

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Title of Report:	Annual Report by the Cabinet Member for Operations	
Report No:	OAS/FH/18/033	
Report to and date:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8 November 2018
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor David Bowman Cabinet Member for Operations Tel: 07711 593737 Email: david.bowman@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officers:	<p>Mark Walsh Assistant Director (Operations) Tel: 01284 757300 Email: mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01638 719729 Email: Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk</p>	
Purpose of report:	<p>As part of the "Challenge" role, Overview and Scrutiny are asked to consider the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members. It is part of the Scrutiny role to "challenge" in the form of questions.</p> <p>Therefore, to carry out this constitutional requirement, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member shall attend to give an account of his or her portfolio and answer questions from the Committee.</p>	

Recommendation:		<p>Members of the Committee are asked to question the Cabinet Member for Operations on his portfolio responsibilities, and having considered the information, the Committee may wish to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Operations for his consideration; 2) Request further information and / or receive a future update. 3) Take any other appropriate action as necessary. 	
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>		<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
Consultation:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	
Alternative option(s):		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	
Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
	Low/Medium/ High*		Low/Medium/ High*
None			
Wards affected:		All	
Background papers:		None	
Documents attached:		None	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation

1.1 Background

1.1.1 As part of its "Challenge" role, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members. To carry out this constitutional requirement, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member shall be invited to give an account of his or her portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.

1.1.2 Last year, on 9 November 2017, Councillor David Bowman, Cabinet Member for Operations attended this committee and presented a report which summarised the areas of responsibility covered under his portfolio.

1.2 Scrutiny Focus

1.2.1 The Cabinet Member has been asked to prepare a report which answers the following specific questions identified by committee members as being relevant to the operations portfolio:

- 1) **Grounds Maintenance:** What is being done to improve the grass cutting and strimming cycle?
- 2) **Markets Delivery:** What is proposed for Mildenhall and Brandon following the revamp of Newmarket's market?
- 3) **Street Scene:** Are there any improvements proposed for Mildenhall because of its historic past and future?
- 4) **Tourism (Operations):** What is proposed to improve Mildenhall and Brandon's tourism?

1.3 Response to Key Questions Set out in the Scrutiny Focus

1.3.1 **Grounds Maintenance:** What is being done to improve the grass cutting and strimming cycle?

As is the case in taking on any new contract of this size and nature, there is inevitably a period of time required to bed down operations.

During July we had some issues that needed to be addressed with the new grounds maintenance team assigned to the work in Forest Heath. A full time grounds maintenance operative has been recruited for strimming work. They have now completed the routes a number of times, becoming more familiar with the requirements and with other team members.

An amended cutting cycle starting in the south of the Forest Heath area and working towards the north is now in place. Rather than operatives being taken off their scheduled work to deal with requests, we have separate resources to call upon to deal with these.

Our mapping system is being constantly developed and updated to accurately reflect requirements on the ground. This means that grass cutting routes are being amended to include small areas previously being missed.

1.3.2 **Markets Delivery:** What is proposed for Mildenhall and Brandon following the revamp of Newmarket's market?

Mildenhall

Four family fun days were organised on the market in August which have included additional stalls and family friendly entertainment. These have been well attended and the stallholders have given discounts and free fruit to children which has resulted in an increase in stallholder enquiries.

FHDC and Mildenhall Parish Council have funded a new electrical feeder pillar (EFP) on the market as currently we are not able to offer stallholders power. The installation of the EFP is scheduled for November ensuring completion in time for Christmas events. Once the market is able to offer a power supply we will hope to be able to attract more stallholders, particularly in the winter months. The EFP will also enable the market place to be used as an event space for other local groups in the area.

The Mildenhall Messenger has been providing free advertising throughout the year for market traders which has included discounts and special offers. We also have an ongoing relationship with Zak FM to promote the market through their local radio station.

Brandon Market

The first family fun day in Brandon was on 1 September and this will continue until December on the first Saturday of each month with additional stalls and family entertainment. There are special offers to community groups and charities in the area which includes stalls being free of charge. The Brandon Musical Arts Project will be providing entertainment and the fun days will finish in December with a special Christmas Event. This market in particular has been struggling for many years and we are therefore seeking to make the fun days an event market rather than a regular provisions market. Take up and interest for stalls has been high and many community groups and clubs are attending during the period.

We are now offering a free 'start up package' to young entrepreneurs and start-up businesses. This package will include a free gazebo, free cover on our insurance package and free business advice. We are promoting this on several websites and social media. This offer will include Brandon, Mildenhall and Newmarket subject to our terms and conditions.

The new West Suffolk Markets website will be up and running by the end of November. This will include details of all our markets, events and special offers as well as events currently being planned for 2019.

1.3.3 **Street Scene:** Are there any improvements proposed for Mildenhall because of its historic past and future?

New zonal working schedules for street cleansing were introduced in June this year. There were two main elements to it:

1. For 'high impact' areas that require more regular cleansing, a weekly cleansing schedule has been adopted for areas where regular activities that take place as well as the type of land use. This includes Mildenhall town centre which now receives three cleanses during the week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) and also a further litter pick on Saturday. This constituted an enhanced cleansing regime to that which had preceded it, if there is a specific issue outside of these times then we will respond as appropriate.
2. For 'lower impact' areas, which for Mildenhall includes the majority of the rest of the town (excluding some of the parks), we aim to work through these zones 5 times per year as well as reacting to specific incidents or issues as they arise using mechanical sweepers, litter pickers and blowers. During autumn these zones may be replaced with temporary schedules to target leaf fall. There is also a separate schedule in place to deal with litter on the trunk roads.

To ensure that the cleansing schedules are achieving the desired outcome we carry out 'local area quality surveys' (LEQs), whereby we grade the amount of litter and detritus at specific locations which are selected based on land use types. This uses a grading system of A-D, where A is free of litter/detritus and D is heavy litter/detritus with significant accumulation. Information from these surveys feeds back into the planning of these schedules to make sure that they are working as efficiently as possible. Results from the surveys carried out this year indicated that 90% of areas visited were deemed to be primarily free of litter and detritus.

1.3.4 **Tourism (Operations):** What is proposed to improve Mildenhall and Brandon's tourism?

In general tourism across West Suffolk is experiencing strong growth with the latest figures (2017) showing an increase in both visits and value. The latest figures show:

- Last year there were 11.4 million tourist trips made to West Suffolk, up 7.3 per cent on 2016.
- Nearly £539 million was spent through tourism in West Suffolk, an increase of 5.4 per cent on the previous year.
- There was an increase of 5.4 percent in tourism jobs between 2016 and 2017. Around 10,650 people being employed in 2017 in tourism in West Suffolk.

Mildenhall and Brandon are currently underrepresented in terms of local tourism organisation provision but businesses and attractions are being

encouraged to work with Bury St Edmunds and Beyond and Visit Suffolk. Visit Suffolk, the county Destination Management Organisation currently promotes the wide Suffolk offer and Brandon and The Brecks are highlighted as a feature destination.

Events and Markets

On a local level there is support for the tourism offer by way of family event days held in both Mildenhall and Brandon which have been run for the last few months.

The family fun days during August were well attended and resulted in three more permanent stall holders trading weekly. Events have been planned during December which will include music and a children's treasure trail. We are in the process of contacting local clubs, charities and community groups to offer a free stall which would include a gazebo and insurance cover to promote themselves or raise funds for their groups/charities.

The first two Brandon fun days have been very well attended and attracted lots of positive comments on social media. Entertainment has included music, magic shows, free roundabout rides and face painting. Each market has a mixture of general stalls and charity/community groups and the last market had 12 stalls.

The next market is Saturday 3 November and the Christmas market is Saturday 1 December which will coincide with the Christmas light switch on weekend.

Our start up package for both markets is continuing and we have had two new traders on Mildenhall taking up this offer. This will continue to be promoted both on social media and in specialist market trader magazines.

For 2019 we are looking at working with the Mildenhall Museum and Brandon Heritage Centre to create a 'pop up museum' for the markets. This is based on a similar model in Bury St Edmunds working with Moyses Hall Museum which was a success.

Filming

In addition West Suffolk councils work in partnership with Screen Suffolk, the official film office for Suffolk, to promote Suffolk as a location to film. The locations hub features locations from across the county and are added daily. Locations in Mildenhall and Brandon have also been added recently as the areas look to attract further filming. Since the inception of Screen Suffolk the area has had a number of shoots in the area.

LEADER Funding

The Mildenhall and Brandon area have also been successful with tourism related funding bids from the Brecks Local Action Group. This programme will continue into early 2019 where future potential tourism

developments may receive funding, increasing the appeal of the area further.

1.4 **Proposals**

- 1.4.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee ask questions of the Cabinet Member following this update.