

MINUTES OF THE JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL, NEEDHAM MARKET ON WEDNESDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2016 AT 5.30 PM

PRESENT:

**BABERGH**

**MID SUFFOLK**

Peter Burgoyne  
Barry Gasper  
Kathryn Grandon  
Bryn Hurren  
Fenella Swan

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

1 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dave Muller, Mark Newman, John Nunn and Harriet Steer.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Bryn Hurren declared a local non-pecuniary interest in relation to Community Grants Update by reason of being chair of a group that receives a grant.

3 MINUTES

**RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to an amendment in relation to Minute 9 on page 3 to the effect that the scoping document for the Review had been developed in conjunction with both Chairs of the Committee, Councillors Rachel Eburne and Peter Burgoyne.**

4 PETITIONS

None received.

5 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None received.

6 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

## 7 COMMUNITY GRANTS UPDATE

Sue Clements, Corporate Manager – Strong Communities, provided an oral update on the Grants Review Project, encompassing a reduction in grant spending over 2017-2020, awareness raising about external funding opportunities and developing skills and offering mentoring with regards to the external funding application process. She also provided an update on Capital and Minor Grants awarded to date for both Mid Suffolk and Babergh:

### MSDC

Grants Allocated	£112,507
Total Project Costs	£747,497
(15% grant allocation of total project costs)	

### Babergh

Grants Allocated	£102,605
Total Project Costs	£414,941
(25% grant allocation of total project costs)	

She informed the meeting that a number of projects were underway, some of them to help applicants by way of workshops and direct advice to build up the confidence and necessary skills to apply for external funding. In addition, a graduate intern with an IT background would be coming on board shortly to assist with applications for external funding and data capturing. Officers asked Members to keep them informed should they learn about or identify new groups and projects getting off the ground that might need assistance with the process.

Members commended the work undertaken to date and commented that it would be useful for the Grants Review to show examples of how this work and upskilling in communities had added value, and not necessarily in monetary form. Members also commented that a report on the outcomes of the Grants Review should be added to the Forward Plan and brought back to a future meeting.

## 7 VOID PERFORMANCE

### Report JSC/01/16

Sue Lister, Corporate Manager (Housing Options), provided an overview of current void performance for both Councils and targets that had been set for completing repairs on void properties. Sue Lister, Calvin Fisher (Interim Corporate Manager – Responsive Repairs) and Scott Jennings (Surveyor Building Maintenance) collectively answered Members' questions with regards to the reasons why some properties remained unoccupied for longer, the process that had to be followed in order to re-let council properties, the effects of the Sheltered Housing and Asset Viability Reviews, comparison benchmarks with other players in the housing market, the effect of long void periods on income, the nature and timings of planned maintenance and replacement programme and the agreed establishment of a Responsive Repairs service.

Members asked for the following to be provided at future meetings:

- An update on the progress of the new Responsive Repairs service 12 months after implementation;

- Void performance for Sheltered Housing to be provided separately from other council properties;
- An overview as to how void performance fits in the wider performance management review.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the contents of the report and the ongoing work to improve performance be noted.**

### 9 SCOPING OF A REVIEW OF WASTE SERVICES

Oliver Faiers, Corporate Manager (Waste), provided a comprehensive oral update on the waste disposal scheme currently in place across the two districts and also quoted useful statistics in relation to the Councils' joint performance against national indicators and in comparison to other local authorities in Suffolk. He answered Members' questions in relation to the Serco contract and the options available for when it comes to an end in 2021, the scope for cost savings, the use of new waste pick-up lorries, viability of food and glass collection and recycling services and alternative waste disposal methods. He advised that many strategic contracts across the county would end in 2019 and a strategic review of the entire waste system would be undertaken in order to shape the future services, to look for further joint and cross-border working opportunities and to seek to improve joint communications on waste prevention and recycling campaigns.

Some Members expressed a view that consideration should be given to residents' views to ensure any changes to the waste collection system were user-friendly, in particular from smaller properties and properties in heavily built-up and rural locations. Members felt it appropriate that the Committee scrutinise the plan for post 2019 and requested a further report be brought at that time.

### 10 FORWARD PLAN

#### JSC/02/16

Councillor Rachel Eburne commented that the Forward Plan had been populated up to April, when the last meeting for the current Council year would take place. When new Committee Members were elected, they might wish to set a different agenda going forward.

She advised that Councillors Peter Burgoyne, David Card, Kathryn Grandon and herself had met with housing officers to establish what aspects of housing delivery were to be scrutinised. Further work was to be done with Portfolio Holders to ensure the required skills currently provided by external consultants were transferred to enable delivery by Officers. Portfolio Holders had requested Scrutiny Committee look at where the barriers were and a report would be brought to the April meeting.

Councillor Eburne also informed the meeting that the Chair of Suffolk County Council Scrutiny Committee had touched on the devolution proposals and how the process should be scrutinised, in particular in relation to Governance arrangements.

Councillor David Card commented that in relation to the Affordable Housing Delivery topic, the term “affordable housing” should be clearly defined.

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

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Chairman

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