



Council 28 September 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;
- 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. Customer services

- 1.1 We have recently introduced customer service feedback forms at West Suffolk House. The aim of these forms is to capture visitors' experiences of the services they receive. I am delighted that people are happy to spare the time to complete these forms and most are very satisfied with both the reception service, and with the services to which they are referred. The forms will be collated and monitored to see where improvements in customer services can be made.

2. Communications

- 2.1 The communications teams at St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath councils are exploring ways to save money and improve communications through joint working.
- 2.2 One of the first projects was a joint procurement exercise for both councils' magazines, Community Spirit and Forest Heath News. The autumn edition was the first product of this joint working and included a survey to gather residents' views about what information they need from both councils and how they want to receive it. The results of the survey will help to define further joint working. The winter and spring editions of the magazines will each have their own individuality but will also have some pages with shared content which is applicable to residents across West Suffolk.

- 2.3 A shared services communications strategy is being developed which will set out how both councils intend to communicate with staff, councillors and stakeholders across West Suffolk, including residents, businesses and partners.
- 2.4 In parallel to this shared services work, the communications team is working extensively with staff, councillors and partner organisations to keep them up to date with developing the business case for joining the Anglia Revenues Partnership.
- 2.5 Apart from a significant amount of partnership working, the team is also continuing to update the website and publicise St Edmundsbury's policies and activities. These include, for example, the installation of the Queen Street gates and opening of the community football project in Haverhill, along with preparations for opening The Apex and Corn Exchange consultation in Bury St Edmunds, and the Local Development Framework across the whole borough.

3. Member Development

3.1 Member Development Charter

- 3.1.1 Since full Council's agreement to re-commit to achieving the Member Development Charter, and the submission of a Self-assessment and Action Plan to the South East Employers Organisation (SEE), an inspection visit by SEE has now been set for Wednesday 27 October 2010. During this inspection a number of Members and officers will be interviewed, and in particular the assessors would like to hold a focus group of around 10 non-Cabinet Members. If you are a non-Cabinet Member not being interviewed separately on the day, e.g. as a Member of the Democratic Renewal Panel or Group Leader etc, you will have received an email asking you to be a Member of the focus group, which will take place at 4.30pm and last up to 45 minutes. If you have not already done so, I would urge you to contact Adriana Stapleton if you are available on that date/time to take part in the focus group. You will be asked about member training opportunities in St Edmundsbury, and a briefing note will be provided in advance.

3.2 Member Development Programme 2010/2011

- 3.2.1 The Member Development Programme for 2010/2011 has now been set, and was circulated in the Members' Bulletin a few weeks ago. As a reminder, sessions for the remainder of the year are as follows:-

22 September 2010	Getting the most out of your major partnerships
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

- 3.2.2 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 Adriana Stapleton know if you attend such training.

4. Transformational Government/Electronic Government

- 4.1 We have introduced new 'bin collection days' facility on the website allowing customers to check for themselves which day their bins are due for collection. The launch of this new online facility, which has been used by customers over a thousand times since mid June, was carefully timed to coincide with the recent collection route re-organisation project. The outcome of this has been potentially over a thousand fewer calls being made to the Waste Management customer service number as customers have been able to look up the information for themselves, '24 X 7'.

5. Human Resources and Health & Safety

5.1 Shared Services

- 5.1.1. Work is progressing on our preferred partnership for shared services with Forest Heath District Council. A project structure is now in place and all services have been assessed against a methodology for prioritising services which will be included in phase one of the programme. It was agreed that the main drivers for the initial phase should be the ability to deliver savings and build resilience.
- 5.1.2 The following services are included in phase one. ICT, Communications, Learning and Development, Payroll, Procurement, Policy and Performance, Property including Markets and Car Parks and existing leisure trusts. These services will now move through an options appraisal and business planning process, and at each stage reports will be initially presented to the Shared Services Steering Group.
- 5.1.3 A vacancy management process has been put in place whereby any vacancy which occurs at either council is considered by a Vacancy Management Working Group comprising the directors of both councils. This ensures that all vacancies are filled in a way that is consistent with our partnership agenda whilst ensuring that effective service delivery is maintained. This provides opportunities to enable shared working and make efficiency savings.
- 5.1.4 A joint Shared Services Consultation Group has been set up with Unison representatives from both Councils, meeting monthly.
- 5.1.5 We are currently surveying staff and councillors on our shared services work. This will help us to support concerns and ensure that we put appropriate communication procedures in place.

5.2 Anglia Revenues Partnership

- 5.2.1 The full business case is on this Council agenda requesting approval to join the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP). A significant amount of work has taken place to inform the due diligence process. The Borough Council leads the ARP HR workstream, and a new structure is being finalised. Regular briefings have taken place with the Council's Revenues and Benefits staff and consultation has taken place with the Unison Shared Services Consultation Group.

5.3 Human Resources (HR) and Learning and Development Service

- 5.3.1 Interim arrangements have now been put in place for this service to be delivered in an integrated way across both the Borough and Forest Heath District Councils. Under this arrangement Ruth Littlechild has responsibility for strategic HR, including Health and Safety, across both councils and Louise Hammond has taken on the project lead role for

shared services and strategic responsibility for Organisational Development and Learning and Development across both councils.

5.4 **Workforce Development Award**

5.4.1 We have entered the East of England Workforce Development Award showcasing our approach to lifelong learning. This is a joint submission with Unison titled *'Learning Together'*. We will know the outcome in the next couple of months.

5.5 **Sickness Absence**

5.5.1 The average days lost per person for the 12 months to the end of July 2010 is 7.52 days, close to our annual target of 7.50 days, representing a significant decrease in sickness absence over time. The figure excludes the cleaners and Facilities Management staff that were transferred to Ocean Contract Cleaning Ltd in May/June this year. We currently have three long term cases of absence. The management of absence continues to be given high priority by the HR Team.

5.6 **The Apex**

5.6.1 A significant piece of work has been undertaken with regard to recruitment and Health and Safety for The Apex, to ensure readiness for opening.