



Council 23 September 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 Vision 2031

1.1.1 Elsewhere on this meeting's agenda the Council is being asked to adopt the three Vision 2031 local plan documents. Their adoption as planning policy will put into place frameworks for managing the forecast growth in the borough over the next two decades. Having these plans in place will mean that we're in a strong position to manage change locally, rather than having to react to pressures from developers and others through the consideration of speculative planning applications. They provide positive guidance for residents, investors, developers and infrastructure providers in terms of how and where the town develops, grows and continues to prosper, while protecting what we value most, including our rich heritage and quality of life.

1.1.2 Work on the Vision documents does not stop here as they contain a number of aspirations and actions that we will now look to implement through both the planning process and by working with other organisations.

1.2 Joint Forest Heath/St Edmundsbury Development Management Policies

1.2.1 The government Planning Inspector examining this local plan document conducted the hearings over four days in July. During the course of the hearings the Inspector has stated that there will be a need for some policies to be amended to make the document "sound". It is anticipated that the Inspector's Recommended Modifications to these policies will be received shortly at which time we will be asked to undertake a six weeks consultation on them on his behalf. Following the conclusion of this consultation, all responses

received will be submitted to the Inspector for his consideration prior to him issuing his report on the examination. When this stage is reached, both councils will be in a position to adopt the local plan document.

1.3 Major Projects

1.3.1 A number of strategic development projects are continuing to be progressed. The receipt of the Inspector's report into the examination of Vision 2031 has helped to provide both clarity and certainty for a number of sites as well as the masterplan process which some sites require. Although there was some discussion on the masterplan process at both recent local plan hearings, there was no questioning of the council of the need for such an approach to bringing forward significant development sites. The Inspector's report into Vision 2031 stated "I share the Council's view that involving the public and other stakeholders in establishing the principles of development on large or complex sites enhances the planning process."

1.3.2 It is anticipated that at forthcoming meetings the Council will be asked to adopt a number of site specific concept statements, masterplans and development briefs, which is a positive indication that the local economy continues to grow following the recent economic downturn.

1.4 Planning Applications

1.4.1 Although the government has introduced relaxations on the type of development that requires planning permission, it is predicted that the number of planning applications that will be received by the Borough Council this year will be the highest for three years and it is likely that the confirmation of site allocations in Vision 2031 will be a catalyst for that increase to continue.

2. Regulatory Services

2.1 Fuel poverty and affordable warmth

2.1.1 Warm Homes Healthy People, our Suffolk-wide local authority-run fuel poverty project, recently received a national award for community engagement. The award was presented by the National Fuel Poverty Charity, National Energy Action, and award sponsor British Gas at a community event held at Norton village Hall for all organisations involved in the scheme and members of the public. With our partners, the Environment Team are now finalising this winter's campaign and working to secure funding to deliver services beyond March 2015.

2.1.2 The Environment Team has been working with Havebury Housing and its delivery partner Sustainable Building Services to offer external wall insulation to the solid wall properties in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill. A programme has been developed to offer the private sector households the opportunity to access grant funding and the install rates offered to Havebury Housing. Currently over 100 properties have been insulated and more work is planned.