



Council 18 June 2013

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. *Community Centres*

- 1.1 I am pleased to report progress continues to be made on the transfer of the two Council-owned community centres in Haverhill. As mentioned previously, the management committee at the Leiston Centre made the decision to step down and gave the Council notice of their intention. They will formally hand the building back on 31 July, at which point it is anticipated that Haverhill Town Council will take over the lease for up to 12 months, with the intention of working towards the full transfer in the coming months.
- 1.2 The Chalkstone Centre is also the subject of negotiation with a community-based organisation who, after a time of uncertainty, are now making progress and applying for funding to Community Matters to carry out a pre-feasibility exercise.
- 1.3 I will provide more details in future report meetings.

2. *Well Project*

- 2.1 On 14 March 2013 the Haverhill Arts Centre hosted an Older Peoples' event inviting older people to talk about how they could be supported to live independently and enjoy life.
- 2.2 A number of local service providers attended the event highlighting local services that can be accessed. The event very much focused on Dementia and how we improve the lives of those suffering with Dementia and how we can support full time carers.

3. **Chalkstone Community Picnic**

- 3.1 Officers had been working with CATRA, the local residents group, to put on a Community Picnic on Thursday 30 May. Unfortunately the very wet weather meant that the event had to be cancelled on the day which was a huge disappointment to all involved in the planning, but the right decision in the circumstances. Work is underway to see whether a similar community event could be planned for another (drier) time.

4. **ONE Haverhill**

- 4.1 Following a year of work the ONE Haverhill Community Budget was formally launched on 6 June 2013. The budget focuses on two areas. There is a single youth strategy for the town which covers both youth work and activities with advice on skills, apprenticeships and more opportunities for young people to learn about the employment opportunities in the town. Recruitment is nearing completion for the Young People's Skills Manager role (funded by the Department for Work and Pensions). The role attracted over 30 applications and it is hoped that the successful candidate will be in post in early July.
- 4.2 The other area of focus is the physical environment, where local people have indicated they are willing to be Community Ambassadors. This will involve helping to report issues and being given the equipment, permission and insurance to carry out minor repairs in their local area. This is not about replacing council jobs, it is empowering local people to take pride in the street they live on.

5. **On The Spot Project**

- 5.1 The project has continued to regularly engage young people who are out and about in the town. It is attracting up to 60 young people per night, especially on Friday nights. There is a new team of youth workers working on the project who are doing really well at engaging young people.
- 5.2 The project has also been successful in securing a further 3 years of funding from Haverhill Town Council, West Suffolk Community Safety Partnership and St Edmundsbury.

6. **Home Link Statistics**

Home-Link Statistics	SEBC	FHDC	SEBC	FHDC	SEBC	FHDC
Date	01-Apr-13		01-May-13		01-Jun-13	
Band A	172	41	202	65	208	77
Band B	242	168	271	215	311	226
Band C	300	216	316	249	329	274
Band D	284	274	306	273	352	274
Band D*			8	5	15	3
Total	998	699	1103	807	1215	854
Homeseecker Transfer	681	508	756	579	824	615
	317	202	350	234	389	250
1 Bedroom	485	350	536	414	600	449
2 Bedroom	359	261	412	288	441	303
3 Bedroom	115	76	120	91	130	93
4 Bedroom	28	21	27	19	32	19

5 Bedroom	9	2	10	1	11	1
Single	383	272	434	317	483	352
Couple	135	111	149	126	170	107
Family with children	455	315	498	354	535	368
Other household types	25	12	25	16	27	38
Statutory Homeless	68	9	82	16	70	19
Homeless Prevention	49	40	41	31	49	27
Homeless Other	48	4	15	2	16	3
Over 65s	104	84	118	100	145	104

6.1 Official Opening of Havebury's new offices and homes in High Street Haverhill

I was pleased to attend the official opening of Havebury's new offices in Haverhill along with the provision of 7 new smaller affordable homes for Haverhill, five of the flats are much needed one beds and the others are two beds. The offices and the flats are located in the High Street and contribute to the on-going regeneration of the High Street.

6.2 Official start on site at Church Street, Hundon

I am delighted to report that the official start on site at Church Street, Hundon took place on 23 May 2013. Following a housing needs study, Icen Homes, in partnership with Suffolk Housing were appointed to bring forward a local housing needs scheme in the village. This scheme will see 10 units of affordable housing come to fruition for applicants with a local connection to Hundon. The project is estimated for completion in March 2014.

7. **Public Health and Housing**

7.1 The HMO strategy has been developed, and will be included as part a wider West Suffolk Housing Strategy. We will continue our programmed inspections, and enforcement where necessary, to keep these properties safe to live in. There will also be other key private sector housing actions for the service, influenced by the findings of a review to be reported shortly. The Council is keen to sign up to Shelter's campaign to 'evict rogue landlords', and build on the work that is already being done to improve poor housing in this sector. We also took the opportunity to engage with local landlords at events in Bury.

7.2 A full grants programme has been in place, under the terms of the Housing Assistance Policy. Through this, the Council has been able to improve and adapt many properties for its most vulnerable residents, whilst meeting key housing priorities. The majority of the performance indicators have been met in relation to these areas. A full review of grants will be taking place in 2013-14, and the subsequent strategy will form part of the wider Housing Strategy, due to be approved in April 2014.

7.3 The service enables the Council to meet its statutory duties in a number of different areas. Much of the work is centered around protecting tenants, by working with landlords, and investigating noise and other nuisance complaints. The team has also been involved with planning responses, public health funerals, caravan/camping sites and traveller encampments.