

Haverhill Town Council

Minutes of a Meeting of Haverhill Town Council's

PLANNING WORKING PARTY

Held remotely on Tuesday 31st January 2023 at 7.00pm



HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

Present: Councillor P Hanlon (Chairman)
Councillor A Brown (Vice Chairman)
Councillor B Davidson
Councillor A Luccarini
Councillor D Smith
Councillor L Smith
Councillor A Stinchcombe
Vacancy

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Colin Poole, Clerk
Vicky Phillips, Deputy Clerk
Councillor J Burns
Scott Bailey and Andrew Smith, Havebury Housing

There were no members of the public present.

Welcome:

Councillor P Hanlon welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that the meeting was being recorded. **To note that this Working Party has no delegated authority and may only make recommendations to Full Council. Urgent actions may be taken under delegated authority given to the Clerk and Chair.**

P23 Apologies for Absence

/011 None, all present.

P22 Declarations of Interest and requests for Dispensation

/012 Councillors Brown and Davidson declared an interest in Item 1 List B as the applicant is known to them,

P22 Minutes of the Meetings held

/013 Councillor D Smith proposed, Councillor T Brown seconded that the minutes of the meeting held 17th January 2023 were approved as a true record by show of hands.
All in favour.

RESOLVED

P23 Matters Arising from the Minutes

/014 None

P23/ Havebury Housing

015 Appendix (ii)

Scott Bailey, Director of Development and Deputy Chief Executive, Havebury Housing Partnership

Andrew Smith, Chief Executive, Havebury Housing Partnership

Havebury Housing were invited to attend the Planning Working Party to discuss the barriers to building social housing in Haverhill.

P23/016 For members of the Public to speak on Planning Matters other than applications before the Working Party

P23/017 Planning Applications determined by the Clerk and Chair under Delegated Powers (List A attached)

Applications determined by the Clerk and Chair are shown on List A attached to the Minutes, see Appendix (i)

P23/018 Planning Applications currently before West Suffolk District Council and received by publication of agenda (List B attached)

Applications determined by the Committee are shown on List B attached to the Minutes, see Appendix (i)

P23/019 Matters to Report

There were no matters to report.

P23/020 Date of next Meeting

The next meeting of the Planning Working Party will be 14th February 2023

P23/021 Closure

The meeting was closed at 8.24pm

Signed
Chairman

Date.....

Appendix (i)

List A – Approved by Chairman and Clerk under delegated powers

		PLAN NO.	PROPOSAL	LOCATION	TOWN COUNCIL DECISION

List B – To be considered at the Working Party Meeting

		PLAN NO.	PROPOSAL	LOCATION	TOWN COUNCIL DECISION
17.01.23 Expires 07.02.23	1	DC/22/1925/OUT	Outline Planning application (all matters reserved) – 1no. dwelling Mr Adrian Collingwood	Land rear of Beechwood and Albany House, Hill Crescent	NEUTRAL Proposed Councillor L Smith, seconded Councillor A Stinchcombe
18.01.23 Expires 08.02.23	2	DC/23/0001/HH	Garage loft conversion Mr Matthew Goodey	15 Woodcock Close	NEUTRAL Proposed Council Brown, seconded Councillor L Smith
19.01.23 Expires 09.02.23	3	DC/23/0072/FUL	Sub Station on the POS/LEAP area to West of Phase 6 Mr Isaac Jolly, Persimmon Homes	Land NW of Haverhill, Anne Sucklings Lane	NEUTRAL Proposed Councillor Davidson, seconded Councillor Brown
23.01.23 Expires 13.02.23	4	DC/23/0091/ADV	One non-illuminated fascia sign Mr Marcus Hunt, Thule Outdoor Ltd	Haverhill Business Park, Unit 6, The Trade Centre	NEUTRAL Proposed Councillor Davidson, seconded Councillor T Brown

Appendix (ii)

Scott Bailey, Director of Development and Deputy Chief Executive, Havebury Housing Partnership

Andrew Smith, Chief Executive, Havebury Housing Partnership

Havebury Housing were invited to attend the Planning Working Party to discuss the barriers to building social housing in Haverhill.

Andrew Smith introduced himself and Scott Bailey. AS shared a presentation to members, outlining the background to Havebury Housing Partnership. Havebury were established in 2002 as a not-for-profit organisation. They own and manage over 7,000 homes across 11 local authorities and manage social rented housing (65% of market rent), affordable rented housing (80% of market rent), shared ownership housing (30-50%) and supported housing. They receive funding from Homes England. The stock of Havebury homes in Haverhill consists of Affordable Rent – 1,737, Social Rent 1,338, shared ownership 15, sheltered 42 and supported 15. AS also outlined ongoing Havebury's Corporate Plan objectives which were; being a great landlord, developing new affordable homes, investing in existing homes, addressing climate change, building a great team and remaining a thriving business.

Councillor Hanlon asked what the difference was between Social Rented and Affordable Rented?

AS – Social Rented was typically historically social housing or council house rent. In 2010, the government introduced increased rent with the aim that the profit would be invested in new homes and to rely less on grant funding. AS explained that a social rent is 65% of market rent, affordable rent is 80% market rent, but other than that they are the same. Havebury chose to cap the affordable rent at the local housing allowance rate, which varies by house type, Haverhill's is around 80%.

Councillor Liz Smith:

Are tenants still able to buy their houses as they did when they were council owned?

AS; There are different models for those that transferred, they still have the reserved right to buy, however people that moved in to social housing recently have the right to acquire, along with the right to shared ownership. The funds received from this will be paid back to the local authority. There is also a modest disposal programme, where up to approximately 12 properties a year are sold and profit from them will be invested back into affordable homes.

SB; new homes are built via two routes; one purchased from private developers, such as from Persimmon and are usually affordable rented because this is what the local authority have negotiated as part of the S106 deal and are auctioned across the social housing associations. Havebury will then need to purchase them in compliance if they are the highest bidder. Where Havebury undertake their own land led development, such as Boyton Meadows, they must attract Government grant funding in order to subsidise and produce a product which is below the market rent. Havebury have been very successful in attracting grants which has enabled them to keep the rent at social rent, rather than affordable. There are 60% affordable rent and 40% social rent coming forward.

Councillor Dave Smith:

- Will Havebury assist if a tenant falls on hard times? AS; Havebury has a generous support fund and advisors who will support tenants to keep their tenures.

- West Suffolk needs more social housing, rather than affordable or shared ownership. AS; Shared ownership is directed at people who need to access affordable homes. Housing need is a continuum and Havebury offer a range of tenures to create a diverse community. SB; both Havebury and West Suffolk Council would like to see more social rent being delivered, however, when negotiating S106, developers will argue that to deliver what is being asked of them switching from affordable to social rent will not be viable as they get a higher price for affordable rather than social rent. Delivering shared ownership meets a housing need for many people but is also insisted upon under S106 and is being pushed by the government.

Councillor Brown:

Is it easier to buy at auction rather than develop new housing yourself? AS; Yes, it carries less risk but there are pros and cons to both. The problem with own land led is overall viability, costs have increased which makes it difficult, although the government is listening and considering increasing grant rates. Havebury have recently completed a land led development at Boyton Meadows, which they are very proud of, working alongside a local contractor. It is challenging to buy land on the local market, competing against other developers and going through the planning process is a long process which can take at least a year. Havebury finds it difficult to get through the process, but they do have a commitment to land led own developments and hold the percentage.

Cllr Hanlon asked what the rent is for social housing, AS will come back with the answer.