

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK CABINET** held in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Tuesday, 9 January 2024

PRESENT:

Councillors:	Rachel Eburne	Andrew Mellen
	Andrew Stringer	Tim Weller
	Richard Winch	

In attendance:

Officers:

- Chief Executive (AC)
- Interim Monitoring Officer (JR)
- Director – Commercial Development and Climate change (FD)
- Director – Operations (ME)
- Director – Housing (DF)
- Director - Assets and Investments (EA)
- Director – Planning and Building Control (TB)
- Director - Customers, Digital Transformation and Improvements (SW)
- Interim Corporate Manager – Finance, Commissioning and Procurement (KW)
- Head of Shared Revenues Partnership (AW)
- Corporate Manager - Housing Solutions (AAY)
- Corporate Manager - Public Realm (NC)
- Corporate Manager - Strategic Policy (JH)
- Corporate Manager - Public Protection (TH)
- Senior Finance Business Partner for Revenue (SC)
- Climate Change Manager (SW)
- Climate Change Consultant (MC)
- Finance Business Partner (JB)
- Project and Research Officer (KP)
- Assistant Manager - Governance (HH)

Apologies:

Councillor Teresa Davis

68 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

There were no declarations of interests made by Councillors.

69 MCA/23/35 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2023

It was **RESOLVED**:

The minutes of the meeting held on the 5 December 2023 be confirmed and

signed as a correct record.

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

None received.

71 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS

None received.

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

There were no matters referred.

73 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST

There were no comments made by Councillors.

74 MCA/23/36 MID SUFFOLK PLAN

74.1 The Chair and Leader of the Council, Councillor Andrew Mellen introduced the report and said that the overarching aim was to set out a plan for the District helping to create thriving and resilient communities. The Council was to be an open, committed and listening council and this was reflected in the plan. Councillor Mellen outlined the engagement process, which had taken place to reach as many residents as possible and that the feedback had been taken into account when the plan was written. The Mid Suffolk Plan would feed into the delivery plan, which would provide the details of how the Council would be impacting the District in the next few years. The plan would be presented to Full Council later in the month.

74.2 Councillor Mellen proposed the recommendation in the report and Councillor Weller seconded the recommendations.

74.3 In response to questions from other Members attending the meeting regarding the approach to high quality service, financial sustainability and social responsibilities, Councillor Mellen responded that there were a number of considerations that needed to be balanced and that environmental sustainability and social justice were key themes for the administration. The economy had to live within the ecology because without a sustainable environment nothing else would thrive. However, this could be balanced with delivering a high standard of service to residents.

74.4 During the debate Members agreed it was a well-developed plan, and that environmental and social responsibilities were important as was working with partners and citizens to ensure Mid Suffolk was thriving. All of the themes in the Mid Suffolk Plan were important and were interlinked.

74.5 Members thanked Officers for their work in writing the plan.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED: -

That Cabinet considered the feedback from engagement and endorsed the final Mid Suffolk Plan setting out the vision and strategic priorities for Mid Suffolk District Council for 2023-2031, as set out in Appendix A.

REASON FOR DECISION

To enable adoption of the Mid Suffolk Plan by Council on 25th January 2024.

75 MCA/23/37 EMPTY HOMES AND SECOND HOMES POLICY

- 75.1 The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property, Councillor Richard Winch to introduce the report.
- 75.2 Councillor Winch summarised the policy for empty homes and how it would impact on house owners and landlords. He stated it was a sensible measure to take for these properties that were empty for more than one year to get them back into use. Councillor Winch advised Members that there was a list of exemptions to be included in the policy. The Empty Homes Policy would come into force on the 1 April 2024.
- 75.3 The Second Homes Policy would not be implemented for a year. The additional income from council tax payments would contribute to the community.
- 75.4 Councillor Winch proposed the recommendations in the report, which was seconded by Councillor Eburne.
- 75.5 Councillor Weller queried if there were sufficient resources to fund this policy and the process for implementing the policy. The Head of Shared Revenues Partnership responded that once the exceptions from the policy were confirmed by Central Government, property owners would receive written notification of the changes.
- 75.6 In response to further questions from other Members attending the meeting the Head of Shared Revenues Partnership confirmed that the list of exceptions to the policy was expected in the early part to this year. However, the policy had been written to accommodate any delays, in case the government confirmation of exceptions was not forthcoming as planned.
- 75.7 Cabinet Member for Housing and Property responded to questions from other Members attending the meeting regarding second homes including capital gains taxes verses council tax for people owning and disposing of second homes, and properties that were of poor insulation such as summer homes and single council tax payments and home ownership. Councillor

Winch stated that all taxes had risks and that he would respond to the details of the questions outside of the meeting. However, there was a general feeling amongst residents that a second home tax was reasonable.

- 75.8 The Head of Shared Revenues Partnership advised that owners of periodical occupied residences (second homes) had to provide details to the Shared Revenues Partnership of main residency. This was reviewed annually, and a process was in place where there was potential avoidance.
- 75.9 During the debate Members considered the issues including that long standing empty homes were a waste and that the policies would inject money into the economy to support local communities and would get empty homes back into use. It would also encourage landlords to rent out properties.
- 75.10 Councillor Mellen stated that the Council was moving forward along with other authorities in relation to empty homes and second homes and that it was a fair and reasonable policy.

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED: -

- 1.1 That Cabinet approved the empty homes and second homes premiums policy for 2024-25 attached in appendix A**
- 1.2 That Cabinet delegated authority to the Director of Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property to make technical amendments to the policy to ensure it meets the criteria set by Government and the Council**

REASON FOR DECISION

To maximise revenue, but more importantly to incentivise owners to bring empty and under-utilised properties back into use.

To ensure the policy is kept in line with Government regulations.

76 MCA/23/38 GREENHOUSE GAS REPORT 2022-23

- 76.1 The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and Wellbeing, Councillor Weller to introduce the report.
- 76.2 Councillor Weller provided a summary of the report and proposed the recommendations, as detailed in the report.
- 76.3 Councillor Eburne seconded the recommendation.
- 76.4 Councillor Winch queried whether the Council would hit the target for being carbon neutral by 2030.

- 76.5 The Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and Wellbeing responded that it would be a tough call, but that the Council would be close to achieving the targets.
- 76.6 The Climate Change Manager advised that officers were working hard on ensuring that the targets were achieved.
- 76.7 During the debate Councillor Eburne stated that it was going to be hard to get the greenhouse gas figures down and that the easy options had been done already. Harder options now had to come forward to support carbon reduction. Councillor Eburne stated that during the process the Council would be able to show new initiatives, which would also be financially beneficial.
- 76.8 Councillor Stringer stated that one of the challenges for the Council was the decisions coming from Central Government. However, in the process of developing ways to reduce its own GHG emission, the Council would make it easier for others in the District to achieve those targets.
- 76.9 Councillor Mellen referred to the graph on page 62 and that the Council was closer to the target than a year ago. However, there was still a long way to go, and the Council had therefore joined UK100 to support this process and avoid having to offset carbon to achieve zero neutral by 2030. Of the whole District's GHG emissions, the Council was responsible for approximately 2% to 3 % of emissions. However, the Council had influence over a further 30% to 40 % and could challenge residents and communities to reduce their carbon emissions. There were schemes in place to support this, such as the Cosy Homes Scheme. However, leadership from the Central Government was required to be able to reduce carbon emission across the whole country.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED: -

That the contents of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report 2022-23 at Appendix A to the report be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION

Since 2011, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) has required local authorities to measure and report greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from their estate and operations. Each Local Authority has been requested to publish their Greenhouse Gas reports locally online each year.

The Council is therefore required to note this report prior to publication on the Councils website.

Over 4 years ago the Council declared a climate emergency and produced their first Carbon Reduction Management Plan a refresh of this Plan is also nearing

completion.

77 MCA/23/39 FEES AND CHARGES 2024/25

77.1 The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Eburne to introduce the report.

77.2 Councillor Eburne advised Members of amendments to the report as follows:

- The tables on pages 69 to 83 should be showing a comparison between 23/24 and 24/25.
- Page 70: Zoo licence (1) +£1,203.00 to be amended to zero.
- Page 70: Dog breeders - renewal +£540
- Page 70 Hiring out horses - renewal (2) +£76
- Page 71 Home boarders - renewal (14) + £350
- Page 73 Provision of boarding for cats or dogs (3) +£51

77.3 Councillor Eburne then introduced the report and proposed the recommendation in the report.

77.4 Councillor Weller seconded the recommendation.

77.5 Councillor Winch asked for clarification of how the Fees and Charges would be communicated to residents.

77.6 The Senior Finance Business Partner advised Members that communication to residents would be put in place once the Council's budgets had been approved.

77.7 In response to questions from other Members attending the meeting regarding letters to Town and Parish Council for the arrangements for dog litter bins the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources responded that due to the recent severe flooding in the District Staff had been stretched this had caused some issues with communication this to parish and town councils, but this had now been resolved.

77.8 During the debate Councillor Winch stated that the Council had to make the changes to ensure a balance between the cost incurred and charges to parish and town councils.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:

That, the proposed Fees and Charges for 2024/25 as shown in Appendix A, be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure that the Council achieves sufficient income and thereby reduces the

subsidy on non-essential services which may compromise the Councils ability to fund statutory services.

78 MCA/23/40 STOWMARKET HEALTH, EDUCATION AND LEISURE FACILITIES (SHELF)

78.1 The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and Wellbeing, Councillor Tim Weller to introduce the report.

78.2 Councillor Weller introduced the report and proposed the recommendations, as detailed in the report.

78.3 Councillor Rachel Eburne seconded the recommendations.

78.4 In response to other Members attending the meeting regarding the purpose of the SHELF Project plans and resources for the Health Hub and the Pavilion, the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and Wellbeing responded that the Health Hub and the Pavilion would form part of future work packages. The overarching project had been divided into work packages to make the project deliverable, as a scheme of this size involved negotiations with different partners involved in the project. Consensus and grants had been lined-up for the first work packages and the Council was keen to commence this part of the project and then bring other work packages forward in due course, as grants come became available.

78.5 During the debate Councillor Andrew Stringer stated that it was good to see this project coming forward and that the division of the project into work streams would make it more deliverable. There was a lot of aspiration in Stowmarket for making improvements to the town.

78.6 Councillor Rachel Eburne stated that she was pleased to see this first part of the project coming forward, as improved sports facilities were desperately needed. It was important to continue the work with Stowmarket Town Council and all sports bodies involved in the project to provide the best facilities possible to residents.

78.7 Councillor Andrew Mellen stated that the report fitted into the broader vision to improve the sporting and wellbeing facilities in Stowmarket and across the district. The Council was committed to this legacy project and Stowmarket Town Council and residents were keen to see this project progress. However, it was important to proceed in a financially sustainable way and ensure that funding was in place, so that this would not leave sports clubs with a financial burden. Councillor Mellen advised that the next stage of the project was to take a planning application to the Planning Committee.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED: -

1.1 That Cabinet endorsed the Full Business Case (FBC) for Work Package 1

in respect of the Stowmarket, Health, Education and Leisure Facilities as attached as Appendix A (confidential).

- 1.2 That Cabinet approved the full delivery of this element of the project as outlined in the FBC which will include pitch and land-based elements of the overall masterplan.
- 1.3 That Cabinet approved the recommended funding strategy detailed in Appendix B (confidential) as the Cabinet's preferred method of delivering the project, SUBJECT TO the securing of all internal and external funding outlined in the recommended funding strategy.
- 1.4 That Cabinet delegated its authority for completion of all necessary matters and agreements pursuant to the approval of recommendation 3.3, including any land legals and transactions required to facilitate Work Package 1, to the Council's Director for Economic Growth and Climate Change and Section 151 Officer/Director for Corporate Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment Culture and Wellbeing.
- 1.5 That Cabinet noted work carried out to date on a sustainable management model for the wider Stowmarket, Health, Education and Leisure Facilities (as outlined in Appendix A – Business Case confidential) but agree that a further recommendation on the preferred model will be brought back to Cabinet for consideration early in 2024.

ONWARD RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

- 1.6 That Council approve the addition of this project to the Capital Programme as outlined in the recommended funding strategy, specifically the Council's commitment of £450,000 from the Council's Strategic Reserve towards the total cost of delivery of Work Package 1.

REASON FOR DECISION

To maximise the opportunities available to the Council to lead the delivery of a new project which supports multiple health, sports, and wellbeing outcomes.

To meet the goals set out in the Council's Sport and Leisure Strategy (refreshed in 2021) and Wellbeing Strategy whilst meeting the priorities in the emerging Corporate Plan for Mid Suffolk.

To support and grow new and existing partnerships on the site and in the local areas, between local clubs, health and wellbeing providers, leisure operators and the local education sector to help improve local health determinants which are consistently below regional and national averages.

To ensure locally provided facilities are fit for purpose and meet the needs of a growing population in Stowmarket and wider Mid Suffolk.

As Members had completed their discussion of MCA/23/40 Stowmarket Health, Education and Leisure Facilities (SHELF) the Chair refrained from going into closed session.

80 MCA/23/40 STOWMARKET HEALTH, EDUCATION AND LEISURE FACILITIES (SHELF) - CONFIDENTIAL APPENDICES

The business of the meeting was concluded at 10:48am

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Chair