

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2014

PRESENT: Jennie Jenkins – Chairman

Clive Arthey	Richard Cave
Michael Bamford	Jack Owen
Simon Barrett	Kathy Pollard
Tony Bavington	Nick Ridley
Sue Carpendale	Sue Wigglesworth

Nigel Bennett and John Hinton were unable to be present.

Robert Lindsay, mover of the Notice of Motion referred to in Minute No. 67 below, was present at the meeting and spoke in support of his proposal.

60 SUBSTITUTES

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

Nick Ridley (substituting for John Hinton)

61 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None declared.

Simon Barrett subsequently referred to his ownership of a small convenience store in conjunction with his garage forecourt operation, but stated that he did not have an interest in relation to Minute No. 67.

62 MINUTES

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the text of the amendment proposed by Tony Bavington in relation to the recommendations in Paper P63 (Accommodation Review – Results of Phase A and Next Steps) being included in full in the public minute.**
- (2) That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

63 PETITIONS

None received.

64 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None received.

65 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

66 WORK PLAN

The Head of Corporate Organisation submitted [Paper P70](#) relating to items which had been identified on the Corporate Work Plan, and updated Members on the two items originally listed for the December meeting, which would now be re-scheduled.

**RESOLVED**

**That Paper P70 together with the updates reported at the meeting be noted.**

67 NOTICE OF MOTION – SUPERMARKET LEVY

Members had before them the report of the Head of Economy, [Paper P71](#), relating to the Notice of Motion (below) which was submitted to the Council at its meeting on 26 September 2014 and had been referred to the Committee for consideration and report:-

“That a letter be sent to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government requesting that local authorities be given the power to introduce a levy of up to 8.5% of the rateable value on supermarkets or large retail outlets in their area with rateable annual value not less than £500,000 and for the revenue to be retained by local authorities in order to be used to help improve their local communities.”

The Chairman, Jennie Jenkins, introduced this item, following which Tony Bavington disagreed that the Committee was able to deal with the Notice of Motion at the meeting. In response to his understanding that the Notice should be the subject of a recommendation to the Council, the Monitoring Officer accepted that the current wording in the Constitution required clarification and that this would be undertaken by the Joint Constitution Review Working Group in the near future, but in the meantime the Strategy Committee could resolve the matter.

David Benham, Corporate Manager – Economic Development and Tourism, then highlighted the key information in 8.7 of the report regarding the DCLG’s rejection of the idea of a levy, before asking the Council’s consultant, Robert Delafield of Waterfront Developments to present his findings as set out in the independent report commissioned by the Council (Appendix A to Paper P71). Members noted and took into account the contents of Appendix A when considering whether the Motion should be accepted.

Following the consultant’s presentation, Robert Lindsay as mover of the Notice of Motion addressed the Committee, emphasising that he saw his proposal as a way to bring about a more level playing field for small independent traders. Robert Delafield when responding to some of the points raised also stated that he was not on a retainer for any of the supermarkets, landowners or developers for which he worked.

During the course of the subsequent debate, Members generally did not express support for the Motion as written, but considered that the Council should be asked to lobby the Government in relation to the 2015 revaluation of business rates with a view to creating a more level playing field for small retailers.

The Committee therefore

RESOLVED

That the Notice of Motion be not accepted.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

**That a letter be sent to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in relation to the 2015 Revaluation of Business Rates, urging the Government to create a more level playing field between large supermarkets and small retailers.**

*Note (subsequent to the meeting)*

*The Committee's decision and recommendation were included (as set out above) on the agenda for the Council meeting on 16 December. However, at that meeting, the proposed recommendation put to Council was:*

*That the Notice of Motion be not accepted and that a letter be sent to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in relation to the 2015 Revaluation of Business rates, urging the Government to create a more level Playing field between large supermarkets and small retailers.*

*The Chairman of the Council also reminded Members that the constitutional matters stood referred to the Joint Constitutional Working Group, but in the meanwhile he was able to use his discretion to allow a motion to be dealt with at the meeting at which it is brought forward.*

*The Notice was rejected and the recommendation to write to the Secretary of State was agreed by Council.*

## 68 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2014/15 – MID YEAR REPORT

The Head of Corporate Resources introduced [Paper P72](#) which summarised key matters relating to the Council's mid-year financial position. The Corporate Manager – Finance referred to specific aspects of the report and responded to Members' questions on various matters including the following:-

- Para 8.12 – staff budget/costs – allowance has been made for likely level of pay increase
- Para 8.11(a) – collection rates are good, reflecting good work by the SRP
- Para 8.11(b) – variations in actual amount of business rates explained in relation to baseline comparison figure
- Level of Council Tax rise cap – not possible at this stage to give more than an indication to Town and Parish Councils

- New Homes Bonus – 2015/16 funding figure still awaited, includes properties brought into use as well as new build. The Strategic Director (Place) responded to concerns about the level of completions with reference to ways in which officers are helping encourage developers to bring forward sites for which planning permission has been granted, as well as working with applicants at the pre-application stage.

Members noted that the reference in para 8.21 – New Homes Fund – to the ‘Mid Suffolk’ Affordable Homes Programme should refer to ‘Babergh’.

**RESOLVED**

**That the overall mid-year position on spending and income in relation to the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme compared to Budget, as set out in Paper P72 and Appendix A, be noted.**

69 STRATEGIC DELIVERY PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE AND PROGRAMME STEERING BOARDS

The Head of Corporate Organisation introduced [Paper P73](#) seeking Member approval to programme governance arrangements and terms of reference which had previously been considered by the Joint Member Integration Board.

He reported that the recommendations in Paper P73 had been agreed by Executive Committee and that the Mid Suffolk Members considered that 12) in the Terms of Reference, relating to the role of Project Sponsors in sharing with the wider membership, would be especially important in the operation of the Programme Steering Boards.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) **That Programme Governance arrangements for the management and monitoring of the Strategic Delivery Programme be based on the proposal outlined in Appendix 1 to Paper P73.**
- (2) **That the proposed structure and Terms of Reference for the Programme Steering Boards as set out in Appendix 2 to Paper P73 be agreed.**
- (3) **That the Head of Corporate Organisation in consultation with the Political Group Leaders be authorised (a) to determine the size and composition of the individual programme Steering Boards and (b) to make the necessary appointments to those Boards.**

70 HOUSING AND HEALTH CHARTER FOR SUFFOLK

The Head of Housing introduced [Paper P74](#), a joint report with the Head of Communities, asking Members to endorse the Charter (Appendix A to the report) and make any comments for submission to the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board as requested in the letter from the Chairman of the Board (Appendix B).

Lindsay Barker, Strategic Director (Place) reported comments made at Executive Committee for inclusion in Mid Suffolk's response, which related to difficulties in accessing services by isolated communities and those without transport, especially the elderly.

During the course of their consideration, Strategy Committee members made comments on various aspects of the Charter, including those listed below, for inclusion in Babergh's response:-

- Addition of reference to energy efficiency and related issues such as winter
- Some wordings identified which could be made clearer
- The importance for health of implementing appropriate space standards

Members were aware that many of the issues identified would be actioned through the Council's Delivery Programme projects.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) That the collective set of principles established in the Suffolk Housing and Health Charter (attached as Appendix A to Paper P74) be endorsed.**
- (2) That the content of the Charter (Appendix A) be noted.**
- (3) That the Head of Housing in consultation with the Head of Communities be authorised to make Babergh's comments to the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board**
  - (a) in response to the specific questions identified in paragraph 8.7 of Paper P74**
  - (b) on the matters identified by Members as set out above**
  - (c) including the comments made by Mid Suffolk's Executive Committee.**

## 71 MOBILE HOMES FEE POLICY

Heather Worton, Interim Corporate Manager – Private Sector Housing, introduced a report from the Head of Housing ([Paper P75](#)) proposing the adoption of a fee policy and structure following changes which enable Councils to charge for associated licensing functions under the Mobile Homes Act 2013.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) That the proposed Mobile Homes Fee Policy, as contained in the Appendix to Paper P75 be adopted with immediate effect.**
- (2) That the Head of Housing be authorised to make any minor amendments to the Policy, including increasing the fees to enable costs incurred to be recovered.**

72 EXCLUSION OF THE 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.**

73 LAND ADJACENT SCHOOLFIELDS, GLEMSFORD (Exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1)

The Corporate Manager – Strategic Housing introduced a report from the Head of Economy ([Paper P76](#)) seeking approvals required for the purchase and disposal of land in connection with an approved affordable housing scheme.

**RESOLVED**

**That the recommendations as set out in detail in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.5 of Paper P75 be agreed to enable the housing scheme at Schoolfields, Glemsford, included in the Council’s approved New Build Affordable Homes Programme (Paper P62 refers) to proceed, subject to the grant of a satisfactory planning permission.**

Note: The meeting was adjourned for refreshments between 10.50 a.m. and 11.05 a.m.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 12.20 p.m.

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Chairman