



Council 18 June 2013

LEADER'S REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Report by Cllr John Griffiths Leader of the Council

Portfolio includes:

- Leadership of Council
- Communications
- Corporate Planning
- Strategic Economic Development (LEPs)
- Shared Services

1. *Shared Services*

- 1.1 All of the smaller services will have been restructured into single teams with Forest Heath District Council by 1 July 2013. These are Human Resources, Resources and Performance, Policy, Legal and Democratic Services and Economic Development. Savings from these service restructures are estimated to be £627,000, which is a significant contribution to our overall shared service savings target. The restructuring has offered some staff new opportunities, but has been very difficult for others who will be leaving the organisation over the next few weeks or months. I commend all of our staff for their continued hard work and dedication at this very difficult time. We are still on track to complete the larger services restructuring by the end of September 2013, meaning that by early October we will have a complete, single team working across Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury.

2. *Strategic Economic Development (LEPs)*

2.1 New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership

- 2.2 I recently joined my fellow board member, Councillor John Fuller of South Norfolk District Council, in hosting a New Anglia Engagement Meeting with Leaders, senior officers and Economic Development Officers from across the New Anglia area. The purpose of the meeting was to make sure that the activities and achievements of the New Anglia LEP are clearly communicated to Members across the districts, and that the opportunity to feed projects, issues and agenda items for future Board meetings is available and clearly known to all. It is intended that these meetings will be held regularly to ensure engagement throughout Norfolk and Suffolk.

3. Communications

- 3.1 The communications team is supporting the corporate work on improving customer access, especially through development of the website to create one that is more focused on transactions, enabling people to interact easily and conveniently with the council.
- 3.2 Internal communications continues to be a priority as the staffing restructures are completed, with changes and additions being updated to the intranet (which is shared with staff and Councillors at Forest Heath District Council).
- 3.3 A major external communications focus has been the Vision 2031 process as the Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and Rural documents went through the democratic process. The final draft documents are now being put into a format that will make them accessible both in print and on the website for consultation during the summer.
- 3.4 The communications team has worked with Cabinet and the planning policy team to build an understanding in the local media, and through them, the public, about the progress of the Local Plan and where Vision 2031 fits into that timetable. This work will continue throughout the consultation period to encourage people to put forward their comments which will then be considered, alongside the Vision 2031 documents, by the independent Planning Inspector.
- 3.5 Work continues on developing the shared communications team with Forest Heath, with team members covering West Suffolk, not just individual councils, especially on internal and external matters which are common to both.