

**ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**HAVERHILL AREA WORKING PARTY**

**Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday 10 December 2009 at 4.00 pm  
in the Meeting Room, Castle Manor Business and Training Centre, Castle  
Manor Business and Enterprise College, Eastern Avenue, Haverhill**

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs K D Richardson (Vice-Chairman) (in the Chair)  
Councillors Ager, Aitkens, Cox, Mrs Gower, McManus, Redhead and  
Mrs Rushbrook

BY INVITATION: Haverhill Town Councillor Mrs E McManus  
Mr G Mussett, Clerk to Haverhill Town Council

**59. Substitutes**

No substitutions were declared.

**60. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Whittaker and Tina Hanks, Haverhill Town Centre Manager.

**61. Minutes**

Councillor Cox made the following observations on issues arising from the minutes:-

- (a) on 23 July 2009 the Working Party had resolved that, *'a breakdown of costs to produce the proposed Business Directory be presented at a future meeting of the Working Party'* (Minute 23 referred). Councillor Cox stated that this breakdown of costs had not been presented before the production of the Directory and that he believed it would be produced in black and white print only and not in colour as actually presented. In response, Councillor Cox was informed that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2009 had stated that the Directory would cost the equivalent of 28p a copy (Minute 34 referred) and there was no mention in previous minutes of the Directory being produced in black and white print only; and
- (b) a written reply had not yet been received by email in respect of confirming whether Market Square was under the ownership of the Borough Council (Minute 50 of the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2009 referred.) The Head of Planning and Economic Development stated that a response would be circulated shortly.

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

*(Councillors Aitkens and Mrs Rushbrook arrived during the consideration of this item.)*

**62. Declaration of Interests**

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

*(Prior to the consideration of the following substantive items of business, Councillor Mrs Gower wished to record that the Town Centre Manager had not submitted a report for consideration at this meeting as previously expected. The Head of Planning and Economic Development and the Haverhill Town Centre Manager would both present a detailed and comprehensive report on the current Town Centre Management (TCM) activities and proposals for the 2010/2011 TCM Work Programme at the next meeting of the Working Party on 14 January 2010.)*

### **63. Economic Action Plan**

The Working Party considered Report A386 (previously circulated) which presented a draft economic assessment for Haverhill and asked the Working Party to provide suggestions for the development of a new Economic Action Plan for Haverhill.

On 18 November 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had endorsed a draft economic assessment of St Edmundsbury. The next stage was to produce an Economic Action Plan which would build upon the information contained in the assessment to enable the Council to promote the economic prosperity of St Edmundsbury. Following consideration and approval of the draft Action Plan by the Policy Development Committee on 13 January 2010, a period of public consultation would commence until the end of February 2010. The final assessment and Action Plan would be then be considered by the Policy Development Committee and the Cabinet in March 2010.

Attached as Appendix A to the report was the economic assessment of Haverhill, which was presented in further detail by the Economic Development Officer (Strategy). A number of key findings associated with Haverhill were expanded upon, namely:-

- (a) Haverhill was the fifth largest town in Suffolk;
- (b) it was located in a significant position as it was close to Cambridge, the M11 and Stansted airport;
- (c) it was economically considered to be part of the Cambridge market and economic performance had been robust over the past ten years;
- (d) the importance of the manufacturing industry was recognised as this market provided a third of all employment in Haverhill;
- (e) recent redundancies had increased unemployment, but Haverhill was weathering the recession reasonably well; and
- (f) it had benefitted from £19 million investment from the Borough Council in the last two years, which had supported the attraction of further investment from other sources, such as Tesco.

The Economic Development Officer (Strategy) then provided a detailed list of suggestions for inclusion in the Economic Action Plan for the whole of St Edmundsbury and also a number of proposals specifically connected with Haverhill. These included:-

- (a) develop an area action plan for the town;
- (b) identify and promote target sectors, for example, bio-technology, advanced manufacturing and engineering;
- (c) develop north-west Haverhill; and
- (d) support the development of Haverhill Enterprise Park.

A wide ranging discussion was held in respect of a number of issues arising from the assessment and the suggestions for the Action Plan, including:-

- (a) as Haverhill had a high number of young people classified as Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) rate, Members considered that a further education centre should be provided in the town centre and further education providers should cater for the needs and practical skills required by businesses in Haverhill;
- (b) in response to a consensus of opinion received from business representatives located in Haverhill, which stated that Haverhill's *'biggest drawback was the social side'*, as contained in Appendix 1 of the Economic Assessment attached as Appendix A to the report; the Working Party considered this was not an accurate representation of Haverhill and provided examples of social provision in the town;
- (c) due to the recent multi-million pound investment in the town centre, Haverhill should be encouraged as a tourist destination;
- (d) whilst some businesses would like to recruit staff from other areas of the country and offer good relocation packages, it was recognised that further housing development was required to accommodate regional migration;
- (e) there had been previous discussions regarding the provision of a 'Science Park' in Haverhill to support the bio-technological industry in South Cambridgeshire; however, the site originally identified for this project was now designated for developing the concept of a Haverhill Enterprise Park. This had been considered to be more economically viable as it would provide an ideal location for developing the advanced manufacturing industry. As previously identified in the Gibbard Report as a principal 'Gateway Site' to Haverhill, any development in this location would also be required to meet high visual standards. A detailed report providing the Concept Statement for this site would be presented to the Working Party at a later date.

RESOLVED:-

That, having taking into account the views of the Haverhill Area Working Party, the suggestions provided by the Economic Development Officer (Strategy) for inclusion in the St Edmundsbury Economic Action Plan, including the proposals specifically connected with Haverhill, be worked up into a draft Economic Action Plan for presentation at the meeting of the Policy Development Committee on 13 January 2010.

#### **64. Queen Street Grant Scheme: Determination of Applications for Grant Funding**

The Working Party considered Report A387 (previously circulated) which sought determination of the applications submitted by Queen Street traders for grants towards shop front improvements in accordance with the Queen Street Shop Fronts Grant Scheme.

On 6 May 2009 the Working Party approved the details of the design and delivery of the Queen Street Shop Fronts Grant Scheme (Report Z687 referred).

On 22 October 2009 a working group comprising Councillors Ager, Cox and Mrs Richardson, supported by officers, was established to assess the submitted applications against the agreed criteria for the Queen Street Shop Fronts Grant Scheme. The group was also required to make recommendations on each application to the Working Party for determination.

A total of 11 grant applications, including one application for two adjacent properties, had been received within the period up to the deadline of 2 October 2009. The applications had subsequently been assessed by the working group and the recommendations of the group in respect of each application were attached as Appendix A to the report.

The Working Party noted that should all applications receive the recommended amounts of grant funding, the total budget allocation of £50,000 towards the Scheme had not been fully utilised. It was, therefore, possible to introduce another round of grant funding at a later date and invite unsuccessful applicants to re-apply.

In response to questions, the Working Party was informed that:-

- (a) it was not considered appropriate to make it a condition of the grant to USA Chicken that it should maintain the cleanliness of the paved area located to the front of the premises, as these matters were not connected. The issue of maintaining a litter-free and clean external appearance to the front of the shop was being monitored separately;
- (b) it was not necessarily imperative that applicants were required to provide a second quote for the works; and
- (c) applicants must meet all the provisos detailed in each recommendation in order to receive the total grant allocation, and this would be reimbursed following the completion of the works. Works were required to be completed within six months of receiving the grant notification or should planning permission of other consents be required, this six month completion period would not commence until the necessary consents had been obtained.

Members commended the working group for its efforts and considered that once the shop fronts that had been recommended to receive grants had been improved these would make an excellent contribution to enhancing the appearance of Queen Street. The Working Party also agreed that the next round of grants should not be awarded until the improvement works to a number of the shop fronts had had been completed in order to evaluate the success of the scheme, including making revisions if necessary.

RESOLVED:-

That, as detailed in Appendix A to Report A387, the following be approved:-

- (1) subject to the necessary consents being first obtained, grants be awarded to *Samuels*, and *Quick Service Shoe Repairs* for the proposed works;
- (2) subject to the necessary consent being first obtained and detailed changes to the fascia being agreed with the officers, a grant be awarded to *Haverhill Weekly News* for the proposed work;
- (3) subject to the necessary consents being first obtained and details of the signage and colours being agreed with the officers, grants be

awarded to *USA Chicken*, and *Haverhill Tandoori* for the proposed works, incorporating the recessed door option to both schemes;

- (4) subject to the necessary consent being first obtained and the provision of details in respect of the fascia being finalised and agreed with the officers, a grant be awarded to *C & B Beautiful* for the proposed work;
- (5) subject to the necessary consent being first obtained and the provision of details in respect of the fascia and illumination being finalised and agreed with the officers, a grant be awarded to *Top Chef* for the proposed work;
- (6) subject to the provision of details in respect of the fascia and colour being finalised and agreed with the officers, a grant be awarded to *Sonia's* for the proposed work;
- (7) a partial grant be awarded to *Kelto* for the proposed repair/redecoration work; and
- (8) no grants be awarded to *Access House/Hair Design*, and *Morleys* for the proposed works but the applicants be encouraged to submit revised proposals in any future round of grant applications.

#### **65. Queen Street Enhancement Scheme: Drakes Yard**

The Working Party considered Report A388 (previously circulated) which provided details on costs for the erection of a gateway feature to Drakes Yard together with a lower cost alternative option.

On 22 October 2009, the Working Party had requested that further details be provided on the cost of erecting a gateway feature to Drakes Yard, which was accessed from Queen Street. Disappointment had been expressed at this meeting that this element was not included in the Queen Street Enhancement Scheme. The officers had considered the feature would be too costly to include in the original Enhancement Scheme; however, the Working Party noted that funding remained available in the Enhancement Scheme budget should it be considered appropriate to commence with the additional works.

The proposed gateway would be constructed of brick and stone, with a metal gate and an indicative illustration was provided in Section 3 of the report. The Working Party noted that as this option would require the construction of foundations and required the relocating of the gas and British Telecom (BT) telephone service to the adjacent Star Express restaurant and also the relocation of the restaurant's downpipe.

The estimated costs to provide this feature would be as follows:-

- (1) Construction Works: £4,500; and
- (2) Engineering Works  
(relocation of services): £2,300.

This indicated an overall total, excluding Value Added Tax (VAT) of £6,800.

Attached as Appendix A to the report was a lower cost option which showed the feature constructed in steel capped timber with a steel arch supported on timber posts. The gate had been omitted from this option and no foundation works would be

required. It was estimated that this option would cost in the region of £2,000 to £2,500.

The Working Party considered the options in detail and whilst it preferred the design of the brick and stone option, Members considered the estimated costs of engineering works were excessive and suggested that this design should be revised to incorporate elements of the second option to eliminate the need to relocate the gas and BT telephone services. It had been identified that a priority was to conceal the ventilation flue emanating from the adjacent restaurant, and considered this could be achieved with a revision to the design. An option of incorporating the name 'Drakes Yard' in steel lettering in the archway itself was also proposed.

The officers confirmed that it would undertake revisions to the design and present further options and costings for consideration at the next meeting of the Working Party on 14 January 2010.

RESOLVED:-

That, revisions to the design of the gateway feature to Drakes Yard be undertaken and further options and costings be presented for consideration at the next meeting of the Working Party on 14 January 2010.

#### **66. Queen Street Enhancement Scheme: Update**

*(The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Richardson, declared a personal interest as an employee of Haldo Developments Ltd, who were supplying the electrical supply boxes for use by market traders in Queen Street and remained in the meeting for the consideration of this item.)*

The Working Party received and noted Report A389 (previously circulated) which was the Project Status Report (PSR) in respect of the Queen Street Enhancement Scheme as at 4 December 2009.

The Head of Planning and Economic Development informed the Working Party that the official opening ceremony was successfully held on Friday 13 November 2009. In addition, a number of 'snagging' issues were being addressed and fencing behind the USA Chicken business was shortly to be erected. A Close Out report would be presented to the Working Party at a future meeting.

The Chairman, as Chairman of the Public Art in the Town Centre of Haverhill (PATCH) Group informed the Working Party that tenders to commission the public art in Queen Street had been invited and four companies had submitted tenders to date. The art would not be installed until some months into the new year.

A wide ranging discussion was held on a number of topics, including the positioning of the notice boards and other items from the bespoke furniture range and the provision of the electrical supply boxes for use by market traders in Queen Street.

## **67. Review of Parking Charges: 2010/2011**

The Working Party considered Report A390 (previously circulated) which sought approval for proposed alterations to parking charges in Haverhill for 2010/2011.

The Council undertook a review of the parking charges applicable to off-street car parks located in St Edmundsbury on an annual basis. Like all other fees and charges there was a need to keep parking charges under review in order to maintain a good quality service, keep pace with rising costs, such as staffing and maintenance, and to ease demands on the level of council tax charged. The variation in car parking charges was also aimed at ensuring parking occurred in the most appropriate location for the length and nature of stay.

The proposed alterations to the parking charges in Haverhill for 2010/2011 were as follows:-

- (a) increase all charges by 10p; and
- (b) introduce charging on Sundays.

The rationale and possible impact of the proposals were detailed in Section 3.2 of the report and a table of the current and proposed charges on Mondays to Saturdays were contained in Appendix A to the report.

A detailed discussion was held and there was a general consensus of opinion that the 10p increase on Mondays to Saturdays was a reasonable increase. However, Members considered that charging to park on Sundays was inappropriate, largely because Sunday was not traditionally a busy shopping day in Haverhill as a significant proportion of businesses remained closed on Sundays.

A discussion was also held regarding the impact of the free car parking available at the new Tesco store on the income generated from the car parks located in the town centre. The Head of Property Services and Engineering informed Members that a review of the complete car parking operation in Haverhill would be presented to the Working Party in 2010.



### ***RECOMMENDED:-***

***That subject to the budget setting process, the following be applied to all off-street car parks in Haverhill for 2010/2011:-***

- (a) all parking charges be increased by 10p on Mondays to Saturdays, as set out in Appendix A to Report A390; and***
- (b) no charging be introduced on Sundays.***

*(Councillor Cox wished it to be recorded that he voted against the recommendations as he did not support any increase in parking charges for 2010/2011.)*

## **68. Review of Markets**

The Working Party received and noted Report A391 (previously circulated) which provided details of the decision of the Cabinet to undertake a review of the provision markets in both Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill.

In order for the provision markets located in both Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill to continue to be successful, it was considered appropriate to identify the vision and aspirations of all stakeholders and agree a way to achieve these. A report which contained the recommendations of the Bury St Edmunds Area Working Party in respect of this issue, was submitted to the Cabinet on 2 December 2009 (Report A363 refers) and the following was subsequently resolved:-

*'That,*

- (1) the review of markets be undertaken;*
- (2) the National Association of British Markets Authorities be appointed to undertake a review and, following consultations, make recommendations for future service delivery; and*
- (3) the appointment of the National Association of British Markets Authorities without compliance with Contract Procedure Rules, as contained within the Council's Constitution, be approved as an exemption under paragraph 2.2(iii) as the services are of a specialised nature.'*

The markets were performing strongly compared to others in the region and proposals to provide positive support for the market in Haverhill, by way of an extension into the High Street on Fridays, were currently the subject of consultation with the intention that this would provide the market with the opportunity to grow and develop. Three of the four staff directly involved in the markets service were approaching retirement age, therefore, this had provided an opportunity to review structures and decide upon appropriate options for the future delivery of the service. On 2 December 2009 the Cabinet had resolved to appoint consultants from The National Association of British Markets Authorities as it was considered this Association could provide the necessary expertise and specialist knowledge to add value to the review. The appointment of the consultant to undertake the work for both markets was approximately £6,000 and this would be funded from earmarked reserves.

A detail discussion was held and some concern was expressed that as the Bury St Edmunds Area Working Party had considered the proposals to undertake the review, the Haverhill Area Working Party should also have been given the same opportunity before approval was sought from the Cabinet. In response, the officers informed the Working Party that the review would analyse the markets provision in both Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill as part of the same review and that the findings of the consultant that related specifically to the Haverhill markets would be reported to the Haverhill Area Working Party for consideration in due course.

## **69. Haverhill Community Football Project: Update**

*(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.)*

The Working Party received and noted Report A392 (previously circulated) which was the Project Status Report for the Haverhill Community Football Project as at 11 November 2009.



The Head of Property Services and Engineering reported that the scheme was progressing on time and within the allocated budget. The blockwork walls of the building were 80 to 90% completed and a planning application had been submitted to dispose of the excavated surplus soil to an adjacent site. In addition, due to the excessive spates of vandalism that had occurred on the site during the early stages of the construction, the security of the site was currently being reviewed. Whilst it was usually the responsibility of the contractor to provide appropriate security measures, the officers had considered that the level of security required was beyond what was reasonable and, therefore, the officers had agreed to make a contribution which would be provided from the approved contingency budget allocation.

In response to questions, the Working Party was informed that:-

- (a) excess soil that had currently been deposited on Chalkstone Playing Field would be removed from this location following receipt of planning consent to dispose of the earth at the adjacent site; and
- (b) following completion of the Project, all costs connected with the scheme would be provided to the Working Party in a Project Close Out report.

#### **70. Haverhill Bus Station Refurbishment: Update**

The Working Party received and noted an oral report in respect of the Haverhill Bus Station refurbishment works.

The Head of Property Services and Engineering drew relevant issues to the attention of the Working Party including that discussions were still continuing with Suffolk County Council in respect of the previous concern expressed regarding the appropriateness of the signage and the bus shelters provided. A further update would be reported at the next meeting on 14 January 2010.

#### **71. Dates of Future Meetings**

The Working Party confirmed the following dates for future meetings in 2010:-

14 January;  
11 March;  
22 April;  
10 June;  
22 July;  
9 September;  
21 October; and  
9 December.

All dates were Thursdays and the meetings to commence at 4.00 pm with the exception of the meetings scheduled for 14 January, 11 March, 22 July and 21 October 2010, which would commence at 4.15 pm.

\*\*\*\*\*

**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.

\*\*\*\*\*

*(At this point, Town Councillor Mrs McManus and the Clerk to Haverhill Town Council, Mr Mussett were invited to remain in the meeting during the consideration of the following item which would be held in private session.)*

**72. Haverhill Leisure Centre Refurbishment: Project Close Out Report**

The Working Party considered Exempt Report A393 (previously circulated) which provided the Project Close Out Report in respect of the Haverhill Leisure Centre Refurbishment.

The Head of Property Services and Engineering drew relevant issues to the attention of the Working Party. Particular reference was given to the positive elements of the project, such as:-

- (a) all original objectives of the scheme had been achieved;
- (b) as original tenders that had been received had been significantly within budget, an opportunity arose whereby it had been decided to remodel the *Kidzone* facility on the first floor and the health suite on the ground floor, which enabled both of these to be accommodated within the existing budget; and
- (c) the building works were finished to a high standard, which could be attributed to the contractor, Cocksedge Builders, and their decision to appoint a Clerk of Works to be available on site.

The Working Party also noted issues that could have progressed the scheme more efficiently or where situations could have been handled differently.

The Portfolio Holder for Haverhill and Housing, Councillor Mrs Gower, stated that the refurbishment of the Leisure Centre had been a tremendous success and she had received several positive reports from residents. She continued by asking whether the paved area located to the front of *Subway* and *Prezzo* could be allocated to an alternative use as it was currently permitted to allow car parking in this area. Vehicles parked in this area appeared visually obtrusive and therefore, this area could instead be used as a pedestrianised plaza with seating and for holding specific outdoor events. Vehicles would also be encouraged to park nearby in The Meadows car park, where full capacity was not currently met. Other Members fully supported this suggestion and the officers agreed to prepare a detailed proposal to present to the next meeting of the Working Party for consideration.

In response to a question, the Head of Property Services and Engineering informed the Working Party that a written reply would be provided in respect of detailing the precise financial implications to Abbeycroft Leisure whilst the Haverhill Leisure Centre was temporarily closed.

RESOLVED:- That,

- (1) a detailed proposal on the possibility of allocating the paved area to the front of *Subway* and *Prezzo* from car parking to a pedestrianised plaza be presented to the next meeting of the Working Party on 14 January 2010; and
- (2) a written reply be provided to the Working Party in respect of detailing the precise financial implications to Abbeycroft Leisure whilst the Haverhill Leisure Centre was temporarily closed.

The meeting concluded at 6.32 pm

**CHAIRMAN**