June 2019 Borough Councillor report

 for

Chevington Parish Council

**Barley Homes**. A development company now wholly owned by West Suffolk Council has planning permission for two sites in Haverhill. Work on these sites is due to start in October and January 2020, thus is enabling the Council to both increase the private and affordable housing stock and act more commercially, reducing the reliance on central Government funding.

**Housing and land supply**. West Suffolk Council is one of the few Councils to achieve housing targets and have an adequate land supply (6.5 years).

**Development.** Of the eight villages within this ward, most are constrianed from development (other than infill) by the Policy of Rural vision 2031. I’m seeking your vision of your village in terms of potential and acceptable growth. Hargrave established a village plan in 2018.

[**New team to unlock doors for homeless**](http://westsuffolkintranet/news/upload/190607-BFP-P9-New-team-to-unlock-doors-for-homeless.pdf) The door to private sector housing for rough sleepers has been unlocked thanks to a successful bid for £290,000 of Government funding. More than 150 St Edmundsbury households required council support for homelessness in the run up to last Christmas.

[**Newmarket Town Council backs mosque plan for former pub**](https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://www.newmarketjournal.co.uk/news/council-backs-mosque-plan-for-former-pub-9072795/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYAioTNjYxMjcyMTI4ODM0NTAxOTU5ODIaYTFjZTk2MDA5YTI0MzkxMzpjb206ZW46VVM&usg=AFQjCNEmp4wkn1KGzM1L3_PzjGtovNQR6w) The building in St Mary's Square is owned by Newmarket Islamic Cultural Centre which has applied to West Suffolk Council for permission for a change of use.

[**West is now new hotspot for drug trafficking gangs**](http://westsuffolkintranet/news/upload/190620-NJ-P14-West-is-now-new-hotspot-for-drug-trafficking-gangs.pdf) . There are now more active drug lines in western Suffolk than in Ipswich. This a growing problem nationally, we all need to be vigilant and report suspicious behavior.

**Suffolk** [**County Council** are to axe bus service subsidies to save £340,000](http://westsuffolkintranet/news/upload/190621-BFP-P3-County-to-axe-bus-service-subsidies-to-save-340-000.pdf)**.** We must protect our local bus service.

[**Pay on exit trial praised despite reports of queues**](http://westsuffolkintranet/news/upload/190621-BFP-P4-Praise-for-Flexi-Park-despite-complaints.pdf) . Pay-on-exit car parking is finally up and running in Bury St Edmunds, six years after first being mooted by the town’s business improvement district. A recent reduction in car park use has been reversed although people several living in the ward have complained of high parking charges. I believe a review is due.

[**Visitors to heart of town staying longer and spending more**](http://westsuffolkintranet/news/upload/190621-EADT-P17-Visitors-to-heart-of-town-staying-longer-and-spending-more.pdf) . Visitors to Bury St Edmunds town centre are spending more money and staying long than ever before, a new study has revealed. Annual Our Bury St Edmunds benchmarking survey also found the town’s car parks are also busier than they have been since the survey began in 2012 and 90% of respondents welcomed West Suffolk Council’s Pay on Exit parking trial which started this month – although car parking was also highlighted as a “negative issue” alongside public toilets

[**West Suffolk Council launch crackdown on parents idling outside schools**](https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://www.buryfreepress.co.uk/news/how-suffolks-idling-parents-are-harming-their-children-s-health-9074453/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYASoTODUwNjQ2MzM5MjE1MzQ1Nzk1NzIaZGViYWU1ZWIxNmFkNTc3NTpjb206ZW46VVM&usg=AFQjCNFtfRQ2ZnDsISZH_QFffBndogLUmg)**.** Parents are harming their children's health every day on school runs, a campaign has warned. West Suffolk Council has this week launched a no idling policy.

[**Vision for rural taskforce unveiled**](http://westsuffolkintranet/news/upload/190620-Eadt-P32-Vision-for-rural-taskforce-unveiled.pdf)

Plans for a rural taskforce to look at opportunities and issues in west Suffolk have been unveiled.

It is proposed that Cabinet establish a Rural Taskforce to review the qualitative and quantitative evidence base relating to rural areas, and to identify the key issues, assets and challenges. This review should encompass all of West Suffolk’s areas, in order to understand the issues and opportunities that all rural or all urban areas have in common, as well as those facing specific localities. The review will draw on existing evidence and research produced by other bodies, for example, the Rural Services Network and the House of Lords Select Committee on the rural economy. In response to this evidence review, it is proposed that the Taskforce develops options both to directly address some of the issues identified and also to ensure rural considerations are taken into account in future Council processes and decision making. The proposed outputs from the Taskforce are expected to be interim recommendations to Cabinet in September 2019 for how taking forward the lead options identified for addressing rural challenges and embedding rural considerations in the Council’s ways of working.

I can confirm that the West Suffolk District Council Cabinet have agreed to a Rural Task Force and that I, your Ward Councillor will be Chairing this Committee. I seek your help and support in achieving its aims.

Mike Chester

**West Suffolk District Councillor for the Chedburgh and Chevington Ward**

**Rede-Depden- Chedburgh-Chevington-Hargrave-Ousden-Lidgate-Dalham**