

## Cabinet 10 December 2013

### Vision 2031: Consideration of Modifications

#### 1. Summary and reasons for recommendation

- 1.1 The Council's Vision 2031 local plan documents are currently with the appointed Planning Inspector. It is expected that, during the course of their Examination, there will be a requirement to produce modifications in order that the Inspector can declare them 'sound'.
- 1.2 In order to meet a tight timetable set by the Inspector, the Council needs to put in place a means whereby draft modifications are initially agreed.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that subject to the approval of full Council, the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services, and pending his arrival in post the Place Shaping Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services, be given delegated authority to approve proposed main modifications required to the Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and Rural Vision 2031 documents ahead of public consultation on the main modifications following the close of the local plan hearings.

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### **3. Corporate priorities**

3.1 The recommendation meets the following, as contained within the Corporate Plan:

- (a) Corporate Priority 2: *Working together for prosperous and environmentally-responsible communities*

### **4. Key issues**

4.1 On 30 September 2013 the Council resolved to submit the Vision 2031 local plan documents for Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and the Rural Area to the Secretary of State for Examination by a Planning Inspector. Examination of the documents has now commenced and Hearings are expected to be held early in 2014. During the course of the Examination it is likely that there will be a need to suggest and agree modifications to the documents in order to ensure that the Inspector can find them 'sound'. Some modifications will arise from questions asked by the Inspector and others will result from comments received from people or organisations that submitted representations during consultation on the Vision documents. Although it is anticipated that most will be minor in nature, there may be a need for the Council to propose some 'main modifications' to the plan in order for the Planning Inspector to find it sound by the time the Examination concludes. While it will ultimately be necessary to consult on these main modifications, it is unlikely that there will be an opportunity before or during the Hearings to take officers' suggested main modifications through the democratic process for consideration and endorsement. To do so would add considerable delays to the Examination process given that the Inspector will have arranged the Hearings and report writing to fit in with his other case load.

4.2 Given that the proposed main modifications will be subject to public consultation following the conclusion of the Hearings, it is suggested that an appropriate way forward would be for the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services, and pending his arrival in post the Place Shaping Manager, should be given delegated powers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services, to agree draft proposed main modifications to the Vision 2031 documents to be submitted to the Planning Inspector. The proposed modifications would be reported back through Cabinet following the conclusion of the Hearings.

### **5. Other options considered**

5.1 The Borough Council is obliged to act diligently to respond to the timetable of the Examination in order that undue delays are not created. The alternative approach of considering proposed modifications to the Vision documents at Cabinet, and possibly Council, before submitting them to the Planning Inspector could introduce significant delay to the adoption of the local plan documents. Ultimately a meeting of the Full Council will determine whether to adopt the Vision documents as required to be modified by the Inspector.

## **6. Community impact**

### **6.1 Crime and disorder impact** *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)*

6.1.1 It is not considered that the content of this paper will have any impact on crime and disorder in the borough.

### **6.2 Diversity and equality impact** *(including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment)*

6.2.1 It is not considered that the content of this paper will have any impact on diversity and equality in the borough.

### **6.3 Sustainability impact** *(including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment)*

6.3.1 A Sustainability Appraisal of the emerging Vision 2031 documents has been published at each stage of their preparation. Any modifications to the Vision 2031 documents, as modified, will also need to be the subject of a Sustainability Appraisal before they are adopted by the Council.

### **6.4 Other impact** *(any other impacts affecting this report)*

6.4.1 None associated with this report.

## **7. Consultation** *(what consultation has been undertaken, and what were the outcomes?)*

7.1 Proposed main modifications will need to be the subject of consultation, with comments being submitted directly to the Planning Inspector. At that stage, the Inspector is able to re-open the Hearing if he considers that the comments require such an action.

## **8. Financial and resource implications** *(including asset management implications)*

8.1 There are no resource implications resulting from the content of this paper.

## **9. Risk/opportunity assessment** *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

9.1 Given that any proposed modifications will ultimately be the subject of consultation, as outlined in 7.1 above, there is little risk of legal challenge as a result of the proposal contained in this report.

## **10. Legal and policy implications**

10.1 There are no legal or policy implications resulting from the content of the consultation document.

## **11. Wards affected**

11.1 All Wards.

## **12. Background papers**

12.1 Report E113 to the Sustainable Development Working Party:  
Bury St Edmunds Vision 2031, Haverhill Vision 2031, Rural Vision 2031 –  
Submission

Report E118 to Cabinet: Recommendations from the Sustainable  
Development Working Party: 18 September 2013

Report E126 to Council: Schedule of Referrals from Cabinet, West Suffolk  
Joint Standards Committee and Development Control Committee

## **13. Documents attached**

13.1 None.

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2031 - Consideration of Modifications.doc