



Council 18 June 2013

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. *Environmental Management*

1.1 Development of a West Suffolk Sustainability Strategy

St Edmundsbury Borough Council has developed a draft Sustainable Development Strategy to achieve a shared approach with Forest Heath District Council to policy and service delivery for the people of West Suffolk and meet statutory obligations.

The draft West Suffolk Sustainability Strategy sets out shared commitment to help minimise the adverse effects that society's activities have on the natural environment whilst ensuring economic and social stability.

The draft Strategy forms part of a wider policy and delivery framework. It supports the aims and objectives set out in the Council's corporate priorities and plans. Once adopted this will replace existing strategies in both Councils covering Sustainability and Fuel Poverty.

1.2 Investing in Renewable Energy Generation

St Edmundsbury Borough Council invested in 2011 approximately £570,000 in solar photovoltaics on its property to cut energy use and carbon emissions and generate income from Feed-in Tariffs.

The first year of operation has seen the systems generate energy to produce a gross value (including the value of energy saved) of approximately £71,000 with a net income to the Council after partner deductions of approximately £54,000.

This equates to an investment return on capital (Internal Rate of Return) of around 9% with a predicted payback of 9 years, which is better than the original business case.

The systems will continue to be monitored and further opportunities to benefit from renewable energy generation will be sought where effective and affordable.

2. *Property and Asset Management*

- 2.1 I am pleased to report that we have refurbished two of our properties in the centre of Bury St Edmunds which as a result of this work will now be brought back into use.
- 2.2 59 Cornhill is in a prominent position adjacent to the Corn Exchange. Following a programme of internal refurbishment the building is being occupied by a National Firm of Estate agents relocating from else where in the Town.
- 2.3 In Risbygate Street the building at No 96, which was formerly occupied for many years by Anglia Arms, has been completely refurbished and is now occupied by a new barbershop business.
- 2.4 At No 99 in Risbygate Street we have been working in conjunction with Bid4Bury to use an empty shop front to display information which helps to make an otherwise empty space look vibrant as well as serving an important purpose.

3. *Rural Affairs*

- 3.1 A Rural Initiatives Grant of £10,000 has been awarded to the Hopton Community Swimming Committee towards the refurbishment of their swimming pool and changing room facilities; £1000 has been awarded to Pakenham Village Hall and Playing Field Committee towards the purchase and installation of a storage shed next to the village hall; and £1,849.34 has been awarded to Fornham All Saints Community Council towards the replacement of wooden frame single glazed windows with upvc double glazed windows in the community centre.
- 3.2 The Parish Conference recently took place and was very successful, with information items on rural burglary prevention; the newly formed Community Action Suffolk; opportunities for business support and enterprise projects that form part of the Rural Action Plan; and 'Better Broadband for Suffolk'. There were also workshops on developing and improving community websites and how to encourage local residents to get involved in where local money is spent, known as 'participatory budgeting'. We heard from three groups who pitched their ideas for a local community project and the winning group were awarded a grant of £500, funded from our Rural Action Plan.
- 3.3 The Suffolk Village of the Year 2013 competition is underway, and applications for the district round were received from Barrow, Great Barton and Ixworth. The winning village in the district round will go through to the county round, judging for which will take place on 23 and 24 July.
- 3.4 Two Community Leadership training sessions have been commissioned for July – the delivery of these forms an action in the Rural Action Plan. The offer is proving popular, with many bookings already being taken. The training will

cover the benefits of being a leader; the types of community projects that leaders may become involved with; how to enhance your community; how to canvas community interest and how to obtain funding for community projects

4. Waste and Street Scene Services

4.1 Suffolk Waste Partnership Plastics Project

Work by the Suffolk Waste Partnership on its action plan to address the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy involves a number of projects. One of these is the plastics project aimed at encouraging our residents in Suffolk to recycle more of their plastic waste. A tongue-in-cheek information film produced by the Partnership has now received over 80,000 hits on the YouTube website (see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUznkdBDOhk>).

4.2 Spring Clean 2013

This year's Spring Clean fortnight took place across West Suffolk during March and April. The Spring clean campaign encourages people to participate in local clean-up events across the county to reduce litter and improve the local environment. In West Suffolk we had over 425 volunteers who between them collected over 400 black bags of rubbish.

Sustainable Bury were one of the new groups clearing litter this year from the Risbygate ward of Bury St Edmunds where they collected 12 bags of rubbish in just over an hour. The Bury St Edmunds Volunteer Police Cadets assisted with a community project to help clear-up a neglected area of Rougham Hill woods on the edge of town. They were assisted by members of the Bury St Edmunds Safer Neighbourhood Team, Borough Councillors and local residents.

4.3 Community Talks and Activities

Over the past two months we have continued to engage with the local community on matters concerning waste collection, recycling and keeping our streets and countryside clear of litter. In April we gave a recycling talk to a deaf group at the Ho Ho Club in Northgate Street and engaged with service personnel at RAF Barnham about the roll-out of our recycling waste collection scheme on the base. In May we promoted our textiles recycling scheme at the South Suffolk Show, supported a compost bag event at the household waste site at Rougham Hill, gave a recycling presentation to residents at Hanover Close in Tollgate Lane and promoted composting at East Town Park in Haverhill where we gave away a whole heap of soil improver to keen local gardeners.