



Council 27 September 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 A recommendation to approve the final draft of the Joint Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Development Management Policies document for consultation appears elsewhere on this meeting's agenda. Taking this forward represents an important step forward to getting locally distinct planning policies in place for West Suffolk. I would therefore advocate that Members encourage local town and parish councils, in particular, to respond to the consultation process when it takes place later this year.
- 1.2 Consultation will commence in October on a draft Joint Supplementary Planning Document for the delivery of affordable housing. This will, when adopted, also provide joint guidance across both districts. Cabinet have also approved, for consultation purposes, a draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities supplementary planning document for St Edmundsbury. The document will, when finalised, provide an explanation of how the Council will approach the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities in conjunction with new housing development. Consultation on this document will also take place in October. Similar guidance is already in place in Forest Heath.
- 1.3 The Council has been consulted on two planning policy documents from neighbouring councils in the last two months. Forest Heath District Council has commenced work on a single issue review of Policy CS7 of their Core Strategy, which deals with the planned housing growth in the district, while South Cambridgeshire District Council has commenced the preparation of a new district wide Local Plan. The content of both documents and their potential impact on St Edmundsbury were considered by the Sustainable Development Working Party on 11 September.

2. Cupola House, Bury St Edmunds

- 2.1 Members will be aware of the devastating fire at the Grade I listed Cupola House in Bury St Edmunds on 16 June which was noted at the June Council meeting. I am sure that Members will agree that the united effort of individuals and organisations across the town to minimise the impact of the fire and get businesses open again has been exceptional. I am especially pleased to report that the Council's Conservation Officers have been working effortlessly with the fire service and demolition company to provide advice and are now working closely with the owners and their architects to bring forward the reconstruction of the building to its former glory at the earliest possible time.

3. Railways

- 3.1 In July I supported, on behalf of the Borough Council, the launch of a new long term rail prospectus for East Anglia that has been signed up to by the region's MPs, local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and a range of business and interest groups. Its timing is of significance given the planned re-letting of the Greater Anglia Rail Franchise and puts forward the case for a "realistic and technically feasible programme of improvements between now and 2032 which will help create thousands of jobs and unlock billions of pounds of growth for the UK economy."
- 3.2 Specifically for St Edmundsbury, it calls for improvements to freight and passenger services between Ipswich and Cambridge / Peterborough including the long term electrification of the line. There are also calls for improvements to the rolling stock and station improvements including additional parking. Clearly this is an ambitious plan but with so much support it is clearly one that many believe is achievable.

4. Parking Services

- 4.1 This has been a busy period for parking events in both Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill, with visitor numbers rising when compared to the previous year. The car parking team is now working to deliver the service across both authorities and the combined parking team will be known as West Suffolk Parking Services.
- 4.2 I was delighted to help launch an initiative in which we joined with Police and Suffolk County Council to make our customers more aware of the security of their valuables when leaving their cars. Our attendants will record any instances they find of owners leaving valuables in sight, and liaise with the Police who will write to the owner to heighten their awareness.
- 4.3 The number of customers choosing to pay by RingGo pay by phone has continued to rise, with summer seeing 718 new customers registering for this convenient pay option and overall use rising 32% against spring figures.
- 4.4 The completion of enhancement works on the Cattle Market/arc main walkway from Parkway has greatly improved this well used pedestrian route to the town.