

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 10 September 2013 at 5.00 pm in the Conference Chamber West (F1R09), West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds

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

BY INVITATION: Councillors Houlder (Chairman of the Overview and
Scrutiny Committee), Nettleton and Spicer

23. Remembrance

The Cabinet observed a moments silence in remembrance of the late Councillor Mrs Charlotte Howard, a former Member of the Borough Council.

24. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

25. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

26. Declarations of Interests

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

27. Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 17 July 2013 ***Decisions Plan Ref: N/A Cabinet Members: All Portfolios***

The Cabinet received and noted Report E99 (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 July 2013:

- (1) Quarter 1 Directed Surveillance Authorised Applications;
- (2) Decisions Plan: July 2013 to May 2014; and
- (3) Work Programme Update and Proposals for Scrutiny.

Councillor Houlder, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet.

28. Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 31 July 2013 ***Decisions Plan Ref: N/A Cabinet Members: All Portfolios***

The Cabinet received and noted Report E100 (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 31 July 2013:

- (1) Presentation by Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance;

- (2) Key Performance Indicators and Quarter 1 Performance Report 2013/2014;
- (3) Budget Outturn and Financial Highlights Report: 2012/2013;
- (4) Budget Monitoring Report: 1 April to 30 June 2013;
- (5) Corporate Risk Register Quarterly Monitoring Report: June 2013;
- (6) Annual Treasury Management Report: 2012/2013 and Investment Activity 1 April to 30 June 2013 and Review of the Councils Treasury Management Strategy; and
- (7) Work Programme Update.

Councillor Spicer, Vice-Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that the Treasury Management Sub-Committee would on 23 September 2013 receive presentations from three organisations that provided a range of Treasury Management services. The appointment of one of these organisations (two were the Borough Council's and Forest Heath District Council's (FHDC) existing Treasury Management advisors) would enable the Sub-Committee to carry out a review of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy. The Sub-Committee's recommendations would be considered by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and reported to Cabinet in due course.

29. Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Annual Treasury Management Report 2012/2013 and Investment Activity 1 April to 30 June 2013; and Review of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy

Decisions Plan Ref: Sep13/11 Cabinet Member: Cllr David Ray

The Cabinet considered Report E101 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the Annual Treasury Management Report 2012/2013.

The Annual Treasury Management Report, summarised the investment activities for the year 2012/2013, and also provided a summary of investment activity for the first three months of the 2013/2014 financial year.

The report showed the total amount invested at 1 April 2012 as £32 million, and at 31 March 2013 £32.9 million. The increase in investment balances over this period was due primarily to the net effect of the Council's capital expenditure and asset disposals programmes. Budgeted income from investments in 2012/2013 was £569,000, and as at 31 March 2013 interest earned amounted to £661,000, an over achievement of £92,000 against the budget. The average rate of interest achieved for the year was 1.65% against the target rate of 1.50%.

The 2013/2014 Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy (Report D252 referred) set out the Council's projections for the current financial year. It showed the budget for investment income in 2013/2014 as £619,000, based on a continuation of the previous year's 1.5% target rate of return on investments.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet.



RECOMMENDED:-

That the Annual Treasury Management Report 2012/2013, attached as Appendix 1 to Report E61, be approved.

30. Policy for Granting Loans to External Organisations

Decisions Plan Ref: Sep13/09 Cabinet Member: Cllr David Ray

The Cabinet considered Report E102 (previously circulated) which sought approval for a new policy for granting loans to external organisations.

On 24 April 2013, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report (Report D340 referred) which was the final report on the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group set up by the Committee, to formulate a policy to be used for assessing future loan requests from external organisations.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved at that meeting that the draft Policy for Granting Loans to External Organisations, as set out in Appendix 1 to Report D340, should be subject to external validation, following which it would be amended if necessary and presented to Cabinet and Council for adoption.

An external review of the draft Policy had now been undertaken and observations and suggested amendments were available for Cabinet to consider at Appendix 2. Also included in Appendix 2 were six recommendations all of which were incorporated into the proposed Policy for Granting Loans to External Organisations, attached at Appendix 1.

Prior to the meeting, Councillor Everitt had queried the cost of setting up any loan agreement and whether the policy should indicate that the Council was able to recoup some or all of the costs associated with the setting up of the loan. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, considered this was an appropriate addition to the policy and recommended the following be added as 3.1 (f) of the draft policy:

'Provision for recovery of any fees incurred for items including but not limited to validation of financials, legal advice on loan security arrangements etc.'

RESOLVED:

That the results of the external review at Appendix to Report E102 be considered by the Cabinet; and



RECOMMENDED:

That the Policy for Granting Loans to External Organisations, as set out in Appendix 1 to Report E102, be adopted, subject to the following addition as Item (f) to Section 3.1 of the Policy:

'Provision for recovery of any fees incurred for items including, but not limited to, validation of financials, legal advice on loan security arrangements etc.'

(Councillor Spicer left the meeting during the consideration of this item.)

31. Amendment to the Grants Policy

Decisions Plan Ref: Sep13/06 Cabinet Member: Cllr Robert Everitt

The Cabinet considered a narrative item which sought approval for an amendment to the Grants Policy in respect of the Substance Mis-use Project Fund.

On 27 March 2013 the Cabinet had accepted the recommendation of the Grant Working Party that all applications for Rural Initiatives Grants be considered via the e-mail system already in use for applications up to £5,000 (Minute 122 referred). The change was recommended as a result of a request from the Cabinet that the Working Party considered how the decision making for rural grants could be streamlined. The change both improved the speed of decision-making for applicants and resulted in efficiencies for the Council. There was one further grant, the Substance Mis-use Project fund of £2,500 annually, which was currently subject to consideration at a meeting of the Grant Working Party. With the agreement of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Grant Working Party it was proposed to standardise the treatment of all project funding by extending the use of the e-mail system to the Substance Mis-use Project fund.



RECOMMENDED:

That the St Edmundsbury Grants Policy be amended to extend the use of the e-mail system for determining all Rural Initiatives Grants is used for all project funding applications.

32. Representation on Outside Bodies: Suffolk Local Access Forum

Decisions Plan Ref: Sep13/14 Cabinet Member: Cllr John Griffiths

The Cabinet considered a narrative item which sought approval for a Member to be nominated for selection as the district/borough council representative on the Suffolk Local Access Forum.

On 19 May 2011, full Council resolved that:

'Where the Council may make a nomination but the nominee is not automatically appointed by the organisation, the nomination be made by the Cabinet'.

The Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) was an independent advisory body established under section 94 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It advised Suffolk County Council on matters relating to countryside access and public rights of way. The forum addressed ways to improve public access and open-air recreation for the benefit of all.

The SLAF wished to have one representative from a Suffolk district/borough council and following receipt of nominations the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders' Group would be asked to appoint an appropriate representative which would largely be based upon examining the submitted reason for the nomination including any relevant skills, interests, experience etc. the nominee may have.

Councillor Griffiths, Leader of the Council, considered that Councillor Stevens should be nominated to sit on the Forum as he had considerable

experience in matters relating to countryside access and public rights of way. Members were in agreement and considered that it was appropriate for a Member of the Borough Council to sit on the Forum to promote public access and open air recreation for the health benefits of all. Councillor Stevens welcomed the nomination.

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with the selection process outlined in Agenda Item 9, Councillor Peter Stevens be nominated by the Cabinet to be put forward as the district/borough council representative on the Suffolk Local Access Forum.

33. West Suffolk Housing Strategy: Scoping Report

Decisions Plan Ref: Sep13/08 Cabinet Member: Cllr Anne Gower

The Cabinet considered Report E103 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the scope of the new West Suffolk Housing Strategy.

This report outlined the scope of the new single West Suffolk Housing Strategy, and also explains the approach to drafting the document and how it would be delivered by both St Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District Councils.

Councillor Mrs Gower, Portfolio Holder for Housing, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet. She firstly proposed an amendment to the list of vulnerable groups provided under the 'Proposed endpoint 2014/2017' of Appendix A attached to the report, whereby she wished to add 'refuges' and 'emergency accommodation' to this list. She then informed the Cabinet about the purpose and remit of the newly established Housing Strategy Members' Group, as outlined in Section 4.3 of the report.

The Cabinet broadly supported the scope for the West Suffolk Housing Strategy and agreed that it was important that the final document should be concise and easy to understand. In response, Councillor Mrs Gower explained that it was intended that all the present housing related policies and strategies for each Council would be incorporated into the single composite strategy, as detailed in Appendix A, and thus providing a holistic package on how the delivery of the range of housing options would be achieved across West Suffolk.

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White considered it appropriate that Theme (e) contained in Section 4.4.2 of the report should be amended to ensure enough homes remained available for older people as people were living longer. Consequently, the title of Theme (e) was amended to *read 'Houses that are well designed, of the highest quality, are environmentally sustainable, and reflect future demographic needs'*.

RESOLVED:

That the scope for the new West Suffolk Housing Strategy, as outlined in Section 4.4 of Report E103, and the governance for the Housing Strategy Members' Group outlined in Section 4.3 of Report E103, be approved, subject to the following amendments:

- (a) Refuges and Emergency Accommodation be added to the *Meeting the needs of vulnerable groups* list provided

under the *Proposed end point 2014-17* of Appendix A to Report E103; and

- (b) the title of Theme (e) contained in Section 4.4.2 of Report E103 be amended to read, *Houses that are well designed, of the highest quality, are environmentally sustainable, and reflect future demographic needs.*

34. West Suffolk Empty Homes Strategy 2013/2015

Decisions Plan Ref: Sep13/01 Cabinet Member: Cllr Anne Gower

The Cabinet considered Report E104 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the adoption of the West Suffolk Empty Homes Strategy 2013/2015.

This report sought to ensure the Council continued to proactively target empty homes by using a range of informal and formal measures which encouraged property owners to bring properties back into use. The refreshed joint Strategy capitalised on the successes to date and repositioned the empty homes procedures in West Suffolk to align with current Government Policy.

Councillor Mrs Gower, Portfolio Holder for Housing, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet. She explained that the strategy may require further revision to integrate it with the new West Suffolk Housing Strategy as referred to in minute 33 above. A number of typographical errors had also been identified and these would be rectified under officers' delegated authority.

Councillor Mrs Gower then drew Members' attention to 'Capacity Grid'. In support of the Government's initiative to tackle the shortfall in national housing the Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council had commissioned Capacity Grid to carry out a one-off data cleansing review of Council Tax registered long term empty properties. This work would seek to identify properties currently registered as long term empty, but were in fact not empty, which in turn would generate additional New Homes Bonus (NHB). The NHB provided local authorities with funding for additional properties added to the Council Tax database. It was available for new properties and for empty properties identified as long-term empty homes (empty for at least six months), which were brought back into use during the year.

Members noted the use of Capacity Grid with interest and supported the adoption of the Strategy. Consideration was also given to encouraging Ward Members to promote the bringing of empty properties back into use with the help from Parish Councils and the community.



RECOMMENDED:

That the West Suffolk Empty Homes Strategy 2013/2015, as contained in Appendix A to Report E104, be adopted to ensure that the Council has a robust and transparent strategy for bringing empty properties back into use.

35. Designated Persons

Decisions Plan Ref: Sep13/02 Cabinet Member: Cllr Anne Gower

The Cabinet considered Report E105 (previously circulated) which sought nominations for Members to act as Designated Persons on behalf of

the Council, in progressing housing complaints to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The report provided information on the new arrangements which came into effect on 1 April 2013, whereby all tenant complaints made against their Registered Providers would need be considered by a Designated Person, once the Registered Providers' own internal complaints procedure had been exhausted, before consideration by the Housing Ombudsman.

A 'designated person' can be any Member of Parliament, a councillor from the local housing authority or can be a designated tenant panel. Although a complainant would be able to ask any councillor to act as a designated person to help them resolve their complaint, it may be helpful for the Council to establish a more structured approach whereby a number of Councillors with a broad knowledge of housing issues were identified as being willing to act as designated persons.

Councillor Mrs Gower, Portfolio Holder for Housing, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet. She explained that designated persons could only act on behalf of residents located within the Borough and Members needed to be aware of this. Training on the role of the designated person would be provided to all Members as Ward Members were often approached by residents regarding housing issues, and that refresher training would be offered to a Member who was called upon to fulfil the role at a hearing. Councillors Mrs Hind, Houlder and Ms Wakelam had previously indicated a desire to become designated persons and Councillor Mrs Gower proposed that these three Councillors, together with herself be nominated to act as such on behalf of the Borough Council.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Cabinet notes the implications of Report E105 and the additional responsibility placed upon local councillors with regard to the role of Designated Persons; and
- (2) the Cabinet nominates the Cabinet Member for Housing and Councillors Mrs D Hind, I Houlder and Ms J Wakelam to act as Designated Persons on behalf of the Council, in progressing housing complaints to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

36. Recommendation of the Informal Gypsy and Traveller Working Party: Unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller Encampments

Decisions Plan Ref: Sep13/13 Cabinet Member: Cllr Anne Gower

The Cabinet considered Report E106 (previously circulated) which sought approval for adopting a more proactive approach to protecting vulnerable sites from unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments.

In order to provide an appropriate response to unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments, particularly on sensitive sites and on repeat occasions, the informal Gypsy and Traveller Working Party had considered proposals to put in place pre-emptive injunctions. The injunctions would mean that an order was in place to prevent occupation of the land *before* there was an encampment and would assist in suitable cases in striking the balance between the different communities in the Borough.

The Suffolk Protocol for dealing with unauthorised encampments *after* they were in place remained applicable and there was no need to amend this.

For this reason Cabinet was asked to confirm that the Protocol would continue to be observed.

Councillor Mrs Gower, Portfolio Holder for Housing drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that the Council was working closely with Suffolk Police and other partners to reach a satisfactory resolution to this situation. In response to questions, she outlined the process should a pre-emptive injunction be served but be subsequently breached and the legal process involved.

Members agreed that whilst the Council needed to take action and supported this proposal, further work would need to be undertaken to potentially identify transient and permanent sites in the Borough. In response, the officers explained that such work was in progress; however, as unauthorised encampments had frequently happened up until this point, it was essential that action was taken to deal with the present situation. The Cabinet also wished to highlight that the Council had a responsibility to keep the Borough safe, clean and tidy and allow the use of land as it was intended and therefore should it be proven that certain individuals of the Gypsy and Traveller community had fly-tipped on the sites occupied by them, action should be taken to deal with the offence in accordance with the Council's usual practice.

RESOLVED:

That while the Council will continue to observe the Suffolk Protocol in relation to removing unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments, a more proactive approach to protecting vulnerable sites be adopted through the selective use of pre-emptive injunctions, on the basis set out in Section 4 of Report E106.

37. Suffolk Growth Strategy Delivery Plan

Decisions Plan Ref: Sep13/05 Cabinet Member: Cllr Alaric Pugh

The Cabinet considered Report E107 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the Suffolk Growth Strategy Delivery Plan.

The Suffolk Growth Strategy (SGS) articulated the ambitions for economic growth held by the constituent local authorities in Suffolk. The SGS Delivery Plan would feed directly into the Growth Plans that each of the two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) were preparing and would enable future funding opportunities to be co-ordinated and supported.

The SGS itself was considered by the Cabinet on 13 February 2013 (Report D286 referred) with the final SGS document being launched at The Apex in Bury St Edmunds on 26 February 2013. Following the launch of the SGS, work had been undertaken to produce the draft SGS Delivery Plan. This plan, attached as Appendix A to Report E107, evidenced how the authorities would bring the aspirations for growth outlined in the Strategy into reality.

Councillor Pugh, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet. In response to a question, Councillor Pugh informed the Cabinet that the Suffolk Growth Strategy and the Growth Plans of the Local Enterprise Partnerships, which were the subject of the next item on this Cabinet agenda, were intrinsically linked to the Borough Council's Vision 2031 documents and the National Planning Policy Framework and therefore the Plans would not be developed in isolation.

Councillor Pugh then highlighted that the 10-day Business Festival was being launched at Ickworth House on Wednesday 11 September 2013. This had been an extremely successful event in previous years for promoting economic development and it was hoped it would be again this year.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the content of the draft Suffolk Growth Strategy Delivery Plan, as contained in Appendix A to Report E107, be approved; and
- (2) the Head of Economic Development and Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, be given delegated authority to approve the final version of the Delivery Plan.

38. Growth Plans for the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership

Decisions Plan Ref: Sep13/04 Cabinet Member: Cllr Alaric Pugh

The Cabinet considered Report E108 (previously circulated) which sought approval for consultation responses to be submitted on the Growth Plans for the two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) had been asked by the Government to develop growth plans for their areas. These plans would help coordinate economic development in local areas and prioritise investment by Central Government and local partners. As part of these plans, the Government had invited LEPs to develop a Structural and Investment Fund Strategy (SIFS) for use of the European Structural and Investment Funds for the period 2014-2020 in their local areas. Since West Suffolk was part of both the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) and the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (GCGP), it was essential that the Council contributed to both growth plans.

The two LEPs were at differing stages of development in terms of producing their plans. The GCGP was currently in the process of establishing a sub-group to draft its plan, whilst NALEP had already produced a draft '*Towards a Growth Plan*', which formed Appendix A to Report E108.

Councillor Pugh, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet. Members expressed concern that there appeared to be a lack of sufficient reference to promoting growth in West Suffolk in the NALEP growth plan. In response, Councillor Pugh stated that NALEP had already been informed about promoting West Suffolk further in its Plan and he would continue to press this point.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the content of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's '*Towards a Growth Plan*', as contained in Appendix A to Report E108, be noted;
- (2) comments on the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's '*Towards a Growth Plan*', as contained in Appendix A, be submitted to the Head of Economic Development and Growth, to enable a West Suffolk response to the consultation to be prepared;

- (3) the Head of Economic Development and Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, be given delegated authority to approve the final version of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's '*Towards a Growth Plan*'; and
- (4) the Head of Economic Development and Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, be given delegated authority to seek comments via email on the draft version, and subsequently approve the final version, of Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership's Growth Plan.

(Councillor Houlder left the meeting during the consideration of this item.)

39. Recommendations from the Sustainable Development Working Party: 3 September 2013

Decisions Plan Ref: Sep13/03, Sep13/10 and Sep13/12

Cabinet Members: Cllrs Terry Clements and Peter Stevens

The Cabinet considered Report E109 (amended) (previously circulated) which presented the recommendations emanating from the meeting of the Sustainable Development Working Party held on 3 September 2013.

On 3 September 2013 the Sustainable Development Working Party considered the following items:

- (1) Draft Joint Statement of Community Involvement;
- (2) Masterplan and Development Brief Protocol Update;
- (3) South Cambridgeshire Local Plan - Consultation;
- (4) 9th Annual Corporate Environmental Performance Report 2012/2013;
and
- (5) Developing a West Suffolk Contaminated Land Strategy.

Councillor Clements, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulation informed the Cabinet that Report E109 had been amended following changes to the recommendations of Report E87, '*Draft Joint Statement of Community Involvement*'. In addition, consideration of Report E89 was deferred until the next meeting of the Working Party on 18 September 2013 as it was closely linked to the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Transport Consultation Report due to be considered at that meeting. The recommendation contained in the original Report E109 was therefore not required to be considered by the Cabinet at this time.

Councillor Stevens, Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for the Environment, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet on the recommendations relating to the 9th Corporate Environmental Performance Report 2013/2013 and the development of the West Suffolk Contaminated Land Strategy. Particular recognition was given to the Environment Manager for the comprehensive content of the Environmental Performance report.

RESOLVED: That

(a) Draft Joint Statement of Community Involvement (Sep13/03)

The revised Draft Joint Statement of Community Involvement, attached as Appendix A of Report E87, be

approved for consultation, subject to the following amendments:

- (a) (Page 4 - state in the introduction how and when document will be reviewed, and also to remove the word 'draft' on first line;
- (b) Page 5 - remove references to 'documents in progress' as these will quickly date the document;
- (c) Page 15 - make it clearer that 'Local Plan contact list' is not limited to these organisations;
- (d) Page 20 - under publicising planning applications, insert 'other applications' at the top of the page as these are the majority of applications received by the Local Planning Authority;
- (e) Pages 20, 21, 22 - remove references to 'our applications' in the boxes;
- (f) Page 24 - Neighbour notification: insert reference to consulting occupants of land or buildings within close proximity of the site (as well as those adjoining or opposite), at the discretion of the Council;
- (g) Page 24 - Local advertisements: to investigate the viability of advertising in Newmarket Weekly News and Haverhill Weekly News; and
- (h) Page 33 - remove reference to 'Borough Council Offices' in relation to Haverhill.

(b) Masterplan and Development Brief Protocol Update

The revised protocol for the preparation of Masterplans and Development Briefs, as set out in Appendices A and B of Paper E88, be approved.

(c) 9th Annual Corporate Environmental Performance Report 2012/2013 (Sep13/12)

Continued support be given to improve the Council's Environmental Performance in order to achieve the Corporate Environmental Targets set out in the Environmental Statement 2012 attached as Appendix A to Report E90.



RECOMMENDED:

(d) Developing a West Suffolk Contaminated Land Strategy

That the proposed West Suffolk Contaminated Land Strategy, as amended by the wording contained in Appendix A and as set out in Appendix C to Report E91, be formally adopted.

**40. Recommendation from the Haverhill Area Working Party:
29 August 2013: Cancellation of Article 4 Direction in Haverhill**
*Decisions Plan Ref: Sep13/07 Cabinet Members: Cllrs Anne Gower
and Terry Clements*

The Cabinet considered Report E110 (previously circulated) which presented the recommendations emanating from the meeting of the Haverhill Area Working Party on 29 August 2013.

On 29 August 2013 the Haverhill Area Working Party considered the following items:

- (1) Haverhill Article 4 Directions: Response to Consultation;
- (2) Public Art in the Town Centre of Haverhill (PATCH): Update; and
- (3) Haverhill Masterplan.

A proposal to cancel the Article 4 Direction in the two conservation areas in Haverhill was presented to the Working Party on 15 November 2012 (Report D185 referred) and Section 4 of Report E82 had provided reasons why the cancellation should be progressed. Members had recommended that public consultation should be carried out regarding the proposed cancellation. Of the residents who had attended the drop-in sessions arranged as part of the consultation process, the majority were in support of the proposal to cancel the Article 4 Direction. Two written objections had been received, one from a resident and one from a Ward Member and Section 7 of Report E110 provided the officers' responses to those objections, which were considered by the Working Party.

At the meeting of the Working Party, a detailed discussion had been held and following due consideration the majority of Members felt the Article 4 Direction should not be cancelled. Members had taken into account the reasons given for removing the Direction, including that it required regular monitoring and the resources required for this had to be weighed against the effectiveness of the Direction. However, concern was expressed that its cancellation would result in inadequate protection for properties whose owners wished to make inappropriate changes in the conservation areas which would not require consent.

Councillor Mrs Gower, Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for Haverhill explained that questions had been raised regarding the possibility of imposing a partial removal of the Article 4 Direction; however, the officers present were not privy to this information. Members therefore considered the item should be deferred to enable the gathering of this further information to enable the Cabinet to make an informed decision at a later date.

RESOLVED:

That consideration of the originally proposed cancellation of the Article 4 Direction in the two Haverhill Conservation Areas be deferred to enable further information to be gathered by the officers on this matter.

(Councillor Nettleton left the meeting during the consideration of this item.)

The meeting concluded at 6.42 pm

**J H M GRIFFITHS
CHAIRMAN**