

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

RURAL AREA WORKING PARTY

**Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday 13 January 2011 at 5.00 pm
in Room GFR14, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds**

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

34. Substitutions

The following substitutions were declared:-

Councillor Houlder for Councillor Mrs D Whittaker; and
Councillor Nettleton for Councillor Redhead.

35. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Redhead and Mrs Whittaker.

36. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37. Declarations of Interests

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

38. Rural Youth Work: 'Wos Up' Outreach Work

(Councillor Thorndyke declared a personal interest as Chairman of Stanton Parish Council which body had funded Supporting Contemporary Adolescence to run Stanton Youth Club and remained within the meeting)

Karl Huggins and Dale Hayward from Supporting Contemporary Adolescence (SCA) gave a presentation on the 'Wos Up' Outreach Project, which aimed to engage with young people in rural areas. They outlined the work undertaken in 2010 when the number of villages visited had been increased. The duration of visits had, however, been limited to a six week period and overall there had been a decrease in the number of young people attending sessions from that recorded for the previous year.

The project endeavoured to identify the needs of young people in rural parts of the Borough and over time to develop responses to these. The value of the project was seen as not only providing activity opportunities but also acting as a reference point whereby young people could be signposted to other service providers and projects.

In response to questions the Working Party was advised that the age group usually contacted was between 13 to 17 years and that the needs of young people were indicated as being lack of activities and facilities locally and lack of knowledge of what was available for them. It was acknowledged, however, that there was a diversity of needs and facilities relating to young people. The Youth and Community Officer liaised regularly with the Police and there was contact with Safer Neighbourhood Teams. It was intended that the outreach project would complement other agencies' roles undertaken in the community. It was accepted that transport to outreach events was difficult in rural areas and ways of providing this had been investigated but the provision of transport was not feasible because of child protection and operational issues. Members were invited to submit any other questions and suggestions they had on the outreach project to officers.

In conclusion the Working Party was of the view that the six weekly phasing of a visit to individual villages warranted re-examination and that the project would need to work within the existing budget level as it was unlikely that this would be increased for 2011/2012. It was further suggested that the project should seek contributions from Parish Councils so as to be able to expand the outreach work.

The speakers were thanked for attending.

(Councillors Mrs Levack and Spicer arrived at the meeting during the discussion of the above item.)

39. Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan 2016: Development Brief for Land at The Green, Barrow

The Working Party considered Report B406 (previously circulated) which sought approval of a Development Brief for Land at The Green, Barrow and its adoption as non-statutory planning guidance.

The adopted Replacement St Edmundsbury Borough Local Plan 2016 contained a requirement for a development brief or site-specific design guidance to be prepared for all major developments before planning permission could be granted (Policy DS5). Despite the adoption of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy in December 2010, Policies RA2 and DS5 of the Local Plan remained in force.

A protocol for the preparation of development briefs had been produced in order to clarify the process for site owners and developers. The protocol was approved by Council on 1 July 2008 (Minute 32(A)(1) refers).

Agents acting on behalf of the owners of the site at The Green, Barrow had prepared a Development Brief for the site in accordance with the Council's Protocol for the preparation of such documents. The Development Brief was attached as Appendix A to the Report. Following a period of consultation with stakeholders and neighbouring residents approval of the Design Brief as planning guidance was now being sought. A report on the consultation was attached as Appendix B. There was general support for the principle of development. The Development Brief had been amended to take account of concerns relating to disturbance during construction and potential overlooking and the need to pay regard to these issues.

As with all such developments of this size within the Borough, any application for the development of the site would be considered using the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) Building For Life standard.

Councillor Houlder, the Ward Member, referred to the situation that the principle of development of the site had been long established and there had been general acceptance of this in the parish over the years. The response to the consultation had, therefore, been largely positive.

It was suggested that at the planning application stage a Section 106 obligation requiring affordable housing to be provided for local people should be explored and that the design of proposed dwellings should be limited to 2 ½ storeys.



RECOMMENDED:- That

That, subject to the approval of full Council, the Design Brief for the development of land at The Green, Barrow, as contained in Appendix A of Report B406, be adopted as non-statutory planning guidance for the determination of future planning applications.

40. Rural Area Masterplan

The Working Party considered a narrative item supported by a presentation which sought approval for work to commence on a detailed Masterplan for the Rural Area.

The Working Party received a presentation from the Principal Policy and Specialist Services Manager on the process for preparing the Masterplan. The plan, would encompass a number of issues which made the area function, such as:-

- (a) homes;
- (b) jobs;
- (c) travel;
- (d) infrastructure and services;
- (e) historic and natural environment;
- (f) leisure and recreation;
- (g) health; and
- (h) education and skills.

The Masterplan would seek to address these social and economic issues and predict the needs of the area in 20 years time, up to 2031. Emphasis was placed upon engaging local people in the process, particularly young people as they would become the adults affected by the objectives detailed in the plan. It was envisaged that the Masterplan would ultimately incorporate the Rural Action Plan and Neighbourhood Plans to be produced under provisions proposed in the Localism Bill. It was being proposed by officers that a 'Rural Summit' meeting be arranged for a date in March 2011 to which Parish Councils and other organisations with an interest in the rural area would be invited. Following this events would then be staged across the rural area to engage local people in the process.



RECOMMENDED:-

That the issues and visioning engagement Masterplan process for Rural Area up to 2031 commence with the holding of the 'Rural Summit' event on a date to be arranged within the first two weeks of March 2011.

(Councillor Nettleton left the meeting following discussion of the above item)

41. Parish Conference Planning

Officers gave an oral report on feedback from representatives who attended the Parish Conference held on 22 November 2010. Those attending had indicated that they had found the content informative and useful. Topics requested by them for the Spring Conference had been Funding Issues, the Rural Action Plan and Allotment Provision. Officers suggested that the Localism Bill and Neighbourhood Plans and Emergency Planning might also be included, and it was also suggested that Community Engagement be included in the programme.

The Working Party discussed the date proposed by officers for the Conference of Thursday 12 May 2011 at 5.45 pm for a 6.00 pm start at Stanton Village Hall. Some reservations were expressed because of the close proximity of this date to the Borough/Parish Council elections which were to be held on 5 May 2011. Officers advised that there was very little scope to either bring forward or put back the date because of other commitments and this situation was accepted. In agreeing the date the Working Party requested that Parish Councils and other interested organisations be informed of the limited availability of dates this year for the Spring Conference.

42. Waste and Street Scene Services Cleansing Review

The Working Party considered Report B407 (previously circulated) which updated Members on the progress of the Joint Review of Cleansing Services by Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC).

Report B54 to the Working Party on 17 June 2010 had outlined why a cleansing review was necessary and what the current rural cleansing arrangements were and how they might be improved.

Officers from both Councils had met and identified major issues which were common to both authorities. Four separate work streams within the project were identified:-

- (i) Street cleansing;
- (ii) Channel sweeping;
- (iii) Dog and Litter Bins; and
- (iv) Strategy and Policy.

Appendix A attached to the Report gave more detail in each of these work streams. Consultation with Parish Councils on the Cleansing Review had begun in December 2010 and a copy of the letter and questionnaire sent was attached as Appendix B. The closing date for responses was 11 February 2011.

The next stages of the Review were:-

- (a) utilising a 'Routesmart' software package developed by Integrated Skills Ltd, a specialist waste management company, to optimise domestic waste collection rounds;
- (b) continuing to develop a procurement process for the purchase of vehicles and equipment as a number of these are due for renewal;
- (c) reviewing staff training; and
- (d) seeking the engagement of parishes to become more involved in local cleansing issues.

In response to a question officers advised that the Borough Council had responsibility for sweeping roads with kerbs. For those highways without kerbs their cleansing was undertaken by the County Council. The Working Party was also advised that the Council liaised closely with those parishes that employed cleansing staff and that a trial had been undertaken in an attempt to overcome the problem posed to street cleansing by on-street parking.

RESOLVED:-

That, Members be asked to engage with the process of the Cleansing Review and encourage parishes in their wards to be involved so that the best outcomes can be achieved.

43. Development of the 2011 - 2014 Rural Action Plan

The Working Party considered Report B408 (previously circulated) which sought:-

- (i) approval to undertake consultation on the draft Rural Action Plan 2011-2014, which was attached as Appendix A; and
- (ii) authorisation for the Rural Economic Development officer to make any necessary amendments to the consultation version of the Plan prior to it being circulated.

On 2 December 2010 Cabinet agreed to extend the Rural Action Plan for a further three years to cover the period from April 2011 to March 2014. This decision followed the recommendation from the meeting of the Working Party held on 18 November 2010.

The first phase of the consultation process, which commenced on 2 December 2010, had now been completed. This consisted of internal consultation with Members and Officers, and external consultation with partners and rural residents. Responses received were listed in Appendix B, along with the comments of officers in relation to these.

A consultation draft Rural Action Plan had now been prepared using the information received to date. It was being proposed that the second phase of consultation would take place from 14 January 2011 to 14 February 2011. The results of this second phase and the final draft Rural Action Plan would be presented to the Working Party for consideration at its meeting scheduled for 10 March 2011. It was also suggested that the approved Rural Action Plan would be launched at the Spring Parish Conference.

In relation to item 20 of the Draft Rural Action Plan, Grants for Rural Shops, Post Offices and Public Houses, officers were asked to clarify the assistance available and include an upper limit of grants for capital items of equipment. On item 26, Tours of St Edmundsbury Villages, it was requested that the reference to larger villages be deleted and that it be indicated that new tours of villages would be provided irrespective of their size. The inclusion of a further item was requested for the promotion of the concept of village websites for parishes where these do not yet exist.

Members felt that the proposal consultation period was too short when taking into consideration the frequency at which Parish Councils met and proposed that this be extended. It was noted that to accommodate this request, the report to the next meeting of the Working Party would need to be sent separately to the agenda as a late item.

RESOLVED:- That,

- (1) the draft Rural Action Plan 2011 – 2014, detailed in Report B408, as amended be approved for consultation;
- (2) the Rural Economic Development Officer be authorised to make any further typographical, factual and/or grammatical amendments to the consultation version of the Plan prior to circulation; and
- (3) the end of the consultation period be extended from 14 February 2011 to 28 February 2011.

44. Rural Area Working Party Work Programme

The Working Party received and noted Report B409 (previously circulated) which set out the Working Party's Work Programme to the end of 2011.

45. Dates of Future Meetings

The Working Party confirmed the date of its next meeting as Thursday 10 March 2011 at 5.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 7.25 pm.

**J THORNDYKE
CHAIRMAN**