



## Council 29 June 2010

### CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

***Written report by Cllr Robert Everitt,  
Bury St Edmunds and Community Safety  
Portfolio***

**Portfolio includes:**

- Cabinet Commitment for Bury St Edmunds;
- Community Safety;
- Safeguarding Children;
- Licensing;
- Environmental Health;
- Environmental Management;
- CCTV;
- Emergency Planning
- Youth Action Plan (excluding Haverhill);
- Community development (excluding Haverhill); and
- Grants

**1. *Bury St Edmunds***

- 1.1 Negotiations have been continuing with the preferred developers of Suffolk Business Park. There are 68 hectares of allocated employment land located on the eastern side of the existing business park at Moreton Hall. This land cannot be developed before an upgrade of the Rookery Crossroads junction and a new link road has been built. The developer, Churchmanor, has prepared a masterplan which details how this land can be developed and Cabinet has followed the recommendation from the Area Working Party that full Council adopts this plan as presented.
- 1.2 Regular monitoring of the vacant shops in the town centre gives a flavour of the health and vitality of the town centre. Vacancy rates in the town centre are currently at 8.5% which is well within the level recognised by the Association of Town Centre Management as being healthy. Many of the existing vacant shops are either being fitted out for new tenants or are under offer. Recent announcements such as Carluccio's (Italian café) in arc underline the ability of Bury St Edmunds to attract high quality retailers from across the spectrum.
- 1.3 The May Bank Holiday saw the most successful Flower and Continental market yet. The weather was on, the whole, agreeable and many people flocked to the town on the Sunday and Monday. The event was organised by Bid4Bury this year and received support from the East Anglian Daily Times.
- 1.4 A series of events held in June including the St Johns Street Fayre on the 19<sup>th</sup>, Nowton Country Fair on the 20<sup>th</sup> and Armed Forces Day on the 26<sup>th</sup> helped or will help to bring visitors flocking into the town.

- 1.5 It is proposed that a temporary park and ride site be located on land adjacent to Rougham airfield. This site will be used to cope with periods of exceptional demand for car parking such as the weekends leading up to Christmas. Planning permission is required and if successful the land could be available in time for Christmas 2010.

## 2. Community Development

- 2.1 As part of National Family Week Community Development Officers organised a Family Picnic on the Howard estate, Bury St Edmunds from 12 noon to 3pm on 3 June. The event, which was attended by around 400 people, benefitted from some summer sunshine and was supported by various partner organisations including Havebury Housing Partnership, Carousel Children's Centre, the local Safer Neighbourhood Team and the local Residents' Association. Information gathered during the event will help to inform our future activities in the area, which, together with the neighbouring Mildenhall Road estate, is an area of health inequality. I hope this successful event now becomes part of the annual calendar.
- 2.2 The 'Wos-Up' youth outreach project which takes youth work to the rural areas has kicked off in Stanton and Ixworth. The project is delivered for St Edmundsbury by Supporting Contemporary Adolescence (SCA) and will be visiting a total of 9 villages across the Borough throughout the summer period each village receiving a six-week block of visits. The project aims to engage with young people by providing activities such as sport, games and computer equipment.
- 2.3 BurySound 2010 was launched on 4 June with an event held at the Lounge in Bury St Edmunds. Around 100 young people came along to hear local bands, including last years BurySound winners Cure Cabello, showcasing their talents in advance of the competition. As the Youth and Community Development Officer is currently on a secondment the launch was organised by a young person who has previously volunteered at the competition. With the support of officers he ran a very successful event, which has given him valuable project management experience.
- 2.4 Work on transferring the community centre in Southgate to a local group comprising the Southgate Community Association and Southgate Church is continuing following the decision by the Cabinet on 26 May 2010 to work with the group. The Development Trust is providing advice and expertise to support the transfer process via the national Advancing Assets programme which the council was successful in gaining a place on. Having listened to the response of the communities in the other areas where there are centres, we have decided not to progress with any other transfers at the moment. However we remain committed to working with the other community associations to support them in developing their skills and expertise where they feel the need to do this and in the longer term see the model of transferring assets to communities as one we wish to promote.
- 2.5 Since the new year a lot of work has been done across the County on the issue of how all the partners, including the police and local councils, respond to anti social behaviour (ASB). One result is that, in line with the national requirement to do so, the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership has published a set of minimum standards for dealing with ASB. These can be found on a new webpage which gives details of what constitutes ASB, contact numbers for reporting issues such as litter, graffiti, fly-tipping, noise nuisance or abandoned cars to the Council, and also provides an on-line form which can be used to report any kind of ASB. These pages will be further developed with case-studies illustrating how local agencies work together and links to other pages and websites that relate to community safety in its broadest sense. The ASB pages can be accessed from the home page of the St Edmundsbury website via Anti Social Behaviour – police and councils working together – entry. Another development is that the Council is working with partners to establish a wider ASB team based in West Suffolk House to ensure that response to reports of ASB as timely and not hampered by the need to bring together

professionals from the different organisations (police, environmental health, children and young people, adult social care etc). West Suffolk House is ideally suited to setting up such a cross-cutting team because of our co-location with Suffolk County Council and hot-desking. At present we are working towards establishing the team in the autumn and further details will be provided nearer the time.

### **3. Environmental Health**

- 3.1 The 'Scores on the Doors' scheme for food businesses is now up and running. Food businesses that have been inspected since 1 January 2010 will be judged on food hygiene practises, structure of premises and food safety management. They will then be awarded a score which translates into a star rating. The star ratings range from 0- 5, with 5 stars being the highest score. All businesses scored will be sent a star certificate, which we hope they will display on their premises. In addition the star ratings will be displayed on the Council's website. A formal press launch took place on 11 June 2010. The latest five star restaurant is Zest at the West Suffolk College and I was pleased to present the students and staff with their certificate.
- 3.2 I am pleased to report that on the 22 June I will open (attend) the annual Landlords' Forum held here in West Suffolk House. Over 30 private sector landlords and letting agents are scheduled to attend the forum that is organised by officers from Environmental Health and Housing Services. The Forum provides landlords with the advice and guidance to ensure that the privately rented housing sector remains strong and compliant with any legislative changes. This year landlords will hear how they might benefit financially from making their properties more energy efficient, the Council's new strategy in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation and changes in planning guidance in respect of these properties, a proposed landlord approval scheme and how to deal with 'anti-social' tenants.
- 3.3 The Environmental Health and Licensing Services have very recently undergone a self assessment and Peer Review of their service. The teams undertook a thorough self assessment and came up with an action plan to make improvements. This was then reviewed by an external team made up of Environmental Health and Licensing specialists and an experienced Member who came to West Suffolk House for two days to interview staff and Members and make a judgement on the action plan and the service as a whole. I am really pleased to report that the Peer Review team reported that the teams had taken a comprehensive, ambitious and challenging approach to the self assessment and that they found very few additional areas for service improvement that had not already been identified. The Peer Review team also congratulated the service for its excellent delivery of core services, its dedicated, committed and ambitious staff group, and for the way the self assessment process had been embraced. They were confident that the service will be successful in maintaining the momentum provided by the Peer Challenge process in improving further what is already a very good service.

### **4. Licensing**

- 4.1 Members of the Licensing Team completed a two day training course on the care and welfare of invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles. Although invertebrates do not require licensing in pet shops, officers have seen an increase in the stock of all of these animals recently, so training provision was made to ensure that we can meet our obligations under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the Pet Animals Act 1952. Some of the officers overcame their fear of spiders and held a Chilli Rose Tarantula.
- 4.2 Work on the new licensing software is progressing well, and all the client and premises information has been transferred. We have also 'gone live' on inputting Temporary Event Notices and Street Collections, and are making good progress on entering licence details for personal (alcohol) licence holders.

5. **Environmental Management: Greener Homes DIY Scheme**

- 5.1 With our partners in Suffolk, the Council's Environmental Management team secured external funding from the Regional Housing 'pot' administered by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) to run a scheme to help households carry out simple energy efficiency measures. In addition to the objectives of reducing domestic energy consumption and cutting associated carbon emissions, the project is designed to assist those households achieve an affordable level of warmth.
- 5.2 As part of the pilot phase during 2009/2010, five showcase events have been run in St Edmundsbury. From the event held at Great Whelnetham:-
- (a) 76 households applied for a Greener Homes grant;
  - (b) products were supplied to the value of £8,000;
  - (c) loft insulation materials were provided to insulate 19 properties; and
  - (d) internal wall insulation materials were provided to insulate 7 properties.
- 5.3 Over the pilot phase, 391 households in the Borough have received Greener Homes grants, of which we estimate that 39 properties have been made decent and four households have been brought out of fuel poverty.
- 5.4 This has proved a cost effective way to secure improvement in domestic energy efficiency as well as getting residents and communities involved.