



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# B89

## Council 29 June 2010

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

*Written report by Cllr David Lockwood  
Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

This report covers the meetings of the Committee held on 21 April and 2 June 2010.

**(A) 21 April 2010 meeting**

**1. Support for Drug Users in St Edmundsbury**

1.1 When planning its work programme for 2009/2010 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee chose to include a session looking at the support for drug users available in the Borough.

1.2 Although the expected representative from the Suffolk Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) was unable to attend, the Committee was pleased to welcome representatives from Focus 12 and Suffolk Misuse Service (SMS) West to the meeting. The Council's Substance Misuse Co-ordinator was also present and outlined the support that was on offer from the Artheads project. Finally, a user of the services being discussed attended the meeting to give an insight into the experience of using the services on offer.

1.3 Members questioned all attendees, and were particularly interested to learn how all these discrete services worked together. The Committee concluded that the Borough was fortunate to have so many services available to support drug users, and noted the value of the West Suffolk Community Safety Partnership's involvement, particularly in funding many of the projects run by the services. Arising from the discussion, the Committee felt that the services could benefit from more publicity, in particular by provision of information in doctors' surgeries, and requested that NHS Suffolk be requested to prioritise the circulation of this information.

**2. Monitoring the West Suffolk Community Safety Partnership**

2.1 The Committee received its annual update on the progress of the West Suffolk Community Safety Partnership from 1 April 2009 to date. 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.

- 2.2 The Council's Community Safety Officer, Helen Lindfield, introduced the report, outlining the focus of the Partnership over the past year and detailing several of the projects which had been run.
- 2.3 The report also looked at performance to date based on data supplied by the Police, and this was presented to the Committee by Chief Inspector Martin Barnes-Smith. The Committee was also pleased to welcome Stuart Hudson, the County Council's Prolific and Priority Offender Scheme Co-ordinator, to the meeting, who gave a presentation on the Scheme.
- 2.4 This annual report was for the information of the Committee, however, under the Police and Justice Act 2006 the Committee could choose to play a wider role in the scrutiny of crime and disorder issues across the County, bearing in mind the need to avoid duplication of effort. On this occasion the Committee only chose to request some additional statistical information from the police.

### **3. Presentation from Portfolio Holder for Culture and Sport, Councillor Lynsey Alexander**

- 3.1 Under its Scrutiny Improvement Plan the Committee requested updates from Portfolio Holders on forthcoming plans and priorities. Four such presentations were received in 2008/2009, and the remaining Portfolio Holders were requested to present to the Committee under the current 2009/2010 work programme. At the meeting, the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Sport made her presentation to the Committee.
- 3.2 Councillor Mrs Alexander's presentation was based around the theme of '*cultural and leisure services – an investment or a cost?*' She first outlined the services provided under the areas of open spaces, heritage, arts, entertainment and tourism, and the facilities available in the Borough. The resources available to the Service and its management and staff structure were outlined, as well as performance. Finally, important future issues were covered, together with how these issues would be addressed, including such areas as the Olympics and The Apex.
- 3.3 After concluding the presentation, Councillor Mrs Alexander brought the Committee back to her original theme, which Members were asked to discuss, regarding whether cultural and leisure services were an investment or a cost. The Committee concluded that the service was a major investment into the economy and wellbeing of the Borough.

### **(B) 2 June 2010 meeting**

#### **1. Annual Report of the Cabinet**

- 1.1 The Leader attended this meeting of the Committee, and presented the Cabinet's Annual Report for 2009/2010. The Committee examined the document in detail, questioning the Leader on the report's contents.
- 1.2 Amongst other discussions, the Committee acknowledged that the Annual Report showed that the Borough had responded very effectively to the recession to date, and could point to successes such as the arc and Christmas Fayre despite the economic downturn. The Committee expressed its broad support for the document and the revised priorities of the Cabinet for 2010/2011.

- 1.3 The Chairman also took the opportunity to remind the Leader that the Cabinet had not commissioned any scrutiny for a while, and offered the services of the Committee should the Cabinet wish it to carry out some exploratory work on any issues which may arise during the year.

## **2. Adoption of 2010/2011 Work Programme and Nominations to Working Groups and Suffolk Joint Scrutiny Committees**

- 2.1 The process for setting the work programme for 2010/2011 began in February this year, with the distribution of forms for the suggestion of new items to all Members and senior officers. In previous years, the high number of suggestions received has meant the Committee has had to analyse and rank suggestions. This year, however, fewer suggestions for new areas of work were received, and the Committee was therefore able to include all suggested work to the work programme for 2010/2011. All the new areas of work suggested will make interesting reviews, and the Committee anticipates an exciting scrutiny year ahead. The new work programme was adopted by the Committee.
- 2.2 The Committee considered its requirements for 2010/2011 and appointed Councillors Buckle and Oliver to work with officers on the review of the Cultural Strategy. The Committee also received an annual report from Councillor Beckwith, the Council's representative on the Suffolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on the work of that Committee over the past year.
- 2.3 The Committee also made nominations to three Suffolk Joint Scrutiny Committees, which are the subject of a separate item on this full Council agenda.

## **3. Environmental Health and Licensing Self Assessment**

- 3.1 The Environmental Health and Licensing Service undertook a self-assessment and peer challenge of their services between December 2009 and April 2010. The Committee was apprised of the process undertaken, and the results arising, which had been included in an Improvement Plan for the Service, as well as individual targets being included in staff development plans. The feedback from the peer review had also become available on the day of the meeting, and this was discussed with Members.
- 3.2 The Improvement Plan arising from the review was discussed, and Members confirmed that it covered all the points which had become apparent during the review process.

## **4. Updates on recommendations arising from Councillor Calls for Action previously considered by the Committee**

- 4.1 Members will recall that four Councillor Calls for Action (CCfAs) have been submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the past year, two of which led to full hearings, but all four of which led to recommendations.
- 4.2 The Committee received updates on the current position with all four CCfAs. Regarding the Stanton Grundle, due to the dredging that had taken place, the Grundle now had more capacity to cope with the water which flowed through it, however, the final cure would not come until funding could be identified. To date, bids for funding had been unsuccessful, and officers would therefore continue to investigate other sources of funding, whilst continuing to clear build-ups of debris as necessary.

- 4.3 Regarding road safety in Bell Meadow, a speed survey had been conducted in the road as requested by the Committee, and the results showed that high speeds were not a significant issue in this road. The Committee now considered this CCfA to be closed.
- 4.4 Moving on to the recommendations following the hearing on the Howard and Mildenhall Road estates, a bid for funding to take forward some of the recommendations had been submitted but the outcome was not yet known.
- 4.5 Finally, regarding Skyliner Way On-Street Parking, the proposed changes to the parking management in the adopted section of the road had been approved for implementation, and the remainder of Skyliner Way was likely to be adopted in around 10 months' time, following which any additional parking issues could be considered.

W:\Democratic WP Services\Committee\Portfolios\2010\Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee\10.06.29 Chairmans Report by Cllr Lockwood.doc