council still holding?

Response

Thank you for your question Cllr Eburne. As at 23rd January 2022 Mid Suffolk had received 493 applications. Of these, 137 have been paid, 296 have been refused and 60 are still awaiting a decision. The percentage therefore that have been paid from the 433 that have been determined is 32%.

In terms of the funding that we are holding from the Government, our initial allocation was £126,500, so with the 137 payments made to date, we currently have £58,000 remaining.

Supplementary Question

That's quite a low percentage 32% and I suspect that a lot of that is people using forms and unusual circumstances that people aren't quite clear perhaps about how they need to claim it, what they need to do and so on. Obviously people who are claiming this money are in desperate need of the £500 due to their circumstances, and I just wonder what help we are providing claimants to do that.

Response

These funds are processed through the Shared Revenues Partnership and I sit on the Committee that monitors that and I think that this may help, an extract from the minutes on the 8th of September, and this is verbatim: Councillor Whitehead noted that self-isolation support scheme seemed to receive a large proportion of applications from people who were ineligible and asked what was the reason for this. The Shared Revenues Partnership Operations Manager explained that people who had heard of the scheme might make speculative claims but reported the application process guided those who didn't qualify away from applying. So Councillor Whitehead asked for reassurances that responses from claimants weren't being missed and their claims refused. The Shared Revenues Partnership Operations Manager confirmed that responses were not being missed and that claimants were given additional time to provide information. I can assure you that the Shared Revenues Partnership staff are very diligent and very caring people and really do go the extra mile to help these claimants.

Councillor Matthissen commented that in the past, written responses to submitted questions were available to Members before the start of the meeting, along with the Leaders announcements, and asked the Monitoring Officer to comment.

The Monitoring Officer advised that there was not a procedure rule which governs the provision of responses to questions from Councillors or Members of the public. The responder could choose the format in which they wished to respond and the questions and answers would be included in the minutes verbatim. This also applied to the Leaders announcements.

53 MC/21/20 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

Councillor Welham introduced the report which covered the meetings of the Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in October, November and December 2021, and the Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting in January 2022.

Details of the reviews were contained in the report and Councillor Welham invited questions from Members.

Councillor Eburne asked whether Councillor Welham could elaborate on the improvements which were required to the work between Citizens Advice and the Housing team.

Councillor Welham advised that Citizens Advice had proposed that Officers from Mid Suffolk District Council work with Officers from the Shared Revenues Partnership in assisting residents with rent and council tax arrears. Citizens Advice had also suggested jointly funding an officer with Mid Suffolk District Council to assist in the co-ordination however Citizens Advice have now funded an officer themselves.

Councillor Mansel enquired whether there was a timescale for the scoping for the provision of transport within the District.

In response, Councillor Welham confirmed that a meeting with the Passenger Transport manager from Suffolk County Council would take place in the next 2 weeks.

The report was noted.

54 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET / COMMITTEES

55 JAC/21/10 HALF YEAR REPORT ON TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2021/22

- 55.1 Councillor Muller introduced the report and informed Council that the report covered the first six months of the financial year 2021/22 and detailed performance and the effects of decisions taken during that period and compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Policy.
- 55.2 Councillor Otton asked if the Governments Greening Finance: A Roadmap to Sustainable Investing report on Page 60 of the report would be taken seriously and feedback provided.
- 55.3 Councillor Muller replied that it would be taken seriously.
- 55.4 Councillor Mellen sought clarification on paragraph 11.1 on page 52 of the report.
- 55.5 Katherine Steel – Assistant Director, Corporate Resources replied that the paragraph was from a previous report and would be updated in the next treasury management report.
- 55.6 Councillor Eburne began the debate by thanking the Finance Team and their advisors for the works they had done during a complex and everchanging period and expressed her hope that treasury management was being reviewed with regards to the climate change emergency.
- 55.7 The Chair fully endorsed her thanks to the Finance team and their advisors.
- 55.8 Councillor Geake gave her opinion that an investment was likely to get a poor return and perhaps it should be rethought.
- 55.9 Councillor Passmore stated that undue risks should not be taken with public monies and expressed his support for the recommendations.
- 55.10 Councillor Whitehead stated that if a better return on investments was achieved the risk would still be probable and noticeable as shown in the risk table on page 52.
- 55.11 Councillor Muller passed on his thanks to the Finance team and proposed the recommendations contained in the report, Councillor Caston seconded the recommendations.

It was RESOLVED:-

- 1. That the Treasury Management activity for the first six months of 2021/22 as set out in the report and Appendices be noted.**
- 2. That it be noted that Mid Suffolk District Council's treasury management activity for the first six months of 2021/22 was in accordance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy, and that the Council has complied with all the Treasury Management Indicators for this period.**

56 MC/21/21 GAMBLING ACT 2005: STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES THREE YEARLY ADOPTION

- 56.1 Councillor Muller introduced the report and informed Council that the purpose of the report was to ask Council to adopt the amended 'Statement of Principles' as recommended by Mid Suffolk Licensing & Regulatory Committee on 3rd December 2021.
- 56.2 Councillor Muller added that it was a statutory requirement to review and readopt the Council's Gambling Policy every three years. The decision to adopt the Statement of Principles may only be taken by the Council and cannot be delegated to the Licensing & Regulatory Committee.
- 56.3 A re-consultation exercise to include the 'No Casino Resolution' was undertaken for a 28-day period and no responses were received. All changes to the policy were contained within Appendix B of the report. The majority of amendments were purely administrative with a few changes that were as a result of the amendments to the Gambling Commission's guidance.
- 56.4 Councillor Fleming added her sincere thanks to the Licensing team for their work and for an excellent report.
- 56.5 Councillor Muller proposed the recommendations contained in the report which Councillor Geake seconded and expressed her thanks to the Licensing Team for making the issues clear and easy to understand.

It was RESOLVED:-

That the draft revision Gambling Act 2005 'Statement of Principles' document as attached as Appendix A to the report be adopted, for publication and to take effect for three years (unless sooner revised) from 31 January 2022.

57 MC/21/22 THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLANS

- 57.1 Councillor Hadingham introduced the report and informed Council that the HRA Business Plan being developed would set out the income and expenditure plans for delivering council housing services and would include key council housing priorities for the forthcoming years.

- 57.2 Councillor Passmore asked if there was a timescale for the business plan being finalised.
- 57.3 Councillor Hadingham stated that it was hoped to bring the final plan to the April council meeting.
- 57.4 Councillor Eburne asked if green and open spaces, such as extended verges, that are used for parking could be reviewed and solutions be sought to stop them being used for parking.
- 57.5 Councillor Hadingham said that this could be investigated.
- 57.6 Councillor Mellen enquired what under occupiers were being encouraged to do in paragraph 9.5 on page 148 of the report.
- 57.7 Gavin Fisk – Assistant Director for Housing clarified that part of the plan would be to encourage and support those who wished to downsize to maximise the housing stock available.
- 57.8 Councillor Otton asked if the tenants involved in the governance model would have voting rights.
- 57.9 Councillor Hadingham stated that it was important that tenants felt that they were being listened to and that their points were valid.
- 57.10 Councillor Warboys asked if more staff should be actively promoting digital channels to tenants.
- 57.11 The Assistant Director for Housing said he would be looking to ensure that officers promote all the opportunities including the digital tools that were available and being part of the landlord service and having a say.
- 57.12 Councillor Matthissen asked if the extent of under occupancy problem within the housing service was known and were enough resources being put into helping people to downsize.
- 57.13 The Assistant Director for Housing replied that statistics regarding under occupancy were not available as it had not been a previous focus, however it would be focussed on as part of this plan and a proactive approach to identify and assist tenants needs and desires with regard to downsizing would be taken.
- 57.14 Councillor Welham asked if it was possible for tenants to appoint someone to access the digital platforms on their behalf.
- 57.15 The Assistant Director for Housing stated there was a facility to support a tenant to have an advocate to act on their behalf.

57.16 Councillor Mansel began the debate by stating that she was happy to see that tenant involvement had been included along with extensive consultation and that she hoped the comments and questions raised during the meeting would be considered in the final plan.

57.3 Councillor Hadingham proposed the recommendations contained in the report which Councillor Flatman seconded.

It was RESOLVED:-

- 1. That Full Council note the approach that had been taken and the progress that has been made in developing the HRA Business Plans along with the overarching aims as set out in this report.**
- 2. That the creation of a new HRA Business Plan be approved.**
- 3. That a final draft of the plan including any financial costings will be presented to Full Council in April 2022, after the 2022/23 budget setting process has been completed.**

58 MC/21/23 DRAFT COMMITTEE TIMETABLE FOR 2022/2023

58.1 Councillor Morley introduced the report and informed Council of an amendment that had been tabled which related to Babergh only. Councillor Morley **MOVED** the recommendations in the report.

58.2 Councillor Richardson seconded the recommendations in the report.

58.3 Councillor Mellen proposed an amendment to the recommendation to add reserve dates in June and October for extra Council meetings to ensure the Council conducts its business in a timely manner.

58.4 The amendment was seconded by Councillor Eburne.

58.5 Councillor Morley stated that she did not feel strongly opposed to the amendment but was mindful about adding dates to the diary when there may not be Council business to conduct and asked other councillors to express their view.

58.6 Councillor Welham stated that it was better to have the dates in the diary and find there are too many meetings scheduled than to find that there is too much business and not know how it is all going to be heard.

58.7 Councillor Hicks questioned if newly proposed dates needed to be agreed at another meeting.

58.8 Councillor Passmore stated that any additional meetings should only be held if there was legitimate business.

- 58.9 The amendment to the recommendation was not accepted by Councillor Morley as proposer to the original recommendations.
- 58.10 Councillor Mellen began the debate on the amended recommendation by stating that on many occasions the guillotine motion was needed to extend council meetings to ensure all the business on the agenda could be dealt with and it would be sensible to have provisional dates in the timetable that could be utilised if needed.
- 58.11 Councillor Fleming stated that the provisional meetings only be held if the Chairman deemed there was sufficient business to be heard.
- 58.12 Councillor Richardson stated that he did not object to the amendments but hoped that they would not be needed and suggested that the suggested amendment should have been communicated to the Leader of the Council before the Council meeting.
- 58.13 Councillor Mansel stated that the amendment was flexible as it has only suggested months not actual dates and long meetings can mean that motions put forward by the opposition are not heard as they are usually at the end of the meeting.
- 58.14 Councillor Matthissen asked the Monitoring Officer if she could confirm that the Chair already had the discretion to cancel the meeting if it is not needed.
- 58.15 The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Chief Executive had the authority to convene or cancel meetings however, the decision to cancel a meeting would be made in consultation with the Chair.
- 58.16 Councillor Stringer enquired if a vote on the amendment was lost would it result in the Council being unable to hold meetings in June and October under the 6 month rule.
- 58.17 The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the 6 month rule would prevent another debate on holding meetings in June and October therefore another motion would not be able to be brought forward unless a third of the Council wanted to revisit the discussion but an extra ordinary meeting could be requested under different provisions in the constitution.
- 58.18 Councillor Whitehead asked that if provisional meetings were agreed in June and October that the dates be communicated to Councillors as soon as possible.
- 58.19 By 19 votes for and 9 votes against the amendment to add provisional meetings to be held in June and October was agreed.

It was RESOLVED:-

- 1. That the draft Committee Timetable for 2022/23 be approved and that additional provisional Council meetings to be held in June and October 2022 be added to the timetable.**
- 2. That the Chief Executive calls the meetings in accordance with the agreed Timetable unless there is insufficient business for the meeting to go ahead.**

59 COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS

59.1 There were no Councillor Appointments.

60 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

61 TO CONSIDER THE MOTION ON NOTICE RECEIVED FROM COUNCILLOR MANSEL

- 61.1 Councillor Mansel introduced the Motion which asked for the Constitution Working Group to conduct a review of the governance arrangements at Mid Suffolk Council.
- 61.2 The Motion was proposed by Councillor Mansel and seconded by Councillor Matthissen.
- 61.3 Councillor Passmore asked what was the problem that was trying to be fixed and questioned if it was the right time to conduct a review of the governance model.
- 61.4 Councillor Stringer stated that the review suggested in the Motion would check that the best governance system was being utilised.
- 61.5 Councillor Morley stated that it would be better to wait and carry out a review of the new council in 2023.
- 61.6 Councillor Geake stated that it would be more efficient to carry out the review now as Officers were already working on this, research was being done and ideas were being consulted on.
- 61.7 Councillor Welham disagreed with the view of holding the review in the new council term as there was likely to be a percentage of new Councillors and the best time to carry out the review would be in the last year of the council term to utilise the experience of Councillors.
- 61.8 Councillors Scarff stated that as a member of the Constitution Working Group, he would welcome a review and could not see any reason to object to the Motion.

- 61.9 Councillor Matthissen addressed concerns raised during debate but stated that the Motion did not suggest there was a problem to be fixed, just a question to be asked and agreed that as a sovereign council it was not necessary to align with Babergh to carry out a review, but it would be more practical.
- 61.10 Councillor Mansel concluded the debate by asking what would be the harm in carrying out a review of the governance model.
- 61.11 The Motion was **PUT** to the meeting and **LOST** on the Chairs casting vote.

62 TO CONSIDER THE MOTION ON NOTICE RECEIVED FROM COUNCILLOR STRINGER

- 62.1 Councillor Stringer introduced the Motion which asked for the Chairman of the Council to write to the Minister for Housing to request rapidly raising building regulations, for Cabinet to consider adopting the improved standard for all Council homes and for Officers to see to achieve energy performance in negotiation with developers.
- 62.2 Councillor Burn stated that whilst supporting the approach of moving quickly he could not support the Motion as the code for sustainable homes was phased out several years ago and the requests to Cabinet and Officers were already works in progress in numerous ways.
- 62.3 Councillor Fleming commended the intention behind the Motion but could not support it as the standard referred to in the Motion was no longer an accepted standard.
- 62.4 Councillor Hadingham stated that she supported the sentiment of the Motion to promote sustainable homes across district but not the detail.
- 62.5 Councillor Warboys stated that the language at the Development Control Committees had changed because of the declaration of the climate emergency and the aspiration for net zero and that this had encouraged some developers to bring forward schemes which were more in tune with the Councils aspirations but not all developers.
- 62.6 Councillor Otton left the meeting.
- 62.7 Councillor Matthissen stated that sitting on the planning committee, being unable to prevent developers from installing gas central heating a matter of months before it becomes effectively obsolete was incredibly frustrating and suggested that rather than rejecting the Motion, amendments could be suggested as pressure needed to be put on the Government.
- 62.8 Councillor Meyer stated that it would be better to withdraw the Motion and come back with another Motion that quoted up to date standards.

- 62.9 Councillor Passmore agreed that the language in planning committees had changed.
- 62.10 Councillor Ekpenyong stated that whilst the intention of the Motion was not in dispute, the wording and detail was misdirected and there was no doubt about the commitment of the Council towards energy efficient homes and more sustainable living.
- 62.11 Councillor Eburne stated that in 2007 some exemplar housing was built by the Council and it was a shame that no suggested amendments had been made as the Motion was originally tabled in November.
- 62.12 Councillor Pratt said that it would be shame to vote against a Motion that tries to help raise standards for more energy efficient homes and that this opportunity should be used to triangulate efforts to raise the standards for energy efficiencies.
- 62.13 Councillor Geake drew Councils' attention to data published by Climate Emergency UK with a check list of criteria for local authorities that showed that Mid Suffolk scored highly on mitigation and adaption and measures to tackle bio diversity crisis but worse than average for measuring and setting emissions targets and this Motion would help to improve those targets.
- 62.14 Councillor Carter said that he was heartened to hear that there was agreement to try and make improvements and become the greenest county but during planning meetings, officers have advised that there were not planning reasons to advise improvements due to government legislation. This Motion would show residents that the council cares enough to push Government for change.
- 62.15 Councillor Mellen said that the Motion provided a steer for pushing for further energy efficiency improvements and noted that since the Motion was tabled in November, the Government had announced a roll out of higher standards for building regulations which were welcome.
- 62.16 Councillor Stringer expressed his disappointment that no amendments to the Motion had been sought and the reason for choosing code 6 equivalent was because that was what the layperson understands within the sustainability language
- 62.17 The Motion was Proposed by Councillor Stringer and Seconded by Councillor Mellen.
- 62.18 The Motion was **PUT** to the meeting and **LOST**.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 8.21pm.

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Chair