

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

BURY ST EDMUNDS AREA WORKING PARTY

**Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 4 March 2014 at 5.00 pm
in the Conference Chamber West, F1R09, West Suffolk House,
Western Way, Bury St Edmunds**

PRESENT: Councillor R D Everitt (Chairman)
Councillors Chung, Farmer, Mrs Mildmay-White
(substituting for Mrs Stamp), Nettleton, Oliver, Mrs
Rayner, Springett and Mrs P A Warby

30. Substitute

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White had been appointed as a temporary substitute for Councillor Mrs Stamp under Paragraph 4.1 of the Rules of Procedure as contained in the Council's Constitution.

31. Election of Chairman

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That Councillor R D Everitt be elected Chairman of this Working Party.

32. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs S A Stamp be elected Vice-Chairman of this Working Party.

The Working Party felt that, as there would only be one more meeting before the end of the municipal year, it would be preferable to identify a Chairman and Vice-Chairman for this meeting and into 2014/2015. In particular, this would allow them to perform their respective roles (e.g. agreeing agendas) in respect of the first meeting of the following year. Although, technically, the Chairman would still have to be re-appointed at the next meeting, the wishes of the Working Party were noted.

33. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cockle and Mrs Stamp.

34. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the amendment in Minute 28, Declaration of Pecuniary Interest by Councillor Mrs Mildmay-

White, that the interest was because of land ownership by a member of her family and not her spouse as stated.

35. Declarations of Interests

Members' declarations of interest are recorded under the item to which the declaration relates.

36. Town Vitality/Viability Indicators: Update

The Growth Officer Apprentice gave a presentation on changes in occupancy of retail units in the town centre and advised the Working Party that the current vacancy rate was 6.9% which was well below the national average of 11.1%. The Working Party noted the report and requested that publicity be given to the low vacancy rate as part of the promotion of the town. The officer, William Putnam, was complimented on his report.

37. Test Town Initiative 2014: Bury St Edmunds

Officers gave a presentation on this initiative supported by the Carnegie UK Trust which was an enterprise challenge intended to give innovative young people, aged 16 to 30, either as individuals or in groups, the chance to test out business ideas in town centres. Bury St Edmunds would be hosting the Eastern Region Event in July 2014. The initiative involved a seven day programme during which applicants would participate in a Skills Masterclass, Monday to Thursday, and then trade in retail units over the weekend. The winner from the regional event would receive start up funding and go on to compete in the National Final during the Autumn. Applications could be made during the period 6 March to 18 April and officers were in contact with the West Suffolk College to promote the scheme, although there was no geographical restrictions for entrants. Possible sites to be used in connection with the event had been identified as existing vacant units on the town with the Market area, Charter Square and the foyer of The Apex as alternatives. There was no cost to the Council other than officer time spent on promotion. Bid4Bury would be involved in partnership with the Council. A panel of judges would be appointed locally including a nominee of the Borough Council. The Working Party welcomed this initiative and noted the report.

38. Markets: Update

Officers reported on initiatives taking place. The Markets Development Officer was now responsible for all six markets operating in St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath. As markets were important to the social and economic wellbeing of towns, market traders were being encouraged to put on promotional events. The Markets Operational Team had also been restructured with a view to making it easier for potential traders to apply for market spaces. There had been liaison with the Prince's Trust and West Suffolk College with the objective of getting younger people more involved with markets and for new products to be introduced in market places. A Youth Market aimed at 16-24 year olds was to be staged in May, the intention being for young people to have a stall for a day to market art, fashion items or craftwork. A prize would be given for the best merchandising. Events for the markets were being planned for Easter, the Autumn and Halloween. Efforts were being made to improve communication with stall holders through newsletters which would contain a calendar of events. The Working Party welcomed these developments and endorsed them. A Member asked whether there were any proposals to revise the

layout of Bury St Edmunds Market since pedestrian access became congested in places because of the close position of stalls on or near the footways and pedestrian areas. Officers advised that this was a matter currently being reviewed.

39. St Andrew's Street South: Update

Officers gave a presentation outlining progress with the previously agreed scheme to provide improvements to St Andrew's Street South which incorporated traffic calming measures and safer pedestrian crossings. The agreed scheme also included the provision of items of public art and street furniture to enhance the appearance of the street scene. The highway works element of the scheme had been recommended for approval by the Working Party on 22 February 2011. This recommendation was accepted by Cabinet on 16 March (Report B511 refers). Working drawings of the highway scheme and public artwork were circulated to the Working Party for its meeting on 9 July 2012 for information (Report D63 refers) reflecting the outcome of consultation with stakeholders. Although the type and outline design of the public artwork were identified in 2012, it was noted at that time that the final details were still to be settled before officers implemented this element of the scheme under delegated powers.

Funding on the highway improvement scheme was split between the County Council and the Borough Council. The latter contribution plus the whole cost of the public artwork was to be met from Section 106 income received in respect of the arc development. Delays in implementing the highway works had occurred because of a National Grid scheme to replace a gas main having to be carried out beforehand. Work on highway improvements had now, however, commenced in accordance with the approved scheme and basic accommodation works were being incorporated for the proposed artwork. The views of the Working Party on the final siting and form of the artwork were therefore being sought to allow this element of the improvement scheme to also proceed.

Proposals for the detail of the proposed artwork were presented by officers. These indicated four possible locations on either side of the two build outs, although there was an option of not utilising all of these. Further choices existed in the design, materials and costings of the artwork, as follows:

- (a) a topiary design in either stainless steel costing £2,593 each or galvanised steel at £900 each; or
- (b) a starburst design in either stainless steel costing £4,188 each or galvanised steel at £1,484 each

Alternative forms of lighting could be provided for both types of designs:

- (i) white LED at a cost of £900 each plus installation costs; or
- (ii) static colour LED at same costs as (i) above; or
- (iii) pre-programmed colour lighting costing £1,300 plus cost of electronics at £1,000 and costs of installation.

Councillor Nettleton raised questions in relation to the highways scheme about the impact of temporary closure of the street whilst works were in progress and the provision of temporary bus stops. Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White asked why the strips of road surfacing material of the edges

of the pedestrian crossing points were in different colours. Officers advised that both these matters were the responsibility of the County Council who had designed and were implementing the works. Answers would be obtained and written replies would be given to Members.

Members discussed the proposed artwork and gave indications of preferences to officers as this was a matter which was to be dealt with by them under delegated authority dating from March 2011. The majority view of the Working Party was that two of the designs should be sited on each of the larger pedestrian crossing build outs, i.e. one on each side of the street and these should be of the starburst design in stainless steel.

In view of the need for the public art aspect of the scheme to be carried out alongside the rest of the improvement works, it was agreed that Members of the Working Party be circulated further details of the artwork and highways matters to answer the outstanding queries from the meeting.

40. CCTV Coverage

Officers gave a presentation which indicated the extent of CCTV coverage in the town currently and advised the Working Party that the future strategy and technology utilised was currently being reviewed. Members' comments were invited regarding whether more cameras were needed and where these were to be located. Officers were aware of a problem in Westgate Street and this was being considered for the possible location of cameras. The possibility of having mobile cameras was also being investigated. The review would take account of advances in technology which had been made in respect of surveillance and the need to upgrade equipment in the control room. The Working Party noted the current situation and also that the Borough Council managed CCTV cover for other towns in adjoining districts and asked that officers continue to explore expansion of this facility to other towns in the county on a shared service basis.

41. Recent Flooding Incidents

Members were asked to report on flooding occurrences in their wards during the recent period of heavy rainfall. The following were identified:

- (a) Gardiner Close – this had been the subject of flooding to which the relevant agencies had responded;
- (b) the River Linnet – this appeared to require a review of its maintenance programme to ensure flow was not restricted;
- (c) the River Lark, Fornham Road – flooding in this location had been a longstanding issue and drainage problems required resolution;
- (d) Rougham near the Bennett Arms – problem with a failure to keep ditches clear, but responsibility for this had been denied by various landowners;
- (e) the Suffolk Housing building on Southgate Street – sufficient concern about flooding potential for sand bags to be deployed recently;
- (f) Ditches around the Hospital/Cullum Road – previous issues with overflowing ditches after heavy rain.

It was agreed to pass on this information to other partners, ie. Suffolk County Council, as the flood management authority, and Anglian Water.

42. Work Programme

The Chairman and Director explained that the format of this meeting had been a pilot, in response to: concerns expressed by Councillors about the cancellation of previous working parties due to lack of formal business, the Council's new Families and Communities Strategy, the need to coordinate with the work of other local authorities in the town, and constraints generally on officer resources. The approach being piloted was for this Area Working Party to become more of a consultative and discussion forum, at which a wider range of topics of interest to Members and their constituents could be covered than might be possible under a more traditional 'committee' format, requiring formal reports. The existing terms of reference of the Working Party already allowed for this, and there was still scope to receive formal reports prior to Cabinet decisions if required, as previously. The pilot agenda of this meeting had been a mixture of updates on ongoing projects and performance and discussion topics raised by Councillors. Overall, this experiment was felt to have worked reasonably well, but there was some learning to be taken in relation to the content of materials and presentations to support items, particularly where a more formal steer from the Working Party was being sought.

The Chairman also indicated his wish to coordinate the work of the Working Party with the County Council's 'Our Place' meeting for Bury St Edmunds and Bury St Edmunds Town Council. He extended an invitation to members of both Councils to attend future meetings, which the Mayor of the Town Council indicated he would refer back to his authority. It was also agreed that all Borough Councillors for Bury St Edmunds Wards (and neighbouring villages if appropriate) should be invited to attend future meetings of the Working Party, which was consistent with its future evolution as a forum to raise and discuss issues of concern to local residents.

It was requested that the following items be considered for inclusion in the Work Programme for future meetings:

- (a) Article 4 Directions;
- (b) Street Vending - 'A' Boards;
- (c) Howard Estate - Litter Bins Review;
- (d) River Linnet - maintenance; and
- (e) Market update.

43. Dates of Future Meetings

The Working Party approved the following dates:

8 July 2014;
7 October 2014;
9 December 2014; and
10 March 2015.

All meetings are on Tuesdays. Meetings to commence at 5.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 7.00 pm.

**R D EVERITT
CHAIRMAN**