

NORTH EAST AREA COMMITTEE

MINUTES

**THURSDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2018
RANSOMES SPORTS PAVILION,
SIDEGATE AVENUE IP4 4JJ
7.30 PM**

Present: Bixley Ward Councillors: J Carnall, E Phillips and R Pope
Rushmere Ward Councillors: S Gage and A Ross
St John's Ward Councillors: K E Elavalakan, N MacDonald and S Darwin

There were 20 members of the public in attendance.

33. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Ion. Suffolk County Councillor S Adams was also unable to attend the meeting.

34. Unconfirmed Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 July 2018

Resolved:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2018, be signed as a true copy.

35. To Confirm or Vary the Order of Business

Resolved:

that the Order of Business, be as confirmed on the Agenda.

36. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

37. Police Priorities in North East Ipswich

- 37.1 Sgt Chris Chaplain presented this item and reported that the changes to local Policing in Ipswich would include a reduction to the amount of PCSO posts and an increase to the number of Police Officers. There would be 1 Neighbourhood Support Team across the whole of the East Area of Ipswich and some other areas of Suffolk, who would be available 24/7. The North East area had previously had 8 PCSO's and there would now only be 3, each with a specialism) and the PC's would increase to by 6 ½ full time posts, up to 29 in total to deal with issues in the local community.
- 37.2 The priorities remained anti-social behaviour and due to Operation Parkland the number of complaints had reduced by 30% compared to last year. In the North East area there were patches or small pockets identified but there were no major locations where incidents of anti-social behaviour had been identified.
- 37.3 Operation Sceptre, the national initiative to reduce knife crime, had seen no knives found during screening or searches for weapons.

38. Chair's Update on Actions from the Previous Meeting

- 38.1 The Suffolk MIND funding request which had been deferred from the last meeting had now been withdrawn although it may come forward for consideration in the new year.
- 38.2 The Chair requested that Councillors promote the Area Committee funding within their wards to any community groups who would benefit.
- 38.3 A drop-in session was held for residents on 13 September 2018 regarding the new temporary housing unit, which was an opportunity for residents to see the plans for the building work and management as well as to meet the staff who would be running the facility.
- 38.4 Information had been received from Julia Procter following the questions raised at the last meeting about the Highway improvements:
- Permits for street works – this had been raised with SCC Cllr West and would be included in the review being undertaken by SCC Cllr Mary Evans, Cabinet Member for Highways.
 - Pot holes at Back Hamlet had been reported via the online SCC 'Report It' tool.
 - Nelson Road potholes that had been repair then resurfaced – this had been a programming/coordination issue and the relevant team had been notified.
 - Pedestrian Crossing timings (by the Royal George PH and opposite Renfrew Road) – raised with the Traffic Signal Team. Timings would be checked, however it was normal for this type of crossing to be 30 seconds. No funds were available for these to be upgraded.

39. Ward Councillors Feedback from their Communities

39.1 Bixley ward

Councillor Phillips reported that the gas repair works at Penshurst Road would be completed by the end of September and the water leak in Schreiber Road had been mended then reported again.

Councillor Pope had met with 2 residents, 1 of which had contacted him about hospital parking, a walkabout had taken place and he had fed back the findings to Suffolk County Councillor West. The resident had since contacted Councillor Pope again as the situation had escalated so he was intending to bring it to the attention of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Carnall had reported problems to the IBC Operations Manager, Waste & Fleet about the amount of weeds in the pavements at some locations. These had been dealt with and the support from the IBC staff had been excellent. Residents at Broke Hall House had experienced difficulty getting access due to the Felixstowe Road roadworks however, Suffolk County Councillor West had reported this to Highways at SCC and he thanked Councillor West for rectifying the situation. Councillor Carnall expressed great concern about aggressive begging in the Town Centre which could cause shoppers to go elsewhere and he had raised this with the Police and Officers at IBC.

Rushmere ward

Councillor Ross said that several residents had also reported weeds in pavements to him and the service from IBC had been good. He had been told they were so dense this year because of the lack of water needed to activate the weed killer. There had been a 30% drop in anti-social behaviour during the summer months, helped by the work of the Police, the offer of the free ICard from IBC and the funding from the Area Committees for sports activities. He promoted the new multi-storey car park now open in Crown Street which was well lit and user friendly.

Councillor Gage made reference to the drop-in session for the new temporary housing unit which was well attended. She thanked the Officers for their work undertaken to reassure residents of how the work would be completed. Several queries were taken away to be answered by Officers. Otherwise she had been involved in several queries about planning applications, excess weeds and problems with branches falling off trees in Inverness Road. As the trees had come to the end of their life, she had arranged a meeting with SCC Highways to look at their condition and cut off the dangerous branches.

Councillor Gage said that she was part of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Task & Finish Group for road repairs, to ensure that Ipswich received a fair share of the £21m Suffolk County Council had borrowed to repair the roads in Suffolk. Highways England had also been invited to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 25 October 2018 to discuss the Orwell Bridge.

St John's ward

Councillor MacDonald said that following the purchase of the land at the Gospel Hall site in Cauldwell Hall Road, the site had been cleared, the

foundations were in and it was hoped that the first occupants would move in early next year. Discussion took place about the conversion to a HMO (House of Multiple Occupation) at 133 Orwell Street and the possible conversion of 131 Orwell Street which although unlicensed at the moment was causing concern to nearby residents about anti-social behaviour. It was confirmed that when licensed, the tenant would benefit from knowing the property was safe.

Councillor Darwin reported that new bins had been installed by the bench at Cherry Lane Recreation Ground. Britannia Primary School had converted to an Academy on 1 September 2018 with Rose Hill Primary School and was now part of the Gippeswyk Community Education Trust. The Bangladeshi Support Centre, who organise the Suffolk BME Business Awards 2018, were now asking for residents to nominate businesses/individuals for the awards. There were several categories and the closing date was 30 September 2018. IBC had adopted a Charter against Modern Slavery and she encouraged residents to report any information to the Police.

40. Suffolk County Councillors Feedback from their Divisions

- 40.1 Suffolk County Councillor P West reported that he was currently in discussions about reinstating a temporary bus stop on the corner of Bixley Road which had been suspended due to the roadworks. He was due to meet with residents of Cherry Lane Gardens in October about parking issues and speeding vehicles.

Suffolk County Councillor S Gage reported that she continued to press Suffolk County Council for a dropped kerb for a disabled resident as well as verge treatment work at Angus Close. As this was frequently used by Rushmere Primary School users it needed to be made safe. Tree roots at Whitby Road were raising the pavement and in a resident's drive and this would be reported to Suffolk County Council. There had been a change to the policy about grit bins and she was unsure how this would affect the gritting volunteers in small streets.

41. Responses to Public Questions Received and Open Discussion on Local Issues

- 41.1 3 Questions had been received prior to the meeting and as always if a question was submitted by the Tuesday at 10.00am, 2 days prior to the meeting then it would receive a full response from Officers:-

Question 1.

Is the restriction of only allowing leisure activities in the town centre unsupportive of the social needs of the residents?

The main thrust of the Council's adopted Local Plan, in line with national guidance, was to achieve sustainable forms of development. As such, new employment, retail and leisure uses were focused on being located within the town centre, where the accessibility was at its greatest. However, this policy does not mean that leisure uses could only be situated within the town centre, as all applications were considered against the provisions of the development

plan unless material considerations dictated otherwise. Material considerations could be wide ranging, but would generally incorporate social, environmental or economic benefits that were considered to outweigh the policy restrictions. Therefore leisure uses were not restricted to the town centre, where sufficient justification was advanced and accepted.

Question 2.

How does the Council propose to enable activity based enterprises to locate affordable activities within their reach?

Private activity based activities were market driven and the local planning authority would consider any planning application for such on merit. As highlighted within the response to Q1, the town centre first approach would be applicable.

Question 3.

Why is the Council pursuing a plan (within the Borough Development Plan) of siting activities in the town centre that does not have the appropriate type of spaces needed for their safe operation as well as setting up financial barriers?

It was not clear what was meant by this question. Notwithstanding, land allocation was subject to numerous criteria, including need, accessibility, and deliverability. As such, matters such as sustainability and viability were considered within the local plan process in demonstrating that a land allocation was deliverable. Only sites that meet the relevant criteria would succeed in being formally allocated with the local plan adoption process, which of course, was subject to full public consultation.

Furthermore, it was the responsibility of any applicant that any development met appropriate Health and Safety legislation or the relevant sport's governing body criteria to ensure that it could operate in a safe way. As regards financial barriers it was dependent on the company's business model to ensure that they were able to offer facilities / activities at a competitive market rate to ensure that the business was both viable and sustainable.

- 41.2 A resident who had attended the drop-in session about the temporary housing unit asked how the costs of the unit had increased following the initial reported costs and Councillor MacDonald confirmed that the original cost had been an allocation included in the council's budget at a very early stage so it was an estimate but an approximate guide was that the final figure would be in the region of £1.9m. The estimate had been put together when the building had been bought and since then the cost of building works had increased by 10% and building regulations had also changed so this required extra money.
- 41.3 The resident asked whether homeless families from outside Ipswich were taken in by IBC and Councillor MacDonald confirmed that IBC do accommodate other Council's applicants in Ipswich by placing them into privately owned bed and breakfast establishments which were in IBC's control. The Council do not accommodate homeless households from outside of the area in its Council run

accommodation. The resident asked whether there would be any single homeless persons in the unit and it was confirmed that there would be but IBC worked closely with other agencies and a safeguarding process would be in place. All individuals would be known to pose no threat as they would either be evictees with rent arrears or from private households.

- 41.4 The resident asked why it was such a big unit was planned as it could become an institution. Councillor MacDonald said that the average stay would be 14 weeks. The resident asked whether the money could have been used more effectively as it could be a magnet for those who wanted to exploit the homeless. Councillor MacDonald said that there were other facilities in Lattice Avenue, Felixstowe Road and in the south of Ipswich where no problems had been experienced.
- 41.5 Discussion took place about the layout inside the House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) in Orwell Road in respect of sprinklers, fire exit signs and fire doors. It was asked whether the roof spaces constituted a fire risk as due to parking issues, fire engines or ambulances would not be able to access in the case of an emergency. A resident considered that the occupancy rate for the house had been exceeded, vermin could be present and anti-social behaviour had been witnessed. The Head of Development as the Lead Officer agreed to look into this.
- 41.6 A resident said that the Crown Street car park was a successful achievement for Ipswich and signs advertising car park availability would be useful. Councillor Ross said that at the moment a soft launch had been initiated until some issues had been corrected (with 40-50% volume midweek and full capacity at weekends) and signage was the responsibility of Suffolk County Council.
- 41.7 A resident asked about the recent opening of a shop called the Cannabis Lounge in Ipswich. Councillor Darwin said that the Police were aware that the shop was selling legal CPD oil products which were not psychoactive.
- 41.8 A resident asked whether there had been any increase in drug usage or dealing in Shetland Close or the Dumbarton Road area. The Police said that statistics had not shown this area as a problem and Councillor Ross said that from the monitoring of drug paraphernalia, very few drug usage incidents occurred in the North East area. However, enforcement work was ongoing by the Police under the County Lines initiative. If any drug dealing was witnessed or drug paraphernalia found then these incidents should be reported to the Police.

42. NEAC/18/11 Area Committee Budget Update

- 42.1 The Head of Development at IBC reported that, as there had been no allocations of funding at the last meeting, the allocated budget of £13,845.70 remained available to spend on the priorities of the Area Action Plan for North East Ipswich.

Resolved:

that the financial position of the North East Area Committee, be noted.

Reason: To provide clear and transparent details of the amount of funds available to the Area Committee to deliver the priorities in its action plan.

43. Dates of Future Meetings for 2018/19 at 7.30pm - a presentation will be held prior to each meeting at 7.00pm.

All meetings to be held at Ransomes Sports Pavilion, Sidegate Avenue IP4 4JJ

- **Thursday 15 November 2018**
- **Thursday 24 January 2019**
- **Thursday 21 March 2019**

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm

Chair