

“The Sampfords Ward” Member report – September 2021

Day Centres

The Council’s Day Centre review continues. The Saffron Walden centre having been closed since Covid started has now been permanently closed. The review of service provision continues and when the review is complete, I expect the Council to find alternative premises to replace the Saffron Walden site. I remain concerned at the lack of public consultation so far and will be pressing the Cabinet member responsible, to ensure that meaningful consultation takes place with both residents and with local organisations.

Environment

Climate Change Working Group is looking into Cycle scheme pilots in Saffron Walden, using money from Developers for some recent planning applications. In addition, they are looking into the possibility of an additional pilot in Dunmow or Stansted, I believe utilising the money that UDC had promised to the Local Highways Panel but withheld.

UDC have recently announced that they have installed electrical vehicle charging points on Council-owned property and car parks. Radwinter PC are investigating the installation of such a scheme on the village car park, and I am liaising with the officer responsible to see whether UDC can enable this. If any other Parish would be interested in such a project, I would be happy to support you and to put you in contact at with the team at UDC.

Local Plan

According to the letter the Council are submitting to the Government on their progress towards the new local plan. The assessments of the call for site locations should be sent onto Parish Council’s and other organisations in October. The next public consultation then begins in the spring when members of the public and Parish Councils will be able to have their say on the emerging local plan.

Officers have raised a risk of additional slippage in the local plan project, due to the requirement for further transport modelling, and the volume of the evidence base that members will need to review. It is hoped that this additional work can be accommodated within the existing timeframe as the Government may not look favourably on the Council failing to meet their deadline of 2033 for submission of a draft local plan.

Chief Executive

At an Extraordinary Council meeting last week, the Council voted to approve the appointment of a new Chief Executive of the Council. The appointee, Peter Holt, has lots of experience in local government and I am sure will prove to be a good appointment for the Council.

George Smith, September 2021