

Cabinet Member Report to County Council

15 September 2016

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Richard Smith MVO Cabinet Member for Finance & Heritage
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Finance

1. Statement of Accounts

The Council's audited accounts will be presented to Audit Committee on 28 September 2016 and the Pension Fund Committee will receive their Accounts at the Pension Fund Committee on 22 September 2016.

2. Budget 2016-17

The first quarterly budgetary control report was presented to Cabinet on 13 September 2016. The major risk in managing the budget has been the requirement to achieve savings whilst minimising the impact on front line services. Alongside this the cost and demand for adult care and purchased care placements for children continue to put pressure on the Council's budget.

3. Pensions

The Suffolk Pension Fund value at 30 June 2016 has risen to £2.310 billion, an increase of nearly £100m in the quarter.

The full business case for the ACCESS Group's pooling of assets was submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on 15 July 2016. Feedback on the submission is expected in September 2016. The next chairs meeting of the 11 funds takes place on 2 September 2016.

The actuary is currently undertaking the triennial valuation of the Fund and is on track to deliver initial results to the Pension Fund Committee meeting on 22 September 2016.

For further information please contact: Geoff Dobson, Director of Resource Management; Email: geoff.dobson@suffolk.gov.uk, Telephone: 01473 264347.

Procurement

1. Cost Down and Savings Agenda

The Corporate Procurement team are supporting Directorates to deliver year-on-year contract savings. The team has supported the organisation to achieve Capital and Revenue savings of £1.59m so far in 2016-17 through re-tendering, contract extension negotiation and various cost-down initiatives.

2. Contract Management

Over the past few months we have developed a suite of information and support materials for contract management, together with face-to-face training via the Council's training portal 'myLearning'. Over forty staff have been trained so far. The first of a series of advanced courses for those who are or will be managing higher-risk contracts and supplier relationships are planned for later in the year.

3. Scrutiny Task and Finish Group

Following the Scrutiny committees examination of procurement and contract management in February, a task and finish group met in May and more recently in July. Topics examined included the views from businesses who have been involved in bidding for contracts with the County Council, exploration of how the County Council manages grant agreements and the arrangements for developing and embedding commercial expertise within the Council's contracting staff.

For further information please contact: Aidan Dunn, Head of Procurement; Email: aidan.dunn@suffolk.gov.uk, Telephone: 01473 264394.

Property

Smarter Workplaces Ipswich

A series of occupation surveys in 2015 revealed that the main Ipswich buildings of Endeavour, Constantine and Landmark Houses are not being adequately utilised. In some areas more than 40% of desks were empty during the working day, whilst in other areas fewer than 20% were empty.

Corporate Property are reviewing this data and preparing plans to change the way buildings are occupied and used with a view to increasing usage to the levels approaching those of the better performing areas. This process will run in conjunction with the "Free Me" initiative which provides staff with technological and other support for better ways of working.

These property changes will enable parts of Endeavour House to be released and available for lease to other organisations such as MSDC/BDC, as suggested recently in the media. As part of the work on this programme Corporate Property are also considering the impact of increased numbers of people on building services and facilities, such as car parking.

For further information please contact: Duncan Johnson, Interim Assistant Director, Corporate Property; Email: duncan.johnson@suffolk.gov.uk, Telephone: 01473 264194.

Culture, Libraries, and Heritage

1. Heritage Programme: 'The Hold'

Following the wonderful news of our successful round 1 pass from the Heritage Lottery Fund together with the award of a development grant of £538k to progress proposals, the project team has been focussing on the following key tasks:

- Appointing the design team to progress architectural designs for the building. 72 firms expressed an initial interest. We anticipate awarding the contract to the successful supplier at the end of November 2016 and designs should be ready for public consultation in the summer next year.
- Recruiting an Activity Plan Officer to lead on the activity programme that runs parallel to the capital scheme. This programme focuses on broadening and diversifying the Record Office's audience, and has at its heart a project called 'Mapping Suffolk's Stories'. The project is set to engage communities right across Suffolk, including under-represented groups and schools.
- Establishing a fundraising committee to help the Friends of Suffolk Record Office with tasks such as soliciting major gifts, corporate sponsorship, events and crowdfunding. Some volunteer training has already taken place.
- Preparing approaches to other funding bodies for match-funding. So far this includes the Clore Foundation and a business case to the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Development Phase of the project is anticipated to last until October 2017, at which point round 2 submissions will be made to the Heritage Lottery Fund, to unlock the delivery grant of £10.3m. 'The Hold' is still on track to open its doors late in 2019 (the 900th anniversary of the oldest document in the collections), with a formal opening targeted for spring/summer 2020.

For further information please contact: Amy Rushton, Heritage Lottery Fund Project Coordinator, Email: amy.rushton@suffolk.gov.uk, Telephone: 01473 264519.

2. Suffolk Record Office (SRO)

SRO's new website (www.suffolkarchives.co.uk) was "soft-launched" at the Suffolk Show on 1 June 2016. This impressive new site provides an interactive information source, marketing tool and shop facility, in line with the Council's "Public Access and Digital Transformation" project. The technical capabilities of the new site are still being tested including e-commerce and bookings for courses. The aim is for the site to be fully functional by the end of September. It already provides easy public access to 900 years of Suffolk's history and over 326,000 electronic catalogue records.

The *Preservica* digital preservation system for digitised and “born digital” records is also currently being tested. This project is already being recognised as an exemplar by The National Archives and other record offices.

We are celebrating a Year of Tweets on [@KeyToThePast](#). The SRO Twitter account is now a year old and has over 800 followers. The Bury St Edmunds Branch of the record office created a small visually rich yet simple display highlighting how social media can be used online and offline to help people engage with historical and cultural information in an appealing and bite-size way.

SRO is keen to emphasise that whilst developing a new website and digital preservation system it is also very much business as usual, and the new Autumn programme of talks, courses, and walks is now available.

Highlights of the last programme included two community learning walks. ‘Take the Kirkley Turnpike’ explored the history of the old road and its evolution into the main shopping street for the community. The second walk ‘On the Trail of the Lowestoft Witches’ examined the history of the sites relating to the events and trial of three 16th century Lowestoft women accused of witchcraft. These popular walks helped local people and visitors to engage with their historical environment as well as encouraging exercise and social interaction. A group of over 60s attending a ‘Time Out’ session enjoyed hearing the original report of the attack of the black devil dog - Black Shuck and viewing the original archives from 1577 which recorded the incident at Bungay St Mary’s Church. Young readers taking part in this year’s Libraries Summer Reading Challenge, themed around the works of the popular children’s author Roald Dahl, and their families saw a display of old school log books, admission registers, punishment books as well as historical items such as slates and satchels to link with Dahl’s book *Matilda*.

The Friends of the Suffolk Record Office (FOSRO) recent purchase of a new iPad for Lowestoft Record Office proved very useful at the Beccles Charter Weekend 2-3 July 2016. It enabled the record office team to demonstrate our marvellous collections relating to the town in the form of a rolling slide show of photographs showing Beccles from the 1890s right up to the 1970s. Images were also taken of early documents from the Beccles Borough Collection as well as other images, stories and the features. An image of a dragon illustrated in the Beccles Fen Corporation Book of 1552 proved a hit with many visitors.

For further information please contact: Kate Chantry, Suffolk Record Office Manager, Email: kate.chantry@suffolk.gov.uk, Telephone: 01473 263913.

3. Suffolk Libraries

The Summer Reading Challenge for children is now well underway. The theme this year is the “Big Friendly Read”. Children are challenged to read 6 books during the long summer holidays, and to talk to a volunteer about each one. There are prizes, competitions, and activities. About 8,000 children have signed up to this year’s game, which is about the same as last year, but children are still joining. Numbers of starters and finishers have increased every year for the last four years.

Debenham Library has moved from its previous premises to a larger and more flexible space. Reaction from customers has been positive, and everyone seems happy to have swapped the county's smallest library space for the county's newest. There will be an official opening in September, which the Chairman of the Council will attend.

Aldeburgh and *Newmarket* libraries are preparing for major projects, funded by external sources, that will see improvements to their facilities. Both will require temporary closures this September, and Suffolk Libraries has put plans in place to help customers use alternative services, including the increasingly used online eBook and audio download facility.

The *Suffolk Libraries website* has undergone some changes and improvements designed to make it quicker, more secure, and easier to navigate. There were also some changes to the online catalogue to improve access from mobile devices.

Great Cornard and *Broomhill* libraries changed their opening hours in July 2016 with Broomhill extending its opening hours slightly without increasing staffing costs.

Ipswich County Library's Code Club is now recognised as a Star Code Club. Star Code Clubs are judged to be outstanding, and promoted as exemplars. The library also recently hosted a *Raspberry Pi coding event* in its Innovation and Enterprise Hub.

During October half term (21-30 October 2106) Suffolk Libraries will hold the second *Suffolk Libraries Bookfest* literary festival with several authors lined up for venues across the county. This year's programme will also include the first ever Lavenham Children's Literary Festival and the Lowestoft Library Friends Literary Festival.

The Brave New Reads summer reading programme co-ordinated by the Norwich Writers Centre and involving the library services of Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk has concluded and with Suffolk issuing the most books through the programme. Suffolk Libraries Literacy Co-ordinator has now visited 17 schools and spoken to 3,200 pupils. Digital roadshows have also now been held in Lowestoft, Aldeburgh, Ipswich and Thurston.

The relaunch of Suffolk Libraries Mental Health and Wellbeing Information Service as '*New Chapters*' has provided the platform to raise awareness and expand the scope of this service. After the success of the *Open Space* group at *Ipswich County Library*, new groups will soon be launched in *Bury* and *Haverhill*. After a successful meeting with the Job Centre Plus and Realise Futures, New Chapters is also aiming to provide *confidence and skills building workshops* later in the year.

Finally, Ipswich County Library's *Northgate Room* will be hosting its first *wedding* in late August after the room was licenced for ceremonies earlier this year.

For further information please contact: Stephen Taylor. Email: Stephen.taylor@suffolk.gov.uk . Telephone: 01473 265309.

4. Arts Development

Suffolk has received new funding to increase philanthropy for the arts in Suffolk. £388,000 was awarded to Suffolk arts organisations from the Arts Council to enable them to invest in attracting philanthropic giving. DanceEast received £138k, Pacitti Company received £150k and Suffolk Artlink received £100k. This investment will enable these organisations to build a case for a significant increase in individual giving. This is a competitive market place and requires a planned, strategic approach. The funding will give these small organisations the capacity to tackle this.

In addition, Suffolk Artlink has been awarded £59,772 for 'Our Place' from Arts Council England through Grants for the Arts. 'Our Place' will work with The Partnership in Care across six residential care homes in Suffolk to pilot developing a whole home approach to embed creative interaction and engagement between residents, families, staff and their communities through a year-long programme of training and artist's residencies.

The arts and economic development are strongly linked in the County. Suffolk and Norfolk County Council arts teams support the New Anglia LEP Cultural Board. We have recently secured £500k of investment from the Arts Council's Local Creative Growth Fund to develop cultural businesses across both counties. Currently we are bidding for £600k of European Regional Development Funding to match this.

The Council is currently delivering the Suffolk Creative Employment Programme (CEP). We attracted £180k of investment to enable 80 paid internships and apprenticeships across the cultural sector. This is part of a national programme. The Suffolk CEP is the most successful scheme in the UK.

Working in partnership with Districts and the Council's Economic Development, we are delivering a plan to stimulate growth in the screen industries across Suffolk. A lead contractor has just been commissioned and the project will begin in September 2016. We expect this project to generate at least £9 million into the Suffolk economy.

A cultural education partnership for Lowestoft has been established, working with Lowestoft Rising. The Partnership is focussing on building employability skills through creative and cultural learning and has attracted investment from the Arts Council. The summer term had a series of activities with a Brazilian theme, linked to the Rio Olympics, and included a visit from the Brazilian Cultural Ambassador to Lowestoft.

For further information please contact: Jayne Knight, Arts Development Manager, Email: jayne.knight@suffolk.gov.uk, Telephone: 07540 669 035.

5. Museums

The Suffolk Museums Partnership has worked with a number of Suffolk museums to attract funding from Arts Council England's Museum Resilience Fund to be deployed over the next 18 months. St Edmundsbury Heritage Services has been awarded £108,000 to develop its education services at West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village and 3 accredited Lowestoft Museums attracted £30,000 to work with Lowestoft Rising to recruit and train new volunteers for work with local schools.

The Association for Suffolk Museums has attracted a £5,000 "Working Together" award for the 'Creative Heritage in Mind' Heritage Lottery Funded project it is co-ordinating with museums in Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich, Stowmarket and Sudbury, an experienced artist and the Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust that is benefitting people with mental health conditions.

The Museum of East Anglian Life brought to life 2,000 years of history over two days in the largest ever living history fair in Suffolk over the weekend of 13-14 August. The event drew re-enactment groups from across England to put on a non-stop programme that included Viking battle reconstructions, Napoleonic War soldier parades, World War Two encampments, falconry, Tudor promenading and a Victorian school experience that involved the public. Visitor feedback was very positive with an overwhelming message that people wanted this to become an annual event.

Every year museum volunteers in the East of England are honoured at a special award ceremony for the contributions they make to support our region's museums. This year Gainsborough's House Education Team won the Learning Volunteer Award, Sheila Sorely of Leiston Long Shop Museum won the Front of House award, and Paul Giller of the Museum of East Anglian Life won the 'Behind the Scenes' Award, as well as several others gaining commendations for their valuable contributions. Gaining 3 top awards out of a possible 8, when Suffolk is just one of 6 counties just shows how special our Suffolk museum volunteer teams are!

For further information on any of the topics above: contact Lyn Gash, Museum Development Manager, lyn.gash@suffolk.gov.uk , Telephone 01473 265241

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