

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON THURSDAY 12 JUNE 2014

PRESENT: Jennie Jenkins – Chairman

Clive Arthey	Richard Cave
Simon Barrett	Nick Ridley
Tony Bavington	Trot Ward
Nigel Bennett	Sue Wigglesworth
Sue Carpendale	

John Hinton and Kathy Pollard were unable to be present.

10 SUBSTITUTES

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

Nick Ridley (substituting for John Hinton)
Trot Ward (substituting for Kathy Pollard)

11 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Trot Ward declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Minute No 18 by reason of family members being council tenants but indicated that he could speak and vote on the item.

12 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on [8 May 2014](#) be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to Minute No 2 – Declaration of Interests being reworded to read as follows:-

‘Clive Arthey, Michael Bamford, Simon Barrett, Tony Bavington and John Hinton in their capacity as Parish/Town Councillors, and Clive Arthey, Jennie Jenkins and Sue Wigglesworth as members of various Village Hall Committees, all declared non-pecuniary interests in respect of Minute No 8 (HS32 eligibility criteria).

All Members named above were able to participate fully in the debate and vote.’

13 PETITIONS

None received.

14 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

15 WORK PLAN

The Head of Corporate Organisation submitted a report ([Paper P19](#)) relating to items which had been identified on the Committee Work Plan.

RESOLVED

That Paper P19 be noted.

16 BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2019

Members had before them [Paper P20](#), asking Members to recommend Council to approve the Joint Strategic Plan (Appendix A to the report). Amended wordings for the *Collaborative Working* and the *Values attitudes and behaviour* paragraphs on page 21 of the Plan were circulated prior to the meeting.

The Chairman of the Strategy Committee in introducing the report stressed the importance of the Plan and the considerable input from Members to its content. The Chief Executive referred to the on-going work to be carried out by Members and officers in driving the Plan forward and the link to the 'Leadership in Mind' initiative.

Members were aware of the importance of the Council's growth agenda in the delivery of the Plan and the officers responded to questions from Members about specific areas including infrastructure funding / role of LEPs / major developments and their effect on Sudbury including traffic implications / future options for the maintenance of open space. Members agreed the recommendation to Council to approve the Plan, incorporating the amended wordings referred to above. The Committee also authorised the Interim Executive Director to make any typographical and other minor changes to the document.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

That the Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Joint Strategic Plan 2014-2019 be approved as set out in Appendix A to Paper P20, as amended by the incorporation of the amended wordings as set out below:-

Collaborative working – to strengthen valuable working partnerships *within the organisation* and voluntary sector, social landlords, business, communities, town, parish, other districts and the county council and all providers of public or community services in the two districts e.g. police, health services in order to achieve our outcomes. ***To do this, we will work in a joined up and collaborative way across all council activities.***

Values attitudes and behaviours – to develop and reflect our organisational values in everything we do and to develop an organisation and workforce that demonstrates through actions and behaviours that we are focused on peoples' needs, outcome orientated and business like. ***Our employees will be able to use their skills and judgment to the full, with less managerial oversight and will be flexible, agile and responsive.***

17 CAREERS SOFTWARE PACKAGE, SHOWCASING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

The Corporate Manager – Economic Development and Tourism introduced a report from the Head of Economy ([Paper P21](#)) seeking Committee approval to match funding for the development of an online careers platform in collaboration with other Councils. He responded to questions from Members about the way in which the platform would operate, which would be an ‘open access’ arrangement, and referred to the report commissioned by Suffolk County Council – *Exploring student and employer perspectives on creating an online platform for ‘Opportunities in Suffolk’* which was available via a link to the County Council website.

RESOLVED

That the Council commits £25,000 over five years to support the development and maintenance of an online careers platform, subject to funding of £120,000 from Suffolk County Council and £25,000 each from the other district and borough councils named in Paper P21.

18 HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Corporate Manager – Asset Management introduced a report from the Head of Housing ([Paper P22](#)) seeking the adoption of an integrated Housing Asset Management Strategy for Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

RESOLVED

That the Housing Asset Management Strategy for the future Management of Babergh District Council’s housing assets (Appendix 2 to Paper P22 refers) be adopted.

19 NEW BUILD PROGRAMME – ACCESSING HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY (HCA) GRANT FUNDING

The Head of Housing introduced [Paper P23](#) which set out the process by which Babergh might attract HCA funding to support the Council’s new build development programmes. Members were asked to approve recommendations to Council to enable the necessary rent conversion and other measures to be put in place.

The Head of Housing and the Corporate Manager – Strategic Housing outlined the background to the recommendations and explained the criteria which were set by the HCA. Members expressed agreement with the recommendations.

During the debate on this item, it was acknowledged that Babergh will need to develop a comprehensive and more extensive programme of investment in new housing if it is to meet its strategic priorities of housing growth and in particular to achieve the right mix and supply of housing. In the light of these strategic priorities and the conversion of some social rented housing stock to affordable rent tenure (if agreed), the Council would have to consider replacing that stock with new social rented houses if the data from our choice based lettings system and the recent extensive, detailed and specialist housing needs survey demonstrates unmet demand for that type and tenure of housing. One Member asked that this point be noted in the minutes and the Committee agreed.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (1) That approval be given to the conversion of sufficient dwellings from social to affordable rents to support the Council's affordable housing development programme within the current Homes and Communities Agency Affordable Housing Programme (2015-18) in accordance with (a) the principles set out within Paper P23 and (b) Option 2 in paragraph 12.10 of the report.

Further, that the Head of Housing be authorised to approve on a case-by-case basis the conversion of individual properties which meet the above requirements.

- (2) That subject to Recommendation (1) above being agreed by the Council, income from rent conversions at £3,000 per unit in accordance with Option 2 in paragraph 12.10 of Paper P23 be included in the Council's bid to the Homes and Communities Agency.

20 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT APRIL 2013 TO MARCH 2014

The Corporate Manager – Business Improvement (Corporate) introduced a report from the Head of Corporate Organisation ([Paper P24](#)) asking Members to review and note the performance monitoring information provided, subject to any comments they might wish to make following their deliberations. A revised Appendix (the Balanced Scorecard) was circulated at the meeting with corrected paragraph numbers to reflect references to the report.

Members were advised that overall, thirteen measures had been met and eleven showed an improved direction of travel. Outcomes had not been met for three measures and the Head of Housing responded to questions of detail about two of those measures, namely the voids figures and the numbers of private dwellings returned to occupation. He explained the reasons behind the figures and outlined the steps being taken to address these areas. He also confirmed that a report on Empty Homes Policy will be included in the Committee Work Plan.

The Strategic Director – Place and the Chief Executive responded to further questions about various matters, including times for determining planning applications, the relationship of public perception to actual performance and the potential effect of some Council Tax changes.

RESOLVED

That the performance monitoring information contained in Paper P24 and the Revised Appendix be noted.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 6.15 p.m.

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Chairman