



Council 26 February 2013

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. Living it UP in West Suffolk

- 1.1 An event was held on Thursday 31 January at the Arts Centre Haverhill to promote falls prevention and general wellbeing in older people through the winter months. The event was supported by 26 partner organisations including the Warmer Homes, Healthy People Team. Members of the public were provided with free refreshments and a healthy lunch from Healthy Ambitions Suffolk. Fifty local people attended and the feedback from both stall holders and visitors was very positive.

2. ONE Haverhill

- 2.1 A great deal of work has been going on to prepare for the Neighbourhood Community Budget. Work on the Young People's Strategy is going well with a number of existing groups working with young people agreeing to merge into one to ensure that all the conversations are had in one place. In addition Job Centre+ have secured funding for a year for a co-ordinator post to pull together what is available in terms of activities, services, skills development and work opportunities for young people. The post-holder will improve the awareness of young people and those working with them of what is already available in the town.
- 2.2 On the public realm side of the pilot there are a variety of practical improvements which are being explored. For example, creating a co-ordinated inspection regime to cover a range of services so we spot problems earlier and solve them together, and opportunities for residents to be involved at a

practical level in helping to keep their neighbourhood tidy by way of a community volunteer scheme. More details on both strands of work will be available on the ONE Haverhill website after the 8 February meeting of the ONE Haverhill Board.

3. Haverhill Community Centres

- 3.1 Discussions continue with a local charity which is expressing a strong interest in negotiating with the Council for the transfer of the Chalkstone centre. A little more work is required to ensure an appropriate model of governance is worked up. This must include representation for local people on the group to be formed to take on the centre. Once this work has been done we will be able to share with you details of the group involved.
- 3.2 Sadly the current Community Association at the Leiston Community Centre has reached the conclusion that it can no longer run the centre. The association is primarily made up of users of the centre and, after four years of excellent work clearing historic utility debts and greatly improving the internal appearance of the centre, the current volunteers understandably feel they have served their time. With no new volunteers responding to the call for help at an Emergency General Meeting they have given the Council six months' notice that they will return the lease of the centre. We are currently in the process of following up interest from Haverhill Town Council in keeping the centre available as a community facility, and I will update you if this interest results in a definite proposal.

4. Business Regulation and Licensing

- 4.1 Following the successful bid for external funding from the Food Standards Agency to implement changes to the way the team captures and reports information relating to their food sampling activities, the necessary software updates are now complete. Members will recall that the new system will ensure that all food sampling results are shared nationally and will allow the team access to other authorities' results. This will enable the team to better target resources and identify foods which should be included in the sampling programme.

5. Environmental Health

5.1 Fuel Poverty

- 5.1.1 The Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, of which the Council is a partner, successfully bid to the Department of Climate Change and Energy to fund home improvement measures for vulnerable people. The funding provision is worth £165,000 across Suffolk.
- 5.1.2 This time-limited funding sits alongside a successful Department of Health - *Warm Homes Healthy People* bid aimed at reducing the risk of cold-related illness or early death in vulnerable Suffolk residents living in cold homes over winter 2012-13. The proposal incorporates a range of free interventions including:
- (a) targeted winter warmth campaign;
 - (b) face-to-face support leading to rapid interventions to improve occupants' living conditions; and
 - (c) services delivering immediate health/wellbeing improvements.

- 5.1.3 It is estimated there have been on average 409 'excess winter deaths' in Suffolk each year (source: NHS Suffolk). This affects people of all ages, with the most vulnerable being those over 75, especially those living alone and suffering from chronic illnesses.
- 5.1.4 Both funding bids were co-written by the West Suffolk Environment Team which is also leading key elements of the services being delivered.

6. Strategic Housing and Homelessness

6.1 Home-Link Re-Registration Process

- 6.1.1 The Home-Link re-registration process is under way. All applicants on the Council's Housing Register, Home-Link, need to update (re-register) by the end of March 2013, in accordance with the changes to the Council's Allocations Policy. The new Allocations Policy comes into effect on 1 April 2013. Applicants are being assisted by the Housing Options Team to complete the re-registration process on-line, with increased staff availability at the Council's offices and on the telephone. A briefing session for Members is being planned for the end of March, but no firm date has been set as yet.

6.2 Temporary Accommodation Working Group

- 6.2.1 Cllr Burt (Cabinet Member for Housing at Forest Heath District Council) and I have set up a West Suffolk Temporary Accommodation Working Group which had its first meeting on 7 February. The group is looking at the level of demand for temporary accommodation; statutory obligations; work with other providers; how people access services; and funding streams with a view to developing a West Suffolk strategy to ensure the best use of the accommodation available across West Suffolk. We have asked officers to map the current availability and type of accommodation and to look at opportunities for extending the options available to homeless and other vulnerable people.

6.3 Home Link Stats

Home-Link Statistics	SEBC FHDC		SEBC FHDC		SEBC FHDC		SEBC FHDC		SEBC FHDC		SEBC FHDC	
Date	01-Sep-12		01-Oct-12		01-Nov-12		01-Dec-12		01-Jan-13		01-Feb-13	
Band A	124	36	134	37	135	45	136	41	136	41	138	39
Band B	188	197	193	195	194	205	192	206	193	205	193	211
Band C	1134	810	1143	785	1020	785	1034	819	1052	837	1048	843
Band D	642	432	649	415	541	429	549	428	553	431	567	430
Total	2088	1475	2119	1432	1890	1464	1911	1494	1934	1514	1946	1523
Homeseeker	1619	1157	1636	1119	1463	1139	1470	1186	1486	1204	1482	1200
Transfer	469	304	483	291	427	303	441	306	448	308	464	319
1 Bedroom	1111	799	1121	771	982	777	991	805	1013	849	1022	841
2 Bedroom	703	426	718	399	649	419	660	421	662	441	664	446
3 Bedroom	206	165	209	157	198	157	199	155	194	166	196	173
4 Bedroom	59	51	60	50	52	58	52	57	55	58	53	56
5 Bedroom	8	2	10	2	8	1	8	1	9	1	10	1
Single	907	634	918	616	798	628	803	654	824	667	827	658
Couple	294	242	297	232	260	233	267	236	267	233	272	236
Family with children	833	558	848	545	782	562	793	564	793	575	797	589
Other household types	54	41	56	39	50	41	48	40	50	40	50	40
Statutory Homeless	75	14	77	16	71	21	69	19	68	19	77	19
Homeless Prevention	70	53	63	49	71	51	71	49	72	46	70	51
Homeless Other	227	4	224	3	195	4	192	8	198	10	199	10
Over 65s	212	195	212	189	192	195	205	197	207	195	214	199