

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

HAVERHILL AREA WORKING PARTY

**Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday 11 September 2014 at 4.15 pm
in the Seminar Room, Castle Manor Business and Enterprise Facility,
Castle Manor Academy, Eastern Avenue, Haverhill**

PRESENT:	Councillor T G Marks	(one of the Joint Chairmen) (in the Chair)
	Councillors: Ms Byrne Mrs Gower Redhead Mrs Richardson	A Whittaker Mrs D Whittaker
BY INVITATION:	Councillor Hanlon Mr Colin Poole Councillor Pugh	Haverhill Town Council Haverhill Town Clerk One of the Borough Council's representatives on ONE Haverhill
IN ATTENDANCE:	Councillor Brown	Ward Member for Haverhill East

13. Substitutes

Councillor Pugh declared that he was substituting for Councillor McManus, however as Councillor Pugh was not a named substitute on the Haverhill Area Working Party and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services had not appointed Councillor Pugh as a temporary substitute (on the nomination from the Leader of the Conservative Group), this substitution was not valid.

14. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors French and McManus.

15. Minutes

Councillor Mrs Gower referred to the actions expected from Minute 11 (c) and (e). A response regarding Minute 11 (c) is provided in Minute 20 (c) below, and with reference to inviting Suffolk County Council officers to attend a future meeting of the Working Party, this matter would be actioned once further discussion was held on a proposed framework for facilitating the discussion with County officers had been agreed.

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16. Declaration of Interests

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

17. Castle Manor – Draft Concept Statement: Update

The Working Party received and noted a presentation on the current situation regarding the preparation of a draft Concept Statement for Castle Manor.

Members noted that the Castle Manor Partnership site had been allocated in the emerging Haverhill Vision 2031 document (Policy HV16) for expansion and redevelopment of educational premises. A Concept Statement was intended to clarify the Council's expectations for the site and provide a framework for the preparation for a masterplan, which would be produced by the developer.

Extensive consultation had been held on the draft Concept Statement and the document had been revised as a result of the responses received. The amended Concept Statement would be presented to the Sustainable Development Working Party in October 2014 where a recommendation of approval by Cabinet would be sought. Subject to the recommendation of Cabinet on 21 October 2014, adoption would be sought by full Council on 17 December 2014.

A number of questions were asked regarding specific issues relating to the site, such as footpath provision, the overall site design, and the potential impact on highway junctions; and the Working party was informed that such matters would be addressed during the development of the more detailed masterplan.

18. Development of the Haverhill Masterplan: Update

The Working Party received and noted Report F112 (previously circulated), which provided an update on the development of the masterplan for Haverhill Town Centre.

Councillor Pugh, one of the Borough Council's representatives on ONE Haverhill provided an update to the Working Party. He explained that the Borough Council had invited ONE Haverhill to take a lead role in the development of a Masterplan for Haverhill Town Centre, particularly with regards to communicating and engaging the community in the process. The Working Party would however, remain fully engaged – a masterplanning workshop would be arranged for example, specifically for the Working Party and ONE Haverhill Board members which would be delivered during the Issues and Options consultation.

The aim of the masterplan was to set out an aspirational vision for the future of the town centre. It would offer a clear plan to enable partners to work on delivering a town centre that the community and visitors wished to use. It would be fit for the future and ready to respond to opportunities.

Councillor Pugh drew attention to the timeline provided in paragraph 6 of the report and topics contained in the Brief for the Preparation of Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan, attached as Appendix 1.

Several points arose from the discussion, including:

- (a) Paragraph 6: following consideration of a number of factors, the ONE Haverhill Masterplanning Core Group would make a decision on the appointment of the professional team tasked with delivering the masterplan and the concepts raised throughout the process.
- (b) Paragraph 7 (a): the budget from which funding for the '*Our Historic Haverhill*' leaflet would be drawn. This detail was yet to be determined, however, it was likely that some sponsorship would be sought from the business community. In addition, the Haverhill Local History Group would be invited to provide input into production of the leaflet;
- (c) Paragraph 8: a project plan was in place which had timetabled the timeline for processing the document through the Borough Council's democratic process. It was anticipated that final adoption would take place in June 2015; and
- (d) Appendix 1, paragraph 2.3 (a): Baseline data would also be sought from other partners, namely Suffolk County Council and Haverhill Town Council.

In response to a question on the process to be undertaken should developers wish to submit potential piecemeal planning applications before the adoption of the town centre masterplan, the Working Party was informed that a written reply would be provided.

An update on the masterplanning process would be provided at the next meeting on 11 December 2014. The Working Party also reiterated that it would like a general update at each meeting on the work of ONE Haverhill and the various projects in which it was involved.

19. Final Report from Kent Business School on the 'Destination Haverhill' Project

The Working Party received and noted Report F113 (previously circulated), which presented the final report of Kent Business School (KBS) on the 'Destination Haverhill' project.

In 2011, the Borough Council committed £10,000 to the project, which was matched by Suffolk County Council. KBS allocated a further £20,000, which provided total funding of £40,000.

The aim of 'Destination Haverhill' was "*To ensure that the town centre of Haverhill attracts more visitors, shoppers and investment by providing a high quality experience for all and by providing a broad range of desired products and services such that visitors need not travel to other nearby local centres.*"

Attached as Appendix 1 to the report was the final report of KBS and the Head of Economic Development and Growth drew Members' attention to the main conclusions and recommendations identified by KBS, including that the project was not intended to be a detailed retail study but aimed to support and engage with retailers to help them provide an improved

shopping experience for meeting customers' needs. Masterclasses were offered to some retailers, some of which engaged extremely well.

Several points arose from the discussion, including:

- (a) whilst a breakdown of spending of the total funding allocated towards the project would be welcomed at a future meeting, it was also important to recognise that the Borough Council only contributed £10,000 of the total £40,000 allocation;
- (b) the conclusions and recommendations would provide opportunities for shared learning and inform further work, including the masterplanning process;
- (c) compared to other towns across the country, Haverhill's town centre remained vibrant and it was particularly encouraging that the market was attracting young traders;
- (d) although consultation had been held at the time regarding a preferred day of the pilot scheme's implementation, Members questioned whether the 'Free from 3' car parking initiative should be offered on an alternative day to Fridays. Members were reminded that the initiative aimed to achieve an increase in footfall into the town during the slowest periods, and that as part of the newly adopted Market Licence Regulations, market traders would be asked to remain operational until 4.00pm on Fridays, but discussion would be held with the Head of Service and Portfolio Holder responsible for car parking to see if this could be revisited with any options for proposed alternatives reported back to the Working Party.

20. Review of Previous Haverhill Area Working Party Recommendations/Decisions

The Working Party received and noted Report F114 (previously circulated), which set out the recommendations and decisions taken by the Working Party from January 2012.

Attached as Appendix 1 was a schedule identifying 11 projects and their current status. Following questions raised at the last meeting, updates were also provided on the breakdown of Growth Area funding currently spent on the Haverhill High Street Improvement Scheme and what events the Jubilee Plaza has previously been used for. Reference was also made to the installation of the noticeboard and map at Haverhill Bus Station and the allocation of £5,000 towards the installation of seating on the Jubilee Plaza.

Attention was drawn to the following:

- (a) Welcome Signs: a discussion was held on whether as a new project and subject to funding availability, the old welcome sign by the Day's Inn hotel could be replaced, and a new sign installed at the Hazel Stub Roundabout. Mr Poole also asked whether it would be possible to include twin-town information illustrated beneath the signs; however the majority of Members felt that this detail had already been considered and upon acting on national advice of the Department for Transport, the signs should be kept free of any additional 'clutter'. Mr Poole was advised to take his suggestion to Suffolk County Council for a response if he so wished.

- (b) The location for the noticeboard and map at Haverhill Bus Station was inadequate as it had been installed facing the car park and not in the direction of flow of pedestrian traffic. Members asked if it could be moved to the wall facing the bus station.
- (c) Seating on Jubilee Plaza: it was noted that the Police had previously expressed reservations that the installation of seating in this location may provoke anti-social behaviour; however, the Police had agreed this was no longer a concern. Members encouraged the installation of furniture in a design that conformed with the bespoke 'Haverhill range' and was finished with durable paint. Events should also be arranged where practicable, as was originally intended for the plaza.

21. Work Programme

The Working Party received and noted a verbal update on this item.

The Chief Executive began by responding to a question raised at the previous meeting. He informed Members that the £750,000 Growth Area Funding for the Haverhill Research Park project remained unspent. The funding was allocated towards the project and not for Haverhill itself.

He then sought Members' views on a potential new direction for the Working Party, insofar that the Haverhill Area Working Party would operate within a 'lighter touch' governance model. Both the Bury St Edmunds and Rural Area Working Parties had previously agreed to trial this approach, whereby there would be no change to the current terms of reference of the Working Party, and it could still consider formal items of business when needed. However, its normal mode of working was much more of a discussion forum for locality matters, with a Member-led agenda. At meetings themselves, rather than formal committee reports, the Working Party could invite officers and external representatives to attend and make short presentations, for informal discussion. As a result of the discussions, recommendations could still be made to Cabinet as normal, but they could in the main be used to give a steer to officers or partners, from the Ward Member perspective. The meetings could also be used for updates on ongoing matters. Essentially, the Working Party would become more of a locality forum, therefore, all Members for Haverhill wards and the immediately surrounding area would be invited to attend Working Party meetings.

Members were generally supportive of the proposal and discussion was held on potential topics, however, some concern was expressed that the Working Party would duplicate the work of ONE Haverhill. Discussion was also held on voting procedures and whilst the non-decision making Working Party currently comprised membership as a result of having regard to the political balance of the Council, it was considered whether membership should comprise the ten Haverhill Ward Members only.

Further detail regarding the proposal would be provided at a future meeting.

22. Dates of Future Meetings

The Working Party had already determined that the next meeting would be held on 11 December 2014 at Castle Manor Academy. Members then agreed the following future meetings in 2015:

- 12 March;
- 9 July; and
- 15 October.

All meetings were on Thursdays starting at 4.15pm. Venues to be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 6.10 pm.

CHAIRMAN