

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

HAVERHILL AREA WORKING PARTY

**Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday 21 November 2013 at 4.15 pm
in the Seminar Room, Business and Enterprise Facility, Castle Manor
Academy, Haverhill**

PRESENT: Councillors:
Mrs Richardson (Chairman) McManus
French Redhead
Mrs Gower Mrs Rushbrook
Marks

BY Councillor Hanlon Haverhill Town Council
INVITATION: Mr Austin Clerk to Haverhill Town Council

29. Substitutes

No substitutions were declared.

30. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ms Byrne.

31. Minutes

The notes of the meeting held on 29 August 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

32. Declaration of Interests

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

33. Public Speaking Arrangements

The Chairman informed the meeting that, although there were no public speaking rights at this meeting, she had used her discretion to allow public speaking for this meeting only on Report E171. Members of the public had been asked to register their interest in speaking prior to the meeting and 30 minutes would be allowed for this in total.

34. Options for Partial Cancellation of the Article 4 Direction in Haverhill

The Article 4 Direction was made in 2003 to encourage owners of properties in the two Haverhill conservation areas to reinstate original features and details as the opportunities arose, thereby enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area over time. Due to a combination of factors, this had not been achieved.

The Conservation Officer explained that, following consultation, a report asking Members to support the full cancellation of the Article 4 Direction in Haverhill was presented to the Haverhill Area Working Party

(HAWP) at the meeting on 29 August 2013 (Report E82 refers). Although there was public support for the cancellation, Members were concerned that alterations could then take place which would potentially harm the character of the conservation areas and therefore did not wish to support the cancellation of the Article 4 Directions. Members concerns related in particular to the painting of front elevations and the loss of decorative elements and patterned brickwork which are distinctive features within the conservation areas.

The proposal to cancel the Direction was therefore deferred by Cabinet to allow officers to investigate other options for amending the Article 4 Direction.

Report E171 recommends that a public consultation is approved on the revised proposals detailed in Section 5.3 of the report. This is an amendment to the Article 4 Direction which retains some restrictions to protect key features of the buildings.

In summary, the restrictions that are to be removed from the Article 4 Direction are:

PART 1

Class A: The enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwellinghouse

Class D: The erection or construction of a porch outside any external door of a dwellinghouse

PART 2

Class A: The erection, construction, maintenance, improvement, or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure

Class B: The formation, laying out and construction of a means of access to a highway which is not a trunk road or a classified road, where that access is required in connection permitted by any Class in this schedule (other than by Class A of this part)

PART 31

Class B: Any building operation consisting of the demolition of the whole or any part of any gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure

The restrictions that are to be retained in the Article 4 Direction are:

PART 1

Class B: The enlargement of a dwellinghouse consisting of an addition or alteration to its roof

Class C: Any other alteration to the roof of a dwellinghouse

Class G: The installation, alteration or replacement of a chimney, flue or soil and vent pipe on a dwellinghouse (this class also permits the removal of external chimney stacks as their removal is alteration rather than demolition).

PART 2

Class C: The painting of the exterior of any building or work

An additional new restriction would be added to the Article 4 Direction which did not exist when the original Direction was made in 2003 (see below). This permits the installation, alteration or replacement of solar PV or solar thermal equipment on any roof slope of a house within a conservation area. This would bring the Article 4 Direction up-to-date and be consistent in restricting alterations to the rooflines.

PART 40

Class A: The installation, alteration or replacement of solar PV or solar thermal equipment

Following the introduction from the Conservation Officer, two members of the public had requested to speak.

(a) Mr Mizon from Chainey Pieces made the following comments:

- The Article 4 Directions had not been effective in encouraging residents to reinstate original features as the costs involved were prohibitive. For example, the cost of reinstating an original bay window was four times the cost of replacing it with a modern equivalent.
- The majority of properties in the conservation area were owned by landlords, elderly residents or first time buyers, many of whom were on low incomes.
- The definition of the conservation area was inconsistent as there were properties outside of the area that were of the same vintage and type as those within the area.

(b) Mrs Smith from Hamlet Road made the following comments:

- They had been unable to afford to reinstate the original windows at the front of the property. The front bedrooms were therefore cold and draughty and they had not been able to use these rooms during the winter months.
- The cost of reinstating original style windows at the front of the property would not add value and there were no longer government grants available for this work.
- The revised proposal was a good compromise and would allow residents to afford to make improvements to their properties.

(c) Councillor Mrs Gower made the following comments on behalf of a resident from Broad Street:

- The resident had installed double glazing at the rear of their property but was not able to do so at the front however the revised proposals would permit replacement windows and doors.
- The proposal would have an impact on the security of the property as well a positive impact on sustainability.

The Conservation Officer confirmed that the public consultation would last for six weeks and would commence after Christmas. There would be two drop in sessions which would be advertised by site notices and public notices in the press. Further clarification was given regarding Part 40; as solar

panels need to be south facing, this could mean that they may be installed at the front of a property. It was reported that no requests for solar panels had been received to date.

As Article 4 was still in place, the Conservation Officer confirmed that any resident undertaking works contrary to Article 4 now would be doing so at their own risk. A four year rule existed for any breaches, meaning that any legal action would have to be taken within four years, after which, the works would become legal.



RECOMMENDED:

That the revised proposals detailed in Section 5.3 of Report E171 be approved for public consultation. This is an amendment to the Article 4 Direction which retains some restrictions to protect key features of the buildings. Maps showing the conservation areas and the properties currently covered by Article 4 Direction are attached to Report E171 as Appendices 1 and 2.

35. Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan

The Chairman gave a verbal update from a recent ONE Haverhill Board meeting where members of the Board had discussed what features of towns they considered to be enjoyable to residents and how these might be applied to Haverhill. This would be looked at further by community engagement or a Task and Finish Group. An update would be provided to Haverhill Area Working Party at the next meeting.

Suffolk County Council had commissioned and published a Transport Report for Haverhill Town Centre following consultation events held in September and October 2013. The report could be downloaded from Suffolk County Council's website at the following address:

<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/environment-and-transport/planning-and-buildings/transport-planning/haverhill-town-centre-transport-report/>

However, Members of the Working Party expressed their frustration that this report contained no new information and no recommendations.

Members raised a number of issues with the main areas for concern being as follows:

- (a) Inadequate signage on the outskirts of the town.
- (b) Ongoing problems with cleansing of the High Street associated with fast food outlets
- (c) Replacement of bollards in Queen Street
- (d) Pedestrianisation of the High Street
- (e) Access for deliveries by Heavy Goods Vehicles and volume of traffic

Members were asked to report any issues directly to the department concerned.

36. Dates of Future Meetings

The Working Party approved the following dates for future meetings in 2014:

23 January 2014;
10 April 2014;
11 September 2014; and
11 December 2014.

All meetings are Thursdays and will commence at 4.15 pm, venues to be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 5.15 pm

**MRS K D RICHARDSON
CHAIRMAN**

