

West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group

Minutes of a meeting of the **West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group** held on **Tuesday 10 May 2016** at **10.45 am** at the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman David Bowman

Forest Heath District Council

St Edmundsbury Borough Council

Chris Barker
Ruth Bowman
Rona Burt
David Palmer

John Burns
Angela Rushen
David Roach
Peter Thompson
Jim Thorndyke

19. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simon Cole (FHDC) and Alaric Pugh (SEBC).

20. **Substitutes**

Councillor David Palmer (FHDC) attended the meeting as substitute for Councillor Simon Cole.

21. **Minutes**

The minutes from the meetings held on 26 January 2016 and 8 February 2016 were received and confirmed as a correct record.

22. **Mildenhall Hub: Development Brief (Report No JGG/JT/16/004)**

The Principal Planning Officer presented this report which reminded Members that the adopted Forest Heath Core Strategy defined Mildenhall as a market town which provided a broad range of shops, services and facilities that served the needs of its catchment area. It had a population of approximately 10,315 (2011 Parish Profile) and would be a focus for growth to 2031, which would place greater demand upon public services. Many of the buildings which housed public services in Mildenhall were coming to the end of their planned lives, or were in need of major investment.

Against this background and the government's 'One Public Estate' initiative, a partnership of public service providers in Mildenhall commissioned Concertus

to investigate the business case for development to replace accommodation on a shared basis. The 2014 report which considered the business case examined a number of options involving five sites across Mildenhall in a number of configurations. One of the options, for a single site 'Hub' at Sheldrick Way, was found to be most beneficial in terms of the business case.

A draft Development Brief was prepared in late 2015 and had been approved for consultation by the West Suffolk Joint Steering Group at its meeting on 26 January 2016. The formal consultation process commenced on 7 March 2016 and ran until 25 April 2016 and included a drop-in event for neighbours and interested parties held at The Pavilion in Recreation Way on 6 April 2016. In addition, a separate meeting was held with a local residents' group at their request.

There were two distinct themes arising from the consultation. The first related to the principle of grouping facilities together on a single site and whether Sheldrick way was the appropriate site and the second related to concerns and issues arising from the development of the site at Sheldrick Way.

The first theme was addressed in the 2014 business case and was considered as part of the Local Plan consultation in August 2015. The local plan consultation identified support for the principle of bringing public services together on a single site at Sheldrick way, which resulted in the inclusion of the site as part of draft Policy M1 in the Preferred Options Site Allocations Local Plan which was currently at consultation until June 2016.

The second matter related to the implications arising from the proposed development addressed by the Development Brief. A number of consistent and important issues were raised, some of which have resulted in changes or clarification within the document, whereas others related to details which would need to be addressed at a later detailed planning application stage. The key issues were as follows:

- Concern about additional traffic on Queensway and the junction of Queensway, Kingsway and High Street at Police Station Square;
- Concern about access for emergency services based at the hub;
- Need for adequate parking;
- Conflict between cars and pedestrians in Church Walk;
- Strong support for improved swimming pool;
- Need to improve public transport;
- Wish to protect allotments;
- Premature ahead of release of RAF Mildenhall.

Further issues raised in discussion by residents at the drop-in meeting and the meeting at the cricket club included opinion about the choices for any complementary housing with a strong preference for Option 1 and dislike of Option 3 and a suggestion that the existing car parking in Wamil Way on the site of Option 3 could be retained and utilised for the benefit of residents or church users. There was also concern that the site should be adequate to accommodate any future growth arising as a result of the housing expansion to the west of Mildenhall.

Following this consultation exercise, the Masterplan had been amended to take account of the many comments and suggestions.

Immediately prior to the commencement of this meeting, the Steering Group had undertaken a site visit to Sheldrick Way to assist with their undertaking of the principle of the development.

The Steering Group considered these consultation responses, as were set out in Appendix B to the report, along with the amended Development Brief, as set out in Appendix A. The Group expressed their support in how the consultation exercise had been undertaken, but did express some concern to ensure that the project was not affected by design and infrastructure problems. Members also stated that they would have liked to have seen more detailed comments from Suffolk County Council with regard to highways infrastructure. Officers confirmed that highways infrastructure was vitally important to the success of this project and that they would be ensuring that continued liaison was undertaken with the County Council accordingly.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RECOMMENDED: (Cabinet: 17 May 2016)

That the Development Brief for the Mildenhall Hub be adopted as non-statutory planning guidance.

(Councillor Peter Thompson joined the meeting at 10.55 am, during the discussion of and prior to the voting, on this item).

23. A11 Technology Corridor (Presentation)

The Principal Growth Officer made a presentation to the Group which provided an update and overview of the work which was being undertaken in relation to the A11 technology corridor.

The Officer also outlined the next steps which would involve securing agreement from key stakeholders on the vision of the project, brand development, funding and governance/operational arrangements.

Members discussed the content of the presentation and asked questions, to which responses were duly provided. Members also requested that regular updates be provided to the Group on its progress.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

24. Dates of Future Meetings

It was noted that future meetings of the Steering Group would be held as follows:

Tuesday 28 June 2016	10.00 am	West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds
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(Proposed topic for discussion: Highways Infrastructure in West Suffolk)

Tuesday 11 October 2016	10.00 am	District Offices, Mildenhall
Tuesday 21 February 2017	10.00 am	West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds

Additional meetings of the Steering Group could also be arranged as and when required.

The Meeting concluded at 11.55 am

Signed by:

Chairman
