



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# B265

## Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee 25 October 2010

### Council Improvement Plan 2010/11 - Update

#### SUMMARY

In May 2010 Cabinet approved the Council Improvement Plan for 2010/11. This Plan brings together a range of actions to help the Council achieve further improvements in performance. This Committee is asked to review progress against the Plan.

The attached report explains the structure of the Plan and how it is monitored. The Plan itself is attached as Appendix A.

#### PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

As part of its performance management role, the Committee is asked to note and challenge the progress made to date against the key actions in the Council's Improvement Plan.

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# Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

## 25 October 2010

### Council Improvement Plan Update

#### 1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Note and challenge the progress made against the key actions in the Council's Improvement Plan.

#### 2. Introduction

- 2.1 This Improvement Plan was adopted by Cabinet and full Council on 26 May 2010 (Paper B7) following consideration by Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee in 26 April 2010 (paper A640 refers). The following drivers for improvement were considered when drafting the plan:

1. the Cabinet's commitments for 2010/11;
2. the review of the Improvement Plan for 2009/2010;
3. an analysis of new Audit Commission requirements relating to Organisational Assessment;
4. recommendations in the Audit Commission's Annual Audit and Inspection letter;
5. the Boundary Committee Review of local government structures;
6. new legislation; and
7. council priorities

- 2.2 The Improvement Plan was developed prior to the General Election in May 2010. Undoubtedly, the changes implemented by the new Government have had impact on many of the drivers outlined in the above paragraph, not least the abolition of the Audit Commission and the halting of the review of local government structures in Suffolk which means that the actions relating to the County Constitutional Convention (action 1.3) is not longer relevant. Further changes are expected once the full extent of the Comprehensive Spending Review is known. The constantly changing environment which the Council is facing means that some elements of the actions identified in the Improvement Plan may need to be amended in the future. However, it is felt that the key themes remain relevant, albeit that reference to place shaping (in theme 2) may need to be reconsidered in light of the Localism Bill which is due later this year.

- 2.3 The Committee is asked to review progress against the Plan, before a year end review in Spring 2011.

- 2.4 This plan is divided into three improvement themes. The improvement themes are:-

Theme 1: improving customer service and performance

Theme 2: communities and place shaping

Theme 3: improving partnership performance

- 2.5 Each theme includes a series of actions which need to be completed in order to achieve the overall improvement. The comments column provides a progress update against each action.

### **3. Monitoring the Improvement Plan**

- 3.1 The Improvement Plan is monitored theme by theme by Management Team every two months and as a whole by this Committee twice a year.

### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The attached table (Appendix A) sets out progress to date in relation to each of the improvement themes. Overall good progress has been made against the four improvement themes. Whilst the Council is on track to deliver against the Plan it should be noted that further changes to the Improvement Plan may be needed once the full impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review is understood.

## Appendix A

### St Edmundsbury Borough Council

### Improvement Plan 2010/2011

There are links between each of these themes, for instance, the need to improve value for money by creating shared services (theme two), will require citizen involvement in the future shape and delivery of these services (theme three).

#### *Theme 1: Place and partnership*

**Rationale:** There is increasing emphasis on looking at local places in a holistic way, rather than through the lens of the individual agencies working within them. This inevitably puts greater emphasis on multi-agency working and the overall needs of each local community. There are greater demands for accountability for local public services.

<b>Key outcome: To ensure that council works effectively with its partners to deliver services and meet the needs of different communities</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Delivery actions</b>	<b>Progress – to be completed throughout the year</b>
1.	Work effectively as part of the Suffolk Collaborative	Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of the Total Place concept across Suffolk</li> </ul>	Review of the effectiveness of the collaborative was held on Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> September, 2010. It was agreed to proceed with the venture and also review the objectives of the County's Strategic Partnership.
2.	Ensure an effective contribution to the Suffolk Strategic Partnership and Delivery of the Local Area Agreement	Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the SSP/LAA structure (including any restructure of the delivery partnerships) is fit for purpose and includes appropriate representation and involvement by St Edmundsbury</li> </ul>	There is uncertainty over the future of the LSP with the abolition of LAA and a fundamental change in the LAA structures. Again it seems sensible to include these items within the remit of the LSP.

**Key outcome: To ensure that council works effectively with its partners to deliver services and meet the needs of different communities**

No	Objective	Lead	Delivery actions	Progress – to be completed throughout the year
3.	Influence the County Constitutional Convention (CCC) to ensure the needs of West Suffolk communities are addressed	Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial paper published in March 2010</li> <li>• The convention is likely to be developed following the General Election.</li> <li>• Working group of Chief Executives established to explore new approaches to service delivery and political management arrangements.</li> </ul>	The CCC has finished. With the change in Central Government, CLGs Leader, Eric Pickles MP, made a very swift comment that this will not now proceed.
4.	Develop 20 year masterplans for Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and rural areas.	Head of Planning and Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the master plans for Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and rural areas express a long term vision for the area.</li> <li>• A council-wide working group has been established to project plan this work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to commence in October 2010.</li> </ul>

**Key outcome: To ensure that council works effectively with its partners to deliver services and meet the needs of different communities**

No	Objective	Lead	Delivery actions	Progress – to be completed throughout the year
5.	To contribute to the ongoing development of the West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership (WSLSP) while keeping an overview on potential changes to the partnership	Head of Neighbourhood Management and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To update the WSLSP's community strategy – by November 2010</li> <li>• Target the distribution of the final round of Performance Reward Grant (PRG) funding to bring forward innovative partnership projects across the WSLSP priorities – by September 2010</li> <li>• If changes to the partnership occur as a result of objective 3 (CCC - listed above) or changes to government policy, ensure a smooth transfer to new working arrangements.</li> </ul>	<p>Work on updating the strategy has been reflected in the objectives and priority outcomes adopted for the distribution of WSLSP funding. The final updating of the strategy may be delayed as the WSLSP Board considers the future of the LSP.</p> <p>The Board is in the process of signing off the distribution of over £441,000 for funding with applications for a further round of capital funding about to be invited. There is a good distribution across the five objectives.</p> <p>County Constitutional Convention (CCC) is not happening, however, the WSLSP has set aside 15<sup>th</sup> December for discussions about the future role of the organisation in the light of the agenda of the new coalition government.</p>
6.	To agree with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), and other partners, the priorities for future investment in the borough.	Head of Environmental Health and Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a working group, including key partners, to identify investment required.</li> <li>• Develop a Local Investment Plan (LIP).</li> <li>• Consult with all partners to determine priorities.</li> <li>• Cabinet and HCA approval for LIP by end of June 2010.</li> </ul>	Plan signed off with HCA and agreed by Cabinet in July 2010.

<b>Key outcome: To ensure that council works effectively with its partners to deliver services and meet the needs of different communities</b>				
No	Objective	Lead	Delivery actions	Progress – to be completed throughout the year
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of Local Investment Agreement identifying HCS capital investment.</li> </ul>	

**Theme 2: Value for money**

**Rationale:** It is likely that the financial climate for local public services will be severe in the next few years. The scale of financial constraints is such that significant restructuring of services will be required. This reinforces the need to look at value for money.

<b>Key outcome: To ensure that the council provides value for money and increases efficiency whilst maintain or improving services</b>				
No	Objective	Lead	Delivery actions	Progress – to be completed throughout the year
1.	Deliver the shared services programme with Forest Heath as preferred partner	Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold a 'visioning session' with Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council - May 2010</li> <li>Identify and introduce work streams</li> <li>Detailed project plan to be implemented.</li> <li>Joint Committee to be established.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed</li> <li>Completed and approved by SSSG</li> <li>Plan established with year one services identified.</li> <li>Completed</li> </ul>
2.	Deliver the Revenues and Benefits Partnership	Chief Finance Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate and develop, with appropriate partners, the business case for a shared revenues and benefits service.</li> <li>Consult and maintain two-way communications with staff and councillors at all potential partner organisations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>28<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 Full Council approval given to become a full partner of ARP on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011.</li> <li>Estimated savings of £325,000 to be delivered in 11/12.</li> </ul>

**Key outcome: To ensure that the council provides value for money and increases efficiency whilst maintain or improving services**

No	Objective	Lead	Delivery actions	Progress – to be completed throughout the year
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take the business case and recommendations through the democratic process for approval by all potential partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full Council approved 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2010.</li> </ul>
3.	Continue to deliver the joint waste partnership with Forest Heath District Council	Head of Waste and Street Scene Services and Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver the agreed work programme, including implementation of the round review.</li> </ul>	Round Review Completed. Cleansing review underway
4.	Increase intelligence on performance, satisfaction and costs of council activities	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development/ Performance Management Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide analysis of benchmarking information currently available – by May 2010</li> <li>Undertake research and analysis on those areas where no information is currently available – ongoing</li> <li>Identify what data and information is needed to support decisions about shared services - ongoing</li> </ul>	<p>Information has been gathered to understand what benchmarking data is gathered and used by services.</p> <p>Benchmarking is also a key part of the business case stage of shared services.</p> <p>Benchmarking opportunities are being explored across the county, particularly if NIs are to be abolished by the government.</p> <p>ICT, Finance and HR have joined the CIPFA VfM benchmarking clubs.</p>
5.	Continue to deliver efficiency savings	Chief Finance Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Efficiency target to be identified once spending announcement is made following the General Election – June 2010 onwards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awaiting the results of CSR on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.</li> </ul>



**Theme 3: Sustainable communities and citizen involvement**

**Rationale:** Local communities have, and will continue, to come under pressure from the economic downturn. This places increasing emphasis on 'softer' outcomes such as community cohesion, social capital and well-being. Citizens expect more choice and voice, particularly about public services. The scale of financial constraints and the restructuring of local services, point towards citizens being more informed, consulted and involved than ever before, especially in priority-setting and budget decisions.

<b>Key outcome: To ensure that the council provides opportunities for citizen involvement to shape and deliver services and support at a local level</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Delivery actions</b>	<b>Progress – to be completed throughout the year</b>
1.	Implement the Place Survey and explore opportunities to increase citizen involvement	Policy, Performance and Customer Service Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place Survey to be in the field September 2010 to early January 2011</li> </ul>	<p>The Place Survey has been abolished by the Government. Councils across Suffolk have identified that there was some good information contained in the survey, particularly satisfaction measures and priority setting.</p> <p>It has been agreed that survey work could be carried out in 2011/12 provided that (i) funding is available; and (ii) new political administrations in the districts support the concept of public surveys. Any such survey would not be on the scale (and cost) of the Place Survey.</p> <p>Whilst the implementation of the Place Survey is no longer relevant, the need to improve citizen involvement remains relevant.</p>

**Key outcome: To ensure that the council provides opportunities for citizen involvement to shape and deliver services and support at a local level**

No	Objective	Lead	Delivery actions	Progress – to be completed throughout the year
2.	Follow up on actions agreed at the Haverhill Performance Clinic	Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor progress of projects – ongoing</li> <li>• Follow up meeting to be held in September 2010</li> <li>• Explore the arrangements within delivery partnerships in Haverhill - ongoing</li> </ul>	Progress to be monitored via the Haverhill Partnership Forum.
3.	Increase knowledge of communities by expanding the use of data (including equality information).	Chief Executive and Policy, Performance and Customer Service Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the Suffolk Information Systems meets the needs of the council and that it is used by councillors and officers – from May 2010</li> <li>• Lead the census work across the borough - ongoing</li> </ul>	<p>The Suffolk Information System (called the Suffolk Observatory) will be available from October 2010.</p> <p>Work is underway to ensure that accurate data sets are uploaded and that the information is available at various geographical levels.</p>
4.	Continue to develop the neighbourhood/ place-based focus of council work	Head of Neighbourhood Management and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore possibility of identifying repeat contacts with families – led by Head of Environmental Health and Housing</li> <li>• Community development work planned in several areas related to the community centre transfer project.</li> <li>• Develop local partnership work in neighbourhoods. Initial event by September 2010</li> <li>• Consider how, within existing resources, practical support can be provided for the community</li> </ul>	<p>Work has focussed on Southgate Community Centre which is acting as a pilot for the model of transfer.</p> <p>Howard and Mildenhall Community picnic held on 2 June and attended by well over 300 was put on with the input of a range of partners.</p> <p>Member Development session scheduled for 28 Oct – practical projects to base the</p>

**Key outcome: To ensure that the council provides opportunities for citizen involvement to shape and deliver services and support at a local level**

No	Objective	Lead	Delivery actions	Progress – to be completed throughout the year
			leadership role of councillors	session around are being sought from Members.
5.	Participate in the county-wide work to increase performance of National Indicator 4 (NI4) - percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality.	Head of Neighbourhood Management and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute to the Suffolk-wide programme aimed at improving NI 4 scores in the longer term</li> <li>Specific activities to be identified if funding for roll-out of learning is secured by SCC.</li> </ul>	<p>Provided input into the process and received a copy of the Suffolk-wide report which highlighted the importance of communication – Community Spirit article followed.</p> <p>No roll-out across the county and given the abolition of the Place Survey, this indicator will no longer be measured.</p>
7.	Review committee and scrutiny structure to ensure that it is fit for purpose	Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the scrutiny structure as it has been in operation for eight years – ongoing</li> </ul>	A report on the restructure will be going through the three scrutiny committees during October and November, and then on to Full Council in December with their recommendations
8.	Promote democracy/ active citizenship	Chief Executive/Head of Neighbourhood Development/Head of Legal and Democratic Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a campaign to promote awareness of the May 2011 Borough elections</li> <li>Link to Local Democracy Week activities</li> <li>Develop a programme of induction for new councillors</li> </ul>	<p>Use will be made of the EELGA regional campaign, supplemented by local information.</p> <p>Programme of activity focussing on young people being developed for local democracy week.</p> <p>May 2011.</p>

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