

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Wednesday 20 April 2016** at **4.00 pm** at the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

**Chairman** Jeremy Farthing

Simon Brown  
Paula Fox  
Susan Glossop  
Richard Rout  
Angela Rushen

Andrew Speed  
Jim Thorndyke  
Frank Warby  
John Burns

**Substitutes attending:**

Peter Thompson  
Patricia Warby

Julia Wakelam

**By Invitation:**

Robert Everitt, Cabinet Member for Families and Communities

71. **Substitutes**

The following substitutions were declared:

Councillor Patricia Warby for Councillor Terry Buckle.  
Councillor Peter Thompson for Councillor Clive Springett.  
Councillor Julia Wakelam for Councillor Diane Hind.

72. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Terry Buckle, Diane Hind, Wayne Hailstone, Paul Hopfensperger and Clive Springett.

73. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2016, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

74. **Public Participation**

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

75. **On-Street Parking - Skyliner Way, Bury St Edmunds - Update**

*[Councillor Richard Rout arrived at 4.05pm during the consideration of this item]*

The Chairman agreed for this item to be brought forward on the agenda.

The Committee received Report No: OAS/SE/16/010, which updated Members on alternative funding options now available to alleviate the parking issues in Skyliner Way, Bury St Edmunds, and improve traffic flow in Skyliner Way before the completion of the Eastern Relief Road.

Owing to the importance of Skyliner Way in relation to the recently approved Eastern Relief Road (ERR), the Head of Planning and Growth had been pursuing alternative funding sources to see whether this project could be brought forward before the ERR was scheduled to be completed towards the end of 2017.

In doing so, Suffolk County Council (SCC) had revisited the costs of the project which had increased from £25,000 to £35,000. SCC had agreed to manage the construction work, if funding could be found. The Head of Planning and Growth warned the Committee that SCC Highways was adamant on its funding position.

The Head of Planning and Growth advised that he had identified funds within the Borough Councils budgets that could be allocated to this project. In addition, he had asked the local County Councillor whether he would be willing to make a contribution from his locality budget to help deliver the project.

In light of the Borough's significant contribution, the Head of Planning and Growth had asked the County Council whether they wished to review their position and also make a contribution to the establishment of a parking facility along Skyliner Way to improve traffic flow in readiness of the anticipated increase in traffic when the ERR was completed.

The Head of Planning and Growth gave a verbal update having received correspondents from SCC's Transport Policy and Development Manager who had clarified the County Councils position. He reported that despite the Borough Councils offer to provide funding for a scheme, SCC had provided the response:

*It is our view that any decision to implement changes to parking within Skyliner Way should be made once the actual impact of the Eastern Relief Road is known enabling the most appropriate measures to be provided. No funding or scheme development is therefore needed at this time.*

This was clearly a different position than the one provided by the Wester Area Highways Manager who had give the impression that if alternative funding could be found SCC would deliver the project using their contractors. The latest view from the Transport Policy and Development Manager had clearly gone against the feelings of this Committee and the Local County Councillor.

He reported that having spoken with the Leader of the Council, Councillor John Griffiths earlier, the Leader had agreed to a letter being sent to Suffolk County Councillor James Finch (Portfolio Holder for Highways) expressing the councils concerns.

The Committee considered the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which the Head of Planning and Growth and the West Area Highways Manager (SCC), provided comprehensive responses.

The Committee was concerned that in light of this recent news little progress had been made since January 2016 and that the estimated cost of the project had now risen by a further £10,000.

The West Area Highways Manager informed the Committee that the cost of construction had generally increased by 14%. In the past a number schemes which had been bid for had come back higher than originally estimated. Therefore, SCC had now built in a margin of error as a precautionary measure. He further explained that funding from the On-Street Parking Account was controlled by legislation. However, SCC could also use funds to support the Transport Plan. In reality SCC received more bids than funding available.

It was proposed by Councillor Andrew Speed and duly seconded by Councillor Frank Warby, that the Borough Council utilises the funding identified to progress the project.

With 8 voting for the motion, 3 voting against and with 2 abstentions, it was

### **RECOMMENDED**

That the Borough Council utilises the funding identified to progress the project.

Upon reflection, following the voting on the above resolution, some members of the Committee then raised further concerns regarding the Borough Council utilising its own funds to progress this project, as it was considered that it could set a precedent for other projects. Therefore, it was further suggested that the project should be jointly funded with Suffolk County Council, as the Highways Authority and that they should also be asked to review this as a matter of urgency, before the ERR was completed.

An amendment to the above resolution was then proposed by Councillor Frank Warby and seconded by Councillor Susan Glossop, in that matched funding should also be sought from Suffolk County Council, where possible, to expedite the project.

With 10 voting for the amendment, 2 voting against and with 1 abstention, it was

### **RECOMMENDED**

The Committee supported the Head of Planning and Growth in sending a letter on behalf of the Council Leader, Cllr John Griffiths, to Cllr

James Finch, Suffolk County Council portfolio holder for Highways, expressing concerns about the delay in improving the parking issues in Skyliner Way and seeking a review of the decision to delay the delivery of a parking solution until after the completion of the Eastern Relief Road, on the basis that the Borough council felt the problem needed to be addressed sooner and as such was prepared to make a contribution towards the cost of the planned layby.

## 76. **Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities**

*[Councillor Simon Brown declared a non-pecuniary interest as the Assistant Portfolio Holder to the Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities, Councillor Robert Everitt]*

As set out in the Council's Constitution, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member would be invited to attend to give an account of his or her portfolio and answer questions from the Committee. Therefore, to carry out this constitutional requirement, members were asked to consider the responsibilities of the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities, who had been invited to the meeting.

Report No: OAS/SE/16/008, set out the overall responsibilities of the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities, which were:

- Corporate strategy/planning and co-ordination;
- Crime and community safety;
- Customer services, access and engagement;
- Equalities and diversity;
- Families and communities;
- Future of public services and service integration; and
- Health.

Councillor Robert Everitt, Cabinet Member for Families and Communities opened his presentation by thanking the Committee for the invitation. He then set out the broad areas of responsibility for (corporate policy; customer services; families and communities). The presentation also included facts and figures, and priorities for the coming year, such as focusing on more on-line needs to make it easier for customers to access the councils services.

Members discussed the presentation in detail and asked a number of questions of the Cabinet Member and officers, to which comprehensive responses were provided.

In particular discussions were held on the percentage of on-line enquiries; automated calls; contact details on the website and social media.

A member of the Committee suggested having a ticketing number system when customers phoned in which could be used to refer back too at a later date.

The Head of Families of Communities informed the Committee that the website was work in progress and welcomed any comments on how it could be improved further.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities for his informative presentation.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the presentation by the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities.

#### 77. **Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership Annual Report**

*[Councillor Andrew Speed left the meeting at 5.15pm during the consideration of this item].*

It is the duty of the Committee, as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee designated under the Police and Justice Act 2006, to scrutinise the work of the Partnership. The Committee received Report No: OAS/SE/16/009, which updated Members on the community safety activity in West Suffolk, including the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP) from April 2015 to March 2016.

Over the past year the WSCSP continued to meet and discharge its statutory duties by carrying out an annual assessment of crime, producing an annual plan and carrying out Domestic Homicide Reviews, as required.

In May 2015, the WSCSP completed and published its partnership plan and project plan for identified community priorities for 2015-2016. Attached as Appendix A to the report, was the WSCSP project plan. Progress on the identified community concerns would be evaluated at the April 2016 meeting of the WSCSP.

The report also set out the work of the Strong and Safe Communities Group; the multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour Group and the PREVENT Strategy, which was published by the Government in 2011. The PREVENT Strategy was part of the country's Counter Terrorism Strategy called CONTEST. The aim of the strategy was to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Members scrutinised the report and asked questions for the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities and officers, to which responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on Appendix A relating to rural crime and the expansion of the street watch scheme. The aims of which were to reduce the fear of crime perception. The Head of Families and Communities advised the Committee that data on the perception and fear of crime was no longer collected in surveys. However, the Council would be liaising with the police regarding the data that was available.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

#### 78. **Review and Revision of the Constitution**

As set out in the Council's Constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis would receive a report from the Monitoring Officer setting out minor amendments made arising from changes to legislation; changes to staffing structures/job descriptions or changes in

terminology. Report No: OAS/SE/16/011 set out minor amendments which had been undertaken by the Monitoring Officer under delegated authority from January to March 2016.

All Members of the Council had also been informed of the minor amendments made as part of the ongoing review and revision of the Constitution.

The Committee considered the report presented by the Monitoring Officer, and there being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the minor amendments undertaken by the Monitoring Officer under delegated authority.

79. **Directed Surveillance Authorised Applications (Quarter 4)**

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources) Order 2010 required that Members should scrutinise the authority's use of its surveillance powers on a quarterly basis.

The Monitoring Officer advised that in Quarter 4, no such surveillance had been authorised. There being no decisions required, the Committee **noted** the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, Quarter 4 update.

80. **Work Programme Update**

The Committee received Report No: OAS/SE/16/012, which updated Members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2016 (Appendix 1).

With regards to the work of the Joint Task and Finish Group on New Housing Development Sites, the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) advised members that following their last meeting on 14 December 2015, the Development Manager undertook to agree the details of the highways adoption conditions with the other Suffolk Authorities and Suffolk County Council. Whilst agreement had been established in principle, the details were yet to be agreed. Consequently, there was no final report to present at the present time. However, every effort would be made to report to the Committee at its next meeting on 8 June 2016.

Following a question from a Member, the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) agreed to follow up with the lead officer when an update on the North West and North East Haverhill Relief Road, including the Haverhill Town Centre Master Plan would be programmed to be presented to the Committee.

There being no decision required the Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

The Meeting concluded at 5.23 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**