



You are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of Haverhill Town Council to be held in The Studio, Town Hall, High Street, Haverhill, on Tuesday 27th January 2009 commencing at 7.30 p.m., or immediately following Finance Committee, whichever is the later, for the purpose of transacting the following business

CONSTITUTION: Deputy Mayor: Cllr. L Ager
Town Councillors: S Bowes, M Byrne, L Carr,
P French, A Gower, P Hanlon,
E McManus, P McManus,
M Marks, Mrs M Martin, G Price,
K Richardson, A Samuels,
A Sisson and T Woodward

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
Please give any apologies to the office by 5.00p.m. of the day of the meeting.
2. **Declaration of Interests**
For Members to declare any interests they may have on items on the agenda.
3. **To confirm Minutes of Meeting held 15th December 2008**
4. **To deal with any urgent matters arising from the Minutes not covered by this agenda**
5. **Inspector Andrew Mason, Suffolk Police**
To discuss Policing issues in the Town.
6. **David Monk, General Manager (Cambridgeshire), East of England Ambulance Trust**
To discuss deployment of ambulances.

PUBLIC FORUM

7. Adoption of Committee Reports

Planning Committee

To move the adoption of the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held 6th January 2009.

Community First Committee

To move the adoption of the minutes of the Community First Committee meeting held 20th January 2009.

Arts & Leisure Committee

To move the adoption of the minutes of the Arts & Leisure Committee meetings held 13th January 2009.

Personnel Committee

To move the adoption of the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held 20th January 2009.

8. Review of Audit Arrangements

To review the arrangements for internal audit (attached).

9. Review of Risks

To review the Council's major risks (attached).

10. Meeting Dates 2009/2010

To agree the meeting dates for Council year 2009/2010 (attached).

11. Budgets 2009/2010

To agree the budgets and precept for 2009/2010 (attached – subject to any variation by the preceding Finance Committee).

12. To Consider the Adoption of a Statement of Community Engagement

To consider the Adoption of a Statement of Community Engagement (attached).

13. To Consider the Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Formation of the Town Council (attached)

To consider the Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the formation of the Town Council (attached).

14. Correspondence

a) Suffolk County Council – Request for Junction Road Markings, Brybank Road/Grove Court (attached)

15. To authorise payments.

To authorise the following cheque lists:-

Date	Cheque No.s	Value
09.12.08	004471 - 004487	£6,651.80
11.12.08	004488 - 004505	£9,163.70
19.12.08	004506 - 004526	£9,604.62
06.01.09	004527 - 004541	£55,608.94
13.01.08	004542 - 004547	£20,967.43
13.01.08	004548 - 004555	£37,184.46

16. To receive urgent correspondence

17. Closure

Gordon Mussett

**Gordon Mussett
Town Clerk**

DATE: 20th January 2009

Review of Audit Arrangements

The Accounts and Audit (Amendment)(England) Regulations 2006 are aimed at strengthening governance and accountability of Town and Parish Councils through new requirements related to internal control and internal audit. The regulations require the Town Council to:-

Carry out a review of the effectiveness of internal audit

Consider the findings of this review

Carry out a review of the systems of internal control

Consider the findings of this review

The reviews must be carried out in accordance with "proper practices". However there is no statutory definition of "proper practices" and thus relevant bodies are expected to identify the appropriate guidance, which is, for the Town Council, "Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England and Wales, A Practitioners Guide 2003". This publication was revised and reissued in 2008.

Internal Audit

In adopting good practice the Town Council should review the internal audit procedure, and that the review should consider, at a minimum, the following points

1. Is the internal auditor (internal audit function) independent of the financial control/management of the council?
2. Is the internal auditor competent?
3. Is the level of internal audit proportionate to the needs, size and circumstance of the council?
4. Is the scope of the internal audit fit for purpose (in relation to the above question)?

In responding to these questions, the council needs to take the following into account:

Independence of financial control/management requires the internal auditor to be someone other than a member of staff or a councillor; all councillors are involved in the financial management; even if the council has a finance committee, there are a number of decisions that must be taken by the full council, e.g. setting the precept.

Competence - does the internal auditor understand the role of internal audit? The role includes reviewing systems rather than just checks on cash book entries; is there an understanding of risk management and the powers and duties applicable to parish councils? i.e. an awareness of the legal framework in which they operate.

Proportionate - for example, a large council with hundreds of transactions in a year is likely to require a more detailed internal audit inspection (possibly a number of inspections during the year). A smaller council may find that one internal audit inspection is satisfactory. The level of detail and scrutiny of the council's processes will also be proportionate to the level of activity and budget.

Scope - Appendix 8 of the Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England and Wales, A Practitioners Guide 2003 provides guidance on a suitable approach to the internal audit in terms of the scope of work.

The results of the internal audit should be reported to the council.

For Haverhill Town Council the answers to these questions are:-

1. The Internal Auditor is an independent person, appointed by the Town Council and employed by the partnership of Heelis and Lodge.
2. Heelis and Lodge supply internal audit to a number of Town and Parish Councils throughout Suffolk. One of the partners is Deputy Chief Executive of Suffolk Association of Local Councils, so there can be said to be an understanding of the role of the internal auditor and the Parish Council framework.
3. There will be a number of visits from the Internal Auditor during the financial year.
4. The Internal Auditor was appointed to work to the guidance in Appendix 8 of the Practitioners Guide, but with the expectation that areas requiring further, more detailed, investigation would be included, albeit at additional charge.

Both the Internal Auditor's Report and the External Auditor's Report are reported to Full Council and appropriate action agreed to address any issues contained within those reports. Full Council agree the Precept.

Internal Control

Internal audit provides a report on the adequacy of systems of control; it does not actively seek evidence of fraud, corruption, error or mistakes, but can assist the council in its responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud or error. Managing the risk of fraud and corruption is the responsibility of the council.

The regulations require active participation by members in providing positive assurance to the electors of their stewardship of public money. The framework of accountability is risk-based, i.e. level of control and management must be proportionate to the risk involved. The council should determine the most appropriate method of internal control e.g. a financial committee or one/two councillors. Suitable controls could include the following:

1. Checking that the cashbook is correctly written up and mathematically correct
2. Bank reconciliations are regularly undertaken
3. Checking that all income due is received
4. Checking that financial statements agree with accounting records
5. Awareness of legislation and any other regulations to ensure that the council conducts itself and its financial affairs correctly

The Guidance urges caution in that care should be taken to ensure that internal control tests are proportionate and relevant and that they are neither seen as, nor intended as, undue interference in the RFO's day to day management of financial affairs.

The Town Council currently addresses these issues by:-

1. Receiving monthly financial statements, issued to all Members and considered in detail at the Finance Committee. Using a proprietary computerised accounting package. Ensuring all budget holders review their individual budgets and expenditure/income on a regular basis.
2. Ensuring this is part of the end-of-month routine conducted by the Accountant prior to production of monthly financial statements.
3. Reporting the income due monthly on the balance sheets and identified as outstanding Debtors.
4. Ensuring the financial records produced by the accounting system are all date and time stamped, ensuring Members have the latest information available.
5. Arranging training for all Members on their roles and responsibilities as Councillors and continuing to promote and offer additional training for Members,

including on financial matters. Employing a professionally-qualified Clerk and Accountant.

In addition to the above the day-to-day management of the financial accounting system is separated from the role of responsible Financial Manager, thereby ensuring another level of checks on the records.

Members are asked to consider whether they would wish to have further internal control measures introduced.



Haverhill Town Council

Annual Assessment of Risks

The Town Council is required to regularly review its risks. This does not mean undertaking a detailed Health and Safety risk assessment for all of its functions and services, but reviewing whether the processes, procedures and checks are robust enough to ensure that the Town Council:-

acts within its legal powers
fulfils its legal duties
ensures the proper use and safety of its resources

Legal Powers

Much of the Town Council's current portfolio of services and support is long-established, and can be undertaken under existing legislation. In terms of additional services, or enhancements to existing services, the Council relies upon the Clerk to ensure that the powers exist in law to provide these services. The Clerk in turn relies upon the availability of advice, either directly from the acknowledged standard textbook (Local Council Administration by Charles Arnold-Baker), or from the National Association of Local Councils (via the Suffolk Association of Local Councils). Further advice is available from the Society of Local Council Clerks.

To ensure that the Town Council acts within its legal powers for all new services the Clerk confirms, and notes in the minutes, the legislation empowering the Council to provide the service, the Council subscribes to the National Association of Local Councils, the Council budgets for purchase of each new edition of Local Council Administration, and the Council continue to pay the Clerk's subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks.

Within the past year the Clerk holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration, a nationally-recognised qualification.

In addition the Town Council's adoption of the trusteeship of the Town Hall Charity requires additional knowledge of the law relating the Charities. To aid this appropriate training has undertaken by the Clerk and the Accountant.

The Clerk has also received training on the duties of a Company Secretary.

The Trustees rely upon the Clerk to the Trustees to ensure that they act in accordance with Charity and Company Law in providing services within the Arts Centre. The Clerk to the Trustees in turn relies upon the availability of advice, either directly from standard textbooks, or from organisations such as Suffolk ACRE, Community Matters and the Charity Commission. To ensure that the Trustees act within their legal powers the Town Council continues to subscribe to Suffolk ACRE and Community Matters, the Town

Council budgets for the purchase of appropriate reference books and the purchase of appropriate training for staff and Trustees.

Councillors, particularly newly-appointed Councillors, rely heavily upon the Town Clerk for advice and guidance. Whilst formal training is available from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, it is not always timely, nor local, and take-up amongst Councillors has in the past been “patchy”. Because of the issues that arose in 2003 following the election of a large number of inexperienced Councillors, and the subsequent costs that the Council subsequently incurred, Council agreed, and budgeted for the Suffolk Association of Local Councils to deliver a four-evening training course for all Councillors elected in May 2007, and continues to offer training to all newly-elected Councillors. However the take-up amongst recently-appointed Councillors has been patchy and Council may wish to consider whether untrained Councillors should participate at Committee meetings.

Legal Duties

The Town Council has a duty in law to its staff and the general public. This includes employment law and Health and Safety, as well as general duties covering race, gender, and ability. Whilst some statements of policy exist, these are neither comprehensive nor published in the same format. Some that are believed to exist do not actually do so. In addition the advent of a more litigious age requires greater emphasis to be placed upon ensuring compliance. It has therefore been agreed that at the start of each new Council all Councillors and staff receive training covering their responsibilities in terms of equality, the Council compile, publish and review annually a handbook of their agreed policies, the Town Clerk undertakes an annual overall risk assessment for the Council’s staff and permanent/regular places of work, and the Arts & Leisure Manager undertakes an annual risk assessment for all of the Council’s “occasional” events (A copy of the current Risk Assessments is attached).

Proper Use and Safety of Resources

The Town Council’s financial resources (including items on its balance sheet) are controlled by an independent financial audit of its financial procedures and an independent external audit of its published accounts. Within a small workforce separation of the duties of ordering and approving invoices is difficult to achieve fully; however with the increased workforce available with the Arts Centre a more structured approach will not only be possible, but also more necessary. In addition to these independent checks the Council insures its assets, not only against the usual risks, but also against fraud by the Clerk and other officers. It is already practice that the insured liabilities be reviewed annually, the inventory be checked annually, the independent internal auditor’s report be circulated to every Member of the Council and noted at Full Council and the external auditor’s report be reported to Full Council.

Balances

The Town Council has already identified the need to continue to raise balances in a very short timescale to a minimum of £100,000 and, in addition, has established a separate repairs and renewals fund to cover larger replacement/renewal issues. Beyond 2009/2010 the need to provide large annual sums to upgrade unreserved balances will be reduced.

Governance

The revisions to the Accounts and Audit Regulations place a greater emphasis on governance arrangements, particularly the role of Council and Councillors in ensuring that matters, particularly financial, are as reported. The Town Council has ensured a separation of financial duties, uses proprietary computerised accounting systems, has ensured that, with the exception of the payroll imprest account, two Councillors must sign all cheques, and employs a qualified Accountant. In addition each Town Councillor receives regularly monthly financial reports of income/expenditure against budget, and has the opportunity to question any item at the Finance Committee.

Members previously decided against but may wish to reconsider nominating individual Members to verify, on a monthly basis, the veracity of a selection of invoices presented for payment, or to audit trail ticket sales income for a particular event.



HAVERHILL TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING DATES May 2009 to May 2010

<u>Committee</u>	May 2009	June 2009	July 2009	Aug 2009	Sept 2009	Oct 2009	Nov 2009	Dec 2009	Jan 2010	Feb 2010	Mar 2010	Apr 2010	May 2010
<u>Planning</u>	5	2	7	4	1	6	3	1	5	2	2	6	4
<u>Leisure & Arts</u>	12		7		8		10		12		9		11
Personnel			14			13			19			13	
Community First			14			20			19			20	
Finance		23	21		15		17		26		16		
Appeals													
Full Council	26	30	28		29		24		26		23		25
Town Meeting	26												25
Arts Centre Trustees	19					27							18

All meetings are held at The Arts Centre, High Street, unless otherwise notified.

Committee meetings commence at 7.00 p.m.

Full Council meetings commence at 7.00 p.m. Annual General Meeting commences at 7.00 p.m.

All meetings are open to the public, and the public may raise matters of concern to the Town Council at the meetings.

The Town Meeting is organised by the Town Council on behalf of the public.

All Agendas are displayed on the Noticeboard in the High Street and on the Town Council website (www.haverhill-uk.com/towncouncil)

All Minutes are displayed on the Town Council website

Statement of Community Engagement

One of the documents listed on the Model freedom of Information publication for Town and Parish Councils was a Statement of Community Engagement. At present Haverhill Town Council does not have such a document, and this does, on occasions, lead to concerns from members of the public about the extent to which they are, or should have been, consulted on matters in their immediate community. Principally, but not exclusively so, these concerns are centred around planning issues.

A draft Statement of Community Engagement has been drawn up to address these issues, without imposing too much additional administrative work on the Town Council or Town Council Members.

Draft Statement

The Town Council will engage and seek the views of its community in the following ways, according to the nature and scale of the proposals before it:-

Broad Description of Issue				Examples
Strategic issues affecting the long-term (10 years plus) future of the whole town or services provided to it	Where other organisations are responsible for the final decision and are undertaking consultation exercises the Town Council will publicise and promote these by way of posters, leaflets, and press releases	Where other organisations are responsible for the final decision and are not undertaking local consultation exercises the Town Council will campaign for a local consultation, and publicise the consultation, either local or wider, by way of posters, leaflets, and press releases	Where the decision rests with the Town Council will consult with its residents by way of public meeting or an audited consultation with a representative selection of the community	Consultation on Local Development Framework; consultation on Health Facilities; consultation on road links
Local issues affecting a wide section of the community (either an estate or a target group of	Where other organisations are responsible for the final decision and are undertaking consultation	Where other organisations are responsible for the final decision and are not undertaking local	Where the decision rests with the Town Council will consult with its residents by way of public meeting or an audited consultation	Changes to community hall provision; Post Office closures; road closures; bus service changes

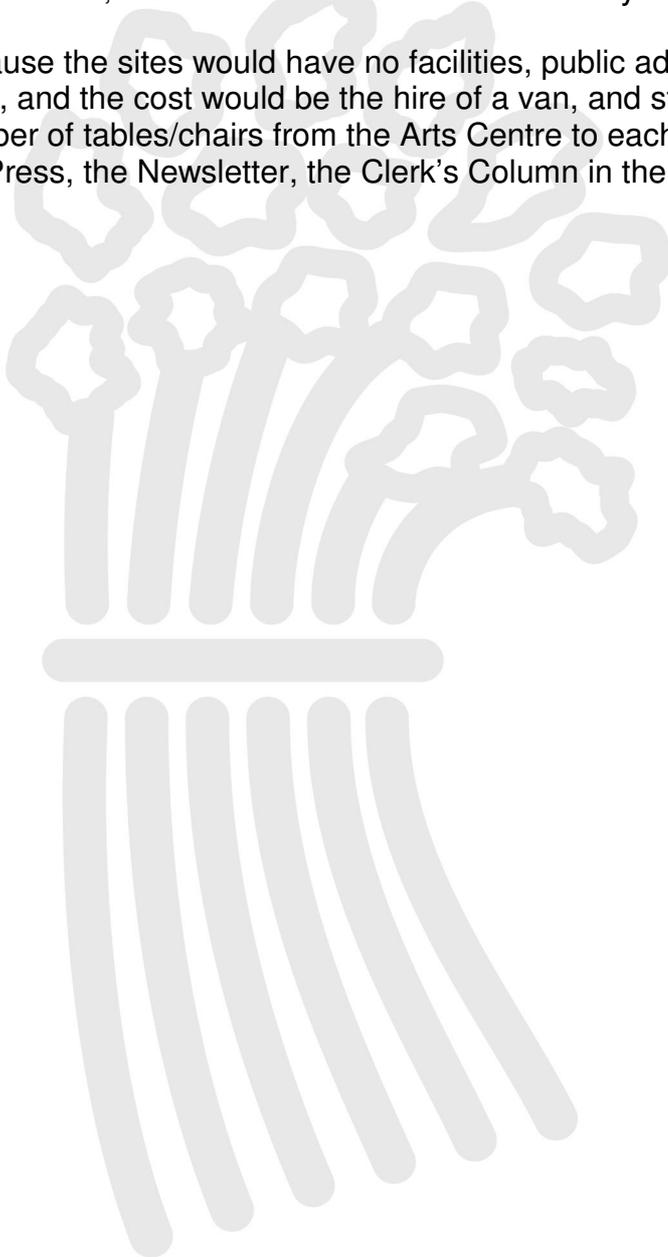
residents)	exercises the Town Council will publicise and promote these by way of posters, leaflets, and press releases	consultation exercises the Town Council will campaign for a local consultation, and publicise the consultation, either local or wider, by way of posters, leaflets, and press releases	with a representative selection of the community	
Local issues affecting a small group within the community	Where other organisations are responsible for the final decision the Town Council Ward Members will publicise the matter amongst the small group affected		Where the decision rests with the Town Council, Ward Members will consult with the group of residents affected and ensure they are invited to speak at the appropriate Council/Committee meeting	Planning applications; siting of bus shelters;

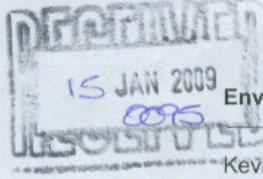
20th Anniversary Celebrations

2009 sees the 20th Anniversary of the Town Council and Members have asked for ideas as to how this could be commemorated, whilst not incurring unnecessary additional expenditure. This would rule out any major public event.

The Town Council, its responsibilities and functions, remains an unknown organisation to many residents, and 2009 might be a time to try to promote the role of the Town Council amongst residents. Hardly any residents actually attend Town Council meetings in the Arts Centre, so one option might be to hold a series of evening meetings, outdoors, on public open spaces around the town. These could be held every evening for a week, from (say) 6.30 p.m. to 8.00 p.m., on the Clements, Parkway, Chalkstone, Meadowlands and Hanchett End estates. If necessary a second week could be added to embrace the Howe Road area, Abbots Road estate, the Shetland Road and Roman Way areas.

Because the sites would have no facilities, public address systems would not be used, and the cost would be the hire of a van, and staff time, to transfer a suitable number of tables/chairs from the Arts Centre to each location. Publicity would be via the Press, the Newsletter, the Clerk's Column in the Echo.





Mr G Mussett
Clerk to Haverhill Town Council
Haverhill Arts Centre
High Street
Haverhill
Suffolk CB9 8AR

Kevin Shipp
Highway Network Improvement
Block 1 Floor 5
Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP1 2BX

Enquiries to: Kevin Shipp
Tel: 0845 606 6067
Fax: 01473 216864
Email: tmwest@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk
Web: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk>

Your Ref:
Our Ref: 500/301
Date: 12 January 2009

Dear Mr Mussett

REQUEST FOR JUNCTION ROAD MARKINGS – BRYBANK ROAD / GROVE COURT

HAVERHILL

I have received a request to provide some road markings at the above junction.

It is usual that on residential estates, especially those with a number of small cul-de-sacs, these markings may not be provided. In this instance the junction is close to a pizza restaurant and residential home and would therefore attract a higher than normal flow of traffic.

Where these markings are not provided the resulting confusion helps to slow drivers and aid traffic calming. However at this location there seems to have been some instances where a formal junction marking would be beneficial.

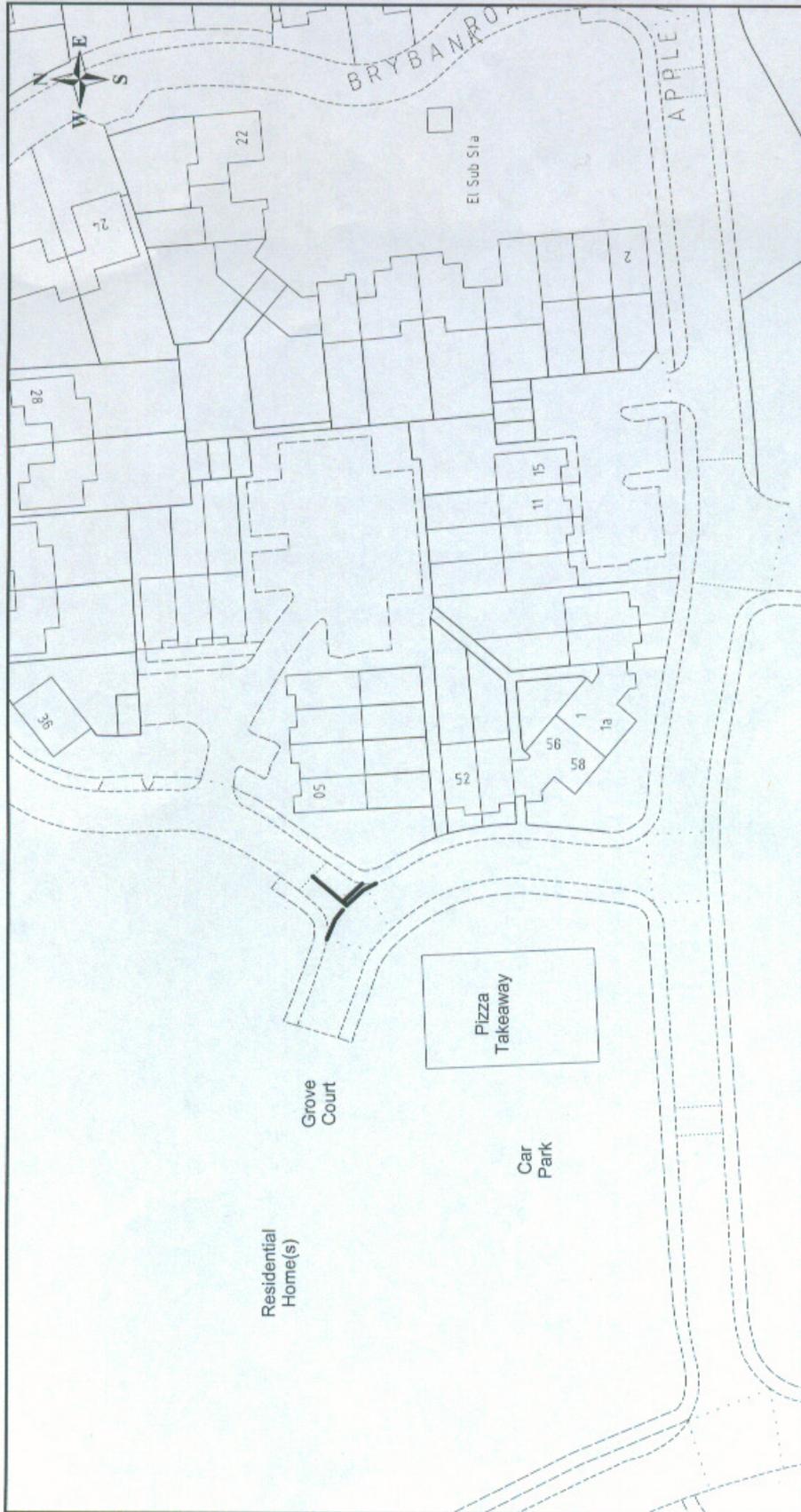
I have inspected the site and the natural flow of the road would lend itself to traffic travelling to / from Grove Court (and the pizza restaurant / residential home) having the priority. However the timescale in the development of the site would lend itself to residents travelling to / from Brybank Road having the priority.

While I am happy to arrange for some lining works to take place I have no preference for the priority. I would therefore seek the views of your council on this matter and ask if the local councillor(s) have a preference. For information I have enclosed two plans showing the two proposals.

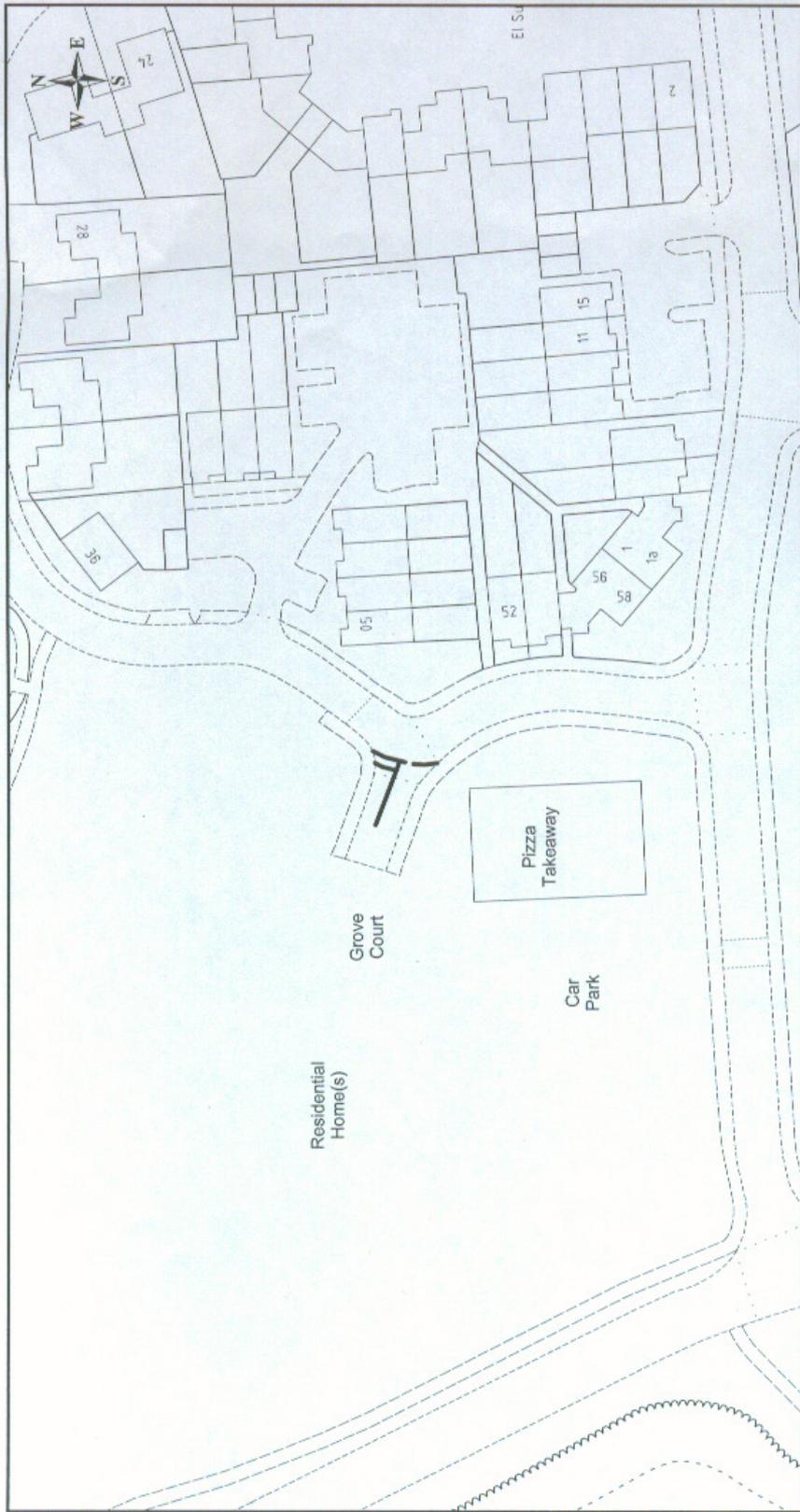
Thank you in advance for your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Shipp Traffic Management Engineer



PRODUCED BY	<p align="center">Option A Junction Markings Brybank Road / Grove Court Haverhill</p>		
CHECKED BY			
DRAWING NO.			
DATE			
Scale 1:750	<p align="center">© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Suffolk County Council Licence No. 100023395 2009</p>		
<p>Lucy Robinson, Director of Environment & Transport Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2BX.</p>			



PRODUCED BY
CHECKED BY
DRAWING NO.
DATE

**Option B
Junction Markings
Brybank Road / Grove Court
Haverhill**

Scale 1:750

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Lucy Robinson, Director of Environment & Transport
Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2BX.