



## **Council** **30 September 2013**

### **CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL**

#### ***Report by Councillor Anne Gower*** ***Housing Portfolio***

**Portfolio includes:**

- Haverhill
- Strategic Housing
- Homelessness
- Social Care
- Gypsies and Travellers

#### **1. *Public Art in the Town Centre of Haverhill (PATCH)***

- 1.1 Following consultation with partners and the Haverhill Area Working Party (HAWP), it was agreed that the PATCH group would commission Samuel Ward Academy to design and create a sculpture. The thinking behind the sculpture was to provide a focal point in Haverhill Town Centre, which, along with the gates, will attract more visitors to the town. Whilst the sculpture is primarily a piece of art, the 'eyes' (which will incorporate monitors/screens) will showcase Haverhill's achievements and local information to members of the public.
- 1.2 The Head of Art at Samuel Ward Academy has incorporated this project into his curriculum work and art students have created the head sculpture over the last two years. The project has also been supported by a local engineering company, Metcraft and various volunteers. The sculpture is shortly due to be completed by the art students and then the monitors/screens (which are being provided free of charge by Samuel Ward Academy) will be installed into the 'eyes' of the sculpture.
- 1.3 A firm of structural engineers has been commissioned to design a plinth for the sculpture to be safely mounted upon. Once this design work has been completed, the council will commission contractors to install the sculpture and carry out the necessary electrical works. There have been many discussions around the location of this piece of art and the decision about its final location was taken by PATCH in consultation with stakeholders including Members of HAWP, the police, Haverhill Town Council and the market traders. A launch event will then be arranged to include Haverhill Town Council, young people and a wide range of other stakeholders.

## **2. Community Development**

- 2.1 The Parkway Fun Day was held on Wednesday 21 August 2013 at The Haverhill Rugby Club. The event was organised by St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Haverhill Town Council and Parkway Residents' Association supported by Dawn Goss, Community Development Officer.
- 2.2 The warm weather attracted over 1,400 people who came with their picnics and enjoyed a wide variety of free activities on offer.
- 2.3 Cambridge Evening News reported it as 'A fun day that would never be forgotten by the town'.

## **3. Haverhill Street Jam**

- 3.1 Around 400 young people attended this year's Street Jam held on 1 August 2013, a scorching hot summers day. It was held on the Market Square which was given over to a celebration of youth culture. Young people had the opportunity to showcase Beatboxing and Breakdancing, become involved with street football tournaments and DJ workshops, as well as trying their skills on the climbing wall.

## **4. Haverhill Graffiti Project**

- 4.1 Young people in Haverhill had the opportunity to try their hand at graffiti at the town's Skatepark on 22/23 August 2013. The event unfortunately had to be cancelled on the first day due to rain, but those who came on day two were able to learn skills from watching a professional artist at work.

## **5. Diabetes Awareness**

- 5.1 Details of this event are included in Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White's report. I was pleased to see the event come to Haverhill on 23 August 2013 as statistics show a higher prevalence of the disease in the town and this open access event will have raised awareness of the symptoms of this condition.

## **6. Official Opening of The Maltings, Mildenhall Road, Bury St Edmunds**

- 6.1 I was pleased to attend the official opening at The Maltings, Mildenhall Road in Bury St Edmunds with David Ruffley MP and Mark Prisk MP (Minister for Housing) on 17 September 2013. The derelict building has been transformed into 35 new affordable homes by Havebury Housing Partnership with a mix of one and two bedroom flats, including 12 units for shared ownership. The event also gave us the opportunity to view some of the properties and meet the new tenants.

## **7. Housing Strategy**

- 7.1 Work has just begun on developing the new West Suffolk Housing Strategy, this will be an important document, developed jointly with Forest Heath District Council (FHDC), which sets out West Suffolk's vision and priorities for all aspects of housing for the next four years. The timeline for the development of the strategy document is as follows:

- (a) 10 September 2013: Scoping Document to Cabinet;
- (b) 4 December 2013: Draft Strategy to Overview and Scrutiny Committee;

- (c) 10 December 2013: Adoption of Draft Strategy for consultation; and  
 (d) 25 March 2014 or 20 May 2014: Final Approval of Strategy.

I look forward to working with Councillor Rona Burt, Cabinet Member for Housing at (FHDC) and those Members who have volunteered to sit on the Housing Strategy Members' Group.

## 8. Designated Persons

- 8.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new role for local councillors regarding working with Registered Providers in dealing with unresolved complaints from their tenants living in the borough. More details are contained in Report E105. I would like to thank those Members who have volunteered to form a panel who will act in the role of 'Designated Persons' – notwithstanding the fact that every Member can still act in this role if approached by a resident. I do not envisage they will be called upon that often, as the majority of Registered Providers in the borough have a very well developed complaints procedure.
- 8.2 We are currently arranging a briefing session for all councillors on the role of Designated Persons and also to provide an update on the many changes that have recently been happening with housing; more details will be available shortly.

## 9. Home Link Statistics

- 9.1 The table below shows that there continues to be a steady increase in the demand for housing across West Suffolk.

Home-Link Statistics	SEBC	FHDC	SEBC	FHDC	SEBC	FHDC	SEBC	FHDC	SEBC	FHDC	SEBC	FHDC
Date	01-Apr-13		01-May-13		01-Jun-13		01-Jul-13		01-Aug-13		01-Sep-13	
Band A	172	41	202	65	208	77	202	66	213	64	218	75
Band B	242	168	271	215	311	226	347	237	357	254	375	260
Band C	300	216	316	249	329	274	356	290	362	306	374	314
Band D	284	274	306	273	352	274	364	282	393	297	415	308
Band D*			8	5	15	3	19	3	23	3	23	4
Total	998	699	1103	807	1215	854	1288	878	1348	924	1405	961
Homeseeker	681	508	756	579	824	615	874	631	910	661	958	690
Transfer	317	202	350	234	389	250	413	257	436	271	447	279
1 Bedroom	485	350	536	414	600	449	642	458	662	493	686	517
2 Bedroom	359	261	412	288	441	303	456	310	492	311	524	319
3 Bedroom	115	76	120	91	130	93	139	96	143	103	144	104
4 Bedroom	28	21	27	19	32	19	38	23	37	24	38	26
5 Bedroom	9	2	10	1	11	1	12	1	13	1	12	3
Single	383	272	434	317	483	352	518	355	534	379	561	397
Couple	135	111	149	126	170	107	182	136	198	145	202	153
Family with children	455	315	498	354	535	368	565	377	591	384	616	394
Other household types	25	12	25	16	27	38	23	20	25	24	26	25
Statutory Homeless	68	9	82	16	70	19	60	15	74	8	75	10
Homeless Prevention	49	40	41	31	49	27	55	24	50	26	62	27
Homeless Other	48	4	15	2	16	3	19	4	24	5	25	3
Over 65s	104	84	118	100	145	104	160	104	166	112	169	122

## **10. Homelessness**

- 10.1 The West Suffolk Temporary Accommodation Working Group has completed its work on analysis of the demand and proposed solutions for temporary accommodation across West Suffolk. The paper will be taken to FHDC and SEBC Cabinet Planning meetings in October 2013 and will feed into the new Housing Strategy work. The Members of the Temporary Accommodation Working Group will also be receiving the papers for the Housing Strategy for their continued information and involvement.

## **11. Public Sector Housing**

- 11.1 'West Suffolk Lettings Partnership' was launched in September 2012. The partnership is achieving a good level of success. When comparing Q1 2012 to Q1 2013, tenancies created have increased by 370%. We have had expressions of interest from five of the Suffolk local authorities to deliver the partnership model across Suffolk with understanding that funding will have to be attached to enable delivery.

## **12. Public Health and Housing**

- 12.1 The Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Strategy has been developed, and will be included as part of the West Suffolk Housing Strategy. There will also be other key private sector housing actions, influenced by the findings of an ongoing Council commissioned review regarding the private rented sector.
- 12.2 The Council has recently signed up to Shelter's campaign to 'evict rogue landlords', building on the work that is already being done to improve poor housing in this sector.
- 12.3 A full grants programme has been in place, under terms of the Councils' Housing Assistance Policy. Through this, 63 properties have been adapted and improved for vulnerable residents. A comprehensive review of grants is taking place in 2013/2014, which will inform our future process, strategy and delivery vehicle. There is an increasing demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) with the associated budgetary constraints, therefore we are considering how best to approach this challenge across West Suffolk.