

MINUTES OF THE JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE
COUNCIL OFFICES CORKS LANE HADLEIGH ON WEDNESDAY 31 JULY 2013
AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

BABERGH

MID SUFFOLK

Mrs J Antill (Chairman)
Mr B D Hurren
Mr P Jones
Mrs M O Munson

Mrs R J Eburne (Chairman)
Mrs E B Gibson-Harries
Mr J E Matthissen
Mr D J Osborne
Mrs S Powell
Mr M R Redbond
Mrs J C Storey
Mr C M W Tilbury

The following Members were unable to be present:

BABERGH

MID SUFFOLK

Mr F R Lawrenson
Mr J A B Long
Mrs A M Norman
Mr J M Owen
Mr J R A Sayers
Mr D L Wood

1 SUBSTITUTES

Mr P Jones and Mrs M O Munson were in attendance as substitutes for Mr J A B Long and Mr D L Wood respectively (Babergh).

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Mrs J Antill declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item referred to in Minute No 8 – Review of the Western Community Safety Partnership – as a Babergh representative on the Partnership and its Vice-Chairman, and as Chairman of the Babergh Community Safety Partnership, but stated that her interest was such that she was able to speak and vote on the matter.

Mrs E Gibson-Harries declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item referred to in Minute No 8 – Review of the Western Community Safety Partnership – in her capacity as a Mid Suffolk representative on the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership, but stated that her interest was such that she was able to speak and vote on the matter.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2013 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

4 PETITIONS

None received.

5 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

6 WORK PLAN

The Head of Corporate Organisation submitted a report ([Paper JSC/10/13](#)) relating to items that had been identified on the Corporate Work Plan. The current versions of the Executive Committee Forward Plan and the Strategy Committee Work Plan were appended for Members' information.

The Chairman, Councillor Jenny Antill, made reference to the useful discussions which had taken place (following the Committee's initial consideration of the Work Plan/Mapping Exercise at its previous meeting) and which were on-going. Members were invited to contact either Chairman with further suggestions for future items.

RESOLVED

That the contents of Paper JSC/10/13 be noted.

7 OPTIONS FOR THE TRANSFORMATION ENQUIRY GROUPS TO CONSIDER – NEW HOMES BONUS (NHB) APPROACHES

The Head of Corporate Organisation introduced a report ([Paper JSC/11/13](#)) summarising funding approaches developed by Councils since the introduction of the NHB, and suggesting that the Transformation Enquiry Groups (TEGs) could be made aware of the information in the report. Further financial details were circulated to Members prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Members recognised that the past approach of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils to the use of NHB had generally focussed on support for existing services. They were aware of the importance of developing new approaches to meeting community needs by aligning resources to the identified strategic priorities and outcomes and feeding this in to the work of the TEGs.

During the discussion on the ways in which the NHB could best be used to further the Councils' strategic objectives, the following were among the points raised:-

- a proper bidding mechanism for NHB monies to be in place, with clear criteria and a timetable linked to the Budget process
- a pro-active approach is required – 'invest to save' in projects which will benefit communities and support the strategic objectives including the green agenda through investment in low carbon initiatives, improvements to the housing stock to support the ageing population and other sustainable capital projects
- use of 'pump priming' initiatives to generate income from other sources

- key role of the TEGs in providing a firm steer to the Executive and Strategy Committees when considering the 2014/15 Budget
- the need for clarity about the process, with real community involvement in putting the NHB to positive use with clear outcomes

In response to a question, the Head of Corporate Organisation undertook to provide details outside the meeting on the basis and timing of NHB payment arrangements.

RESOLVED

That a letter be sent from the two Joint Scrutiny Chairs to the Transformation Enquiry Groups making them aware of the potential approaches for the allocation and use of New Homes Bonus, as contained in Paper JSC/11/13, and of the Joint Scrutiny Committee's specific views as summarised below:-

- **The importance of the 'invest to save approach' and its incorporation in the Budget process for 2014/15**
- **The need to secure effective community engagement and clarity throughout the process, with a clear timetable and criteria for making bids**

8 REVIEW OF THE WESTERN COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Peta Jones, Corporate Manager – Safe Communities, introduced a report from the Head of Communities ([Paper JSC/12/13](#)) to enable Members to scrutinise the work of the Partnership in 2012/13. She also alerted Members to the current uncertainty around the new funding arrangements and the involvement of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in funding and in considering the possibility of a larger Partnership being created by further mergers.

The Corporate Manager responded to Members' questions about various matters including the following:-

- How is duplication avoided and best use made of limited financial resources in areas such as supporting troubled families – Suffolk Family Focus – preventing and dealing with Anti-Social behaviour? We work with the PCC.
- Farm security? – Farm Watch is one of a number of 'Watch' initiatives
- Further detail on costs and benefits of officer input? – there is officer input at working group meetings but no direct financial contribution
- Night time economy – how do we interact with the Police? We have been involved in the Night Time Economy and tasking Groups which look at covert operations and other ways of reducing alcohol-related problems, provide support for Town Pastors schemes
- Cold Calling? Currently dealt with by Trading Standards

The Chairman, Jenny Antill referred to the very real contribution which the constituent Local Authorities are able to make through the Partnership and its positive outcomes for the community. Members expressed their support for the work of the Partnership and emphasised the benefits of a good working relationship with the local Police and with the wider Police role through the PCC.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the contents of Paper JSC/12/13 be noted.**
- (2) That a letter be sent to the Police and Crime Commissioner from the two Joint Scrutiny Chairs, in support of the Western Community Safety Partnership, emphasising its positive outcomes for the community and the value of its good local connections.**

9 CORPORATE COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS REPORT

David Cleary, Corporate Manager – Customer Services introduced a report from the Head of Corporate Resources ([Paper JSC/13/13](#)) briefing Members on the new joint system and procedures and the activity recorded since 2 April 2013.

The Corporate Manager referred to some of the differences between the two previous reporting regimes, and Members noted that, going forward, the information would be recorded in a consistent way across the two authorities and the reporting format could be further refined to ensure that Members received the details they required in order to carry out their scrutiny role in the most effective manner. He answered questions from Members and undertook to bring an interim report back to Members, ahead of an annual report, to address issues of format and detail identified by Members during the course of the discussion.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the compliments and complaints activity since the new system was introduced on 2 April 2013, as shown in Appendix 1 to Paper JSC/13/13, be noted.**
- (2) That an interim report as referred to above be made to the Committee ahead of the annual report for 2013/14.**

The business of the meeting was concluded at 6.55 p.m.

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Chairman