

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BABERGH COUNCIL HELD IN KING EDMUND CHAMBER, ENDEAVOUR HOUSE, 8 RUSSELL ROAD, IPSWICH ON TUESDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2017

PRESENT: Peter Burgoyne - Chairman

Melanie Barrett	Simon Barrett
Tony Bavington	Peter Beer
Sue Burgoyne	David Busby
Tina Campbell	Sue Carpendale
Michael Creffield	Luke Cresswell
Derek Davis	Siân Dawson
Alan Ferguson	Barry Gasper
Kathryn Grandon	Michael Holt
Bryn Hurren	Jennie Jenkins
Richard Kemp	James Long
Margaret Maybury	Mark Newman
John Nunn	Adrian Osborne
Jan Osborne	Lee Parker
Peter Patrick	Stephen Plumb
Nick Ridley	Fenella Swan
John Ward	Stephen Williams

The following Members were unable to be present: Clive Arthey, Sue Ayres, Tom Burrows, John Hinton, Frank Lawrenson, Alastair McCraw, David Rose, William Shropshire, Ray Smith and Harriet Steer.

32 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

None declared.

33 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

34 MINUTES

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 August 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

35 BC/17/14 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman referred to Paper BC/17/8 outlining recent events attended by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

He welcomed to the meeting Luke Cresswell, newly elected Member for Sudbury South, and Jan Robinson, Corporate Manager – Democratic Services.

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

None received.

37 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

None received.

38 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

Question from Peter Beer to Lee Parker, Cabinet Member for Planning

In the interests of transparency and openness please could you tell me the total cost to Babergh taxpayers of the three Planning Committees, plus site inspection, judicial review and all back office costs related to planning application No B/16/01254/FUL. Please provide a breakdown of this total cost and including all the in-house paper transactions costs and time.

Answer

Total costs of the three committees, judicial review and back office costs: £6450

Breakdown:

Planning officer time:	£730
Enforcement involvement:	£270
Legal:	£1700 + £3500
Committee services:	£250

This does not include Councillors' mileage for the site visit (because that hasn't worked its way through the system yet), but that is unlikely to be more than £50 so the overall costs are broadly £6,500.

Supplementary Question

Continuing the theme in the interests of public perception and transparency, could you please now acknowledge that at the original Planning Committee that I chaired back in November 2016 the Committee Members and I were given very bad legal advice by the then legal planning officer of the day and that we were not wrong in our actions and decisions.

Answer

No.

39 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

A motion as set out below was moved by Councillor Luke Cresswell and seconded by Councillor Tony Bavington, the requisite notice thereof having been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 13.1. Councillor Cresswell explained the purpose of the Motion.

“That this Council resolves to establish, without undue delay, a timetable for ensuring that the employees of all its contractors are paid at least the Living Wage in order that Babergh is in a position to declare itself a Living Wage employer by no later than one year from today.”

The Chairman of the Council determined that the Motion be referred without discussion to the Cabinet, for consideration and report back to the Council.

40 REPORT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Barry Gasper, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, introduced his report circulated prior to the commencement of the meeting, a copy of which is appended to the Minutes.

Councillor Gasper responded to Members' questions. The report was noted.

41 BC/17/15 REVISING AND UPDATING THE COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION (CTR) SCHEME FOR WORKING AGE HOUSEHOLDS

Councillor Peter Patrick, Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced Paper BC/17/15 seeking Council approval to undertake a public consultation on proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, with a view to adopting a revised Scheme with effect from 1 April 2018.

RESOLVED

That public consultation be undertaken on the following proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme:-

- **Align the BDC Working Age Council Tax Reduction Scheme with the Housing Benefit Scheme**
- **Increase the maximum entitlement for working age CTR Scheme from 91.5% to 95%**
- **Introduce a minimum weekly award of £1 per week**
- **Make provision for Universal Credit**

42 BC/17/16 LAWSHALL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Councillor Lee Parker, Cabinet Member for Planning, introduced Paper BC/17/16 updating Members on the progress of the Lawshall Neighbourhood Plan which was recommended for adoption, subject to a favourable referendum result.

Councillor Parker was pleased to report the overwhelming level of support for adoption, the referendum results being as follows:-

Total number of votes cast	236 (29.2% turnout)
Number of votes cast in favour of a YES	218 (92.7%)
Number of votes cast in favour of a NO	17 (7.2%)

Councillor Parker responded to Members' general questions about various related matters including the effect of the current Local Plan consultation on the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. He confirmed that Parishes were still being encouraged to proceed, and that Neighbourhood Plans had a specific weight alongside an adopted Local Plan which some other documents did not.

Councillor Long expressed Lawshall's gratitude for the support the Parish had received from Babergh and encouraged other villages to consider engaging in the process.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Lawshall Neighbourhood Plan be formally made (adopted) as part of the District Council's Development Plan and used to help determine planning applications where relevant.**
- (2) That the Final Decision Statement (Appendix 1 to Paper BC/17/16) be updated to include the referendum results and published with immediate effect.**

43 BC/17/17 POLITICAL BALANCE AND COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES

The Monitoring Officer introduced Paper BC/17/17 which set out the revised political balance and composition of Committees following the Sudbury South by-election on 7 September 2017. Appendix 2 to the report was circulated at the meeting.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Committees' size and numerical allocation of seats be approved as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.**
- (2) That the following revisions to the appointments to Committees as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be noted:-**
 - David Rose (Independent) is no longer a member of the Planning Committee**
 - Luke Cresswell is appointed to the Labour seat on the Planning Committee**
 - David Rose (Independent) replaces Alastair McCraw (Independent) on the Joint Audit and Standards Committee.**

44 BC/17/18 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

The Leader of the Council, Jennie Jenkins, introduced Paper BC/17/18, relating to the proposed appointment of a new Panel.

The Assistant Director – Law and Governance referred to Report C/68/17 appointing the IRP to Mid Suffolk District Council. Members were advised that the names of the Panel Members were included in the Mid Suffolk District Council report.

RESOLVED

That the Independent Remuneration Panel appointed by Mid Suffolk District Council on 22 September 2016 also be appointed by Babergh District Council.

45 APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLOR TO OUTSIDE BODY

RESOLVED

That Margaret Maybury – Cabinet Member for Communities be appointed as the Babergh representative on the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (replacing Jan Osborne).

The business of the meeting was concluded at 6.35 p.m.

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Chairman

Babergh Council – 24 October 2017
Agenda Item 10

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman Report to Council
24 October 2017

- This is the first report to Full council, which spans 5 months. Therefore I will not go into the detail of each topic considered, but set out what has happened, since I took over Chairmanship in June and indicate some of the issues addressed. In future I will be happy to present particular scrutiny topics in detail, if Members consider it important.
- Myself as Chairman and Alastair McCraw as Vice-Chairman, provide a balanced approach to Scrutiny. This should reassure members that there is no political emphasis on the scrutiny process.
- The role of scrutiny is even more important than before, having adopted the Cabinet system and becoming a legal requirement. Therefore, it is essential that we have a robust scrutiny process and active, enthusiastic and lively Overview and Scrutiny Committee members. To date we have suffered from changes to the makeup of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and poor attendance by some members.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee now meets monthly. This means that to get through the work load, it is necessary for all members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to actively participate in the scrutiny process. This requires Members to work outside the formal Overview and Scrutiny Committee on specific topics, to develop in depth assessments. This allows meaningful questions to be addressed at the formal Overview and Scrutiny meeting.
- To improve the scrutiny process to that previously adopted, we aim to:
 - Scrutinise Cabinet decisions. Relevant Cabinet Members are expected to support the scrutiny process at each meeting. This initiates a process where Cabinet Members get used representing their portfolio in the scrutiny process, on a regular basis.
 - Undertake ongoing scrutiny tracking, through the life of a topic, particularly at key decision points. This places emphasis on individual committee members who take a lead on particular topics, throughout the topics life.
 - Engage and review with Officers and others, outside of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings to undertake pre-scrutiny in order to improve the quality of the scrutiny process.
 - Provide the opportunity to introduce a topic where there is concern, in a timely fashion.
 - Provide a communications link between the Scrutiny and Audit Committee, since they are both, to some extent, fulfilling similar objectives.
 - Ensure good communication between Babergh and Mid Suffolk Scrutiny Committees. Here the Chairs and Vice Chairs meet on a semi regular basis each month to discuss the Scrutiny programme and common issues.

- The topics to be considered have been planned on the basis of:
 - Considering outstanding topics from the previous scrutiny committees.
 - Considering Cabinet decisions for a rolling three months – From the forthcoming decisions List
 - Evaluating the Significant Risk Register
 - Considering topical and Members topics of concern.

- There have been 4 Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings since I was appointed Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman. The first taking place in June with others in July, September and October. August was cancelled, because of the unavailability of personnel to support scrutiny of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership, which is a legal requirement.

- Three Topics have been Scoped, including:
 - Voids
 - Homelessness and Bed & Breakfast & Accommodation.
 - Supporting Business Growth

- Seven topics have been scrutinised to date, with 3 requiring further action.

- The seven topics with associated issues in red include:
 - Development of the Scrutiny Forward Plan. (See the plan for the next four months and other topics)
 - Housing Revenue Account 30 year business and financial plan. (Concern regarding non-linear projections and validation, now resolved). (1)
 - Homelessness & Bed and Breakfast review and the requirements of the new legislation coming in on the first of April 2018. (Seems to be progressing well, but will be reassessed in November. Awaiting a Report to be issued)
 - Risk Assessment – where it was identified that the Council was at risk, because it was not possible to Audit Risk assessments. (This has now been partially addressed by John Snell and the Senior Management Team, by recording minutes of Risk assessment meetings, but there is still some concern regarding all reports issued. It is important to have confidence in the Risk assessments and statements). (2)
 - Void Times in Council Properties – (Significant problems with high Void times, definition of remedial action, and implementation. In particular concern with the ongoing lack of progress in reducing Void times; particularly since Void times had increased since the previous Scrutiny review, undertaken during 2016. This problem is now being addressed by new management team. A Scrutiny Committee member has been appointed to track progress and this topic will come back to Scrutiny within the next 6 months, to assess progress). (3)

 - Neighbourhood Planning (Review of the Task and Finish Group finding show a need to ensure that Parish Councils understand the importance of developing Neighbourhood Plans and what the benefits are. They are particularly important for Core Villages. Further engagement with Parish Councils is planned).

- Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership. (Babergh are currently staffed to organise individual reviews of tragic events, which is considered appropriate. Shared responsibility is with the Members of the West Suffolk Crime and Disorder Partnership. Funding is mainly by application to e.g. The Police & Crime Commissioner).
- Ten topics have been planned for scrutiny over the next four months to February.
 - Supporting Business Growth
 - Report on the current status of Interims & Consultants
 - CIL – A review of the impact and delivery of the CIL regime for infrastructure.
 - Review of preparations to implement the Homelessness Act.
 - Review of the legal Services Partnership.
 - Community Grants
 - Performance Management
 - Draft Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget
 - Investment Strategy Business Plan, before presentation to full council.
 - Waste Strategy Review
- Other topics identified include;
 - Void Times in Council Properties
 - Fuel poverty – Consider if further action is needed at this stage, in the light of it being incorporated into a Suffolk-wide strategy
 - Home ownership review
 - Leisure Strategy – when its timetabling in the Forthcoming Decisions List is known
 - Babergh and Mid Suffolk Building Services.
 - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Review.
 - Costs of the move to Endeavour House
 - Reviewing the impact the office move has had on staff with the aim of learning points for other future major change activities.
 - Pre-application planning process
 - Leisure Strategy - To scrutinise the paper presented to Cabinet
 - Etc.
- There will be other topics, which arise and will be dealt with in a timely manner as necessary.
- Finally, if any Member has a concern, which requires consideration for scrutiny, please contact Alastair or myself. Also in future I will be happy to discuss specific topics considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Council as necessary.