



Council 5 April 2011

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

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

Portfolio includes:

- Democratic Services;
- Health and 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;
- Shared Services.

1. Equality and diversity

- 1.1 The Diversity Group has recently met, with the main focus for discussion being the implications of the new Equality Act which comes into force on 5 April 2011. This new Act consolidates all previous legislation and extends equality legislation to a wider range of protected characteristics, such as age and religion/belief. The Act impacts on our role as an employer and as a service provider.
- 1.2 As a result of the change in law, the Diversity Group is updating the Borough Council's Equality Scheme and its approach to carrying out Equality Impact Assessments. The Impact Assessments are important because they help us to understand the implications of the decisions we are making on a wide range of people. The revised Equality Scheme will be considered by Members in the next few months.

2. Customer service

- 2.1 The Borough Council is taking part in the 'Tell Us Once' Programme which is due to be launched across Suffolk in June. 'Tell Us Once' makes it possible for people to inform Government just once of a birth or death. The information is collected by Registrars and is then shared with Government departments and local authority services, including, housing, revenues and benefits and elections.
- 2.2 Staff involved in the programme are learning more about it and are being registered on the Employee Authentication System (EAS). The EAS is used to ensure that data is only accessed by those should have access to it, and that these staff are who they say they are.
- 2.3 'Tell Us Once' has been operating successfully in many parts of the country and we are delighted that it is finally being offered by Suffolk authorities. Publicity documents will be available nearer to the time of launch so that people are aware of the service being offered and we will keep members informed of progress.

3. Communications

3.1 Staff in the Communications Unit are:-

- (a) supporting The Apex through development of a conferencing website;
- (b) setting up www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/newcouncillor page, with links to relevant information for potential candidates and slide show of photographs illustrating the range of services and activities carried out by the Borough Council;
- (c) completing support through the change process for Revenues and Benefits staff transferring to Anglia Revenues Partnership;
- (d) starting communications for the 'mini Public Service Village' at Lower Downs Slade, Haverhill, such as identifying how we keep all the stakeholders informed, including the voluntary sector;
- (e) researching alternatives to the annual Council Tax booklet to create a more useful publication;
- (f) planning for two, instead of four, editions of *Community Spirit* in 2011/12, including alternative communications methods;
- (g) progressing the business case for a shared West Suffolk communications team; and
- (h) providing appropriate communications and support throughout the elections process and for Member Induction.

4. Member Development

4.1 Member Development Charter

- 4.1.1 Following recommendations from the Democratic Renewal Working Party, Council approved an eight item Action Plan to address both the three priority areas recommended by the Charter Assessors, plus five other areas which the Working Party feels will add value to the Borough Council's Member Development offer.
- 4.1.2 Work has commenced on the Action Plan, and the next meeting of the Democratic Renewal Working Party will consider a revised Member Development Policy, and will also start monitoring the budget for Member Development.

4.2 Member Induction Programme and Development Programme 2011/2012

4.2.1 The Democratic Renewal Working Party has approved a programme of development sessions for new and re-elected Members for the three month period following the Borough Council elections, May to July 2011. To enable Members to get these dates in their diaries as soon as possible, the sessions planned are as follows, and more detail on each session will be provided in due course:

Session	Date
1. Initial welcome sessions, tour of and introduction to the Council, incorporating official photographs, ID badges, signing Declaration of Acceptance of Office, ICT demonstration etc.	Tuesday 10 May
(Annual Meeting – Cabinet, Committees appointed) – Thursday 19 May	
2. Development Control Committee training (essential for new members of the Committee).	Monday 23 May
3. Standards and ethics/Code of Conduct.	Thursday 26 May
4. Scrutiny – Introduction for Committee (joint session with Forest Heath District Council scrutiny members). (5.30pm, venue to be arranged)	Thursday 2 June
5. The Constitution, decision making and rules of debate.	Wednesday 8 June
6. The Shared Services Project.	Tuesday 14 June
7. Diversity.	Wednesday 22 June
8. Local Government Finance.	Wednesday 29 June
9. Introduction to Licensing.	Monday 4 July
10. Audit and Treasury Management (Committee Members only).	Tuesday 12 July
11. Choice Based Lettings/Strategic Housing.	Monday 18 July
12. Planning – the basics – for non-Committee Members – what a Ward Member needs to know.	Tuesday 26 July

4.2.2 The remainder of the Member Development Programme for 2011/2012 will be set following a Training Needs Analysis to be completed by all Members following the Borough Council elections.

5. Shared Services

5.1 This programme is on track to complete the business cases for Phase 1 of our shared service programme with Forest Heath District Council by the end of April 2011. Significant work continues to support the programme and some of the achievements since my last report are detailed below:-

- (a) joint media briefings, with both Leaders and Chief Executives, to outline our progress and achievements to date have resulted in some positive press coverage;
- (b) presentations to Members at both Councils, helping to keep all Members informed of the programme;
- (c) completion of the detailed business cases for the Property, and Learning and Development services;
- (d) development of a protocol for policy development across both Councils; and
- (e) commencement of the interim arrangement to share the Head of Planning, Nicola Baker.