



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

E215

Council 17 December 2013

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report by Cllr Ian Houlder Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This report covers the meeting of the Committee held on 4 December 2013.

1. Draft Families and Communities Strategy

- 1.1 The Committee received Report E182, which provided information on the Draft Families and Communities Strategy (the Strategy), which has been developed in conjunction with Forest Heath District Council.
- 1.2 The Strategy provided the framework for reshaping the relationship between the Council, its communities and their families. Its aim is to foster resilience in local communities and seeks to address the dependency culture which can build up when the Council is seen as the first port of call for any issue.
- 1.3 The Committee considered the Strategy in detail and asked a number of questions to which the Cabinet Member for Communities and officers provided comprehensive responses.
- 1.4 In particular, discussions were held on:
 - (a) The role of the eight locality officers and the support they will provide to Councillors in their wards across West Suffolk;
 - (b) How to encourage the "connectors" in the communities to talk to each other;
 - (c) What communities can do for themselves; and
 - (d) Councillors being more proactive in their communities and being aware of issues.
- 1.5 The Committee recommended that, subject to the approval of full Council, the West Suffolk Families and Communities Strategy, as contained in Appendix A to Report E182, be adopted.

2. Decisions Plan – December 2013 to May 2014

- 2.1 Members considered the latest Decision Plan, covering the period December 2013 to May 2014.
- 2.2 The Committee did not request any further information or involvement in any of the current planned decisions.

3. Work Programme Update

- 3.1 The Committee now has a rolling work programme, whereby suggestions for scrutiny reviews are brought to each meeting, and if accepted, are timetabled to report to a future meeting. The work programme also leaves space for Call-ins and Councillor Calls for Action.
- 3.2 Members were informed that the presentation on "Future Developments for Regional Transport in West Suffolk" had been rescheduled to 5 March 2014, as Cambridgeshire County Council and Suffolk County Council were jointly commissioning a corridor study of the A1307 which would not be completed until early 2014.
- 3.3 The Committee's scheduled meeting on 22 January 2014, with the Chairman's agreement would be utilised as an Informal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee held with Forest Heath's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable informal discussions to take place between the two authorities on the Draft West Strategic Plan 2014-2016 and Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 3.4 Members reviewed the current position of the work programme, and noted the items which were expected at the next meetings of the Committee.