

**Draft until signed**

**Minutes of Battsford Parish Council Meeting  
Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September at 7.30pm, Battsford Village Hall, Straight Road, Battsford**

**Present:** C Knock (Chairman), J Olley (Councillor), C Nicholas (Councillor), S Zethraeus (Councillor), J Truelove (County Councillor), D Whybrow (District Councillor)

**Attending:** S Meech (Clerk), J Budd (Public), S Winter (Public)

**1. Apologises for absence**

B Rhodes (Councillor)

**2. Declaration of Interest**

Cllr Olley – Wonderleir – Item 10 (b) (iv)

**3. Public Forum**

Mrs S Winter attending meeting to discuss village benches

**15. (b/f) Village benches in storage**

Mrs S Winter advises that Cllr Hand had raised money for 3 benches, 1 for Combs, 1 for Battsford and 1 for Little Finborough. Two of the three benches have been erected in both Battsford and Little Finborough. Mrs S Winter will enquire with Cllr J Crooks of Combs Parish Council as to the location of the third bench and whether the one erected at Scothes Corner is from Cllr Hand's fundraising or Cllr Truelove's locality budget. Mrs S Winter informs that Cllr Hand had wanted the benches located in the play area or next to the post box in Battsford.

Another item raised by Mrs S Winter was how the bus shelter at the front of the village hall is unused. Mrs S Winter suggests that it could be used as a storage area for the preschool. All councillors agree with this as long as a 6 week notice sign is placed on the bus shelter and notice board for any objections and a decision can then be made by Battsford Parish Council. The bus shelter will still belong to Battsford Parish Council.

**4. Community Police Officers Report**

S Meech (Clerk) advises that the PCSO will no longer be attending parish council meetings or providing a crime report, crime information will now be provided online. **Action** – Clerk to forward email received from PCSO advising of change to all councillors.

**5. County Councillors Report**

See Appendix 1

Cllr Truelove advises that there are plans to sort problems with drainage and a guarantee for work to be carried out. Appendix 1 has drainage update email attached.

**6. District Councillors Report**

See Appendix 2

8.13pm Cllr Skinner arrives

**7. Parish Council Chairman's Report**

Nothing to report

**8. Minutes of meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

Agreed and signed as a true and accurate copy

**9. Matters arising from minutes**

None

**10. Planning**

a. **Applications received for consideration** – No planning applications received

b. **Decisions received from MSDC**

- i. 2101/15 – Foxes Cottage, Valley Road, Battisford – Erection of outbuilding (retention of) – Granted
- ii. 2010/15 – Land, Burnt House Lane, Battisford – Livery Yard. To extend Condition 7 of Planning Permission 3021/13 – Granted
- iii. 1761/15 – Land South of 7 Church Road, Battisford – Change of use from agricultural land to domestic garden land – Granted
- iv. Wonderleir – Appeal dismissed. Cllr Olley advises that resident of property can still apply for planning permission to MSDC with changes
- v. 2322/15 – Willow Cottage, Mill Road, Battisford IP14 2LL - Reconstruction of fire damaged dwelling incorporating existing single storey side extension and construction of two storey rear extension – Granted – This item was not included in the agenda but raised at the meeting

**11. Finance**

a. **Accounts review to date**

b. **Payments received – None received**

c. **Payments to hand**

- i. Clerks salary and expenses - £268.02 – All councillors agree payment. Cheque No: 100852 written and signed
- ii. HMRC (Clerks tax on salary) - £60.80 – All councillors agree payment. Cheque No: 100853 written and signed
- iii. Ratification of payment to David Windle - £731.00 for grass cutting and maintenance

**12. Neighbourhood Watch**

Cllr Zethraeus has contacted Jim Henson and there has been no neighbourhood watch for 6 years, neighbourhood watch signs are £30.00 each and £30.00 or more to erect. The police would like Battisford to join with Combs and the Home Office are convinced that Neighbourhood Watch is a deterrent. Cllr Zethraeus is unsure how many signs would be needed. **Action** – Cllr Zethraeus to liaise with Jim Henson regarding attendance at next police meeting for neighbourhood watch.

**Action** - Contact details for Battisford Parish Council to be updated and posted on the notice board, data protection procedure to be checked with SALC for this

**13. Defibrillation machine – Community Heartbeat Trust**

Cllr Knock proposes the installation of a defibrillation machine in the parish of Battisford. Unanimous decision by all councillors of Battisford Parish Council for this proposal. Battisford Parish Council are happy to pay for a machine to be fitted within the phone box on Straight Road in front of Ashburnham House. Cllr Truelove advises it is critical that a qualified electrician checks the installation and that she is prepared to contribute £1,000.00 towards a defibrillation machine to be fitted. Cllr Knock advises the total cost is between £1,400.00 and

£2,000.00. **Action** – Clerk to liaise with Martin Render at Community Heartbeat Trust to move installation of defibrillation machine forward.

**14. Councillor Vacancy**

No-one has come forward to the parish clerk or any member of Battsford Parish Council with interest in the vacancy. Councillors to liaise with parishioners to raise interest in vacancy.

**16. Quote from MSDC – bin for cemetery**

Quote is put forward to councillors but it is agreed to put a sign up at Battsford cemetery to request that all rubbish is taken away. Bin for cemetery to be reviewed again around January time unless any issues occur before this time. **Action** – Sign to be put up “Please can visitors take any out of date tributes away with them. Many Thanks Battsford Parish Council”.

**17. Roadside Nature Reserves**

Councillors have reviewed the email received regarding roadside nature reserves and inform clerk that the information received is incorrect and there is an area in the village of Battsford not included in the spreadsheet. The area is on Pitts Hill at the junction of Valley Road and Church Road. **Action** – Clerk to advise Suffolk County Council of this nature reserve

**18. Housing Needs Survey**

**Action** – Cllr Knock to liaise with Ian Tibbett at MSDC regarding the funding of a housing survey for Battsford. E-mail to be sent to Anthea for inclusion in the next Barclif edition to advise that Battsford Parish Council are considering a Local Housing Needs Survey and will hold an open meeting to explain the reasons why.

**19. Play area**

Last email received from play area committee circulated. **Action** – A representative of the Battsford play area committee to be invited to attend the next parish council meeting for an update on the play area in Battsford

**20. Correspondence**

All circulated by e-mail

**21. Any other business raised by councillors for inclusion on the next agenda**

Cllr Skinner raises concerns from parishioners of speeding tractors and trailers through the village highlighting three incidents where high speed straw trailers have forced traffic onto verges and caused damage to vehicles. **Action** – E-mail to be sent to PCSO advising of these concerns for investigation

**22. Date and time of next meeting – Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

Meeting closed at 9.30pm

## PARISH REPORT SEPTEMBER 2015 BOSMERE DIVISION

County Councillor Julia Truelove

### DEVOLUTION BID

Colin Noble, Leader of S.C.C., has reported the position regarding a potential bid to Government to be given devolved powers in the future. Councillors and staff from every Borough, County and District councils are working on this bid. Colin Noble reports, 'Suffolk is now the exemplar at national level when it comes to collaborative working across boundaries and structures. It is this experience, along with a desire to get some real influence and power at local levels, that is the background for our devolution work'.

The next update to councillors will be some time after early September. The deadline for the bid to be submitted to Government is September 18<sup>th</sup>.

At the time of reporting the above I have not seen a draft of the submission.

### C.COUNCILLORS TO BE BRIEFED ON CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Local Safeguarding Children's Boards are responsible for ensuring that appropriate local procedures are in place to tackle child exploitation. This is the manipulation and/or coercion of young people under the age of 18, into sexual activity, in exchange for things such as money, gifts, accommodation, affection or status.

All County Councillors are now required to attend an induction meeting to be held in the near future, in order to be fully apprised of the issues.

### S.C.C.'S REPORT FOR THE EDUCATIONAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At this meeting, the Assistant Director for Education's current Report will be scrutinised. Six factors are listed which block Suffolk achieving its ambitions. Amongst them is the degree of aspiration and problems relating to teacher recruitment. 'Too many leaders, teachers and parents are not inspirational enough'.

The above report is an important subject for scrutiny, notwithstanding the improved attainments in G.C.S.E. and Primary School ratings. The County Council wants all schools to be rated, 'good', or outstanding by January 20<sup>th</sup>.

### SUFFOLK WALKING STRATEGY

This is a plan over the next five years to get more people walking. It aims to encourage walking as a means of transport for all journeys under 20 minutes. The Council will engage with rambler groups and walking challenge events. There will also be work to promote more people into sports.

The project should encourage local people to help ensure that footpaths and other rights of way remain in place and are easily accessible.

DEVELOPMENT BID

**SUCCESS FOR SUFFOLK SCAMENSTY**

As a result of the 'Scamensty' campaign reported recently, 8,000 pieces of scam mail were destroyed. These were collected since January 2015.

The mail continues to be logged and information sent to the National Trading Scams Team to utilise their enforcement and in their training work with other agencies, such as Royal Mail.

**AVIVA TOUR OF BRITAIN – STAGE 7 – Sept.12<sup>th</sup> – SAT.**

Wattisham Flying Station is to host a runway sprint for the professional cyclists participating in the event. Up to 120 top cyclists will race on the Base's 2,400 metre runway. The whole distance covered in this stage is from Fakenham to Ipswich. Cyclists will also travel through Barking.

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**Julia Truelove**

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**From:** Philip Wright  
**Sent:** 01 September 2015 13:38  
**To:** Julia Truelove  
**Subject:** Drainage schemes for Battsford 2015-16  
**Attachments:** Drainage location and the phased expansion drawing.pdf

Hi Julia,

As per our conversation.

I think the attached pdf plan should explain what is happening and the time frames for construction of the phases.

Basically put, Phase 3 of the scheme from house named 'Smugglers' to a point between properties called 'Field View/Thorne Cottage' is scheduled for this year. This is the replacement of the existing system, which some of which is within front gardens and the rest is in Highway verge.

Phase 4, is the continued extension of the drainage system from 'Brakenwood' to the layby of 'Holly House' is scheduled for summer of 2016.

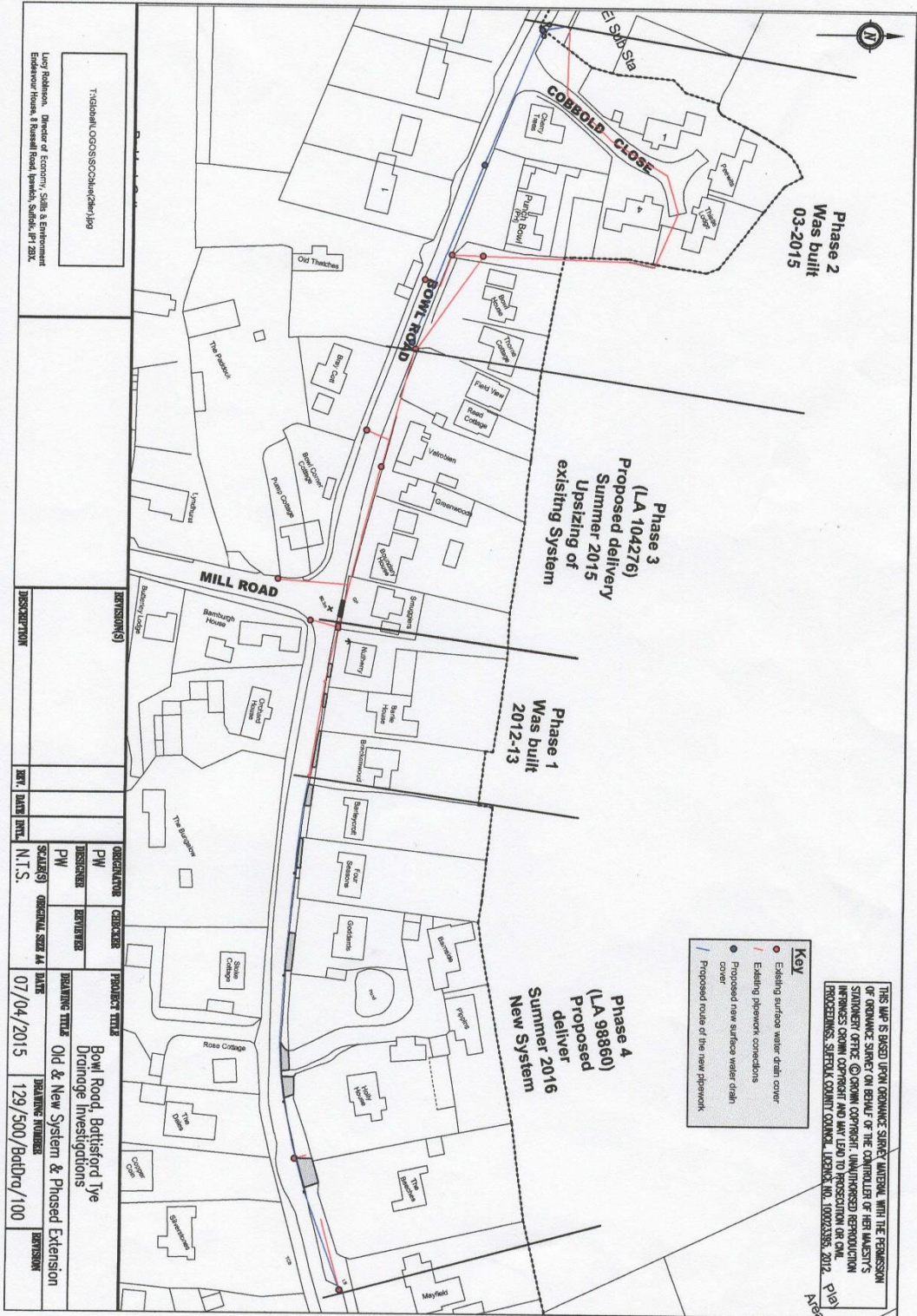
Hope this helps.

Kindest Regards

Phil

Philip Wright  
Area Engineer

Central Area Highways  
Resources Management  
Suffolk County Council  
Phoenix House, 3 Goddard Road, Ipswich, IP1 5NP  
01473 341479 – [philip.wright@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:philip.wright@suffolk.gov.uk)



<b>REVISIONS</b> 1. 15/04/2015 [Signature]		<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	
<b>DATE</b> 07/04/2015	<b>SCALE(S)</b> ORIGINAL SIZE A4	<b>DATE</b> 129/500/BatDrw/100	<b>REVISION</b>
<b>PROJECT TITLE</b> Bowli Road, Battisford Tye Drainage Investigations		<b>HEATING TITLE</b> Old & New System & Phased Extension	
<b>ORGANISATOR</b> PW	<b>CHECKER</b> PW	<b>DATE</b> 07/04/2015	
<b>DESIGNER</b> PW	<b>REVIEWER</b> PW	<b>HEATING NUMBER</b> 129/500/BatDrw/100	

## Appendix 2

Report to Battsford Parish Council for Full Council Meeting on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015

### 1.0 Planning (since 28<sup>th</sup> July 2015 to date of report)

#### 1.1 Validated -

##### 1.1.1 The Oldings, Hascot Hill, Battsford IP14 2HL

Reference 2589/15

Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for an existing use as private residential dwelling (C3) in breach of agricultural tie (Condition 1 of planning permission 562/85).

Validated 04 August 2015

Consultation Expiry 26 August 2015

Target Determination 29 September 2015

#### 1.2 Decisions –

##### 1.2.1 Willow Cottage, Mill Road, Battsford IP14 2LL

Reference 2322/15

Reconstruction of fire damaged dwelling incorporating existing single storey side extension and construction of two storey rear extension.

Validated 07 July 2015

Consultation Expiry 05 August 2015

Decision Made 01 September 2015

Planning Permission has been Granted

##### 1.2.2 Land south of 7 Church Road, Battsford

Reference 1761/15

Change of use from agricultural land to domestic garden land

Validated 23 June 2015

Consultation Expiry 20 July 2015

Decision Made 14 August 2015

Planning Permission has been Granted

##### 1.2.3 Land Burnt House Lane, Battsford

Reference 2010/15



Livery Yard, to extend Condition 7 of Planning Permission 3012/13

Validated 09 June 2015

Consultation Expiry 13 July 2015

Decision Made 04 August 2015

Planning Permission has been Granted

1.2.4 Foxes Cottage, Valley Road, Battsford  
Reference 2101/15

Erection of outbuilding (retention of)

Validated 17 June 2015

Consultation Expiry 15 July 2015

Decision Made 12 August 2015

Planning Permission has been Granted

1.3 Permitted Developments – I'm not aware of any PD's within the parish during the reporting period. If Councillors are aware of any construction activity they would like me to investigate its planning history – just ask.

1.4 Appeals – Wonderlier Farm, Straight Road, Battsford

Reference APP/W3520/W/15/3011367

The following is a communication that I've shared with neighbours of the applicant site that provides some background information and some potential timelines for conclusion relating to the period since the Planning Inspectorate Dismissed the Appeal against the refusal for Change of Use under Appeal referenced APP/W3520/W/15/3011367 initial advice regarding the same I received on 29th July 2015. The following is a status update.

- On 30th July I wrote the following to Planning and Enforcement Officers at MSDC.  
The originating Planning Application was a response to attempt to resolve an ongoing enforcement matter that was being pursued at that time. Accordingly following this Appeal Decision to dismiss the change of use of the former agricultural buildings to use involving keeping of birds and gundogs I seek your advice as to how you now intend to proceed in connection with this matter. The Appeal Decision is a significant milestone for objector neighbours but the prevailing circumstance that they have objected to in terms of loss of residential amenity remains.  
I look forward to your soonest response.
- On the same day I received a response which I precis as follows.  
We are currently considering our options in terms of how we proceed with this matter. In the first instance, we shall contact the landowner of Wonderlier to advise of the Appeal decision and the actions we consider ought to be taken next – i.e. the removal from the premises of the birds. We will then need to

consider any response we receive, or how to deal with a lack of response from the landowner.

For information, the landowner has the option to submit a further planning application to remedy the breach of planning control. That would then need to go through the planning process as per the last application. Such an application could be approved, in which case there would be no further action from the Council, or it could be refused by the Council and go to another appeal for determination by the Planning Inspectorate. Alternatively, the Council could proceed with formal enforcement action and serve an Enforcement Notice. Such a Notice would also be subject to appeal, and if such an appeal was upheld in the landowner's favour, could result in planning permission allowing the birds to remain.

Given these scenarios, I'm sure you can appreciate we need to consider all the options before we take any action.

- My further response, also on 30th July, was as follows.  
I'm at a bit of a loss to understand the landowner's options better. My understanding is that the Planning Permission sought, refused, was subsequently appealed, and very recently dismissed, was to remedy a previous enforcement relating to the change of use of the former agricultural buildings to use involving keeping of birds and gundogs. Accordingly, I don't understand under what terms that the landowner could submit a further planning application to remedy the breach of planning control. I thought that was the process that has just resulted in the appeal dismissal. Please advise.  
I'd also appreciate further advice regarding the potential outcomes in the scenario you describe if the Council proceed with formal enforcement action and serve an Enforcement Notice. What is the appeal process and associated timescales? I further fail to understand how, given the originating change of use application, subsequent appeal etc, could be over-ridden if an enforcement appeal is upheld. Please advise. Finally, could you advise whether following the Appeal Decision above, notwithstanding the other scenarios, there is any further action that the appellant can make in response to the dismissal of the appeal.
- The email correspondence between me and the MSDC Officer team continued on 30th with this reply.  
The matter of the parrots was first brought to the attention of Planning Enforcement. The result of our [MSDC] investigation was to invite an application for retention of the 'development' – i.e. the change of use of the buildings and land. The application was dealt with by the Planning team. Their refusal of the application was the subject of the recently decided appeal. So, the appeal was a 'planning' appeal rather than an 'enforcement' appeal.  
The landowner has the right to submit a further planning application. In order for the Planning team to consider that application, I believe, it would need to be, in some way, different to the last application. The Inspector stated in the decision document (at para.20) "I also note that there is no indication in the evidence before me that the proposal would cause any significant harm in respect of any matter other than its effect on living conditions through noise and disturbance. Equally, however, there is no indication that the proposal would result in any benefits other than those I have identified, and there may be scope for the continuation of these benefits through a package of mitigation

measures which is more comprehensive and of more certain effectiveness than that which is before me” – in essence, with (more) suitable mitigation measures to control noise and disturbance, the development could potentially be made acceptable.

In terms of an appeal against an Enforcement Notice, the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides seven ‘grounds’ for appeal – those being a) the development ought to be granted planning permission, b) that the breach hasn’t occurred, c) that the matters alleged do not constitute a breach, d) that the matters alleged are immune from enforcement action (due to the passage of time), e) that the Notice was not served correctly, f) that the steps required to be taken are unreasonable, and g) that the timescales for compliance are insufficient. Depending on how the Notice is drafted, the appellant can invoke any number, or all, of these ‘grounds’. If ground a) is cited, the appeal is treated similarly to an application – the Inspector’s decision would be based on whether or not planning permission ought to be granted. When an Enforcement Notice is served, the law requires a period of at least 28 days from the date of service for the Notice to come in to effect. An appeal against the Notice must be lodged before the Notice comes in to effect. After that, the timescales are largely decided by the Inspectorate. There are some requirements in terms of when evidence and information must be provided to the Inspectorate, but it is entirely within the gift of the Inspectorate to decide dates for site visits, hearings, etc, and for the final decision. At present, there seems to some delay associated with appeals, I think due to workloads at the Inspectorate. The decision on an appeal is made entirely by the Inspector allocated the case. It is entirely possible for two Inspectors to come to completely different conclusions on the same case. They are bound, in the same way as we are, by the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plan policy, and they are required to take account of all material considerations when determining an appeal. However, they are at liberty to reach their own conclusions.

As for further action by the appellant after the Inspector’s decision, the only route available to challenge the decision is by way of judicial review, and that would have to be brought on the basis of an error in law made by the Inspector – i.e. that the way he/she reached the decision was incorrect, rather than that the decision was incorrect

- On the 7th August I requested an update on actions following the Appeal Decision and our correspondence of 30th July. I received a twothread response - one from Enforcement and one from Planning. Enforcement correspondence was as follows.

We have written to the landowner to advise that, following the dismissal of the appeal, the use of the land for the keeping of birds and gun dogs ought to cease. We have further advised that continued unauthorised use of the land/buildings for the keeping of birds and gun dogs may be subject to formal enforcement action.

We have also advised, because we are obliged to do so, that the landowner is entitled to submit a further application, but have requested that any such application is with the Council within the next 28 days.

- I responded stating that I am sure that the neighbours that consider themselves to be affected by this matter will be pleased that “a process” has begun. However, the Planners informed me of the following.

We have had an enquiry from the agents acting for the [landowner]. Our understanding is that another application may be lodged shortly. As you may be aware, the recent appeal decision does appear to leave the door open for a revised submission

I was less welcoming to this news and responded as follows.

Notwithstanding the advice you have provided I am concerned that Enforcement action hasn't commenced. The neighbour's residential amenity remains negatively affected by the presence of the birds and dogs, as acknowledged in the Inspectors appeal dismissal, and as such surely it is appropriate to proceed with Enforcement. The speculation regarding a possible further application may be months away. The process of determining that application and possible appeal if unsuccessful may stretch to in excess of a year. I await your further advice.

- At this point Senior Officer intervention occurred. It was suggested that perhaps a better way to progress this matter would be for me to meet up with the various Officers involved and discuss what the next steps are and talk through the relevant timetables. They were keen to understand the community feedback that I'd been receiving. They reiterated that they have to approach things with equity and balance though they could quite understand that those most affected by the prevailing circumstances may have a perception of injustice. They further went on to state that whilst they couldn't wave a magic wand over the procedural aspects that surround a matter such as this they were committed to support my enquiries and engage in an ongoing conversation. They hoped that might make what they're doing more transparent to the community and provide opportunities for them to have their say.
- We subsequently had a brief meeting on the 12th August at which the following scenarios were considered as being the most likely next steps. Scenario [a]. Receipt of a new application seeking to deal with Inspectors points (as noted in 7th August correspondence above). This would need to be lodged with MSDC without undue delay. However, given the need for expert noise advice it would probably not be reasonably achievable within a month. It was considered a long-stop date of mid-October was reasonable. The following timetable would be circa 6 weeks for publicity, consultation and Committee Decision in December. If refused then likely next action would be Enforcement Notice (say within 3 weeks of decision on application). That may lead to a conjoined appeal on planning & enforcement – worst case Planning Inspector Decision on that Appeal may be mid 2016 resolution.

If Planning Permission Granted - with Conditions - then very careful consideration would need to be given to how to control through Conditions a bespoke timeline for any unresolved measures (noise mitigation) to be implemented. As there would be an Appeal option relating to those Conditions early issue of Enforcement Notice might be expedient at that point.

Scenario [b]. If no new application received by mid-October, or no guaranteed timetable from applicant for the submission of a new application to meet that objective were received, an Enforcement Notice could be served. The likelihood of Appeal against the Enforcement Notice is considered to be high. Particularly against whatever the stated timetable for compliance is as this will buy time for the appellant. Scenario [c]. Legal challenge to current appeal decision. This is considered as unlikely.

Whilst I was frustrated that there might still be an apparent lack of action to resolve the current unlawful prevailing circumstances I was still pleased that the Enforcement process had begun as noted above.

- There has been some further development since I met with Officers. The applicant's solicitor has requested that the 28 days submission period stated in the Enforcement team letter be extended to 42 days. This has been agreed to providing that clear evidence that an application, with the required supporting information (in particular the acoustic modelling), is being prepared can be provided. They are also seeking a meeting with the Planners during week commencing 7th September 2015.
- As can be seen this matter is complex. The last 7 years will have proven this. I trust that upon review of the above you will appreciate that I am trying to ensure that Officers progress this matter to a conclusion. They have many procedural constraints to take consideration of as well as their professional body requirements regarding probity and integrity. Perhaps the worst-case outcome would be that the current circumstance prevailed due to a procedural or inappropriate action that could be cited as a reason to allow the status-quo to remain?
- When I contacted the Planners on the 30th July I also contacted Environmental Health. This was my initiating enquiry.  
Now a milestone has been achieved in the planning status of the site I think that neighbour expectation is that MSDC can now work towards a resolution of the nuisance issue that they suffer.  
Irrespective of planning issues there is one of noise nuisance - your department's sphere of expertise. The macaws in particular emit loud and piercing squawks especially early morning and late evening. The immediate neighbours that consider they are exposed to noise nuisance have an expectation that MSDC will exercise their powers to seek remedy of the prevailing noise nuisance.  
Your comments and proposals in connection with this matter would be greatly appreciated.
- The response I received from an Environmental Health Officer was as follows. I am more than happy to take any complaints from the immediate neighbours and investigate for noise nuisance.  
As you may be aware, the legislation we enforce is framed within criminal law and attracts with it certain procedural rules that we must follow. The first is that the neighbour concerned will need to contact the Council direct to register a complaint. This will allow me to arrange a visit to their home to assess the noise, after notifying Mr Hammond that a complaint has been made.

In addition to rules of evidence, this is necessary because nuisance law must be assessed and documented as affecting the ordinary use of an actual 'premises' If the immediate neighbours are being disturbed (and I agree this is possible) please ask them to contact me so that I can start our investigation procedure. Once the Council is satisfied a nuisance exists, an abatement notice must be served. Such notices must give a reasonable amount of time for compliance having regard to the amount of resources and expenditure required to comply. Failure to comply with an abatement notice results in reporting the matter to magistrates court and fine if found guilty. There is also a possibility that a court will hold over any decision (sine die) pending action by other departments such as Planning Enforcement or new planning application submitted, which I understand has happened in similar complex cases.

It must be noted that the Environmental Health Team need a noise nuisance complaint to come from neighbours - that would extend to anyone living in the vicinity that feels they are affected by the noise. A single complaint would start the investigation process.

- I will update again when this matter proceeds to the next phase.

#### 2.0 Proposed "one-off" Mid Suffolk Locality Award Programme.

I have received the following regarding the plans for a "one off" District Councillor locality budget of £5,000 which was agreed at yesterday's Full Council meeting (subject to Scrutiny call-in). It is scheduled to commence from 1st October with a deadline for submissions of the 8th January 2016.

Any grant awarded would be "one off" and there should be no expectation that this would signal any on-going and long term financial commitment to any supported scheme. The award scheme will not exclude any groups, projects and organisations that are or have been receiving funding from the Council's Grants Programme from applying for an award. The Locality Awards Programme has been created for the direct benefit of Mid Suffolk communities and projects which meet one or more of the Council's Strategic Priorities. The previous Council allocated £200,000 of New Homes Bonus funding in 2012 for the budget year 2013/14 to support transformation in our communities. This funding was allocated during a period of significant change and the programme implementation was postponed to provide time to develop a system which ensured best use of the fund for both the Council and the communities. With 40 councillors each has a budget of £5,000.

It is vitally important any applicant to the Award Programme meets one or more of these Strategic Priorities and the outcome of the Award results in a positive impact on the community.

These priorities with their supporting outcomes are documented in the Mid Suffolk Member Locality Award Programme – both within the Guidance Notes and the Application Form. The Award scheme will ensure opportunities to apply are open and inclusive and could include funding support for a range of project types such as: public realm projects, village halls, sports development and young people's groups (the above examples are intended as a guide only and should not be considered an exhaustive list). The Award could also be used to start up a new activity or event or enhance an existing provision. The Award could also tackle a range of areas of need including: social and rural isolation, mental health issues and disability, and support the health and wellbeing of Mid Suffolk residents through the provision of preventative work.

Let me know of any schemes you would wish to put forward so we can put the application together. Please feel free to pass this onto other groups you know of who may wish to take advantage of this scheme.

See attached The Joint Strategic Plan, Locality Award Guidance Notes and Locality Award Application Form in this reports Appendices.

### 3.0 Devolution in Suffolk

What is the context? The Government is currently piloting the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill through Parliament. The Bill makes provision for local authorities and other parts of the public sector to 'bid' to run functions currently delivered centrally in return for certain agreed outcomes. Whilst most attention has been given to the so-called Northern Powerhouse, other councils in other parts of the country have also been talking with Government. Most of these are metropolitan or unitary councils. In all cases, there is a requirement of those councils which 'bid' for devolved powers both to satisfy the requirements of the Treasury that any new approaches are at least fiscally neutral (they don't cost more than they are currently projected to) and by the Department for

Communities and Local Government to do this in an innovative and accountable way. Where is Suffolk in all of this? We have a track record of collaborative and efficient working together in Suffolk (recognised by Government in its grant of the £3.3 million

Transformation Challenge Award) and strong working relationships with national politicians and officials. This background means we are very well-placed to start having a conversation with ministers and civil servants that may result in us assuming devolved powers from them. The Government recognises that what works in the big cities and unitaries is not appropriate for every part of the country and is looking to find solutions. Suffolk are one of just four initial bids in two-tier areas that are seeking to work with Government as to the devolution of powers and responsibilities.

This is a politically-led process. The Suffolk Public Sector Leaders' (SPSL) group, chaired by Babergh Leader Cllr. Jennie Jenkins, has set up a Devolution Working Group to investigate the level of interest about devolution among public sector organisations. The aim is to start formulating some broad principles and ideas that all can support in opening up this conversation with Government. This group is chaired by Forest Heath Deputy Leader, Cllr.

Robin Millar, with Ipswich Leader Cllr. David Ellesmere as deputy chairman.

The Working Group is working closely with representatives from the health and police sectors as well as the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP).

Officers from the eight Suffolk councils are pulling together information requested by the Working Group to help develop ideas that may be of interest to Government.

So what could be the main benefits to Suffolk from devolution? Suffolk is already a great place in which to live and work and that our communities are largely cohesive and work well are great foundations for our future productivity and progress. Ultimately, it is thought that by having more local control over what goes on in the county we can help to deliver even better outcomes for all of Suffolk's communities, both in our urban and rural areas. It is considered that locally-made decisions are likely to be better and more directly accountable to the communities where they're made. It is hoped that conversations with the Government will lead to the local knowledge and expertise of

councillors being better recognised, leading to greater and more effective decision-making on issues that affect you and your communities.

What progress has the Devolution Working Group made? Over the last couple of months, the Working Group has begun to sketch out a broad framework that identifies four possible areas where there may be benefits to our communities from devolving powers from Government. These are: education & skills, health, housing and productivity & growth. These are all areas where councils at borough, county and district level have direct interests and responsibilities, with strong input from other public sector partners as well. As part of their investigations, they are looking at the challenges and what they believe can be achieved in each of these four areas. Crucially, they need to begin to produce evidence for Government as to the possible local and national benefits that can be delivered by having more powers and responsibilities delivered in a devolved way. They will look to fully develop these ideas as they get into detailed conversations with Government. At the moment, the focus of the Working Group has been to ensure that there is broad support for these areas and that all partners can sign up to these as the starting point for future discussions with Government.

The Working Group has now reported to the SPSL and the SPSL met on 4<sup>th</sup> September to 'sign off' Suffolk's interest to Government. This is in effect a statement of interest and a starting point for future and more detailed discussions with ministers and civil servants, subject to approval by all eight councils.

So what happens next? The paper outlining the broad ideas of the Devolution Working Group and seeking the backing of each of the eight council partners is now due to be considered by our councils over the three weeks or so.

In the case of the borough/district councils, this paper will be considered by each full council. In the case of Suffolk County Council, the paper will be considered and resolved at its cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> September.

The Council report papers will be published a week ahead of the next MSDC Full Council Meeting taking place on 24<sup>th</sup> September.

Councillors will be asked to support in principle the devolution 'bid' and to allow the Devolution Working Group to submit that to Government to start the dialogue. So, the 'bid' is not the end of the process; rather it is the beginning of what may well be a detailed and lengthy effort to get the right balance to allow us to do more for those in our communities in most need and to help others to do more for themselves.

What happens after 24<sup>th</sup> September? A wide range of conversations with ministers and civil servants will start to flesh out the framework ideas in much more detail. This will take time to evolve and it is not expected that the process of shaping and implementing devolution in Suffolk would be fully completed for another 18-24 months or so, giving time to engage councillors and partners further.

How will the public know what is going on? At this stage there is very little detail that anyone can tell the public. The SPSL Group have already engaged with the EADT and BBC Radio Suffolk so they have an informed background. They will also be engaging the wider media when the cabinet and council papers start going into the public domain, giving the message that this is the start of an ongoing conversation with the Government. It is also hoped that briefings will be sent to Councillors to help keep our local communities up to date.

What about working with Norfolk, or other neighbouring counties?



At this stage the concentration is on the 'Suffolk deal' that is wanted from Government. There may be a time when it makes sense to work outside our county boundary and this will be considered, if appropriate, but in the context of what's best for Suffolk.

#### 4.0 Landlords and homeowners grants and government backed loans.

Landlords and homeowners across Mid Suffolk are being urged to take advantage of grants and loans that could improve their properties.

The Council runs a grant scheme that funds landlords, up to 50 per cent of the total cost, in order that they can provide efficient heating systems and insulation in tenanted homes, as well as grants of up to £5,000 for home owners to help them ensure their properties meet the Decent Homes Standard.

Homeowners can also apply for a loan of up to £15,000 to help bring their properties in line with the guideline standards.

These grants and loans bolster the councils' current strategic priorities to improve the quality and use of existing private sector housing, as well as helping to foster the right conditions for private landlords to work with our communities to deliver local housing need. These grants and loans can also be used to help homeowners to fund work to bring longterm empty properties back into use and to fund the conversion of empty buildings into residential dwellings. Across Mid Suffolk and Babergh there are 1,100 properties that have been empty for six months or more.

Both councils have a pot of £200,000 each for the grants and loans.

For further information and application advice call Private Sector Housing on 01473 826639. Note - All loans are means tested. All loans are interest free and repayable upon sale or transfer of a property. A local Land Charge will be applied.

#### 5.0 Licensing and Gambling Policies

Mid Suffolk and Babergh are now simultaneously consulting on updated (statutory) policy documents in respect of Licensing Act 2003 (alcohol, entertainment, late night refreshment – including events/festivals) and Gambling Act 2005 (betting, bingo, gaming in pubs and clubs, arcades, machines, lotteries etc.)

These are key documents to supporting both sets of functions, including the decisionmaking framework that the Council's licensing and regulatory team work to. This round of revision aims to focus more on how to balance business needs (including new and diversifying businesses) with proportionate community protections, increased alignment between the two Councils work – especially around the business support offered, promoting well-managed premises (and the Regulators' Code), closer integration of these functions with the Council's strategic priorities and recognising the importance of SMEs and events in the leisure sector to our local economies and wellbeing/self-sufficiency of our communities.

This consultation will run until 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015. However, there is a keenness to raise greater awareness and input from inside the Councils than has been achieved previously so that both documents become more corporately owned, integrated with other work/strategies and wider referenced. There are over 800 licensed premises in the districts, several thousand individual licence

holders and many more licensable events and activities going on. Councillors and officers involved know how much is done to support these functions.

There are two informal drop-in workshops for those interested to have a chat with a member of the team about this work.

Lecture Theatre, Needham offices – Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2015 (12-1.15pm Licensing policy and 1.15pm to 2pm Gambling policy)

Committee Room 1, Hadleigh offices – Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015 (12-1.15pm Licensing policy and 1.15pm to 2pm Gambling policy)

Depending on interest there may be another couple of dates added later in Sept/Oct.

The public consultation documents are available on the websites, as below:

<http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/business/licensing/latest-licensing-news/>

#### 6.0 Building Leadership and Management Capacity.

Over the last four years, both Mid Suffolk and Babergh have changed significantly. The workforce has been fully integrated across the two Councils and the senior management team, corporate management cohort and every operational delivery team has been restructured. This structural re-design has been paralleled by change in the Councils approach to leadership and management to enable the workforce to function effectively with less management capacity, to adapt to a rapidly changing agenda, to be more flexible and able to work in new ways.

Alongside this change, Councillors have worked with officers to develop a clear strategic focus on outcomes they wish to achieve with their communities in both Districts. There is a joint strategic plan and a significant delivery programme of work is underway. Following the elections in May the Joint Strategic Plan will be refreshed over coming months, and the budget and our resources will be better aligned to the priorities in the plan as the Council progress through the planning for the budget for 2016-17 and beyond. It is clear that the pace of delivery needs to increase, efficiencies still need to be achieved and resources need to be optimised to maximise our impact on outcomes for communities. This is a big challenge.

The capacity and capability of the leadership and management team at all levels has developed significantly since 2011. The context is now changing again with a newly elected Conservative Government; its devolution agenda and Suffolk Leaders' ambition to make the whole public service in Suffolk work as one, with a relentless focus on achieving what's best for Suffolk people and its places; means that the demands on managers and leaders is changing yet again.

As a consequence, it is apparent that the Councils current management arrangements need to be looked at again. It is proposed that the Chief Executive carries out a focused review. As with previous reviews, all obligations as a fair and reasonable employer will be met. The Council will work closely with Union colleagues and will be engaging with all staff to secure a full understanding and commitment to make any proposed changes work effectively.

#### 7.0 Aviva Tour of Britain

The Aviva Tour of Britain arrives in Suffolk next Saturday, the 12<sup>th</sup> September.

The Tour of Britain will start in Fakenham, Norfolk, before passing through Suffolk through Thetford and will make its way across the county to Ipswich where the penultimate stage of the race will finish.

Whilst the race is underway a rolling road block will be in place and local road users are being advised to expect short delays.

Details of the route and spectator information including parking can be found on the Tour of Britain website: <http://www.tourofbritain.co.uk/stages/stage7/index.php#.VciB5k1VhBc> The action will be very local to us with expected arrival times as follows:

· Bury St Edmunds	13:26
· Drinkstone	13:50
· Onehouse	14:00
· Stowmarket	14:05
· SPRINT Needham Market	14:14
· KING OF THE MOUNTAIN Barking Tye	14:18
· Ringshall	14:23
· Great Bricet	14:27
· Wattisham Airfield	14:27
· SPRINT Wattisham Airfield	14:34
· Semer	14:44
· Hadleigh	14:49
· Finish Princes Street, Ipswich	15:39

### 8.0 Joint Annual Monitoring Report

This document contains key statistics and information gathered for the 2014/15 financial year including the position on 5 year land supply, housing completions delivery, town centre information and Local Plan policy usage. It is available on the Councils' website.

By way of background the following is relevant to the context of the Report.

Mid Suffolk is predominantly a rural district covering the centre of Suffolk

Mid Suffolk Area 335 square miles (858 km<sup>2</sup>)

Population and households (approximately) 96,700 people / 40,300 households (ONS 2011)

Population growth 11% between 2001 to 2011. A similar level of growth is expected up to 2020

Main centres of population Stowmarket, Needham Market and Eye

Heritage assets Approx. 3,500 listed buildings, 31 Conservation Areas, 35 Scheduled Ancient

Monuments, 2 registered Historic Parks & Gardens Landscape

Mid Suffolk District is predominantly characterised by undulating plateau claylands dissected by rolling river valleys.

The District has a demography with fewer younger people and an increasing proportion of aging population and an aging population with 45 - 64 year olds representing the single largest age group at present. In addition, a significant percentage of the population are aged

65 years or older (20.13% in Mid Suffolk). (Suffolk Observatory 2012, Census 2011) The Babergh & Mid-Suffolk Joint Annual Monitoring Report 2014 - 2015 provides information on the key areas where Planning has a role. The objectives of the Joint Annual Monitoring Report are to:

- Report on the progress made in producing the key Joint Local Plan documents (a complete list of documents can be found in the Councils Joint Local Plan Programme – March 2015) on <http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/>
- Report on Key Indicators and the progress made towards delivery against the targets set out in the Local Plan documents.
- Report on the use and implementation of the adopted Local Plans and Saved Policies
- Report on any financial receipts obtained via implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy. This came into law in 2010 and is the new way of charging all new development to make a cash contribution towards essential infrastructure Key Headlines from the Report:
  - + Mid Suffolk and Babergh have jointly begun a new Joint Local Plan through the publication of an Issues and Options (Reg18) consultation, in January to March 2015.
  - + 416 new dwellings were built in Mid Suffolk district last year.
  - + Mid Suffolk District Council cannot identify a sufficient supply of deliverable sites for development, based upon the targets as set out in the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy.

### 9.0 Annual Canvass of Electors 2015

Each year Mid Suffolk is required to write to every residential property in the district to collect the details of people who are entitled to be included on the electoral register. During August 2015, they sent a letter, known as a "household enquiry form" (HEF), to every household in the district. The letter was addressed to "the occupier" and contained the details of all those in the household who are registered to vote.

The letter asked for confirmation that the details of those living at that address and registered to vote were correct. Anyone in the household can respond to the letter.

If the details are correct simply follow the instructions on the letter.

Choose only one of the following options to respond:

Go online to complete the form to confirm that there are no changes. The two security numbers printed on the letter are needed to complete the online form. Or phone 0800 197 9871 to confirm that there are no changes. Again, the two security numbers printed on the letter will be needed to confirm by phone. Alternatively, text NOCHANGE and the security codes to 80212. Finally, one could simply complete the paper form and return it using the pre-paid envelope.

If details are incorrect or missing - for example, someone has moved away or moved in - follow the instructions on the letter to let the Council know.

Again, choose only one of the two options:

Go online to complete the form to tell MSDC what has changed (the two security numbers will be needed), or, complete the paper form and return using the pre-paid envelope as above.

If you confirm that there are no changes, MSDC won't write to you again as part of the 2015 canvass.

If you tell them there are new people eligible to be registered, they will send each person an "invitation to register". This form invites that person to apply to register to vote. If they prefer they can register online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

If you tell them someone has moved away, they may need to write again to confirm that that person has moved away. This is because they're required to have two pieces of evidence to remove someone from the electoral register.

By law, they are required to send a reminder where they don't get a reply from a household. It help to save money by replying promptly to the first letter.

If there is no response after these reminders, they are legally required to send one of their canvassing staff to your property to ask for information.

The law says that you must provide them information as part of the annual canvass. Failure to respond could result in you being unable to vote at future elections and being fined.

## 10.0 Conclusion

I trust the forgoing is informative and relevant.

Finally, if there are specific matters that you would like me to investigate or report on – just ask.

Contacts details as follows:

[david.whybrow@midsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:david.whybrow@midsuffolk.gov.uk) [david@dswwhybrow.com](mailto:david@dswwhybrow.com)  
07799 068 926

Or visit me at The Old Rectory, Stowmarket Road, Ringshall. IP14 2HZ

## Appendices

The Joint Strategic Plan

Locality Award Guidance Notes

Locality Award Application Form

SPSL Group Devolution Proposal 2015-09-04