



Council 27 September 2011

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. Environmental Health

1.1 Noise Abatement Notice: Successful Defence following Appeal

1.1.1 I am pleased to report that officers from Environmental Health and Housing Services, together with colleagues in Legal Services, successfully defended an appeal in the Magistrates' Court against a Noise Abatement Notice. The Abatement Notice was, unusually, in respect of noise from the excessive barking of a dog. Prior to the service of the Notice, officers worked with the owners of the dog to find ways of reducing the noise from the barking, including the loan of an anti-barking collar. Unfortunately these efforts were unsuccessful and the continuous barking of the dog when the owners were away from home was intolerable. Monitoring carried out by Environmental Health Officers (EHO) confirmed that the level of noise was a statutory noise nuisance. In defending the service of the Notice in the Magistrates' Court, the EHO stated that the level of noise witnessed was the worst she had heard from a dog barking in all of her 25 years working life as an Environmental Health Officer. The Magistrates were convinced and upheld the Notice.

1.2 Greener Homes Event

1.2.1 Two Greener Homes DIY events have been organised for autumn 2011. The first took place at Great Whelnetham Community Centre on Sunday 11 September to run in conjunction with the Great Whelnetham Classic Car Rally. The event gave householders the chance to find out more about energy efficient products for DIY installation which can reduce their carbon footprint as well as helping them save money on fuel bills. The event also

showcased the Centre's new solar PV system and air source heat pump heating system with local installer Aran Services on hand to provide advice and support.

- 1.2.2 The second event is planned for Saturday 8 October 2011 at Chedburgh Village Hall and will follow the same format as the event held in Great Whelnetham.

1.3 **New Grant towards Wall Insulation**

- 1.3.1 Officers are working in partnership with British Gas and Aran Services to promote a new scheme offering free or a 50% grant towards the cost of fitting external wall insulation (EWI) to solid wall homes where the residents are in receipt of benefits. The cost of EWI is around £8,000 for a three bedroom semi-detached property and all residents in receipt of housing and/or council tax benefit will be informed of the offer by way of a letter from the Environmental Health Section. The letter will also promote free loft and cavity wall insulation to the same target audience. It is hoped there will be a good take up of this grant, especially before the winter.

1.4 **Health and Safety: Noise Assessments**

- 1.4.1 In April 2011, the Commercial and Food Team of the Environmental Health Section continued their new approach to health and safety work, as previously reported on previous occasions. Questionnaires have been sent to 48 Public Houses and clubs which are licensed to play live or recorded music. The questionnaires were designed to check if businesses had carried out noise assessments to ensure that workers are protected from the potentially serious effects of loud music in their work environment. It is hoped this will reduce the burden on businesses of having to undergo a formal inspection whilst reminding them of their duties to protect staff under legislation. In addition to the questionnaire, businesses were also sent useful information to help them comply and protect employees. Businesses were advised if they returned the form, no formal inspection would be carried out. To date 70% of the forms have been returned and the remaining businesses are being reminded prior to inspection.

1.5 **Food Cautions Issues**

- 1.5.1 In the past month, the Commercial and Food Team has issued two 'simple cautions' to food businesses in the Borough. One caution was the result of a food complaint where a customer found a foreign object in some food which could have resulted in a prosecution. However, as the problem had been rectified on discovery and procedures put in place to prevent a recurrence, a caution was deemed appropriate.
- 1.5.2 In the second case, the food business had two poor food hygiene inspections but on re-inspection, improvements had been promptly made on both occasions. Prosecution could have been considered for the second poor inspection but as improvements had been made and the business actually sold very little food it was considered appropriate to issue a caution.
- 1.5.3 In both cases, these cautions will be retained on the premises' file and will be considered should further breaches of legislation occur in the future.

2. **Licensing**

- 2.1 Licensing Services have now completed the migration of records from the old software to the new licensing database, LALPAK, (over 2,000 registrations, permits and licences). Over the next few months, training will be delivered to other Responsible Authorities and Councillors so that they can easily access our new online register, which will be a real time reflection of licences and applications currently in progress, and will also show more detail

that we have been able to provide up until now. This will mean that there will in future be a single web access point for viewing licences and applications.

- 2.2 The Licensing Team has been working hard with Suffolk Constabulary to deliver joint inspections of licensed premises in summer 2011. Joint advice letters are now being generated to feed back any issues to the licence holders, and a team of Special Constables has now received training in undertaking inspections, which will increase our visibility and business support for premises in the Borough. In the coming months, we will be working with the police and licensed premises to address the issues of inappropriate drink offers, in a positive and pro-active way.
- 2.3 A Test Purchase operation for underage for alcohol sales in the Haverhill was successful. Of eight tested there were no sales.
- 2.4 The Hackney Carriage Proprietors' Association requested an increase in fares, which was approved without objection. The new fares are displayed on the Licensing Services page of the Council's website.
- 2.5 A new Hackney Carriage rank will soon be established on St Andrews Street South, Bury St Edmunds at the Woolhall Street end.

3. Community Safety

- 3.1 As detailed in Councillor Mrs Gower's report (Report C151 refers), a response to the anti-social behaviour being experienced in some parts of Haverhill is being addressed by developing a multi-agency and community led longer term strategy for work with young people on the issue. Both the Community Safety and Youth Development officers are fully involved in this work, with community engagement taking place via our Safer Neighbourhood Team public meetings to address local issues.

3.2 Positive Futures, Teenage Kicks football project

- 3.2.1 As also reported in Councillor Mrs Gower's report, this project runs until the end of September 2011 in both Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill. Over the first 16 weeks of the Bury St Edmunds' project there have been 495 attendances with average weekly attendances around 30 young people. Both projects play a useful part in providing young people with positive activities.

3.3 Town Pastors

- 3.1 These schemes are an excellent community-based response to issues associated with the night-time economy. Councillor Mrs Gower's report updates you on the start of the scheme in Haverhill. In Bury St Edmunds, where the scheme is now well-established, the Pastors continue to patrol most Friday and Saturday evenings. The statistics for the first quarter of the year show a decrease in incidents in May and June 2011. This may or may not be related to the presence of the 'SOS Bus' on Friday nights in addition to the Pastors. Further analysis is being carried out but this is an encouraging trend which I hope to see continued.

3.4 Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP)

- 3.4.1 Initial discussions have begun in relation to Babergh District Council joining the WSCSP. There are also County-level discussions about the overall shape and working practices of the partnerships across Suffolk. The WSCSP wishes to take the opportunities available to streamline processes and ensure the maximum effort goes into front-line services. However the CSP is also mindful that the new arrangements must work in the best interests of residents in the west of the county.

4. Community Development

4.1 Southgate Community Centre, Bury St Edmunds

4.1.1 At the time of writing this report, we are in the final stages of completing the legal transfer of the Centre. As the first community asset transfer of a community centre the process has taken some time as we have had to work through issues and develop our approach. I now look forward to formally celebrating the transfer with the members of the Southgate Community Partnership who are taking on ownership of the building. They are planning a handover ceremony in October 2011 to mark the event. This is an excellent example of localism in practice and we will be looking at ways that the experience in the Southgate Ward can be shared with other centres.

4.2 New Residents' Association

4.2.1 A new Residents' Association for people living in the Southgate area of Bury St Edmunds has been set up with the help of officers. This brings the total of constituted groups we support to 14. The group aims to promote the interests of all those who live in the area by means of consultation, negotiation and liaison.

5. Youth and Community Development

5.1 Bury Skate Jam 2011

5.1.1 Around 1,000 young people and their families attended this year's Skate Jam which was held on 10 July 2011. The day saw 20 competitions across the disciplines which this year included performances on micro-scooters. The community group, the 'Bury Skate Park Experience', is continuing to work on the development of the site and has plans to replace the wooden ramps which are coming to the end of their life with a more permanent structure, subject to securing external grant funding. The BMX track opened earlier in the year has proved hugely popular over summer 2011 with the park being very well used.

5.2 'Wos Up' Project

5.2.1 The 'Wos Up' Project, providing mobile youth-work in rural locations, is coming to an end for the year. It has been very successful this year engaging with good numbers of young people. Sessions have been provided in Barningham, Barrow, Great Whelnetham, Hundon, Ixworth, Kedington, Stanton and Wickhambrook. More sessions were delivered this year because, in the majority of villages, the Parish Council has matched the funding provided by the Borough Council allowing the number of sessions to be doubled. This in turn has helped to build up the numbers attending as the provision has run throughout summer 2011. I will provide more details in my next report when final attendance numbers will be known. This continues to be a valuable project which reaches out to young people in our rural communities who can find it difficult to access the facilities in the towns and larger villages.