

SUDBURY
Town Centre
Regeneration
Project

**Draft Vision
Document**

Initial Thoughts by
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The Market Hill and Old Market Place

Sudbury's Market Hill is, architecturally probably the finest market town urban space in East Anglia. At ground level however there is little to encourage appreciation of what could be an area to be respected, better used and enjoyed.

Our proposal is to attempt to analyse the good, bad and indifferent qualities that currently make up the content of the Market Hill and Old Market Place. To suggest ways of improvement and change of use which might ultimately produce a much more enjoyable and functional town centre area.

Introduction and Brief

We are '**Sudbury21c**'

We have been asked by the Clerk to Sudbury Town Council to come up with proposals that allow use of £300,000 of council funding for improvements to the town centre. There are a number of suggestions that have been put forward by the council as to how they would like to see the money spent.

These include:

- New planters
- Trees
- Cycle racks/Shelters
- Lighting around Gainsborough's statue
- New lighting to illuminate the exterior of St Peter's
- A seat-high wall with a wooden top
- Horse trough refurbishment
- New Christmas lights
- Trees in planters in North Street
- Cleaning of Gainsborough's statue
- More paving
- Improvement to lighting.

Proposal

1) Although wishing to carry out the various individual requests suggested by the Town Council, we believe that a more over-arching scheme could be suggested which would achieve a long lasting beneficial change to the town centre. Once established, councillors' ideas can be incorporated into the scheme. This is a unique opportunity to upgrade these areas. We would anticipate that this newly available funding can help to lever in further money and assistance from other agencies.

2) The more major changes we envisage involve:

Shared Space

Emphasis on 'shared space' This is a concept that is being generally encouraged in town/city centres and allows greater pedestrianisation as well greater driving care. It allows compromise between total pedestrianisation and maximising parking / driver convenience.

Planting

Tree and shrub planting with a view to 'softening' the built environment.

More paving, less parking

Encouragement of a 'café culture' over a much broader paved area, allowing people to enjoy a more leisured experience of the north 'sunny' side of Market Hill. We would suggest a reduction in the amount of parking being made available to accommodate more pedestrian use, especially during the evening.

Market Stalls

If feasible to create a more formalised area of market in Old Market Place. We would like to see a reduced area taken up by market traders on the Market Hill and a move to improving the appearance of stalls on an enlarged market place opposite the Town Hall. These stalls might be designed and erected to be a semi-permanent fixture and used by other community groups on non-market days.

Parking

A change to the parking bays that will disallow access from the main traffic artery on the south side of Market Hill. Instead parking would be accessed on the north side road via the shared space scheme.

Lighting & Street Furniture

Street furniture to be reviewed and replaced with improved designs. Repositioned where necessary.

It is felt that with lighting, in particular, that the current solution of victorian lamp standards creates a cold, unfriendly environment. With revision or replacement, overall road lighting can still be achieved but a more intimate, lower level pedestrian lighting is would help create a happier night time ambience. Illumination of Gainsborough's statue and church facade will create good night time focal points.

The quality and consistency of street furniture and lighting in connection with design, colour and materials are important qualities needed to raise the general appearance of the whole area. We intend to demonstrate how this has been achieved in other such town centre projects.

Street clutter

A recent street survey of road signage by the Sudbury Society has established that much could be done to improve presentation and reduction of signage. We would like to look at this and see how Suffolk Highways policy on street signage can be adapted to go some way to help.

Quality of surface dressing

'Shared space' will require a review of road and pavement surfacing, with a reduction in the use of black tarmac surfacing in favour of materials with more colour and texture. There is an established palette of materials and colouring, used in North Street which complements the general use of york stone paving on Old Market Place and the Market Hill. We suggest that careful use of these materials would greatly enhance these areas. It should also be noted from enclosed illustrations how use of unsympathetic surfacing can destroy the integrity of historically based town centres.

Justification

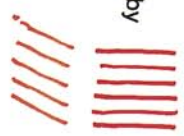
Commercially, Sudbury town centre trading has ever increasing competition from outside - out-of-town supermarkets; larger towns with more choice like Ipswich, Bury and Colchester; internet shopping. Supporting the small retailers and other town centre businesses ensures the lifeblood is not removed from the heart of town. It is our aim to build on the qualities the town already has, with the aim of encouraging both shoppers, visitors and residents to stay in the town, take pride in the heritage we have and enjoy the place.

There is an awareness that the presence of Waitrose in town has drawn a large catchment of shoppers that might not have previously shopped in Sudbury. We would like to see these same shoppers use the town centre and small retailers.

We are intending to utilise Section 106 from Tesco which has been earmarked for 'Town Centre improvements'. With such a broad-based plan such as this, as opposed to a piecemeal approach, it becomes possible to access other funding.

Proposed schedule

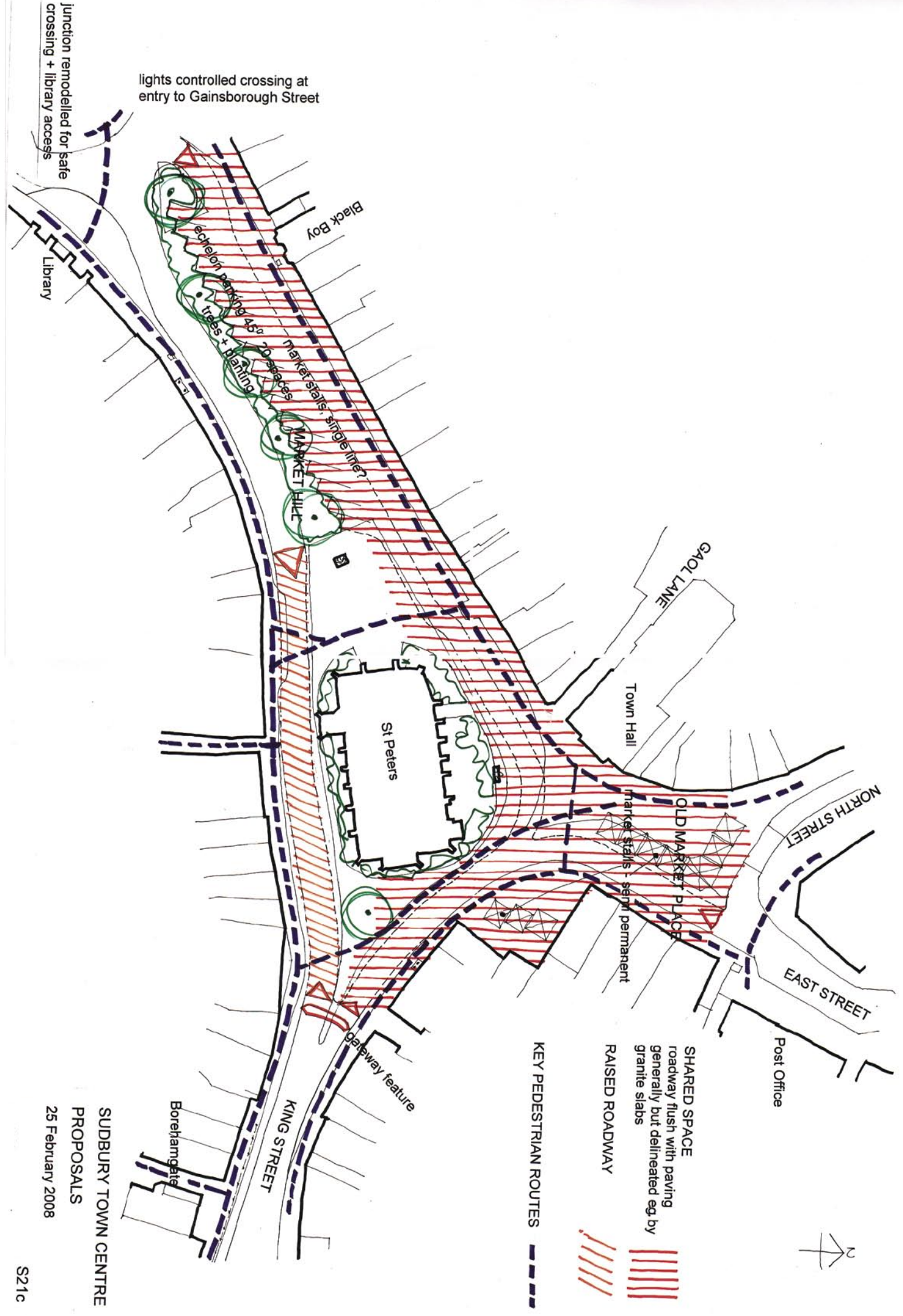
- a) To carry out fresh survey of areas under consideration; research treatments established in other towns; prepare initial concepts.
- b) Meet with representatives from SCC Transport & Environment Department to consider existing policy and future strategy. Query what flexibility there is to encompass our proposals.
- c) Explore possible sources for further funding.
- d) Gather ball park costings and assess viability.
- e) Present initial findings to Sudbury Town Council, then provide a 'document of intent' that might be submitted to Babergh in order to secure the necessary funding.
- f) Approach all interested parties and other local authority partners to gain their views on our initial concepts and, if possible and where relevant, their professional assistance.
- g) Gain a grasp on what current Local Authority projects might be in the pipeline that might effect or be effected by our proposals. ie new bins, Highways work etc. To attempt to hold up or integrate any works that might be in conflict with the broad overall plan.
- h) At an early stage, to seek approval in principle from full Town Council to progress with draft plans and statement in principle, ready for submission to Local Authority partners.
- i) Once agreed, to present to other interested parties and use as a basis for Public Consultation. This would take the form of a press campaign, website and public exhibition, with acknowledgement of alternative views.
- j) Take on board and respond to comment and duly adapt plans.
- k) Publish revised plans in the light of budget restraint and outside influences. This to be carried out through press and website along with further report to Sudbury TC.
- l) Draw up Full Visual Specification, to be passed on to a facilitator to deal with planners and the roads authority, as well as carry out product research, work tendering, final costings and oversee the works.



SHARED SPACE
roadway flush with paving
generally but delineated eg by
granite slabs

RAISED ROADWAY

KEY PEDESTRIAN ROUTES



lights controlled crossing at
entry to Gainsborough Street

Junction remodelled for safe
crossing + library access

SUDBURY TOWN CENTRE
PROPOSALS
25 February 2008

'Sudbury21c'

This was the name chosen for a local initiative set up in 2004 by two long term residents of Sudbury, Robin Drury and Stephen Thorpe.

They expressed concerns at the lack of vision and co-ordinated thinking being expressed at local authority level on the future development of the town centre. After publishing a leaflet - 'What we think Sudbury deserves' and doing various presentations to business, community leaders and the general public their views were widely acknowledged as a good way forward for the town. They went on too set up a significant focus group to begin to follow this through.

The regeneration of the existing town centre (Market Hill & Old Market Place), was part of this agenda, although a major concern now is that a suitable Development Brief for the Bus Station area is soon forthcoming from Babergh Planning Department, as promised. That this is quickly followed by establishment of a 'Master Plan' to join up thinking between agencies about the co-ordinating various functions of the town centre as a whole.

Stephen Thorpe is a long established local architect and vice chairman of the Sudbury Society. One of his roles is to comment on local planning applications on behalf of the Society. Stephen is also a consultant for accessible and inclusive environments of buildings and external spaces. He recently completed a Sudbury town centre survey on accessibility for disabled people and pedestrians generally.

Robin Drury, also long established as a designer in Sudbury, has been associated with town centre projects and promotion. He has been responsible for design and installation of Sudbury Heritage Centre and heavily involved in three successful bids for Quality of Place funding. He also sits on the Executive committee of Sudbury Chamber of Commerce.

Both professionals have lived in the town for over 30 years and have established credibility. They are seen as having a 'grass roots' view of how the town centre might evolve and are well placed to tap into local opinion. They also have a deep local knowledge as well as working relationships with many of the local authority officers and leaders in town.