

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON THURSDAY 9 JULY 2015

PRESENT: Jennie Jenkins – Chairman

Clive Arthey	Alastair McCraw
Sue Carpendale	Adrian Osborne
Alan Ferguson	Jan Osborne
David Holland	Peter Patrick
Frank Lawrenson	

Simon Barrett and Richard Kemp were unable to be present.

1 SUBSTITUTES

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

Alastair McCraw (substituting for Richard Kemp)
Adrian Osborne (substituting for Simon Barrett)

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Alan Ferguson declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to [Paper R22](#) by reason of his previous employment with Serco Ltd, but stated that he was able to speak and vote on the item.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on [4 June 2015](#) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

4 PETITIONS

None received.

5 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None received.

6 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Capital Investment Strategy (Joint Audit and Standards Committee – 15 June 2015)

Members had before them [Paper JAC54](#) (previously considered by the Joint Committee) together with [Paper R17](#) which contained additional information regarding the various options and the rationale for the proposal to amend the Treasury Management Strategy.

Prior to the day of the meeting, additional information supplied by Arlingclose Limited was circulated to Strategy Committee members, who were advised that the information was identified as not for disclosure to third parties and was therefore confidential by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Any discussion or questions on this element would therefore need to take place after the exclusion of public and press. In the event, this was not necessary.

Jennie Jenkins, Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder, introduced this item and Katherine Steel, Head of Corporate Resources confirmed that as the Council's Section 151 Officer, she was comfortable with the recommendation to Strategy Committee. She also answered questions from Members about the use of the Council's reserves to reduce the cost of borrowing, and the operation of the Public Works Loan Board, CCLA Property Fund and Funding Circle. Members were aware that the Joint Committee had resolved to note the Capital Investment Strategy approach and its impact in the short and medium/long term (Paper JAC54 – recommendation 2.1 refers).

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

That the 2015/16 Treasury Management Strategy be amended as outlined in paragraph 9.31 of Paper JAC54.

8 FORWARD PLAN

The Chief Executive submitted [Paper R18](#) relating to items which had been identified on the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED

That the contents of Paper R18 be noted.

9 2014/15 FINANCIAL OUTTURN

Jennie Jenkins, Portfolio Holder, Finance and Resources, introduced Paper R19 which summarised the financial outturn for the year, showing how it links to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Council's strategic priorities.

The Head of Corporate Resources reported that the transfer of £72,000 from the Transformation Fund referred to in Recommendation 2.1 b) of the report has now been reduced to £30,000 (subject to audit) as a result of further work which has been carried out on the accounts.

Members were also advised that the original budget surplus of £4,282.000 shown in paragraph 8.26 of [Paper R19](#) for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) had been amended to £3,391.000 to take account of impairment arising from garage site valuations, and that the net favourable variance for the year would be adjusted accordingly.

The Head of Service then answered questions from Members about various aspects of the report, including:-

- Revenue return on the Solar PV project and the mechanism to be applied in the event of subsequent property sales – safeguards are built into the new Tenancy Agreement
- The benefits of the IT systems being linked to the Suffolk County Council platform – building on the introduction of Office 365
- The background to the one-off IT costs arising from the end of the CSD contract and the need to upgrade in a shortened time-scale (in this connection, Members noted that the word ‘unsurprising’ in the third paragraph of paragraph 8.4 should read ‘surprising’). A further analysis of the overspend will be provided to a future meeting.
- County-wide arrangements for pooling Business Rates, the role of the Public Sector Leaders in considering the use of pooled monies and the reasons for the original growth estimates in this area not being achieved (Leader will update the other group leaders after the next PSL meeting).

RESOLVED

- (1) That the 2014/15 financial outturn as set out in Paper R19, together with the amended figures reported for (a) the transfer to the general Fund (Resolution (2) below) and (b) the surplus on the HRA be noted.**
- (2) That the transfer of £30,000 from the Transformation Fund to the General Fund be approved.**
- (3) The approval be given to the General Fund carry forward requests that exceed £25,000, as referred to in paragraph 8.21 of the report.**
- (4) That approval be given to the Capital carry forward requests that exceed £25,000, as referred to in paragraph 8.34 of the report.**

10 RECHARGEABLE HOUSING REPAIRS POLICY (DRAFT)

Jill Pearmain, Corporate Manager – Housing Revenue Account Investment introduced [Paper R20](#) seeking approval to the introduction of a joint policy following a review of the policies and practices previously in place in the two Councils.

In response to questions from Members, she confirmed that the wording in the new Tenancy Agreement had been clarified in relation to the proposed Policy and that a definition of decent homes standard was included. She also referred to the process for making tenants aware of the implications of the Policy.

RESOLVED

That the Rechargeable Housing Repairs Policy attached as Appendix 1 to Paper R20 be adopted with an implementation date of 1 August 2015.

11 DEVELOPING SUFFOLK'S DEVOLUTION PROPOSAL

The Chief Executive presented [Paper R21](#) seeking Member approval to work with local partners to develop a robust proposal for devolution to Suffolk. Further reports would be made to Members in due course, but in the meantime a lot of work would need to be undertaken in the next few weeks by the Public Sector Leaders and others. She outlined the provisional timetable for preparing a suitable proposal and made reference to the opportunity to build on the development of closer working arrangements in which the Suffolk local authorities are already involved.

Members commented on various of the possible models which might be available, recognising the need for a 'whole system' response and appropriate consideration of any cross-border aspects.

RESOLVED

That Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

- (a) Work with local partners in developing a devolution proposal for Suffolk**
- (b) With local partners, use the proposal to influence the new government's approach to local public services.**

12 BUILDING OUR LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

The Chief Executive presented [Paper R23](#) which set out her proposals for a review of both Councils' current management arrangements.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service should conduct a focused review of the integrated management of both Councils in consultation with the Leaders of both Councils.**
- (2) That it be noted that any decisions that may not be taken by the Chief Executive as a consequence of this review will be referred to the appropriate body for decision in accordance with the Councils' legal or constitutional requirements.**
- (3) That the principles and objectives of the focused review, as set out in Paper R23, be noted.**

13 COMMENCEMENT TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chairman asked Members considered future timings, taking into account the differing demands on individual Councillors' time.

After some discussion and in the absence of sufficient support for all meetings to take place in the evening, a motion to continue with alternate morning / afternoon meetings, subject to the evening commencement time being 5.30 p.m., was moved and carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED

That the commencement times of Strategy Committee be as follows, with immediate effect:

- **Morning meetings to remain at the scheduled time of 9.30 a.m.**
- **Evening meetings to commence at the revised time of 5.30 p.m.**

14 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.

15 JOINT WASTE CONTRACT WITH SERCO LTD (Exempt information by virtue of Paragraphs 3 and 5 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.

Members had before them Paper R22, which was presented by the Head of Environment. The Senior Solicitor, Jonathan Reed, highlighted two specific items relating to the legal position.

The Committee accepted the recommendations contained in the report.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 6.50 a.m.

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Chairman