

Committee: COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item

Date: September 6, 2007

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Title: LEAD OFFICER'S REPORT -

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Item for noting

Summary

- 1 This report updates Members on matters arising from the minutes that are not otherwise on this Agenda and information items arising since the last meeting of this Committee.

Recommendations

- 2 That the report is noted.

Background Papers

- 3 The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report.
 - Minutes of Community Committee meeting of 21 June 2007

Situation/Update

- 4 There are five update items from the 21 June meeting.

5 Flooding

- (i) Following the Ashdon Post Flood Meeting on 13 July 2007, the Emergency Planning Officer was asked to investigate how potential flood warnings could be cascaded to the Parish Council.
- (ii) The Emergency Planning Officer investigated a number of systems which could be used. The following options were considered:-

Option	Pros	Cons
1) To advise and support parish councils in signing up to the Environment Flood Warning Service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Warnings are direct from the Environment Agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Warnings are intended only for Main Water Courses and not Ordinary Water Courses. Some parishes are at risk from flooding from Ordinary Water

		Courses.
2) To provide parish councils with Met Office severe weather warnings by text using the Answering Service (24hrs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All text messages are instant from a computer using an automated message. ▪ Text messages can be received quicker as it does not rely on someone picking up the phone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floods are few and far between whereas weather warnings are far more common and therefore the information could be misleading.
3) To contact the parish councils by phone when a Met Office weather warning or Environment Agency flood warning is received.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conflicting information from the Environment Agency flood warnings and Met Office weather warnings. ▪ Time lost making contact with each council would be impractical particularly out of office hours. ▪ Monitor incoming warnings and contacting all parishes would require a team of officers.

(iii) It was decided that the best option was the weather warning service because most parish councils are already aware of option one; option three would be impractical and expensive and again, information could be misleading. It was therefore viable to choose option two as it was simple to use and cost effective. This was offered to all parish councils but none have shown interest in taking this service up as some have alluded to the fact that there are anomalies in weather warnings and floods.

(iv) The Emergency Planning Department has also produced guidance on how to store and distribute sandbags which has been made available to the parish/town councils.

Flood Fair:

As part of the Corporate Plan and under the requirement of the Civil Contingencies Act, the Emergency Planning Department will conduct a Flood Fair on 2 October 2007 for the general public and those at risk from flooding. The Flood Fair is intended to provide advice and guidance and will include a range of organisations and companies in the field of flood prevention in order

to achieve the overall goal. Members are invited to contact the Emergency Planning Officer if they wish to participate at this event.

6 Dog Control areas

The public consultation has commenced on designated Dog Control areas, this will report back to this committee in November.

7 Greenways Play Area

Saffron Walden Town Council have obtained a draft scheme for local consultation. In the interim the play area has been closed due to concerns about health & safety. Officers are working on obtaining external funding. The scheme is within the Play Strategy for funding.

8 Housing Initiative Task Group

This task group has been established and its first meeting will be held on 17 September. The group will consist of 2 Tenant Representatives plus Cllrs Bellingham-Smith, Chamberlain, Hicks, Hudson, Menell and Morson.

9 Homelessness Shelter

- (i) The site plan for short stay managed accommodation at Manor Road, Stansted is agreed and planning permission sought.
- (ii) Following the Community Committee a meeting was held with residents to discuss our proposals regarding the site. The garage site did, over the years, suffer from anti-social activity. The block will house an office as a point of contact with the an 'In Touch Floating Support Service'.
- (iii) Some residents welcomed development of a site which is currently unattractive. However many concerns were raised – mainly how would the block be controlled or monitored and will the bed sits be used to house people with social problem
- (iv) A formal planning application will be submitted shortly, followed by a bid for funds. Residents will again be consulted as part of the planning process.

The two following items update members on current issues.

10 Vicarage Mead Day Centre

There is a budget of £325,000 for the rebuild of Vicarage Mead Day Centre, the tenders came significantly over budget. Officers and professional advisors have been working with the two lowest tenderers to curtail the costs. Further work is ongoing including consideration of a reduction in floor space.

11 Housing Green Paper

Responses to the Housing Green Paper are to be submitted by 15 October. This will be on the agenda of the first Housing Initiative meeting in September to allow discussion and our response to be formed.