

# West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group** held on **Tuesday 26 January 2016** at **10.00 am** at the **Council Chamber, District Offices**, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Forest Heath District Council

Chris Barker  
David Bowman  
Ruth Bowman  
Rona Burt  
Simon Cole

St Edmundsbury Borough Council

John Burns  
Alaric Pugh  
Angela Rushen  
Peter Thompson  
Jim Thorndyke

## 1. **Election of Chairman for 2015/2016**

The approved Terms of Reference for the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group required that the Chairmanship and Vice Chairmanship is rotated annually between the two Councils.

Therefore, the Panel was requested to **ELECT** a Chairman from Forest Heath District Council and **ELECT** a Vice-Chairman from St Edmundsbury Borough Council, in accordance with this arrangement.

It was proposed, seconded and

### **RESOLVED:**

That Councillor David Bowman (Forest Heath District Council) be elected as Chairman for 2015/2016.

## 2. **Election of Vice Chairman for 2015/2016**

It was proposed, seconded and

### **RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Alaric Pugh (St Edmundsbury Borough Council) be elected as Vice-Chairman for 2015/2016.

### 3. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

Councillor James Lay (Forest Heath District Council) was unable to attend the meeting.

### 4. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutes present at the meeting.

### 5. **Minutes**

The schedule of recommendations from the meeting held on 27 October 2014 were received and confirmed as a correct record.

### 6. **Mildenhall Hub: Development Brief (Report No JGG/JT/16/001)**

The Principal Planning Officer (Major Projects) presented this report which explained 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 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, Mildenhall, was found to be the most beneficial in terms of the business case.

Public consultation in respect of the Site Allocations Local Plan: Issues and Options, which was carried out between August to October 2015, also identified support for the principle of bringing services together on a single site at Sheldrick Way.

Attached as Appendix 1 to the report was the draft Development Brief for the allocated site. The Brief set out the planning issues and constraints and provided guidance as to what would need to be addressed in bringing the site forward for development in a cohesive and phased manner to meet the future demands for public services in Mildenhall.

Subject to the draft Development Brief being approved, a public consultation would take place for a (minimum) four week period. The consultation would be carried out in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). All responses to the consultation exercise would be reported back to the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group and, if necessary, a modified version of the document would be put forward for

final adoption by Council, as planning guidance. Officers also advised that a site visit to Sheldrick Way would be arranged for the Steering Group, prior to their consideration of the consultation responses.

In discussing the proposed Development Brief, Members recommended that the Brief should contain an Executive Summary, outlining the following areas:

- Explaining the value and importance of the Hub, particularly as a community facility.
- To emphasise the proposals for the leisure facilities.
- To include reference to the previous transport study and how this would relate to this development.

Councillor Ruth Bowman, Ward Member for the Market Ward (Mildenhall), explained the current concerns of residents with regard to the issues of traffic, car parking and pedestrian access, within the area of Wamil Way and Church Walk and how this may also be further affected by other potential development within that area. Therefore, Councillor Bowman proposed that the Development Brief should be amended to reflect:-

- An appreciation of the current concerns raised by residents within that area with regard to traffic, car parking and pedestrian/cycle access.
- This development was not seen in isolation to other live planning applications in that area.
- An acknowledgment of the current known issues of vehicular access at Wamil Way and Church Walk (including parental 'drop-off' for the current school/pre-school).
- A sympathetic account of the current amenities within the area and how this development could affect them (positively).
- An acknowledgment that this development may also require changes to be made to the road system on Queensway.
- An explanation of how any complementary housing would be accessed.

With regard to the consultation process, Members also stated the importance of ensuring that the community could fully participate and, therefore, requested for the consultation period to be undertaken for a minimum of six weeks, rather than the proposed minimum of four weeks.

Members also made the following comments with regard to the Hub development (which were outside the specific remit of the Development Brief itself):

- Ensuring that the appropriate safeguarding issues were in place with regard to the use of the buildings which were to be located on the site (Officers confirmed that that this was a primary consideration).
- That the style of the development should fit into the community and which could be seen as a landmark development.
- Consideration of the prioritisation of pedestrians over other forms of transport in use within the area.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RECOMMENDED:** (to FHDC Cabinet - 10 February 2016)

That the draft Development Brief be approved for public consultation, subject to the final content being amended to:

1. Reflect the comments of the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group, with approval of the final text to be undertaken in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth and the Ward Members for the Market Ward (Mildenhall); and
2. Add an Executive Summary, for circulation to the Members of the Steering Group for comment, prior to the Development Brief going out to public consultation.

7. **Confirmation of Day/Time for Meetings of the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group**

The meetings of the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group were scheduled to take place on Mondays at 10.00 am. Venues for these meetings were rotated between the Offices of St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council (where able to do so).

The Steering Group then considered whether their meetings should continue to be held on the day/time stated and it was felt that, taking account of the availability of the Steering Group members, these meetings should now be held on Tuesdays at 10.00 am.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:**

That the meetings of the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group to be held on Tuesdays at 10.00 am. Venues to be rotated between the Offices of St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council (where able to do so).

8. **Date of Next Meeting**

The Steering Group noted that their next meeting would be held on Monday 8 February 2016 at 10.00 am at Forest Heath District Council.

The Meeting concluded at 11.35 am

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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