

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Joint Scrutiny Committee Report for Council – 25 February (Babergh) and 27 February (Mid Suffolk) 2014

1. Joint Scrutiny Committee Meeting of 5 February 2014

A summary of key items follows (and for full detail of the meeting, please see the minutes):

- 1.1 **S106 / Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) arrangements:** This report was discussed by Members and they were able to ask questions to the Corporate Managers Business Improvement (Place) and Legal and Monitoring Officer and from Suffolk County Council's (SCC) Developer Contributions Manager.
 - 1.2 Members raised many issues and concerns and there was much debate regarding the differences between the Babergh approach to S106 and the Mid Suffolk approach.
 - 1.3 Questions were raised and comments made relating to the criteria of the agreements (financial, timing, location etc); monitoring of agreements; accountability and feedback from SCC; and involvement of Parish / Town Councils.
 - 1.4 Members also discussed whether it was possible for a joint database / IT system to be set up across the district and county councils and whether access to this information could be more widely available and hence more transparent to the public.
 - 1.5 Members also noted that differences in planning policy between the two Councils meant that the parameters of the S106 agreements were different and they were advised that an internal review of the roles and processes involved was currently underway.
 - 1.6 With regards to specific planning policy issues Members asked that these be considered by the Strategic Planning Policy Task and Finish Group.
 - 1.7 Members made recommendations to Executive and Strategy Committees regarding:-
 - a review of S106 management and monitoring;
 - a timetable for the development of a CIL framework;
 - issues for consideration of a potential strategic planning policy group; and
 - requesting Suffolk County Council to regularly report on developer contribution spend.
2. **Scoping of review on localism:** Members discussed a potential review for looking at the impact of the Localism Act, barriers to communities in using it and identification of opportunities from it.

- 2.1 Members noted that, currently, the main aspects of the Localism Act that were being investigated were neighbourhood plans and approved the framework presented.
- 2.2 With regards to neighbourhood plans there were discussions as to whether this was truly “local” or meant communities were still bound by centralised regulations. Members agreed it would be useful to hear from Parish/Town Councils who were involved in this process especially as there was currently a lot of interest.
- 2.3 It was agreed that the review would be arranged for a future Committee meeting.
- 3 **Follow ups:** Members reviewed previous Joint Scrutiny Committee recommendations.
- 3.1 Members asked for an update on the **planning policy group** recommendation that was presented to Executive and Strategy Committees and were advised that the Executive and Strategy Committee meetings on 10 and 13 February would receive a report outlining “strategic planning policy development and member involvement,” proposing a task and finish group be set up. There was some concern that this would not be exactly in line with the Joint Scrutiny Committee recommendation and as to whether this group would achieve what members had asked for.
- 3.2 Members were advised that the work on **partnership accountability** (including member representation on outside bodies) would be linked to the strategic plan.

The next Joint Scrutiny Committee is on Wednesday 26 March 2014 at Babergh District Council offices.

Councillor Jenny Antill
Joint Chair (Babergh)

Councillor Rachel Eburne
Joint Chair (Mid Suffolk) and Chair of this meeting