



Council **30 June 2014**

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Report by Cllr Anne Gower ***Housing Portfolio***

Portfolio includes:

- Haverhill
- Strategic Housing
- Homelessness
- Social Care
- Gypsies and Travellers

1. *Haverhill Community Development*

- 1.1 The Locality Officer is still working with The River of Life Church over a possible transfer of the Chalkstone Community Centre. Can Do Communities, a community interest company that provides a wide range of community development support, were successful in enabling the group to apply for a Pre-Feasibility fund for local organisations looking to take over the management of a community building.
- 1.2 A number of community projects and activities are being supported by the locality officer in Haverhill including, One Haverhill Master planning process, Community Ambassadors and Peoples Health Trust with Community Action Suffolk, Local History Society 1970's project also in partnership with SCC and the East Town Park Sun Dial project. The officer has invited pupils from Samuel Ward School to perform at the unveiling ceremony.
- 1.3 The first Locality Budget award in Haverhill has gone to the Haverhill Community Sports Association from Cllr. Cox. The grant is to support the annual Summer Bash on Saturday 19th July. This is a large well attended event and the money will go towards Health & Safety equipment and event management support.

2. *Haverhill Masterplanning*

- 2.1 ONE Haverhill has been doing some initial work to identify issues and options for the Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan. There are currently 3 draft themes focussing on growth, environment, and having a town centre which meets the needs of those who live, work and visit the town all of which are underpinned by connectivity. Further development will be done by ONE Haverhill over the summer to transform these themes into issues and options which will then

come back to St Edmundsbury and the Haverhill Area Working Party for discussion prior to any formal consultation.

3. *West Suffolk Housing Strategy*

- 3.1 In July we will begin consulting partners on our West Suffolk Housing Strategy. This document describes how Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Councils will work in partnership with our residents, developers, public bodies, registered providers and the VCS to support improvements in housing for West Suffolk's residents during the period 2015-18. Following consultation, the strategy will be presented for formal adoption in September.
- 3.2 The strategy is divided into three key areas: increasing the supply of new homes; making best use of existing housing; and specialist housing and support. It contains a number of actions that we will deliver over the coming years. What is clear is that our ways of working in future will need to be very different from those outlined in previous housing strategies. Given the changes in the wider economic, housing and government context, the strategy sets out a range of new and innovative approaches that we will be taking to address the council's strategic priority of 'Homes for our communities'.

4. *Affordable Housing Event*

- 4.1 The Strategy and Enabling Team hosted an event on the 4 June 2014 which brought together the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Registered Providers, Planners, Housing Officers and County Council Officers. The aim was to gain a better understanding of the contribution each organisation makes in the delivery of affordable housing.
- 4.2 During the morning each partner gave a short presentation on what has to be done in the process of delivering housing which included the barriers that they are up against. We then moved into smaller groups to look at how to work together more effectively to deliver our common aims.

5. *West Suffolk Lettings Partnership Landlords Conference*

- 5.1 On 28 March 2014 the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership hosted our annual Landlords Conference at West Suffolk House. This was attended by Councillors, staff, local letting agents and private landlords. After a welcome from our portfolio holder, we heard presentations from Haart Lettings, Public Health and Housing, Eastern Landlords Association, Housing Options, Nottingham City Council, Anglia Revenues Partnership and the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership Coordinator.
- 5.2 The day provided an excellent opportunity to promote the growing success and products of the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership scheme.

6. Home Link Statistics

6.1 There are over 700 applicants in Band A or Band B.

Home-Link Statistics	SEBC	FHDC	SEBC	FHDC	SEBC	FHDC	SEBC	FHDC	SEBC	FHDC	SEBC	FHDC
Date	01-Jan-14		01-Feb-14		01-Mar-14		01-Apr-14		01-May-14		01-Jun-14	
Band A	211	57	202	57	205	79	200	81	203	56	241	60
Band B	391	303	397	302	440	321	455	340	451	348	463	361
Band C	406	350	414	349	427	343	440	338	441	339	448	335
Band D	475	343	498	357	522	370	540	384	560	393	578	397
Band D*	29	8	28	10	28	10	26	10	28	10	28	8
Total	1512	1061	1539	1075	1622	1123	1661	1153	1683	1146	1758	1161
Homeseeker	1021	751	1044	755	1104	788	1138	811	1176	812	1230	822
Transfer	489	311	493	320	516	355	521	342	503	333	524	339
1 Bedroom	771	574	787	581	828	602	852	614	848	608	891	610
2 Bedroom	542	355	551	359	580	382	595	395	612	396	634	405
3 Bedroom	138	106	146	106	150	109	151	112	154	109	165	115
4 Bedroom	48	24	41	26	50	27	52	29	55	28	54	26
5 Bedroom	11	3	12	3	12	3	10	3	11	4	12	4
Single	623	437	639	443	673	457	686	465	689	474	729	475
Couple	223	176	230	176	243	190	259	195	254	179	268	191
Family with children	631	423	637	426	672	443	683	462	701	458	721	462
Other household types	35	26	33	30	34	33	35	31	39	35	40	33
Statutory Homeless	55	6	49	7	41	13	43	14	52	13	63	9
Homeless Prevention	53	31	48	31	62	36	67	42	57	41	59	44
Homeless Other	35	5	36	6	38	5	40	5	37	3	37	6
Over 65s	199	138	203	145	211	147	216	153	207	143	220	145

7. Homelessness

- 7.1 The number of homeless households that the Council is accommodating in Bed & Breakfast has stabilised at between 8 and 12 households, and is likely to remain at this level until there is an increase in provision of temporary accommodation.
- 7.2 In February 2014 Cabinet agreed to the development of a business case to improve the provision of Temporary Accommodation across West Suffolk. Subsequently the Local Housing Investment Options Paper was presented to Cabinet in March 2014 and Cabinet agreed to the development of business cases from that paper which consequently impact significantly on the Temporary Accommodation business case. The business case being developed to provide additional Temporary Accommodation across West Suffolk is now to form part of the larger Local Housing Investment business case.
- 7.3 The policy to allow the Council to house homeless households in Private Rented accommodation has now been implemented with effect from 1st April 2014. The West Suffolk Lettings Partnership is actively seeking properties for the Council to use for this purpose and we are hopeful that we could house 20 households in the Borough this financial year.

8. Fair Chance Fund Update

- 8.1 The Fair Chance Fund is a payment by results programme of up to £15 million. It aims to improve outcomes for a group of young, homeless people (predominantly 18 to 24 year olds) whose needs are difficult to address using existing services. If these needs are not addressed the outcomes for these young people is likely to be long-term benefit dependency, health problems and increased crime.
- 8.2 The programme expects to move at least 2,500 homeless, young people (nationally) not in education, employment or training into sustainable accommodation and at least 1,000 of those into sustained employment, education or training over 36 months - from January 2015 to December 2017.
- 8.3 Expressions of interest (EOI) were invited for the fund in April 2014. As a partner member of the Young Person Housing Action Group we submitted an EOI and have been successful in being invited to submit a full bid. A full model for delivery outcome for this group will have to be developed and submitted in October 2014
- 8.4 The Suffolk Young Person's Housing Action Group (YPHAG) was formally constituted in 2006. It is a partnership of 32 voluntary and public agencies whose aims are to share information and work together to promote good practice in services for young homeless people in Suffolk. The partners work together to deliver the Suffolk Young People's Action Plan which again links into the Suffolk Children Plan.

9. Suffolk Coordination Service (SCS)

- 9.1 Additional funding has been secured from Suffolk County Council to extend the Suffolk Coordination Service (SCS) Pilot to April 2015! The pilot offers additional choice of supported housing to residents of West Suffolk by giving additional choice accommodation available across Suffolk.

10. House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Guidance & Standards

- 10.1 This seeks to align previous policies of both West Suffolk Councils into one approach, one set of standards and one fee for those larger HMO properties that require licensing. It will cover, in detail, issues such as the identification, inspection and enforcement. These larger properties pose a higher risk to tenants than single household rentals but they also provide a valuable source of lower cost housing. The Guidance and Standards will also ensure consistent enforcement and protection for our HMO residents.