

## Suffolk County Update July 2015

### **Refinancing proposal for Suffolk's Energy from Waste facility will save over £24million**

SCC's cabinet will discuss proposals to re-finance part of the capital costs of the Energy from Waste facility at Great Blakenham, when it meets next Tuesday (14<sup>th</sup> July). If the cabinet do agree to the proposal, the new agreement would reduce contract-fee payments to Suez Environment (formerly SITA UK), saving over £24million over the remaining lifetime of the contract. If all goes to plan, the hope would be that the refinancing will take place later this year.

### **All Suffolk Waste Partnership members to consider changes to garden waste collection policy**

Also on the agenda at next Tuesday's meeting, SCC's cabinet will be the first within the Suffolk Waste Partnership to discuss a proposal to introduce a new policy for the collection and treatment of garden waste in the county. The suggested approach is to encourage more residents to manage their own waste through home composting and to adopt the policy already in use within Babergh and Mid Suffolk areas, where there is a charged service for residents who wish to take up the option of a garden waste collection. Suffolk Waste Partnership members have collectively discussed their potential options and accept that this proposal offers a potential way of reducing overall costs of waste collection and treatment in Suffolk. Suffolk's councils currently spend £6million a year collecting and treating garden waste (which in some areas includes food waste). If Suffolk's councils collectively decide to adopt this approach, the saving will be around £2million a year. At the same time, each local council can decide to retain a universal free service to all residents should they so choose.

### **New academy sponsor proposed for Bury St Edmunds High School**

In what is looking a packed agenda next Tuesday, the cabinet will also discuss the recommendation of a new academy school sponsor for the proposed high school on the Moreton Hall estate in Bury St Edmunds. Samuel Ward Academy Trust being recommended, after a panel assessed two potential providers; the other was The Seckford Trust. The panel was impressed with the calibre and professional expertise of both providers but the Samuel Ward Academy Trust was selected for recommendation as it was able to demonstrate particular knowledge and understanding of the local community, strong local relationships and greater experience of working collaboratively with schools and other education providers. This recommendation comes after a decision by the previous sponsor, the National Education Trust (NET), to withdraw its bid to run the school. If Cabinet agree to recommend Samuel Ward Academy Trust, the decision will be referred to the Secretary of State for Education for final approval.

### **Are you a private foster carer?**

As part of Private Fostering week, which begins on Monday 6 July, SCC is appealing to Suffolk residents to let them know about children who are being privately fostered. Private fostering is when a child under 16, or under 18 if disabled, is looked after by someone other than their parent or a close relative for 28 days or more. A close relative includes a step-parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt, but not extended family, such as a great aunt or uncle. If you are involved in a private fostering arrangement or know about one, please contact us on 01473 265025. You can find out more about the support available to private foster carers and why it's important to let us know your arrangements at [www.suffolk.gov.uk/privatefostering](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/privatefostering).

**Terry Clements**

## **Borough Councillor's Report for Hawstead July 2015**

I am taking this opportunity to forward you the following briefing note about St Edmundsbury and the way forward. Not all of it is new to you, but it seemed logical to give you the comprehensive document.

There are some serious challenges – and opportunities – on the near horizon.

### **Issues covered:**

1. Local Government Transformation- what St Edmundsbury is doing
2. Strategic Priorities:

Economic development

Families and Communities

Housing

3. Key Current Projects:

Haverhill Masterplan

West Suffolk Operational Hub

Eastern Bury St Edmunds development

### **1) Local Government Transformation – what St Edmundsbury is doing**

#### **Shared services**

- St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) has been at the forefront of the local government transformation agenda in recent years, due to its work in a shared service partnership with Forest Heath District Council (FHDC)
- The two councils work together with a single staff team to deliver services as a single organisation, known as West Suffolk
- A Chief Executive for both councils (Ian Gallin) was appointed in 2012 and the staff body has been shared since 2013
- This approach has saved council tax payers and the wider public purse over £3.5m
- The councils now have a single strategic plan and set of objectives; a single website and Councillors meet in joint committees where appropriate

#### **Transformation Challenge Award – Suffolk-wide working and integration**

- In November 2014 public services in Suffolk, including St Edmundsbury Borough Council, were successful in bidding for £3.35 million of new funding and £1.8 million to help us use capital more flexibly from a central government fund called the Transformation Challenge Award.
- The Suffolk local authorities will use the funding to deliver a major change in our relationships with other public sector bodies such as police and health, voluntary groups and Jobcentre Plus to deliver immediate and lasting benefit to people across the county.

## **Devolution**

- Suffolk's public sector leaders (from local government, police and health) are currently working collaboratively to put together a devolution proposition to Government in September.
- This puts Suffolk ahead of the field as far as non-metropolitan areas re concerned and the Leaders have a strong ambition to be the first to put their case to Government
- The proposal will include "asks" of Government to support growth and infrastructure delivery, across Suffolk and across the New Anglia LEP geography as well as in individual communities

## **Behaving more commercially**

- In the face of ongoing public sector funding reductions, St Edmundsbury Council is aiming to be more self sufficient by making the most of our current assets, rather than relying on grant funding
- Across the council, we have reviewed our service delivery to make sure we are behaving in a business-like way, identifying savings, making sure we are competing on an equal footing for commercial services.

## **2) Our major priorities**

The West Suffolk Strategic Plan for 2014-16, which covers St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath councils, set out our three major priorities. These priorities (shown below) are the key areas for action through which the councils will achieve our vision of "supporting communities to create the best possible future for people in West Suffolk".

- **Economic development**
- **Families and communities**
- **Housing**

Examples of our current approach in these areas are set out below.

### **i) Economic development**

- The West Suffolk plan for jobs and growth will support the ongoing growth and development of Bury St Edmunds and surrounding areas
- The Suffolk Business Park (see next section) will bring significant new opportunities for local and national businesses to relocate to Bury St Edmunds
- An inward investment pack was produced in 2015, encouraging would-be investors to bring their business to West Suffolk
- The number of people visiting Bury St Edmunds town centre in 2014 rose 4% compared with 2013. Nationally and regionally, footfall for 2014 fell by 0.5% compared with the previous year

## **ii) Families and communities**

The West Suffolk Families and Communities Strategy, published in 2013, sets out how we will focus our resources on strengthening families and communities to reduce the demand on public services. We do this by:

- focusing on early intervention and prevention;
- working in localities and identifying community leaders and key groups of residents, we will work to support communities in using their assets to reduce the need for crisis interventions;
- making £2,500 available to each ward councillors via a locality budgets to help local groups achieve their goals, supported by council Families and Communities officers; and
- simplifying the grant process to a Community Chest and ensuring it is accessible to local community groups.

## **iii) Housing – growth**

- St Edmundsbury is an area of significant housing pressure – with prices influenced by the Cambridge housing market, and a number of families in housing need.
- 11,000 new homes need to be built across St Edmundsbury by 2031.
- The Council's Vision 2031 planning document sets out where new homes will be built over the next 16 years
- This includes a number of large sites around Bury St Edmunds. Masterplans have already been approved for 4 major sites; Tayfen Road (300 homes), Moreton Hall (500 homes), NE Bury (1200 homes) and NW Bury (1200 homes). A further proposal for 1250 homes in SE Bury is being consulted on.
- The councils also supported 112 home owners to bring their empty properties back into use last financial year (2014-15) (NB this figure is for W Suffolk as a whole)

## **iv) Haverhill Masterplan**

- In the Vision 2031 Plan for Haverhill it was identified that a new town centre masterplan was needed to guide planners to what the community wants its town to look like in the future.
- The public gave their views during Phase 1 of the consultation, held in March and April, on what independent planning and urban design experts believed to be the broad 'issues and options' that needed to be considered in preparing the town centre masterplan. Those comments were taken into consideration in the draft masterplan.
- The draft masterplan was written to be an 'aspirational, realistic and deliverable' flexible framework which can help bring development opportunities and improvements to Haverhill town centre in the short, medium and long term. Consultation on the draft masterplan is currently open, and closes on the 17 July. Following on from this a final masterplan will be formally prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) thereby forming part of the Statutory Planning Policy Framework for Haverhill."

### **3a) West Suffolk Operational Hub**

#### **Current position**

- Project involving the West Suffolk (WS) councils (Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council) and Suffolk County Council to build a new shared West Suffolk Operational Hub.
- Hub includes:
  - o waste transfer station and household waste recycling centre (SCC);
  - o vehicle depot and workshops (WS);
  - o shared support facilities.
- Preferred site identified, and land option secured (to fix price and availability if the project goes ahead), at Hollow Road Farm, Fornham St Martin, next to the British Sugar factory on the outskirts of Bury St Edmunds.
- Benefits include:
  - o significant cost savings for all three councils;
  - o assets released for future development/alternative use;
  - o reduced environmental impact (including reduced fleet mileage);
  - o opportunities for more commercial services to be provided;
  - o better, easier to access, recycling facilities for householders;
  - o meets Government's One Public Estate objectives.

#### **Pre-application consultation**

- Good practice is to consult those likely to be affected before a major planning application is submitted (pre-application consultation).
- Consultation included public meeting, attendance at parish/town council meetings, media advertisement and press releases, website info: [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/wsoh](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/wsoh)
- Consultation extended from four to six weeks to accommodate volume of contributions (640 responses and two petitions).
- Five most frequent issues raised: highways/traffic; location/site selection process; noise; odour; planning policy (site not allocated for this use).
- Petition (555 signatures) was presented to St Edmundsbury's 23<sup>rd</sup> June Cabinet, objecting to the site on environmental and nuisance grounds.
- Petition will go through the planning process as part of the Statement of Community Involvement, which summarises the pre-application consultation comments and outlines responses.

## **Next steps**

- Further pre-application consultation will cover site selection criteria and why the partners believe that Hollow Road Farm is the most suitable site.
- Amend site design and planning application to reflect comments made during consultation (including changing site layout).
- Carry out surveys and investigations as required, both legally and as a result of the pre-application consultation (traffic, site access, archaeology and others).

## **3b) Eastern Bury St Edmunds development - Suffolk Business Park, Eastern Relief Road, (ERR), new secondary school and homes**

### **Current position**

- Suffolk Business Park: strategic site (68 hectares) to the east of Bury St Edmunds (edge of Moreton Hall and Rougham) for employment use, 500 homes, a secondary school incorporating leisure and community uses.
- Delivery is dependent on the Eastern Relief Road (ERR), with improved junction on the A14.
- Important phase of the town's growth.
- Land has been allocated for a number of years, unlocking the potential now become a reality as £15 million in funding available for the ERR.
- ERR construction contract to be let in summer by Suffolk County Council (SCC).

### **Secondary school**

- St Edmundsbury (SEBC) transferred land to SCC for school, with shared community use, including indoor and outdoor sports and leisure facilities.
- SEBC capital contribution of £1,366,460 (including anticipated S106 contributions and receipt from land transfer) for community facilities.
- Community facilities to be managed by Abbeycroft Leisure (manages five council-owned leisure centres in West Suffolk) as a commercial opportunity, enabling the council to reduce its management fee.
- NB The school development is subject to Suffolk County Council planning permission. This was refused (on highways considerations, coach and parental drop off etc) on 9 June 2015 and an application will be resubmitted.

### **Funding**

Funding for the Eastern Relief Road is coming from:

- New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP): £10 million;
- St Edmundsbury Borough Council investment £3 million; Suffolk County Council: £2 million;

- St Edmundsbury is underwriting a maximum of £4.5 million to secure an electricity supply to the whole site;
- Return on investment could include land, a share of development profits or both, giving the council a say in the business park's development beyond the traditional planning role.

**Challenges**

- Land ownership – mixed ownership.
- St Edmundsbury agreed to start Compulsory Purchase Order process to enable all the land to be assembled to enable work to start on the road and subsequently to bring the various developments forward.
- At the same St Edmundsbury is seeking to reach agreement with the land owners by negotiation.
- Agreement with second landowner/developer is enabling road to be built in stages while other negotiations carried out – means the road can be built to service new school.

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There are three other major items which were considered by Cabinet this week. They are the Masterplans for Station Hill and the West Suffolk Hospital, also the Culford Park Management Plan.

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**Housing**

In the summer last year St Edmundsbury bought a five bedroom House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) in Lake Avenue, Bury St Edmunds. The move was triggered after the council had to spend more than £200,000 on putting homeless households into bed and breakfast accommodation.

We have a statutory duty to provide accommodation for homeless households in priority need, but a lack of suitable accommodation meant the authority had to rely on bed and breakfast accommodation.

We also have a duty to the Taxpayer to make efforts to bring this cost down – and this purchase is a bold step to reduce this cost. By investing we are also saving. The first residents have now moved in.

**Funding: Community Chest**

A new fund has been set up to encourage and enable organisations to innovate and explore ways they can improve the lives of residents.

Community Chest is a new flexible fund set up by Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council to simplify the range of funding the two councils previously offered.

Organisations can still apply for funding and will be asked to show how it will help the two West Suffolk councils to support families and strengthening community resilience. The councils will also be able to commission a voluntary, charity or community groups to carry out a project, which again helps meet its families and communities agenda.

The level of grant available through the two councils has been increased by £20,000 with a combined total of more than £500,000 available for 2016/17.

More information about the Community Chest will be available at the Smarter Funding: Better Outcomes conference at The Apex in Bury St Edmunds on 15 July from 9.30am. To book a place phone Kirsty Downes on 01284 757040 or email [kirsty.downes@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:kirsty.downes@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

A smaller amount of money – approximately £110,000 - is available for 15/16. The closing date for applications is the end of July. The closing date for applications for 2016/17 is the end of September 2015.

Further details about the Community Chest fund, the councillor locality budget scheme and West Suffolk's Families and Communities Strategy can be found at: [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/community](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/community)

### **Cycle route**

Neil Anthony, who used to work for SEBC, is trying to get people interested in an idea of a safe cycle route into Bury from the south west rural villages. Horringer Parish Council is keen on this potential scheme. If a suitable route could be found this would be of benefit to all villages and communities south west of Bury. These communities could develop their own routes to link together and provide, as much as possible, a traffic free route that could extend, over time to Haverhill and Clare. Local knowledge will be key in identifying routes and securing access over potentially private land. Neil can be contacted on [njanthony@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:njanthony@hotmail.co.uk)

### **Crucial Crew 201**

Around 900 St Edmundsbury school children will be learning vital life-lessons at Crucial Crew 2015 this month.

Year six children aged between 10 and 11 years, from 20 schools, will come together at West Suffolk College in Bury St Edmunds to experience various scenarios, staffed by experts who show children how to deal with potentially dangerous situations and how to protect both themselves and others. The Fire Service will simulate what it is like being in a burning house and East Anglian Dogs Trust will explain how to keep safe around dogs. As well as fire and dog safety, the focus is also on road safety, food safety, personal safety and personal well being.

This year 900 children from 20 schools will be attending the scenarios run by the Fire Service, Police, Road Safety, East of England Ambulance Trust Environmental Health, East Anglian Dogs Trust, and Abbeycroft Leisure. Crucial Crew is organised by St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

Contact Helen Lindfield, Families and Communities Officer, 01284 757620, mobile 07939 886 649

**Angela Rushen**

**July 2015**