

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON THURSDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 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	Mrs S M Wigglesworth
Mrs A K Pollard	Mr L H Young

Mr N A Bennett was unable to be present.

Mr S R Barrett, Member representative on the Sudbury Pilot Steering Group, was in attendance at the meeting to present part of the item relating to Minute No. 67 below.

52 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Mr A C Bavington, Ms J A Jenkins and Mr B Riley all declared non-pecuniary interests in respect of Minute No. 60 below ([Paper M72](#)) through their involvement as the Council's representatives (or substitutes) on the Shared Revenues Partnership Joint Committee, but indicated that they were able to speak and vote on the matter.

Mrs A K Pollard declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Minute Nos. 61 and 66 below ([Papers M73](#) and [M77](#)), as a Suffolk County Councillor, but indicated that she was able to speak and vote on the matter.

Mr A J Hinton subsequently declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Minute No. 64 below ([Paper M76](#)), as a former member of the Armed Forces but indicated that he was able to speak and vote on the matter.

53 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on [9 August 2012](#) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

54 PETITIONS

None received.

55 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

56 ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

None received.

57 WORK PLAN

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report ([Paper M69](#)) on items identified for the Strategy Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Work Plan set out in Paper M69 be noted.

58 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE

The Strategic Director (Corporate) introduced [Paper M70](#), which had attached as an appendix, the final Peer Review Report which contained some useful insights and would be helpful in guiding thoughts and actions as we progress transformation and integration.

There were no real substantive surprises in the findings although some elements of advice and interpretation were unexpected. The report shows that the two Councils have a good track record of achievement over a relatively short period of time. It also sees the Councils' financial management as a key strength which links to the future success of the transformation and integration programme.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the final peer review report (Appendix A to [Paper M70](#)) and the Management Board's comments and proposed actions (Appendix B to [Paper M70](#)) are published widely within the two councils so that a range of audiences can reflect on their contents and so that they can be used as an aid to self improvement.**
- (2) That JMIB be asked to drive forward and monitor delivery of the actions to address the issues as set out in Appendix B to [Paper M70](#).**
- (3) That a further LGG Peer Review is carried out no earlier than the second half of 2014 and that JMIB be asked to keep the timing of the Review under review.**

59 STRATEGIC AND FINANCIAL PLANNING PROGRAMME FOR 2013/14 – LEAD MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head of Corporate Organisation and the Head of Resources submitted a joint report ([Paper M71](#)) providing Members with the opportunity to review, design and approve the timetable and overall methodology for the development of the strategic priorities, financial planning and budget setting processes for 2013/14.

The proposed member roles and responsibilities, particularly lead Members in determining the Council's strategic priorities and associated resource allocation and budget planning processes were outlined in the report.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the 2013/14 strategic and financial planning programme timetable approach and overall methodology as contained in [Paper M71](#) be approved.
- (2) That the key role which lead Members will play in determining strategic priorities and then using these to agree future resource allocation as part of the Medium Term Financial Planning and Budget setting process as outlined in [Paper M71](#) is recognised and agreed.

60 PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER ONE 2012/13 – BALANCED SCORECARD AS AT 30 JUNE 2012

The Head of Corporate Organisation submitted a report ([Paper M72](#)) on Council performance for the first quarter of 2012/13 using the approach previously approved which included the key principles and the measures to be included in a balanced scorecard.

During consideration of this report several concerns were raised which included:-

- Percentage of housing rent collected
- Average time taken to re-let council housing
- Determination of Planning Application
- Length of time taken to process Benefits claims

RESOLVED

That the key points relating to operational performance, transformation and integration be noted.

61 LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCE REVIEW – BUSINESS RATES RETENTION - POOLING

The Head of Corporate Resources submitted a report ([Paper M73](#)) requesting the committee to consider the approach to business rates retention and pooling these on a countywide basis.

The creation of a business rates pool would ensure the maximum amount of business rates collected in Suffolk remain in Suffolk and provide opportunities for the eight councils to work together to deliver enhanced economic prosperity for the county as a whole.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the formation of a Countywide pool with the County Council and other Borough and District Councils for the collection of business rates with effect from 1 April 2013 be continued.
- (2) That the County Council becomes the lead authority and acts as Banker for the pool.

- (3) That the Chief Executive in consultation with the S151 Officer be authorised to agree the detailed governance and operating arrangements following the Suffolk Public Sector leaders at their meeting on 14 September 2012.
- (4) That the Chief Executive and S151 Officer in consultation with the Chairman of Strategy Committee be authorised to sign on behalf of the Council that it joins the Suffolk pool, in line with DCLG timescales.

62 POLICY AND GUIDANCE ON UNREASONABLE AND PERSISTENT COMPLAINANT BEHAVIOUR

The Head of Corporate Resources submitted a report ([Paper M74](#)) recommending the adoption of a joint policy and guidance on unreasonable and persistent behaviour.

It was noted that Babergh District Council has adopted a policy and issued a guidance document on dealing with persistent complainants and that it is recommended that both councils should adopt a single joint policy.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

That the Joint Policy and Guidance on Unreasonable and Persistent Complainant Behaviour attached as an Appendix to [Paper M74](#) be endorsed.

63 JOINT BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN

The Head of Economy submitted a report ([Paper M75](#)) informing Members of the update and review of the Joint Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Investment Plan (LIP).

The updated LIP will run from 2012 to 2017 and will be subject to regular review and revision to reflect changes to both the main document and to the details of schemes that require some form of investment for delivery.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Local Investment Plan and priority list of schemes for the Babergh District as contained in [Paper M75](#) be approved.
- (2) That an annual update of the Local Investment Plan for approval be received.

64 COMMUNITY COVENANT WITH THE ARMED FORCES

The Strategic Director (People) introduced [Paper M76](#) advising of Suffolk County Council's intention to enter into a community covenant with the Armed Forces in Suffolk on behalf of the County and their proposal to do so with representatives of the County's District and Borough Councils, the Charitable and Voluntary Sectors and the civilian community of Suffolk.

The covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between the civilian community and its local Armed Forces community.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (1) That the principle of entering into the Community Covenant at Appendix A to [Paper M76](#) be endorsed and that the Chairman of Strategy Committee be authorised to sign the Covenant on behalf of the Council (scheduled to take place at a signing ceremony at Endeavour House on 11 October 2012).
- (2) That the entering into of a Task Force to develop a Suffolk Armed Forces Community Covenant Action Plan be endorsed (membership of the Task Force to be decided).
- (3) That representatives of the Council attend the Covenant signing ceremony together with any relevant guests they may wish to invite be approved (subject to numbers to be agreed).
- (4) That the Strategic Director (People), in consultation with the Chairman of Strategy Committee be given delegated authority to work with Suffolk County Council, Suffolk's Armed Forces and other agencies to deliver the principles of the Covenant at Appendix A to [Paper M76](#).

65 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 these items, it is likely that there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information as indicated against each item.

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

66 THE FUTURE PROVISION OF BACK OFFICE SERVICES (Exempt Information by Virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1)

The Strategic Director (Corporate) presented a report ([Paper M77](#)) setting out the results of an option appraisal for the provision of back office services currently provided for Mid Suffolk District Council through the CSD partnership.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (1) That subject to agreement by Mid Suffolk District Council the Council enters into a commitment to join the shared service partnership as set out in [Paper M77](#), and that the Council joins the shared service partnership from the expiry of the current CSD contract.

- (2) That subject to agreement by Mid Suffolk District Council, if the shared service partnership does not receive from district and borough councils, the necessary level of support required, the Council explores with the County Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and any other participants, the development of a joint procurement exercise for back office services.
- (3) That in the absence of an agreement for the Council to work with the County Council on the provision of the back office services set out in [Paper M77](#), other models are explored with Mid Suffolk District Council including:

 - Provision with other district/borough councils who wish to participate either through in-house shared service teams or through an external provider(s) including a public joint venture body
 - Babergh and Mid Suffolk in-house provision
 - Provision through an external provider(s) for Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

67 DISPOSAL OF FREEHOLD

The Head of Housing submitted a report ([Paper M78](#)) requesting approval to negotiate the disposal of the freehold interest of land at Sudbury.

The Corporate Manager – Asset Management undertook to liaise with Suffolk County Council to ensure that any proposed development would not prejudice any future highway improvements in the area.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Corporate Manager – Asset Management be authorised to dispose of the Council's freehold interest in the site in Sudbury referred to in [Paper M78](#) and shown on the plan attached as an Appendix to the report.
- (2) That the disposal referred to in (1) above be subject to:-

 - (a) Appropriate terms and conditions in order to protect the interests of the Council, as agreed with the Head of Legal Services and the Strategic Director (Place).
 - (b) A consideration to be finalised by the Council's appointed valuer.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

That the capital receipt generated from the disposal of the site in Sudbury referred to in [Paper M78](#) and shown on the plan attached as an Appendix to the report be used towards the provision of facilities within Sudbury.

68 LEISURE TRUST FINANCE AND FUTURE LEISURE PROVISION (Exempt Information by Virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1)

The Minute relating to the above-mentioned item is excluded from the public record. A summary of the Minute made by the Proper Officer in accordance with subsection 2 of Section 100(c) of the Local Government Act 1972 is set out below.

The Head of Communities submitted a report ([Paper M79](#)) relating to South Suffolk Leisure Trust and discussions between Officers and Senior Board Members of the Trust.

Members concurred with the plan of action for South Suffolk Leisure and the release of up to £75K from reserves in support of this.

Note: The meeting adjourned between 11.00 a.m. and 11.20 a.m. for refreshments.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 1.25 p.m.

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Chairman