

Minutes of a site meeting held on **Monday, 7 October 2019 at 10.00 am**
at Saxmundham Railway Station, Station Approach, Saxmundham, IP17 1BW.

Planning Committee North Members Present:

Councillors Paul Ashdown (Chairman), Jenny Ceresa (Vice-Chairman), Jocelyn Bond, Linda Coulam, Graham Elliott, Andrée Gee.

Other Members Present:

Councillors Mike Deacon, John Fisher (Ward Member), Kay Yule.

Officers Present:

Liz Beighton (Planning Development Manager), Chris Green (Senior Planning and Enforcement Officer), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer).

Others in Attendance:

Mr Jeremy Smith (Chair, Saxmundham Town Council)
Mrs Charlotte Hawkins (Saxmundham Town Councillor)
Mr Tim Lock (Saxmundham Town Councillor)
Mr Jonathan Clark (Advisor to Saxmundham Town Council)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the site meeting and reminded those present that the purpose of the meeting was a 'fact finding' exercise only and to provide Members with an opportunity to view the site and its surroundings.

The site visit began at the entrance to Saxmundham Railway Station. The Senior Planning and Enforcement Officer outlined the fire damage to the railway station building which had resulted in nearly all its upper storey being needed to be demolished.

It was highlighted that the railway station and the town centre were located within a defined Conservation Area.

The meeting moved down Station Approach and viewed the front of the railway station building. The Senior Planning and Enforcement Officer explained the new canopy that was proposed for the building. It was confirmed that it was proposed building would consist of a single storey.

The Senior Planning and Enforcement Officer invited Mr Smith, Chair of Saxmundham Town Council, to outline how the railway station linked with Saxmundham's town centre. Mr Smith said that the town centre was a large part of the Local Plan and that the railway station was key to being part of its entrance.

The meeting continued down Station approach, with Mr Smith demonstrating how it linked directly into Market Place and the town centre. He also highlighted a site off Station Approach, near to the railway station, that could be used for overflow parking. Mr Smith explained that the site's potential was being explored with the landowner.

Having visited Market Place, the meeting proceeded up Station Approach and returned to the front of Saxmundham Railway Station. The Senior Planning and Enforcement Officer highlighted the existing masonry that would be retained.

A small amount of the building, located near the present entrance, was proposed to be demolished and replaced with a new waiting area. The applicant had identified that much of the space in the building would be used for railway operation purposes.

A member of the Committee asked about disabled access. The Senior Planning and Enforcement Officer explained that there would be ramp access. Another member of the Committee noted comments received regarding the width of accessible doors.

It was confirmed that there were no plans to install toilet facilities within the railway station.

The meeting returned to the entrance of the railway station and it was again highlighted what would be removed to make way for a new waiting area.

The meeting then moved on to the southbound station platform. It was confirmed that a wall at the end of the platform would be retained and used as the entrance to the new waiting area, and that the existing platform canopy would be refurbished.

Mr Clark, who had been advising Saxmundham Town Council on the application, sought further external context regarding the proposed parking arrangements at the front of the building. The Chairman advised that this was a question that could be asked of the applicant when the application was determined at the meeting of Planning Committee North on Tuesday 8 October 2019.

The Senior Planning and Enforcement Officer highlighted the remainder of the platform area, drawing attention to the form of railway buildings that could be viewed looking across the platform to the north.

The possibility of amenities within the station was discussed, with examples from other stations in the District being highlighted by members of the Committee.

The meeting progressed further down the platform. Councillor Fisher, the Ward Member for Saxmundham, noted the loss of a door at this end of the platform and asked if this was being mitigated elsewhere in the development. The Senior Planning and Enforcement Officer explained the development of an open area on that portion of the site, which would retain a wall and window.

The Senior Planning and Enforcement Officer highlighted the railway cottage buildings located on the northbound platform.

There being no further questions or comments, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

The site visit concluded at 10.32 am.