

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Wednesday 13 September 2017** at **4.00 pm** in **Conference Chamber West, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Susan Glossop

John Burns
Patrick Chung
Paula Fox
Richard Rout
Andrew Speed

Clive Springett
Sarah Stamp
Jim Thorndyke
Frank Warby

Substitutes attending:

David Nettleton

Patricia Warby

By Invitation:

Margaret Marks

174. **Substitutes**

The following substitutions were declared:

Councillor David Nettleton for Councillor Diane Hind.
Councillor Patricia Warby for Council Simon Brown.

175. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simon Brown, Diane Hind and Paul Hopfensperger.

176. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2017, were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

177. **Public Participation**

There were no questions/statements from members of the public.

178. Announcements from the Chairman regarding responses of the Cabinet to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Chairman advised that she had nothing to report. However, the next Cabinet meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 19 September 2017, at 5pm.

179. Annual Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth

[Councillor Andrew Speed arrived at 4.05pm during the consideration of this item].

The Committee was reminded that on 14 September 2016, it had received a presentation from the Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth, setting out his responsibilities covered under his portfolio.

At this meeting, the Cabinet Member had been invited back to provide his annual update. Report No: OAS/SE/17/023 set out the focus of the update.

The Cabinet Member was also provided in advance of the meeting with some key questions identified by Scrutiny Members on areas they wished to be appraised on during the annual update, specifically:

- 1) The justification for the proposal to close the bus station which was proposed within the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Master Plan.
- 2) Proposals for implementing Minimum Space Standards;
- 3) The Eastern Relief Road and plans for the business park and how it was progressing alongside the Portfolio Holders Vision for supporting businesses in the Borough;
- 4) An update on the Haverhill Town Centre Master Plan and current proposals being worked on;
- 5) An update on the Haverhill Research Park and progress on development;
- 6) The likely impact on the government's proposals on withdrawing diesel/petrol vehicles from market in 2040 on planning applications and other developments in terms of electrical charging points; and
- 7) An update on the A1307 corridor including road and rail links.

Councillor Alaric Pugh opened his presentation by thanking the Committee for the invitation to address the Committee on progress made within his Portfolio since September 2016.

Before responding to the questions, he introduced two new Assistant Directors; Julie Baird for Growth, and David Collinson for Planning and Regulatory Services. He then gave a short introduction explaining that the Council was now seeing progress in its journey of moving towards thinking and working strategically and not just in geographical or planning terms but in how it could go beyond the boundaries of its statutory responsibilities to

lever investment. Work had begun on developing the Strategic direction for Growth, which was being shaped under the Strategic Plan work over the forthcoming months. This would help the Council to clearly define its Growth priorities and align its resources in promoting what it was good at to attract the right businesses, infrastructure and investments to support communities. He then provided responses to each of the questions in turn:

Bus Station, Bury St Edmunds

The draft Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan did not propose the closure of the bus station, although that was how it had been reported in the press, which was disappointing.

However, the Masterplan did include an aspiration to reconfigure facilities on St Andrews Street North which would facilitate the redevelopment of the existing bus station, which occupied a site of some 0.36ha. The aspiration was to ensure bus services met the needs of the town in the future.

Given the level of interest which this had created, it was an aspiration which would need to be reviewed as the Council considered the consultation responses and progress towards a final Masterplan.

Minimum Space Standards

A technical advice note had been drafted, and officers were currently looking outside the administrative boundaries to identify what standards neighbouring local authorities were achieving on sites.

The technical advice note was expected to make its way through the democratic reporting process in November 2017. The Council would like to see developers exceed those minimum standards as it was aiming for the best possible housing standards.

Eastern Relief Road and the Business Park

The launch of the Eastern Relief Road was taking place on Monday 25 September 2017. There would be a pedestrian route aligned with the cycle route and appropriate signage would be in place for cyclists to dismount. The Council had checked the Safety Audits relating to the identified pinch points, and a Stage 3 Audit check would be completed before the road opened on 25 September.

Officers were working with developers to support the growth of the Suffolk Business Park in line with the Portfolio Holders Vision, which sought to support and develop key business sectors, as well as delivering a range of unit types and sizes at the Park. A paper would be presented to Cabinet in the Autumn on the Vision for the Business Park.

Haverhill Town Centre Master Plan and Current Proposals

Officers were working with the One Haverhill Working Group (Working Group) to deliver the objectives set out within the adopted Masterplan.

Amy Leader (Principal Growth Officer) had re-organised the project delivery plan, which had been approved by the Working Group. Progress was being made on the five work streams. The Working Group met recently and formed project teams to work on the objectives set out within each of the adopted work streams.

Haverhill Research Park

The Enterprise Zone was working well, and officers continued to support the wider marketing and promotional activity that was in place, both by the developer and by the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership (the latter in support of the Enterprise Zone status afforded to the Park. The commercial market in Cambridge remained buoyant and there continued to be active enquiries for space at the Haverhill Research Park.

Government's Proposals on Withdrawing Diesel/Petrol Vehicles

This was a priority for the Growth Team, and a paper would be coming forward on the impact of the Government's policy and how the Council would respond. A relevant policy setting out electric charging points would then be prepared for inclusion within the West Suffolk Local Plan, which would commence in early 2018.

A second successful Electric Car Exhibition was held at The Apex. The emphasis was on commercial vehicles, which the Council was promoting alongside the promotion of electrical charging points.

A1307 Corridor

The A1307 campaign was moving forward, led by the Suffolk Chamber; chaired by Matt Hancock MP, attended by St Edmundsbury Borough Council; Haverhill Town Council; Cambridge County Council; Suffolk County Council; Greater Cambridgeshire Greater Peterborough LEP; South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge Ahead. A new A1307 traffic study had been commissioned by the Strategy Board, and the study would revisit the growth figures for Haverhill and beyond to ensure the accuracy of the findings. The study would then form a pre-business case. The priority for the Strategy Board and the campaign was the section of the A1307 between Haverhill and the A11.

Matt Hancock MP, had met with Councillor James Palmer, the newly elected mayor, who had confirmed his commitment to a commuter light rail link between Cambridge and Haverhill, which the A1307 Strategy Board had agreed would complement the A1307 campaign.

Sara Noonan, Principal Growth Officer was working with all parties regarding the A1307 corridor and was marketing the delivery side through the Haverhill Masterplan.

Members discussed the update in detail and asked a number of follow-up questions of the Cabinet Member and officers, to which responses were provided.

In particular discussions were held on Suffolk County Council Highways in relation to the Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan and pavements as part of the public realm workstream. Some members felt that issues such as pavements were not high enough in Highway's category of importance, and suggested that the Council needed to look at match funding. The Assistant Director (Planning and Regulatory) advised that the Council was discussing a number of issues with Highways. The Chairman also informed members that Suffolk County Council Highways would be attending its Extraordinary Committee meeting on 25 October 2017.

The Chairman wished to thank the Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth for his attendance and **noted** the update.

180. **Work Programme Update**

The Committee received Report No: OAS/SE/17/024, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2017-2018 (Appendix 1). The report also requested that Members identify questions they would like the Portfolio Holder for Operations to cover in his annual update to the Committee on 8 November 2017.

The Committee considered the report and at the time of the meeting had not identified any questions they wished to be put to the Portfolio Holder for Operations. Therefore, the Democratic Services Officers would email the Committee asking for questions to be submitted to her by Monday 9 October 2017.

Finally, the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) reminded the Committee of the Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting arranged for Wednesday 25 October 2017 at 4pm when the Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transports would be attending to discuss how communication could be improved between the various tiers of local government for the benefit of all residents and Councillors in West Suffolk, and the New Suffolk Highways Structure. Forest Heath's Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also been invited to attend the meeting as observers.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the current status of its forward work programme for 2017-2018.

The Meeting concluded at 5.10 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
