

MINUTES OF THE JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON  
WEDNESDAY 13 APRIL 2016 AT 5.30 PM

PRESENT:	<b>BABERGH</b>	<b>MID SUFFOLK</b>
	Peter Burgoyne (Chairman)	Rachel Eburne
	Barry Gasper	John Field
	Kathryn Grandon	John Levantis
	Bryn Hurren	Lesley Mayes
	Margaret Maybury	Suzie Morley
	Mark Newman	Jill Wilshaw
	John Nunn	
	Fenella Swan	

1 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillors John Field, Margaret Maybury and Lesley Mayes were substituting for Wendy Marchant, Harriet Steer and Dave Muller respectively. Councillor James Caston was unable to be present.

Members were aware that there was a vacancy for a Mid Suffolk Councillor on the Committee following the resignation of Councillor David Card.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None received.

3 MINUTES

**RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

4 PETITIONS

None received.

5 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None received.

6 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

7 JOINT SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE COUNCILS DIRECT DELIVERY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Louise Rawsthorne, Head of Investment and Commercial Delivery, presented [Paper JSC/03/16](#), which provided Members with the strategic context for affordable housing delivery in Babergh and Mid Suffolk. The report also provided Members with an overview of the Councils' own affordable housing delivery programme and the resources and expertise in place to delivery it.

The Head of Investment and Commercial Delivery then answered questions from Members on various related matters, including:-

- Existing staff's skill set and use of external consultants;
- Current staffing levels and employment of new staff and their roles, as well as associated costs – Members received an explanation on the reasons referred to in paragraphs 10.4.1.-10.4.4 of the report.
- Members asked for a breakdown of figures on resources together with information discounts / re-payments to be provided outside the meeting;
- Impact of the Right-to-Buy scheme on the Council's housing stock and the financial viability of associated building works;
- The Councils' investment programmes and how they would generate revenue income streams in line with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Joint Strategic Plan.
- Clarification on different models of affordable housing available to tenants;
- Type and size of affordable housing to be built across the districts and how the demand for certain types of properties would be measured.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That the information provided about the progress of the Councils' own affordable housing delivery programme in Paper JSC/03/16 be noted.**
- (2) That the plans to recruit skills and expertise when required and develop skills within the organisation to enable the Councils to deliver an affordable housing programme and develop its wider housing delivery function be noted.**

8 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2015/16

Christine Roofe, Project and Research Officer, introduced Paper [JSC/04/16](#), together with a draft report (Appendix1) summarising the work of the Joint Scrutiny Committee during 2015/16 for submission to both Councils.

Babergh Members considered that paragraph 10.9 of the draft report – Babergh Scrutiny Committee – should be reworded to reflect their comments regarding the recognition of the inherent risks in the financial approach and the need to pursue further cost cutting options.

Mid Suffolk Members asked for the section of the draft report on Affordable Housing Provision (Paragraph 10.5 – summary of the Committee’s main achievements – to be amended to reflect Members’ comments on staffing levels and resources, and this was agreed.

**RESOLVED**

**(1) That subject to (a) the amendments identified in (i) and (ii) below as a result of its consideration at the meeting and (b) Resolution (2) below, the draft document attached as Appendix 1 to Paper JSC/04/16 be adopted as the Joint Scrutiny Committee’s Annual report for 2015/16 and submitted to the Annual Council meetings at the end of April 2016:**

**(i) Second sentence in paragraph 10.9 of the Draft Annual Report of the Joint Scrutiny Committee 2015/16 be amended to read as follows: “Although concerns were raised on the five-year plan, the Scrutiny Committee endorsed the recommendations but asked for comments raised to be considered including the recognition of the inherent risks in the financial approach and the need to pursue further cost cutting options”;**

**(ii) Paragraph on Affordable Housing Provision on page 4 be amended to reflect Members’ comments on future plans to evaluate whether the Councils have the capacity and capability to continue to deliver the stretching affordable housing targets.**

**(2) That the Joint Chairs of the Committee be asked to agree additional text relating to this meeting (paragraph 10.2 of Paper JSC/04/16 refers) prior to submission to both Councils.**

9 FOLLOW-UP OF JOINT SCRUTINY ITEMS

Members had before them [Paper JSC/05/16](#) and noted that items marked as “ongoing” in Appendix A would be carried forward to future Forward Plans.

**RESOLVED**

**That the progress made be noted.**

10 OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOINT SCRUTINY IN SUFFOLK

Peter Quirk, Interim Projects – Governance and Elections, introduced the debate by giving a brief overview of possible areas for collaboration across Suffolk. During the course of a discussion regarding the opportunities and potential approaches for Joint Scrutiny working, Members identified the following areas including budget activity, proactive approach, pre-decision scrutiny and devolution which could form part of a Joint Scrutiny framework in Suffolk.

**RESOLVED**

**That the comments made as referred to above be noted.**

11 REVIEW OF SCRUTINY – UPDATE

Peter Quirk, Interim Projects – Governance and Electoral, gave an oral report on the opportunities, key drivers and phases for the Scrutiny function review, linked to the Strengthening Governance review and in the context of the changing environment and in conjunction with best practice nationally. Reference was made to the change in culture which would be required, and the need to ensure that Members were fully engaged in the review process. A further report will be made to Committee.

**RESOLVED**

**That the position be noted.**

12 FORWARD PLAN FOR 2015/16

Christine Roofe, Project and Research Officer, introduced Paper [JSC/06/16](#), which listed potential areas for future review. Following the Annual Council meetings, a workshop for new Committee Members to develop the Forward Plan for 2016/17 would be set up in early May. Members asked to avoid the first week of May as any meeting then would clash with pre-election work.

**RESOLVED**

**That the position be noted.**

The business of the meeting was concluded at 7.00 p.m.

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Chairman