



Cabinet **25 July 2012**

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 6 June 2012

1. Work Programme Update and Suggestion for Scrutiny

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 Members reviewed the current position of the work programme, and noted the items which were expected at the next meeting of the Committee in July 2012.
- 1.3 Additionally, an invitation had been received from Cambridgeshire County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee for two Members to join a half day scrutiny hearing which would review the progress of the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership. Councillors Houlder, Oliver and Mrs P A Warby were nominated to attend the hearing, which would take place in summer 2012. When the date of the hearing is known, those Members able to attend, up to a maximum of two, will do so.

2. Appointments to Task and Finish Groups and Suffolk Joint Scrutiny Panels/Committees

- 2.1 As this was the first meeting of the civic year, the Committee reviewed the membership of its Task and Finish Groups and other groups.
- 2.2 Firstly, the Committee nominated Councillor Beckwith to continue as the Council's representative on the Suffolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. No substitute Member was nominated, and the nomination of Councillor Beckwith was subsequently confirmed by full Council at its meeting on 19 June 2012.
- 2.3 Next, the Committee re-appointed Councillors Mrs P A Warby, Mrs D Whittaker and Redhead to the Diversity Group for 2012/2013. They noted, however, that the Council was moving towards a joint Diversity Group with Members from Forest Heath District Council, and membership may therefore need to be reviewed later in the year.

- 2.4 Finally, the Committee reviewed the Task and Finish Groups which were currently running, and re-appointed Members as follows:-

Title of Task and Finish Group	Members Appointed
1. The Variable Quality of Paving in Bury St Edmunds Town Centre (and subsequently the Borough)	Councillors French, Mrs Levack, Oliver, Simner, Thorndyke and F J Warby
2. The co-ordination of licensing, planning and enforcement functions relating to street vending (the "A Boards" Review)	Councillors French, P J Hopfensperger, Marks, Nettleton, Rout, Mrs Stamp (as Licensing and Regulatory Committee representative) and Cox (as Development Control Committee representative)
3. Litter collection and dog/litter bin distribution in the Borough	Councillors Buckle, French, P J Hopfensperger, Nettleton, Thorndyke and Mrs P A Warby
4. Conservation Area Policy/Article 4 Directions	Councillors P J Hopfensperger, Houlder, Marks, Nettleton, Rout and F J Warby
5. The impact on customers and stakeholders of the Council joining the Anglia Revenues Partnership	Councillors Buckle, Houlder, Nettleton, Springett, Mrs P A Warby and Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee
6. Review of car parking charges throughout the Borough	Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, and Councillors Rout, Mrs Rushbrook, Springett and Thorndyke

3. Review of car parking charges throughout the Borough

- 3.1 The Chairman gave a brief update on the first meeting of the Task and Finish Group looking into the above topic, which had taken place on 30 May 2012. He advised that a further meeting of the Group had been set for 12 June 2012, where officers had been invited to assist with gathering the information the Group will need to inform the review.
- 3.2 The Committee would receive a further short update at its meeting on 11 July 2012, and on 5 September 2012, it would receive the draft report of the Task and Finish Group, setting out any recommendations. That would be the commencement of wide consultation. On 24 October 2012 meeting the final recommendations of the Group would be presented to the Committee, and subject to the Committee's approval, these would be presented to Cabinet on 21 November 2012.
- 3.3 The Chairman invited any Members with urgent issues related to car parking charges which could not wait until the consultation element of the review commenced, to email him direct, and he would ensure their comments fed into the review.

4. Cabinet Annual Report 2011/2012

- 4.1 The Constitution requires that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive reports from the Leader of the Council or representative(s) of Cabinet, either prior to the commencement of each financial year or at its first meeting after each Annual Council meeting on "the state of the Borough", the Cabinet's priorities and its performance in the previous year.
- 4.2 The Leader of the Council attended this meeting of the Committee, and presented the Cabinet's Annual Report for 2011/2012. Unlike previous years, the Annual Report did not set out the Cabinet's plans for the next year, as these would now be covered by the new Corporate Plan, which was considered by the Committee in February 2012. The Annual Report did; however, set out the Cabinet's Portfolio Holders and their current respective responsibilities for 2012/2013.
- 4.3 The Committee examined the document in detail, questioning the Leader on the Report's contents, including extensive discussions on a number of areas of the Report. One such example was a discussion on the timetable for transfer of Borough Council-owned community centres to be run by the local community, following the success of the transfer of Southgate Community Centre. It was acknowledged that such transfers had to be sensitively handled, with extensive support provided, and it was suggested that a presentation by Trustees of the Southgate Community Centre to other community groups considering taking on the running of their Centres may help to smooth the process and alleviate any concerns.
- 4.4 Other issues discussed included the continuing consultation on Vision 2031, actions taken to bring empty homes back into use, and actions taken to ensure empty business premises were let. Finally, a discussion was held on the closure of the Crown Health Centre in Haverhill, with Haverhill Members advising the Committee of actions being taken both to lobby against the closure, including raising the issue with the Suffolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and also to ensure that healthcare funding in Haverhill did not reduce following the closure.

5. Cabinet Forward Plan: June to September 2012

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

6. Monitoring the West Suffolk Community Safety Partnership

- 6.1 The Committee received its annual update on the progress of the West Suffolk Community Safety Partnership from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012. It is the duty of the Committee, as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee designated under the Police and Justice Act 2006, to scrutinise the work of the Partnership.
- 6.2 The Council's Head of Neighbourhood Development, Cathy Manning, introduced the report, and updated Members on the work of the CSP during 2011/2012, expansion of the partnership from April 2012 and the election of the Police and Crime Commissioner; and formation of Police and Crime Panels.

- 6.3 The work of the Partnership during 2011/2012 included nine projects which had a proven track record of achieving good results, and further detail on three of these – staysafe, acquisitive crime and substance misuse fighting fund – was given in the report and discussed with Members. Additionally, seven county-wide issues were managed through the Safer Suffolk Partnership Board, and information on two of these – ‘Best Bar None’ and domestic abuse training – was provided.
- 6.4 An update on the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Police and Crime Panels (PCPs) was given. PCPs would hold PCCs to account, and would have a significant effect on the Partnership, including on its funding, and a full report on the formation of the Suffolk Panel was considered at Annual Council in May 2012.
- 6.5 Finally, details of end-of-year police crime statistics were provided as an appendix to the report, together with statistics provided by the St Edmundsbury Anti Social Behaviour Co-located Team.
- 6.6 Discussions were held on a number of elements of the report, including on the police statistics. Members asked whether a more detailed breakdown of the figures into town or even Safer Neighbourhood Team areas could be provided, in order for them to identify whether there were problems in any particular areas.
- 6.7 Finally, a discussion was held on whether incidents of crime had increased since the street lights in many residential areas were now switched off between midnight and 5am. Several Members advised the Committee that their requests to turn back on certain lights where they could make a case for this, for example where a light was outside sheltered housing or there were traffic issues, had been agreed by Suffolk County Council. However, this was not possible in every case.

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