



Council 19 June 2012

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Report by Cllr Terry Clements, Planning and Transport Portfolio

Portfolio includes:

- Planning Policy, including Conservation and the Built Environment;
- Building Control;
- Property Gazetteer and Land Charges;
- Transportation Policy, Public Transport, Bus Station and Car Parking; and
- Engineering.

1. Planning Policy

- 1.1 Consultation on the three Vision 2031 draft documents ended on 30 April 2012, and I am pleased to report that we have had a very good level of response. A total of 445 people and organisations submitted responses, some representing the views of a number of people through parish councils, residents' associations and community groups. All comments are available to view on the Council's website and in the receptions at West Suffolk House in Bury St Edmunds and Lower Downs Slade in Haverhill. A report highlighting the main points raised during the consultation is being presented to the Sustainable Development Working Party on 3 July 2012. The Leader's report sets out the next stages in the preparation of these important frameworks.
- 1.2 Work continues with Forest Heath District Council on the preparation of a joint Development Management Policies document. As reported previously, the document is the first example across Suffolk of two local planning authorities preparing a joint Local Plan document. Consultation on the first draft closed on 8 March, resulting in 368 people and organisations submitting comments. Officers are now working to amend the draft in the light of comments received and a revised draft will be presented to full Council in September 2012, when agreement will be sought to undertake a final round of consultation prior to examination by a Planning Inspector.
- 1.3 The two Councils have also been working jointly to prepare an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document which, when complete, will provide important guidance for the public, developers, landowners, consultants and local authority staff in providing clear and consistent advice to all parties involved in the delivery of affordable housing through the planning system. On 23 May 2012 Cabinet approved a draft document for public consultation. The final document will be brought before full Council for adoption later in 2012.

2. National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 On 27 March 2012 the Government published the new National Planning Policy Framework which came into immediate effect. As such, all decisions on planning applications and the preparation of new planning policies will have regard to its content. The content of the new National Planning Policy Framework will be reflected in new planning policy documents as they are prepared by the Council.

3. Development Proposals

- 3.1 I am pleased to inform Members that developers are undertaking preliminary work ahead of the submission of a planning application for the Bury St Edmunds Eastern Relief Road, which will link Moreton Hall with junction 45 of the A14 at Rougham. The Council has granted a loan of £750,000 of Government Growth Area Funds to assist with submitting the application, which will be recovered when construction of the road commences.

4. Rail Services in Suffolk

- 4.1 I recently attended a very constructive meeting with the Portfolio Holder for Roads, Transport and Planning at Suffolk County Council concerning the development of a revised Rail Strategy for the County, and the preparation of a wider East Anglia Rail Manifesto being prepared by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership for the Greater Anglia rail franchise area. The Greater Anglia Franchise will be subject to renewal in 2014, with a contract expected to last for 15 years. Local transport authorities in the area are, therefore, seeking to influence the content of the franchise.
- 4.2 From a St Edmundsbury point of view, this provides a real opportunity to seek higher quality and more frequent services to Cambridge, Ipswich and Peterborough from Bury St Edmunds, better facilities at Bury St Edmunds station and better links to stations from Haverhill and other settlements in the Borough.

5. Car Parking

- 5.1 It has been a busy period for parking events in both Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill, with visitor numbers remaining consistent.
- 5.2 The introduction of charging to blue badge holders saw the adoption of a very successful engagement with blue badge holders with the roll out of special signs, information leaflets, and very direct support from the front line team.
- 5.3 A major resurface at Ram Meadow Car Park in Bury St Edmunds was carried out in May bringing the site up to the high standards seen elsewhere in the town's parking environment.
- 5.4 The introduction of parking charges at Clare Country Park and Nowton Park began in April, again with close management of the scheme involving commissioning of pay machines, signage and the introduction of a cash collection operation.
- 5.5 Following a national tender, a vending contract to supply vending in selected car parks and the bus station has been awarded with a guaranteed income over three years.
- 5.6 Customers choosing to pay by RingGo, the credit card facility, has seen rising demand since the introduction of this valuable service in March.
- 5.7 Works have been completed to extend the provision of parking bays at Hardwick Heath creating 25 more spaces.