

District Councillor's Report 20th September 2024

Sunnica

As you will know the new labour government passed the huge solar farm application in July. All 4 local councils West Suffolk , East Cambs , Cambridgeshire County and Suffolk County had all called for the previous Conservative government to reject the application. From September 2023 the application decision was pushed back

When the decision was finally taken, all 4 councils took legal advice about a possible judicial review legal challenge. However this could only be done on a technical issue regarding fees .The government and applicant did not accept our claim for higher fees which was to pay for the councils administering the implementation of the application. Further legal advice suggested even if a very costly legal challenge had been successful it would not have changed the decision.

It was decided by West Suffolk and Cambridgeshire to not proceed. The “ Say no to Sunnica” action group also dropped its challenge. All groups will use its resources in watching the implementation of the application.

LOCAL PLAN

The new local plan has been presented to a government inspector and there is at the moment requests being made by the inspector for further information on certain points.

Once all the final questions and information has been submitted the document will be subject to an examination in public to decide upon its soundness.

AHT

West Suffolk turned down the applications for Certificate of lawfulness for the buildings on the former AHT land made by LOCHAILORT LTD.

The developer went to appeal and was successful in overturning the council's decision.

Next West Suffolk have appealed to the Treasury that their decision was legally flawed and we are awaiting their response.

Subsequently Lochailort have submitted 29 prior approval applications to change the use of the buildings to residential.

At the same time a developer masterplan for the entire site has become public with up to 1000 homes , retail and business park to be included. Though there is no planning application for this at the moment.

BURY LEISURE CENTRE

There is currently a public consultation looking at improvements for the Bury Leisure centre.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The West Suffolk Standards committee has been involved in determining breaches of the code of conduct by 2 councillors.

The committee is made up of 7 councillors. 3 Conservative, 2 Independents , 1 Labour and 1 Green

Councillor Andy Drummond was found to have breached a number of parts of the code of conduct . The unanimous decision by the committee decided he was to publicly apologise at full council on July 16th and to the complainants. Whilst also being removed from the Development Control Committee and Local Plan Working Group due to the seriousness and nature of the complaints.

Councillor Nick Clarke was also found to have breached a number of parts of the code of conduct. The unanimous decision by the committee recommended he lose his position as Leader of the Conservative Group and be removed from a working group . He was also asked to apologise at full council on 16th July and to the complainants . At this moment in time he refuses to apologise.

THRIVING COMMUNITIES GRANTS

The grants application is back open , We have revamped the process whereby smaller grants by smaller organisations are now available. Please contact the families communities dept for more information or ask me.

I also still have locality budget funds available.

Coming up to Cabinet and then onto full council in October:

Simpler Recycling

To move to separating our waste to having a food caddy and 2 recycling bin. This comes from central government and its to try to increase recycling rates.

We will also be looking to approve West Suffolk Housing, Homelessness Reduction and rough sleeping strategy.

Also agreeing the updated West Suffolk Street Trading Policy.

Discussion will also take place about WEST SUFFOLK SOLAR CANOPIES PROJECT.

To Erect Solar Canopies at the car park at Mildenhall Hub to save £150,000 + in electricity from the grid.

Finally The Bury Society is looking to set up a charitable trust to house the Suffolk archives at West Suffolk House.

Anything else I have missed I will update at the next meetings.