

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

HAVERHILL AREA WORKING PARTY

**Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday 11 March 2010 at 4.15 pm
in the Conference Room, Samuel Ward Arts and Technology College,
Chalkstone Way, Haverhill**

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs K D Richardson (Vice-Chairman) (In the Chair)
Councillors Ager, Aitkens, Cox, Mrs Gower, Marks (substituting for
A Whittaker), McManus, Redhead, Mrs Richardson and
Mrs Rushbrook

BY INVITATION: Simon Barnett, Passenger Transport Senior Infrastructure Officer,
Suffolk County Council (for Agenda Item 5 only (Minute 89 below))
Tina Hanks, Haverhill Town Centre Manager
Mr Bill Harrison, Regional Director, AECOM Consultants (for Agenda
Item 6 only (Minute 90 below))
Gordon Mussett, Clerk to Haverhill Town Council

85. Substitutes

The following substitution was declared:-

Councillor Marks substituting for Councillor A Whittaker.

86. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Town Councillor Mrs E McManus and
the Chairman, Borough Councillor A Whittaker.

87. Minutes

Councillor Cox made reference to Minute 75(c) of the previous meeting held on
14 January 2010, where he had queried whether the Head of Property Services and
Engineering had been given delegated authority to instigate the provision of additional
security measures on the site of the Haverhill Community Football Project from the
approved contingency contained within the total budget allocation for this scheme.
Councillor Cox stated that whilst he had received a written response regarding this
matter from the Head of Property Services and Engineering, he considered that the
spending of £28,857 on the additional security measures exceeded the amount
permitted under delegated authority powers. In response, the Head of Property
Services and Engineering stated that the allocation was provided in the approved capital
budget for the scheme and therefore, considered he was authorised to make this
decision. However, he would provide a written response on this issue following
consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2010 were confirmed as a
correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RESOLVED:-

That a response be provided by the Head of Property Services and
Engineering by email in respect of confirmation that he was authorised to
authorise £28,857 on additional security measures on the site of the

Haverhill Community Football Project from the approved contingency contained within the total budget allocation for this scheme.

(Councillor Mrs Rushbrook arrived during the consideration of this item.)

88. Declaration of Interests

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

89. Proposals for Replacement Bus Shelters

(Councillors Mrs Gower and Marks declared personal interests as Members of Suffolk County Council and remained in the meeting for the consideration of this item.)

The Working Party considered Paper A555 (previously circulated) which contained information to support the presentation provided by an officer of Suffolk County Council (SCC) in respect of the proposed replacement shelters for Haverhill Bus Station.

The Working Party received a presentation from Simon Barnett, Passenger Transport Senior Infrastructure Officer of SCC, in respect of the proposed replacement shelters for Haverhill Bus Station. Documentation to support the presentation, including the principle of the design of the proposed shelters, was attached to the Working Party agenda as Paper A555.

Following complaints received that the bus shelters installed at the recently refurbished Haverhill Bus Station were inadequate and not fit-for-purpose, SCC had investigated possibilities for replacement shelters. It was proposed to remove the six newly installed shelters and replace them with larger versions, including repositioning the shelters to aid the deployment of ramps compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to reach the buses.

The Working Party noted that principally, the proposed shelters would:-

- (a) be wider than the existing shelters by 0.7 metres;
- (b) be custom built to a particular length at each bay to ensure the required capacity was met;
- (c) have panes constructed of glass as opposed to polycarbonate, which was more expensive and created maintenance problems; and
- (d) contain a mix of flat and perched seating.

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

- (a) the new shelters could be installed in approximately four to five weeks, which largely depended upon the availability of contractors to install the shelters;
- (b) the existing bus stop information flags should contain 'freephone' details to enable passengers to report any damage to the shelters;
- (c) fold down seating was not an option for installation in the shelters at this time, principally because they could be easily damaged and maintenance or replacement costs would be significantly higher than flat and perched seating;

- (d) solar powered lighting was also not an option due to the unreliability of the technology and there was currently no budget available for this addition to the shelters; and
- (e) it had originally been agreed to illustrate the CB9 logo on the shelters when St Edmundsbury Borough Council was leading on this project; however, SCC had investigated this issue and considered it was not a viable option to etch the logo on the panes of glass and other non permanent options were likely to easily deteriorate. The logo would, however, be shown on the Real-Time Passenger Information Displays and the clock feature.

A discussion was also held in respect of how successful the bus operators had adapted to the new pick-up and drop-off bays, which was noted by Mr Barnett.

The collective response of the Working Party would be forwarded to Suffolk County Council.



RECOMMENDED:-

That the principle of the design and positioning of the replacement bus shelters at Haverhill Bus Station proposed by Suffolk County Council, as outlined in Paper A555, be approved.

(Mr Barnett left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

90. Local Development Framework: North East Haverhill Transport Impact Assessment

The Working Party considered Paper A546 (previously circulated), which was the St Edmundsbury Local Development Framework: Haverhill Transport Impact Assessment and was asked to approve this report as part of the evidence base for preparing the Local Development Framework.

The Local Development Framework Submission Core Strategy identified a strategic direction of growth in north east Haverhill. In order to ensure that the growth proposed in this location would not have any insurmountable impacts on the transport infrastructure of the town, Suffolk County Council, as Highway Authority, and the Borough Council had employed consultants to assess the potential impact of this proposal on the local highway network. The consultants' final report had now been published and would form important background evidence in demonstrating that the Core Strategy was sound when examined by the Planning Inspector.

The Working Party noted that the Assessment had also been considered by the Sustainable Development Panel on 9 March 2010.

The Assessment concluded that:-

- (a) the strategic direction of growth at north-east Haverhill was feasible in transport terms, with relatively modest transport infrastructure and facilities requirements;
- (b) the A11/A1307 junction in Cambridgeshire was likely to need some minor changes to respond to the additional flows;
- (c) the proposed development could be managed in a sustainable way, with manageable impacts on the town and the trunk road. The town as a whole needed to be involved in the shift to lower car use; and

- (d) the north east relief road would be provided as part of the development, linking the A143 Wratting Road to Coupals Road running round the north of the golf course. Safety and environmental improvements were considered feasible, and would be needed on the existing roads linking to the A1017 Sturmer Road/ Rowley Hill. This local route would provide some limited diversion from the town centre. A more detailed traffic impact study would be required to design the required improvements at the eastern connection between the north east relief road and the local road network.

Councillor Cox proposed that consideration of the item should be deferred to allow the Working Party further time to fully digest the contents of the report; however this suggestion was not supported by the remaining Members of the Working Party.

The Working Party received a presentation from Mr Bill Harrison, Regional Director of AECOM, consultants appointed to undertake the North East Haverhill Transport Impact Assessment.

Members considered the conclusions of the study in detail, particularly the costings amounting to £5 million that was required to deliver transport infrastructure improvements to support development in north east Haverhill, as outlined in Table 13 of Section 5 of the Paper. It wished for emphasis to be placed in the Assessment that the costings were indicative only and this amount would be the absolute minimum required to make the necessary enhancements.



RECOMMENDED:- That

- (1) subject to (2) and (3) below, Paper A546 be published as part of the evidence base for preparing the Local Development Framework;***
- (2) it be emphasised in the report that the costings amounting to £5 million required to deliver transport infrastructure improvements to support development in north-east Haverhill, as outlined in Table 13 of Section 5 of Paper A546, are indicative only and this amount is the absolute minimum required to make the necessary enhancements; and***
- (3) the Head of Planning and Economic Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning and Chairmen of the Sustainable Development Panel and Haverhill Area Working Party be authorised to make minor typographic, grammatical and/or factual changes.***

(Councillor Cox wished it to be recorded that he voted against the recommendations.)

(Mr Harrison left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

91. Consultation on Building a New Care Home to Replace Place Court

(Councillors Mrs Gower and Marks declared personal interests as Members of Suffolk County Council and remained in the meeting for the consideration of this item.)

The Working Party considered Report A556 (previously circulated) which asked Members to respond to a consultation on a new standard of care home for older people in Haverhill.

Suffolk County Council (SCC) was proposing to build three new registered care homes in Haverhill, Lowestoft and Mildenhall to replace the existing homes in these areas. This would be undertaken using a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) allocation from the Department of Health. In Haverhill, it was proposed that the new care home would have 60 beds for the care and accommodation of older people with dementia and complex needs. The care home would also have the flexibility to offer intermediate and respite care services. All residents of the existing Place Court Residential Care Home in Haverhill would be able to transfer to the new home and it was expected that the Place Court care team would also relocate to the new home with the residents to provide continuity during the time of change.

The Chief Executive tabled a booklet which detailed the consultation process on the proposed care home in Haverhill including that the likely location for the new home was on the former Chalkstone Middle School Site on Millfield Way.

Attached as Appendix A to the report was a number of questions provided by SCC and the Working Party was asked to respond to these questions to form a collective consultation response on behalf of the Borough Council.

Councillor Cox expressed concern that the proposed location was not suitable for the new care home and considered that older people would prefer a more tranquil site out of town. In contrast, the majority of Members considered that from their own experience, older people preferred to feel part of the community and not placed in isolation away from facilities and other people.

The Working Party considered the questions detailed in Appendix A and wished the following comments to be submitted to Suffolk County Council:-

- (a) a significant need for a new care home in Haverhill to meet capacity requirements was recognised as a high priority, particularly to cater for those who had dementia, required respite care or required other complex, specialist care;
- (b) whilst it was recognised that the new home was proposed to be located on the former Chalkstone Middle School Site on Millfield Way and support was given to this location by the majority of Members, it was considered whether the premises should be positioned on the site nearest to the town centre to enable ease of pedestrian access to and from the town;
- (c) it was asked whether the Working Party could be consulted on a detailed plan for the new home;
- (d) adequate parking arrangements should be incorporated into the scheme, including accommodating Community Transport buses; and
- (e) Members strongly supported the concept of rooms being grouped into homely clusters, as proposed.

Some concern was also expressed regarding the reliability of funding the scheme using a PFI capital allocation from the Department of Health, as detailed in Section 13.2 of the report. The Working Party acknowledged that in order to proceed, the scheme depended on this capital; however, it was agreed that this issue should be highlighted to SCC in the consultation response.



RECOMMENDED:-

That having considered the proposal of Suffolk County Council (SCC) to replace Place Court, Haverhill with a new care home, as detailed in Section 13 of Report A556, the following observations and comments of the Haverhill Area Working Party be submitted to SCC on behalf of the Borough Council in response to the consultation questions set out in Appendix A to Report A556:-

- (1) a significant need for a new care home in Haverhill to meet capacity requirements is recognised as a high priority, particularly to cater for those that have dementia, require respite care or require other complex, specialist care;*
- (2) whilst it has already been agreed to locate the new home on the former Chalkstone Middle School site on Millfield Way and support is given to this location, it be asked that the premises be positioned on the site nearest to the town centre to enable ease of pedestrian access to and from the town;*
- (3) it be asked that the Haverhill Area Working Party be consulted on the detailed plan for the new home;*
- (4) adequate parking arrangements be incorporated into the scheme, including accommodating Community Transport buses;*
- (5) strong support is given to the concept of the rooms being grouped into homely clusters; and*
- (6) some concern is expressed regarding the reliability of using a Private Finance Initiative capital allocation from the Department of Health to fund the scheme.*

92. Draft Development Brief: Chantry Mills, Former Gurteen's Factory Site, Haverhill: Update

The officers reported that it was necessary to defer this item from consideration due to circumstances arising that required additional work to be undertaken on the draft Development Brief. Members noted that consideration of Report A557, including the exempt Appendix detailed under Item 16 on this Working Party agenda, would be considered at a future meeting of the Working Party.

93. Access for New Westfield Primary School, adjacent to Chalkstone Way, Haverhill

(Councillor Mrs Gower declared a personal interest as a Suffolk County Councillor with particular reference to being a Member of its Children and Young People Services Committee. Councillor Marks declared a personal interest as a Member of Suffolk County Council. Both Members remained in the meeting for the consideration of this item.)

The Working Party considered Report A558 (previously circulated) which asked that a request received from Suffolk County Council (SCC) to provide an area of land owned by St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) be considered to facilitate the access to the new Westfield Primary School in Haverhill.

The proposed parcel of land, as annotated in red on the plan attached as Appendix A to the report, was required to enable vehicular and pedestrian access to the new Westfield Primary School, which was proposed to be constructed adjacent to Chalkstone Way, Haverhill. The imminent construction of another new primary school on the site of the Puddlebrook Playing Fields adjacent to Greenfields Way was also being undertaken as part of the Schools Organisation Review in Haverhill. In order to achieve economies of scale, SCC would like to commence the building of Westfield Primary School concurrently with Puddlebrook Primary School, but required SEBC land to facilitate access in conjunction with the purchase of the majority of land required from a third party landowner.

Councillor Cox expressed concern that planning permission for the proposed construction of the Westfield Primary School on this site had been granted under officer delegated authority and had not been considered by the Development Control Committee. He also considered this parcel of land should be retained as it was a valued piece of green space frequently utilised by residents. However, there was a general consensus of opinion that the disposal of the land was acceptable to enable progression of the Westfield Primary School development.



RECOMMENDED:-

That the Corporate Property Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Haverhill and Housing, agree terms with Suffolk County Council for the transfer of the necessary strip of land, as illustrated in Appendix A to Report A558, to enable the progression of a project to create access for the new Westfield Primary School, Haverhill adjacent to Chalkstone Way.

RESOLVED:-

That a further report be presented to the Working Party on progress at a future meeting.

(Councillor Cox wished it to be recorded that he voted against the recommendation and the resolution.)

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

94. Conversion of Parking Area to Form Public Plaza

The Working Party considered Report A559 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the car parking area to the front of the Haverhill Leisure Centre to be redesignated as a public plaza.

The restaurant and cinema development in Ehringshausen Way formed a key part of meeting the overall Masterplan Vision for investment in Haverhill. Together with investment in the Haverhill Leisure Centre (HLC) it had created a dramatic transformation and improvement of this whole area. Following the re-opening of the HLC, the area of the car park allocated for parents and toddlers had been widely used by everyone, in contravention with this designation. Vehicles also parked outside of the paved areas between trees and on designated planting areas, which created concerns regarding the future maintenance of the landscaping.

The proposal would identify this area, as illustrated on the plan attached as Appendix 1 to the report, converted to a public Plaza. It would be accessible to all pedestrians and be complemented by the installation of seating. It would also act as a focal point and could be used for various public events including exhibitions.

The Working Party also noted that disabled parking spaces were currently designated immediately in front of the leisure centre and less than half of these were generally in use. It was, therefore, proposed to redesignate seven of these spaces for parent and toddler parking, accepting that enforcement action could not be taken against their misuse by others. Members also noted that sufficient car parking spaces would be available for visitors to the leisure centre in the adjacent Meadows and Ehringshausen Way car parks.

The total cost of the works was estimated at £80,000. This allowed for relaying the existing pavements into a formal pattern as opposed to parking bay layout; seats, picnic tables, bollards and the creation of a small play area. The works were proposed to be funded from the existing allocation provided for car parks relating to the cinema development contained within the approved capital budget.

Councillor Cox expressed concern that the formation of the public Plaza would encourage anti-social behaviour and was not in favour of the recommendations. He considered the £80,000 estimated costs to fund the works could be better spent elsewhere; the current designated parking enabled effortless access to HLC for parents with babies and toddlers; and the indoor children's play centre located within HLC provided more than adequate play provision for children in this locality. However, the majority of Members supported the proposals, particularly welcoming the suggestion for holding outside events in this location. Installing an adequate power supply for use by organisers of events was supported.



RECOMMENDED:- That

- (1) the car parking area, as illustrated in Appendix 1 to Report A559, be redesignated to form a public Plaza;***
- (2) street furniture and play equipment be introduced and the cost be financed from the existing allocated car parks capital budget;***
- (3) seven of the spaces currently designated as disabled parking spaces be redesignated as parent and toddler parking; and***
- (4) investigations be undertaken into installing an adequate power supply to assist organisers of events that may be held on the public Plaza.***

(Councillor Cox wished it to be recorded that he voted against the recommendations.)

95. 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 this item.)

The Working Party considered Report A560 (previously circulated) which was the Project Status Report for the Haverhill Community Football Project as at 2 March 2010.

The Head of Property Services and Engineering drew relevant issues to the attention of the Working Party. Further to the previously reported spate of freezing conditions that had affected progress and had resulted in the laying of the screed floor being delayed by two weeks, the project had made up time and was now delayed by

only one week. This was now principally due to not obtaining a definitive date for the gas suppliers to carry out their work on the site. The suggestion of undertaking a tour of the site immediately prior to the next meeting of the Working Party was supported.

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

- (a) the erection of the metal fencing around the periphery of the site was considered to satisfy the conditions attached to the planning permission for the scheme; however, a written response would be provided to confirm this assumption; and
- (b) the officers had investigated the obstruction of Public Footpath No. 3 and following consultation with the contractors, this path had been reinstated and a temporary diversion established.

RESOLVED:-

That a written response be provided by the Head of Planning and Economic Development Services by email in respect of whether the erection of the metal fencing around the periphery of the site satisfied the conditions attached to the planning permission for the Haverhill Community Football Project.

96. Queen Street Enhancement Scheme: Close Out Report

The Working Party considered Report A561 (previously circulated) which was the Project Close Out report for the Queen Street Enhancement Scheme in Haverhill.

The Head of Planning and Economic Development Services reported that following the completion of the Jubilee Walk Enhancement Scheme, a number of issues had been managed more efficiently and effectively, particularly in terms of maintaining continuity of the scheme and keeping retailers informed of progress. She stated that contrary to information published in the report, *'regular'* newsletters were distributed to traders and residents, not *'weekly'* as printed. In addition, the report would require further amendment following the installation of the public art and new shop fronts under the Shop Front Grant Scheme and the success of these initiatives would be reported in due course.

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

- (a) the installation of the power supply boxes to enable market traders to operate in Queen Street was an outstanding issue that was being addressed by the Borough Council's engineers;
- (b) the officers would contact Kevin Shipp, Traffic Management Engineer of Suffolk County Council, to investigate the possibility of removing the 'A' boards that had recently appeared to accumulate in Queen Street and other parts of the town;
- (c) the vehicle restricting gates designed in the style of Lime leaves would be installed simultaneously with the other approved items of public art; and
- (d) an update would be provided at the next meeting of the Working Party in respect of the current situation regarding progression of enhancements to shop fronts that had successfully achieved grants under the Shop Front Grant Scheme.

RESOLVED:- That

- (1) Kevin Shipp, Traffic Management Engineer of Suffolk County Council, be contacted to investigate the possibility of removing the 'A' boards that had recently appeared to accumulate in Queen Street and other parts of the town; and
- (2) an update on the current position in respect of the enhancements to shop fronts that had successfully achieved grants under the Shop Front Grant Scheme be provided at the next meeting of the Working Party on 22 April 2010.

97. Proposed High Street Enhancement Scheme

The Working Party received and noted a narrative item which outlined proposals for undertaking an Enhancement Scheme for the High Street, Haverhill.

In 2008/2009, the Cabinet approved an allocation of £250,000 capital funding for public realm improvements in Haverhill. This funding, together with approximately £125,000 capital remaining from the Queen Street Enhancement Scheme project was available to allocate towards developing a scheme for the enhancement of the High Street.

Enhancement of the High Street would mean that all the main retail streets in the centre of Haverhill would have had significant investment to improve their appearance and functionality. This was an important indicator of public investment and confidence in the town and helped to underpin the regeneration, economic development and town centre management activities that were being pursued for Haverhill.

In terms of delivering this scheme, completion was expected by autumn 2011. The scheme would, however, require the conclusion of the works by Suffolk County Council on changes to the current pedestrianisation arrangements in the High Street. Detailed in the narrative item were 11 potential areas for investigation to develop the Enhancement Scheme, which were noted by the Working Party.

Particular reference was given to the possibility of installing new street furniture in the design of the Haverhill Bespoke Street Furniture Range, and concern was expressed that some of the items already replaced in this design were beginning to deteriorate with reports of flaking to the timber and metal finishes on some of the benches. In response, the officers stated that investigations would be undertaken to resolve these issues and if appropriate, the manufacturers would be requested to apply new finishing to the affected items.

In addition to the items listed in the narrative item, Members considered that some of the pavements in the High Street required attention and asked whether paving in front of shops in the High Street that were not under the Borough Council's ownership could also be enhanced. In response, the officers stated that this was a three-way project between the Borough Council, Suffolk County Council as the highway authority, and landowners. A full survey and other investigations were required to be undertaken before works could proceed. The changes to the current pedestrianisation arrangements in the High Street may incorporate the installation of gates preventing vehicular access to the High Street at certain times of the day and it was possible that these would be erected before Christmas 2010.

98. Haverhill Retail Project

The Working Party was informed that Professor Andrew Fearne of the Centre for Value Chain Research was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting and present his proposals for undertaking a retail research programme in Haverhill, in partnership with other organisations.

It was anticipated that he would be available to provide his presentation at the meeting of the Working Party on 10 June 2010.

99. Dates of Future Meetings

As it was intended that the Working Party would undertake a tour of the Haverhill Community Football Project located on Chalkstone Playing Fields, it was considered appropriate that the next meeting be held at Samuel Ward Arts and Technology College, Chalkstone Way instead of the previously arranged venue of Castle Manor Business and Enterprise College, located on Eastern Avenue. In response, the Committee Administrator stated that she would attempt to change the venue as requested and further details regarding arrangements for the tour would be circulated in due course. The Working Party then confirmed the following dates for future meetings in 2010:-

22 April;
10 June;
22 July;
9 September;
21 October; and
9 December.

All dates were Thursdays and the meetings to commence at 4.15 pm.

The meeting concluded at 6.43 pm

CHAIRMAN