

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON THURSDAY, 12 JANUARY 2012

PRESENT: Ms J A Jenkins – Chairman

Mrs J Antill	Mr N A Ridley
Dr M F M Bamford	Mr A J Ward
Mr A C Bavington	Mrs S M Wigglesworth
Mrs S Carpendale	Mr L H Young
Mr A J Hinton	

The following Members were unable to be present:-

Mr N A Bennett and Mrs A K Pollard.

75 SUBSTITUTES

It was noted that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 5, substitutes were in attendance as follows:-

Dr M F M Bamford (substituting for Mrs A K Pollard)  
Mr A J Ward (substituting for Mr N A Bennett)

76 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Mr A J Hinton declared a personal interest in Minute No 81(a) below (Strategic and Financial Planning – Budget Options) in his capacity as an East Bergholt Parish Councillor but stated that he was able to speak and vote on the matter.

Mrs J Antill declared a personal interest in Minute No. 81 (a) below in her capacity as a Director of Sudbury CAB but indicated that her interest was such that she was able to speak and vote on the matter.

Dr M F M Bamford subsequently declared a personal interest in Minute No. 81 (a) in his capacity as the Council's representative on the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley JAC and the East Bergholt Dual Use Sports Centre Management Committee but indicated that his interest was such that he was able to speak and vote on the matter.

77 MINUTES

**RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the meeting held on [24 November 2011](#) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

78 PETITIONS

None received.

79 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

80 ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

None received.

81 RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

(a) Strategic and Financial Planning – Budget Options

Mr N A Ridley, Chairman of the Strategic and Financial Planning Task Group, introduced [Paper L123](#), which set out the latest assessment of the Council's anticipated financial position for the next three years and the savings which are likely to be required, together with the Task Group's three Budget Options for 2012/13. The Strategy Committee also had regard to [Paper L119](#), considered by the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees on 13 December 2011. Members noted the Task Group's recommendation in paragraph 2 of [Paper L123](#), asking the Committee to endorse Option 2 and make an appropriate recommendation to the additional Council meeting on 26 January. Both Mr Ridley and the Director of Finance confirmed that any of the Options considered by the Task Group should be achievable.

Ms J A Jenkins, Chairman of the Strategy Committee, then asked Members to consider an amended set of recommendations (subsequently numbered as [Paper L123R](#)) which were circulated at the meeting and proposed and seconded. Ms Jenkins explained that the alternative recommendations reflected views that had been expressed by a number of Members since the Task Group's report had been circulated. Members noted that the revised recommendations largely reflected Option 1 as considered by the Task Group and shown in Appendix B to [Paper L123](#).

During the course of the ensuing debate, the Chairman of the Strategic and Financial Planning Task Group indicated his support for the revisions, which were also generally welcomed by the Committee.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

**(1) That the key aspects of Budget Option 1 for the 2012/13 financial year, as set out and described in [Paper L123](#) be endorsed to reflect:**

- **The very substantial Integration, transformation and other savings and income generation proposals of £1m summarised in Appendix B and further referred to in Paper L123, and Paper [L119](#) which was considered by the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees on 13 December 2011**
- **A Council Tax increase of 3.5% to provide a degree of financial sustainability in future years instead of accepting the Government's one-off Council Tax Freeze grant**

- The retention of free parking for up to 3 hours in Sudbury and Hadleigh but there being an increase in the long-stay charge from £1.50 to £2.
- (2) That, in addition, further savings and income of £40k relating to public conveniences and the brown bin scheme (as reflected in Budget Option 2) be also incorporated in the 2012/13 Budget and also that:
- The further reduction in community grants of £30k is deleted, with a full strategic review of the community grants budget in 2012/13 by the Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee, having regard to the information attached in Appendix D to [Paper L123](#).
  - The remaining Budget shortfall, estimated at £134k, is funded by the limited temporary use of the New Homes Bonus and/or the additional use of reserves
  - The remaining New Homes Bonus is used to support economic growth and the vitality of market towns, jobs, new homes and investing in achieving long-term savings, as set out and described in section 8.9 of this report
  - The reserves strategy, as also outlined in [Paper L119](#), adjusted as necessary by the above proposals is approved.
- (3) That, in terms of the significant financial challenge facing the Council over the next 3 years, the following approaches be adopted:-
- Vigorously pursue the programme of service integration and transformation with Mid Suffolk District Council to achieve annual savings of at least £1m by the end of 2014/15, recognising that this involves significant staff reductions, and
  - Continue to constructively engage with local communities, particularly Town Councils, on how they can contribute to the transformation of services in order to assist in meeting the budget shortfall of around £1.3m that still has to be found by end of 2014/15.

(b) Council House Rents and Charges for 2012/13

The Chairman of the Housing Panel, Mrs S M Wigglesworth, introduced [Paper L124](#), the report of the Panel relating to proposed rent increases for 2012/13. The report also contained preliminary information on the potential increase in heating/lighting charges.

Members were aware that the Committee's view on the proposed rent increase would be included in the final budget proposals to be submitted to the Council meeting in February. They also noted that proposed heating/lighting charges would be the subject of a further report.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That the Housing Panel's recommendation of a 5% rent increase for 2012/13 be endorsed for inclusion in the final Budget proposals, subject to the result of the Committee's consideration of the HRA Business Plan at its next meeting.**
- (2) That the potential increase in heating/lighting charges for those in sheltered and homeless accommodation be noted. Further, that it also be noted that a detailed report will be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on supporting people costs and charges, including any cost implications for the HRA.**

82 WORK PLAN FOR 2011/12

The Head of Corporate Organisation submitted a report ([Paper L125](#)) on items identified for the Strategy Committee.

**RESOLVED**

**That the Work Plan set out in Paper L125 be noted.**

83 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS (CSPs)

Mrs J Antill, the Council's representative on the Community Safety Partnership for Babergh, updated Members on the work of the body and referred to the proposed future arrangements for their operation. Mike Hammond – Interim Transformation Director (Acting Director for Place) – referred to previous updates and decisions on Babergh's future involvement in Local Strategic Partnerships.

Members were aware that CSPs are statutory and that Babergh has its own partnership whilst Mid Suffolk forms part of the West Suffolk CSP alongside St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath. Following discussions between all interested parties there is now one Responsible Authorities Group and one officer working group for all four local authority areas. This has enabled pooling of resources on much reduced budgets. Continuing this arrangement will be beneficial to Babergh and Mid Suffolk as it will enable officers to concentrate limited resources on one rather than two partnerships. Localised working on priorities will not be diminished by the changes. The Committee was asked to formally endorse this revised working arrangement which will lead to a single CSP to cover the Districts of Babergh, Mid Suffolk, St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, and which was fully supported by Mrs Antill.

**RESOLVED**

**That the revised working arrangement leading to a single Community Safety Partnership to cover the Districts of Babergh, Mid Suffolk, St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath be formally endorsed.**

84 CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL – STOKE BY NAYLAND

The Head of Natural and Built Environment submitted a report ([Paper L126](#)) advising Members of the results of the recent public consultation and asking the Committee to adopt the new Appraisal document for Stoke by Nayland.

**RESOLVED**

**That the Stoke by Nayland Conservation Area Appraisal document (Appendix A to [Paper L126](#)) be adopted as non-statutory Supplementary Planning Guidance with immediate effect.**

85 CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL – MONKS ELEIGH

The Head of Natural and Built Environment submitted a report ([Paper L127](#)) advising Members of the results of the recent public consultation and asking the Committee to adopt the new Appraisal document for Monks Eleigh.

**RESOLVED**

**That the Monks Eleigh Conservation Area Appraisal document (Appendix A to [Paper L127](#)) be adopted as non-statutory Supplementary Planning Guidance with immediate effect.**

The business of the meeting was concluded at 11.00 a.m.

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Chairman