

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

BURY ST EDMUNDS AREA WORKING PARTY

**Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 24 January 2012 at 5.00 pm
in Conference Chamber West (F1R09), West Suffolk House, Western Way,
Bury St Edmunds**

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

BY INVITATION: Councillor Clements

27. Substitutes

The Working Party was advised of the following substitution:-

Councillor Buckle substituting for Councillor Mrs P A Warby.

28. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rout and Mrs P A Warby.

29. Record of Meeting

The record of the meeting held on 13 September 2011 was noted.

30. Declarations of Interests

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

**31. Amendments to the boundaries of the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre
and Victoria Street Conservation Areas**

The Working Party considered Report C296 (previously circulated) which sought approval that consultation be undertaken on the amended Conservation Area boundaries for the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre and Victoria Street Conservation Areas.

The Town Centre Conservation Area was designated on 26 January 1973, with some extensions to the boundary being added on 23 May 1975. The Victoria Street Conservation Area was designated on 5 March 1987. In reviewing the use of Article 4 Directions in these two conservation areas, it had become apparent that there were places where the boundaries of the Conservation Areas were in need of updating.

In carrying out the preparatory work before the full re-survey of all the Article 4 directions, Officers had identified parts of the Conservation Area Boundaries which, for the reasons set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report, required amending. Assessment had been made on whether each Conservation Area boundary met the criteria and as a result of this assessment, several amendments to the boundaries of the Conservation Areas were proposed. It was, therefore, intended to complete the review of the

Conservation Area Boundaries before re-surveying the Article 4 Directions, as some properties currently with Article 4 Directions maybe excluded from the revised Conservation Areas.

Attached to the report were the following appendices:-

- Appendix 1:** Map showing the proposed boundary amendments for the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Conservation Area.
- Appendix 2:** Description of each proposed change to the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Conservation Area boundary.
- Appendix 3:** Map showing the proposed boundary amendments for the Bury St Edmunds Victoria Street Conservation Area.
- Appendix 4:** Description of each proposed change to the Bury St Edmunds Victoria Street Conservation Area boundary.

The Principal Conservation Officer provided a presentation, which included reminding the Working Party of the definition of a Conservation Area, timescale and procedures associated with the consultation and photographs of the appropriate properties.

There was no statutory requirement to carry out any public consultation before designating a Conservation Area or amending its boundary. However, it was considered 'good practice' to seek public involvement and this would be done in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Relevant bodies and consultees were listed in Appendix 4 of the Statement of Community Involvement. A discussion was held on the consultation process and whether 'more should be done'. However, there was a consensus that writing individually to those affected by the changes would alert them to the consultation events and/or seek clarification on an individual basis.



RECOMMENDED:- That

- (1) the draft amended conservation area boundaries for the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre and Victoria Street Conservation Areas, as detailed in Report C296, be approved for consultation; and***
- (2) the Interim Joint Head of Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport, be authorised to amend any minor mapping errors prior to the commencement of the consultation.***

32. Highways Update

(Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White declared a personal interest as she worked at West Suffolk Hospital, and remained in the meeting for the consideration of this item.)

The Working Party received and noted Report C297 (previously circulated) which provided information on Maintenance Issues, Traffic Management and proposed changes to the layout of St Andrews Street South.

Maintenance work currently programmed in the next few months included:-

- (1) the resolution of a drainage issues in Angel Lane;
- (2) ongoing repairs to the footways on the Howard Estate; and
- (3) resolution of a long standing drainage issue in Sicklesmere Road.

There were now 77 grit bins on the streets in the town and Suffolk County Council had supplied grit for these and would 'top them up' as necessary during the winter.

Street trees were an important amenity and added significantly to the street scene in Bury St Edmunds. As well as the benefits, the trees could also result in nuisance and damage to highways and adjacent structures. The County Council remained committed to managing the highway tree stock appropriately.

As a result of the impact on road safety in some locations of parking associated with West Suffolk Hospital, an emergency traffic order would be implemented to deal with the issues in early February 2012. Work had commenced on investigating parking in the area of St Peter's Pit on Out Risbygate in response to concerns raised by local pedestrians. Additional assessments were being undertaken into the need for a pedestrian crossing facility on Mustow Street in the vicinity of Cotton Lane.

A detailed discussion was held regarding the proposed changes and timing of the works in respect of the layout of the section of St Andrews Street South between Woolhall Street and Risbygate Street. Initially it was considered appropriate that the works remained dependent on the completion of the gas main replacement work. However, Simon Curle, from Suffolk County Council Highways Department, informed the Working Party that the works to the layout of the road at St Andrew's Street South would now go ahead prior to the installation of the gas main replacement works as notification had only just been received that these works were not scheduled until 2013/2014. Therefore, there would need to be an agreement with the contractor that they would reinstate the road layout.

In response to questions, Simon Curle of Suffolk County Council informed the Working Party that:-

- (1) the response to requests to repair footpaths depended upon the scale of the defect and the repairs could be done within 24 hours or take over a week;
- (2) a written response would be given regarding the resident parking permit scheme for King's Road;
- (3) there was a regular programme for renewing the white line road markings which did not usually commence until at least the Spring when the weather 'improved';
- (4) the final scheme for the St Andrew's Street South enhancement scheme had not been finalised;
- (5) questionnaires would be sent out to residents located opposite St Peter's Pit on Out Risbygate concerning parking within the area; and
- (6) monitoring would take place on the impact of the emergency traffic order associated with parking at West Suffolk Hospital to see if there were any secondary issues.

Other issues were drawn to the attention of Mr Curle, which included the flooding in Fornham Road.

33. Vision 2031

(Councillor Farmer declared a personal interest as he resided in close proximity to the brownfield site identified as BV10a, Bury St Edmunds Garden Centre, and remained in the meeting for the consideration of this item.)

The Working Party considered Report C298 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the document to be the subject of consultation.

The Borough Council had made a commitment to prepare a holistic vision document for Bury St Edmunds to cover the period to 2031. The vision would cover both planning and corporate priorities for the town and would form part of the Local Development Framework. Ultimately it would supersede the Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan that was adopted in 2006.

Initial consultation on the issues for Bury St Edmunds commenced at the beginning of February 2011 and ran to the end of April 2011. Observations received during the Issues and Options consultation had assisted in the preparation of the first draft Vision 2031 document for consultation, and this was attached as Appendix A to the report.

A comprehensive update of the Issues and Options consultation responses, together with officer responses would be published as part of the consultation. In addition, sites which had been submitted to the Council by landowners and developers for inclusion in the Vision 2031 document, including those in Haverhill and the Rural Area, but had not been included in the draft consultation documents, were set out in one separate report that would also be published alongside the consultation document.

Consultation would commence on 1 March 2012 and last until 30 April 2012.

The Working Party considered a number of issues, and recognising it was a consultation document did not make any amendments at this stage of the process.



RECOMMENDED:- That

- (1) the draft Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031 document, as contained in Appendix A to Report C298, be approved for public consultation; and***
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Director of Economy and Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport, to make any necessary minor typographical, grammatical or similar textual changes to the draft prior to publication for consultation purposes.***

(Councillor Cockle left the meeting during the discussion on this item.)

34. Town Vitality/Viability Indicators

The Working Party received a presentation from the Economic Development Manager. The Economic Development Manager informed the Working Party as to the shops that had newly opened within Bury St Edmunds and also of those that were coming shortly. Not including units currently being fitted out, there were 44 vacant premises out of 483 units, which was a vacancy rate of 9%, and had increased since the last report. However, this was in the 5% to 10% range still considered healthy by the Association of Town Centre Management.

The Economic Development Manager then informed the Working Party regarding car parking events. December 2011 saw the highest number of parking events since the arc opened in March 2009 and peaked at 45,074 paid events in week commencing 19 December 2011, which was an increase over December 2010 by 6.5% and December 2009 by 8.8%. The RingGO cashless parking system had now gone live at the off street car parks. A further four town centre car parks had been awarded the ParkMark safer parking accreditation. In addition, the Cattle Market/arc surface and lower level sites and Parkway multi-storey car park had been accredited again.

The presentation also included pictures regarding the refurbished finger posts and the new welcome sign located at the railway station.

The Economic Development Manager then provided an overview of the review undertaken by Mary Portas into the high street. She drew attention to key aspects contained within the review.

The Economic Development Manager concluded her presentation by providing details of the Retail Appraisal 2011, which would be used to support the Local Development Framework, and had been undertaken by the same company that undertook the Retail Appraisal in 2006. The Working Party was pleased to note that the appraisal showed that 3.8% wanted more/better shops, whereas in 2006 the response was 18%. Those wishing to see more/better parking had decreased from 13% in 2006 to 8.3% in 2011. However, the Working Party was particularly pleased to note that 53% of respondents wished to see no improvements. The appraisal concluded that:-

- (1) it would be unlikely that there would be any demonstrable need for further large food stores before 2021;
- (2) the arc had a major positive effect on role and performance of the town centre;
- (3) the strategy for the first part of the planning period should now be consolidated;
- (4) there was considerable large free standing independent retailing around the town; and
- (5) the Tayfen Road allocation for additional retail warehousing should provide for more additional needs.

For town centre issues the conclusions reached included that:-

- (1) linkages between the arc and the historic core would benefit from improvements; and
- (2) there should be car parking reconfiguration, which could provide an opportunity for floor space expansion, but for 'high street type' retailing.

During the discussion it was suggested that with the success of the low emissions car park apparently being continually full that this policy should be expanded elsewhere within the town. The Working Party also noted the successful markets that operated on a Wednesday and a Saturday which would be the subject of an article within the trade magazine.

(Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White left the meeting during the consideration of this item.)

35. Annual Ratepayers Event: 19 January 2012

The Economic Development Manager informed the Working Party that the Annual Ratepayers Event had taken place on 19 January 2012, and had been well received. Guest speakers included the Head Chef at Ickworth House Hotel, Head of Employer Responsiveness and Senior Business Development Co-ordinator from West Suffolk College, a representative from Phoenix Internet Consultancy, and the Borough Council's Chief Executive. Arising from this event it was agreed that a small group be set up to examine issues surrounding business rates.

36. Dates of Future Meetings

The Working Party confirmed that it would meet on the following dates:-

20 March; and
8 May 2012.

Both dates were Tuesdays and meetings would commence at 5.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 6.44 pm.

**R D EVERITT
CHAIRMAN**