



Council 28 February 2012

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Report by Cllr Anne Gower, Housing, Licensing and Environmental Health Portfolio

Portfolio includes:

- Haverhill
- Haverhill Masterplan;
- Haverhill Town Centre Management;
Haverhill Youth and Community
Development;
- Environmental Health
- Licensing; and
- Strategic Housing and Homelessness.

1. *Strategic Housing and Homelessness*

1.1 Bardwell

- (a) Following a housing needs study in 2008 a development built by Hastoe Housing, specifically for people with a local connection to Bardwell is near to completion. St Edmundsbury supported the bid to the Homes and Communities Agency, which secured £318,000 of grant towards the scheme. The development is made up of 2 one bed roomed, 3 two bed roomed, and 1 three bed roomed home for social rent, and 2 two bed roomed homes for HomeBuy shared ownership. The rented properties are in the process of being allocated, and tenants are due to move in early March 2012. Hastoe Housing are hoping to arrange an official opening in the village to coincide with the celebrations for the Queens Jubilee.

1.2 Cavendish

- (a) Cavenish also had a housing needs study in early 2008, and Havebury Housing Partnership is near to completing the scheme specifically for people with a local connection to Cavendish. St Edmundsbury supported the bid to the Homes and Communities Agency, which secured a bid of £238,000 of grant towards the scheme. The development is made up of 3 two bed roomed houses, 1 three bed roomed house, and 1 two bed roomed bungalow for social rent and 1 two bed roomed house, 1 three bed roomed house and 1 two bed roomed bungalow for HomeBuy shared ownership. The rented properties are currently in the process of being allocated to new tenants

1.3 Housing Register (Home-Link)

Home-Link Monthly Stats						
Date	01-Sep-11	01-Oct-11	01-Nov-11	01-Dec-11	01-Jan-12	01-Feb-12
Band A	84	90	85	83	96	90
Band B	167	165	173	158	152	169
Band C	971	973	1004	1053	1078	1097
Band D	675	623	622	629	671	687
Total	1897	1851	1884	1923	1997	2043
Homeseeker	1458	1430	1454	1476	1538	1580
Transfer	439	421	430	447	459	463
1 Bedroom	1029	1005	1010	1027	1084	1112
2 Bedroom	593	576	597	625	635	651
3 Bedroom	217	210	215	206	213	215
4 Bedroom	52	53	55	59	59	59
5 Bedroom	6	7	7	6	6	6
Single	850	828	832	859	901	919
Couple	270	263	263	263	276	288
Family with children	736	721	748	753	774	789
Other household types	41	38	41	48	46	47
Statutory Homeless	25	28	23	25	36	34
Homeless Prevention	66	68	68	55	54	70
Homeless Other	191	189	201	206	213	225
Over 65s	194	176	184	188	198	204

Home-Link in St Edmundsbury has let 403 properties since February 2011 to: Band A: 220, Band B: 115, Band C: 60, Band D: 8

- 1.4 Severe Weather Provision is being well used this year again, and has been full for the last two weeks. We have been very successful in getting people housed from the provision this year. Ten of the people who have used the provision are now housed at Tayfen House.

2. **Environmental Health: Housing Act 2004 prosecution**

- 2.1 Officers from Environmental Health and Housing Services, together with colleagues in Legal Services, successfully prosecuted the owners of The Rose of Bengal restaurant for breaching a Prohibition Order served under the provisions of the Housing Act 2004. The Order made on 4 March 2008 prohibited the use of all second floor rooms as residential or sleeping accommodation and limited the use of the first floor residential accommodation to no more than two persons for sleeping purposes. The principal reason for making the Order was the inadequacy of a means of escape in case of fire from the premises.
- 2.2 The Order was initially complied with, but information obtained by Environmental Health Officers in June of last year suggested that the property was being by more than two persons. An inspection of the rooms on the 9 June 2011, made by prior arrangement with the owner, showed that that the rooms were empty and assurances were given that they were not being used as sleeping accommodation. The Officers were sceptical and a further inspection, this time without notifying the owner and made under a Magistrate's warrant, was carried out on the 22 June 2011. The inspection was carried out together with the officers from the UK Border Agency and the Police. A locksmith also accompanied the officers to gain entry to the property. The inspection found eight persons sleeping in the property. Despite assurances from the owners that alternative accommodation would be found for the resident workers, it was apparent that the rooms were still being used, and a further warrant was obtained to enter the property. A second unannounced inspection was made on the 29 July 2011 and again eight persons were found to be using the rooms on the first and second floor as sleeping accommodation.

- 2.3 On the 5 January 2012 the owners (three individuals and a limited company) pleaded guilty to breaching the terms of the Prohibition Order in the Bury St Edmunds Magistrates' Court. Fines totalling £1,770 were awarded, together with a victim surcharge of £60, and local authority costs of £810.
- 2.4 Following the court case the owners of the restaurant carried out the necessary works to improve the means of escape in case of fire and remove the 'fire hazard', making the premise suitable for eight persons. Accordingly the Prohibition Order was revoked.

3. Youth and Community Development: Haverhill

- 3.1 Following the success of the October Street Jam, attended by over 100 young people, the project returned to Haverhill on 16 February 2012. Activities included DJs, MC battles and Cage Football. The project teamed up with the CB9 Media Hub's music production project that has been operating since last October. The Street Jam gave the young people a great opportunity to showcase what they have learnt on the project.
- 3.2 The 'On the Spot' van has continued to go out twice weekly and a report about the project has been sent to Haverhill Members, and is available from Simon Pickering if anyone else wishes to see a copy. The project's steering group are now looking into future development options, including the possibility of getting a part time co-ordinator to increase the participation and opportunities for increasing the service.
- 3.3 The Youth and Community Development Officer has continued to support the Parkour Park group of young people in developing their project and starting to apply for funding to make their ideas into reality.

4. Warm Homes Healthy People

- 4.1 The Borough Council, with its partners, successfully secured £265,000 in December 2011 from the Department of Health to support vulnerable people in the County through the remaining winter months. The 'Warm Homes Healthy People' Fund will help support a number of initiatives designed to tackle fuel poverty in the County. Through a central helpline, the services include:-
- (a) offering advice to anyone struggling to keep warm this winter;
 - (b) independent energy advisors will visit households struggling to pay their energy bills to offer advice, and install measures to save money and energy;
 - (c) emergency boiler repairs;
 - (d) providing temporary emergency heating;
 - (e) help with paying fuel bills utilising the Age UK/Suffolk Foundation "Surviving Winter" Fund for the over 60s and the Warm Homes Fund for other eligible households;
 - (f) handyperson service to carry out small jobs like draught proofing;
 - (g) road shows to promote the Suffolk Acre good neighbour and community oil buying schemes; and
 - (h) installation of free extreme temperature sensors in vulnerable people's homes along with a befriending service.
- 4.2 The Borough Council is co-managing the majority of services being provided across the County, with the administration being run by Suffolk Coastal District Council. The scheme was launched on the 10 January 2012 and will run until the end of March 2012. To date, the scheme has received the following level of enquiries:

DISTRICT	CALLS RECEIVED BY SCDC ADMIN	ENERGY SURVEYS BOOKED	BENEFITS CHECKS BOOKED	LOFT/CAVITY WALL INSULATIONS BOOKED	BOILER REPAIRS BOOKED	FUEL PAYMENTS MADE
BABERGH	33	24	4	1	1	7
FOREST HEATH	27	22	1	3	1	1
IPSWICH	24	17	3	1	0	1
MID SUFFOLK	19	10	4	3	1	4
SUFFOLK COASTAL	48	43	1	7	2	4
ST EDMUNDSBURY	49	31	6	4	0	6
WAVENEY	57	44	4	5	1	2
TOTAL	257	191	23	24	6	25

All the services listed above are generally free or heavily discounted to the client.

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