



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

C44

Council 28 June 2011

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Written report by Cllr Terry Clements, Transport & Planning Portfolio

Portfolio includes:

- Highways Agency;
- Engineering;
- Conservation of the built environment;
- Car Parking;
- Transportation policy;
- Bus station and public transport;
- Planning Policy;
- Development Control and Enforcement;
- Building Control;
- Local Land and Property Gazetteer; and
- Local Land Charges.

1. Transport and Engineering: Bury St Edmunds

- 1.1 Parking events in May 2011 were 7.8% up against the same period last year which demonstrates that Bury St Edmunds remains a popular destination and that the pricing level for parking is competitive. It should be noted that the parking events in Haverhill remained at a similar level.
- 1.2 The new half hour drop-in rates introduced in April 2011 at St Andrews Car Park and Lower Baxter Street Car Park have proved very popular with close to 2,000 customers choosing this option in May 2011.
- 1.3 Our new low emissions car park at School Yard East was officially opened in June 2011 but the car park was made operational in May 2011 and had already seen strong demand from eco friendly car owners.
- 1.4 New drop-off bays at the cattle market/arc car park, which allow drivers a couple of free minutes to drop off passengers close to the town centre, are now open and are providing a valuable service to customers.
- 1.5 Representations made to First Eastern Counties Buses Ltd have resulted in revisions to a number of the service routes in Bury St Edmunds. This is a positive result and I am pleased that the company has responded to the feedback given.

2. Planning Policy

- 2.1 The preparation of the Vision 2031 documents for Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and the rural area is progressing well. The preparation of these documents provides an opportunity to combine our corporate objectives with those of other service providers and the planning framework for these areas in a truly joined up approach to shaping the Borough to meet the long term needs of the community. At the same time, developers and landowners promoting the development of the strategic sites identified in the Core Strategy, undertook initial engagement with the local community and service providers to establish the constraints and opportunities for developing these areas. Initial reports on the first round of consultation, including the strategic sites, have been submitted to the locality working parties and made available on the Vision 2031 websites. Work is now progressing on draft documents and the preparation of concepts for how the strategic sites could be developed. Members will be provided opportunities to contribute to the content of these prior to public consultation later in the year.
- 2.2 The Government's Localism Bill, which proposes significant reforms for the planning system, is currently progressing through the House of Lords. Its proposals include:-
- (a) the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies;
 - (b) amending the Community Infrastructure Levy, which allows Councils to charge developers to pay for infrastructure. The Bill makes clear that the use of financial incentives, such as the community infrastructure levy, can be a material consideration in the planning process;
 - (c) providing for neighbourhood plans, prepared by local communities for parishes and other neighbourhoods and which would be approved if they received 50% of the votes cast in a local referendum; and
 - (d) providing for neighbourhood development orders to allow communities to approve development without requiring normal planning consent.
- 2.3 It is likely to be a number of months before the Bill receives Royal Assent and it will be necessary at the time to review the implications of the new Act on planning policy. However, the Government has made it clear that Councils should press ahead with putting strategic planning policies in place. In this context, the Borough Council is in a very strong position in having a Core Strategy that was adopted in December 2010 and providing an up-to-date strategic planning framework for the Borough.

3. Growth Area Green Infrastructure projects

- 3.1 The Council has agreed to invest an element of the Government's Growth Area Fund grant in a number of green infrastructure projects. The creation of a new footpath adjoining Haverhill Golf Driving Range is now complete, linking up routes on the eastern side of the town. The relocation of trees in the Wilsey open space area will be undertaken during the next planting season.
- 3.2 In Bury St Edmunds, works to improve a number of open spaces and play areas in the western and north-western part of the town will commence in the near future. In some cases the works will involve re-positioning play equipment within the site or creating new paths. These will be subject to local consultation prior to the works being undertaken.

- 3.3 Work is also progressing on the improvement of Pigeon Lane, between Mildenhall Road, Bury St Edmunds and Fornham All Saints and to the Lark Valley path between Fornham All Saints and Hengrave. This work is being managed by the County Council Rights of Way team and it should be completed in the autumn. The actual works to the path will be delayed to avoid closing the path during the popular summer walking period.

W:\Democratic WP Services\Committee\Portfolios\2011\Transport and Planning\11.06.28 Cllr Clements.doc