

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON THURSDAY, 9 AUGUST 2012

PRESENT: Ms J A Jenkins – Chairman

Mr A C Bavington	Mr N A Ridley
Mrs S Carpendale	Mr B Riley
Mr A J Hinton	Mr A J Ward
Mr P Jones	Mrs S M Wigglesworth

Mr N A Bennett, Mrs A K Pollard and Mr L H Young were unable to be present.

41 SUBSTITUTES

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

Mr P Jones (substituting for Mr L H Young)
Mr A J Ward (substituting for Mrs A K Pollard)

42 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Mr A C Bavington and Mr B Riley declared non-pecuniary interests in respect of Minute No. 48 below (Paper M62) through their involvement, as the Council's representatives on the Shared Revenues Partnership Joint Committee, in discussions on the proposals, but indicated that they were able to speak and vote on the matter.

43 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2012 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

44 PETITIONS

None received.

45 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

46 ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

None received.

47 WORK PLAN

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (Paper M61) on items identified for the Strategy Committee.

Members noted that there would be further adjustments to the items listed following implementation of new arrangements for agenda management.

RESOLVED

That the Work Plan set out in Paper M61 be noted.

48 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

The Corporate Manager – Financial Services introduced the report of the Head of Corporate Resources (Paper M62) seeking approval to consult on a variant of the current national Council Tax Scheme, based on Appendix B to the report.

The Head of Shared Revenues Partnership then gave an overview of the background to the changes proposed, as outlined in her presentation notes which were circulated at the meeting, and it was reported that the Mid Suffolk Executive Committee had accepted the recommendations in Paper M62. Members noted that the delegation referred to in recommendation 2.2 of the report would be in consultation with the relevant Mid Suffolk Portfolio Holder instead of the Committee Chairman.

In responding to questions, the Corporate Manager explained some of the potential effects of the revised arrangements on Town/Parish precepts (as referred to in paragraph 3.6 of the report) in relation to their impact on the Council Tax Base, and on collection rates. Members were advised that further briefings would be provided on this and the whole package of Welfare Reform changes scheduled for April 2013, in which the Council Tax Support Scheme is included.

Members asked that the consultation documents be sent to all Councillors, to assist them in explaining the implications of the proposal to their parishes and dealing with any queries from those affected in their Wards.

RESOLVED

- (1) That subject to consultation, the approach outlined in sections 8.9 to 8.18 of Paper M62 and detailed further in Appendix B for the Local Council Tax Support Scheme, including removing and reducing second and empty home discounts, be endorsed.**
- (2) That the Head of Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder and the Chairman of the Strategy Committee be given delegated authority to determine the consultation arrangements, process and draft scheme based on the details set out in Appendix B to Paper M62.**

49 FINANCIAL OUTTURN FOR 2011/12

The Corporate Manager – Financial Services presented Paper M63 setting out the current position and seeking Member approval to an additional transfer of funds. Various Member queries on the transfer to earmarked reserves, future capital planning and investment, use of the New Homes Bonus and the audit of the accounts were answered.

RESOLVED

- (1) **That the likely financial outturn for 2011/12 be noted. Further, that the proposed additional transfer of £200k to the Integration and Transformation Earmarked Reserve be approved, and the overall level of Earmarked Reserves as set out in section 8.12 of Paper M63 be noted.**
- (2) **That the revenue budget and capital carry forwards as set out in sections 8.8, 8.9, 8.17 and 8.18 of Paper M63 be noted.**
- (3) **That the Joint Housing Board considers, and makes recommendations as to how, the HRA surplus, along with additional capital receipts arising from the Government’s re-invigoration of the Right to Buy arrangements and other HRA financial ‘headroom’, should be used for additional capital investment and to achieve other priority outcomes.**

50 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.

51 DISPOSALS AND ACQUISITIONS (Exempt information by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1)

The Corporate Manager – Asset Management presented Paper M64 seeking Member approval for two land transactions.

RESOLVED

- (1) **That the Corporate Manager – Asset Management be authorised to dispose of the Council’s freehold interest in the industrial unit at Sudbury, as shown on the plan attached as Appendix A to Paper M64.**

- (2) **That the Corporate Manager – Asset Management be authorised to acquire for the Council the freehold interest in part of one of the Council’s off street car parks, as shown on the plan attached as Appendix B to Paper M64.**
- (3) **That the disposal and acquisition referred to in (1) and (2) above respectively be subject to appropriate terms and conditions in order to protect the interests of the Council, as agreed with the Head of Legal Services.**

The business of the meeting was concluded at 11.05 a.m.

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Chairman