
Council



Forest Heath
District Council

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Single Council

After much hard work and debate I'd like to welcome the announcement by the Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government that he is minded to support our proposals for one West Suffolk Council. His announcement is a strong recognition of the compelling and aspirational business case we have put forward to better improve and transform local government while supporting, investing in and championing our communities. What better time of year to also reflect on how councillors from all parties have come together to help shape this. I would like to thank them and our staff who have worked tirelessly on this initiative. While this is a very welcome step forward we still have more to do and I look forward to working with everyone on this.

Strategic Framework

One of our main arguments to the Secretary of State is how we have turned aspirations and the transformation of local Government to benefit business and our communities into a reality. There is no doubt we and West Suffolk is a success story, pioneering new ways of working with communities and bringing investment into our area. Today we will discuss the next Strategic Framework which builds on this work and sets out our vision and aims.

Community Chest

Projects to help people recover from alcohol abuse, get young people involved in sports development, tackle mental health issues, assist struggling families and support carers, will receive a welcome boost and Christmas present this month.

We, together with St Edmundsbury Borough Council, as we discuss £370,000 of new Community Chest grants for 2018/19 at our Cabinet meetings this month. The grants all focus on helping families and communities to become more resilient, stronger and caring for each other. This is just part of the great work we are doing through our families and communities work.

Economic Success

There is no doubt that we and West Suffolk is a great place to build or start a business. I was delighted to hear the latest Business Register and Employment Survey for the UK shows the percentage increase in people in employment in West Suffolk has risen more than the national and East Anglian average. Not only that, but the percentage rise between 2015 and 2016 is also above Suffolk and neighbouring areas, such as Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. While we all know there are many factors that make this up it does underline the fact that our aims to manage growth and support the local economy, jobs and skills is the right one.

Mildenhall Hub

Following the Secretary of State's decision not to call in the Mildenhall Hub for his determination planning permission for this vital site has been formally granted. This is an excellent example of us working with partners as part of the One Public Estate work. It will provide excellent new and much needed educational, leisure and health facilities as well as help public services work better together.

Merry Christmas

Once again our area and communities have done a great job of putting on Christmas events, including markets and lights. Not only does it help people get into the festive mood but often helps boost the local economy and brings communities together.

The community spirit and help that has come forward for the Dobbin family as part of the BBC DIY:SOS programme in Mildenhall is particularly apt at this time of year. You may not know that our own council and Screen Suffolk were part of helping make this happen. The response was so strong by the trades the programme turned away 900 offers of help. But it was not just the trades that showed up in strength day after day,

often working in difficult conditions. Residents came with help for those working, baked goods and support. It was a pleasure to welcome back former Mildenhall resident Nick Knowles and the crew. He will have his dignity back said Simon's wife Nicole in a radio interview – I think that is probably one of the best presents you can give someone.

We have had a very busy year making transformational improvements that will directly help our communities. Here is to another good one and I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas.