



Council 30 June 2014

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Report by Cllr Peter Stevens Waste and Property Portfolio

Portfolio includes:

- Rural Areas
- Waste
- Street Scene
- Grounds Maintenance
- Environmental Management
- Property and Asset Management

1. Waste and Street Scene Services

1.1 Street Sweepings

- 1.1.1 A new street sweepings collection bay had been introduced at the depot in Mildenhall to improve efficiencies of the street cleansing operation. Early results indicate an improvement in sweeping efficiency and a reduction in fuel consumption, both due to less travel time to the tipping off point.
- 1.1.2 The Suffolk Waste Partnership has also awarded the new Street Sweepings contract to Eastern Waste Disposal, who will collect and recycle all street sweeping residues from all Suffolk councils.

1.2 Community Action

- 1.2.1 There has been a lot of activity to maintain awareness and involvement with street cleansing activity and recycling. This has included:
- activities in five local schools on recycling, composting and litter awareness
 - two roadshows in Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket to promote plastics recycling
 - participation at local events including South Suffolk Show and the Earth Day at RAF Mildenhall
 - promoted and supported community litter picking across West Suffolk, involving 26 groups and involving around 340 volunteers
 - work with the Probation Service to cut back trees and hedges at Hardwick Park Gardens in Bury St Edmunds, which removed about 20m³ of waste for composting

- “The Rubbish Friends”, a local group supported by and working with us in litter picking hot spots, were successful in the recent Greenest County Awards following nomination by the Waste Team
- two events as part of the national compost awareness week were held at the local household waste recycling centres, focusing on closing the compost loop and buying recycled soil improver
- support for the “Let's Be Proud of Bury” clean up on 9 May 2014. Congratulations and thanks to all Councillors and staff who participated in the town centre painting in Bury St Edmunds

1.3 West Suffolk Waste Facilities

1.3.1 We have identified potential locations around Bury St Edmunds that could serve as sites to combine a number of waste, cleansing and fleet operations. Co-locating facilities onto one site may yield long-term efficiencies and savings for the taxpayer. One of these options could provide an alternative location from that of Rougham Hill which Suffolk County Council has been planning to develop into a combined Transfer Station and Household Waste Recycling Facility. The planning consent for the proposed Rougham Hill facility is currently subject to a legal challenge.

2. Environmental Management

2.1 Domestic Energy Efficiency

- 2.1.1 In March 2014, I was pleased to announce the launch of a new County-wide energy efficiency programme, Suffolk Energy Action, a quality-assured scheme designed to help all Suffolk residents save money on their energy bills and encourage the reduction of carbon emissions through energy efficiency improvements.
- 2.1.2 Since then, the Environment Team has worked successfully with other local authority partners within the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership leading to being awarded £3.5million from the Government’s Green Deal Communities Fund – one of only 6 successful areas in the country. The funding will be used to support up to 2,000 households across Suffolk to make energy saving improvements to their homes like solid wall insulation, cavity wall insulation and replacement boilers over the next year.
- 2.1.3 Through the project we will aim to remove some of the key barriers to taking up the Green Deal for example by offering free Green Deal assessments, funding the up-front householder contribution for solid wall insulation, and providing free access to a loft emptying service for vulnerable and elderly residents. It will also enable local plumbing, heating and building businesses to gain accreditation to undertake this work, supporting the development of the local green economy and enabling local firms to benefit through the project from its outset.
- 2.1.4 These awards are a strong endorsement by central government of our collaborative approach to delivering projects which will benefit West Suffolk’s householders, businesses and communities.

3. Property and Asset Management

3.1 Lettings Update

3.1.1 The commercial market continued to strengthen in the second quarter and town centre properties have seen an uptake of renewed interest:-

- Two new restaurants have moved into the former Barclays bank building in Abbeygate Street and Mothersole builders have begun their conversion of the former Collis jewellers to residential.
- The former Council owned Specsavers unit is now a very impressive branch of Spicer Haart and the last remaining unit on Risbygate Street is all set to become an accountants.
- Industrial stock at Bunting Road is finding renewed interest with the recent relocation of ARCO from Boldero Road once a refurbishment is complete.

4. Rural Affairs

4.1 Rural Initiative Grants

4.1.1 Since the last report there have been a number of applications and the council has awarded £23,923 of funding to the following schemes:-

- £7,000 to Barnham Parish Council towards a £23,000 scheme to provide outdoor fitness equipment, suitable for all ages to use.
- £4,000 to the Jiggins Memorial Trust which manages Ixworth Village Hall towards the costs of upgrading their heating. Just under £25,000 of works are being carried out as the first phase of a refurbishment of the hall.
- £1,423 to the Wickhambrook First Responders group (which also covers surrounding villages) for the provision of equipment to help this growing group of volunteers get set up to provide a local first response.
- £10,000 to the Barrow Community Play Project to completely replace the old, unsafe play equipment at a cost of £60,000. The size of this award recognises both the potential number of users of the new play area and that the scheme was underpinned by particularly good community engagement.
- £1,500 to the Barrow Archery club as part of a £3,000 scheme to provide taster sessions and get people of all ages in the village and the surrounding area involved in the sport.