

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON THURSDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2011

PRESENT: Ms J A Jenkins – Chairman

Mrs J Antill	Mrs A K Pollard
Mr A C Bavington	Mr N A Ridley
Mr N A Bennett	Mrs S M Wigglesworth
Mrs S Carpendale	Mr L H Young
Mr A J Hinton	

44 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None declared.

45 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 August 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

46 PETITIONS

None received.

47 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

48 ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

None received.

49 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM TASK GROUPS AND PANELS

(a) 2012/13 Strategic Financial Planning Process

Katherine Steel, Chief Financial Officer of Mid Suffolk District Council, presented [Paper L77](#) informing Members of the work undertaken to date in relation to the strategic and financial planning process and the timetable and work plan that has been jointly agreed between Mid Suffolk District Council and Babergh District Council to formulate a clear framework for resource allocation, linked to corporate and service priorities, and a budget for 2012/13.

The latest worst case assessment of the three-year financial position for 2012/13 to 2014/15 and the budget savings shortfall that is currently forecast was outlined to the meeting.

The joint strategic charging policy, which will be the basis against which income generation ideas are evaluated before consideration by Members at future Strategy Committee meetings was also submitted for approval. Members noted that the level of any charges must have regard to any relevant Council strategies or policies. This would enable flexibility for each Council to determine the amount to be levied.

During consideration of this item it became apparent that the strategic charging policy attached as Appendix C to [Paper L77](#) still required some work to be undertaken and that it should be referred back to the Strategic and Financial Planning Task Group for further consideration.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the high level timetable for the strategic financial planning process as set out in Appendix A to [Paper L77](#) be noted.**
- (2) That the three-year financial position and key aspects of this as set out in paragraphs 8.8 to 8.13 and Appendix B to Paper L77 be noted.**
- (3) That the strategic charging policy attached as Appendix C to Paper L77 be referred back to the Strategic and Financial Planning Task Group for further consideration.**

(b) Proposals for a Joint Housing Board

Members had before them a report ([Paper L78](#)) by the Housing Integration Group seeking approval for the establishment of a Joint Housing Board comprising both Members and tenants to run the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) element of the housing services of Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council.

The proposals contained in Paper L78 have been considered and are supported by:-

Housing Integration Group
Babergh District Council/Mid Suffolk District Council's Joint Management Board
Babergh's Housing Panel
Mid Suffolk District Council's Community Policy Panel
Joint Tenant Group

Members asked a number of questions of Officers relating to the Joint Housing Board.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (1) That a Joint Housing Board be established by 1 April 2012.**
- (2) That the Constitutional Details for the operation of the Board, as set out in Section 9 of [Paper L78](#), be approved.**

- (3) That the Schemes of Delegation at BDC and MSDC be amended (and any consequential amendments be made to the respective Constitutions of the two Councils) to reflect the details in Section 9.2 of [Paper L78](#).
- (4) That three Babergh Councillors be appointed to serve on the Board for the remainder of the current term of office.

50 WORK PLAN

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report ([Paper L79](#)) on items identified for the Strategy Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Work Plan set out in Paper L79 be noted.

51 LOCALISATION OF BUSINESS RATES AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFITS

The Director of Finance submitted a report ([Paper L80](#)) relating to the Government's consultation papers on the proposals for Business Rates retention in relation to growth in Business Rates income and localisation of support for Council Tax which form part of the Local Government Resource Review.

The consultation sets out and seeks views on the proposals for how, from 1 April 2013:-

- (a) A local Business Rates retention scheme that allows Councils to keep additional income from growth could operate.
- (b) Local Council Tax benefit schemes could be introduced saving 10% on current costs.

The Local Government Association has published a response (Appendix B to Paper L80) to the main consultation papers and it was suggested that this, together with additional key issues in Appendix C to Paper L80 be used as the basis for Babergh District Council's response.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Council's response to the Government's Business Rates and Council Tax Benefit Scheme consultation proposals be based on those set out in Appendix B and Appendix C [to Paper L80](#) subject to:-
 - The second key point in Appendix C (council tax benefits) relating to the elderly nature of our residents being strengthened
 - It being made clear that the council tax benefit proposals will increase the likelihood of people entering the "poverty trap".
- (2) That the final details of the submission be delegated to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Chairman of the Strategy Committee.

52 DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK: RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

The Head of Natural and Built Environment submitted a [report \(Paper L81\)](#) outlining the main provisions of the draft National Planning Policy Framework produced by the Department of Communities and Local Government and requesting a draft response to be approved.

During consideration of this item a number of points were made by Members and clarification received from Officers. Reference to the following needed to be incorporated into any response:-

- Gypsy/Traveller guidance
- Planning inspectorate role to be clarified
- There was little suggest that the framework would speed up the plan making process.

RESOLVED

- (1) That, subject to the inclusion of additional comments on the matters referred to above the draft comments set out in the commentary boxes contained within [Paper L81](#) be used as the basis for the District Council's formal response to the Department of Communities and Local Government.**
- (2) That the Head of Natural and Built Environment, in consultation with the Chairman of the Strategy Committee, be authorised to finalise the submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government subject to any revisions not altering the substance of the response.**

Note: The meeting adjourned between 11.07 a.m. and 11.27 a.m. for refreshments.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 12.50 p.m.

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Chairman