

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON THURSDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2014

PRESENT: Ms J A Jenkins – Chairman

|                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Mr C W Arthey    | Mr J R B Cave        |
| Mr S R Barrett   | Mr A J Hinton        |
| Mr A C Bavington | Mrs A K Pollard      |
| Mr N A Bennett   | Mrs S M Wigglesworth |
| Mrs S Carpendale |                      |

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

77 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Mr A C Bavington declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 86 (Treasury Management Strategy) by virtue of being a member of the Co-operative Party but stated that he was able to speak and vote on the matter.

Mr A J Hinton declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 88 (Land adjacent to 4 Lady Lane) by virtue of a family member living in the vicinity of the property but stated that he was able to speak and vote on the matter.

78 MINUTES

**RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the meeting held on [16 January 2014](#) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

79 PETITIONS

None received.

80 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

81 WORK PLAN

The Head of Corporate Organisation submitted a report ([Paper N106](#)) relating to items which had been identified on the Committee Work Plan.

Members were aware that if they were minded to approve the Work Programme for the new Member group to review the Councils' Strategic Planning Policy Development, the report of the group would be included in the April Work Plan.

**RESOLVED**

**That the contents of [Paper N106](#), together with the information reported above be noted.**

82 FINANCIAL OUTLOOK INCLUDING THE 2014/15 DRAFT GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETS AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Members had before them a replacement Table 1 to [Paper N107](#) – Options for Rent Increase 2014/15 – which was circulated at the meeting.

The Head of Corporate Resources introduced [Paper N107](#), following which the Corporate Managers for Finance and Housing Revenue Account addressed the key points from the General Fund and HRA Budgets respectively, and responded to Members' questions on the Council's reserves / Reserves Policy and council house rent levels.

Members noted that if they wished to recommend the adoption of Option 3 in the revised Table 1 referred to above, full details would be provided for the Council meeting on 25 February. The Corporate Manager – Housing Revenue Account undertook to provide further information on target rent levels to Members.

Members also considered the recommendations of the Babergh Scrutiny Committee (Minute No 3, 27 January 2014 refers) in relation to the Council's working balance / reserves and the level of the community grants budget. The Chairman, Jennie Jenkins, outlined to Members a possible way forward in addressing the issues raised by the Babergh Scrutiny Committee. All recommendations contained in [Paper N107](#) and on the agenda paper were moved, with separate votes taken on recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 (General Fund); 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 (HRA) and recommendations (1) and (2) from the Scrutiny Committee. Members voted against accepting the Scrutiny recommendations as submitted, but agreed revised wordings which were included in the recommendations to Council to form part of its consideration of the Budget and related matters.

#### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

- (1) That the draft Budget proposals set out in [Paper N107](#) be agreed.**
- (2) That the draft General Fund Budget for 2014/15 is based on:-**
  - (a) Realigning funding to deliver the Council's Transformation Programme and Strategic Priority outcomes.**
  - (b) Investing New Homes Bonus as indicated in section 12.1 of [Paper N107](#).**
  - (c) Accepting the council tax freeze grant equivalent to a 1% increase in council tax.**
- (3) That the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Investment Strategy 2014/15 to 2018/19 and the HRA Budget proposals for 2014/15 are based on:-**
  - (a) Housing and garage rents being increased in accordance with Option 3 of the revised Table 1 together with the creation of a Transitional Discretionary Housing Support Fund.**

- (b) The re-let of vacant HRA properties from the 1 April 2014 being at target rent levels.
- (4) That the proposed capital programme in Appendix D to [Paper N107](#) be approved.
- (5) That the 10 year revised HRA Business Plan(s) in Appendix C to [Paper N107](#) be noted.
- (6) That in view of increasing financial risks and uncertainties, consideration be given to reserves policy as part of the review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- (7) That the community grants budget be reviewed as part of the priority based budgeting exercise which will review all our spend and assess how it contributes towards our priorities.

Note: The final General Fund and HRA Budgets, along with the HRA Business Plan, will reflect the recommended rent option (3(a) above) and any other changes required.

#### 83 BABERGH CORE STRATEGY AND POLICIES (2011-2031) – ADOPTION

The Head of Economy submitted a report ([Paper N108](#)) asking Members to recommend Council to accept the Inspector's report and adopt the resultant Core Strategy for immediate implementation. Members were also asked to agree appropriate wordings to enable the Corporate Manager – Spatial Planning Policy to make minor amendments to text and numbering.

In presenting the report, the Corporate Manager summarised the key stages of the process to date and made specific reference to the position reached on the possible use of any greenfield land at Brantham. He also responded to Members' questions on various matters including the 5 year housing supply and the delivery of affordable housing. He drew the Committee's attention to the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document which was recommended for adoption ([Paper N109](#)) and was one of a number of SPDs and guidance notes which would support the adopted Core Strategy.

#### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

- (1) That the Inspector's Report be accepted and the Babergh Core Strategy and Policies (2011-2031) be adopted, in line with the conclusions of the Inspector's Report, incorporating the proposed changes required for soundness (Main Modifications).
- (2) That this new Plan document be introduced and implemented for all operational planning purposes (including determining planning applications) with immediate effect following the Council decision on 25 February 2014.

- (3) That the Corporate Manager – Spatial Planning Policy be authorised to make such typographical corrections and other minor amendments to the Core Strategy and Policies document as he considers necessary, ahead of publication of the final document.

**RESOLVED**

That the Corporate Manager – Spatial Planning Policy be authorised to make such typographical corrections and other minor amendments to the Core Strategy and Policies document as he considers necessary, prior to the Council considering the recommendations for its adoption.

84 AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) 2014

The Senior Planner – Spatial Planning Policy introduced a report submitted by the Head of Economy ([Paper N109](#)) asking Members to approve the SPD, and to authorise the Corporate Manager to make minor amendments to the Document. The Corporate Manager responded to questions from Members about various matters including deliverability and sustainability.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That the 2014 Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document as attached at Appendix (A) to [Paper N109](#) be approved and adopted.
- (2) That the Corporate Manager – Spatial Planning Policy be authorised to make such typographical corrections and other minor amendments to the SPD as he considers necessary, ahead of the publication of the final document.

85 STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

The Head of Economy submitted a report ([Paper N110](#)) asking both Councils to approve the Terms of Reference for a task and finish working group, and to appoint Councillor representatives to the group.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That a working group be set up with the Terms of Reference and Future Member Involvement Principles agreed as contained in Appendix (a) to [Paper N110](#).
- (2) That no more than 8 representatives (4 from each Authority) be appointed to work on the short term task and finish group referred to in (1) above, concerned with the future strategic direction of planning policy across the two Councils. Further, that the suggested timetable / work programme for this new working group (attached at Appendix (b)) be agreed.

- (3) That the following Babergh Members be appointed to serve on the Group:-**

**Simon Barrett: David Busby: Richard Cave: Rex Thake**

Note:

The Mid Suffolk Members on the group are as follows:-

Rachel Eburne: John Field: Sara Michell: John Whitehead

86 **RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

Treasury Management Strategy 2014/15 (Babergh Audit Committee 23 January 2014)

Mr David Busby, Chairman of the Babergh Audit Committee, introduced the Committee's recommendations following its consideration of [Paper N102](#), which set out the Council's Borrowing and Investment Strategy for 2014/15.

During the course of the debate, the Corporate Manager – Finance responded to Members' questions and confirmed that various matters identified would be further clarified/included in the report to Council.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

- (1) That the key factors and information relating to and affecting treasury management activities set out in Appendices A and B to [Paper N102](#) be noted.**
- (2) That the following be approved:-**
- (a) The Treasury Management Policy Statement set out in Appendix C to [Paper N102](#).**
  - (b) The Draft Treasury Management Strategy for 2014/15, incorporating the proposed changes referred to in paragraphs 8.16 and 8.17 of [Paper N102](#) and including the Annual Investment Strategy as set out in Appendix D to [Paper N102](#).**
  - (c) The Prudential Indicators and MRP Statement set out in Appendices F and G to [Paper N102](#).**
- (3) That Santander UK Plc be included on the counterparty list (for short-term lending only).**
- (4) That it be noted that actual borrowing for the period 2014/15 to 2016/17 and the impact on future revenue budgets will be dependent on the development of business cases for capital/project investment to date and the income generated by these.**

87 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.**

88 LAND DISPOSAL – LAND ADJACENT TO 4 LADY LANE HADLEIGH (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 Head of Economy submitted a report ([Paper N111](#)) relating to a scheme in the Council's Affordable Housing Programme. Members agreed the recommendations as set out in the report to enable the scheme to proceed.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 7.00 p.m.

.....  
Chairman