



Council 28 June 2011

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Written report by Cllr Anne Gower, Haverhill and Housing Portfolio

Portfolio includes:

- Commitment for Haverhill including:-
 - Haverhill Masterplan;
 - Town Centre Management;
 - Youth Action Plan; and
 - Community Development.
- Strategic Housing;
- Homelessness.

Highlights

- ◆ The new Plaza is being well-used with a programme of events.
- ◆ The Haverhill Business Awards took place on 14 May.
- ◆ A new project called 'Supporting Young Haverhill' has been launched.
- ◆ A new development at Stanningfield has been officially opened.

1. Commitment for Haverhill

1.1 New Plaza

The Plaza, the new public space beside the Leisure Centre in Ehringshausen Way, was launched on 16 April 2011 with live music and face painting. A programme of events is taking place on the new plaza and so far, has included street performers, exercise exhibitions and a music duo, and, to celebrate the Royal Wedding, a bridal statue blowing bubbles. Future events include street theatre from Samuel Ward Academy, 'Art in the Open' from Castle Manor Business and Enterprise College, workshops for young people and gymnastics demonstrations organised by Abbeycroft Leisure.

1.2 Haverhill Chamber of Commerce Business Awards

The Business Awards ceremony run by Haverhill Chamber of Commerce took place at Chilford Hall on 14 May 2011. The Borough Council would like to congratulate all the award winners, including A-Revolution, based at Murton Slade, who won the Best Retailer Award which was sponsored by the Borough Council. A-Revolution won two more awards including the Best Business. The Apprentice finalist, Claire Young, was the guest speaker and talked about promoting entrepreneurship and enterprise to the younger generation. Over 250 people attended and it was a wonderful showcase for the businesses of Haverhill.

1.3 **Supporting Young Haverhill**

The *'Supporting Young Haverhill'* project was launched on 20 May 2011 by Matthew Hancock MP. This project is being lead by Job Centre Plus and brings together many different organizations in the town. It aims to help young people in Haverhill bridge the gap between education and employment and find their way into jobs or training. It is the first initiative of its kind in Suffolk and has strong support from local partners. Any young person wanting help can ask for details at the Job Centre or visit the Job Centre Plus bus opposite the Market Square every other Friday from 9.15 am to 3.45pm.

1.4 **New Photograph Library**

This project has been supported by the Haverhill Area Working Party so that community organisations can download 135 new images of Haverhill people and places from www.cb9haverhill.co.uk , free of charge, to promote the town.

1.5 **Shops and Lettings**

Several new shops have opened in Haverhill in recent weeks. Cash and Cheque Express has opened in Access House, Queen St; Expression Custom Tattoo Studio has opened at 1 Queen's Head Yard and a new BMX shop is opening at 4 Queen's Head. There are currently 13 vacancies out of about 188 units, a vacancy rate of 6.9%, which is well within the rate considered healthy. There are concerns about some retailers whose businesses may be moving out of the High Street and the Economic Development Unit is working with them to see if this can be mitigated.

1.6 **Town Centre Manager**

Tina Hanks' three year contract as Town Centre Manager has come to an end as it was not possible to find further funding. I am sure you will join me in thanking Tina for all she has done for Haverhill during her three years in the role and wishing her the very best for the future.

2. **Community and Youth Development in Haverhill**

2.1 **Clements Estate**

The *'Skills for Life'* Workshop I mentioned in a previous report is not going ahead. Questionnaires were circulated to establish which courses local residents felt they would benefit from but, unfortunately, when the courses were actually scheduled there were insufficient numbers to make the workshops viable.

2.2 ***'Reach-Out'* in Haverhill**

As part of the *'Reach-Out'* in Haverhill health project, a course of six cooking skills classes have been held for older single men. The project was developed with partners including the Primary Care Trust (PCT), Haverhill Association of Voluntary Organisations (HAVO) and the Library. All those who attended felt it was very worthwhile and had outcomes beyond just learning to cook, such as budgeting, food safety and, more importantly, friendships which were forged amongst the participants. Funding is now being sought to run further classes in the autumn and spring.

2.3 **Chalkstone Community Picnic**

On 1 June 2011 over 300 people enjoyed the first community picnic hosted on the Chalkstone estate, with input from CATRA, the local residents association. The warm weather encouraged the families to bring their picnics along. There were sports, arts and crafts activities available to enjoy as well as the opportunity to meet up with other families. Feedback from the community has been very positive with a clear desire to hold the event again next year. The success of this event is down to the commitment of all partners who came and worked together to provide this community event.

2.4 **Offices: Lower Downs Slade**

Officers have been acting as the liaison point for the voluntary sector groups based in the Haverhill Offices as the plans to develop the offices as a shared resource with Suffolk County Council move forward. The project will involve all the voluntary groups moving to the ground floor of the refurbished building. Inevitably there will be some disruption during the course of the refurbishment works but this should be offset by the benefits of the long term goal of providing a 'one stop shop' at which local residents can access a range of services.

2.5 **Chalkstone Community Centre**

Officers have been approached by a local community group which may be interested in taking over the ownership of the Centre. We have provided information about letting income and expenditure and are now awaiting their decision about whether they wish to proceed.

2.6 **U-Festival: Market Square**

Three big youth events for 13 to 19 year olds are planned on the Market Square on Thursday 4, 11 and 18 August. Each event has a different main activity, including a street football cage, live DJ's and media based activities.

2.7 ***'On the Spot'* Project**

This project has been operational for almost a year and the van has continued to go out regularly to young people in the Town up to three nights a week visiting the Town Centre and the main housing estates. The Friday night sessions are proving the most successful with an average attendance of over 40 young people. An annual report will be produced once the reorganisation of Suffolk County Council's Youth Service is complete, which will give us a steer on the future challenges for this very valuable youth resource.

2.8 **Parkour Park**

The Youth and Community Development Officer has been working with partners and a very able group of young people looking at the possibility of developing a Parkour Park in Haverhill to cater for the large number of young people involved in the sport. Such a facility would help divert young people away from other activities which put them at risk and have an impact on the local community so it would bring benefits all round. The young people have set up a formally constituted group and have been to Birmingham to meet a company which produces the type of equipment and spaces they are interested in developing. I will update you in future reports.

3. Strategic Housing

3.1 New Developments

Two new housing developments have opened in recent weeks:-

- (a) The Merry-Go-Round, St Olaves, was a pub, closed and boarded up for a considerable time and then destroyed by fire some years ago. It has now been replaced by a prestigious housing scheme with eight new homes, made up of two 3 bedroom houses, three 2 bedroom houses, two 2 bedroom flats and one 1 bedroom flat. This has been achieved through successful partnership working between the owners of the site, the Borough Council, Havebury Housing Partnership (Havebury) and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The Borough Council supported the bid to the HCA which resulted in Havebury receiving £560,000 towards the scheme.

- (b) A site in the village of Stanningfield originally contained ten Swedish timber houses. These have been replaced to provide 22 code 4 new homes, twelve more than the original site accommodated. The new houses offer a good mix, with 3 two bedroom bungalows, 7 two bedroom houses, 9 three bedroom houses and 3 four bedroom houses. The Borough Council supported the bid to the HCA which resulted in Havebury receiving £420,000 towards the scheme. The site was officially opened by David Ruffley MP and Karen Mayhew, Chief Executive of Havebury, on Saturday 11 June 2011. As part of the celebrations a bench was dedicated and a tree planted to commemorate Lance Corporal Adam Drane, a son of Stanningfield, who was the 100th British soldier lost in the Afghanistan conflict. During the afternoon and evening there were activities for the whole community which made a memorable day for everyone.

3.2 *'Housing....What Housing?'* Event

On 13 July 2011 the Housing Team is hosting an event at The Apex to promote housing issues and offer help and advice. At least 25 agencies will be on hand to offer assistance and guidance. A street theatre company will hold performances on the issue of homelessness and also provide entertainment. Further information on this event will be circulated during the coming weeks.

3.3 Housing Register Figures

The housing register figures at the beginning of June were as follows:

Home-Link Monthly Stats						
Date	01-Jan-11	01-Feb-11	01-Mar-11	01-Apr-11	01-May-11	01-Jun-11
Band A	68	64	63	63	67	65
Band B	162	171	175	173	183	163
Band C	911	948	975	977	1000	924
Band D	723	736	750	753	763	669
Total	1864	1919	1963	1966	2013	1821
Homeseeker	1447	1477	1514	1519	1554	1410
Transfer	417	437	442	447	459	411
1 Bedroom	1037	1060	1084	1099	1125	996
2 Bedroom	561	582	590	593	610	568
3 Bedroom	211	221	232	218	221	204
4 Bedroom	50	51	52	52	53	50
5 Bedroom	0	1	1	4	4	3
Single			950	905	924	817
Couple			272	272	281	258
Family with children			766	746	763	707
Other household types			38	43	45	39
Statutory Homeless			22	23	23	19
Homeless Prevention			66	57	65	65
Homeless Other			198	197	194	183