



## **Cabinet**

### **23 May 2012**

#### **Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 18 April 2012**

At this meeting the Committee also considered the final report of the Task and Finish Group looking into the Review of the Continuing Success of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre, and a separate report appears on this Cabinet agenda.

#### **1. Cabinet Forward Plan: April to July 2012**

- 1.1 The Committee considered the Cabinet's Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period April to July 2012, but did not request any further information or involvement in any of the expected decisions on this occasion.

#### **2. Work Programme: Update**

- 2.1 The Committee now has a rolling work programme, whereby suggestions for scrutiny reviews are brought to each meeting, and if accepted, are timetabled to report to a future meeting. The work programme also leaves space for Call-ins and Councillor Calls for Action.
- 2.2 Members reviewed the current position of the work programme, and noted the items which were expected at the next meeting of the Committee in June 2012. Members also resolved to disband the New Health Agenda Task and Finish Group as the new legislation had not made any changes to the responsibilities of districts.
- 2.3 Two reviews were completed at this meeting:-
- (a) Universal Coverage of Broadband in St Edmundsbury (although the Task and Finish Group will meet again should there be a need to do so at the conclusion of the Suffolk Better Broadband Project); and
  - (b) Review of the continuing success of the Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre,
- 2.4 A new review was added as set out below. The current position of the Task and Finish Groups running and timetabled are as follows:-

#### **(a) Reviews currently running**

- 1. Litter collection and litter/dog bin distribution in the Borough.
- 2. Article 4 Directions/Conservation Area Policy.

3. The co-ordination of licensing, planning and enforcement of functions relating to street vending (the "A Boards" review).
4. The variable quality of paving in Bury St Edmunds Town Centre (this review was to be concluded at this meeting, but Members wished for the Group to meet again to discuss areas of poor paving across the Borough).

**(b) Reviews timetabled**

1. Anglia Revenues Partnership (to commence in May/June 2012).
  2. Review of car parking charges throughout the Borough. This review was added at the meeting, and will aim to secure a clear way forward for future years' car parking charges in the context of the Council's budget (to commence in May 2012).
- 2.5 Also at the meeting Councillor Everitt suggested that the Committee may wish to look at Forest Heath District Council's review of educational attainment, with a view to carrying out a similar review for St Edmundsbury. We will aim to invite a representative from Forest Heath District Council to the June meeting to brief the Committee on the outcomes of this review.

**3. Final report of the Task and Finish Group:  
Universal Coverage of Broadband in St Edmundsbury**

- 3.1 This review was originally suggested under a different scope in July 2011. However, before the review commenced Suffolk County Council was successful in accessing £22m of funding to provide Broadband to those areas of Suffolk without it, and to provide minimum download speeds in others, and the original review was, therefore, no longer necessary. However, the scope of the review was amended to be *"an investigation into general Broadband coverage and infrastructure availability across the Borough, to include identifying areas currently receiving poor Broadband service and determining minimum standards considered acceptable regarding Broadband coverage and speed."*
- 3.2 The Task and Finish Group met on two occasions, and discussed the scope of the Suffolk Better Broadband Review, which aimed to capture information regarding areas which struggled to receive Broadband, taking into account future needs to provide a complete picture for the next stage of the review: competition for a contract which aimed to cover 85-90% of Suffolk with high speed Broadband, the rest with at least 2MB, by 2015.
- 3.3 At the meetings Members discussed how they could influence the project. It was acknowledged that the Better Broadband for Suffolk programme was designed to do exactly what Members commenced this review to do, i.e. to reduce Broadband inequalities. The scope of the review had, therefore, been achieved following the success of the £22m bid.
- 3.4 The Committee resolved that the Task and Finish Group would only meet again should it become necessary to review the progress of the Better Broadband for Suffolk project.

**4. Report of the Task and Finish Group:  
The Variable Quality of Paving in Bury St Edmunds Town Centre**

- 4.1 This Task and Finish Group was set up in November 2011 as *“an investigation into the variable quality of paving in Bury St Edmunds Town Centre; to identify how this situation came about, and to ensure that in future the specification of paving in Bury St Edmunds Town Centre is appropriate for the expected use of any particular area of paving; and to look at the possibility of repairing/replacing any damaged paving”*.
- 4.2 The Task and Finish Group met on 21 February 2012, where it explored the rationale/criteria behind the County Council's maintenance standards, and how the specification of the paving for the town centre was arrived at. Steve Boor, the County Council's Area Highway Manager (West), was in attendance at the meeting, which also included a site visit.
- 4.3 The Group explored a number of lines of inquiry, and accepted that, due to County Council policies and health and safety requirements, wholesale replacement of the slabs was unlikely, and that as the County Council budget covered the whole of the County, the area of paving of concern in the centre of Bury St Edmunds was not necessarily a high priority compared to other areas of footway.
- 4.4 The Group's work resulted in a number of aspirational recommendations to both the Borough and County Council which were brought to the April 2012 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However, following a wide ranging discussion, Members concluded that the work of this Task and Finish Group was not completed, and that there were several areas of poor paving across the whole Borough, not just in the Bury St Edmunds Town Centre.
- 4.5 The Committee asked that the Task and Finish Group meet again to put together a list of areas of particularly poor paving across the Borough, which could be forwarded to the County Council Highways Office, alongside any other recommendations of the Task and Finish Group which may be brought back to the Committee at a later date. Councillor Ms Byrne was added to the Membership of the Task and Finish Group, in order to cover the Haverhill end of the Borough.

**5. Interim Report of the Task and Finish Group:  
Litter Collection and Litter/Dog Bin Distribution in the Borough**

- 5.1 Following two meetings, the Task and Finish Group brought an update on its work to date to the Committee. This provided background to contextualise the cleansing service in relation to the Council's statutory responsibilities, reviewed the initial scope of the Task and Finish Group, and operational changes made to date in furthering these issues, and reviewed the Joint Waste Committee approved framework for future provision, maintenance and servicing arrangements for dog and litter bins.
- 5.2 The Committee noted the work carried out to date both by the Task and Finish Group, and as part of the wider remit of the Joint Cleansing Review in partnership with Forest Heath District Council.

**6. Interim Report of the Task and Finish Group: The Co-ordination of  
Licensing, Planning and Enforcement Functions Relating to Street  
Vending (the “A Boards” Review)**

6.1 This report updated the Committee on the work carried out to date by the Task and Finish Group, and that planned for the next phase of the review. The Group had met twice, at the first meeting examining the issues involved, and at the second looking at best practice from elsewhere and at some proposals to address the issues raised.

6.2 The Group had concluded that the issue was far more complex than it first appeared, and also that the issue was divisive. The Group had agreed that the best way to address the issues would be to draw up a policy on A Boards, to consult on it, to publicise it and to implement it. The next step was, therefore, for the Group to consider a policy and to look at the complex legal and financial implications of implementing it. This is intended to be brought to the July 2012 meeting of the Committee.

## **7. Update from the Task and Finish Group: Article 4 Directions/Conservation Area Policy**

7.1 A full update on the work of this Task and Finish Group was brought to the meeting of the Committee held on 29 February 2012, which was also the day consultation began. This consultation ran to the end of April 2012, and the next meeting of the Group will be on 8 May 2012, following which updates will be prepared as necessary.

## **8. Update: The Stanton Grundle**

8.1 Flooding of the Stanton Grundle was the subject of a Councillor Call for Action in June 2009, as a result of which an improved inspection regime was implemented. A number of updates on the situation had since been brought to Members, and the latest position was provided to the Committee.

8.2 Following an inspection at the beginning of February 2012, the Grundle was cleared of debris by the in-house grounds maintenance service, and flowed during the recent wet spell. The engineering officer would continue to make regular visits and arrange for any clearing necessary. This continued approach was considered the most appropriate for this situation.

## **9. Quarter 4 Directed Surveillance Authorised Applications**

9.1 The Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources) Order 2010 requires that Members should scrutinise the authority's use of its surveillance powers on a quarterly basis. In June 2010 it was agreed that this requirement should be fulfilled by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

9.2 The Monitoring Officer advised that in Quarter 4 no such surveillance had been authorised.

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