

# West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group** held on **Tuesday 21 February 2017** at **10.00 am** at the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3YU**

Present: **Councillors**

**Chairman** David Bowman  
**Vice Chairman** Alaric Pugh

Forest Heath District Council

Chris Barker  
Ruth Bowman  
Rona Burt  
David Palmer  
Reg Silvester

St Edmundsbury Borough Council

John Burns  
Angela Rushen  
David Roach  
Peter Thompson  
Jim Thorndyke

39. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

40. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutes present at the meeting.

41. **Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held on 29 November 2016 were received and confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42. **Suffolk Skills and Employment Programme - Update**

Judith Mobbs, Assistant Director Inclusion and Skills, Suffolk County Council, was in attendance to present her report (which had been circulated with the agenda papers) which highlighted the main developments within the Suffolk Skills and Employment Programme over recent months.

Members then asked questions of Judith in which responses were duly provided, which centred around the areas of:

- The processes in place for the development of the skills of young offenders.
- The available opportunities for young people in the west of the county, particularly within Haverhill.
- The effectiveness of the interface with businesses in developing skills of young people and the incentivisation to employ young people.
- The Programme needed to be more 'place specific'.

- The possibility of the development of a business plan for the establishment of a 'MyGo' service offer in the west of the county.
- The pace of some initiatives needed to be increased.
- The encouragement of higher skilled employment within West Suffolk, particularly within Brandon.

Judith also offered to come back to the Steering Group, in approximately two months time, with a position paper on the young people unemployment position within West Suffolk and to further explore the development of an offer for these young people.

It was

**RESOLVED:**

That:-

1. A paper be brought back to the next meeting of the Steering Group which covered the points which had been raised at this meeting, to see how some of the initiatives could be moved forward in West Suffolk.
2. Consideration also be given to the offer made by Judith in relation to coming back to the Steering Group, in approximately two months time, with a position paper on the young people unemployment position within West Suffolk and to further explore the development of an offer for these young people.

*(Councillor Peter Thompson joined the meeting at 10.10 am, during the discussion of this item)*

**43. Housing White Paper: 'Fixing Our Broken Housing Market'**

The Service Manager (Planning Strategy) presented this item which explained that on 7 February 2017, the Government had published the Housing White Paper: 'Fixing our Broken Housing Market'. The White Paper set out a broad range of improvements that the Government planned to introduce to help reform the housing market and increase the supply of new homes.

In order to implement the vision set out in the White Paper, the Government was consulting on a range of changes to planning policy and legislation needed to implement the proposals. Officers from Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Councils were considering the strategic and operational impact of the proposals and would be responding to the consultation accordingly, which closed on 2 May 2017.

Alongside the White Paper, the Government had also published a number of responses to outstanding consultations and Select Committee reports. A new consultation on planning and affordable housing for build-to-rent had been published and the Government had also published the report submitted by the Community Infrastructure Review Group.

The briefing note, which had been circulated with the agenda papers, also provided an outline of the key objectives and actions from the White Paper.

Members then discussed the content of the briefing paper and asked questions of the Officer, in which responses were duly provided.

It was

**RESOLVED:**

That:-

1. A further paper be brought back to the Steering Group which outlined how the improvements proposed by the Housing White Paper to reform the housing market and increase the supply of new homes could directly affect Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Councils.
2. As soon as was deemed appropriate, a Member Development Session also be arranged so that all Members could be briefed on the content of the Housing White Paper.

*(Councillors Jim Thorndyke and Angela Rushen left the meeting at 11.35 am, during the discussion of this item)*

**44. Suffolk Planning and Infrastructure Framework (SPIF) - Update**

The Service Manager (Economic Development and Growth) provided a presentation to the Steering Group on the work which was starting to be undertaken on the planning and delivering of economic growth in Suffolk.

The Officer particularly referred to the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Framework (SPIF) which was the cross-county spatial framework to deliver the Suffolk economic vision for 2050. The SPIF would particularly focus on:

- Achieving the housing delivery targets put forward in Suffolk
- The scale, location and nature of economic and employment growth and what was needed to ensure that this growth happened
- The development of Ipswich as a driving force for the county's competitiveness and future prosperity
- An understanding of the impact that arose from different patterns of growth (eg congestion on transportation corridors) and the investment needed to mitigate these impacts.

The internal management and governance of the SPIF was via a client team, which consisted of one lead from each Suffolk authority and from county transport, with a project manager. Monthly updates were provided to the Suffolk Growth Programme Board (SGPB) (formerly the Suffolk Growth Group). Monthly updates were also provided to the SPIF Member Working Group, which was chaired by Councillor David Ellesmere, Leader of Ipswich Borough Council. The Suffolk Public Sector Leaders had also received reports in November 2016 and February 2017.

The Officer outlined the progress made on the development of the SPIF to-date, which included:

- engagement with private sector/LEP/businesses
- extensive programme of stakeholder meetings underway
- development of growth scenarios

- future launch of an on-line questionnaire
- continued engagement with local planning and economic development teams
- workshops to be held on Ipswich as a centre of growth and developer engagement

It was the intention for the SPIF to be finalised in late Spring 2017, with consideration also being given as to how the framework would then be formally adopted within the county.

Councillor Alaric Pugh also explained that as the work on the SPIF progressed, more information would be available and Members would also be engaged more widely.

With there being no decision required, the Steering Group **noted** the presentation.

#### 45. **Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan - Update**

The Steering Group received a presentation on the forthcoming public engagement on the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan.

The Masterplan was a project to shape the future of the Town Centre so that it worked for people. It was not just about ensuring that it continued to attract shoppers and visitors, but also that it was accessible and a place where people could live and work.

From 27 February to 21 April 2017, there would be a public engagement campaign to get people's views on what the issues and options were for the Town Centre. The Issues and Options covered the following eight objectives:

- Objective 1: Accommodating and supporting growth
- Objective 2: Maintaining a strong, historic heart for Bury St Edmunds
- Objective 3: Identifying an arc of opportunity
- Objective 4: Supporting thriving mixed-use neighbourhoods
- Objective 5: Providing welcoming gateways and approaches
- Objective 6: Encouraging vibrant, well-designed streets and spaces
- Objective 7: Managing and enabling accessibility for all
- Objective 8: Capitalising on green and blue spaces

The venues for the public engagement events had been confirmed so far as:

|               |              |                                |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| 8 March 2017  | 8am to 3 pm  | Bury St Edmunds Market         |
| 8 March 2017  | 6pm to 8 pm  | The Apex                       |
| 9 March 2017  | 10am to 5 pm | Tesco, Bury St Edmunds         |
| 17 March 2017 | 10am to 5 pm | Sainsbury's, Bury St Edmunds   |
| 24 March 2017 | 10am to 5 pm | Waitrose, Bury St Edmunds      |
| 7 April 2017  | 10am to 5 pm | Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre |
| 8 April 2017  | 8am to 3 pm  | Bury St Edmunds Market         |

The Issues and Options report and associated documents would also be available on the Council's website and hard copies/information leaflets would be made available at various locations in Bury St Edmunds. Councillor John Burns also requested for this information to also be made available at various

locations within Haverhill. Officers agreed to ensure that this was undertaken.

Once the engagement period had ended, analysis would then be undertaken to achieve a viable, realistic and deliverable Masterplan. A further draft Masterplan public engagement would then be undertaken in Summer 2017, so that the Plan could be finalised in Autumn 2017 and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in Winter 2017.

Councillor Alaric Pugh also explained that engagement would also be undertaken with neighbouring areas, including the Forest Heath District Council Members.

The Steering Group recognised the importance of the development and adoption of Masterplans and that this should be considered for the Forest Heath district, particularly for the towns of Brandon, Mildenhall and Newmarket.

With there being no decision required, the Steering Group **noted** the presentation.

**46. Work Programme 2017/2018 - Update**

The Service Manager (Economic Development and Growth) provided an update on the proposed items which were to be presented to the Steering Group during the period 2017/2018.

The Officer also confirmed that it was intended, at the next meeting, to include the proposed Work Programme for 2017/2018 for the consideration of the Steering Group.

With there being no decision required, the Steering Group **noted** the update.

**47. Date of Next Meeting**

The Service Manager (Economic Development and Growth) explained that due to the number of items due to be considered by the Steering Group, it was being proposed for an additional meeting to be held in March/April 2017, with a date and venue being notified as soon as possible.

With there being no decision required, the Steering Group **noted** the requirement for an additional meeting to be held in March/April 2017.

The Meeting concluded at 12.40 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**