

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee



St Edmundsbury  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Update on Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan and North West Relief Road, Haverhill</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>OAS/SE/17/009</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	15 March 2017
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<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To update Members on the Haverhill Masterplan and the North West Relief Road, Haverhill.	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that:</b>  <b>(1)</b> Members <b>note</b> the update on the Haverhill Masterplan; and  <b>(2)</b> Members <b>note</b> the update on the North West Relief Road.	
<b>Key Decision:</b>  <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

<b>Consultation:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production of the Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan included two sets of formal public consultation.</li> <li>• The North West Relief Road was subject to consultation at policy formulation stage, preparation of the masterplan and consideration of the planning application.</li> </ul>	
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The alternative option could have been to not produce a Town Centre Masterplan. However this would have been contrary to policy as stipulated in the Haverhill Vision 2031 document.</li> <li>• Without the relief road, future growth of Haverhill would be limited.</li> <li>• Without the implementation of Local Plan commitments to planning inspector-led approved housing site allocations, there would be no need for the relief road and no mechanism for delivery.</li> </ul>	
<b>Implications:</b>			
Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • Nothing as a result of this report	
Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • Nothing as a result of this report	
Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • Nothing as a result of this report	
Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • Nothing as a result of this report	
Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • Nothing as a result of this report	
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
The Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan is not delivered	Medium	The One Haverhill Implementation Working Group regularly meet and are governed by One Haverhill Partnership Board	Low
The extant planning permission is not taken up and the relief road is not delivered	Low	Any future planning application would be required to accommodate any growth in traffic	Low
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All Haverhill Wards	

<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>	Haverhill Vision 2031 - <a href="https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/local_plans/upload/2-Haverhill-2031.pdf">https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/local_plans/upload/2-Haverhill-2031.pdf</a>  Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan - <a href="http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/haverhillmasterplan">http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/haverhillmasterplan</a>  Development Control Committee, 5 June 2014 ( <a href="#">Paper F25</a> )
<b>Documents attached:</b>	N/A

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## **1. Key issues and reasons for recommendations**

### **1.1 Role of The One Haverhill Partnership in the Haverhill Town Centre Masterplanning process**

1.1.1 Due to its role as Local Planning Authority, and the fact that the Masterplan is a Supplementary Planning Document, St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) has an overarching role, and the legal responsibility, for the masterplanning process. However, The One Haverhill Partnership (TOHP) led in the production of the town centre masterplan document and continues to lead in the implementation of the masterplan – this is to ensure co-production/delivery with key stakeholders in the town centre. This was a ground-breaking move by SEBC, recognising the role that communities have in planning their future as per the localism agenda. With TOHP Haverhill had a mechanism perfectly suited to taking on this responsibility.

1.1.2 TOHP formed a Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan Working Group (HTCMWG) at the start of the masterplanning process (August 2014), with the support of officers from the town, borough and county council. The group met on a fortnightly basis to ensure that every stage of the process was closely monitored and delivered effectively, and provided minutes of its actions to the TOHP Board. Representatives on the group were drawn from organisations able to provide the most commitment to the process:

- a) Havebury Housing Partnership
- b) Haverhill Chamber of Commerce
- c) Haverhill Town Council
- d) St Edmundsbury Borough Council; and
- e) Suffolk County Council.

1.1.3 After the Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan was adopted in September 2015, TOHP Board agreed that a Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan Implementation Working Group (HTCMIWG) was required. SEBC and Haverhill Town Council agreed to provide substantial levels of officer support to enable successful implementation over the next ten years. It was recognised that this was a long term process, requiring long term resources. Early on in its deliberations, the HTCMIWG secured a long term commitment from Suffolk County Council (SCC) Highways to work with it at all stages of implementation. Initially, this group met on a quarterly basis, but later it has agreed to meet approximately monthly (or as and when individual project updates are required) in order to maintain momentum. Representative organisations on the group remained the same, although actual membership changed. The current members of the HTCMIWG are:

- a) Havebury Housing Partnership – Philip Sullivan
- b) Haverhill Chamber of Commerce – John Mayhew
- c) Haverhill Town Council – Cllr David Roach (also Borough councillor) and Colin Poole (Town Clerk)
- d) St Edmundsbury Borough Council - Cllr Alaric Pugh (Chair); and
- e) Suffolk County Council - Cllr John Burns (also Town and Borough councillor).

- 1.1.4 There is an expectation that all members of the HTCMIWG will provide updates to their Haverhill colleagues, as appropriate.
- 1.1.5 The mechanism by which the masterplan document was delivered was provided by TOHP Board, who meet quarterly and receive updates on the masterplan. TOHP itself is a board of boards and is scrutinised by the boards of all the organisations that send representatives to it. It is to be recorded that all members of TOHP offer their participation on the basis of the constitution of TOHP, which stresses the a-political nature of the organisation.
- 1.2 **Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan process - production of the masterplan document**
- 1.2.1 The Haverhill Vision 2031 Local Plan document was adopted by SEBC Full Council in September 2014. That document concluded that it could not do justice to the long term issues affecting the town centre. It therefore proposed that a town centre masterplan be developed at a later date, in consultation with the many businesses, representative groups and interests that operate within, or rely on, the town centre. Accordingly, Policy HV19 required the production of a masterplan.
- 1.2.2 The Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan document was duly begun. Unusually, in the world of masterplans, it was produced over a period of approximately one year, starting in August 2014 and finishing in September 2015. This was only possible because of the substantial historical masterplanning that had been undertaken in Haverhill, in addition to the two years of consultation and workshops undertaken with the community by SCC.
- 1.2.3 Following a competitive procurement process, planning and urban design specialists, David Lock Associates (DLA), were appointed to work with SEBC in partnership with TOHP to produce the masterplan. DLA brought considerable experience of best practice masterplanning from across the country.
- 1.2.4 The task of the HTCMWG for many weeks, supported by SEBC's lead officer, was to develop the most appropriate and extremely detailed brief for the consultants. This work was then used to develop the following stages of the process:
- a) *Stage 1: Analysis and baseline review* – this involved reviewing a library of documents relevant to the town centre which formed the evidence base for the masterplan going forward.
  - b) *Stage 1a: Presentation of initial findings* – the consultants reported to the Working Group and updates were given to the Haverhill Area Working Party and SEBC Cabinet.
  - c) *Stage 2: Preparation of issues and options report* – a report and questionnaire was produced in readiness for public consultation.
  - d) *Stage 2a: Issues and options consultation period (6 weeks)* – a period of consultation, engagement and participation with stakeholders; through drop-in sessions, events, leaflet drops, questionnaires, and so on.
  - e) *Stage 3: Production of draft masterplan* – following analysis of

consultation the draft was produced.

- f) *Stage 3b: Draft masterplan consultation period (6 weeks)* - a period of consultation, engagement and participation with stakeholders; through drop-in sessions, events, leaflet drops, questionnaires, and so on.
- g) *Stage 4: Finalise masterplan* - following analysis of consultation the final document was produced.
- h) *Stage 5: Handover* - this included adopting and launching the masterplan.

1.2.5 Throughout the process, in addition to reporting and seeking approval from the HTCMTWG, reports were taken to Leadership Team, Cabinet and SEBC Council as appropriate.

1.2.6 All the agreed timescales were met and the Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan was adopted by SEBC in September 2015.

1.2.7 Alongside the formal process above, uniquely for masterplans, and in order to increase community engagement and participation, the HTCMTWG organised a number of community projects with a focus on the town centre including:

- a) Community 'Give CB9 a Shine' clean-up days, organised by Haverhill Town Council on behalf of One Haverhill and supported by the Haverhill Weekly News.
- b) Development of a 'Historic Haverhill' leaflet to highlight some of the sometimes hidden historic architectural gems within the town.
- c) Empty shop displays, led by the Haverhill Chamber of Commerce (although we are pleased to report that these have largely been unused due to a low vacancy rate).
- d) Uplighting: A project to provide uplighting to highlight some of the town centres attractive and iconic buildings and structures.

1.2.8 These projects continue to be developed and are regarded as another method of promoting the masterplan.

1.2.9 New projects are being developed through the implementation of the masterplan.

### 1.3 **Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan process – implementing the adopted masterplan**

1.3.1 The town centre masterplan includes actions/opportunities on strategic sites, movement and public realm. Each action/opportunity was given an indicative timescale – for example short (approximately 5 years), medium (approximately 10 years) or long term (more than 10 years).

1.3.2 The HTCMTWG and SEBC officers further prioritised these actions in terms of those which we can directly control and influence, those our partners can control and directly influence, and those that we/our partners are unable to control but can seek to influence.

1.3.3 Several actions are currently being progressed, supported by officers from the town, borough and county councils. For some projects, a lead is agreed

from within the working group.

- 1.3.4 Updates on the current actions are provided at each HTCMIWG meeting and next steps discussed and agreed. On occasions, it is necessary to have a meeting solely dedicated to an individual action.

#### 1.4 **Key issues and challenges**

- 1.4.1 There have been, and are still, a number of issues and challenges. These are outlined below:

- a) There is an expectation amongst some that the actions/opportunities can be completed in a short time scale and there is frustration at the apparent slow pace of delivery. However, the town centre masterplan covers the period to 2031 (to link to the Vision 2031 documents). The challenge for us is to manage expectations and explain that we will not/cannot achieve the masterplan's aims overnight; nor will the market let us.
- b) We would like to be able to regularly promote the delivery of the masterplan to the public to show that work is happening, however there are a number of reasons why this is difficult – for example:
  - i. The majority of current actions are at an early feasibility stage. We cannot go public with this information until we are certain on the final options as we would 'set hares running' unnecessarily.
  - ii. Some of the actions are commercially sensitive.
  - iii. The pace of the actions, as explained in a) above, means that it is very difficult to show tangible progress on a short term regular basis.
- c) SEBC and partners are committed to individual actions and projects to support delivery as and when feasibility, business cases and costs are established. This is an ongoing commitment to achieve delivery.

#### 1.5

##### **Lessons to be learnt for the other West Suffolk masterplans**

#### 1.5.1

There are lots of things that have *worked well* with the Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan process and will be replicated for other masterplans. For example:

- a) *Co-production*. Due to the existence of TOHP, we were able to co-produce the masterplan and it was therefore recognised by the public as coming from Haverhill (rather than the traditional method of producing the masterplan where it is written and consulted on). We will continue to use the co-production approach. For example in Bury St Edmunds, where the production of a masterplan is now underway, we have formed a co-production group which includes representatives from the town, borough and county councils, Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership, Bury Market Trader Association, Bury Society, Bury Town Trust, the Cathedral and Our Burystedmunds Business Improvement District.

- b) *Early pre formal consultation engagement.* In Haverhill shortly before the start of the masterplan process, lots of engagement work on the future of the town centre had taken place, managed by SCC and led by Kevin Murray Associates. The results of this information were made available for our masterplan consultants to use as part of their evidence base. Whilst we did not have the benefit of this type of work for Bury St Edmunds, the town already had a recent history of studies, reports and research, together with local knowledge. This dates back to the arc development, progressing through the strong engagement of many community-focussed organisations, and most recently, the commissioning of reports for, and by, the Business Improvement District. SEBC also undertook to update some of its own data. Additionally, we have decided to add in our own early consultation engagement (it should result in a more robust final masterplan). For example, in Bury St Edmunds we created an Accessibility consultation group (11 organisations representing people with additional needs who live, work, shop and visit Bury St Edmunds town centre; including Age UK Suffolk, Bury Dementia Action Alliance, Bury Youth Forum, Suffolk Coalition of Disabled People, Suffolk Deaf Association, Suffolk Family Carers and West Suffolk Blind Association). We also created a Bury Assembly of Associations consultation group (the 11 residents' associations operating within the Town Council boundary area). Furthermore, we are working with Suffolk MIND to see how the masterplan can address mental health and wellbeing. We would seek to do similar for the remaining West Suffolk masterplans.
- c) *Role of communities in consultation process.* Due to early engagement, by the working group and officers, with the public in the form of lots of face to face drop-ins, events, flyer drops and so on, we received an excellent response rate to our two formal consultation periods. We have replicated this for Bury St Edmunds and would seek to do so for the remaining West Suffolk masterplans.
- d) *Use of social media.* TOHP used social media to a great extent during the production of the Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan, something that SEBC has not previously used for Masterplanning. This use of social media was successful in gaining interest from the public in the masterplan (though did need to be managed carefully, with factually incorrect information being responded to as far as possible). For the Bury St Edmunds Issues and Options masterplan consultation which was recently launched, we too are using social media to our benefit.
- e) *Stages in producing the masterplan.* The stages outlined in paragraph 1.2.4 were proven to be the right way forward. As such, we have exactly replicated these stages for Bury St Edmunds and envisage doing to for the remaining West Suffolk masterplans.
- f) *Funding.* While, because of its statutory duty, the local planning authority provided significant core funding, the sponsor in the form of TOHP played a funding role and where possible member organisations provided 'buy-in' funding (either in cash, for example the Town Council gave £20k, or in kind). This same successful model has been



followed in Bury St Edmunds.

1.5.2 There are some things that have *not worked so well* and so we will look to learn lessons. For example:

- a) *Action plan*. This would have benefitted from being clearer to aid implementation. For example, we should have stipulated that the consultants prioritise the projects. The HTCMIWG acknowledged the need to look afresh at the actions to provide clarity going forward and more effective management of the actions. A decision has been made to split the actions into five workstreams (heading description is draft at this stage), each workstream to have a working group lead:
- i. *Workstream 1: Highways and movement* - Delivery of highway improvements
  - ii. *Workstream 2: Marketing* - Advertising Haverhill and marketing specific sites
  - iii. *Workstream 3: Site assembly* - Getting control, investing, influencing
  - iv. *Workstream 4: Development briefs* - Creation of briefs from planning perspective - what are rules for sites? What constraints need to be put on?
  - v. *Workstream 5: Place management* - Town and borough council day job

Under each workstream more detail will be given in terms of resources, budget, timescales, and so on.

We have asked that the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre masterplan Action Plan must:

- i. identify short, medium and long term actions including interdependencies between the actions and desired outcomes;
  - ii. prioritise the actions according to appropriate criteria;
  - iii. identify how each action should be implemented – e.g. identify potential delivery mechanisms, resources (both financial and non-financial) required, funding sources, who should deliver the action; and who the key stakeholders are; and
  - iv. take strong account of market demand for development, and indicate viability of private sector investment.
- b) *Timescales*. Whilst we met the timescales for the production of the masterplan, at times they were very tight. We should consider not publishing consultation period dates publically until much nearer the time (for Bury St Edmunds we therefore said the Issues and Options consultation would be in the Spring rather than giving specific dates). For Bury St Edmunds we have told the public we hope to complete the masterplan by the end of 2017. It is more important that we get the engagement and the solutions right rather than hit a deadline. We should perhaps review giving an end date for the remaining West Suffolk masterplans in case unexpected delays occur.

- c) *Promotion*. Whilst there is an understanding and an expectation that members of the HTCMIWG update colleagues, we acknowledge that this perhaps does not always happen in a timely fashion. We will therefore recognise that email updates should be provided on a regular basis to supplement the conversations, briefings and broader opportunities to discuss progress.
- d) *Communications*. Significant communications support was provided for the first stage of the masterplan by TOHP and significant community engagement resulted. However, in hindsight, it was felt that if more resources had been available they could have been well used to publicise the process further and underpin the implementation stage. As a result, the HTCMIWG is ensuring that more communications resources are found at this stage. This issue has been resolved for the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan.

## 1.6 **North West relief road, Haverhill**

- 1.6.1 The NW relief road is completely outside the scope of the Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan and all associated processes. However, significant housing growth in Haverhill is planned for in Haverhill Vision 2031, the Local Plan document. Without this significant growth, the current Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan will not be able to be implemented. Previous Haverhill Masterplans have failed when economic conditions have affected the delivery of planned growth.
- 1.6.2 A relief road to serve NW Haverhill was first identified in the Gibberd Plan of 1971 running from the A1307 east of Meldham Bridge to the A143 close to Boyton Hall. A significant portion of this road was built to serve development south of Boyton Hall and now forms Ann Suckling Road. Further development to the west of this road did not take place until an application was submitted in 2001.
- 1.6.3 In 2001 an application was made for residential development to the west of Howe Road for 393 dwellings with associated roads and infrastructure (application SE/01/3365/P). This application included the eastern end of the Relief Road which has since been built. This development all fed onto Withersfield Road and was restricted to 400 dwellings due to the restriction created by the Cangle Junction between the site and the town centre. At that time, prior to the construction of the Tesco supermarket, Cangle Junction was a double mini roundabout which caused major congestion. Following construction of Tesco, the road configuration was altered and a new road provided to the north of properties in Lordcroft Lane, enabling two separate roundabouts to be constructed with a road between them. This provided significant additional capacity.
- 1.6.4 The 2001 application identified significant local opposition to the relief road linking with Ann Suckling Road and this prompted consideration of a new line for the road opening the opportunity for additional development. This was incorporated into the 2006 Replacement Local Plan. Had that change not been made in response to local concern, the relief road would have connected with Ann Suckling Road and would probably have been completed some years ago.

- 1.6.5 Having established a new route for the road, linking with the A143 in the vicinity of the Fox Public House, a masterplan was prepared for the delivery of the development including the road. This was prepared in consultation with, and the participation of, local residents. The masterplan was adopted by the council in June 2009. A planning application for the construction of the road and 1150 houses, school and other associated infrastructure was submitted later that year (application SE/09/1283).
- 1.6.6 In 2010 the Council adopted its Core Strategy following an examination in Public led by a government appointed inspector. This document confirmed the previous allocation for 1150 houses and the relief road (Policy CS12).
- 1.6.7 In 2014 the Council adopted the Haverhill Vision 2031 Local Plan document. Again, it was adopted following an inspector led examination in public. This again confirmed the designation of the NW Strategic development incorporating the relief road (Policy HV3). Policy HV12 states "The delivery and timing of the Relief Road will be controlled through a legal agreement attached to any planning permission for that development".
- 1.6.8 Consideration of the planning application submitted in 2009 had stalled following the economic downturn and serious concerns about viability. Serious discussion resumed in September 2013 following growth in the property market. Earlier discussions had proposed a reduction in the overall contributions towards other infrastructure requirements including affordable housing in order to deliver the relief road. However, following independent valuation advice and evidence of higher yields, we were able to demonstrate that the road could be delivered without significant reduction of other primary infrastructure requirements.
- 1.6.9 The following two paragraphs are lifted directly from the report to the Development Control Committee at its meeting on 5 June 2014 (Paper F25) when the application was considered:
- a) Paragraph 49:  
*"The timing of the delivery of the relief road has been the subject of protracted detailed discussion between the applicant, your officers and the Highway Authority (Suffolk County Council). Originally it was intended that the road should be delivered before any other part of the development. However, this would require significant expenditure before any income had been received from the sale of houses. This in turn would have had a significant impact upon the viability of the whole development reducing the potential to provide other essential infrastructure. The need for early provision of the road has also been affected by the completion of improvements to the Cangle junction in the centre of Haverhill, following development of the Tesco store. This resolved earlier capacity issues at this junction that would have prevented any development on the application site from coming forward. This matter has been resolved by providing a time limit of 5 years to complete the road following commencement of the development. This would be guaranteed by a bond which would fund the completion of the road, should it not be completed within 5 years."*

b) Paragraph 57:

*"S106 contributions: As a strategic development the proposal is liable for a range of S106 contributions. These are listed for clarity as follows:*

- *30% affordable housing across the site*
- *Education provision for early years, primary and secondary*
- *Library provision*
- *Provision and maintenance of open space and play facilities*
- *Contribution towards off-site leisure facilities*
- *Contribution towards health provision*
- *Off site pedestrian and cycle improvements*
- *Contribution towards public transport provision and real time passenger information screens*
- *Bond to ensure completion of the relief road*
- *Funding of travel plan and provision of a travel plan bond."*

1.6.10 The S106 was accepted by all parties and planning permission was granted and remains extant. Consequently, there is a robust mechanism in place to deliver this important road, the cost of which will be derived from the value of the land.

1.6.11 Since the granting of planning permission, Persimmon Homes has taken an interest in the site. Discussions have been taking place between all parties and the first application for a submission of details has been formally submitted and is currently at consultation. Implementation of this development will trigger the delivery of the North West Relief Road. SEBC is working proactively with all parties to ensure that there are no unsurmountable constraints imposed on this process.