

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON THURSDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2013

PRESENT: Ms J A Jenkins – Chairman

Mr C W Arthey	Mr J R B Cave
Dr M F M Bamford	Mr A J Hinton
Mr S R Barrett	Mr A J Ward
Mr A C Bavington	Mrs S M Wigglesworth
Mrs S Carpendale	

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

Mr N A Bennett and Mrs A K Pollard were unable to be present.

49 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 Mr N A Bennett)  
Mr A J Ward (substituting for Mrs A K Pollard)

50 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The following Members declared local non-pecuniary interests in the matter referred to in Minute No. 57 in their capacity as Parish Councillors, but stated that they had been granted a dispensation to speak and vote on the item:-

Mr C W Arthey, Dr M F M Bamford and Ms J A Jenkins.

Mr S R Barrett declared a local non-pecuniary interest in the matter referred to in Minute No. 57 by virtue of being the Council's representative on the SRP.

Mr A C Bavington declared a local non-pecuniary interest in the matter referred to in Minute No. 57 by virtue of having been the Council's representative on the SRP for the previous year.

Ms J A Jenkins declared a local non-pecuniary interest in the matter referred to in Minute No. 57 by virtue of being a substitute Member on the SRP.

51 MINUTES

**RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the meeting held on [17 October 2013](#) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

52 PETITIONS

None received.

53 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

54 WORK PLAN

The Head of Corporate Organisation submitted a report ([Paper N77](#)) relating to items which had been identified on the Committee Work Plan.

Members were aware from a recent update on the Bramford to Twinstead Overhead Line Project that National Grid has revised its timescales for the new line, which is now on hold. There is at present no indication of when a report on this item will come forward so it will be removed from the Work Plan.

Members were also aware of the slippage in the timetable for adopting the Babergh Core Strategy, which is now awaiting the response of the Planning Inspector. In response to questions from Members about the current position and the implications of delay, the Corporate Manager – Spatial Planning Policy responded as follows:-

- Progress towards adoption at this stage is essentially out of the Council's own hands. We are awaiting receipt of the Inspector's report before we will be able to confirm future Committee and Council dates for reporting on this item, and will need to take into account the 14 day fact check period (and associated document revision / turn around timescales) which will follow receipt, before this can be actioned.
- The Core Strategy will be adopted in its entirety to ensure it is sound overall.
- The content of the Core Strategy is gathering weight, in terms of its application in planning. For those sections of the Strategy for which further (new) supportive Planning Guidance is not required, the NPPF allows, in principle, for those parts to be relied upon ahead of final formal adoption.

Members were assured that the intention was to take the adoption report to the earliest possible Committee and Council meetings, and noted the interim arrangements for the application of the relevant policies wherever this was achievable.

**RESOLVED**

**That the contents of Paper N77 together with the above update be noted.**

55 JOINT HOUSING BOARD – VIABILITY ASSESSMENTS

The Corporate Manager – Asset Management introduced the report of the Head of Housing ([Paper N78](#)) seeking Committee approval to the disposal of two Babergh-owned properties, following the outcome of viability assessments.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That approval be given to the sale of the two properties referred to in the table in paragraph 9 of [Paper N78](#), being 6 Hall Road Brent Eleigh and 26 Manor Road Sudbury.**
- (2) That the Corporate Manager – Asset Utilisation be authorised to dispose of these properties in whichever way will realise best value for the asset based both on internal officer opinion and external advice.**
- (3) That the disposals referred to above be subject to:-**
  - (a) Appropriate terms and conditions in order to protect the interests of the Council, as agreed with the Corporate Manager – Legal in consultation with the Strategic Director (Place).**
  - (b) A consideration to be agreed by the Council’s appointed Valuer.**

56 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING: NEW JOINT DOCUMENT

The Corporate Manager – Spatial Planning Policy introduced the report of the Head of Economy ([Paper N79](#)) seeking Committee approval to a consultation exercise and expedient adoption process on a draft new joint Statement of Community Involvement. This follows recent Member approval of the planning service redesign, including agreement to work to a joint new local planning policy framework

In response to a concern expressed during the ensuing debate, the Corporate Manager agreed that the wording of the Statement of Community Interest (SCI) would be made more explicit in relation to non-electronic communication of its existence and purpose. He also undertook to make available on the intranet the Parish responses to the consultation and to include the West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group in the list of statutory consultees on page 17 of Appendix (a). He would look at categorising the ‘other organisations’ referred to on page 17 instead of listing specific examples. The need to make reference to delivering the growth agenda through the timely production of up-to-date new Plans was also raised as a required addition. Some minor typographical errors would be corrected.

In relation to publicising the SCI, it was noted that SALC would be one of the avenues through which this could be pursued via our existing relationship with that organisation.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That a public consultation exercise be carried out on the draft SCI document attached as Appendix (a) to [Paper N79](#), as amended to reflect the Committee’s comments above.**
- (2) That the Corporate Manager – Spatial Planning Policy be authorised to make such changes to the proposed document in the light of Member feedback and the public consultation exercise as may prove appropriate and beneficial.**

- (3) That subject to such changes as detailed in Resolution (2) above not being of a fundamental or highly substantive nature, approval be given to the adoption of the resultant document in line with the relevant legislation / regulations.**

57 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX TECHNICAL CHANGES – 2014/15 ONWARDS

Members had before them amended recommendations to Council, which had been circulated prior to the commencement of the meeting. The Corporate Manager – Financial Services introduced the report from the Head of Corporate Resources ([Paper N80](#)) proposing changes to certain categories of exemptions from Council Tax, and explained the reason for the amended recommendations.

The Corporate Manager referred to the collection rates being encouraging so far, based on the first eight months' operation of the new Scheme and advised Members that no major changes were proposed at present, but that a fuller picture would emerge once figures for a complete year were available. He responded to Members' questions about the operation of the Scheme including the effect of its provisions on the return of empty properties into the housing supply.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

- (1) That the Council's existing 2013/14 Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR) Scheme continues to operate from 1 April 2014.**
- (2) That the changes to certain categories of exemptions from Council Tax from 1 April 2014, as set out below, be approved, with further consideration and final confirmation in February 2014 as part of the Budget setting process:-**
- **Empty Unfurnished properties (Class C exemption)**  
Currently a 100% reduction in Council Tax applies for the first 4 weeks then full Council Tax is payable. It is proposed that this is amended to a 25% reduction for the first 3 months with Council Tax then being payable in full.
  - **Uninhabitable properties (Class A exemption)**  
Currently a 30% reduction in Council Tax applies. It is proposed that this is amended slightly to a 25% reduction.

58 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)

**RESOLVED**

**That pursuant to Part I 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.**

59 DISPOSAL OF FREEHOLD (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 sub-section 2 of Section 100(c) of the Local Government Act 1972 is set out below.

The Corporate Manager – Asset Utilisation presented a report from the Head of Corporate Resources ([Paper N81](#)). Members agreed the recommendations as set out in the report, including a recommendation to Council regarding the use of any capital receipt.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 11.10 a.m.

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Chairman