



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

B217

Council 28 September 2010

LEADER'S REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

*Written report by the Leader of the Council,
Cllr John Griffiths*

1. **West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership (WSLSP)**

- 1.1 Since my last report the WSLSP has recruited a new manager, Lurna Compton, who has been contracted to work 2½ days a week for a year to support the partnership. With the coalition Government beginning to put flesh on some of its policies the WSLSP awaits the publication of the Decentralisation and Localism Bill. It will be interesting to see if the previous statutory requirement to have an LSP remains or whether this is a more relaxed approach which allows for such partnership where it is felt locally that they add value. As the Partnership already works with many local organisations across the voluntary and public sector and has links with business representatives and faith organisations it could be that the LSP will be well-placed to deliver on the localism and 'Big Society' agendas.
- 1.2 Assuming more detail on the new national policy, shared services and the potential implications for the area covered by the WSLSP are known by December 2010, the Board plans to hold a half day workshop to consider the role of the WSLSP in the light of these developments.
- 1.3 The WSLSP is in the process of allocating the Performance Reward Grant funding it received for the contribution it made to achieving targets in previous Suffolk-wide agreements. On 15 September 2010 the Board allocated 17 voluntary and community organisations up to £2,000 for very local projects which contribute to delivering the WSLSP's objectives. Examples of projects within St Edmundsbury that received funding have ranged from providing money advice and training, running coaches in Haverhill, to a telephone befriending service and a festival to celebrate and promote volunteering in Bury St Edmunds; and the rural areas also feature with a cross-generation sewing group in Chevington being successful in gaining some funding.
- 1.4 The Board also considered the allocation of the more substantial partnership funding of £651,000, which provides up to a maximum £60,000 to each partnership project, but the Board felt some further work was required before making final decisions on its distribution. A range of projects had come through an initial expression of interest stage, all which are good projects in their own right. Sadly, there is not enough revenue available to fund them all and some will be disappointed. While the revenue funding was over-subscribed capital funding has not been fully allocated so there will be further rounds of both

Community Chest and partnership funding available for capital projects. Details will be included in the Members' Bulletin once the timetable has been finalised.

2. Rural Issues

- 2.1 Since the last report, Barningham Village Hall Committee have been awarded £750 towards the upgrade of the emergency lighting and fire alarm system at their Village Hall and Troston Parish Council have been awarded £2,000 towards the installation of an aerial runway for their children's play area.
- 2.2 Wickhambrook Shop and Post Office has been awarded a grant of £2,500 through the Suffolk Rural Economy Scheme, which is to be used towards the costs of improving the customer/disabled parking. There will be a designated parking area adjacent to the shop which will improve the traffic flow and make the area much safer for customers.
- 2.3 The Suffolk Village of the Year Competition, organised by the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, had a very positive ending for St Edmundsbury. The Borough Council's judging panel, chaired by Councillor Mrs Charlesworth, put Clare forward to the County round (Barrow, Hundon, Pakenham and Troston were the other entrants). Clare, together with Moulton and Wickham Market were put through to the Final round by the County judges. Mark Murphy and Lesley Dolphin from BBC Radio Suffolk judged the finalists on 14 August 2010 and announced Clare as the outright winner of the competition. Clare received £1,000 prize money, a certificate, a plaque and a firkin of beer from Adnams, in addition to the £500 prize money and a rose bowl they received from the Borough Council as the district round prize.
- 2.4 In partnership with Suffolk County Council's Rural Development Managers, officers organised funding surgeries to help community groups develop their project ideas and help turn them into reality. These surgeries were well attended and took place at Hundon Village Hall, Culford Village Hall and Great Whelnetham Community Centre.
- 2.5 Ousden is the latest village to benefit from the '*Connected Villages*' project, which is part of our Rural Action Plan. The residents of Ousden now have wireless internet access and a laptop for use in their village hall. The new equipment was officially launched during the Rural Coffee Caravan visit that took place on 2 September 2010. Since the last report, the Rural Coffee Caravan and Rural Campervan have also visited Ampton, Barningham, Barrow, Cowlinge, Great Livermere, Lidgate, Ousden, Rougham, Stradishall, and Timworth.

3. Achievements

- 3.1 Despite current challenging economic conditions there have been many successes and positive developments throughout St Edmundsbury; the results of Anglia in Bloom; Green Flag Awards; Tour of Britain; Tourist Information Centre Awards and Haverhill Community Football Project to name but a few. These are covered in detail in the reports of fellow Cabinet Members and I will confine my report to the WSLSP and Rural Issues.