

SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PLANNING DEVELOPMENT AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN THE TOWN HALL ON 7TH APRIL COMMENCING AT 6:30 PM

Committee members present: Mr N Bennett – the chair.
Mr S Hall
Mr N Younger

Officers in attendance: Mr C Griffin – Town Clerk

1. SUBSTITUTES AND APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Councillors Ms J Carter, Mr A Osborne, Miss A Owen and Mr A Stohr.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

There were no declarations of gifts or hospitality.

4. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

No requests for dispensation had been received.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 24th March 2025 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

6. REVIEW OF ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Town Clerk updated members on actions from previous minutes.

7. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

DC/25/01314 **Proposal:** Application for Works to Trees subject to Tree Preservation Order BT57/T10 – Sycamore tree Removal due to large amount of dead crown (75%) with only a small section of live wood.
Location: 51 Newton Croft, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 2RW

RESOLVED – To recommend refusal on the following grounds;

- The application did not provide sufficient information to identify the tree and assess its condition.
- The tree would need to be replaced with another tree of similar value, but no details had been provided.
- The Babergh District Council Arboricultural Officer should be invited to inspect the tree and report on its condition before this request could be considered.

DC/25/01315 **Proposal:** Application for Works to Trees Subject to Tree Preservation Order BT57/T5 – Monkey Puzzle tree to fell.
Location: 51 Newton Croft, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 2RW

RESOLVED – To recommend refusal on the following grounds;

- The tree would need to be replaced with another tree of similar value, but no details had been provided.
- The Babergh District Council Arboricultural Officer should be invited to inspect the tree and report on its condition before this request could be considered.

DC/25/01348 **Proposal:** Notification of works to trees in a Conservation Area – Fell Sycamore (T1)
Location: 29 Melford Road, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 1JS

RESOLVED – To recommend refusal on the following grounds;

- The application did not provide sufficient information to identify the tree and assess its condition.
- Photographic evidence of the blockage of sunlight would have been useful, if this was the main issue, as a reduction in size might be more appropriate than felling.
- The Babergh District Council Arboricultural Officer should be invited to inspect the tree and assess the extent of the problem before this request could be considered.

8. TO CONSIDER BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL'S PROPOSAL TO STOP SENDING NEIGHBOUR LETTERS FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS, AS MOST NEIGHBOUR COMMENTS ARE RECEIVED ELECTRONICALLY.

Babergh District Council was consulting on a proposal to stop sending neighbour letters for certain types of planning applications, as most of the neighbour comments were received electronically. There was a statutory requirement that they notify neighbouring residents about a planning application by sending a letter, or by placing a site notice on display in the relevant location. Currently, Babergh did both.

There were two reasons for this proposed change. The first reason was that Babergh didn't think the current approach was efficient, as, in the financial year 2023/24, they had sent 22,515 letters and had only received 1,352 replies. This was a 6.0% response rate which was very low and the bulk of the neighbour comments were coming in electronically. The second reason was the cost. Babergh spent £2.80 on each letter (this included not only postage but also officer time to prepare the letters, envelope cost, printing etc), so this had cost £63,042 in the financial year 2023/24.

The consultation would run until 12th May 2025 and all residents were encouraged to respond.

RESOLVED

To complete the BMSDC Planning Statement of Community Involvement Survey with the following answers, which would be confirmed at the next meeting of the committee.

1. Which of the following are you responding as/on behalf of? Town Council.
2. How do you feel about the Council's proposal to stop sending neighbour letters for certain types of planning applications? Strongly disagree.
3. Do you help other people to become aware of planning applications? Yes
4. What impacts, if any, would these proposals have on you? The Town Council feels that most residents find out about a planning application by reading the letter to their own home as many people do not read notices attached to street furniture. These notices are often left attached to lampposts for months after the application expires and so do not attract attention. This proposal to stop sending letters to neighbours would reduce awareness and engagement in the planning process.
5. How do you usually see our notifications about planning applications? Although the Town Council gets all Sudbury planning applications as a statutory consultee, it feels that most residents rely on the letter through their own door.
6. How do you usually respond to planning notifications? Other – The Town Council replies as a statutory consultee but feels that many residents read the letter to their home address and then reply electronically.
7. If you have any final comments about this proposal please use the textbox below, thank you. The Town Council suggests that the cost of sending letters to local residents could be reduced if the team sent to attach the notices to the street furniture also hand deliver the notices to local residents. This should not require any additional time to prepare letters and only an extra 15 minutes to deliver copies to local homes.

DEVELOPMENT**9. TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED UPGRADE TO THE RADIO BASE STATION AT HIGHFIELDS RIDING SCHOOL, MELFORD ROAD.**

Cornerstone was a UK mobile infrastructure services company which owned and managed over 20,000 sites. They were currently working to improve mobile phone services in the Sudbury area and needed to upgrade the current mast site at Highfields Riding School on the Melford Road.

They intended to remove the existing 17m high mast and replace it with a new 22.5m high mast, as the additional height would aid signal propagation and improve local services.

RESOLVED

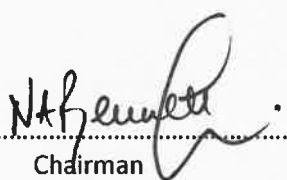
To reply to Cornerstone that the Town Council had no objection to the upgrade to the mast at Highfields Riding School, but they would prefer the new mast to be made of a green material that would match the surrounding trees in a similar manner to the other new mast in Canhams Road, Great Cornard.

HIGHWAYS**10. TO DISCUSS THE HIGHWAYS LIST**

Members discussed the following points;

- Fires were being lit on the Valley Walk near the Brundon Bridge a couple of times a week. This was county council land and should be reported to them for action.
- There were many faults in the surface of Gainsborough Road between the Croft and the Melford Road junction. This should be reported to the county council as it appeared to need complete resurfacing rather than spot repair.

The meeting closed at 7:07pm.

Signed 
Chairman