

BCa/17/53

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

BABERGH CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BABERGH CABINET HELD IN BRITTEN ROOM - ENDEAVOUR HOUSE, 8 RUSSELL ROAD, IPSWICH ON THURSDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2018

PRESENT: John Ward - Chair

Jan Osborne
Peter Patrick

Lee Parker
Nick Ridley

In attendance:

Councillor Clive Arthey
Councillor Tony Bavington
Councillor Sue Carpendale
Councillor Alastair McCraw

Chief Executive (AC)
HRA Accountant (TA)
Assistant Director – Planning (TB)
Corporate Manager – Finance (ME)
Assistant Director – Housing (GF)
Corporate Business Coordinator (SM – notes)
Interim Strategic Director (KN)
Assistant Director – Finance (KS)
Assistant Director – Law and Governance (EY)

85 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Campbell and Maybury.

86 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

Councillor Ridley declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Items 12 and 13 “BCa/17/50 – Gainsborough’s Chambers – Transfer of Ownership, parts 1 and 2, as a Member of the Friends.

87 BCA/17/43 - TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2018 were confirmed as a correct record.

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

None received.

89 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS

There were none.

90 BCA/17/44 MATTER REFERRED BY THE JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

90.1 Councillor McCraw introduced the report and explained the Shared Legal Service had been scrutinised by the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee. 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.

90.2 Members welcomed the recommendation from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and agreed a Business Case was required in the first instance for all cases of shared services, apart from when working with Mid Suffolk District Council and as such the recommendation was amended accordingly.

90.3 The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Ridley and seconded by Councillor Osborne.

By an unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) That prior to any future shared services or partnership arrangements with Councils other than Mid Suffolk, 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 were provided with a full and proper business case in relation to future shared services or partnership working arrangements.

91 BCA/17/45 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST

The Forthcoming Decisions List was noted. It was questioned as to whether the redevelopment of the Leisure Centres should reappear and it was thought it would be added to return to Cabinet around September 2018.

92 BCA/17/46 JOINT TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018/19

92.1 Councillor Patrick, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance, introduced report BCa/17/46 and moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Osborne.

92.2 It was questioned what criteria was used to assess the strongest/lowest risk non-credit rated building societies. It was noted this advice was given by the Council's advisors as to which ones were considered appropriate from a very limited list. External borrowing was also questioned as to why Mid Suffolk District Council was at a higher rate than Babergh District Council. It was noted this was due to Mid

Suffolk borrowing on a higher level historically due to fixed term interest rates.

- 92.3 It was questioned why the £25 million had not been included in the borrowing figures listed in paragraph 10.9 of the report. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance, with the help from the Assistant Director, explained this was in the process of being borrowed, as the first few purchases were now being made by CIFCO. This would be part of the Capital Programme.

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 Members approved the Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19, including the Annual Investment Strategy.

93 BCA/17/47 JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND 2018/19 BUDGET

- 93.1 The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance, Councillor Patrick, introduced report BCa/17/47 and moved the recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Ridley.
- 93.2. It was questioned that within the minutes it had stated four things would be amended, with one being the Transformation Fund being renamed. It was explained this would happen in due course.
- 93.3 It was also questioned whether the money for the local poll had been included in the budget. It was explained that before this could happen a motion should be put to Council to overturn the 19 December 2017 motion to allow monies to be spent on the Single Council project. This could not be done until a period of six months had passed. The Chief Executive provided further clarity by adding it would be subject to Council/Cabinet agreeing a business case.

93.4 Cabinet hoped Members would grasp the severity of the situation of the budget and a five year plan would address the deficit going forward.

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, based on an increase to Council Tax of £5 per annum (10p per week) for a Band D property, which is equivalent to 3.25% 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 £0.90 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 £27k.
- (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, in report BCa/17/47, be noted.
- (10) That the Capital Programme in Appendix D be agreed.
- (11) That the offer to participate for Babergh in the Business Rate Pilot for 2018/19 as set out in paragraph 11.9 to 11.10 in report BCa/17/47 be accepted.

Reason for Decisions:

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

94 BCA/17/48 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) - FRAMEWORK FOR CIL EXPENDITURE

94.1 The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning introduced report BCa/17/48 and moved the recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Osborne.

94.2 It was noted during week commencing 12 February 2018 workshops would commence with the Panel of Members, these Members would not necessarily be

part of Cabinet. It was felt the more transparent the framework for the Community Infrastructure Levy the better.

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 was presented to Full Council for approval.

95 BCA/17/49 JOINT BABERGH MID SUFFOLK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 'OPEN FOR BUSINESS' STRATEGY

- 95.1 The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economy, introduced report BCa/17/49 and moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Patrick.
- 95.2 It was questioned as to how the economic growth would be delivered and how this would happen on the ground. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economy, with the help from the Corporate Manager for Open for Business, explained it would become more transparent and be made to be as self sufficient as possible. Any referrals would go before the Open for Business team. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economy would also work closely with the team to monitor performance.
- 95.3 It was noted, in terms of visitor economy, signage and the physical environment was unsuitable and as such there was scope for an upgrade to become more welcoming and professional. The Corporate Manager for Open for Business would look at what was required and would have funding conversations with the Action Groups. He would report back.
- 95.4 Cabinet considered anything which promoted growth and business was a good thing. In response to a question as to whether the department was up to a full staff quota it was noted they were currently one full time post down.

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 report BCa/17/49 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.

96 BCA/17/50 GAINSBOROUGH'S CHAMBERS - TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP (PART 1)

96.1 The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economy, Councillor Ward, presented report BCa/17/50 and moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Osborne.

96.2 There was some concern as to how the various options had been written in the report, with some issues raised as to how each option had been worded made it unclear. It was noted if the Council made a contribution it would not be prevented from making future contributions.

96.3 Cabinet considered the proposal to be a fantastic opportunity for Sudbury and Babergh district as a whole.

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) That a commitment to “Reviving an Artists Birthplace – a National Centre for Gainsborough’s Chambers to the Gainsborough’s House Society, Option 3 in report BCa/17/50 be endorsed.

Reason for Decisions:

To establish whether to endorse the “minded to” letter from the Council or to consider alternative options in relation to Gainsborough’s Chambers.

97 BCA/17/51 LEISURE INVESTMENT PROPOSALS (PART 1)

97.1 The Leader of the Council, Councillor Ward, introduced report BCa/17/51, in the absence of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, and moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Patrick.

97.2 The liability for South Suffolk Leisure (SSL) was questioned as some members expected to see an explanation of this within the report. The Leader of the Council, with the help from the Chief Executive, explained SSL was a provider in the sense it managed the facility on their behalf, if SSL went bust the asset would revert back to the Council and as such there was no liability. It was also noted the Council had an ongoing relationship with SSL.

97.3 Cabinet felt both facilities were essential, complemented each other and welcomed

the proposal.

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Assistant Director, Environment and Commercial Partnerships, be authorised to commission detailed design for the refurbishment and redevelopment of Kingfisher Leisure Centre and for the replacement of the Swimming Pool at Hadleigh Pool and Leisure. This to include obtaining planning permissions and competitive tenders for the two schemes.
- (2) That additional funding of up to £3.4m is allocated to the capital programme to support the refurbishment and redevelopment of Kingfisher Leisure Centre and for the replacement of the Swimming Pool at Hadleigh Pool and Leisure (as per paragraph 3.4 of report BCa/17/51) be recommended to Full Council.

Reason for Decision:

To meet the outcomes of the adopted Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.

98 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.

99 BCA/17/50 GAINSBOROUGH'S CHAMBERS - TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP (PART 2)

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED:-

- (1) The recommendation as set out in the report BCa/17/50 – Part 2 be approved.

100 BCA/17/51 LEISURE INVESTMENT PROPOSALS (PART 2)

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED:-

(1) The recommendation as set out in the report BCa/17/51 – Part 2 be approved.

101 BCA/17/52 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.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 7:30pm.

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Chair (date)