



Council 29 JUNE 2010

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Written report by Cllr David Ray, Performance & Organisational Development Portfolio

Portfolio includes:

- Democratic Services;
- Health & Safety;
- Human Resources (including workforce development plan);
- Legal Services;
- Organisational Development;
- Work style programme;
- Staff learning and development;
- Member development and training;
- Performance management;
- Consultation;
- CAA and Council Improvement Plan;
- Risk management;
- Communications;
- Diversity;
- Customer services and access;
- Transformational Government/Electronic Government;
- Systems review and business change;
- Partnership working/service integration;
- Democratic renewal.

1. Performance Management

- 1.1 As you may be aware, on 27 May 2010 the new Government announced the abolition of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). This abolition took immediate effect and all work on the 2009/2010 assessment was halted. This work was at an advanced stage with officers already having submitted evidence and self-assessments on our performance. Indications were that we scored very well in the assessment.
- 1.2 At the moment, National Indicators (NIs) remain, as does the Local Area Agreement. Auditors will also continue to carry out work on our accounts and the value for money conclusion. Further Government announcements are likely on what sort of national performance framework (if any) might be put in place.
- 1.3 Performance management remains important to the Council so that Councillors, staff, and more importantly, the public, can be reassured that we are providing good quality, value for money services. The abolition of the CAA will provide an ideal opportunity for us to review our performance management arrangements to ensure that they meet our local requirements as opposed to being constrained by national requirements.

2. Communications

- 2.1 There has been a major communications campaign across St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council areas to tell people about changes to the days and times their bins will be collected. These changes are due to start at the end of June and there is a Freephone number if anyone has any queries: 0800 028 4083
- 2.2 This is one example of shared work between the West Suffolk councils. There are other projects being worked on, such as joint procurement for, and shared pages in, the corporate magazines which will help to cut staff time and costs. In time there may be a joined-up communications team serving both Councils.
- 2.3 While there will always be some demand for printed information, the communications team is exploring the use of more electronic and social media, with the aim of reaching different audiences. This means that information about services will get to a wider range of people and it will also help them to become involved in making decisions about issues that affect their local communities.

3. Member Development

3.1 Member Development Charter

- (a) Since full Council's agreement to re-commit to achieving the Member Development Charter, the Borough Council's Member Development Self-assessment and Action Plan were submitted to the South East Employers Organisation (SEE) in April 2010.
- (b) The next stage is for SEE to carry out an inspection visit, during which a number of Members and officers will be interviewed. Unfortunately SEE cannot accommodate the inspection before October 2010, although they have confirmed that the Council's Charter status will not lapse in the meantime.

3.2 Member Development Programme 2010/2011

- (a) The Member Development Programme for 2010/2011 is coming together with sessions having been held or set as follows:

24 May 2010	Presentation Skills (6 named members who expressed an interest)
21 July 2010	Local Government Finance
22 September 2010	Getting the most out of your partnerships (TBC)
28 October 2010	Neighbourhood Development and Community Engagement
23 November 2010	Community Safety
13 December 2010	Influencing and negotiating skills (plus "working with officers" add-on)
25 January 2011	IT Security Policy, Word Level 2 and Outlook Level 2
15 February 2011	Handling challenging situations and people
28 March 2011	Session to be arranged
19 April 2011	Session to be arranged

- (b) As you can see, two sessions towards the end of the civic year are still to be arranged. Sessions have been taken from the shortlist of potential areas of training agreed by the Democratic Renewal Panel in February 2010, following consultation with all Members.
- (c) Could I take this opportunity to remind Members that should you attend any training outside of the programme outlined above, for example conferences or more specialised training, this needs to be captured as evidence for the Charter Inspection, so please let the Scrutiny Manager know if you attend such training.

4. Human Resources

4.1 Lifelong Learning Update

- (a) At the end of May 2010 we celebrated Adult Learning Week, offering a range of learning activities for staff. The emphasis was on making sure that every one of our staff is aware of what learning they are entitled to, how to get it and what support they can access to help them learn.
- (b) The Council entered into a Lifelong Learning Agreement in partnership with Unison in 2006. Since then we have offered a programme of basic skills training in literacy and numeracy. We have been successful in engaging hesitant learners who have now achieved basic skills qualifications.
- (c) During Adult Learning Week we signed the national Skills Pledge in partnership with Forest Heath District Council. This Pledge commits us as organisations to ensure that all of our staff have support in reaching Level 2 qualifications in literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. These are the recognised 'skills for life' that everyone needs to be successful.
- (d) A bulletin of our recent lifelong learning activity can be seen at <http://intranet.stedsbc.gov.uk/LifelongLearningSandramessage.htm>

4.2 Sickness Absence

- (a) The average days lost due to sickness has again fallen. The outturn figure for the year ended 31 March 2010 was 7.79 days. This is the lowest figure since formal monitoring began in 2003. It compares favourably with the 2008/2009 average of 9.7 days (public sector) 10.7 (local government figure) and is not far off the overall national average of 7.4. The comparable year's national data has yet to be published.