

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 28th January 2003 at 7.30 p.m.

At The Studio, Town Hall Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill

- PRESENT:**
- Town Mayor:** Councillor Mrs Mary Martin
- Councillors:** M Dane, P French, E Goody, M Graham, P Hanlon,
E Jarred, L Kiernan, Maggie Lee (except part item 6)
C Pinker, and M Woodley
- ALSO PRESENT:** Ian Poole, Local Plans Officer, St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Gerry Massey, Director of Planning & Transportation, St Edmundsbury
Borough Council
- Thirteen members of the public
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Clerk to the Council – Gordon Mussett

MINUTES

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received and were accepted from Cllrs Dunning, Gerry Kiernan, Millar, Smith and Trewartha.

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllrs French, Hanlon, Larry Kiernan, Maggie Lee and Mrs Martin declared an interest in the Arts Centre as Members of St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

3. To confirm Minutes of Meeting held 17th December 2002 and 21st January 2003

Cllr Hanlon proposed and Cllr Goody seconded, all being in favour, that the minutes of the meeting held 17th December 2002 be adopted as a true record, all being in favour.

Cllr Goody proposed and Cllr Larry Kiernan seconded, all being in favour, that the minutes of the meeting held 21st January 2003 be adopted as a true record, all being in favour.

4. To deal with any urgent matters arising from the Minutes

There were no urgent matters arising from the minutes of the previous meetings.

5. A Presentation On The Draft St Edmundsbury Borough Council Local Plan

Cllr Mrs Martin welcomed Ian Poole, Local Plans Officer for St Edmundsbury Borough Council. Mr Poole explained that the Borough Council had published the Draft Replacement Local Plan, and that the public were being consulted on its content. Mr Poole stated that the Plan had been produced following input from members of the public, focus groups, etc, and had been produced in such a way as to become the Local Planning Framework. It would inform planning policy until 2016 and was likely to be formally adopted in 2005. When the consultation period ended on 10th March 2003, the responses would be reviewed, the Plan redrawn, and further consultation would take place on the revisions. Mr Poole stated that for Haverhill there were two key issues to note, namely that developers of new housing land on the north west boundary would be expected not only to contribute to a new north west relief road, but also to provide 40% social housing.

Cllr Dane asked why the area shown in the Draft Plan for retail development included existing residential properties in The Pightle and Lordcroft Lane. Mr Massey, Director of Planning & Transportation, St Edmundsbury Borough Council explained that this was to ensure that any such development treated the residential properties sympathetically; there was no threat of compulsory purchase implied by their inclusion in the site area and that St Edmundsbury Borough Council would be writing to the residents and businesses involved to confirm this.

Cllr Maggie Lee asked for sight of the Environment Agency and Anglian Water's comments on the Draft Plan, and stated that the role of the Town Council at this point was to review the Draft Plan content and make comment, including commenting on omissions. The Town Council was keen to have the Plan reflect the need for full pedestrianisation and town service improvements.

Mr Poole responded that the Environment Agency and Anglian Water are statutory consultees and that their responses would be in the public domain, probably May/June 2003.

Cllr Dane stated that St Edmundsbury Borough Council should have explained the inclusion of the residential properties in the retail zoning to the residents ahead of the Plan publication, and asked if the residential properties could be removed from the retail zone.

Mr Massey stated that the Draft Plan was a mix of policy statements and accompanying maps, and the statement was clear that the residential properties were to be considered in the development.

Cllr French stated that whilst Anglian Water were clear that the sewage works could treat the outfall from a larger town population, there were concerns as to whether the river could accept the additional volume that would be discharged into it.

Cllr Maggie Lee asked whether the Draft Plan included the southern town centre relief road that had formed part of the original Gibberd Plan. Mr Poole confirmed that this road was not included in either the existing or the Draft Replacement Plan, but that a town center "area" was identified in the plan rather than specific sites or routes.

Cllr Graham stated that whilst developer contributions to the relief road, and social housing were welcomed, there needed to be contributions to the drainage infrastructure.

Cllr Hanlon asked if the Borough Council could encourage developers to commence work on the northern end of the new relief road as soon as possible. Mr Poole advised that the Draft Plan did set out a strategy for development.

(Full Council adjourned for Public Forum)

A member of the public asked for information regarding resolution of the Chalkstone Humps issue. Mr Massey, on behalf of St Edmundsbury Borough Council, confirmed he would write to the member of the public and the Town Council with full details within the next seen days.

A member of the public asked for reassurance that the relief road would be built in its entirety. Mr Poole assured the Council that the development of the road would form part of a legally binding agreement with the developers.

A member of the public, a resident of The Pightle, reported that her property was in a flood plain according to the Environment Agency, and now was to be within a retail development zone. Mr Massey advised that the written policy in the Draft Local Plan was designed to protect residents and added that he was expecting the Town Council to debate and make its comments on the Draft Plan known to the Borough Council.

Another resident of The Pightle stated that whilst the policy wording make be clear the map causes concern and uncertainty for residents. Mr Massey confirmed he would provide the written policy to all the residents involved.

A further resident of the area asked if the wider public could be informed that the residential properties were being protected, rather than blighted, by the policy, as obviously it affected future resale values.

Cllr Dane stated he had raised these concerns at a Town Council meeting some months ago, adding that rather than tinker with policy words why not simply redraw the retail park outline.

A member of the public stated that whilst the Town Council had debated the transfer of the Arts Centre long and hard, and even produced a Business Plan to “sell” its proposals to the Borough Council and Charity Commissioners, the general public were possibly unaware as to what the transfer might mean for the Arts Centre, and for those who already use its facilities.

(Full Council resumed after Public Forum)

6. Adoption of Committee Reports

Planning Committee

Cllr Larry Kiernan proposed, and Cllr Pinker seconded, that the minutes of the Planning Committee held 21st January 2003 be adopted, all being in favour.

Cllr Dane welcomed the Committee’s decision to oppose the application for siting of a residential caravan in Beaumont Vale.

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr Maggie Lee proposed and Cllr Hanlon seconded that the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held 17th December 2002 and 14th January 2003 be adopted, all being in favour.

7. Review of Council’s Risks

Cllr Maggie Lee proposed and Cllr Goody seconded that with the addition of the Human Rights Act and Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 the suggestions in the Clerk’s report be implemented, all being in favour.

8. To authorise urgent payments

There were no urgent payments requiring authorisation.

9. To receive urgent correspondence

Cllr Maggie Lee commented on the letter received from St Edmundsbury Borough Council regarding street lighting, which the Clerk had copied to all Members. Cllr Maggie Lee advised that on any one night there were 2.5% of the street lights in Suffolk not working. If the problem with any light was with the mains supply then that was the responsibility of 24/7 to resolve and currently delays of up to six months were being experienced with that statutory undertaker.

10. Matters of report

Cllr Maggie Lee sought clarification as to how the Town Council could respond to the Draft Local Plan. It was agreed that Members should comment individually, and that the Town Council Planning Committee, at their meeting on 18th February, would prepare a response, to be approved by a Full Town Council meeting immediately after the close of the Planning Committee.

Cllr Dane reported that he had received a number of complaints of failure by developer to deliver their obligations to homeowners. Cllr Maggie Lee advised that where possible St Edmundsbury Borough Council exerted their legal powers on developers, but even then some developers were reluctant to “finish off” their development to the required standard.

Cllr Dane asked whether the current consultation by St Edmundsbury Borough Council on skateboarding would further delay the skatepark, and was advised that it would not.

Cllr Dane stated that he was concerned about the related issues of underage drinking and incidents in Jubilee Walk involving large numbers of young people.

Cllr Hanlon stated that the Town Council needed to issue a press release following its decision on comments on the Draft Local Plan.

11. Closure

The meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.