



## Council 30 June 2014

### CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

#### ***Report by Cllr Terry Clements Planning and Regulation Portfolio***

**Portfolio includes:**

- Planning (Development Control)
- Planning Policy
- Building Control
- Vision 2031
- Environmental Health (excluding Environmental Management)
- Licensing

#### **1. *Planning Policy and Vision 2031***

- 1.1 Members will be aware that getting up to date planning policies in place across the borough is not only one of our highest priorities, but also reflects the government's ambition of providing planning certainty at the local level. The three Vision 2031 local plan documents will, when complete, provide an important element of this approach, indicating the location of the development that will meet the needs of the growing population over the next 17 years.
- 1.2 As I reported to the February meeting of the Council, the public examination hearings were conducted by the Planning Inspector in January and February. Following the conclusion of the hearings the Inspector has now published his Recommended Main Modifications that he considers are necessary to make the documents "sound" in planning terms. The Modifications were the subject to consultation by the council on behalf of the Inspector for a seven week period up to 30 May and all comments received have been forwarded to him. The Inspector will now complete his report on the examination of the Vision 2031 documents and submit it to the Council, stating what changes are required to make them sound. The Council will then be able to adopt the three Vision 2031 local plans as statutory planning policy. It is anticipated that this could occur in September.
- 1.3 Given the extent and detail of the Vision 2031 documents, I am especially pleased to report that there were relatively few main modifications recommended by the Inspector. This demonstrates that we have prepared a solid planning framework that will positively manage the inevitable growth in the borough over the next few years.

## **2. Joint Development Management Policies**

- 2.1 The government Planning Inspector examining this local plan document is conducting the hearings over four days commencing 22 July 2014. The hearing programme, matters being discussed and details of those invited to attend by the Inspector are available to view on the Planning Policy pages of our website. It is hoped that, following any subsequent consultation on modifications, this local plan document could be in a position to be adopted by the end of 2014.

## **3. St Edmundsbury Planning Policy Framework**

- 3.1 The potential adoption of Vision 2031 and the Joint Development Management Policies document will complete the work to put in place up-to-date planning policies across the borough and will supersede the 2006 Replacement Local Plan. The local plan will then comprise:
- Core Strategy – the strategic framework that determines how much growth will take place and where in the period to 2031;
  - Vision 2031 – primarily identifying sites where development will take place to deliver the strategy; and
  - Development Management Policies – the day-to-day policies used against which most planning applications are considered.
- 3.2 In addition to these documents, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out the governments planning policy and local plans must conform with the content of this document.

## **4. Major Projects**

- 4.1 A major milestone in the delivery of growth at Haverhill was achieved at the June meeting of the Development Control Committee. Members approved a planning application for the construction of a relief road, around 1100 new homes, a primary school and local centre at North-West Haverhill. This development was first conceived in the Haverhill Town Map prepared in 1972 and represents the culmination of proposals that have evolved through the preparation of a concept statement and masterplan that have had significant local community engagement along the way. While there are no house builders coming forward on the site at present, it is hoped that this decision will soon result in this long anticipated development commencing.
- 4.2 In Bury St Edmunds, the preparation and community engagement on the masterplan for the North-East Bury St Edmunds strategic site has now been completed by the developers and has been considered by the Sustainable Development Working Party with a recommendation for adoption at this meeting of the Council. Once adopted, this will be the third of the five strategic housing sites in Bury St Edmunds to have a masterplan in place. It is understood that work will shortly be commencing on a masterplan for South-East Bury St Edmunds, but there is no progress to date on the masterplan for the Westley site.
- 4.3 I am also able to inform Members that the owners have agreed to prepare a masterplan for the Gurteen's site in Haverhill in order to provide a framework for the future use of this site, which contains a number of listed buildings. We will ensure that the preparation includes engagement with the local community and statutory bodies, including the town council and English Heritage.

## **5. Regulatory Services**

### **5.1 Support to improve energy efficiency in private accommodation**

- 5.1.1 Energy prices have risen steeply in recent years and the cost of heating a home is a major source of concern to householders. Nationally, the energy efficiency of the private rental sector, in particular, lags behind the rest of the housing market. One in five households in the English private rented sector is fuel poor – almost double the national average. In March 2014, the Council and its partners in the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership launched a new County-wide energy efficiency programme, Suffolk Energy Action, a quality-assured scheme designed to help all Suffolk residents save money on their energy bills and encourage the reduction of carbon emissions through energy efficiency improvements.
- 5.1.2 Since then, the Environment Team has worked successfully with other local authority partners within the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership leading to being awarded £2million from the Government to support energy efficiency improvements in the private rental sector in Suffolk. We aim to engage the hard-to-reach private rental sector through the project, in order to help tenants who are struggling with energy bills in properties that require updating. This funding is in addition to an earlier successful bid for £3.5 million aimed at supporting Suffolk households improve energy efficiency by making it easier to take up the Green Deal.

### **5.2 Licensing**

- 5.2.1 Premises and clubs holding licences/certificates under the Licensing Act 2003 are obliged to ensure that all of the activities they do in no way undermine the Act's objectives, which are:
- The prevention of crime and disorder;
  - The prevention of public nuisance;
  - Public safety; and
  - The protection of children from harm.
- 5.2.2 In some situations the number or type and variety of these premises can directly or indirectly give rise to significant levels of crime and disorder, public nuisance and anti-social issues. In many cases the responsible authorities, which include Police, Trading Standards, and Environmental Health, will alongside Licensing, intervene and take appropriate action to prevent further problems. However, these locations are often saturated with either premises and associated problems which require additional tools to tackle.
- 5.2.3 Cumulative Impact Policies were introduced as a tool for licensing authorities to limit the growth of licensed premises in a problem area. This is set out in the statutory guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003. The principal is that applications for new or variations to licensed premises in such areas would normally be refused following the receipt of a relevant representation, unless the applicant can demonstrate that they will not undermine Act's objectives. The onus is placed upon the applicant to take

strong proactive measures to prevent the problems associated with the area and to satisfy the Members at a hearing.

5.2.4 Following a recent consultation two areas have been proposed and are as the result of the levels of night time economy crime and disorder. These are part of the Abbeygate Ward and the Risbygate Ward. Licensing and Regulatory Committee were considering the consultation and evidence to support the proposed policy areas on the 10 June 2014.

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