



St Edmundsbury  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# D84

## Cabinet 25 July 2012

### Report from the Haverhill Area Working Party: 12 July 2012 (Aug12/01)

*Cabinet Member:*  
Cllr Anne Gower

*Chairman of the Working Party:*  
Cllr Karen Richardson

*(The following is a summary of the decisions taken by the Haverhill Area Working Party. This is for information only and no decisions are required by the Cabinet at this stage)*

#### 1. 'Destination Haverhill' (Agenda Item 7)

The Working Party received and noted a presentation on the 'Destination Haverhill' project.

The vision for the project is *'to ensure that the town centre of Haverhill attracts more visitors, shoppers and investment by providing a high quality **experience** for all and by providing a broad range of desired products and services such that visitors need not travel to other nearby local centres.'*

The project was commissioned following an allocation of £40,000 total funding provided by the Borough Council, Suffolk County Council, and Kent Business School's (KBS) Innovation Fund.

Phase One of the project involved KBS undertaking a Shopper Survey between 24 November 2011 and 2 December 2011. A total of 538 surveys had been received, which was considered an acceptable number for analysis. On 15 March 2012 the Working Party had noted the initial findings of the survey, which had indicated that Haverhill was a town with potential; it had good accessibility; a high number of car parking spaces, partial pedestrianisation and low shop vacancy rates. However, Members had noted that the poor range of shops was the biggest singular issue faced by the town centre. The mix of shops was inadequate with an over domination of takeaways, betting shops and charity shops. National retailers needed a compelling incentive to open new stores in Haverhill.

On 12 July 2012, the Working Party noted the outcome of Phase Two of the project which aimed to improve the performance of the current independent retailers through the conducting of masterclasses and follow-up mentoring sessions. The outcomes of the masterclasses and mentoring sessions in terms of whether the independent retailers taking part in the project have benefited from an upturn in performance will be reported at the next meeting in September 2012. Phase Three will continue with the mentoring sessions and the undertaking of an evaluation process.

## **2. Haverhill Vision 2031 (Agenda Item 8)**

The Working Party received and noted a presentation on the key issues emanating from the formal consultation on the first draft of Vision 2031, with particular emphasis on the comments received on the draft Haverhill Vision document.

Consultation on the first draft of the Vision 2031 document for Haverhill took place between 1 March 2012 and 30 April 2012. An extensive consultation programme was organised by the Borough Council and there has been a good level of engagement and response.

Such comments arising from the consultation on the Haverhill Vision 2031 include:-

- (a) an imbalance between jobs and houses;
- (b) development of brownfield sites before greenfield sites;
- (c) development of an action plan about the regeneration of the town rather than extending it;
- (d) transport issues, including provision of a rail link;
- (e) the need for more open space and parks;
- (f) development of the town centre masterplan before new housing development;
- (g) concerns about increased flood risk;
- (h) opposition to the removal of restrictions on the redevelopment of former school sites;
- (i) issues relating to small development sites;
- (j) support for further/higher education provision but question the site identified for such provision;
- (k) cemetery provision; and
- (l) several references to the North-east Haverhill Strategic Site.

The Working Party also noted the planned timetable for taking the Vision 2031 documents through to the Examination and Adoption stages, as contained in the recommendations emanating from the Sustainable Development Working Party meeting held on 3 July 2012 (Report D82 refers).

## **3. Haverhill High Street Improvement Scheme: Progress Update (Report D65)**

**RESOLVED that:-**

- (1) an enforceable 20 mph zone covering the High Street, Haverhill as outlined in Paragraph 1.6 of Report D65, be implemented, ensuring clear and concise signage;**
- (2) (i) the revised waiting and loading Traffic Regulation Order be delivered through an Experimental Order, as detailed in Section 4 of Report D65, and lasting a maximum of 18 months; and**

- (ii) the current proposals be withdrawn but pedestrianisation remains on the Haverhill Area Working Party agenda;**
- (3) during the delivery of (2) above, a period of statutory consultation be undertaken with a public exhibition, as appropriate;**
- (4) the preliminary design of High Street and Peas Market Square, as detailed in Sections 4.3 and 7.3 of Report D65, be approved; and**
- (5) an addition of a flag pole to Peas Market Square be investigated.**

On 27 April 2011, the Cabinet approved the Terms of Reference for the High Street Improvement Scheme (minute 155 (3) refers), which included delegating authority to the Haverhill Area Working Party for managing the total £750,000 budget for the Scheme and approving the final project design.

Suffolk County Council' Highways Section has been commissioned by the Borough Council to design the Improvement Scheme, which initially included the incorporation of a level block paved surface for the area between Swan Lane and Quakers Lane, with an associated Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). This would build upon the current access restrictions to provide a totally traffic free pedestrian environment during the core hours of the day.

The statutory consultation on the proposed TRO during February 2012 resulted in a large volume of objections, primarily on the grounds that the restrictions would prevent Blue Badge Holders from parking within walking distance of the High Street shops, and from the business community who had concerns about business deliveries during the restricted hours.

The level of concern was reported to the Haverhill Area Working Party (HAWP) on 15 March 2012. Members supported taking the concerns into account and the re-drafting of the TRO to avoid the most contentious issues. Therefore, the TRO as proposed and consulted on has now effectively been abandoned and will not proceed to the Suffolk County Council Rights of Way (RoW) Committee or any subsequent Public Inquiry.

On 12 July 2012, the Working Party was informed that Haverhill Town Council had undertaken its own survey with the Haverhill community and had ascertained that the majority of respondents still wished to see pedestrianisation in the High Street during core hours of the day. Members therefore, considered it appropriate to withdraw the current proposals in accordance with the outcomes of the statutory consultation, but the issue of pedestrianisation would remain an item for future discussion on the HAWP agenda.

A discussion was also held on maintaining a distinction between the Improvement Scheme and the TROs, and therefore the officers' recommendations were amended by Members to reflect this distinction, particularly as the proposed traffic restrictions detailed in the recommendations could commence independently of the Improvement Scheme. The new TRO can initially be introduced as an Experimental TRO lasting a maximum of 18 months during which time it is anticipated that public acceptance of the scheme will grow. Members accepted this approach.

The 20 mph zone covering the High Street did not receive any objections from the original consultations and can be implemented as a stand alone measure; however, Members sought reassurance that the restriction would be enforceable.

The Working Party also considered the preliminary designs for the High Street and Peas Market Square, which were supported, and following the submission of a written suggestion by Councillor Cox, agreed that further investigations be undertaken into the feasibility of erecting a flag pole in Peas Market Square.

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