

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (COMMUNITY SERVICES) COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON TUESDAY, 31 JANUARY 2012

PRESENT: Mr J A B Long – Chairman

Mr P D Burgoyne

Mr J M Owen

Mr B D Hurren

Mr J R A Sayers

Mrs A M Norman

Mr F R Lawrenson, Mr M Newman and Mr D L Wood were unable to be present.

31 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Mr J R A Sayers declared a personal interest in the relevant part of the items referred to in Minute No 35 (Six-Monthly Review of the 2011 Emergency Planning Work Plan) and Minute No 36 (Council Housing - Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme) below by virtue of being a Member of Suffolk County Council and Sudbury Town Council, but stated that his interest was such that he was able to speak and vote on the matters concerned.

32 MINUTES

**RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the meeting held on [13 September 2011](#) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

33 PETITIONS

None received.

34 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

35 SIX-MONTHLY REVIEW OF THE 2011 EMERGENCY PLANNING WORK PLAN

The Head of Communities submitted a report ([Paper L138](#)) providing an update on Emergency Planning and Business Continuity activity since October 2011 and proposing a revised approach to reporting arrangements.

The following points were noted:-

- The Chief Executive completed her training in November 2011
- The cost proportion and payment mechanism for the new joint call-out arrangements for Babergh DC and Mid Suffolk DC have yet to be determined, this cost will be shared between each Council with effect from April 2012.

During the course of the discussion the following were among the points raised:-

- The Committee would like to continue to receive six-monthly reports
- Future reports to include a more up-to-date work plan if possible
- Further work required on ICT and satellite phones.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (1) That the creation of a Joint Emergency Preparedness Forum (JEPF), as detailed in paragraph 8.3 of Paper L138 be noted.**
- (2) That the newly implemented Joint Duty Manager arrangements, as detailed in paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 of Paper L138 be noted.**
- (3) That the Committee continue to receive six-monthly reports.**
- (4) That the report be noted.**

#### 36 COUNCIL HOUSING - DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Director of Finance submitted a report ([Paper L137](#)) outlining the draft HRA Budget for 2012/13, the draft 4-year Capital Programme for Council Housing and the position on rent levels for next year. The report also outlined the position on supporting people and energy charges for sheltered accommodation which have been subject to review and scrutiny by the Housing Panel and Tenant's Forum.

Members also had before them [Paper L124](#) which was considered by Strategy Committee on 12 January 2012.

The Director of Finance referred to amended recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 in respect of Paper L137, circulated to Members prior to the meeting, and advised Members of the updated position following the Housing Panel meeting on 27 January 2012. It was also noted that the figure in recommendation 2.4 of Paper L137 should be amended to net £49k.

Members were aware that their views would be reported to Strategy Committee for consideration at their meeting on 9 February 2012 alongside the HRA 30 year Business Plan required under the Government's Council Housing self-financing reforms.

During the consideration of this item a lengthy discussion ensued on the rent increase for next year and a number of questions to Officers by Members were raised.

#### **RECOMMENDED TO STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

- (1) That, having considered the draft Council Housing Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2012/13, this Committee's view is that a rent increase of 6% would, on balance, be appropriate next year and that rents for compulsory and casual let garages should be increased by RPI of 5.6%.**

- (2) That the increase for heating and lighting charges in sheltered and homeless accommodation be capped at 2%.**
- (3) That Supporting People charges for those in sheltered accommodation be approved in line with the grant reduction proposed by Suffolk County Council and that the subsidy required to maintain the service of net £49k be approved.**

Mr J M Owen voted against the decision referred to in (1) above and requested that this be recorded in the minutes.

37 WORK PLAN

The Head of Corporate Organisation submitted a report ([Paper L139](#)) which provided details of the Committee's anticipated work for the remainder of 2011/12.

**RESOLVED**

**That the Work Plan submitted as Paper L139 be noted.**

The business of the meeting was concluded at 12.15 p.m.

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Chairman