

Stansfield Parish Council 19th July 2021

Report from West Suffolk District Council

1. The Council recently met and agreed to proceed with the development of the Western Way site in Bury St Edmunds. This is a project to provide updated leisure facilities together with integrated community facilities through a partnership with the NHS, Suffolk County Council and other agencies. The new Hub will offer workspace that can be rented, non-urgent primary care in the community, a new library, big skate park and on-site parking. The Council recently opened a similar type of Hub in Mildenhall and that is proving very popular. The existing Leisure Centre in Bury will be demolished and a new one built.
2. SHELAA and the Local Plan.
Having now completed the various training modules for new Councillors I have been attending a number of presentations from the Strategic Planning department regards the new Local Plan. Various residents in Stansfield have asked questions and I feel it is helpful if I clarify a couple of points.
3. Concerns have been raised about the SHELAA – the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. I feel it needs to be repeated that this is an annual requirement as part of the National Planning Policy Framework. All Councils have to submit returns every year. It DOES NOT identify sites for development. It has NO weight in decision making. The LOCAL PLAN allocates sites and the next Local Plan will not come into force until July 2024.
4. Various Parishes in West Suffolk are currently conducting surveys of various types and all of the results will come into the public domain as part of the next stage of consultation. Presently in West Suffolk the expectation is that the document will be prepared in January-February 2022 and will be out for consultation from March-May 2022. There will be a further period of consultation from February to April 2023 after all of the comments from 2022 are taken into account. The new Local Plan will go to the Secretary of State in June 2023 and there will be a further examination in public of the proposals in September 2023. The proposal will finally be consulted on and late modifications made in February 2024 and it will then go to a Planning Inspector for signing off. I would urge residents not to get too anxious about the surveys and proposals being undertaken at the present time but to be assured there will be plenty of opportunity to make comments at the numerous public consultations that will be made before the Plan is adopted.