
Council



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title:	Leader's Statement	
Paper No:	COU/SE/18/013	
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Documents attached:	None	

1. As we approach a milestone in transforming our local authority, I am delighted to acknowledge the long service of two former councillors who have helped build the foundations of our future.
2. I pay tribute to past councillor Terry Buckle for his service to the borough. He diligently represented Moreton Hall ward where he was elected in 2003 and his warmth and wisdom have been much valued by his colleagues and constituents.
3. And I again congratulate former mayor Bob Cockle, on his 21 years' service, which began in Fornham ward in 1995, which he represented until 1999, before being re-elected in 2001 for St Olave's ward until his recent resignation.
4. I am sure you will join me in expressing our appreciation for all they have done for their constituents and the borough.
5. I also thank Ian Playle, who has served as Mayor's Officer for 14 years and attended countless civic engagements in the borough, across the county and in our twinned communities of Compiègne and Kevelaer. He has brought both gravitas and common sense to ceremonial duties, ensuring they are carried as they should be, and bringing us together with a purpose.
6. Our agenda tonight reflects just some of the enormous amount of work going on in our communities and the Council, and I thank in particular the Chairmen and Members of the Overview and Scrutiny and Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committees for the work they do to help ensure we keep on track.

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7. I attended the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 6 June 2018 for a lively discussion on the draft Annual Report for 2017/ 2018, which perfectly illustrates their commitment to enhancing services and making life better for people living, visiting and working in St Edmundsbury. (I recommend the Annual Report as well worth reading.) Members expressed their strong sense of the importance of our rural areas, in defining our quality of life, in supporting the local economy and attracting visitors, something I know we all feel passionately about.
8. The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee leads on improvement planning and risk management, as well as monitoring the Council's budget, and approving our Annual Statement of Accounts. This invaluable scrutiny cannot be underestimated in ensuring that our ambitions can be delivered.
9. The Growth Investment Fund is now being employed to deliver some of the differences we want to make. Our designs for the former post office site have received warm praise for capturing many of the aspirations expressed by the public in Bury masterplan engagement. This project highlights the blended outcomes we seek to achieve, equally present in our recently approved energy framework. As well as being an investment opportunity, energy is a cost borne by our businesses, our residents, and in CO₂ terms, future generations. The West Suffolk Energy Framework sets out how the Council will work with our diverse communities to reduce expense and environmental impact and build resilience. For example, home insulation and greener business schemes are already available, and working with our partners we are launching a new household solar energy scheme, as well as leading by example through our own operations and partnerships.
10. West Suffolk hosted the Armed Forces Day celebrations this year on behalf of the whole of Suffolk, and I think we can all agree that we did the county and our military friends and neighbours proud. Thousands of people attended the various events during the week including the moving raising of the flag ceremony, the inspiring Sunset Ceremony which included eight Apache helicopters flypast, the family fun day with historic re-enactors in Abbey Gardens as well as the Suffolk Philharmonic Orchestra playing at the Apex in the evening. Our friends from HMS Vengeance were also in the town not only to march at the Sunset Ceremony but also to volunteer with local groups and organisations. British and US army, navy and air force personnel were involved and local traders, including our market, offered discounts to veterans and serving personnel.
11. And the celebrations continued across West Suffolk with our own towns and villages showing their support in their own way with other successful events. We are active partners in the Suffolk Military Covenant which helps supports the armed forces community. I know how much hard work went into all these activities and on your behalf I'd like to thank Councillor Everitt for leading the group that delivered these events and everyone involved in making this such a success. I would also like to thank all the partners, including HMS Vengeance, USAFE, 6 Regiment Army Air Corp, 3

Regiment Army Air Corp, RAF Honington, Bury St Edmunds Town Council, the BID, British Legion, The Apex, and the Suffolk Regiment, to name but a few.

12. One compliment we received from a local charity following the family event I think sums things up:

"....from our point of view it was seamless from start to finish, we know from experience to achieve that, actually represents a lot of hard work, clear thinking, forward planning together with the ability to think on your feet, something that you all managed with apparent ease"

Councillor John Griffiths
Leader of the Council