

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council meeting of the **MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL** held at the Council Offices, Needham Market on 22 September 2016 at 5:30 pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors:	Roy Barker	Diana Kearsley
	Gerard Brewster	Anne Killett
	David Burn	John Levantis
	James Caston	Sarah Mansel
	Rachel Eburne	Wendy Marchant
	Paul Ekpenyong	John Matthissen
	John Field	Suzie Morley
	Charles Flatman	Dave Muller
	Julie Flatman	Mike Norris
	Elizabeth Gibson-Harries	Derek Osborne
	Nick Gowrley	Penny Otton
	Gary Green	Jane Storey
	Kathie Guthrie	Andrew Stringer
	Lavinia Hadingham	Timothy Passmore
	Derrick Haley	Keith Welham
	Matthew Hicks	Kevin Welsby
	Glen Horn	John Whitehead
	Barry Humphreys MBE	David Whybrow
	Esther Jewson	Jill Wilshaw

In attendance:

Head of Paid Service
Deputy Chief Executive
Strategic Director
Interim Strategic Director
Interim Assistant Director - Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Interim Head of Democratic Services
Assistant Director – Corporate Resources
Assistant Director – Investment and Commercial Delivery
Interim Public Access Transformation
Interim Investment and Development Executive
Governance Support Officer (VL/GB)

Note: The Chairman explained the rules and procedures for the Council, members of the public and the press to record/film/photograph or broadcast the meeting when the public and press are not lawfully excluded.

CL85 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jessica Fleming and Lesley Mayes.

CL86 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Jane Storey declared a local non-pecuniary interest in Paper C/70/16 by reason of being a Suffolk County Councillor. The Chairman commented this would apply to other Members who also were Suffolk County Councillors. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that being a Suffolk County Councillor did not preclude Members from considering and making a decision on recommendations in Paper C/70/16.

CL87 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 JULY 2016

Report C/64/16

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2016 be confirmed as a correct record

CL88 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 JULY 2016

Report C/80/16

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION

That the Confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2016 be confirmed as a correct record

CL89 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Report C/65/16

The report was noted.

The Chairman informed Members that she had also attended the Stowmarket Civic Service in Stowmarket on Sunday. She also informed Members that she would present a cheque for £1,040 to support the charity Homestart, one of her two chosen charities, as she felt that it was a small charity that would benefit from receiving the donation now rather than at the end of her term of office. A further cheque would be presented at that time when fundraising was completed.

CL90 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

No requests had been received.

CL91 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions had been received.

CL92 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

No questions had been received.

CL93 PETITIONS

No petitions had been received.

CL94 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEE

Report JAC85

Changes to Arrangements for Appointment of External Auditors

Councillor Suzie Morley, Chairman of the Joint Audit and Standards Committee, introduced Paper JAC85, which had been considered by the Committee at its meeting on 12 September. The Committee considered the three options outlined in the report and recommended to the Council that we opt-in to LGA's sector-led body.

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION 1

That the arrangements for appointing External Auditors at the end of the 2017/18 audit be noted.

RESOLUTION 2

That the Council opts-in to the Local Government Association (LGA) sector led body (Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA)) for the independent appointment of the Councils' External Auditor, beginning with responsibilities for the financial year 2018/19.

CL95 RECRUITMENT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – LAW AND GOVERNANCE (MONITORING OFFICER)

Report C/66/16

Assistant Director – Corporate Resources

Councillor Nick Gowrley, Leader and Assets and Investments Portfolio Holder, introduced Paper C/66/16 and proposed that the Task and Finish Group, which had been formed to oversee recruitment of the Joint Chief Executive, be approved to undertake the same role in the recruitment of the Assistant Director – Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer).

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION

That the Joint Task and Finish Group, which was formed to oversee and make recommendation to Council on the new Joint Chief Executive, also undertakes the same role for the Assistant Director – Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer).

CL96 EXTENSION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

Report C/67/16

Interim Assistant Director - Law and Governance Interim Projects – Governance and Electoral

Councillor Nick Gowrley, Leader and Assets and Investments Portfolio Holder, introduced Paper C/67/16 and proposed that the appointment of the current

Independent Persons be extended in order to comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION

That Council agrees to extend the appointment of the individuals listed in Appendix A to Paper C/67/16, as Independent Persons for the Council for a further period of two years.

CL97 APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Report C/68/16

**Interim Assistant Director - Law and Governance
Interim Projects – Governance and Electoral**

Councillor Nick Gowrley, Leader and Assets and Investments Portfolio Holder, introduced Paper C/68/16 and proposed the appointment of a new Independent Remuneration Panel comprising the persons detailed in the report in order to address the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION

That the following persons be appointed to the Councils Independent Remuneration Panel:

- *Frances Aspinall*
- *Sandra Cox*
- *Karen Forster*
- *Ivor Holden*
- *Pamela Linsey.*

CL98 MAKING OF AN ORDER TO CONFER CERTAIN POWERS UPON STUSTON PARISH MEETING

Report C/69/16

Senior Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Councillor Julie Flatman, Community Capacity Building and Engagement Portfolio Holder, introduced Paper C/69/16 and proposed that the recommendation to confer certain powers on Stuston Parish Meeting be approved. She also drew Members' attention to an error in section 10.6 of the report in so far as a delegated authority to the Strategic Director (Corporate) existed, however the application was still to be considered by Council.

In relation to the Powers sought and included in Appendix A to the report, Members questioned the appropriateness of authorising the power to provide traffic signs to a Parish Meeting; as these generally required Highways Authority approval. Members asked that the Parish Meeting be made aware of the limitations to their powers and actions in this respect.

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION

That in accordance with Section 109 of the Local Government Act 1972, Stuston Parish Meeting be granted the powers of a Parish Council as listed in Appendix A to Paper C/69/16.

CL99 LEADER (AND ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS PORTFOLIO)

Report C/71/16

Councillor Nick Gowrley

The report was received. Councillor Nick Gowrley advised that the last paragraph was included in the report in error.

CL100 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

Report C/72/16

The report was received.

In response to Councillor Rachel Eburne the Leader confirmed that there was an Executive Committee meeting in October, although this was not included on the Forward Plan. In response to a question from Councillor Keith Welham, the Leader confirmed that the report on Passivhaus Design for Affordable Housing would be considered at the October Executive Committee meeting.

CL101 BUSINESS GROWTH AND INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY PORTFOLIO

Report C/73/16

Councillor Gerard Brewster

The report was received.

Councillor Gerard Brewster advised there should be a heading "Open for Business – Business Management" above the second paragraph of the report. In response to a question from Councillor Keith Welham, he confirmed that consideration of the Stowmarket Enterprise Zone LDO had been postponed and the Planning Referrals Committee meeting on 28 September 2016 had been cancelled as further work was required.

CL102 ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

Report C/74/16

Councillor David Burn

The report was received.

Councillor Keith Welham asked whether consideration could be given to the existing commercial glass recycling collection being extended to one-off events. Councillor Burn replied that he would look into this and provide an answer.

Councillor Penny Otton said that there was a public perception that charges at waste collection sites were contributing to an increase in fly tipping across the County and asked what was being done to reduce the problem to Mid Suffolk. Councillor Burn replied that he did not believe that fly tipping was any more serious in Mid Suffolk than

elsewhere and he believed that to stamp it out would require higher penalties but that this was a legal issue. He agreed to provide a fuller answer in due course.

Councillor Charles Flatman asked if there was any way the cost of clearing up after unauthorised encampments on Eye Airfield occurred. Councillor Burn replied that the only method of recompense was for the landowner to sue the perpetrators. It was noted that the speedy distribution of black refuse sacks to the encampment could often reduce costs.

CL103 COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING AND ENGAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

Report C/75/16

Councillor Julie Flatman

The report was received.

Councillor Keith Welham noted the popularity of the Great Run Local held at Needham Lake and asked whether more could be done to support and expand the event into other locations to minimise the need to drive to take part. Councillor Flatman said she would look into this.

CL104 ENABLED AND EFFICIENT ORGANISATION / FINANCE PORTFOLIO

Report C/76/16

Councillor Glen Horn / Councillor John Whitehead

The report was received.

Councillor Rachel Eburne asked that the draft consultation response on 100% retention of Business Rates be circulated to all Members.

CL105 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

Report C/77/16

Councillor John Levantis

The report was received.

Councillor John Field requested that replies be provided to letters from residents within his Ward and the MP, who had written with their concerns in relation to the Sheltered Housing Review. Councillor Levantis said he would look into the matter.

Councillor John Field advised that he had received complaints at a parish meeting regarding the treatment of residents adjacent to the Bramford housing development and asked if the situation could be improved. Councillor Levantis advised he would look into the matter.

Councillor Charles Flatman asked for a detailed progress update on the Sheltered Housing Review. Councillor Levantis confirmed that a report would be produced for the Administration Meeting, Joint Housing Board and Executive Committee in due course.

Councillor Wendy Marchant asked whether the unviable properties referred to in 'Council Housing Utilisation' would be in one location or dispersed. She was advised that the location of properties was unknown at this time.

Councillor Keith Welham asked whether a more proactive approach could be used to find empty properties in private sector housing that could be brought back into use. Councillor Levantis said he would provide a response.

CL106 JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report C/78/16

Councillor Rachel Eburne

The report was received.

CL107 MID SUFFOLK SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report C/79/16

Councillor Rachel Eburne

The report was received.

CL108 URGENT BUSINESS

None reported.

CL109 FUTURE MODEL FOR PUBLIC ACCESS INCLUDING ACCOMMODATION

Report C/70/16

**Strategic Director
Interim Public Access Transformation**

Strategic Director Michael Evans and his team delivered a presentation on the reasons for co-location of the Mid Suffolk headquarters with Babergh and outlined the principles and key elements of the Public Access Strategy and how it would take advantage of online resources and technology. Assistant Director Investment and Commercial Delivery Louise Rawsthorne referred to the financial viability assessments of each option and how figures in the report had been assessed and scrutinised with the help of external consultants. She drew Members' attention to an error in section 20.4: the estimate for the office fit-out costs should read £5,000 plus VAT per person and not £4,000. The total of £1.7m was unaffected by the correction.

Councillor Nick Gowrley, Leader and Assets and Investments Portfolio Holder, introduced the report, saying that a well thought-out model and recommendations for the Public Access Strategy and headquarters co-location had been developed, which put the public at the heart of future service delivery while taking into account the pressures all councils faced. He commented that the status quo was not an option and urged Members to choose one of the four options in front of them. Councillor Gowrley informed Members that dialogue with staff had begun 2-3 years ago to appraise and develop new ways of working. However, no formal consultation was required prior to a decision being made.

A demand for a recorded vote in relation to Recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 was then received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 23.6.

During the course of the discussion on the emerging Public Access Strategy, Officers replied to Members' questions, including in relation to a single phone number for the public and related costs, direct dials and access to Officers, broadband provision in the district and related issues, new strategy in terms of Building Control, new joint website, lessons learned from other local authorities who had been through a similar change, current levels of contact by the currently available means and other statistics. Some

Members expressed a view that the proposed Strategy did not provide for those members of the public who could not use the technology or were vulnerable, and that insufficient ‘spokes’ were proposed if face-to-face contact was required.

The result of the recorded vote on Recommendation 2.1 was unanimous.

During the course of the discussion on the options for Accommodation, Officers replied to Members’ questions in connection to related matters, including the number of satellites, spokes and hubs, potential staff outflow as a result of co-location at one of the four option sites, likely timetable for moving to Endeavour House if approved, car parking arrangements and the cost of travel if co-location was approved, security and caretaking of the vacated premises at Hadleigh and Needham Market before disposal, consultation with staff, socio-economic impact on the market towns if co-location away from the districts was approved and potential loss of identities for both district councils in the case of co-location at Endeavour House. Members also discussed the potential impact upon the local economy of Needham Market as result of the move and how it could be addressed.

During the debate Councillor Andrew Stringer proposed an amendment to the recommendations as follows:

“Option 5 – a combination of Options 4 and 3 in line with Executive Minutes in September 2015 and Transformation Enquiry Group.”

The motion was duly seconded but lost by six votes to thirty on being put to the vote.

Members considered the options presented in the original Recommendation 2.2 further, including in terms of the potential devolution deal for Suffolk and Norfolk and fiscal pressures and challenges facing the public sector as a whole. The original Recommendation 2.2 was then put to the vote and carried.

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION 1

That the principles of the emerging Public Access Strategy as set out in Section One page 8 to 18 of Paper C/70/16 be agreed

The result of the recorded vote for Recommendation 2.2 was as follows:

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Abstentions
	Roy Barker Rachel Eburne John Field Charles Flatman Anne Killett Sarah Mansel Wendy Marchant John Matthissen Mike Norris	Gerard Brewster David Burn James Caston Paul Ekpenyong Julie Flatman Elizabeth Gibson-Harries Nick Gowrley Gary Green Kathie Guthrie		

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Abstentions
	Penny Otton Andrew Stringer Keith Welham	Lavinia Hadingham Derrick Haley Matthew Hicks Glen Horn Barry Humphreys Esther Jewson Diana Kearsley John Levantis Suzie Morley Dave Muller Derek Osborne Tim Passmore Jane Storey Kevin Welsby John Whitehead David Whybrow Jill Wilshaw		

By 26 votes to 12

RESOLUTION 2

That Option 3 – share accommodation in Endeavour House with Suffolk County Council and other public sector partners, as set out in Recommendation 2.2 (c) and the detailed business case in Section Two (pages 19 to 28) of Paper C/70/16 be approved

RESOLUTION 3

That the key information available including the indicative timetable relating to the development of the Needham Market site, contained in Part II of Paper C/70/16 be noted

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION 4

That the Strategic Director, in conjunction with the Leaders of the Councils, be authorised to make any minor changes to the recommendations as set out in Paper C/70/16 as may be necessary

The business of the meeting was concluded at 8.45 p.m.

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Chairman