

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

PRESENT: Ms J A Jenkins – Chairman

Mr N A Bennett	Mr B Riley
Mrs S Carpendale	Mr A J Ward
Mr A J Hinton	Mrs S M Wigglesworth
Mr N A Ridley	Mr L H Young

Mr A C Bavington and Mrs A K Pollard were unable to be present.

30 SUBSTITUTES

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

Mr A J Ward (substituting for Mrs A K Pollard)

31 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Ms J A Jenkins, Mr N A Ridley, Mr B Riley and Mrs S M Wigglesworth all declared non-pecuniary interests in respect of Minute No. 37 below – Paper M50 – by virtue of living in the vicinity of one of the original suggested routes and/or having community forum groups within their Wards, but stated that they were able to speak and vote on the matter concerned.

32 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2012 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

33 PETITIONS

None received.

34 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

35 ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

None received.

36 WORK PLAN

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (Paper M49) on items identified for the Strategy Committee.

It was noted that in respect of the meeting on 9 August 2012 the topics on South Suffolk Leisure and Peer Review would now be submitted to the September meeting and the topic on Business Rates Retention would not be considered by Strategy Committee in August but would be dealt with initially through Member briefings.

RESOLVED

That the Work Plan set out in Paper M49 (as amended) be noted.

37 BRAMFORD TO TWINSTEAD ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT:
CONNECTION OPTIONS REPORT – RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

It was agreed that following consideration of the Strategic Directors report, public speaking arrangements be as follows:

One Speaker (3 minutes) from each of the following community forum groups:

- Hintlesham and Bramford area
- Hadleigh area
- Polstead and Dedham Vale AONB

One Speaker (5 minutes) from National Grid

The Strategic Director (Place) submitted a report (Paper M50) requesting the Committee to consider the impact of the National Grid proposals to construct a new 400kV power line through South Suffolk from the existing sub-station at Bramford, to Twinstead in Essex. The Committee was requested to provide a response to the findings of the Connection Options Reports (COR).

Following the introduction of the report by the Strategic Director (Place) representations from the agreed public speakers (as referred to above) were made as detailed below:

- Polstead and Dedham Vale AONB Community Forum – Mr Adam Sedgwick
- Hadleigh area Community Forum – Mr Michael Woods
- Hintlesham and Bramford area Community Forum – Mrs Francis Self
- National Grid – Mr Simon Pepper

RESOLVED

(1) That, representatives from each Council continue to work with other local authorities together with local interest groups affected by the proposals to provide a co-ordinated and united response to the Project being:

- (a) Councillors Jennie Jenkins and Nick Ridley as previously appointed for Babergh District Council, and,**
- (b) Councillor John Field for Mid Suffolk District Council and Councillor Michael Blakenham as his substitute.**

- (2) That, in conjunction with the other local authorities Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council urge Government to review the processes which dictate that National Grid must pursue the scheme now so as to avoid an unsatisfactory project being approved given the known delays associated with the delivery of new electricity generation capacity in the Eastern Region.**
- (3) That, in conjunction with the other local authorities Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council urge Government to review the current arrangements concerning compensation to ensure that individuals and communities who may be negatively affected by the Project whether underground or overground cabling is carried out, receive sufficient recompense.**
- (4) That the comments set out below be approved as the formal response for each authority to National Grid. Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council:**

 - (a) expect that each and every section of the line should be placed underground.**
 - (b) note the limited sections of undergrounding proposed but consider that any "sealing end compounds" (the transition points between overhead and underground cables) are likely to have a significant and unacceptable impact upon the character of the countryside.**
 - (c) consider that by failing to follow best practice guidance National Grid has not adequately responded to concerns about the socio-economic impact of the scheme upon the local economy.**
 - (d) note the frustration of local communities with the consultation process, in particular the way in which their representations have been taken into account, and strongly urge National Grid to ensure that residents are afforded every opportunity to be fully engaged as the project progresses in order to address the uncertainty that has been created.**
 - (e) consider there has been a lack of clarity over the approach to route selection in the Burstall and Hintlesham area and over the need for a substation in the Twinstead area; consequently the Project is not being progressed in an holistic manner.**
 - (f) consider that if a Development Consent Order is granted, National Grid should set up and finance an Environmental Improvement Fund to support local environmental initiatives to mitigate the impacts of the development.**

- (g) Consider that in addition to requiring the new line to be placed beneath ground the emerging opportunities for undergrounding the existing lines through the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Stour Valley should be exploited fully with the ambition of securing and maintaining a landscape free of high voltage electricity transmission pylons.**
- (5) That the Strategic Director (Place) in conjunction with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Strategy Committee be authorised to make changes and additions to the detail of this wording if necessary following further discussions with the other local authorities and interest groups.**

38 THE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (“CIL”)

The Head of Economy submitted a report (Paper M51) advising that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is being implemented across the country by local authorities. The report outlined the latest information in developing community infrastructure levies and requested confirmation of the work programme and budget provisions necessary to enable their implementation.

It is anticipated that there will be savings to be made by adopting a joint approach. If authorities act independently, they will probably have to pay around £15k for a Viability Assessment (stages 1 and 2 - with the authority providing the infrastructure evidence). However, if 6 authorities were to join together the cost might be £70k a saving of around £3k each. It is estimated that with the enquiry attendance and associated costs a total budgetary figure of £30k per authority would be advisable.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the progress on the CILs programmes be noted.**
- (2) That budgetary provision be made of £30k per authority to carry out the consultancy work for the viability exercise and subsequent hearing referred to in Paragraphs 8.9 to 8.13 of Paper M51.**

39 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)

RESOLVED

That pursuant to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the business specified below on the grounds that if the public were present during this item, it is likely that there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information as indicated against the item.

The Committee was also satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

40 RIGHT TO BUY (Exempt information by virtue of paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1)

The Head of Housing presented Paper M52 relating to an opportunity to purchase back a previous right to buy property.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the purchase of the property described in Section 8 of Paper M52 be approved (subject to negotiation with the seller and the lender).**
- (2) That, where expenditure meets the appropriate financial criteria within the constraints of the HRA Initial Business Plan, the Head of Housing be authorised to:-**
 - Exercise the Covenant included in the RTB sale contract to 'buy back' ex Council properties, until a strategy for the reinvestment of surplus HRA funds has been developed by the Housing Board.**

Note: The meeting adjourned for refreshments between 10.57 a.m. and 11.22 a.m.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 11.30 a.m.

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Chairman