

MINUTES OF THE JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON
WEDNESDAY 16 DECEMBER 2015 AT 5.30 PM

PRESENT:

BABERGH

MID SUFFOLK

Peter Burgoyne (Chairman)
Barry Gasper
Kathryn Grandon
Bryn Hurren
Margaret Maybury
John Nunn
Fenella Swan

David Card
James Caston
Rachel Eburne
John Levantis
Wendy Marchant
Suzie Morley
Jill Wilshaw

1 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Margaret Maybury was substituting for Harriet Steer. Apologies for absence were received from Mark Newman and Dave Muller.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Margaret Maybury declared a local non-pecuniary interest in [Paper JSC/17/15](#) – Grants Review and External Funding in her capacity as the Council's representative on Compassion.

Bryn Hurren declared a local non-pecuniary interest in Paper [JSC/17/15](#) – Grants Review and External Funding in his capacity as the Council's representative on The Quay at Sudbury.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on [21 October 2015](#) be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the following minor amendments:

Deletion of the name of Elizabeth Gibson Harries from the list of attendees

Minute no 8, 3rd bullet point – addition of the wording in italics to read 'Support for local businesses to thrive and grow – *in particular, small businesses*.

4 PETITIONS

None received.

5 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None received.

6 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

7 HOMELESSNESS

Sue Lister, Corporate Manager – Housing Options presented Paper [JSC/16/15](#) informing Members about homelessness in Babergh and Mid Suffolk, including some rough sleeper case studies.

In response to questions from Members, the Corporate Manager referred to the effects of recent case law and the introduction of Universal Credit, and the current review of the process for intentional homelessness appeals which had in the past involved a Panel in Mid Suffolk, but not in Babergh. She explained various initiatives, such as working with the Stone Foundation to lease properties for shared accommodation, which could help to address the current demand for one bed properties.

Members noted the data relating to the differences in the levels of demand and reasons for homelessness in the two Districts, and the ways in which the integrated delivery team works with other agencies in relation to safeguarding issues, domestic violence, parenting, ex-forces personnel, medical assessments, care leavers and supported housing for young people. The Councils have two Financial Inclusion posts in place to help Council tenants, especially those needing smaller properties.

Members acknowledged the contribution of the team in the aftermath of the recent Sudbury fire.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in Paper JSC/16/15 be noted.

8 GRANTS REVIEW AND EXTERNAL FUNDING

Sue Clements, Corporate Manager – Strong Communities presented [Paper JSC/17/15](#) detailing the work carried out through the first phase of the Grants Review Project and suggesting areas which might be the subject of further investigation as part of the second phase of the Review.

She referred to the ‘critical friend’ type of role which the Joint Scrutiny Committee was being asked to undertake, and the way in which the next phase might be approached. Members were advised that the process would involve working with the Executive and Strategy Committees, and could employ means such as task and finish groups / workshops as well as reporting to the Scrutiny Committee. A project plan would be developed.

After questioning various aspects of the report including

- the reasons for the historic differences between the budgets of the two Councils
- the level of take-up of grants
- the availability of external funding

- fund raising capacity in different communities
- the enabling role of the Councils including assistance with grant bids to external funders
- use of service level agreements / monitoring
- social and monetary return on grant monies,

Members agreed to feed in any further thoughts and suggestions prior to considering the way forward the way forward in more detail, with a view to the second phase being completed by the end of April.

RESOLVED

- (1) **That the information on Phase 1 of the Grants Review Project be noted.**
- (2) **That a report be made to the next meeting of the Committee, taking into account the matters raised at this meeting, to enable Members to establish the process for Phase 2 of the Review.**

9

SCOPING OF A JOINT SCRUTINY REVIEW OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY CAPABILITIES

Peter Quirk, Head of Corporate Organisation introduced Paper [JSC/18/15](#) and referred to the context for bringing the report forward, following the workshop which had taken place after the previous Committee meeting. Louise Rawsthorne, Head of Economy – Investment and Development referred to the proposed scoping document for the Review (Appendix A to the report) which was put forward as a basis for discussion, and which had been developed in conjunction with Rachel Eburne who explained some of the thinking behind the exercise, in the context of the Councils' Strategic priorities.

During the course of the discussion on this item, the definition of affordable housing was questioned and it was agreed that clarification was needed. Members also requested the inclusion of references to shared equity and measures to encourage self-reliance, and expressed concern about the way in which small starter homes could be enlarged and consequently might be taken out of the 'affordable' range. Delivery of housing development for which planning permission had been granted was recognised as an issue and the important contribution which could be made by small-scale schemes was emphasised.

As a result of their deliberations, Members concluded that further work should be undertaken by the Chairs in conjunction with relevant Portfolio Holders and officers on the scope of the Review.

RESOLVED

That the Review Scoping Document (Appendix A to Paper JSC/18/15) be further developed in the light of the comments made at the meeting and a report be made to a future meeting of the Committee.

10 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) AND SECTION 106 PROCESS

Peter Quirk, Head of Corporate Organisation updated Members as follows:-

Section 106

When we move to a CIL environment, we plan to centralise the monitoring of CIL and S106 funds in one 'CIL' team. This will enable us to make best use of the funds and ensure compliance. This work is planned to coincide with the implementation of CIL and has already started.

CIL adoption will also have the potential for simplifying the S106 process as it is envisaged that the majority of infrastructure funding will be secured through a CIL charge with S106 being only used for onsite requirements and affordable housing contributions, potentially simplifying the writing and sign off process.

With regard to S106 agreements which remain outstanding, we have recognised the need to address this issue and have brought in additional resource to manage the process. We are confident that we will have addressed most of these issues prior to the implementation of the CIL regime.

CIL

The final charging schedule from the PINS Examiner was received today. The Examiner has agreed with the Councils' draft Charging Schedule and states that

'...the evidence which has been to inform the Charging Schedule is robust, proportionate and appropriate'

The Council meetings on 20 and 21 January will consider this recommendation for the charging level, with implementation to follow.

The CIL team will administer the collection of CIL and develop with Councillors and key stakeholders an approach to spend allocation and governance. It is unlikely that we will have any substantial spend for at least a year as the CIL pot starts from zero.

Members noted that because the CIL adoption process is clearly defined by statute and has been followed in all respects, coupled with extensive engagement and briefings, the opportunity for Committee scrutiny would be very limited. Members were also aware that the Examiner had indicated that a review should be carried out after CIL had been operational for 18-24 months.

RESOLVED

That the position as reported above be noted.

11 FORWARD PLAN FOR 2015/16

Christine Roofe, Project and Research Officer confirmed that the Affordable Housing Delivery item would be added to the Forward Plan, together with the further report on Community Grants, as identified during the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the content of Paper JSC/19/15 together with the information reported to the meeting as set out above be noted.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 8.20 p.m.

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Chairman