

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON THURSDAY, 11 JULY 2013

PRESENT: Ms J A Jenkins – Chairman

Mr C W Arthey

Mr J R B Cave

Mr S R Barrett

Mr A J Hinton

Mr N A Bennett

Mrs A K Pollard

Mrs S Carpendale

Mrs S M Wigglesworth

Mr N A Ridley was also in attendance at the meeting.

Mr A C Bavington was unable to be present.

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Ms J A Jenkins declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item referred to in Minute No. 21 because of her relationship to a Suffolk County Councillor who might wish to use his Locality Budget funding in connection with the Community Right to Bid. She stated that the interest was such that she was able to speak and vote on the matter.

Mr S R Barrett and Mr N A Bennett declared non-pecuniary interests in the item referred to in Minute No. 20 in their capacity as Sudbury Town Councillors with regard to Belle Vue House, but stated that their interest was such that they could speak and vote on the matter.

14 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on [13 June 2013](#) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

15 PETITIONS

None received.

16 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

17 STRATEGIC TENANCY POLICY INCLUDING THE USE OF FLEXIBLE TENANCIES AND SUCCESSION RIGHTS

David Clarke, Corporate Manager – Business Improvement (People), introduced the report of the Joint Housing Board (Paper N31) which summarised the results of a recent consultation and made recommendations on the administration of the Council's new statutory duty under the Localism Act 2011. Minor corrections to the references in 2.1 and 2.3 of the report were corrected and noted.

Relevant officers responded to various matters identified during the debates which included:-

- the potential advantages and disadvantages of granting a 5 year fixed term tenancy
- the disappointing level of responses to the consultation exercise
- the workload which might be expected from the on-going review of the new arrangements
- concerns about the income and capital threshold levels, which will be used to determine a tenant's ability to support their own housing costs

Members were advised that there would be additional support for tenants through appointments such as the Worklessness Officer and Social Inclusion team, and that the proposed long lead-in period was intended to minimise potential problems, the overall aim being to achieve an effective, fairer and more flexible use of Council housing. The operation of the new arrangements would be kept under review by the relevant officers and through the Work Plan of the Joint Housing Board, with appropriate reports to Strategy and Executive Committees.

Councillor Sue Wigglesworth, a member of the Board, referred to the involvement of the tenant members on the Board, and proposed its recommendations.

RESOLVED

- (1) **That a flexible tenancy scheme for new tenants (subject to the exclusions set out in paragraph 11 of [Paper N31](#)) be adopted with an implementation date for the scheme of 1 April 2014.**
- (2) **That the minimum term of the fixed term tenancy be five years for general needs accommodation (following a one-year introductory tenancy).**
- (3) **That the continuation of lifetime tenancies for vulnerable households as set out in paragraph 9.2 of Paper N31 be approved.**
- (4) **That the mitigating factors set out in the Equality Analysis Assessment (Appendix 2 to Paper N31) be approved.**
- (5) **That the three new discretionary succession rights as set out below be approved, to take effect from 1 April 2014:-**
 - **Children of a deceased tenant will be given a discretionary succession right, subject to the formalities that no previous succession has already taken place, and there is no spouse, partner or civil partner currently residing in the property at the point of death**
 - **People who find themselves accepting responsibility for the deceased tenant's dependents and need to reside with these dependents in order to be able to fulfil this role, and**

- **Succession rights will be allowed for family carers if the property in question is the principal or only residence of the survivor at the time the tenant dies.**

(6) That the Head of Housing in consultation with the Joint Housing Board be authorised to make minor amendments to the scheme.

(7) That it be noted that the impact of these arrangements may not be known for some time and that officers will keep the scheme under review and report back to the Joint Housing Board and, where appropriate, to Strategy and Executive Committees.

18 WORK PLAN

The Head of Corporate Organisation submitted a report ([Paper N32](#)) relating to items that had been identified on the Committee Work Plan.

RESOLVED

That the contents of Paper N32 be noted.

19 2012/13 FINANCIAL OUTTURN

The Head of Corporate Resources submitted a report ([Paper N33](#)) summarising the outturn position and making recommendations on various elements covered by the report. Members noted that the outturn figures represented a good result in a difficult year. In answer to a question about the use of the new Strategic Priorities Reserve, Members were advised that this will be kept under review, but that it was intended that the Transformation Enquiry process would help the Council to be more proactive in identifying schemes to be brought forward.

RESOLVED

That the following be approved:-

- **The 2012/13 financial outturn as set out in Paper N33**
- **The overall reserve transfers summarised in Appendix A to Paper N33**
- **The General Fund slippage requests as set out in paragraph 8.9 of Paper N33**
- **The Capital Programme slippage requests as set out in paragraph 8.18 of Paper N33**

20 THE LOCALISM ACT 2011 – COMMUNITY RIGHTS

The Head of Communities submitted a report ([Paper N34](#)) setting out a proposed approach and procedure for administering expressions of interest under the Community Rights legislation including delegation arrangements. Members also had before them an amended wording for recommendation 2.4 in the report to clarify the delegation arrangements. The Committee was asked to make appropriate recommendations to Council.

The Head of Communities responded to a number of questions on the detailed operation of the proposals, and referred to keeping Members informed of

applications in their Wards being a key element in the process. Reference was made to possible funding opportunities to help communities wishing to bid.

The Committee considered whether it wished to make a further recommendation to cover the matters raised in paragraph 8.34 of the report and agreed to do so (recommendation (7) below).

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (1) That the introduction of new Community Rights under the Localism Act 2011 and the proposed approach that Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council are taking be noted.**
- (2) That the proposed procedure for administering an expression of interest under the Community Rights to Bid for “assets of community value” (as set out in paragraphs 8.23 to 8.33 of [Paper N34](#)) be approved.**
- (3) That the proposed procedure for administering an expression of interest under the Community Right to Challenge (as set out in paragraphs 8.34 to 8.43 of Paper N34) be approved.**
- (4) That the Scheme of delegation in relation to the Community Rights (as identified in Appendix C of Paper N34) be agreed and incorporated in the general scheme of officer delegations with the Council’s Constitution amended accordingly.**
- (5) That the arrangements for setting timescales during which expressions of interest can be made for services already contracted out which are set out in paragraph 8.41 and Appendix A of Paper N34 be agreed.**
- (6) That the Council should actively raise awareness of the Community Rights and the processes for expressing an interest on the Council’s website and in the Council’s interaction with Town and Parish Councils, Voluntary and Community Groups.**
- (7) That the option to nominate Council assets on a Community Asset Register (paragraph 8.34 of Paper N34 refers) be exercised as follows:-**
 - The Asset Management Group to consider, on a case by case basis, which assets should be nominated for inclusion in the Register.**
 - The Head of Communities, in consultation with the Asset Management Group, be authorised to place relevant Council assets on the Register.**
 - That the delegation referred to above be incorporated in the scheme of delegations with the Council’s Constitution amended accordingly.**

Note: Subsequent to the meeting, further legal advice resulted in the recommendation in (7) above being withdrawn.

21 REQUEST TO REGISTER AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE – THE CASE IS ALTERED PUBLIC HOUSE CAPEL ROAD BENTLEY

The Head of Communities submitted a report ([Paper N35](#)) relating to a request to register the public house under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011. He updated Members on the current position, which was that a potential sale of the asset as a public house might be under consideration as a result of which he asked for an amended recommendation to be considered, to allow time for further investigation.

RESOLVED

That the Head of Communities be authorised to accept the nomination for The Case is Altered Public House, Capel Road, Bentley to be entered on a Community Asset Register as defined by the Asset of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012.

22 BID TO DCLG'S TRANSFORMATION CHALLENGE AWARD

The Interim Director of Transformation submitted a report ([Paper N36](#)) requesting Members' approval for the submission of two bids, on the basis outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.

RESOLVED

That the following be submitted as bids to DCLG's Transformation Challenge Award:-

- **A Suffolk 'Major Multi Authority Bid' (Appendix 1 to Paper N36)**
- **A Babergh/Mid Suffolk 'Authority Award Bid' (Appendix 2 to Paper N36)**

23 SUFFOLK COAST AND HEATHS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) MANAGEMENT PLAN 2013-2018

The Strategic Director (Place) submitted a report ([Paper N37](#)) asking the Committee to endorse the Management Plan and outlining its implications for Babergh.

RESOLVED

That the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Management Plan 2013 – 2018, as referred to in Appendix A to Paper N37, be endorsed.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 6.20 p.m.

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Chairman