

Borough Councillor's March Report for Hawstead

West Stow Country Park. This was discussed at the February DC Committee meeting and the scheme was approved by majority vote. SEBC have to abide by a number of conditions, but can go ahead with developing a caravan and camp site for 100 pitches in the park.

Public Service Village (PSV)/Western Way. Masterplan*. (**a vision for what could happen in the future if land becomes available and not something that's going to happen immediately. It is not a certainty, it's an ambition developed through consultation which helps potential developers put forward appropriate plans.*) In December 2006 the Council, following public consultation, adopted a masterplan for phased development of land at Western Way as a Public Service Village. The first phase of that development was completed with the construction of the West Suffolk House council offices and car parking at Olding Road.

The second phase of the development is now being brought forward. A masterplan for this site is now open for public consultation and will run until the 29th of February. The plan is available online at www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/westernway or at the council offices, in Western Way. There will also be a drop-in session at West Suffolk House on 4 February from 2pm to 7pm. To take part in the consultation please download a form from the website and email it to westernway@westsuffolk.gov.uk

The Plan allows for student accommodation, various service provisions, NHS developments and more. It will be funded by both public and private sector investment.

Magistrates Court in Bury. It has been announced that Bury Magistrates Court will, indeed, close this summer with the workload moved primarily to Ipswich Magistrates' Court but also to Norwich magistrates' Court. However, the Court will not close until a suitable local alternative provision is established.

Some of the family court work will relocate to the Bury St Edmunds County Court and Employment Tribunal building (Triton House) while video conferencing will be used to benefit vulnerable victims and witnesses in criminal cases.

SEBC has already suggested that the Court could be a part of the PSV2 development in Western Way in the form of a multi-purpose meeting room which could double as a court or inquest facility, as well as offering teleconferencing and family court facilities. We will pursue this option in further detail with the Ministry of Justice to see if something beneficial can be salvaged for West Suffolk residents.

Tayfen Road. The gasometer has finally been removed from this rather tired and rundown area and a masterplan is coming forward for the area. The plan envisages a care home, food store, family pub, 200 houses, commercial, and retail uses.

Ingham Country Park. This area was included in the 2031 vision document and is also now moving forward. It includes lakes, holiday accommodation, camping, fishing, and walking. The period of consultation has now finished. The Concept plan is coming before Full Council at the end of this month.

FHDC Mildenhall hub. Plans are coming forward to relocate some essential services, Council offices, library, leisure facilities and a revamped secondary school on an enlarged site at the current Mildenhall Academy.

MOD Mildenhall. We await further news from the MOD on this. FHDC are insisting they have a major input in the way forward on this site. The USAF propose to leave the area by 2020. It is mooted that land will be available for 4000 new homes. It is still characterised by a lot of uncertainty.

Planning enforcement. Our new Planning Enforcement team are steadily making progress in closing long running contentious cases. They currently investigating 214 cases.

In Bardwell, land at The Birches in Glassfield Road had been subdivided and occupied by unauthorised caravans. In 2014 the Council applied to the High Court for an injunction to stop its further use as a Traveller site and to remove unauthorised caravans and vehicles. The injunction was granted and compliance with its many terms was pursued through 2015.

In the summer of 2015, with several items still outstanding, committal proceedings resulted in a High Court order requiring the remaining steps to be undertaken by September 2015.

Compliance was eventually confirmed and the Council was awarded £21,000 in legal costs, for which a charge was put on the land. The land was voluntarily sold and the costs have now been paid.

In another intransigent case, the Development Control Committee authorised the use of a rarely used power to stop up an unauthorised access in Mill Road Pakenham by replanting a hedge.

This matter remained outstanding since 2008 and on receiving notice that the Council was going to enter the land and carry out the requisite replanting itself, the owner was prompted last week to replant the hedge as required.

Eastern Relief Road. Following 18 months of complex land negotiations, agreements have now been signed and work is about to start. This will enable not only the Eastern Relief Road to be built, but also the expansion of the Suffolk Business Park creating fourteen thousands of new jobs, and the construction of 500 new homes by Taylor Wimpey. The road will also serve a new school, with community leisure facilities. It is expected to generate £275m of inward investment to the local area over the next 25 years.

The new road will connect the junction of Skyliner Way/Lady Miriam Way with junction 45 of the A14. Suffolk County Council will soon issue the contract for the new road.

Brown bins. You should now have received a package about the new scheme for Brown Bins. The pack will have contained information you will need about the new scheme. It will come into force on April 4th. For people not wishing to opt in to pay for a brown bin, home composting units will be offered at subsidised rates for a limited time.

Council tax. Having frozen Council Tax for six of the last seven years, it is proposed that this will rise by just under 7p a week for properties in Band D. (the current level of £3.37p will rise to £3.42p). Full Council approval is needed for this on February 23rd. The need to raise tax has been brought about by our traditionally largest source of Government funding, the Revenue Support Grant, which has been reduced year-on-year is now being phased out completely. The Government has also made it plain that local services will need to be funded by local people and businesses.

The borough council currently receives just under 12% of a household's total council tax bill for a Band D house (£175.23) with the rest split between Suffolk County Council (76.5% – £1127) and Suffolk Police (11.5% – £170). Both of these organisations are also having to raise funds to meet current services.

Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme: As at 1 February 2016 six projects have been allocated funding totalling £33,195.67 during the financial year 2015/2016.

- (a) Kedington Parish Council: New frontage and entrance lobby to Kedington Community Centre and Kedington Parish Council Offices £6,166.67
- (b) Horringer Community Council: Improvements to community centre to meet energy efficiency and health and safety standards £7,809.00
- (c) Stanton Bowls Club: Improved flooring £3,350.00
- (d) Barrow Town Estate Rooms: Renovate Grade II listed building into community facility £10,000.00
- (e) Clare Country Park Trust: Improve kitchen and toilets £4,350.00
- f) Great Barton Bowls Club: Furnishings to complete extension £1,520.00

The Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme has a remaining balance of £112,491.56.

New vendor. Churchill, a local company, have been awarded the contract for the vending kiosk in the bus station.

For 3 days in July a **street velodrome** will be at the arc.

West Suffolk Operational Hub. The public consultation for the WSOH has now ended. Further news will emerge once comments have been processed.

Devolution. SEBC await further updates from the government. South East Cambridge have now indicated they will work closely with Suffolk and Norfolk for this bid. This is all still in the exploratory stages and more information from the government should emerge shortly. Any firm proposal on Devolution would have to go through a number of consultations before being in a form that could be ratified by Full Council.

Locality money. I am happy to report that I have now allocated my £500 of Locality Money for Hawstead. It will be spent in setting up a monthly family Games Club in the VH.

Mayor. Next year's mayor will be Julia Wakelam. Her deputy will be Terry Clements.

Angela Rushen

March 2016