



## Rural Area Working Party 10 March 2011

### Rural Action Plan 2011 to 2014

#### SUMMARY

1. On 1 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 (Minute 87(d)(1) refers). This decision followed the recommendation from the Rural Area Working Party meeting held on 18 November 2010.
2. The first phase of consultation, asking members of the public for project ideas, was carried out in December 2010. Following an analysis of the responses received, a draft Rural Action Plan was presented to the Rural Area Working Party on 13 January 2011 (Paper B408 refers). At this meeting the draft Rural Action Plan was approved by Members to go out to consultation. The second phase of consultation therefore took place from 14 January to 28 February 2011, and the Working Party agreed that this report would be circulated to follow to allow the maximum opportunity to comment.
3. The responses from this phase of consultation have now been analysed and a final Rural Action Plan has been produced and is attached to this report.
4. The purpose of this report is to report the findings/results from this consultation phase and to agree the final Rural Action Plan for 2011-2014.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

It is **RECOMMENDED** that:-

- (a) the Rural Action Plan for 2011 to 2014, attached as Appendix A to Report B499 be recommended to Cabinet for approval; and
- (b) the Corporate Director for Community Services, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Rural Area Working Party be authorised, to make any necessary minor amendments to the final document prior to publication.

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# Rural Area Working Party

## 10 March 2011

### Rural Action Plan 2011/2014

#### 1. Background

1.1 Public consultation on the draft Rural Action Plan took place from 14 January 2011 to 28 February 2011, promoted via another special edition of *Rural News*.

1.2 The online survey asked the following questions:-

Question A: For each project in the draft Rural Action Plan, please tick the box according to your preference:

- Keep the project in the final plan;
- Remove the project from the final plan; or
- No preference.

Question B: We have tried to include projects that cover a wide variety of issues. Do you think there are areas that we have missed? If so, what project/s would you recommend to fill this gap?

Question C: Do you think that the number of projects in the draft Rural Action Plan is:

- Too many;
- Too few; or
- About right.

Question D: Lastly, please let us know if you have any further thoughts about the draft Rural Action Plan.

#### 2. Consultation responses

2.1 53 responses to the consultation were received, and our thanks go to those who took the time to respond.

2.2 The responses to Question A (should the projects be kept or removed) have been analysed and the option that had the most votes can be summarised as follows:

##### **Keep**

36 projects identified to be kept in the Plan.

##### **Remove**

Two projects were identified to be removed:

- The Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project; and
- Encourage villages to make the most of the 2012 Olympic opportunity.

## No preference

Seven projects were voted into the no preference category:

- Promotion and support for the Upper Stour Valley and the Brecks;
- The 'Business Carbon Cutters' Grant;
- A business electricity monitoring Service;
- Provide an 'enterprise champion';
- National Mills Day events;
- Tours of St Edmundsbury villages; and
- Pilot a joint business event or activity in partnership with the Clare Business Association.

2.3 The responses received to Question B (additional project suggestions) and Question D (further thoughts) included comments on some specific parts of the Rural Action Plan and these have been reflected in the final document. Other comments were not directly related to the Plan, and those have been forwarded to the relevant services or have been noted.

2.4 The responses to Question C (are there too many/few projects) can be summarised as follows:

	No. of responses
Too many	29
About right	20
Too few	0
No comment	4

2.5 Details of the consultation results will be made available in due course on the Borough Council's website.

## 3. Resulting amendments to the Rural Action Plan

3.1 The responses to Question A tell us that a small proportion of projects should be reconsidered. Concurrently, the majority of respondents have said that there are too many projects within the Plan.

3.2 Despite 21 people wanting to remove the Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project, all the respondents that voted to remove it were from villages that do not, and have never, received visits from the caravan. It is, therefore, recommended that this project remains within the Plan (particularly since those respondents that do receive visits from the caravan voted to keep the project). The Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project has been running in St Edmundsbury for three years and has supported more than ten villages, who have valued this work. During 2011 to 2014 the Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project intends to widen its coverage.

3.3 It is, therefore, recommended that the following amendments are made to the Rural Action Plan, that the:-

- (a) projects below be merged into one project entitled '*Deliver the Business Carbon Cutters grant and support*':

- Deliver the 'Business Carbon Cutters' grant; and
  - Deliver a business electricity monitoring service.
- (b) projects below be merged into one project entitled: *'Advice and support for rural enterprise'*:
- Business support sessions for rural business industrial estates;
  - Deliver business start-up support to rural areas; and
  - Provide an 'enterprise champion'.
- (c) projects below be merged into one project entitled: *'Support and promote rural tourism and heritage'*:
- Deliver and support Heritage Open Day events;
  - Deliver National Mills Day events; and
  - Deliver tours of St Edmundsbury villages.
- (d) projects below be merged into one project entitled: *'Planning guidance on rural redundant buildings'*:
- Create a Farm Diversification Guidance booklet; and
  - Create planning guidance on the re-use of redundant buildings in rural areas.
- (e) projects below be merged into one project entitled: *'Deliver and support rural youth work'*:
- Deliver rural youth work; and
  - Deliver support towards providing rural youth outreach work.
- (f) project below be removed from the plan:
- Encourage villages to make the most of the 2012 Olympic opportunity.
- 3.4 The amendments above will result in the total number of projects being reduced from 45 to 37.
- 3.5 The final Rural Action Plan document is attached at Appendix A. This includes all of the projects proposed to be taken forward.

#### **4. Recommendations**

4.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that:-

- (a) the Rural Action Plan for 2011 to 2014, attached as Appendix A to Report B499 be recommended to Cabinet for approval; and
- (b) the Corporate Director for Community Services, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Rural Area Working Party be authorised, to make any necessary minor amendments to the final document prior to publication.

# 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 have produced a print-only black and white version of this document, which is available online: [www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/ruralactionplan](http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/ruralactionplan)  
Alternatively, to request this version via email please email us at: [rural@stedsbc.gov.uk](mailto:rural@stedsbc.gov.uk)

# 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 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.





# 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:**

- 2001 Census: [www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/live/2001-census.cfm](http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/live/2001-census.cfm)
- 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/>
- Choose Suffolk, The Observatory (for local statistics): [www.suffolkobservatory.info](http://www.suffolkobservatory.info)
- Department for Communities and Local Government (for the latest Government initiatives): [www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/)

# Summary of projects

- 1 Deliver training for community leaders
- 2 [Deliver funding advice surgeries](#)
- 3 Deliver the Rural Areas Community Initiatives Fund
- 4 [Deliver the 'Connected Villages' project](#)
- 5 Deliver a grant towards the cost of a projector and screen for community use
- 6 [Deliver the 'Help Yourself' pilot](#)
- 7 Deliver a participatory budgeting event
- 8 [Produce an information pack on running community events and street parties](#)
- 9 Identify all the environmental organisations, projects and grants that are available in St Edmundsbury
- 10 [Deliver a tree and hedge planting scheme](#)
- 11 Deliver enhancement projects on St Edmundsbury owned nature reserves
- 12 [Promotion and support for the Upper Stour Valley and the Brecks](#)
- 13 Support the further development of the 'Sustainable Tourism East' project in St Edmundsbury
- 14 [Deliver the Business Carbon Cutters grant and support](#)
- 15 Deliver the 'Warmer Greener Homes' initiative
- 16 [Offer rural communities a comprehensive pack to enable them to carry out litter picks](#)
- 17 Deliver social enterprise awareness events and training
- 18 [Advice and support for rural enterprise](#)
- 19 Deliver a grant for rural shops, post offices and public houses
- 20 [Support the employment of apprentices in rural businesses](#)
- 21 Support and promote rural tourism and heritage
- 22 [Pilot a joint business event or activity in partnership with the Clare Business Association](#)
- 23 Create planning guidance on rural redundant buildings
- 24 [Deliver a grant/s to support Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership's 'Community Speed Watch'](#)
- 25 Deliver a grant for community cafés
- 26 [Deliver an allotment/shared land guidance pack and grant](#)
- 27 Further develop the Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project in St Edmundsbury
- 28 [Facilitate older people's wellbeing checks](#)
- 29 Facilitate the delivery of housing needs surveys
- 30 [Host an event to promote Community Land Trusts](#)
- 31 Help St Edmundsbury communities to be better prepared and more self sufficient in an emergency
- 32 [Deliver and support rural youth work](#)
- 33 Support initiatives that promote community self-help and reduce isolation
- 34 [Investigate buying consortia in villages](#)
- 35 Deliver an improved cycle network within the borough
- 36 [Produce the St Edmundsbury Borough Council Rural Vision 2031](#)
- 37 Support the development of community websites

# The action plan

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

<b>Empowerment - enabling communities to help themselves</b>				
<b>No.</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Desired outcome/s</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>
1	<b>Deliver training for community leaders</b> – 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	<b>Deliver funding advice surgeries</b> – 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	<b>Deliver the Rural Areas Community Initiatives Fund</b> - 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	<b>Deliver the 'Connected Villages' project</b> – 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	<b>Deliver a grant towards the cost of a projector and screen for community use</b> – 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	<b>Deliver the 'Help Yourself' pilot</b> – at least 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	<b>Deliver a participatory budgeting event</b> – to encourage rural communities to take an active role in the allocation of their parish council's grants.	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	<b>Produce an information pack on running community events and street parties</b> – 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	<b>Identify all the environmental organisations, projects and grants that are available in St Edmundsbury</b> - 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	<b>Deliver a tree and hedge planting scheme</b> – 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	<b>Deliver enhancement projects on St Edmundsbury owned nature reserves</b> – 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	<b>Promotion and support for the Upper Stour Valley and the Brecks</b> - community action projects will be established to improve biodiversity and access and awareness.	One community action project completed each year.	Brecks Partnership; local groups and volunteers; parishes within the project area; Parks Section (SEBC) and Suffolk County Council Dedham Vale Project.	From April 2011 to March 2014.

No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
13	<p><b>Support the further development of the 'Sustainable Tourism East' project in St Edmundsbury</b> - 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><b>Deliver the 'Business Carbon Cutters' grant and support</b> – 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). In support of the grant, a service will be offered to businesses giving them access to real-time electricity data and thermal imaging.</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><b>Deliver the 'Warmer Greener Homes' initiative</b> – 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><b>Offer rural communities a comprehensive pack to enable them to carry out litter picks</b> – extending the current scheme, this initiative 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
17	<b>Deliver social enterprise awareness events and training</b> – 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.
18	<b>Advice and support for rural enterprise</b> - this will include providing a qualified business advisor to visit rural locations to provide business start up advice; delivering advice sessions to existing businesses on at least two rural industrial estates; and to provide a qualified business advisor to attend existing rural social and networking groups (e.g. parent and toddler groups and other special interest groups).	Increased number of start-up businesses in St Edmundsbury.  Improved business efficiency.  Reduced business failure in rural areas.  Improved opportunity to access business support.	Business support agencies; Economic Development Services (SEBC); and rural businesses.	From April 2011.
19	<b>Deliver a grant for rural shops, post offices and public houses</b> - a small scheme to help improve the groceries available in our rural areas through free, or low cost, advice from a consultant and 50% match funding for improvements.	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).
20	<b>Support the employment of apprentices in rural businesses</b> – 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.

No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
21	<p><b>Support and promote rural tourism and heritage</b> – this may include delivering tours, supporting the Heritage Open Days and supporting National Mills Day events.</p>	<p>Increased number of visitors to tourism businesses in St Edmundsbury.</p> <p>Improved understanding of local facilities and heritage.</p>	<p>Bury St Edmunds Registered Tour Guides; local businesses and attractions; local history groups; Parish Councils; the National Mills Organisation; and Tourism Services (SEBC).</p>	<p>Between May and September annually.</p>
22	<p><b>Pilot a joint business event or activity in partnership with the Clare Business Association</b> – details to be announced. Could be extended if new associations are formed.</p>	<p>Cannot list these until the project has been finalised.</p>	<p>Clare Business Association; Economic Development Services (SEBC); and local businesses.</p>	<p>From April 2011</p>
23	<p><b>Create planning guidance on rural redundant buildings</b> – 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 Plan 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>	<p>Improved rural employment opportunities.</p> <p>Increased knowledge of the re-use of redundant buildings.</p> <p>Increased opportunities for farm diversification.</p>	<p>Planning Section (SEBC).</p>	<p>From April 2011 to March 2014.</p>

Well-being - actions which improve the quality of life of individuals and communities				
No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
24	<b>Deliver a grant/s to support Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership's 'Community Speed Watch'</b> - 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).
25	<b>Deliver a grant for community cafés</b> – 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).
26	<b>Deliver an allotment/shared land guidance pack and grant</b> – 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 shared land. 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.
27	<b>Further develop the Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project (RCCIP) in St Edmundsbury</b> – 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
28	<p><b>Facilitate older people's well-being checks</b> - 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>
29	<p><b>Facilitate the delivery of housing needs surveys</b> – 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>Housing Associations; Housing Team (SEBC); Parish Councils; and Suffolk ACRE.</p>	<p>From April 2011 to March 2014.</p>
30	<p><b>Host an event to promote Community Land Trusts</b> – 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
31	<p><b>Help St Edmundsbury communities to be better prepared and more self-sufficient in an emergency</b> - 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.</p>	<p>Increased resilience of St Edmundsbury communities.</p>	<p>Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit and rural residents.</p>	<p>To be confirmed at a later date.</p>
32	<p><b>Deliver and support rural youth work</b> - deliver a programme of youth outreach work in rural villages in St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, and support and promote opportunities for parish councils to take on more youth work activities.</p>	<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>	<p>Community Development Units (SEBC and Forest Heath District Council); Parish Councils; Supporting Contemporary Adolescence; volunteers; and Young Suffolk.</p>	<p>May 2011 to March 2014.</p>

No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
33	<p><b>Support initiatives that promote community self-help and reduce isolation</b> – for example, 'Suffolk Circle' - <a href="http://www.suffolkcircle.org.uk">www.suffolkcircle.org.uk</a>.</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.
34	<p><b>Investigate buying consortia in villages</b> – 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.
35	<p><b>Deliver an improved cycle network within the borough</b> – 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.
36	<p><b>Produce the St Edmundsbury Borough Council Rural Vision 2031</b> – this will guide the future growth of the rural areas, including the identification of new sites for development up to 2031. The Rural Vision 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>	Local residents; Parish Councils; and various officers from St Edmundsbury Borough Council.	From April 2011.

No.	What	Desired outcome/s	Who	When
37	<b>Support the development of community websites</b> – promote the benefits of community websites and offer guidance to communities on setting up websites.	Increased number of villages with their own website.  Improved access for all to information about village facilities.	Community Development Unit (SEBC); Economic Development Services (SEBC); and Suffolk County Council.	From April 2011 to March 2014.

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# Useful websites

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

## Local:

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

## Regional:

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

## National:

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

**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](mailto:rural@stedsbcc.gov.uk)

**Visit our Rural Communities web pages at:**  
[www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/live/ruralcommunities.cfm](http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/live/ruralcommunities.cfm)

