

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 16 December 2008

Subject: Planning and Economic Development

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Anne Grigg

Item: 6(j)

Recommending:

That the report of the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development be noted.

Gypsies and Travellers - Consultation

Following the Government's direction to this Council to provide gypsy and travellers sites in the District, I immediately recognised that this would be a very contentious issue for the whole community and this has proven to be the case. I am aware that there have been many meetings, discussions and communications throughout the district regarding this matter with people expressing their many and varied views. I anticipate that the response to Epping Forest District Council will be very considerable.

The consultation period has been extended to 6th February 2009 following printing difficulties due to the very high volume of requests for the consultation document. The Council has already held a number of Public Information Exhibitions in the District. This has been resource intensive - not only with 4 or 5 Officers from Planning present, plus our Consultant, to advise and answer the many questions, but the presence of additional staff required to meet Health and Safety concerns. Officers continue to receive a great many requests for information, follow up queries etc. and are dealing with these extremely well, under what are, at times, very stressful conditions.

Loughton Broadway Town Centre Enhancement

The second phase of the Loughton Broadway Town Centre Enhancement scheme commenced on 27th October 2008. Work is currently being carried out at the Willingale Road end of the Broadway. At present a 40 metre length of new kerbstones and concrete paving slabs have been constructed. The work will cease on 5th December to allow trading on the Broadway to continue through the Christmas period. Construction will recommence on 5th January 2009. There will be a 13 week road closure of the eastbound carriageway; a 10 week closure

of the westbound carriageway and one 4 week total closure of the Broadway. We are still awaiting receipt of the £100,000 contribution from Essex County Council. However, Essex County Council has indicated that it is prepared to pay additional money for the District Council to undertake some road surfacing works at the Churchill P.H. end of the road.

Loughton Town Centre Enhancement Scheme - Trees

I am pleased to be able to report that Essex County Council has posted an Adoption Notice on the area of land adjacent to Centric Parade, High Road, Loughton, expressing their intention of adopting the said land as highway maintainable at public expense. Subject to there being no objections to the proposed adoption of highway land, this will assist in progressing the planting of trees in this area.

Loughton Town Centre Enhancement - Phases 3 and 4

Essex County Council is actively working up proposals for phases 3 and 4, including topographical surveys soon. At present, however, we are not aware of a definitive year for actual delivery of the scheme. Works on the 5th arm at Brooklyn Parade are still intended as part of congestion management by Essex County Council.

Stansted G2 - BAA's Proposal to develop a second runway

Together with Cllr Sartin and Mr Preston, I attended the procedural Pre Inquiry meeting on 10th November 2008 at the Hilton Hotel, Stansted Airport. There were approximately 400 people present, of whom the vast majority were representing organisations opposed to this proposal. BAA was also represented. The Inspector proposed a fast track process by the introduction of parallel sessions, but this was opposed by the majority of the organisations present as they would have extreme difficulty in resourcing concurrent sessions. The Inspector resisted requests to delay the start of the Inquiry, which will commence on 15th April 2009.

Business Breakfast held at Epping Forest College

Epping Forest College in partnership with Epping Forest District Council, Epping Forest Chamber of Commerce and Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership hosted a Business Breakfast at the new College campus on 14th November 2008. The Speakers included Eleanor Laing MP, Peter Sadler Principal at Epping Forest College. Approximately 70 business representatives were present and afterwards I took the opportunity of a short tour of the new College buildings, which has impressive new facilities for students.