



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

B193

Cabinet

15 September 2010

Report of the Policy Development Committee: 1 September 2010

At this meeting the Committee also considered Park Byelaws, and a separate report appears on this Cabinet agenda.

1. Cabinet Forward Plan/Work Programme

1.1 The Committee examined the Cabinet's Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period September to December 2010, but did not ask for any further information or involvement at this time.

1.2 Turning to its own work programme, the Committee reviewed the work still to be completed for 2010/2011, with particular reference to the items expected at the next meeting on 13 October 2010.

2. Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2011/2012

2.1 The Committee considered a report which set out the context of the 2011/2012 budget process and described the approach which would be taken to deliver the substantial savings required.

2.2 The way forward was currently based on assumptions in the Medium Term Financial Strategy on likely increased costs, reduced grants from central Government and the level of DR-IVE savings to be made. However, it would not be clear how the Government's announced 25% spending cuts would be split across government departments until the October Comprehensive Spending Review, and the figures would need to be changed once the situation became clearer.

2.3 Consideration of proposed savings and income opportunities will take place at the Committee's October and November meetings.

3. Review of Empty Homes and Wasted Space Strategy 2009-2011

3.1 Following the recommendation of adoption of the Empty Homes and Wasted Space Strategy by the Committee on 2 September 2009 (Report A170 refers), an Action Plan was developed, reflecting the aims and objectives of the strategy, its priority being to bring long term (ie empty longer than 6 months) private sector empty homes back into use.

- 3.2 At its last meeting the Committee considered a review of progress against the action plan. The average number of long term empty properties over the past six months, excluding those considered uninhabitable, was 159, and an officer working group had been set up to monitor empty properties which were of concern, to ensure a co-ordinated and responsive approach. The officer working group also prioritised action based on issues including the state of the property, impact on the community and safety of the building, and officers were currently targeting actions against properties that had been empty longer than 12 months, at present a total of 84.
- 3.3 A detailed analysis of the position with these 84 properties was provided to the Committee, together with a progress report on the action plan, and Members concluded that good progress was being made with ensuring accurate information was available, and that the officer working group ensured that the right properties were targeted.

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