



## Rural Area Working Party 21 January 2010

### Parish Council Conference: Update

#### Summary

1. St Edmundsbury Borough Council runs a Parish Council Conference twice a year (usually in April and November).
2. The aim of the Conferences is to bring together councillors, officers and partner organisations to network and, with the presentations and workshops, update and inform delegates on current rural issues.

#### Contact Details

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## **1. Purpose of Report**

To update members on the purpose of the conference and inform them of plans for the forthcoming conference on 29 April 2010.

## **2. Background**

During 2009 St Edmundsbury Borough Council held Parish Council Conferences on 30 April and 10 November.

The aims of the Parish Council Conference are to:-

- (i) encourage networking between councillors, officers and partnership organisations; and
- (ii) raise awareness of current rural issues and facilitate, wherever possible, programmes to inform and assist rural communities in improving sustainability and developing strategies to deal with issues.

A list of the partner organisations invited to attend is attached at Appendix A.

## **3. Monitoring and Review**

Evaluation forms are distributed at each conference and a review of the effectiveness of each conference held is carried out using the collated feedback. This has helped to identify agenda items for future topics and consider the format of the conference. For example, a change was made to the format of the conferences in 2009 following feedback in 2008 that too much use was being made of presentations and that delegates would welcome more time to network and have more in-depth discussion. As a result the refreshment break, which was previously moved to the middle of the conference to facilitate networking, was extended, the number of presentations limited and half the agenda item devoted to workshop sessions. The networking nature of the conference also allows delegates to review how other parish councils are tackling rural issues.

As part of the review process officers begin to identify the agenda for the next conference. The provisional agenda is then shared with Leader, Chief Executive and Management Team. Now that this Working Party exists the draft agendas will also be shared with Members. The draft agenda for 29 April 2010 is attached as Appendix B.

## **4. Recommendations**

The Rural Area Working Party is asked to note:-

- (1) the way in which the Parish Council Conference has developed; and
- (2) agree the continued planning and preparation for the next conference on 29 April 2010.

## APPENDIX A

Suffolk ACRE  
Youth and Connexions Service  
SCC Environment & Transport  
SCC Social Services  
SCC Culture Information  
Inclusion & Learning  
East of England Development Agency  
Brecks Partnership  
Choose Suffolk  
Keystone Development Trust  
Western Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership  
Suffolk Constabulary  
SCC Fostering and Adoption Services  
SCC Adult and Community Services  
Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project  
SCC Libraries, Archives and Information  
Suffolk Association of Local Councils  
Bury Records Office  
British Telecom  
SCC Passenger Transport

## APPENDIX B

### AGENDA FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL CONFERENCE

Thursday 29 April 2010 4.00 pm at Great Whelnetham Village Hall  
Great Whelnetham

- 4.00 pm **Welcome from** Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council and Geoff Rivers, Chief Executive
- 4.05 pm **Information items:**
- (1) **Suffolk Safe Cam**  
A presentation and explanation of the County Council Speed Management Policy in Suffolk and the various interventions available.
  - (2) **Train to Gain**  
A presentation on training, development and learning opportunities available to communities through the Train to Gain Scheme (details to be confirmed)
  - (3) **Local Government Review** – update if required
- There will be an opportunity to ask questions after each of the above items*
- 4.45 pm **Open Forum**  
Your opportunity to ask questions about Borough services or policies which impact on parishes, answered by the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors
- 4.55 pm **Our Partner Organisations**  
A brief introduction to the partner organisations attending.
- 5.00 pm **Tea/coffee** and an opportunity to network with other Parish Council representatives, Borough officers and our partner organisations. Many of our partner organisations will be attending with display material.
- 5.40 pm **Workshops**
- (1) **Housing Needs**  
Housing Needs Surveys - A practical workshop exploring what is involved in conducting a Housing Needs Survey for a parish. The session will be led by Kevin Marshall, Senior Development Officer with St Edmundsbury and Louise Wilby, Rural Housing Enabler with Suffolk ACRE.
  - (2) **Community Safety** - Helen Lindfield  
How do Parish Councils discharge their Community Safety duties? All tiers of local government have a statutory duty to consider the community safety issues when planning and delivering services. This workshop will look at what discharging this duty means for Parish and Town Councils and will seek to share good practice. It is anticipated that staff from one of the Rural Safer Neighbourhood Teams will also take part in the workshop.
  - (3) **Inspire East**  
An interactive session from Inspire East on community empowerment toolkits available and relevant to Parish Councils.

**6.25 pm**    ***Summary and Close***

Please return your tick-box feedback form (included in your delegate information pack) which will help us plan for future conferences. Relevant information and outcomes from each workshop will be circulated to all attendees.

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