

Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title:	Agenda																		
Date:	Tuesday 10 February 2015																		
Time:	5.00 pm																		
Venue:	Conference Chamber West (F1R09) West Suffolk House Western Way Bury St Edmunds																		
Membership:	<p style="text-align: center;">Leader John Griffiths</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Deputy Leader Sara Mildmay-White</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Councillor</u></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Portfolio</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Terry Clements</td> <td>Planning and Regulation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Anne Gower</td> <td>Housing</td> </tr> <tr> <td>John Griffiths</td> <td>Leader</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sara Mildmay-White</td> <td>Health and Communities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alaric Pugh</td> <td>Economic Growth</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dave Ray</td> <td>Resources and Performance</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sarah Stamp</td> <td>Leisure, Culture and Heritage</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Peter Stevens</td> <td>Waste and Property</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>	Terry Clements	Planning and Regulation	Anne Gower	Housing	John Griffiths	Leader	Sara Mildmay-White	Health and Communities	Alaric Pugh	Economic Growth	Dave Ray	Resources and Performance	Sarah Stamp	Leisure, Culture and Heritage	Peter Stevens	Waste and Property
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Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda (subject to the exception for sensitive information) and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on an item in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.																		
Quorum:	Three Members																		
Committee administrator:	Claire Skoyles SEBC Cabinet Officer/Committee Administrator Tel: 01284 757176 Email: claire.skoyles@westsuffolk.gov.uk																		

Agenda

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Procedural Matters

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Minutes** **1 - 16**

To confirm the public minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2014 (copy attached).

Part 1 - Public

3. **Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
17 December 2014** **17 - 20**
Report No: **CAB/SE/15/001**
Chairman: Ian Houlder Lead Officer: Christine Brain
4. **Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee:
29 January 2015** **21 - 26**
Report No: **CAB/SE/15/002**
Chairman: Sarah Broughton Lead Officer: Christine Brain
5. **Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny
Committee: 29 January 2015: Annual Treasury
Management and Investment Strategy Statements
2015/2016** **27 - 30**
Report No: **CAB/SE/15/003**
Cabinet Member: David Ray Lead Officer: Rachael Mann
6. **Recommendations of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny
Committee: 29 January 2015 - Update on Procurement
Exercise for External Fund Manager to Support Treasury
Management Activities** **31 - 34**
Report No: **CAB/SE/15/004**
Cabinet Member: David Ray Lead Officer: Rachael Mann
7. **Budget and Council Tax Setting: 2015/2016 and Medium
Term Financial Strategy** **35 - 92**
Report No: **CAB/SE/15/005**
Cabinet Member: David Ray Lead Officer: Rachael Mann

16. Exemption to Contract Procedure Rules

Cabinet Member: Sarah Stamp Lead Officer: Mark Walsh

Summary and Reason for Recommendation:

Replacement Sports Hall Flooring System, Haverhill Leisure Centre

Section 4.3 of the Contract Procedure Rules state: Between £50,001 and the EU Threshold any exemption must be approved by the Officer and Head of Service in consultation with the Head of Resources and Performance. The Officer must produce evidence to support the request for any exemption. The Head of Service shall prepare a report for the next Cabinet to support the action taken. The exemption, being a Contracting Decision, the reason for it (together with support evidence) shall be forwarded to the Head of Resources and Performance.

This exemption was exercised on 23 December 2014 for a contract to 4 Runner Ltd valued at £52,275 for the urgent replacement of flooring to the sports hall at Haverhill Leisure Centre. The semi-sprung floor system has failed and is rapidly deteriorating requiring urgent replacement to protect the safety of sports hall users.

The exemption was made on the basis that there was:

- An unforeseeable emergency involving immediate risk to persons or property, or serious disruption to council services; and
- Unforeseen works where delay will adversely impact on the service delivery of the council.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet is requested to **NOTE** this exemption to the Contract Procedure Rules.

17. Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs

191 - 194

Report No: **CAB/SE/15/014**

Cabinet Member: David Ray Lead Officer: Rachael Mann

18. West Suffolk Operational Hub

Report No: **CAB/SE/15/015 TO FOLLOW**

Cabinet Member: John Griffiths Lead Officer: Mark Walsh

19. Exclusion of Press and Public

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded during the consideration of the following items because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt categories of information as prescribed in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and indicated against each item and, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Part 2 - Exempt

20. Exempt Appendices: West Suffolk Operational Hub

Exempt Appendices to Report No: **CAB/SE/15/015 TO FOLLOW**
Cabinet Member: John Griffiths Lead Officer: Mark Walsh

(These exempt appendices are to be considered in private under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as they contain information relating to the financial and business affairs of a particular organisation.)

21. Exempt Appendices: Revenues Collection Performance and Write Offs 195 - 200

Exempt Appendices to Report No: **CAB/SE/15/014**
Cabinet Member: David Ray Lead Officer: Rachael Mann

(These exempt appendices are to be considered in private under paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as they contain information relating to an individual and information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.)

22. Exempt Minutes: 2 December 2014 201 - 204

To confirm the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2014 (copy attached.)

(These exempt minutes are to be considered in private under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as they contain information relating to the financial and business affairs of a particular organisation.)

(No representations have been received from members of the public regarding these items being held in private.)

Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held on
Tuesday 2 December 2014 at 5.00 pm at the **Conference Chamber, West
Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman John Griffiths (Leader of the Council)

Vice Chairman Sara Mildmay-White (Deputy Leader of the Council)

Terry Clements

Dave Ray

Anne Gower

Sarah Stamp

Alaric Pugh

Peter Stevens

By Sarah Broughton (Chairman of the Performance and Audit
Invitation: Scrutiny Committee)

Ian Houlder (Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny
Committee)

In Tony Brown Helen Levack
Attendance:

David Nettleton

1. **Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the Cabinet Member detailed immediately below the heading for Minute 65, '*Recommendations from the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel:15 September 2014*', being amended to replace '*Cllr Terry Clements*' with '*Cllr David Ray*'.

3. **Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 22 October 2014**

The Cabinet received and noted Report No: CAB/SE/14/001 (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 October 2014:

- (1) Outdoor Advertisement and Signs, St Edmundsbury Borough;
- (2) Quarter 2 Directed Surveillance Authorised Applications;
- (3) Decisions Plan: September 2014 to May 2015; and
- (4) Work Programme Update

Councillor Houlder, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that recommendations emanating from discussion on Item (1) above were included within a separate report for consideration next on the Cabinet agenda (Report No: CAB/SE/14/002 refers).

4. **Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 22 October 2014: Outdoor Advertisement and Signs, St Edmundsbury Borough**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/002 (previously circulated) which sought approval for a revised approach for managing the use of advertising boards (so-called A-Boards) in the Borough.

Councillor Clements, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulation drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that following the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review of its original proposals regarding the regulation of the display of A-Boards on the highway, it was felt this could be better achieved through the use of the Outdoor Advertisement Regulations 2007. The exercising of these Regulations, instead of incorporating the requirements within the Street Vending Policy, provided the Council with greater powers to enforce.

RESOLVED:

That in view of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's wish to achieve the original objectives of its review of "A" Boards as quickly as possible:

- (1) the approach of using the Outdoor Advertising Regulation 2007 to control the use of "A" Boards through the Borough, as set out in Section 4 of Report F155, be approved;
- (2) the Street Vending Policy be amended by deleting the section relating to "A" Boards; and
- (3) the Council produces and publishes clear guidance to businesses on how the Outdoor Advertising Regulations would work in practice, including partnership working with the Highways Authority.

5. **Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 26 November 2014**

The Cabinet received and noted Report No: CAB/SE/14/003 (previously circulated) which informed the Cabinet of the following items discussed by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 26 November 2014:

- (1) Mid-year Internal Audit Progress Report 2014/2015;
- (2) Key Performance Indicators and Quarter Two Performance Report 2014/2015;
- (3) West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Monitoring Report – September 2014;
- (4) Biannual Corporate Complaints and Compliments Digest;
- (5) West Suffolk Fees and Charges Policy;
- (6) Accounting for a Single West Suffolk Staffing Structure and the Move to a West Suffolk Cost Sharing Model;
- (7) Work Programme Update;
- (8) Ernst and Young Presentation of Annual Audit Letter 2013/2014;
- (9) Financial Performance Report (Revenue and Capital) Quarter 2 – 2014/2015;
- (10) Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2015/2016 and Budget Consultation Results; and
- (11) Mid-Year Treasury Management Report 2014/2015 Investment Activity 1 April to 30 September 2014.

Councillor Mrs Broughton, Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that the Committee had informally considered the first seven items listed above jointly with Forest Heath District Council's Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.

The Cabinet was informed that separate reports relating to Items (5), (6) and (10) above were included on the Cabinet agenda as these required separate consideration of the recommendations provided.

6. Recommendations from the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee - 26 November 2014: Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2015-2016 and Budget Consultation Results

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/004 (previously circulated) which sought approval for several proposals for savings and income generation to enable the delivery of a balanced budget in 2015/2016.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet including that in light of continuing financial challenges as a result of uncertainty in the wider economy and constraints on public sector spending, difficult financial decisions are needed to be taken.

A public consultation exercise was undertaken over summer 2014 in order to inform the budget setting process and help Members make decisions on the 2015/2016 budget. The feedback received was analysed and as a result, a number of budget proposals had been considered by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for inclusion or removal, as detailed in Sections 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 of Report No: PAS/SE/14/010 (duplicated in Sections 1.2.3 and 1.2.4 of Report No: CAB/SE/14/004).

The Cabinet noted that some areas of the budget consultation still required further work and these were likely to be the subject of individual business cases over the coming months.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That, taking into account the public consultation results outlined in Appendix A to Report No: PAS/SE/14/010:

- (a) the proposals, as detailed in Table 2 at paragraph 1.5.1 of Report No: PAS/SE/14/010, be included; and**
- (b) the proposals, as detailed in paragraph 1.5.2 of Report No: PAS/SE/14/010, be removed.**

(Councillor Mrs Levack arrived during the consideration of this item.)

7. Recommendations from the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee - 26 November 2014: West Suffolk Fees and Charges Policy

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/005 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the West Suffolk Fees and Charges Policy.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, informed the Cabinet that the Policy had been formulated to create a single, clear and consistent approach to formulating, agreeing and reviewing the fees and charges set by the West Suffolk councils (St Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District Councils).

RESOLVED:

That, the West Suffolk Fees and Charges Policy, attached as Appendix B to Report No: PAS/SE/14/005, be approved.

8. Recommendations from the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee - 26 November 2014: Accounting for a single West Suffolk staffing structure and the move to a West Suffolk Cost Sharing Model

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/006 (previously circulated) which sought approval for accounting for a single West Suffolk staffing structure and the move to a West Suffolk cost sharing model.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet including that:

- (i) the allocation of the single staffing structure across the West Suffolk partnership between Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council had to date been driven by the level of savings generated from the baseline position back in 2012; and
- (ii) this was a new approach to cost sharing for West Suffolk which acknowledged the shared nature of much of West Suffolk's service delivery and recognised that the Councils remained separate legal entities. The West Suffolk cost sharing model must therefore be transparent and comply with external audit requirements.

Section 1.1.5 summarised the benefits for implementing a new cost sharing model. In addition, extracts from Report No: PAS/SE/14/006, as referred to in the recommendations below, were included in the Cabinet report. These set out the principles of the cost sharing model; how it would be cost effective for the tax payer and would not result in either council subsidising the other; and how the model would be implemented.

The model would be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process with any necessary amendments reported to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That:

- (1) as part of the 2015/16 budget setting process and subject to external audit support, the proposed cost sharing model for income and employee costs, as detailed in Table 2 and 3 and at paragraph 2.17 of Report No: PAS/SE/14/006, be approved; and**
- (2) the proposed model, as detailed in Tables 2 and 3 and at paragraph 2.17 of Report No: PAS/SE/14/006, be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process with any necessary amendments to the model (in order to secure delivery against the principles set out in paragraph 2.12 of Report No: PAS/SE/14/006), being reported through to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee in the autumn.**

9. Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Technical Changes 2015/2016

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/007 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Technical Changes 2015/2016.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet including amendments to the following typographical errors contained in the report:

Section 3.2: the in-year collection rate was 98.4% and not 97.12%, as printed; and

Section 6.1, Table 2: the 30% figure in the first row, second column needed to be replaced with 10% [discount for a twelve month period].

Councillor Ray then explained that Sections 2 and 3 provided a summary of the first year review (2013/2014) on the new Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) and the technical changes on some empty properties and second homes, introduced from 1 April 2013. These findings, which included

the behavioural, administrative and financial impacts, were duly noted by the Cabinet.

Members' attention was then drawn to recommendations for the 2015/2016 LCTRS and the technical changes from 1 April 2015. The recommended continuation of the current schemes covered in the report was intended to continue to deliver a 'cost neutral scheme' against the original 10% Government grant reduction. The impact of the 2015/2016 24% reduction in Central Government grant would therefore be required to be addressed elsewhere and would form part of the Council's wider Medium Term Financial Strategy review and 2015/2016 budget setting process.

Based on the overall findings of the first year review outlined in Sections 2 and 3 of the report, and the monitoring information for 2014/2015 contained at Appendix A, the Cabinet supported the recommendation to continue the LCTR scheme in its current form, including applying the current 2014/2015 level of applicable amounts (as defined in the report) within the LCTRS, for 2015/2016. As it was recommended that the LCTRS should not be changed this year, there was no requirement to undertake specific consultation.

In respect of the technical changes, based on the overall findings of the first year review outlined in Sections 2 and 3 of the report, and the monitoring information for 2014/2015 contained at Appendix A, Members supported the recommendations, as shown in Table 2 (as amended) of paragraph 6.1.

RESOLVED :

That:

- (1) the first year review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2013/2014 be noted;

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That:

- (2) no change be made to the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015/2016;**
- (3) the 5% second homes discount be removed from 1 April 2015; and**
- (4) a change to a one week exemption for Class C empty property from 1 April 2015 be approved, subject to the conditions contained in Table 2 of paragraph 6.1 of Report No: CAB/SE/14/007, as amended to replace 30% with 10% [discount for a twelve month period], in the first row, second column.**

10. **Council Tax Base for Tax Setting Purposes 2015/2016**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/008 (previously circulated) which sought approval for Council Tax Base for Tax Setting Purposes 2015/2016.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet including that the tax base formed the basis for the formal calculation of Council Tax for 2015/2016.

The CTB1 Tax Base Return form was attached at Appendix 1, which had been updated as at 6 November 2014 to allow for:

- (a) technical changes outlined in Report No: CAB/SE/14/007; and
- (b) potential growth in the property base during 2015/2016 taken from an average of the housing delivery numbers for those sites within the local plan and those that had planning permission, adjusted for an assumed level of discounts/exemptions within that growth of property base.

An allowance was then made for losses on collection, which assumed that overall collection rates would be maintained at approximately 98%. In addition to this collection rate change, an adjustment had been made to allow for the collectability of the Council Tax arising from the Local Council Tax Support scheme, which had been assessed at 90%. The resulting Tax Base for Council Tax collection purposes had been calculated as 34,839.29 which was an increase of 114.29 on the previous year.

The tax base figures provided within Appendix 2 of the report had been communicated to town and parish councils so they could start to factor these into their budget setting process.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That:

- (1) the tax base for 2015/2016, for the whole of St Edmundsbury is 34,839.29 equivalent Band 'D' dwellings, as detailed in paragraph 1.4 of Report No: CAB/SE/14/008; and**
- (2) the tax base for 2015/2016 for the different parts of its area, as defined by parish or special expense area boundaries, are as shown in Appendix 2.**

11. **Developing a Community Energy Plan**

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/009 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the development of a West Suffolk Community Energy Plan and associated funding allocations.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, informed the Cabinet that the report summarised the business case and made

recommendations regarding potential viable options which, if approved, would establish for the first time a long term energy investment plan generating stable revenue and energy cost savings for the Council alongside its existing support for improved community energy efficiency. Produced jointly with Forest Heath District Council, this would form the West Suffolk Community Energy Plan.

Since its launch in 2011, the West Suffolk Greener Business Grant had contributed to the improvement in efficiency of 62 businesses in West Suffolk from a pot of £60,000 provided by West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership. The fund had been used by businesses to match-fund either their own capital or other funds, for example Grants for Growth funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

As part of the broader support to business in the Community Energy Plan, the Cabinet supported the proposal for the Council allocating £15,000 to top up this grant pot. A similar amount would be sought from Forest Heath District Council so that the grant could continue to be offered to help cut local business costs which in turn would support the Councils' strategic priority to stimulate economic growth across West Suffolk.

Attention was then drawn to the various options for energy efficiency investment schemes, as outlined in Appendix A. Appendix B provided a summary of the options appraisal.

Councillor Stevens, Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for the environment, emphasised that each proposal recommended for development in Appendix A would need to be considered in the context of ensuring various robust procedures had been undertaken before each scheme could progress. Measures such as financial viability, the potential impact on the landscape and residential amenity, and its engagement with the local community would need to be considered.

Councillor Brown was in attendance and expressed some concern regarding the viability of the proposed schemes and whether there were other means in which CO2 emissions could be reduced. The Environment Manager comprehensively responded to these concerns and also answered additional questions raised.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (1) the development of a West Suffolk Community Energy Plan, be supported;
- (2) appraisal of other energy-related options set out in the report with a view to receiving further investment proposals, be supported;

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That:

- (3) The following be allocated:**
- (a) £15,000 to continue the West Suffolk Greener Business Grant in support of energy efficiency improvements, as outlined in paragraphs 1.1.4 and 1.1.5 of Report No: CAB/SE/14/009;**
 - (b) £85,500 to improve business resource efficiency and install the next phase of solar schemes on Council property (Option 1), as outlined in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/SE/14/009;**
 - (c) as part of the 2015/2016 budget setting process, £1.62 million over three years to develop rent-a-roof solar schemes in partnership with local businesses (Option 3), as outlined in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/SE/14/009; and**
 - (d) as part of the 2015/2016 budget setting process, £50,000 to cover the identification, detailed feasibility and associated community engagement activities in support of potential sites for larger scale solar and renewable energy generation technologies (Option 5) where supported and/or led by communities in the Borough, as outlined in paragraph 1.3.5 to Report No: CAB/SE/14/009.**

12. Public Service Village Phase II, Olding Road, Bury St Edmunds

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/010 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the existing Public Service Village (PSV) Masterplan to be reviewed and for the allocation of funding to enable Phase II of the PSV to progress.

Councillor Clements, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulation, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that the Public Service Village concept was approved and adopted by the Council in 2006. Phase I had been successfully completed by the construction and occupation of West Suffolk House. The improving economic climate and the possible relocation of the Council's depot together with a change of ownership of the DHL logistics building, presented an opportunity for the Council to progress Phase II of the project.

To do this the Council would need to review the adopted Masterplan to bring it up to date with the changes since 2006 and to put in place resources to help deliver this ambitious plan. £100,000 had therefore been requested to be allocated towards the appointment of specialist resources to help formulate the project and ensure that the Council obtains 'Best Consideration'.

An amendment to the second recommendation was reported in respect of inserting the word 'masterplanning' after the word 'legal' to make it clear that some of the funding would be used for this purpose.

Councillor Griffiths, Chairman and Leader of the Council, explained that this was an exciting investment proposal, which had implications for the majority of portfolios, not just planning. He, supported by other Cabinet Members, looked forward to the development of the scheme and the future savings to be made through effective and efficient partnership working between public service providers.

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White wished it to be recorded that Appendix A showed an illustration of the original 2006 Masterplan, and therefore did not show the recently refurbished skate park, but a building in its place. The Council was not looking to relocate the new skate park and the site would be indicated on the revised Masterplan.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That:

- (1) the Masterplan for the Public Service Village, Bury St Edmunds (2006), be reviewed; and**
- (2) £100,000 be allocated from earmarked reserves (invest to save) to support the appointment of project management, legal, masterplanning and property expertise, as detailed in Section 1.4 of Report CAB/SE/14/010.**

13. Bridging Loan to the Samaritans

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/011 (previously circulated) which sought approval for an additional £25,000 loan to the Samaritans, bringing the total secured loan to £175,000.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Performance and Resources, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that in September 2014, full Council had approved a bridging loan of £150,000 at an interest rate of 3% above bank base rate, in order that the charity could relocate to more suitable premises without a break in operations. These terms were acceptable to the charity, as well as meeting the Council's own loans policy.

The property identified had fallen through, but the charity had identified another suitable property, which was more expensive, but still within their available capital funds, once they had sold 46 Well Street, Bury St Edmunds. Purchase of the new property meant that the charity was £47,710 short of cash, pending the sale of 46 Well Street. They had endeavoured to fill the gap, and had indeed found two benefactors who were prepared to loan some of the money. However, there was still a shortfall of £25,000 and the Council had been approached to consider increasing the value of the already agreed loan by £25,000. The loan would still be repaid within six months. The

benefactors would have a second charge (meaning that the Council's loan repayment would take precedence).

The Cabinet was pleased to note that the Samaritans had made their own efforts to source funding to bridge the gap and considered the proposal was acceptable.

RESOLVED:

That a further £25,000 be loaned to Samaritans (bringing the total secured loan to £175,000) subject to the appropriate level of due diligence being undertaken by the Chief Finance Officer as already agreed by full Council on 23 September 2014.

14. **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Guidance and Standards**

The Cabinet considered Report CAB/SE/14/012 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the West Suffolk Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Guidance and Standards.

Councillor Mrs Gower, Portfolio Holder for Housing, informed the Cabinet that the West Suffolk HMO Guidance and Standards document aligned the existing standards and fees for both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath District Councils, and ensured a consistent approach towards dealing with HMOs and gaining compliance with relevant legislation and standards.

The document and associated fee had been subject to public and stakeholder consultation. Larger HMOs (those with three or more storeys and five or more persons) were required to be licensed and there was a fee to cover the cost of this process; the proposal being that it should be £500 for a five year period, which accorded with Forest Heath's existing policy. No adverse comments had been received from landlords in respect of this proposal.

Councillor Brown expressed concern regarding the proposed inspection programme as contained in Appendix 3 to the HMO Standards and Guidance (Appendix A), with particular reference to those properties being considered to be at lower risk, which were scheduled to be inspected on a five yearly basis. In response, Members were advised that if robust information was received regarding a potential problem within this timeframe, Public Health and Housing Services would be informed and appropriate action would immediately be taken.

RESOLVED:

That the West Suffolk Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Guidance and Standards, and HMO licence fee, as contained in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/SE/14/012, be approved.

(Councillor Brown left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

15. Draft West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/013 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the draft West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy for consultation.

Councillor Mrs Gower, Portfolio Holder for Housing, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet including that the Homelessness Act 2002 required all councils to produce a Homelessness Strategy at least every five years. This Strategy set out how St Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District Councils (the two West Suffolk Councils), along with their partners, would address and prevent homelessness over the next three years, ensuring that sufficient suitable temporary accommodation and support was available for those who were homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The document would be subject to public and stakeholder consultation before adoption was sought in February 2015.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (1) the draft West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018, as contained in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/SE/14/013, be approved for consultation to the public, local authorities, voluntary and statutory agencies; and
- (2) following consultation, the amended Strategy be brought back to Cabinet for consideration in February 2015 with a recommendation to full Council for adoption.

16. West Suffolk Data Protection Policy

The Cabinet considered a narrative item, which sought approval for the West Suffolk Data Protection Policy, as attached as Report No: CAB/SE/14/014 (previously circulated).

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that compliance with the Data Protection Act (DPA) was monitored and enforced by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO had the power to impose fines of up to £500,000 for a serious breach of one or more of the data protection principles and where the breach was likely to cause substantial damage or distress. This was in addition to any penalties imposed by the courts against individuals who unlawfully breached the DPA. ICO guidance therefore stressed that it was vital for all Council employees, Members and contractors to understand the importance of protecting personal data; that they were familiar with the organisation's security policy; and that they put its security procedures into practice.

The joint policy (based on that previously adopted by Forest Heath District Council) outlined the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and identified

how both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (jointly referred to as West Suffolk Councils throughout the policy) complied with the Data Protection Act. It aimed to give guidance on how the requirements of the Act applied to the work of the Councils.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That the West Suffolk Data Protection Policy, provided as Report No: CAB/SE/14/014, be adopted.

17. Recommendation from the West Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Panel: 29 October 2014

The Cabinet considered a narrative item, which contained a recommendation from the West Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Panel emanating from its meeting on 29 October 2014.

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for emergency planning informed the Cabinet that the Joint Panel wished to make minor amendments to its terms of reference to bring them up to date, as detailed in the narrative item.

RESOLVED:

That paragraph 2.7 of the Terms of Reference for the West Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Panel be amended to:

At the discretion of the Chairman, or if absent the Vice-Chairman, in the event that either:

- (a) an emergency event arises which affects the area of either authority, or both authorities, or*
- (b) the risk of an emergency that affects the area of either authority, or both authorities, is assessed as significant by the District Emergency Planning Officer,*

an extraordinary meeting of the Panel may be called.

18. Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs

(At this point it was determined that the meeting did not need to go into private session to consider the Exempt Appendices attached to Report No: CAB/SE/14/016. Therefore, with the agreement of the Chairman, Agenda Item 19 was taken before Agenda Item 18 whilst the meeting remained in public session.)

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/016 (previously circulated) which provided the collection data in respect of Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates and sought approval for the write-off of debts as contained in the Exempt Appendices.

Councillor Ray, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that as at 31 October 2014, the total National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) billed by Anglia Revenues Partnership on behalf of St Edmundsbury Borough Council (as the billing Authority) was nearly £47.3 million per annum. The collection rate as at 31 October 2014 was 66.67% against a profile of 66.75%.

As at 31 October 2014, the total Council Tax billed by Anglia Revenues Partnership on behalf of St Edmundsbury Borough Council (included the County, Police and Parish precept elements) was just under £53.8 million per annum. The collection rate as at 31 October 2014 was 67.87% against a profiled target of 68.31%

The Revenues Section collected outstanding debts in accordance with either statutory guidelines or Council agreed procedures. When all these procedures had been exhausted the outstanding debt was written off using the delegated authority of the Head of Resources and Performance (for debts up to £2,499.99) or by Cabinet (for debts over £2,500).

The specific reasons for recommending each write-off were included in Exempt Appendices 1 and 2.

RESOLVED:

That the write-off of the amounts detailed in the exempt appendices to Report No: CAB/SE/14/016 be approved, as follows:

- (1) Exempt Appendix 1: Council Tax totalling £13,945.63; and
- (2) Exempt Appendix 2: Business Rates totalling £17,736.82.

19. **Proposals for the Commercial Development of West Stow Country Park**

(Councillor Clements declared in the interests of transparency that he held a fishing permit for West Stow Country Park. Councillor Mrs Broughton declared a Local Non-Pecuniary Interest as Chairman of the West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village Trust. Both remained in the meeting for the consideration of this item.)

The Cabinet considered Report No: CAB/SE/14/015 (previously circulated) which sought approval for a number of recommendations relating to the development of part of West Stow Country Park.

Councillor Mrs Stamp, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage drew relevant issues to the attention of the Cabinet, including that West Stow Country Park would cost the Council £132,350 in 2014/2015. Whilst considerable savings had already been made against the spend in previous years, a range of proposals needed to be considered to fill this budget gap for 2015/2016 and beyond whilst protecting West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village. Such options were summarised in Exempt Appendix 1a. A preferred option

was provided in a business case, as contained in Exempt Appendix 1. Exempt Appendices 2-10 and A-C provided additional information in support of the preferred option.

The following amendments to the first two recommendations were proposed:

That Cabinet:

- (1) considers a range of proposals for appropriate **further leisure commercial** development of part of West Stow Country Park to complement the existing attractions;
- (2) considers minimising the risk of the preferred option by **seeking gaining** planning permission in advance of selecting a partner to work with;

These proposed amendments were accepted by the Cabinet.

Councillor Mrs Stamp commended the Commercial Manager for his work on this project and how the business case provided a good starting point for encouraging commercial partners to come forward and develop the preferred option.

Councillor Mrs Broughton, Chairman of the West Stow Anglo-Saxon Trust, stated that the Trust had been consulted on the preferred option and had supported the scheme. The Trust had acknowledged the prospect of attracting additional tourism to the Park and the Anglo-Saxon Village, and reducing the budget gap.

Councillor Mrs Levack was in attendance and wished to speak on matters provided in the Exempt Appendices.

Therefore at this point, it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

Following consideration in private session, the Cabinet concluded its discussion in public. It recognised the exciting opportunities for creating further leisure development at West Stow Country Park and subsequently

RESOLVED:

That:

- (1) a range of proposals for appropriate further leisure development of part of West Stow Country Park to complement the existing attractions have been considered;

- (2) planning permission for the preferred option be sought in advance of selecting a partner to work with in order to minimise the risk; and
- (3) the taking of the business plan to the market in order to secure a suitable operating partner for the preferred option, as contained in Exempt Appendix 1 to Report No. CAB/SE/14/015, be approved.

20. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Referred to under Item 19 above.

21. **Exempt Appendices: Proposals for the Commercial Development of West Stow Country Park**

The Cabinet considered Exempt Appendices 1, 1a, 2-10 and A-C to Report No: CAB/SE/14/015 (previously circulated) and the discussion on these is contained in the Exempt version of these minutes.

22. **Exempt Appendices: Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs**

The Cabinet considered Exempt Appendices 1 and 2 to Report No: CAB/SE/14/016 (previously circulated), however no reference was made to specific detail and therefore this item was not held in private session.

The meeting concluded at 6.52pm

Signed by:

Chairman

Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 17 December 2014	
Report No:	CAB/SE/15/001	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	10 February 2015
Chairman of the Committee:	Ian Houlder Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tel: 01284 810074 Email: ian.houlder@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Christine Brain Scrutiny Officer Tel: 01638 719729 Email: christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	On 17 December 2014, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the following items: (1) Car Park Tariffs 2015/16; (2) Decisions Plan: December 2014 to May 2015; and (3) Work Programme Update and Suggestions for Scrutiny	
Recommendation:	The Cabinet is requested to <u>NOTE</u> the content of Report CAB/SE/15/001, being the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report for information only.	
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 	

Alternative option(s):		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 	
Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 	
Are there any staffing implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 	
Are there any ICT implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 	
Are there any equality implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Reports listed under background papers below 	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
See Reports listed under background papers below			
Ward(s) affected:		All Wards	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		Report OAS/SE/14/001 – Car Park Tariffs 2015/16; Report OAS/SE/14/002 – Decisions Plan December 2014 to May 2015; and Report OAS/SE/14/003 - Work Programme Update and Suggestions for Scrutiny All considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 December 2014	
Documents attached:		None	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation

1.1 Car Park Tariffs 2015/16 (Report No: OAS/SE/14/001)

1.1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report which referred to Cabinet Report D223 (12 December 2012), which recommended that the Committee receives a report each year outlining recommendations from Officers for changes to car park tariffs, including supporting evidence and justification for changes. The resulting recommendations would be considered by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee as part of the budget setting process at its meeting on 29 January 2015.

1.1.2 Members were informed of the proposed recommendations and the justifications for change, which was in line with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review carried out in 2012.

1.1.3 The Committee examined the proposed recommendations in detail and asked questions of officers who provided comprehensive responses. In particular discussions were held on:

- (1) The current "Free from 3" parking initiative which had been introduced as a trial in an attempt to increase footfall and revenue to traders in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill on quieter trading days and was not intended for busy days. Members representing Haverhill felt that the "Free from 3" was not making a difference in increasing footfall on Fridays and suggested that this be reviewed as part of the full parking review in June 2015.
- (2) The National standard used in calculating the number of disabled spaces required. The Car Parks Manager informed Members he was happy to visit car parks and work with ward members who had particular concerns about disabled parking.
- (3) The cost of using Ringo, which would be reviewed alongside the tariff structures for 2015.
- (4) The talks taking place between the Council and West Suffolk College in promoting public transport to students to resolve parking issues since the College had introduced charging.

1.1.4 The Committee **NOTED** the proposed recommendations which were subsequently presented to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 29 January 2015, as part of the budget setting process.

1.2 Decisions Plan: December 2014 to May 2015 (Report No: OAS/SE/14/002)

1.2.1 The Committee considered the latest Decisions Plan, covering the period December 2014 to May 2015. Members reviewed the Decisions Plan in detail and asked a number of questions to which officers duly responded.

1.2.2 The Committee did not collectively request any involvement in any of the expected decisions on this occasion, and there being no decision required,

NOTED the contents of the report.

1.3 **Work Programme Update and Suggestions for Scrutiny (Report No: OAS/SE/14/003)**

1.3.1 The Committee has a rolling work programme, whereby suggestions for scrutiny reviews are brought to each meeting, and if accepted, are timetabled to report to a future meeting. The work programme also leaves space for Call-ins and Councillor Calls for Action.

1.3.2 The Committee considered two suggestion for scrutiny forms which had been submitted proposing:

- (a) a review of Shared Services to ensure there was no negative impact on users and that the joint service was fit for purpose; and
- (b) a review of the Leader and Cabinet Model at St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

1.3.3 A lengthy debate on the two issues was held, and taking into account information provided by Members, the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance and the officers, the Committee resolved that:

- (1) a Member Learning and Development Session on the Shared Services model and corporate working practices be arranged to take place prior to the elections in May 2015; and
- (2) the operation of the Leader and Cabinet Model be incorporated within the Member Learning and Development Session to be arranged to take place prior to the elections in May 2015 in respect of the issues arising from the two scrutiny suggestions.

Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 29 January 2015	
Report No:	CAB/SE/15/002	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	10 February 2015
Portfolio holder:	David Ray Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Tel: 01359 250912 Email: david.ray@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Chairman of the Committee:	Sarah Broughton Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee Tel: 01284 787327 Email: sarah.broughton@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead Officer:	Christine Brain Scrutiny Officer Tel: 01638 719729 Email: Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	<p>On 29 January 2015, the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee held an informal joint meeting with members of Forest Heath's Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, and <u>considered the first three items jointly:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Key Performance Indicators and Quarter Three Performance Report 2014/2015; (2) West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Monitoring Report – December 2014 ; (3) Work Programme Update; (4) Financial Performance Report (Revenue and Capital) Quarter 3 – 2014/2015; 	

	<p>(5) Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2015/2016 Update;</p> <p>(6) Treasury Management Report 2014/2015 Investment Activity 1 April - 31 December 2014;</p> <p>(7) Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2015/2016; and</p> <p>(8) Update on Procurement Exercise for External Fund Manager to Support Treasury Management Activities.</p> <p>Separate reports are included on this Cabinet agenda for Items (7) and (8) above. In addition, a recommendation relating to car park tariffs for 2015/2016, which was considered as part of Item (5) above is detailed below for Cabinet's consideration.</p>
Recommendation:	<p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that:</p> <p>(1) the majority of Report No: CAB/SE/15/002, being the report of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee be noted; and</p> <p>(2) the car park tariffs for 2015/16, as set out in Paragraph 1.3.2 of Report No: PAS/SE/15/005 be approved, as part of the budget setting process for 2015/16.</p>
Key Decision:	No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See reports listed in Section 2 below.
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See reports listed in Section 2 below.
Implications:	
Are there any financial implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Please see background papers.
Are there any staffing implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Please see background papers.
Are there any ICT implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Please see background papers.
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Please see background papers.
Are there any equality implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Please see background papers.
Risk/opportunity assessment:	Please see background papers.
Ward(s) affected:	All Wards
Background papers:	Please see background papers, which are listed at the end of the report.
Documents attached:	None

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation

1.1 Key Performance Indicators and Quarter 3 Performance Report 2014-15 (Report No: PAS/SE/15/001)

- 1.1.1 The Committee received and noted the report, which set out the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) being used to measure the Council's performance for 2014/2015. The report also included the third quarter indicators covering April to December 2014 for both Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, together with a combined performance for West Suffolk, where relevant.
- 1.1.2 For St Edmundsbury, the current Quarter Three performance showed that of a total of 27 indicators, 11 were green, 4 were amber, 2 were red and 10 were data only indicators. For West Suffolk, there were a total of 19 indicators, of which 7 were green, 4 were amber, 1 was red and 7 were data only indicators.
- 1.1.3 Members discussed a number of the indicators, and asked questions to which officers duly responded. In particular, discussions were held on the new and existing businesses benefiting from the Council's Business Grant scheme and the number of planning enforcement cases closed.
- 1.1.4 No issues were required to be brought to the attention of Cabinet.

1.2 West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Monitoring Report – December 2014 (Report No: PAS/SE/15/002)

- 1.2.1 The Committee received and noted the third quarterly risk register monitoring report in respect of the West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register. The Register was updated regularly by the Risk Management Group and at its recent meeting the Group reviewed the target risk, the risk level where the Council aimed to be, and agreed a current risk assessment. These assessments formed the revised West Suffolk Risk Register (Appendix 1). Since the last assessment report presented to the Committee on 26 November 2014, there had been no new risks identified and no risks had been amended or closed. Some individual controls and actions had been updated and those which were not ongoing and had been completed by December 2014 had been removed from the Register.
- 1.2.2 However, following the December review, the probability of the Inherent Risk of WS1A had been changed from 2 to 3 to reflect the importance of Business Rates Retention and improved financial reporting. Also, in light of the recent news concerning the closure of RAF Mildenhall, the probability of the Inherent Risk WS12 had been changed from 2 to 3 to highlight the risk of losing a large employer and contributor to the local economy.
- 1.2.3 Members scrutinised the report and asked questions to which officers duly responded. In particular discussions were held on inherent risk WS12, - loss of a key employer, which included RAF Mildenhall. Members noted that in future reports, RAF Mildenhall would be reported as a separate risk.
- 1.2.4 No issues were required to be brought to the attention of Cabinet.

1.3 **Work Programme Update (Report No: PAS/SE/15/003)**

1.3.1 The Committee received and noted its Work Programme which provided items scheduled to be presented to the Committee during 2015.

1.4 **Financial Performance Report (Revenue and Capital) Quarter 3 – 2014/2015 (Report No: PAS/SE/15/004)**

1.4.1 The Committee received and noted the third quarterly monitoring report which informed Members of the forecasted outturn position for 2014-15. The latest Revenue Budget Summary for the year to date position after nine months showed a current underspend of £502,000, with a forecast position for the year end showing an underspend of £108,000. In terms of the Council's capital financial position, the first nine months of 2014/2015 showed an expenditure of £1,692,000.

1.4.2 Members scrutinised the report in detail, and asked a number of questions to which officers duly responded. In particular discussions were held on the Council's capital programme and the future planning of projects. Members noted that future reports would include a forecast position on the Council's capital programme.

1.5 **Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2015/2016 Update (Report No: PAS/SE/15/005)**

1.5.1 The Committee received and noted the update report on progress made towards delivering a balanced budget for 2015/2016. The update included additional pressures and the progress made to date in achieving the 2015/2016 savings target was set out in Table 1 of the report. These were now being incorporated into the budgets, over and above those items brought to members' attention in November 2014, as part of Report PAS/SE/14/010.

1.5.2 The report also informed the Committee on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's consideration of the annual car park tariffs report (OAS/SE/14/001), at its meeting on 17 December 2014. The Committee had noted the proposed recommendations for inclusion in the Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2015/2016 Update Report to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (Paragraph 1.3.2 of Report No: PAS/SE/15/005), as part of the budget setting process:

- (1) In accordance with the Car Parking Charges Review Group recommendation (24 October 2012) and Cabinet approval (12 December 2012), that a full review of car parking charges should commence in June 2015 on completion of the Pay on Exit/Automatic Number Plate Recognition feasibility investigations and completion of a review on car parking capacity across the district.
- (2) That no increase would be applied to any existing tariff or permit on any car park during 2015/16 financial year.
- (3) The current 'Free from 3' offer in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill on Tuesdays and Fridays respectively would continue for a further year.

- (4) The introduction of a new tariff structure arising on commencement of a revised Borough of St Edmundsbury Off Street Parking Places Order in 2015:
- (1) A tariff of £1.80 for up to 4hrs and £3.00 (all day) to be introduced on the new 40-space Shire Hall car park in Bury St Edmunds (which will replace the Manor House provision).
 - (b) The introduction of low emission vehicle tariff of 60p for up to 4hrs, £1.20 all day on the Old Sale Yard (Rose and Crown) car park in Haverhill.
- 1.5.3 Members scrutinised the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which officers duly responded. In particular discussions were held on the budget assumptions set out in Table 1 of the report, and suggested that more detailed information on savings identified should be provided in future reports.
- 1.5.4 The following recommendation has been put forward by the Committee, as detailed on the first page of this report:
- That the car park tariffs for 2015/16, as set out in Paragraph 1.3.2 of Report No: PAS/SE/15/005 be approved, as part of the budget setting process for 2015/16.
- 1.6 **Treasury Management Report 2014/2015 Investment Activity 1 April to 31 December 2014 (Report No: TMS/SE/15/001)**
- 1.6.1 Following the Treasury Management Sub-Committee's consideration of Report No: TMS/SE/15/001 on 19 January 2015, the Head of Resources and Performance verbally reported on the Sub-Committee's consideration of the report, which summarised the Treasury Management activity for the first nine months of the 2014/2015 financial year.
- 1.6.2 The Sub-Committee had been advised that interest earned during the first nine months of the financial year amounted to £0.261m against the profiled budget for the period of £0.444m; a budgetary deficit of £0.183m. This was due to a lower average rate of interest than projected during the period. The reduction in the average interest rate was primarily due to the continued low bank base rate of 0.50%, which in turn had seen a reduction in the interest rates on the Council's call accounts and fixed term investments. In the current economic climate it is considered likely that the current low rates will continue for the remainder of this year.
- 1.6.3 The Sub-Committee had scrutinised the content of the report, asking questions of officers who duly responded. Discussions were also held on the investment activity and the increase in balances as at 31 December 2014; the Council's potential future borrowing requirements; links to the use of treasury management investment balances and cash flow planning. There were no issues or recommendations needed to be brought to the attention of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on this occasion.

1.6.4 The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the report and there being no decision required, **NOTED** the contents of the report.

2. Background Papers

2.1.1 [Report PAS/SE/15/001](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Key Performance Indicators and Quarter 3 Performance Report 2014-15

2.1.2 [Report PAS/SE/15/002](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: West Suffolk Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Monitoring Report – December 2014

2.1.3 [Report PAS/SE/15/003](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Work Programme Update

2.1.4 [Report PAS/SE/15/004](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Financial Performance Report (Revenue and Capital) Quarter 3 – 2014-15

2.1.5 [Report PAS/SE/15/005](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2015-16 - Update

2.1.6 [Report TMS/SE/15/001](#) to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Treasury Management Report 2014/15 - Investment Activity 1 April to 31 December 2014

Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 29 January 2015 Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2015/2016	
Report No:	CAB/SE/15/003	
Report to and dates:	Cabinet	10 February 2015
	Council	24 February 2015
Portfolio holder:	David Ray Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Tel: 01359 250912 Email: david.ray@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Chairman of the Committee:	Sarah Broughton Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee Tel: 01284 787327 Email: sarah.broughton@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead Officer:	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance Tel: 01638 719245 Email: rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	On 29 January 2015, the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee considered Report No: TMS/SE/15/002 , which had been scrutinised by the Treasury Management Sub-Committee on 19 January 2015. The report provided information on the proposed Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2015/16 (including treasury related prudential indicators).	
Recommendation:	It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that, subject to the approval of full Council, the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2015/2016, as contained in Appendix 1 to Report TMS/SE/15/002, be adopted.	

Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>		<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Consultation:		• See Report No: TMS/SE/15/002	
Alternative option(s):		• See Report No: TMS/SE/15/002	
Implications:			
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • See Report No: TMS/SE/15/002	
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • See Report No: TMS/SE/15/002	
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • See Report No: TMS/SE/15/002	
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • See Report No: TMS/SE/15/002	
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • See Report No: TMS/SE/15/002	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
See Report No: TMS/SE/15/002			
Ward(s) affected:		All Wards	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		See Report No: TMS/SE/15/002 to Treasury Management Sub-Committee and the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2015/2016: 19 and 29 January 2015	
Documents attached:		None	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation

1.1 Key Issues

- 1.1.1 Following the Treasury Management Sub-Committee's consideration of Report TMS/SE/15/002, the Head of Resources and Performance verbally reported to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on the Sub-Committee's consideration of the report and recommendation.
- 1.1.2 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management required that, prior to the start of the financial year that Council formally approved an Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy, setting out the Council's treasury management policy and strategy statements for the forthcoming year.
- 1.1.3 The proposed Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2015/2016 (including treasury related prudential indicators) was attached as Appendix 1 to Report TMS/SE/15/002. The Sub-Committee was advised that that no major changes had been made to the Strategy since it was presented to the Sub-Committee on 20 January 2014.
- 1.1.4 The Sub-Committee was further advised that the Treasury Management Code of Practice had been updated accordingly, to reflect the proposed Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statements 2015/16. No major changes had been made to the Code of Practice since it was presented to the Sub-Committee on 20 January 2014.
- 1.1.5 The Treasury Management Sub-Committee had examined the report in detail. In particular, the Sub-Committee was pleased to note that based on the current economic climate that the interest rate projected in 2015/2016 had been revised down from 1.50% to 0.90%.
- 1.1.6 The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the report and has put forward a recommendation as set out on page one of this report.

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Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Recommendation of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: 29 January 2015 Update on Procurement Exercise for External Fund Manager to Support Treasury Management Activities	
Report No:	CAB/SE/15/004	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	10 February 2015
Portfolio holder:	David Ray Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Tel: 01359 250912 Email: david.ray@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Chairman of the Committee:	Sarah Broughton Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee Tel: 01284 787327 Email: sarah.broughton@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance Tel: 01638 719245 Email: rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	On 29 January 2015, the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee considered Report No: TMS/SE/15/003 , which had been scrutinised by the Treasury Management Sub-Committee on 19 January 2015. The report provided information on options around the timing for the procurement exercise for external fund managers to support the Council's treasury management activities.	
Recommendation:	It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that, Option B, as detailed in paragraph 1.2.1 of Report TMS/SE/15/003, be approved.	

Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>		<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Consultation:		• See Report No: TMS/SE/15/003	
Alternative option(s):		• See Report No: TMS/SE/15/003	
Implications:			
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • See Report No: TMS/SE/15/003	
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • See Report No: TMS/SE/15/003	
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • See Report No: TMS/SE/15/003	
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • See Report No: TMS/SE/15/003	
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • See Report No: TMS/SE/15/003	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
See Report No: TMS/SE/15/002			
Ward(s) affected:		All Wards	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		See Report No: TMS/SE/15/003 to Treasury Management Sub-Committee and the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Update on procurement exercise for external fund manager to support treasury management activities: 19 and 29 January 2015	
Documents attached:		None	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation

1.1 Key Issues

- 1.1.1 Following the Treasury Management Sub-Committee's consideration of Report TMS/SE/15/003, the Head of Resources and Performance verbally reported to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on the Sub-Committee's consideration of the report and recommendation.
- 1.1.2 On 18 November 2013, as part of Report E163, the Sub-Committee had agreed to the option to use both Treasury Management Advisors and External Fund Managers. This was subsequently recommended to and approved by Cabinet, as external support for its Treasury Management Investment Activities. As a result, the current Treasury Management Strategy sets out the potential use of fund managers and treasury management advisors.
- 1.1.3 Report TMS/SE/15/003 provides options around the timing for the procurement exercise for external fund managers to support the Council's treasury management activities.
- 1.1.4 The current contract with Sector for Treasury Management advice was extendable until March 2017, and could be terminated on 31 March 2015.
- 1.1.5 The report summarises two potential options on the timing for a procurement exercise for appointment and use of an external fund manager:
- Option A: A procurement exercise commences during the last quarter of 2014/15, following the approval of the Council's spending plans as part of the 2015/16 budget and council tax setting reports at the end of February 2015.
- Option B: A procurement exercise commences during the summer of 2015, allowing for further opportunity to consider the business cases for some potentially significant investment opportunities such as Public Sector Village II, Waste Transfer Site and Investing in Housing within the Borough and the Council's overall spending plans.
- 1.1.5 The Treasury Management Sub-Committee had examined the options in detail and asked questions to which officers duly responded.
- 1.1.6 The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the report and has put forward a recommendation, as set out on page one of this report.

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Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Budget and Council Tax Setting: 2015/2016 and Medium Term Financial Strategy	
Report No:	CAB/SE/15/005	
Report to and date/s:	Cabinet	10 February 2015
	Council	24 February 2015
Portfolio holder:	David Ray Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Tel: 01359 250912 Email: david.ray@stedsbcc.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance Tel: 01638 719245 Email: rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	This report sets out details of the Council's proposed revenue and capital budgets for 2015/16 for Cabinet's consideration and recommendation to full Council.	
Recommendations:	<p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that, subject to the approval of full Council:</p> <p>(1) the revenue and capital budget for 2015/2016 attached at Attachment A to Report No: CAB/SE/15/005, and as detailed in Attachment D, Appendix 1-5 and Attachment E be approved;</p> <p>(2) having taken into account the conclusions of the Head of Resources and Performance's report on the adequacy of reserves and the robustness of budget estimates (Attachment C) and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (Attachment D), particularly the Scenario Planning and Sensitivity Analysis (Attachment D and Appendix 5) and all other information contained in this report,</p>	

Recommendations (continued)	<p>Cabinet establish the level of council tax for 2015/2016;</p> <p>(3) the Head of Resources and Performance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, be authorised to transfer any surplus from the 2014/2015 revenue budget to the Invest to Save Reserve as detailed in paragraph 1.8.4, and to vire funds between existing Earmarked Reserves (as set out at Attachment D, Appendix 3) as deemed appropriate throughout the year; and</p> <p>(4) that the use of the Council’s discretionary power (S47 Local Government Finance Act) to provide the transitional relief be approved and delegated authority be given to the Head of Resources and Performance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, to determine the final guidelines for the operation of the transitional relief for 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 following the current scheme and guidance issued by Government (Attachment F), as set out in paragraphs 1.4.3 to 1.4.7 of Report No: CAB/SE/15/005.</p>
Key Decision:	No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Council decisions
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As detailed in the body of this report
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is legally required to set a balanced budget.
Implications:	
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As detailed in the body of this report
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing implications are considered as part of any proposed structure changes.
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As detailed in the body of this report
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be considered as part of implementation of service changes

Risk/opportunity assessment:	A risk assessment is included at Attachment C as part of the report by the Head of Resources and Performance (Chief Finance Officer). The Head of Resources and Performance's conclusion is that overall the estimates are robust, taking into account known risks and mitigating strategies and the reserves are adequate for the 2015/2016 budget plans. Cabinet and Council are advised to have regard to this report when making their decisions on the 2015/2016 budget.
Ward(s) affected:	All Wards
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>	<p><u>PAS/SE/14/010</u> Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2015-16 and Budget Consultation Results -26 November 2014</p> <p><u>PAS/SE/15/005</u> Budget Monitoring 1 April 2014 – 31 December 2014 -29 January 2015</p> <p>West Suffolk Medium Term Financial Strategy http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Finance_and_Statistics/upload/MediumTermFinancialStrategy2014-16.pdf</p>
Documents attached:	See list at Section 4 of this report.

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendations

1.1 Local government funding

1.1.1 The financial landscape for central government funding remains one of uncertainty. The December Autumn Statement outlined further reductions in the Local Government Department spending, with the medium term projections being subject to confirmation by any new administration from May 2015. Further and potentially steeper reductions appear highly likely.

1.2 Local Government Finance Settlement 2015/2016

1.2.1 The Local Government Finance Settlement was announced on 18 December 2014. This only covered 2015/2016, unlike the previous year which provided us with a two-year funding settlement. Pressure is mounting on any incoming government to commit to earlier settlement announcements and to multi-year settlements as local authorities are no longer in the realms of making annual savings, but rather implementing long term strategies to meet the financial future of continued austerity. To do this with little or no knowledge of the long term settlement is extremely difficult.

1.2.2 The Council's total formula grant for 2015/2016 (including Revenue Support Grant, Baseline Funding from retained business rates, Local Services Support Grant and Council Tax Freeze grant) is £4.168m. The Borough has seen a 49.8% cumulative cut in revenue support grant funding over the two years from 2013/2014 to 2015/2016.

1.3 The Government's Council Tax freeze and referendum requirements 2015/2016

1.3.1 The Government has once again offered to subsidise all councils which agree to freeze council tax levels by providing a grant equivalent to 1% council tax increase for one year only. The impact (financial contribution from central government) of accepting the council tax freeze grant is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Impact of accepting council tax freeze grant

Council tax freeze grant	2011/ 2012 £000	2012/ 2013 £000	2013/ 2014 £000	2014/ 2015 £000	2015/ 2016 £000
Grant awarded in 2011/12*	167	167	167	167	167
Grant awarded in 2012/13*	n/a	168	0	0	0
Grant awarded in 2013/14*	n/a	n/a	67	67	67
Grant awarded in 2014/15*	n/a	n/a	n/a	61	66
Grant offered in 2015/16					66
Total grant received if we freeze council tax in 2015/2016	167	335	234	295	366

* Grant awarded in 2011/2012, 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 now forms part of the formula grant

- 1.3.2 It should be noted that accepting successive years' council tax freeze grants provides only a short term solution and has a cumulative detrimental impact on the Council's finances as year on year council tax levels fail to rise in line with inflation. This impact has already been factored into the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 1.3.3 The Government has stated that any increase of 2% or more in council tax would trigger a local referendum, as was the case in 2014/2015, giving the local electorate the opportunity to approve or veto the increase. For information - a 2% increase in an average Band D property for St Edmundsbury Borough Council would equate to income of approximately £122,000 for 2015/2016.
- 1.3.4 Should Cabinet and full Council decide to set a 0% increase on council tax, the Borough Council will have frozen council tax for six out of the last seven years, as set out in Table 2.

Table 2: St Edmundsbury - Council Tax level since 2009/2010

	2009 /2010	2010 /2011	2011 /2012	2012 /2013	2013 /2014	2014 /2015	2015 /2016
Council tax increase	0%	1.9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0% (proposed)

1.4 **Business rates**

Business rates retail relief 2015/2016

- 1.4.1 The Government has continued, as announced in the Autumn Statement 2014, to offer support for business rate bills in 2015/2016 by offering small

business rate relief for an extra year, a 2% cap on the inflation increase for the second consecutive year and increased temporary discounts for shops, pubs and restaurants (with rateable values below £50,000) from £1,000 to £1,500.

- 1.4.2 Business rates retail relief was introduced from April 2013 by the Borough Council in line with Government's guidelines and expectations, as detailed in Cabinet Report E272 'Budget and Council Tax Setting 2014-15 and MTFS 2014-16'. The Autumn Statement 2014 has proposed to increase the total relief from £1,000 a year to £1,500. The implementation of this change is covered under the existing delegations to the Head of Resources and Performance given by Council at the Budget Setting last year (full Council: 26 February 2014 - minute 76 (4) refers) and will be implemented in time for 2015/2016 business rate bills using the revised figure. The changes are cost neutral as the Government will fully reimburse local authorities for the local share of the discretionary relief using a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Business rates transitional relief 2015/2016 to 2016/2017

- 1.4.3 Until recently a Non-Domestic Valuation List was valid for five years after which time a re-valuation exercise was carried out to re-assess the Rateable Value based on the rental value of the premises. The Government always ensures a zero impact of a re-valuation nationally by adjusting the rate in the pound, however locally there are always 'gainers' and 'losers'.
- 1.4.4 In order to restrict the impact of the re-valuation on business, a Transitional Relief scheme was introduced by Central Government to last five years. The scheme was self-financing nationally and meant that a cap was placed on increases and decreases in bills above a certain percentage. This percentage increased year on year so that over time the full rates bill was being paid. The cost of this scheme was borne by the Government.

Current situation

- 1.4.5 The re-valuation that was due in April 2015 has been postponed until April 2017; however the transitional scheme, contained in statute, will end on 31 March 2015 to coincide with the original re-valuation cycle. In order to continue to support businesses the Government has decided to extend transitional relief for properties under £50,000 RV; however they are going to achieve this through use of an authority's discretionary powers to grant a Local Discount under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act rather than through Regulation.
- 1.4.6 The Scheme guidance has been issued by Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) setting out the eligibility criteria for relief, based on the existing scheme; however as this is a discretionary power, a local scheme should be adopted.
- 1.4.7 Any relief granted under these provisions will be fully funded by Central Government through a grant under Section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 so there is no financial impact on the Council. The

number of properties which will fall under these provisions is likely to be minimal as in most cases transitional relief has already been phased out. State Aid rules will also apply.

1.5 **Setting the budget – 2015/2016**

- 1.5.1 The Council continues to face considerable financial challenges as a result of uncertainty in the wider economy and constraints on public sector spending. In this context, and like many other councils, difficult financial decisions have to be made. The Council has an excellent track record of achieving substantial year-on-year budget savings and generating new income.
- 1.5.2 The approach for delivering the 2015/2016 budget has been that the Council's resources for 2015/2016 should be allocated according to its strategic priorities. In practice, this meant prioritising the projects, actions and themes outlined in the West Suffolk Strategic Plan for 2014-2016, as well as the essential work that the Council needs to do, including statutory functions.
- 1.5.3 The process of allocating resources according to priorities and essential services has helped to identify areas of the Council's work which could either be scaled back or where further opportunities for generating more income could be pursued. The process then focused on non-priority areas, and challenged whether the Council should continue with the activities at all, or in their current form, in order to ensure they provided value for money to council tax payers.
- 1.5.4 It should also be noted that savings achieved through sharing services with Forest Heath District Council have to date been predominately delivered through the joining up of services and staff structures. During September business partners and advisors from the Resources and Performance team held a number of budget challenge meetings with heads of service and portfolio holders. The focus of these meetings was to review all supplies, service and income budgets across West Suffolk. This review took into account previous spending patterns, but more importantly what the projected spending and income requirement under a shared service for 2015/2016 would look like. The challenge meetings also provided the opportunity to consider potential contractual savings as a result of joining up contracts across West Suffolk.
- 1.5.5 A significant number of the proposals generated from the process outlined in paragraphs 1.5.3 and 1.5.4 above are relatively straightforward to implement with minimal impact on service delivery as these items fall mainly in the categories of contract, supplies and service efficiencies, further shared service savings and income generation opportunities from making better use of council assets.
- 1.5.6 However, other proposals require more detailed analysis in order to develop options and to provide clarity as to the potential savings/income. Indeed, some proposals required input from users and the public and were therefore explored as part of this year's budget consultation carried out over the summer of 2014.

- 1.5.7 The purpose of the budget consultation was to inform the budget setting process and help councillors to make decisions about the 2015/2016 budget. It was also used to gauge public opinion on the main savings/income generating options and to test views on a range of issues relating to the council priorities and themes in the MTFs, such as channel shift, families and communities and our commercial approach.
- 1.5.8 The exercise included three public focus groups and three town and parish council focus groups. This provided qualitative feedback which helped to shape the content of the public survey. Quantitative information came from sending the survey to 3,000 randomly-selected households across the borough.
- 1.5.9 The results of this budget consultation assisted Members of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee in November 2014 (Report PAS/SE/14/010 'Delivering a Sustainable Budget 2015-16 and Budget Consultation Results') with their recommended saving proposals through to Cabinet and Full Council on 16 December 2014 (Report COU/SE/14/012). These savings proposals are included within the proposed budget for 2015/2016 as contained at Attachment A, and have been summarised in Attachment B for ease of reference.
- 1.5.10 The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee has a key role in the scrutiny of the budget process and proposals for achieving a balanced budget. At the January 2015 meeting the Committee received Report PAS/SE/15/005, which detailed the remaining saving/income proposals required in order for a balanced budget to be achieved. The complete list presented to the Committee in November 2014 and January 2015 has been summarised in Attachment B for ease of reference.
- 1.5.11 Attachment A is the revenue budget summary, which provides an overview of the proposed net service expenditure, (net revenue position after income, expenditure and recharges) for 2015/2016. The total proposed net revenue expenditure in 2015/2016 is £12.757million.

1.6 **Capital programme**

- 1.6.1 The capital expenditure of the Council has an impact on the revenue budget and is part of the overall preparation of the revenue proposals for the coming year.
- 1.6.2 It is estimated that £8.832 million will be spent on capital programme schemes during 2015/2016 which are to be funded by a combination of grants and contributions (£2.214 million), earmarked revenue reserves (£3.209 million) and the useable capital receipts reserve (£3.409 million).
- 1.6.3 Looking ahead, the total value of the capital programme over the next four years is approximately £18.716 million. Attachment D, Appendix 2 shows the planned capital expenditure in financial year 2015/2016 and future years, together with information on the funding of that expenditure (that is, grants and contributions, use of earmarked revenue reserves and useable capital receipts reserve) and is summarised in Table 3 below.

1.6.4 **Table 3: Planned capital expenditure over four years to 2018/2019**

	2015/16 millions	2016/17 millions	2017/18 millions	2018/19 millions	Total
Gross capital expenditure	£8.832	£6.266	£2.234	£1.384	£18.716
Funded by:					
Grants and contributions	£2.214	£0.250	£0.250	£0.834	£3.548
Earmarked revenue reserves	£3.209	£2.216	£1.434	£ Nil	£6.859
Capital receipts reserve	£3.409	£3.800	£0.550	£0.550	£8.309
Total	£8.832	£6.266	£2.234	£1.384	£18.716

1.7 **Disposal of assets**

1.7.1 Part of the funding arrangements for the capital programme is the disposal of surplus assets. The Council has an agreed programme of asset disposals, which has already been affected by the national economic situation. Table 4 is a summary estimate of the likely level of income from asset disposals over the period 2015/2016 to 2018/2019.

1.7.2 **Table 4: Estimated income from asset disposals 2015/2016 to 2018/2019**

	<u>2015/16</u>	<u>2016/17</u>	<u>2017/18</u>	<u>2018/19</u>
Estimated income from asset disposals – Council share of Right to Buy receipts	£408,000	£408,000	£408,000	£408,000

1.7.3 The above capital programme and asset disposals programme will, in the short to medium term, reduce the Borough Council's useable capital receipts reserves from £12.7 million to £6.0 million. However, this approach still does not address the funding of longer term requirements for major capital repairs to key Borough Council assets including, for example, the £11 million for major repairs and refurbishment of the Borough Council's two leisure centres. Consideration of the affordability of these major capital expenditure proposals, including options for funding, will need to be included in the options and investment appraisals for these projects.

1.7.4 The Council has a number of projects on the horizon that have the potential to require significant capital investment, such as the Public Sector Village (PSV) Phase II (Cabinet Report CAB/SE/14/010) and the potential relocation of the Depot facilities to a new Shared Facility (Cabinet Report F51). Consideration of the affordability of these major capital expenditure proposals, including options for funding, will need to be included in the

options and investment appraisals for these projects and will be subject to Full Council decisions.

- 1.7.5 The calculation of interest income used in the MTFS is based on the use of existing and anticipated capital expenditure and receipts. Changes in the level and timing of these cashflows have a direct impact on investment returns and revenue funding requirements. However, the Interest Equalisation Reserve does allow for some change in the budgeted levels of income from interest to be accommodated. The Prudential Code for Capital Finance and matters relating to the affordability of the Capital Programme are addressed in Attachment D, Appendix 4. The revenue cost of the capital programme is achievable without significant council tax rises provided the savings indicated in the MTFS and set out in Attachment D, Appendix 1 are implemented.

1.8 **Revenue reserves and balances**

General Fund

- 1.8.1 The revenue budget, Attachment A, based on current budget projections, shows a balanced budget position for 2015/2016. However, many of the assumptions supporting the budget projections for 2015/2016 (and future years) are subject to significant uncertainty. This includes assumptions regarding:
- (a) sustainability of income stream estimates (including commercial property rental income and planning income);
 - (b) impact of Business Rates Retention scheme and Suffolk pooling arrangements;
 - (c) impact of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme; and
 - (d) pay inflation and employer's pension liabilities.
- 1.8.2 The Borough Council holds General Fund balances as a contingency to cover the cost of unexpected expenditure during the year. The Borough Council agreed as part of 2014/2015 budget process and development of the MTFS to hold a General Fund balance at the level of £3 million, which is 24% of the 2015/2016 net expenditure. As in previous years, the Borough Council can use balances above this minimum to support revenue expenditure and to reduce the level of council tax.
- 1.8.3 The recommended level of general fund balance has been established by taking into account the following:
- (a) allowance for a working balance to cushion the impact of any unexpected events or emergencies;
 - (b) the new risks placed at a local level under the new business rates retention scheme, such as appeals;
 - (c) the addition of greater income targets linked to being more commercial and the selling of councils' services; and
 - (d) other risks detailed in the Scenario Planning and Sensitivity Analysis provided at Attachment D, Appendix 5.

- 1.8.4 The budget monitoring report to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 29 January 2015 (Report PAS/SE/15/005 refers) included an estimate of the year end budget underspend of £108,000. It is proposed to transfer the final year-end surplus in its entirety to the Council's Invest to Save reserve to support the Council share of the cost of change associated with the current leadership and service management restructure.

Earmarked reserves

- 1.8.5 At the end of the 2015/2016 financial year, the Council will have an estimated £10.971 million in earmarked reserves. The current level of earmarked reserves and contributions during 2015/2016 has been reviewed and where appropriate annual contributions have been adjusted. Attachment D, Appendix 3, provides details of the proposed contributions to, and projected expenditure from, Earmarked reserves during 2015/2016.

Strategic priorities and MTFS Reserve

- 1.8.6 This reserve will act as a one-off fund to provide the financial capacity, either through direct investment (revenue and/or capital) or through servicing external borrowing, for the West Suffolk authorities to drive forward the delivery of a sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the West Suffolk Strategic Plan priorities.
- 1.8.7 The Council received a total New Homes Bonus (NHB) grant of £0.268 million in 2011/2012, £0.559 million in 2012/2013, £0.757 million in 2013/2014, £0.888 million in 2014/2015 and expects to receive £1.219 million in 2015/2016. These NHB allocations have all been put into this Strategic Priorities and MTFS reserve.
- 1.8.8 No assumptions have been made with regard to NHB allocations beyond 2015/2016 as there is a likelihood that future payments of the NHB will be funded at a national level by cutting our funding elsewhere, such as top-slicing revenue support grant or by retaining a proportion of business rate monies that otherwise would be retained locally.
- 1.8.9 The 2015/2016 budget and MTFS includes a number of proposed draws on this reserve, some of which are still to be quantified and will require further reports to full Council. Attachment E summarises the proposed draws on this reserve as part of the 2015/2016 budget.

Adequacy of reserves

- 1.8.10 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Section 151 Officer (Head of Resources and Performance) to report to Council, as part of the tax setting report, her view of the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves. The Council is required to take these views into account when setting the council tax at its meeting on 24 February 2015. The full statement is attached in Attachment C.

1.8.11 In summary, the Section 151 Officer's overall assessment is that the estimates are robust (taking into account known risks and mitigating strategies) and reserves are adequate for the 2015/2016 budget plans.

2. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

2.1 It should be noted that by 2018/2019 the projected budget gap amounts to £2.5 million for St Edmundsbury (that is, £1.3 million 2016/2017, £0.8 million 2017/2018, and £0.4 million 2018/2019). Should any of the assumptions within the MTFS change significantly, the gap would also change.

2.2 The six themes within our agreed MTFS (link below) relate to areas of the West Suffolk councils' business which will support sustainability in a more financially constrained environment.

http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Finance_and_Statistics/upload/MediumTermFinancialStrategy2014-16.pdf

2.3 The themes are:

- aligning resources to the councils' strategic plan and essential services;
- continuation of the shared services agenda and transformation of service delivery;
- behaving more commercially;
- encouraging more use of digital forms of customer access;
- taking advantage of new forms of local government finance (for example, business rate retention); and
- considering new funding models (for example, becoming as an investing authority).

2.4 Some of the budget consultation areas (discussed as part of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Report PAS/SE/14/010), such as the Bury St Edmunds bus station building and investing in housing, still require further work and are likely to be the subject of individual business cases over the coming months. These areas are likely to inform the Council's 2016/2017 budget.

3. Legal implications

3.1 The Local Government Act 2003 imposed duties on local authorities in relation to financial management which covers the following areas:

- (a) A power for the Secretary of State to determine a minimum reserve level for local authorities by regulations. The Government has indicated that their preference is to keep this power in reserve.
- (b) Section 25 of the Act places a requirement on the S151 Officer to report on the adequacy of reserves and robustness of budget estimates as part of the authority's annual budget setting process. The Council is required to take these views into account when setting the Council Tax at its meeting on 24 February 2015. This is included as Attachment C of the report.

- (c) Sections 28 and 29 of the Act place a statutory duty on local authorities to monitor their budgets and take such action as considered necessary in the case of overspends and shortfalls of income.
- (d) Section 30 of the Act relates to the provisions preventing local authorities entering into agreements following a Section 114 Report which a S151 Officer must produce when it appears that expenditure of the authority in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources available to meet the expenditure. No such report has been produced for St Edmundsbury this year.

4. Documents attached

- 4.1 **Attachment A:** Revenue Budget Summary
- Attachment B:** Summary of major budget changes
- Attachment C:** Report by the Head of Resources and Performance
- Attachment D:** (not attached) – Medium Term Financial Strategy
http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Finance_and_Statistics/upload/MediumTermFinancialStrategy2014-16.pdf
- Appendix 1:** 5 Year Revenue Budget
- Appendix 2:** 5 Year Capital Budget
- Appendix 3:** Earmarked Revenue Reserves
- Appendix 4:** Prudential Code for Capital Finance
- Appendix 5:** Scenario Planning and Sensitivity Analysis
- Attachment E:** Strategic Priorities and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Reserve
- Attachment F:** CLG Transitional Relief guidance

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Service	Ref.No.	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Budget	2015/16 Budget
Net Service Expenditure (net revenue position after income, expenditure and recharges) by Service Area Net expenditure/(net income)				
Services				
Head of Resources & Performance	1	153,587	433,396	1,086,551
Head of HR and Democratic Services	2	1,235,889	1,299,141	1,207,167
Head of Families and Communities	3	574,089	666,290	1,032,211
Head of Planning and Growth	4	2,170,111	1,784,500	1,320,996
Head of Operations	5	7,505,677	7,124,323	7,028,228
Head of Housing	6	1,544,777	1,424,099	1,081,854
Total Net Expenditure excluding Parishes	7	13,184,130	12,731,749	12,757,007
Transfer to / (from) General Fund Balance	8	202,672	(460,000)	0
BUDGET REQUIREMENT EXCLUDING PARISHES	9	13,386,802	12,271,749	12,757,007
GRANTS AND COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT				
Collection Fund Deficit / (Surplus) - Council Tax	10	30,172	83,000	(167,300)
Collection Fund Deficit / (Surplus) - Business Rates	11	0	(40,074)	240,000
Government Support				
Formula Grant - Revenue Support Grant	12	(3,178,463)	(2,381,349)	(1,594,413)
Formula Grant - Business Rate Retention Scheme	13	(2,114,311)	(2,155,499)	(2,196,687)
Business Rates Retention Scheme - Local Share of Growth	14	(525,051)	(392,000)	72,000
Business Rates Retention Scheme - Share of Suffolk Pooling Benefit	15	0	(45,000)	(127,000)
Business Rates Retention Scheme - Renewable Energy	16	(35,841)	0	(427,000)
Business Rates Retention Scheme - S31 Grants	17	(373,442)	0	(751,000)
Local Services Support Grant	18	(50,000)	(49,252)	(49,062)
Efficiency Support for Services in Sparse Areas	19	0	(17,714)	(28,901)
Council Tax Freeze Grant - 2011/12	20	(167,239)	(166,545)	(166,490)
Council Tax Freeze Grant - 2013/14	21	(67,519)	(67,191)	(67,191)
Council Tax Freeze Grant - 2014/15	22	0	(60,849)	(65,429)
Council Tax Freeze Grant - 2015/16	23	0	0	(65,967)
New Homes Bonus		(828,042)	(894,414)	(1,219,085)
Totals	23	6,077,066	6,084,862	6,143,482
Amount met from Collection Fund				
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	24	6,077,066	6,084,862	6,143,482
Parish Councils	25	1,493,828	1,587,004	1,587,004
Total met from Collection Fund	26	7,570,894	7,671,866	7,730,486
Working Balances				
Opening General Fund Balance	27	3,376,383	3,579,055	3,165,055
Transfers to General Fund	28	202,672	(414,000)	0
General Fund Balance carried forward:	29	3,579,055	3,165,055	3,165,055

Service	Ref.No.	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Budget	2015/16 Budget
Head of Resources & Performance				
General Fund		(2,483,300)	(1,811,827)	(1,713,665)
Resources & Performance*		(122,531)	0	0
Internal Audit*		(13,312)	0	0
ICT*		64,828	(30,000)	0
Anglia Revenues Partnership		59,792	0	0
Council Tax Administration		740,242	899,444	456,277
Business Rate Administration		14,710	123,250	(9,704)
Grants to Organisations		554,911	521,533	224,537
Housing Benefits		604,276	314,822	456,579
Housing Act Advances		258	250	0
Emergency Planning		39,596	43,250	35,250
Corporate Expenditure		865,802	682,088	1,659,281
Non-Distributed Costs		301,352	235,650	217,000
Non-Distributed Costs - Cost of Unused Assets		30,993	33,600	41,100
Interest Transactions		(504,030)	(578,664)	(280,104)
Head of Resources & Performance Totals:	1	153,587	433,396	1,086,551
Head of HR and Democratic Services				
Human Resources & Payroll*		60,371	11,809	3,900
Central Training Services*		(19,480)	(1,142)	0
Health & Safety*		(2,527)	15,000	0
Legal Services*		(100,014)	(371)	0
Electoral Registration		123,784	123,115	117,452
Election Expenses		77,352	67,285	114,419
Democratic Services		555,778	551,150	507,246
Members Expenses		416,128	402,234	346,570
Mayoralty & Civic Functions		124,497	130,061	117,580
Head of HR and Democratic Services Totals;	2	1,235,889	1,299,141	1,207,167
Head of Families and Communities				
Customer Services *		23,606	515	0
Policy*		(35,461)	0	0
Communications*		11,949	24,400	0
Website and Intranet		0	0	43,931
Bus Stations		257,004	254,473	247,642
Concessionary Transport		4,258	3,650	5,110
Community Development		197,575	270,058	332,845
Community Chest - Families & Communities		0	0	294,250
Community Centres		115,158	113,194	108,433
Head of Families and Communities Totals:	3	574,089	666,290	1,032,211
Head of Planning and Growth				
Land Charges		(62,706)	(68,810)	(121,950)
Prevention of Pollution		258,867	33,956	145,440
Environmental Management		34,580	42,489	13,828
Drinking Water Quality		6,835	7,089	6,024
Climate Change		44,207	93,275	92,131
Licensing		34,206	(103,248)	15,103
Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing		31,846	(20,988)	(57,340)
Food Safety		173,451	161,941	104,169
Health & Safety at Work Act/Enforcement		127,150	115,241	102,831
Home Energy Conservation		56,043	62,400	6,200
Development Control		983,220	570,302	(118,593)
Planning Policy		124,740	628,433	595,546
Local Plan		91,867	(52,450)	(10,280)
Building Control		68,619	81,820	(87,268)
Planning & Regulatory Support		(15,578)	0	348,110
Economic Development & Growth		(60,020)	123,992	272,797
Strategic Tourism & Markets		255,730	115,508	42,768
Bury Christmas Fayre		4,088	(6,450)	(28,520)
Park & Ride		3,967	0	0

Service	Ref.No.	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Budget	2015/16 Budget
Vibrant Town Centres		9,000	0	0
Head of Planning and Growth Totals:	4	2,170,112	1,784,500	1,320,996
Head of Operations				
Ex-1090 Section (13/14 only)		(33,565)	0	0
Offices: West Suffolk House*		(399,205)	0	0
Offices: Haverhill House*		9,930	0	0
Courier & Postal Service*		(26,508)	0	0
Printing & Copying Service*		(3,055)	0	0
Property Services*		41,423	0	0
Estates Management*		(39,992)	0	0
CCTV & Support*		8,403	0	0
Leisure Services Management & Support		8,712	7,038	238,667
Leisure Promotion		104	182,940	146,666
Leisure - Commercial Activities		(163,786)	34,770	(209,231)
Arboriculture (Tree Maintenance Works)		268,690	270,721	275,888
Other Parks and Play Provision		517,949	470,760	507,314
Abbey Gardens		383,739	340,787	366,704
Nowton Park		212,809	205,959	202,429
East Town Park		132,318	132,962	131,477
Clare Country Park		(24,514)	447	1,379
Children's Play Areas		158,303	159,479	147,471
Arts, Heritage & Cultural Services		242,485	251,274	144,009
Moyse's Hall Museum		306,112	275,518	441,333
West Stow Country Park		332,608	234,162	124,260
West Stow ASVT Operating Account		0	0	1,270
Heritage Outreach Services		9,735	18,500	4,510
Heritage Sites & Monuments		6,800	8,950	9,718
West Front Houses		59,928	60,700	63,842
Sports & Leisure Centres		1,142,914	1,194,068	1,175,401
Sports Development & Community Recreation		265,438	169,789	14,081
Leisure & Sports		0	0	49,900
Cemeteries & Closed Churchyards		249,381	232,958	228,874
Allotments		2,803	1,850	610
The Apex		1,423,000	1,177,565	1,391,162
The Athenaeum		138,010	117,125	94,781
The Guildhall, Bury St Edmunds		31,693	40,000	41,606
Tourist Information Centres		174,543	166,279	99,686
Shopmobility		34,646	27,100	18,288
Bury Festival		70,405	66,747	36,630
Depots		16,543	55,767	17,422
Vehicle Workshop		27,250	30,694	0
Pool Cars		1,790	0	13,250
Vehicle Workshop Trading Account - FHDC		(2,948)	0	36,030
Public Conveniences		165,530	188,567	188,101
CCTV		281,292	310,603	270,487
Green Travel Plan		336,849	13,000	(16,480)
Street Banners & Displays		(2,860)	3,162	3,423
Street Cleansing		1,274,816	1,349,704	1,325,264
Refuse Collection (Black Bin)		1,020,541	992,806	948,271
Recycling Collection (Blue Bin)		513,285	653,193	597,439
Compostable Collection (Brown Bin)		414,510	381,241	352,615
Bulky, Fridges, Metal & Scrap Collection		121,937	120,758	116,484
Clinical & Hazardous Waste Collection		40,056	27,224	20,013
Multi-Bank Recycling Sites		(5,736)	6,817	31,048
Trade Waste		(156,269)	(43,143)	(5,052)
Grounds Maintenance Operatives*		115,754	90,423	17,423
Tree Maintenance Operatives*		0	0	0
Waste & Cleansing Operatives*		(9,449)	(2,595)	(52,268)
District Highways Services		483,356	390,702	515,342
Street Furniture		190,056	208,383	196,496
Land Drainage & Associated Works		10,538	15,900	9,690
Off Street Car Parks		(1,440,233)	(1,938,721)	(1,949,043)
Industrial & Business Units		(660,883)	(630,303)	(539,831)
Town Centres & Shops		(732,241)	(808,930)	(750,758)

Service	Ref.No.	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Budget	2015/16 Budget
Markets		(40,062)	(139,377)	(65,863)
Head of Operations Totals:	5	7,505,677	7,124,323	7,028,228
Head of Housing				
Housing Development & Strategy		251,253	121,406	205,274
Housing Business & Partnerships		14	80,998	26,547
Homelessness		252,408	278,603	236,598
Housing Advice & Choice Based Lettings		367,392	434,027	235,627
Housing Renewals		567,087	232,208	70,773
Pest Control		14,550	9,650	0
Burial of the Dead		6,548	17,212	49,949
Gypsies & Travellers		11,110	30,962	35,575
Other Public Health Services		61,165	210,183	221,511
Communicable Disease Control		13,250	8,850	0
Head of Housing Totals:	6	1,544,777	1,424,099	1,081,854

* These cost centres are recharged out

Summary of major budget changes

The following table details the major changes, as reported in Performance and Audit Scrutiny Reports **PAS/SE/14/010** and **PAS/SE/15/005**, from the current budget process between the original 2015/16 forecast budget and the final proposed 2015/16 budget.

Description	2015/16 £'000 Pressure/ (Saving)
Budget gap	1,500
<i>Budget saving proposals</i>	
Budget challenge days – including supplies and service efficiencies identified through shared services	(128)
Change recycling bin collection days	(135)
Contract efficiencies through new banking arrangements	(16)
Contract efficiencies through waste tipping arrangements	(78)
Further shared service staffing structural savings, includes increase in planning and enforcement staff linked to report F123	(60)
Grants and contributions review	(54)
Income generation - Apex sales (net income)	(50)
Income generation – CCTV expansion business case	(40)
Income generation - Tree services	(10)
Income generation - Vehicle workshop	(26)
Income generation - Waste and street cleansing services	(50)
Income – Additional planning fee income linked to report F123.	(208)
Income through Business Rate Retention Scheme – S31 grants compensating for the central Government’s imposed inflation cap on business rates (announced December 2013) and retention of renewable energy business rates growth under the new scheme.	(621)
Reduction in bed and breakfast accommodation costs	(15)
Further reduction in business mileage	(10)
Reduction in Mayoralty budget	(5)
Reduction in printing costs for officer committee papers	(16)
Office space partnership –more efficient use of existing sites	(25)
West Suffolk Letting Partnership income generation	(8)
Removal of Discretionary Rate Relief budget (now part of Business Rates Retention Scheme)	(118)
Reduction in external audit fees	(31)
Waste management back office support and in-cab technology efficiency savings	(26)
Remaining community centre transfers as identified in previous Cabinet report E154 – part year saving	(25)

Description	2015/16 £'000 Pressure/ (Saving)
Income through being an investing authority as per Cabinet report CAB/SE/14/009	(19)
Net reduction in Abbeycroft management fee following final negotiations (includes allowance for increased sports development role and management of major sporting events)*	(28)
Reduction in Housing Benefit Payment assumptions and subsidy arrangements	(66)
Additional council tax income following approved tax base increase for council tax setting purposes, cabinet report CAB/SE/14/008	(33)
Changes to Formula Grant – provisional settlement	(25)
Remaining leisure income target	(66)
Other minor budget changes	(4)
<i>Additional budget pressures</i>	
Reduction in interest income assumption to 0.9% following external advice from Sector our Treasury Advisors	210
Reduction in leisure income budgets to bring in line with last three years average level, predominately linked to Moyses Hall	65
Reduction in market toll income budget to bring in line with current year forecasts	40
Contractual increases – inflation linked	25
Increase in bad debt provision	30
Increase in utilities and business rates – inflation linked	65
Net effect of council tax freeze for 2015/16 – budget assumption only – Subject to Full Council at its meeting of 24 February 2015	61
Final Budget Gap	0

*While still a net reduction overall, the 2015/16 management fee includes provision not only for the trust taking on an increased strategic sports development role (to complement the Councils' recent management restructuring) but also for a £15,000 fund to allow the Council (working with Abbeycroft) to continue to support the staging of major sporting events in the Borough when opportunities arise to do so, given the success (and return on investment) of cycle races and athletics events in recent years. The management fee will also be subject to a complete review in 2015/16 to reflect the proposed merger of Abbeycroft and ACL, and the opportunity this offers to develop a new long-term partnership agreement.

**Adequacy of Reserves and robustness of budget estimates
Report by the Head of Resources and Performance (S151 Officer)**

1. Introduction

Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Section 151 Officer/Chief Financial Officer (Head of Resources and Performance) to formally report to Council as part of the tax setting report her view of the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves. The Council is required to take these views into account when setting the Council Tax at its meeting on 24 February 2015.

2 Financial Controls

2.1 St Edmundsbury Borough Council operates a comprehensive and effective range of financial management policies. These are contained in the Financial Procedure Rules, which form part of the Council's Constitution. This Constitution is available on the council's internet and intranet.

2.2 The Council conducts an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and reports on this in the Annual Governance Statement.

2.3 The Council continues to implement effective risk management policies, identifying corporate, operational and budget risks and mitigating strategies. Capital projects are subject to a comprehensive work plan which includes detailed risk management strategies. The Council operates a monthly Programme Board which monitors the progress of capital and revenue projects.

2.4 The internal and external audit functions play a key role in ensuring that the Council's financial controls and governance arrangements are operating satisfactorily.

2.5 This is backed up by the review processes of Cabinet, with the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee undertaking the role of the Council's Audit Committee.

3 Adequacy of Reserves

Unallocated general reserve

3.1 This statement focuses upon the unallocated general reserve. The minimum prudent level of reserves that the Council should maintain is a matter of judgement and cannot be judged merely against the current risks facing the Council as these can and will change over time.

3.2 The consequences of not keeping a prudent minimum level of reserves can be serious. In the event of a major problem or a series of events, the Council would run a serious risk of a deficit or of being forced to cut spending during the year in a damaging and arbitrary way.

3.3 CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) have issued a notification from the LAAP (Local Authority Accounting Panel) stating that there should be no imposed limit on level or nature of balances required to be held by an individual Council (except under section 26 where this has been imposed by ministers).

3.4 When setting the minimum level of reserves, the Section 151 Officer has taken into account strategic, operational and financial risks when recommending the minimum level of unallocated General Fund reserves. These include:

- Economy measures and service reductions always contain some degree of uncertainty as to whether their full effects will be achieved;
- The effect of the macro-economy on St Edmundsbury Borough Council, and subsequent loss of income from Council Tax and from fees and charges;
- The delivery of all savings targets;
- The new risks placed at a local level under the new business rates retention scheme i.e. appeals;
- The addition of greater income targets linked to being 'more commercial' and the selling of council services; and
- Unforeseeable events such as major inclement weather (floods etc) which may require urgent, material spending to be incurred;
- Risks in relation to litigation;
- Risks of grants being introduced or removed mid year, requiring authority contributions;
- The need to retain a general contingency to provide for unforeseen circumstances; and
- Other risks detailed in the Scenario Planning and Sensitivity Analysis provided at Attachment D, Appendix 5.

As a consequence, it is recommended that the general fund reserve continues at a minimum of £3m.

3.5 If an event occurs that is so serious it depletes the Council reserves to below the limit of £3m, then the Council will take appropriate measures to raise the general fund reserve to the desired level as soon as possible without undermining service provision.

Other Reserves

The Council has a variety of other reserves which are earmarked for specific purposes. The significant items to be drawn out as part of the 2015/16 budget setting process are:

- Statutory reserves utilised to create a rolling balancing three year cost neutral service
Building Control Reserve
- Reserves expected to be utilised/committed to support the strategic objectives and medium term financial strategy (MTFS) of the Council
Delivering the Strategic Priorities and MTFS Reserve

- Invest to Save Reserve - created as part of the 2012/13 budget process to be utilised/committed to support the delivery of the shared service agenda and saving requirements of the Council.
- Asset Management Reserve utilised to fund the council's Asset Management Plan.
- Vehicle, Plant and Equipment Reserve utilised to fund the councils' replacement plan for these assets.

4 Robustness of Estimates

4.1 The treatment of inflation and interest rates

The 2015/16 pay award for staff has been awarded at 2.2% from 1st January 2015. Non pay related budgets have not been inflated unless there is a contractually committed rate of inflation where services can demonstrate a requirement to do so to maintain service delivery levels. The average rate of return on Council investments for 2015/16 has been assumed at 0.9%. Increases for fees and charges have been set in line with inflation where appropriate.

4.2 Savings proposals

The Council continues to face a budget gap beyond 2015/16 and into the medium and longer term. Broadly, the Council will need to have savings proposals totalling £2.5m over the period 2016/17 to 2018/19. Work is underway to close the medium to longer term budget gap emerging beyond 2015/16.

4.3 Budget and Financial management

St Edmundsbury has a good record of budget and financial management. All relevant reports to Cabinet and Committee have their financial effects identified and the Leadership Team keeps any emerging budget pressures under review during the year. Monthly reports are received by the Leadership Team and quarterly reports to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee detail both budgetary and performance indicators.

The Council has a number of demand led budgets and historically it has been able to manage changes in demand to ensure a sound financial standing at the end of the financial year.

4.4 Adequacy of insurance and risk management

Strategic risk management is embedded throughout the Council to ensure that all risks are identified, mitigated and managed appropriately. The Council's insurance arrangements are in the form of external insurance premiums and internal funds to

self insure some items. The Councils' insurance arrangements will be subject to a formal procurement process during 2015/16.

5 Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is included at Attachment D, Appendix 5 as part of the Scenario and Sensitivity Analysis. All areas will be monitored by the Chief Finance Officer but they are the culmination of individual managers' responsibilities and combine to establish overall corporate responsibility.

6 Conclusion

- (1) Overall, the estimates are robust, taking into account known risks and mitigating strategies and the reserves are adequate for the 2015/16 budget plans.**
- (2) Cabinet and Council are asked to have regard to this report when making their decisions on the 2015/16 budget.**

Rachael Mann
Head of Resources and Performance
January 2015

SEBC MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Description	Item	2013/14 Actual £'000	2014/15 Forecast Position £'000	2015/16 Total Budget £'000	2016/17 Projected Budget £'000	2017/18 Projected Budget £'000	2018/19 Projected Budget £'000
Net Service Expenditure before Interest	1	13,692	13,243	12,999	12,649	13,414	13,931
Interest received on investment of cash balances	3	(511)	(558)	(243)	(353)	(438)	(533)
Net Expenditure after Interest and Capital	4	13,181	12,685	12,756	12,296	12,976	13,398
Savings Required:							
2015/16	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
2016/17	6	0	0	0	(1,315)	(1,315)	(1,315)
2017/18	7	0	0	0	0	(756)	(756)
2018/19	8	0	0	0	0	0	(413)
Transfer to/(from) General Fund Balance	9	203	(460)	0	0	0	0
Additional net planning budget under CEO special powers			46				
Budget Requirement (excluding Parishes)	10	13,384	12,271	12,756	10,981	10,905	10,914
Collection Fund Deficit/(Surplus) - Council Tax	11	30	83	(167)	0	0	0
Collection Fund Deficit/(Surplus) - Business Rates	12	0	(40)	240	0	0	0
Formula Grant - Revenue Support	13	(3,178)	(2,381)	(1,594)	(1,212)	(872)	(611)
Council Tax Freeze Grant - Prior Years (Revenue Support)	14	0	0	0	(296)	(296)	(296)
Council Tax Freeze Grant (Prior Years)	15	(167)	(234)	(299)	0	0	0
Council Tax Freeze Grant (Current Year)	16	(67)	(61)	(66)	0	0	0
Formula Grant - Business Rate Retention Scheme	17	(2,114)	(2,155)	(2,197)	(2,247)	(2,300)	(2,353)
Business Rates Retention Scheme - Local Share of Growth	18	(525)	(392)	72	(505)	(519)	(533)
Business Rates Retention Scheme - Share of Suffolk Pooling	19	0	(45)	(127)	(130)	(133)	(136)
Business Rates Retention Scheme - Renewable Energy	20	(36)	0	(427)	(261)	(267)	(273)
Business Rates Retention Scheme - S31 Grants	21	(373)	0	(751)	0	0	0
Local Services Support Grant	22	(49)	(49)	(49)	0	0	0
Efficiency Support for Services in Sparse Areas	23	0	(18)	(29)	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus Grant	24	(828)	(888)	(1,219)	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus Topslice: Returned Funding	25	0	(6)	0	0	0	0
Amount to be charged to Council Taxpayers	26	6,077	6,085	6,143	6,330	6,518	6,712
Council Tax Base	27	34,681	34,725	35,058	35,394	35,734	36,077
Council Tax at Band D (£ p)	28	£175.23	£175.23	£175.23	£178.83	£182.41	£186.06
Budgeted Increase Year on Year (%)	29	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Budgeted Increase Year on Year (£ p)	30	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£3.60	£3.58	£3.65
Total Council Tax Generated Excluding Parishes	31	6,077	6,085	6,143	6,330	6,518	6,712

General Fund

Balance as at 1 April	32	3,376	3,579	3,165	3,165	3,165	3,165
Transfer to / (from) Reserve	33	203	(414)	0	0	0	0
Closing Balance as at 31 March	34	<u>3,579</u>	<u>3,165</u>	<u>3,165</u>	<u>3,165</u>	<u>3,165</u>	<u>3,165</u>
Net Expenditure for General Fund purposes	35	13,181	12,685	12,756	12,296	12,976	13,398
General Fund balance as % of Net Expenditure	36	27.15%	24.95%	24.81%	25.74%	24.39%	23.62%

Earmarked Reserves

Balance as at 1 April	37	10,548	12,614	12,779	10,971	9,360	8,982
Contributions to / (from) Reserves	38	2,066	165	(1,808)	(1,611)	(378)	401
Closing Balance as at 31 March	39	<u>12,614</u>	<u>12,779</u>	<u>10,971</u>	<u>9,360</u>	<u>8,982</u>	<u>9,383</u>

Capital Receipts

Balance as at 1 April	40	13,822	14,762	12,703	9,702	6,310	6,168
Movement in the year	41	940	(2,059)	(3,001)	(3,392)	(142)	(142)
Closing Balance as at 31 March	42	<u>14,762</u>	<u>12,703</u>	<u>9,702</u>	<u>6,310</u>	<u>6,168</u>	<u>6,026</u>

Investment Balances (average in year)	43		(32,600)	(28,408)	(24,376)	(22,534)	(21,820)
Interest Rates	44		0.50%	0.90%	1.50%	2.00%	2.50%

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Project Description	Category	Project Sponsor	Account Code	Project Code	2014-15 Revised Budget	2015-16 Budget	2016-17 Budget	2017-18 Budget	2018-19 Budget	Total Budget (over 5 years)	5 Year Programme Financing				Total
											Capital Receipts	Revenue Reserves	Government Grants	S106	
Bury Town Football - Relocation Scheme	SEBC ASSET	M Walsh	C9999	S1003	0	1,627,000	0	0	0	1,627,000	963,000	0	580,000	84,000	1,627,000
Environmental Improvement Works, Risbygate Street	SEBC ASSET	M Walsh	C9999	S1050	0	72,000	0	0	0	72,000	58,000	0	14,000	0	72,000
St Andrews St South access arrangements	SEBC ASSET	M Walsh	C9999	S1040	35,000	0	0	0	0	35,000	35,000	0	0	0	35,000
Peach Maltings	SEBC ASSET	M Walsh	C9999	S1051	0	51,000	0	0	0	51,000	0	0	0	51,000	51,000
Haverhill Plaza	SEBC ASSET	M Walsh	C9999	S1022	5,000	0	0	0	0	5,000	5,000	0	0	0	5,000
Hollands Road Employment Units	SEBC ASSET	M Walsh / A Mayley	C9999	S1044	27,000	0	0	0	0	27,000	27,000	0	0	0	27,000
Children's Play Equipment - Haverhill Recreation Ground	SEBC ASSET	M Walsh	C9999	S1025	64,000	0	0	0	0	64,000	0	64,000	0	0	64,000
Parks Infrastructure	SEBC ASSET	M Walsh	C9999	S1027	29,000	0	0	0	0	29,000	0	29,000	0	0	29,000
Cycle Stands Cattle Market	SEBC ASSET	M Walsh	C9999	S1052	0	5,000	0	0	0	5,000	0	0	0	5,000	5,000
Gypsy and traveller site	SEBC ASSET	S Phelan	C9999	S1042	0	589,000	0	0	0	589,000	0	0	589,000	0	589,000
Havebury - Bury Road, Chedburgh	SEBC ASSET	S Phelan	C9999	S1053	0	400,000	0	0	0	400,000	400,000	0	0	0	400,000
Millfields Way, Haverhill	SEBC ASSET	S Phelan	C9999	S1029	96,000	0	0	0	0	96,000	0	0	0	96,000	96,000
Purchase of Lake Avenue HMO	SEBC ASSET	S Phelan	C9999	S1046	200,000	0	0	0	0	200,000	0	38,000	0	162,000	200,000
Provision of Affordable Housing	SEBC ASSET	S Phelan	C9999	S1054	104,000	0	0	0	0	104,000	57,000	0	0	47,000	104,000
West Stow biomass boiler	SEBC ASSET	M Walsh / S Wood	C9999	S1063	0	140,000	0	0	0	140,000	0	140,000	0	0	140,000
Haverhill depot water borehole	SEBC ASSET	M Walsh	C9999	S1064	21,000	0	0	0	0	21,000	0	21,000	0	0	21,000
Vehicle & Plant Purchases	VP&E	M Walsh	C9999	S1038	392,000	1,565,000	1,342,000	310,000	0	3,609,000	0	3,609,000	0	0	3,609,000
CCTV Cameras and Server	VP&E	M Walsh	C9999	S1047	272,000	0	0	0	0	272,000	0	272,000	0	0	272,000
Suffolk Business Park Investment	GROWTH AREA	S Wood / A Mayley	C9999	S1008	2,621,000	0	0	0	0	2,621,000	500,000	0	2,121,000	0	2,621,000
Growth Area Initiatives	GROWTH AREA	S Wood	C9999	S1055	0	88,000	0	0	0	88,000	0	0	88,000	0	88,000
Haverhill Railway Walks, Education	GROWTH AREA	S Wood	C9999	S1056	27,000	0	0	0	0	27,000	0	0	27,000	0	27,000
High Street Haverhill Improvements	GROWTH AREA	S Wood	C9999	S1007	0	693,000	0	0	0	693,000	0	0	693,000	0	693,000
Millfields Way, Haverhill - Housing Scheme	GROWTH AREA	S Wood	C9999	S1066	85,000	0	0	0	0	85,000	0	0	85,000	0	85,000
Lark Valley Path	GROWTH AREA	S Wood	C9999	S1030	27,000	0	0	0	0	27,000	0	0	27,000	0	27,000

Project Description	Category	Project Sponsor	Account Code	Project Code	2014-15 Revised Budget	2015-16 Budget	2016-17 Budget	2017-18 Budget	2018-19 Budget	Total Budget (over 5 years)	5 Year Programme Financing				Total
											Capital Receipts	Revenue Reserves	Government Grants	S106	
Rural Initiatives Grant Scheme	GRANT	D Howes	C5000	S1035	152,000	0	0	0	0	152,000	111,000	41,000	0	0	152,000
Empty Homes Grants to Private Owners	GRANT	S Phelan	C5000	S1057	0	71,000	0	0	0	71,000	71,000	0	0	0	71,000
Private Sector Disabled Facilities Grants	DFG/DH	S Phelan	C5000	S1000	400,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,400,000	1,150,000	0	1,250,000	0	2,400,000
Private Sector Renewal Grants	DFG/DH	S Phelan	C5000	S1001	200,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	1,400,000	1,400,000	0	0	0	1,400,000
Asset Management Plan											0	0	0	0	0
Major Planned Building Works	AMP	M Walsh	C9999	S0002	0	717,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	1,467,000	1,467,000	0	0	0	1,467,000
HH Office Improvements	AMP	M Walsh	C9999	S1012	33,000	0	0	0	0	33,000	33,000	0	0	0	33,000
Bury Leisure Centre Flumes & Cladding	AMP	M Walsh	C9999	S1013	518,000	0	0	0	0	518,000	432,000	86,000	0	0	518,000
The Apex - Improvements	AMP	M Walsh	C9999	S1004	18,000	0	0	0	0	18,000	18,000	0	0	0	18,000
Bury Cemetery Buildings	AMP	M Walsh	C9999	S1058	70,000	0	0	0	0	70,000	70,000	0	0	0	70,000
Bury Leisure Centre - All Weather Pitch	AMP	M Walsh	C9999	S1059	0	150,000	0	0	0	150,000	0	150,000	0	0	150,000
Haverhill Leisure Centre - All Weather Pitch	AMP	M Walsh	C9999	S1060	200,000	0	0	0	0	200,000	0	200,000	0	0	200,000
New Moreton Hall Park	AMP	M Walsh	C9999	S1026	160,000	0	0	0	0	160,000	0	160,000	0	0	160,000
Leisure Asset Management Scheme	AMP	M Walsh	C9999	S0003	78,000	324,000	334,000	334,000	334,000	1,404,000	0	1,404,000	0	0	1,404,000
CRM Project	SOFTWARE	D Howes	C9999	S1018	170,750	0	0	0	0	170,750	170,750	0	0	0	170,750
Rent-a-roof	SEBC ASSET	M Walsh/ S Wood				540,000	540,000	540,000		1,620,000		1,620,000			1,620,000
Feasibility Studies	SEBC ASSET	R Mann			0	100,000	0	0	0	100,000	0	100,000	0	0	100,000
Invest to Save Projects	SEBC ASSET	R Mann			0	500,000	0	0	0	500,000	0	500,000	0	0	500,000
PENDING ITEMS											0	0	0	0	0
The range and delivery of options contained in the housing strategy document	PENDING	S Phelan	C9999	S1061	0	0	3,000,000	0	0	3,000,000	3,000,000	0	0	0	3,000,000
West Stow Investment opportunities	PENDING	M Walsh / R Mann	C9999	S1065	0	400,000	0	0	0	400,000	400,000	0	0	0	400,000
					6,004,750	8,832,000	6,266,000	2,234,000	1,384,000	24,720,750	10,367,750	8,434,000	5,474,000	445,000	24,720,750

Reserve Details	2014/15 Opening Balance	2014/15 Contribution to Reserve	2014/15 Contribution from Reserve	2014/15 Forecast Adjustmts	2014/15 Forecast Movement	2015/16 Opening Balance	2015/16 Contribution to Reserve	2015/16 Contribution from Reserve	2016/17 Opening Balance	2016/17 Contribution to Reserve	2016/17 Contribution from Reserve	2017/18 Opening Balance	2017/18 Contribution to Reserve	2017/18 Contribution from Reserve	2018/19 Opening Balance	2018/19 Contribution to Reserve	2018/19 Contribution from Reserve	2018/19 Closing Balance	
Strategic Priorities and MTFS	1,577,149	888,497	-122,370	-21,000	745,127	2,322,276	1,219,085	-1,547,500	1,993,861		-697,500	1,296,361		-540,000	756,361			0	756,361
Invest to Save Reserve	1,101,367	9,870	-97,250	0	-87,380	1,013,987	0	-6,500	1,007,487		0	1,007,487		0	1,007,487			0	1,007,487
Risk/Recession Reserve	35,000	0	-4,100	0	-4,100	30,900	64,000	-1,100	93,800		0	93,800		0	93,800			0	93,800
BRR Equalisation Reserve	488,493	0	0	0	0	488,493	175,000	-240,000	423,493		0	423,493		0	423,493			0	423,493
Self Insured Fund	454,833	50,000	0	0	50,000	504,833	0	0	504,833		0	504,833		0	504,833			0	504,833
Computer & Telephone Equipment Reserve	103,057	48,100	0	0	48,100	151,157	73,000	0	224,157	73,000	0	297,157	73,000	0	370,157	73,000	0	0	443,157
Office Equipment Reserve	987,592	99,300	0	-272,000	-172,700	814,892	39,800	0	854,692	39,800	0	894,492	39,800	0	934,292	39,800	0	0	974,092
Section 106 - Public Service Village	65,298	0	-37,400	0	-37,400	27,898	0	-24,750	3,148		-3,148	0		0				0	0
HB Equalisation Reserve	1,606,812	0	0	0	0	1,606,812	0	-86,570	1,520,242		-86,570	1,433,672		-86,570	1,347,102			-86,570	1,260,532
Special Pension Reserve	316,945	0	0	0	0	316,945	0	0	316,945		0	316,945		0	316,945			0	316,945
Investment Equalisation Reserve	227,408	0	0	0	0	227,408	0	0	227,408		0	227,408		0	227,408			0	227,408
Professional Fees Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0	65,000	0	65,000	65,000	0	130,000	65,000	0	195,000	65,000	0	0	260,000
Vehicle & Plant Renewal Fund	1,863,615	662,425	0	-392,000	270,425	2,134,040	600,000	-1,565,000	1,169,040	600,000	-1,342,000	427,040	600,000	-310,000	717,040	600,000	0	0	1,317,040
Wheeled Bins	74,615	80,750	-58,400	0	22,350	96,965	80,700	-58,400	119,265	80,700	-58,400	141,565	80,700	-58,400	163,865	80,700	-58,400	0	186,165
BR-Building Repairs Reserve - Leisure	607,638	305,000	0	-762,637	-457,637	150,001	324,000	-474,000	1	334,000	-334,000	1	334,000	-334,000	1	334,000	-334,000	0	1
BR-Building Repairs Reserve - Other	1,053,923	1,045,700	-1,234,500	134,497	-54,303	999,620	1,018,050	-1,200,576	817,094	1,008,050	-1,234,500	590,644	1,008,050	-1,234,500	364,194	1,008,050	-1,234,500	0	137,744
BR-Bunting Road Service	11,779	0	0	0	0	11,779	0	0	11,779		0	11,779		0	11,779			0	11,779
BR-Leased Flats Management	33,957	0	0	0	0	33,957	0	0	33,957		0	33,957		0	33,957			0	33,957
Commuted Maintenance Reserve	828,869	0	-108,900	0	-108,900	719,969	0	-108,900	611,069		-108,900	502,169		-108,900	393,269			-108,900	284,369
M-Gershom Parkington Bequest	519,654	0	-4,800	0	-4,800	514,854	8,300	-4,800	518,354	8,300	-4,800	521,854	8,300	-4,800	525,354	8,300	-4,800	0	528,854
M-Others	65,279	0	0	0	0	65,279	0	0	65,279		0	65,279		0	65,279			0	65,279
The Apex Reserve	32,580	0	0	0	0	32,580	0	0	32,580		0	32,580		0	32,580			0	32,580
Abbey Gardens Donation	20,927	0	0	0	0	20,927	0	0	20,927		0	20,927		0	20,927			0	20,927
Cemetery & Gravestone Provision	5,239	0	0	0	0	5,239	0	0	5,239		0	5,239		0	5,239			0	5,239
Rural Areas Action Plan	90,818	0	0	-41,000	-41,000	49,818	0	0	49,818		0	49,818		0	49,818			0	49,818
Planning Reserve	313,578	0	-101,600	0	-101,600	211,978	0	-101,600	110,378	90,000	-70,000	130,378	90,000	-30,000	190,378	90,000	-100,000	0	180,378
El-Historic Building Grants	621	0	0	0	0	621	0	0	621		0	621		0	621			0	621
S106 Monitoring Officer Reserve	0	0	0	75,000	75,000	75,000	55,000	-54,870	75,130	55,000	-55,000	75,130	55,000	-55,000	75,130	55,000	-55,000	0	75,130
Economic Development Reserve (LABGI)	40,974	0	-5,000	0	-5,000	35,974	0	-5,000	30,974		0	30,974		0	30,974			0	30,974
Election Reserve	84,786	30,000	0	0	30,000	114,786	30,000	-80,000	64,786	30,000	0	94,786	30,000	0	124,786	30,000	0	0	154,786
St Edmundsbury Totals:	12,612,806	3,219,642	-1,774,320	-1,279,140	166,182	12,778,988	3,751,935	-5,559,566	10,971,357	2,383,850	-3,994,818	9,360,389	2,383,850	-2,762,170	8,982,069	2,383,850	-1,982,170	0	9,383,749

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St EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL
PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2015/2016

1. Background

- 1.1 Each year the Council sets an annual budget, which details the revenue and capital resources required to meet its priorities for service delivery. Under the provisions of The Local Government Act 2003, local authorities are able to make their own decisions about how much they wish to borrow to pay for capital investment providing they assess the borrowing to be affordable, prudent and sustainable. In addition to complying with the Act they must comply with:
- a. the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003; and
 - b. the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- 1.2 The Prudential Code was developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) to assist local authorities in taking their decisions.
- 1.3 The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008/414) place a duty on local authorities to make a prudent provision for debt redemption. The Secretary of State has issued guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision and local authorities are required to "have regard" to such Guidance under section 21(1A) of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 1.4 The prudential indicators contained within this paper are based on the current revenue and capital budget proposals within the main 2015/16 Budget and Council Tax setting report. Any additional capital investment, above those contained within the capital programme at Appendix 2, will require the prudential indicators as detailed below being reviewed.

2. Prudential Indicators

Objectives

- 2.1 The key objectives are to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable. A further key objective is to ensure that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice and in a manner that supports prudence, affordability and sustainability. To demonstrate that local authorities have fulfilled these objectives, the Prudential Code sets the indicators that must be used, and the factors that must be taken into account.
- 2.2 These targets are known as the "Prudential Indicators" and particular indicators will be used to separately assess:

- Management of capital expenditure
- Affordability
- Prudence
- Management of external debt
- Treasury Management

Process and Governance

- 2.3 The Prudential Code sets out a clear governance procedure for the setting and revising of prudential indicators. This is done by the same body that takes the decisions for the local authority's budget – Full Council. The Chief Finance Officer (the Head of Resources and Performance) is responsible for ensuring that all matters required to be taken into account are reported to full Council for consideration, and for establishing procedures to monitor performance.
- 2.4 In setting the indicators due regard was paid to the following matters:
- affordability, e.g. implications for Council Tax
 - prudence and sustainability, e.g. implications for external borrowing
 - value for money, e.g. option appraisal
 - stewardship of assets, e.g. asset management planning
 - service objectives, e.g. strategic planning for the authority
 - practicality, e.g. achievability of forward plan
- 2.5 Set out below are the indicators for 2014/2015 and beyond. For each indicator, the CIPFA requirements of the code are set out in bold italics. An explanation is provided, unless the indicator and limits are completely self explanatory.
- 2.6 The figures used to compile the indicators which are detailed in this report are based on the latest five year capital programme.

3. Prudential Indicators 2014/15 – 2017/18

Management of Capital Expenditure Prudential Indicators

Estimates of Capital Expenditure

3.1 The local authority will make reasonable estimates of the total of capital expenditure that it plans to incur during the forthcoming financial year and at least the following two financial years. These prudential indicators shall be referred to as:

'Estimate of total capital expenditure to be incurred in years 1, 2 and 3.'

- 3.2 In addition to the approved capital programme the estimates of capital expenditure include any capital expenditure that is estimated, might (depending on option appraisals) or will be dealt with as other long term liabilities.
- 3.3 This indicator is set to ensure that the level of proposed capital expenditure remains within sustainable and affordable limits and, in particular, to consider

the impact on Council Tax. The following indicator is an assessment of the forward capital programme and in line with Budget approvals.

Indicator 1	2014/15 £000 Approved	2014/15 £000 Revised	2015/16 £000 Budget	2016/17 £000 Indicative	2017/18 £000 Indicative
Expenditure	12,012	6,004	8,832	6,266	2,234

Financed by:	2014/15 Approved	2014/15 Revised	2015/16 Budget	2016/17 Indicative	2017/18 Indicative
Capital Receipts	7,788	2,059	3,409	3,800	550
Government Grants	2,510	2,510	2,214	250	250
Donations	0	0	0	0	0
Other Grants	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue Reserves	1,714	1,435	3,209	2,216	1,434
Total	12,012	6,004	8,832	6,266	2,234

Affordability Indicators

- 3.4 The fundamental objective in the consideration of affordability of the authority's capital plans is to ensure that the proposed investment is sustainable throughout the period under review, which must cover at least three years from 2014/2015 onwards. In essence, to consider its impact on the authority's 'bottom line' Council Tax. Affordability is ultimately judged by the impact the capital investment plans have on the revenue budget and Council Tax levels.
- 3.5 In considering the affordability of the plans it is necessary to consider all the resources available, together with those estimated to be available during the programme period.
- 3.6 There are various prudential indicators of affordability but the key ones are as set out below.

Estimates of ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream

- 3.7 *The local authority will estimate for the forthcoming financial year and following two financial years the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream.***
- 3.8 This is an indicator of affordability and highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet borrowing costs:

Indicator 2	2014/15 Approved	2014/15 Revised	2015/16 Budget	2016/17 Indicative	2017/18 Indicative
Ratio %	(4%)	(2%)	(3%)	(3%)	(4%)

NB: In circumstances where interest costs on borrowing are greatly exceeded by interest and investment income the ratio of financing costs to the net revenue stream will be negative. This reflects the fact that the authority is making a contribution to the income and expenditure account via its investment income stream.

Estimates of Incremental impact on capital investment decisions on the Council Tax

3.9 This shows the potential impact of approved capital investment decisions on the Council Tax and allows for the existing and proposed capital plans.

3.10 This calculation shall be undertaken for the forthcoming and following two financial years or longer timeframe if required to capture the full year effect of capital investment decisions. This prudential indicator is referred to as:

'Estimates of the incremental impact of the new capital investment decisions on the Council Tax'

Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions					
Indicator 3	2014/15 Approved	2014/15 Revised	2015/16 Budget	2016/17 Indicative	2017/18 Indicative
Increase in Band D Council Tax	£0.00	£0.00	£0.10	£1.29	£0.00

Prudence - Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

3.11 The local authority will make reasonable estimates of the total capital financing requirement at the end of the forthcoming financial year and the following two years. These prudential indicators shall be referred to as:

'Estimate of capital financing requirement as at the end of years 1, 2 and 3.

3.12 The capital financing requirement can simply be understood as the Council's underlying need to borrow money long term. It does not necessarily mean that borrowing will be undertaken. The calculation of the CFR is taken from the amounts held in the Balance Sheet relating to capital expenditure and its financing. It is an aggregation of the amounts shown for Investment Property, Non-Current and Intangible assets, the Revaluation Reserve, the Capital Adjustment Account and any other balances treated as capital expenditure.

The indicator takes account of the borrowing requirement and the minimum revenue provision.

Estimate of Capital Financing Requirements					
Indicator 4	2014/15 £000 Approved	2014/15 £000 Revised	2015/16 £000 Budget	2016/17 £000 Indicative	2017/18 £000 Indicative
CFR	(833)	(833)	(833)	(833)	(833)

- 3.13 The forecast capital financing requirement reflects the changes to the overall capital programme, including pending projects.
- 3.14 The negative indicator reflects the fact that the Council has no requirement to borrow in order to finance its current capital spending plans over the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Management of External Debt Prudential Indicators

3.15 The local authority will set for the forthcoming financial year and at least the following two financial years a prudential limit for its total external debt, gross of investments, separately identifying borrowing from other long term liabilities. This prudential indicator shall be referred to as:

'Authorised limit for external debt = authorised limit for borrowing + authorised limit for other long term liabilities for years 1, 2 and 3.'

- 3.16 The recommended Authorised Limit for External Debt:

Authorised Limit of External Debt			
Indicator 5	2015/16 £000 Budget	2016/17 £000 Indicative	2017/18 £000 Indicative
Authorised Limit	1,111	1,111	1,111

- 3.17 This limit represents the maximum amount the Council may borrow at any point in the year. It has to be at a level the Council considers is 'prudent'. It is ultra vires to exceed the authorised limit, and therefore the limits are set so as to avoid circumstances in which the Council would need to borrow more money than this limit.
- 3.18 It is consistent with the Council's existing commitments, its proposals for capital expenditure and financing and its approved treasury management policy statement and practices.

3.19 Other long term liabilities include items that would appear on the balance sheet of the Council that are related to borrowing. For example, the capital cost of leases would be included.

Operational Boundary

3.20 The local authority will also set for the forthcoming financial year and the following two years an operational boundary for its total external debt, gross of investments, separately identifying borrowing from other long term liabilities. This prudential indicator shall be referred to as the:

Operational Boundary = operational boundary for borrowing + operational boundary for other long term liabilities for years 1, 2 and 3'

3.21 The operational boundary is a measure of the most money the Council would normally borrow at any time during the year. The code recognises that circumstances might arise when the boundary might be exceeded temporarily, but suggest a sustained or regular pattern of borrowing above this level ought to be investigated, as a potential symptom of a more serious financial problem. Any movement between these separate limits will be reported to the next available Council.

3.22 The recommended operational boundary for external debt is:

Operational Boundary for External Debt			
Indicator 6	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	£000	£000	£000
	Budget	Indicative	Indicative
Operational Boundary	1,000	1,000	1,000

3.23 The Council’s actual external debt, borrowings, at 31 December 2014 amounted to **ZERO**. There were no other long term liabilities.

4. Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

4.1 The Council has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services. Treasury Management Practices (TMPs) have been established by the Head of Resources and Performance and are kept up to date. The first prudential indicator in respect of treasury management is that the local authority has adopted the CIPFA Code is therefore met.

Interest Rate Exposure

4.2 The local authority will set, for the forthcoming year and the following two years, upper limits to its exposures to the effects of changes in interest rates. These prudential indicators will relate to both fixed interest rates and variable interest rates and will be referred to respectively as the upper limits on fixed and variable interest rate exposures.

Upper limits on fixed and variable rate exposures

4.3 These two indicators on the following page, allow the Council to manage the extent to which it is exposed to changes in interest rates. Such decisions will ultimately be determined by expectations of anticipated interest rate movements as set out in the Council’s Treasury Management Strategy. In circumstances where interest costs on borrowing are greatly exceeded by interest and investment income the upper limit for fixed and variable interest rate exposure will be negative.

Upper Limit for Fixed & Variable Rate Exposure			
Indicator 7	2015/16 Budget	2016/17 Indicative	2017/18 Indicative
Upper Limit for Fixed Interest Rate Exposure (as a % of total investments)	100%	100%	100%

Indicator 8			
Upper Limit for Variable Interest Rate Exposure (as a % of total investments)	60%	60%	60%

4.4 The upper limits on interest rate exposures can be expressed either as absolute amounts or as percentages.

Prudential limits for the maturity structure of borrowing

4.5 The local authority will set for the forthcoming year both upper and lower limits with respect to the maturity structure of its borrowing, calculated as follows:

- (a) Amount of projected borrowing that is fixed rate maturing in each period.

4.6 Expressed as a Percentage of total projected borrowing that is fixed rate at the start of the period where the periods in question are:

- **Under 12 months.**
- **12 months and within 24 months.**
- **24 months and within 5 years.**
- **5 years and within 10 years.**
- **10 years+**

4.7 All Councils undertaking borrowing need to ensure that the maturity structure of its borrowing is both prudent and affordable. This indicator highlights the

existence of any large concentrations of fixed rate debt needing to be replaced at times of uncertainty over interest rates, and is designed to protect against excessive exposure to interest rate changes in any one period, in particular in the course of the next ten years.

4.8 The proposed prudential limits are as follows:

Period (years)	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Under 12 months	0%	100%
1 – 2 years	0%	0%
2 – 5 years	0%	0%
5 – 10 years	0%	0%
Over 10 years	0%	0%

4.9 The profiled limits set out above apply to the start of each financial year within the period 2014/15 to 2018/19.

Total Principal Sums invested for longer than 364 days

4.10 Where a local authority invests, or plans to invest, for periods longer than 364 days, the local authority will set an upper limit for each financial year period for the maturing of such investments. The prudential indicators will be referred to as prudential limits for principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days.

Period (years)	Upper limit £M
31/3/2015	20
31/3/2016	20
31/3/2017	20
31/3/2018	20
31/3/2019	20

5. Minimum Revenue Policy – Annual Policy Statement

5.1 This system for establishing the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) has been radically revised by the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 [SI 2008/414], (“the 2008 Regulations”) in conjunction with the publication by the Department for Communities and Local Government of detailed MRP guidance.

5.2 All Local Authorities are required to establish annually their policy regarding Minimum Revenue Provision for the forthcoming year.

5.3 With the revision of the original arrangements the Department for Communities and Local Government have issued guidance to complement the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 [SI 2008/414], (“the 2008 Regulations”).

5.4 Local Authorities are obliged to have regard to this guidance which provides for four ready-made options which are consistent with the statutory duty to make

prudent Minimum Revenue Provision. The broad aim of the prudent provision is to ensure that debt is repaid over a period which is commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefit.

Method	Explanation
<u>Supported debt</u>	
Option 1	MRP is equal to the amount determined in accordance with the former regulations 28 and 29 of the 2003 Regulations, as if they had not been revoked by the 2008 Regulations.
Option 2	The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) method MRP is equal to 4% of the non-housing CFR at the end of the preceding financial year.
<u>Unsupported debt</u>	
Option 3	Where capital expenditure on an asset is financed wholly or partly by borrowing or credit arrangements, MRP is to be determined by reference to the life of the asset.
a)	Equal instalment method MRP is the amount given by the following formula: (Capital expenditure in respect of the asset less total provision made before the current financial year), divided by the estimated life of the asset.
b)	Annuity Method MRP is the principal element for the year of the annuity required to repay over the asset life the amount of capital expenditure financed by borrowing or credit arrangements.
Option 4	Depreciation method Charging MRP in accordance with the standard rules for depreciation accounting. (If only part of the expenditure on the asset was financed by debt, the depreciation provision is proportionately reduced.)

5.5 St Edmundsbury Borough Council has no Capital Financing Requirement and therefore does not require a Minimum Revenue Provision

5.6 The MRP included in the revenue estimates is as follows:

MRP estimates	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000
MRP	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)

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St Edmundsbury Borough Council Risk Area	2015/16 Impact £000s	2015/19 MTFS Impact £000s
<p><u>Pay Inflation</u></p> <p>The Council's MTFS currently assumes a 2.2% pay inflationary increase for 2015/16, and a 2% inflationary increase for 2016/17 - 2018/19.</p> <p>An annual 1% increase in pay inflation over what is already assumed in the MTFS would result in an additional £521k pressure on the Council's finances.</p>	<p>124</p>	<p>521</p>
<p><u>Employers Pensions</u></p> <p>The Council's MTFS currently assumes the following Employers' Pension Contribution Rates:</p> <p>2015/16 – 23.7% 2016/17 – 25.7% 2017/18 – 27.7% 2018/19 - 29.7%</p> <p>An increase of 1% to the contributions on top of that already budgeted would result in an additional pressure of £473k on the Council's MTFS.</p>	<p>118</p>	<p>473</p>
<p><u>Industrial Unit Rental Income</u></p> <p>The Council's MTFS currently allows for no increase in Industrial Unit income.</p> <p>If income from Industrial Unit Rents falls by 10% this would put an additional £771k pressure on the MTFS.</p>	<p>224</p>	<p>771</p>
<p><u>Commercial Income</u></p> <p>The Council's MTFS currently includes a number of initiatives in line with the commercial agenda, however there is a risk associated with the achievement of these targets.</p> <p>If commercial income were to fall short of the anticipated levels by 10%, this would have a £200k detrimental effect across the Council's MTFS.</p>	<p>50</p>	<p>200</p>
<p><u>Planning Income - 1</u></p>	<p>120</p>	<p>482</p>

St Edmundsbury Borough Council	2015/16	2015/19
Risk Area	Impact £000s	MTFS Impact £000s
<p>The Council's budgets have been updated to reflect an increase in Planning Application Fees which has been kept at a constant level across the MTFS. Building Control and Land Charges income have been inflated in line with the agreed assumptions. There is, however, a risk that the desired levels of income may not be achieved.</p> <p>If Planning income levels were to drop by 10%, this would have a £482k detrimental impact on the Council's MTFS.</p>		
<p><u>Planning Income - 2</u></p> <p>The Council's Planning Application Income has been updated to allow for increased service demand, and this has subsequently been reflected in the resourcing of the service.</p> <p>If these projected increased Planning income levels were to drop by 10%, this would have a £166k detrimental impact on the Council's MTFS. If this eventuality were to occur, however, then service resourcing levels would be assessed and amended accordingly.</p>	42	166

St Edmundsbury Borough Council Risk Area	2015/16 Impact £000s	2015/19 MTFS Impact £000s
<p><u>Transfer of Waste Station</u></p> <p>The Council's budgets are currently based around using 3 waste sites for tipping in West Suffolk. This will be reducing to 1 or 2 sites from late 2015/16.</p> <p>The impact of this change is yet to be determined, however a business case is being put together to assess the options and their likely effects on the Council's finances. At this stage it is difficult to quantify the likely savings or costs, however it has been identified as a risk area.</p>	<p align="center">N/A</p>	<p align="center">N/A</p>
<p><u>Interest Receipt Rates</u></p> <p>The Council's current assumptions around interest receipts are as follows:</p> <p>2015/16 – 0.90% 2016/17 – 1.50% 2017/18 – 2.00% 2018/19 – 2.50%</p> <p>A 0.5% reduction in each of these figures would result in approximately £486k pressure on the Council's MTFS.</p>	<p align="center">142</p>	<p align="center">486</p>
<p><u>Government Grant</u></p> <p>The Council's MTFS currently assumes cumulative reductions in formula grant funding of 24% for 2016/17, 28% for 2017/18 and 30% for 2018/19</p> <p>An additional reduction of 2% per annum for each of these years would result in a £74k cost to the Council's MTFS position.</p>	<p align="center">0</p>	<p align="center">74</p>
<p><u>Revenue Support Grant</u></p> <p>The MTFS currently assumes that Revenue Support Grant will be reduced each year with a view to it ceasing in 2020/21.</p> <p>If this is brought forward by a year, then the effect on the Council's current MTFS will be an additional £213k cost.</p>	<p align="center">0</p>	<p align="center">213</p>
<p><u>Council Tax Increases</u></p>	<p align="center">0</p>	<p align="center">748</p>

St Edmundsbury Borough Council Risk Area	2015/16 Impact £000s	2015/19 MTFS Impact £000s
<p>The MTFS currently assumes a Council Tax freeze for 2015/16 and an increase of 2% from 2016/17 onwards.</p> <p>A freeze on Council Tax in 2016/17 would create an additional pressure of £122k in that year and a pressure of £748k across the MTFS.</p>		

St Edmundsbury Borough Council Risk Area	2015/16 Impact £000s	2015/19 MTFS Impact £000s
<p><u>Business Rate Retention</u></p> <p>The Business Rates Retention Scheme commenced from 1 April 2013. Under the new scheme, the Council benefits from a proportion of the additional business rates generated through economic growth in its area. Conversely the risks inherent in such a scheme have now been passed down to local authorities and as such the Council could suffer from an economic decline or the cessation of business from one of its major business ratepayers.</p> <p>A 1% decrease in the business rates collectable across the Borough/District would result in additional pressure on the MTFS of around £181k per year.</p>	<p>159</p>	<p>637</p>
<p><u>Council Tax Localisation</u></p> <p>The level of Council Tax receipts in the MTFS are based upon collection rates of 98% for Council Tax and 90% for the additional income generated from changes to the discounts scheme.</p> <p>A fall of 1% in both of these collection rates would have a detrimental effect of £252k across the Council's MTFS.</p>	<p>63</p>	<p>252</p>
<p><u>Housing Benefit Subsidy</u></p> <p>The MTFS currently assumes a 99% subsidy rate within the budgets.</p> <p>A 1% reduction in this subsidy rate for the Council for each year would result in an additional £1,298k pressure on the Council's MTFS position.</p>	<p>311</p>	<p>1,298</p>
<p>TOTALS (£000s):</p>	<p>1,353</p>	<p>6,321</p>

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Delivering our Strategic Priorities and MTFS Reserve

This reserve will act as a one off fund to provide the financial capacity, either through direct investment – revenue and/or capital or through servicing external borrowing, for the West Suffolk authorities to drive forward the delivering of a sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the delivery of the new Strategic Plan.

In 2013/14 the Council commissioned an Empty Homes report in the sum of £0.016m in order to assist with maximising the number of empty homes brought back into circulation, which was funded from the New Homes Bonus (NHB). To date the only other draw on this reserve (following a formal council decision) is detailed in exempt paper D227 on the Haverhill Research Park where £0.11m of NHB was ring-fenced to offer financial support for an anchor tenant at the research park. The £0.110m remains allocated within the reserve until such time as it is drawn down.

The table below summarises the proposed funding from this reserve as part of the 2015/16 budget process.

Area	One-Off Funding	Annual Funding that spans more than one year	Comments
The range and delivery of options contained in the housing strategy document	TBC (£3m included as a pending item in the Councils capital programme, funded from capital receipts)	TBC	In progress, following adoption of the West Suffolk Housing Strategy, report F115. £3m included as a pending item in the Councils capital programme, funded from capital receipts, however this pending item is still subject to a full council decision.
Developing a Community Energy Plan	£0.085m invest to save on next phase of solar for council properties. £50k for larger scale solar and renewable energy generation technologies	Annual funding of £0.54m for rent a roof solar. Total of £1.62m (2015/16 to 2017/18)	As detailed in Cabinet report CAB/SE/14009 Developing a Community Energy Plan
Capital Invest to Save Fund	£0.5m		Invest to Save reserve to support capital projects that have an invest to save / invest to earn outcome. Fund allocation will be subject to a report (a) through to Cabinet.

Feasibility budgets for key capital projects	£0.1m		Feasibility fund for commissioning external support and expert advice for future capital projects. Fund allocation to be delegated to the Head of Resources and Performance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance. Spend to be reported through to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee as part of the quarterly budget monitoring report
Continuation of Locality Budgets		Annual funding of £112.5k. <i>Total of £225k (2015/16 and 2016/17)</i>	First year review of Locality Budgets and new approach to grants to be considered at Cabinet on 24 March 2015, via Grant Panel. Funding for 2015/16 and 2016/17
Part funding of commissioning pot - community chest (new approach to Grants)		Annual funding of £55k. <i>Total of £110k (2015/16 and 2016/17)</i>	Locality Budgets and part funding for Community Chest (new approach to Grant), future years included in base budget.
Investing in the continuation of the shared service agenda and transformation of service delivery	TBC	TBC	In progress as part of the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The proposals outlined in the above table result in an uncommitted balance of £0.656m in the Strategic Priorities/MTFS reserve to be used to fund or facilitate those items in the table that are currently not quantified, in particular the range and delivery of options contained in the housing strategy document.



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Business Rates

Extension of Transitional Relief for small and medium
properties - Guidance



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Extension of Transitional Relief for small and medium properties - Guidance

About this guidance

1. This guidance is intended to support local authorities in administering the extension of transitional relief for small and medium properties announced in the Autumn Statement on 3 December 2014. This Guidance applies to England only.
2. This guidance sets out the detailed criteria which central government will use to determine funding relief for properties falling out of transition to higher bills in 2015/16. The Guidance does not replace existing legislation on any other relief.
3. Enquiries on this measure should be addressed to:
ndr@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Introduction

4. The transitional relief scheme was introduced in 2010 to help those ratepayers who were faced with higher bills. The scheme ends on 31 March 2015 and as a result a small number of ratepayers will face a jump to their full rates bill from 1 April 2015.
5. The government announced in the Autumn Statement on 3 December 2014 that it will extend to March 2017 the current transitional relief scheme for properties with a rateable value up to and including £50,000.
6. This document provides guidance to authorities about the operation and delivery of the policy. The number of ratepayers affected in each local authority is very small (typically below 100) and the government recognises that authorities may choose to explore manual solutions to calculate the relief. If as a result authorities are unable to include the award of relief in bills for the beginning of 2015/16 then they are encouraged to inform the ratepayers affected that relief is available.

Section 1:

Extension of Transitional Relief

How will the relief be provided?

7. As this is a measure for 2015-16 and 2016-17, the government is not changing the legislation around transitional relief. Instead the government will, in line with the eligibility criteria set out in this guidance, reimburse local authorities that use their discretionary relief powers, under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended¹, to grant relief. It will be for individual local billing authorities to adopt a local scheme and decide in each individual case when to grant relief under section 47. Central government will fully reimburse local authorities for the local share of the discretionary relief (using a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003). In view of the fact that such expenditure can be reimbursed, the government expects local government to grant discretionary relief to qualifying ratepayers.
8. Central government will reimburse billing authorities and those major precepting authorities within the rates retention system for the actual cost to them under the rates retention scheme of the relief that falls within the definitions in this guidance.

Which properties will benefit from relief?

9. Properties that will benefit are those with a rateable value up to and including £50,000 who would have received transitional relief in 2015/16 or 2016/17 had the existing transitional relief scheme continued in its current format. In line with the existing thresholds in the transitional relief scheme, the £50,000 rateable value threshold should be based on the rateable value shown for 1/4/10 or the substituted day in the cases of splits and mergers.
10. This policy applies to transitional relief only (i.e. those moving to higher bills).
11. As the grant of the relief is discretionary, authorities may choose not to grant the relief if they consider that appropriate, for example where granting the relief would go against the authority's wider objectives for the local area. We would encourage councillors to be consulted on the final scheme that the local authority adopts, so there is a clear line of accountability.

How much relief will be available?

12. The government will fund Localism Act discounts to ensure eligible properties receive the same level of protection they would have received had the transitional

¹ Section 47 was amended by the Localism Act 2011

relief scheme extended into 2015/16 and 2016/17. The transitional relief scheme should be assumed to remain as it is in the current statutory scheme² except that:

- a. the cap on increases for small properties (with a rateable value of less than £18,000/£25,500 in London) in both 2015/16 & 2016/17 should be assumed to be 15% (before the increase for the change in the multiplier)³, and
 - b. the cap on increases for other properties (up to and including £50,000 rateable value) in both 2015/16 and 2016/17 should be assumed to be 25% (before the increase for the change in the multiplier)⁴.
13. As explained above, the scheme applies only to properties up to and including £50,000 rateable value based on the value shown for 1/4/10 or the substituted day in the cases of splits and mergers. Changes in rateable value which take effect from a later date should be calculated using the normal rules in the transitional relief scheme⁵. For the avoidance of doubt, properties whose rateable value is £50,000 or less on 1 April 2010 (or the day of merger) but increase above £50,000 from a later date will still be eligible for the relief. Where necessary the Valuation Office Agency will continue to issue certificates for the value at 31 March 2010⁶ or 1 April 2010⁷. The relief should be calculated on a daily basis.
14. A detailed explanation and illustration of how the relief (and the associated section 31 grant) should be calculated is at Annex A.

Recalculations of relief

15. As with the current transitional relief scheme, the amount of relief awarded should be recalculated in the event of a change of circumstances. This could include, for example, a backdated change to the rateable value or the hereditament. This change of circumstances could arise during the year in question or during a later year.
16. The Non-Domestic Rating (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1989 (S.I. 1989/1059)⁸ require authorities to provide ratepayers with at least one year's notice in writing before any decision to revoke or vary a decision so as to increase the amount the ratepayer has to pay takes effect. Such a revocation or variation of a decision can only take effect at the end of a financial year. But within these regulations, local authorities may still make decisions which are conditional upon eligibility criteria or rules for calculating relief which allow the amount of relief to be amended within the year to reflect changing circumstances.

² As prescribed in the Non-Domestic Rating (Chargeable Amounts) (England) Regulations 2009 No. 3343.

³ Specifically, X in regulation 8(3) for the years commencing 1 April 2015 and 1 April 2016 should be assumed to be 115. Q should be assumed to be 1.019.

⁴ Specifically X in regulation 8(2) for years commencing 1 April 2015 and 2016 should be assumed to be 125. Q should be assumed to be 1.019.

⁵ i.e. "N over J" for reductions or "N minus J" for increases.

⁶ Regulations 15 or 16, SI 2009 No. 3342.

⁷ Regulation 14 SI 2009 No.3343.

⁸ The Non-Domestic Rating (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1989 No. 1059.

17. Therefore, when making an award for the extension of transitional relief, local authorities should ensure in the conditions of the award that the relief can be recalculated in the event of a change to the rating list for the property concerned (retrospective or otherwise). This is so that the relief can be re-calculated if the rateable value changes.

State Aid

18. State Aid law is the means by which the European Union regulates state funded support to businesses. Providing discretionary relief to ratepayers is likely to amount to State Aid. However the extension of transitional relief will be State Aid compliant where it is provided in accordance with the De Minimis Regulations (1407/2013)⁹.
19. The De Minimis Regulations allow an undertaking to receive up to €200,000 of De Minimis aid in a three year period (consisting of the current financial year and the two previous financial years). Local authorities should familiarise themselves with the terms of this State Aid exemption, in particular the types of undertaking that are excluded from receiving De Minimis aid (Article 1), the relevant definition of undertaking (Article 2(2)¹⁰) and the requirement to convert the aid into Euros¹¹.
20. To administer De Minimis it is necessary for the local authority to establish that the award of aid will not result in the undertaking having received more than €200,000 of De Minimis aid. Note that the threshold only relates to aid provided under the De Minimis Regulations (aid under other exemptions or outside the scope of State Aid is not relevant to the De Minimis calculation). Where local authorities have further questions about De Minimis or other aspects of State Aid law, they should seek advice from their legal department in the first instance¹².

How will the relief work in Enterprise Zones?

21. Where an eligible property is also eligible for Enterprise Zone relief, then Enterprise Zone relief should be granted and this will be funded under the rates retention scheme by a deduction from the central share. Local authorities should not claim funding for the extension of transitional relief on properties which would otherwise qualify for Enterprise Zone government funded relief.
22. If a property in an Enterprise Zone is not eligible for Enterprise Zone relief, or that relief has ended, the extension of transitional relief may be granted in the normal way, and this would be reimbursed by grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

⁹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:352:0001:0008:EN:PDF>

¹⁰ The 'New SME Definition user guide and model declaration' provides further guidance:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/sme_definition/sme_user_guide_en.pdf

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm

¹² Detailed State Aid guidance can also be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/15277/National_State_Aid_Law_Requirements.pdf

Section 2:

Calculation for the extension of transitional relief

Calculating the extension of transitional relief where other reliefs apply

Under the existing statutory transition scheme which ends on 31 March 2015, transitional relief is measured before all other reliefs. But the extension of transitional relief into 2015/16 and 2016/17 will be delivered via section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended by the Localism Act) which is measured after other reliefs (including other Localism Act delivered reliefs such as retail relief).

Therefore, for the purposes of awarding relief and claiming section 31 grant, authorities should measure the extension of transitional relief after all other reliefs. To do this authorities will need to:

- Step 1: identify those eligible properties which would have qualified for transitional relief in 2015/16,
- Step 2: calculate the actual rates bill for those properties in 2015/16 after all other reliefs assuming transitional relief has ended,
- Step 3: calculate the rates bill for those properties in 2015/16 after all other reliefs assuming transitional relief continued (in line with the assumptions in this guidance), and
- Step 4: calculate the difference between stage 2 and 3 and award a Localism Act discount to that value.

Authorities will be asked to report the cost of extending the transitional relief scheme using this methodology from which the associated section 31 grant will be calculated (using the appropriate local share).

Example

If a ratepayer would have been eligible for transitional relief of 25% caps in 2015/16 then their bill is calculated as follows (ignoring inflation):

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16	2015/16
Bill before any reliefs	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Transitional relief (had the original scheme continued)	-4,000	n/a	-2,500	n/a
Net bill before Localism Act discount	6,000	10,000	7,500	10,000
Localism Act discount (to give effect to transitional relief)	n/a	n/a	n/a	-2,500
Net rates bill	6,000	10,000	7,500	7,500

For illustration we have assumed the multiplier does not change between years.

This is the simple case. The value of the transitional relief had the scheme continued is £2,500. In practice extending transitional relief will be achieved by awarding a Localism Act discount which is calculated at the end of the bill. But because there are no other reliefs the value of the discount to ensure in practice transitional relief continues is also £2,500.

But if, for example, the same ratepayer would otherwise have fallen out of transitional relief in 2015/16 also receives 80% charitable mandatory relief then their bill is calculated as follows (ignoring inflation):

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16	2015/16
Bill before any reliefs	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Transitional relief (had the original scheme continued)	-4,000	n/a	-2,500	0
Net bill before Charitable relief or Localism Act discount	6,000	n/a	7,500	10,000
Charitable Relief	-4,800	-8,000	-6,000	-8,000
Localism Act discount (to give effect to transitional relief)	0	0	0	-500
Net rates bill	1,200	2,000	1,500	1,500

For illustration we have assumed the multiplier does not change between years.

In the above example, whilst the reported cost of transitional relief in 2015/16 would still have been £2,500 had the scheme continued in its current form, this is measured before all other reliefs. In practice extending transitional relief will be achieved by awarding a Localism Act discount which is calculated after all other reliefs. So the value of the discount to ensure in practice transitional relief continues is £500.

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Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Suffolk Business Park Land Assembly	
Report No:	CAB/SE/15/006	
Report to and date/s:	Cabinet	10 February 2015
	Council	24 February 2015
Portfolio holder:	Cllr John Griffiths Leader of the Council Tel: 01284 757001 Email: john.griffiths@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Steven Wood Head of Planning and Growth Tel: 01284 757306 Email: steven.wood@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To establish whether the Council is willing to agree to the use of its Compulsory Purchase Powers under Section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to help facilitate the development of Suffolk Business Park. This action meets the Council's following priorities: Increased opportunities for economic growth; and Homes for our communities.	
Recommendations	It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that Cabinet: (1) approves the principle of using the Council's compulsory purchase powers (CPO) under section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to acquire such estates and interest in the land as may be necessary to facilitate the development of the Eastern Relief Road and Suffolk Business Park in accordance with the local development plan, as detailed in Section 2 of Report No: CAB/SE/15/006; and	

Recommendations: (continued)	(2) authorises the Head of Planning and Growth to continue to explore options with the landowners which would resolve the matter without the need for the Council to invoke its compulsory purchase powers. In the event of negotiations proving unsuccessful, a further report will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting to seek a recommendation to Council for use of CPO powers in accordance with recommendation 1 above.
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (as it is a decision in principle)
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation on the Masterplan for Suffolk Business Park ran for four weeks before the Masterplan was formally adopted in June 2010. • Additional consultation will be necessary for any development brief in line with the Council's Joint Statement of Community Involvement and protocols on development briefs.
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not to use CPO powers would result in the Eastern Relief Road not progressing and funding falling away. Suffolk Business Park cannot be delivered without the Eastern Relief Road.
Implications:	
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As detailed in the report
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and resources of existing staff and need to appoint/manage consultants
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As detailed in the report
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As detailed in the report

Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
The CPO fails to be confirmed by the Secretary of State	Medium	Instruct expert consultants and follow due process	Low
Recovery of costs	Medium	Legal agreement	Low
Time taken to confirm the CPO affects the delivery of the road	High	Consultants advice and MP support	Medium
Ward(s) affected:		All Wards	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		Suffolk Business Park Masterplan dated June 2010.	
Documents attached:		Appendix A: Location Plan	

Key issues and reasons for recommendations

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Eastern Relief Road is required to facilitate 68 hectares of General Employment land (Extension to Suffolk Business Park) and further housing growth on the Moreton Hall Estate (500 homes). The housing is one of the five directions of growth for Bury St Edmunds and the Suffolk Business Park Extension provides a significant proportion of the strategic employment allocation for the Borough up to and beyond 2031. The principle of both of these were agreed when the Core Strategy was adopted in December 2010. The general alignment of the road was also set out in the "Suffolk Business Park Extension Masterplan" adopted June 2010. The Masterplan set the broad principles for the development of Suffolk Business Park.
- 1.2 Planning permission for the Eastern Relief Road (ERR) was granted on 17 February 2014. The ERR is set to provide a new link from the A14 Trunk Road at junction 45 to Moreton Hall/Suffolk Business Park. The new road will head east from the existing roundabout on the junction of Skyliner Way and Lady Miriam Way and link into the A14 at Junction 45. The road design includes five new roundabouts serving a new secondary school site; 68 hectares of employment land to the south; the Rougham Tower Museum and the Rougham Airfield to the north; and access to the existing Rougham Industrial Estate. Junction 45 is proposed to be significantly altered with a new roundabout, extended slip roads, altered radii and the addition of traffic lights, as required.
- 1.3 The Eastern Relief Road is an important piece of infrastructure designed to help relieve existing congestion at junctions 43 and 44 of the A14 that currently serve Moreton Hall/Suffolk Business Park. The road is required to be in place before new development can be occupied.
- 1.4 The 68 hectare extension to Suffolk Business Park is in three ownerships. Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd owns approximately 35 hectares (88 acres) of the western section of the site (closest to Moreton Hall); Rougham Estates owns approximately 21 hectares (54 acres) on the eastern side of the site (adjoining Rougham Industrial Estate on two sides); and St Edmundsbury Borough Council owns a strip of land along the western edge of the site. Rougham Estates are represented by an agent, Churchmanor Estates Company PLC ('Churchmanor').
- 1.5 Negotiations with Churchmanor and the Council have currently stalled. The land in the control of Churchmanor is now the only parcel of land needed to complete the Eastern Relief Road and extension to Suffolk Business Park. This is the first time that the council has considered using CPO powers to unlock this strategic development. Up until recently, it had not been considered necessary to use CPO powers as it was considered that all the landowners were on course to negotiate a settlement.
- 1.6 Officers are now concerned that unless the Council considers the use of its powers and approves the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order, the current impasse will continue indefinitely further delaying this important scheme and thereby failing to provide much needed housing, education, community and employment land.

2. Background

- 2.1 Guidance on the use of compulsory purchase orders was issued by The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in Circular 06/2004. The circular opens by saying:
- "Ministers believe that compulsory purchase powers are an important tool for local authorities and other public bodies to use as a means of assembling the land needed to help deliver social and economic change. Used properly, they can contribute towards effective and efficient urban and rural regeneration, the revitalisation of communities, and the promotion of business – leading to improvements in quality of life. Bodies possessing compulsory purchase powers – whether at local, regional or national level – are therefore encouraged to consider using them pro-actively wherever appropriate to ensure real gains are brought to residents and the business community without delay."*
- 2.2 The Council is responsible through its Local Development Framework for ensuring the delivery and efficient planning of future housing and employment growth in the Borough. The extension to Suffolk Business Park is not only a strategic employment site for West Suffolk to 2031; it is of regional significance as a site capable of accommodating significant employment growth along the A14 corridor.
- 2.3 In order to enable the 68 hectare Suffolk Business Park site to be brought forward the Eastern Relief Road needs to be completed to provide the essential infrastructure linking the land directly to the A14 Trunk Road. As such the Council can utilise its compulsory purchase powers under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 2.4 All parties have recognised that the Eastern Relief Road is a high priority to be achieved preferably through agreement with the landowners of Suffolk Business Park. This has not happened to date. In the absence of such an agreement, in order to assist bringing the development forward, it is considered that it is now necessary for the Council to resolve in principle to make a Compulsory Purchase Order.
- 2.5 If Cabinet agrees in principle to recommend using the Council's CPO powers it is intended that a letter be written to inform Churchmanor Estates Company PLC and Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd of the resolution and invite them to attend a meeting to try to resolve the matter without the need for the Council to invoke its CPO powers. This is in line with the recommendations in the guidance that acquiring authorities should try to acquire land by agreement wherever practicable. Bearing in mind the time the CPO process can take, authorities are encouraged to start formal CPO procedures in parallel with their efforts to acquire by agreement. This has the extra advantage of, in the words of the Guidance "making the seriousness of the authorities intentions clear from the outset, which in turn might encourage those whose land is affected to enter more readily into meaningful negotiations".
- 2.6 Members will be advised of the outcome of discussions with Churchmanor and Taylor Wimpey. To preserve the Council's position a further report will be produced seeking full approval to the making of the Order and the taking of all

necessary steps to enable the land to be compulsorily acquired by the Council.

3. Legal Powers

- 3.1 **Section 226(1)(a) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)** enables the compulsory acquisition of land. These powers provide a positive tool to help acquiring authorities with planning powers to assemble land where this is necessary to implement the proposals in their community strategies and Local Development Documents. Under these powers an acquiring authority can acquire land compulsorily for the purposes of development, redevelopment or improvement if it considers that the acquisition will facilitate the carrying out of development, redevelopment or improvement on, or in relation to, that land; and the development, redevelopment or improvement will contribute to the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of their area which is clearly the purpose behind the Eastern Relief Road and Suffolk Business Park.
- 3.2 The use of the words "on, or in relation to" means that the scheme of development, redevelopment or improvement for which the land needs to be acquired does not necessarily have to be taking place on that land so long as its acquisition can be shown to be essential to the successful implementation of the scheme.
- 3.3 The Guidance advises that before making an Order, the acquiring authority should be satisfied, so far as is possible, that the proposed scheme would not be blocked by any impediments to implementation:
- "In demonstrating that there is a reasonable prospect of the scheme going ahead, the acquiring authority will also need to be able to show that it is unlikely to be blocked by any impediments to implementation. In addition to potential financial impediments, physical and legal factors need to be taken into account. These include the programming of any infrastructure accommodation works or remedial work which may be required, and any need for planning permission or other consent or licence."*
- 3.4 Whilst there is clear benefit when seeking to exercise powers of compulsory purchase in having the certainty of extant, implementable planning permission this is not always possible. This situation is explicitly acknowledged in the Guidance which recognises that it may not always be feasible or sensible to wait until the full details of the scheme have been worked up, and planning permission obtained, before proceeding with the order. In this instance it is clear that planning permission exists for the Eastern Relief Road and that the extension to Suffolk Business Plan is both included in the Local Plan and benefits from an adopted Master Plan.
- 3.5 The Guidance advises that evidence to establish to financial viability of the scheme will need to be provided in those cases where it is an issue. This does not mean, though, that the acquiring authority will be required as a matter of routine to submit a full financial approval of the proposed scheme in justification for its compulsory purchase proposal.
- 3.6 The financial viability of Suffolk Business Park is not considered to be an issue now that there is a commitment by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and the Local Authorities to fund the Eastern Relief Road.

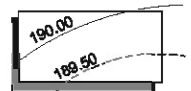

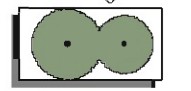

- 3.7 CPOs made by a local authority under section 226 must be confirmed by Secretary of State. If the owner of the land which is the subject of the CPO objects to the order, the Secretary of State will appoint an independent inspector to conduct a public inquiry. The inspector's report and recommendation will be considered by the Secretary of State when a decision whether or not to confirm the CPO is taken.
- 3.8 **Section 233 Town and Planning Act 1990 (as amended)** provides that where a council disposes of land that has been acquired or appropriated for planning purposes, it must secure the best use of the land for the "proper planning of the area" and ensure that the consideration for any disposal is not "less than the best that can reasonably be obtained". All disposals at less than best consideration must receive a specific consent from the Secretary of State.
- 3.9 The Council is entitled to enter into contractual or other arrangements with another party for the procuring of a development and to dispose of a freehold or leasehold interest in land acquired pursuant to a CPO to that party.
- 3.10 There is no need for the Council to carry out a full marketing exercise before it can enter into such a back-to-back arrangement with Taylor Wimpey or another developer to acquire the land acquired by the Council through use of its CPO powers. A "back-to-back" arrangement (under which the acquiring local authority makes neither a commercial loss nor a commercial gain from its participation, using section 226 powers, in a scheme) is standard practice.
- 3.11 **The Human Rights Act 1998** incorporated into domestic law the European Convention on Human Rights ("the Convention"). The Convention includes provision in the form of Articles, the aim of which is to protect the rights of the individual. In resolving to make a CPO order the Council has to consider the rights of property owners under the Convention, notably under Article 1 which protects the rights of everyone to the peaceful enjoyment of possessions. No-one can be deprived of possessions except in the public interest and subject to the relevant national and international laws.
- 3.12 In the case of each of these Articles (and indeed other provisions in the Convention) the Council has to be conscious of the need to strike a balance between the rights of the individual and the rights of the public. In the light of the significant public benefit which would arise from the implementation of the scheme, officers have concluded that it would be appropriate to make an order. Officers do not regard the use of CPO powers in this case as constituting any unlawful interference with individual property rights.
- 3.13 The opportunity has been given to landowners to make representations regarding the council's planning policies which underpin the scheme for which the council is considering the use of its CPO powers. Further representation can be made in the context of the compulsory purchase process which allows objections to be made which may be considered by the Secretary of State if not resolved. Also, those directly affected by the order will be entitled to compensation proportionate to the loss which they incur as a result of the acquisition.

4. Finance/Budget/Resource Implications


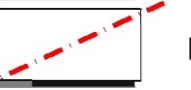



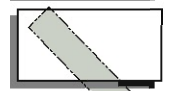
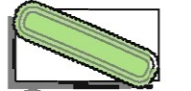
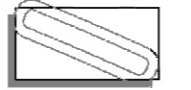
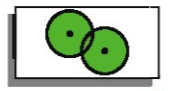
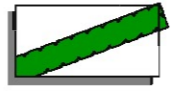

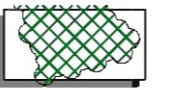
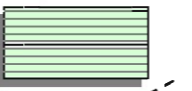
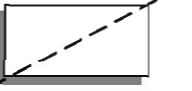
- 4.1 Any action taken to secure the delivery of Suffolk Business Park using CPO powers will have financial and resource implications. There will be costs associated with making the order (administrative, legal and potentially inquiry costs) and then if the order is enacted there will be costs associated with compensation payments.
- 4.2 The scale of costs associated with making the order will be dependent upon the nature of the process going forward. Further reports to Members will detail these costs before expenditure is incurred.



EXISTING FEATURES

-  Contours
-  Building
-  Trees (from survey)
-  Recent native woodland planting (estimated)

PROPOSED FEATURES

-  Tree to be removed
-  Planning application boundary
-  Amenity grass
-  Native meadow
-  Hedgerow (from survey)
-  Recent hedgerow planting (estimated)
-  Drainage swales
-  Noise attenuation bund
-  Specimen trees
-  Native clipped hedge
-  Native woodland planting
-  Native understorey planting
-  Netpave with amenity grass
-  Boundary fence

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CLIENT	Churchmanor Estates		
PROJECT	Bury St. Edmunds - Eastern Relief Road (ERR)		
TITLE	Overall Layout Plan		
DRAWN	CHECK	Project No./	Dwg No.
AD	ES		
SCALE	DATE	328-PA-051 E	
1 : 3000 (@A1)	FEB 2014		

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Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Grant Funding 2015/2016: Arts and Sports Revenue Support Grants	
Report No:	CAB/SE/15/007	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	10 February 2015
Portfolio holder:	Sarah Stamp Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage Tel: 01284 769360 Email: sarah.stamp@stedsb.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Liz Watts Director Tel: 01284 757252 Email: liz.watts@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To approve the grant funding levels for key arts and sports facilities for 2015/2016.	
Recommendation:	<p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that Cabinet approves the following levels of funding to be included in the budget for 2015/2016, as detailed in Report No: CAB/SE/15/007:</p> <p>(1) Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds: £66,250 (a reduction of £5,000);</p> <p>(2) Smith's Row Art Gallery, Bury St Edmunds: £25,000 (a reduction of £9,485); and</p> <p>(3) Victory Ground Sports Ground, Bury St Edmunds: £45,250 (a reduction of £2,500).</p>	
Key Decision: (Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <u>do not</u> apply.)	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smith's Row Art Gallery, Theatre Royal, Victory Sports Ground, Grant Working Party 	
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant funding could be more or less than that set out in the recommendations. 	

Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • Annual savings for the council	
Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Reputational damage to the council if the cuts are too high or too low	Medium	Budget consultation carried out in 2014 confirmed the decisions taken are appropriate	Low
Arts/Sports organisations are no longer sustainable with reduced funding	Medium	Discussions have taken place with all organisations and none have indicated that they would no longer be sustainable.	Low
Ward(s) affected:		All wards	
Background papers:		Minute 9 of Grant Working Party meeting: 12 January 2015	
Documents attached:		None	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 Arts Funding

- 1.1.1 The council has traditionally supported the art gallery (Smith's Row) and the Theatre Royal with grant funding. They each play a different role within our community, and have varying degrees of accessibility amongst our residents. The council has suffered significant funding cuts over the last few years, and as our funding becomes tighter, the requirement to ensure we are getting value for money becomes even more of an imperative.
- 1.1.2 As of 1 April 2015, the Theatre Royal will no longer receive Arts Council England grant funding through its National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) funding stream. This is a significant reduction for the theatre, although they have undertaken considerable work in the last 12 months to prepare themselves for the cut. Recent discussions have taken place with the theatre to see whether there is more joint working that could be undertaken with The Apex, in order to generate further savings and/or increased income for both organisations. This work is ongoing, and in the light of the potential for closer working, it is proposed that a funding cut of £5,000 be made for 2015/2016, resulting in the grant being £66,250.
- 1.1.3 The council met with Smith's Row Art Gallery before Christmas 2014 to raise concerns that its work was not reaching a wide audience or delivering on the council's priorities, and that therefore the level of public funding received had to be reconsidered in light of this situation. A funding cut of £9,485 is proposed for 2015/2016. The proposal beyond 2016, which will be worked up during 2015/2016 is to withdraw all core grant funding from Smith's Row, and use some of the £25,000 to create a visual arts grant fund, which can be allocated on the basis of an organisation's ability to deliver on the council's priorities around economic growth and families and communities, ideally leveraging in significant amounts of external match funding. This fund would be commissioned through an open and competitive tender.

1.2 Sports Funding

- 1.2.1 Victory Ground Sports Hall has now been open for 12 months, and has established a good basis on which to expand its commercial operations. A community use agreement has been put in place, and there is a clearly established way forward for 'Victory Sports Ground Ltd' to secure their financial future through increasing income generated from hires and other community uses.
- 1.2.2 A reduction of £2,500 is proposed for 2015/2016, with a clear understanding that there must be a longer term plan drawn up during the year (with advice from the council's strategic sports partner, Abbeycroft Leisure) in order to reduce the grant down to zero within a limited number of years, as previously agreed by the Cabinet.

2. Grant Working Party

- 2.1 On 12 January 2015, the Grant Working Party considered a verbal report on the above recommendations, which consequently resulted in all three proposals being supported by the Working Party.

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Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018	
Report No:	CAB/SE/15/008	
Report to and dates:	Cabinet	10 February 2015
	Council	24 February 2015
Portfolio holder:	Anne Gower Portfolio Holder for Housing 01440 706402 anne.gower@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Simon Phelan Head of Housing 01638 719440 simon.phelan@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	<p>The Strategy sets out what the West Suffolk councils, along with their partners, will do over the next three years to address and prevent homelessness, ensuring that there is sufficient suitable temporary accommodation and support for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.</p> <p>The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all councils to produce a Homelessness Strategy at least every five years.</p>	
Recommendation:	It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that, subject to the approval of full Council, the West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018, as contained in Appendix A to Report No: CAB/SE/15/008, be adopted.	
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders have been consulted as part of the Homelessness Review and their views have been incorporated in developing the draft strategy. The strategy has been subject to a six week stakeholder and public consultation from 10 December 2014, ending on 21 January 2015. Revisions to the Strategy as a result of the consultation process are detailed in paragraph 1.4 of the Key Issues section of this report.
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not to produce a strategy. However the Council would be in breach of its statutory requirements.
Implications:	
<p>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The outcomes of the strategy should result in overall savings to West Suffolk by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminating the use of costly Bed and Breakfast accommodation. The Councils spent £220,000 in 2013/2014 on Bed and Breakfast. This figure is expected to reduce to £130,000 in 2014/2015. Increasing the numbers of successful homeless prevention cases, so reducing the need for costly homelessness assessments. Research from the homelessness charity, Shelter, indicates the cost to a Local Authority per homeless prevention case is £826 and the minimum cost of a homeless case is £2,112.
<p>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">
<p>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">
<p>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not to produce a strategy would mean that the Council would be in breach of its statutory requirements.

Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • Equality Impact Assessment attached as Appendix B.	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Non-engagement of Partners	Medium	Development of multi-agency partnerships	Low
Insufficient Temporary Accommodation	Medium	Provide identified re-provision of temporary accommodation	Low
Ward(s) affected:		All	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		None	
Documents attached:		Appendix A: West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018 Appendix B: West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy - Equality Impact Assessment	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 This Strategy will support priorities set out in West Suffolk's Strategic Plan. In particular:

Priority 2: Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active

Priority 3: Homes for our communities

1.2 Councils are required to carry out a homelessness review of their area and produce a strategy to:

- (1) Address the causes of homelessness in the area.
- (2) Introduce initiatives to prevent homelessness wherever possible.
- (3) Provide sufficient temporary accommodation for those households that are or may become homeless.
- (4) Ensure that appropriate support is available for people who have previously experienced homelessness in order to prevent it happening again.

1.3 This is the first joint West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy. Previously Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council have had their own.

1.4 Revisions made to the strategy following consultation

1.4.1 In Section 5 (Providing sufficient temporary accommodation for those households that are or may become homeless) of the Strategy, the line "*We will continue to monitor the need for temporary accommodation and influencing factors such as projected population growth and economic deprivation to ensure sufficient ongoing provision*" has been added to recognise that the location and type of accommodation may need to vary in the medium to long term.

1.4.2 Also in Section 5, the profile of proposed temporary accommodation has been revised to include an accommodation unit for larger families, previously not catered for in the Strategy. The profile has also been changed from specifying what type of accommodation should be provided, for example: 2 bedroom flat, to the suitability of accommodation for the size of household to reflect that the accommodation could be any one of a number of property types, shared facilities, flat or house.

1.4.3 The total number of accommodation units remains the same at 46.

1.4.4 The following page shows the proposed provision of temporary accommodation profile before and after consultation.

Proposed Profile of Temporary Accommodation Provision

Before consultation

Area	A room with shared facilities	Studio/1 bed Flat	2 bed Flat	3 bed Flat
Brandon		6	2	
Newmarket			10	
Haverhill		3	7	
Mildenhall	3			
Bury St Edmunds	10		5	
Total	13	9	24	0

After consultation

Accommodation suitable for Household size	Single person/ couple	Family unit upto 4 people	Family unit, 5 or more people
<i>Brandon</i>	6	2	
<i>Newmarket</i>		10	
<i>Haverhill</i>	3	7	
<i>Mildenhall</i>	1	2	
<i>Bury St Edmunds</i>	7	7	1
Total	17	28	1

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West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018

Foreword:

In recent years, housing in our area has become less and less affordable. For some people, it has meant staying put in an unsuitable home, or passing up a job opportunity because a house move is simply out of the question. For others, the consequences have been more extreme, with more and more people facing homelessness.

As the Councillors responsible for leading West Suffolk's housing agenda, we are fully committed to seeing the actions in this strategy taken forward. Together, we will work across our councils and with our partners to make sure those who are affected by homelessness receive timely advice and assistance.

Cllr Rona Burt, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Transport,
Forest Heath District Council.

Cllr Anne Gower, Portfolio Holder for Housing, St Edmundsbury Borough
Council

1. Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all councils to produce a Homelessness Strategy at least every five years. Councils are required to carry out a homelessness review of their area and produce a strategy to:

1. Address the causes of homelessness in the area.
2. Introduce initiatives to prevent homelessness wherever possible.
3. Provide sufficient temporary accommodation for those households that are or may become homeless.
4. Ensure that appropriate support is available for people who have previously experienced homelessness in order to prevent it happening again.

This is the first joint West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy. Previously Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council have had their own. References to "West Suffolk" in this document refer to both councils, working together.

This Strategy will support priorities set out in West Suffolk's Strategic Plan (2013-15). In particular:

- Priority 2: Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active

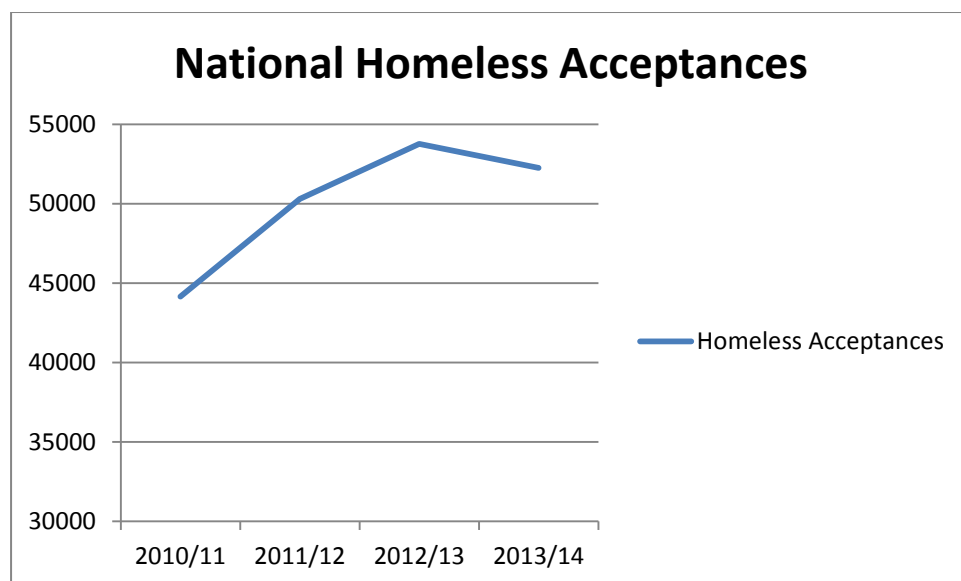
- Priority 3: Homes for our communities

Both councils have recently adopted a West Suffolk Housing Strategy 2015–2018, the priorities set out in the strategy which specifically relate to homelessness are expanded upon within this document.

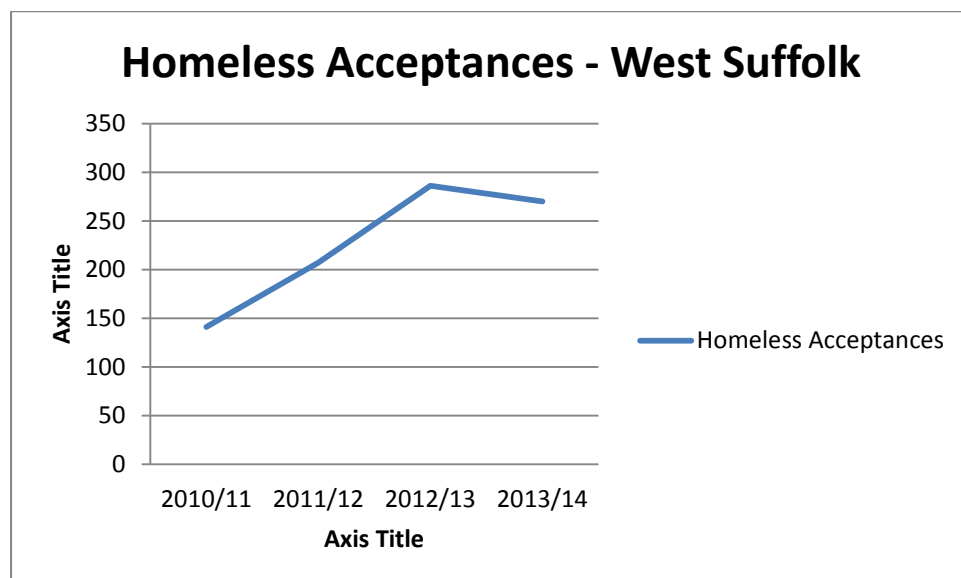
2. Homelessness Context

2.1 Level of Homelessness

Nationally the rate of homeless acceptances, where a local authority has a duty to find accommodation for a household, has increased overall in the last four years, a trend which is reflected in West Suffolk.



Source: www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics



Source: www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics

Unless action is taken, the number of cases where West Suffolk has a duty to provide accommodation for homeless households is anticipated to remain at between 250 and 300 households per year.

2.2 Age profile of homeless households

Analysis of homelessness acceptances show that younger and middle aged people are affected more by homelessness than older people. The table below shows the breakdown by age group of homeless households housed by West Suffolk from April 2010 – March 2014.

Age	Number	Percentage
16-24	321	36%
25-44	457	51%
45-59	84	9%
60+	33	4%

Source: www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics

2.3 Stakeholder and Partner Survey

As part of the review of homelessness across West Suffolk, questionnaires were sent to over 40 individuals at 22 stakeholder and partner organisations in July 2014 (attached at Appendix 1). A response rate of 32% was achieved.

The questionnaire asked what issues partners had identified regarding homelessness and what they and others, including West Suffolk, could do to prevent homelessness and support homeless households.

Several themes emerged, including barriers to accessing suitable housing, which included:

1. Lack of affordable properties,
2. The need for earlier interventions, partnership working, information sharing which would identify and enable problems to be resolved before the situation becomes a crisis,
3. The process of moving applicants on through the Housing Register (Home-Link) has become much slower, largely as a result of increased demand for 1 bed properties,
4. Partners generally reported that the causes of homelessness were those relevant to themselves, eg: a Registered Provider (RP) would report that rent arrears was the biggest cause of homelessness. This could demonstrate a lack of awareness of issues affecting other partners (for example change in personal circumstances or change in benefits eligibility),

5. Difficulties in sourcing housing and support for customers with complex/multiple issues and/or a history of not being able to manage their accommodation needs.

Some of these barriers will be directly addressed through this Strategy and the West Suffolk Housing Strategy.

3. Addressing the causes of homelessness in the area.

The main causes of individuals/families being homeless within West Suffolk are in line with national trends. The loss of private rented accommodation is now the biggest cause of homelessness rather than the traditional cause of eviction by parents, other relatives or friends. The other major cause of homelessness is relationship breakdown (violent and non-violent).

Causes of Homelessness in West Suffolk	2010 - 2014
Eviction by family or friends	28%
Non-violent relationship breakdown	9%
Violent relationship breakdown	13%
Mortgage arrears	3%
Loss of private rented accommodation	35%
Other eg: discharge from hospital or prison	12%

Source: www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics

West Suffolk has already within two of its key strategies, the Housing Strategy (2015-18) and the Families and Communities Strategy 2013, taken steps to address some of the root causes of homelessness.

The Housing Strategy's main priority areas are:

1. increasing the supply of new homes so as to accommodate our growing population, promote economic growth, improve affordability and reduce homelessness,
2. making the best use of existing housing so as to allocate housing efficiently and improve the quality, sustainability and suitability for an ageing population,
3. support the provision of specialist housing and support for those who need it.

This homelessness strategy will give particular emphasis to increasing the provision of specialist housing i.e.: temporary accommodation for homeless households and providing timely support for those threatened with homelessness.

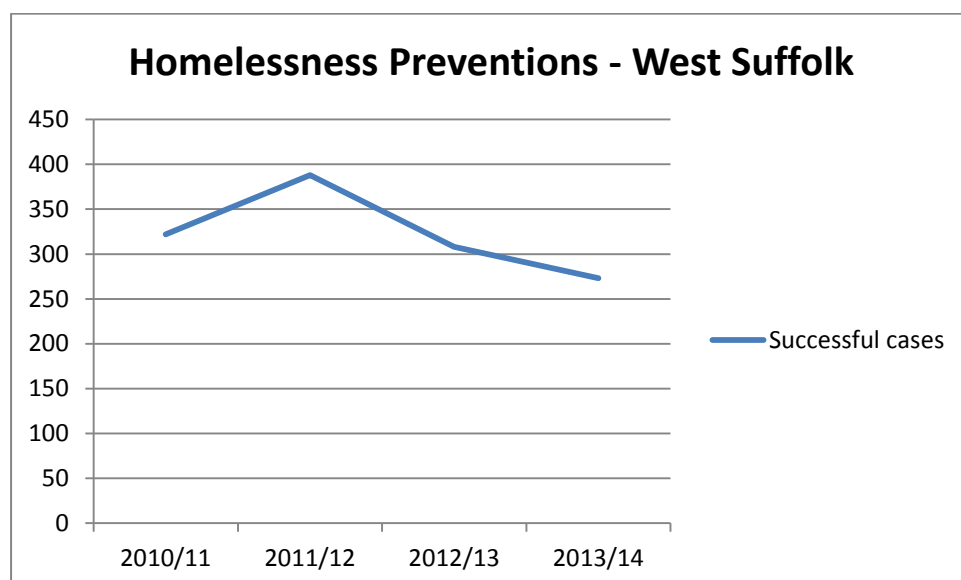
The Families and Communities Strategy emphasises the advantages of early intervention and the empowerment of communities to identify problems early and address situations before they escalate into a crisis. However this, in some circumstances requires intervention by the councils.

Through the actions set out in these strategies we will aim to actively assist and alleviate the pressure on households, who could otherwise become homeless.

Increasing the availability of affordable housing will also help to provide accommodation for those living in overcrowded conditions in the family home, as well as for those struggling to find and afford private rented properties.

4. Introducing initiatives to prevent homelessness wherever possible.

The graph below shows that the number of successful homelessness prevention cases has fallen over the last few years. A prevention case is where the Council has actively worked with a household to prevent their homelessness. This reduction in numbers has occurred despite the fact that the level of resources committed to preventing homelessness has remained constant.



Source: www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics

This trend can be seen as a reflection of the difficulties of finding and maintaining affordable accommodation in the private rented sector and

the high demand for social housing. A snapshot survey in July 2014 found that only 5% of available private rented properties in St Edmundsbury and 9% in Forest Heath had rental levels that could be fully met by Housing Benefit.

In order to address this trend West Suffolk will need to explore new and innovative ways of improving homelessness prevention, working in partnership with other organisations. We have signed up to the "Housing and Health Charter for Suffolk" demonstrating our commitment for joint working with other agencies, such as the West Suffolk Lettings Partnership to deliver shared agendas and services.

Our Housing Strategy has already identified a number of specific actions that we will be working on to prevent homelessness.

We will:

- Develop good quality, easily accessible housing advice materials, including web-based material which reflect the diversity of applicants' needs and abilities
- Continue to work in partnership with other key agencies to prevent individuals and families from getting into a housing crisis.

In addition we will complete the Government's GOLD Standard Challenge for homelessness. The challenge is a local authority sector led peer review scheme designed to help local authorities deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services. The challenge comprise of 10 points that Local Authorities are required to achieve. These are set out below and the Action Plan at appendix 2 details how we are going to achieve the GOLD Standard.

1. To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services
2. To actively work in partnership with the voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
3. To offer a Housing Options prevention service to all clients including written advice
4. To adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative
5. To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support
6. To develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both client and landlord
7. To actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme
8. To have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness, reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs

9. To not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation
10. To not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks.

The stakeholder and partner survey also identified several specific proposals which could be used to help prevent homelessness and support homeless households. We have incorporated a number of these proposals in the Action Plan (at Appendix 2), which include developing:

1. Improved hospital and prison discharge protocols.
2. Home security scheme for victims of domestic violence.
3. More flexible use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)
4. Expansion of a Private Rented Scheme into West Suffolk for applicants with complex issues

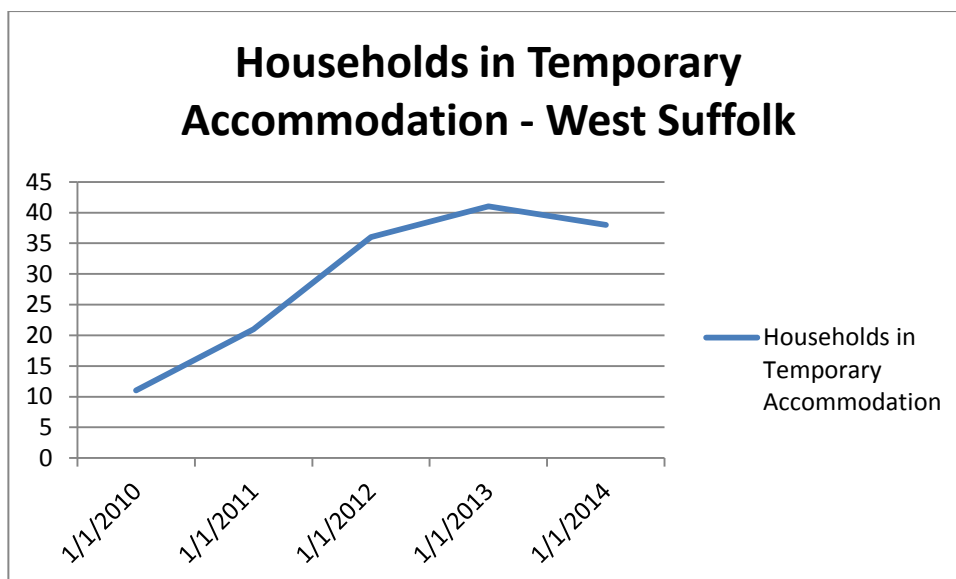
5. Providing sufficient temporary accommodation for those households that are or may become homeless.

The majority of homeless households that West Suffolk has a duty to source accommodation for are small families, with one or two children, with the next biggest group being single people. This trend points to the growing need for smaller units of accommodation both as temporary accommodation and for permanent housing.

Household Composition of homeless households – West Suffolk	2010-2014
Single person	18%
Couple	7%
Pregnant woman, no other children	13%
Family with 1 child	37%
Family with 2 children	18%
Family with 3 or more children	7%

Source: www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics

With the numbers of homeless households in temporary accommodation mirroring the trend of homelessness acceptances it is anticipated that West Suffolk will need permanent access to around 45 units of temporary accommodation, at any one time, in the future.



Source: www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics

Currently West Suffolk has access to self-contained temporary accommodation, provided by Registered Providers, but has to supplement this accommodation with the use of bed & breakfast.

The Housing Strategy sets out that West Suffolk should increase:

“the amount of temporary accommodation available for individuals and families in crisis housing need, to reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation.”

Within the lifetime of this Homelessness Strategy we aim to:

- minimise the use of bed & breakfast to the extent it is only used in an emergency and
- ensure that enough suitable temporary accommodation is available and that it is in the right location for homeless households to access support, maintain employment and education.

A breakdown of the last four years homelessness duty accepted cases shows where homeless households have originated from

Area	Homeless Acceptances 2010/2014
Newmarket	22%
Brandon	13%
Mildenhall	10%
Haverhill	19%
Bury	36%
Total	100%

Source: West Suffolk Homeless Database

In order that the location and numbers of available temporary accommodation reflects where homeless households are originating from, we will look to change the profile of our temporary accommodation to that proposed in the table below.

Area	Current units		Proposed units	
Newmarket	10	29%	10	22%
Brandon	8	23%	8	17%
Mildenhall	0	0%	3	7%
Haverhill	10	29%	10	22%
Bury	7	20%	15	33%
Total	35	100%	46	100%

Source: West Suffolk Homeless Database

This would retain the units in Newmarket and Brandon, whilst new temporary accommodation would need to be provided in Mildenhall.

In Haverhill, whilst the numbers of units remain the same, there would have to be new provision of 10 units, due to the expiry of the lease on the current temporary accommodation in 2015.

In Bury an additional eight units would be needed, but the council has recently bought a five bedroom property which will go some way to meeting this need.

We will continue to monitor the need for temporary accommodation and influencing factors such as projected population growth and economic deprivation to ensure sufficient ongoing provision.

Breakdown by size

In order to provide suitable sized temporary accommodation for homeless households it is proposed that the type of temporary accommodation should be as follows.

Accommodation suitable for Household size	Single person/ couple	Family unit upto 4 people	Family unit, 5 or more people
Brandon	6	2	
Newmarket		10	
Haverhill	3	7	
Mildenhall	1	2	
Bury St Edmunds	7	7	1
Total	17	28	1

To achieve this West Suffolk will work with partners to deliver innovative, cost effective solutions in-line with the Housing Strategy's aim that:

“By April 2015 we will identify and deliver new funding models for delivering open market, private rented and affordable housing.”

Details of the specific actions around temporary accommodation are included in the Action Plan at Appendix 2.

6. Ensuring that appropriate support is available for people who have previously experienced homelessness in order to prevent it happening again.

There is a low rate of recurring homelessness where West Suffolk has accepted a duty to house households more than once. Less than 1% of cases approach the councils again for assistance in the 2 years after being housed. However, analysis of the data regarding households who have approached the councils as being potentially homeless, shows that a significant proportion of them (15%), have accessed assistance from the Housing Options Team more than once. Although information is not available to show if the reason they have returned is as a result of lack of support in finding and maintaining accommodation, it would be a natural assumption that this is one of the reasons.

The Housing Strategy has already identified the need for the provision of specialist housing and support, and included these specific actions:

- Continue to engage with partners on specific multi-agency homeless prevention projects to improve the support given to young people across West Suffolk,
- Set up a Task and Finish Group to develop a West Suffolk model for housing chronically excluded adults,
- Continue to lead the county-wide partnership to develop a strategy for “move-on” of marginalised adults.

A key element of supporting those threatened with homelessness is early intervention. As part of this work we will, in conjunction with partners, develop a “Making Every Intervention Count” programme which will feature:

- Multi agency teams and service integration
- Joint commissioning, data sharing and data analysis
- Community resilience being supported by the voluntary sector

Details of the specific actions around the prevention of recurring homelessness are included in the Action Plan at Appendix 2.

7. Conclusion

This strategy identifies the steps needed to achieve the four key aims of addressing the causes of homelessness, preventing homelessness, having suitable temporary accommodation and support for those threatened with homelessness.

The action plan at Appendix 2 details how West Suffolk will build on existing strategies and partnerships and develop new partnerships to achieve these aims.

Appendix 1



West Suffolk Homelessness Review

Completed by:

Position in Organisation:

What is your organisation currently doing, or planning to do to:

- Prevent homelessness
- House homeless households

(please include any policies, action plans, initiatives)

What do you see as the barriers to homelessness prevention (including any council or government policies)?

What would you like to see West Suffolk Councils doing to address homelessness?

How could you work with the Councils and other partners to address homelessness?

From your experience of dealing with homelessness and housing issues, what do you regard as the main causes of homelessness?

What trends and patterns in homelessness have you noticed over the past two years?

Please return to:

Tony Hobby – Housing Options Manager
District Offices
College Heath Road
Mildenhall
IP28 7EY

tony.hobby@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Appendix 2 – ACTION PLAN

No	Action	Priority Area	Funding	By when?	Outcomes & Monitoring	Lead Officer	Key Partners
1	Develop Housing Advice Materials	Homelessness Prevention Initiatives	Existing budget - Homelessness Prevention Fund	Dec 2015	Report Web site hits, Customer Service enquiries.	Team Leaders – Housing Options	Customer Services.
2	Implement Young Persons Housing Protocol	Homelessness Prevention Initiatives	Existing budget - Homelessness Prevention Fund	Jan 2016	Reduced numbers of Homeless young persons, reports to SHOG.	Housing Options Manager	Children & Young People Services
3	Hospital and Prison discharge protocols.	Homelessness Prevention Initiatives	Existing budget - Homelessness Prevention Fund	April 2016	Successful homeless preventions. Report numbers.	Housing Options Manager	Health, Probation, Prison Service
4	Achieve GOLD Standard	Homelessness Prevention Initiatives	Existing budget - Homelessness Prevention Fund	April 2016	Award of Gold Standard	Housing Options Manager	Local Authority Peers
5	Develop flexible use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)	Homelessness Prevention Initiatives	Discretionary Housing Payments Budget	April 2016	Successful homeless preventions. Report numbers.	Housing Business and Partnership Manager	Anglia Revenue Partnership

	Action	Priority Area	Funding	By when?	Monitoring	Lead Officer	Key Partners
6	Home security scheme for victims of domestic violence.	Homelessness Prevention Initiatives	Existing budget - Homelessness Prevention Fund	Sept 2016	Successful homeless preventions. Report numbers.	Housing Options Manager	Police, Registered Providers
7	Replacement for Heron House, Haverhill	Sufficient Temporary Accommodation	Capital Funding/ Housing Company – to be identified.	August 2015	New provision operational	Housing Options Manager	Registered Providers
8	Eliminate use of Bed and Breakfast – provide alternative accommodation.	Sufficient Temporary Accommodation	Capital Funding/ Housing Company – to be identified	August 2016	B&B usage	Housing Options Manager	Registered Providers
9	Develop - Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	Support to prevent recurring homelessness.	To be determined	Sept 2015	MASH outcomes reporting	Housing Options Manager	Children & Young People Services, Adult Care, Police, Health, Probation

	Action	Priority Area	Funding	By when?	Monitoring	Lead Officer	Key Partners
10	Make Every Intervention Count (MEIC)	Support to prevent recurring homelessness.	To be determined	April 2017	To be determined	Housing Options Manager	Children & Young People Services
11	Develop model for housing chronically excluded adults	Support to prevent recurring homelessness.	To be determined	April 2018	To be determined	Housing Business & Transformation Manager	Supported Housing Providers, Health, Adult Care Services, Suffolk Co-ordination Service

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Name of strategy, project or policy to be assessed	
West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-18	
Lead officer completing assessment	Job title
Tony Hobby	Housing Options Manager

Summary:**Equality Impact Assessment****1. What is the main purpose of the strategy?**

To set out what West Suffolk, along with its partners, will do over the next three years to address and prevent homelessness, ensuring that there is sufficient suitable temporary accommodation and support for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

2. List the main activities of the project/policy (for strategies list the main policy areas):

1. Address the causes of homelessness in the area.
2. Introduce initiatives to prevent homelessness wherever possible.
3. Provide sufficient temporary accommodation for those households that are or may become homeless.
4. Ensure that appropriate support is available for people who have previously experienced homelessness in order to prevent it happening again.

3. Who are the main stakeholders?

Residents
 Voluntary and community sector
 Suffolk County Council – Children and Young People services, Adult Care Services
 Registered Providers
 Police
 Probation
 Housing Providers
 Users of the service

4. What outcomes are wanted from this strategy?

This strategy identifies the steps needed to achieve the four keys aims of addressing the causes of homeless, preventing homelessness, having suitable temporary accommodation and support for those threatened with homelessness.

The action plan details how West Suffolk will build on existing partnerships and develop new partnership to achieve these aims.

5. Are there any concerns that the strategy could have a differential impact in terms of equality?

The table below highlights where we believe the project will have a positive or negative impact on a particular group.

	Explanation
Gender	The Homelessness Strategy plans positively for the residents in West Suffolk and will benefit all homeless people regardless of gender. We monitor the gender profile of homeless cases and will take action if required.
Race	The Homelessness Strategy will have no negative impact upon people in terms of race. It plans positively for the residents in West Suffolk and will benefit all homeless people regardless of race.
Disability	We expect the strategy to have a positive impact on this group. The re-provision of temporary accommodation will facilitate the provision of more suitable and accessible accommodation.
Sexual Orientation	The Homelessness Strategy will have no negative impact upon people in terms of sexual orientation. It plans positively for the residents in West Suffolk and will benefit all homeless people regardless of sexual orientation.
Age	<p>Older people (60 +):</p> <p>The Homelessness Strategy will have no negative impact upon older people in terms of age. It plans positively for the residents in West Suffolk and will benefit all homeless people regardless of age.</p> <p>Younger people:</p> <p>We expect the strategy to have a positive impact on this group. The strategy includes plans to engage with partners on specific multi-agency homeless prevention projects to improve the support given to young homeless people across West Suffolk. We monitor the age profile of homeless cases and will take action if required.</p>
Belief or Religion	The Homelessness Strategy will have no negative impact upon people in terms of belief or religion. It plans positively for the residents in West Suffolk and will benefit all homeless people regardless of belief or religion.

Language	The Homelessness Strategy will have no negative impact upon people in terms of language. It plans positively for the residents in West Suffolk and will benefit all homeless people regardless of language. Translation services are available to ensure language is not a barrier.
Social inclusion and rural isolation	<p>Low Income:</p> <p>We expect the strategy to have a positive impact on this group. Households on a low income are likely to have fewer options available to them than those on a higher income when threatened with homelessness. This strategy seeks to assist such affected people.</p> <p>Rural Isolation:</p> <p>The Homelessness Strategy will have no negative impact upon people in terms of rural isolation. It plans positively for the residents in West Suffolk and will benefit all homeless people.</p> <p>Social Inclusion:</p> <p>We expect the strategy to have a positive impact on the provision of specialist housing and support as we plan to set up a task and finish group to develop a model for housing chronically excluded adults and will continue to lead on the county-wide partnership to develop a 'move-on' strategy for marginalised adults.</p>
Other Groups	No other group has been identified that the Homelessness Strategy will impact upon. It plans positively for the residents in West Suffolk and will benefit all homeless people.

6. Are key elements of people's lives affected by this strategy for example finance, accommodation, welfare?

The Strategy could have a positive impact for all people threatened with homelessness living in West Suffolk as it is aimed at improving Housing/Accommodation and Health and Wellbeing.

7. Could the strategy discriminate against any group(s) either directly or indirectly? If yes, please state how.

No

8 a) If there are any negative impacts, how could you minimise or remove any negative impact?

N/A

8 b) How could you improve the strategy, project or policy's positive impact?

The Homelessness Strategy and action plan in place to deliver it will continue to be reviewed and monitored. This will help to ensure that we plan positively for the future of those threatened with homelessness in the area.

9. If there is no evidence that the strategy, policy or project promotes equality, equal opportunities or improved relations – how could it be adapted so that it does?

N/A

10. What consultation has been carried out on the strategy? Please include details of any equality monitoring carried out.

Consultation with stakeholders and members of the public occurred in December 2014 – January 2015.

11. Do you have data available which monitors the impact of the policy on minority groups? If not, please explain how you intend to continue monitoring the impact of this strategy, policy or project

Equality monitoring for housing is conducted by:-

- Collecting data for our Homelessness Database, giving us information on age, disabilities and ethnic origin of people who are homeless or threatened with Homelessness.

We will continue to use this data to monitor the impact of the Homelessness Strategy

12. Next steps: Based on your assessment, what changes, if any do you need to make? Tick one of the following and provide an explanation of why this is the action you are taking.

Action*	Tick ✓ relevant	Explanation of action
No major change	✓	
Adjust the policy		
Continue the policy		
Stop and remove the policy		

Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send one copy to the relevant Director and one to the Policy Team.

Name: Tony Hobby

Signed:

Date:

If you have identified any negative impact which is possibly discriminatory and not intended and / or of high impact, you must amend your policy/strategy and/or contact the Policy Unit to discuss remedial action

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Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	West Suffolk Equality Scheme 2015-2020	
Report No:	CAB/SE/15/009 [to be completed by Democratic Services]	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	10 February 2015
Portfolio holder:	Sara Mildmay-White Portfolio Holder for Health and Communities Tel: 01359 270580 Email: sara.mildmay-white@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Davina Howes Head of Families and Communities Tel: 01284 757070 Email: Davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To provide Members with an updated Equality Scheme to be operational across both Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils.	
Recommendation:	It is RECOMMENDED that the West Suffolk Equality Scheme 2015-2020 at Appendix 1 to Report No: CAB/SE/15/009 and the Equality Guidance and Forms at Appendix 2, be approved.	
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is an articulation of the legislation applicable to local authorities in relation to equalities, as such there is no need to consult. 	
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is best practice to have an Equality Scheme. 	
Implications:		
Are there any financial implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are there any staffing implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are there any ICT implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council is required by the Equality Act 2010 to adhere to the public sector equality duty. 	
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Scheme provides a structure for ensuring equality and has such has implications for equality as it sets a standard for the councils to adhere to. 	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Enforcement by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission for breach of legislation.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Equality Scheme, The EqIA Guidance and Forms. 	Low
Reputational damage for breach of legislation.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Equality Scheme, The EqIA Guidance and Forms. 	Low
Ward(s) affected:		All Ward/s	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		None	
Documents attached:		Appendix 1 – West Suffolk Equality Scheme 2015 - 2020 Appendix 2 – EqIA Guidance and Forms (Appendix A to Scheme)	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 Equality Scheme 2015-2020

1.1.1 Both St Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District Councils have had an Equality Scheme in place since the introduction of the Equalities Act 2010 and the requirement for a single scheme rather than the previous regime of Race Equality and Disability Equality Schemes.

1.1.2 Both these schemes are now due to be updated and the opportunity has been taken to develop one single scheme for West Suffolk. This scheme has been developed having regard to The Equalities Act 2010, the Public Sector Equalities Duty and the guidance provided by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.

1.1.3 Under the public sector equality duty we must, in the exercise of our functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are sometimes referred to as the general equality duty. The Act further explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

1.2 Managing and monitoring equality

1.2.1 This scheme sets out how we will manage and monitor equality, as an employer, as a service provider and in our role as local authority.

1.2.2 As highlighted in the scheme, the actions of public bodies can affect groups of people in different ways, which may result in unfair advantage or exclusion from opportunities to fully participate in society. Where this occurs is known as 'adverse impact' or 'negative impact' and in many cases is unlawful.

1.2.3 To avoid adverse or negative impacts, we must scrutinise our own policies, projects and proposals to assess whether they will unfairly disadvantage or exclude certain groups, and mitigate any areas of concern – through an 'Equality Impact Assessment' (EqIA).

1.2.4 Under the equality duty, we are not required to follow any specific methodology or template to undertake equality analysis, but we do need to be able to show that we have had due regard to the effect of our policies and

practices on equality – this will involve looking at evidence, engaging with people, staff, service users and others, whilst also considering the effect of what we do on the whole community.

- 1.2.5 We have produced a template and guidance for a two stage approach (Appendix 2 attached and Appendix A to Scheme). The first stage is an equality screening assessment which should be completed for all policy or service delivery decisions. It should be noted that the completion of the Equalities screening assessment supports the equality analysis but it is only a starting point and prompts us to consider equality issues.
- 1.2.6 The full EqIA is a natural progression from the screening stage if there remain significant uncertainties about the levels of impact on one or more of the identified diversity groups.

1.3 Other Options

- 1.3.1 Whilst compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Equality Duty is statutory, we do have options as to how we ensure our compliance. The advantage of a formally adopted Equality Scheme is that the councils can be clear about our obligations and be consistent in the application of our commitments. The Scheme will also provide clarity for staff, Members and the general public as to our position on the issue of equality.
- 1.3.2 The use of a standard form and guidance for Equalities Screening and Impact Assessment has similar benefits; we can be clear with the public as to the factors we have taken into consideration and the remedial action we have taken where appropriate.
- 1.3.3 The risk of not having such documented policies and procedures is that the council is at risk of legal challenge because it cannot demonstrate that it has given “due regard”, irrespective of whether or not the outcome could have been different

Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

West Suffolk
working together

APPENDIX 1

**Forest Heath District Council
St Edmundsbury Borough Council**

**West Suffolk Equality Scheme
2015 - 2020**

Corporate Policy Team
(01638 719473)
policy@westsuffolk.gov.uk
February 2015

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Appendix A: A guide to Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA)

West Suffolk Equality Scheme published: February 2015.

If you have any questions about this equality scheme, please contact the Corporate Policy Team on 01638 719473 or policy@westsuffolk.gov.uk

1. Purpose of this scheme

Equality is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Legislation is in place to address unfair discrimination based on membership of a particular group.

This scheme sets out how Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council will meet our equality obligations.

Under the Equality Act 2010, we have a duty to exercise our functions, having due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic¹ and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

For further information regarding our statutory duties, please refer to section two of this scheme.

This scheme is a guide to our work to promote equal opportunities, oppose discrimination, as well as recognise the benefits that a diverse community can bring. This scheme also provides a clear message to staff, councillors, customers, partners and businesses that we prioritise good customer service; it demonstrates that we understand our customers and can adapt services to their needs. It also highlights the steps we will take to protect and support our staff as a responsible employer.

The scheme includes:

- our statutory duties
- guidance to staff and councillors about the promotion of equal opportunities and opposing discrimination, both as an employer and a service provider;
- our commitment to promoting equal opportunities and challenging discrimination in our employment and service delivery functions; and
- our equality analysis and impact assessment procedures;

¹ See appendix 1 for definition of protected characteristics – Equalities Act 2010

2. Our statutory duties

2.1 The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act creates a general public sector equality duty as well as introducing specific duties. The specific duties (outlined below) are intended to ensure that we are accountable for delivering on our equality duties by requiring us to be transparent about our staff and the services we deliver.

2.2 General equality duty

As explored in Chapter 1, as a public authority we must have due regard to:

1. Eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
2. Advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (protected characteristics are detailed in Section 8); and
3. Fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and
- encouraging persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The Equality Act 2010 states that meeting different needs involves taking steps to take account of people's differences. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. It states that compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.

We also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status. This means that the first element of the equality duty (eliminating discrimination etc) applies to this characteristic but that the other elements (advancing equality and fostering good relations) do not apply.

2.3 Specific duties

As well as the general duty, we also have a number of specific duties we have to comply with. The purpose of the specific duties is to help us comply with the general equality duty. In terms of the specific duties we are required to:

1. Set and publish equality objectives at least every four years (from April 2011); and
2. Publish information to show our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, at least annually.

All of this information must be published in a way that is accessible to the public and is written in plain English.

2.4 Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 came into force in the United Kingdom in October 2000. It is composed of a series of sections that have the effect of codifying the protections in the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law.

The Act applies to all public authorities and other bodies performing public functions. These organisations must comply with the act – and people’s human rights – when providing a service or making decisions that have a decisive impact upon people’s rights.

3. Our equality commitments

3.1 Our West Suffolk equality objectives

Our equality objectives are incorporated into our Strategic Plan 2014-2016. These objectives are our commitment to ensuring equality in our communities. Through the achievement of these equality objectives for 2014-16, we want to see:

1. People with the educational attainment and skills needed in our local economy;
2. A thriving voluntary sector and active communities who take the initiative to help the most vulnerable;
3. Improved physical and mental health and wellbeing; and
4. Homes that are flexible to meet people's changing needs.

3.2 Delivering equalities as a service provider and an employer

As well as working towards our equality objectives we recognise that people may experience different forms of disadvantage depending on their age, sex, ethnicity, race, gender reassignment, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status and whether or not they have a disability.

As a service provider and an employer we are committed to promoting equal opportunities and eliminating all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

We examine our policies and practices to guard against institutional discrimination. We are also committed to providing services fairly to all sections of the community and valuing diversity.

We aim to provide:

- services that are accessible;
- equal and appropriate opportunities in employment and recruitment; and
- effective partnership working with all our communities

We are committed to promoting equality by:

- ensuring that our services are accessible and relevant to the needs of our communities;
- having appropriate recruitment, employment and promotion practices and procedures;
- letting contracts to suitable/appropriate suppliers of services;
- consulting with communities and groups affected when developing policies;
- providing training opportunities for staff and councillors;
- providing information in relevant languages and formats where necessary; and

- ensuring equal access to our complaints and other procedures.

To ensure equality in service provision, we are committed to the following:

- **Access to council buildings** – we will ensure that buildings from which a council service is delivered will be as accessible as is reasonably practicable to people with disabilities.
- **Charges for services** – when charges are made for services we will recognise that this may have an impact on people with low incomes and work to minimise the impact where possible.
- **Community consultation** – we will, where appropriate, consult with organisations and individuals who are able to represent their community in order to help us develop policies and services.
- **Information about services** – we will provide, where appropriate, information on our services, policies and practices in a reasonable variety of formats to avoid exclusion or discrimination against any group or individual.
- **Inspection and regulation** – we will undertake inspection and regulation duties in such a way that prevents prejudice, stereotyping and unequal treatment.
- **Interacting with the public** – we will ensure, through training and raising awareness, that all staff and councillors are familiar with the principles, practices and policies with regard to equal opportunities.
- **Service delivery** – we will seek to ensure equality of access and will strive to meet people’s specific needs.
- **Take-up of services** – we will, where appropriate, monitor the use of our services to ensure that no individual or groups are excluded because of age, sex, ethnicity, race, gender reassignment, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status.
- **Transparency** – we will be open about the information on which we base our decisions, about what we are seeking to achieve and about our results.

3.3 Going beyond the equality protected characteristics

Whilst there is no legal requirement to do so, we will also consider the impact that our activities may have on other social groups that are not listed in the protected groups. For example:

- families and those with parenting or caring responsibilities
- individuals on low income
- those suffering rural isolation
- those who do not have English as a first language

4. Our responsibilities as a service provider

4.1 Equality analysis and impact screening and assessment

The Equality Act 2010 attaches importance to the need for analysis and engagement with those likely to be affected by a policy. West Suffolk councils believe that the best way to assess the impact of a policy or service change is through an equality impact assessment (EqIA). These must be completed to a high standard, as opposed to just completing a document (an EqIA form), which some may take to be standard practice.

The actions of public bodies can affect groups of people in different ways, which may result in unfair advantage or exclusion from opportunities to fully participate in society. Where this occurs is known as 'adverse impact' or 'negative impact' and in many cases is unlawful.

To avoid adverse or negative impacts, we must scrutinise our own policies, projects and proposals to assess whether they will unfairly disadvantage or exclude certain groups, and mitigate any areas of concern. This practice is formally known as 'Equality Impact Assessment' (EqIA).

Under the equality duty, we are not required to follow any specific methodology or template to undertake equality analysis, but we do need to be able to show that we have had due regard to the effect of our policies and practices on equality – this will involve looking at evidence, engaging with people, staff, service users and others, whilst also considering the effect of what we do on the whole community.

To assist our officers in completing EqIAs to a high standard, we have produced a guidance form which reflects the requirements of the Equality Act. Completion of the EqIA form supports the equality analysis but it is only a starting point and prompts us to consider equality issues. For this reason, an assessment of the equality implications (equalities screening) is a compulsory part of all policy or service delivery decisions at St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath Councils. The full EqIA is a natural progression from the screening stage if there remain **significant** uncertainties about the levels of impact on one or more of the identified diversity groups. We have developed EqIA forms and guidance for this purpose (Appendix A). EqIA's form part of a business case or report and are available via the committee papers on our website, www.westsuffolk.gov.uk.

4.2 Equality monitoring arrangements

The introduction of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) began our journey to greater understanding of how our services and functions take account of the protected characteristics. We recognise the value of assessing the effects of our services on the protected characteristics, as well as the views of our users and non-users. We use some of the following methods to gather information:

- analysis of complaints;
- Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs);
- focus group for employees with disabilities;
- locality networks;
- customer and resident surveys;
- feedback at community events;
- service/policy specific monitoring and consultation; and
- staff and councillor surveys.
- national and local data from other organisations e.g. census.

Our aim is to ensure that monitoring arrangements are proportionate to the size of the relevant service, the nature of the policies concerned and the potential impact on the public, especially with regard to the protected characteristics. In some cases, small-scale decisions can have significant equality implications; whereas in other cases, large-scale decisions may have very few. There are therefore no rules about the scale of a project or policy to which an EqIA would apply. Rather, the handling of each decision needs to be considered in isolation.

When monitoring, we take into account resource implications, the sensitivity of the information, and also the willingness of the public to supply it. We also consider how best to publish the results of monitoring. We recognise that implementing monitoring arrangements across the entire organisation is an area which requires further development for all protected characteristics.

4.3 Publishing data

The Equality Act requires us to publish equalities information relating both to our workforce and to the services we provide. This data must be published in a way that is open and freely available to a range of individuals and groups such as equalities campaigners. The publication of this equality data is intended to ensure that we:

- are held to account for our actions by the local communities and interested parties; and
- are judged by residents on the basis of clear information about the equality results we achieve.

We will also report progress against our equality objectives through our Annual Report which documents achievements against our Strategic Plan. These documents are available on our website, www.westsuffolk.gov.uk.

5. Our responsibilities as an employer

5.1 Equality of opportunity in employment

We are committed to promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of employment and are committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all staff at West Suffolk. Assessment for recruitment and selection, as well as appraisal, training and career progression is based entirely on the individual's ability and suitability for the work. All applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for a vacancy are guaranteed an interview.

We are also committed to providing all of our staff with opportunities to maximise their skills and achieve their potential, while offering flexible working arrangements wherever possible. We believe a diverse workforce brings benefits and experience, and aim to provide a working environment where staff are valued and respected. Discrimination, bullying and harassment are not tolerated. This responsibility is shared by everyone and includes both councillors and staff.

Staff surveys allow us to keep up-to-date with staff opinions and this helps us to identify what we can do better. The surveys ask for opinions on a range of subjects including:

- internal communications;
- staff welfare;
- work-life balance;
- learning culture;
- team-based working;
- recruitment and retention; and
- pay and benefits.

We are committed to monitoring employment and recruitment to ensure equal opportunity of employment. This includes monitoring the following activities:

- job applications;
- access to training and internal promotions;
- performance related pay as a result of outcomes of Performance Reviews (PRs);
- grievances/discipline matters
- leavers from employment;
- staff affected by redundancy and early retirements;
- flexible working requests; and
- reports of bullying.

To help us to continually improve our approach to equality we are committed to regularly reviewing our recruitment and employment policies and practices.

5.2 Arrangements for gathering information: employment

We operate a system whereby information provided to us by staff is on a voluntary basis, and we actively encourage staff to do this. This includes information on age, sex, ethnicity, race, gender reassignment, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status issues they may have; whilst ensuring their privacy is respected. Any information about our staff helps us to identify if there are instances of occupational segregation (the division of labour where men, women and members of different ethnic or religious groupings are channelled into different types of occupational roles and tasks).

When recruiting, we gather information about each applicant. This information is monitored to ensure that our advertising is reaching all sectors of the community. As a result of our commitment to the Double Tick scheme more detailed monitoring is carried out before short-listing to ensure that all applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria are guaranteed an interview.

Monitoring continues throughout the career of the applicant and provides a detailed, accurate database, while capturing the following information:

- activities leading to promotion (for example mentoring);
- disciplinary and grievance (stating outcomes and sanctions);
- exit interviews;
- grade at entry;
- Performance Review (stating outcomes leading to pay awards); and
- training and development (offered and undertaken)

5.3 Disability (Double Tick)

We renew our pledge to this scheme annually in order to reflect our best practice procedure towards those with a disability and employment.

The double tick symbol is a recognised award given to organisations which can demonstrate their commitment to employing people with disabilities.

Each year we are required to provide written evidence on how we have continued to meet the commitment and requirements of this award.

5.4 Staff and councillor development/organisational learning

We are conscious that effective communication, staff development and organisation-wide learning play a key role in the implementation of this Equality Scheme. We are therefore committed to integrating an equality dimension in the design, development and implementation of learning and development activities.

In accordance with our legal responsibilities and our commitment to delivering high performing, customer-focused service, all staff are made aware of the

performance standards of work and behaviour expected. We ensure equality of access to learning and development (and thereby opportunities for career progression), and evaluate the extent to which the beneficiaries of training activities acquire the necessary skills and knowledge.

We incorporate an equality dimension in the development of service provision and team planning. This includes:

- equality requirements in the induction of new staff and councillors;
- employees who investigate and monitor complaints effectively provided with the necessary skills and knowledge;
- specific development activities provided to staff in management and specialist roles, for example, trainers, lawyers and staff involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, monitoring and evaluation; and
- our recruitment process is competency based. All competencies for posts mirror those corporate competencies included in the Performance Review scheme, including a diversity competency.

Learning and development activities are delivered both by in-house staff and external consultants. Input is sought from representatives of consultative groups to inform the content and development of such activities. The quality of delivery, benchmarked against agreed learning objectives, is recorded by in-house evaluation returns.

6. Working with partners and procuring

6.1 Partnerships

We have a strong history of working with partners, both in the public, private and voluntary sectors. We recognise that we remain responsible for meeting the equality duty when working in partnership.

6.2 Procurement

Procurement is the process by which we enter into a contract with another party to carry out works on our behalf or provide us goods and services. Equality considerations are an important part of the procurement process.

Our procurement rules mean that the purchase of goods, services and facilities is undertaken in line with our own commitment to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all and complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

We aim to ensure that our suppliers abide by the law and are working to best practice in this area. As part of our tender evaluation criteria, suppliers are required to provide evidence that they have appropriate equal opportunities policies in place and are committed to them, as well as an understanding of the specific training their staff need.

The West Suffolk Procurement Strategy 2014-2016 states that we will:

- ensure all applicable procurement opportunities are advertised to alert as wider a range of businesses as possible;
- conduct our procurement operations in a transparent and fair manner;
- comply with relevant equality and diversity legislation and expect the same of our suppliers;
- treat people fairly and not discriminate against but actively promote equality; and
- abide by the councils' statutory equality duties under the Equality Act 2010 and ensure compliance.

Our Procurement Strategy can be found on our website, www.westsuffolk.gov.uk

7. Involvement and consultation

7.1 How we involve and consult

Consultation provides people with the opportunity to tell us what they think about our services and the implementation of them and other key issues affecting the area and their communities.

To ensure that consultation opportunities are available to all communities we will endeavour to ensure:

- consultation methods are accessible for under-represented groups (for example in a language and style that is understandable);
- consultation exercises are well-managed, giving people enough time to respond, and have clear aims;
- service users are consulted and their views taken into account when developing policies;
- the same groups are not overburdened; and
- the results of consultation are published, fed back to those taking part in the consultation, and taken account of in the decision-making process in an open and responsible way.

Amongst other methods we use social media to communicate with the public and continue to search for new and innovative methods to communicate and include the public in consultation.

Groups that are often under-represented in consultation, and therefore groups that we are particularly keen to engage and consult with, include;

- people with disabilities
- Gypsies and Travellers;
- lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people;
- older people;
- people from minority ethnic communities;
- people with caring responsibilities;
- refugees and asylum seekers;
- religious groups;
- women; and
- young people.

Further information about our approach to involvement and consultation, specifically relating to planning matters, can be found in our Joint Statement of Community Involvement on our website, www.westsuffolk.gov.uk.

7.2 Benefits of involvement in consultation

Effective community involvement means that the way our services are delivered will be better informed and more effective.

Benefits for the community:

- a better understanding of local issues and council processes;
- a positive experience of working with the council;
- improved community cohesion;
- improvement in the delivery of services in the public interest;
- increased participation in decision making;
- more attention to public priorities;
- raised awareness of the local issues and priorities;
- the creation of a sense of shared ownership;
- the opportunity to influence decision making; and
- the opportunity to work collaboratively with other individuals and organisations.

Benefits for West Suffolk:

- more effective and efficient use of resources;
- a shared responsibility for decision making;
- improved quality of decisions and problem solving;
- raising the profile of our work; and
- the opportunity to work together with the community and stakeholders.

8. Protected Characteristics

The Equality Duty replaces the three previous public sector equality duties – for race, disability and gender. The new Equality Duty covers the following **protected characteristics**:

- **Age** – refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 30 years old) or range of ages (e.g. 18-30 years old).
- **Disability** – a person has a disability if s/he has physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. For the purposes of the Equality Act, these terms have the following meanings: 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial, 'long term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions), 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday tasks such as eating, washing, walking and going shopping.
- **Sex** – men/boys and women/girls
- **Gender reassignment** – the process of transitioning from one gender to another.
- **Race** – refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
- **Religion or belief** – religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
- **Sexual orientation** – whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.
- **Pregnancy or maternity** – pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
- **Marriage and civil partnership** – marriage is defined as 'the legally or formally recognized union of a man and a woman (or, in some jurisdictions, two people of the same sex) as partners in a relationship.' This definition changed in July 2013 to incorporate the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013.

Further guidance on the protected characteristics and what the Equality Act duties mean can be found at www.equalityhumanrights.com.

Further Information

Appendix 1 includes our Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) Screening Form and Guidance for staff and councillors.

Further information and support is available from the Corporate Policy Team on policy@westsuffolk.gov.uk or 01638 719473.

Additional information can also be found on the Equality and Human Rights Commission website at www.equalityhumanrights.com

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APPENDIX 2

**St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Forest Heath District Council**

**West Suffolk Joint Equality Scheme
2015 – 2020**

**Appendix A:
Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) Guidance**

Including:

EqIA Screening Form

EqIA Screening Guidance

EqIA Full Assessment Form

Corporate Policy Team
Telephone: (01638) 719473
Email: policy@westsuffolk.gov.uk
February 2015

1. Introduction

The actions of public bodies can affect groups of people in different ways, which may result in unfair advantage or exclusion from opportunities to fully participate in society. Where this occurs is known as 'adverse impact' or 'negative impact' and in many cases is unlawful.

To avoid adverse or negative impacts, we must scrutinise our own policies, projects and proposals to assess whether they will unfairly disadvantage or exclude certain groups, and mitigate any areas of concern. This practice is formally known as 'Equality Impact Assessment' (EqIA).

This guidance has been produced to assist staff in their duty to carry out and provide effective EqIAs. These assessments can then be used by Members to provide appropriate and timely information within the decision making process.

2. Conducting Equality Impact Assessments

An EqIA is a systematic process to identify the impact, or likely impact, a project or programme proposal will have on different groups of people. An impact is defined as 'an intentional or unintentional lasting consequence or significant change to people's lives brought about by an action or series of actions'. The impact of an investment is likely to be one or more of the following:

- **Positive** – a positive impact will actively promote equality of opportunity for one or more groups, or improve equal opportunities/relations between groups.
- **Adverse or negative** – an adverse or negative impact causes disadvantage or exclusion. If such an impact is identified the EqIA process will ensure that as far as possible it is either justified, eliminated, minimised or counter balanced by other measures.
- **Neutral** – a neutral impact is where there are no notable consequences for any diversity group.

There is no statistical test to form these conclusions. Instead, professional judgement must be made based on factual information and evidence. A policy may have a positive impact on some groups, but an adverse or negative impact on other groups. The EqIA process is designed to help you identify these potential impacts and arrive at a balanced position.

It is important to explore the impact of proposals on different groups and explain why a given proposal has been developed in the way it has. It is important to ensure that when a solution to an adverse effect on one group is found, it does not in turn adversely impact on another group. If an adverse impact is unavoidable, then it must be clearly justified and recorded as such.

The two levels of EqIA

There are two levels of EqIA that can be undertaken depending on the likely impact of the proposed policy or project. This allows for a reasonable, practical and manageable approach to the process. These levels are:

- i. Initial screening EqIA
- ii. Full EqIA

In broad terms, the purpose of a screening EqIA is to determine whether there is any possibility of differential impact, to prompt a process of mitigating adverse impact, and to address opportunities for tackling disadvantage and under-representation, all before a policy is endorsed and adopted. The **action plan** section of the impact assessment is critical in demonstrating how the project intends to mitigate risks and maximise opportunities. This action plan also forms a basis for monitoring.

The full EqIA is a natural progression from the screening stage if there remain **significant** uncertainties about the levels of impact on one or more of the identified diversity groups. It is also required if there is no agreement about the balance of differential impact between diversity groups and/or no obvious or acceptable way to mitigate adverse impact or address opportunities for positive impact. The process includes a more in-depth analysis supported by formal involvement and consultation of diversity groups, and fully evidenced research. Once a full EqIA is complete it should be possible to resolve the outstanding issues identified at the screening stage.

Every policy and project must undergo the initial Equality Impact Screening stage. This stage will determine whether or not a more in-depth analysis is required, and is based on what information is already available and known in relation to the policy, for example existing statistical information or earlier consultation results.

The principle outcomes from this stage should be either:

- i. Concluding that there will be no significant differential impact on any diversity group arising from the proposal.
- ii. That there is a potential for significant differential impact which may result in an adverse impact on one or more diversity groups – requiring review of the policy to mitigate this impact.
- iii. Identifying any areas where the policy may provide an opportunity to address disadvantage or under-representation for one or more diversity groups, and agree actions to address such opportunities.
- iv. Identify the need for a more in-depth analysis in the form of a full EqIA

A standard form has been provided to assist staff with the format of the screening stage.

What should be taken into account?

The form and guidance highlight the protected characteristics as referenced in the Equality Scheme. However they also reference the additional characteristics we will take into account as part of our decision making processes including the implications for families and those with parenting or caring responsibilities.

The inclusion of the families' characteristic builds on our commitments in The Families and Communities Strategy and the government guidance on the Families Test. The objective of the Families Test is to introduce an explicit family perspective to the policy making process, and ensure that potential impacts on family relationships and functioning are made explicit and recognised in the process of developing new policy. Further information on the Families Test is available from the policy team.

Who is responsible for carrying out an EqIA?

Staff responsible for the development and oversight of the policy or project is responsible for the completion of the EqIA. It is advised that officers may wish to consult with diversity groups to establish any impacts, and with the policy team for guidance regarding the mechanics of the EqIA.

Equality Screening Form

Question	Response
Q1) Name of the strategy, policy, programme or project being assessed.	
Q2) In no more than five lines and using Plain English, summarise the purpose of the policy or proposal, and its desired outcomes.	
Q3) Who should benefit from the proposal and in what way?	
Q4) Is there any evidence or reason to believe that in relation to this proposal, there may be a difference in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of participation • Uptake by different groups • Needs or experiences of different groups • Priorities • Other areas? 	
Q5) Using the evidence listed above, fill in the table below to highlight the groups you think this policy or proposal has the potential to impact upon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Is there any potential for negative impact? Yes or No (ii) Are there opportunities for positive impact or to promote equality of opportunity? 	
Q6) Considering your answers to questions 1-5, do you believe a Full Equality Impact Assessment is needed?	
Q7) Considering our duty to proactively tackle disadvantage and promote equality of opportunity, list the actions required.	

Impacts Table				
	Is there potential for negative impact? YES or NO	Are there opportunities for positive impact? YES or NO	If YES, please provide details of the impact below	
			Positive Impact	Negative Impact
All groups or society generally				
Age - Older or younger people				
Disability - People with a disability				
Sex - Women or men				
Pregnancy or maternity - including expectant or new parents i.e. pregnancy and maternity				
Marriage and civil partnership – including same sex couples				
Race - People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME)				
Religion - People with a religion or belief (or who choose not to have a religion or belief)				
Sexual Orientation - People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) or in a Civil Partnership				
Gender Reassignment - People who are transitioning from one gender to another				
<i>Families and those with parenting or caring responsibilities (The Families Test)</i>				
<i>Individuals on low income</i>				
<i>Those suffering rural isolation</i>				
<i>Those who do not have English as a first language</i>				

Action Plan				
Equality group/ characteristic	Action/milestone	Responsibility (Project manager or partner organisation)	Achievement date	Monitoring arrangements

Sign off section

This Screening Level EqIA was completed by:

Name

Job Title

Signature

Date

On completion, please submit this document with the policy or proposal. Guidance and advice on draft and final versions can be obtained from:

Tanya Sturman, Corporate Policy Team

01638 719473

tanya.sturman@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Equality Screening – Guidance

Question	Guidance
Q1) Name of the strategy, policy, programme or project being assessed.	Fill in as required.
Q2) In no more than five lines and using Plain English, , summarise the purpose of the policy or proposal, and its desired outcomes.	Summarise the main aims clearly, trying to avoid jargon and acronyms. This provides someone unfamiliar with the details of the project a transparent overview of the proposal.
Q3) Who should benefit from the proposal and in what way?	List as required, for example people within a specific location, women, young people, older people, people from an ethnic minority community, SMEs etc. The question is designed to assist officers in their duty to consider any positive impact that may arise from the policy or proposal, as well as anyone who may be excluded from benefiting from the proposal and the justification for this.
Q4 Is there any evidence or reason to believe that in relation to this proposal, there may be a difference in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of participation • Uptake by different groups • Needs or experiences of different groups • Priorities • Other areas? 	<p>If yes, please list</p> <p>Evidence can be both formal and informal, and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data/analysis from the Suffolk Observatory www.suffolkobservatory.info • Local demographic data relevant to the policy or proposal • Research into specific sectors • Reports about issues particular communities have in accessing certain services • Feasibility studies • Feedback from meetings with diversity groups • Information from other staff (i.e. Locality Officers) <p>List the main sources, and quote selectively where appropriate. If there are significant gaps in the evidence base which make it difficult to reach a decision about adverse impacts then it is important that further consultation/research is undertaken as appropriate. Policy or project leads will need to make a judgement about what is reasonable and justifiable in this context.</p>


<p>Q5) Using the evidence listed above, fill in the table below to highlight the groups you think this policy or proposal has the potential to impact upon: Is there any potential for negative impact? Yes or No</p>	<p>It is important to consider this question in consultation with other people, as a variety of people will bring different thoughts to the process. Also consider involving or consulting organisations which represent the different diversity groups. You can use the information you have gathered and analysed to decide whether the policy or proposal may affect diversity groups differently, and whether any of these differences constitute disadvantage or unlawful discrimination.</p>
<p>Are there opportunities for positive impact or to promote equality of opportunity?</p>	<p>As previously, use information you have already gathered or is available to highlight opportunities where the project can make a positive impact and promote equality of opportunity. As a prompt, consider obligations contained in the equality duty, as detailed in the main body of the equalities scheme.</p>
<p>Q6) Considering your answers to questions 1-5, do you believe a Full Equality Impact Assessment is needed?</p>	<p>If you are confident, on the basis of the information available, that there will not be an adverse impact, or that any adverse impact can be mitigated with a few amendments, you may not need to proceed to a full impact assessment. However, if you need to undertake further significant consultation and research to resolve issues then a full EqIA will be required.</p>
<p>Q7) Considering our duty to proactively tackle disadvantage and promote equality of opportunity, list the actions required.</p>	<p>If you have identified an adverse impact you will need to detail the clear and measurable actions or changes that will be made to the proposal or policy in order to mitigate this. If you cannot find a way to resolve an adverse impact at the screening stage, for example because of a lack of information, or because more than one diversity group is affected, you should progress to a full EqIA. For further advice, contact West Suffolk's Equality and Diversity Officer. You should list any actions which will be taken to address opportunities to promote equality of opportunity. These will then be followed up through monitoring and evaluation, should the policy or proposal be endorsed or adopted.</p>

Full Equality Impact Assessment

The full EqIA is a natural progression from the screening stage if there remain concerns about the proposal or policy in terms of adverse impact on one or more of the identified diversity groups. This is often the case if there are gaps in the evidence used during the screening stage.

The full EqIA is not different in nature from the screening stage of the process but should be undertaken in a structured, systematic way. This may include primary research, consultation, and/or engagement with representatives from the diversity groups with a legitimate interest, or that potentially face an adverse impact as a result of the policy or proposal. It should be timely, open and inclusive, and conducted in accordance with the principles detailed in our gender, disability and race equality schemes.

The aim of this stage is to conclude with clear recommendations on changes and amendments based on adequate and objective information. Clear evidence of the consideration of the impact of alternatives and the changes that have been made as a result of the review must be presented.

Full Equality Impact Assessment		
Question	Response	
Summary		
Q1) Name of the strategy, policy, programme or project being assessed.		
Q2) In no more than five lines and using Plain English, summarise the purpose of the policy or proposal, and its desired outcomes.		
Evidence		
Q3) What does the current evidence tell us about possible inequalities in relation to this proposal?	Equality group/characteristic	Issue(s)
Consultation		
Q4 How do you plan to seek the views of the groups outlined above?	Method	
	General consultation event (open to all)	
	Use regional Equality Networks	
	Specific and targeted consultation workshop	
	Seek specialist advice from relevant organisations	
	Commission research	
	Other (please detail)	

Consultation Results			
Q5) Using the table below, summarise the results of the consultation exercise (attach full records of consultation carried out).			
Consultation Results	Please outline each impact (positive or negative) identified through the consultation process	Impact Negative, positive or neutral?	Evidence The process should have highlighted new information e.g. secondary research or anecdotal experiences of individuals from specific groups
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

Decision – Final Outcome

Q6) Based on the results of this full EqIA, please select how this policy or proposal will be taken forward:

Implement policy or proposal without making any changes

Implement policy or proposal but take action (listed below) to address impacts identified

Implement policy or proposal as a pilot and monitor for impact

Abandon policy or proposal and redesign with involvement of specific groups from the outset

Action Plan				
Equality group/ characteristic	Action/milestone	Responsibility (Project manager or partner organisation)	Achievement date	Monitoring arrangements

Sign off section

This Screening Level EqIA was completed by:

Name

Job Title

Signature

Date

On completion, please submit this document with the policy or proposal. Guidance and advice on draft and final versions can be obtained from:

Tanya Sturman, Corporate Policy Team
01638 719473
tanya.sturman@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee: 11 December 2014	
Report No:	CAB/SE/15/011	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	10 February 2015
Portfolio holder:	David Ray Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Tel: 01359 250912 Email: david.ray@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead officers:	Liz Watts Director Tel: 01284 757252 Email: liz.watts@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance Tel: 01638 719245 Email: rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	<p>On 11 December 2014 the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership (ARP) Joint Committee considered the following substantive items of business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Fraud; (2) Performance Report; (3) ARP Partnership Budget 2015/2016; (4) ARP Risk Register; (5) Strategic Review; and (6) Welfare Reform. <p>This report is for information only. No decisions are required by the Cabinet.</p>	
Recommendation:	The Cabinet is requested to <u>NOTE</u> the content of Report No: CAB/SE/15/011, being the report of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee.	

Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>The key decision made as a result of this report will be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until seven working days have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.</i>	
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers'
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers'
Implications:	
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers'
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers'
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers'
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers'
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers'
Risk/opportunity assessment: See reports of ARP Joint Committee at link provided under 'Background papers'	<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>
Ward(s) affected:	All Ward/s
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>	Breckland DC Website: Reports of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee – 11 December 2014
Documents attached:	None

1. Key issues

1.1 **Fraud (Agenda Item 6)**

1.1.1 The Joint Committee had received and noted updates on:

- (a) current performance in respect of Counter Fraud Activity. There had been a significant upturn in referrals and so ensuring the right benefits were being paid was a priority;
- (b) that ARP partners remained on target for the transfer of welfare benefit fraud staff to the Single Fraud Investigation Service from 1 September 2015;
- (c) ongoing projects which included new software procurement and installation;
- (d) that the ARP bid for the DCLG's Counter Fraud Fund had been unsuccessful. Feedback had indicated that the fund had been significantly oversubscribed with £16.6million available and bids exceeding £80million; and
- (e) a brief background to the Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive Scheme had been launched on 26 November 2014. Details were sparse at the time of the meeting, therefore delegated authority had been sought to opt into the Scheme once officers had taken the opportunity to assess the implications.

1.1.2 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED to delegate authority to the Operational Improvement Board to authorise opt in to the Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive Scheme once the relevant risks and potential gains had been identified and reviewed.**

1.2 **Performance Report (Agenda Item 7)**

1.2.1 The Joint Committee had received and noted a Performance Report as at 31 October 2014. The report detailed ARP's key achievements in respect of Benefits News; Council Tax News; NDR news; HBOP News; Projects; Learning and Support; and Customer Survey. This detailed report can be viewed on Breckland District Council's website at:

<http://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/documents/s32944/ARP%20Performance%20Report%20October%202014.pdf>

1.2.2 A discussion was held on the balanced scorecard dashboard (summary), which was annotated green in respect of all five partner authorities, indicating 'good' or no data was available. A breakdown of the performance data was also provided and discussed.

1.2.3 It had however, been noted at the meeting that the number of successful fraud investigations was down and that the indicator should be annotated 'amber' to reflect that. It was expected that the figures would be back on track by the

end of the financial year.

- 1.2.4 In respect of financial performance as at 30 November 2014, the Joint Committee noted that the total partnership costs were currently showing a £41,235 (0.42%) underspend against the approved 2014/2015 total budget of £9,724,340. The savings from the business cases for Fenland DC, and Suffolk Coastal and Waveney DCs joining a single officer core had been reflected in the budgets and outturn figures. One-off redundancy costs amounting to £209,000 had been absorbed in the savings with the target savings of £180,000 for the year being achieved. The full year effect for this had been included in future years' budgets with savings of over £500,000 exceeding the business case target. The variances on individual budgets were explained.

1.3 **ARP Partnership Budget 2015/2016 (Agenda Item 8)**

- 1.3.1 The Joint Committee had considered the annual revenue budgets for 2015/2016 and indicative budgets for 2016/2017 and 2017/2018.
- 1.3.2 The figures presented in Appendix A attached to the report reflected the growth in the partnership and included costs for running the revenues and benefits services for the seven partners, and incorporated the savings from the management reorganisation that was completed in 2014/2015.
- 1.3.3 The 2015/2016 budget is a reduction of £328,000 on the revised budget for 2014/2015, which includes set up costs and part year savings for moving to a single officer core for the seven authorities. A saving of over £500,000 has been achieved against the baseline budget for 2015/2016 (i.e. before the reorganisation had been factored in). This compares favourably with the £470,000 target saving. Inflation has also been absorbed in that figure so the saving in real terms against original baseline is much higher at around £552,000.
- 1.3.4 The budget does not yet reflect the costs and income for the new enforcement agency, which will be integrated once the business case has been approved by all partner authorities. This is expected to bring in additional net income of around £150,000 from 2016/2017. The agency budget for 2015/2016 will be cost neutral after the initial costs of setting up the agency are matched by income in the first year of operation.
- 1.3.5 Further tables in Appendix A set out the share of costs for each authority, and the proportion that any additional costs or savings against the budget will be shared. For St Edmundsbury, in 2015/2016, its contribution to the total £9,396,831 partnership budget will be £1,375,651 which is a reduction of £55,455 on the 2014/2015 figure.
- 1.3.6 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED that the partnership budget for 2015/2016 be approved.**

1.4 **ARP Risk Register (Agenda Item 9)**

1.4.1 The Joint Committee had considered the ARP risk register, which was attached as Appendix A to the report. Appendix B had shown the criteria used to apply a risk score by analysing the likelihood of a risk occurring and the potential impact of a risk to ARP.

1.4.2 The following risks remained annotated 'amber' after mitigation and the [report](#) (see via link) explained the reasons for this:

- (a) Income from retained business rates and council tax (Service Delivery Plan Item 4);
- (b) Housing benefit subsidy shortfall; and
- (c) Universal Credit implementation, which had been brought forward by the Department of Work and Pensions, but only for new claims from childless single people.

1.4.3 Following discussion on the following up of fraud investigations and the implications of the Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive Scheme and the Single Fraud Investigation Service, that an additional risk concerning Fraud Investigation would be added to the Register.

1.4.4 All other risks identified were annotated 'green' after mitigation.

1.4.5 The Joint Committee **RESOLVED that subject to the addition of a risk concerning Fraud Investigation, the report be noted and the Risk Register agreed.**

1.5 **Strategic Review (Agenda Item 10)**

1.5.1 The Joint Committee had held a discussion on the Strategic Review, having received a presentation on this topic prior to the meeting.

1.5.2 Issues raised included the potential role of Anglia Revenues Partnership Trading (ARPT) as a limited company and how this could integrate with the existing Partnership. A written report setting out proposals needed to be provided to the Joint Committee which would explain options for the format of the Partnership going forward and how the ARPT could be established as a trading arm.

The following additional items of information would also be required in the report:

- (a) variations of the hosted authority model;
- (b) the current Partnership being able to trade on the basis of spare capacity and developing products;
- (c) one Member, one vote;
- (d) the principle of no more full Partners;
- (e) how to address key issues such as the different Terms and Conditions of staff; and
- (f) provision of an outline timescale for implementation.

1.5.3 The report would be presented to the next Joint Committee meeting on 19 March 2015; however due to timescales, it was unlikely that its recommendations will be presented to each partner authority's full Council until after the elections in May 2015.

1.6 **Welfare Reform (Agenda Item 11)**

1.6.1 The Joint Committee had received and noted a verbal update which made reference to the Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive Scheme and the Universal Credit implementation. Further details are provided in the [minutes](#) (see via link) of the meeting on Breckland DC's website.

Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Recommendations from the Rural Area Working Party: 26 January 2015	
Report No:	CAB/SE/15/012	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	10 February 2015
Portfolio holder:	Peter Stevens Portfolio Holder for Waste and Property (with responsibility for rural areas) Tel: 01787 280284 Email: peter.stevens@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Chairman of the Working Party:	Jim Thorndyke Chairman of the Rural Area Working Party Tel: 01359 250271 Email: jim.thorndyke@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Alex Wilson Director Tel: 01284 757695 Email: alex.wilson@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	<p>On 26 January 2015, the Rural Area Working Party (RAWP) considered the following substantive items of business:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) St Edmundsbury's Rural Youth Work Project 2015; (2) Rural Public Transport; (3) Funding of Rural Local Authorities; (4) Parish Conference: Thursday 26 March 2015; and (5) Work Programme. <p>Recommendations for Cabinet consideration emanated from Items (1) and (3) above.</p>	

Recommendations:	<p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u>:</p> <p>(a) <u>St Edmundsbury's Rural Youth Work Project 2015</u></p> <p>That:</p> <p>(1) the Council's existing funding of £10,600 for rural youth programmes, as outlined in paragraph 1.1.3 of Report No: RUR/SE/15/001, continue to be ring-fenced for that purpose within any new wider approach to grants and commissioning, and underspends in that budget in any year be rolled forward as appropriate;</p> <p>(2) a review of the delivery and funding of the rural youth programme be carried out for implementation in 2016, with a view to enabling rural communities to provide sustainable and locally-led youth initiatives in their villages;</p> <p>(3) for 2015, the officers negotiate with the Suffolk YMCA to provide a transitional programme using the On the Spot Vehicle, taking into account the steer of the Rural Area Working Party at its meeting on 26 January 2015, and with the final detail to be approved in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.</p> <p>(b) <u>Funding of Rural Local Authorities</u></p> <p>That, supporting the work of the Rural Services Network and SPARSE, the Council raises its concerns regarding the relative under-funding of rural local authorities with its Members of Parliament.</p>
Key Decisions:	No, these are not Key Decisions - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Reports: RUR/SE/15/001 and 002
Alternative option(s):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable
Implications:	
<p><i>Are there any financial implications?</i> <i>If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Reports: RUR/SE/15/001 and 002
<p><i>Are there any staffing implications?</i> <i>If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • See Paper No: RUR/SE/15/002	
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • See Report RUR/SE/15/001	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Not applicable			
Ward(s) affected:		All rural Wards	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		Report RUR/SE/15/001 – Rural Area Working Party: 26 January 2015 Paper RUR/SE/15/002 – Rural Area Working Party: 26 January 2015	
Documents attached:		None	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendations

1.1 St Edmundsbury's Rural Youth Work Project 2015 (Report No: RUR/SE/15/001)

- 1.1.1 The Working Party considered Report No: RUR/SE/15/001 which, following the consultation with Members agreed at the last meeting of the Working Party, proposed a programme for rural youth work in 2015. The proposed programme would involve 54 sessions in six villages from May or July, provided by the YMCA using spare capacity of the Council's On the Spot Vehicle in Haverhill. Before taking into account any contributions from parishes, the proposed programme would cost £18,400, reflecting the roll-over of the underspent 2014/15 budget, and allowing for an element of 'pump-priming' work in the form of targeted volunteer recruitment and training and extra publicity. Additional sessions could also be arranged if funded by the parish councils or locality budgets.
- 1.1.2 The Working Party felt that, while it had served its original purpose, there was now a need to introduce a new approach to the provision and funding of the rural youth work programme, which complemented the Families and Communities Strategy, and the work of locality officers. The officers were therefore asked to carry out a review for implementation in 2016/17, with a view to ring-fencing the core budget (£10,600) and any carried forward underspends within a wider Community Chest/Locality Budget system of grants designed to encourage rural communities to innovate around sustainable and locally-led youth initiatives in their villages. It was recognised that some villages would continue to want to access a service like the On the Spot Vehicle, but others may have other ideas for engaging young people in positive youth activities.
- 1.1.3 In relation to 2015, the Working Party noted that, pending their meeting, no formal arrangements had yet been agreed with the YMCA, and therefore there was some flexibility for councillors to amend the approach proposed by the officers, provided it was done quickly. Therefore the Working Party requested that a transitional arrangement be put in place for 2015 whereby all parishes were given the opportunity to express an interest in receiving free 'taster sessions' from the On the Spot Vehicle, with a view to establishing if this was something they would want to continue with under the new approach from 2016. A condition of receiving the sessions would be that parishes would publicise them, and they would also be encouraged to take up the offer of community volunteer training. When the level of interest was known, the available sessions (provisionally up to 54 as originally planned) would be shared fairly between the parishes. Parishes or ward members would also still have the chance to purchase additional sessions.
- 1.1.4 The Working Party was asked to note that the agreement of the YMCA, as provider, would still be needed to the new approach, and some negotiation may be required over the cost and number of sessions which could be offered on this new transitional basis. Given the urgency of finalising a programme for this Spring, the Working Party therefore noted that the fine detail of the 2015 scheme would need to be agreed with the relevant Portfolio Holder, within the broad framework it had suggested. However, the Working Party asked that any communications be shared with local Ward Members before being sent to

parish councils so they could assist in promoting the scheme in their areas. Given the timetable, parishes would also be asked to respond with five weeks to the offer of the sessions.

1.2 **Funding of Rural Local Authorities (Paper No: RUR/SE/15/002)**

- 1.2.1 The Working Party noted the background information provided, including a 2014 DCLG and DEFRA research report, and the response to it of the Sparsity Partnership for Authorities Delivering Rural Services (SPARSE). This research showed that rural sparsity increased the cost of providing many council services including waste management, regulatory services and economic development. SPARSE also argued that the findings in the research did not properly reflect the fact that there was low or non-provision of other services in rural areas due to the cost and practicality of doing so. This situation was exacerbated by the fact that residents in urban areas currently received £178 more per head each year in government funding for council services than those in rural areas, a gap which would not be closed by government proposals for 2015/16. The Working Party noted that the Council had already highlighted this disparity in its response to the Government's consultation on the provisional finance settlement in January, but wished the Cabinet to carry out further lobbying and awareness raising.

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Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Recommendations of the Sustainable Development Working Party: 28 January 2015	
Report No:	CAB/SE/15/013	
Report to and dates:	Cabinet	10 February 2015
	Council	24 February 2015 <i>(where applicable)</i>
Portfolio holder:	Terry Clements Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulation Tel: 01284 827161 Email: terry.clements@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Chairman of the Working Party:	Karen Richardson Sustainable Development Working Party Tel: 07894 390815 Email: karen.richardson@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Marie Smith Strategic Planning Manager Tel: 01638 719260 Email: marie.smith@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	<p>On 28 January 2015, the Sustainable Development Working Party considered the following substantive items of business:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Joint Development Management Policies Document Planning Inspector's Report and Adoption; (2) Erskine Lodge, Great Whelnetham Development Brief; and (3) West Suffolk Shop Front and Advertisement Design Guide Consultation Responses and Adoption. <p>Recommendations for Cabinet consideration emanated from Items (2) and (3) above.</p>	

Recommendations:	<p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u>: that</p> <p>(a) <u>Erskine Lodge, Gt Whelnetham Development Brief</u></p> <p>The Development Brief for Erskine Lodge, Great Whelnetham in its current form, as contained in Appendix A to Report SDW/SE/15/002, be <u>NOT</u> adopted; and</p> <p>(b) <u>West Suffolk Shop Front and Advertisement Design Guide</u></p> <p>(1) Subject to the approval of full Council, the West Suffolk Shop Front and Advertisement Design Guide with suggested amendments, as contained in Appendix A to Report SDW/SE/15/003 be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document subject to it being noted in the Glossary on page 28 in respect of the second item 'Building of Local Interest' , reference to 'Birmingham' be deleted and 'the areas' inserted therefor; and</p> <p>(2) the Head of Planning and Growth be given delegated authority to edit/insert appropriate images as part of the final document publishing process.</p>
<p>Key Decision:</p> <p><i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i></p>	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Consultation:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Reports: SDW/SE/15/002 and 003
<p>Alternative option(s):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Reports: SDW/SE/15/002 and 003
<p>Implications:</p>	
<p><i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>See Reports: SDW/SE/15/002 and 003</p>
<p><i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>See Reports: SDW/SE/15/002 and 003</p>
<p><i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>See Reports: SDW/SE/15/002 and 003</p>
<p><i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>See Reports: SDW/SE/15/002 and 003</p>
<p><i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>See Reports: SDW/SE/15/002 and 003</p>

Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
See Reports: SDW/SE/15/002 and 003			
Ward(s) affected:		All Wards	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		Sustainable Development Working Party: 28 January 2015 Reports: SDW/SE/15/002 and 003	
Documents attached:		None	

1. Joint Development Management Policies Document – Inspector’s Report and Adoption (Report No: SDW/SE/15/001)

- 1.1 The Cabinet is asked to **NOTE** that the Working Party has made its recommendations in respect of the above document directly to the Joint Development Management Policies Committee. The Joint Committee will meet on 11 February 2015 and will be asked to recommend adoption of the Joint Development Management Policies Document by both St Edmundsbury’s and Forest Heath’s full Councils on 24 and 27 February 2015 respectively.

2. Erskine Lodge, Great Whelnetham – Development Brief (Report No: SDW/SE/15/002)

- 2.1 In discussing the proposed Development Brief, Councillor Clements, as Ward Member, referred to consideration given to the allocation of two sites for residential development in Gt Whelnetham in connection with the Rural Vision 2031 document. At that time, a need for 20 new dwellings in the village had been put forward and to fulfil this sites at Fentons Farm and Erskine Lodge had been allocated. It had been envisaged that 10 dwellings would be provided on the first mentioned with remaining development taking place at Erskine Lodge.
- 2.2 Members expressed surprise that the site at Erskine Lodge had been enlarged as a result of re-modelling and subsequent redefinition of the flood plain. As a consequence there was potential capacity for 63 dwellings to be provided at the site (based on a density of 30 dwellings per hectare on the site which was now extended to 2.1 hectares).
- 2.3 The Working Party was of the firm view that the developers should be working on the basis on a lesser figure than this given the constraints which existed in respect of the site. In this regard reservations were expressed about the potential for flooding from surface water as a consequence of redevelopment of the site, despite the floodplain remodelling which had taken place. There was anecdotal evidence that existing properties around the site, for example, the Rushbrooke Arms Public House, had been subject to flooding in past years. There were concerns amongst local residents that the run off of surface water which would be created by any development would aggravate existing flooding problems. There were concerns from Members that the Development Brief did not give due regard to landscape considerations, part of the site being an attractive meadow over which there were open views. The proximity of the sewage treatment plant was also referred to as a further constraint. Despite the proposal to create a cordon sanitaire the prevailing south westerly winds would disperse any odours across the site. There were further concerns about the impact of development on the conservation area (part of the site was within this area) and on a nearby rookery which was protected. The Development Brief had not addressed the siting of an electricity sub-station which would be required with any development.
- 2.4 The Working Party therefore considered that the Development Brief should not be adopted in its current form and this is reflected in recommendation (2) above.

3. West Suffolk Shop Front and Advertisement Design Guide (Report No: SDW/SE/15/003)

- 3.1 The West Suffolk Shop Front and Advertisement Design Guide (SFDG) has been drafted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to support the policies of each local planning authority's (LPA) Core Strategy and the Development Management Policies Local Plan Document which in themselves relate to all three priorities contained within the West Suffolk Strategic Plan, (2014-2016).
- 3.2 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will provide detailed guidance on the design of new and replacement shop fronts throughout West Suffolk. The guidance covers matters such as general design principles; materials and colour; signage and lighting; blinds and canopies; and security measures for retail and other commercial properties.
- 3.3 Public consultation took place between 24 November 2014 and 9 January 2015. The consultation was carried out in line with the adopted Joint Statement of Community Involvement. Copies of the documents were available on the Councils' website and could be inspected at both Councils' principal offices. Letters were sent to statutory consultees, parish councils, adjoining councils and relevant selected interest groups, individuals and bodies.
- 3.4 Nine responses were received to the consultation. The comments have been summarised in the report followed by a suggested Council response and amendment.

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Cabinet



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Revenues Collection Performance and Write-Offs	
Report No:	CAB/SE/15/014	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	10 February 2015
Portfolio holder:	David Ray Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance (01359) 250912 david.ray@stedsbcc.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Rachael Mann Head of Resources and Performance (01638) 719245 rachael.mann@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To consider the current revenue collection performance and to consider writing off outstanding debts, as detailed in the exempt appendices.	
Recommendation:	<p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that the write-off of the amounts detailed in the exempt appendices to Report No: CAB/SE/15/014, be approved, as follows:</p> <p>Exempt Appendix 1: Council Tax totalling £5,363.83</p> <p>Exempt Appendix 2: Business Rates totalling £4,727.56</p> <p>Exempt Appendix 3: Housing Benefit Overpayments £6,991.65</p>	
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
Consultation:	Leadership Team and the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance have been consulted with on the proposed write-offs.	
Alternative option(s):	See paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2	
Implications:		
Are there any financial implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3 	

Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> The recovery procedures followed have been previously agreed; writing off uncollectable debt allows staff to focus recovery action on debt which is recoverable.	
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application of predetermined recovery procedures ensures that everybody is treated consistently. • Failure to collect any debt impacts on either the levels of service provision or the levels of charges. • All available remedies are used to recover the debt before write off is considered. • The provision of services by the Council applies to everyone in the area. 	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Debts are written off which could have been collected.	Medium	Extensive recovery procedures are in place to ensure that all possible mechanisms are exhausted before a debt is written off.	Low
Ward(s) affected:		All wards are affected.	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		None	
Documents attached:		Exempt Appendix 1: Council Tax Exempt Appendix 2: Business Rates Exempt Appendix 3: Housing Benefit Overpayments	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

- 1.1 The Revenues Section collects outstanding debts in accordance with either statutory guidelines or Council agreed procedures.
- 1.2 When all these procedures have been exhausted, the outstanding debt is written off using the delegated authority of the Head of Resources and Performance for debts up to £2,499.99 or by Cabinet for debts over £2,500.00.
- 1.3 It is best practice to monitor the recovery procedures for outstanding debts regularly and, when appropriate, write off irrecoverable debts.
- 1.4 Provision for irrecoverable debts is included both in the Collection Fund and the General Fund and writing off debts that are known to be irrecoverable ensures that staff are focussed on achieving good collection levels in respect of the recoverable debt.

2. Alternative options

- 2.1 The Council has appointed a firm of bailiffs to assist in the collection business rates and Council Tax and also has on line tracing facilities. It is not considered appropriate to pass the debts on to another agency.
- 2.2 It should be noted that in the event that a written-off debt become recoverable, the amount is written back on, and enforcement procedures are re-established. This might happen, for example, if someone has gone away with no trace, and then they are unexpectedly 'found' again, through whatever route.

3. Financial implications and collection performance

- 3.1 Provision is made in the accounts for non recovery but the total amounts to be written off are *as follows* with full details shown in Exempt Appendices 1, 2 and 3.
- 3.2 The total amounts proposed to be written off as a result of this paper is:

Exempt Appendix 1:	Council Tax totalling £5,363.83
Exempt Appendix 2:	Business Rates totalling £4,727.56
Exempt Appendix 3:	Housing Benefit Overpayments £6,991.65
- 3.3 As at 30 November 2014, the total National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) billed by Anglia Revenues Partnership on behalf of St Edmundsbury Borough Council (as the billing Authority) is nearly £47.3 million per annum. The collection rate as at 30 November 2014 was 75.54% against a profile of 75.37%.
- 3.4 As at 30 November 2014, the total Council Tax billed by Anglia Revenues Partnership on behalf of St Edmundsbury Borough Council (includes the County, Police and Parish precept elements) is just under £53.8 million per annum. The collection rate as at 30 November 2014 was 77.14% against a profiled target of 77.85%.

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