

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 Monday, 5 February 2018 at 2:30pm

PRESENT:

Councillor: Nick Gowrley – Chair
John Whitehead – Vice Chair

Councillors:	Gerard Brewster	David Burn
	Julie Flatman	Glen Horn
	Penny Otton	Andrew Stringer
	Jill Wilshaw	David Whybrow

In attendance:

Councillor Rachel Eburne
Councillor Diana Kearsley
Councillor Sarah Mansel
Councillor John Matthissen
Councillor Suzie Morley

Assistant Director – Planning for Growth (TB)
Corporate Manager – Open for Business (LC)
Corporate Manager – Finance (ME)
Assistant Director – Communities and Public Realm (JF)
Corporate Business Co-ordinator (SM – notes)
Interim Strategic Director (KN)
Infrastructure Officer (NP)
Corporate Manager – Asset Manager (JP)
Corporate Manager – Democratic Services (JR)
Assistant Director – Finance (KS)
Strategic Director (JS)
Professional Lead – Key Sites and Infrastructure Manager (CT)

73 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor Barker.

74 TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS

74.1 Councillor Kearsley declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 12 “MCa/17/45 - Wingfield Barns Community Interest Company (WBCIC) Update Report” as Chairman to WBCIC.

74.2 Councillor Brewster and Councillor Gowrley declared non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 13 “MCa/17/46 - Regal Theatre Stowmarket Improvement Project” as

Stowmarket Town Councillors.

- 74.3 Councillor Horn declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 17 “Local Tourism Strategy Review” as the Chair and a Trustee of the Museum of East Anglian Life.

- 74.4 Councillor Stringer declared non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 14, Wingfield Barns Community Interest Company (WBCIC) update report and Agenda Item 18 “Strategic Acquisition of Property” as a Director of the John Peel Centre who dealt with arts and administration.

75 **MCA/17/38 - CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 JANUARY 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2018 were confirmed as a correct record subject to within paragraph 72.2 the words “it was agreed amendments” be removed.

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

None received.

77 **QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

- 77.1 The following questions were received:

77.2 **Councillor John Matthissen to Councillor Glen Horn**

“What is our Service Level Agreement for the IT service provided by Suffolk County Council, and what has the performance been over the years 2015/16, 2016/17, and since the move to Ipswich.”

Response from Councillor Morley as the Lead Member

“We are working closely with the SCC IT service to review the partnership and accompanying performance measures. The performance measures have not been reviewed recently, and due to a number of changes within SCC IT, both in terms of their processes, level of resources and the tools they use to measure performance, comparisons over the period requested would be very difficult to provide and unlikely to represent an accurate picture of the service actually provided. SCC IT have confirmed that their average measurement of customer satisfaction across all customers is as follows:

2015 - 89%
2016 - 91%
2017 - 89%

Information from August 17 to January 18 demonstrates all of our calls raised (including immediate help desk queries as well as additional requests for new services) over the last 6 months, on average approximately 44% are resolved within

24 hours and 70% of calls are resolved within one week. We will be working with SCC IT to further analyse this data.

Taken from table below:

	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Resolved in 24 hours	398	296	340	322	202	240
% resolved in 24 hours	49.20%	38.10%	42.71%	42.93%	49.88%	45.03%
Resolved in 1 week	554	518	563	525	292	387
% resolved in 1 week	68.48%	66.67%	70.73%	70.00%	72.10%	72.61%
Resolved in 2 weeks	625	627	649	593	330	465
% resolved in 2 weeks	77.26%	80.69%	81.53%	79.07%	81.48%	87.24%

Councillor Matthissen then asked a supplementary question requesting that comparisons and a review of the partnership were put in place as his personal experience had not been the same as what had been quoted. Councillor Morley stated she had asked the “facts and stats” team to monitor data regarding our usage of IT and she would also keep an eye on the issue.

77.3 Councillor John Matthissen to Councillor Jill Wilshaw

“When will the Quarter 3 housing delivery statistics be published, and if they have already been published then what are the statistics?”

Response from Councillor Wilshaw

“Q3 Housing delivery statistics have been updated on Connect and can be found at: <https://suffolknet.sharepoint.com/sites/BMSDCDemo/housingdeliveryprogramme/SitePages/Performance.aspx>”

Councillor Matthissen responded by saying he was asking for a single number and did Councillor Wilshaw agree this was crucially important in respect of the Council’s finances and residents? Councillor Wilshaw replied that she understood the importance.

77.4 Councillor John Matthissen to Councillor John Whitehead

“Staff turnover: how many staff have left from 01/04/17 to 31/12/17 by Department? As the East of England LGA are willing to provide a benchmarking report, will you request one?”

Response from Councillor Whitehead

“For the first part of the question please see the table below:

LEAVERS APRIL - DECEMBER 2017 BY SERVICE AREA

<u>Service Area</u>	<u>Number</u>
BMBS	4

Building Control	4
Business Improvement	1
Commissioning & Procurement	1
Countryside & Public Realm	3
Customer Services	9
Democratic Services	4
Development Management	11
Financial Services	1
Housing Options	2
Housing Solutions	1
HRA Finance	1
Information Management & ICT	26
Internal Audit	1
Open for Business	3
Property Services	8
Senior Leadership Team	2
Shared Legal Service	2
Strategic Planning	3
Strong & Safe Communities	2
Supported Housing	5
Sustainable Environment	2
Tenancy Services	1
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For the second part this is not a service that is provided within the Council’s annual subscription to the East of England LGA, so there would be an additional cost to the council to request that some benchmarking is undertaken on our behalf. In thinking about and developing performance measures within my portfolio, we will look at the HR data and consider what we want to measure and report on a regular basis, but any benchmarking would need to demonstrate value for money and we need to remember that our Chief Executive, in his Head of Paid Service role, is responsible for staffing arrangements within the Council.”

Councillor Matthissen felt it had been previously established regular information on staff would be provided in the future. Councillor Whitehead explained they were looking into how this could be incorporated within the Quarterly outturn reports.

77.5 Councillor John Matthissen to Councillor Jill Wilshaw

“My question about Universal Credit last year, specifically regarding what we had learned from Waveney DC, was never properly answered. What have we learned from Waveney regarding rent arrears, Council Tax arrears and staffing pressures, bearing in mind that Universal Credit full roll-out is now scheduled for May this year. Will we increase our funding to Citizens Advice centres serving the District?”

Response from Councillor Wilshaw

“We have been in regular contact with Waveney District Council, and they have shared their experiences in respect of managing customer service calls and visits to their walk in centres. They have shared written communications sent to residents, and how they have worked with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and other agencies. Waveney has its own unique challenges in response to Universal Credit (UC) for example the volume of seasonal workers.

We have been actively working for the past year on our approach to the implementation of UC. This has included partnership meetings with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), and DWP amongst other key stakeholders. Sudbury in Babergh went to ‘Universal Credit full service’ in October 2017 and we have seen no significant rise in rent arrears as a result. I am not aware of any plans to increase our funding to the Citizens Advice Centres serving our districts as a result of Universal Credit.”

Councillor Matthissen felt this response did not answer what had been learnt from Waveney District Council as to how much their customer service and visits went up if any. He accepted Sudbury had had its own challenges. Councillor Wilshaw explained it was a unique situation as they were the first to manage customer service calls and as such had encountered problems. Mid Suffolk were much further down the line but were also monitoring Sudbury.

Councillor Otton asked what the rationale was behind having all of the Joint Member Briefings in the future in Bildeston?

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Gowrley explained the rationale had been to try and increase the attendance of the Joint Member Briefings and as such it had been suggested an out of Ipswich centre might be more acceptable. This had proven not to be the case and as such all Member Briefings would now move back to Endeavour House, Ipswich.

Councillor Otton responded by requesting the financial difference between holding them at Endeavour or out in the district. The Leader of the Council agreed to report this information back once known.

78 MCA/17/39 - MATTER REFERRED BY THE JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

78.1 Councillor Eburne introduced the report and explained the Shared Legal Service had been scrutinised. This had highlighted real issues in performance. The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee had therefore requested a response be received, hopefully with an improvement in performance. This item had been difficult to scrutinise as no business plan nor savings/benefits had been identified in the first instance.

78.2 The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Wilshaw and seconded by Councillor Flatman.

By an unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) That prior to any future shared services or partnership working arrangements, a full and proper business case be prepared and be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for pre-scrutiny

Reason for Decision:

To ensure that Overview and Scrutiny Members are provided with a full and proper business case in relation to future shared services or partnership working arrangements.

79 MCA/17/40 - FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST

- 79.1 The Forthcoming Decisions List was noted and it was agreed the latest version provided more clarity.
- 79.2 It was discussed for future agenda packs that if there were late papers these should be provided in a "late paper bundle" which were numerically numbered, the number of "intentionally left blank" pages were unacceptable and "Environmental Implications" should be included in reports.
- 79.3 The Corporate Manager for Democratic Services explained work was currently taking place on a report template, which would include an Environmental Impact section.

80 MCA/17/41 - JOINT TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018/19

- 80.1 Councillor Whitehead, the Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced report MCA/17/41 and moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Horn.
- 80.2 It was questioned whether there was any additional information available on the repayment of loans before maturity and whether this entailed heavy premiums? Also whether any risk was involved in dealing with large contractors, whether investments were at risk.
- 80.3 Councillor Whitehead, with help from the Assistant Director for Finance, explained the Council had fixed interest rate loans which were looked at on an individual basis and were kept up to review with Treasury Management advisors. The Council did not invest in large contractors, such as those who had recently featured in the media.
- 80.4 It was noted there had been no mention of the return received in investments, therefore in the future any strategy documents should include this detail rather than be reactive.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19 including the Annual Investment Strategy as set out in Appendix A to paper JAC/17/15 be approved.
- (2) That the Treasury Management Policy Statement set out in Appendix B to paper JAC/17/15 be approved.
- (3) That the Treasury Management Indicators set out in Appendix E to Paper JAC/17/15 be approved.
- (4) That the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Statement set out in Appendix F (subject to an amendment to correct the figures in the Capital Financing – General Fund for Mid Suffolk to reflect the error identified by the Committee) and Appendix G to Paper JAC/17/15 be approved.
- (5) That the key factors and information relating to and affecting Treasury Management activities set out in Appendices C, D and H to Paper JAC/17/15 be noted.

Reason for Decisions:

To ensure that Members approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19, including the Annual Investment Strategy.

81 MCA/17/42 - JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND 2018/19 BUDGET

- 81.1 Councillor Whitehead, the Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced report MCA/17/42 and moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Burn.
- 81.2 Councillor Otton felt she could not support the proposals at they stood. As such both herself, Councillor Gowrley, Councillor Whitehead would meet to discuss her proposals. She was concerned over the £30,000 set aside for supported living which would penalise residents in sheltered housing as well as an increase in being able to reduce the £200,000 rent loss on council homes and would like to see some work produced on this. £19,000 had been spent on disabled facilities grants, Suffolk County Council had publicly stated that the organisation which they had employed to deal with these had not performed as expected. It was noted sheltered housing came under the HRA and as such had no impact on the Council Tax.
- 81.3 Concern was also raised within paragraph 11.10 of the report, in respect of business rates not being kept separate, also the Growth and Efficiency budget should list where funds had been spent as had been the case in the past. Councillor Whitehead, with the help from the Assistant Director of Finance, explained growth initiatives had been put to Government and agreement reached at the Suffolk Leaders meeting. A further update to be given at Council. Concern was raised that Mid Suffolk should be able to influence whether the £750,000 be spent rather than delegating to the Public Sector Leaders. It was reiterated that Mid Suffolk would decide in both an open and transparent way and as such would come back to Cabinet for approval.

81.4 It was pointed out within the January 2018 Cabinet minutes, which had been approved, that paragraph 72.2 said the budget would include the average underspends however no reference had been made. It was noted much had been obtained from extra income and it was variable therefore to put comparative detail into the report would prove difficult.

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Budget proposals set out in the report be approved.
- (2) That the final General Fund Budget for 2018/19 is based on a council tax increase of 0.5%, an increase of 81p per annum for a Band D property to support the Council's overall financial position be approved.
- (3) That the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Investment Strategy 2018/19 to 2022/23 and HRA Budget for 2018/19 be agreed.
- (4) That the mandatory decrease of 1% in Council House rents, equivalent to an average rent reduction of £0.83 a week, as required by the Welfare Reform and Work Act be implemented.
- (5) That the Sheltered Housing Supported people cost of £3 per week be removed and Service charges be increased by £5 per week for each scheme (set at £4 cap per week last year) meaning a net increase of £2 per week to tenants. This will reduce the subsidy by £30k.
- (6) That Sheltered Housing utility charges are kept at the same level.
- (7) That in principle, Right to Buy receipts should be retained to enabled continued development and acquisition of new council dwellings.
- (8) That garage rents are kept at the same level.
- (9) That the revised HRA Business Plan in Appendix E be noted.
- (10) That the Capital Programme in Appendix D be agreed.
- (11) That the offer to participate for Mid Suffolk in the Business Rate Pilot for 2018/19 as set out in paragraph 11.9 to 11.10 in the report be accepted.

Reason for Decisions:

To ensure that Members approve the budget proposals for 2018/19, Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Council Tax for 2018/19.

82 MCA/17/43 - COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) - FRAMEWORK FOR CIL EXPENDITURE

82.1 Councillor Whybrow, the Cabinet Member for Planning, introduced report MCA/17/43 and moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Flatman.

- 82.2 Councillor Whybrow gave thanks to the team for their recent member briefing which he found to be excellent. He also explained three workshop dates had been set for 5pm on 12/13/15 February 2018 which would allow time to report back to March Cabinet and Full Council in April. The first bid round was due in May 2018 but more time may be required. The Panel of members would comprise of Councillors Whybrow, Brewster and Stringer from Mid Suffolk.
- 82.3 On page 167, the level of delegation was questioned and as to why there would be no appeal process. It was explained details would be worked through at a later date, via the Joint Member Panel.
- 82.4 The Infrastructure team requested that all enquiries in the future, in respect of Section 106 agreements, be diverted to themselves in the first instance in order for them to be aware of potential spend.

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the current thinking around a framework for CIL expenditure be noted and used as a basis for development of a detailed CIL expenditure framework.
- (2) That the creation of a Panel comprising of three Members from each Council to shape the development of a detailed CIL expenditure framework be approved.
- (3) That the framework be returned to Cabinet for consideration and agreement before being presented to Full Council as a key decision for both Councils.

Reason for Decisions:

To ensure member involvement in the development of the framework before this is presented to Full Council for approval.

83 MCA/17/44 - JOINT BABERGH MID SUFFOLK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT "OPEN FOR BUSINESS" STRATEGY

- 83.1 Councillor Brewster, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economy, introduced report MCA/17/44 and moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Horn.
- 83.2 Members wished to see within paragraph 1.77, paragraph 6.4, the inclusion of once relevant education and training skills were gained students were then encouraged to stay within the District. Disappointment was expressed that within paragraph 6.10 other local railway stations, such as Elmswell, Thurston, Needham Market had not been mentioned as it was critical they remain and be fit for purpose. It was agreed this would be included.
- 83.3 It was also felt this was an opportunity to include an enhancement objective for the general economy of the area. In respect of environment it was felt it conflicted with 5.2H and as such the wording should be revised. It was agreed 5.2H would be further enhanced.

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Joint Babergh Mid Suffolk Economic Development “Open for Business” Strategy attached as Appendix A in the report be endorsed.

Reason for Decisions:

To accessibly set out the local strategic approach towards meeting and positively impacting upon district level and broader economic challenges, and expressing our offer to the business community.

84 MCA/17/45 - WINGFIELD BARNS COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY (WBCIC) UPDATE REPORT

- 84.1 Councillor Flatman, the Cabinet Member for Communities, introduced report MCA/17/45 and moved the recommendation, subject to an amendment in 2.4 to read “a maximum total of £18,000”, which was seconded by Councillor Brewster.
- 84.2 It was questioned as to whether the heating system should be maintained? It was pointed out that, Mid Suffolk District Council, as landlords, should look after their assets.
- 84.3 It was proposed to amend the recommendation in 2.7 to read “consideration of lease”, this was seconded.
- 84.4 It was questioned whether a break clause should be included as part of the lease but it was felt it would be up to WBCIC to prove itself sustainable.
- 84.5 It was noted that an annual maintenance budget be established in the first instance and managed by Property Services.

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the current revenue budget of £6000 (which provides support for the WBCIC) is transferred to the Communities Grant budget.
- (2) That the initial grant payment of £6000 is made to WBCIC for 2018/19.
- (3) That a further £12000 of grant funding be made available to WBCIC to apply for during the next two years. To apply for this additional grant WBCIC will need to include a business case as part of the application which outlines how the organisation will achieve sustainability.
- (4) That a maximum total of £18000 will be the final revenue grant support made available by MSDC to WBCIC.
- (5) That the rental charge for 2018/19 is waived in keeping with the terms of the WBCIC lease.

- (6) That an annual revenue budget of £15000 is established to meet landlord obligations at the Wingfield Barns site and that this budget is administered by Property Services.
- (7) That further work is carried out to explore, the potential for a new cost effective and efficient heating system for the site and consideration of the lease to enable subletting of some of the parts of the site by the WBCIC.

Reason for Decisions:

To ensure that Members approve the grant funding to the WBCIC

85 MCA/17/46 - REGAL THEATRE STOWMARKET IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (PART 1)

- 85.1 Councillor Whitehead, the Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced report MCA/17/46 and moved the recommendation with amendments as follows:
- 85.2 Within recommendation 2.2 the words “(as per paragraphs 3.2, 4.2 and 4.3)” be included and an additional recommendation of 2.4 be added “To establish with Stowmarket Town Council an integrated project team to ensure project delivery.” This was seconded by Councillor Whybrow.
- 85.3 Members considered that this would bring both economic, social and community benefits if this project commenced and thought it was good to see a document which funded something tangible which would change the town for the better.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) That Option 3 (as per paragraph 8.6 of the report), the funding of up to £2.56m, (Loan and Grant) from the Transformation Fund, to support the redevelopment of the Regal Theatre and the regeneration of Stowmarket Town Centre be approved.
- (2) That the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and the Cabinet Member for Finance, negotiates and enters into a legal agreement between Mid Suffolk District Council and Stowmarket Town Council for a £1m loan and £1.56m capital grant (as per paragraphs 3.2, 4.2 and 4.3) be authorised.
- (3) That funding of up to £15000 from the Transformation Fund, for the remodelling of Ipswich Road car park (referred to in paragraphs 10.6 and 10.7 of the report) which will result in a reduction of, no more than, 10% of the total number of parking spaces available be approved.
- (4) To establish with Stowmarket Town Council an integrated project team to ensure project delivery.

Reason for Decisions:

The recommendations to support the redevelopment and financial sustainability of the Regal Theatre, the regeneration of Stowmarket Town Centre and provides wider social and economic benefits to Stowmarket and the surrounding areas.

86 **MCA/17/48 - STRATEGIC ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY - PART 1**

87 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)**

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:

That pursuant to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public should be excluded from the meeting for the business specified below on the grounds that if the public were present during these items, it was likely there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information as indicated against each item. The authors of the reports proposed to be considered in Part II of the agenda were satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

88 **MCA/17/46 - REGAL THEATRE STOWMARKET IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (PART 2)**

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) The recommendation as set out in the report MCA/17/46 – Part 2 be approved subject to minor amendments

89 **MCA/17/47 - LOCAL TOURISM STRATEGY REVIEW**

Members agreed that this item be deferred until the next Cabinet meeting on the 5 March 2018 due to wider implications which had arisen and further options to be explored.

90 **MCA/17/48 - STRATEGIC ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY - PART 2**

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED:-

The recommendation as set out in the report MCA/17/48 be approved, subject to a minor amendment, and that the decision was taken on the grounds of urgency and as such cannot reasonably be deferred as the property will be auctioned before the next scheduled Cabinet meeting and the cost was likely to exceed the key decision threshold. Under paragraph 17 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules within Part 3 of the Council's Constitution **THIS DECISION IS EXEMPT FROM CALL-IN ON THE GROUNDS OF URGENCY.**

The business of the meeting was concluded at 4:50pm.

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Chair (date)