



Cabinet 9 July 2013

Annual Report 2012/2013 (Jul13/03)

1. Summary and reasons for recommendation

- 1.1 The Annual Report highlights the key activities and developments that have been achieved against the Cabinet's priorities as detailed in the 2012/2016 Corporate Plan. The Annual Report also sets out the Cabinet's Portfolio Holders and their respective responsibilities for 2013/2014.
- 1.2 On 3 June 2013, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was presented with the report by the Leader of the Council. He provided an overview of the progress made in 2012/2013 and comprehensively responded to questions raised.
- 1.3 When considering the report, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee broadly supported it and suggested some additions, which have been incorporated. Members are invited to discuss and approve the Cabinet's Annual Report for 2012/2013, attached as Appendix A to the report.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Cabinet's Annual Report 2012/2013, as contained in Appendix A to Report E51, be approved.

Contact details

Name

Title

Telephone

E-mail

Leader of the Council

John Griffiths

01284 757136

john.griffiths@stedsbc.gov.uk

Davina Howes

Head of Policy, Communications
and Customers

01284 757070

davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk

3. Corporate priorities

3.1 The recommendation meets the following, as contained within the Corporate Plan:

(a) Corporate priority: 3 *'Working together for an efficient council'*.

4. Key issues

4.1 The Corporate Plan for 2012/2016 sets out how we will deliver our Corporate Priorities which are:

- (1) Working together for strong, healthy and diverse communities;
- (2) Working together for prosperous and environmentally-responsible communities; and
- (3) Working together for an efficient council.

4.2 In order to help us deliver these priorities we identified commitments and a number of actions. This Annual Report presents progress against these. Many of the commitments are ambitious and will take time to complete, however, this report will present how we are working towards achieving them.

5. Other options considered

5.1 None applicable

6. Community impact

6.1 **Crime and disorder impact** *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)*

6.1.1 None applicable

6.2 **Diversity and equality impact** *(including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment)*

6.2.1 None applicable

6.3 **Sustainability impact** *(including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment)*

6.3.1 None applicable

6.4 **Other impact** *(any other impacts affecting this report)*

6.4.1 None applicable

7. Consultation *(what consultation has been undertaken, and what were the outcomes?)*

7.1 None applicable

8. Financial and resource implications *(including asset management implications)*

8.1 None applicable

9. Risk/opportunity assessment *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

9.1 None applicable

10. Legal and policy implications

10.1 None applicable

11. Wards affected

11.1 All

12. Background papers

12.1 St Edmundsbury Borough Council Corporate Plan 2012/2016

13. Documents attached

13.1 Appendix A: Annual Report 2012/2013.



Annual Report 2012/13

May 2013

Contents

Foreword from the Leader	3
Review of 2012/13 corporate priorities	4
Priority 1: Working together for strong, healthy and diverse communities	5
Priority 2: Working together for prosperous and environmentally responsible communities	16
Priority 3: Working together for an efficient council	22
The future	27
2013/14 Portfolio holders and responsibilities	28

If you have any questions about this Annual Report, please contact the Policy Team.

Email: strategy.performance@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Telephone: 01284 757638

Foreword from the Leader

The last twelve months have presented some tough challenges, but I am pleased to report that we have achieved a great deal despite difficult economic circumstances. Our 2012-2016 Corporate Plan sets out our priorities over the next few years, and this Annual Report presents the progress we have made in 2012/13.

Across St Edmundsbury we have continued to deliver excellent services to residents and businesses whilst freezing Council Tax for the third year running. A snapshot of this year's achievements includes establishing the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership (an innovative way of helping those in need to access housing in the private sector); support for the Suffolk Business Park development and construction of the essential Bury St Edmunds Eastern Relief Road; and helping communities to become more self-reliant through access to funding.

Working in partnership our shared services restructure with Forest Heath District Council is now well advanced and in April 2012 we took the positive step of appointing a Chief Executive. The joint unified staff structure is taking shape with the Joint Leadership Team being established last November and the remaining restructuring of our new joint service teams to be finalised later this year. Both councils expect savings in the region of £870,000 from the management restructure and are confident of making further savings.

I hope you enjoy reading this year's annual report and look forward to reporting further progress next year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Griffiths', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Cllr John Griffiths, MBE,
Leader of St Edmundsbury Borough Council

Review of 2012/13 corporate priorities

The Corporate Plan for 2012-2016 sets out how we will deliver our Corporate Priorities which are:

- 1** Working together for strong, healthy and diverse communities.
- 2** Working together for prosperous and environmentally responsible communities.
- 3** Working together for an efficient council.

In order to help us deliver these priorities we identified commitments and actions, many of the actions are ambitious and will take time to achieve. This annual report presents our progress.

Priority 1: Working together for strong, healthy and diverse communities

Commitments for 2012/13

- a Increase the availability of low-cost homes.
- b Reduce crime and the fear of crime.
- c Improve life opportunities.
- d Improve people's physical and mental health.

Why this was a priority for 2012/13

Having somewhere safe and affordable to live is fundamental to people's well-being, however many people are finding it difficult to buy their own home in the borough and we have also seen a rise in the cost of renting. This presents us with a challenge, as does the need to ensure that people are able to live independently into their old age. We are a safe borough, but need to continue to work with our communities to ensure that crime remains low and that the fear of crime doesn't impact on people's lives. We know that, whilst being a fairly affluent borough, there are pockets of deprivation and we need to continue to work to improve people's access to services and improve their life opportunities. Our cultural, leisure and sporting facilities can have an enormous positive impact on people's physical and mental health and wellbeing.

a Increase the availability of low-cost homes

Find innovative ways to help people find homes.

We have established the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership to operate across St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath. This partnership provides an innovative way of helping those in need to access housing in the private sector. The partnership operates in a commercial way to support people to find suitable accommodation whilst helping landlords sustain tenancies, maximise income and reduce void times. We are pleased to report that 40 households have been supported through this scheme across West Suffolk.

The National Housing Federation hosted the East of England Housing Summit at West Suffolk House in March 2013. Representatives of housing organisations from across the region met to discuss

the growing homelessness problem in the East of England. We are pleased to report that the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership was highlighted as good practice and attracted a great deal of interest from delegates about how it operates.

The Choice Based Lettings Scheme continues to provide homes for those people on the Housing Needs Register across the Cambridge sub-region. In response to changes in Government policy centred upon Welfare Reform and the Localism Act, we have been proactive in ensuring that, through the West Suffolk Lettings Policy we are compliant with the changes relating to the housing register priority and the size of the property for which people can claim benefit. We also used this opportunity to consider any other changes necessary after the four years since Home-Link Choice Based Lettings Scheme has been operating. The Lettings Policy continues to help those seeking social housing in West Suffolk decide where they would like to live and find a home, whilst ensuring that we can consider their needs and make the best use of available housing.

Work with private landlords to offer affordable accommodation and provide more homes for homeless families.

The West Suffolk Lettings Partnership has given us access to suitable private sector housing for those on the Housing Needs Register. It is hoped that the excellent relationships being formed with the private sector will result in private landlords offering more affordable rents in the future.

We are delivering the Suffolk Co-ordination Service as a two year pilot scheme funded by Suffolk County Council. One of the service's aims is to develop a single application form which will make it easier for people to access supported housing across Suffolk. Currently five different forms need to be completed. The benefit to our customers is a streamlined application process and ensuring that they receive the right level of support when housed.

Increase the housing supply by supporting private sector and housing associations to build new homes and improve existing ones.

We remain committed to ensuring that tenants in the private sector have safe and suitable accommodation, that vulnerable households are protected and that good quality housing is maintained by providing assistance through grant support. With Forest Heath, we have adopted a common approach through the Housing Assistance Policy which sets out the framework for providing housing assistance to owners and occupiers in the private sector.

We continue to work in partnership with Registered Providers such as housing associations to maximise development opportunities and funding streams to deliver new homes and where possible bring empty properties back into use. The current economic climate is proving challenging for developers to build new housing. However, in this year we built 42 new affordable homes.

The Rural Profiling Project has been launched as a pilot and will ensure that we have the right information to make informed choices about future residential developments and the affordability

of available housing options in rural areas. It will identify need, in terms of housing, and solutions to meet those housing needs. Housing cannot be considered in isolation and the pilot will address needs associated with wider community issues such as care and support and space for home and community working. Crucially, the pilot is about empowering the local community to shape their own solutions.

Parishes across the borough have been approached to take part in the pilot. Data will be gathered from a variety of sources including at a sub-regional and County Council (Suffolk Observatory) level, to establish the following key facts for each pilot village:

- a. Population age profile.
- b. Household composition.
- c. Private rent levels.
- d. Stock profile all sectors.
- e. Stock turn over all sectors.
- f. Housing demand for all sectors.
- g. Compare housing demand with price people can afford to pay.
- h. Unemployment rates.
- i. Social-economic status.

If the pilot is successful it will provide key information on local needs, stimulate a positive response in finding solutions to the identified needs and empower the local community to take ownership for moving forward to finding solutions.

Encourage best use of homes within the borough.

We carry out extensive work to ensure that homes in the borough are used in the best way possible. This is underpinned by our work with private sector landlords and helping to ensure that homes in the borough are fit for purpose. We also contact the private sector landlords and owners about homes not in use.

As at the end of March 2013 the number of homes in St Edmundsbury that have been empty for more than 12 months was 174, all of which are being monitored. Grants are available for improvements to meet the Decent Home Standard, allowing them

to be rented out to vulnerable households seeking rented accommodation.

In response to the Localism Act we have developed a Tenancy Strategy which sets out guidance to Registered Providers in the borough. The benefit of this strategy is that it provides greater flexibility when issuing tenancies which will allow for movement in the housing stock when the circumstances of a person or family changes. In the current economic climate there is a high demand for housing and the Tenancy Strategy will help to ensure that as many people are housed as possible.

b Reduce crime and the fear of crime

Encourage people to play an active role in keeping their communities safe.

We work with partners at a strategic level through the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP), and at a more local level with the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) and groups such as Town Pastors in order to keep West Suffolk a safe place to live, work or visit. We also support communities to access the various "watch" schemes. For example when speeding is raised at an SNT meeting the Community Safety Officer will write to the relevant parish council giving them the contact for Community Speedwatch. Rural communities can apply for a grant, via our Rural Action Plan, of up to £1,000 for equipment to help them set up a local Speedwatch group.

There are currently seven Community Speedwatch schemes in the borough and 295 active Neighbourhood Watch schemes. A Farmwatch Scheme has been established in the borough and there are Pubwatch schemes for Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill. Whenever we can we encourage communities to support and engage with watch schemes. With effect from March 2013, funding difficulties have led to the withdrawal of the Friday night presence of the SOS Bus in Bury St Edmunds. Although no longer a regular feature of the night-time economy the bus is still available to support specific campaigns such as the responsible drinking campaigns held during the summer and over the Christmas and New Year festive season.

The Town Pastor Schemes in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill continue to make a valuable community contribution to helping people who may become vulnerable during a night out. In Bury St Edmunds the pastors, who work from 20:00 to 04:00, were out on 94 evenings in 2012/13 and dealt with over 3,250 incidents ranging from providing water, removing potential weapons (such as bottles and cans), providing medical assistance and talking to people about their wellbeing and personal safety. In Haverhill, where the pastors operate between 18:00 and midnight, the scheme was operational on 46 nights and dealt with over 2,800 contacts. The difference in the number of nights worked and incidents dealt with reflects the difference in scale between the night-time economies of the two towns as well as the number of Pastors in each scheme. In Haverhill the night-time economy is pub based whereas Bury St Edmunds also has night clubs which stay open later and draw in to the town a wider range of people from the surrounding area with the result that assistance is needed into the early hours of the morning.

All the public car parks in the borough managed by St Edmundsbury have received the prestigious ParkMark Award. The ParkMark is awarded to parking facilities that have met the requirements of a risk assessment conducted by the Police, further details are given later in this report.

The total recorded crime figures across the borough for 2012/13 show an encouraging downward trend with 58.4 crimes per 1000 population being recorded, compared to 62.3 in 2011/12. This compared with 54.8 across Suffolk in 2012/13 and 62.5 in 2011/12.

Support efforts to stop crime happening.

St Edmundsbury is a partner in the WSCSP and each year its local priorities are reviewed through an evidenced-based assessment process. For 2012-13 the three priorities were:

- Sustaining a safer night time economy.
- Protecting and developing communities.
- Protecting vulnerable families.

These priorities are delivered by specific actions. Some examples of the kind of actions undertaken in 2012/13 include:

- Providing mediation to some of the most entrenched anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases.
- Mentoring for young people who become victims or perpetrators of ASB.

Case study:

An Anti-Social Behaviour co-located team has been in operation in St Edmundsbury since 2010 and brings together key partners to ensure that high risk reports of anti-social behaviour are tackled in a co-ordinated manner. The team was set up following a countywide review of how partners tackle repeat incidents of anti-social behaviour. The team is led by the Anti-social Behaviour coordinator who also worked across Forest Heath and Mid Suffolk. In 2012/13 the St Edmundsbury ASB co-located team dealt with 49 cases referred by partners and of those 46 cases have been closed and seven were repeat cases. As a result of working with partners the following has been achieved: one Anti-Social Behaviour Order, four referrals into early intervention programmes, one Family Intervention Programme referral, two Good Neighbour Agreements, two successful mediation cases, ten cases resulting in positive housing action (notice seeking possession, evictions, injunctions etc.), being taken against ASB perpetrators and one noise abatement notice being served by Environmental Health.

- Raising awareness of domestic violence with young people in supported housing.
- Implementing the "Knock Knock" campaign to raise awareness of distraction burglaries.
- Personal safety awareness campaigns relating to drinking responsibly, "Think before you drink," and sexual offences - "Time to Stop".
- Practical crime prevention such as information campaigns around domestic oil thefts and car crime and the Immobilise Property Marking Scheme.
- Supporting the Alcohol Diversion Scheme delivering brief interventions to people who receive a fixed penalty notice for alcohol related disorder.

c Improve life opportunities

Develop apprenticeship schemes.



We have defined our commitment to apprenticeships through a new Apprenticeship Agreement which developed with Unison and Forest Heath ensures a consistent and supportive approach to employing apprentices. There is considerable public interest in high levels of unemployment amongst young adults and this is an excellent opportunity for us to build quality apprenticeship routes for young people.

At present, we have eight apprentices across St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath and a further 25 people who have come through the apprenticeship scheme with some progressing through their initial NVQ onto formal professional qualifications.

We are pleased to report that the West Suffolk Apprenticeship Agreement is now being implemented by other organisations, and won the Sarah Swane Workforce Development and Equality Award 2012, from the East of England Regional Council. The scheme also received national recognition, leading to a visit to West Suffolk House by Lord Adonis, Skills Minister, and local MP, Matthew Hancock in December 2012, when they

talked to apprentices, staff, councillors and union officials from both councils.

Build capacity – the ability to become more self-reliant – and increase confidence within communities.

During 2012/13 a range of communities were supported to deliver local projects. There were



Case study

The transfer of the Southgate Community Centre to the Southgate Community Partnership (SCP) has had a very positive impact on the area. The transfer has been instrumental in building a stronger community in the area. With a clearly defined business plan and a sub-committee focused on commercial opportunities and development of the centre, hirings and income for the centre have risen.

The trustees have worked hard to ensure that the centre offers events and opportunities to all sections of the community, and this has resulted in a true sense of both pride and ownership. As well as offering fundraising, social and family activities, the community centre also offers several support and activity groups for the most vulnerable, and the trustees are keen to build on this in the future.

Furthermore, community ownership and charity status has enabled the SCP to access previously unavailable funding streams allowing it to undertake renovation work, including a new commercial kitchen.

by Councillor Sarah Stamp

two Jubilee Family Picnics organised, one on the Howard Estate in Bury St Edmunds and the other on the Chalkstone Estate in Haverhill. Borough officers helped co-ordinate some arrangements, local residents' groups played an important role in running events. A range of funding was secured that allowed free activities to be offered alongside the opportunity for local people to meet and socialise.

We took part in a community engagement project on the Midenhall Road Estate in Bury St Edmunds in November 2012, in partnership with Havebury Housing partnership. This was organised in response to representations from the community concerning a range of issues on the estate which impacted on their wellbeing. Community safety, community development and waste staff all took part in the project. At the request of local voluntary and community groups in Haverhill we organised an Informative Day which took place at the Leiston Social Centre in April. The day provided local people with the opportunity to seek advice from a range of partner organisations dealing with issues such as skills and employment, housing, health and wellbeing and debt and money advice.

The Haverhill Community Sports Association at Chalkstone has had great success in providing coaching and development for Haverhill teams of all ages. The board of the association is supported by St Edmundsbury staff and by the Football Association (FA). We have helped to prepare various successful funding bids and resulting in improvements to facilities. Haverhill Community Sports Association is cited by the FA as an example of good governance.

As part of its package of new community rights, the Government introduced the Community Right to Bid (or Assets of Community Value) and the Community Right to Challenge in the Localism Act 2011. All councils needed to make preparations for operating the Community Right to Challenge by June 2012 and the Community Right to Bid by September 2012. The rights are aimed at giving local people more power over what happens in their neighbourhoods by either bidding to take over the running of a council service, or by having more

time to bid to buy local buildings or land when they come up for sale.

We were among the first councils in the country to put new arrangements in place to support local community groups in submitting bids or expressions of interest under the new community rights. New web pages were developed and the new rights were discussed at a workshop at the Parish Conference in April 2013. To date, no expressions of interest have been received under the Community Right to Challenge. One listing has been made under the Community Right to Bid.

In the last year we have supported three community groups to access capacity building funding. This funding provides access to independent advice to enable communities to work through the issues associated with taking ownership of their local community centre. Westbury Community Association has achieved national funding and local professional pro-bono help, and is developing its plans. A community group in Haverhill is interested in the Chalkstone Centre. There are also discussions underway with Haverhill Town Council in relation to the Leiston Centre.

We are active members of the newly formed West Suffolk Partnership (WSP) (formerly West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership). The WSP aims to allow a wide range of organisations to work together and provide an environment in which partners, communities and individuals can make the most effective use of their joint resources to make a difference on local issues. The West Suffolk Operational Group (WSOG) is the support group for the WSP and amongst other things it gathers information in order to gain an understanding of the specific problems facing West Suffolk. The WSP has formed a pilot project around those not in education, employment or training (NEET). The aim of the project is to identify people in danger of becoming NEET and work with them at an early stage to avoid the progression to NEET. In December 2012 the West Suffolk Partnership launched the West Suffolk Network. The Network provides everyone with an interest in West Suffolk the chance to meet, share best practice, raise concerns, provide feedback and influence the work of the Partnership. Over 60 people representing 40

organisations from across West Suffolk attended. Feedback on the event was very positive and over 20 attendees volunteered to become more actively involved in the Network.

Support young people to create and maintain their own facilities and activities (statutory equality objective).

We have supported seven projects which have allowed young people to provide their own events and facilities. These range from Bury Sound Unplugged, which involves just a handful of young people helping run the acoustic music sessions in the Apex coffee shop, to over 30 young people regularly involved in the Bury Skatepark Experience Group.

The Bury St Edmunds Skatepark Experience is a group of young people who use the skatepark, together with some of their parents. It was established to give young people a say in how they want the Skatepark to develop. The group has previously secured over £50,000 of lottery funding to install a BMX track on the land around the existing wooden skatepark. The group are now working on replacing the wooden structures, which have come to the end of their life, with a concrete skatepark. The group raised over £31,000 towards the estimated £180,000 cost. This includes £2,300 raised from the SkateJam which the group organised in September 2012. Through regular meetings the group has commissioned designs which have then been discussed and tested with skatepark users. Over 330 questionnaires were completed which provide the views of the young people using the park and are important supporting evidence for the grant applications the group is in the process of making to a variety of funding sources. We have provided some capital funding through the leisure asset management plan. A modular design has been developed which allows additional features to be added to the park as more funding is raised. The group gives young people experience of planning and delivering a major project including funding raising, submitting grant applications, and researching the views of the users of the park. These are all skills which they include on their CVs and which they can go on to contribute to other community projects.



Other events during the year included the first Fresh Festival which was an event aimed at young entrepreneurs run as part of the Business Festival, held in September 2012. Young people are also involved in the committee which runs the 'On the Spot' mobile youth provision in Haverhill and have helped ONE Haverhill shape its community budget for young people in the town by taking part in community engagement, focus groups and sessions to design the new way of providing services. Community capacity to provide activities for young people has been extended through the Street Response project. This project trains local young people to become street-based youth workers, providing peer leadership to other young people. Four young people were trained in Haverhill, with a further 18 signed up for the next course, and 12 in Bury St Edmunds. The young people gain a Level two qualification in youth work and first aid training, all of which is useful development for them. We are delighted to report that several have been successful in securing jobs since the training.

The Youth Chill Out at Haverhill Leisure Centre has provided young people in this area with an alternative youth facility which enables them to meet in a safe environment and enjoy engaging in social activities. The session can attract over 100 young people on a weekly basis.

We have held discussions with the newly formed Community Action Suffolk (CAS). CAS is an organisation providing infrastructure support to voluntary and community groups which was formed by the merging of a number of local and county-wide organisations such as the Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations, Young Suffolk and Suffolk ACRE. Discussions focussed

on the outcomes that we wished to see from the funding it provides, with the emphasis on practical support, such as help in recruiting treasurers, secretaries and auditors for local groups, as well as a range of governance and funding advice.

d

Improve people's physical and mental health

Encourage wider access to physical and cultural activities and promote healthy lifestyles to benefit as many as possible.

We have promoted local activities through the 'Out and About' brochure and website. Launched in May 2012, Out and About is a way of helping the local community to find out about events taking place in the area. The first brochure was hugely successful and it led to a second brochure covering events between September 2012 and April 2013. For the second publication more venues were approached to take part which broadened the scope of the brochure. The brochure has been made available at a number of places including libraries, tourist information centres, schools and community centres. The brochure is complemented by a website (www.outandabout2013.co.uk) together with information posted on Facebook and Twitter.

We are building on the success of Out and About by expanding the brochure to include events at even more venues, including those in the Forest Heath area. In future we hope to publish the brochure twice a year and distribute it to all households in St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath.

Promoting healthy and active lifestyles is important, particularly in the older population. This year we secured £43,750 of funding from the West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group for an 18 month project to employ a falls exercise co-ordinator. The person appointed recently took up post and is mapping existing exercise provision, organising strength and balance training, and liaising with GPs, physiotherapists and local communities to ensure a seamless transition from the Health Service to community based facilities for older people who have experienced a fall or are at risk of falling.

The Active People Survey results indicated that 25.5% of the population were active three times a week for 30 minutes which is the highest participation rate in Suffolk and this is a 6.2% increase from the date it was first measured in 2006.

The focus on encouraging people to become more active has been maintained throughout the year and Abbeycroft Leisure launched a new initiative called Active St Eds in July 2012, across Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill. This initiative aimed to inspire people to become more active through the stories of individuals who use physical activity to lead a healthier lifestyle and overcome barriers. Physical activity in every form is promoted and the initiative encourages people to use the natural environment as well as other facilities and services to get active. This initiative demonstrates the value of physical activity and supports the aspiration to make Suffolk the Most Active County.

Leisure centres in St Edmundsbury received 900,000 visits in the year and maintained their popularity in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill by providing a wide range of facilities and services.

Referral programmes also saw continued success with over 100 referrals being made from a variety of health agencies and supporting these individuals to overcome illness. This scheme has also been supported by a falls prevention programme offering a wide range of classes to enable older people to maintain strength and lead a more independent lifestyle. Funding has also been secured from Sport England through the Get Healthy, Get Into Sport Fund to operate a targeted scheme providing sport to individuals to overcome mental health issues.

Abbeycroft Leisure has also continued to offer a free swimming programme which has enabled people aged over 60 and under 16 access to swimming within a targeted programme. This attracted 6,438 visits in 2012/13 and produced a real opportunity to access a valuable form of exercise.

A children's activity programme was operated throughout all school holiday periods and created a mix of opportunities in which young people could engage. A new programme called Explore Outdoor

was launched at West Stow Country Park and this provided a range of alternative outdoor activities for young people and promoted the use of this unique asset.

Promote cultural, sporting and leisure opportunities to all ages and abilities.

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games inspired a nation and St Edmundsbury was no different. A vast range of sporting and cultural activity took place to encourage people to take part in as many opportunities as possible. This was enhanced further by the presence of the Rwandan Olympic and Paralympic Teams which stayed in Bury St Edmunds in the lead up to the competition.

The teams' arrival in the town was the culmination of partnership working between the council, Abbeycroft Leisure, local schools, sports clubs, local businesses and community groups. It gave the chance for local people to take part in opportunities such as training with sports people in athletics, sitting volleyball, swimming, powerlifting and judo. The athletes engaged in a wide number of events to inspire people with different abilities to take part. The following events took place: the Suffolk Youth Games; Suffolk School Games; the Torch Relay; Sport Rwanda Week; St Edmundsbury

Sports Awards Sitting VolleyBall Exhibition Match (Great Britain v Rwanda); and Cycle to Rwanda which raised over £11,000 for the charity 'Sport for Rwanda'.

The Olympic Torch Relay came through Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds on 7 July. 25,000 people attended in Haverhill and 60,000 in Bury St Edmunds making the day the largest event we have ever organised. Both relays were a great success and enjoyed by all.

All of these events and initiatives raised the profile of sport. Many of the activities and events will continue beyond this year and become regular in the sporting calendar as part of the legacy of the games.

Providing good quality parks and open spaces contributes significantly to the health and wellbeing of our community and access to green space provides a wealth of opportunities for exercise and sport. We therefore place a high priority on maintaining these areas.

Visitor numbers to four parks and open spaces in the borough are monitored on a monthly basis and during 2012/13 there were approximately 1,244,906 visitors to the Abbey Gardens; 230,495 to Nowton



Park; 187,176 to Clare Castle Country Park; and 64,908 to East Town Park.

A busy weekend of Jubilee events took place in the Abbey Gardens, Nowton Park, East Town Park and Moyses's Hall with up to 5,000 people attending. This represented a great team effort between a number of partner organisations. We also supported commemorative tree planting schemes throughout the borough to ensure that the Jubilee is remembered for generations to come.

In Haverhill, the Jubilee was marked with the new Jubilee Plaza and flagpole and the new Jubilee Park (on the former Clements Primary School site) which will include a small play area and has been designed in consultation with the local community. The park also includes the new Jubilee allotments and related facilities. The formal opening of this site is planned for summer 2013.

In its first two years it is estimated that over 250,000 people attended a diverse range of shows and events at the Apex. In this year we introduced a 'day ticket' for visitors to West Stow and Moyses's Hall to encourage visitors to our heritage sites despite poor weather experienced. All of this work is being supported by the Out and About brochure and website which has been very successful at targeting all ages and interest groups in the community.

Have a strong voice on the Health and Wellbeing Board to help achieve a healthy population.

We have played an active role on the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Portfolio holder for Culture and Sport has attended Board meetings, training for Board members and a stakeholder event. Furthermore, staff have played an active role in the task and finish groups which underpin the work of the Board. These efforts resulted in West Suffolk having considerable influence over the content of the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Strategy has recently been approved with much of the text from the West Suffolk consultation response being incorporated directly into the final version.

We have a strong role in promoting healthier lifestyles. A wide range of council services, from Housing to Economic Development, support the delivery of the four outcomes adopted by the Health and Wellbeing Board, which are:

Outcome 1: Every child in Suffolk has the best start in life.

Outcome 2: Suffolk residents have access to a healthy environment and take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

Outcome 3: Older people in Suffolk have a good quality of life.

Outcome 4: People in Suffolk have the opportunity to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Support measures to increase affordable warmth to householders.

15.5% of households in the borough are predicted to be in fuel poverty which compares with the county average of 18%. The Government's Warm Front Scheme operated until January 2013. We supported the scheme which helped people at risk from fuel poverty, specifically, on low incomes living in properties with poor insulation or without a heating system. Warm Front expenditure on energy efficiency improvements in the borough totalled £17,000 in 2012 and £2.3 million since 2007.

In response to closure of the scheme, Suffolk local authorities and their partners secured £315,000 of external funding from the Department of Health and £165,000 from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) during 2012/13 in support of our winter fuel poverty programmes. We have been partners in the Department of Health-funded Warm Homes Healthy People programme over the last two winters. The aim of the programme is to reduce excess winter mortality and illness caused by cold homes. Up to the end of March 2013, over 260 households received a free energy survey with 140 homes being referred for loft or cavity wall insulation. The Suffolk-wide partnership has also been promoted at over 18 neighbourhood roadshows and 16 other targeted events run with the Rural Coffee Caravan charity on behalf of the project. The programme continues to operate in 2013/14.

Case study:

This case study highlights some of the work carried out by Warm Homes Healthy People during 2012 (names have been changed): Simon is in his late 60s. His poor health keeps him in a wheel chair in his living room all day every day. His social worker called the Warm Homes helpline to say that Simon had no heating because he had run out of oil and could we help. Andy from the Suffolk Warm Homes Healthy People Project went out to Simon to see what could be done. Andy found that Simon's house was leaking heat with no loft insulation and draughts blowing in through curtain-less windows. Simon was freezing. Andy took with him a plug-in oil filled heater to get Simon's living room warmer. He organised an emergency oil delivery and a heating engineer to get the boiler going. Andy also arranged for someone to measure up for loft insulation and fit heavy duty curtains. These improvements were paid for through the Suffolk Warm Homes Healthy People. Simon is warmer now.

Reduce the level of environmental pollutants (noise, contaminated land and air and water quality) that impact on health.

We have a duty to monitor for specified air pollutants under Local Air Quality Management regulations. Currently only Nitrogen Dioxide, associated with road transport, is monitored at eighteen sites in St Edmundsbury using diffusion tubes at a number of locations. No adverse health impact is predicted, based on the monitoring results and likely exposure levels at these locations. We dealt with 762 environmental pollution complaints during 2012. These included complaints associated with odour, noise, dust, drainage and land contamination.

Priority 2: Working together for prosperous and environmentally responsible communities

Commitments for 2012/13

- a Encourage inward investment and support local business development.
- b Make the best use of community facilities.
- c Enhance and protect our environment and heritage.
- d Support sustainable transport options.

Why this was a priority for 2012/13

We want our local economy to thrive and prosper and provide jobs that people want. Attracting new investment and retaining and strengthening existing business is key to ensuring the future prosperity of the borough. We want to encourage wider use by communities of the many facilities in the area and we know that people value the natural and built heritage of the borough, so we need to work hard to retain and enhance that.

a Encourage inward investment and support local business development

Lobby for superfast broadband in rural areas.

We are working in close partnership with Suffolk County Council and district councils to deliver the Better Broadband for Suffolk project (BB4S). This £40 million scheme will offer superfast broadband to 85-90% of premises across the whole of the county by 2015.

Support the Suffolk Business Park development.

We are working to deliver the 68 hectare extension to Suffolk Business Park, to the east of Bury St Edmunds. Before this extension can be developed, it is essential that junction 45 on the A14 at Rougham is improved and a relief road is in place to provide access to the park. The development of this land is expected to provide approximately 14-15,000 new jobs.

Encourage the delivery of a Haverhill Research Park.

In partnership with Carisbrooke Investments, we successfully secured £4 million through the New Anglia and Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnerships to develop the Haverhill Research Park, a flagship project that will bring new homes, leisure and employment space to Haverhill. The development is expected to create up to 2000 new jobs and homes for around 350 people.

Work with local economic partnerships to secure inward investment that will support local jobs.

We work proactively with the UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), Local Enterprise Partnerships, business representative groups, commercial agents and Suffolk and Cambridgeshire County Councils to attract inward investment. We also work with local businesses seeking to invest and grow their current operations.

Ensure the viability of our town centres and promote the individuality of our towns and rural areas, especially through support for our markets and tourism.

In partnership with Bid4Bury, we support tourism and work to provide a co-ordinated approach to marketing the events held and promotion through websites and literature. The Bury St Edmunds Tourist Information Centre (TIC) also organised a very successful Jubilee event in the Abbey Gardens, on behalf of Bury Town Council, and events organised by Haverhill Town Council have also been promoted.

The Christmas Market in 2012 was again a huge success with 100,000 visitors, 300 stallholders and 180 coaches. The market was estimated to be worth over £1 million to the local economy.

The 'Love Markets' promotion has been successful in boosting visitors to the market and encouraging new stallholders. The promotion has included a new website and the production of recipe cards.

We do all we can to increase customer and trader satisfaction with the markets in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill by holding regular meetings with trader representatives to explore new ideas for markets promotions. In this year, there have been 28 newly recruited traders and 39 traders left the market. The market occupancy rate is 186,680 linear feet.

ParkMark is part of the Safer Parking Scheme, an initiative of the Association of Chief Police Officers aimed at reducing crime and the fear of crime in parking facilities. The ParkMark is awarded to parking facilities that have met the requirements of a risk assessment conducted by the Police. These requirements mean the parking operator has put in place measures that help to deter criminal activity and anti-social behaviour, thereby doing everything they can to prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime in their parking facility. For customers, using a ParkMark Safer Parking facility means that the area has been vetted by the Police and has measures in place to create a safe environment, including appropriate lighting, effective surveillance, clean environment and quality management. All the

public car parks operated by St Edmundsbury have received prestigious ParkMark awards. We are also pleased to report that West Suffolk's Parking Services Manager, Cameron Findlay, has been voted Parking Person of the Year 2013. The British Parking Awards 2013 were presented to the people leading car parking management. Across West Suffolk, Cameron has created a traffic management team to help customers choose the right location for their stay, and to reduce on-street queuing. This ambassadorial culture has had a remarkable effect on compliance, with only 0.2% of visits incurring a fine.

Use the Apex to complement other facilities in the borough and develop the space for both cultural and commercial activities.

The Apex is a blank canvas for virtually any event. The auditorium converts from a 525 seat theatre, to a standing music venue of 800, to a flat-floor space for conferences and parties. The upstairs bar areas and studios at the rear of the building are also used for a variety of events. The Apex is therefore one of the most versatile public buildings in the country, and this will improve further following the investment of the caterer in the downstairs foyer.

There is a programming policy for staging music, dance and comedy performances to complement the Theatre Royal's focus on drama and positive liaison takes place with St Edmundsbury Cathedral to avoid the likelihood of clashes when hosting concerts.

In addition to world-class musicians and entertainers, drawing audiences from all over the country, the Apex has hosted events and activities of regional significance. The highlights include NHS conferences, the BOSCH national conference, BID4BURY, BBC Children in Need and the Bobby Robson Breakthrough Breast Cancer Ball.

b

Make the best use of community facilities

Assist the transfer of community facilities to community ownership.

We have received one application under the Community Right to Bid and we continue to explore options for the four community centres in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill. As described earlier, the rights are aimed at giving local people more power over what happens in their neighbourhoods by either bidding to take over the running of a council service, or by having more time to bid to buy local buildings or land when they become available for sale.

The Victory Ground Facilities Project is a major new facility for Bury St Edmunds and will include a new pavilion with space to hold functions, overlooking both cricket areas with four changing rooms below. In addition, there will be a 4-5 Badminton court-sized sports hall with two adjoining changing rooms. This represents approximately £2 million of investment with the council contributing £25,000. The project is being developed by a Community Interest Company which consists of Victory Sports Ground Ltd, South Lee School and Bury St Edmunds Cricket Club. South Lee School is providing £1.5 million of funding and the English Cricket Board is contributing £250,000.

The Victory Ground was transferred this year from the council to the Community Interest Company by a Community Asset Transfer. This project is regarded by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy as a case of national good practice in Asset Management Transfer. A condition of the transfer is a Community Use Agreement enabling public use of the facilities. The facility is due to be completed in October 2013.

Allotment holders in Haverhill are celebrating the successful transfer of the Manor Road allotments to their newly formed association. The plot holders met St Edmundsbury staff in Spring 2012 to discuss ways of improving the site which was developed throughout the year. The favoured approach was that the tenants would form a constituted allotment association and lease the site from the

council. The National Association of Leisure and Allotments Gardens provided advice on the terms for the ten-year lease, allowing the Manor Road Allotment Association, which comprises of those people who tend plots on site, a greater say in how the site is managed and the setting of rents. The Association will be responsible for collecting plot holders rent, filling vacant plots (using the waiting list provided by the council), insuring the site, paying site rent and monitoring plot holders adherence to the terms and conditions of the lease.

Vision 2031 captures our aspiration to increase the number of facilities offered for community use. One recent practical example of support for improved access to facilities is the £10,000 awarded to the group leasing the swimming pool at Hopton Primary School and making it available for the wider community to use.

This provides local access to swimming facilities which prevents the need to travel to Bury St Edmunds or further afield.

Maintain strong rural communities.

Through the Rural Action Plan we continue to support our rural communities in a number of ways:

- Grants have helped seven villages to install a projector, screen and other related equipment in their respective village halls/community centres for use at parish council meetings, youth groups, other community meetings and hirers of the hall.
- 32 grants were awarded following applications for a Greener Business Grant which funds energy saving measures such as loft insulation, replacement heating, lighting upgrade and variable speed initiatives.
- The Warmer Greener Homes initiative has helped 293 homes obtain energy saving materials across West Suffolk.
- In May 2012 an event, 'Is there a business in you' was held where successful businesses gave inspiring and thought-provoking presentations and workshops to attendees who were thinking of starting up their own business. The event was delivered in partnership and was a huge success.
- During this year a scheme to support the employment of apprentices in rural businesses



has been developed for implementation from April 2013. We have been working with West Suffolk College to deliver this project and it will enable an employer to apply to the college for a grant of up to £2,500 to support an apprentice which will be match funded by the employer.

- The Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project works with all the major agencies that deliver services aimed at improving care, quality of life and independent living. The caravan made 39 visits in the rural areas. The project remains very popular but securing the funding to enable it to continue may become a challenge. Funding is continually being sought from local authorities and grants and the project has signed up to a donations website to try and attract financial support.
- We have continued to work with a number of organisations to develop projects which improve the quality of life for young people in rural areas. Projects address specific issues such as community safety, anti-social behaviour, health improvements and skills development. The 'Wos Up' project operated in nine villages with sports equipment, a tuck shop, DJ equipment and a mobile media suite.

More information about grants that have been approved through the Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme can be found under priority three.

Support increased access to public buildings such as schools, sports and other community facilities.

The Victory Ground Facilities Project is a major new facility for Bury St Edmunds. Although the new sports hall is operated by a private school (South Lee) it is being made available for community use as part of the Community Asset Transfer of the Victory Ground.

Discussions are underway with Stour Valley Community College in Clare about the enhancement of facilities which will be available for both school and community use. However, the current economic climate is a difficult environment to attract the external funding needed for new facilities.

C Enhance and protect our environment and heritage

Maintain high levels of cleanliness.

The waste and recycling operations of St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath have been successfully merged and are operating effectively. Vehicle livery has been refreshed and joint service

charges, documentation and services offered have been agreed and are being implemented.

We are performing above our targets in levels of cleanliness for detritus and graffiti. However, litter is currently below target. In this year we have begun a new local environment quality surveying system and this new inspection regime has affected our performance figures. Changes to the cleansing schedule were made which resulted in an improvement in quarter four but targets will be reviewed for 2013/14.

Encourage less waste and more recycling.

The Suffolk Waste Partnership has identified a number of ways it can reduce waste to landfill sites. These include a joint communications plan; a review of bulk waste collection services; a review of street sweepings and a recycling incentives project.

A new textile recycling campaign was launched across West Suffolk in 2012/13. A campaign was focused around activities such as textile roadshows in Bury St Edmunds and Mildenhall; a radio advert and press releases and a replacement bag poster campaign. The scheme has been very successful and

between August and December 2012 West Suffolk collected 137 tonnes of textiles (508 tonnes across Suffolk).

In this year we have also developed a targeted education and enforcement strategy to raise awareness of waste and the need for recycling. Activities include the notification to households of service changes, litter picking projects and a plastic recycling project is planned for Spring 2013.

Encourage people to reduce their energy use and water use and generate their own renewable energy.

During the summer and autumn of 2012 we promoted the Suffolk 'Warm as Toast' Insulation programme which offered free or heavily discounted home insulation to eligible houses in Suffolk. 614 households in the borough enquired about loft or cavity wall insulation, 184 of which resulted in installations being made.

Through the participation of schools, community groups and businesses over 1,000 homes across Suffolk received loft or cavity wall insulation



Textiles Recycling Roadshow

with over £15,000 being raised for good causes. A number of organisations benefited from the programme in the borough which included Great Barton Village Hall, the Mayor's charities, Stanton Community Centre, Castle Manor Academy and Hopton Primary School.

As part of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, we were successful in securing £98,000 and we are supporting a Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) funded Green Deal pilot across Suffolk. This pilot consists of a range of promotional activities including roadshows and publicity to promote free home energy assessments by a qualified surveyor, leading to a detailed action plan for each participating household and access to Green Deal finance. The pilot programme will run into 2013/14. During the year the Partnership's Environmental Business Advisor service carried out detailed energy audits of ten business in the borough identifying over £90,000 of potential annual energy savings for the businesses and annual CO2 saving of 40 tonnes.

With funding from the West Suffolk Partnership, 31 local businesses across St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath were supported with Greener Business Grant aid to the value of £21,300. This investment is predicted to deliver annual energy savings of £19,500 for the businesses and annual CO2 savings of 91 tonnes. Supported by the Feed-In Tariff, 1.5 megawatts of renewable energy generating capacity using solar photovoltaics and wind technologies was installed across the borough in 2012.

In May 2012 a loan was offered to the council's two leisure centres for a scheme of environmental improvements and these are detailed in the next section.

Use our influence, alongside our regulatory and statutory powers, to protect our built and natural environment, rural and urban heritage and resources.

In 2012/13, two additional buildings have been listed and 11 new Tree Preservation Orders made. The Bury St Edmunds Town and Victoria Street

conservation areas have been reduced to ensure that the right parts of these areas are protected.

d Support sustainable transport options

Seek improvements to roads and other transport options.

In this year Section 106 contributions secured with planning permissions issued in 2012/13 totalled £51,435 for highways, which includes two agreements, one for highways improvements and the other a contribution towards a relief road.

A further £83,533 has been agreed for foot and cycleways with £157,00 secured towards cycle parking facilities and £4,621 towards Green Travel initiatives and public transport improvements

Ensure sufficient walking and cycling routes are provided, where appropriate, as part of the planning process.

Three agreements have been signed in 2012/13 providing for cycle routes, footpath improvements totalling £83,690 (including a cycle parking contribution of £157,00). This illustrated one of the practical ways that we can contribute to the health and wellbeing of our residents.

In the 2012/13 financial year, £50,955 of Section 106 funding has been used for improving pedestrian and cycle access at Thingoe Hill, Bury St Edmunds.

Priority 3: Working together for an efficient council

Commitments for 2012/13

- a Create unified, coherent and accessible service delivery across West Suffolk.
- b Continue to make efficiencies to meet our annual savings targets.
- c Develop staff and councillors' skills.
- d Proactively target external funding and look to generate more income where appropriate.

Why this was a priority for 2012/13

Like many organisations we have to manage with less money at the same time as seeing our costs rise and demand on some services increasing. We've done well over the past four years and saved £5.3 million. The budget consultation held in 2011 gave us a clear understanding of where people want us to make savings or increase income. It will be a challenge, but we will find savings and work more efficiently by merging our staffing structures with our neighbouring authority, Forest Heath District Council. We will also look for ways of reducing the resources we use and opportunities to identify money which can be spent in the borough.

a Create unified, coherent and accessible service delivery across West Suffolk

Engage with staff and councillors to create a unified staff structure with Forest Heath District Council.

We have made significant progress on the shared services restructure with Forest Heath. In this year we saw the positive step of appointing the Joint Leadership Team of a new Chief Executive, two directors and nine Heads of Service. The councils jointly expect to make annual savings in the region of £870,000 from the management restructure. The restructure of individual services will be completed in 2013/14. The shared services restructure is expected to achieve total savings of £2.3 million across both councils.

A single pay and reward package has been agreed between St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath. The councils worked closely and effectively with Unison in negotiating the new Pay and Reward Strategy, which was overwhelmingly supported through the ballot of Unison members. We now have a single pay structure for everybody, along with common



terms and conditions that are affordable and fair for the future. The package underpins our commitment to be a joint West Suffolk organisation of staff who are valued and rewarded appropriately during difficult budget times. The proposals modernise our pay and conditions package and at the same time we have modernised our organisation's management and staffing structure.

In 2013/14 the total savings through shared services are expected to be £1.2 million; with the cumulative savings since starting shared services expected to be £2.3 million across both councils.

A joint Chief Executive for the two leisure trusts: Abbeycroft Leisure and Anglia Community Leisure, was appointed in February 2013. This will enable the West Suffolk councils to work with a single leader of our strategic leisure delivery partners and

maximise opportunities to provide a quality sport, health and fitness offer.

Ensure customers continue to receive high quality cost-effective services.

A customer access strategy for both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath has been approved in this year. Customer access is a fundamental part of the shared services transformation programme. We recognise the need to achieve excellent customer service and customer satisfaction and through the strategy we acknowledge the demands on service delivery, customer needs, reducing costs, the shared services programme and the need to transform our services.

In order to improve the way customers can access the councils' services we are implementing a new customer service model. Our aim is to ensure that customers are able to find the information they need easily and quickly.

We are undertaking business process reengineering work (BPR) so that we can improve how we deliver customer service and through this we are developing a Target Operating Model (TOM) which states how we will interact with our customers and how we wish to deliver services across West Suffolk in the future. The TOM also addresses the need for more proactive communications, through text message alerts for example, and the increased use of our website and new technology for servicing customer transactions. However, we acknowledge that 'going online' is not always possible for all our customers. So far Waste; Planning and Development Control; Regulatory Services; Housing; and Leisure have looked in detail at their processes.

The corporate complaints and compliments received are reported biannually. In this year we received 168 compliments across the council and 58 complaints. As ever, we aim to learn from any complaints and identify ways to improve.

Put customers at the heart of our service redesigns.

Our Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) work focuses on challenging the ways we deliver services and provide information. The focus on redesign is a clear understanding of customer needs and preferences.

b Continue to make efficiencies to meet our annual savings targets

Reduce energy and water use in council buildings, and make the best use of technology.

Working with Abbeycroft Leisure Trust, we have supported investment in energy efficiency improvements which should result in savings at the Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill Leisure Centres. Improvements include better control of lighting and heating and improvements to pumps. Separately, Abbeycroft has installed combined heat and power technology at the Haverhill Leisure Centre.

We have installed automatic meter reading for both gas and electricity supplies at our largest buildings. This should help improve the monitoring of energy consumption. In 2011 we made a capital investment in solar photovoltaic installations (PI) on our corporate property to cut energy use and carbon emissions and benefit from Feed-in Tariffs (FITs). PI systems were fitted to five council properties comprising West Suffolk House, the leisure centres in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill, Haverhill Depot and the Council Offices in Haverhill. In their first year, the systems have generated around 163,000kWh of electricity with a gross value of £71,500 along with a CO2 saving of approximately 89 tonnes.

The council produced twenty different waste streams in 2011 down from twenty-three the previous year. Of these, 12 waste streams 50% recycled, three waste streams remain with potential

to increase the recycling rate to 50% or above. Five waste streams are subject to safe disposal only.

Continually challenge our costs so we can set realistic annual budgets that take account of the economic climate.

We are pleased to report that council tax was frozen in this year which means we have frozen the level of council tax for four out of the last five years.

In order to respond to the cuts in government funding and other economic pressures, we have had to make significant savings. We have an excellent track record of achieving substantial year on year budget savings and exploring ways of increasing income.

The key strategy to deliver savings over the next two years is the shared services re-structure with Forest Heath. In addition, local savings initiatives are being developed.

The changes to council tax support are also impacting on our budgets. In the 2010 Spending Review, the Government announced its intention to localise support for council tax in order to give councils a greater stake in the economic future of their local areas and to align the systems of benefits and discounts. Each council was required to develop its own scheme for introduction in April 2013, which reduced the overall spend on council tax support by 10% while protecting the most vulnerable and incentivising those who are able to return to work.

Both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath consulted on how the new system should work, including asking local people how the 10% financial saving should be met. Based on the outcome of this consultation and further deliberations by councillors, a new scheme was introduced on 1 April 2013. Under the new arrangements, working age claimants pay slightly more council tax (8.5%) and the single adult rebate has been removed. Other changes to existing council tax discounts for empty and second homes have also been made in order fairly to share the burden of the reduction in funding for council tax support.

As documented earlier in this report we are undertaking a restructure of the council's services and merging them with Forest Heath. This means that we are aligning the staff structure; this started with the Joint Leadership Team in this year and all departments across the councils will be restructured. A full review of the Mid-Term Financial Strategy will take place in Autumn 2013 and budgets may need to be challenged further.

There are important changes being introduced for business rates. As part of the new Business Rates Retention scheme, which took effect on 1 April 2013, the council will, for the first time be able to retain a proportion of the business rates it collects for its area, as well as a proportion of any growth generated. In addition to this we have signed up to a "Suffolk Pool" which should enable us to take advantage of growth across the county. The forecasted income from the scheme has been built into our financial plans and as such will be closely monitored as part of the ongoing financial reporting arrangements.

c Develop staff and councillors' skills

Ensure our staff take opportunities to learn so we use best practice to maintain the high quality of our services.

The corporate development programmes provide employees with opportunities that aim to meet the overall organisational needs of the council.

In this year we offered 43 training sessions for staff covering a range of core skill subjects from Information Communication Technology advanced training, to safeguarding young people and bite size sessions on Performance Development Reviews for managers and staff. 379 staff from St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath attended the training sessions.

We currently have 39 members of staff studying towards work-based apprentice qualifications some have Apprenticeship Contracts while many are staff working towards Level 2 and Level 3 in Maths, English and their core apprentice subjects. These

include business administration, customer service and finance to horticulture and waste management.

Provide our councillors with the skills they need to be champions within their communities, especially through promoting engagement in democracy and localism.

The member development programme for 2012/13 is based on a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) completed by Members to assess their skill needs to carry out their roles in the community. Changes in local policy and national legislation also inform the subject areas covered in the member development programme. Members attend national conferences relevant to their specialist roles and county training seminars in addition to the programme of training delivered jointly for members from St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath. A total of 15 events have been delivered this year covering subject areas such as local government finance; gypsy and travellers awareness; welfare reform; the Localism Act; planning training; and questioning and listening skills.

d Proactively target external funding and look to generate more income where appropriate

Support communities to access external funding.

11 applications for grants up to £5,000 have been approved - totalling £17,888 - to the following groups:

- Great Saxham Parochial Church Council - £1,100 towards a hearing loop in the Church;
- Kedington Community Association - £5,000 towards a heating and hot water upgrade in the Community Centre;
- Combined Halls of Clare - £2,500 towards the upgrade of the bar and kitchen area in the Town Hall;
- Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe Parish Council - £1,500 towards a new village sign in Ixworth Thorpe;
- Stanton Parish Council - £2,712 towards an underground sewage pipe from the Village Hall;

- Brockley Carpet Bowls Club - £320 towards a new bowls carpet;
- Horringer Hedgehogs - £1,000 towards new tables, chairs, safety mats and play equipment;
- Great Barton Bowls Club - £1,176.77 towards tables and chairs;
- Troston Village Hall Management Committee - £580 towards a new cooker in the Village Hall;
- Bardwell Baby and Toddler Group - £400 towards new toys and a storage facility; and
- Thurlow Sports Club - £1,600 towards the refurbishment of the Pavilion showers and new timed-flow basin taps in the toilets.

Two applications for grants between £5,001 and £10,000 have been approved (totalling £16,000 and subject to match funding being secured).

- Fornham All Saints Parish Council - £8,000 towards a skate park; and
- St Edmunds Archers - £8,000 towards a purpose built indoor range with a clubhouse.

We are pleased to report that match funding has been secured for 11 projects in this year which have now been completed.

Continually look for external funding sources to supplement the council's own budgets.

We actively seek partnerships and funding streams to bring valuable funding into the local community. In this year the following projects have been supported by external funding:

- Victory Ground Facilities Project (referenced earlier in this report), we have contributed £25,000 with £1.5 million funding from South Lee School and £250,000 from the English Cricket Board. The project has been enabled by the council's Community Asset Transfer of the Victory Ground and is due to be complete in October 2013;
- Bury St Edmunds Community Football Project has received in excess of £500,000 from the Football Foundation, £150,000 from the Football Stadia Improvement Fund, £250,000 from Suffolk Football Association. We have committed £1 million of funding to deliver this project together with the site for the scheme at Moreton Hall. The project will comprise a full size artificial

grass surface for football, the relocation of Bury Town Football Club and a Suffolk County Football Association Player Development Centre to provide excellent coaching, player and team development facilities through all ages in addition to daytime education use. It will develop senior and junior teams and football for players with a disability through the participation and engagement with the local football community; and

- Bury St Edmunds Skatepark (referenced earlier in this report). The Bury Skatepark Experience group has raised £31,000 towards the estimated £180,000 cost of the new park.

The future

As highlighted in this report, we have achieved a great deal this year, and by working with others, particularly with Forest Heath District Council, we have continued to deliver services and support communities, whilst facing challenging economic circumstances.

In 2013/14, we will continue to find ways to shape and deliver our priorities. Our plans for the future will be set out in a new Corporate Plan which will be published later this year. Importantly, the new Corporate Plan will be supported by a robust and sustainable financial plan.

2013/14 Portfolio holders and responsibilities

Portfolio Holder	Responsibilities
Leader John Griffiths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership of Council • Corporate Planning • Shared Services • Strategic Economic Development (LEPs) • Communications
Deputy Leader Sara Mildmay-White	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellbeing • Sport
Resources and Performance David Ray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal and Democratic • Elections • Finance • Internal Audit • Information and Communication Technology • Risk Management • Performance Management • Human Resources and Organisational Development • Health and Safety • Procurement • Customer Access
Economic Growth Alaric Pugh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development • Town Centre Management • Markets (Strategy) • Tourism (Strategy) • Car Parking Strategy • Transport
Planning and Regulation Terry Clements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning (Development Control) • Planning Policy • Building Control • Vision 2031 • Environmental Health (excluding Environmental Management) • Licensing
Housing Anne Gower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haverhill • Strategic Housing • Homelessness • Social Care • Gypsies and Travellers

Portfolio Holder	Responsibilities
<p>Communities Robert Everitt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bury St Edmunds • Community Safety • Youth Provision/Children and Young People • Community Development • Third Sector/Localism • Equalities • CCTV • Emergency Planning
<p>Heritage, Arts and Culture Sarah Stamp</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts and Culture • Festivals and Events • Heritage Services • Parks and Open Spaces • Public Halls • Tourism (Destinations and Events)
<p>Waste and Property Peter Stevens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Areas • Waste • Street Scene • Grounds Maintenance • Environmental Management • Property and Asset Management

