



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

B408

Rural Area Working Party 13 January 2011

Development of the 2011-2014 Rural Action Plan

SUMMARY

On 2 December 2010 Cabinet agreed to extend the Rural Action Plan for a further three years to cover the period from April 2011 to March 2014 (Report B303 refers). This decision followed the recommendation from the Rural Area Working Party held on 18 November 2010.

The first phase of the consultation process has been completed. This consisted of internal consultation with Members and Officers, and external consultation with our partners and rural residents.

A consultation draft Rural Action Plan has now been prepared using the information received to date. Officers are now seeking approval to send the draft plan out to consultation. The results of this second phase of consultation and the final draft Rural Action Plan will be presented to the Rural Area Working Party for consideration at its meeting on 10 March 2011.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is:-

- (1) for Members to note the draft Rural Action Plan;
- (2) to seek approval from Members to consult on the consultation draft Rural Action Plan (using delegated authority as approved under Report B303); and
- (3) authorise the Rural Economic Development Officer to make any necessary amendments to the consultation version of the plan prior to circulation.

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Rural Area Working Party

13 January 2011

Development of the 2011-2014 Rural Action Plan

1. Background

- 1.1 Internal consultation for the new Rural Action Plan took place in November and December 2010 as follows:-
- (a) Members of the Rural Area Working Party were consulted for their suggestions for suitable project ideas for inclusion in the new Rural Action Plan in terms of resources available and need;
 - (b) all rural members were contacted and asked to suggest project ideas through the 'Member's Bulletin';
 - (c) Officers within various sections of St Edmundsbury Borough Council were consulted for project suggestions; and
 - (d) Borough Council Staff who live in a village in St Edmundsbury were asked to complete the online survey via the staff 'E-Teamwork' bulletin.
- 1.2 External consultation with partners (including Business Link, Mid Anglian Enterprise Agency, Suffolk ACRE, Suffolk Association of Local Councils, Suffolk County Council and West Suffolk College) took place in November and December 2010.
- 1.3 The first phase of external consultation with rural residents took place from 2 December 2010 through a special edition of Rural News (following Cabinet approval of the Rural Area Working Party's recommendations of 18 November 2010).

2. Current position

- 2.1 To date 44 first phase public consultation responses have been received . The questions asked were:-
- (a) What project/s would you like to see take place in your village?
 - (b) Do you have any spare time? Would you like to do more to support your community? Can you give examples of the support you could offer?
 - (c) Is there anything else that you would like to let us know about?
- 2.2 The closing date for the first phase of consultation was 24 December 2010. An analysis of the responses is attached as Appendix B to this report.

- 2.3 A draft Rural Action Plan has now been prepared and forms Appendix A of this report. The document reflects responses to the consultation received by 23 December 2010. The Rural Action Plan is a flexible working document (and will continue to be so throughout the three year period from April 2011 to March 2014) and thus as consultation responses continue to be received, the Action Plan project list will be amended as appropriate. The delivery dates for projects are currently quite broad in the majority of instances, but these will be fine-tuned at the first annual review.

3. Next steps

- 3.1 Subject to approval of the consultation draft Rural Action Plan as requested by this report; the second phase of public consultation will commence shortly after the 14 January 2011 and end on 14 February 2011.
- 3.2 The second phase of public consultation will continue to ask members of the public and local organisations for project ideas, but will also ask the public for their opinion on the projects listed in the consultation draft Rural Action Plan.
- 3.3 Consultation responses will be collated and analysed, and further discussions will take place with our delivery partners.
- 3.4 The final Rural Action Plan will then be presented to the Rural Area Working Party on 10 March 2011 for it to recommend approval by Cabinet on 16 March 2011. The Full Council will be asked to approve the plan in April 2011.
- 3.5 Once the document has been approved, the Rural Action Plan for 2011-2014 can be officially launched at the Spring Parish Conference (date yet to be confirmed).

4. Recommendations

It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Working Party:-

- (1) note the consultation responses received to date;
- (2) approve the draft Rural Action Plan, as amended, for consultation (using the delegated authority as approved following Report B303); and
- (3) authorise the Rural Economic Development Officer to make any necessary amendments to the consultation version of the plan prior to circulation.

St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Rural Action Plan

April 2011 to March 2014



*Working with communities
in rural areas*



**St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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Please note that we will be producing a print-only black and white version of this document once it is finalised.

Foreword

From Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Portfolio Holder for Rural Affairs

Welcome to the council's new three year Rural Action Plan.

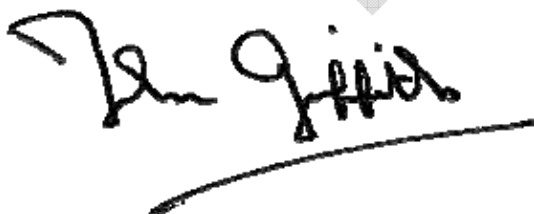
St Edmundsbury's Rural Action Plan has given us a framework for providing services which support, sustain and promote rural life.

Playing an active role in the borough's rural communities, where we can encourage and pump prime prosperity and help improve people's wellbeing, is a priority for the council and one of our cabinet commitments. To back this up we have set up a special committee of councillors, called the Rural Area Working Party, which meets on a regular basis throughout the year to specifically look at issues that affect our rural areas.

This new Rural Action Plan, covering the period 2011 to 2014, will continue to develop projects and themes found in the previous plan. Having this structure has served us well and resulted in tangible benefits for the 40 per cent of people in St Edmundsbury who live in our lovely villages and rural areas.

The plan is a partnership between ourselves and others with an interest in our villages; we thank our partners for their support and look forward to working with them in the future.

Although everyone is facing challenging times - not least local councils - we are "putting our money where our mouth is" and backing our support for rural communities with increased investment. With careful planning, innovative approaches, and working together, we hope this will continue to make a difference.



Councillor John Griffiths
Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Rural Affairs
St Edmundsbury Borough Council

March 2011



Executive summary

This Rural Action Plan is based upon a clear vision for our communities, which remains unchanged from our last Rural Action Plan. This vision is to have:

“Active, sustainable and thriving communities in peaceful and unspoilt countryside”.



Whilst our vision remains the same, we realise that the Rural Action Plan itself must be a flexible document that will inevitably evolve over the three years of the plan. St Edmundsbury Borough Council, like all local authorities, is having to work smarter and more efficiently to adapt to the new political and financial landscape. Our partners are also under similar pressures. Therefore some projects within the action plan may need to be reviewed or taken out of the plan, and new projects may need to be added. We always welcome project ideas and funding, so please keep letting us know if you think of projects that we can work on with our partners.

For ease of reading, projects within the action plan have been split into four sections: **empowerment** (enabling communities to help themselves), **environment** (improving both the built and the natural environment), **prosperity** (to generate a healthy economy) and **well-being** (actions which improve the quality of life of individuals and communities). Naturally, some projects fall within more than one of these headings, so we have associated what we consider to be the most appropriate heading to each project.

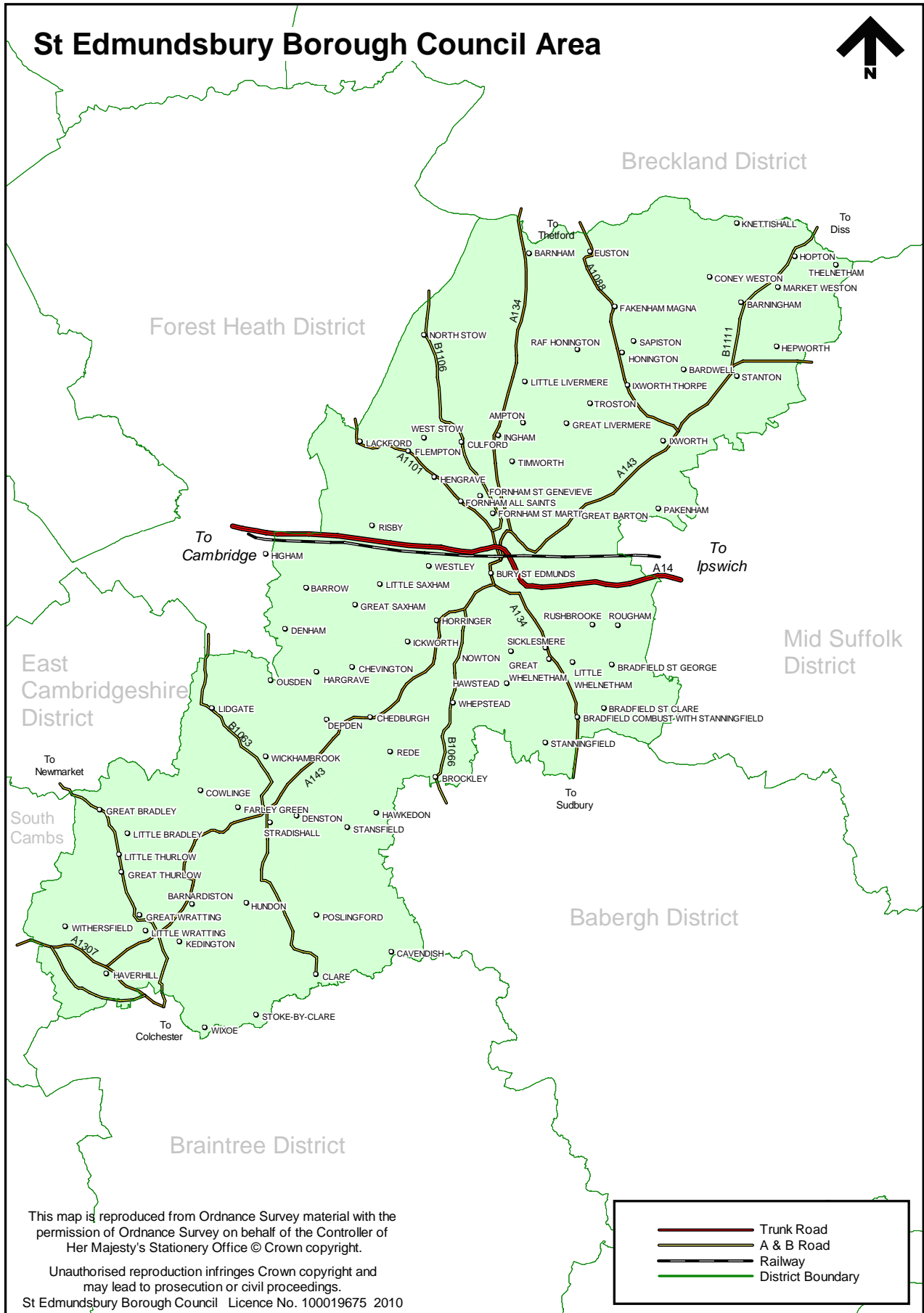
There are various types of projects in the plan, including those that support training needs, those that support and advise individuals and groups on various issues (including funding, business and older people's well-being), those that facilitate events and others that offer small grants. Small grants are particularly important since they provide money through a swift application process which enables communities to carry out much-needed community-led projects that otherwise may not have taken place.

Some projects listed in the action plan (for example, funding and supporting housing needs surveys, tours of the larger St Edmundsbury villages, and developing the Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project) will be familiar since they have been carried forward from our 2008 to 2011 plan. Experience has shown that these projects work and villages will continue to benefit from them.

This action plan enables St Edmundsbury Borough Council and its partners to be involved in real local projects that make a difference for our rural communities.

Map

Villages in St Edmundsbury in relation to neighbouring councils



Context

This Rural Action Plan has been produced during a time of unprecedented financial and political change in the country. There have been a number of developments in recent months, at local, regional and national levels. Local authorities at district and borough level, for example, are looking to share or merge their services to make savings.



Suffolk County Council has responded with its 'New Strategic Direction' programme, whereby the County Council will provide fewer services directly and many services will be delivered by different organisations in the future, including the voluntary sector, private sector and community groups.

The Government has announced its intention to abolish Regional Development Agencies and support the creation of Local Enterprise Partnerships, which are due to be in place by March 2012. Furthermore, the Prime Minister has launched the 'Big Society' concept, which aims to give more power to local people and communities. Intrinsicly linked to this is the Localism Bill, which includes the new 'Community Right to Build'.

All of the above changes mean that there is an increased need for communities to help themselves at a time when grant funding across the country will be diminishing. Nonetheless, these circumstances bring lots of opportunities; local people and community groups can get involved in the future development of their local area to determine its future in a way that has been difficult before.

Despite a reduction in its Government grant, St Edmundsbury Borough Council continues to invest in its rural areas; hence this Rural Action Plan.

Facts and figures

Nationally, 20 percent of the population lives in rural areas. The rural population of St Edmundsbury is therefore above average at 41.5 percent. We have defined 'rural' as everywhere in the borough outside Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill.

Most of our villages have a population of under 1000, eight have populations of 1000 to 2000, and only three have populations of more than 2000 (Great Barton, Ixworth and Stanton) according to the 2001 Census.

The population of St Edmundsbury's rural areas increased by 3.2 percent between 1991 and 2001; this was less than the rate of increase in the towns. Between 2001 and 2008 the population of rural England rose faster than in urban areas, according to The Commission for Rural Communities' *State of the Countryside Report 2010*.

Nationally there are growing differences between the age profiles of rural and urban England. There are more older people living in rural areas and there has been a reduction in the proportion of people aged between 20 and 35 years. This is true of St Edmundsbury's rural population, which experienced a 25 percent decrease in people aged between 16 and 25, and a 50 percent increase in those aged 65 or over between 1991 and 2001.

While virtually all households in urban areas nationally have access to services, a much smaller proportion of those in rural villages have similar access to services. This again is true of our local rural areas, where the number of post offices, shops and public houses is declining. Young people living in rural areas also feel dissatisfied because of the lack of facilities and services for them on their doorstep. There is therefore a dependence upon the main towns that provide employment, schools, shops and health and leisure activities. However, since public transport is not always available, it makes it very difficult for some people, particularly those without their own transport, to access any services. This can lead to rural isolation and thus a reduced quality of life.

Affordability of housing is a key concern within rural St Edmundsbury, with high house prices and rents relative to incomes. Families on lower incomes cannot compete with affluent incomers and so those new to the housing market are forced to move away from where they grew up, leaving family and friends. One in four households in sparsely populated areas have an income of less than 60 percent of the national average, when calculated before housing costs have been taken out.

Among businesses in rural areas, there are more start-up enterprises nationally in villages than towns. Because people in rural areas rely on their own cars, gas emissions per head are 8 percent higher than in urban areas.

Twenty-nine percent of people living in the most rural districts have given unpaid voluntary help at least monthly over the last year, compared with 21 percent of people living in the most urban authorities. In the last decade, there has been a marked increase in the number of people volunteering for conservation projects.

This information has come from various reports and sources, including those below.

For more information please see:

- o 2001 Census: www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/live/2001-census.cfm
- o Commission for Rural Communities, *State of the Countryside Report 2010* (for national statistics): <http://ruralcommunities.gov.uk/2010/07/06/state-of-the-countryside-2010/>
- o Choose Suffolk, The Observatory (for local statistics): www.suffolkobservatory.info
- o Department for Communities and Local Government (for the latest Government initiatives): www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/

Summary of projects

To be completed once the final projects have been approved

DRAFT

The action plan

Projects to support four themes: empowerment, environment, prosperity and well-being

Empowerment - enabling communities to help themselves				
No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
1	Deliver training for community leaders – these sessions will cover several topics, including how existing community leaders can enlist new people and develop the necessary skills base.	Improved knowledge for existing community leaders. Increased number of people becoming community leaders.	Economic Development Services (SEBC); local residents; and Suffolk Association of Local Councils.	From April 2011 to March 2013.
2	Deliver funding advice surgeries – these will be aimed at local rural community groups to enable them to access current funds to carry out community projects in villages.	Increased knowledge by community groups of available grants. More community projects taking place in St Edmundsbury villages. Increased external money coming into St Edmundsbury.	Community Development (SEBC); Economic Development Services (SEBC); local residents; and rural community groups.	From April 2011 to March 2014.
3	Deliver the Rural Areas Community Initiatives Fund - a small council grant scheme for community groups which gives up to 50% match funding from £500 towards capital projects such as village hall, play area and sports field improvements.	More community projects taking place in St Edmundsbury villages.	Economic Development Services (SEBC).	From April 2011 to March 2014 (subject to demand).

No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
4	Deliver the 'Connected Villages' project – this project was in the previous plan, but there is money available for one more village to benefit from this project. It enables a village to get free wireless internet access in their village hall, a laptop with Microsoft Office, and a grant for free broadband for a year.	Increased opportunity for residents to access the internet. Improved local facility.	Economic Development Services (SEBC); Parish Councils; Suffolk Association of Local Councils; and Village Hall Committees.	From April 2011 to March 2012.
5	Deliver a grant towards the cost of a projector and screen for community use – equipment to be used by the community for use in a village hall/community centre.	Improved local facility. Improved opportunities to provide presentations and training.	Economic Development Services (SEBC); Parish Councils; Suffolk Association of Local Councils; and Village Hall Committees.	From April 2011 to March 2014 (subject to demand).
6	Deliver the 'Help Yourself' pilot - one rural community within St Edmundsbury will be approached to pilot an innovative project designed to help communities with the delivery of the vision of the Government's 'Big Society' concept. By using existing staff skills and resources, communities will be supported to deliver those services or activities that they are interested in developing/taking on.	Improved use of existing resources. Strengthening skills of local community groups and residents.	Parish Councils; Suffolk County Council; various St Edmundsbury Borough Council officers; and various voluntary and community organisations.	From April 2011.
7	Deliver a participatory budgeting event – to encourage rural communities to take an active role in the allocation of grants in their community.	All councils in St Edmundsbury will be more informed about participatory budgeting and democracy.	Economic Development Services (SEBC); local residents; Parish Councils; and Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC).	From April 2011 to March 2012
8	Produce an information pack on running community events and street parties – to give communities a useful check-list to enable them to carry out events safely and successfully.	Increased number of community events taking place. Increased skills and knowledge of local residents.	Community Development; Economic Development Services and Licensing section (SEBC).	From April 2011 to March 2012

Environment - improving both the built and the natural environment

No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
9	Identify all the environmental organisations, projects and grants that are available in St Edmundsbury - with a view to making the opportunities for grant funding clear to rural residents and community groups.	Improved understanding of environmental grant schemes currently available. Reduced duplication of information about support available.	Parks Section (SEBC) and various environmental organisations.	From April 2011.
10	Deliver a tree and hedge planting scheme – the council will supply free plants and advice to tree wardens and community groups. Applications for funding must come from the parish tree warden in consultation with Suffolk Wildlife Trust.	More native species planted in the countryside for everyone's benefit.	Community groups; Parish Tree Wardens; Parks Section (SEBC); and Suffolk Wildlife Trust.	From April 2011 to March 2014 (subject to demand).
11	Deliver enhancement projects on St Edmundsbury owned nature reserves – this will involve working with volunteers, and sites that will be considered include: Risbridge Meadow and Woods in Kedington, Larksgate Meadow in Fornham All Saints, Diomed Drive Green and Downing Drive Spinney in Great Barton and The Chase in Stanton.	Complete management scheme and identified habitat improvements for one nature reserve each year.	Local community groups; local volunteers and Parks Section (SEBC).	From April 2011 to March 2014.
12	Promotion and support for the Upper Stour Valley - community action projects will be established to improve biodiversity and access and awareness.	One community action project completed each year.	Parks Section (SEBC); local groups and volunteers; parishes within the project area; and Suffolk County Council Dedham Vale Project.	From April 2011 to March 2014.

No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
13	<p>Support the further development of the 'Sustainable Tourism East' project in St Edmundsbury - local leaflets which cover some St Edmundsbury villages will be produced. They will include maps showing the facilities and opportunities for sustainable tourism. Participating businesses must complete marketing training, administered by East of England Tourism.</p>	<p>Improved relationship between tourism businesses and the broader rural economy through sourcing local food and cross-referral between tourism businesses.</p> <p>A more vibrant, efficient and eco-sensitive rural tourism economy.</p>	<p>East of England Tourism; Economic Development Services (SEBC); rural businesses; and Tourism Services (SEBC).</p>	<p>By June 2013.</p>
14	<p>Deliver the 'Business Carbon Cutters' grant - eligible businesses (Small and medium enterprises) in West Suffolk can apply for up to £1000 from the fund to carry out work such as insulating their building, replacing heating controls/lighting or installing more energy efficient alternatives to existing equipment. Businesses must participate in one of an existing portfolio of delivery mechanisms, including the Suffolk Environmental Business Advice sessions, the Resource Efficiency East programme (Renewables East), 'Energywise' (Suffolk Chamber of Commerce) and the Sustainable Efficiency East programme (West Suffolk College).</p>	<p>Reduced business carbon footprint.</p> <p>Reduced fuel bills for West Suffolk businesses.</p> <p>Increased profile for businesses taking part, through recognition and award programmes.</p>	<p>Businesses; Economic Development Services (SEBC); Environmental Management section (SEBC); Green Light Trust; Groundwork; Renewables East; Suffolk Chamber of Commerce; West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership; and West Suffolk College.</p>	<p>From April 2011 to December 2012 (subject to demand).</p>

No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
15	<p>Deliver the 'Warmer Greener Homes' initiative – this project builds on the successful county-wide 'Greener Homes DIY Grant' and consists of an income-banded grant that is available to residents in the West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership area. Residents will be provided with support and advice to enable them to improve the thermal efficiency of their homes. The project will be delivered through organising up to seven events in areas identified as being most at need and having poor home thermal efficiency.</p>	<p>Cutting energy bills and reducing household fuel poverty.</p> <p>Improved domestic energy efficiency.</p> <p>Improved take-up by residents of eligible benefits.</p>	<p>Environmental Management Section (SEBC); local residents; and the West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership.</p>	<p>From April 2011 to December 2012 (subject to demand).</p>
16	<p>Deliver a business electricity monitoring service – this service will be offered to small and medium sized businesses that will be given access to real time electricity data.</p>	<p>Reduced energy waste and CO2 emissions.</p> <p>Reduced energy bills for businesses.</p>	<p>Environmental Management Section (SEBC); West Suffolk College; and the West Suffolk Green Business Forum.</p>	<p>From April 2011.</p>
17	<p>Offer rural communities a comprehensive pack to enable them to carry out litter picks – this will include both equipment and educational advice to empower residents to undertake organised litter picks within their community. We would like to deliver this initiative as part of the cleansing review, in partnership with Forest Heath District Council.</p>	<p>Reduced litter in rural areas.</p> <p>Strengthened partnership working with rural communities.</p> <p>Raised profile of adopted education/awareness campaign as part of the cleansing review.</p>	<p>Local residents; Parish Councils; and Waste and Street Scene Services (SEBC and Forest Heath District Council).</p>	<p>From April 2011 to March 2014.</p>

Prosperity - to generate a healthy economy

No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
18	Deliver social enterprise awareness events and training – these sessions will aim to encourage the start-up of social enterprises and to expand the skills base and services of existing social enterprises.	Increased number of social enterprises developing. Improved skills for social enterprises.	Economic Development Services (SEBC); local and regional social enterprise organisations; local residents; and Suffolk ACRE.	From April 2011.
19	Business support sessions for rural business industrial estates – to promote and deliver sessions to at least two rural industrial estates.	Improved business efficiency. Reduced business failure in rural areas. Increased accessibility to business support.	Business support agencies; Economic Development Services (SEBC); and rural businesses.	From April 2011.
20	Deliver a grant for rural shops, post offices and public houses - a small scheme to help improve the groceries available in our rural areas through advice from a consultant and 50% match funding, from £500.	Improved facilities in St Edmundsbury villages.	Economic Development Services (SEBC); Plunkett Foundation; Pub is the Hub; Suffolk ACRE; and Suffolk County Council.	From April 2011 to March 2014 (subject to demand).
21	Support the employment of apprentices in rural businesses – the council will provide match funding towards the placement of at least two apprentices.	Increased productivity in the business. Improved skills and future employability for the apprentices.	Apprentices; Economic Development Services (SEBC); rural businesses; and West Suffolk College.	From April 2011.
22	Deliver business start-up support to rural areas – a qualified business advisor will visit rural locations to provide business start up advice.	Increased number of start-up businesses in St Edmundsbury. Increased employment in St Edmundsbury in the medium to long term.	Economic Development Services (SEBC); local enterprise agency; and rural residents.	From April 2011 to March 2014.

No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
23	Provide an 'enterprise champion' – a qualified business advisor will attend existing rural social and networking groups (e.g. parent and toddler groups and other special interest groups).	Improved opportunity to access business support. Increased number of start-up businesses in St Edmundsbury. Increased employment in St Edmundsbury in the medium to long term.	Economic Development Services (SEBC); local enterprise agency; and rural residents.	From April 2011 to March 2014.
24	Deliver and support Heritage Open Day events - encourage more villages and tourism businesses to take part in the annual Heritage Open Days.	Increased number of visitors to tourism businesses in St Edmundsbury. Improved awareness of local heritage.	Local history groups; local rural attractions; and Tourism Services (SEBC).	September annually.
25	Deliver National Mills Day events – encourage, support and promote villages with mills to deliver events, with further development in terms of facilitating sustainable transport options for residents who wish to attend the events without a car.	Increased number of visitors to the mills in St Edmundsbury. Improved understanding of local facilities and heritage.	Local mills; the National Mills Organisation; and Tourism Services (SEBC).	May annually.
26	Deliver tours of the larger St Edmundsbury villages – new tours to be prepared and provided by qualified tour guides in conjunction with local expertise, plus existing tours will continue to be promoted and delivered.	Raising the profile and number of visitors to villages during and after tours. Increased knowledge of local facilities.	Bury St Edmunds Registered Tour Guides; local businesses and attractions (including St Edmundsbury's West Stow); Parish Councils; and Tourism Services (SEBC).	Between May and September annually.
27	Pilot a joint business event or activity in partnership with the Clare Business Association – details to be announced.	Cannot list these until the project has been finalised.	Clare Business Association; Economic Development Services (SEBC); and local businesses.	To be confirmed at a later date.

No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
28	<p>Create a Farm Diversification Guidance booklet – both the Farm Diversification Guidance booklet and guidance on the re-use of redundant buildings in rural areas (project below) are intrinsically linked. There have been recent announcements from the Coalition Government that the Localism Bill will provide greater strength for local communities to determine their own future. This includes the potential for the creation of affordable housing using disused agricultural buildings as well as providing rural employment opportunities.</p> <p>At present, the existing St Edmundsbury Local Development Framework Policy RU4 is being reviewed with the formulation of a new policy in the draft Development Management Development Plan Document which will form part of the Local Development Framework. This will need to take account of any changes arising from the Localism Bill. The need for further guidance will be reviewed at this stage.</p>	Improved rural employment opportunities.	Planning Section and Economic Development Services (SEBC).	From April 2011 to March 2014.
29	Create planning guidance on the re-use of redundant buildings in rural areas – please see description in above project.	<p>Increased knowledge of the re-use of redundant buildings.</p> <p>Increased opportunities for farm diversification.</p>	Planning Section and Economic Development Services (SEBC).	From April 2011 to March 2014.

Well-being - actions which improve the quality of life of individuals and communities				
No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
30	Deliver a grant/s to support Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership's 'Community Speed Watch' - groups can apply for a grant towards training and equipment.	Reduced speeding on rural roads. Improved safety for pedestrians and other road users.	Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership and Parish Councils.	From April 2011 to March 2014 (subject to demand).
31	Deliver a grant for community cafés – in addition to the useful guide to community cafés that was produced in the last plan, a small grant is available for groups towards set-up costs to encourage communities to open a community café in a community building. Council officer support will continue to be available.	Increased social activity in villages. Increased use of community facility.	Economic Development Services (SEBC); Environmental Health (SEBC); Parish Councils; and rural residents.	From April 2011 to March 2014 (subject to demand).
32	Deliver an allotment guidance pack and grant – to introduce people to the land-share and produce-share idea.	Increased access to the environmental, social and health benefits that can be gained from managing an allotment. Reduced food miles.	Economic Development Services (SEBC); local community groups and residents; and Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC).	From April 2011 to March 2014.
33	Further develop the Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project (RCCIP) in St Edmundsbury – RCCIP now consists of a caravan for use from April to October but also a campervan which is in use throughout the year. The council will support the delivery of visits in St Edmundsbury villages.	Improved community spirit. Increased social interaction. Increase in number of community networking activities. Improved knowledge about information and services available locally.	Community councils; Economic Development Services (SEBC); Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project; Parish Councils; and the rural community.	From April 2011 to March 2014.

No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
34	<p>Facilitate older people's wellbeing checks - information will be made available to older residents on healthy eating, keeping active and improving general well-being, together with the offer of having blood pressure checks carried out and the inspection of walking aids.</p>	<p>Improved access to health and well-being services for rural residents.</p> <p>Extension of the council's health and well-being activity to those who may not always have the opportunity to visit other events which are held in towns.</p>	<p>Community Development Unit (SEBC); Falls Prevention Team at Suffolk Primary Care Trust; Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project; and the Stroke Association.</p>	<p>From April 2011.</p>
35	<p>Facilitate the delivery of housing needs surveys – working with Parish Councils, expand the number of housing needs surveys in villages every three years, subject to resources being available. This project is in line with the National Housing Federation's 'Save our Village' campaign that St Edmundsbury Borough Council has signed up to.</p>	<p>Improved understanding of the housing needs in villages.</p> <p>To inform decisions about location of affordable housing developments.</p> <p>The delivery of an average of eight affordable homes per year in villages.</p>	<p>Housing Associations; Housing Team (SEBC); Parish Councils; and Suffolk ACRE.</p>	<p>From April 2011 to March 2014.</p>
36	<p>Host an event to promote Community Land Trusts – this project will also involve assisting parishes to explore the Village Hall to Village Hub initiative further (this initiative consists of positively using existing village assets to help to engage and re-energise the community).</p>	<p>Identify potential villages where the local community may wish to consider the initiative further.</p> <p>Enable interested villages to progress the initiative as appropriate.</p>	<p>Community Land Trust; Foundation East; Housing Associations; Housing Team (SEBC); Local Planning Authority; Parish Councils; and Suffolk ACRE.</p>	<p>From April 2011 to March 2012.</p>

No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
37	Helping St Edmundsbury communities to be better prepared and more self-sufficient in an emergency - communities will be encouraged and supported to prepare a plan, and identify a focal point ahead of an emergency situation occurring, and to have easy access to relevant equipment and resources to help in dealing with the emergency.	Increased resilience of St Edmundsbury communities.	Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit and rural residents.	To be confirmed at a later date.
38	Deliver rural youth work - deliver a programme of youth outreach work in rural villages in St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath.	<p>Improved access for young people to outreach youth work, providing informal education.</p> <p>Improved affordable access to sporting, media and music opportunities.</p> <p>Reduced anti-social behaviour, and reduced perception of anti-social behaviour, in rural areas.</p> <p>Improved provision of information, advice and guidance to young people about a wide range of issues.</p>	Community Development Units (SEBC and Forest Heath District Council); Parish Councils; Supporting Contemporary Adolescence; volunteers; and Young Suffolk.	May 2011 to March 2014.
39	Deliver support towards providing rural youth outreach work - to support and promote opportunities for parish councils to take on more youth work activities.	<p>Reduced perception of anti-social behaviour in rural areas.</p> <p>Improved provision of information, advice and guidance about young people.</p>	Community Development Units (SEBC and Forest Heath District Council); Parish Councils; Supporting Contemporary Adolescence; volunteers; and Young Suffolk.	May 2011 to March 2014.

No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
40	<p>Support initiatives that promote community self-help and reduce isolation – for example, 'Suffolk Circle' - www.suffolkcircle.org.uk.</p>	<p>Improved networking opportunities for members through meeting people, going to different places and doing different things.</p> <p>Increased number of practical jobs completed by and for members. Improved learning for members, from how to send a text message to how to use a drill.</p>	Rural organisations; rural residents; Suffolk Circle; and Suffolk County Council.	From April 2011.
41	<p>Investigate buying consortia in villages – we will look at the various options for setting up a village consortium (e.g. oil) and will promote our findings.</p>	<p>Reduced bills for households/community groups.</p> <p>Empowered communities with a collective voice.</p>	Economic Development Services (SEBC); local community groups; local residents; and Parish Councils.	From April 2011 to March 2014.
42	<p>Deliver an improved cycle network within the borough – working with partners to find new, and improve existing, routes.</p>	<p>Improved opportunities for the public to become more active.</p> <p>Reduced use of motor vehicles and thus carbon emissions.</p>	Friends groups; Leisure Services (SEBC); Suffolk County Council; and volunteer groups.	From April 2011 to March 2014.
43	<p>To encourage villages to make the most of the 2012 Olympic opportunity – the Rwandan Olympic and Paralympic teams are coming to St Edmundsbury for their pre-games training camp; this is about nurturing a legacy that is more than sport and involves culture, education, business and tourism.</p>	To use the Olympic Games as a catalyst to improve community involvement and participation.	Leisure Services (SEBC); local business organisations and residents; Parish Councils; Suffolk County Council; and volunteer groups.	From April 2011 to March 2014.

No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
44	<p>Produce the St Edmundsbury Borough Council Rural Masterplan – this will guide the future growth of the rural areas, including the identification of new sites for development up to 2031. The masterplan will complement the documents which are being produced for Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill.</p>	<p>Protected and enhanced natural environment and landscape whilst planning for the needs of future growth.</p> <p>Protected and enhanced rural communities' access to homes, employment and services.</p>	<p>Local residents; Parish Councils; and various officers from St Edmundsbury Borough Council.</p>	<p>From April 2011.</p>

DRAFT

Useful websites

Local, regional and national websites of organisations that carry out work in rural communities

Local:

Brecks Countryside Project: www.brecks.org
Bury St Edmunds Chamber of Commerce: www.burystedmundschamber.co.uk
Choose Suffolk: www.choosesuffolk.com
Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project: www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org
Forest Heath District Council: www.forest-heath.gov.uk
Greater Cambridge partnership (GCP): www.gcp.uk.net
Haverhill Chamber of Commerce: www.suffolkchamber.co.uk/haverhill
Mid Anglian Enterprise Agency (Menta): www.menta.org.uk/
Neighbourhood Watch: www.suffolk.police.uk/Crime+Reduction/Neighbourhood+Watch/default.htm
Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project: www.onesuffolk.co.uk/RuralCoffeeCaravanIP/
Safer Neighbourhood Scheme: www.onesuffolk.co.uk/safersuffolk
St Edmundsbury Borough Council: www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk
Suffolk ACRE: www.suffolkacre.org.uk
Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC): www.onesuffolk.co.uk/SALC
Suffolk Chamber of Commerce: www.suffolkchamber.co.uk
Suffolk Circle: www.suffolkcircle.org.uk
Suffolk County Council: www.suffolk.gov.uk
Suffolk Police: www.suffolk.police.uk
Suffolk Tourism Partnership: www.suffolktourismpartnership.org.uk
Suffolk Wildlife Trust: www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk
Suffolk Youth and Connexions Service: www.connexions4suffolk.org.uk
Supporting Contemporary Adolescence (SCA): www.sca-uk.info
West Suffolk Green Business Forum: www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/work/gbinfo.cfm
West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership: www.onesuffolk.co.uk/WLSLSP

Regional:

Business Link East: www.businesslink.gov.uk/east
East of England Development Agency: www.eeda.org.uk
East of England Rural Forum: www.eerf.org.uk
East of England Tourism: www.eet.org.uk
Resource Efficiency East: www.resourceefficiencyeast.org.uk
Rural Action East: www.ruralactioneast.org.uk

National:

Action for Communities in Rural England: www.acre.org.uk
Carbon Trust: www.carbontrust.co.uk
Country Land and Business Association: www.cla.org.uk
Department for Food and Rural Affairs: www.defra.gov.uk/rural/default.htm
Environment Agency: www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Federation of Small Businesses (FSB): www.fsb.org.uk
National Association of Local Councils: www.nalc.gov.uk
Natural England: www.naturalengland.org.uk
Rural Services Network: www.rsonline.org.uk
Rural Shops Alliance: www.ruralshops.org.uk
The Plunkett Foundation: www.plunkett.co.uk

Further information

If you would like further information about this Rural Action Plan, or you would like to suggest an idea for a future project, please contact:

Economic Development Officer (Rural Areas)
St Edmundsbury Borough Council
West Suffolk House
Western Way
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP33 3YU

Phone: 01284 757109
Email: rural@stedsbcc.gov.uk

Visit our Rural Communities web pages at:
www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/live/ruralcommunities.cfm



APPENDIX B

No.	Consultee village	Project suggestions	Link to project in the draft Rural Action Plan, where appropriate	Comment?
1	Ampton	Only need necessities in times of cutbacks		No projects requested
2	Ampton	Community speedwatch	30	
		Community events	1,8	
		Litter picking	17	
3	Bardwell	Improved street lighting	3, 44	The issue of improved street lighting could be raised with the County Council as highways authority and also considered as part of the Rural Masterplanning process. The village could also potentially apply for RACIF funding
4	Barnham	We are pretty well catered for		No projects requested
		Incorporate a shop and post office into Mobile Library		Will raise with Suffolk County Council on village's behalf
		Activities for young people	38,39	
		Multi-use games area	3	
		Promotion of existing Dial-a-ride service		Already part of our day-to-day work from first plan
5	Barningham	Outdoor activities for younger people	3,38,39	
		Insulation in the village hall	3	
		Identify new people to help in the village	1	
6	Bradfield St Clare	Speed awareness	30	
		Extend/maintain bus route		Will refer comment to Suffolk County Council
		Maintain library bus		Suffolk County Council will be carrying out public consultation from the New Year to ascertain demand for the mobile library service
		Contribute to highway mowing		This is unlikely to be something that the Borough Council could contribute to at the current time

		Extend salting of all roads		This is unlikely to be something that the Borough Council could contribute to at the current time
		Support for village hall maintenance	2,3	
7	Chedburgh	Improved children's play area	3	
8	Chevington	There is already lots going on here		No projects requested
9	Clare	Help to potentially take over Clare Country Park and Clare Library	6	
		Improve parking		This is already being looked at by planning as part of on-going work
		Improved infrastructure for Parish Councils in the light of Big Society		We need to wait for more information from the Government following the Localism Bill
		Potential town manager role		We need to wait for more information from the Government following the Localism Bill
10	Fornham	Improved bus service		Will refer comment to Suffolk County Council. We contributed some funding to demand responsive transport last year
		Reopen the post office		The Borough Council helped to revive the Fornham Shop and also supported the campaign to keep the post office. The shop ultimately closed because the owners said that levels of custom did not make it financially viable in long-term
		More lower priced housing	35	
11	Great Barton	Happy with what we have		No projects requested
12	Great Livermere	Community speed watch	30	
13	Great Livermere	Sustain current projects		No projects requested
14	Great Whelnetham	More equipment in the play area.	3	
		A youth club	39	
		Tidy up overgrown trees		Covered by agreed Tree and Woodland Strategy for maintenance

15	Great Whelnetham	More and improved lights on Stanningfield Road		3	The issue of improved street lighting could be raised with the County Council as highways authority. The village could also potentially apply for RACIF funding
		Would like some sort of project to encourage people to maintain the land outside their own homes.			This could be something that we can look into in the future; perhaps after we know more about the outcome of the Localism Bill
		More funding surgeries		2	
		Financial help for local groups to cover venue hire		2	
		Help for older people to look after their gardens		32	
16	Great Whelnetham	The restoration of the listed windmill		2	
		The upgrading of the footpath to a footpath/cycle path from the community centre to the school		3	Village could apply for RACIF funding from us. Comment will also be passed to SCC as highways authority
17	Hargrave	Nothing new planned			No projects requested
18	Hawstead	A new projector and screen for the hall		5	
		New bark for the play area		3	
		Improved lighting and surface for car park		2,3	
		Lunch club		31	
19	Hawstead	Community speed watch project		30	
20	Honington	New village hall		2,3	
21	Horringer	Identify new people to help in the village		1	
22	Horringer	A fenced in play park		3	
		A woodland area with a trail for children to go on their bikes		3	
23	Hundon	Keep fit/sport/singing sessions in the village for youngsters and adults			Officers will signpost village to appropriate sources of assistance
		Improve the football pavilion		2,3	
		Crib sheet on how to run village street parties		8	
24	Hundon	Village fete, sporting event		8	
		Good neighbour scheme			This is something that Suffolk ACRE lead on and we would signpost to
		Community Transport for health care			Suggested that we signpost people to existing community transport services (e.g. dial-a-ride)

		Adopt a street scheme project	17	
		Older Children playground	3	
		Buying group organisation	41	
		Environmental enhancement group	9,10	
		Carbon reduction and renewable energy group	14,15,16	
25	Ixworth	Designated play space	3	
		Units for small business development	44	We would look at this type of thing as part of the LDF, rural masterplanning and on-going Economic Development work
		Youth Club	39	
		Scout club facilities	39	
		More advertising and help with websites etc for small businesses in villages	19,22	
26	Kedington	Development of a One Stop Shop at Community Centre	1,2	
		New Kitchen for our Community café	3	
		River Stour Clearance	12,17	
		Storage Facility for Football and Fete equipment	3	
27	Lidgate	Community area to give people a sense of wellbeing e.g. coffee/farm shop or Post Office	8,31,32,33	
28	Little Thurlow	Greater protection of our Stour Valley meadows	12	
29	Little Thurlow	Improve the village recreation ground car park and swings	3	
30	Little Wratting	New footpath along B1061 towards Kedington	3	Village could apply for RACIF funding from us. Comment will also be passed to SCC as highways authority
31	Ousden	Regular Salsa club		Officers will signpost village to appropriate sources of assistance
		Continuation of Coffee Caravan	33	
32	Rougham	Would like to see more interaction in village	1,32,33,40	
		Completed playing field project	3	
		Something for the youngsters 13 - 19 year olds	38,39	
33	Rougham	New play area in the Kingshall Street area	3	
		Safe route to play area at sports field on Almshouse Rd	3	Village could apply for RACIF funding from us. Comment will also be passed to SCC as highways authority
		Upgrade the play area at Mouse lane	3	

		Increased parking at primary school		Will pass comment to school and Suffolk County Council
		More activities at sports hall (e.g. youth club)	39	
		Extension of footpath leading to primary school	3	Village could apply for RACIF funding from us. Comment will also be passed to SCC as highways authority
34	Sapiston	Village focal point to bring all ages together e.g. allotments/community woodland	9,10,32	
35	Stanningfield	Increase community spirit	1,32,33,40	
36	Stansfield	More development at the village hall	3,2,5,31	
		Offer of more classes/educational opportunities for all		Officers will signpost village to appropriate sources of assistance
		Activities for youngsters and those who are 'trapped' in the village	38,39	
		Development of sports areas	2,3	
37	Stanton	Improvement to tennis courts and the 5-a-side football area	2,3	
38	Stanton	Updated play equipment	3	
		Improvements to 5-aside-pitch	2,3	
		More allotments	32	
39	Stanton	Stanton has very good facilities for all ages		No projects requested
40	Stanton	Restoration of play area, tennis court and multi-use games area	2,3	
		Expansion of skate park	2,3	
		Completion of basketball court	2,3	
41	Timworth	Would like to see the Coffee Caravan in Ingham	33	
42	Timworth	Would like the coffee caravan to continue	33	
43	Wickhambrook	Happy with what is currently underway in the village		No projects requested
44	Withersfield	We already have lots of projects underway in our village		No projects requested