



## **Cabinet**

### **12 September 2012**

#### **Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 5 September 2012**

- 1. Work Programme Update and Suggestion for Scrutiny:  
Educational Attainment**
- 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. Members reviewed the current position of the work programme, and noted the items which were expected at the next meeting of the Committee in October 2012.
- 1.2 Following discussion with officers, the Chairman circulated a proposed consultation timetable for the 'A Boards' review. It was proposed that the 'A Boards' consultation approved at the last meeting would commence in Mid September 2012, to run concurrently with the consultation on the wider Street Vending Policy, for a period of 10 weeks. The results of the consultation would be brought to the 5 December 2012 or 16 January 2013 meeting of the Committee, with the results of the Street Vending Policy consultation being brought to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee on 21 January 2013. Recommendations from both Committees would be brought to the Cabinet on 13 February 2013, and full Council on 25 February 2013.
- 1.3 Cabinet will recall that following a presentation at the last meeting of the Committee from Members of Forest Heath District Council concerning their review of Educational Attainment, Members had requested that further information be circulated to them, and that a 'Suggestion for Scrutiny' form be produced for the next meeting setting out the expected outcomes and value of carrying out a similar review in St Edmundsbury.
- 1.4 Members felt that St Edmundsbury would probably not need to carry out as extensive a review as Forest Heath, as this would leave little time for other scrutiny reviews, but were interested in looking at the 'headlines', in order to ensure that the educational provision and support for parents in St Edmundsbury was meeting its needs.
- 1.5 A Task and Finish Group was set up, to which Councillors Buckle, P J Hopfensperger, F J Warby and Mrs P A Warby were nominated, to consider an update of the Forest Heath review's findings, revised to provide figures applicable to St Edmundsbury, to be provided by the Council's officers, and to make any necessary recommendations arising from consideration of the updated report. The

review will commence when there is a gap in the review schedule (Members having made the decision that no more than four Member-suggested reviews should be running at any one time).

## **2. Cabinet Forward Plan: September to December 2012**

- 2.1 The Committee considered the Cabinet's Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period September to December 2012
- 2.2 A lengthy discussion took place on the Two Year Review of The Apex, timetabled for consideration by Cabinet on 21 November 2012. Members wished to have the opportunity to comment on the proposals in the report, but by way of a full scrutiny discussion rather than a Member briefing. Officers advised that to bring the report to the meeting of the Committee arranged for 24 October 2012 may be too tight, as the business case may not have been completed in time for dispatch of papers to that Committee, or even by 24 October.
- 2.3 Officers were therefore asked to find a solution whereby Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members had the opportunity to scrutinise the report prior to Cabinet consideration. Solutions discussed included putting back the 24 October meeting of the Committee by one to three weeks; holding a special meeting of the Committee in November 2012; or bringing the report to the 5 December meeting of the Committee, prior to a final decision being taken at full Council on 18 December 2012. Members' preference was for the report to be considered by the Committee prior to Cabinet consideration. Officers will discuss this with Cabinet and the Chairman of the Committee to find a solution to the Committee's request.

## **3. Interim Report of the Task and Finish Group: Review of car parking charges throughout the Borough**

- 3.1 The Chairman presented an update on the work of the above Task and Finish Group, which had met five times since the Committee set up the Group in April 2012. A scoping meeting had taken place in May 2012, which had set the Terms of Reference for the Review, followed by two information gathering meetings in June and July 2012, and two meetings to discuss the information provided and commence drafting proposals in July and August 2012. The Group aims to bring recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 24 October 2012, and if agreed, to bring the recommendations of the Committee through Cabinet in November 2012.
- 3.2 At the last meeting of the Task and Finish Group, it was agreed that focus groups should be arranged with the Chamber of Commerce, the Bury Society and Bid4Bury, as well as representatives of businesses located in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill. The first focus group was held with the Chamber of Commerce, Bury Society and Bid4Bury on 3 September 2012, at which a very helpful discussion had taken place and ideas put forward as to how to move forward for the next three years. The next focus group will be with the businesses themselves.
- 3.3 Additionally, following on from the Cabinet's consultation on car park charges prior to preparing the budget for 2012/2013, the Task and Finish Group wished to ask the Markets and Car Parks Team to undertake further market research in the Borough Council's car parks. The purpose of this survey would be to obtain the

public's view on car parks across the Borough, and in particular to get a view on usage, the current tariffs and on how the Council should set future years' charges.

- 3.4 Whilst the focus groups with business and local business representatives will be carried out by the officer leading the review, alongside Members of the Task and Finish Group, the consultation with the public will have a cost attached. Although the Committee has its own budget, and could arrange for external parties to carry out the consultation, it would make more sense for the Markets and Car Park staff or representatives to carry it out, and this will therefore incur a cost on their time which cannot be committed by the Committee. Cabinet is therefore **RECOMMENDED that the Markets and Car Parks Team, or their representatives, be asked to undertake market research in the Borough Council's car parks, to ascertain the public's view on car parks across the Borough, their usage, the current tariffs and how the Council should set future years' charges.**

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