

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

**Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 15 September 2010 at 5.00 pm
in the Conference Room West (F1R09), West Suffolk House,
Western Way, Bury St Edmunds**

PRESENT: Councillor J H M Griffiths (Leader of the Council) (in the Chair)
Councillors Mrs Alexander, Clements, Everitt, Mrs Gower,
Mrs Mildmay-White and Stevens.

BY INVITATION: Councillor Aitkens (Chairman of the Policy Development
Committee) Lockwood (Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny
Committee), Spicer (Vice-Chairman of the Performance and Audit
Scrutiny Committee) and Councillors Cox, Houlder and
Mrs Richardson.

43. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Farmer and Ray.

44. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

45. Declarations of Interests

Members' declarations of interests are recorded under the item to which the declaration relates.

46. Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 26 July 2010
Forward Plan Reference: N/A Cabinet Members: All Portfolio Holders

The Cabinet received and noted Report B192 (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 7 July 2010:-

- (1) Re-appointment to Treasury Management Sub-Committee;
- (2) Annual Treasury Management Report 2009/2010 and Investment Activity 1 April to 30 June 2010;
- (3) Key Performance Indicators: First Quarter 2010/2011;
- (4) Budget Monitoring Report: 1 April to 30 June 2010;
- (5) Corporate Risk Register: Quarterly Monitoring Report;
- (6) Capital Programme Audited Accounts;
- (7) Audit Commission: Certification of Housing and Council Tax Benefits, Disabled Facilities Grants, and National Non-domestic Rates Claims and Returns; and
- (8) Audit Commission: Audit Opinion Plan.

Councillor Spicer, Vice-Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet. He informed the Cabinet of the deliberations regarding the Treasury Management function and also the scrutiny of the Key Performance Indicators. In particular, there was some concern expressed as to the tonnage of household waste sent to landfill.

Councillor Stevens, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Street Scene, informed the Cabinet that the amount of tonnage of household waste sent to landfill was now below the target set.

47. Report of the Policy Development Committee: 1 September 2010

Forward Plan Reference: N/A Cabinet Members: All Portfolio Holders

(During a discussion on the review of Empty Homes and Wasted Space Strategy Councillor Aitkens declared a prejudicial interest as Chairman of Suffolk Housing Society and left the meeting for the consideration of this item.)

The Cabinet received and noted Report B193 (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Policy Development Committee on 1 September 2010:-

- (1) Cabinet Forward Plan: September to December 2010;
- (2) Work Programme;
- (3) Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2011/2012;
- (4) Review of Empty Homes and Wasted Space Strategy 2009 – 2011; and
- (5) Park Byelaws.

Councillor Aitkens, Chairman of the Policy Development Committee, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet. He stated that the Committee had considered a report regarding Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2011/2012. However, a major factor in the deliberations of the budget would be the Government announcements arising from the October Comprehensive Spending Review.

A discussion was held regarding the Council's priority to bring long-term private sector empty homes back in use. Some concern was expressed that long-term was defined as a property being empty longer than six months and this period of time was considered to be too short a duration. However, the Cabinet was informed that although six months was a minimum period of time set by the Government, the Borough Council's policy was not to take action until the property had been empty longer than a year.

48. Report of the Policy Development Committee: Parks Byelaws

Forward Plan Reference: Sep10/10 Cabinet Member: Cllr Lynsey Alexander

The Cabinet considered Report B194 (previously circulated) which contained the recommendations from the Policy Development Committee regarding consultation on the introduction of new byelaws for the Borough Council's parks and open spaces.

Park byelaws currently existed for the Abbey Gardens, Haverhill Recreation Ground and West Stow Country Park, but it was acknowledged that these byelaws were antiquated. It had, therefore, been agreed that new byelaws should be drafted for these sites and a number of other sites in the Borough. The Committee had set up a Member/Officer Working Group to review the existing byelaws and assist in the

production of new byelaws. The Working Group had agreed that the model byelaws created by the Department of Communities and Local Government should be used as a template for creating the Borough Council's own byelaws, and those which the group felt should be adopted were set out in Appendix 1 to Report B167.

During the discussions it was recognised that the byelaws were not intended to be used to stop people having fun and enjoying the Council's parks to the full, but were tools which would enable the Council to deal with those activities that annoyed or upset other park users.

Councillors Cox and Mrs Richardson, Members of the Working Group, informed the Cabinet of relevant issues and that this task and finish group had worked extremely well and were supplied with significant information by the officers.

During the discussion on this item Councillor Mrs Alexander informed the Cabinet of the results of the Anglia in Bloom judging as follows:-

Large Town Category:	Bury St Edmunds awarded Gold;
Village Category:	Cavendish was awarded Bronze;
Large Village Category:	Clare was awarded Silver; and
Best Public Open Space:	Clare Country Park.

Councillor Mrs Alexander was delighted that the areas within the Borough had done so well in the Anglia in Bloom Competition and congratulated all the many people and organisations who had contributed to this success. These sentiments were endorsed by the Cabinet.

RESOLVED:- That

- (1) The introduction of new byelaws for the Borough Council's parks and open spaces, as outlined in Appendix 1 to Report B167, be supported, and that the existing byelaws for the Abbey Gardens, Haverhill Recreation Ground and West Stow Country Park be revoked; and
- (2) the necessary consultations be progressed prior to full Council being asked to approve the adoption of the new byelaws, and the affixing of the Council's seal thereto.

49. Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 8 September 2010

Forward Plan Reference: N/A Cabinet Members: All Portfolio Holders

The Cabinet received and noted Report B195 (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 September 2010:-

- (1) Annual report on the Impact of the West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership and Community Strategy;
- (2) Update on Section 106 matters in St Edmundsbury;
- (3) Review of response of Borough Council to severe winter weather 2009/2010;
- (4) Work Programme; and
- (5) Cabinet Forward Plan: September to December 2010.

Councillor Lockwood, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet. He stated that the presentations received from representatives who had received funding from the West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership (WSLSP) were interesting and had proved extremely useful in understanding the workings of the WSLSP and its Community Strategy. He stated that the Committee had asked for further information concerning how Suffolk County Council had spent Section 106 monies linked to public transport improvements. The Committee had also requested that the procedures for planning and budgeting landscape work should be investigated and had requested a review be added to their Work Programme for the current year.

50. Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Review of response of the Borough Council to severe winter weather 2009/2010

Forward Plan Reference: Sep10/08 Cabinet Member: Cllr Terry Clements

The Cabinet received and noted Report B196 (previously circulated) which detailed the response of the Borough Council to the severe winter weather conditions experienced during the 2009/2010 winter.

The report summarised the impact on the delivery of services in the Borough and the steps taken to maintain these services and the assistance provided by Suffolk County Council in the delivery of their highways responsibilities.

Councillor Lockwood informed the Cabinet that the Committee had received presentations from the County Council's West Area Highway Manager who explained that the prioritisation of roads for gritting was difficult due to limited resources, and that a system of priority road grading was used.

Members had been concerned that minor roads in villages had not been cleared and that some people had been marooned in their houses and unable to get to the towns. However, the Committee was advised that this was a resource issue and the severity of the snow meant that the safety of the County Council's Priority 1 routes had to take priority.

The Cabinet held a wide-ranging discussion regarding the impact of the severe weather conditions. It was recognised that highway issues were the responsibility of the County Council and that there was also a need for 'self help' from the communities. It was suggested that an appropriate article be placed in the next edition of Community Spirit informing residents of what they could do and the extent of their liabilities in helping to alleviate problems.

51. Recommendations from Grant Panel: 7 September 2010

Forward Plan Reference: Sep10/03 Cabinet Member: Cllr Robert Everitt

The Cabinet considered Report B197 (previously circulated) which sought approval for grants recommended by the Grant Panel.

During the discussions, it was emphasised that the Grant Panel scored every application against the approved criteria.

RESOLVED:- That

(1) Rural Areas Community Initiatives Fund: Application for Project Funding: 2010/2011

A grant of £3,531 be awarded to Stanton Community Village Hall Management Committee towards the purchase of replacement chairs and crockery for the village hall.

(2) Recreation, Village Hall and Play Scheme Grants: Applications for Project Funding: 2010/2011

- (1) Subject to the renewal of previously approved planning permission, £5,200 be awarded to Suffolk Hunt branch of the Pony Club for the new portable timber teaching/meeting/club room building;
- (2) £7,500 be awarded to Stansfield Village Hall Management Committee towards the cost of refurbishing the village hall kitchen; and
- (3) subject to the determination of other applications for match funding, £5,000 be awarded to Fornham All Saints Community Council towards the cost of replacing the Community Centre kitchen.

52. Recommendations from Sustainable Development Panel: 31 August 2010

Forward Plan Reference: Sep10/01 Cabinet Member: Cllr Terry Clements

The Cabinet considered Report B198 (previously circulated) which sought approval of the recommendations emanating from the meeting of the Sustainable Development Panel held on 31 August 2010.

On 31 August 2010 the Sustainable Development Panel considered the following items:-

- (1) Home Renewable Energy Grant Scheme: Update;
- (2) St Edmundsbury Replacement Local Plan 2016 – Policy HAV3 – Employment Site – Hanchett End, Haverhill: Adoption of Draft Concept Statement;
- (3) St Edmundsbury Local Development Framework: Rural Allocations Document: April–June 2010 Consultation Feedback; and
- (4) St Edmundsbury Local Development Framework: Development Management Document: April–June 2010 Consultation Feedback.

Councillor Clements, Chairman of the Panel for this meeting, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet. He emphasised the success of the Home Renewable Energy Grant Scheme and recommended that the allocation of a further £10,000 be made.

RESOLVED:- That

Home Renewable Energy Grant Scheme

The Renewable Energy Grant Scheme be continued by the allocation of a further £10,000 from the unallocated Capital Programme 2010/2011.



RECOMMENDED:- That

***St Edmundsbury Replacement Local Plan 2016 – Policy HAV3;
Employment Site – Hanchett End, Haverhill: Adoption of Draft
Concept Statement***

***The Concept Statement for Hanchett End, Haverhill, as attached
as Appendix C of Report B169, be adopted as non-statutory
planning guidance.***

53. Recommendations from Haverhill Area Working Party: 29 July 2010

Forward Plan Reference: Sep10/04 Cabinet Member: Cllr Anne Gower

(Councillor Clements declared a prejudicial interest as a Borough Council representative on the Abbeycroft Leisure Board and withdrew from the meeting when the discussion was held regarding the Haverhill Player Development Centre. Councillor Cox declared a personal interest as an Affiliated Member of the Suffolk and Cambridge Football Association and the Football Association and remained in the meeting for the consideration of the item concerning the Haverhill Player Development Centre.)

The Cabinet considered Report B199 (previously circulated) which contained the recommendations emanating from the meeting of the Haverhill Area Working Party held on 29 July 2010.

On 29 July 2010 the Haverhill Area Working Party considered the following items:-

- (1) Haverhill Community Football Project: Update;
- (2) Haverhill Player Development Centre;
- (3) Markets Review;
- (4) Haverhill Town Centre Management: Update on Work Programme to December 2010;
- (5) Haverhill Town Centre Management: Update on the Haverhill Residential Welcome Pack;
- (6) Queen Street Shop Front Grant Scheme: Update; and
- (7) Queen Street Gates: Launch Update.

Councillor Griffiths, Chairman, informed the Cabinet that the Bury St Edmunds Area Working Party had also considered the results of the Markets Review and had also made an identical recommendation to that of the Haverhill Area Working Party.

Councillor Mrs Gower, Cabinet Member with the responsibility for Haverhill, informed the Cabinet that the presentation made by the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) on their review was well received by stakeholders in

Haverhill and had addressed issues associated with the operation of the market, including the operation of a Friday market.

Councillor Everitt, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Bury St Edmunds, also reported on the consultation and presentations from the NABMA, which had also been welcomed by the stakeholders.

Councillor Mrs Gower informed the Cabinet that the Haverhill Area Working Party and residents were delighted with the Haverhill Community Project in general and with the proposed Player Development Centre as it would promote participation by community groups such as the disabled, women and girls. In addition, any support and assistance provided for unpaid coaches was welcomed, as volunteers were quite often difficult to recruit and sustain.

Councillor Cox informed the Cabinet of a press release issued by the Suffolk Football Association in relation to the up and coming launch of the Player Development Centre which appeared to have pre-empted the Cabinet's decision. Councillor Mrs Alexander, Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Culture and Sport, agreed to investigate this issue. She also emphasised that Abbeycroft Leisure were responsible for delivering the Borough Council's Sport Development Programme.

RESOLVED:- That

(1) Haverhill Player Development Centre

- (a) The Haverhill Player Development Centre be established and commence in the 2010/2011 football season as a means of delivering the development targets contained in the funding agreement for the Haverhill Community Football Project;
- (b) Abbeycroft Leisure contract Suffolk County Football Association to carry out the Development Centre work; and
- (c) (i) an element of the management fee from the Borough Council to Abbeycroft Leisure that was formerly used to fund the Haverhill Football School, as detailed in Section 4.6 of Report B148, now be used to fund the Player Development Centre; and
(ii) this position be kept under annual review.

(2) Markets Review

The recommendations as detailed in Section 4 of the Markets Review, attached as Appendix A to Report B144, be adopted as the basis for future action.

54. Recommendations from Bury St Edmunds Area Working Party: 27 July and 14 September 2010

Forward Plan Reference: Sep10/05 Cabinet Member: Cllr Robert Everitt

The Cabinet considered Reports B200 and B201 (previously circulated) which contained the recommendations emanating from the meetings of the Bury St Edmunds Area Working Party held on 27 July and 14 September 2010.

(a) 27 July 2010

On 27 July 2010 the Bury St Edmunds Area Working Party considered the following items:-

- (1) Markets Review;
- (2) Vacant Shops;
- (3) St John's Street Sign;
- (4) Engineering Services Works Programme; and
- (5) Proposed Introduction of Electric Car Charging Points in the Multi Storey Car Park, Parkway.

The recommendation concerning the Markets Review had been discussed during consideration of the previous item (see minute 53 above).

Councillor Everitt, Chairman of the Area Working Party, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet. In response to a question he stated that the use of the proposed electric car charging points in the multi-storey car park in Bury St Edmunds would not be available to commercial vehicles as they were unable to gain access to this car park. In response to another question, he stated that the cost of the electricity used for the six month trial period would be borne by the Borough Council but that it was not envisaged that this would be a significant amount of money.

RESOLVED:- That

(a) Engineering Services Work Programme

- (1) The newly created parking bays in Chalk Road and the small car park annexe area, as shown on the plan at Appendix B of Report B145, be available for Zone H permit holders only from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Mondays to Saturdays;
- (2) the changes to the parking layout in the Chalk Road (South) spur, as shown on the Plan at Appendix C of Report B145, be made;
- (3) the limited waiting bays in Albert Street, as shown on Plan 3 at Appendix A of Report B145 be changed to permit holders only from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, Mondays to Saturdays and the management of this bay to be subject to review if over restrictive parking prevents the adjacent vacant commercial premises being brought into beneficial use;

- (4) consultation be carried out on possible changes to the hours of closure of Abbeygate Street to enable this matter to be reviewed; and
- (5) approval be given to works being undertaken to install containment kerbs on the bend outside numbers 22/24 St Olaves Road, as detailed in paragraph 5.8.2 of Report B145.

(b) Proposed Introduction of Electric Car Charging Points in the Multi-Storey Car Park, Parkway, Bury St Edmunds

A 6 month trial with Cale BriParc of the electric car charging points be undertaken and a review of use be conducted at the end of the trial to determine whether to carry the project forward on a permanent basis and also to what extent.

(b) 14 September 2010

(Councillor Clements declared a prejudicial interest as his daughter lived in close proximity to School Yard, Bury St Edmunds and left the meeting for the consideration of this item.)

On 14 September 2010 the Bury St Edmunds Area Working Party considered the following items:-

- (1) Vacant Shops;
- (2) Bury St Edmunds Visitor Trail: issues and options;
- (3) Engineering Services Works Programme;
- (4) School Yard Land, Bury St Edmunds; and
- (5) Proposed changes to management of Off-Street Car Parks.

There was a consensus amongst the Cabinet that the ultimate use of the two plots at School Yard were linked with the usage of adjacent plots and until the aspirations of the other landowners were known it would be beneficial to use these sites as car parks.

RESOLVED:- That

(a) Bury St Edmunds Visitor Trail: Issues and Options

- (1) The proposals for a new visitor trail in Bury St Edmunds consisting of a range of solutions (visual and audio) and improved signing be approved in principle; and
- (2) officers develop the proposals and produce detailed specifications and costings for consideration by the Bury St Edmunds Area Working Party prior to approval by the Cabinet.

(b) School Yard Land, Bury St Edmunds

- (1) Works be undertaken to use School Yard West as a weekly ticket holders car park and short stay car park on Sundays;
- (2) School Yard East be retained as a strategic site; and
- (3) until that time, works be undertaken to use School Yard East as a 'sustainable' low emissions short stay car park.

(c) Proposed Changes to Management of Off-Street Car Parks, Bury St Edmunds

- (1) The change to the Excess Charge Penalty for abusing the disabled drop off bay near to the cinema off Parkway Surface Car Park, Bury St Edmunds, detailed in Section 2.3 of Report B210 be approved;
- (2) changing the restriction on blue badge holders only bays to 24 hours be approved;
- (3) the removal of the prohibition on washing cars in car parks to allow formal car washing arrangements to be made in some car parks be approved;
- (4) the provision of an experimental drop off bay in the Cattle Market/arc car park, Bury St Edmunds, as detailed in Paragraph 2.6 and Appendix A of Report B210, be approved; and
- (5) re-drafting the wording in the Traffic Regulation Order for the car parks to clarify the display of parking tickets be approved.

(Councillors Lockwood and Spicer left the meeting at the end of the consideration of this item.)

55. Recommendations from Public Venue (The Apex) Working Party: 11 August 2010

Forward Plan Reference: Sep10/02 Cabinet Member: Cllr Lynsey Alexander

The Cabinet received and noted Report B202 which informed the Cabinet of the use of the Chief Executive's Urgency Powers in connection with the First Floor Area and Business Plan of The Apex.

On 11 August 2010 the Public Venue (The Apex) Working Party considered the following items:-

- (1) The Apex: First Floor Area and Business Plan; and
- (2) The Apex Project Status Report: Construction.

The Working Party had endorsed the use of the Chief Executive exercising his Urgency Powers as contained within the Council's Constitution to authorise the following actions and expenditure:-

- (1) capital expenditure of up to £160,000 to be funded from unallocated capital reserves and be invested in the fit-out of the First Floor Area of The Apex;
- (2) the Business Plan for The Apex be amended to reflect the additional revenue income and expenditure arising from the Council's control of the entire First Floor Area;
- (3) the existing capital budget for equipping The Apex be increased by up to £48,000 from unallocated capital reserves to accommodate the purchase of additional conference/banqueting furniture and two mobile bars to support the successful delivery of the Business Plan; and
- (4) under the terms of rules 2.1 (ii) and (iii), an exemption from the Contract Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution, be authorised to allow the selected designer, Ryoko Leveritt, to design, procure and/or supply furniture to the bar/café area of The Apex, as required, within the agreed budget.

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, Chairman of the Working Party, informed the Cabinet of the reasons behind endorsing this action by the Working Party and also that this matter would also need to be reported to full Council on 28 September 2010.

56. Community Centre Transfer

Forward Plan Reference: Sep10/11 Cabinet Member: Cllr Robert Everitt

The Cabinet considered Report B203 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the 'transfer of Council-owned community centres to community ownership – Expectations Document', the project plan regarding the transfer of Southgate Community Centre to the Southgate Community Partnership.

The 2007 review of Council owned community centres was the origin for the work which was taking place now to establish the framework in which community centres could be transferred into the ownership of the local community.

In May 2010 Cabinet considered Report B12 which outlined contact with the existing community associations running centres and other local voluntary and community groups and town councils. This contact resulted in an expression of interest being received from the Southgate Community Association working with the Southgate Church, now known as the Southgate Community Partnership (SCP), in relation to Southgate Community Centre. The report also outlined the support in kind for the transfer process which had been gained through the Council's successful application for a place on the final round of the national Advancing Assets Programme. As part of that programme, officers and the SCP have been working with the Development Trust Association (DTA), the national group supporting community enterprise practitioners and groups which take on community asset transfers. The DTA have been providing a range of practical support to the SCP.

Although the focus of work with the DTA was the transfer of the Southgate Centre, the basis of the application to the Advancing Assets Programme was that transfer would be used to develop an overall model which would be applicable to the transfer of other centres. To develop that model the DTA had encouraged the Council to develop the "Expectations Document" attached as Appendix 1 to the report. The document clearly set out the expectations the Council had of any voluntary or community group coming forward to take on a centre, how those expectations could be met and the support which the Council would offer the organisation. Attached at Appendix 2 was a working project plan which applied those expectations to the transfer of the Southgate Community Centre.

As background, Appendix 3 contained the working principles agreed in May 2010 and which had formed the basis of discussions with the SCP to date.



RECOMMENDED:- That

- (1) full Council endorse the 'Transfer of council-owned community centres to community ownership – Expectations Document', attached as Appendix 1 to Report B203, as its adopted framework for working towards the transfer of community centres;***
- (2) the project plan attached as Appendix 2 to Report B203 be agreed as the working timetable and basis for work towards the transfer of Southgate Community Centre to the Southgate Community Partnership, subject to the partnership satisfactorily meeting the milestones listed in the plan;***
- (3) delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director for Community Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Bury St Edmunds and Community Safety, to receive updates and determine whether the various milestones have been satisfactorily met;***
- (4) where milestones have not been satisfactorily met, further negotiations take place with the Southgate Community Partnership, or the issue to be referred to Cabinet; and***
- (5) the final decision on transfer be brought back to the Cabinet for consideration and a recommendation to full Council.***

57. Havebury Housing Partnership: Articles of Association

Forward Plan Reference: N/A Cabinet Member: Cllr Anne Gower

The Cabinet considered a narrative item which sought approval for changing the Articles of Association for Havebury Housing Partnership.

Under its Articles of Association, Havebury Housing Partnership (HHP) must receive the prior written consent of the Borough Council to change any governance

arrangements in respect of the local authority directors. The Borough Council currently nominated one third of the directors, which equated to 5 from a Board of 15.

Following a governance review, HHP had recommended a number of changes which would need to be voted on by its Board at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting. These were minor amendments to take into account recognised good practice in housing association governance and did not affect either the Borough Council's level of representation, or its ability to make nominations. The main change was a move to fixed three year terms of office for the Council's nominees. As now, the Council did not need to nominate serving Councillors as its representatives. The Council was also asked to have regard to the skills, qualities and experience required by the Board.

A copy of the proposed new rules governing the appointment of local authority directors were attached as Paper B204 to this Cabinet agenda.

Councillor Mrs Gower, the Portfolio Holder for Haverhill and Housing, advised the Cabinet of the process which had been followed in relation to the two current Council vacancies on the HHP Board, which would be considered by full Council on 28 September.

RESOLVED:- That

That the Borough Council gives written permission to Havebury Housing Partnership in advance of its Annual General Meeting to change its Articles of Association, as set out in Paper B204, and that the Borough Council's representative is also authorised to approve the changes at the Partnership's Annual General Meeting.

(Councillor Cox left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

**EXEMPT INFORMATION – EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC
TERMS OF FORMAL RESOLUTION**

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

58. Asset Management Plan: Ground Lease Shopping Centres in Bury St Edmunds

Forward Plan Reference: Sep10/12 Cabinet Member: Cllr Sara Mildmay-White

The Cabinet considered Report B205 (previously circulated) which sought approval that the Hardwick and St Olaves Shopping Parades in Bury St Edmunds be declared surplus and the sites sold, either by auction or by private treaty.

As part of the Asset Management Plan (AMP) review of all the Council's assets, the decision in 2006 to retain the two housing estate shopping parades held on historic ground leases had been reassessed.

This report reconsidered the AMP options for the future Council ownership of the freehold of the Hardwick and St Olaves shopping parades in Bury St Edmunds, as part of the objective of making better use of property resources, in accordance with good asset management planning. In the context of the current economic and financial conditions, sale of the two ground lease shopping parade assets may be a more compelling option than retaining them.

The Cabinet was informed that selling the freehold interest of the land did not have any impact on the leases held by the shops from their current landlord.

Some concern was expressed that if the Council sold the shopping parades then the Council would have no influence on the operation or the environment of these parades. However, it was emphasised that the sale of the assets did not alter the individual tenancies of the shops, which would continue to be managed in the same way. In addition, it was envisaged that it would not have any effect on the community and customers which used the parades. It was also emphasised that it would be in the owners' interests to ensure that the parades were attractive environments in order to attract customers to the shops with a resultant beneficial impact on the level of leases that could be charged.



RECOMMENDED:-

That the Hardwick and St Olaves Shopping Parades in Bury St Edmunds are declared surplus and the sites are sold, either by auction or by private treaty, as outlined in Report B205.

59. Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs

Forward Plan Reference: N/A Cabinet Member: Cllr Paul Farmer

The Cabinet considered Report B206 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the write off of three accounts for overpayment of Housing/Council Tax benefits.

The Revenues Section collects outstanding debts in accordance with either statutory guidelines or Council agreed procedures. When all these procedures have been exhausted the outstanding debt is written off using the delegated authority of the Chief Finance Officer (for debts up to £1,500) or by Cabinet (for debts over £1,500). The reasons for recommending the write offs were included in Exempt Appendices attached to this report.

The Collection Data in respect of National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) and Council Tax were shown in Section 4.3 of the report. 2009/2010 was a challenging year in which to recover debt, although the final collection rate for Council Tax was the joint 10th highest in the country, which was a significant achievement given the financial climate.

RESOLVED:-

That the write off of three accounts for overpayment of Housing/Council Tax benefits detailed in Exempt Appendix 1 to Report B206 be approved.

The meeting concluded at 7.06 pm

**J H M GRIFFITHS
CHAIRMAN**