

St Edmundsbury Borough Council: March 2014 Report for Hawstead

Budget and Council Tax Setting. The Council continues to face a number of financial challenges. In particular, the continuation of public expenditure cuts and the reduction in central government grant funding coupled with the demand on front line services such as Housing Benefits and homelessness.

SEBC is freezing Council Tax for the 4th year running which will qualify us for a government grant of £295,000. However, it must be recognised that this is only a short term solution as it has a cumulative detrimental impact on the Council's finances as year on year council tax levels fail to rise in line with inflation.

New regulations announced by the government now require councils to publish, as a matter of record, how each councillor votes on any budget decisions including Council Tax changes. Previously, individual voting records were not usually public with only the overall vote outcome published. This increases council transparency and accountability over Council Tax and was carried out for the first time at our last Full Council meeting.

West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014-2016. This plan sets out the shared ambitions of Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Council over the next two years. Whilst we remain two councils, with two separate budgets, there are many similarities in our approach to meeting the financial challenges we face. We are therefore working together to build common strategies, and to share learning from one another in designing new approaches, although how these approaches apply to the different localities in West Suffolk may still vary. The overall aim is to put us in the best possible position to manage our finances in these challenging times. It is clear that councils will have to rely more on sources of income such as business rates and the New Homes bonus than on grants from central government.

SEBC is also committed to increase our income through commercial activity. To do this we are engaging with other councils and partners to explore the potential opportunities for development. In particular this will involve development in the largest areas of our current service delivery such as leisure, culture, communities, waste and property.

Economic growth. This remains a priority for us. Due to its geographical position, SEBC is a member of both the New Anglia and the Greater Cambridge

Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnerships. These two LEPs control more than £165 million of public money which they will assign throughout their regions through economic plans. In order to get our fair share of funding from the LEPs we have to, for example, engage with local businesses helping them to expand, work with partners to deliver improved transport connections, develop growth projects and masterplans and promote West Suffolk as an excellent place to live. Closely linked to economic growth, is the need to provide suitable homes for people to live in.

West Suffolk Families and Community Strategy. We are also looking at the ways that we work with our residents and communities to ensure we are supporting them to help themselves. Our Locality Officer, Gemma O'Shea will have given you more information this evening.

This type of approach may require councillors and staff alike to learn new skills and new ways of working. The overall aim of this is to make our communities more resilient in order to save money, but at the same offering the highest possible level of customer service.

Vision 2031 The public hearing by Roger Clews, the Planning Inspector, has now concluded. We wait to hear his findings. Peter Westcott, chairman of Chedburgh PC was the only speaker from Chedburgh Ward at the hearing.

Development Control Having been elected as vice chair of the DCC in our meeting in February, I am now a member of the delegation panel. Just to recap, the panel meets every other Wednesday to determine which applications are delegated to officers for a decision, or which will go to committee. Site inspections, when necessary, are now held on the Thursday preceding the DC meeting. These applications are no longer determined after these visits, but are put on to the agenda for the next week's committee meeting. The aim of the new system is to speed up the application process as hitherto a site inspection could hold up an application for up to 6 weeks.

SEBC are replacing the audio system in the conference chamber as the current system is not working satisfactorily.

The refurbishment of St Andrews Street north between the arc and the town centre is now in progress. The safety of pedestrians and the general appearance of the area is of paramount importance.

Next year's mayor will be Robert Everitt and his deputy will be Patrick Chung.

Angela Rushen

Crime Report for Hawstead for the period 16/01/2014 – 19/03/2014

Here is the crime report for Hawstead for the period 16/01/2014 – 19/03/2014 ahead of tomorrow night's meeting. Unfortunately no one from the team is on duty tomorrow evening. If there are any issues/concerns raised for our attention please do not hesitate to forward these on to us.

Since the last meeting on 16th January we are pleased to report there have been no crimes of note in the area.

The SNT priority setting meeting was held on Tuesday 11th March. As a result our new priorities for the forthcoming period are as follows:

- 1) Targeting speeding motorists in the villages of Stradishall and Withersfield.**
- 2) Addressing the parking issues at Wickhambrook primary school before and after school times and in Kedington on Friday evenings through education and enforcement.**
- 3) Reducing the incidents of Burglary throughout the St Edmundsbury Rural South area.**

Details of the next SNT priority setting meeting are waiting to be confirmed. Once these have been finalised we will let you know the date, time and venue.

Attached is the report from the recent SNT priority setting meeting for your information.

The PCC, Tim Passmore, will be hosting a public meeting for the St Edmundsbury district on Wednesday 7th May 2014 at 6:30 pm at The Samuel Ward Academy, Chalkstone Way, Haverhill, CB9 0LD. Chief Constable, Douglas Paxton will also be in attendance at the meeting.

General information worth noting:

We have had increasing reports in Suffolk of a fraud scam currently ongoing nationwide where by the offender phones an elderly victim purporting to be a Police Officer investigating a fraud involving the victim's bank account. The offender persuades the victim to withdraw cash or send their credit card by handing to a taxi driver who will courier to the offender. The offender can be very plausible offering bogus numbers for the victim to call to confirm that a Police Officer has contacted them.

In response to this the constabulary now has a county wide operation namely Op Allow targeting this type of crime. If you hear of anyone that may have been subject to this type fraud offence please urge them to call Police and report it straight away.

- Three men are appearing in court in connection with hare coursing after being stopped by officers in Great Barton. Police received a report of hare coursing in progress in a field off Brand Road at around 1:25pm on Friday 14 February. Officers attended the scene and a black 4x4 vehicle was stopped nearby. An 18-year-old man and two 23-year-old men all from Surrey have been reported for summons to court for hare coursing.

If you witness any hare coursing or potential suspicious activity that maybe linked to hare coursing please report it to us straight away. As part of a rural crime initiative hare coursing is a current priority for the force countywide.

- We have had a recent spate of catalytic converter thefts in and around the area. Overnight on Monday 3rd February we had 5 stolen from various villages on our patch. 2 from Chedburgh, 1 from Chevington, 1 from Cavendish and 1 from Hundon, in addition to these there was various others stolen from the Babergh and St Edmundsbury Rural North regions. The latest reported theft was from a vehicle in Kedington which occurred sometime over the weekend of Thursday 27th February – Sunday 2nd March.

The most common vehicles targeted are usually those with high ground clearance such as Mitsubishi L200 trucks, Ford Rangers, Toyota Hilux's and 4x4's, however recently we have seen vehicles such as Ford Galaxies, Peugeot 406's and other people carrier style vehicles being targeted.

As a constabulary we currently have a countywide operation ongoing, Operation Ballgame, targeting the thefts of catalytic converters. The following is some advice and guidelines to help protect your vehicles from being targeted:

- Vehicles can be parked in such a way as to make access to the catalytic converter underneath difficult, or parked parallel with another vehicle if you own one.
- Ideally, private vehicles should be kept in a well-secured garage where possible.
- Commercial vehicles should always be kept in a locked building or compound, supported by alarms, lighting and CCTV. Suffolk Police have some warning signs to place on compounds, which are free of charge to any business that have marked all the catalytic converters on the vehicles in their fleet.
- Catalytic converters can be etched or marked with a Retaina Group kit, or SmartWater, both of which paints an invisible liquid with a unique formula onto the converter that forensically proves where the marked item comes from.
- The converter itself can be secured with a clamp and anti-tamper alarms that are available to buy. The CAT Clamp (<http://www.catsafe.org.uk/product/catclamp-maxx/>) is the first and currently only Secured By Design approved CAT security product on the market.

For details of upcoming catalytic converter marking sessions please keep an eye on the Suffolk Constabulary website or call your local Crime Reduction Officer on 101 for more details.

- A number of attempted and full thefts of BT Cables and other various types of cable have surfaced in the past few weeks or so. We have had just the one in our area from Hundon, but worth keeping an eye out for and being vigilant to any persons and vehicles particularly at the roadside who appear to be working on cables and not part of BT. Last year we had a couple of incidents in Stoke By Clare so it isn't uncommon for offenders to target this area.

Sophie Mitchell

PCSO 3265

St Edmundsbury Rural South

Safer Neighbourhood Team

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