

**ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**RURAL AREA WORKING PARTY**

**Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday 18 November 2010 at 5.00 pm  
in Room GFR14, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds**

PRESENT: Councillor J Thorndyke (Chairman)  
Councillors Mrs Bone, Chappell, Clifton-Brown (substituting for Mrs Broughton), Mrs Levack, Ray, Redhead, Spicer, Stevens and Mrs Whittaker.

**23. Substitution**

The following substitution was declared:-

Councillor Clifton-Brown for Councillor Mrs Broughton.

**24. Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs Broughton.

*(Councillors Chappell and Mrs Levack arrived at the meeting following this item)*

**25. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. A Member queried in relation to minute 18 whether the reference to the application form for benefits as containing 24 pages was correct since a higher figure had been mentioned at the meeting. The Chairman undertook to clarify this. (It was subsequently ascertained that the figure of 32 pages referred to at the meeting related to the Department of Work and Pensions form and that the Council's claim form consisted of 24 pages).

**26. Declarations of Interests**

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

**27. Village Hall to Village Hub Concept**

The Working Party considered Report B299 (previously circulated) which examined in more detail the potential of the Village Hall to Village Hub Concept and the issues that needed to be considered if parishes were to progress this initiative. Possible parishes where the initiative might be applied were also identified. The Working Party was also asked whether the Council should host an event to promote Community Land Trusts (CLTS) which were non-profit making, community based organisations committed to the stewardship and affordability of land, housing and other buildings used for community benefit in perpetuity. Such bodies were regarded as an appropriate vehicle for delivering the Village Hall to Village Hub initiative at the local level.

On 30 September 2010, the Working Party had received a presentation on the concept of Village Hall to Village Hub. The concept suggested focusing on intensifying the use of the Village Hall to facilitate change that might facilitate, through the creation of a Community Land Trust, the provision of small pockets of affordable rural housing, the creation permanent intermediate housing; the provision of workspace; and/or community facilities. A premise of the concept was that some village playing fields adjacent to village halls were underused and could therefore be partly developed to provide a vibrant Village Hub.

In response to the presentation the Working Party had requested a further report to:-

- (i) identify those villages where the initiative might be applied and in this regard Members were asked to advise officers of parishes in their wards which they felt were appropriate for consideration; and
- (ii) examine in more detail the issues which would have to be confronted if the idea is to be utilised by individual parishes.

The Working Party discussed the difficulties the initiative might pose in relation to the apparent conflict with planning policies if proposals for development of part of a village playing field were to be put forward. It was acknowledged, however, that the Government, having abolished Regional Spatial Strategies, had announced the introduction of new initiatives under the headings of 'localism' and the 'Big Society' and the details of these were awaited. A member suggested that if relatively few parishes in St Edmundsbury expressed an interest in the proposed promotional event that invitations be extended to parishes in neighbouring districts. A member referred to the success of Hundon Village Shop and Community Café as a Village Hub initiative.



***RECOMMENDED:- That***

- (1) an event be hosted to promote Community Land Trusts and assist parishes to explore the Village Hall to Village Hub initiative further; and***
- (2) in the first instance, however, all villages be circulated with information about the initiative and responses sought to ascertain the extent of overall interest.***

*(Councillor Spicer arrived at the meeting during the discussion of the above item)*

**28. Replacement Local Plan – Policy RA2(b): Land off Crown Lane, Ixworth. Approval of Masterplan (Report B300). Also to be considered by the Sustainable Working Party on 23 November 2010**

*(Councillor Spicer declared a personal interest as his wife was the County Councillor for the Electoral Division in which Ixworth was situated and remained within the meeting)*

The Committee considered Report B300 (previously circulated) which sought approval of the draft Masterplan for land off Crown Lane, Ixworth for adoption as non-statutory planning guidance.

Land at Crown Lane, Ixworth had been allocated for development in the Replacement Local Plan. The Local Plan stated that development could not proceed until a Masterplan had been adopted for the site and this was to be informed by a Concept Statement.

A draft Masterplan in respect of the land had subsequently prepared by consultants on behalf of the proposed developer. Public consultation had taken place in July and August 2010 and the Masterplan had been amended in the light of the comments received. A Public Consultation Report was contained as Appendix A to the Report.

Key elements of the revised Masterplan which was attached as Appendix B were as follows:-

- (a) the development closely followed the format established by the adopted Concept Statement with vehicular access taken from the Walsham Road roundabout with pedestrian and emergency access from Crown Lane;
- (b) the development addressed Crown Lane as a green lane and created a focal public square opposite the existing development at Thomas Close;
- (c) open space was proposed between the development and the cemetery;
- (d) the form of development illustrated a permeable layout punctuated by focal features and outward looking around the perimeter. This was supported by indicative sketches of key features; and
- (e) issues relating to sustainability and biodiversity were addressed, identifying issues would will be carried through in greater detail with the emerging detailed design.

The Masterplan and the proposals within it, had been prepared in accordance with the adopted Replacement Borough Local Plan and the protocol for preparing Masterplans.

Adoption of the Masterplan would enable planning applications to be considered and the development of this housing site to proceed.

In discussing the Masterplan there was a divergence of views whether or not an access to the development should be indicated from the A143 By-Pass. Some Members were concerned that there was a necessity for such an access so as to relieve traffic along Crown Lane and to avoid the proposed estate being isolated from the main village. Other Members were of the opinion that such an access would be of insufficient capacity to cope with additional traffic and that it would create a 'rat run' which would be detrimental to residential amenity. Officers advised that the access arrangements had already been determined in the adopted concept statement and that provision had been included for an access for emergency vehicles to be created from the A143 to Crown Lane. This could be opened up further to provide a general access at a future date if future circumstances warranted it.



**RECOMMENDED:-**

***That, subject to the approval of full Council, the Masterplan for the development of land off Crown Lane, Ixworth as contained in Appendix B of Report B300 be adopted as non-statutory planning guidance.***

*(With the agreement of the Chairman the agenda was varied to allow the following item to taken out of order from that printed)*

## **29. St Edmundsbury's Rural Youth Work Programme**

The Working Party considered Report B302 (previously circulated) which provided an update about the various activities, events and projects which had been delivered for young people over the past twelve months and which formed part of St Edmundsbury's Rural Youth Work Programme. It also provided an evaluation of the rural youth work project, 'WOS UP', which was now in its third year.

The Borough Council was committed to improving the quality of life of young people within the community and to promoting the involvement of young people. Officers gave a presentation on all the rural youth projects that had been happening and outlined options for the Rural Youth Work Programme 2011. Officers advised that a reference to the 'On the Spot' service which catered for villages around Haverhill should have also been included in the Report.

In discussing the report Members acknowledged that details of the divestment of Suffolk County Council's Youth Services were not yet known and, therefore, there was a difficulty in setting the programme in advance of receiving this information. Reference was also made to the logistical issues of delivering youth services in the rural area. It was agreed to invite a representative from Supporting Contemporary Adolescence (SCA), the partnership organisation delivering the 'WOS-UP' project, to the next meeting on 13 January 2011 to discuss these issues. The Working Party was of the view that joint commissioning of rural youth work with Forest Heath District Council should also be investigated before the Rural Youth Programme 2011 was settled.



### ***RECOMMENDED:-***

***That investigation be carried out at the earliest opportunity into the joint commissioning of Rural Youth Work with Forest Heath District Council.***

*(Councillor Spicer left the meeting at the conclusion of the discussion of this item)*

## **30. Options for Off-Street Borough Car Park Charges 2011/2012**

The Working Party considered Report B301 (previously circulated) the purpose of which was to provide information on management initiatives to effect improvements to off-street car parks in Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds over the last year and to put forward proposals for alterations to parking charges for 2011/2012 for consideration. The report contained the following Appendices:-

- A Schedule of Existing and Proposed Charges;
- B Plan of St Andrew's Car Park showing annexe area where all day parking was proposed;
- C Comparative Season Ticket Prices for Borough Car Parks; and
- D Regional Car Parking Charges Comparison.

The Report would also be considered by the Bury St Edmunds Area Working Party on 30 November 2011. A member questioned the situation that parking in disabled persons parking spaces was free as in some local authority areas this was not the case. Officers indicated that this issue had already been identified for potential review in 2011. Officers also acknowledged the need to look at the physical layout of Lower Baxter Street Car Park in response to a members' reference to difficulties drivers

experienced in manoeuvring around this car park. The Working Party supported the proposals to alter the parking charges for 2011/2012 contained in paragraphs 3.5, 3.6, 4 and 5 of Report B301 with exception of the proposed increase from £1.00 to £2.00 for parking up to 2 hours at the Hardwick Heath Car Park. Members acknowledged that the purpose of this increase was to discourage parking associated with West Suffolk Hospital but felt that the charge should be unchanged so as not to penalise users of the leisure facilities at this location.

The Working Party's recommendation would be included in a composite report to Cabinet on 19 January 2011 along with the recommendations of both other Area Working Parties.



***RECOMMENDED:- That***

***That the proposals to alter the parking charges for 2011/2012 as contained in paragraphs 3.5, 3.6, 4 and 5 of Report B301 be supported with the exception of the proposed increase from £1.00 to £2.00 for up to 2 hours at the Hardwick Heath Car Park.***

*(Councillor Mrs Bone left the meeting at the conclusion of this item)*

**31. Review of the Final Year of the 2008/2011 Rural Action Plan and Proposals for Future Extension**

The Working Party considered Report B303 (previously circulated) which sought approval of the future extension of the Rural Action Plan.

The Rural Action Plan (RAP) covering the period from March 2008 to March 2011 was approved on 5 March 2008 (Report Y606 refers). In addition to regular monitoring by officers throughout the year, it had been agreed that the development of the Rural Action Plan would be monitored on an annual basis by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In November 2009 the responsibility for monitoring of the Rural Action Plan came under the remit of this Working Party. Report B303 formed the third and final monitoring report on the 2008 to 2011 Rural Action Plan. Appendix A of the Report provided a progress report on Action Plan Projects. Appendix B contained a Programme for formulating the Rural Action Plan 2011 - 2014.

The Rural Area Working Party Funding Sub-Group had expressed a view that the Rural Action Plan should be continued beyond March 2011 (Report B235 to the Working Party on 30 September 2010); a view subsequently endorsed by Cabinet.

During the discussion the view was promoted that there should be greater joint working with partners and other organisations involved in similar projects e.g. Natural England and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, to ensure the fullest use of resources and to avoid duplication. Members were asked to contribute ideas for projects for inclusion in the 2011 – 2014 Rural Action Plan by communicating these to officers before the next meeting of the Working Party on 13 January 2011.



**RECOMMENDED:- That**

- (1) the progress made towards the 2008 to 2011 Rural Action Plan be noted;**
- (2) the Rural Action Plan be extended for a further three years to the end of March 2014, with funding from: the underspend from previous years; Local Authority Business Growth Incentive funding; and Economic Development section codes as set out in Paragraph 7.2 of Report B303;**
- (3) the work programme for developing the new Rural Action Plan 2011 to 2014 be noted;**
- (4) the continuation of some projects from the 2008 to 2011 plan (denoted by a 'yes' in paragraph 2.4 of this report) be noted, and these projects be approved for inclusion in the 2011 to 2014 Rural Action Plan; and**
- (5) delegated authority be given to the Rural Area Working Party to carry out consultation on the draft Rural Action Plan once it has been collated, and to prepare and recommend a new plan to Cabinet.**

**32. Work Programme 2010**

A copy of the current Rural Area Working Party Work Programme had been previously circulated as a late paper. Members having comments on this were asked to convey these to officers after the meeting.

**33. Dates of Future Meetings**

The Working Party confirmed the following dates for future meetings:-

13 January 2011; and  
10 March 2011.

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

The meeting concluded at 7.48 pm.

**J THORNDYKE  
CHAIRMAN**