



Council 14 December 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. Community Development and Community Safety

- 1.1 There has been a good range of community development activity across the Borough since my last report. For example in October 2010 members of the Newbury Community and Howard Estate Residents Associations in Bury St Edmunds attended an IT training session at West Suffolk House. The session provided members of the community with basic IT skills. It was well received and officers will be exploring how we can provide a similar opportunity for other communities.
- 1.2 Officers are continuing to work with the Southgate Community Partnership towards the transfer of the Southgate Community Centre. A recent meeting with the group provided useful feedback on the community survey which they had conducted and their business planning. Their work is helping to develop the model for a successful transfer which others can follow. I continue to encourage other groups to consider this option which puts local communities in complete control of their local centres and the services provided from them.
- 1.3 The Grant Panel meeting in September 2010 saw projects at Ickworth, Stansfield and Fornham All Saints gain funding to improve facilities and services. Officers have analysed the figures for the past two years and found that for every £1 the Borough Council has given out in grant on average a further £11.60 has been brought to the projects which shows that a little grant funding can go a long way in helping our local groups attract other money.

Youth work

- 1.4 Local Democracy Week ran from 11 to 15 October 2010. Via eight sessions in a variety of settings, including lessons in schools, visits to West Suffolk House and presentations to the student representation meeting of West Suffolk College, over 200 young people were reached. As part of the week the Borough Council worked with Ben Gray, a local young film maker, to produce a short vox pop film asking young people from the Borough their views on politics and democracy. The film, *Armchair Politics*, gives a very interesting youth perspective on the issue and formed a key feature of the week of activity. The film is available online or copies can be provided by Simon Pickering, the Council's Youth and Community Development Officer.
- 1.5 BurySOUND enjoyed a very successful first year at The Apex. Ten bands entered the competition, with five contesting the final. Twisted Piglet were the winners and the competition was featured on *Look East* and BBC Suffolk's *Introducing* programme.
- 1.6 The Bury Skate Park Experience held its Annual General Meeting on 11 October 2010. The meeting was attended by 25 young people, supporters, partners, Members and officers. The group are continuing to look at ways of raising funds and are currently waiting to hear the outcome of their Changing Spaces Application which, if successful, will see the installation of a BMX Pump Track, new lighting and bins.

Community safety

- 1.7 The five Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) across Suffolk are taking part in a review of how community safety can most effectively and efficiently be provided across Suffolk. A peer review has been taking place led by a team from the Local Government Improvement and Development agency, (LGID). By the time of our meeting early outcomes from the review should be known. As part of a three-district CSP, with Forest Heath and Mid Suffolk District Councils, we feel that the West of the county has already shown the way in forming a clustered CSP. I will report further once the final report has been received.
- 1.8 The new Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) co-located team started to come together in October and now meets weekly at West Suffolk House. It consists of partners from a number of agencies and discusses high risk or vulnerable victims of ASB. An action plan is put in place to support the victim and stop the perpetrator. The Borough Council has been using this multi-agency approach for a number of years but the advent of the weekly meeting means that the time taken to address problems should be reduced. The work of the team will be reviewed after 3, 6 and 12 months to evaluate the effectiveness of bringing partners together at one location.
- 1.9 A multi-agency team is working to bring the West Suffolk SOS bus to Bury St Edmunds on a Friday night from April 2011. The SOS bus provides a first point of contact for those whose wellbeing is threatened by injury, emotional distress, illness, intoxication, the inability to get home or other issues associated with the night time economy. The bus is already running in Newmarket on Saturday nights and evaluation shows its presence reduces violent crime, the number of ambulance call outs and visits to A&E. To raise awareness and help with the recruitment of volunteers the bus was in Charter Square, Bury St Edmunds on Saturday 13 November 2010. It attracted much interest and several volunteers were recruited. There will be two 'trial' nights in Bury St Edmunds in the run up to Christmas. The bus will be parked on the Buttermarket from 8pm through to 1am on 17 and 23 December and will be staffed by existing volunteers from Newmarket and trained volunteers from St John Ambulance.

2. Environmental Health

Health and Safety Visits

- 2.1 In the last 3 months officers from the Commercial and Food Team have tried a different approach to health and safety visits. Four officers have been visiting Bury St Edmunds town centre businesses to check if they have their asbestos register in place. The requirement for a register was introduced in the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006. This was as a result of increasing evidence that repeated occupational exposure, particularly to maintenance workers was leading to asbestos related cancers.
- 2.2 The visits can last only 10 to 15 minutes, so they are not a burden on business, they aim to raise awareness of asbestos issues, provide officers with a chance to assess general health and safety compliance and give businesses the opportunity to ask questions/ raise issues with officers. Full details of numbers of visits completed are not available at present but visits have been made in Abbeygate Street, Cornhill, Buttermarket and St Johns Street. Generally compliance levels have been good.
- 2.3 Most importantly businesses have been very appreciative of this light touch and have welcomed the chance to ask questions.

Prohibition Order

- 2.4 You may be aware from press reports that our Environmental Health Officers have taken action to remedy unsatisfactory accommodation used for residential purposes in Stanton. An office building leased by Suffolk Mushrooms Ltd was being used to provide residential accommodation for migrant workers working in the adjacent mushroom factory despite it not having planning permission to do so. The officers' inspection found forty-three beds, mainly bunk beds, in ten rooms previously used as offices. The occupants shared one shower, three WCs and a kitchen. An assessment under the Housing Act 2004 showed that there were five separate Category 1 Hazards, namely: overcrowding and space; food safety; personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage; excess cold and means of escape in case of fire. It was determined that the most appropriate course of action was to make Prohibition Order prohibiting the use of the building as a dwelling. Accordingly, a Prohibition Order was made on the 25 November 2010 but suspended until the 31 January 2011 to allow sufficient time for the owner to find alternative accommodation for his workers. Our staff in Environmental Health and Housing have been working with the manager of Suffolk Mushrooms Ltd to make sure the terms of the notice are met, and will consider prosecution if the Prohibition Order is not complied with at the end of January 2011.

Fuel Poverty

- 2.5 The Borough Council has signed the East of England Fuel Poverty Declaration developed by the UK fuel poverty charity, National Energy Action, as a means of encouraging action to tackle fuel poverty and provide affordable warmth for households in the East of England. A formal signing ceremony was held in Cambridge on the 3 December 2010.
- 2.6 The declaration provides a focus for both individuals and organisations across the East of England to demonstrate their commitment to tackling fuel poverty, so contributing to achievement of national fuel poverty commitments.
- 2.7 A wide range of partner organisations across the East of England have given their overwhelming support to the declaration.

- 2.8 The declaration acknowledges the multi-faceted nature of fuel poverty and its impact on individual households and the wider community. It further supports the idea of individual and collective action to provide long-term sustainable solutions for low-income and other vulnerable fuel poor households.
- 2.9 Signing the declaration is not a commitment to take forward or fund specific activity. However it is supportive of any developments which seek to alleviate fuel poverty directly or indirectly and accords with the Borough Council's work programme to ensure affordable warmth and improve domestic energy efficiency.

3. Licensing

- 3.1 I am really pleased to report that as a result of an unannounced inspection of door staff in Bury St Edmunds 100 per cent compliance with the Security Industry Act was confirmed. On Friday 29 October 2010 a combined team of officers from the Police, the Licensing Team and the Security Industry Authority conducted an operation to check compliance of door staff working at the various venues in Bury St Edmunds.
- 3.2 As part of this operation all premises in Bury St Edmunds employing door staff were checked and all were found to be fully compliant with legislation. Overall this was a very successful operation which saw 24 people checked at 7 different premises. It was positively received by door staff and management alike and proves the high standard expected was being maintained. This is really good news and will assure our residents that the night clubs and other late night premises are being well managed.
- 3.3 I can advise Members that there are likely to be changes to the Licensing Act 2003 which will be included in the Police Reform and Social responsibility Bill, currently in progress. The changes are likely to overhaul the Licensing Act to give local authorities and the Police much stronger powers to remove licenses from, or refuse to grant licences to, any premises that are causing problems. It may also allow local councils to charge more for late night licences to pay for additional policing, and other powers associated with selling alcohol to children. There has been a period of consultation over the summer, and following this the Bill will be published shortly.
- 3.4 In response to concerns raised by residents of the historic core of Bury St Edmunds raised through a petition submitted to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee on 8 November 2010, it was resolved that further consultation will take place regarding the re-instatement of the Special Area Policy for this area. Therefore, with effect from 29 November 2010, a new draft policy including the existing Special Area Policy, will go back out to public consultation for a period of three months. To ensure effective use of resources, this will be done in conjunction with the consultation on the Sex Establishment Policy. In the meantime, the revised Licensing Statement of Policy, which was approved by the Licensing and Regulatory Committee, will be considered at this meeting of Council.