

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 October 2022 at 5.30pm

PRESENT:

Councillor: James Caston (Chairman)
Paul Ekpenyong (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Oliver Amorowson
Terence Carter
John Field
Jessica Fleming
Peter Gould
Lavinia Hadingham
Barry Humphreys MBE
John Matthissen
Richard Meyer
David Muller
Penny Otton
Dr Daniel Pratt
Keith Scarff
Rowland Warboys
John Whitehead

David Burn
Rachel Eburne
Julie Flatman
Dr Helen Geake
Kathie Guthrie
Matthew Hicks
Sarah Mansel
Andrew Mellen
Suzie Morley
Mike Norris
Timothy Passmore
Harry Richardson
Andrew Stringer
Keith Welham

In attendance:

Officers: Chief Executive (AC)
Deputy Chief Executive (KN)
Monitoring Officer (IA)
Corporate Manager – Governance and Civic Office (JR)
Director – Corporate Resources (ME)
Director – Assets & Investments / Managing Director CIFCO (EA)
Corporate Manager – Councils' Companies (HB)
Director – Planning & Building Control (TB)
Corporate Manager – Strategic Planning (RH)

Apologies:

Gerard Brewster
Austin Davies
Stephen Phillips

46 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

46.1 Dispensations had been granted by the Monitoring Officer to all Councillors for Item 18 Independent Remuneration Panel Report for Councillor Allowances.

46.2 Members who were on the Boards of the Council's companies had been granted dispensation from the Monitoring Officer with regard to Item 11 CIFCO Trading and Business report.

46.3 There were no declarations of interests by Councillors.

47 MC/22/17 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 JULY 2022

It was RESOLVED:-

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2022 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

48 MC/22/18 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

48.1 The Chair referred Councillors to paper MC/22/18 for noting.

49 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

49.1 Councillor Morley made the following announcements:

I know it has been several weeks since Queen Elizabeth's death and the King's Proclamation. Political and economic events have dominated our news cycles over the last month, but I wanted to take this opportunity to respectfully mark the death of our late Queen, at full council, and proclamation of the King. God Save the King.

Turning back to politics, I'm sure all of us will want to congratulate Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, we wish him well as he has a huge task ahead of him. Local government and in particular Mid Suffolk, stands ready to support Government with its priorities but I will also take this opportunity to remind Westminster that local government and in particular Mid Suffolk, is the most efficient and innovative part of the public sector. Trust us. Back us. And wherever possible provide greater financial certainty to the sector and devolve more powers to local government.

Despite the period of national mourning, it has been an extremely busy period since we last met, this has included further curiosity events with HSBC and the NHS, helping to raise the aspirations of our young people and make them more aware of the opportunities that exist within Mid Suffolk, also helping children and families to stay happy, healthy, and active during the holidays, through outdoor adventure days, football, dance camps, swimming, and family cooking sessions.

Our fabulous Innovation Awards, congratulations again to all the local businesses who were shortlisted for these awards, and I want to take this opportunity to remind all of our businesses that they are still able to access free digital workshops as part of our digital skills program before November. Our businesses are also able to apply to participate in our new program, jointly funded with the University of Essex, to help them take the next steps towards innovation and growth.

The purchase by Mid Suffolk that has enabled the expansion of the John Peel Centre into 11 Marketplace in Stowmarket, and the John Peel Centre also hosted our very well attended '*what's next for Stowmarket*' event during September, and the Stowmarket Health Education and Leisure Facilities Scheme survey, which some of you may know better as the SHELF project, closed last week and I'm really looking forward to seeing the outcome of that survey soon. It was also fantastic to see our building control team successfully winning a regional award in the Annual Local Authority Building Control Building Excellence Awards. The Regal in Stowmarket won the best non-residential extension or alteration, and we will now move onto the national final in London in January 2023.

Granting planning permission to the first site at Gateway 14 with a new facility owned by the Range will create 1650 new jobs. In Harleston we have funded the creation of a wonderful wildflower Jubilee meadow, that together with our district-wide tree canopy survey work, and wildflower survey verges trials are all helping to tackle biodiversity and climate change, and most importantly continuing to help tackle the cost-of-living crisis for our residents. We are currently consulting about increasing the level of council tax discount to one hundred percent, and through Suffolk public sector leaders we have agreed to fund a new fuel poverty retrofit team, designed to deliver £50 million worth of retrofit works, such as insulation, fitting air source heat pumps, and replacing single glazing. This is alongside Solar Together Suffolk which is a separate group buying scheme which has already helped over 1500 homes in Suffolk to install solar panels and batteries and opened for new registrations from August this year. Through Suffolk Waste Partnership we have launched a new campaign to help families reduce food waste and save money, and finally I want to encourage all our community groups and non-profit organisations to apply for our winter warmth support grant which closes next week. This grant is open for applications from £250 up to £5000 to cover the rising cost of energy, rent, and food and to keep operating without passing on increased costs to our residents.

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

50.1 None received.

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 Mansel to Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Communities, Health and Wellbeing

Is the Council offering help and support to village halls, parish councils and other community groups to facilitate social gathering in heated communal spaces during this period of soaring energy prices and as winter approaches?

Response from Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Communities, Health and Wellbeing

The term 'warm banks' has emerged in recent months and is encouraging community locations this winter to remain open for longer to provide people with a warm, safe place to be rather than heating homes or living in a cold property.

The Council has launched its 'Winter Warmth Support Grant' and is available to support small grass roots, community groups and other not-for-profit organisations that support residents across Mid Suffolk with the cost-of-living crisis by offering 'one off' grants to support the anticipated increases in running costs between November 2022 and April 2023, including rent increases and electricity cost rises.

This will enable community groups to open more often during this period and for longer to support local residents by providing a warm place to be.

Grants of between £250 and up to £5,000 can be applied for and the deadline for applications is 5pm on 31st October. The link to the Grant is on our Communities web pages [Winter Warmth Support Grant » Babergh Mid Suffolk](#)

Supplementary Question from Councillor Mansel

We only got notified of this scheme for community grants earlier this week, I think it was about 6 days ago and applications have to be in by Monday, that's quite a short time limit so is there any plans for any future widening of the support grant application window and any long term support.

Response from Councillor Flatman, Cabinet Member for Communities, Health and Wellbeing.

We have had a lot of applications already so people are on it, I emailed all my parishes the moment I knew it was going out and I think you'll find that will be probably up to the limit of what we are offering but we will see and it depends on the level of ask from groups, we are hoping to attract smaller community groups to reach across the district, many of these groups only need small amounts of money to support or extend their work with our residents so we could support higher numbers maybe.

Question 2 – Councillor Field to Councillor Gould, Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments

I am pleased to see that CIFCO has had a successful year and at the time the report was produced had recovered the property value that existed at time of the various purchases. However, that was some time ago and there has been considerable financial turbulence nationally and internationally since the accounts were drawn up.

Could the Cabinet Member give a view of the likely impact of dramatically rising interest rates on the District Councils programme to finance the CIFCO investment and of the likely recession on the core CIFCO business. I would ask that this be in sufficient detail for members and the public to understand the risks involved. It would appear that CIFCO client companies will be in some problem and property values may fall substantially?

Response from Councillor Gould, Cabinet Member for Assets and Investments

The CIFCO portfolio fundamentals remain strong, despite the current volatile economic and geopolitical environment.

These include:

- The weighted average lease contract is 6.4 years across 78 tenants providing CIFCO with a diversified and resilient income stream.
- Projected revenue for 2023/24 remains in line with the current year, despite the predicted recessionary headwinds
- Further diversification is provided by the asset base with the revenue being derived from 21 properties across different property sectors
- Core markets such as industrial continue to experience low development and vacancy levels which is supporting continued demand. CIFCO has 55% weighting to this sector.
- The portfolio is substantially let with a low void rate of 2.90%
- Revenue collection rates remain above 98% with 0.01% attributable to pre-pandemic arrears.

Whilst Capital values will be subject to volatility and values have adjusted to the rising cost of debt, the core fundamentals of generating a sustainable and robust revenue stream for the Councils remain.

The Council is monitoring the cost of debt situation closely. The exposure to fluctuations in short term interest rates is minimal at the moment as the Council took advantage of some low rates with other local authorities before rates increased. The Council also has some longer term borrowing at fixed rates. The Council is in the process of reviewing the impact for next year as part of the budget work and will be presenting revised projections in the budget for 23/24.

Question 3 – Councillor Mellen to Councillor Hadingham, Cabinet Member for Housing

Many of the refugees from Ukraine who came to Suffolk under the Homes for Ukraine scheme are coming to the end of their first six months as guests here and are needing to find new accommodation. Where do these vulnerable people stand in terms of qualifying for social housing?

Response from Councillor Hadingham, Cabinet Member for Housing

The Ukrainian refugees under the Homes for Ukraine visa scheme are eligible to join the housing register in both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils and their housing needs will be assessed in line with the current Allocations Policy. Once they have been assessed they are able to bid for properties. However, this could take some time till they are successful, and they will need to widen their area choices to be rehoused into social housing, this will be dependent on where they are looking to live, and the size of accommodation required.

Information has been provided to support Ukraine refugees on how to apply for social housing on the following website: [Ukraine Refugee Gateway Guidance - HomeChoice \(gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk\)](https://gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk).

There is also information on waiting times based on area that can be used to give an indication on how long it is likely to take to be rehoused: on the Gateway to Home Choice website <https://www.gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk/PropertySearch/Index>.

There are some properties that are subject to section 106 agreements, with a location criterion and unless they can meet the local connection criteria, they will not be successful in securing these properties through the housing register. This has been a feature of Allocations Policies since the Localism Act 2011. Unfortunately, this is a situation that will be faced by all refugees that have recently arrived in the United Kingdom and they are unlikely to meet the local connection requirement. There is nothing that would prevent them bidding on such properties, but they are not likely to be successful, I can only advise that they should also consider properties that are not restricted by a local connection criterion and widen their areas. They should also consider the private rented sector which would allow them to access accommodation in an area of their choosing.

Supplementary question from Councillor Mellen

Given the huge amount of uncertainty for host families and their guests are we doing what we promised to do at the start of the crisis which is to wrap support around our Ukrainian guests and their host families.

Response from Councillor Hadingham, Cabinet Member for Housing

I can just tell you about how many cases we have dealt with if that is helpful. So in terms of cases so far where we have had to step in, only a handful compared to the total number within our districts, out of 14 cases nine in Mid Suffolk and 5 in Babergh, 6 have been resolved having been offered advice, 1 has been rehoused in the private rented sector, 2 have been rematched with new host families, 3 cases have been closed as applicants have either left the UK or approached other authorities and we have 2 cases remaining where we continue to work with the families to prevent them becoming homeless.

Question 4 – Councillor Mellen to Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

With businesses moving into the Freeport / Investment zone not paying business rates, there will be a loss of income into the council coffers. Is the portfolio holder confident that central government will make up this shortfall?

Response from Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

Short answer is yes

More information - Freeports/Investment Zones, as with the preceding Enterprise Zones have a programme of support for businesses locating on site, including business rate relief of up to 100% of rates payable for 5 years (Freeport) or 10 years (Investment Zones). As with other form of statutory reliefs, any discount to businesses locating on these sites will be repaid to the Council via a S31 grant. This ensures that the discounts to businesses do not come at a cost to the Local Authority.

Councils hosting Freeports or Investment Zones will receive 100% of the business rates growth in designated sites above an agreed baseline for 25 years.

Supplementary question from Councillor Mellen

Can I ask has any assessment been made of the impact of the disparity of tax regimes inside and outside the freeport or investment zones and particularly the impacts on communities if business decide to move from outside to inside.

Response from Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

I think that's a question better directed at Jeremy Hunt because it's a nationwide thing but certainly we ourselves haven't done any studies that I am aware of.

Question 5 – Councillor Eburne to Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

For the year 2021/22 an additional £4 million was available, on top of the normal budget, to be spent on separate projects. Another £1.1 million was added to this for 2022/23. Of this £5.1 million total extra funding, how much has actually been spent to date?

Response from Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

I think you are quite right to ask for an update on these major spending programmes. However, it does feel somewhat surreal, to be standing here reporting on our additional spending proposals of £5.1million when I'm sure that many other councils, up and down the country, are at this time instead wrestling with the challenges of finding spending cuts running into millions of pounds and would relish our Mid Suffolk situation.

We have been busy working on about 50 individual projects within this ambitious programme to support our residents and communities. Whilst we have spent approximately £1.5m, the majority of the rest of that money has been committed to projects that are being rolled out in several phases, to fixed term staff posts that still have of the majority of their time to run, to funds that will be drawn down as need demands for example to support victims of domestic abuse, grants to support energy efficiency in the private rented sector or support for businesses through various schemes where applications can be made.

We have also used this additional money to lever in significant additional match funding from external organisations, which is in the region of £400k to date, close to the £438k target that we set for officers.

The Cabinet would, however, like all Members to have a more detailed update on all the work we have in progress and to that end we will have an all Members briefing on this before Christmas.

Supplementary question from Councillor Eburne

Thank you for your comprehensive response and I look forward to a briefing on that, if only £1.5 million has been spent to date that is a good start. Since we allocated that £4million that's a good 18 months on from that and if you could give me assurances that the remainder £3.6million will be spent by the end of the financial year and if it isn't can we please use it to address the cost of living crisis such as by providing a council tax rebate for those citizens that most need it while there's a cost of living crisis.

Response from Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance

Some of these projects are designed to run over a couple of years, they've some time in terms of recruitment to get traction I would accept but basically a project that lasts for two years will not be all spent by the end of this year but the spending and commitment is different but we shall see by the end of the year well as part of the all member briefing we will look at what's spent and what's committed and what is spare which I suspect is very little.

Question 6 Councillor Stringer to Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for Planning

Does the portfolio holder for planning agree that Mid Suffolk should develop its own local policy guidance for determining solar farm applications?

Response from Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for Planning

Thank you, Councillor Stringer. As you'll be aware, there is a policy on energy sources, storage and distribution within the emerging Joint Local Plan, which is still under examination. I had already asked officers to look into how we might supplement this and my suggestion is that we will develop and adopt a renewable energy and low carbon position statement so that we can move quickly while recognising that this is a complicated matter.

As I say, this is by no means a simple issue, with energy security, food production, landscape impacts and heritage, to name but a few of the considerations our officers and Members of planning committees must grapple with. We have raised our concerns and frustrations about the lack of joined-up thinking of energy-related projects versus food production at the national level, and encouraged a more strategic, joined up national plan for energy development to be drawn up. However, we will continue to work towards doing what we can at a local level to provide guidance on our new Joint Local Plan policies through the position statement I referred to earlier.

Supplementary question from Councillor Stringer

Why have we not introduced this to date and when will this guidance be ready.

Response from Councillor Burn, Cabinet Member for Planning

We haven't introduced it to date because the situation has been very fluid. It is being worked on at the moment and hopefully it will be ready in the early part of next year and by that I mean round about February / March time but if you would like a more complete answer because I haven't got all the details at my fingertips, I will ask the Corporate Manager for Planning Policy to give you a fuller answer if I may.

It was agreed that the Corporate Manager would respond out of the meeting.

53 MC/22/19 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

53.1 The Chair invited Councillor Welham to introduce the report.

53.2 Councillor Welham introduced report MC/22/19 and highlighted the key points within the report.

53.3 Councillor Eburne asked if the local consultation into unmet transport needs also covered input from Suffolk County Council regarding cancellations and changes to bus services.

53.4 Councillor Welham replied that the main task of the rural transport task and finish group was to judge unmet demand on the number of refusals that connecting communities make and once an area had been considered suitable to introducing a project then a formal local consultation would take place with residents in that area to identify the types of unmet demand that need to be picked up.

53.5 Councillor Mansel asked if there was a timescale for the resolution for Cabinet to carry out further works to replace car parking demands with alternatives by looking at other areas that have done so successfully.

53.6 Councillor Welham stated that a timescale was not set.

53.7 Councillor Otton asked about the lack of transport to the warm spaces being provided in the cost of living help being provided.

53.8 Councillor Welham replied that connecting communities needed to be promoted as a way of people accessing transport to the warm spaces being provided.

54 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET / COMMITTEES

54a JAC/21/33 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2021/22

54.1 On the Chair's invitation, Councillor Muller introduced report JAC/21/33 and **PROPOSED** the recommendations in the report.

54.2 Councillor Field asked what impact the substantial increases in interest rates would have on the treasury management of the Councils.

54.3 The Director – Corporate Resources and Section 151 officer replied that a rough calculation of the like for like borrowing would be an increase of around £800,000 for next year however, the current borrowing is likely to reduce going forward as result of other investments and therefore it is not expected that the increase would be that figure.

54.4 Councillor Passmore asked for reassurance that the risk of ethical investments and investments in general were being taken seriously. The Director – Corporate Resources stated that she would provide an answer to this outside the meeting.

54.5 Councillor Eburne asked how the push to invest in more environmental, social and governance funds was progressing.

54.6 The Director – Corporate Resources replied that the focus had been on securing borrowing at the moment and further works would take place on ESG investments shortly.

54.7 Councillor Matthissen enquired if financial and performance information was getting to all members in a sufficiently timely way and would it be possible to get at least preliminary information to all Councillors quicker.

54.8 The Director – Corporate Resources invited Councillor Matthissen to have a conversation with her outside of the meeting to discuss the issues further.

54.9 Councillor Whitehead **SECONDED** the recommendations and by a vote of 31 votes for,

It was RESOLVED:-

1.1 That the treasury management activity for the year 2021/22 as set out in report JAC/21/33 and appendices be noted.

1.2 That it be noted that both Councils activity was in accordance with the approved Prudential Indicators for 2021/22.

1.3 That it be noted that, except for one occasion when the Council exceeded its investment limits in two of its Money Market Funds by £500k, as mentioned in Appendix C, paragraph 4.1, Mid Suffolk District Council's treasury management activity for 2021/22 was in accordance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Indicators for this period.

55 MC/22/20 CAPITAL INVESTMENT FUND COMPANY (CIFCO CAPITAL LTD) BUSINESS TRADING AND PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22

55.1 The Chairman welcomed Sir Christopher Haworth – CIFCO Board Chair, Henry Cooke – Director CIFCO, Mark Sargeantson – Director CIFCO, Nigel Golder - Director Strategic Asset Management JLL and Jack Anders - Manager Ensors.

55.2 The Chair invited Councillor Gould to introduce report MC/22/20.

55.3 Councillor Gould introduced the report highlighting the key points and **PROPOSED** the recommendations within the report.

55.4 Councillor Passmore enquired how sustainability for investments were assessed.

55.5 Councillor Gould stated that the primary objective of CIFCO was to provide valuable revenue to the Council and whilst the sustainability of the portfolio was a consideration, constraints existed around the nature of the leases. The Director for Assets and Investments added that CIFCO's policy around sustainability is ensuring the assets deliver a financial return but also address reducing impact on the environment and there have been opportunities to increase the value of the portfolio whilst also improving the sustainability credentials by improving the EPC rating.

55.6 Councillor Welham asked if CIFCO had EPC ratings for all of its buildings and could they move faster to improve those ratings.

55.7 The Director for Assets and Investments replied that CIFCO do have EPC data for the buildings and substantial progress in improving the ratings was being made. Also, a new KPI had been added to the proposed business plan in relation to sustainability.

55.8 Councillor Field asked for justification that the monies needed to improve the EPC ratings to B and above as required by government could be met out of CIFCO's rental income while also paying interest back to the council and not undertaking any further borrowing.

55.9 The Director for Assets and Investments replied that a number of improvements needed were lower cost improvements and some of the works would be the responsibility of the tenants. Longer term some of the bigger projects would need to be reviewed and how they are funded.

55.10 Councillors debated the contents of the report including the affect of the current unstable economic situation on the business plan and the revenue that CIFCO could provide in the future.

55.11 Councillor Meyer **SECONDED** the recommendations and by a vote of 16 votes for and 15 votes against,

It was RESOLVED:-

- 1.1 **That Council notes CIFCO Capital Ltd's trading activity and performance for the year to 31st March 2022.**
- 1.2 **That CIFCO Capital Ltd's 2022/23 Business plan be approved for adoption by CIFCO Capital Limited.**
- 1.3 **That future CIFCO business plans continue to be scrutinised by the Councils' Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then reported to Council, as recommended by the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

56 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)

As Members had completed their discussion of Item MC/22/20 Capital Investment Fund Company (CIFCO Capital LTD.) Business Trading and Performance Report, the Chair refrained from going into closed session.

57 RESTRICTED APPENDIX - CIFCO CAPITAL LTD BUSINESS PLAN (EXEMPT INFORMATION BY VIRTUE OF PARAGRAPH 3 OF PART 1)

58 RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)

59 MC/22/21 JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2022-2025

59.1 The Chair invited The Cabinet Member for Planning to introduce paper MC/22/21.

59.2 Councillor Burn introduced the report and highlighted the key points contained in it.

59.3 Councillor Field sought assurance that the right resources were available to avoid further delays.

59.4 Councillor Burn gave that assurance and referred to the Director for Planning who stated that he was confident that sufficient budget was available to secure the necessary resource.

59.5 Councillor Eburne asked if any more SPD's were added would that require this issue to return to council and would extra resource be required to which Councillor Burn replied that the council was not obliged to include SPD's in the Local Development Scheme.

59.6 Following a question from Councillor Amorowson, the Corporate Manager Strategic Planning clarified the process for adopting the Local Plan Scheme document.

59.7 Councillor Stringer questioned if the timetable for part 2 was realistic. The Director for Planning & Building Control stated that yes it was realistic despite the pressures.

59.8 Councillor Stringer asked what the difference was between a commitment and a site allocation was as stated in the first table in part 2 of the report. The Corporate Manager Strategic Planning stated that a commitment refers to something that has planning permission.

59.9 Councillor Welham sought assurance that the Local Development Scheme would not result in a flurry of planning applications. Councillor Burn stated that such assurance could not be given as it was outside the control of the Council.

59.10 Councillor Welham asked if the council would be in a sound position to turn down applications if they were on unsuitable sites.

The Corporate Manager Strategic Planning stated that having part 1 of the Local Development Scheme in place would give stronger protection.

59.11 Councillor Burn **PROPOSED** and Councillor Guthrie **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report. By a vote of 31 votes for,

It was RESOLVED:-

That the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Development Scheme 2022-2025 (October 2022) (Appendix A) be agreed to be brought into effect from 31st October 2022.

Councillor Otton left the meeting at 7.22pm

60 MC/22/22 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS FOR CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

60.1 The Chair invited the Interim Monitoring Officer to introduce report MC/22/22.

60.2 The Interim Monitoring Officer introduced the report and explained the process of selection of the Independent Persons recommended in the report.

60.3 Councillor Morley **PROPOSED** and Councillor Flatman **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report.

60.4 Following a question from Councillor Amorowson, the Corporate Manager Governance & Civic Office explained that an impartial process was followed with all applicants going through the council's normal recruitment process so no applicant details were known until at interview.

60.5 By a vote of 30 votes for,

It was RESOLVED:

That the individuals listed in Appendix A of the report be appointed as the Council's Independent Persons pursuant to section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 for a term of two years with an option to extend the appointment for a further two years.

61 MC/22/23 DRAFT 2023/24 TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS

61.1 The Chair invited Councillor Morley to introduce paper MC/22/23.

61.2 Councillor Morley introduced the report and **PROPOSED** the recommendations.

61.3 Councillor Hadingham **SECONDED** the recommendations.

61.4 Councillor Welham suggested as the Overview and Scrutiny meetings were separate on the timetable but often get changed closer to the meeting to a joint meeting, that Overview and Scrutiny agree their work plan early on and the timetable

be changed to reflect the joint meetings.

61.5 Councillor Scarff asked if this timetable had been co-ordinated with Suffolk County Council meetings. The Corporate Manager Governance & Civic Office replied that where possible the timetables have been co-ordinated.

61.6 By a vote of 30 votes for,

It was RESOLVED:

1.1 That the draft Committee Timetable for 2022/23, attached as Appendix A be approved.

1.2 That the Chief Executive calls the meetings in accordance with the agreed Timetable unless there is insufficient business for the meeting to go ahead.

62 MC/22/24 DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE UNDER DELEGATED POWERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 2 OF THE CONSTITUTION

62.1 The Chair invited the Chief Executive to introduce the report.

62.2 The Chief Executive introduced the report and explained that as a Monitoring Officer was unable to be appointed at the last Council meeting, an Interim Monitoring Officer had been appointed using delegated powers. This report therefore requested the formal ratification of the appointment of Ifty Ally as Interim Monitoring Officer.

62.3 Councillor Fleming **PROPOSED** the recommendation which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Ekpenyong.

62.4 By a unanimous vote,

It was RESOLVED:

That the decision taken under delegated powers by the Chief Executive as detailed in Appendix A of report MC/22/24 be ratified.

63 MC/22/25 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

63.1 The Corporate Manager, Governance and Civic Office introduced the report, which presented the findings of the review of the scheme of allowances by an Independent Remuneration Panel.

63.2 The Chair moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Ekpenyong seconded the motion.

63.4 Councillor Morley tabled an amendment to the recommendations following a review of the report by the Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk Cross Party Member Working Group. Councillor Morley summarised the amendments contained in Appendix F of the report and moved the revised recommendations.

63.5 Councillor Mellen seconded the revised recommendation.

63.6 Councillor Caston and Councillor Ekpenyong accepted the amendments to the recommendations.

63.7 By a show of hands, it was **RESOLVED** that the amended motion became the substantive motion.

63.8 Members debated items within the report including: the lack of an increase in the passenger allowance, the issue of not following the advice of the Independent Remuneration Panel, and the number of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA's) in relation to the number of Councillors. The Corporate Manager, Governance and Civic Office responded to a question regarding remuneration of Directors and advised that this had been considered by the Panel. However, it was considered that should the Directors be remunerated they would be deemed to have a conflict of interest and would therefore not be able to take part in the debate and vote relating to the Councils Companies as they would have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

63.9 Following a question from Councillor Carter, the Corporate Manager, Governance and Civic Office advised that the Panel had given consideration to average wages in the area and how to encourage new Councillors.

63.10 Members continued to debate the report on issues including: the number of Members with more than one SRA, the percentage of Councillors who voluntarily engaged with the review panel, the principle of voting for an increase during the municipal term, and the amount of work undertaken by Members.

63.11 By a vote of 19 vote for, 4 against and 7 abstentions,

It was RESOLVED:-

1.1a That the basic (Ward Representation) Allowance be set at £6,510.

1.1b That the Special Responsibility Allowances(SRA) be set at:-

Role	Amount
Chairman of the Council	£6,510
Deputy Chairman of the Council	£3,255
Leader of Council	£16,275
Deputy Leader of the Council	£8,137
Chair of Planning Committee	£6,510
Vice-Chair of Planning Committee	£3,255
Chair of the Joint Scrutiny Committee	£6,510
Vice-Chair of the Joint Scrutiny Committee	£3,255
Chair of Joint Audit and Standards Committee	£3,255
Planning Committee Members	£814
Political Group Leaders 5 or more	£4,882

members	
Political Group Leaders less than 5 members	£1,627
Chair of Regulatory Committee	£3,255
Vice-Chair of Regulatory Committee	£1,627
Cabinet Member with Portfolio	£8,137
Cabinet Member without Portfolio	£3,255
Lead Member	£4,882

- 1.1c That no Councillor will be entitled to claim more than two SRA's**
- 1.1d That the Travel and Subsistence Allowance be set as the maximum levels payable to council staff in line with HM Revenue advertised Customs' roles. Currently at:-**
- Mileage Rate 45p per mile**
Cycle Mileage Rate 27.7p per mile
Passenger Allowance 5p per mile
- 1.1e That the Childcare and Dependants Allowance be set at:-**
- Childcare Allowance up to £13 per hour (subject to a receipt)**
Dependants Relative Care/Specialist Nursing Care Allowance up to £30 per hour (subject to receipt)
- With no cap on the maximum amount you can claim per month for approved duties.**
- 1.2 That the revised Member Allowance Scheme will take effect from 8th May 2023.**
- 1.3 That the revised Basic Allowance be increased in line with the Local Government Officer pay awards until the scheme is next reviewed in 2026 or earlier. If a future officer pay award was to be in the form of a lump sum the increase would be calculated by establishing the percentage increase of the lump sum using the council's average officer wage.**
- 1.4 That a Parental Leave policy be formulated on the principles set out in the Panel's report and brought back to Council for approval.**
- 1.5 That a revised Members Allowance Scheme incorporating the decisions of the Council be prepared by the Monitoring Officer. Further, that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make any typographical amendments prior to publication of the final document.**
- 1.6 That the Council formally records its thanks to the Independent Remuneration Panel for their work in preparing the report.**

64 COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS

64.1 The Chair referred Members to the tabled paper to appoint Councillor Harry Richardson as a Non- Executive Director of Freeport East Limited Supervisory Board.

64.2 Councillor Morley **PROPOSED** the motion which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Flatman.

64.3 Councillor Mellen asked how long the appointment would last, whether the Director would be remunerated, and whether there would be regular feedback provided to Members.

64.4 In response, Councillor Richardson advised that there was not a specific timeframe for the appointment, there would be no remuneration for the post. Councillor Richardson confirmed that he would provide regular feedback to Members via the most appropriate channels.

64.5 By a vote of 26 votes for, 1 vote against and 2 abstentions,

It was RESOLVED:

That Councillor Harry Richardson be appointed as a Non-Executive Director of Freeport Supervisory Board.

65 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

65.1 None received.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 8.19 pm.

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Chair